



# Accuracy of Using Omission Procedure in selected “TED-Ed” videos

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## Abstract

Despite being relatively new compared to other areas of translation, subtitling has emerged as a field of expertise in recent years. Initially ignored and dismissed as a form of adaptation, subtitling has emerged as a leading industry, particularly considering the rapid advancement of technology. Although it is still a very new field of practice in Kurdistan, many bilingual academics, and translators has worked on a variety of projects without being vetted by any committees of subtitling professionals, which is a serious issue in the industry. This paper aims to be the first in a series of future investigations on the expertise of Kurdish subtitles in this important area of translation. The study will also examine one of the tricky but crucial subtitling techniques that local subtitlers, more so than those from other countries, frequently abuse. In conclusion, several phases of modifications and future professional propositions in subtitling projects will be reviewed and proposed. The causes for the accuracy, or otherwise, inaccuracy, of the omission technique uses will be explored and studied. This study uses a qualitative methodology to look into subtitling omissions in a few TED videos. The methodology is intended to offer a thorough investigation of the variables affecting omitting practices in this particular setting. Subtitles for the selected TED videos are obtained from official sources, such as the TED website or affiliated platforms. Each subtitling work is carefully analyzed to identify instances of omission. Omissions are categorized based on their nature, including content omission, cultural adaptation, or linguistic simplification. The reasons behind each omission are documented to understand the underlying motivations. The framework of the paper is based on the content Analysis to identify themes and patterns, omitted parts are subjected to a qualitative analysis. To clarify subtitling choices, this research looks at the speaker's objectives, the context, and cultural allusions. Thematic Coding is also another focus of the subtitlers to find recurrent themes and patterns connected to omitting behaviors, qualitative data is coded. Themes could include difficulties with language, cultural factors, and speaker traits that affect subtitling choices.

**Keywords:** Subtitling, omission, audiovisual translation, Ted-Ed, subtitling procedures.

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## Introduction

Omission is one of the primary procedures for subtitlers to use while subtitling videos; however, some of them may misuse and exaggerate it, which could result in the loss of a sizable quantity of information about the videos. Even while omission is often the forced choice, unintentional neglect may cause considerably more harm than benefit to the entire subtitling process. The impact of written translation on them, which offers a variety of processes to utilize, causes academics in other subfields of translation studies to tend to use it less.

Investigating usage accuracy—or lack thereof, as the researchers have noted—is quite important. Kurdish subtitlers lack sufficient experience with subtitling and instead use all the norms and practices for textual translation in their subtitling projects. Recognizing that Omission is one of the least favorable strategies for textual translation (Dimitriu, 2004, p. 163) and that translators should steer clear of it at all costs, despite how well it works for subtitling and how much it can aid the process (Pedersen, 2008, p. 104)

The videos selected by the researchers for this paper are selected randomly amongst different videos of TED website, the reason is to cover a wide range of subtitlers' methods of subtitling and demonstrate the degree of Kurdish subtitlers familiarity of the investigated procedure. The researchers have also chosen subtitled videos on TED website in order to prove their hypothesis accurately, and it is because most of the TED-Ed videos are topics with immense amount of speech and image feeds related to the topic; image plays a prominent role in transferring message which gives subtitlers a chance to use less words to describe more, also it is important to keep in mind that the Ted website standards of subtitling allow a maximum of 84 characters per two lines of subtitling in a six second period (TED, n.d.) , in this case, subtitlers are in a challenging situation and they would be on the brink of damaging the whole process but for referring to omission, they will ruin the whole purpose of subtitling which is to send over the message to the audience rather than a literal translation of every word they hear.

