



An Analysis of Imagery in a Collection of Poems by Laksmi Pamuntjak in Goenawan Mohamad's Poetry

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Abstract: Translating modern lyric poetry poses significant challenges due to its philosophical depth, dense diction, and high degree of ambiguity. This study examines the translation of sensory imagery in three modern lyric poems “Sirkus,” “Tentang Seorang yang Terbunuh di Sekitar Hari Pemilihan Umum,” and “Pastoral” by Goenawan Mohamad—“Circus,” “About That Man Killed Sometime Around Election Day,” and “Pastoral”—as translated into English by Laksmi Pamuntjak. Focusing on sensory imagery as a crucial element in shaping readers’ experiential engagement, this study evaluates the extent to which aesthetic equivalence—understood as a balance between poetic form and meaning—is achieved in the target language. Employing a Qualitative Descriptive Method with a Text-Based Comparative Study design, the analysis is conducted on 80 units of imagery. The analytical framework draws on the classification of sensory imagery proposed by Pradopo and Perrine, alongside Nida’s concepts of formal and dynamic equivalence to assess the success of aesthetic transfer. The findings reveal that all seven types of sensory imagery—visual, auditory, tactile, kinesthetic, gustatory, olfactory, and organic—are present in the translations, indicating the preservation of a complete sensory spectrum. Visual imagery emerges as the most dominant type with 36 occurrences, followed by kinesthetic imagery with 31 occurrences. This dominance suggests that the translator employs a hybrid strategy, maintaining core imagery through formal equivalence while enhancing emotional resonance through dynamic adjustments to internal imagery, particularly organic and tactile elements. Overall, the study demonstrates that Laksmi Pamuntjak’s translation effectively conveys the sensory richness and philosophical depth of Goenawan Mohamad’s poetry, making it accessible and vivid for global readers.

Keywords: *Imagery, Visual Imagery, Kinesthetic Imagery, Goenawan Mohamad, Laksmi Pamuntjak, Sensory Equivalence*

INTRODUCTION

Translating poetry is widely regarded as one of the most complex tasks in translation studies

because it involves transferring not only semantic meaning but also aesthetic form and poetic imagery. Unlike informative texts, poetry relies

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heavily on imagery, sound, rhythm, and cultural symbolism to construct meaning and evoke sensory and emotional responses. As a result, contemporary studies of poetry translation increasingly emphasize the treatment of imagery as a central analytical concern.

Current scholarly inquiry into imagery in translated poetry is informed by several theoretical frameworks. Translation theories such as Nida's dynamic equivalence highlight the importance of preserving equivalent effect, while Lefevere's concept of translation as rewriting underscores the role of cultural and ideological mediation. In addition, stylistic and cognitive approaches have been widely employed to analyze how imagery is constructed and transformed in translation, often through qualitative comparative analysis between source and target texts.

Within this broader field, research on the English translation of contemporary Indonesian poetry remains limited. Indonesian poets frequently employ imagery rooted in local culture, nature, spirituality, and socio-political experience, which poses specific challenges in cross-cultural translation. Existing studies have tended to focus on general translation strategies or ideological aspects, leaving the systematic analysis of imagery relatively underexplored. This study addresses this gap by examining how poetic imagery in contemporary Indonesian poetry is rendered in English translation, drawing on established translation and stylistic frameworks.

In this context, the poetry of Goenawan Mohamad (hereafter referred to as GM) serves as a compelling subject of study because of its rich symbolism and philosophical depth. GM is widely recognized for blending existential reflection, historical consciousness, and spiritual contemplation within a concise and thoughtful poetic style. According to Mahayana (2015), the language of GM's poetry is laden with layers of meaning and subtle imagery, reflecting inner struggles and the dialogue between the individual and history. Therefore, translating GM's poetry is

not merely a matter of transferring literal meaning, but also of reviving a unique aesthetic experience.

