

Implementation Interpreter Role in Investigations Process at the Ditpolairud Polda Kepri

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Abstract. The Riau Islands Province, as an international border region, experiences a high intensity of maritime activities, making it vulnerable to various forms of transnational crimes. The Directorate of Water and Air Police (Ditpolairud) of the Riau Islands Regional Police frequently handles cases involving foreign nationals. One of the main obstacles in the investigation process is language barriers. Therefore, the assistance of English interpreters plays a crucial role in accelerating and facilitating the investigation process. This community service activity aims to enhance the capacity of interpreters and Gakkum Ditpolairud personnel in supporting effective case investigations. The methods applied include training, direct assistance, case simulations, and evaluations. The results indicate that interpreter assistance improves investigation time efficiency, enhances the quality of official investigation reports, and strengthens the juridical aspects of cases. This activity makes a tangible contribution to improving professionalism and accountability in maritime law enforcement at Ditpolairud of the Riau Islands Regional Police.

Keywords: Ditpolairud; Interpreter; Investigation; Law Enforcement; Maritime Case

Abstrak. Provinsi Kepulauan Riau, sebagai wilayah perbatasan internasional, mengalami intensitas aktivitas maritim yang tinggi, sehingga rentan terhadap berbagai bentuk kejahatan transnasional. Direktorat Kepolisian Air dan Udara (Ditpolairud) Polda Kepri kerap menangani kasus-kasus yang melibatkan warga negara asing. Salah satu kendala utama dalam proses investigasi adalah kendala bahasa. Oleh karena itu, bantuan penerjemah bahasa Inggris berperan penting dalam mempercepat dan mempermudah proses investigasi. Kegiatan pengabdian masyarakat ini bertujuan untuk meningkatkan kapasitas penerjemah dan personel Gakkum Ditpolairud dalam mendukung investigasi kasus yang efektif. Metode yang diterapkan meliputi pelatihan, pendampingan langsung, simulasi kasus, dan evaluasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa bantuan penerjemah meningkatkan efisiensi waktu investigasi, meningkatkan kualitas laporan investigasi resmi, dan memperkuat aspek yuridis kasus. Kegiatan ini memberikan kontribusi nyata dalam meningkatkan profesionalisme dan akuntabilitas penegakan hukum maritim di Ditpolairud Polda Kepulauan Riau.

Kata kunci: Ditpolairud; Penegakan Hukum; Penerjemah; Penyidikan; Perkara Maritim

INTRODUCTION

The Riau Islands are part of the Free Trade Zone (FTZ) which has a special economic zone (KEK) which geographically has direct borders with countries such as Singapore, Malaysia, Vietnam, and Thailand, so that this region is the main route of trade, international shipping, and fishing activities (Fatimah & Silitonga, 2022). The existence of this status set by the government is expected to have a direct or indirect impact on the welfare of the people of the Riau Islands (Silitonga et al., 2024). On the other hand, this situation also increases the risk of transnational criminal acts, such as illegal fishing, smuggling of goods, human trafficking, and immigration violations (Windiyari, 2020). In the law enforcement process, the Marine Police (Ditpolairud Polda Riau Islands) would face witnesses and suspects of foreign nationals whose communication skills in Indonesian are limited (Penerjemah, 2016).

The use of interpreters is needed in a number of cases, including theft on foreign ships in the waters of the Philip Strait, *red notice* cases, and environmental crimes against foreign vessels (Globibo, 2023). The majority of foreign ships rely on English-language communication so that language barriers can lead to misinterpretation, slow down the examination process, and potentially weaken the strength of evidence (Keputusan Menteri Ketenagakerjaan Nomor 205 Tahun 2021 Tentang Penetapan Standar Kompetensi Kerja Nasional Indonesia Kategori Aktivitas Profesional, Ilmiah Dan Teknis Golongan Pokok Aktivitas Profesional, Ilmiah Dan Teknis Lainnya Pada Jabatan Kerja Juru, 2021). Therefore, professional and competent English interpreter assistance is needed to support the acceleration and accuracy of the examination process (Undang-Undang Republik Indonesia Nomor 2 Tahun 2002 Tentang Kepolisian Negara Republik Indonesia, 2002). This service activity was carried out as a form of academics' contribution in helping to increase the capacity of existing resources at the Riau Islands Regional Marine Police Directorate, especially in the field of cross-lingual legal communication (Mandarin, 2018).

