

The Ideological Choices in the English-Indonesian Translation of Imperative Utterances in Al-Quran Surah Al-Kahf

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Received: 12th December 2025 | Revised: 22nd June 2026 | Accepted: 30th June 2026

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Abstract

This study is grounded in the increasing need to understand how ideological perspectives shape the translation of sacred texts, particularly in the rendering of directive expressions across languages. The complexity of translating imperative utterances lies in preserving both their directive force and theological meaning. In Qur'anic discourse, imperative utterances carry not only linguistic meaning but also theological, cultural, and pragmatic significance, making their translation highly complex and ideologically sensitive. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the translation ideology underlying the English–Indonesian rendering of imperative utterances in Surah Al-Kahf, with a particular focus on identifying their thematic distribution and examining how they are translated through the frameworks of domestication and foreignization proposed by Lawrence Venuti. Employing a qualitative discourse analysis approach, this study analyzes 44 imperative utterances extracted from the English translation by Mustafa Khattab and the Indonesian translation issued by the Ministry of Religious Affairs. The data were systematically classified and analyzed based on thematic categories and translation ideology. The findings reveal that the imperative utterances are organized into three major thematic domains: theological orientation, moral-psychological formation, and pragmatic-life guidance. These imperatives function as complex directive speech acts, encompassing guidance, warnings, instructions, and ethical formation. In terms of translation ideology, 35 out of 44 utterances are translated using domestication, while 9 reflect foreignization. Domestication predominates in the moral and pragmatic domains, where clarity, naturalness, and cultural familiarity are prioritized. In contrast, foreignization is selectively applied in theological contexts to preserve the rhetorical structure, lexical specificity, and sacred tone of the source text.

Keywords: Domestication; Foreignization; Imperative Utterances; Qur'anic Translation; Translation Ideology.

How to Cite:

Rajabul, M. G., Anggraini, S. W. P., & Hidayati, R. (2026). The Ideological Choices in the English-Indonesian Translation of Imperative Utterances in Al-Quran Surah Al-Kahf. *Humanitatis : Journal of Language and Literature*, 12(2), 269-282.

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1. INTRODUCTION

As a field of inquiry, translation studies are grounded in the inseparable relationship between language and culture because meaning is always produced and interpreted within a specific sociocultural context (Al-Sulaimaan & Khoshaba, 2018; Mohamed, 2022). In religious texts, as argued by Husni and Newman (2015), translation does not merely transfer meaning from one language to another but also carries spiritual, theological, and cultural meanings across linguistic boundaries. In this regard, Al Farisi (2023) highlighted that the translation of sacred texts such as the Al-Qur'an requires exceptional precision, since these texts are deeply respected and contain not only linguistic expression but also divine guidance and religious instruction. Among the most challenging elements in such translation are imperative utterances, which frequently convey commands, prohibitions, and instructions that are central to understanding Islamic theology and moral conduct.

Surah Al-Kahf, the eighteenth chapter of the Al-Qur'an, is a profound and thematically rich surah that addresses faith, morality, divine wisdom, and human experience (Markhamah et al., 2017). Consisting of 110 verses, it offers guidance on how believers should respond to trials, remain steadfast, and preserve their faith in the face of worldly challenges. The central themes of this chapter include faith and disbelief, the nature of trials, the limits of human knowledge, divine justice, humility, and moral responsibility. Because of this thematic richness, Surah Al-Kahf holds a significant position in both Qur'anic studies and translation studies, especially when its verses are rendered into other languages for broader audiences.

The thematic structure of Surah Al-Kahf also demonstrates how its narratives function as moral and spiritual guidance for both individuals and society. It integrates spiritual insight with practical moral lessons. The surah opens with an affirmation of divine truth and guidance, followed by the story of the People of the Cave, which emphasizes steadfast faith in the face of persecution. It continues with the narrative of the owner of two gardens, illustrating the dangers of arrogance and materialism. The story of Prophet Musa and Khidr offers profound lessons on the limits of human knowledge and the depth of divine wisdom. Finally, the account of Dhul-Qarnayn reflects themes of justice, leadership, and responsibility. The relevance of these narratives to everyday life is evident in their emphasis on patience, humility, faith, and ethical conduct in dealing with both worldly and spiritual challenges.

The translation of imperative utterances in Surah Al-Kahf necessitates an approach that balances linguistic precision with cultural and theological considerations. These utterances, often expressed as commands, prohibitions, or guidance, represent divine authority while simultaneously conveying moral instruction within specific narrative contexts. Examples include directives such as "say," "be patient," and "remember your Lord," which are central to the surah's ethical and spiritual messages. As Lanigan (1977), Searle et al. (1980), and other pragmatics scholars have shown, the meaning of an utterance is shaped not only by its literal form but also by the speaker's intention and the effect it is expected to produce. This adds complexity to the translation process, as it must convey not only the literal meaning but also the emotional, contextual, and theological dimensions of these utterances. For instance, directives such as *faṣḥir* ("be patient") or *qul* ("say") in Surah Al-Kahf carry layered meanings ranging from instruction and reassurance to expressions of divine authority, thus requiring a nuanced and context-sensitive translation approach.

