

## **Preserving Bahasa Indonesia Through Translating Modality System in The English Classic Novel “*Little Women*” by Louisa May Alcott in English into Bahasa Indonesia: Translation Studies on Translation Shift and Variation Meaning Realization**

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**Abstract.** English and Bahasa Indonesia have different ways to realize modality system. English has various modal verbs to express modality, whereas Bahasa Indonesia uses combination of auxiliary verbs, adverbs, and particle to express it. Therefore, the translation process of the modality from English to Bahasa Indonesia will realize shift, the small linguistic changes occurring in translation, and meaning variation. The shift and variation of modality system that will be analyzed in this research is the modality system used in the novel “*Little Women*” by Louisa May Alcott that is translated into Bahasa Indonesia by three different translators and publishers. This research is descriptive-qualitative research that will show and describe the translation strategy used to translate modality in English into Bahasa Indonesia, the realization of modality in Bahasa Indonesia, and the quality of translation. It will apply the translation shift theory proposed by Catford, the concept of meaning variation in translation that is based on the SFL theory proposed by Halliday, and the concept of Translation Quality proposed by Nababan.

**Keywords:** Modality, Translation Shift, Variation Meaning Realization

## INTRODUCTION

The preservation of a language is not merely a matter of cultural pride but an essential factor in maintaining a nation’s identity and values. In Indonesia, [1] the preservation of Bahasa Indonesia has become increasingly crucial amidst globalization, which has intensified the influence of foreign languages, particularly English. One effective way to preserve Bahasa Indonesia is through translation, a process that involves transferring meaning from one language to another while maintaining linguistic and cultural integrity.

Translation plays a pivotal role in preserving and promoting linguistic and cultural identity, especially when dealing with languages like Bahasa Indonesia. [1] As one of the richest languages in Southeast Asia, Bahasa Indonesia holds unique grammatical structures and cultural nuances that must be preserved when translating from other languages. However, [2] preserving Bahasa Indonesia through translation is not an easy task. It becomes more difficult if it is translated from English.

Bahasa Indonesia and English is two languages that do not have the same root. Those two languages have different language system, either in grammar or meaning. One of the differences is the modality system. In English, modality system can be realized by the using of modal, such as will, may, must, should, etc. Bahasa Indonesia does not have the realization of modal. How modal in English is realized in Bahasa Indonesia is the interesting topic to be learned and discussed in this research.

This study focuses on the translation of the modality system in the English classic novel *Little Women* by Louisa May Alcott into Bahasa Indonesia. It examines how modality is rendered in translation and explores the potential shifts and variations in meaning realization during the process of translating the novel. Modality plays a critical role in shaping the tone and mood of a narrative, thus impacting the reader’s understanding of character motivations, intentions, and emotions.

Written by Louisa May Alcot in 1868, *Little Women* is a widely cherished novel with complex modal expressions. It presents a particular challenge for translators due to its use of modal verbs and phrases that reflect both social norms and character intentions. [3] The task of translating modality involves not only finding functional equivalences but also maintaining the subtleties of meaning and cultural context in the target language. In Bahasa Indonesia, modality can take on various forms that may differ significantly from their English counterparts, leading to potential shifts in meaning during translation. Therefore, in translating modality, the translator must navigate between linguistic structures and cultural expectations that differ between English and Bahasa Indonesia.

The goal of this research is to explore how modality is translated in *Little Women* from English into Bahasa Indonesia, focusing specifically on translation shifts and variation in meaning realization. By analyzing the translation of modality in *Little Women*, this study aims to contribute to the broader field of translation studies, particularly in relation to translation shifts and the preservation of meaning across languages. More importantly, the research investigates how these shifts can either aid or hinder the preservation of Bahasa Indonesia, a language that, while dynamic and adaptable, faces increasing external pressures. The findings of this research will offer insights into the translation practices that best support the maintenance of Bahasa Indonesia's distinctiveness while preserving the essence of the original text.

