

Translating Implicit Meaning of English Texts into Indonesian

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Abstract

Translation can help the language learners/translators realize the possibility of conveying the message of source text (ST) in many different ways in the target text (TT). A text, which is a product of language, is a unit whose parts contain information, explicit or implicit, connected in various ways with the aid of cohesive devices. At the one end, the cohesive devices help tie the parts of the texts, but at the other end, they may result in producing implicit meaning. If the explicit information is indicated by the presence of lexical items and grammatical forms, the implicit one is formless or at least modestly marked. Among the cohesive devices responsible for making the implicit meanings are the use of reference, substitution, and ellipsis. In case of translation, if a text containing the cohesive devices is to be translated, the translator has options to shift or keep the level of their explicitness. This article attempts to examine how these cohesive markers are translated by analyzing some Indonesian translations of different short stories by Oscar Wilde. The analysis demonstrates the translators tend to keep the implicit meaning of the source language (SL) in the target language (TL). This may owe to two explanations: the translators are not aware of the implicit information in the SL and are tempted to employ literal translation. However, the explanation by no means discredits the translators as they may deliberately translate so and their translations are possible in the structure of the TL.

Key words: translation, cohesive devices, implicit meaning, explicit meaning

1. Introduction

Translation has long been used as a tool for language teaching and for language testing particularly in the realm of second/foreign language teaching. As a teaching methodology, it is a quintessence of the method called Grammar-Translation Method. As language testing, it comes in handy as a way to check the students' understandings of the target language by means of asking them to transfer their comprehension into their first language. The idea is if they comprehend let us say a sentence of a target language (TL), the students must be able to render it in their source language (SL) either in spoken or in written form.

No doubt, translation contributes to some extent to the language teaching and comprehension. Liao (in Mogahed, 2011) summarizes the positive aspects of using translation. First, translation can help students comprehend the second language (L2) and to check whether or not their comprehension is correct. Second, translation can ease memory constraints in memorizing more words, idioms, grammar, and sentence structures; third, translation can assist the students to develop and express ideas in another language. Last, from psychological perspective, translation can reduce the students' learning anxiety and boost their enthusiasm to learn L2. Part of the reason for this is because the students can find themselves as enjoying the freedom of switching their language whenever their target language fails them.

Translation starts from smallest unit of language to a larger one called a text. A text is composed of parts that are connected to one another by cohesive devices. Baker (1992) defines cohesion as 'the network of lexical, grammatical, and other relations which provide links between various parts of a text.' The cohesive devices are grouped into two: grammatical and lexical. The former covers reference, substitution, and ellipsis and the later includes lexical cohesion; meanwhile, a conjunction is said to reside on the borderline as they are 'mainly grammatical but with lexical component in it (Halliday & Hassan, 1976).

At the one end, cohesive cues help unite the parts of a text. It is obvious that a text contains old and new information. To avoid repetition-saying something in the same word over and over again-the writer may use other grammatical forms and lexical words. However, this is done with consequences in that the meaning or the information of the previous item can change to some extent. For instance the level of explicitness can move up and down. In fact, such is the nature of any act of transformation, substitution, addition, or reduction. For that reason, a text can have explicit and implicit information. If explicit information is clearly shown by certain lexical items and grammatical forms, the implicit one occurs in reverse; the implicit information are conveyed in less forms or even formless at all. For the translators, to translate the text with implicit information appears to be more challenging.

Larson (1984) states there are three reasons for the existence of implicit meaning in a text. First, it owes to the structure of the source language that makes it possible. Second, the information has been included elsewhere in the text, and third, the readers have shared information in the communication situation.

Furthermore, Larson divides meaning into three kinds: referential, organizational, and situational. Referential meaning is the relation between a word and thing, event, attribution which it represents in the real world either actual or potential. Organizational meaning appears whenever words are combined and used together so as to create new meaning which is dependent on one another. Meanwhile, situational meaning assumes that any messages or speech acts are produced in a certain communication situation. In that case, information may be not said, but intrinsically communicated. If the referential and organizational meaning can normally be known to the readers/hearers by relying on the textual context alone (endophoric), the situational meaning is known by considering the context of situation. Among the three kinds of meaning, it is the organizational one that very likely contains a greater part of implicit information as far as textual context is concerned.