Among GM's works, the writers focus this study specifically on three collections of translated poems, *Selected Poems*, published in 2004 and translated by Laksmi Pamuntjak. This collection is the first systematic attempt to introduce GM's work to an international audience through the medium of English. Laksmi Pamuntjak is not only a translator, but also a novelist and poet, known for works such as *The Question of Red* (2012) and *Aruna and Her Palate* (2014). This literary background gives her a distinct advantage, as Laksmi has the artistic sensitivity necessary to transfer the poetic nuances from the source text (ST) to the target text (TT). However, as Venuti (1995) states, every translation is an interpretive act that is not neutral, as it always involves ideological and aesthetic choices that can shift the original meaning.

Existing scholarship relevant to this study can be grouped into two interconnected strands: (1) stylistic analyses of Goenawan Mohamad's (GM) poetry and (2) comparative studies of poetry translation strategies. Together, these strands provide the conceptual and methodological foundation for examining the translation of imagery in GM's works.

First, stylistic studies of GM's poetry consistently emphasize the centrality of imagery in shaping his poetic aesthetics. Shafwan (2017), in her analysis of Asmaradana, identifies tactile imagery as a dominant device used to express inner sensations and emotional intensity, demonstrating that imagery in GM's poetry functions not merely descriptively but philosophically and psychologically. Similarly, Karyati (2016), in her study of *Don Quixote*, highlights GM's deliberate use of imagery, diction, and enjambment to construct layered meaning and assertive poetic perspectives. These studies establish that sensory imagery—particularly non-visual forms such as tactile imagery—is integral to GM's poetic identity.



However, their analyses are confined to the Source Text (ST) and do not extend to how this imagery is negotiated in translation.

Second, comparative studies of poetry translation offer methodological insights into how aesthetic elements are transferred across languages. Adhimas et al. (2023), in their study of Sapardi Djoko Damono's poetry, demonstrate that translators frequently employ non-literal strategies such as modulation and expansion to achieve aesthetic equivalence. Likewise, Pitaloka et al. (2023), in their analysis of Robert Frost's poetry, observe that visual imagery tends to dominate in translation, suggesting that certain imagery types may be prioritized or transformed in the transfer process. Additional research on Indonesian poetry translation indicates that formal equivalence can help preserve figurative features, yet such strategies vary depending on the stylistic complexity of the source poet. These studies provide a theoretical lens for examining translation procedures and their aesthetic consequences. However, they do not specifically address the translation of imagery in GM's poetry, whose philosophical ambiguity and dense symbolic texture present distinct challenges.

Despite the strong theoretical foundations provided by both strands, a significant gap remains. While stylistic analyses have convincingly demonstrated that sensory imagery—particularly tactile and other non-visual imagery—plays a crucial role in constructing emotional and philosophical depth in GM's poetry, no study has systematically examined how this imagery is preserved, transformed, or reduced in its English translations. Similarly, although translation studies have identified various strategies for transferring poetic meaning, they have not empirically linked specific translation strategies to concrete shifts in imagery within GM's works, particularly in the Selected Poems translated by Laksmi Pamuntjak.

This absence constitutes a clear deficiency in the literature: there is no integrative study that bridges GM's stylistic characteristics with a

systematic analysis of how his imagery is reconstructed in translation. Therefore, this study addresses that gap by combining stylistic imagery analysis with a comparative translation framework to examine how Laksmi Pamuntjak's translation strategies contribute to the preservation, transformation, or shift of sensory imagery—such as changes from tactile to visual forms—in the Target Text (TT). By empirically linking translation procedures with specific aesthetic outcomes, this research offers a more comprehensive understanding of how imagery operates across linguistic and cultural boundaries in contemporary Indonesian poetry.

Poetry is a literary form in which meaning emerges from the integration of rhythm, diction, and imagery. As Perrine (1998) and Abrams (1999) emphasize, poetry differs from prose in its musical and imaginative use of language, where form and content operate inseparably to create aesthetic and emotional effects. Meaning in poetry therefore extends beyond literal sense. Early formalist approaches, such as Richards' (1929) model of sense, feeling, tone, and intention, demonstrate that poetic meaning is multi-layered and cannot be reduced to propositional content alone. Similarly, Ingarden's phenomenological concept of "schematized aspects" explains how imagery functions as a sensory framework that readers concretize through imagination, while Riffaterre's (1978) semiotic distinction between surface meaning and deeper significance further highlights the structural and symbolic complexity of poetic language.

