

# Translating Al-Hikam Aphorisms: Evaluating Unmarked Topical Themes through Theme-Rheme Structure Analysis

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## ABSTRACT

Aphorisms are unique literary works known for their memorability, concision, and ambiguity. They have an information structure divided into theme (known information) and rheme (new information), with the "unmarked topical theme" playing a crucial role. This study examines the impact of translation techniques on these unmarked topical themes and their influence on translation quality, focusing on an unexplored area in Arabic discourse. The research design is descriptive qualitative. Data were collected from the aphoristic text of Al-Hikam in Arabic (L1) and its translations into Indonesian (L2a) and Javanese (L2b). The research problems addressed are: (1) What translation techniques do translators employ when dealing with the "unmarked topical theme" in Al-Hikam's aphoristic text? Do translators favor the source language or the target language? (2) How can the translation of unmarked topical themes in Al-Hikam's aphorisms be assessed in terms of accuracy, readability, and acceptability? The study finds that translation techniques, including conventional equivalent, compensation, modulation, and reduction, significantly impact the translation quality of unmarked topical themes. The conventional equivalent technique is particularly effective in maintaining the position of the unmarked topical theme from the source language to the target language. This research contributes to developing an Arabic translation model based on Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) analysis. It also provides a comparative analysis of the distinctive discourse topic development elements in Arabic, Indonesian, and Javanese texts, highlighting the implications of various translation techniques on the quality of aphoristic translations.

## 1. Introduction

Translation is a pivotal process that establishes equivalence between source and target languages, ensuring coherence and fidelity. For translations between Arabic and languages such as Indonesian and Javanese, identifying the unmarked topical theme in each sentence is crucial for maintaining the original text's integrity (Munip, 2018). Despite its importance, the impact of translation techniques on unmarked topical themes, particularly in the context of Arabic discourse, remains underexplored. Understanding how thematic structures in Arabic translate into Indonesian and Javanese can reveal significant linguistic characteristics and information organization patterns (Anis et al., 2015).

Historically, Arabic-Javanese translations using Arabic script (Pegon) have marked significant phases in the intellectual history of Islamic education in

Nusantara (Munip, 2016). Translations by Indonesian scholars, especially those affiliated with Salafi-Wahhabi movements, have influenced critiques of traditional Islamic rituals in Indonesia, shaping regional discourse on Islamic practices (Munip, 2018). Thus, thematic analysis of Arabic texts and their translations into Indonesian and Javanese offers valuable insights into the linguistic and cultural nuances, allowing translators to convey intended meanings and preserve the essence of original texts.

Previous research has investigated various aspects of bilingual literary text translation, including the challenges of transferring foreign codes from the source language to the target language (Ahmed, 2018). Techniques such as borrowing, loan translation, and literal translation have been employed to ensure accurate and meaningful translations (Awang & Salman, 2017).

Moreover, the importance of thematic development in Arabic texts has been emphasized, particularly for creative writing and translation training (Anis et al., 2015). However, there is a noticeable gap in the literature concerning the translation quality of unmarked topical themes, especially within the context of Arabic aphorisms translated into Indonesian and Javanese (Al Hasanah & Anis, 2022; Alfaleh, 2020; Choiriyah et al., 2022; Khuddro, 2018; Kurniawan et al., 2023; Sakulpimorat, 2019; Taibi & Qadi, 2016).

Studies that discuss translation techniques have not specifically addressed the issue of information structure in Arabic-Indonesian and Arabic-Javanese translations (Anis, 2022; Mardiana, 2014; Muhammad, 2023; Nurlaila & Purwaningsih, 2015; Rahmawati et al., 2016; Romadhan & Anis, 2016). Furthermore, comparative studies on the quality of translations, particularly focusing on Arabic aphorisms translated into Indonesian and Javanese, are virtually non-existent. This lack of attention to the unmarked topical theme in the translation process represents a significant gap that this study aims to address. The data used in this study are drawn from the aphorisms of al-Hikam by Sheikh Ibn Athaillah As-Sakandari, which have a distinctive information structure characterized by conciseness, density, memorability, and occasional ambiguity.

To examine the distinctive character of al-Hikam's information structure, it is essential to study the theme and rheme, which are crucial components of the information structure in a clause. The theme, as the starting point of an aphorism, is found at the beginning of the clause and includes part of the old information, assuming shared understanding between the speaker and the listener. Conversely, the rheme introduces new information eagerly awaited by the audience (Bloor & Bloor, 2004; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). In Arabic, the theme can occupy the positions of *mubtada'* and *fi'l* (Potter, 2016). The challenge arises in translating this information structure from Arabic into Indonesian, and the results are further compared with the Javanese translation.

The core issue lies in how the information structure, particularly the unmarked topical themes, is translated from Arabic into Indonesian and Javanese. Hewson (2011) noted that a published translation is a paradoxical object, as it simultaneously substitutes for and becomes a separate entity from the original text. Translation is essentially a series of decisions made by the translator that, at some point, diverges from the original text. Therefore, this study is fundamentally an exploration of the "decision-making" process employed by translators. By focusing on the translation techniques and information structures in Arabic, Indonesian, and Javanese, this study, titled "An Exploratory Study," aims to fill the existing research gap and provide new insights into the quality of translations involving unmarked topical themes.