This article seeks to describe how the implicit meaning/information realized by some cohesive devices in the source text is translated in the target text. However, only three (out of five) cohesion signals are going to be analyzed, namely reference, substitution, and ellipsis. Compared to conjunction and lexical cohesion, the application of the three ties is more likely to produce implicit information in a text. If the three cohesive signals are stretched in a continuum and graded for having the least to the most implicit meaning, the ellipsis will be at one end and reference at the other end and substitution takes place in the middle.

2. Methodology

Data are gathered from the Indonesian translations of parts of three different short stories by Oscar Wilde. The short stories, translated by different senior students of English Department at Andalas University, are *The Selfish Giant* (TSG), *The Star Child* (TSC), and *The Devoted Friend* (TDF). These texts are observed to find any parts containing implicit meaning realized by the cohesive devices, namely the reference, substitution, and ellipsis. The next step is to compare the source text containing the implicit meanings to their translated Indonesian versions (facing translations). The comparison is aimed to figure out the way the translators took care of the implicit meanings.

3. Discussion

I shall now discuss some examples taken from the short stories and their translation. The data are displayed by putting them face to face for ease of analysis. The implicit meanings, realized by the cohesive signals under consideration are marked in both columns. Some preceding or following texts may be included to supply more contextual information.

Before coming to the analysis, I shall present a brief theoretical framework of the three cohesive devices and follow it up with analysis of the implicit meanings found in the three short stories. However, the data for analysis given below are by no means exhaustive, but simply representation of the total implicit meanings possibly found in them. In conclusion, I should

make it clear from the beginning that neither the theoretical framework of cohesion nor the data under analysis are pursued in-depth.

3.1 Translation of Referential Implicit Meaning

Reference of course has their own referential meaning, but very often they cannot be interpreted in their own right as they can factually refer to something else. This is why the use of reference can cause the meaning implicit; instead of repeating for example the proper name of an object, the object is preferably identified with for example a pronoun. Baker (1992) concludes it is reference which makes it possible for the readers/hearers to trace participants, entities, events, and so on in a text. Therefore, the correct interpretation must be based mainly on the textual context.

Reference can appear in the forms of exophora or endophora. However, it is reasonable to argue that endophora plays more roles in making a cohesive text. Endophora is further grouped into two kinds: anaphora and anaphora. If the former refers to the preceding text to find the presupposed item, the later in contrast refers to the following text. Among of the reference are realized by personals, demonstratives, definite article, and they seem to be the common ones in use (definite article is not discussed in this article). The personals are further realized by *pronouns*, *one (s)* which can take various positions in the sentence such as the subject, object, possessive or modifier; the demonstratives are *this, that, these, those, here, there*, etc. For example, the two sentences below are tied in some ways and therefore deserve to be called as a cohesive text.

Mary lives near *the bookstore*. She often goes *there*.

In the example above, *Mary* and *She* refer to the same person. *Mary* is the presupposed (person) or the antecedent and *She* is the presupposing item or the pronoun. In this case, *she* is anaphoric as it refers back to the preceding text. Likewise, the demonstrative *there* refers to *the bookstore*.

I now come to present some of reference case found in the shortstories.