This challenge becomes even more complex because translating sacred texts inevitably involves interpretation. In the case of the Al-Qur'an, as noted by Husni and Newman (2015) and Lubis (2021), the translator is not only transferring language but also interpreting divine discourse, making the task both linguistically demanding and theologically sensitive. Any translation inevitably reflects the translator's linguistic, cultural, and theological background, meaning that translation is never entirely neutral (Bauler, 2022; Chen, 2024). As a result, the translator's ideological orientation significantly influences how the target text is shaped and understood. In religious translation, the decision to maintain close adherence to the source text or to adapt it for target readers is not merely technical but ideological.

The concept of translation ideology is essential in addressing these challenges. Munday (2007) discussed domestication and foreignization as two fundamental translation ideologies. Domestication seeks to align the source

text with the cultural and linguistic conventions of the target language, making the translation more accessible and natural for its audience. Conversely, foreignization preserves the cultural and linguistic characteristics of the source text, often encouraging readers to confront the “foreignness” of the original. In translating imperative utterances in Surah Al-Kahf, these approaches significantly influence how readers interpret and respond to the conveyed directives. A domesticated translation, as argued by Yang (2010), may prioritize accessibility and cultural relatability, potentially at the expense of theological nuance. In contrast, a foreignized translation may preserve the original cultural and theological context while creating challenges for readers due to unfamiliar language or concepts (Yang, 2010).

The need to maintain doctrinal accuracy while ensuring comprehensibility for contemporary readers further complicates the translation of religious imperatives. McDonald (2022) argued that translators must decide whether to prioritize literal fidelity or adapt expressions so that their intended meanings are understandable and relatable to the target audience. According to Lanigan (1977), imperative forms in Speech Act Theory are associated with illocutionary force, namely the speaker’s intention to influence the listener’s behaviour, and perlocutionary effect, namely the listener’s response to that intention. The translator’s ideological position and understanding of the intended impact of the text frequently shape these decisions (Nayla & Dewi, 2024). For example, a translator favouring domestication might render *ittaqu* as “be mindful of Allah” to communicate its essence in a culturally resonant manner, whereas a translator oriented toward foreignization might retain a more literal rendering, such as “fear Allah.”

Furthermore, translating the Al-Qur’an entails an inherent responsibility because it involves interpreting the word of God (Husni & Newman, 2015; Lubis, 2021). Any translation is, by definition, an interpretation shaped by the translator’s linguistic, cultural, and theological background (Man, 2017; Zhou & Yin, 2017). This makes the translator’s role critical in bridging the gap between the source and target cultures. Failure to account for cultural nuances or theological subtleties can lead to misinterpretation and potentially alter the intended message of the scripture. Consequently, a translator’s ideological orientation, whether toward domestication or foreignization, significantly affects how the text is received and understood by the target audience.

Recent studies on the translation of sacred texts have demonstrated that translation is not merely a linguistic transfer but also an interpretive and ideological process shaped by translators’ choices and sociocultural contexts. Several studies conducted over the last decade have examined the translation of sacred texts, particularly in relation to ideological choices, translation strategies, and pragmatic meaning. Albarakati and Saleem (2019) emphasized that readability and accessibility are crucial in translating sacred texts but must be carefully balanced with fidelity to the original meaning and doctrinal accuracy. Al Farisi (2023), using a qualitative discourse analysis approach, investigated the translation of imperative utterances in the Qur’an and found that maintaining directive force remains a major challenge, with variations in translation strategies influencing interpretation and tone. Similarly, Dewi (2023) analysed translation errors and methods in religious and academic texts, revealing that communicative translation tends to prioritize clarity and reader comprehension, often resulting in structural and semantic shifts. In addition, Nayla and Dewi (2024) explored translation strategies in literary-religious texts and found that different strategies reflect distinct interpretive orientations, particularly in balancing accuracy and readability. Furthermore, Faizin et al. (2025), employing a qualitative comparative method, demonstrated that translation choices in Qur’anic texts are closely linked to translators’ theological understandings, resulting in variations in meaning representation.

Despite these contributions, a significant research gap remains. Most existing studies focus on general translation strategies or broad linguistic features without specifically examining imperative utterances as a central pragmatic and discursive phenomenon. In addition, limited research has investigated the English–Indonesian translation of Qur’anic texts, particularly Surah Al-Kahf, through a systematic analysis that integrates themes, speech-act types, and translation ideology within a unified framework. Previous studies have also rarely combined Speech Act Theory with translation ideology (domestication versus foreignization) to examine how directive meanings are constructed and transferred across languages. This study offers novelty by providing an integrated analysis of imperative utterances that simultaneously examines three key dimensions: (1) the types of imperative

speech acts, (2) their thematic classification, and (3) the translation ideology underlying their rendering through domestication and foreignization. Unlike previous studies that have treated these aspects separately, this study combines them into a comprehensive analytical model. Furthermore, the focus on Surah Al-Kahf introduces a corpus that has not been extensively explored in this context, thereby enriching the empirical scope of Qur'anic translation studies.

Through an analysis of Dr. Mustafa Khattab's English translation and the Indonesian translation issued by the Ministry of Religious Affairs, this study pursues three objectives: first, to identify the types of imperative utterances found in Surah Al-Kahf; second, to examine the thematic patterns of these imperative utterances within the surah; and third, to analyse the translation ideology applied in rendering them into English and Indonesian.