## METHOD

This study applied the theory of translation shift proposed by Catford and the concept of modality proposed by Halliday. The theory is applied to analyze the translation of Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women* in English into Bahasa Indonesia. The translation version that is used is published by Gramedia Pustaka Utama. The researcher only focuses on the translation of modal.

Translation shifts refer to the changes that occur when a text is translated from one language into another, accounting for the structural and linguistic differences between languages [4]. These shifts are inevitable because no two languages are identical in their grammar, syntax, or cultural context. Understanding translation shifts is particularly crucial when translating complex linguistic elements such as modality, where subtle differences in meaning between the source and target language can result in shifts in interpretation. Two prominent scholars, J.C. Catford and Vinay & Darbelnet, provide influential frameworks for studying these shifts in translation studies.

J.C. Catford, introduced the concept of translation shifts as the departures from formal correspondence between the source language (SL) and the target language (TL). Catford defines translation as the process of replacing textual material in one language with equivalent textual material in another language [5]. When exact equivalence is not possible, a shift occurs. Catford categorizes these shifts into two main types: Level Shifts and Category Shifts.

Halliday's modality system is situated within the interpersonal metafunction of language [7], which involves the social interaction between speakers and listeners, or writers and readers. The modality system expresses a range of attitudes, from certainty to uncertainty, obligation, and permission. According to Halliday, modality covers two key areas: (1) Modalization that is related to probability and usuality, and (2) Modulation that is related to obligation and inclination.

Halliday identifies different grammatical forms for realizing modality, which include modal verbs (can, could, must), modal adjuncts (perhaps, probably), and even certain mood structures (imperatives, interrogatives) [7]. These grammatical markers

vary in strength and provide subtle meaning variations. Modality in Halliday's framework interacts with polarity, which refers to the positive or negative form of a statement (e.g., "She is coming" vs. "She is not coming"). The combination of modality and polarity allows for intricate variations in meaning, such as hedging or reinforcing statements.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Translation shifts refer to the changes that occur when a text is translated from one language into another, accounting for the structural and linguistic differences between languages [4]. These shifts are inevitable because no two languages are identical in their grammar, syntax, or cultural context. Understanding translation shifts is particularly crucial when translating complex linguistic elements such as modality, where subtle differences in meaning between the source and target language can result in shifts in interpretation. Two prominent scholars, J.C. Catford and Vinay & Darbelnet, provide influential frameworks for studying these shifts in translation studies.

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Level shifts [5] occur when something expressed at one linguistic level in the source language (e.g., grammar) is expressed at a different level in the target language (e.g., lexis). For instance, the English modal verb "must" (a grammatical element) might be translated into Bahasa Indonesia as *harus* (a lexical item) instead of another grammatical structure. Such shifts arise due to the different ways languages handle modality, requiring the translator to shift between grammatical and lexical forms to maintain meaning equivalence.

Catford [5] further divides category shifts into four types:

1. Structural Shifts: Changes in grammatical structure between languages.
2. Class Shifts: Changes in the word class of a term.
3. Unit Shifts: Changes in the rank or level of linguistic units (e.g., translating a phrase into a word).
4. Intra-system Shifts: Shifts within systems where the source language and target language operate differently within the same grammatical system.

In translating a classic novel like "*Little Women*", structural shifts might occur when translating complex English sentences into simpler Bahasa Indonesia sentence structures,

while class shifts could happen when modal verbs in English are translated into adverbs or other expressions in Bahasa Indonesia.

Toury views translation as a norm-governed activity, meaning [6] that the translation process is shaped by the expectations and conventions of both the source and target cultures. These norms influence the degree of meaning variation that can occur during translation. Toury distinguishes between initial norms, which affect the translator's orientation either toward the source text or target audience, and operational norms, which guide specific decisions during the translation process.

Initial norms occurs if the translator leans toward adequacy (faithfulness to the source text), the translation will likely preserve the original meanings [6]. However, if the translator favors acceptability (alignment with the target culture's norms), meaning variations might occur to ensure the translation feels natural or fluent in the target language.