Source Text (ST)	Target Text (TT)
(A) The Star-Child ₁ was very beautiful but very cruel, arrogant and selfish. He ₂ laughed at the other children in the village and said, "Your parents are poor but I am noble, I come from a star." He ₃ had no pity for poor people. He ₄ laughed at ugly people and ill people. He ₅ hurt animals and he ₆ laughed when they suffered. He ₇ was very vain and loved his ₈ beauty. In summer he ₉ often went to the well in the priest's orchard and looked at the reflection of his ₁₀ face in the water. Then he ₁₁ was happy. (TSC)	Si anak bintang ₁ sangat tampan, tetapi sangat kejam, sombong, dan egois. Dia ₂ menertawakan anak-anak lain di desa itu dengan berkata, "Orangtuamu sangat miskin tetapi aku adalah orang bangsawan, aku berasal dari bintang." Dia ₃ tidak mempunyai belas kasihan pada orang miskin. Dia ₄ menertawakan setiap anak yang jelek dan penyakitan. Dia ₅ melukai binatang dan tertawa ketika binatang itu menderita. Dia ₆ sangat peduli dan mencintai ketampanannya ₇ . Pada musim panas dia ₈ pergi kebun buah milik seorang pendeta dan melihat bayangan wajahnya ₉ di air. Dia ₁₀ sangat senang. (TSC)
(B) "But we can't leave this little baby <u>here</u> alone," (TSC)	"Tetapi kita tidak bisa meninggalkan bayi ini <u>di sini</u> sendirian."
(C) 'How happy we are here'. (TSG)	"Begitu bahagia kami di sini"
(D) "How happy we are there". (TSG)	"Begitu bahagia kami di sana"

The paragraph is meant to show the implicit information contained in the pronoun 'he' which refers back to the 'The Star-Child'. This is the most common patterns of establishing chains of reference in which the participant is mentioned explicitly in the first instance and then a pronoun is used to refer back to it (Baker, 1992). Therefore, both have anaphorical relation. In the ST, the pronoun appears ten times; eight of them function as the subjects and the other two as possessive pronoun. Interestingly, in the TT, there are only nine pronouns left because the translator deleted the pronoun indexed with six (he₆). There are some points that can be drawn from the data above. First, a pronoun is a linguistic item which can make the meaning of the identity in question implicit. It is due to its function to substitute for an entity or else. In general, some languages favor the use of pronominal system including English and others do not (Baker, 1992). Levenston & Herman (in Blum-Kulka, 2000) have contrasted English with Hebrew and have concluded that Hebrew prefers lexical repetition to pronominalization.

Second, in the TT, all of the pronouns are translated literally which consequently mean the translator keep the meaning implicit. In fact, I would say the meaning of the pronoun in the TT is both implicit and ambiguous. This is due to the fact that third person singular pronoun 'dia' in Indonesian is sexless or neutral. It can be used for male or female person. The situation may become worse if the text talks about different third singular persons. While in English they can be made explicit in terms of gender, it cannot be done so in Indonesian.

As a consequence of such translation, the implicit meaning of it stays put in the TT. In other words, there is no shift of level of explicitness. A text containing repeated subjects in such text can indeed be modified by using its synonym, its superordinate, and so forth. Thus, the translation of the pronoun in question can be varied with 'anak lelaki itu', 'anak nakal itu' 'anak sombong ini', and so on.

In B, the cohesive device under consideration is the demonstrative 'here' which is literally translated into 'di sini'. The information given by it is implicit both in the ST and TT. The translator indeed can change the meaning into more explicit by using the true identity (place) recoverable from the textual information. From the context, it is known to the readers that 'here' refers to the jungle. Therefore, another possible translation for the demonstrative is "... di hutan ini".

The same cases are found in the translation of the ST (C) and (D) below. Both of the demonstratives 'here' and 'there', referring to the garden, are translated into 'di sini' and 'di sana' respectively. Therefore, the information is kept implicit in the TT as in that in the ST. Another possible translation would be 'di taman ini' and 'di taman itu' in which the meanings become more explicit.

1.1. Translating Implicit Meaning of Substitution

Substitution can be defined as an act of replacing a linguistic element by an item as a way to avoid repeating the linguistic element in question. As a consequence, the replacing item obviously makes the meaning of the replaced item implicit.