This study delves into the translation techniques for unmarked topical themes in al-Hikam aphorisms and their impact on translation quality. It poses critical questions: What are the techniques used to translate unmarked topical themes in al-Hikam aphorisms, and how do these techniques affect translation quality? The main objective is to describe and analyze these techniques and their implications for translation quality. This research is unique in that it addresses a gap in the field by comparing the translation quality of unmarked topical themes in Arabic al-Hikam aphorisms translated into Indonesian and Javanese. Unlike previous studies, it specifically investigates the unmarked topical themes in Arabic aphorisms, examines the application of translation techniques from Arabic into Indonesian and Javanese, and explores their impact on translation quality.

The implications of this research extend to both theoretical and practical domains. Theoretically, it fills a gap in Arabic translation studies by applying Functional Systemic Linguistics to unmarked topical themes, contributing to our understanding of how these themes are handled in translation. Practically, it offers recommendations for Arabic translators in Indonesia to be more meticulous when translating unmarked topical themes, emphasizing the importance of maintaining cohesive elements in the translation. This study also contributes to developing a translation assessment model based on unmarked topical themes. Overall, it enriches the field of translation studies and provides practical guidelines for improving Arabic translations in Indonesian and Javanese contexts.

## 2. Literature Review

There have been numerous studies discussing theme and rheme by previous researchers (Aziz & Yowell, 1988; Chen, 2019; Oktaviani, 2013; Potter, 2016; Wahyu et al., 2019). Generally, theme studies are rooted in Systemic Functional Linguistics, a linguistic approach that aims to understand how a text forms its meaning in a context, encompassing both situational and cultural contexts (Bloor & Bloor, 2004; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). Some Systemic Functional Linguistics studies have been applied in Arabic studies (Abdul-Raof, 2007; Almanna, 2016; Bardi, 2008). However, there is no study that specifically explores the quality of translation based on the translation of unmarked topical themes (Al Hasanah & Anis, 2022; Alfaleh, 2020; Choiriyah et al., 2022; Khuddro, 2018; Kurniawan et al., 2023; Sakulpimorat, 2019; Taibi & Qadi, 2016). Based on the literature review, it can be concluded that there are several research gaps in this study: (1) no study specifically discusses topical themes in Arabic, (2) no study investigates translation techniques in translating unmarked topical themes from Arabic into Indonesian and Javanese, and (3) no study discusses the relationship between translation techniques and the translation quality of unmarked topical themes in Arabic.

The discussion related to themes in specific texts has been studied by prior researchers (Ethelb, 2019; Kadhim & Al-Shaibani, 2013; Siahaan et al., 2022). However, the comparative aspect between different languages, particularly Arabic-Indonesian and Arabic-Javanese, has not been extensively examined. The theme serves as the starting point of the main message contained in a clause, followed by subsequent related messages until the unity of the message forms a discourse. As the inception of the message, the theme provides the foundation for language users to convey subsequent messages. The methodological strength of this study is the use of two different target languages. Previous studies methodologically only utilized Arabic (L1) and Indonesian (L2). However, this study expands the data to include Javanese (L3), offering a broader range of translation techniques. The weakness of this study is that it only specifically examines the unmarked topical theme. Further studies could map marked topical themes, textual themes, and interpersonal themes as well.

Textually, there are three types of themes: topical, interpersonal, and textual. Topical themes can be further classified into marked and unmarked topical themes. An unmarked topical theme functions as a subject in a clause, while a marked topical theme is determined by the presence of other information preceding the subject, such as circumstantial information related to the clause (e.g., adverbs of manner, place, or time), making it a marked topical theme. Interpersonal themes are oriented towards the speaker, taking the form of greeting words, mood adverbs, or finites in polarity, question words, and modalities. Finally, textual themes are realized through the use of conjunctions (external and internal) as well as continuative discourse markers.

Based on the study conducted by previous researchers (Anis, 2022), it is evident that the distribution of unmarked topical themes in al-Hikam aphorisms is quite high. It can be assumed that each clause has a subject accurately translated by the translator. However, the Arabic clause structure, which can take the forms (S + V + O) and (V + S + O), causes a shift in the unmarked topical theme when translated from the source language into the target language. Meanwhile, Indonesian predominantly uses the form (S + V + O).

From Table 1, it can be highlighted that Arabic al-Hikam aphorisms exhibit few marked topical themes, and when these themes are translated into Indonesian, the number increases. Additionally, the text of al-Hikam aphorisms undergoes a significant reduction in terms of textual themes, indicating that the translator has omitted numerous textual themes when translating from Arabic into Indonesian. Therefore, this study focuses on how unmarked topical themes are translated from Arabic into both Indonesian and Javanese

**Table 1.** Theme distribution in *al-Hikam* aphorisms (Arabic - Bahasa Indonesia)

No	Theme	Arabic	Indonesian
1	Unmarked Topical Theme	205	195
2	Marked Topical Theme	13	23
3	Interpersonal	40	20
4	Textual	117	65

### 3. Method

This research employed a descriptive qualitative research design, integrating systemic functional linguistics and Arabic translation approaches. The choice of a qualitative design was based on the need to analyze multiple data types, specifically theme and rheme information structures, and translation techniques. The data in this study consist of linguistic units, such as clauses, which include the components of theme and rheme. The theoretical framework used in this research is divided into two major theories: linguistic theory, focusing on the functional systemic linguistic theory of theme and rheme, specifically unmarked topical themes, and translation theory, particularly concerning translation techniques and their impact on translation quality.

