



## **Noun Phrase Construction in The Alchemist: An Indonesian Translation of English Noun Phrases**

**Fadhilatus Sa'adah**

Universitas 17 Agustus 1945 Surabaya, Indonesia

Email: fadhilasaadah@gmail.com

**Dra. Susie Chrismalia Garnida, M.Pd.**

Universitas 17 Agustus 1945 Surabaya, Indonesia

Email: susigarnida@untag-sby.ac.id

**Abstract.** The purpose of this research is to examine the noun phrase construction in the Indonesian translation of Paulo Coelho's *The Alchemist*. This study employed the descriptive qualitative approach in conjunction with Collins (2017) English noun phrase theory and Djenar (2003) Indonesian noun phrase theory. The construction of noun phrases in English and Indonesian differs somewhat in the location of the pre-modifier. In the English noun phrase construction, the pre-modifier comes before the head, whereas in the Indonesian noun phrase construction, the pre-modifier comes after the head. *The Alchemist* contains 96 data points on English noun phrase construction, according to the findings of this study. In the TL the structure changes into: 74 Indonesian noun phrase construction consisting of head + post-HM, 21 Indonesian noun phrase construction consisting of determiner + head + post-HM, and 1 Indonesian noun phrase construction consisting of subject + predicate.

**Keywords:** *Noun Phrase Structure, The Alchemist, Translation*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Translation is more than just transferring words from one language to another; it is a complex process that involves the replication of meaning, structure, and style in a new linguistic and cultural context. The noun phrase (NP) is one of the language components that provide translation issues. Noun phrases (NP) are defined as consisting of a head, which is normally a noun, and parts that (either obligatorily or optionally) determine the head and (optionally) change the head, or compliment another element in the phrase (Quirk et al., 1985). Differences in NP construction between English and Indonesian, notably the usage of pre- and post-modifiers, need strategic translation decisions in order to maintain clarity and meaning. For instance, English typically uses pre-modification (e.g., "*a big house*"), while Indonesian favors post-modification ("*rumah besar*"), requiring translators to adjust structure without distorting the original message.

The key research question stems from this context: how are English noun phrase structures translated into Indonesian noun phrase structures in Paulo Coelho's *The Alchemist*? This question directs the investigation by analyzing structural alterations that occur during translation and their possible influence on meaning. To solve the

issue, the purpose of this research is to monitor, compare, and evaluate the structural transformation of noun phrases from source language (SL) to target language (TL). The researcher intends to provide practical insight into how noun phrase structures shift in translation and how those shifts affect clarity and interpretation by applying linguistic theories, particularly Collins' noun phrase construction theory, to both the English and Indonesian versions of the novel.

Several prior research have looked at noun phrase construction in various circumstances. Mauliddia & Megawati (2021) examined noun phrases in high school textbooks and discovered similar structures involving determiners and modifiers. Nurdiansyah & Satriani (2021) discovered several types of modifiers in magazine articles. Meanwhile, Rahmawati et al. (2022) investigated phrase structure in song lyrics, discovering many phrase structures, including noun phrases. However, none of these research focused on noun phrase construction in literary translations, particularly in a work as globally famous as *The Alchemist*. This creates a gap, which the current study intends to fill by providing a concentrated comparison of SL and TL noun phrase construction within a comprehensive narrative work. The purpose of this study is to identify and categorize the noun phrase construction present in the Indonesian translations of English noun phrases from Paulo Coelho's *The Alchemist*. This work is intended to add to the area of translation studies by improving knowledge of grammatical structures and assisting future translators with comparable issues in literary translation.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Understanding noun phrase construction is critical in translation research, especially when analyzing how structural modifications impact meaning between languages. This section examines various earlier research and significant theoretical frameworks pertinent to the analysis of noun phrases and their translations, followed by a critical evaluation and placement of the current study within the existing literature.

Several academics have examined noun phrase (NP) structures in various textual settings. Cindy et al. (2022) investigated NP structures in English menu names in restaurants and cafés in Padang, Indonesia. Their descriptive qualitative investigation discovered 209 NPs divided into 31 categories, with the most finding being noun + noun and adjective + noun construction. While this illustrates the syntactic variety of NPs in public signs, it does not address translation concerns. Simanjuntak (2020) investigated the translation of English noun phrases into Indonesian using a literary source. Her research revealed four major translation patterns: the usage of the term *yang*, singular transformations, and non-literal changes. This research is directly relevant because it demonstrates structural changes while maintaining meaning—a concern that is also central to the current study. Kumbara Omar et al. (2022) examined noun phrase types in a travel magazine. They discovered three primary structures: pre-modification, post-modification, and multiple modification.

