Omission in the Translation of Indonesian Novels into English

Erlina Z. Mahmud, Bima Bayusena, and Taufik Ampera

ABSTRACT

This research article discusses one of the translation strategies called omission as identified in the translation of Indonesian novels into English. Novels in any language are the reflection of the daily life of a certain culture so the use of cultural words or terms in cultural activities cannot be avoided, and it may reach a certain extent that needs to be fully taken care of. To get the appropriate equivalents for the cultural words/terms, the translation mainly requires more detailed information through addition, expansion, or amplification in the target text and certainly not by omitting information. When it is allowed to omit a piece of information from the source text, it needs some requirements to be fulfilled. It is challenging and needs the skill to delete information of the source text without losing the unity of the message. Scholars give some classifications regarding the act of omitting, deleting, subtracting, and reducing information as guidance to start with. This research uses descriptive qualitative method to identify what information is omitted and what function of the omission performed in the English target text. The results show that the information omitted is more than what has been categorized in theory. They are not only repetition, specification of reference, adverbs and conjunction, vocatives, but also others such as elaborate information, whereas the functions of the omission, among others are to present only essential information by simplifying elaborate information, to shift from explicit information into implicit information, to shift from specific information into more general information, to avoid redundancy and to make the information concise.

Keywords: deletion, Indonesian novels, omission, specification reference.

E. Z. Mahmud*
Universitas Padjadjaran, Bandung, West Java, Indonesia
(e-mail: erlina@unpad.ac.id)
B. Bayusena
Universitas Padjadjaran, Bandung, West Java, Indonesia
(e-mail: bima.bayusena@unpad.ac.id)
Taufik Ampera
Universitas Padjadjaran, Bandung, West Java, Indonesia
(e-mail: taufik.ampera@unpad.ac.id)

*Corresponding Author

I. INTRODUCTION

Naturally, a translator carries out his/her own style when doing his/her work, and it is therefore, it may not depend on a certain condition of a source text why the translator decides to do this instead of that. Take an example, when a target text needs more explanation or information for its equivalent due to the uniqueness of a term in the source text categorized as a non-equivalent word, the translator needs to make use of either addition, description, expansion, or amplification, or even a borrowing plus explanation, and the use of one of the strategies or techniques is not optional. The translator has to do that if the target text needs to be comprehended equally by the target readers. Whereas in the case of omitting information for any reason, it may be considered optional. There is no harm in translating the whole text without omitting a piece of information from the source text whether it involves redundancy or too lengthy an explanation or description following certain information. The translator just needs to facilitate an author's by translating all parts of the text, especially when it deals with a literary work.

An author has their own style of writing that may be wordy, yet it is not to be the concern of a translator. One of the main functions of a translator is to transfer all information given in the source text to the target text the way it is. One piece of information left untranslated or simply omitted may corrupt the unity of the message of the source text. It is therefore, omission is challenging, specifically in literary translation, as a translator has to render both the content and the form (Abdullatief, 2020).

Dealing with the act of omitting information of the source text in any terms, omission, deletion, reduction, this research article refers to some previous research. In the translation of an English novel entitled *Hills Like White Elephants and Joyce's The Sisters* by Hemingway into Arabic language, omission is studied as a problem and a solution and its function is to avoid redundancy and to make the information clear and concise (Abdullatief, 2020). The following previous research about omission is when omission is taken as a method of translation from the English translation of the Russian novel "*Heart of A Dog*" by Mikhail Bulgakov into Sinhala; according to this research, the method of omission is a way to solve a problem of non-equivalents (Dulari & Amarasinghe, 2020).

In some other researches, omission is studied together with its opposite strategies like omission and addition as translation procedures in English-Arabic translation dealing with in-flight magazine articles

(Alrumayh, 2021). Then there are addition and deletion procedures in translating the Indonesian novel "*Negeri Lima Menara*" into English (Djohan & Diah Lestari, 2021). The last previous research referred by this article is when deletion is used together with implicitation in translating subtitles and it also discusses the translation quality (Fajar Aryana & Nababan, 2018).