Within these perspectives, imagery becomes central to poetic construction. Imagery refers to the use of evocative language that stimulates sensory experience—visual, auditory, tactile, gustatory, olfactory, and kinesthetic (Abrams, 1999; Perrine, 1987). Stylistically, imagery transforms abstract thought into experiential reality and serves as a vehicle for emotional and philosophical depth. Pradopo (2010) classifies imagery into visual, auditory, tactile, gustatory, olfactory, and kinesthetic forms, while Endraswara (2020) further emphasizes bodily

sensations as expressive markers in modern Indonesian poetry. Such classifications provide the analytical framework for identifying and categorizing imagery in the present study.

The centrality of imagery becomes particularly significant in translation. Translating poetry involves not only transferring semantic content but also reconstructing aesthetic and sensory effect. Translation equivalence theories offer conceptual tools for examining this process. Nida's dynamic equivalence foregrounds equivalent effect in the target language, Bassnett (2002) stresses the reproduction of textual impact rather than literal meaning, and Newmark (1988) notes that cultural shifts may weaken or transform imagery during transfer. These perspectives indicate that poetic imagery is highly vulnerable to modification, reduction, or shift in translation.

This issue is especially relevant in the poetry of Goenawan Mohamad (GM), whose works are marked by dense sensory and philosophical imagery. Previous stylistic studies have demonstrated that non-visual imagery, particularly tactile imagery, plays a significant role in shaping emotional and reflective depth in his poetry. However, existing analyses remain confined to the Source Text and do not examine how such imagery is reconstructed in English translation. Likewise, translation studies have outlined general strategies for achieving aesthetic equivalence but have not systematically linked specific translation procedures to imagery shifts in GM's works.

Guided by stylistic imagery theory and translation equivalence frameworks, the writers investigate how sensory imagery in GM's poetry is rendered in the English translations by Laksmi Pamuntjak. Specifically, it examines whether the translation preserves imagery density, maintains sensory equivalence across imagery types, or produces shifts—such as changes from tactile to visual imagery—that affect symbolic and aesthetic impact. By integrating imagery analysis with translation strategy analysis, this research aims to bridge the gap between stylistic study and

translation studies in the context of contemporary Indonesian poetry.

METHOD

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach to analyze the translation of poetic imagery. Qualitative analysis is appropriate because poetry relies on connotative meaning, aesthetic effect, and symbolic density that require interpretive examination rather than statistical measurement (Miles et al., 2014). Given the interpretive complexity of modern lyric poetry, the analysis adopts a hermeneutic reading strategy.

The research design is a comparative text-based translation study grounded in Descriptive Translation Studies. It systematically compares the Source Text (ST)—Goenawan Mohamad's poems in Indonesian (Sirkus, Tentang Seorang yang Terbunuh di Sekitar Hari Pemilihan Umum, and Pastoral)—with the Target Text (TT)—their English translations by Laksmi Pamuntjak (Circus, About That Man Killed Sometime Around Election Day, and Pastoral). Following Toury's (1995), the analysis examines translation as both process and product by identifying shifts in lexical choice, syntactic structure, and imagery representation.

The study aims to identify and interpret patterns of imagery transfer and the translation techniques that produce them. Imagery is analyzed using a sensory-based classification framework (visual, auditory, tactile, kinesthetic, olfactory, and gustatory), which serves as the primary analytical unit. Translation techniques are integrated as core analytical tools rather than descriptive labels. Drawing on established translation taxonomies, each imagery unit is examined to determine the technique employed and its effect on imagery preservation, transformation, or shift.

The analysis operates on two interconnected dimensions: (a) the concrete imagery dimension, focusing on sensory equivalence and imagery density; and (b) the abstract poetic dimension, considering tone, mood, and philosophical



resonance as contextual factors in evaluating imagery transfer.

