HOW EFL STUDENTS COPE WITH ILL-FORMED SOURCE-LANGUAGE SENTENCES IN ENGLISH-TO-INDONESIAN SIGHT INTERPRETING

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Abstract: This research investigates how English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students cope with ill-formed source-language sentences in English-to-Indonesian sight interpreting. In line with the objective, students' interpretations of sentences with linguistic errors were collected as the data via video-based observation and qualitatively analyzed using content analysis. The findings reveal that most students were aware of the occurrence of typographical errors in the assigned source documents and able to sight interpret those parts as targeted, especially when dealing with mix-up letters and middle-letter omission. However, many of them seemed to have difficulties in identifying the occurrence of grammatical errors, such as subject-verb disagreement and improper use of a certain part of speech and punctuation errors, such as the presence of unnecessary punctuations, which then leading to inaccurate interpretations. It is assumed that the primary cause of these interpretation problems is attributed to students' limited understanding of the source texts, highlighting the critical need for enhanced fast-reading comprehension skills among students.
Keywords: *EFL; fast-reading comprehension; ill-formed sentence; sight interpreting.*

INTRODUCTION
Teaching at a higher education level is not only about equipping the students with contents, but also about preparing them for any challenges and opportunities they are likely to face in the future of work with some related soft skills. It is widely agreed that one of essential soft skills needed for the workplace is problem-solving skill. In a teaching and learning process, such soft skill can be honed one of which by implementing Problem-Based Learning (Alias et al., 2020; Ramadhani et al., 2019; Sholihah & Lastariwati, 2020). As the term suggests, Problem-Based Learning (hereafter abbreviated to PBL) is a learning approach which utilizes authentic or real-world problems as a means to enhance student learning of concepts as well as lifelong learning (Duch et al., 2001). Furthermore, PBL can eventually be used to help monitor the extent to which the students are able to overcome the presented problems.

Given that every professional may encounter challenges at work, PBL can be applied to teach any subjects or courses including Sight Interpreting (also known as Sight Translation). It is regarded as a form of simultaneous interpreting, in which the interpreter reads a document in the source language and reproduces the translation orally (Chen, 2015; Pöchhacker, 2016). The types of documents commonly sight interpreted are prescriptions, agreements, surveys, accident reports, registration forms, etc. Regardless of its vital or non-vital ones, an interpreter is highly expected to be able to transfer messages accurately as stated in the interpreter's code of ethics (Saehu, 2018). To be technically accurate, Ginori & Scimone (1995) suggested that an interpreter is required to be able to fully understand the source language (SL) and then convert it into the target language (TL) in the best possible ways. However, when it comes to the real practice, there are always possibilities that the source text (ST) provided is not well-written, whereby it contains a number of ill-formed sentences made either intentionally or unintentionally. It is in line with Sirriyya (2016), who argued that, in most cases, the ST producers did not necessarily master the standard languages they used. Along with this, she proposed that the linguistic errors frequently found in the ST are typographical, grammatical, informational,

punctuation, and stylistic errors. Those various errors may change the meaning of some or all of document that is undergoing sight translation.

Indeed, the presented reality is potential to give certain constraints, especially for those learning foreign languages with different language rules from their first language's. This situation can be seen from the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students in Indonesia. It is found that some of common difficulties faced by Indonesian EFL students in translation-related practices are caused by several differences of their grammar structures or sentence patterns between the two languages aside from their poor mastery of English vocabularies (Arono & Nadrah, 2019; Nadirah et al., 2019; Putranti, 2017). In performing sight interpreting, back to the case, it becomes even more challenging when the ST provided contains several ill-formed sentences since the process needs to be done concurrently, which leads to the absence of any aids. Therefore, a sight interpreter needs to possess good reflexes to solve those potential problems in order to avoid lag time. More importantly, to follow Sirriyya (2016), being able to tactfully deal with errors in the ST is a form of faithfulness. With this in mind, regularly evaluating students' capacity is then a must to reveal their shortcomings, so that the findings can be used to design more appropriate pedagogical decisions for further class activities.

Considering that sight interpreting is now an increasingly important form of professional practice (Li, 2014), extensive studies related to such evaluation activities have been carried out in this field. Many of them investigated students' common difficulties when performing sight interpreting in general context with various language pairs, such as English and Chinese (Su & Li, 2019; Wu, 2019), English and Kurdish (Abdulrahman, 2021), English and Arabic (Thawabteh, 2015), and English and Indonesian (Putranti, 2017). Besides that, similar studies have also been conducted in a more specific context, such as examining student interpreters' strategies in dealing with syntactic complexity (Ma, 2021) and with unfamiliar words (Fang & Wang, 2022). Last but not least, several research focused on discovering effective techniques for teaching and learning sight interpreting (Chang, 2016; Li, 2015; Song, 2010). Although a lot has been done, only a dearth of studies has focused on English and Indonesian language pair, so it needs to be explored. Thus, this research was meant to bridge the existing lacuna, particularly to investigate EFL students' abilities as well as strategies in coping with several ill-formed sentences during sight interpreting practices. As it is supported by PBL implementation, it is hoped that the results of this study can be used as a consideration for preparing the students better to face the world of work after their graduation.