The selection criteria for aphorisms were based on the presence of unmarked topical themes in each aphorism clause. Theories such as Halliday's information structure theory were used to validate the topical theme. Generally, the unmarked topical theme occupies the subject position and represents information already known between speakers and listeners. After identifying the unmarked topical themes, the researcher elaborated on the translation techniques used to translate these themes into Indonesian and Javanese, assessing how these techniques affected translation quality.

The primary data for this study consist of unmarked topical themes extracted from the book *Al-Hikam* in three languages: Arabic, Indonesian, and Javanese (Pustaka, 2016). The Arabic data serve as the source language, while the Indonesian data come from Uhm and Mufarohah (2022), and the Javanese data are sourced from Mushthafa (n.d.). Data validation was conducted using the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) method, involving several experts in translation theory and Arabic. The FGD aimed to identify unmarked topical themes, translation techniques, and their impact on translation quality. Results indicated that unmarked topical themes typically occupy the subject position in Indonesian, while in Arabic, they can be found in both subject (S + V + O) and verb (V + S + O) positions. The FGD also validated that translation techniques

significantly impact translation quality. Regarding reproducibility, future research on unmarked topical themes and aphorisms should consider not only (SVO) and (VSO) forms but also interrogative and imperative sentences.

Following data validation, the data analysis process was carried out using Spradley's model (Santosa, 2021; Spradley, 2016). The first stage, domain analysis, involved identifying unmarked topical themes in the source language (Arabic) and target languages (Indonesian and Javanese), mapping the translation techniques used. The second stage, taxonomic analysis, established parameters of translation quality, focusing on accuracy, readability, and acceptability (Nababan & Rudolf, 2012). The third stage, componential analysis, aimed to uncover relationships between domain and taxonomic analyses. Finally, cultural theme analysis concluded that the unmarked topical theme is crucial in constructing the theme of a text. Therefore, the application of translation techniques must be considered in detail, as their use in translating unmarked topical themes affects translation quality.

#### 4. Results

The results of this study can be divided into two parts: firstly, the findings related to how the information structure of the unmarked topical theme is

translated using specific translation techniques, and secondly, the results related to the translation quality of the unmarked topical theme in al-Hikam aphorisms. In general, the study concludes that in the unmarked topical theme, two forms are found in Al-Hikam aphorisms: (1) the singular form of nouns and (2) the topical theme in the form of doubles. A singular topical theme can be composed of one noun and one verb. When an unmarked topical theme is derived from a noun, it occupies the subject position or *mubtada'* in Arabic.

Conversely, when the unmarked topical theme is derived from a verb, it occupies the predicator position. Additionally, a double unmarked topical theme can be formed with the model (noun + preposition + noun). Several translation techniques can be used for translating unmarked topical themes, including (1) common equivalent, (2) compensation translation, (3) modulation technique, and (4) reduction technique. These techniques can cause a translation shift in the unmarked topical theme, resulting in either shifted or unshifted forms. When the topical theme remains unshifted, the translation quality is accurate. However, if the topical theme shifts, the translation quality decreases. For more details, refer to Table 2.

**Table 2.** Relationship between Translation Techniques and Translation Quality of Unmarked Topical Themes

Type of Theme	Unmarked Topical Theme Types	Elements within the Unmarked Topical Theme	Translation technique	Translation Shift	Translation Quality
unmarked topical themes	the singular form of noun (2.1)	subject and <i>mubtada'</i> in Arabic	compensation translation technique	common equivalent: Unshifted	Accurate
		a single form in the form of a noun	common equivalent/ conventional equivalent translation technique,		
	the singular form of verb (2.2)	the initial experiential element functioning as the predicator	modulation technique,	compensation translation: Shifted	Less Accurate
		a single verb at the beginning of a clause	reduction technique		
	topical theme in the form of doubles (2.3)	(noun + preposition + noun)		modulation technique: Shifted	Less Accurate
				reduction technique: Shifted	Less Accurate

#### 4.1 Translation Techniques of Unmarked Topical Themes in the al-Hikam Aphorisms

It is widely recognized that an aphorism is a brief and concise statement of an attitude towards life or a general truth. The compact and conciseness of the text are the main characteristics of the aphorisms. Therefore, aphorism texts inevitably possess a different character compared to other text genres, such as poetry, prose, drama, song, and so on. Therefore, if this research focuses on unmarked topical themes in aphorism texts, further research related to the unmarked topical theme can be developed in other text genres.

Research on thematic elements (unmarked topical theme) is of great importance for development as themes are important elements viewed by readers. Themes always capture readers' attention. Themes are considered by readers as important and newsworthy making them a rhetorical purpose and a distinct angle in the process of delivering news and stories (Potter, 2016, p. 1).

