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## **The Influence of Syntactic Translation Strategies to the Translation Qualities of the Alchemist into Sang Alkemis**

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### **Abstract**

Literary translation, a nuanced process demanding a profound grasp of source language intricacies and cultural nuances, is pivotal in transferring a text's essence and aesthetics into a target language. This study delves into the impact of syntactic translation strategies on the quality of the Indonesian version of Paulo Coelho's novel "The Alchemist," titled "Sang Alkemis," focusing on accuracy, readability, and acceptability. Employing a descriptive approach, data collection involved an in-depth analysis of both source and target texts, categorization based on Chesterman's syntactic translation strategies theory, and assessment by a team of three translation experts. Eight identified strategies encompassed literal translation, transposition, unit shift, phrase structure change, clause structure change, sentence structure change, cohesion change, and scheme change. Results revealed exceptional translation performance, with average scores of 2.43 for accuracy, 2.81 for acceptability, and 2.93 for readability out of 3. These findings signify high accuracy, acceptability, and readability levels for the target audience, shedding light on the intricate interplay between syntactic strategies and the ultimate quality of literary translations. This research contributes valuable insights to enhancing literary translation skills and a deeper comprehension of how translation

strategies shape the outcome of such endeavors.

**Keywords:** acceptability, accuracy, qualities, readability, translation strategies.

## **Introduction**

Translation studies is an interdisciplinary field examining the theory and practice of translation, encompassing topics such as translation history, technology, and cultural/linguistic aspects. Translation is a crucial facilitator for information and knowledge transfer in society, bridging cultural and linguistic gaps. The field has grown substantially in response to translation phenomena, addressing challenges like idiomatic expressions, cultural references, and grammatical structures. Notably, idiomatic expressions pose a common challenge, as their meaning cannot be translated literally due to linguistic and cultural differences.

Another translation phenomenon is the problem of cultural references. These can include references to historical events, famous figures, or common customs that the target language may not know or understand. Grammatical structures can also pose a challenge in translation. Different languages have different ways of expressing the same ideas, and a sentence that is grammatically correct in one language may be different. If the grammatical structure is correctly translated, it can lead to clarity and interpretation of the text. In addition, other phenomena can occur in translation, such as differences in meaning, tone, technical terms, nuances, metaphors, etc.

It is important to note that translation is not an exact science and always involves a degree of interpretation. To overcome these challenges, professional translators use linguistic knowledge, cultural understanding, and creativity to produce accurate and easily understood translations by the target audience. Different translation strategies can have a significant impact on the effectiveness and accuracy of the final product.

Ultimately, the goal of a translator is to produce a grammatically and semantically correct text that meets the expectations and requirements of the target audience and context while retaining the meaning and style of the original or source language text.

Since there are so many translated texts worldwide, the novels “The Alchemist” and “Sang Alkemis” are chosen to be examined further. This novel has been translated into more than 67 different languages by one of the professional translators in Indonesia, Tanti Lesmana. Most importantly, the translation of this novel from English to Indonesian may contain syntactic translation strategies that influence the quality of the translated product.

This research addresses the evolving landscape of translation studies, delving into the intricacies of syntactic translation strategies and their impact on the quality of literary translations. By synthesizing theoretical frameworks, acknowledging the limitations of previous research, and delineating clear objectives, this study seeks to shed light on an underexplored facet of translation studies, offering valuable insights for scholars and practitioners in the field.

### **Research Method**

This study constitutes a descriptive qualitative study focusing on translation products. According to Cresswell (2014:32), qualitative research is a methodological approach that seeks to

explore and comprehend the meanings individuals or groups attribute to a social or human problem. The research methodology involves formulating evolving questions and procedures, collecting data within the participants' milieu, an inductive data analysis process progressing from specific instances to overarching themes, and the researcher deriving interpretations regarding the meaning embedded in the data. The resultant written report exhibits a flexible structure, accommodating the dynamic nature inherent in qualitative research.

The data source for this study's exploration of translation strategies comes from Paulo Coelho's novel 'The Alchemist' and its Bahasa Indonesia translation, 'Sang Alkemis.' 'The Alchemist' and 'Sang Alkemis' were selected as the data sources for their abundant and relevant content, particularly for examining the application of translation strategies. This study also focuses on the syntactic translation strategies employed in translating noun phrases within the novels, underscoring their critical role in translation.