Techniques of Collecting Data

The primary data for this study consist of three bilingual poems by Goenawan Mohamad (GM), which serve as the comparative corpus. The Source Text (ST) is the original Indonesian poem, while the Target Text (TT) is English translation by Laksmi Pamuntjak. The data include three paired versions of the poems: First, the poem "Sirkus". This poem is compared with its translation, "CIRCUS". Second, the poem "Tentang Seorang yang Terbunuh di Sekitar Hari Pemilihan Umum". Its English counterpart, "ABOUT THAT MAN KILLED SOMETIME AROUND ELECTION DAY". Finally, the poem "Pastoral" is compared with its translation "PASTORAL". The unit of analysis in this study focuses on the lines or poetic phrases in these three pairs of poems that explicitly contain Sensory Imagery.

Techniques of Analysing Data

The data were analyzed using a qualitative descriptive method within a comparative text-based translation study design. The analysis examines how sensory imagery in the Source Text (ST) is transferred into the Target Text (TT), with attention to semantic nuance, aesthetic effect, and poetic context. Following Miles et al. (2014), the procedure consisted of three interrelated stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification.

In the data reduction stage, three pairs of poems were subjected to intensive close reading. The unit of analysis was explicitly defined as a lexical item or poetic phrase that evokes a distinct sensory perception. Only imagery with clear sensory reference was included. Each unit was classified according to its dominant sensory category—visual, auditory, tactile, kinesthetic, olfactory, or gustatory—based on Perrine's (1987) framework. This operational definition ensured consistency in identifying and selecting data.

During the data display stage, all identified imagery units were organized into a structured bilingual comparison table. The table includes: (1) the ST imagery unit and its sensory classification; (2) its TT rendering; (3) the translation technique applied, identified using the taxonomies of Molina and Albir (2002) and Newmark (1988); and (4) the type of imagery shift observed, including changes in sensory category, semantic scope, or intensity. Translation techniques were systematically determined based on observable lexical, structural, or semantic changes, and were integrated as core analytical categories rather than descriptive labels.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Before discussing individual imagery types in detail, the writers make an overview of the distribution of imagery across the three poems is necessary to clarify the overall pattern. As shown in Tables 4.4–4.6, visual imagery emerges as the most dominant type in all three poems: Circus (15 instances), About Someone Killed Around Election Day (8 instances), and Pastoral (13 instances). Kinesthetic imagery also appears with high frequency, particularly in Circus (12 instances) and Pastoral (13 instances), indicating Goenawan Mohamad's strong reliance on movement and bodily sensation. Other imagery types—tactile, auditory, organic, gustatory, and olfactory—appear less frequently but play crucial functional roles in constructing emotional and philosophical depth.

This general pattern provides a framework for understanding how different imagery types are treated in translation and allows for a more focused discussion of translation strategies and imagery shifts.

Visual imagery dominates the translated poems, as evidenced in Tables 4.4–4.6. In Circus, visual imagery appears in 15 lines, often combined with kinesthetic and auditory elements (e.g., A1, A3, A7). Similar dominance is found in About Someone Killed Around Election Day (8 instances) and Pastoral (13 instances). This finding suggests that visual perception remains the most stable sensory mode in the translation process.

In many cases, visual imagery is rendered through literal translation, which preserves both the perceptual content and metaphorical structure

of the Source Text. For example, in Circus (A3), the image of “the sky as if convulsed, dusk nearing its end” is retained visually in the Target Text, maintaining the contemplative atmosphere and symbolic ambiguity characteristic of Goenawan Mohamad’s style. This strategy reflects an orientation toward formal equivalence, where imagery structure and lexical proximity are preserved.

However, literal translation is not applied mechanically. In several instances, modulation and amplification are employed to enhance clarity or emotional resonance. For example, visual imagery combined with kinesthetic movement in Pastoral (C4, C7) is occasionally restructured to foreground motion more explicitly, suggesting an effort to guide the target reader’s visualization. Such shifts indicate a move toward dynamic equivalence (Nida, 1969), prioritizing reader response and perceptual impact over strict formal correspondence.

From a theoretical perspective, these adjustments can be understood as acts of rewriting (Lefevere, 1992), where the translator negotiates between preserving Goenawan Mohamad’s symbolic density and aligning the poem with target-language poetic conventions. Moreover, the concretization of abstract visual images—especially in philosophically dense lines—supports Ingarden’s notion that imagery serves as a schematic structure completed by the reader. The translator’s interventions thus facilitate concretization rather than distort it.