When considered in detail, unmarked topical themes in *al-Hikam* aphorisms have various forms. The first form is a single form, which can be divided into two types: a single form in the form of a noun and a single form in the form of a verb. Meanwhile, the second form is a double form, where unmarked topical themes are composed of several relatively long words.

The following data 1 is an example of unmarked topical themes in the singular form of nouns (2.1).

الْأَكْوَانُ ظَاهِرُهَا غِرَّةٌ وَبَاطِنُهَا عِبْرَةٌ ،

*Secara lahiriyah, alam ini adalah sebuah tipuan bathiniyah, ia merupakan sebuah pelajaran.*

***Outwardly, this realm is a deception inwardly, it is a lesson.***

فَالنَّفْسُ تَنْظُرُ إِلَى ظَاهِرِ غِرَّتِهَا،

*Dan nafsu senantiasa melihat pada lahirnya yang menipu,*

***And lust always looks at its deceptive outward appearance,***

وَ الْقَلْبُ يَنْظُرُ إِلَى بَاطِنِ عِبْرَتِهَا

*Sedangkan kalbu senantiasa melihat kepada batinnya yang memberi pelajaran*

***While the heart always looks to its inner self that gives lessons***

(Pustaka, 2016, p. 142)

In the provided data, unmarked topical themes in the singular are observed, such as */al-akwānu/*, */an-nafsu/*, and */al-qalbu/*. The three nouns occupy the position of *mubtada'* in the Arabic sentence structure. The three nouns become the beginning of the utterance and organize the thematic content of a discourse in the text. In the data, the reader can easily grasp the theme

of the first clause which discusses "the universe" (*alam semesta*), the second clause discusses "lust" (*nafsu*).

Meanwhile, the third clause describes the *kalbu* or "heart" (*hati*). The important elements in the clause can be easily understood by the reader, as the unmarked topical theme occupies the position of subject and *mubtada'*. Some particles are found attached to and precede the unmarked topical theme, such as the particle */fa/* and the particle */wa/*, which translates to "and" (*dan*) and "while" (*sedangkan*), respectively.

In the first clause, the translator employed the compensation translation technique, shifting the position of the unmarked topical theme in the source language to the marked theme in the target language. Compensation technique is a translation technique that replaces the position of an information element or stylistic effect in the source language in another part of the target language because it cannot be realized in the same part in the target language (Molina & Albir, 2002).

Based on the review of data 1, it can be concluded that the unmarked topical theme can take the form of a single language unit. It derives from a single noun and occupies the position of subject and *mubtada'* in Arabic.

In data 2, an example of an unmarked topical theme derived from a single verb at the beginning of a clause is presented (2.2). The following data provides an example of a singular unmarked topical theme composed of verbs.

كَفَى مِنْ جَزَائِهِ إِيَّاكَ عَلَى الطَّاعَةِ أَنْ رَضِيكَ لَهَا أَهْلًا

*Cukuplah sebagai balasan Allah atas ketaatanmu, ketika Dia meridaimu sebagai pelaku ketaatan*

***It is sufficient as Allah's reward for your obedience, when He is pleased with you as a doer of obedience***

(Pustaka, 2016, p. 147)

In data 2, it can be concluded that the unmarked topical theme takes the form of verbs in Arabic. This is one of the distinctive characters in Arabic, where the unmarked topical theme can take the form of the initial experiential element functioning as the predicator (Potter, 2016, p. 9), for example, the lexical verb */kafā min/* in data 2. The main reason for considering verbs as components of unmarked topical themes is Halliday's theory that non-declarative clauses, such as imperative clauses and interrogative clauses, Halliday considers verbs and subjects as unmarked topical themes (Potter, 2016). Based on data 2, the reader can deduce that the main topic in the clause in data 2 is the verb */ka fā min/*.

Based on the examples of data 1 and data 2, unmarked topical themes can be composed by one noun and one verb or more than one noun. For example, in data 3, unmarked topical themes are found in Arabic

in the form of noun + preposition. The following data is an example of an unmarked topical theme in the form of doubles (2.3).

العطاء من الخلق جرمان،

*Pemberian dari makhluk adalah keterhalangan*

***A gift from a creature is an obstruction***

و المنع من الله إحسان

*Sedangkan penangguhan pemberian dari Allah merupakan karunia.*

***Whereas the deferral of gifts from Allah is a bounty.***

(Pustaka, 2016, p. 145)

Based on data 3, the phrases /*al-'athā'u minal-khlaqi*/ and /*wal-man'u minallahi*/ serve as unmarked topical themes. The theme is constructed in the pattern (noun + preposition + noun). In this case, the first noun remains the center of the clause, or the topic that draws the reader's attention. The clause above focuses on the words /*al-'athā'u*/ "gift" and /*al-man'u*/ "delay".

#### 4.2 Translation Quality of Unmarked Topical Themes in the al-Hikam Aphorisms

In this section, the focus is on the translation quality of unmarked topical themes. To measure the translation quality of unmarked topical themes, a micro-analysis in the form of translation techniques will be connected to several translation quality parameters, such as accuracy, readability, and acceptability aspects.

To observe the correlation between translation techniques and translation quality of unmarked topical themes, the following data examples are examined.