The occurrence of substitution in spoken or written text can be attributed to the nature of language speakers. The speakers of any language normally try to use their language in a more economical and interesting way whenever it is possible. As for substitutions, it is classified into three types. First is the nominal realized by *one*, *ones*, *some* which are used to substitute for nouns. The next is verbal realized by *do* which is used to substitute for verbs. The last one is clausal type realized by *so* and *not* which are used to substitute for clauses.

Below is an example of substitution:

Mary has read lots of fiction books. However, this one is different.

In the example above, *one* refers back to the *fiction books*. The *books* in the first sentence functions as the head of the noun phrase and so does *one* in the second sentence.

At a glance, it may be tempting to say the case of reference as part of nominal substitution in which the pronoun appears to substitute for the antecedent. However, they indeed work in different ways. In the case of reference, there is a total referential identity. The pronoun totally refers to the antecedent. Meanwhile substitution involves some redefinition. One clear example of redefinition in the example above is the presupposed and the presupposing items are different in number. It is for the same reason why a proper noun cannot be substituted for by any nominal substitution devices because ‘a proper name is already fully defined as unique’ and there is no way of redefining it (Halliday & Hassan, 1976).

Below are some analyses of how the cases of substitution are translated:

Source Text (ST)	Target Text (TT)
(A) “And did he have an amber chain round his neck?” “Yes, he <u>did</u> ,” said the woodcutter. (TSC)	“Dan apakah dia dililit dengan rantai ambar di sekitar lehernya?” “Iya, <u>benar</u> ,” kata si Tukang kayu
(B) “I am sure the clergyman himself could not say such beautiful things as you <u>do</u> .” (TDF)	“Aku yakin pendeta saja tidak bisa berkata sesuatu hal yang indah seperti yang kamu <u>lakukan</u> ”.
(C) “... please stay” “ <u>No</u> , this is my punishment” (TSC)	“... tetaplah di sini ...” “ <u>Tidak</u> , ini adalah hukumanku.”
(D) “Is that the end of the story?” asked the Water rat. “Certainly <u>not</u> ,” answered the Linnet, this is the beginning.” (TDF)	“Apakah itu adalah akhir cerita?” Tanya Tikus Air. “Tentu <u>tidak</u> ,” jawab Linnet, “Itu adalah permulaan.”

In A the cohesive tie is realized by ‘did’ which refers back to the previous information ‘... had an amber chain round his neck’. This is a verbal substitution and carries implicit meaning. The substitute (the replacing item) is translated by reformulation in which the cohesive device is omitted in the TT (Querol, 2005). In fact, the subject and the substitute are singly replaced by ‘benar (literally means ‘right’ or ‘true’ in the TT)’ which is not the equivalence for either of them; the subject is obviously omitted in the TT. The translation is quite acceptable because Indonesian allows several responses to such questions like ‘ada’, ‘benar’, or ‘betul’. However, they do not have grammatical force as such in English. As far as the translation is concerned, the translator makes the meaning of the substitute more explicit in the TT without necessarily translating the presupposed items. If the translator does, the translation will possibly look like “Iya, dia dililit dengan rantai ambar di sekitar lehernya.” This translation is more explicit, but is too long and may unsuitable for the situational context in which the conversation takes place.

The relatively similar case is found in B. The substitute ‘do’ which is also a kind of verbal substitution, substitutes for ‘say such beautiful things’. The translator translates it into “lakukan”. I shall argue the translation is a literal rendering of the word ‘do’. However, in that case, ‘do’ is not a main verb like ‘act’, but simply the grammatical substitute. It is known from the context that ‘do’, if it is to be made explicit, is best translated into ‘katakan’ as the main verb of the substituted part is ‘say’. Acting (lakukan) and saying (katakan) certainly carry different meaning. In the TT, the word ‘lakukan’ can possibly be omitted altogether without producing ungrammaticality to the whole sentence which mean reduction takes place. However, this option may keep the meaning implicit.