In terms of idiomatic expressions, information content and smaller linguistic components like words, Baker (1992) divided omission into three categories. To minimize the risk of losing the crucial information on the one hand, and to escape the scrutiny of the target language audience on the other, we think that Kurdish subtitlers rarely employ the third technique. We also think that the majority of the Kurdish subtitlers' omissions are insufficient. Using omission, despite the fact that it could seem difficult, is unavoidable, and it “attains its peak in use. The translator omits words that do not have equivalents in the TT, or that may raise the hostility of the receptor” Ivacovoni (2009)

Due to academics' neglect of the entire strategy in translation studies, professionals may hesitate to exclude considerable amounts of dialogue from their subtitling projects as well as clear redundancies and insignificant information (Dimitriu: 2004, p. 163). This may also be due to the fact that Indo-European languages prefer to convey ideas in more words than English; hence addition strategies are prioritized in addition to careful handling of omission in the English to Kurdish translation versions. (Dimitriu: 2004, p 163) While the Omission Procedure has been widely used and recognized within translation studies, there is room for further exploration and refinement of its application, particularly in the context of modern multimedia platforms such as “TED-Ed” videos. These platforms present unique challenges and opportunities for translation, including the integration of visual and auditory elements alongside textual content.

According to Luyken (154), Audiovisual translation both supplements and omits information from the source text. It will never be able to attempt to translate every word from one language to the other. It is both more and less than traditional translation at the same time, less because not everything is translated. Additionally, because the audiovisual Translator must constantly decide whether to omit or condense the original text and whether to



add new information, his decisions have a significant impact on any program that is subject to Language Transfer. However, whether it is for stylistic or technological reasons there must be compelling reasons to remove a dialogue. According to Baker (1992), the decision of what to include and what to exclude is driven by both intra- and inter-semiotic redundancy. The spoken word might be seen as redundant when the visual and auditory channels are able to transmit almost similar information. The same information could also be repeated within the soundtrack to maximize the retrievability of the intended meaning, each subtitle must function both independently and as a component of a greater polysemiotic whole.

According to Georgakopoulou (2003) The majority of these linguistic elements are deleted because the viewer can retrieve them from the soundtrack. (a) Repetitions. (b) Names in appellative constructions. (c) False starts and ungrammatical constructions (d) internationally known words, such as: Yes, No, OK. (e) Expressions followed by gestures to denote salutation, politeness, affirmation, negation, surprise, telephone responses, etc. (f) Exclamations, such as 'oh', 'ah', 'wow' and the like. (g) Instances of phatic communion and 'padding', often empty of semantic load, their presence being mostly functional speech embellishment aimed at maintaining the desired speech-flow. Among these, we can find expressions such as: you know, well, naturally, of course, etc.

## Methodology and data collection

The research involved a corpus-based investigation of the subtitling process using a non-judgmental methodology on a 75-minute English to Kurdish video subtitling works. The corpus, which was chosen at random from any of the 15 videos, we had 75 minutes of TED dialogues in English and 75 minutes of Kurdish subtitles (a total of 150 minutes). The corpus included 15 TED-Ed videos, English audio scripts paired with subtitles that provided a Kurdish translation. The information was acquired by looking through the Kurdish subtitles of the various genres of videos. The idea was to have a wider range of subjects and substance to allow for a wider range of translation and subtitling techniques, the genres included psychology, philosophy, medicine, physics, entomology, history, and biology. Furthermore, the quality of subtitles were average and sometimes below in terms of technicality. Here is the list of the videos:

“Why do we dream?” by Amy Adkins

“Why do we love? A philosophical inquiry” by Skye C. Cleary

“What would happen if you didn't drink water?” by Mia Nacamulli

“How does alcohol make you drunk?” by Judy Grisel

“Is time travel possible?” by Colin Stuart

“The language of lying” by Noah Zandan

“Inside the ant colony” by Deborah M. Gordon

“Should you trust your first impression?” Peter Mende-Siedlecki



“History’s “worst” nun” by Theresa A. Yugar

“Why sitting is bad for you” by Murat Dalkilinc

“Does time exist?” by Andrew Zimmerman Jones

“Debunking the myths of OCD” by Natascha M. Santos

“What happens when you remove the hippocampus?” by Sam Kean

“What causes constipation?” by Heba Shaheed

“What causes heartburn?” by Rusha Modi

The classification of interlingual subtitling procedures put forward by Gottlieb (1994) served as the theoretical foundation for the researchers’ analysis of the data. The researchers also used a three-step process to gather the necessary data: watching the videos, transcribing the English and Kurdish subtitles for each video, and then identifying the strategies for subtitling in accordance with the framework. A frame is a video’s fundamental building block, hence in this study, a frame was used as the analytical unit. A frame is described as a word or group of words that showed on the screen for a while as a subtitle before disappearing and being replaced by another frame.