Competence of Interpreters in Examination

The competence of the interpreter is a determining factor for the success of the translation process in the examination (Peraturan Kepala Kepolisian Negara Republik Indonesia Nomor 12 Tahun 2009 Tentang Pengawasan Dan Pengendalian Penanganan Perkara Pidana Di Lingkungan Kepolisian Negara Republik Indonesia, 2009): a) Language Competence. Interpreters must be actively proficient in the source language and the target language, including legal and technical vocabulary; b) Basic Legal Competencies. An understanding of criminal procedure law, suspect rights, and investigation procedures is very necessary to avoid misinterpretation; c) Communication Competence. The ability to convey messages clearly, systematically, and easily understood is an important aspect of the examination; d) Psychological Competence. Interpreters must be able to work under pressure, maintain emotional stability, and be calm in conflict situations.

Adequate competence will improve the quality of Audit Minutes and reduce the risk of legal disputes (Undang-Undang Republik Indonesia Nomor 8 Tahun 1981 Tentang Hukum Acara Pidana, 1981). The Riau Islands Province is strategically located as one of Indonesia's international border regions and serves as part of the Free Trade Zone (FTZ) and Special Economic Zone (SEZ). Its geographical proximity to Singapore, Malaysia, Vietnam, and Thailand makes the region a major hub for international maritime transportation, fisheries, and cross-border trade. While these strategic advantages contribute significantly to regional economic development, they also increase the risk of transnational crimes, including illegal fishing, smuggling, human trafficking, and immigration violations. Consequently, the Directorate of Water and Air Police (Ditpolairud) of the Riau Islands Regional Police frequently handles criminal investigations involving foreign nationals whose limited proficiency in the Indonesian language creates significant communication challenges during legal proceedings.

Gap Analysis in Community Service

Although Indonesian criminal procedure recognizes the importance of interpreters in ensuring fair legal processes, there remains a substantial gap between regulatory provisions

and practical implementation. Most interpreters involved in police investigations possess general language proficiency but have limited understanding of legal terminology, investigative procedures, and ethical standards required in criminal examinations. Similarly, investigators often lack structured guidelines for effectively collaborating with interpreters during interviews and evidence collection. This gap reduces communication accuracy, prolongs investigation time, and potentially weakens the legal validity of investigation reports, particularly in cases involving foreign suspects or witnesses.

State of the Art Community Service

Previous studies have emphasized that interpreter competence is essential in legal settings because it directly affects communication accuracy, procedural fairness, and the protection of suspects' rights. Existing literature mainly discusses interpreter qualifications, legal communication, and courtroom interpreting, while professional standards also highlight competencies in language, legal knowledge, communication skills, and psychological readiness. However, limited studies have translated these concepts into practical community service programs that simultaneously strengthen interpreter competence and improve investigators' capacity to work effectively with interpreters in maritime law enforcement institutions. Therefore, this community service introduces an integrated capacity-building approach through training, mentoring, case simulations, and evaluation specifically designed for the operational context of Ditpolairud Polda Kepulauan Riau.

Community Service Objectives

Based on these conditions, this community service aims to enhance the competence of English interpreters and investigators of Ditpolairud Polda Kepulauan Riau in conducting investigations involving foreign nationals. Specifically, the program seeks to (1) improve interpreters' understanding of legal terminology and investigation procedures, (2) strengthen investigators' capacity to collaborate effectively with interpreters during criminal investigations, (3) improve the accuracy and efficiency of bilingual communication in the investigation process, and (4) contribute to strengthening professionalism, accountability, and the quality of maritime law enforcement in the Riau Islands Province.