C and D above belong to clausal substitutions which are realized by ‘no’ and ‘not’. In A, ‘no’ substitutes for ‘I will not stay’ and in B, ‘not’ substitutes for ‘That is not the end of the story’. In the TT, both are translated literally and therefore the meanings remain implicit. The translation of course can be made more explicit like ‘Tidak, Aku tidak bisa tinggal. Ini adalah hukumanku’ and ‘Tentu saja, bukan itu akhir ceritanya’, but they produce longer translations.

1.2. Translating Implicit Meaning of Ellipsis

Ellipsis is a better example in showing the preference of language speakers to use their language in the possibly easiest way. If substitution still needs an item to replace another item in questions, ellipsis replaces it for nothing. This is the reason why ellipsis is also named as a substitution by zero. There is no lexical item present in an ellipted construction and therefore the only way to know its whereabouts is from the textual context. Ellipsis is possible because there are two identical linguistic elements in a text. One of them is then omitted, instead of being replaced. Quirk & Greenbaum (1973) claims two reasons of making ellipsis: to avoid repetition, like substitution, and to focus on new materials. Therefore, answering with (A) *I have not yet spoken to him* is less preferable to (B) *Not yet to the same question Have you spoken to him?*. The reason is because some old materials are still in place in A, but not in B. Quirk & Greenbaum also divide ellipsis into two: ellipsis dependent on linguistic context and another one which is independent on linguistic context which show resemblance to the classification of endophora and exophora respectively.

Like substitution, ellipsis can be classified under three headings, namely nominal ellipsis, verbal ellipsis, and clausal ellipsis (Halliday & Hassan). Each name reflects the part of the sentence which is ellipted so as to form an elliptical construction. For example, in nominal ellipsis, it is the noun that is missing.

The followings are some of the analysis of ellipsis observed in the data:

Source Text (ST)	Target Text (TT)
(A) “I have never been married and I never intend to be”. (TDF)	“Kenyataannya aku tidak pernah menikah dan aku tidak pernah merencanakannya.”
(B) “Life is for rich people, not for poor people like us” (TSC)	“Hidup itu hanya untuk orang kaya, bukan untuk orang miskin seperti kita”

In A, the complete construction will be ‘I have never been married and I never intend to be married’. As it shows, the verb ‘married’ is ellipted from the construction. Thus, this belongs to the verbal ellipsis. Its presence or absence certainly contributes to the level of explicitness of the sentence. As it is absent in the ST, it conveys implicit meaning. Interestingly, the meaning is somehow tried to be made explicit in the TT with the addition of suffix ‘-nya’. In Indonesian, this suffix, unlike the third person singular pronouns ‘dia/ia’ that can only refer to humans, can refer to both non-human animate and inanimate nouns. In addition, ‘-nya’ is also a bound form of third person singular that can replace ‘dia/ia’ (Sneddon, 1996). In the translation, ‘-nya’ functions as the object of the verb ‘merencanakan’ and refers back to ‘pernikahan’ (marriage) which is realized by a verb ‘menikah’ in the previous clause. As a result, it causes the meaning of the ellipted part to be more explicit to some extent.

The complete construction of B will be ‘Life is for rich people, life is not for poor people like us’. It is the subject ‘life’ and the verb ‘is’ that are deleted from the sentence. The repetition of them may be important if the speaker wants to emphasize his point despite producing a longer translation. Emphasizing it means making it more explicit at the same time. The translator translate the ST literally as the ellipted parts of the ST remain absent in the TT.

4. Conclusion

Translation can help the students to be aware of their use of language both in spoken and written language. It can show the students the choices or possibilities of language use. The analyses above show the tendency of the translator to translate the implicit meanings in a literal fashion. In fact, they cannot be discredited for this as such way of translating is possible in the structure of the TL. However, it is also likely that they translate in that way as a result of not being aware of the choice available to them. They may not realize that they can translate the implicit meaning in the ST, realized by grammatical cohesions under consideration, into more explicit in the TT. This implies that the students who keep the implicit meaning of the ST in the TT should translate in that way by design, not by chance, for example for the sake of stylistic preference.

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