## Omission

Omission is a translation technique where a translation unit from the source text (ST) is partially or entirely removed from the target language (TL). According to Baker (2011, p. 40), a translator “can simply omit translating the word or expression in question if the meaning conveyed by a particular item or expression is not vital enough to the development of the text to justify distracting the reader with lengthy explanations.” Although the reasons for choosing omission in subtitling may range greatly, one must seriously consider employing such a practical method, especially given the time and space constraints in this field.

Now, some of the video samples have their vital components omitted due to negligence or unfamiliarity with a particular strategy which will be tackled later on. Contrary to that, there are plenty of instances where the subtitler should better choose omission over maintaining the dialogue for obvious reasons, nevertheless, they will be ignored and certainly causes confusion for the audience. Baker (2011, p. 40), for example, notes that “if the meaning conveyed by a particular item or expression is not vital enough to the development of the text to justify distracting the reader with lengthy explanations, a translator can simply omit translating the word or expression in question”.



**Data:**

Video's title	English excerpt	Omitted part	Time	Time of speech in seconds	Subtitled	Video period
Why .1 .1 - ?do we dream Amy Adkins	Symbolic representation	symbolic	00.59-01.01	2	Azhin Hassan	5:37
Why .2 .2 do we love? A philosophical inquiry - Skye C. Cleary	Much much later, german philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer		01.37 – 01.34	3	Sarhand Rasul	5:45
	Love lets us reach beyond ourselves Beauvoir” 1908-1986”	Beauvoir” ” 1908 - 1986	04.23 – 04.20	3		
.3 .3 What would happen if you didn't drink water? - Mia Nacamulli	While these functions are essential to our survival	essential	01.30 – 01.27	2.5	Razaw Bor	4:52
	The recommended daily intake varies from between 2.5 to 3.7 litres of water for men	varies	03.39 – 03.33	6		
	In how you feel	How	04.33 – 04.32	1		
How .4 .4 does alcohol make you drunk? - Judy Grisel	Alcohol, taken in” sufficient quantities, make produce all the effects of drunkenness” Oscar wilde	All of it	05.00 – 01.00	4	Ayan Organization	5:25
	to understand where these bottles end up, we must first search their origins	first	00.23 – 00.19			
	Together they create a harmful stew called leachate	Called leachate	01.40 – 01.36		Daban Q Jaff	
Is .5 .5 time travel possible? - Colin Stuart	and what's more, it is already been done	already	00.17 – 00.15	2	Daban Q Jaff	5:03
The .6 .6 language of lying — Noah Zandan	On a psychological level, we lie partly to paint a better picture of ourselves	partly	01.09 – 01.05	5	Kakalaw Mohamad	5:41



In- .7 .7	But in larger area with less ants where such meetings happen less often	with less ants	02:55 – 02:51	4	Ahmad N	4:46
	Once the food in that spot is depleted	In that spot	03.26 – 03.24	1.5		
.8 .8	Activity in the ventrolateral prefrontal cortex	ventrolateral prefrontal	03.00 – 02.57	2:5	Sarbast Muhammed	4:38
Should you trust your first impression? - Peter Mendel-Siedlecki						
His- .9 .9	---				Rebar Atta	4:46
tory's "worst" nun - Theresa A. Yugar						
.1 0 .10	Our nerve cells benefit from movement	Our nerve cells benefit from movement	01.16 – 01.14	2.5	Nualla Pshtivan	5:04
Why sitting is bad for you - Murat Dalkilinc						
.1 1 .11	Time and space are modes by which we think and not conditions in which we live" Albert Einstein	Time and space" are modes by which we think and not conditions in which we live" Albert Einstein	00.05 – 00.02	3	Hiwa foundation	5:16
Does time exist? - Andrew Zimmerman Jones						
.1 2 .12	But the actual disorder is far more rare and can be quite debilitating	can be quite	01.16 – 01.11	5	Hiwa foundation	4:50
Debunking the myths of OCD - Natascha M. Santos						
.1 3 .13	---				Avan Hassan	5:25
What happens when you remove the hippocampus? - Sam Keane						
.1 4 .14	I wish that being famous helped prevent me from being constipated" Marvin Gaye	I wish that" being famous helped prevent me from being constipated" Marvin Gaye	00.05 – 00.01	4	Shanaz Pshtivan	3:32
What causes constipation? - Heba Shahed						
.1 5 .15	Things sweet to taste" prove indigestion sour" William Shakespeare, Richard II	Things sweet to" taste prove indigestion sour" William Shakespeare, Richard II	00.05 – 00.01	4	Dastan Koya	04:54
What causes heartburn? - Rasha Modi						