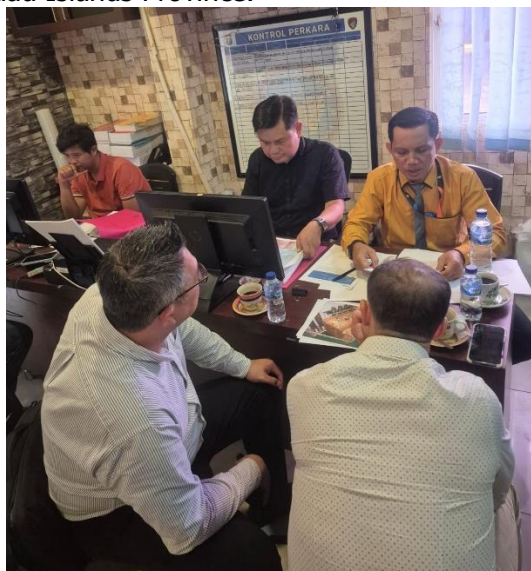


Figure 1. Aipda Haerul Umami, S.H as Investigator Subditgakkum Ditpolairud Polda Kepri and Frangky Silitoga, S.Pd.M.S.I as Interpreter were conducting a Case Examination

The Role of Interpreters at the Riau Islands Regional Police Directorate

Interpreters are parties who assist in communication between investigators and foreign parties in the legal examination process, especially in the waters under the authority of the Riau Islands Police, which is part of the Riau Islands Police under the auspices of the National Police of the Republic of Indonesia (Undang-Undang Republik Indonesia Nomor 39 Tahun 1999

Tentang Hak Asasi Manusia, 1999). This role is very important because the Riau Islands area is directly adjacent to other countries and often interacts with foreign nationals (Undang-Undang (UU) Nomor 27 Tahun 2022 Tentang Pelindungan Data Pribadi, 2022).

Main Duties of an Interpreter

A. Translating Spoken Language

Interpreters are in charge of translating directly (oral) between: 1) Investigator; 2) Suspect; 3) Witnesses; 4) Victims; 5) Foreign ship crew. Both from foreign languages to Indonesian and vice versa (Undang-Undang (UU) Nomor 27 Tahun 2022 Tentang Pelindungan Data Pribadi, 2022). For example when foreign fishermen are examined, interpreters translate the investigator's questions and the answers given.



Figure 2. Aipda Marthin Edi Chandra S, S.H. as Investigator Subditgakkum Ditpolairud Riau Islands shows shipping documents for inspection

B. Assisting the Research and Investigation Process

In each stage of the examination, an interpreter accompanies the investigator, starting from: 1) Initial inspection; 2) Interrogation; 3) Reconstruction of the incident; 4) Title of case; 5) Conference (if needed). This assistance ensures that the legal rights of foreign parties are still fulfilled.



Figure 3. Frangky Silitonga, S.Pd., M.S.I as Interpreters' Leader Team gave some instruction before the inspection is carried out

C. Translating Inspection Documents

Interpreters also help translate documents, such as: 1) Examination Minutes (BAP); 2) Statement letter; 3) Ship documents; 4) Passport and cruise permit; 5) Crew work contract. The goal is for all parties to understand the content of the document legally.



Figure 4. Ditpolairud Polda The Riau Islands team together with the Interpreter explored information to support the evidence of the case being examined

D. Maintaining the Accuracy of Information

Interpreter is mandatory: 1) Translate neutrally; 2) Not adding or subtracting information; 3) Impartiality; 4) Conveying meaning in its entirety. This is important so that the results of the examination are legally valid (Irwandika et al., 2023).

Ethics and Competence of Interpreters

Interpreter ethics is a set of values, norms, and moral rules that govern the attitude and behavior of interpreters when accompanying the examination process carried out by the National Police (Sutarma et al., 2023). Ethics aims to ensure that the examination process runs fairly, honestly, and professionally (Undang-Undang Republik Indonesia Nomor 2 Tahun 2002 Tentang Kepolisian Negara Republik Indonesia, 2002). With good ethics, interpreters do not abuse their role in legal proceedings. Interpreter competence is the ability, skills, and knowledge that interpreters have to carry out their duties effectively in examinations conducted by the National Police (Mahsun, 2023). Competence indicates the level of professionalism and quality of work of the interpreter (AIIC, 2026). With good competence, an interpreter can help the examination run smoothly and accurately. Ethics and competencies complement each other; ethics govern how interpreters behave and competence governs how interpreters work (Suryawinata & Hariyanto, 2016). The ideal interpreter is one who has good morals and high ability.