METHOD

This study employed qualitative method. The participants of this study were 185 undergraduate students of English Literature Study Program in an Islamic State University in Bandung, West Java, Indonesia. They are currently enrolled in a Simultaneous Interpreting course, in which Sight Interpreting becomes one of the topics offered. The selection of participants from this specific cohort was aimed at capturing insights from individuals with a background in English studies and an ongoing exposure to interpreting practices within the academic setting.

Prior to collecting data, three types of English text were prepared to be used as the STs. The texts consisted of a short paragraph of inspirational story (Text 1), prescriptions (Text 2), and a list of tips (Text 3). All of them contained several linguistic errors made intentionally as well as purposively, which were limited to the form of typographical error (12 cases), grammatical error (6 cases), and punctuation error (2 cases). To clarify, first, Typographical Error (TE) refers to any spelling mistakes, which were further differentiated into *mix up letters*, errors made when a certain letter in a word was changed by another letter, such as "csn" (supposed to be can) and "rather then" (rather than), and *missing letters*, errors made when the providers missed a certain letter in a word, such as "evryone" (everyone) and "thn" (than). Second, Grammatical Error (GE) refers to a condition when the providers failed to follow the SL grammar rules, such as subject-verb agreement, parts of speech, and word order. Last, Punctuation Error (PE) refers to the use of a symbol that is not belonging to a certain written language or vice versa, such as missing or too many commas and unnecessary full stops. In this article, the errors were underlined, and the corrections were bolded. However, it is important to note that the underlines were not displayed during the research to investigate the students' awareness of their presence.

In line with the objective, students' interpretations towards the ill-formed parts were then becoming the data of this study. To collect

them, the students were instructed to record and submit their videos of sight interpreting practices to the assigned STs, which were divided into three different teaching class periods for a comprehensive exploration of varying instructional methods and their impact on students' interpretation capabilities. This video-based observation was used to ease researchers to capture all details in a live as well as simultaneous setting (Asan & Montague, 2014). Aside from that, the data can be considered natural due to the absence of any interruption from researchers.

After collected, the data were studied qualitatively using content analysis method to find out how the students deal with the errors. As suggested by Bhandari (2022), this method is appropriate for determining common concepts or patterns within qualitative data. Furthermore, since interpreting is also involving translation processes, some findings were also identified using translation method and technique theories proposed by Molina & Albir (2004). Finally, the results of the study were then evaluated and presented comprehensively.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
As discussed earlier, this research is aimed at revealing how Indonesian EFL students cope with several linguistic errors contained in the STs during sight interpreting practices. To present the results, students' interpretations towards the ill-formed sentences catering either typographical errors, grammatical errors, or punctuation errors will be discussed respectively in different parts.

Students' interpretations towards Typographical Errors (TE)
During their interpreting practices, it is found that almost all students seem to be aware of the expected interpretations towards sentences with mix-up-letter words in it. It can be seen, for instance, when they sight interpret the following excerpt.

Excerpt 1

"… by interpreting the joke the best you csn." (Text 3)

Expected correction

"… by interpreting the joke the best you can."

Students' interpretations

SI1 : "*… dengan menafsirkan leluconnya sebaik yang kamu bisa.*"

SI2 : "*… dengan menginterpretasikan lelucon itu semampunya.*"

In Excerpt 1, the word "can" would be best translated into "*bisa*" or "*mampu*" since it refers to a certain skill (how to interpret jokes)*,* and most of the students literally translate "the best you can" into "*sebaik yang kamu bisa*" as exemplified in SI1. Besides, few other students translate it into "*semampunya*" (SI2). Although the use of this version does not necessarily sound natural in meaning, the message is understandable. Most importantly, the occurrence of the base word "*mampu*" indicates the students' awareness of what the TE is supposed to be. Better students' performance in overcoming mix up letters can be seen from the way they sight interpret the following excerpt. It is noted that all the students are able to accurately translate the TE "rather then" as intended into "*daripada*" 'rather than', which indicates their language mastery regarding the phrase as a common preposition.