Based on the background mentioned, this current research has two research questions: (I) What information of the source text is omitted and (II) What function does the omission perform? Looking at the questions then, the objectives of this research are (a) To locate the kind of information being omitted and (b) To identify the function of the omission in the text.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

In Translation Studies, the act of omitting information from the source text is variously named. Nida categorizes it as an adjustment and calls it subtraction (Nida, 1969). Interestingly, the next work together with Taber is called reduction, not subtraction (Nida *et al*., 1982). Molina and Albir categorize it as a technique of translation called reduction (Molina & Hurtado Albir, 2002) as well as Punga (Pungă, 2016). At the same time Newmark categorizes it as a translation procedure under the name of deletion/omission (Newmark, 1988). Other scholars categorize it as a semantic adjustment strategy, and it is called reduction (Abbasi & Koosha, 2016). In this research article, the term used is omission to cover all other terms.

The kind of omission is taken from the four kinds of subtraction by Nida consisting of (a) repetition, (b) specification of reference, (c) conjunction and adverb, and (d) vocatives. The four kinds of omission are then added with one kind of omission, which is not included in the four kinds of omission, namely detail information. Unlike Nida, Baker categorized omission into three forms: (a) the omission of a word or an expression, (b) omission of idioms, and (c) omission of information in the content (Baker, 2011).

The functions of omission are taken from several scholars: (a) to generalize the meaning as well as to make the meaning implicit (Dickins in Alrumayh, 2021), (b) to omit redundancy and repetition (Molina & Hurtado Albir, 2002); (c) to avoid unnecessary clarification as the specific elements omitted have already been adequately concluded in other words (Baker, 2011), (d) to avoid redundancy; to present the information concisely; to present only essential information; this is in line with Abdullaief's (Abdullatief, 2020); to avoid unnecessary culture bumps (Dimitriu, 2004); to omit content which is considered offensive or even mildly irritating (Davies in Havumetsä, 2021)

III. METHODOLOGY

This research article uses descriptive qualitative method. It is qualitative as it deals with words not numbers and it is descriptive as the result is given in a description just the way it is in natural manner without any modification. It is in line with Kothari's definition (Kothari, 2004) and Creswell's (Creswell, 2014). This research is not field research so there was no interview in the process of collecting data. It is library research that all data studied were taken from literature materials like books and novels. Data were taken from some Indonesian novels having translated into English*: Student Hidjo* 'Student Hijo', *Maryam* 'The Outcast', *Pulang* 'Home', and *Bekisar Merah* 'The Red Bekisar', The quantity of novels is based on the needs for this research but not all omissions identified were used as data.

The steps of collecting data are as follows: (a) observing both source texts and its target texts of each novel to locate omissions; (b) collecting the data that experienced omission. The next steps were the steps of analyzing the data: the first is classifying the data based on the characteristics of the four kinds of subtraction by Nida and Taber; the second is putting each classification into a table; the third is adding one more table for the data that do not belong to the four classifications. After all data was collected and put in a table then the data was selected to a certain quantity to be used as a representation of each kind of subtraction for this article. The analysis is then continued to identify functions of the omission based on Dickin's (2004), Dimitriu's (2017), Baker's (2011) and Leppihalme's (2001) in Havumetsa (2021). Finally, all the analysis was concluded to be described in the conclusion section in the article.

IV. DISCUSSION AND RESULT

Based on the data collected, it could be identified that the omission in the translation of Indonesian novels into English is different from one novel to others. One prefers to translate all elements of the source text, including the repetition, specification of reference, conjunction, and adverb, as well as vocative. One other chooses to paraphrase so certain words are conveyed in different words. One has his own style that he omits detailed information just to present essential information in the target text although what is omitted could be a paragraph long. The discussion is divided into Nida's four kinds of reduction or omission plus one section which is not included into the four kinds of omission: omission of detail information. There some

data undergo more than one kind of omission.

