

How to Satisfy Your Clients as an Interpreter

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Abstract

The more and more Japanese investors are coming to Indonesia has made interpreters play a big role as the communication bridge between the two nations, especially for the industry sector. However, to become interpreters in this field is not that easy. There are many problems that Japanese language interpreters have to face, and those will only be known by them who really work directly there. For examples some interpreters do not know the special terminology in a factory, the speaker of source language (SL) speaks too fast, or some interpreters cannot speak correct sentence grammatically. Therefore, I chose a theme titled "How to Satisfy Your Clients as an Interpreter" in order to know the criteria of interpreter that user needs, and also to know what kind of problems faced by the interpreters in industrial field. The method used in this research is descriptive qualitative. By analyzing the data, it can be said that the criteria of interpreters that users need are not based on his/her degree, but what more important is having the JLPT certification, working experiences, interpersonal skill, discipline and general knowledge. Problems that usually are faced by interpreters are problems of lack of understanding the content, nervous, the speaker's way of talking is too fast, unclear speaker's language, concentration distraction such as noisy voice, weakness to remember words, and lack of general knowledge.

Keywords

interpreter, user, industry

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Introduction

Recently, the government continues to attract foreign investors to invest in Indonesia in order to spur economic growth to be more significant and dynamic. Investment by foreign investors, especially in the industrial sector is expected to absorb local labor and can also take advantage of our domestic capabilities in exporting products abroad that can bring foreign exchange to the country (Fernandez, Almaazmi, & Robinson, 2020). This condition makes interpreters play an important role in bridging communication between the two nations in the industrial world (Wardhani & Dugis, 2020). However, being an interpreter is not easy. The various problems faced in the industrial world may only be known by those who jump directly in the field (Alam, Hamzah, Putra, Ginting, & Teng, 2019). For example, when interpreters do not understand a specific term used in a factory, a Source Language (Bsu) speaker speaks too quickly, or the interpreters cannot string together words grammatically. As these problems are important to be known and handled, therefore I decided to choose the theme "How to Satisfy Your Clients as An Interpreter".

Research Methods

The purpose of this research is to know the criteria of interpreters needed by users, as well as to know what problems interpreters in the industrial world and solutions. By knowing this, those who want to dive into the world of interpretation are expected to prepare themselves better. Based on the background and objectives above, the problem formulation in this study will be focused on three things are as below:

1. What are the user criteria for choosing a Japanese interpreter?
2. What are the problems that interpreters often face in the industrial world?
3. What are the strategies for solving translation problems?

The method used in this study is qualitative descriptive method. It is said to be descriptive because this study seeks to reveal the true conditions that occur in the field through an observation. Data collection is conducted through direct observation as interpreters in various companies, interviews to several fellow interpreters, users and agents of interpreter services, as well as the study of translation documents so that the research content can describe the real situation.

Results

Interview Results on Interpreters Criteria

At first, I thought to be able to plunge into the world of interpreters, required a high degree and certificate JLPT N2 /N1. This is because both in Japan and Indonesia, users or interpreters agencies usually ask about their educational background and also the JLPT level of interpreters used as an overview of Japanese language skills (Sasaki, 2018). To find out the criteria of the desired interpreter or can meet the needs of the user, I interviewed four agents of interpreters' service users and three manufacturing companies as user users of interpreter services. The interview questions and answers are shown in the following table.

Tabel 1.

Interview Results to Agents

No.	Questions	Agen "I"	Agen "A"	Agen "J"	Agen "F"
1.	Is JLPT certificate necessary? If so, at least what N level is it?	yes. As an indicator of N2 capability	yes. As an indicator of N2 capability	yes. N2 for professional interpreters	yes. N3 field, N2 business meeting, seminar
2.	Is a degree required? If so, at least graduated from what degree?	No	No, but basic basic education becomes a reference	yes. S1 for permanent staff	No
3.	Does the working hours/experience factor play a role/as a very important factor?	Most important	Yes, absolutely	Yes, absolutely	Yes, absolutely
4.	Are there more important factors than Japanese language proficiency itself? If any, please specify.	Discipline, honesty, general knowledge, can keep secrets	Discipline, manner, general ability	Knowledge, attitude, discipline, ethics, appearance	yes. Discipline general knowledge, hospitality, loyalty

Tabel 2.