The method of collecting data includes reading both the source language text, the novel *The Alchemist*, and the target language text, *Sang Alkemis*, note-taking, classifying data based on translation strategies theory, and assessing translation qualities based on the qualitative parameter of each translation category.

The data collection regarding the quality of translation in terms of accuracy, readability, and acceptability is taken from quality assessment results that several qualified assessors do. To maintain the validity and reliability of the assessment result, a minimum of 3 (or any odd numbers) qualified assessors are chosen to assess the quality of translation. Qualified assessors, in this case, are (1) translators experienced in producing, editing, or proofreading English-Indonesian translation for more than two years, (2) Indonesian native speakers who are competent in linguistics,

understand English, and utilize proper Bahasa Indonesia.

The present study employs the triangulation technique as a method of data analysis, aiming to enhance the credibility and validity of the research findings. Credibility, denoting the trustworthiness and believability of a study, is distinct from validity, which pertains to the accuracy with which a study reflects or evaluates the concepts or ideas under investigation (Noble and Heale, 2019:67). Triangulation involves the utilization of multiple methods, theories, observers, or data sources to cultivate a comprehensive understanding of phenomena.

This study adopts an informal method for data presentation. This includes a detailed representation of the translator's translation strategies for rendering noun phrases, clauses, and sentences containing noun phrases in the novels. Additionally, the findings from the translation quality assessments, encompassing aspects of accuracy, readability, and acceptability, are also presented.

For each accuracy, acceptability, and readability aspect, the assessors assign a score from 1 to 3, where 1 point presents the translation is not accurate/not readable/not acceptable, 2 points present less accurate/less readable/less acceptable, and 3 points presents accurate/readable/ acceptable.

The qualitative parameter for the accuracy aspect is described as follows. The translation is accurate, and 3 points are given if the meaning of words, phrases, clauses or sentences, and technical terms in the SL is accurately translated into TL, according to the dictionary of meaning, collocation, etc. Distortion of meaning is not found.

It needs to be more accurate and given 2 points if most of the words, phrases, clauses, sentences, and technical terms in the SL are accurately translated into TL, according to the dictionary of

meaning, collocation, etc. However, there is a distortion of meaning that influences the original message or purpose of the SL.

The translation needs to be more accurate, and 1 point is given if the meaning of words, phrases, clauses, or sentences, and technical terms in the SL is not accurately translated into TL, according to the dictionary of meaning, collocation, etc. In other words, the meaning of SL in the TL is deleted.

The qualitative parameter for scoring the acceptability is as follows. It is considered acceptable and given 3 points if the translation product sounds natural. The technical or cultural terms used in the SL is familiar to the native speakers of Indonesia. The phrase, clause, and sentence used are appropriate to the rules or grammar of the Indonesian language as SPOK (Subjek/Subject, Predikat / Predicate, Objek / Object, Keterangan / Complement).

It is considered less acceptable and given 2 points if the translation product sounds natural. However, there needs to be more technical terms or grammatical mistakes. Then, it is considered unacceptable, and given that one of the translation products does not sound natural, the words, clauses, or sentences used are unfamiliar to the native speakers.

Furthermore, the qualitative parameter for assessing the readability is as follows. It is categorized as a high level of readability and given 3 points if the translation product is easy to understand by the readers. It has a medium level of readability and is given 2 points if the translation product is understandable enough by the reader; however, some parts need to be read twice or more to understand the whole meaning. Moreover, it is classified as a low level of readability and given 1 point if the translation product needs to be more challenging to understand.

## **Theoretical Framework**

To assess how syntactic translation strategies impact the quality of translating “The Alchemist” into “Sang Alkemis,” two fundamental theories form the analytical framework, steering the investigation across different aspects of the translation process. Firstly, it examines Chesterman's theory of translation strategies (2016: 91), which addresses linguistic aspects across three levels: syntactic strategies, semantic strategies, and pragmatic strategies. The former predominantly involves the manipulation of textual form, the latter pertains to nuanced adjustments of meaning, and the latter predominantly entails the selection of information in the target text, a decision shaped by the translator's understanding of the prospective readership of the translation. This investigation centers on the employment of syntactic translation strategies by professional translators, elucidating their impact on the quality of translation outputs.