The contribution of this research is both theoretical and practical. Theoretically, it extends the application of Speech Act Theory to the study of sacred-text translation by demonstrating how imperative utterances function as complex directive mechanisms across linguistic and cultural boundaries. It also contributes to translation studies by clarifying how ideological choices shape meaning, authority, and interpretation in religious discourse. Practically, the findings provide insights for translators, educators, and scholars seeking to develop more systematic and context-sensitive approaches to translating sacred texts, particularly in balancing clarity (domestication) and fidelity (foreignization). Ultimately, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of how language, ideology, and theology interact in the translation of the Qur'an.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative descriptive research design and a discourse analysis approach to examine the ideological choices underlying the translation of imperative utterances in Surah Al-Kahf. This design was selected because the study focuses on interpreting meanings, identifying patterns, and uncovering underlying ideological tendencies rather than measuring numerical data. In line with Bell et al. (2022), qualitative research emphasizes meaning-making, contextual interpretation, and inductive analysis, which are essential for analyzing sacred texts and their translations. The research object consists of imperative utterances found in the English and Indonesian translations of Surah Al-Kahf. The data were obtained from the official website *Quran.com* (<https://quran.com/18>). The English translation analyzed in this study was produced by Dr. Mustafa Khattab, while the Indonesian translation was issued by the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs. Surah Al-Kahf was purposively selected because of its rich narrative structure and frequent use of imperative utterances that function as divine commands, guidance, and moral instruction.

The data collection method employed in this study was document analysis using observation and note-taking techniques. The procedure was conducted in several stages: (1) close reading of the English and Indonesian versions of Surah Al-Kahf; (2) identification of all imperative utterances based on linguistic and pragmatic criteria; (3) marking and extracting the identified utterances; and (4) compiling the data into a structured dataset for analysis. The unit of analysis in this study was each imperative utterance, including both explicit and implicit directive forms carrying illocutionary force, such as commands, prohibitions, and instructions. The data were analyzed using an interactive qualitative analysis model consisting of three stages: (1) data reduction, in which imperative utterances were selected and categorized; (2) data display, in which the data were organized into thematic and analytical tables; and (3) conclusion drawing and verification, in which patterns of themes, types, and translation ideologies were interpreted.

The analysis was guided by three theoretical frameworks. First, the Speech Act Theory developed by Austin (1975) and Searle et al. (1980) was employed to classify the types of imperative utterances based on their illocutionary force (e.g., commands, prohibitions, directives, and advisories). Second, thematic analysis was used to identify the domains of meaning (e.g., faith, morality, law, and guidance) in which the imperatives operate. Third, the translation ideology framework proposed by Venuti (2021) and discussed by Munday (2007) was applied to determine whether each translation reflects domestication or foreignization. To ensure analytical rigor, each datum was examined comparatively across the English and Indonesian versions to identify shifts in meaning, structure, and

pragmatic force. The interpretation focused on how translation choices influence the representation of theological meaning, cultural context, and directive force.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In Surah Al-Kahf, the researcher identified 44 imperative utterances used to instruct and guide believers in matters of faith, moral conduct, and practical life orientation. These utterances are categorized according to their linguistic form (i.e., imperative verb structures) and the functions they perform in directing actions within both theological and narrative contexts. This classification aligns with the understanding in Speech Act Theory that imperative utterances are intended to influence the listener's behaviour through commands, prohibitions, and guidance, as emphasized by Searle et al. (1980).

The features that classify an utterance as imperative in this context include: (1) the form of the verb, as imperative utterances typically employ verbs in the imperative form (e.g., “say,” “recite,” “remember,” “take,” and “bring”); (2) the intention underlying the utterance, as the imperatives in Surah Al-Kahf express divine will, spiritual guidance, and situational instruction, ranging from reinforcing belief and reliance on Allah to providing direction in specific life circumstances; and (3) the role of the listener, as these utterances are directed either to the Prophet or to a broader audience, calling them to action through acts of worship, ethical behaviour, or appropriate responses to real-life challenges.

Surah Al-Kahf is characterized by a dynamic interplay between positive and negative directives throughout its narrative structure. Positive imperatives instruct actions such as remembering Allah, reciting revelation, maintaining patience, seeking guidance, and taking practical steps in times of difficulty (e.g., “take refuge in the cave,” “send one of you,” and “bring provisions”). Negative imperatives, on the other hand, function as prohibitions that regulate belief and behaviour, such as “do not argue without knowledge,” “do not obey the heedless,” and “never say, ‘I will do this tomorrow,’ without adding, ‘if Allah wills.’” Together, these imperative utterances reflect a comprehensive system of guidance that integrates theological orientation, moral-psychological formation, and pragmatic-life instruction.

3.1. The Types of Imperative Utterances in Al-Quran Surah Al-Kahf

Drawing on the framework of Speech Act Theory proposed by Austin (1975) and Searle et al. (1980), a total of 44 imperative utterances were identified and systematically classified based on their pragmatic functions, including commands, prohibitions, requests, advice, and warnings. This classification demonstrates that each imperative form carries a specific communicative intention, ranging from the expression of divine authority to the provision of moral guidance and spiritual instruction.