Excerpt 2

"Rather then dwelling too much on how you're going to interpret a joke, ..." (Text 3)

Expected correction

"Rather than dwelling too much on how you're going to interpret a joke, ..."

Students' interpretations

SI3: "*Daripada terlalu memikirkan bagaimana anda menafsirkan sebuah lelucon, ...*"

SI4: "*Daripada terlalu memikirkan bagaimana kamu akan meng-interpretasi lelucon, …*"

Meanwhile, when they are faced with several missing-letter words, this study reveals two findings. On the one hand, the students tend to have no difficulties to deal with the words with middle-letter omission, such as "evryone" (everyone) in "... but could lead to awkward and uncomfortable feelings for evryone. (Text 3)" and "thn" (than) in "... the intention behind the joke can sometimes be more important thn the joke itself." (Text 3). This might be due to their familiarity with the combination of the existing letters or their understanding towards its

surrounded context, so that they could easily assume which words would logically be there to construct a coherent sentence. On the other hand, some students seem to struggle to cope with the words with such error when the omission is in their initial or final letter as can be seen below.

Excerpt 3

"If you are unable to follow these instructions, lease contact your physician, and your surgery ay be delayed of postponed."

Expected correction

"If you are unable to follow these instructions, please contact your physician, and your surgery may be delayed of postponed." (Text 2)

Students' interpretations

SI5 : "*Jika Anda tidak dapat mengikuti instruksi ini, ... silakan hubungi dokter Anda, dan operasi Anda .. mungkin ditunda.*"

SI6 : "*Jika Anda tidak dapat mengikuti instruksi ini, ... sewa hubungi dokter Anda, dan operasi Anda... mungkin ditunda.*"

SI7 : "*Jika anda tidak dapat mengikuti instruksi ini, silakan hubungi dokter Anda dan spesialis operasi Anda, katakan tertunda atau ditunda.*"

SI8 : "*Jika Anda tidak dapat mengikuti petunjuk ini, silakan hubungi dokter Anda, dan operasi Anda tertunda atau ditunda.*"

Considering the context, it can be stated that SI5 is the best possible way to translate the sentence. The TE "lease" is supposed to be translated into "*silakan*" 'please' rather than "*sewa*" as in SI6. The word "*sewa*" is basically the literal meaning for "lease", showing that the students were not aware of the existing TE despite its illogical interpretation. Similar case can also be seen in SI7 when the student translated the TE "ay" into "*katakan*" 'say', which is likely to change the targeted meaning. Different way in coping with the TE can be seen in SI8, in which the students decided to implement omission technique by skipping the second missing-letter word. However, the omission did not seem to be strategic that it is also likely to change the targeted meaning. Hence, this finding suggests that missing-initial- or final-letter words in an ST can lead to a serious misinterpretation due to its

larger possibilities of forming more various words compared to the middle-letter-missing words. Additionally, the pauses occurred in between their speech as shown by SI5 and SI6 lead to an assumption that there are cognitive loads in which the students, regardless the results, tried to identify or consider the best interpretation of the sentence (Defrancq & Plevoets, 2018; Wang & Li, 2015).

Students' interpretations towards Grammatical Errors (GE)
It is assumed that majority of the students were not aware of any GE in the STs since only few of them sight translate those parts accurately as targeted. The first example of this case can be seen below.

Excerpt 4

"… and suddenly, the one who was slapped started to sink, but his friend saved him. When they regained consciousness, he wrote on the stone: "Today my best friend saved my life." (Text 1)

Expected correction

"… and suddenly, the one who was slapped started to sink, but his friend saved him. When he regained consciousness, he wrote on the stone: "Today my best friend saved my life"."

Students' interpretation

SI9 : "*... dan tiba-tiba, orang yang ditamparnya tadi mulai tenggelam, tetapi temannya menyelamatkannya. Ketika mereka kembali tersadar, dia menulis di atas batu: "Hari ini sahabatku menyelamatkanku".*"

In this context, the use of "*mereka*" 'they' shows disagreement since it refers to a single person, *the one who was slapped*. Most students are assumed to translate it word for word, or they simply thought that there was nothing wrong even after going through skimming process. As for the rest interpretations to Excerpt 4, some translation strategies were interestingly implemented by minority of the students as a sign of their awareness regarding the GE. These can be seen in the following examples.