TABLE I: OMISSION OF REPETITION

No.	The Indonesian Source Text	The English Target Text
1	Begitu juga teman-temanku yang lain, diluar dugaan, kami semua mendapatkan nilai cukup baik.	It was like that for my others friends too, unexpectedly.
2	Padahal dia sangat baik padaku. Perempuan itu selalu penuh hormat pada keluargaku.	Telaga has been so kind and respectful to my family.
3	Kemudian Lasi pun menyusul ke sumur, juga untuk mengguyur seluruh tubuhnya. Lasi mandi besar lagi meski rambutnya belum sempat kering.	She joined him at the well and bathed again, even though her hair was still wet from earlier.

In Table I, the omitted information is *kami semua mendapatkan nilai cukup baik* 'we all got pretty good scores' which is beyond their expectation. This information has been mentioned before so the translator just omits this piece of information as it is a repetition. The function of this omission is to avoid redundancy and to give the information in the target text in a concise manner. Unlike data no 1, data no.2 and no.3 have different characteristics as they involve more than one form of omission. In data no. 2, the information which is omitted consists of conjunction *padahal* 'even though', specific information *padaku* 'to me', and repeated information *perempuan itu* 'that woman' that refers to a woman by the name of Telaga. With the three forms of omission, the translator shifts the specific information in the source text into general information in the target text and loses the detailed information in conjunction *padahal* referring to opposite situation. Whereas in data no.3, the information which is omitted covers conjunction *kemudian* 'then' showing the order of an activity, adverb *pun* 'too', *juga* 'also', detail information *untuk mengguyur seluruh tubuhnya* 'to flush all parts of her body', and repetition *mandi besar lagi* 'take a big bath again' referring to flush your body from head to toe after having sexual intercourse as a rule to be obeyed in Islam'. The words *mengguyur seluruh tubuh* refer to the same meaning as the words *mandi besar*. It is generalized by the verb "bathed".

TABLE II: OMISSION BY SPECIFICATION OF REFERENCE

No.	The Indonesian Source Text	The English Target Text
1	Jadi Mas Han benar-benar suka sambal terasi?	You really like sambal trassi?
2	Terserah, Kang. Tetapi kurang pantas, dalam cuaca seperti ini kamu bekerja juga.	That's up to you, but it doesn't feel right for you to work in this kind of weather.
3	"Dan lagi, kamu harus ingat Mbakyumu Biroe!" nasihat Raden Nganten.	"And you won't forget Biru," she said solemnly,
4	Perempuan Bali itu, Luh, perempuan yang tidak terbiasa mengeluarkan keluhan.	"Balinese women are not ones to complain"
5	Raden Hidjo sudah tiga bulan tamat	Hijo had finished high school three months earlier

Data in Table II involve cultural words showing that in Indonesian culture, people do not call each other names especially, to elders like in sibling relationships: an older brother and older sister. Every culture has its own way of calling older brother and older sister. The specification of reference is not only in sibling relationship but also to any older as an expression of respect or intimacy. In data no.1, the specification of reference which is omitted is *Mas* Han. Han is a name of a male person and it is added with *Mas* as an expression of respect to older male people in Javanese culture. In data no.2, the specification of reference is *Kang*. It is also a respect way to call a male older people, but it is in Sundanese culture. In data no.3, the specification of reference, *Mbakyu* is a respectful way to call an older sister in Javanese culture. The suffix {-*mu*} is a possessive equal to "your" in English. Unlike data no 1. 2, and 3, data no.4 *Luh* is not about the specification of reference in sibling relationship. It is how Balinese people call a girl of a particular caste, Sudra, a commoner. The term *Luh* is placed before a name, for example, *Luh* Sadri. Whereas in data no.5, the term *Raden* is given to a person from a noble family, both male and female, to show a person's status as well as to show respect in Javanese culture. In English target text, all the specification of reference is omitted as they are non-equivalent words, and the function of the omission is to avoid unnecessary culture bumps, and to present only essential information. The omission may be avoided by giving the equivalent of the specification of reference in a description in a footnote once and then use it for the rest of the text as a loan word.

