



# An Analysis of Transposition Techniques in Indonesian Subtitle of Knives Out Movie

Fayza Ulhaq<sup>1</sup>, Mohammad Yahya<sup>2\*</sup>, Siti Yuliah<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1,2,3</sup> Politeknik Negeri Bandung, Bandung – Indonesia

[fayza.ulhaq.bing21@polban.ac.id](mailto:fayza.ulhaq.bing21@polban.ac.id)<sup>1</sup>, [m.yahya@polban.ac.id](mailto:m.yahya@polban.ac.id)<sup>2\*</sup>, [siti.yuliah@polban.ac.id](mailto:siti.yuliah@polban.ac.id)<sup>3</sup>

## Abstract

*This research focuses on analyzing transposition techniques and the translation quality of the Indonesian subtitle of Knives Out Movie. Subtitles are needed in the entertainment industry, particularly to translate narratives and dialogues, for viewers understanding although the grammatical rules between source and target language are different. This study aims to identify the most dominant type of transposition techniques, and to assess the accuracy and acceptability aspect of the translation quality. This research uses qualitative methods. There are 413 data of Indonesian subtitles applied transposition techniques. The most dominant type is structure shift with 37.31% of the data followed by unit shift with 33.18% of the data, intra-system shift with 22.03% of the data, class shift with 4.12% of the data, and level shift with 3.39% of the data. Shifts occurred because of the grammatical differences between the source language (English) and the target language (Indonesian). For the translation quality assessment, the final score is 2.83, which means the Indonesian subtitles that apply transposition techniques are accurate and acceptable. There are 90% accurate translations and 10% less accurate translations. For acceptability, there are 88% acceptable translations and 12% less acceptable translations. This analysis can enrich research in translation studies and serve as a reference or additional material for the Translation course.*

**Keywords:** *Transposition techniques, Translation quality, Knives Out movie*

## Introduction

Hornby (2015) defines language as a means of communication, both oral and written, used by individuals in a specific region or country, which may vary from one place to another. This challenge can be addressed through translation as the process of replacing text in one language with its equivalent in another (Bell, 1991; Catford, 1965; Munday, 2016; Nida & Taber, 1982). Various translation techniques exist, one of which is transposition. According to Newmark (2001), transposition is a translation technique involving grammatical changes when translating from the source language to the target language. This method is particularly useful when the grammatical structures of the two languages differ significantly, ensuring the translated text remains natural and accurate.

Translation plays a crucial role in the entertainment industry, particularly in creating subtitles for videos and films. Subtitling, a popular form of audiovisual translation in today's digital era, involves converting spoken dialogue into written text usually displayed at the bottom of a screen, driven by advancements in technology and internet accessibility (Cintas, 2012; Rahmah, 2020; Supardi & Putri, 2018). In other words, subtitles are essential for helping viewers understand

movies or videos in different languages. Thus, they enable people from diverse linguistic backgrounds to comprehend the content and are commonly found in films and television shows.

Furthermore, the transposition technique is significantly used in translation subtitles in order to achieve the acceptability of translation. It is due to the fact that the grammatical structure from the source language into the target language is different. Besides, translation subtitle films demand the translator to consider the space of the text. It means that the translator does not only avoid some translation techniques like paraphrase and amplification but also inaccurate translation. Thus, this study analyzed the transposition technique used in the Indonesian subtitle of *Knives Out* Movie and assesses the accuracy and acceptability of translation quality.

However, several studies on the translation technique of transposition have been conducted previously. First, Anggraeni et.al (2018) conducted the analysis related to the use of transposition procedures in English-Indonesian subtitle of *Epic* Movie. The results indicated that 63.9% of the data frequently involves literary translation. Second, Adipta & Amilia (2022) analyzed the use of transposition technique in the subtitle of *Social Dilemma* movie. The results highlighted that the structure shift has become the most frequently applied type of transposition techniques with 36% of the data. Third, Fasya (2023) researched the transposition techniques in the translation of a book entitled “*The Subtle Art of Not Giving a F\*ck into the Indonesian version*”. The results showed that the most dominant type of transposition technique is intra-system shift with 33.1% of the data. Although both the present and previous studies similarly conducted the translation technique analysis of transposition, the present study also focuses on the translation quality assessment related to the accuracy and acceptability aspect.

## Theoretical Framework

### Transposition Techniques

In Catford's (1965) term, transposition is called ‘shift’ which means departures from formal correspondence in the process of going from the SL to the TL”. It is classified into two types: level shift and category shift.

#### 1. Level shift

Level shift refers to a situation where a linguistic element in the source language is translated into an equivalent element at a different linguistic level in the target language (Catford, 1965). It occurs from the level of grammar to lexis. The example of a level shift is shown below.