Hasil Wawancara kepada Perusahaan(user)

No.	Questions	Automotive Factory	Spare Part Factory	Carpet Factory
1.	Is JLPT certificate necessary? If so, at least what N level is it?	Yes. N3	yes. N3. For staff, there is an allowance depends on his/her level JLPT	Yes. N2
2.	Is a degree required? If so, at least graduated from what degree?	Depends on the position. Yes, as a staffer and not as a freelance	No. Except as a staff	No
3.	Does the working hours/experience factor play a role/as a very important factor?	Yes, absolutely	Yes, absolutely	Yes, absolutely
4.	Are there more important factors than Japanese language proficiency itself? If any, please specify.	yes. Discipline, attitude	yes. Factory term, can work together, cheerful, honest, smart, know the culture and mindset of Japanese people	yes. General knowledge, attitude, discipline

From the interview results above, it can be known that the criteria required by the user in choosing an interpreter is not a degree, but JLPT ownership, work experience, interpersonal skills, and discipline.

Direct Observation Results in Several Industries

Interpreter Weaknesses by User

In using the services of interpreters, there are times when the user is not satisfied with the performance of the interpreter. Not a few agents get claims from users about the performance of interpreters, both in oral and written translations (Ahrens et al., 2020). Below are the results of interviews to several industry manufacturers who use interpreter services as users, about the weaknesses of interpreters. From their answers, it can be concluded that the weaknesses of oral interpreters are as follows:

1. Not in the classification from the beginning of the selection but already in place. There is a discrepancy between cv and capability.
2. Don't understand specific terms in the manufacturing industry.
3. Cannot translate simultaneously.
4. Suddenly cancel, without notice or notify but on the day of H.
5. Manner is not good as many complain, or open shoes at work.
6. Discipline in work is lacking, such as not keeping time, not being in place when needed.
7. Appearance is not neat, or looks too excessive.

Interpretation Problems according to the Interpreters

From the author's personal experience while serving as an oral interpreter, some difficulties can be described as follows: Japanese language proficiency's four abilities (4 ginou):

Listening ability

Factors of the speaker: speak too fast, do not speak the standard language, and speak without pause / too long, small voice. Factors of the oral interpreter: poor hearing, poor memory/ easy to forget, not knowing the tenses spoken, not being able to capture the speaker's intentions, not understanding the term. Another factor: noisy machine noise around, rowdy by human voice. Noise, both from the sound and the surrounding sound, makes it difficult for the interpreter to concentrate. In joint meetings such as TV Meeting, tele-conference, sometimes too many people talk, so it should be able to summarize in a very fast tempo.

Reading ability

Write speakers unreadable; do not understand the material, no subject.

Writing skills

Can't write memos quickly, can't deduce what's being heard because it doesn't understand the material.

Speaking ability

Factors of the oral interpreter: unable to speak quickly, unable to explain precisely and high efficiency, translation not understood by the interlocutor, unable to find the equivalent of the word. Problems from other factors:

Contract

A different contract discrepancy from the beginning of the deal, with that happening on the field. For example, in a consecutive contract, but the reality becomes simultaneous, two languages become three languages, spoken translation becomes a written interpreter / become a guide / become an MC, or the abrupt cancellation of the contract on the day H.

Materials

Sometimes it doesn't get material before work. This is widely found by other oral interpreters. In the absence of jizen shiryō (material received before the event) then the interpreter can prepare by getting an idea of what will be discussed in the event.

General and specialized knowledge

Do not master the material discussed because of the limitations of general and special knowledge. Working hour's experiences play an important role in improving interpreter skills.

Mental

Nervous, tense because of something that makes it unable to concentrate on what the speaker is saying.

Additional services

There are times when clients ask an oral interpreter to do other things that are not related to work, such as accompanying dinner, helping with surveys, etc.

Time

Sometimes work time doesn't go according to agreement. There are clients that do not enforce of system.

User Characters

Sometimes we face users who are less cooperative, unclear, grumpy, shy, demeaning etc. At a time when they are angry sometimes issuing unethical words are heard.