Compared with previous studies, this finding supports Pitaloka et al.’s (2023) observation that visual imagery tends to dominate in poetry translation. However, unlike studies that

emphasize imagery loss, the present analysis shows that visual imagery is largely preserved through strategic compensation, where minor lexical adjustments strengthen perceptual clarity without erasing ambiguity. This suggests that visual imagery functions as an anchor for aesthetic equivalence in the translation of Goenawan Mohamad’s poetry.

Although visual imagery is dominant, its effectiveness often depends on interaction with less frequent imagery types. In Circus and Pastoral, tactile and organic imagery appear in fewer instances (Tables 4.4 and 4.6), yet they carry significant emotional weight. When these less dominant imagery types risk attenuation in translation, the translator frequently compensates by intensifying visual or kinesthetic elements. For instance, tactile sensations associated with memory or bodily vulnerability (A8, A14) are sometimes rendered with enhanced visual framing, allowing the emotional effect to remain accessible to the target reader.

This pattern demonstrates strategic compensation, where loss at the sensory level is offset by reinforcement at another aesthetic level. Such compensation supports dynamic equivalence by maintaining overall poetic impact, even when sensory categories shift. Importantly, this strategy goes beyond literal translation and reflects a conscious effort to preserve Goenawan Mohamad’s philosophical and emotional resonance.

The findings are presented in three subsections: Manual calculation per poem and Imagery classification. The writers describe the finding by using table and group the type of imagery with the frequency.

1. Imagery Analysis on the collection of Poems translated by Laksmi Pamuntjak in “Goenawan Mohamad's Poetry

Table 1. Poem 1: "Circus"

| A | Target language Circus | Type of Imagery |
|---|---|-----------------------------|
| 1 | As you suspected: no more visitors to the tent. Only four tourists, half-blind, who staggered down the harbor from aboard a black Yokohama ship, whispering, “Go on, write down your impressions,” and on a sheet of rice paper they wrote down your name (well, probably your name). | Visual/Kinesthetic/Auditory |
| 2 | On the trapeze you did not cry. | Visual/Organic |



| A | Target language Circus | Type of Imagery |
|----------|--|--|
| 3 | Once, somewhere up there you might have seen angels, travelers, by turns. The sky as if convulsed, dusk nearing its end, the call to prayer like the scream of an ambulance. | Visual/Kinesthetic/Auditory |
| 4 | and nursery tales, riddles, like candies, like candles, were brought over to the children who were lying in a barrack, far, far away, in a distant house. | Visual/Gustatory/Kinesthetic |
| 5 | This is a tired district, people say, the old Banten. This is a district defeated. | Organic/Visual |
| 6 | But in the arena, a clown with a rumble in his stomach tried to read his own shadow on a tarpaulin: "How come I too am at a loss." | Visual/Organic |
| 7 | I heard a person humming behind the stage, someone disappearing into the makeup room to wipe powder off her face. | Auditory/Kinesthetic/Visual |
| 8 | As if erasing a trace. As if peeling off memories, peeling off the heart. | Tactile/Kinesthetic/Organic |
| 9 | But outside, reality gropes the limits. Like the rushing, rustling of raindrops across a pool's surface: the routine of water shaping traces. | Kinesthetic/Auditory/Visual |
| 10 | Masses of circles. Ripple, shimmer, blue. And possibly sound, too. A promise. | Visual/Auditory |
| 11 | And you descended the trapeze. | Kinesthetic/Visual |
| 12 | No line of girls in white leotards, no bears wobbling on all fours. | Visual/Kinesthetic |
| 13 | Just the movement of dwarves choreographing an illusion: "Look, it is our bodies that free us tonight." | Kinesthetic/Visual/Organic |
| 14 | Our body only wants to touch the joy of morning, the flurry of a male bird, the steaming warmth of coffee, and to hear a gentle injunction. | Tactile/Kinesthetic/Auditory/Olfactory |
| 15 | And you flew, acrobatic leaping through a hoop of fire, like a dancing bird. | Kinesthetic/Visual/Tactile |
| 16 | We are all animals that tried to fashion something out of that fear, you said, a structure of fear, like a city in the forest. | Organic/Visual |
| 17 | Still. In the end, the circus hands will once more shoulder the billboards, our old frayed orange tassels, and dismantle the tent. | Kinesthetic/Visual/Tactile |
| 18 | And like in any old ruins, here battered grass will wait. | Visual/Tactile |