SL: Recently in India, Internet lynch mobs have killed a dozen people.

TL: *Baru-baru ini di India, massa hakim jalanan di internet telah membunuh lusinan orang.*

The phrase ‘have killed’ in the SL is expressed using present perfect which describes an activity completed within a period up to the present (Hornby, 2015). However, in the TL, the activity taking place in the past is not described grammatically, but lexically by using ‘*sudah atau telah*’ (Adipta & Amilia, 2022).

#### 2. Category shift

Catford (1965) mentioned that category shifts refer to changes that deviate from formal equivalence during the translation process. Formal correspondence in translation refers to a literal approach where the goal is to stay as close to the original text as possible. There are

various categories in which formal correspondence can be constructed, including class, structure, unit, and intra-system.

a. Class shift

The class shift occurs when an SL item corresponds to a TL item in a different class. The example from Sipayung (2018) is given as follows:

SL: *Kerajaan Sunda mangalami keruntuhan pada tahun 1579 M akibat serangan pasukan Islam dari Banten.*

TL: Sunda fell in 1579 after attacked by Banten.

It is classified as a class shift because the word 'akibat' in source language is a noun. However, when it is translated into the target language, it becomes 'after' that is an adverb.

b. Structure shift

Structure shifts occur when the target language elements of the unit are different, or they are the same but arranged differently with the source language. The example is given as follows:

SL: This is a real change in a generation.

TL: *Ini perubahan nyata dalam satu generasi.*

In the SL, the structure of 'real change' phrase which is an adjective followed by a noun is translated into 'perubahan nyata' phrase that has a noun followed by an adjective structure. It is classified as a structure shift because the position of the modifier and head is different between the source and target language.

c. Unit shift

The unit shift occurs when a unit at one rank in the source language is translated to a different rank in the target language. There are two optional directions for the shift: either down rank (from the upper unit to the lower unit) or up rank (from the lower unit to the upper unit). For example,

SL: *Bangsa Indonesia.*

TL: Indonesian.

The lingual unit of 'Bangsa Indonesia' in the SL has a phrase form. However, when it is translated into the target language, it becomes a word 'Indonesian' which causes a down rank shift from phrase to word.

d. Intra-system shift

Intra-system shift is related to numbers and articles. It happens when the source language (SL) and target language (TL) have systems that are roughly similar in structure, but translation occurs when a non-equivalent term is chosen from the TL system.

SL: I don't want my secrets to die with me.

TL: *Aku tak mau rahasiaku mati denganku.*

The word 'secrets' in the SL is in plural form indicated from the existence of suffix -s/es that is placed at the end of the word. However, it is translated to a singular word in target language. In Indonesian grammar, plural nouns are formed using reduplication, and this shift occurs when translation involves the internal structure of language formation (Fitria, 2020).

### The Quality of Translation

According to Nababan et.al (2012), translation quality is evaluated based on the accuracy of message transfer, the acceptability of the translation, and the readability of the text. Therefore, there are three aspects of translation quality: accuracy, acceptability, and readability. However, this study only focuses on assessing accuracy and acceptability. It is due to the fact that the transposition technique has significant contribution in accuracy and acceptability of translation.

#### a. Accuracy aspect

Table 1 shows the parameter of accuracy. The parameters above have 1 to 3 scales. The higher the score is given by the rater, the more accurate the translation is and vice versa.

**Table 1**  
Parameter of Accuracy (Nababan et al., 2012)

Translation Category	Score	Qualitative Parameter
Accurate	3	Words, phrases, clauses, and sentences do not have their meanings distorted.
Less accurate	2	Even when the words, phrases, clauses, and sentences are conveyed appropriately, some certain distortions or ambiguities impact the entire message.
Inaccurate	1	There are missing or inaccurately translated words, phrases, clauses, and sentences.

Testing accuracy is crucial throughout the translation process, making high accuracy a key criterion for a good quality translation (Larson, 1998; Rahmah & Zamzani, 2022). To assess the final score of translation quality, the average score of accuracy multiplied by 3 and the average score of acceptability multiplied by 3. Then, the score is added up and divided by 5.

#### b. Acceptability aspect

The parameter of the acceptability aspect of translation quality is shown in Table 2. The higher the score a rater gives, the more acceptable the translation is and vice versa.