Secondly, it considers the theory of translation qualities as proposed by Nababan et al. (2012). According to Nababan et al. (2012:44-45), a high-quality translation is characterized by fulfilling three prominent criteria: accuracy, readability, and acceptability. Accuracy is used to evaluate the equivalence between source and target language text. The term accurate means correct in all details; in this case, a translator must be able to transfer the exact meaning of a source language into a target language (Danbaba, 2017: 4). The conveyed information is exact, with no omissions, additions, or alterations, maintaining fidelity to the original content.

Readability refers to the ease of grasping the idea in the writing. In other words, it is about how easily a translated text can be understood by its intended audience. The readability of a translated text attains a high standard when it is easily comprehensible,

enabling the reader to grasp the conveyed message, irrespective of the alignment of the message with that of the source language text. Essentially, the reader assumes a determinant role in assessing the text's readability.

Generally, factors that affect readability include the use of appropriate vocabulary, grammar, and sentence structure, as well as cultural considerations. Ensuring readability in translation is essential for effective communication. It can be achieved through professional human translators or machine translation software trained on a large corpus of high-quality translations.

Acceptability refers to the translations of the talent with the rules, norms, and culture e of the target language. According to McDonald (2010: 25), acceptance engenders the prevalence and organic integration of the translated text within the target language, adhering to the linguistic rules and norms of the target language readers. The imperative lies in the text's reception and comprehension by the target audience.

Readers discern the meaning encapsulated in the sentences constituting a translated text and contextualize it within the broader situational context. The term “acceptability” is employed to denote the fidelity of the translation to the linguistic conventions and textual norms of the target language. It underscores the notion that a translation achieves adequacy when adhering to norms derived from the source culture and language. At the same time, it is deemed acceptable when aligning with the norms prevalent in the target culture and language.

### **Result and Discussion**

In translating Paulo Coelho's “The Alchemist” into the Indonesian version “Sang Alkemis,” various syntactic strategies were employed to maintain the original's essence and style. This



translation focused on accurately conveying the meaning and preserving the author's unique narrative tone. Syntactic strategies, crucial for structuring sentences and phrases, played a key role in adapting Coelho's prose to align with the grammatical nuances of the Indonesian language. This brief analysis aims to shed light on these syntactic adaptations, exploring how the translator navigated the linguistic intricacies to deliver a version that resonates with Indonesian readers while remaining faithful to the original text.

Eight key syntactic translation strategies proposed by Chesterman (2016) were identified in the novels: literal translation, transposition, unit shift, phrase structure change, clause structure change, sentence structure change, cohesion change, and scheme change. It is then assessed by an evaluation team consisting of three individuals, Indonesian native speakers, who are experts in the field of translation and have backgrounds as translators for more than two years.

Literal translation, commonly known as word-for-word translation, is a translation strategy in which the translator tries to say as accurately the original words and sentence structure as possible when translating a text from a source language to the target language, without taking into account idiomatic expressions, cultural differences or nuances that may exist between the two languages. An instance that is taken from the novels is presented as follows.

SL: "Can I help you?" asked **the man behind the window**. (The Alchemist, 1993: 32)

TL: "Bisa saya bantu?," tanya **laki-laki di balik loket**. (Sang Alkemis, 2005: 35)

In the source language (SL), the phrase "the man" is a simple noun phrase with the definite article "the" specifying a particular individual. The target language (TL) translates this to "laki-laki" in

Indonesian, where the definite aspect is less emphasized, relying more on contextual cues than explicit articles.

Similarly, the prepositional phrase “behind the window” is translated literally to “di balik loket” in Indonesian, with “di balik” denoting “behind” and “loket” referring to a counter or window in a service context. This translation maintains a direct correspondence between the SL and TL words, aligning each component of the original phrases.

Transposition strategy in translation refers to a change in the grammatical category or word class during translation. Transposition can involve changing nouns to verbs, adjectives to adverbs, etc. An example extracted from the novels is presented as follows.