## Data Analysis

Omission might cause inconsistencies due to a variety of reasons according to (Diaz-Cintas & Rameal, 2014): it could be due to linguistic reasons because “It can be difficult to create proper subtitles that accurately convey the meaning of the original speech since certain languages have grammatical structures that differ greatly from those of other languages”, or cultural ones “because they may not have direct translations in other languages”, or technical reasons like time and space restrictions. When dealing with complex or lengthy dialogue, subtitles must be timed to display on screen at the appropriate moment and must fit inside the given space on the screen (Diaz-Cintas & Rameal, 2014). Because of this, subtitlers may decide to omit some dialogue in to fit everything into the allotted time or space, which results in inconsistent subtitles.

According to Baker (1992), the first video fits within the category of omission at the word level. This study, which is classified as an omission-based subtitling approach, adhered to Baker’s definition of omission. Omissions in translation can take one of three forms, according to Baker (1992, pp. 40–86: omission in word or expression, omission in idiom, or omission in informational substance. So the subtitler has opted for the word omission without a clear excuse for his choice.

In contrast, the subtitler in the second example video chose a 49 character translation and did not skip a single word, going above the allowed 43 characters for a three-second period. Although he had reached the character restriction and could have removed other unnecessary material, the subtitler chose to go for a dramatic removal of an author in the following table, leaving only the name and the years. compared to this deleted one, and include this crucial information (خۆشهويستى سنوره كامان تيكنه شكينن) while this one is only 33 characters despite the fact that “Beside these strategies, Toury (1995, p.82) has successfully shown that omission is a legitimate translation strategy, and it is possibly used in subtitling more than in any other form of translation, due to the restrictions of the medium” (Pedersen, 2008, p.104).

But in the third video, the subtitler chose to omit the word “essential” even though it was necessary to finish the sentence’s meaning in a few instances. According to Guardini (1998), many critics of subtitling have singled out reduction as a significant flaw as compared to dubbing, yet in many cases the difficulty just involves selecting what is padding and what is vital information. Clarity of expression and authenticity to the original are at risk; therefore, allegedly unnecessary parts cannot simply be removed because they might be essential to a character’s way of expression. The aesthetic and structural differences between speech and writing are the main challenge a subtitler has when translating spoken discourse into subtitles. Written materials tend to be more official in tone, but spoken language tends to be casual with lots of repetition and redundancy.

In video sample 4, the subtitler failed to translate a significant portion that appears at the beginning of the video in written form. This is either because subtitler forgot to translate it or because he may have thought it was unimportant. In either cases, the omission is wholly inappropriate. The same issue has emerged again in the video samples of fourteenth and fifteenth which brings the researchers to the conclusion that the selected subtitlers neglect the written texts on the screen rather than using omission procedure. Although the subtitler removed the word “first” in his second attempt, this did not significantly alter the character count or the meaning; however, reformulating the sentence could have had a significant impact on the caption: A whole notion in almost 10 less characters.

In the video sample 5, the subtitler has opted for explicitation strategy for the pronoun “it” for “گه شتکردن له” رېگه ي کاته وه, which is defined “as a shift in translation from what is implicit in the source text to what is explicit in the target text.” and this is frowned upon in subtitling unless critical for the whole scene, this could have been



expressed with a literal translation of the pronoun into Kurdish language. It is worth mentioning that the subtitler could have compensated the phrase in a prior displayed caption, unfortunately he had not.

In the sixth video, an important element of the sentence has been omitted which leads to misdirection if not translated. “partly” is the adverb that determines the boundaries of the aforementioned dialogue, and in the case the main topic.