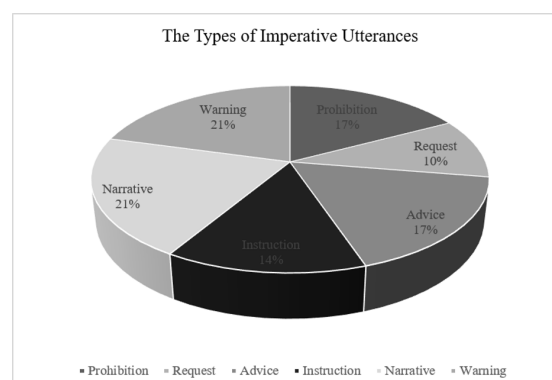


Figure 1. The Types of Imperative Utterances

As shown in Figure 1, the imperative utterances identified in Surah Al-Kahf are distributed across six categories: Narrative, Warning, Advice, Prohibition, Instruction, and Request. The findings indicate that Narrative

and Warning constitute the largest proportion of the data, each accounting for 21% of the total occurrences, followed by Advice and Prohibition at 17%, respectively, while Instruction represents 14% and Request emerges as the least frequent category at 10%. This distribution demonstrates that imperative utterances in the surah perform a variety of communicative functions beyond direct commands. Rather than serving solely as expressions of authority, these imperatives are strategically employed to convey warnings, provide guidance, structure narrative events, offer moral advice, regulate behaviour through prohibitions, and facilitate interpersonal requests. The predominance of Narrative and Warning functions further suggests that imperative forms in Surah Al-Kahf play a significant role in conveying theological messages, moral lessons, and practical guidance, reflecting the multifaceted nature of directive speech acts in Qur'anic discourse.

The findings reveal that imperative utterances in Surah Al-Kahf function as complex realizations of directive speech acts rather than merely grammatical command forms. Within the framework of Speech Act Theory proposed by Searle et al. (1980), these utterances represent attempts by the speaker to influence the behaviour, cognition, or beliefs of the hearer. The dominance of commands (15 instances) and warnings (6 instances) indicates that the surah strongly emphasizes divine authority and moral regulation. For instance, a clear example of a command is found in the utterance "Recite what has been revealed to you," translated as "*Bacakanlah apa yang diwahyukan kepadamu.*" This utterance reflects a high degree of illocutionary force, as it represents a direct divine instruction addressed to the Prophet. Similarly, "Take refuge in the cave" ("*Berlindunglah ke dalam gua*") illustrates a situational command embedded within narrative discourse, demonstrating how directive force operates contextually.

In line with Speech Act Theory proposed by Austin (1975) and Searle et al. (1980), the findings reveal a gradient of directive force ranging from strong imposition to softer interpersonal forms. Strong directives are evident in prohibitive structures such as "Do not argue about them" ("*Janganlah kamu berdebat tentang mereka*") and "Do not obey those whose hearts are heedless" ("*Jangan mengikuti orang yang lalai*"). These examples function as prohibitions, which not only restrict behaviour but also serve as moral safeguards against theological deviation.

Meanwhile, softer directives appear in the form of requests and advice. For example, the utterance "May I follow you?" ("*Bolehkah aku mengikutimu?*") represents a request characterized by lower imposition and interpersonal negotiation. Likewise, "Be patient" ("*Bersabarlah*") functions as advice, conveying moral guidance rather than a strict obligation. These findings support Searle's view that directive speech acts vary in strength and intention depending on the context and the relationship between the speaker and the hearer.

Another important category is narrative-embedded directives, which occur within dialogic storytelling. For instance, "Follow me" ("*Ikutilah aku*") and "Do not question me about anything" ("*Jangan bertanya kepadaku tentang apa pun*") appear in the Musa-Khidr narrative. These utterances demonstrate that directives are not exclusively divine commands but may also be mediated through human interaction, reinforcing the contextual nature of speech acts.

The category of instructional commands further illustrates practical and procedural directives. Examples such as "Bring me blocks of iron" ("*Bawalah kepadaku potongan besi*") and "Blow!" ("*Tiuplah!*") in the story of Dhul-Qarnayn indicate task-oriented instructions requiring immediate physical execution. These directives differ from theological commands in that they emphasize action rather than belief.

In addition, permission- or choice-oriented directives highlight a unique pragmatic feature of Qur'anic discourse. The utterance "Whoever wills—let them believe, and whoever wills—let them disbelieve" ("*Barang siapa mau, berimanlah ... kafirlah*") reflects a non-coercive directive that allows individual agency while still implying moral consequences. This demonstrates that not all directives impose obligations; some construct a framework for human choice within the broader context of divine authority.

The presence of strong warnings further reinforces the directive force of the text. For example, "Beware of the Day ..." ("*Ingatlah hari ...*") and "Do good deeds and associate none with Allah" ("*Berbuatlah kebajikan dan jangan mempersekutukan Allah*") combine elements of command and warning, reflecting both instruction and eschatological caution. These utterances carry a dual illocutionary force: guiding behaviour while simultaneously

evoking awareness, fear, and moral responsibility.

The variation in imperative types, viewed from the perspective of translation ideology as proposed by Venuti (2021), significantly influences translation strategies. Strong commands such as “Recite” → “*Bacakanlah*” tend to preserve their force through foreignization, thereby maintaining the authoritative tone of the source text. In contrast, softer directives such as “May I follow you?” are translated into culturally natural forms (“*Bolehkah aku mengikutimu?*”), reflecting domestication and enhancing readability and acceptability for the target audience.

These findings align with previous research. Al Farisi (2023) emphasized that maintaining directive force in Qur’anic translation is challenging; the present study confirms that this difficulty stems partly from the diversity of imperative types. Dewi (2023) noted that communicative translation often prioritizes clarity, which is evident in the rendering of advice and requests into more natural Indonesian expressions. Furthermore, Faizin et al. (2025) and Nayla and Dewi (2024) argued that translation reflects ideological positioning; this study extends their findings by demonstrating that the type of speech act itself influences ideological choices.