Believing his concept, Toury challenges the traditional notion of equivalence in translation, arguing that perfect equivalence between languages is rarely achievable. Instead, he proposes that translators often produce non-equivalent translations that result in meaning variation. These variations are not necessarily errors but rather responses to the inherent differences between languages and cultural contexts. In this sense, [6] meaning variation can involve shifts in tone, formality, or nuance, depending on how the translator negotiates the relationship between the source and target languages.

According to Toury [6], meaning variation can manifest in different ways:

1. Lexical variations: Differences in word choice may occur when a direct equivalent is unavailable, or when the translator opts for a term that is more culturally appropriate in the target language.
2. Pragmatic variations: These involve shifts in the function or intended meaning of an utterance, especially when translating idiomatic expressions, politeness strategies, or culturally specific speech acts.
3. Syntactic variations: Differences in sentence structure, which can influence the emphasis or flow of meaning in the target text.
4. Cultural variations: Meaning shifts that occur due to differences in cultural references, customs, or social norms between the source and target audiences.

Toury's framework highlights the importance of the target culture in shaping meaning variation. A translation is not merely a linguistic transfer but a cultural negotiation, where the translator mediates between the source culture's meaning system and the expectations of the target audience. This can lead to variations in meaning as translators adjust the text to ensure it resonates within the target cultural context. For example, in translating "*Little Women*" into Bahasa Indonesia, certain cultural elements of 19th-century American life may not have direct equivalents in Indonesian culture. In such

cases, the translator may introduce variations in meaning by modulating or adapting these references to better align with Indonesian readers' experiences and understanding.

Catford's concept of translation shifts is closely linked to meaning variation. Translation shifts refer to the systematic changes that occur when translating from one language to another, particularly in terms of structure, meaning, and form. These shifts often result in variations in meaning, either because certain linguistic features are untranslatable or because the target language has different ways of encoding the same meaning. In the context of modality, for example, shifts might occur when translating modal verbs or expressions that do not have direct equivalents in Bahasa Indonesia. The resulting variation in meaning reflects the linguistic and cultural constraints of the translation process.

Halliday's modality system is situated within the interpersonal metafunction of language [7], which involves the social interaction between speakers and listeners, or writers and readers. The modality system expresses a range of attitudes, from certainty to uncertainty, obligation, and permission. According to Halliday, modality covers two key areas: (1) Modalization that is related to probability and usuality, and (2) Modulation that is related to obligation and inclination.

Modalization expresses the speaker's assessment of the likelihood or frequency of an event [8]. It typically answers questions like: 'How likely is it that something will happen?' or 'How often does it happen?' For example, in the sentence "She might come tomorrow," the modal verb "might" indicates a probability rather than a certainty. Modalization involves: (1) Probability that shows degrees of likelihood (e.g., can, may, might), and (2) Usuality that shows the degrees of frequency or habitual action (e.g., sometimes, always, never).

Modulation involves the expression of necessity and obligation [8]. It answers questions like: 'How strong is the obligation for someone to act?' or 'How willing is someone to act?' For example, in "You must finish the task," the modal "must" indicates an obligation imposed on the listener. Modulation can be expressed in terms of: (1) Obligation that shows necessity or requirement for action (e.g., must, should, ought to), and (2) Inclination that shows willingness or desire (e.g., will, would, want).

Halliday identifies different grammatical forms for realizing modality, which include modal verbs (can, could, must), modal adjuncts (perhaps, probably), and even certain mood structures (imperatives, interrogatives) [7]. These grammatical markers vary in strength and provide subtle meaning variations. Modality in Halliday's framework interacts with polarity, which refers to the positive or negative form of a statement (e.g., "She is coming" vs. "She is not coming"). The combination of modality and polarity allows for intricate variations in meaning, such as hedging or reinforcing statements. For example:

Positive: “He will finish the project” (high certainty).