Interpreters' Problems Solving Strategies

From the description of some good problems raised by users, interpreters in the industrial world, it is necessary to take the right strategy to overcome difficulties in the field. In order for the interpreter to satisfy the customer (user/agent) it is recommended that the:

1. Don't lie. Write down the real thing, no need to exaggerate achievements let alone write experiences that you never had.
2. Learn specific terms in the manufacturing industry, or try to find a match by opening a site related to the company to be visited. Strictly from the beginning to both the user and the agent, that the rate given is as a simultaneous interpreter or consequential, or in terms of the category of work received.
3. Be professional, such as not doing any cancellations (except force majeure), keeping time, not having much fun while on duty. If you are going to leave the room to worship, or go to the toilet, ask the local pic for permission first.
4. Look neat, both from hair, clothes, shoes etc. Sometimes there are users who judge from the appearance of the outside to assess credibility

Interpreters Strategies

1. When we are facing a fast-talking cover, look at the surrounding situation. If possible, ask the speaker to speak more slowly and wait for us to finish translating. If the problem is on hearing, then try to be near the speaker; always bring a scrapbook to help remember the content of the conversation. If you do not know the term, then use the word or do not include it in the translation but the intent can be caught well. If you don't know a specific term in a company, just say it as it is. Usually the specific terms in the company can already be understood by local employees without having to match the word in the target language. The rowdiness of the room by either human voice or machine is inevitable. Therefore, always try to be near the position of the speaker.

In TV Meeting conditions where too many people are talking, try to concentrate on at least the 5W1H thing. Usually what is discussed is the answer to the question posed at the beginning.

2. In oral translation, if we have to translate the material but do not understand, are illegible or there is a vagueness of the subject, then it should be asked to the speaker. It is not advisable to make up or guess because it is feared that it does not fit the speaker's intentions.

3. If you can't write memos quickly, then keep practicing. The memo will only be read by the spoken interpreter itself, therefore create symbols, initial abbreviations, images, or short Kanji to easily remember the material described by the speaker.

4. If the oral interpreter is unable to speak fast, then practice by mimicking the way Japanese speak through the media, as well as increasing flying hours on various occasions because it will familiarize us with the use of word equivalents and deeper material understanding. So that contract problems or unexpected cancellations do not occur, then we better determine from the beginning some conditions that we can pour in quotation at the time we are offered the job. It is better to always ask *jizen shiryō* so that our performance is more maximal in duty. If that is not possible, try our best. Try to read a lot about the general news that is happening in the world, as well as material related to the company that we will handle. General and special knowledge is expected because it greatly affects the results of our translation of the object.

5. If tense / nervous, try to take a long breath so that oxygen in the brain is not reduced. Hold the assumption that "no matter how difficult the condition may be, it will all end". "No matter how important the guests are, they are still human beings who eat like us too."

6. Regarding the additional services requested by the client, depending on the personal oral interpreter itself. If you feel like being professional, it's ok to subtly reject the request. But for those who feel additional service is not taboo, or consider it can make the user / client become a customer (repeater) in the future, it can meet their demand.

7. The problem of the use of time-related services must be addressed with professionalism. If there is overtime, then write it in the working sheet as it is. If there is no working sheet, then inform the client / user about overtime and its consequences if the concerned forgets.

8. Regarding the user's character, we cannot choose let alone patronize them. If it is within the limits of fairness, try to survive, be patient, and consider it part of mental exercise. However, if this is beyond the bounds of fairness, then it is better not to accept the same job offer in the future. In addition, if the user uses a word that could cause conflict, then the oral interpreter should be able to be wise in diction or word selection when translating without prejudice to the meaning contained in it.

Conclusions

From the above research can be concluded, that the ownership of a high level JLPT certificate does help the assessment of interpreters because it serves as an indicator of Japanese language proficiency. However it turns out that 'flying hours' or poor experience-transverse one is the most important factor for users and agents in choosing an interpreter. Therefore, expand the experience of interpreting to train ourselves and also broaden our horizons. In addition, interpreters are required to behave professionally and have good interpersonal skills in carrying out their duties. Interpreters are also advised to read a lot of news and books that contain general knowledge to have a plus when communicating with users.

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