An interpreter for the Riau Islands Regional Police Ditpolairud must have: 1) Active foreign language skills; 2) Understanding of basic laws; 3) Professional ethics; 4) High confidentiality; 5) Integrity and neutrality; 6) Mental endurance. Because it often handles sensitive and high-risk cases. Interpreters at the Riau Islands Regional Police Directorate have a vital role in: 1) Bridging cross-language communication; 2) Ensuring legal justice; 3) Streamline investigations; 4) Improving the professionalism of the apparatus; 5) Supporting the enforcement of the law of the sea. Without interpreters, many international cases in Riau Islands waters will be difficult to handle optimally (Irwandika et al., 2023).

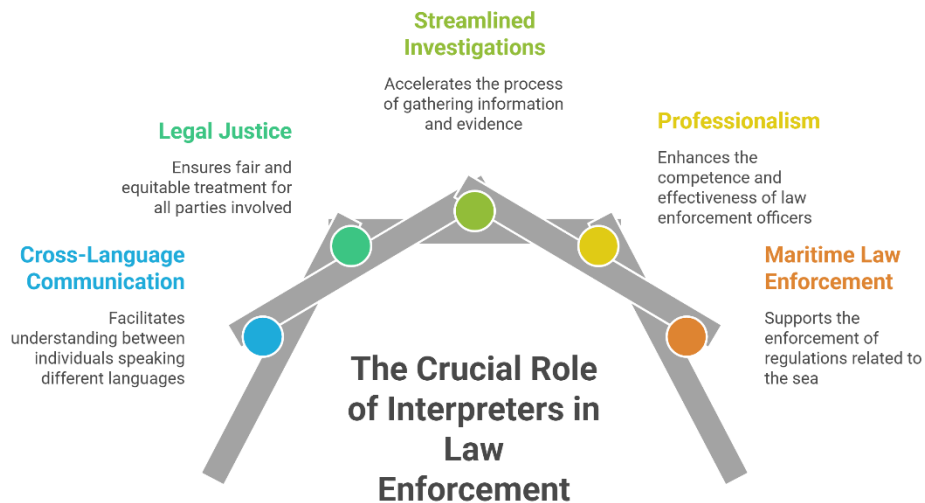


Figure 5. Interpreter Handles sensitive and high-risk cases

Overview of the Riau Islands Regional Police Directorate

The Riau Islands Regional Police Directorate is a work unit of the Indonesian National Police (Polri) which has the main task of carrying out patrols, security, investigations, and investigations of criminal acts in the waters. The work area of the Riau Islands Regional Police Directorate covers the waters of the Malacca Strait, the North Natuna Sea, and international border waters. In carrying out its duties, the Riau Islands Regional Police Directorate plays a leading role in maintaining state sovereignty, maritime security, and order maritime activities (Undang-Undang Republik Indonesia Nomor 2 Tahun 2002 Tentang Kepolisian Negara Republik Indonesia, 2002). The main functions carried out include routine patrols, law enforcement operations, shipping supervision, and handling special crimes at sea. The organizational structure of the Riau Islands Regional Police Directorate consists of leadership elements, coaching elements, and operational elements, including the Gakkum unit which is responsible for the investigation and investigation process (Ward & Wilkinson, 2012). In the context of handling international cases, the Riau Islands Regional Police Directorate also collaborates with related agencies, such as the Indonesian Navy, Bakamla, Customs, Immigration, and the Ministry of Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (Suryawinata & Hariyanto, 2016).