Negative: “He will not finish the project” (high certainty of non-completion).

Modulated: “He might not finish the project” (uncertain possibility of non-completion).

When translating modality from English to Bahasa Indonesia, the translator must consider shifts and variations in meaning, as the two languages may express modality differently. English uses auxiliary verbs (e.g., can, must, might) [9], while Bahasa Indonesia often employs modal particles (e.g., *bisa*, *harus*,  *mungkin*) and verbal affixes. This creates potential for translation shifts, where the level of certainty, obligation, or inclination may need adjustment to fit the grammatical and cultural norms of Bahasa Indonesia.

Translation shift, according to Catford [5], refers to the changes that occur in the process of translating from one language to another. Shifts can happen at various linguistic levels, including grammar, lexicon, or meaning. When translating modality, a shift can occur in the degree of modalization or modulation to maintain naturalness and equivalence in the target language.

In translating "*Little Women*," for example, one might encounter sentences where English modals such as "should" or "might" convey nuanced meanings. Translators need to ensure that Bahasa Indonesia equivalents (e.g., *seharusnya* for "should") capture these meanings without losing the subtleties of probability, obligation, or inclination embedded in the original text.

Halliday’s modality system provides a framework for analyzing how speakers use language to express certainty, obligation, probability, and inclination. When applied to translation studies, particularly when translating from English to Bahasa Indonesia, understanding the modality system allows for a deeper comprehension of how meaning can shift across languages. This theoretical lens is essential in ensuring that translations remain faithful to the original text while adapting to the linguistic and cultural norms of the target language.



Modality in linguistics refers to the way speakers express attitudes toward the truth of a proposition or the necessity and possibility of an event [9]. While modality systems exist in most languages, they manifest differently depending on the language's syntactic and lexical structures. In *Bahasa Indonesia*, the modality system plays a crucial role in reflecting obligations, permissions, abilities, and possibilities, akin to other languages but with unique structural properties. Modality in Bahasa Indonesia is expressed primarily through modal verbs, adverbs, and particles. In Bahasa Indonesia, modality often occurs lexically, and while there are no exact equivalents to English auxiliary modal verbs like 'might', 'could', or 'must', the language uses modal markers such as *bisa* (can), *mungkin* (might), *harus* (must), *boleh* (may), and *seharusnya* (ought to)

According to the concept and theory previously explained, there are various types of translation shift occur in the translational text *Little Women* in English and in Bahasa Indonesia. Almost all types are occurred, except intra-system shift. The text consists of 1200 sentences that contains 1400 modal verbs in English. Out of the modal verbs in English, there are 1100 realized in Bahasa Indonesia. Out of 1400 data, there are 1150 cases of translation shift occurs. In the translational text structural shift occurs in 563 cases, class shift in 391 cases, and unit shift in 196 cases. Intra-system shift does not occur in the text because English and Bahasa Indonesia do not have the same root of language.

## CONCLUSIONS

Translation shift in translational text is a translation phenomenon that can be denied. It occurs in translational text because the different language system between SL and TL, cultural and situational context and semantically factors.

In the translational text *Little Women* in English and Bahasa Indonesia the structural shift occurs dominantly, because there is a different modality system between English and Bahasa Indonesia. Bahasa Indonesia has limited modal verb and does not have modal auxiliaries. Therefore, modal verb and auxiliaries in English are realized in different word level, class, and structure. In most of the cases, the English modal must be changed into different structure in Bahasa Indonesia to pertain the meaning.

Translation shift occurs in language structure. It does not create meaning shift. The translator must do the strategy to create acceptable, readable, and natural expression in the Target Text. The use of translation shift is also a way to preserve Bahasa Indonesia. By using Bahasa Indonesia in a broader way, the familiarity and awareness of Bahasa Indonesia among the young generation is increasing. Thus, the youngsters of Indonesia are proud of using Bahasa Indonesia in daily life.

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