SI10 : "*Kemudian setelah mereka siuman ... mm.., setelah mereka sama-sama sadar dari kejadian tenggelam tadi, ...* 'Then,

after they woke up... *mm...,* after they were both conscious of the drowning incident, …'

SI11 : "*Ketika mereka sudah sama-sama selamat ...* 'When they were both safe …'"

SI12 : "*Setelah diselamatkan, dia menuliskan di atas batu, ...* 'After being rescued, he inscribed it on a rock, …'"

From SI10, we can infer that the student shows his awareness that the sentence needs a correction as evidenced by the presence of pause as well as filler followed by a change in translation for the part containing GE. Additionally, it can be seen that both SI10 and SI11 maintain the use of pronoun "*mereka*", but they both tried to make the interpretations better and more acceptable by modifying the words after the pronoun. Different from SI10 and SI11, S12 involves omission method by skipping the ambiguous part without changing the main point of the sentence.

The next example of the assigned GE is related to the proper use of a certain part of speech. This case is presented as follows.

Excerpt 5

…, you may want to <u>summary</u> the joke or provide an explanation of why it was funny. (Text 3)

Expected correction

…, you may want to summarize the joke or provide an explanation of why it was funny.

Students' interpretations

SI13: "*..., kamu mungkin ingin meringkas leluconnya atau memberikan penjelasan mengapa hal tersebut lucu.*

SI14: "*..., kamu mungkin ingin rangkuman lelucon atau memberikan penjelasan kenapa itu lucu.*

SI15: "*..., kemungkinan kamu ingin membuat sebuah ringkasan dari lelucon tersebut atau menyediakan sebuah penjelasan kenapa lelucon tersebut bisa lucu.*

SI16: "*..., kamu mungkin ingin memberikan sebuah penjelasan mengapal hal itu lucu.*

Based on the data above, it can be stated that they resulted in almost similar findings to what have been presented previously. SI13 could be the most acceptable translation performed by

minority of the students who are aware of the GE, in which they translated "want to summary" into "*ingin meringkas*" 'want to summarize'. One of the poor interpretations due to word-for-word translation technique is exemplified by SI14. Different from SI14, despite maintaining the use of "summary", SI15 shows another student's attempt to make the message understandable by modifying its sentence structure without creating any significant change in meaning. Meanwhile, some other students seem to struggle to translate it that they ended up with omission method by skipping the error part becoming "you may want to ~~summary the joke or~~ provide an explanation of why it was funny" as presented in SI16. This last strategy might also be due the student's belief that the omission will not necessarily change the message considering that the coordinating conjunction used in the sentence is "or", which usually functions as a connector between two or more alternatives.

Students' interpretations towards Punctuation Errors (PE)
This study found that PE in the form of missing comma (see Excerpt 6) does not necessarily affect students' interpretation towards the sentence. Students seem to know when they need to make a pause or a small break in their speech delivery.

Excerpt 6

"If you interpret the joke by finding an equivalent or doing a literal <u>translation make</u> sure you can carry out the joke in its entirety."

Expected correction

"If you interpret the joke by finding an equivalent or doing a literal translation, make sure you can carry out the joke in its entirety."

However, a number of students are likely to have difficulties in dealing with unnecessary punctuations, such as an additional full stop inserted in the middle of the following excerpt.

Excerpt 7

"When this happens, you must explain <u>why. you</u> laughed through a summarization."

Expected correction

"When this happens, you must explain why you laughed through a summarization."

Students' interpretations

SI17: *"Ketika ini terjadi, kamu harus menjelaskan kenapa kamu tertawa melalui sebuah ringkasan."*

SI18: *"Ketika hal ini terjadi, maka kita harus bisa menjelaskan alasan kita tertawa. Kita dapat menjelaskannya melalui sebuah ringkasan.* 'When this happens, we must explain why you laughed. We can explain it through a summarization.'"

SI19: *"Ketika hal ini terjadi, kamu harus jelaskan alasannya. Kamu tertawa dari hasil terjemahanmu.* 'When this happens, you must explain the reasons. You laughed through your translation.'"

In the time when this error was assigned, it was expected that the students would be aware of its presence. Aside from its ambiguous meaning when translated as it is with the occurrence of the first full stop, the underlined "you", which is not started with a capital letter as it should be, is considered sufficient to indicate a typo in the part being concerned. Based on the examples above, SI17 could be the students' best way to deal with Excerpt 7. In addition, it is also interesting to notice some other students' awareness as well as strategies as exemplified by SI18. Even though the student kept delivering the message in two sentences, the student tried to make the message more comprehensive and acceptable by modifying its construction. However, there are still many students producing poor translation as can be seen in SI19. Similar to the previous cases, a poor translation seems to stem from the use of word-for-word and literal translation techniques. Thus, it can be assumed that missing a certain punctuation in an ST is more tolerable and solvable rather than putting too much of it.