Importantly, this study addresses a limitation in previous research, which has often treated imperative utterances as a single category. The classification of imperative utterances into distinct types, supported by empirical examples, provides a more nuanced and systematic model for analyzing directive speech acts in sacred texts. It also highlights that meaning in translation is negotiated not only linguistically but also pragmatically and ideologically.

In conclusion, the analysis demonstrates that imperative utterances in Surah Al-Kahf are pragmatically diverse, context-sensitive, and ideologically significant. Their variation in illocutionary force influences both interpretation and translation, reinforcing the importance of integrating Speech Act Theory and translation ideology in the study of Qur’anic discourse.

3.2. The Themes of Imperative Utterances in Al-Quran Surah Al-Kahf

The forty-four imperative utterances identified in the text can be broadly organized into three major thematic orientations: Theological Orientation, Moral-Psychological Formation, and Pragmatic-Life Guidance. From a pragmatic perspective, particularly within the framework of directive speech acts theorized by Austin (1975) and Searle et al. (1980), these imperatives are not merely literal commands. Rather, they function as directive speech acts with layered meanings, combining instruction, warning, guidance, and ethical formation, which are systematically distributed across the three thematic domains.

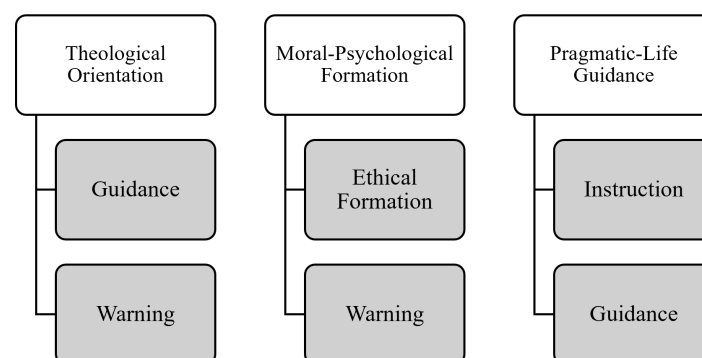


Figure 2. The Theme of Imperative Utterances in Al-Quran Surah Al-Kahf

Figure 2 illustrates that the imperative utterances in Surah Al-Kahf are thematically grouped into three major orientations, namely Theological Orientation, Moral-Psychological Formation, and Pragmatic-Life Guidance. Each orientation is associated with specific pragmatic functions, including guidance, warning, ethical formation, and instruction, demonstrating that the imperative forms in the surah do not operate as isolated commands but as integrated directives serving broader spiritual, moral, and practical purposes. Theological Orientation is primarily

associated with guidance and warnings related to faith and divine consciousness, Moral-Psychological Formation emphasizes character development and ethical behaviour through warning and ethical instruction, while Pragmatic-Life Guidance focuses on instruction and guidance within concrete narrative situations. This thematic distribution demonstrates that imperative utterances in the surah function as multidimensional speech acts that simultaneously convey divine authority, moral lessons, and practical direction.

First, the Theological Orientation encompasses imperatives that direct human consciousness toward Allah, emphasizing faith (*īmān*), reliance (*tawakkul*), and adherence to divine revelation. Utterances such as “Say: If Allah so wills,” “Remember your Lord,” “Recite what has been revealed,” and the recurring command “Say ...” (items 9, 13–15, 16, 20, and 34–37) illustrate how guidance and warning function as the dominant pragmatic domains within this category. These imperatives guide believers toward a proper theological understanding while simultaneously warning against deviation, disbelief, and associating partners with Allah. Although they may appear to be simple instructions, their deeper function lies in shaping a theologically grounded worldview and reinforcing the vertical relationship between human beings and the Divine.

Second, the Moral-Psychological Formation theme includes imperatives aimed at shaping inner character, emotional discipline, and ethical behaviour. Commands such as “Do not obey those whose hearts are heedless,” “Do not let your eyes look beyond them,” “Remain with those who call upon their Lord,” and “Do not argue without knowledge” (items 10–11, 17–19, and 38–44) demonstrate that ethical formation and warning are the primary pragmatic domains operating within this theme. These utterances function not only as prohibitions but also as mechanisms of internal moral regulation, cultivating virtues such as patience, humility, sincerity, and self-restraint. The warning element serves to prevent moral and psychological deviation, while ethical formation contributes to the development of a disciplined and value-oriented personality.

Third, the Pragmatic-Life Guidance theme consists of imperatives that provide concrete and situational instructions within narrative contexts. Examples such as “Take refuge in the cave,” “Send one of you to the city,” “Bring provisions,” “Assist me with resources,” “Bring me blocks of iron,” and “Blow!” (items 2–6, 24, and 29–33) clearly highlight instruction as the dominant pragmatic domain, accompanied by guidance. These imperatives provide practical directions for action, survival strategies, and problem-solving in real-life situations. At the same time, the presence of guidance ensures that these instructions are not merely technical but also contextually appropriate and purposeful. Additionally, interpersonal directives such as “Excuse me for forgetting” and “Do not be hard on me” reflect the extension of ethical formation into social interaction, thereby linking this theme to broader moral considerations.

The distribution of the forty-four imperative utterances across these themes reveals that imperative forms in the text operate as complex and multifunctional directive acts. Each theme is characterized by a dominant combination of pragmatic domains: guidance and warning in Theological Orientation, ethical formation and warning in Moral-Psychological Formation, and instruction and guidance in Pragmatic-Life Guidance. This demonstrates that imperatives are not isolated commands but integrated communicative strategies that simultaneously instruct behaviour, warn against misguidance, guide human action, and shape moral consciousness.