However, in the seventh film, the omission has advanced to the next level and has been on the clause level. Not only have important components been left out of the video, but the entire sentence’s meaning has also been wrecked. The next segment of the video even has another crucial passage of dialogue randomly deleted by the subtitler. Even so, it is less harmful and things might work out in this instance. On the eighth video, these careless and detrimental omissions reach a new low when the sentence’s main idea is eliminated, rendering it wholly false. The idea is that the subtitler may not have been aware of the meaning and just left it untranslated because the removed part is a medical phrase.

There are always situations where the subtitlers could have used an omission procedure, and it is unavoidably a procedure to use in subtitles. Strangely, omissions were not done at all in the ninth and thirteenth videos. This causes issues for the audience because they cannot keep up with the entire dialogue in written form while also enjoying the pictures. because as Georgakopoulou (2003) mentions three kinds of elements in subtitling regarding subtitlers’ ability to deal with them. They are: the indispensable elements (that must be translated), the partly dispensable elements (that can be condensed), and the dispensable elements (that can be omitted).

Video ten contains a total deletion that simply demonstrates the subtitler’s inability for the job. Alternatively, he may have forgotten to conduct a review of his work, which would also demonstrate incompetence. The final video sample contains a similar scene to the first, but this one didn’t include a writing text in the subtitles, which is a very common error subtitlers make when they translate, underestimating the texts on the screen and their significance for the audience. In this instance, the subtitler acted irresponsibly because the entire concept of the video is based on the one quotation.

Twelfth video sample has one instance of omission in which he has used 57 characters in a five second period subtitling which is nearly the allowed number of characters per two line in that amount of time, and the omission of “can be quite” doesn’t alter much of the meaning because of the compensation of the sentence in its first part, and as Gardini (1998) claims

“the deletion of ostensibly redundant elements cannot be done automatically, as they may be integral to the mode of expression of a character. The major problem a subtitler encounters when transferring spoken dialogue into subtitles originates from the stylistic and structural divergences between speech and writing. Written texts are more formal in style, while spoken language is characterized with informal style and plenty of redundancy and repetition.”

but in this case it is not integral, so the researchers consider it the only time a subtitler has used omission procedure accurately.

## Findings

The findings indicate that the omission strategy used in the selected “TED-Ed” videos is an effective means of enhancing the viewer’s understanding of the topic while maintaining accuracy. The frequency of omitted information





was relatively low, and the omitted information was not critical to understanding the topic. The samples show that some omissions have been used, but these occur at random.

1. The subtitlers failed to take into consideration the crucial information that belongs in the captions, they did so without realizing the significance of the omission categorizations, and in most instances failed to translate where it was necessary.
2. The subtitlers have adopted the same principle to subtitling and avoided any omission, as they have some basic knowledge of written translation where using omission is discouraged.
3. omission procedure is misused, underused, and randomly used throughout the study. This affirms the researchers' claim that some Kurdish subtitlers are influenced by the textual translation procedures and some others are using omission haphazardly.

## Conclusion:

In summary, this study has shed important light on the phenomena of subtitling deletion in a few TED videos. We have discovered a number of reasons impacting omitting behaviors through a qualitative examination of subtitle data, such as linguistic limitations, cultural concerns, and speaker characteristics. The results underscore the intricacy involved in subtitling choices and the intricate relationship between audience comprehension and content preservation.

Our research emphasizes how crucial it is to take context into account when examining subtitling processes, especially in the dynamic and varied world of TED speeches. We further our awareness of the difficulties and approaches associated with subtitling TED content by delving into the reasons behind omissions and identifying recurrent themes.

Going forward, more investigation is necessary to examine other aspects of omission in subtitling, such as the influence of audience preferences and technological improvements. We can continue to improve subtitling techniques and improve the inclusivity and accessibility of audiovisual content in the digital era by filling in these gaps.

All things considered, this research adds to our understanding of the techniques used in TED video subtitling and emphasizes the importance of omission as a crucial component of audiovisual translation. We anticipate that the knowledge gained from this study will guide future initiatives to improve subtitling procedures and enhance the watching experience for a variety of global audiences.

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