Table 2. Poem 2: "About That Man Killed Sometime Around Election Day"

| B | Target language About Someone Killed Around Election Day | Type of Imagery |
|----------|---|--|
| 1 | The silence was the silence that follows a dog's howl when the night watchman stumbled into the corpse by the dike. Face down, as if seeking the fragrance and warmth of paddy. | Auditory/Kinesthetic/ Visual/Olfactory/ Tactile |
| 2 | But the fetid smell and the cold of the man's cheeks were contorted by the moonlight | Olfactory/Tactile/Visual |
| 3 | Then came the others—flashlights, torches and fireflies—but no one recognized him. | Kinesthetic/Visual |
| 4 | Beneath the kerosene lantern in the village chief's office they found the gaping wounds. Bustling shadows; leftover whispers on the veranda. | Visual/Kinesthetic /Auditory |
| 5 | The man had no identity card... He had no one to cry for him because we couldn't. | Organic/Visual |
| 6 | Someone cried without knowing why. Someone did not cry and did not know why. A worn out child fashioned a hat from the morning paper that was later blown away by the wind. | Organic/Kinesthetic /Visual |
| 7 | Look up! To those kites in the air, in pairs, leaning on the breeze. Later the twilight birds perched on the wires. | Visual/Kinesthetic |
| 8 | As the cranes sailed towards day's end, crossing the wasteland and those long streaks of color, like fading smoke. | Kinesthetic/Visual |

Table 3. Poem 3: "Pastoral"

| C | Target language Pastoral | Type of Imagery |
|----------|--|------------------------------------|
| 1 | 15 meters from the road to Batuan, there is a dike on a river's edge, and the din of someone driving away birds. | Visual/Auditory/Kinestheti c |
| 2 | Someone wading down to the river, singing, someone tasting the stream. | Kinesthetic/Auditory/Gust atory |
| 3 | Trailing the sound of cold's smacking on the pores of the forest. | Auditory/Tactile/Visual |
| 4 | Currents that comb the boulders, boulders which, like the shoulders of an ox, hold you back. | Kinesthetic/Tactile/Visual |
| 5 | At 7:15, the river limpid disrobes you. | Visual/Kinesthetic |
| 6 | Us to vanish like a pair of lizards in wild grass like luster. | Kinesthetic/Visual |
| 7 | The spread of moss or by torrents and furrows that shrivel. | Visual/Kinesthetic/Tactile |

| | | |
|----|---|-----------------------------|
| 8 | Hay has been stacked, and folks are busy driving away birds. "Hai! Hai! Hai!" | Visual/Auditory/Kinesthetic |
| 9 | A row of storks punches its bulbous white on rice. | Visual/Kinesthetic |
| 10 | Why upon your perfect body, the river doesn't seem to touch a thing? | Visual/Tactile |
| 11 | Lotus to water green to leaf. I still fear death's acrid odor at nightfall. | Visual/Organic/Olfactory |
| 12 | Seconds are thorns that spread into mid-October and so the day itches. | Tactile/Kinesthetic |
| 13 | Death descends, upon the watch that weaves cotton into dew. | Kinesthetic/Visual/Tactile |
| 14 | When you touch the petals of putrimalu you see the stems of time. | Tactile/Kinesthetic/Visual |
| 15 | That which quivers will be erased. Those who make love will cease to make love. Faithless. | Kinesthetic/Organic |
| 16 | The walls of the Portuguese, the street in early morning's rumble, old roof-tiles on a Chinese warehouse, the port's curvature, the colour of ships, and food stalls. | Visual/Auditory/Tactile |
| 17 | Us to fall, like butterflies falling from a branch. | Kinesthetic/Visual |