الأعمال صنور قائمة،

و أرواحها وجود سير الإخلاص فيها

*Amal itu seumpama jasad,*

*Sedangkan, keikhlasan adalah ruhnya*

***Charity is like the body,***

***Whereas, sincerity is the soul***

In the data above, the phenomenon of unmarked topical themes in Arabic is evident, which includes (*al-a'mālu*) in the first clause, and (*arwāḥuhā*) in the second clause. Both words occupy the subject position in Arabic, serving as the starting point of a clause or an information.

Both data (*al-a'mālu*) and (*arwāḥuhā*) convey information the writer and the reader already known. The reader needs new information (rheme) from both words, such as what happened to *al-a'mālu*, and what new information is available about *al-a'mālu*. In the clause, *al-a'mālu* is likened to a body. Meanwhile, *arwāḥuhā* is an unmarked topical theme in the second clause.

Both unmarked topical themes in clause 1 and clause 2 above are translated into Indonesian using different techniques.

The unmarked topical theme in clause 1 (*al-a'mālu*) is translated using the common equivalent or conventional equivalent technique as (*amal itu*) or "that charity". As a result, the unmarked topical theme in Arabic occupies the same position as the unmarked topical theme in the Indonesian target language "*amal itu seumpama jasad*" or (*amal is like a body*), where "amal itu" in Indonesian occupies the subject position just as *al-a'mālu* in Arabic occupies the subject.

The Arabic word *arwāḥuhā*, on the other hand, is translated into Indonesian as "sedangkan keikhlasan" or "while sincerity" using the modulation technique. The modulation technique attempts to change the perspective from the source language text to the target language point of view. If we look closely, the position of the subject in Arabic has shifted to the point of view in the Indonesian target language.

In Arabic, the subject is *arwāḥuhā*, which should be translated as "ruhnya" or "the spirit". However, the translator reverses the sentence to "*sedangkan keikhlasan adalah ruhnya*" or "*while sincerity is the spirit*". The source text in Arabic if translated structurally according to the common equivalence technique would appear as follows:

و أرواحها وجود سير الإخلاص فيها

*Dan + ruhnya + adalah + rahasia keikhlasan*  
***And+the+spirit+is+the+secret+of+sincerity***

But the translator changed the point of view to:

*Sedangkan + keikhlasan + adalah + ruhnya*  
***While + sincerity + is + the spirit***

The clause structure is altered, causing the unmarked topical theme in Arabic to experience a shift when translated into Indonesian. This shift is the result of the application of the modulation technique. The scores for translation accuracy in the provided data example are rated as two, indicating less accuracy. The change in point of view in the data above disrupts the connection between the unmarked topical theme present in clause 1 and the topical theme found in clause 2. If the translator consistently translates the unmarked topical theme according to the source language, they will maintain the cohesion between clause 1 and clause 2 in both the source text (Arabic) and the target text (Indonesian).

Therefore, a translator should not disregard the position of the unmarked topical theme in the source language. The determination of the unmarked topical theme affects the cohesive elements in a text. The study of the unmarked topical theme in the translation process is an early advancement in developing Systemic Functional Linguistics based on translation theory, thus called "Systemic Functional Translation

Studies" (SFTS). Ultimately, the study on the elaboration of translation techniques for Arabic unmarked topical themes found in al-Hikam aphorisms translated into Indonesian and Javanese represents an innovation and novelty in translation theory.

## 5. Discussion

The discussion centers on two key issues of this study: (1) the relationship between translation techniques and translation quality, and (2) the comparative analysis between two data corpuses: Arabic Indonesian aphorisms, and Arabic - Javanese aphorisms.

### 5.1 The relationship between translation techniques and translation quality

As previously explained, the application of translation techniques is closely tied to the quality of translation. Translation techniques significantly impact the quality of translated texts. Common equivalent techniques typically enhance translation accuracy (Farisi, 2020), while modulation techniques, which change the viewpoint from the source to the target language, can decrease accuracy (Yahya et al., 2021). The compensation technique, which adjusts the arrangement of unmarked topical themes, also affects translation quality, particularly accuracy (Syahputri et al., 2021).

Translators use various techniques to convey the original text's meaning appropriately in the target language (Aresta, 2018). The choice of translation technique influences accuracy, acceptability, and readability (Syahputri et al., 2021). Selecting logical, relevant, and contextual techniques is crucial for enhancing translation accuracy at the micro-unit level (Farisi, 2020). Research in translation studies focuses on the application and impact of different techniques on translation quality. Studies emphasize the importance of choosing suitable techniques for accurate and effective translation. Approaches like literal translation or borrowing have been shown to improve accuracy, acceptability, and readability (Lubis et al., 2020).

When compare it with the Javanese text written in *Pegon* Arabic script, we can draw the following conclusions on translation techniques. The following data is a text written in *Pegon* Arabic script using Javanese, then translated into Indonesian.