**Table 2**  
Parameter of Acceptability (Nababan et al., 2012)

Translation Category	Score	Qualitative Parameter
Acceptable	3	The translation seems to flow naturally. The reader is familiar with the technical phrases because they are frequently utilized. The Indonesian language's rules apply to the phrases, clauses, and sentences that are employed.
Less acceptable	2	In general, the translation seems natural although there are a few grammatical mistakes or issues with the usage of technical words.
Unacceptable	1	The translation does not seem natural or like it was translated. The reader is unfamiliar with the technical terms employed, as they are not generally used. The reader does not recognize the phrases, clauses, or sentences employed, nor do they follow the rules of the Indonesian language.

To assess the final score of translation quality, the average score of accuracy multiplied by 3 and the average score of acceptability multiplied by 3. Then, the score is added up and divided by 5.

### Sampling Method

To determine the sample size to be used in the translation quality assessment, the approach of Slovin was used. The formula below shows how to calculate the sample size.

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + Ne^2}$$

Explanation:

$n$  = Number of samples

$N$  = Population

$e$  = Error rate (5% = 0.05)

Sample size of each type of change in transposition techniques used for translation quality assessment was selected using proportional stratified random sampling. According to Simkus (2023), by using stratified random sampling, a population can be split up into smaller groups (called strata) according to shared traits. In addition, Hassan (2024) mentions that in proportional stratified random sampling, the sample size for each stratum is determined in proportion to the stratum's size within the population.

$$\text{Sample size of a group} = \frac{\text{size of entire group}}{\text{Population size}} \cdot \text{sample size}$$

## Method

This study used qualitative methods in analyzing data which means that the study only focuses on specific research problems. The source of data was taken from English and the Indonesian subtitle of *Knives Out* movie. Meanwhile, the data were sentences, clauses, phrases, and words from the subtitle. The research also collected data from all questionnaires from the rater. In analyzing data, there are some analyses conducted, namely translation shift for analyzing the types of transposition while in assessing the accuracy and acceptability of translation the concept of translation quality Nababan et al. (2012) is used. There are several steps conducted in analyzing the data such as collecting data, selecting data, assessing data, and describing the analysis. In collecting data, the study implemented some techniques, namely content analysis and questionnaire. The researcher identifies all sentences, clauses, and phrases which are translated using the transposition technique. The research also classified the translation shift based on the Catford (1965) criteria and also determined the translation accuracy and acceptability. Finally, the study displays the analysis of data in the form of the frequency of types of transposition techniques, degree of accuracy, and degree of acceptability in order to drawing the conclusion.

## Results and Discussion

### Results

#### Transposition Techniques

The frequency of types of transposition techniques applied in the data is presented on the table below.

**Table 3**  
The Frequency of Types of Transposition Techniques

No	Transposition Technique Types	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Level shift	14	3%
2.	Class shift	17	4%
3.	Structure shift	154	37%
4.	Unit shift	137	33%
5.	Intra-system shift	91	22%
<b>Total</b>		<b>413</b>	<b>100%</b>

The total of data found is 413 data. The most dominant type of transposition techniques applied is structure shift with 154 data or 37%. It is followed by unit shift with 137 data or 33%. Then, there are 91 data of intra-system shift found or 22% of total data. The next is class shift with 17 data of transposition techniques found or 4% of total data identified. The least is level shift with 14 data or 3% of total data.

#### Level Shift

SL: I've put all of it in this letter to her.

TL: Aku sudah memasukkan semuanya ke surat ini.

This translation is categorized as level shift. It is because the present perfect tense that has the formula 'have/has + V3' in the source language has a target language translation equivalent to a different degree that is lexis '*sudah*'. According to the Indonesian dictionary, '*sudah*' refers to 'states an action that has occurred' (Kemendikbud, 2023).

#### Category Shift

##### a. Class shift

SL: My presence will be ornamental.

TL: Keberadaanku bagaikan pajangan.

In this sample, the class shift happens from adjective to noun. According to Hornby (2015), 'ornamental' is an adjective that means "used as decoration rather than for a practical purpose". The translator chose to translate it to a noun that is 'pajangan'. Based on Badan Bahasa Kemendikbud (2023), pajangan means something that is used to decorate a building.

##### b. Structure shift

SL: Physical evidence can tell a clear story with a forked tongue.

TL: Bukti fisik bisa bercerita jelas dengan lidah bercabang.

This sample classified as structure shift because in source language, the phrase structure is 'modifier + head' or 'physical + evidence'. However, when it is translated to TL, the structure becomes 'head + modifier' or '*bukti + fisik*'.

##### c. Unit shift

SL: Would you mind coming to the house early?

TL: Bisa kau datang lebih awal?

In this translation, the change of rank occurs from a word 'early' in the source language to a phrase '*lebih awal*' in target language. It means, there is an up-rank from word to phrase.