Critically, the majority of these studies concentrate on either monolingual structural analysis or translations in non-literary contexts (menus, textbooks, magazines). However, no existing study has looked specifically at noun phrase translation in *The*

*Alchemist*, a widely translated philosophical novel with complex linguistic and thematic elements. This gap provides a possibility for future investigation.

This study is theoretically based on two major linguistic frameworks: Quirk et al. (1985) and Collins (2017) models of English noun phrase structure. Collins defines noun phrases as (1) head only; (2) pre-head modifier + head; (3) head + post- head modifier; and (4) pre-head modifier + head + post- head modifier. These structure represent English syntax's flexibility and density, particularly in extensively pre-modified formulations. In contrast, Indonesian noun phrases, according to Djenar (2003) follow more regular structure, with the head usually before the modifier. Examples of common forms are noun + possessor, noun + adjective, noun + demonstrative, and more. This study critically examines these structural differences to determine how English noun phrases from *The Alchemist* are represented in its Indonesian translation, *Sang Alkemis*. By focusing on particular literary work, the research hopes to fill a vacuum in the relevant literature and provide a better knowledge of structural modifications and their consequences for translation accuracy, naturalness, and meaning preservation.

## METHOD

This study used a descriptive qualitative design to examine and explain the construction of noun phrases in Paulo Coelho's *The Alchemist* and its Indonesian adaptation, *Sang Alkemis*. Qualitative research is a technique for studying and understanding the meaning people or groups attribute to a social or human situation (Creswell, 2013). This study's population consists of all noun phrases contained in the English novel *The Alchemist*, whereas the sample consists of chosen noun phrases and their Indonesian translations from the novel *Sang Alkemis*, translated by Tanti Lesmana. The English edition has 208 pages, and the Indonesian version has 216 pages. Purposive sampling was carried out by picking noun phrases that were easily recognized in both language variants. The researcher herself served as a participant observer, collecting, identifying, and analyzing the data personally.

This study's data collecting involved multiple phases. First, the researcher extensively studied novel *The Alchemist* in order to identify and gather data in the form of noun phrases. After collecting the English noun phrases, the researcher read the Indonesian translation, *Sang Alkemis*. The following phase included comparing the previously obtained English noun phrases with their Indonesian counterparts. This method guaranteed that each data pair had the same phrases in both the source and target languages. Following data collection, multiple rounds of analysis were carried out. The researcher started by reorganizing and categorizing English noun phrases based on Collins' noun phrase structure theory. Next, the corresponding Indonesian noun phrases were analyzed and compared to their English counterparts. Some of the Indonesian noun phrases were then chosen and classed based on structural patterns. The researcher also deleted any Indonesian noun phrases that did not structurally match to the English data. Finally, the researcher concluded on the amount and types of noun phrase structures discovered in both the English and Indonesian versions of the work.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Based on the analysis, this study identified 96 English noun phrases construction consisting of pre-head modifier + head + post-head modifier. In TL, this structure becomes:

No	Structure in TL	Data Code	Findings
1.	Head + Post-headed Modifier	HP	74
2.	Determiner + Head + Post-headed Modifier	DHP	21
3.	Subject + Predicate	SP	1
	Total Data		96

#### A. The Construction Consisting of Head + Post-head Modifier in TL

This construction contains only the head and post-head modifier in the target language. The determiner is normally not translated, and the pre-modifier in the SL is replaced by the post-head modifier in the TL during translation.

##### 1. Data HP 1

SL: The alchemist knew the legend of Narcissus, a youth who knelt daily beside a lake to contemplate his own beauty (Coelho, 1993)

TL: Sang Alkemis tahu legenda tentang Narcissus, pemuda yang setiap hari berlutut di tepi telaga untuk memandang-mandangi keelokannya sendiri (Coelho, 2013)

The construction of NP in SL: det. (*a*) + Head (*youth*) + post-HM (*who knelt daily beside a lake*)

The construction in TL: Head (*pemuda*) + post-HM (*yang setiap hari berlutut di tepi telaga*)

The translator does not translate the '*a*' determiner in SL into TL. The head '*youth*' in SL is translated as '*pemuda*' in TL. The post-HM '*who knelt everyday by a lake*' in SL was translated the same way as the post-HM '*yang setiap hari berlutut di tepi telaga*'.

##### 2. Data HP 2

SL: As long as the boy knew how to find the best pastures in Andalusia, they would be his friend (Coelho, 1993)

TL: Selama si anak bisa mencarikan padang-padang rumput terbaik di Andalusia, domba-domba itu akan menjadi teman-temannya (Coelho, 2013)

The construction of NP in SL: det. (*the*) + pre-HM (*best*) + Head (*pastures*) + post-HM (*in Andalusia*)

The construction in TL: Head (*padang-padang rumput*) + post-HM (*terbaik di Andalusia*)

The determiner 'the' in SL does not undergo translation into TL. The pre-HM 'best' in SL is translated as 'terbaik', while the position shifts to the post-HM in TL. The head 'pastures' in SL is equivalent to the head 'padang-padang rumput' in TL. The post-HM 'in Andalusia' has the same place as the post-HM 'di Andalusia' in TL.