SL: It was **a pleasant change** from talking to his sheep. (The Alchemist, 1993: 16)

TL: **Senang rasanya** kali ini teman bicaranya bukanlah domba-dombanya. (Sang Alkemis, 2005: 10)

“A pleasant change” is a noun phrase. “Change” is the noun, and “pleasant” is the adjective modifying it. The phrase conveys the idea of a welcome or enjoyable alteration in the situation. The phrase “senang rasanya” translates to something akin to “it feels pleasant” or “it is pleasing.” In this translation, “sensing” is an adjective meaning “pleasant,” and “asana” refers to “the feeling” or “how it feels.” The translation shifts the grammatical structure from an English noun phrase to an Indonesian adjective phrase.

Unit shift, on the other hand, involves the movement or shifting of larger linguistic units within a sentence. This unit can include morphemes, words, phrases, clauses, sentences, and even paragraphs. The following is an example of a unit shift.

SL: “For several reasons. But let us say that the most important is that you have succeeded in discovering **your legend.**”

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(The Alchemist, 1993: 28)

TL: “Karena beberapa alasan. Tapi anggap saja yang paling penting karena kau telah berhasil menemukan **takdirmu**.” (Sang Alkemis, 2005: 29)

In the SL, the phrase "your Legends" is a noun phrase referring to a specific concept or an idea in the narrative of the novel. This concept represents individual destinies or life paths people are meant to pursue, often tied to their aspirations, dreams, or purposes. "Personal Legends" is not a general or an everyday term. It is a particular term for the author's work and story.

Translating such specific concepts can sometimes require adjustments in the target language to ensure that the meaning is accurately conveyed and that the text reads naturally to the target audience. However, in the target language, Indonesian, the translation “takdir” involves a unit shift where the noun phrase "your Legends" is shifted into a single word with two morphemes, "takdir" and suffix “-mu,” that can be translated as "destiny" or "fate." Therefore, this translation involves a unit shift strategy.

Phrase structure change strategy refers to the alteration of the hierarchical structure of phrases within a sentence, including number, definiteness, and modification of the phrase. In this strategy, the translator often modifies the structure of phrases while maintaining the overall meaning. An example of phrase structure change is shown below.

SL: He paid the wool and asked **the shepherd** to return the following year. (The Alchemist, 1993: 16)

TL: Kemudian dia membayar harga wol itu dan meminta **si anak gembala** datang kembali tahun depan. (Sang Alkemis, 2005: 11)

In the SL, “the shepherd” is a simple noun phrase consisting of a determiner “the” and a noun “shepherd.” It functions as the

object of the verb “asked.” In the TL, “si anak gimbali” is an expanded noun phrase. It is made more specific and descriptive compared to the English version. “Si” is a definite article, “anak” means “child” or “young person,” and “gimbali” means “shepherd.” The syntactic function of “the shepherd” and “si anak gimbali” is the same in both sentences; they both serve as the objects of the verb “asked” in English and “meminta” in Indonesian.

Clause structure change involves the changes in the structure of the clause in terms of its constituent phrases. Various subclasses include constituent order analyzed simply as Subject, Verb, Object, Complement, and Adverbial. It includes active vs. passive voice, finite vs. non-finite structure, or transitive vs. intransitive. In short, it refers to modifying the structure or arrangement of clauses within a sentence. Here is an instance extracted from the novels, provided as follows.

SL: The older woman led the boy to a room at the back of her house, separated from **her living room** by **a curtain of coated beads**. (The Alchemist, 1993: 20)

TL: Perempuan tua itu membawa si anak lelaki ke ruangan di bagian belakang rumahnya: ruangan itu dipisahkan oleh **tirai manik-manik berwarna-warni** dari **ruang tamunya**. (Sang Alkemis, 2005: 18)

The arrangement and presentation of information within the clauses in the SL and TL demonstrates clause structure change. The SL has two main clauses: “The old woman led the boy to a room at the back of her house” and “It was separated from her living room by a curtain of colored beads.” The second clause describes how the room is separated from “her living room,” a noun phrase, by “a curtain of colored beads,” which is another noun phrase.