Figure 6. Patrol Boats Penguin belonging to Ditpolair Baharkam Polri is leaning di Pelabuhan Macgobar, Batu Ampar-Batam

METHOD

The method of implementing this activity supports the training pattern and continues with mentoring because in this activity all activities must be measurable and accountable therefore this activity is made a training mechanism at the beginning of the activity then continued with guidance (Muthma et al., 2026). This service activity uses a participatory and collaborative approach, which is to actively involve a service team, interpreters, and law enforcement officials under the auspices of the Indonesian National Police, in this activity is Gakkum Polairud Polda Kepri. The approach used includes: 1) Educational Approach. Provide an understanding of the ethics and competence of interpreters; 2) Practical approach. Through direct assistance in the examination process; 3) Continuous Mentoring Approach. Provide guidance gradually and systematically.

The targets of this service activity include: 1) Interpreter who accompanied the examination at the Riau Islands Regional Police Polairud; 2) Investigators and assistant investigators; 3) Examination administrative officer; 4) Related parties in the process of enforcing water laws. The main goal is to improve the quality of legal communication between investigators and suspects/ witnesses of foreign nationality.

Location and Time of Implementation:

1. Location: Office and work area of the Riau Islands Regional Police Polairud
2. Time: Adjusted to the schedule of service activities and the needs of partner agencies
3. Duration: ± 3–6 months of phased mentoring

This community service employed a Participatory Action Learning (PAL) approach, which actively involved both English interpreters and investigators from the Directorate of Water and Air Police (Ditpolairud) of the Riau Islands Regional Police throughout the implementation process. The approach was selected because it emphasizes collaborative problem-solving, experiential learning, and continuous improvement of participants' competencies. The service activities combined educational, practical, and mentoring components to address communication barriers encountered during criminal investigations involving foreign nationals. The program adopted a capacity-building model, aiming to strengthen both the technical competence of interpreters and the collaborative skills of investigators. Capacity building was implemented through interactive learning methods that enabled participants to apply theoretical knowledge directly to simulated and real investigation contexts. The overall method was designed not only to transfer knowledge but also to improve professional practices and institutional performance.

Implementation Method

The implementation of the community service was conducted in four sequential stages:

Needs Assessment

The initial stage involved identifying existing challenges related to interpreter utilization during criminal investigations. Data were collected through discussions, interviews, and observations involving investigators and interpreters at Ditpolairud Polda Kepulauan Riau. The assessment focused on identifying communication barriers, interpreter competency needs, and operational constraints encountered during investigations involving foreign nationals.

Training and Knowledge Enhancement

Based on the results of the needs assessment, structured training sessions were conducted to improve participants' competencies. The training materials covered: 1) legal terminology in criminal investigations; 2) interpreter ethics and professional standards; 3) investigation procedures involving foreign suspects and witnesses; 4) effective bilingual communication techniques; 5) documentation and accuracy in translating official investigation reports.

Interactive lectures, group discussions, and case-based learning were used to encourage active participation and improve conceptual understanding.

Practical Mentoring and Case Simulation

Following the training sessions, participants engaged in practical mentoring through simulated investigation scenarios. The simulations replicated actual criminal investigation processes involving foreign nationals, allowing interpreters and investigators to practice communication, questioning techniques, evidence documentation, and interpreter-investigator coordination. Facilitators provided direct feedback to improve participants' performance and ensure that legal communication standards were consistently applied.

Evaluation and Reflection

The final stage evaluated the effectiveness of the community service activities using observation, participant feedback, and facilitator assessments. Evaluation indicators included participants' understanding of legal terminology, communication accuracy, interpreter confidence, investigation efficiency, and collaboration between interpreters and investigators. Reflection sessions were conducted to identify strengths, remaining challenges, and recommendations for sustaining interpreter capacity development within Ditpolairud Polda Kepulauan Riau.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Implementation of Activities

The service activity will be carried out in September 2025 through several stages, namely preparation, implementation, mentoring, and evaluation. In the preparation stage, coordination was carried out with the Riau Islands Regional Police and the preparation of training materials. The implementation stage includes providing material on legal translation, professional ethics of interpreters, and communication techniques in examinations. Assistance is carried out directly in the simulation process and the practice of examining cases involving foreign nationals. Participants are trained to apply consecutive interpreting translation techniques, use appropriate legal and maritime terms, and maintain neutrality in the examination process. Ethics and competence have a complementary relationship. Ethics govern attitudes, while competence regulates technical abilities (Russell, 1976). The application of both consistently has a positive impact, including: 1) Guaranteed legal rights of suspects and witnesses; 2) Increased accuracy of examination documents; 3) Reduced potential for misinterpretation; 4) Increased public trust; 5) Realization of a fair legal process. Thus, interpreters not only play the role of translators, but also as guardians of the quality of legal communication.