Overall, this study both supports and extends previous research on Qur’anic translation and directive speech acts by confirming that imperative utterances in the Qur’an are complex, multilayered, and challenging to translate because of their strong directive force. However, it extends prior studies by demonstrating that imperatives are not homogeneous but are systematically organized into thematic domains with distinct pragmatic functions. Moreover, this research reveals that translation ideology is influenced not only by linguistic and cultural factors but also by the type and theme of imperative utterances, thereby offering a more integrated analytical model for understanding Qur’anic discourse.

3.3. The Ideological Choices in the English-Indonesian Translation of Surah Al-Kahf

Figure 3 shows that the translation is dominated by domestication, with 35 utterances (80% of the data) classified under this ideology, whereas foreignization is observed in 9 utterances (20%). This distribution indicates

that the translators primarily prioritize readability, naturalness, and cultural familiarity in the target language while preserving theological specificity in selected expressions that require a closer retention of the source text's form and meaning.

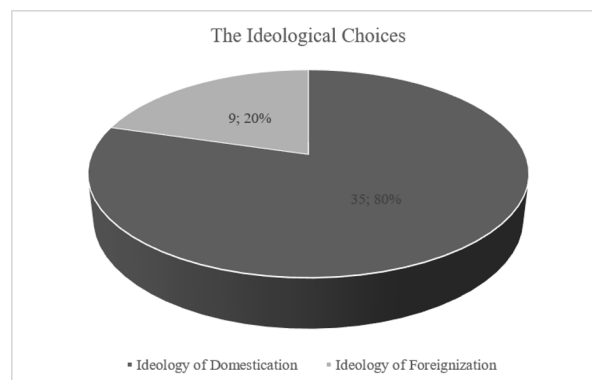


Figure 3. The Ideological Choices of Imperative Utterances in Al-Quran Surah Al-Kahf

This section discusses the ideological choices underlying the English–Indonesian translation of imperative utterances in Surah Al-Kahf. Based on the analysis of 44 imperative utterances, the findings reveal that the translation is shaped by two dominant translation ideologies: domestication and foreignization, as proposed by Venuti (2002, 2018). The results show that 35 out of 44 imperative utterances are categorized under the ideology of domestication, while the remaining 9 utterances reflect the ideology of foreignization. This distribution indicates that domestication is the dominant strategy employed by the translators in rendering Qur’anic imperatives into Indonesian.

The predominance of domestication suggests that the translators prioritize readability, clarity, and cultural familiarity for Indonesian readers. This is evident in the use of natural Indonesian imperative forms such as *katakanlah*, *ingatlah*, *bacakanlah*, and *bersabarlah*, as well as the adaptation of Arabic syntactic structures into fluent Indonesian expressions. In addition, the frequent use of linguistic markers such as *-lah*, *jangan*, and *hendaklah* reflects an effort to align the translation with Indonesian norms of politeness and directive expression. These strategies make the divine commands and narrative instructions more accessible and meaningful within the target cultural context. On the other hand, the presence of 9 foreignized utterances demonstrates that the translators also maintain a selective commitment to preserving the theological nuances and rhetorical features of the source text. This is particularly evident in expressions that retain Islamic terminology or formulaic phrases, such as “*Insyaa Allah*”, as well as in translations that closely follow the original Qur’anic style, especially in declarative-imperative constructions like “*Katakanlah ...*”. These instances reflect an intention to preserve the sacred tone and authenticity of the Qur’anic message.

Furthermore, the distribution of these ideological choices corresponds to the three major domains identified in this study. Domestication predominantly appears in moral and pragmatic domains, where clarity and applicability are essential, while foreignization is more commonly found in theological contexts, where preserving doctrinal meaning and religious authenticity is crucial. Overall, the findings suggest that the English–Indonesian translation of Surah Al-Kahf adopts a balanced yet domestication-oriented approach, in which linguistic accessibility is prioritized without entirely abandoning the theological and stylistic integrity of the source text. This combination of 35 domesticated and 9 foreignized utterances reflects a strategic negotiation between cultural adaptation and faithful representation in translating the Qur’anic discourse.

3.4. The Ideology of Domestication

This section presents the findings and discussion related to the ideology of domestication identified in the Indonesian translation of 44 imperative utterances in Surah Al-Kahf. Domestication is evident when translators

adapt the source text into culturally and linguistically familiar forms in the target language, making divine commands and narrative instructions more accessible, natural, and meaningful for Indonesian readers.

Domestication, as conceptualized by Venuti (2021), refers to a translation strategy that minimizes the foreignness of the source text by aligning it with the norms, values, and expectations of the target culture. In the context of Qur'anic translation, this strategy plays a crucial role in ensuring that the message is not only understood linguistically but also internalized within the socio-religious framework of the target audience. This aligns with Munday's (2007) concept of dynamic equivalence, which emphasizes producing a similar effect on the target readers as experienced by the original audience.

The analysis reveals that 35 out of 44 imperative utterances are translated using domestication strategies, indicating a strong orientation toward target-language readability and communicative effectiveness. These strategies are realized through several interrelated linguistic and pragmatic processes.