In the TL, the clause structure has been modified. “Perempuan tua itu membawa si anak lelaki ke ruangan di bagian

belakang rumahnya.” This is a direct translation of the first clause. Then, "Ruangan itu dipisahkan oleh tirai manik-manik berwarna-warni dari ruang tamunya." This is restructured second clause. The second clause in Indonesian places more emphasis on “tirai manik-manik berwarna-warni” (a curtain of colored beads) as the subject, with “dipisahkan” (was separated) as the passive verb, and “dari ruang tamunya” (from her living room) following it.

The clause structure change from active to passive voice in the Indonesian translation shifts the focus within the sentence. The English version uses an active voice, focusing on the action of separation. The Indonesian version, however, uses a passive construction, focusing on the curtain as the element that does the separating.

Sentence structure change can involve changes between main clause and sub-clause status, changes of sub-clause types, to word order, or sentence length. This strategy focuses on modifying the entire sentence structure to convey the same meaning as the source text but in a grammatically and stylistically appropriate way in the target language.

SL: **His purpose in life** was to travel, and after **two years** of walking **the Andalusian terrain**, he knew **all the region's cities**. (Sang Alkemis, 2005: 13)

TL: **Tujuan hidupnya** adalah berkelana. Setelah **satu tahun** menjelajahi **kawasan Andalusia**, dia sudah tahu **semua kota di daerah tersebut**. (Sang Alkemis, 2005: 13)

In the SL, the sentence is a compound sentence with two independent clauses joined by the coordinating conjunction "and." The first clause is "His purpose in life was to travel," and the second clause is "After two years of walking the Andalusian terrain, he knew all the cities of the region." The first clause states the

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character's purpose, and the second describes the outcome of his travels.

The translated sentence in TL transforms the second clause into a subordinate clause using the subordinating conjunction "selah." The sentence structure is changed from a compound sentence to a complex sentence. Instead of coordinating with "and," the translator separated the clauses into two sentences, each expressing a separate idea. The first sentence conveys the character's purpose, and the second sentence describes his knowledge of the cities. There is also a difference in sentence length between the two languages. The SL sentence is relatively longer than the TL sentence. This restructuring represents a sentence structure change strategy.

Cohesion change refers to alterations in the way different parts of a text are connected or linked together. It involves changes in cohesive devices such as pronouns, conjunctions, or lexical repetition. It also affects intra-textual reference, ellipsis, substitution, pronominalization, repetition, or the use of connectors of various kinds. Cohesion change aims to maintain the flow and coherence of the text by adjusting the relationships between sentences and paragraphs. An example of cohesion change is presented in the following data.

SL: "Then, at the Egyptian pyramids," he slowly said **the last three words** so the old woman would understand. (The Alchemist, 1993: 22)

TL: "Kemudian, di Piramida-Piramida Mesir itu," si anak sengaja mengucapkan **keempat kata terakhir itu** perlahan-lahan, supaya perempuan tua itu mengerti (Sang Alkemis, 2005: 20)

The pronoun "he" refers to the person speaking in the SL. In the TL, the phrase "si anak" is used, providing a specific reference to the individual speaking. This could be a choice made in translation to

maintain clarity or cultural nuances. In the TL, there is an addition for clarification. The phrase "si anak sengaja," which means "the child intentionally," is included, conveying the idea that the child deliberately pronounced the last four words slowly for the old woman to understand. This addition provides more explicit information about the child's intention.

The translation of "the last three words" into "keep kata terakhir" also represents a change in cohesion. In the source text, "the last three words" refer to a specific part of the speech. In the translation, "I" translates to "the last four words," which includes a change in the number of words specified. This is an adaptation made by the translator to align with the context and the target language's conventions, resulting in a cohesion change.

Scheme change refers to alterations in a linguistic system's underlying structure or pattern. Scheme change involves changes in the stylistic or rhetorical scheme, such as parallelism, repetition, alliteration, antithesis, chiasmus, etc., used in the source text. This strategy aims to adapt the text to the target language's rhetorical conventions, style, or cultural norms while preserving its overall meaning.