اعسن ريعكس ناموع ساء فرتلوني اصل سوفيا كفعاعي اعنسي  
ووع عوام امثال

*Ingsun ringkes naming sak-pertelon asli supoyo gampangake ingatase wong awam amtsal*

*Saya sengaja meringkas sekira 1/3 (137 hikmah dari 264 hikmah) dari kitab aslinya supaya dapat mempermudah masyarakat awam untuk memahaminya*

***I have deliberately summarised about 1/3 (137 hikmah of 264 hikmah) of the original book in order to make it easier for ordinary people to understand.***

In the data above, the use of a single unmarked topical theme is evident, similar to the use of a single unmarked topical theme in the Arabic - Indonesian translation text. The word /ingsun/ in the source language (Javanese) is translated into /me/ in Indonesian. Both words occupy the same position, as a singular unmarked topical theme. It also noteworthy that the singular unmarked topical themes in the source language and target language are both derived from nouns.

If we look closely into the following data, we find a single unmarked topical theme derived from verbs, then translated by borrowing method. Such cases can be seen in the following data.

اعلم وروها هي سالك

*I'lam weruho hei Salik*

*Ketahuilah wahai Salik<sup>1</sup>*

***Know this, O Salik***

*<sup>1</sup>perambah jalan kebenaran spiritual dengan berbagai riyadhah*

***<sup>1</sup>advancing the path of spiritual truth with various riyadhah***

In the data above, the word /i'lam/ is a verb form in Arabic, but the author of the text, Kyai Sholeh Darat, uses mixed Arabic in Javanese communication. This is one of the distinctive characteristics of Indonesian Muslim academics, where mixed elements or absorption from Arabic are found in Javanese communication. The word /i'lam/ as an unmarked topical theme in Arabic is translated into /ketahuilah/ or /know!/ imperative form in Indonesian. This is one form of application of the conventional equivalence technique. Based on the data, it further emphasizes that the use of the conventional equivalence technique maintains the position of the unmarked topical theme in the source language (Javanese *Pegon*) and the target language (Indonesian). The following is an example of a double unmarked topical theme in *Pegon* Javanese.

*Iku angen angen ora dadi biso ngelangkahi ing pestine qudrat azali – ora!*

*Angan-angan seperti ini tidak akan bisa mengalahkan qadla' dan qadar Allah, yang sudah ditetapkan sejak zaman 'Azali, sama sekali tidak!*

***This kind of wishful thinking can never override the qadla' and qadar of Allah, which have been determined since the 'Azali era, not at all!***

In the data above, the unmarked topical theme is in the form of a pattern, consisting of more than one word (double), such as /iku angen angen/ which is an unmarked topical theme in Javanese and translated into /angan angan seperti ini/ in Indonesian. Both are in the position of unmarked topical theme.

On the other hand, when a translator adopts the reduction technique, the quality of translation may decrease. Reduction technique aims to condense the information in the source language into the target language (to suppress a source text (ST) information item in the target text - TT). Here is an example of reduction technique from Javanese Pegon (ST) into Indonesian (TT).

لن قارون ايكو علماني ووغ بني اسرائيل اغحالي ان كروني ايكو ماتني كافر كروني

*Lan Qarun iku ulama'ne wong bani Israil inghale ana karuna iku matine kafir karone*

*Qarun merupakan ulama Bani Israil, tetapi saat menghadapi ajal keduanya mati dalam keadaan kafir.*

***Qarun was a scholar of the Children of Israel, but both died in a state of disbelief.***

In the data above, the word /lan/ in Javanese is reduced, so it is simply translated as "Qarun" in the target text. The word Qarun serves as the subject in both Javanese and Indonesian clauses. Both occupy the position of unmarked topical theme. Both maintain a certain degree of cohesion. However, the translation text above has reduced the quality of translation because it has simplified the word /lan/. In this case, "lan" in Javanese helps maintain coherence by connecting to the previous clause. On the one hand, the use of /lan/ or /dan/ or /and/ in Indonesian is less common at the beginning of a clause. As a result, the degradation of quality in translation does not considered a fatal error. The translator's intent appears to achieve a natural position in Indonesian as the target text.

The following is an example of the application of the reduction technique from Javanese Pegon (ST) into Indonesian (TT).

لن مليه علفا عبارة سيرا مريد اغ چرتني انق لنعي نبي نوح عليه الصلوة و السلام لن چريتي بوجوني نبي لوط عليه الصلوة و السلام

مك ان كروني ايكو مات كافر كروني

*Lan malih ngalapa ibarah siro murid ing ceritane anak lanange nabi Nuh alaihi ash-shalatu was-salamu lan ceritane bojone nabi Luth alaihi ash-shalatu was-salamu, maka ana karone iku mati kafir karone*

*Wahai Murid, ambillah ibarat dari kisah putra Nabi Nuh a.s. dan kisah istri Nabi Luth a.s. yang keduanya mati dalam keadaan kafir.*

***O Murid, take an example from the story of the son of Prophet Noah a.s. and the story of the wife of Prophet Luth a.s. who both died in a state of disbelief.***

## 5.2 The comparative analysis between two data corpuses: Arabic Indonesian and Arabic - Javanese aphorisms.

When compared in detail between the two corpora, it can be concluded that the application of the common equivalence translation technique in both Arabic and Indonesian and Javanese - Indonesian al-Hikam has an impact on the quality of the translation, both in terms of translation accuracy, acceptability, and readability. This case can be seen in the following data.