Practical recommendations
This study has revealed that many students seem to have certain difficulties to cope with the ill-formed source-language sentences during their sight interpreting practices. This preliminary finding leads to several practical recommendations.

First, it is believed that the primary cause of translation problem in a sight interpreting practice is related to the lack of ST comprehension, while to find the equivalent target language may come

easier after successfully understanding the ST (Ivars, 2008). Therefore, starting for the pre-interpreting practice, it is crucial for students to improve their fast-reading comprehension skills, such as scanning and skimming techniques. As suggested by Lee (2013) and (Thawabteh, 2015), these reading strategies will be helpful especially when interpreters need to perform unrehearsed sight interpreting since it will require rapid text analysis. In such a very short time, interpreters are expected to get the general idea of the text and at the same time try to revise the existing errors in order to be able to deliver the translated messages as close as possible as intended. Additionally, mastering scanning and skimming can also prevent the interpreters from using word-for-word or literal translation techniques. As evidenced in this study, the use of these techniques, especially when dealing with two languages with different grammatical rules such as English and Indonesian, often leads to misinterpretation. Even so, it is important to note that reading speed does not necessarily determine students' reading quality since it will also be affected by other factors, such as unfamiliar words or context, but at least they will be able to notice the occurrence of any linguistic errors in the ST being concerned.

Second, as for the whilst-interpreting practice, implementing PBL approach is recommended to help improve students' problem solving and critical thinking skills, which are beneficial for their future of work. In other words, interpreting lecturers need to occasionally challenge their students to perform sight interpreting to a lower-quality ST. Indeed, it has to be noted that this approach would be much more appropriate to conduct after the students have been familiar with the standard practice. For instance, my students have practiced sight interpreting to well-written STs for 2 meetings, then they were brought to the next level by performing it to the imperfect ones in the next meetings. In relation to that, (Mossop, 2001) found that 'translator-editors' are preferable by many employers nowadays. This fact appears to give more points to the idea offered, which leads the students to get closer to the real-world opportunities.

Third, asking them to regularly carry out self-evaluation as their post-interpreting practice could be a considerable idea. By doing so, the students could have to reread the ST as well as reinterpret it and assess their own performance, such as its accuracy, fluency, and clarity. Since they can do it in a much slower pace, it is expected that it will be easier for them to detect the occurrence of the

ill-formed sentences in the STs. As asserted by Lee (2013), it will eventually help lecturers to reveal whether the students are aware of their own sight interpreting quality. Once they notice, it is hoped that they will remember it longer and be more triggered to perform better later, or else it is lecturers' turn to give the students some constructive feedback regarding their performances.

Last but not least, this study suggests providers to be more careful with their writing, so that they can accommodate a high-quality ST to prevent unfavorable misinterpretation. Otherwise, to stay around the interpreter when the ST is undergoing sight interpreting could become a mandatory. In a medical setting, the presence of provider has actually been one of crucial points emphasized by the National Council on Interpreting in Health Care (2009), so that every question coming from the patient can be responded by the provider himself (doctor, receptionist, or pharmacist). In a more general context, therefore, it is expected that when something is going unclear, the clarification will come from the person concerned, not the interpreter.

CONCLUSIONS

This study has investigated Indonesian EFL students' ability as well as strategies in sight interpreting English STs containing several linguistic errors supported by the implementation of PBL approach. The presented findings lead to a conclusion that dealing with the ill-formed source-language sentences does not appear to be an easy task for most of the students. Simply put, it seems that the students still require much effort to recognize the presence of the errors themselves, let alone to revise them simultaneously and translate them accurately. As has been elaborated, this may be related to the students' inability to fully understand what the STs are about. Besides, they were likely to put their focus only on the translation process, not on its results. This way often gives rise to a high tendency of using word-for-word and literal translation techniques, which are not suggested especially when involving two languages with different grammatical rules, such as English and Indonesian. Hence, aside from improving their translation quality, this study suggests the need to enhance their reading comprehension skills. After all, it can be stated that the implementation of this PBL approach in teaching Sight Interpreting course is worth a consideration to help students face the real-world problems as sounded by the current curriculum in

Indonesia, *Merdeka Belajar-Kampus Merdeka* 'Freedom to Learn-Independent Campus' (Norawati & Puspitasari, 2022).

This preliminary research is hoped to be able to give a significant insight for other researchers who have a common interest to conduct any similar studies since the study on this field, especially with English and Indonesian language pair, is still in under-researched area. Further research is suggested to occupy more authentic STs and to support the research by conducting interviews with some of the participants, which have been the limitations of this present study, so that it will give more elaborative findings. Further studies can also be done by comparing students' performance qualities before and after equipping them with sufficient reading comprehension skills.

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