Table III deals with omission of conjunction and adverb. The Indonesian conjunction *dan* 'and' as in English is to show addition, a series of events after the first one. Without the conjunction in the target text, the detailed information regarding the series of events cannot be seen or missing as in data no.1 and no.2. In data no 2, what is omitted not only the conjunction *dan* 'and' but also the adverb *dari dalam* 'from inside'. The adverb *dari dalam* is used to give specific information that the activity of locking the door is done from inside the room where Darsa and his wife are located. This is also to emphasize the meaning.

TABLE III: OMISSION BY CONJUNCTION AND ADVERB

No.	The Indonesian Source Text	The English Target Text
1	Dan lebih dari pohon-pohon kelapa yang tak putus meneteskan nira	Even more than in the coconut palms that never stopped giving.
2	Dan Darsa mengikutinya, lalu mengunci pintu dari dalam.	He followed her and closed the door.
3	Lasi dan Darsa sama-sama tersenyum.	Larsi and Darsa smiled
4	Kenapa hanya perempuan bangsawan yang diberi seluruh kecantikan bumi!	Why is it that noblewomen are granted all the beauty of this earth?

The function of omission in data no.1 and no.2 may give essential information concisely yet it causes missing information. In data no.3, the word *sama-sama* 'to each other' and in data no.4, the word *hanya* 'only' are adverbs which are omitted. The function of omission in data no.3 is to avoid unnecessary clarification as the specific elements omitted have already been adequately concluded in other words "Larsi and Darsa smiled" which means there are two persons who do the activity of smiling. In data no.4, the function of the omission strategy is to perform the shift from explicit information that who have been granted all the beauty of this earth is only the noblewomen into implicit information that noblewomen are granted all the beauty of this earth.

TABLE IV: OMISSION BY VOCATIVES

No.	The Indonesian Source Text	The English Target Text
1	"Pagi-pagi mau kemana, Sayang?"	"It's still early. Where are you going?"
2	"KANDA! KANDA! Bagaimana (mungkin) anakmu, kamu kirim ke Negeri Belanda." Begitulah, Raden Nganten Potronojo menangis di depan suaminya	"But what will become of him?!" Madame Potronoyo sobbed at her husband.

In Table IV, the vocatives or the specific expression of love and intimacy in the Indonesian source text are represented by the word *sayang* 'darling'. It has a general meaning that a love couple usually uses to call each other. It could be translated into "darling" or "sweetheart" or other similar terms as it is not a non-equivalent word. However, the translator chooses not to translate it by omitting it from the target text. By doing this, the translator misses the message of intimacy in the context. It does not show a part of conversation done by a love couple; the meaning of the message in the target text becomes general. This also occurs in data no.2 where the expression of love and deep intimacy of marriage couple *kanda* 'dear or darling' to call a husband is omitted. Not only that, the detailed information *Bagaimana (mungkin) anakmu, kamu kirim ke Negeri Belanda* 'How was it possible, you sent your son to Netherlands'. The statement is used to question the husband of his act of sending their son away. This omission is to eliminate specific detailed information and change it into a more general meaning. There is one more omission taken when the specification of reference *Raden Nganten* which is given to the noble family is replaced by the English reference "Madame" showing the highlly respected status of a woman.