First, at the morphological and pragmatic level, domestication is reflected in the consistent use of the suffix *-lah* and the prohibitive marker *jangan*, which are central to Indonesian directive expressions. For example:

- "Take refuge in the cave" → "*Berlindunglah ke dalam gua*"
- "Do not let him give you away" → "*Jangan sekali-kali menceritakan halmu*"

These examples illustrate what Munday (2007) describes as functional adjustment in translation, where linguistic forms are modified to preserve communicative intent while conforming to target-language norms. The addition of *-lah* softens the imperative tone, making it more polite and culturally appropriate while still maintaining its directive force. This reflects Indonesian socio-pragmatic conventions, where commands are often expressed with degrees of politeness rather than direct imposition.

Second, at the syntactic level, domestication is realized through structural expansion and reorganization to achieve naturalness and clarity. For instance:

- "Send one of you to the city" → "*Suruhlah salah seorang di antara kamu pergi ke kota*"
- "Bring you provisions" → "*Bawalah sebagian makanan itu*"

These examples demonstrate what Camelia (2023) terms transposition and modulation, where translators shift grammatical structures and semantic emphasis to produce a more natural expression in the target language. The addition of elements such as "*di antara kamu*" and "*sebagian*" also reflects the tendency toward explicitation, as discussed by Munday (2007), where implicit meanings in the source text are made explicit to enhance comprehension.

Third, domestication is evident in the use of familiar Indonesian Islamic lexical items, which resonate strongly with the target audience's religious and cultural background. For example:

- "Recite what has been revealed" → "*Bacakanlah apa yang diwahyukan*"
- "Be patient with those who call upon their Lord" → "*Bersabarlah bersama orang-orang yang menyeru Tuhan*"

These examples reflect what Hatim (2004) describes as register and discourse adaptation, where translation choices are shaped by the socio-cultural context of the target audience. By employing commonly used religious expressions, the translation ensures that the message is not only linguistically accurate but also emotionally and spiritually relatable.

Fourth, domestication operates through pragmatic and contextual adaptation, particularly in narrative imperatives that guide actions within specific situations. For instance:

- "Build a structure around them" → "*Dirikanlah suatu bangunan*"
- "Let him be cautious" → "*Hendaklah dia berlaku lemah lembut*"

These examples illustrate how the translator prioritizes clarity and actionability, transforming abstract or context-dependent commands into expressions that are easily understood and visualized by Indonesian readers.

This supports Venuti's principle that translation should aim for functional equivalence, ensuring that the intended message produces a similar response in the target audience (Venuti, 2021).

Importantly, these domestication strategies are consistently applied across the three major thematic domains identified in this study. In the theological domain, imperatives such as "*Katakanlah*" and "*Ingatlah Tuhanmu*" are rendered in ways that emphasize devotion while remaining linguistically natural. In the moral-psychological domain, expressions like "*Bersabarlah*" reflect culturally familiar ethical values. Meanwhile, in the pragmatic-narrative domain, commands such as "*Bawalah makanan*" and "*Suruhlah salah seorang*" are rendered as clear, contextually grounded instructions.

This pattern is consistent with findings from previous research on Qur'anic translation, which indicate that domestication is often the dominant strategy in translating religious texts into Indonesian due to the need for accessibility, pedagogical clarity, and cultural resonance. Studies in translation studies have shown that translators of sacred texts tend to prioritize reader comprehension and interpretability, especially when addressing audiences with varying levels of linguistic and theological knowledge.

However, from a critical perspective, the dominance of domestication may also lead to a partial loss of the source text's stylistic and rhetorical distinctiveness. As argued by Venuti (2000), excessive domestication can result in the invisibility of the translator and the erasure of the source culture's uniqueness. In the case of Surah Al-Kahf, while domestication enhances readability and relatability, it may simultaneously reduce the sense of sacred distance and linguistic otherness that characterizes the original text.

In conclusion, the predominance of 35 domesticated imperative utterances demonstrates that domestication functions as a systematic and ideologically driven translation strategy in the English-Indonesian rendering of Surah Al-Kahf. Through morphological, syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic adaptations, the translation effectively bridges linguistic and cultural gaps, making the Qur'anic message more accessible and meaningful to Indonesian readers. At the same time, this strategy reflects an ongoing negotiation between clarity and fidelity, highlighting the inherently ideological nature of translation practices.

3.5. The Ideology of Foreignization

This section presents the findings and discussion on the ideology of foreignization identified in the Indonesian translation of 44 imperative utterances from Surah Al-Kahf. In contrast to domestication, foreignization is reflected in translation choices that deliberately retain the linguistic, cultural, and theological features of the source text, thereby preserving its distinct identity and resisting full adaptation to target-language norms.

Foreignization, as theorized by Venuti (2021), refers to a strategy that maintains the "foreignness" of the source text, allowing readers to encounter elements that signal its origin in a different linguistic and cultural system. Rather than prioritizing fluency and naturalness, foreignization emphasizes fidelity to source-text form, structure, and meaning, even when such choices result in stylistic markedness in the target language. This perspective challenges the dominance of domestication and highlights the ideological dimension of translation as a site of cultural negotiation.

The analysis shows that 9 out of 44 imperative utterances reflect foreignization strategies, indicating a more selective but strategically significant application. These instances are primarily concentrated in theologically sensitive and rhetorically marked expressions, where preserving the original structure and meaning is crucial.