### 3. Data HP 3

SL: It had caused him to have *the same dream for a second time*, and it was causing him to feel anger towards his faithful companions (Coelho, 1993)

TL: Barangkali itu sebabnya dia mengalami *mimpi yang sama untuk kedua kali*. Barangkali itu pula yang menyebabkan dia merasa marah pada teman-teman setianya ini (Coelho, 2013)

The construction of NP in SL: det. (the) + pre-HM (same) + Head (dream) + post-HM (for a second time)

The construction in TL: Head (mimpi) + post-HM (yang sama untuk kedua kali)

The translator does not translate the determiner 'the' in SL into TL. The pre-HM 'same' in SL is translated as 'yang sama', and the position shifts to the post-HM in TL. The head 'dream' in SL is the same as the head 'mimpi' in TL. The post-HM 'for the second time' in SL is in the same place as the post-HM 'untuk kedua kali' in TL.

## B. The Construction Consisting of Determiner + Head + Post-head Modifier in TL

The construction includes a determiner, head, and post-head modifier in target language. In most cases, the pre-head modifier in the source language is translated and replaced by the post-modifier in the target language.

### 1. Data DHP 1

SL: The alchemist picked *a book that someone in the caravan had brought* (Coelho, 1993)

TL: Sang Alkemis mengambil *sebuah buku yang dibawa seseorang di karavan itu* (Coelho, 2013)

The construction of NP in SL: det. (a) + Head (book) + post-HM (that someone in the caravan had brought)

The construction in TL: det. (sebuah) + Head (buku) + post-HM (yang dibawa seseorang di karavan itu)

The SL determiner 'a' is equivalent to the TL determiner 'sebuah' in terms of position. The head 'book' in SL occupies the same place as the head 'buku' in TL. In SL, the post-HM phrase 'that someone in the caravan had brought' is translated similarly to TL's 'yang dibawa seseorang di karavan itu'.

## 2. Data DHP 2

SL: I have never heard of them, but, if it was a child who showed them to you, they exist (Coelho, 1993)

TL: Aku belum pernah mendengar tentangnya, tapi andai seorang anak yang menunjukkannya padamu, berarti mereka ada (Coelho, 2013)

The construction of NP in SL is: det. (*a*) + Head (*child*) + post-HM (*who showed them to you*)

The construction in TL is: det. (*seorang*) + Head (*anak*) + post-HM (*yang menunjukkannya padamu*).

In SL, the determiner '*a*' has the same position as in TL '*seorang*'. In SL, the head '*child*' occupies the same place as the TL head '*anak*'. In SL, the post-HM '*who showed them to you*' is equivalent to the post-HM '*yang menunjukkannya padamu*' in TL.

## 3. Data DHP 3

SL: He also tried to remember some good stories to relate as he sheared the sheep (Coelho, 1993)

TL: Dia juga berusaha mengingat-ingat beberapa kisah menarik untuk diceritakan sambil mencukur domba-domba (Coelho, 2013)

The construction of NP in SL: det. (*some*) + pre-HM (*good*) + Head (*stories*) + post-HM (*to relate as he sheared the sheep*)

The construction in TL: det. (*beberapa*) + Head (*kisah*) + post-HM (*menarik untuk diceritakan sambil mencukur domba-domba*)

The SL determiner '*some*' is translated at the same location as the TL determiner '*beberapa*'. When translated from SL to TL, the pre-head modifier '*good*' means '*bagus*' or '*baik*'. However, the translation needs to be more readable, the translator chose to use the post-head modifier '*menarik*'. The SL head '*stories*' is in the same place as the TL head '*kisah*'. In SL, the post-headed modifier '*to relate as he sheared the sheep*' is equivalent to the post-HM '*untuk diceritakan sambil mencukur domba-domba*' in TL.

## C. The Construction Consisting of Subject + Predicate in TL

This construction in TL consists of a subject and a predicate. In contrast to the other two Indonesian noun phrase construction, in which the pre-head modifier in SL is typically translated into the post-head modifier in TL, the order in this structure varies depending on how the translator translates the sentence structure.

### 1. Data SP 1

SL: He had said that it was a good thing for the boy to clean the crystal pieces (Coelho, 1993)

TL: Pedagang itu pernah berkata, kegiatan membersihkan barang-barang kristal itu bagus bagi si anak (Coelho, 2013)

The construction of NP in SL: det. (*a*) + pre-HM (*good*) + Head (*thing*) + post-HM (*for the boy to clean the crystal pieces*).