اجتهادك فيما ضمن لك وتقصيرك فيما طلب منك دليل على انطماس البصيرة منك

*Kegigihanmu dalam mencari apa yang telah dijamin untukmu dan kekuranganmu dalam melaksanakan apa yang diminta darimu menjadi bukti butanya mata hatimu*

***Your persistence in seeking what has been secured for you and your lack of fulfilling what is asked of you is evidence of the blind eyes of your heart.***

In the data above, the readers can notice that the topical unmarked theme in Arabic is (اجتهادك فيما ضمن لك) (لك) وتقصيرك فيما طلب منك). The unmarked topical theme in Arabic is translated using the conventional equivalent technique into Indonesian as (kegigihanmu dalam mencari apa yang telah dijamin untukmu dan kekuranganmu dalam melaksanakan apa yang diminta darimu).

The common equivalence technique in the data above has a strong influence on the quality of translation, especially the accuracy aspect of translation, in this case, for example, the word (اجتهادك) is translated into Indonesian into (kegigihanmu). This translation aligns with the conventions and expressions used daily, both by Arabs and Indonesians. Thus, it can be concluded that the unmarked topical themes translated from Arabic into Indonesian using the common equivalence technique have a high level of accuracy. Comparative translation techniques are prevalent in maintaining the accuracy aspect of a text. This can also be observed in the data of al-Hikam from Javanese Arabic Pegon into Indonesian:

بليك الله اغكغ فريغ عمل مريغ سيرا (Arabic Javanese Pegon)

*Balik Allah ingkang paring amal maring siro (Javanese)*

*Akan tetapi, Allah-lah yang memberi amal pada kamu (Indonesian)*

***But it is Allah who gives you charity***

The data provided is the Indonesian translated text of Arabic Javanese Pegon al-Hikam. The unmarked topical theme is the word Allah. When the unmarked topical theme in the source language is translated into the target language using the common equivalent technique, accurate results are achieved. The word "Allah" in the source language, when serving as an unmarked topical theme, is translated into the target language (Indonesian) using the common equivalent technique. Texts that are generally translated using the common equivalent technique almost certainly convey a fairly good translation quality, in terms of accuracy, readability, and acceptability.

Based on the data discovered, it can be concluded that the reduction technique reduces the quality of translation, especially the accuracy aspect. In this case, the unmarked topical theme is still translated with the conventional equivalent translation technique; however, the particles attached before the unmarked topical theme are reduced by the translator. The application of the reduction technique in the element attached to the unmarked topical theme has the effect of reducing the translation quality. This can be seen in the following data cases.

Based on the data found in the Arabic – Indonesian text of al-Hikam, it can be concluded that the reduction technique reduces the quality of translation, especially the accuracy aspect. In this case, the unmarked topical theme is still translated using the common equivalent translation technique; however, the particles attached before the unmarked topical theme are reduced by the translator. The application of the reduction technique to the elements attached to the unmarked topical theme has the effect of lowering the translation quality. This can be observed in the following data examples:

أَصْلُ كُلِّ مَعْصِيَةٍ وَ غَفْلَةٍ وَ شَهْوَةٍ الرِّضَا عَنْ النَّفْسِ، وَ أَصْلُ  
كُلِّ طَاعَةٍ وَ يَفْطَةِ وَ عَفَّةٍ عِنْدَ الرِّضَا مِنْكَ عَنْهَا

ashlu kulli ma'shiyatin wa ghaflatin wa  
syahwatīn ar-riḍhā 'anin-naḥsi,

wa + ashlu kulli thā'atin wa yaqdzatin wa  
'iffatin 'adamur-riḍhā minka 'anhā

*Pangkal segala ketaatan, kesadaran dan  
kesucian adalah sikap tidak puas dengan  
keadaan diri sendiri*

***The base of all obedience, awareness and  
purity is an attitude of dissatisfaction with  
one's own situation***

In the data above, it can be observed that the unmarked topical theme in Arabic (أَصْلُ كُلِّ طَاعَةٍ وَ يَفْطَةِ وَ عَفَّةٍ) is translated into Indonesian as (pangkal segala ketaatan, kesadaran dan kesucian). The particle attached to the unmarked topical theme is the particle /wa/. The particle /wa/ in Arabic has an important role as a connector between one sentence and another; however, in the data above, the particle /wa/ is not translated by the translator who uses the /wa/ particle

reduction technique. This has an influence on the quality of the translation.

The same case is also found in the data of the Indonesian-translated Arabic Javanese-Pegon al-Hikam. The translator uses the reduction technique to minimize the particle attached to the unmarked topical theme. This emphasizes that the reduction technique reduces the quality of translation of unmarked topical themes. This can be seen in the following data:

مك انتوركن شيخ كلون فغنديكا ايكي:

*Syeikh Ibnu 'Atha'illah Al-Iskandary berkata:*

***Shaykh Ibn 'Atha'illah al-Iskandary said:***

In the above data, the particle /moko/ is not translated by the translator. The translator employs the reduction technique to minimize the particle attached to the unmarked topical theme. The particle /moko/ attached to the unmarked topical theme plays an important role because it indicates an impact or effect in a conditional sentence. If the translator removes the particle, the effect and impact in the data above will be eliminated. Therefore, the reduction technique in this case is proven to have reduced the quality of proper translation.