Activity Achievements

The results obtained from this service activity include: 1) Increasing participants' ability to translate legal and maritime terms; 2) Reduced time for examining cases involving foreigners; 3) Improving the quality and completeness of the inspection minutes; 4) Increasing participants' understanding of the ethics and responsibilities of the interpreter profession; 5) Build synergy between academics and law enforcement officials (Undang-Undang Republik Indonesia Nomor 8 Tahun 1981 Tentang Hukum Acara Pidana, 1981).

1. Increased Accuracy of Legal Communication

The results of the service activities showed that the direct involvement of interpreters in the examination process contributed significantly to improving the accuracy of communication between investigators and foreign parties. In the legal context, every statement given by a witness or suspect has important juridical implications. Mistranslations can potentially lead to distortions of meaning, ultimately affecting the validity of the evidence. Interpreter assistance allows the language translation process to be carried out appropriately, both semantically and contextually. This ensures that the intention of the investigator's questions and the respondents'

answers can be understood in their entirety. Thus, the quality of the information data obtained becomes more reliable and can be legally accounted for.

2. Time Efficiency and Investigation Process

From the results of field observations, the cooperation between Polairud and interpreters has been proven to be able to increase the efficiency of examination time. Before the assistance, the clarification process was often repeated due to miscommunication. This caused delays in the preparation of the Examination Report (BAP) and extended the case handling period. With the presence of an interpreter, the question and answer process takes place more systematically and directionally. Investigators can immediately obtain relevant information without having to make repeated clarifications. Academically, this condition reflects an increase in organizational efficiency in managing time and energy resources.

3. Strengthening the Validity of Evidence

In the criminal justice system, the testimony of witnesses and suspects is one of the main evidence. The validity of such evidence is highly dependent on the process of obtaining information that is free from pressure and misinterpretation. Interpreter assistance plays a role in ensuring that information is provided consciously, voluntarily, and based on a correct understanding of the investigator's questions. This strengthens the legitimacy of the audit results and reduces the potential for lawsuits related to procedural violations. Thus, this cooperation contributes to improving the quality of evidence in the maritime law enforcement process.

4. Protection of Human Rights and the Principle of Procedural Justice

The results of the activity also show that the assistance of interpreters strengthens the protection of the legal rights of foreigners. Suspects and witnesses can understand their rights, including the right to provide information freely, the right to legal assistance, and the right to refuse to provide incriminating information. From an academic perspective, this condition reflects the application of the principles of due process of law and procedural justice. The inspection process is not only oriented towards law enforcement, but also on respect for human rights. This is in line with the values of professionalism developed by the Indonesian National Police in the modern justice system.

5. Increasing Professionalism and Capacity of Investigators

Cooperation with interpreters not only has an impact on the quality of examinations, but also on increasing the capacity of investigators. Through intensive interaction, investigators gain a better understanding of: a) Cross-cultural communication techniques; b) International legal terms; c) Psychological characteristics of foreign examination subjects; d) Ethics of multinational inspections.

This process forms continuous *institutional learning*. Investigators have become more adaptive in handling cross-border cases, so that the quality of legal services has been systematically improved. The results of the service also show that transparent and communicative inspections increase the trust of foreigners in law enforcement officials. A well-understood process reduces perceptions of bullying and injustice. In the study of public administration, public trust is an important indicator of institutional legitimacy. With the support of interpreters, Polairud is able to present its image as a professional, humanist, and international standard institution. This has a positive impact on the institution's reputation, both at the national and international levels.