## d. Intra-system shift

SL: 30 languages.TL: *Tiga puluh bahasa*.

In this translation, Intra-system shift from plural to singular occurred. The reason is both nouns in SL and TL were mentioning the same number of language or 'bahasa'. However, in SL the form of the noun is plural unlike the noun form in TL that is in singular.

**Translation Quality Assessment**

There are two forms of translation quality assessment: accuracy and acceptability. The results show that of 203 data assessed, 183 data or 90% of data is accurate, 20 data or 10% of the data is less accurate, and 0 data of inaccurate. The translation quality categories for accuracy, data, and percentage are shown on Table 4.

**Table 4**  
The Categorization of Accuracy Aspect

No	Translation Category	Total	Percentage
1.	Accurate	183	90%
2.	Less accurate	20	10%
<b>Total</b>		<b>203</b>	<b>100%</b>

## a. Accurate

SL: Yeah, well, he's gently requesting, but I'm gonna have to make that an order.TL: *Dia meminta dengan lembut, tapi aku memerintah kalian.*

This translation is categorized as an accurate translation. Although there is a change of class from noun to verb, the message is transferred accurately. It is because there is no distortion of meaning and no ambiguity. All the raters give a score of 3 for this sample.

## b. Less accurate

SL: Get it back and destroy it.TL: *Ambil dan hancurkan.*

This translation is classified as a less accurate translation. It is because there is a distortion of meaning. The message in the source language is transferred less accurately to the target language. 'Get it back' has a closer meaning to 'ambil kembali' than 'ambil' in target language. For this sample, two raters give a score of 2 and one rater gives the score of 3.

For the acceptability, from 203 data assessed, 179 of data or 88% of data is acceptable, 24 data or 12% of the data is less acceptable, and 0 data is unacceptable. The translation quality categories for acceptability, data, and percentage are shown on Table 5.

**Table 3**  
The Categorization of Acceptability Aspect

No	Translation Category	Total	Percentage
1.	Acceptable	178	88%
2.	Less acceptable	25	12%
<b>Total</b>		<b>203</b>	<b>100%</b>

The final score of translation quality of the Indonesian subtitle of *Knives Out* movie that applies transposition techniques is 2.83. It means that the data is accurate and acceptable. The calculation of the final score of translation quality is shown on Table 6.

a. Acceptable

SL: *Poor Fran*.

TL: *Fran yang malang*.

This translation is categorized as an acceptable translation. It is because the translations feel natural, the translation use familiar terms, and the translation is by the rules of the Indonesian language. All of the raters give a score of 3.

b. Less acceptable

SL: 1209, *Columbus Road*.

TL: 1209 *Jalan Columbus*.

This translation is classified as a less acceptable translation. It is because the translation feels not natural and not in accordance with Indonesian language rules. A name for a road should not be translated. Therefore, the name of the road that is 'Columbus Road' is better kept in the source language. For this sample, two raters give the score of 1 and one rater gives the score of 3.

**Table 4**  
Final Score of Translation Quality

Final Score			
Accuracy	Acceptability	Sum	Average
$2.86 \times 3 = 8.58$	$2.8 \times 2 = 5.6$	14.18	$14.18 : 5 = 2.83$

## Discussion

The implementation of the transposition technique in translation subtitles cannot be avoided by the translator. The transposition technique is not optional but it should be used by the translator in translation subtitles. It is due to the fact that in translation subtitles the translator is faced with factors of grammatical differences and limited space of the text.

Furthermore, different grammatical system is an important aspect of why the translation of subtitles film should implement the transposition technique. The different grammatical systems of the source text (English) and target text (Indonesian) demand the translator implement this technique. Transposition or form shift is a translation process that relates changes in grammatical form from SL to TL (Newmark, 2001).

Moreover, in translation subtitle text, another factor is the limited space of the text. It is a problem that generally appears in translation subtitles because translation subtitles are considered as audio-visual translations. In this case, the translator is demanded to transfer the message and achieve an acceptable translation. Thus, the translator requires the proper translation technique like the transposition technique to solve the problem. Applying a shift in translating, whether shift in terms of form or meaning is one way to overcome the problem of equivalence (Machali, 2000).



## Conclusion

The transposition technique is an essential issue of translation. This technique is not an optional choice but it should be implemented by the translator in translation subtitle film. In translation, subtitle film translators not only demand to translate the text accurately but also acceptable. This is because there are grammatical differences between the source language (English) and the target language (Indonesian). Besides, the implementation of the transposition technique can make the translator fully transfer the message from the source language so it can affect the accuracy and acceptability of translation. The technique also makes the translation natural and familiar to the target reader.

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