TABLE V: OMISSION BY DETAIL INFORMATION

No.	The Indonesian Source Text	The English Target Text
1	Tapi begitu pulang, hari-harinya dipenuhi dengan ibadah, pembicaraan-pembicaraan tentang keyakinan bersama Pak dan Bu Zul, lalu pengajian di rumah salah satu keluarga Ahmadi seminggu sekali.	But when she got home, the rest of her day was dedicated to prayer and discussions on faith with Mr. and Mrs. Zul, as well as the weekly Koran recitals.
2	Rendang Kapau yang sudah kering ke hitam-hitaman	Dried, blackish rendang – spicy meat.
3	Perempuan tua itu seperti diserap embun. Sadri kembali menarik nafas, lalu berkata pada dirinya sendiri, mungkin percakapan itu tidak pernah ada.	It was as if the old woman had been absorbed into the morning mist.
4	"Kenapa kamu memakai baju sutra kuning, kain bagus, subang berlian, selop model baru?" balas Hidjo. Tetapi maksud dari pertanyaan itu hendak memuji Raden Ajeng yang tak ada bandingannya. Sebab, subang itu oleh Raden Ajeng dianggap sebagai tanda cinta Raden Ajeng terhadapnya.	"Why are you wearing a yellow silk jacket, a lovely sarong, diamond earrings, and the latest sandals?" said Hijo, wanting to make the incomparable Biru happy.
5	"Maukah Tuan mengantar kita melihat-lihat panorama?" tanya seorang dari perempuan itu.	"Would you like to go with us to the lookout?"
6	Sebuah tari tentang nikmatnya merakit sebuah percintaan. Tari tentang keindahan cinta laki-laki dan perempuan.	Oleg is the dance of love, a dance about the delights of romance, about the beauty of courtship.
7	Selesai acara, dai mereka akan menerangkan apa yang tadi disiarkan.	After the program, the dai would explain the program to them
8	Bagi Telaga, dialah lelaki idiot yang harus dipanggil dengan nama yang sangat agung, Aji, Ayah. Menjijikan sekali! offensive	Telaga considered him an idiot, but an idiot who she had to approach with respectful titles: aji – noble father, or ratu – lord.

Data in Table V deals with omission of detailed information which is not included in the previous four kinds of omission. The eight data can be categorized into three: specific detail information, explicit detail information, and offensive detail information. From data no.1 to data no. 5, they consist of specific detailed information. In data no.1, the detailed information is *di rumah salah satu keluarga Ahmadi* 'in the resident of one of Ahmadi families' it is specific information, and it is missing in the target text, so the specific meaning is shifted into the general meaning. In data no.2, the specific food *rendang* followed by the specific place of origin Kapau is omitted. By this omission the specific information that the *rendang* is from a place named Kapau is not delivered in the English target text; the information becomes general. In data no.3, the words omitted are a sentence of three clauses. They are all omitted so again the specific information is shifted into general information with the function to present only essential information or to give information in a concise manner. The same thing occurs in data no.4 when the detail information *Tetapi maksud dari pertanyaan itu hendak memuji Raden Ajeng yang tak ada bandingannya. Sebab, subang itu oleh Raden Ajeng dianggap sebagai tanda cinta Raden Ajeng terhadapnya.* 'But what he meant in his question is the intention to praise the incomparable Raden Ajeng as the earing for Raden Ajeng is taken by Radeng Ajeng as a sign of love to her'. Since the detailed information given in two sentences is omitted, then the function of the omission is to avoid unnecessary clarification as the specific elements omitted have already been adequately concluded in other words, in this context, it is in words "wanting to make the incomparable Biru happy". In data no.5, the detailed information omitted is *tanya seorang dari perempuan itu* 'ask one of the girls'. This is a continuation of a question in giving specific information on who is asking. When it is missing from the context in the target text, the information is then shifted from specific into general, that it could be anybody who asked the question.

The next category is the omission of explicit detailed information. In data 6, the omitted information is *cinta laki-laki dan perempuan* 'the love between a man and a woman' showing the essence of Oleg dance: that it is about a romance in a courtship between a man and a woman. It is to give explicit information that the courtship is not between other genders but only between a man and a woman. When this explicit detailed information is omitted, the message in the target text becomes implicit that it is not clear anymore that the courtship is between a man and a woman. In data no.7, there are two pieces of omission: (i) the explicit detailed information in words *da'i mereka* 'their *da'i*' into the implicit information the *da'i*, the article "the" implies a specific *da'i*; (ii) the explicit detailed information *apa yang tadi disiarkan.* 'What was broadcasted' is shifted into implicit through the equivalent "the program". The function is to make the explicit detail information implicit.

The last category is the omission of detailed information, which is considered offensive, as seen in data no.8. It is when the expression *menjijikan sekali* 'very disgusting' ended by an exclamation mark is deleted from the text. The detailed information is an expression of anger from a daughter to her noble father. For some people of a certain culture, it is considered offensive no matter what is behind the expression. In this case, it is allowed to make use of the omission strategy.