6. Implications for the Maritime Law Enforcement System

Overall, improving the effectiveness of checks through cooperation with interpreters has strategic implications for maritime law enforcement systems, including: a) Improving the quality of cross-border case investigations; b) Reduce the risk of international legal disputes; b) Strengthening Indonesia's legal position in maritime conflicts; c) Supports water safety stability; d) Encouraging standardization of international legal services.

Thus, interpreter assistance is not only technical, but also plays a role in strengthening the national maritime legal system. Interpreter assistance has a positive impact on the effectiveness of Gakkum Polairud's work. The examination process becomes more systematic,

communicative, and transparent. In addition, this activity also increases the confidence of personnel in handling cross-border cases and strengthens the professional image of the National Police institution.

CONCLUSION

The assistance of English interpreters in accelerating the examination process at the Gakkum Polairud of the Riau Islands Police has proven to make a significant contribution to increasing the effectiveness of law enforcement. The existence of a competent interpreter is able to minimize communication barriers, speed up the examination process, and strengthen the juridical aspect of the case. This service activity also shows that the synergy between universities and the National Police institution can result in a sustainable increase in the capacity of human resources. With the support of systematic assistance, the Riau Islands Regional Police Polairud is increasingly ready to face the challenges of law enforcement in international waters. Ethics and competence of interpreters are two fundamental aspects in supporting the examination process carried out by the National Police. Ethics ensure that interpreters work honestly, neutrally, and responsibly, while competence ensures that translations are carried out accurately and professionally. Interpreters who have high ethics and adequate competence are able to contribute significantly to fair, transparent, and reliable law enforcement. Therefore, it is necessary to continue to coach, train, and standardize the interpreter profession within the Indonesian National Police (Polri).

Based on the results of this community service, several recommendations are proposed. First, Ditpolairud Polda Kepulauan Riau should conduct regular training to improve the competence of English interpreters and investigators in handling cases involving foreign nationals. Second, standard operating procedures (SOPs) for the use of interpreters during investigations should be developed to ensure effective and accurate communication. Third, collaboration between Ditpolairud and higher education institutions should be strengthened to support continuous training and professional development. Finally, future community service programs should involve more participants and include other law enforcement agencies to expand the impact of the program and improve the quality of maritime law enforcement.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The implementation team of community service activities expressed their deepest gratitude to the entire academic community of the **Institut Agama Islam Hidayatullah Batam** for providing us with the opportunity for support, as well as good cooperation so that the output of this service activity can be published in this Sigma Journal. To the Rector, Dr. Muhammad Siddik, M.Pd.I, Mrs. Muthma'innah, M.Pd. as the Head of LPPM, as well as Structural Ladies and Gentlemen and Lecturers, as well as the entire Academic Community of the Institut Agama Islam Hidayatullah Batam that we respect, we pray that the Institut Agama Islam Hidayatullah Batam campus will be more at the forefront and superior in the quality of education in Indonesia, especially in Batam.

With full gratitude and respect, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to the **Ditpolairud Polda Kepri** for the trust, and the entire ranks of the Polairud, we also extend our respectful greetings to Mr. Ipda Marthin Edi Candra Simarmata and Mr. Ipda Haerul Umami for the opportunity and support that has been given to us to be part of the Interpreter in the Riau Islands Regional Police Department. This opportunity is an honor as well as a very valuable experience in supporting the smooth examination and law enforcement process. Through this mentoring, I learned a lot, both in terms of professionalism, discipline, and responsibility in carrying out my duties. I hope that the trust that has been given can be carried out as well as possible, full of integrity, and uphold ethics and professionalism. Hopefully this cooperation can continue to be well established and make a positive contribution to institutions and society. Precision Police, Police for the Community

We would like to express our deepest gratitude and appreciation to the **Batam Tourism**

Polytechnic, especially to the Director of the Batam Tourism Polytechnic, the Center for Research and Community Service of the Batam Tourism Polytechnic (Puslitabmas), and the Culinary Management Study Program, who have provided full support so that Community Service activities can be carried out properly and successfully according to the specified time target. Hopefully this good cooperation can continue to be established and develop in various academic and service activities in the future.

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