Besides reduction techniques, compensation techniques also lower the translation quality. Compensation replaces the position of an information element or stylistic effect in the source language with another part in the target language because it cannot be realized in the same part in the target language. However, these cases are not predominant and are rare. This can be observed in the following data.

كَانَ اللهُ وَ لَا شَيْءَ مَعَهُ، وَ هُوَ الْآنَ عَلَى مَا عَلَيْهِ كَانَ

*Allah telah ada dan tiada sesuatu pun di  
samping-Nya,*

*Kini, Dia masih tetap sebagaimana ada-Nya  
semula*

***God existed and there was nothing beside  
Him,***

***Now, He is still as He was***

The data show the application of the compensation technique, in which the position of the word (الآن) in Arabic, meaning (kini) or (sekarang) in Indonesian, is changed from a literal position (dan + Dia + kini) to a communicative position (Kini + Dia). This demonstrates one of the impacts of the compensation technique. The use of reduction techniques, as seen in the data, leads to a decrease in translation quality, particularly in terms of translation accuracy.

When translators employ modulation, compensation, and reduction techniques, translation shifts are likely to occur, significantly affecting the quality of the translation (Sofyan & Tarigan, 2018). It is crucial for translators to exercise caution when using these techniques and to prioritize the familiarity

between the source and target languages to uphold accuracy (Andriyanti, 2019). The integration of systemic functional linguistics with translation theory, as demonstrated in a study focusing on Arabic, Indonesian, and Javanese data, introduces a fresh approach to translation practices (Mufidah, 2024). The application of systemic functional linguistics in translation emphasizes the importance of maintaining the original meaning and message of the source text during the transfer to the target text, considering ideational, interpersonal, and textual metafunctions (Mufidah, 2024).

This approach highlights that translation goes beyond literal word-for-word conversion and involves aspects such as thematic structure and information organization to effectively convey the intended meaning. Moreover, the manipulation of various linguistic systems such as transitivity, mood, modality, and Theme is essential to ensure equivalence between translations and the source text across ideational, interpersonal, and textual metafunctions (Zhao, 2024). This underscores the intricate nature of translation and the necessity for translators to skillfully navigate these systems to produce accurate and high-quality translations. In the context of Arabic-Javanese translations, certain works have been observed to surpass mere translation by integrating new information and opinions, thereby creating a unique piece diverging from traditional translation practices (Munip, 2018). This illustrates how translators can enhance the content and value of the translated work by going beyond literal translation.

Translation studies have traditionally focused on micro aspects, but there is a growing recognition of the importance of delving into macro translation elements such as methods and ideology (Leuven-Zwart & Naaijken, 1991). Understanding the implications of translation techniques on quality is crucial, as highlighted by Radaelli and Sitton-Kent (2016), who explored the effects of modulation, compensation, and reduction on translation shifts. Their research illuminates the intricate nature of translation processes (Roos et al., 2016). Further, Nababan and Rudolf (2012), as well as Bo Wang and Yuanyi Ma (2021) emphasize the necessity for translators to skillfully navigate these shifts to ensure the accuracy and effectiveness of translations (Wilss, 2005). The field of translation studies has evolved significantly, not only enhancing our comprehension of sociocultural structures and technological processes but also broadening our linguistic and cultural perspectives (Wilss, 2005). Translation is fundamental for acquiring new knowledge and understanding different worldviews, emphasizing its pivotal role in shaping our awareness of diverse cultures and perspectives (Wilss, 2005).

Moreover, the study's exploration of multiple languages adds a valuable dimension to the understanding of how translation techniques operate

across different linguistic contexts (Rahmania & Ardi, 2023). In conclusion, the study's insights into the impact of translation techniques on translation shifts and quality provide valuable contributions to the field of translation studies. By delving into the micro-level intricacies of translation, the research sets the stage for future investigations to delve into broader translation aspects, offering a comprehensive understanding of translation practices.

## 6. Conclusions

This study addresses two main aspects: the translation techniques applied to unmarked topical themes in al-Hikam aphorisms and the translation quality of these themes. Unmarked topical themes significantly contribute to textual cohesion, and translators must carefully determine them. The study found similarities in unmarked topical themes in Arabic and Javanese, especially in singular forms derived from nouns and verbs, as well as in double forms. Various translation techniques, such as conventional equivalent, compensation, modulation, and reduction, were analyzed for their impact on translation quality. The conventional equivalent technique effectively maintains the position of the unmarked topical theme, while compensation, modulation, and reduction techniques tend to alter it, sometimes prioritizing naturalness over strict accuracy. This research is pioneering in integrating systemic functional linguistics with translation theory, aiming to develop Systemic Functional Translation Studies (SFTS) in Indonesia. The findings suggest that translation techniques within SFTS can significantly affect translation quality, emphasizing accuracy, readability, and acceptability. Future research should expand beyond micro translation studies to include macro aspects like translation methods and ideology, and should also explore marked topical themes, textual themes, and interpersonal themes in Arabic, Indonesian, and Javanese.

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