V. CONCLUSION

The result of the analysis dealing with the objectives of this research is not going to be re-explained, as has already been stated in the Abstract. What is going to be described in chapter V is that based on the discussion and result in chapter IV, it can be concluded that the omission strategy is closely related to the style of a translator as the decision is on them. A translator may choose to translate any information instead of omitting it for any reason. When a translator wants to use omission strategy, they need to make sure that he or she is not going to corrupt the unity of a message. That is the requirement a translator has to fulfill before making a decision to use the omission strategy.

From the previous research, it is recommended that omission strategy is avoided unless it is very needed, especially when the omission strategy is related to the translation quality. Besides the four kinds of omission (subtraction) stated by Nida and the seven kinds of reduction stated by Nida and Taber, there is another option that can be applied: the three forms of omission by Baker.

REFERENCES

Abbasi, A., & Koosha, M. (2016). Exploring expansion and reduction strategies in two english translations of masnavi. *Advances in Language and Literary Studies*, *7*(2). https://doi.org/10.7575/aiac.alls.v.7n.2p.219.

Abdullatief, M. (2020). Omission as a problem and a solution in literary translation: a study of hemingway's hills like white elephants and Joyce's the sisters and their arabic translations. *Journal of Languages and Translation*, 7(1), 16–42. https://doi.org/10.21608/jltmin.2020.143453.

Alrumayh, A. (2021). Translation by omission and translation by addition in english-arabic translation with reference to consumer-oriented texts. *International Journal of Comparative Literature and Translation Studies*, 9(1), 1. https://doi.org/10.7575/aiac.ijclts.v.9n.1p.1.

Baker, M. (2011). In Other Words: A coursebook on translation, second edition. In *In Other Words: A coursebook on translation* (3rd

ed.). Routledge Taylor and Francis Group.

Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research design: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (4th ed.). Sage Publication.

Dimitriu, R. (2004). Omission in translation. *Perspectives: Studies in Translatology*, 12(3), 163–175. https://doi.org/10.1080/0907676X.2004.9961499.

Djohan, R. S., & Diah Lestari, N. (2021). Addition and deletion of information in the translation of negeri 5 Menara by A. Fuadi. *Proceeding of the Fifth International Conference on Language, Literature, Culture, and Education (ICOLLITE 2021)*, 590–595.

Dulari, A., & Amarasinghe, H. (2020). Investigation on the usage of omission as a method of translation: with special reference to english translation of "heart of a dog" By Mikhail Bulgakov and Its Sinhala translation "Ballekuge Hadawtha" By Gamini Viyangoda. In *IRE Journals,* 4.

Fajar Aryana, M., & Nababan, M. R. (2018). Implicitation and deletion in the translation of band of brothers' subtitle and their effect on the translation quality. In *Journal of Language and Literature*, 18(1).

Havumetsä, N. (2021). A comparative study of information change in translation of nonfiction literature. *Translation Matters*, 3(1), 8–24. https://doi.org/10.21747/21844585/tm3_1a1.

Kothari, C. R. (2004). *Research methodology methods and techniques*. New Age International Publishers.

Molina, L., & Hurtado Albir, A. (2002). Translation techniques revisited: a dynamic and functionalist approach. *Meta: Journal Des Traducteurs*, 47(4), 498. https://doi.org/10.7202/008033ar.

Newmark. (1988). *A Textbook of Translation* (1st ed.). Prentice Hall International (UK) Ltd.

Nida, Eugene A & Taber, C. R. (1982). *Helps for translators the theory and practice of translation* (Vol. VII). E.J. Brill.

Nida, E. A. (1969). Toward a science of translating. With special reference to principles and procedures involved in Bible translating. In *Foundations of Language*, 5(3), 445–448. https://doi.org/10.7202/003030ar.

Pungă, L. (2016). To delete or to add? Omissions and additions in two Romanian translations of Jack and the beanstalk. In *Language in the Digital Era: Challenges and Perspectives* (pp. 109–119). Walter de Gruyter GmbH. https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110472059-011.