The construction in TL: Subject (*kegiatan membersihkan barang-barang kristal itu*) + Predicate (*bagus bagi si anak*)

The translation of this noun phrase becomes a sentence in TL because in SL the noun phrase is a part of '*it was a good thing for the boy to clean the crystal pieces*'. This is a structure of infinitive '*to clean the crystal pieces was a good thing for the boy*' in which the subject is infinitive. It is common to change the structure by using 'it' as the subject, and place the infinitive in the last part.

## CONCLUSION

The aim of this study was to analyse at how English noun phrases, particularly those with the construction pre-head modifier + head + post-head modifier, are translated into Indonesian in Paulo Coelho's *The Alchemist*. A total of 96 English noun phrases were investigated. The data show that the bulk of these noun phrases change structurally during the translation process. Specifically, 74 data are translated into the Indonesian noun phrase structure of head + post-modifier, 21 data remain in the determiner + head + post-modifier structure, and 1 data is moved into a complete sentence with subject and predicate.

Despite these structural changes, the semantic meaning of noun phrases is mostly intact. Significant differences were discovered, such as the absence of determiners, as evidenced in the translation of '*the best pastures in Andalusia*' into '*padang-padang rumput terbaik di Andalusia*', which omits the word '*the*'. Pre-modifiers are often displaced, such as '*some good stories to relate...*' becoming '*beberapa kisah menarik...*' by transferring the modifier '*good*' to the post-modifier position in target language. To retain naturalness in Indonesian, noun phrases are sometimes reorganized into sentences with subject and predicate. For example, '*a good thing for the boy to clean...*' is translated as '*kegiatan membersihkan... itu bagus bagi si anak*'.

These findings show that translating noun phrases requires not just lexical similarity but also awareness to the target language's syntactic and stylistic conventions. The study adds to translation research by highlighting how structural differences between English and Indonesian influence phrase construction during translation.

## SUGGESTION

Further study should look into different sorts of phrases, such as verb or adjective phrases, to have a better understanding of syntactic translation adjustments. In practice, the findings advise translators to take into account both the grammatical structure and natural flow of the target language when dealing with complicated noun phrases. Future research may look into how changes in phrase structure affect reader comprehension and interpretation, providing a better understanding of the function of syntax in translation quality.

## REFERENCES

Cindy, J., Marnita, R., & Ayendi, A. (2022). The Study of Noun Phrase Structure of English Names for Menus in Selected Restaurants and Cafes in Padang Chinese Town, Indonesia. *Linguistika Kultura: Jurnal Linguistik Sastra Berdimensi Cultural Studies*, 11(1), 33–45. <https://doi.org/10.25077/jlk.11.1.33-45.2022>

Coelho, P. (1993). *The Alchemist*. Harper Collins Publishers.

Coelho, P. (2013). *Sang Alkemis*. Gramedia Pustaka Utama.

Collins, P. (2017). *English Grammar: An Introduction*. Bloomsbury Publishing.

Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Method Approaches*. SAGE Publications.

Djenar, N. (2003). *A Student's Guide to Indonesian Grammar*. Oxford University Press.

Kumbara Omar, B., Putu Intan Yuliana, N., & Umiyati, M. (2022). English Noun Phrase Structure Found in Inclover Magazine. *KnE Social Sciences*, 146–152. <https://doi.org/10.18502/kss.v7i10.11282>

Mauliddia, D., & Megawati, F. (2021). Noun Phrase Construction Found in Recount Genres on the First Year Senior High School Students' Textbooks. *Academia Open*, 4. <https://doi.org/10.21070/acopen.4.2021.2952>

Nurdiansyah, E., & Satriani, I. (2021). NOUN PHRASE ANALYSIS OF MAGAZINE ARTICLE “VIDEO GAMES … ARE GOOD FOR YOU?” BY GABRIEL J. ADAMS. *PROJECT (Professional Journal of English Education)*, 4(1), 91. <https://doi.org/10.22460/project.v4i1.p91-99>

Quirk, R., Greenbaum, S., Leech, G., & Svartvik, J. (1985). *A Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language*. Longman.

Rahmawati, R., Gaol, S. P. L., Hutabarat, N. D. B., & Pandiangan, T. (2022). AN ANALYSIS PHRASE STRUCTURE RULES IN ANNETH SONG LYRICS. *Indonesian EFL Journal*, 8(1), 73–82. <https://doi.org/10.25134/ieflj.v8i1.5590>

Simanjuntak, H. L. (2020). THE TRANSLATION OF ENGLISH NOUN PHRASE INTO INDONESIAN. *Scope : Journal of English Language Teaching*, 4(2), 81. <https://doi.org/10.30998/scope.v4i2.6507>