At the discourse and rhetorical level, foreignization is most evident in the consistent retention of the imperative structure "Say..." → "*Katakanlah...*". For example:

- "Say: My Lord knows best" → "*Katakanlah: Tuhanku lebih mengetahui*"
- "Say: This is the truth" → "*Katakanlah: Kebenaran itu dari Tuhanmu*"
- "Say: I am only a man like you" → "*Katakanlah: Sesungguhnya aku ini hanya seorang manusia seperti kamu*"

These examples illustrate what Munday (2007) identifies as the preservation of source-text discourse patterns, where the translator maintains the original rhetorical structure rather than adapting it to more natural target-language

expressions. The repetition of “*Katakanlah*” mirrors the authoritative pattern of divine instruction, reinforcing the role of the Prophet as a mediator of revelation. This structural consistency reflects a commitment to formal equivalence, as proposed by Hatim (2004), where both form and content are preserved to maintain textual integrity.

At the lexical level, foreignization is also reflected in the retention of culturally specific expressions that carry strong theological significance. For instance:

- “Say: If Allah wills” → “*Katakanlah: Insha Allah*”
- “If only you had said...” → “*Mengapa tidak mengucapkan: Masyā Allāh, lā quwwata illā billāh*”

These examples demonstrate that certain expressions are maintained in their original or near-original form rather than being fully translated into Indonesian equivalents. This aligns with Venuti’s concept of resistancy, where the translator intentionally preserves elements that may appear unfamiliar in order to retain religious nuance and doctrinal depth. Such expressions function as markers of Islamic identity, ensuring continuity with broader religious discourse and practice.

From a stylistic perspective, foreignization introduces a degree of markedness and formality into the translation. Imperatives such as:

- “Call upon those you claimed” → “*Panggillah sekutu-sekutu-Ku*”
- “Prostrate before Adam” → “*Sujudlah kepada Adam*”

... retain a high-register tone that reflects the elevated style of scriptural language. While these constructions remain grammatically acceptable in Indonesian, they are less common in everyday usage, thereby signaling the text’s sacred and authoritative nature. This supports Venuti’s notion of defamiliarization, in which translation disrupts readers’ expectations to highlight the text’s foreign origin.

In addition, foreignization helps maintain intertextual consistency within Islamic discourse, as many of these expressions are widely recognized across religious texts, sermons, and practices. As noted by Yang (2010), translation is influenced by text type and communicative function. In the case of sacred texts, preserving key expressions and structures is essential to maintaining textual authority and theological coherence.

However, from a critical perspective, the use of foreignization also presents certain challenges. The retention of source-oriented forms may reduce immediate accessibility, particularly for readers who are less familiar with Islamic terminology or scriptural style. This reflects the tension identified by Venuti (2021) between readability and authenticity, where increasing one often comes at the expense of the other.

Despite this limitation, the selective use of foreignization in these 9 imperative utterances suggests a deliberate and strategic approach. The translator appears to reserve foreignization for expressions that carry high theological weight, rhetorical significance, or doctrinal specificity, where domestication could risk oversimplification or loss of meaning. This indicates that foreignization is not merely an alternative strategy but a complementary mechanism that ensures the preservation of the Qur’an’s sacred and authoritative character.

In conclusion, the presence of 9 foreignized imperative utterances demonstrates that foreignization serves as a targeted, ideologically motivated strategy in the English–Indonesian translation of Surah Al-Kahf. The translation preserves key lexical items, rhetorical structures, and stylistic features, thereby retaining the theological depth, cultural identity, and authoritative discourse of the source text. At the same time, this approach highlights the inherent tension in translation between accessibility and fidelity, reinforcing the view that translation is not a neutral process but a site of ideological negotiation.

These findings are largely consistent with previous research in translation studies, particularly those grounded in the framework of Venuti (2021), which argue that translations of sacred texts tend to favor domestication to enhance comprehension and pedagogical function. At the same time, this study extends earlier work by demonstrating a more strategic and domain-sensitive application of foreignization, particularly in preserving the theological and rhetorical features of Qur’anic imperatives. Therefore, rather than simply confirming the dominance of domestication, this study offers a more nuanced perspective by showing how translation ideology operates

dynamically across thematic and pragmatic domains, reinforcing the view that translating sacred texts is inherently ideological and context-sensitive.

4. CONCLUSION

The results of this study show that the 44 imperative utterances in Surah Al-Kahf are systematically organized into three major themes: theological orientation, moral-psychological formation, and pragmatic-life guidance. These themes confirm that imperative forms function as complex directive speech acts, encompassing guidance, warning, instruction, and ethical formation rather than merely expressing commands. In terms of translation ideology, the findings are consistent with those presented in the abstract: 35 utterances are translated using domestication, while 9 reflect foreignization. Domestication dominates particularly in moral and pragmatic domains, where clarity, naturalness, and cultural familiarity are prioritized. In contrast, foreignization is mainly preserved in theological contexts to maintain rhetorical structure, lexical specificity, and the sacred tone of the source text. Overall, the translation reflects a balanced yet domestication-oriented approach, where accessibility and readability are emphasized without completely sacrificing fidelity and doctrinal integrity.

For further research, it is recommended that scholars expand the scope of analysis beyond imperative utterances to include other speech-act categories, such as declaratives and interrogatives, to gain a more comprehensive understanding of translation ideology in Qur'anic discourse. Future studies may also incorporate comparative analyses across different translations or languages to explore how ideological choices vary across cultural contexts. In addition, integrating corpus-based methods or reader-response approaches could provide deeper insights into how domestication and foreignization influence interpretation and reception among diverse audiences. Such directions would not only strengthen the theoretical contribution to translation studies but also enhance the practical understanding of translating sacred texts.

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