SL: Like **crickets, grasshoppers, four-leaf, leaf clovers**. (The Alchemist, 1993: 35)

SL: Seperti **jangkrik, dan ekspektasi-ekspektasi; seperti kadal dan daun semanggi berhelai empat**. (Sang Alkemis, 2005: 40)

The SL exhibits parallelism in its structure, emphasizing a repeated pattern for rhetorical effect. The repeated use of "like" creates a parallel structure. The phrases "like crickets," "like grasshoppers," "like lizard," and "like four-leaf clovers" follow a consistent grammatical pattern. In the TL, "seperti" serves the same function as "like" in the SL, indicating a comparison. The phrases

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“seperti jangkrik,” “dan “ekspektasi-ekspektasi,” “seperti kadal,” and “dan daun semanggi berhelai empat” maintain a parallel structure. This presents that the translator uses an alternative of scheme change ST scheme  $X \rightarrow$  TT scheme X; if the SL scheme is considered relevant to the translation task, it can be (to some extent) preserved: in fact, no change.

The analysis of the translation of “The Alchemist” by Paulo Coelho into Indonesian as “Sang Alkemis” involves a thorough examination across three key dimensions: Accuracy, Acceptability, and Readability. These aspects assess how faithful the translation is to the original text, how well it fits into the Indonesian culture and language, and how easily readers can understand it.

By employing a panel of knowledgeable assessors, each possessing a background in translation and linguistic proficiency in both the source and target languages, this study aims to assess the influence of the syntactic translation strategies mentioned previously on the effectiveness and quality of the translation and how well it conveys the essence of the literary work to Indonesian readers. Their assessments were conducted using a well-defined set of criteria, ensuring the objectivity and reliability of the results.

Assessment	Score		
	Accu- racy	Accept- ability	Read- ability
Total	39	45	47
Average	2.43	2.81	2.93

This score suggests that the translations are, on average, highly accurate, acceptable, and readable by the target readers. The average accuracy score is 2.43 out of 3, indicating that the



translations closely match the source text's content and meaning. This high level of accuracy is crucial for ensuring that the translated content conveys the intended message effectively.

The acceptability score averages 2.81 out of 3, indicating that the target readers receive the translations well. This suggests that the translations' style and tone align with the audience's preferences and expectations.

With an average readability score of 2.93 out of 3, the translations are accurate, acceptable, and highly readable. This is essential for ensuring that the translated content is easily comprehensible and accessible to the target readers. While these scores indicate a baseline level of quality and competence in the translation process, they also indicate a clear opportunity for refinement and enhancement within some particular translation strategies.

The choice and implementation of translation strategies play a pivotal role in determining the quality of our translated content. Out of the ten syntactic translation strategies employed to translate the SL to the TL, an impressive eight strategies have consistently demonstrated their influence on the translation's quality, leading to translations that excel in accuracy, readability, and acceptability.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, this research sheds light on the intricate process of literary translation, emphasizing the pivotal role of syntactic translation strategies in shaping the quality of the translated text. By delving into the Indonesian rendition of Paulo Coelho's "The Alchemist," titled "Sang Alkemis," the study illuminates how syntactic choices impact the translated novel's accuracy, readability, and acceptability.

The identified syntactic translation strategies, encompassing literal translation, transposition, unit shift, phrase structure change,

clause structure change, sentence structure change, cohesion change, and scheme change, collectively serve as the architects of the translated narrative, influencing not only the linguistic fidelity but also the aesthetic and emotional dimensions of the work.

The exceptional performance of the translation product, with an average accuracy score of 2.43, acceptability score of 2.81, and readability score of 2.93 out of 3, suggests a high level of effectiveness in preserving the nuances and message of the source text. This suggests that the source text's nuanced aspects and core message are adeptly preserved, ensuring a seamless and engaging reading experience for the target audience.

Moreover, the credibility of the assessment is reinforced by the expertise of the evaluation team, consisting of individuals with a profound understanding of the intricacies of translation and practical experience as translators. Their discerning analysis provides a solid foundation for the reliability and validity of the study's conclusions. As literary translation continues to evolve in a globalized world, this research underscores the significance of syntactic translation strategies as indispensable tools for achieving both linguistic accuracy and cultural resonance. Moving forward, further exploration into the dynamic interplay between these strategies and the nuances of diverse literary genres and cultural contexts promises to enrich the understanding of effective translation practices.

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