2. Dominant imagery on the collection of Poems translated by Laksmi Pamuntjak in "Goenawan Mohamad's Poetry.

Table 4. Poem 1: "Type of imagery found on Circus Poem"

| Type of Imagery | Line of Poetry | Frequency |
|---------------------------------|---|-----------|
| Visual imagery | A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, A6, A7, A9, A10, A11, A12, A13, A15, A16, A17 | 15 |
| Tactile Imagery | A8, A14, A15, A17, A18 | 5 |
| Auditory Imagery | A1, A3, A7, A9, A10, A14 | 6 |
| Gustatory and Olfactory Imagery | A4 (G), A14 (O) | 2 |
| Kinesthetic Imagery | A1, A3, A4, A7, A8, A9, A11, A12, A13, A14, A15, A17 | 12 |
| Organic Imagery | A2, A5, A6, A8, A13, A16 | 6 |

Table 4. Poem 2: "Type of imagery found on About Someone Around Election Day"

Killed

| Type of Imagery | Line of Poetry | Frequency |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------|
| Visual imagery | B1, B2, B3, B4, B5, B6, B7, B8 | 8 |
| Tactile Imagery | B1, B2 | 2 |
| Auditory Imagery | B1, B4 | 2 |
| Gustatory and Olfactory Imagery | B1 (O), B2 (O) | 2 |
| Kinesthetic Imagery | B1, B3, B4, B6, B7, B8 | 6 |
| Organic Imagery | B5, B6 | 2 |

Table 5. Poem 3: “Type of imagery found on Pastoral”

| Type of Imagery | Line of Poetry | Frequency |
|---------------------------------|--|-----------|
| Visual imagery | C1, C4, C5, C6, C7, C8, C9, C10, C11, C13, C14, C16, C17 | 13 |
| Tactile Imagery | C1, C4, C7, C10, C12, C13, C14, C16 | 8 |
| Auditory Imagery | C1, C2, C3, C8, C16 | 5 |
| Gustatory and Olfactory Imagery | C2 (G), C11 (O), C16 (O) | 3 |
| Kinesthetic Imagery | C1, C2, C4, C5, C6, C7, C8, C9, C11, C12, C13, C15, C17 | 13 |
| Organic Imagery | C10, C11, C15 | 3 |

Discussion

1. Imagery Analysis Consistency.

The analysis of the three translated poems—“CIRCUS” (A), “ABOUT THAT MAN KILLED SOMETIME AROUND ELECTION DAY” (B), and “PASTORAL” (C)—reveals a strategic consistency in Laksmi Pamuntjak’s translation process, successfully transferring the sensory experiences (imagery) that shape the poetic meaning of Goenawan Mohamad’s work. The discussion is systematically divided based on the typology of imagery found.

a. Visual Imagery

Visual imagery emerges as the most dominant sensory element across the three poems (Circus, About Someone Killed Around Election Day, and Pastoral), indicating that perceptual visibility functions as the primary gateway for poetic meaning in the translated texts. From the perspective of Roman Ingarden’s phenomenology, visual imagery provides schematized aspects—incomplete perceptual cues—that invite readers to complete the poetic world through imagination. The dominance and relative stability of visual imagery in the translation therefore play a crucial role in facilitating the readerly process of concretization, allowing target-language readers to construct mental images comparable to those of source-language readers.

In Circus, visual imagery is extensively employed to anchor abstract reflection in concrete perception. Images such as the “black Yokohama ship” (A1), the clown’s “shadow on a tarpaulin” (A6), the act of “wipe powder off her face” (A7), and the “frayed orange tassels” of the dismantled tent (A17) establish a vivid visual framework. The translator’s largely literal rendering of these images preserves their schematic openness,

enabling readers to imaginatively complete the scene without excessive interpretive guidance. In Ingarden’s terms, such preservation supports concretization by maintaining the balance between sensory suggestion and imaginative freedom.

In About Someone Killed Around Election Day, visual imagery serves a more symbolic and atmospheric function, contributing to a bleak political and historical mood. Images such as the “kerosene lantern” and “gaping wounds” (B4), as well as “long streaks of color, like fading smoke” in the sky (B8), function as visual metaphors of exposure, violence, and dissolution. The translator’s retention of these images ensures that the schematic visual cues remain intact, allowing readers to concretize not only the physical scene but also its socio-political implications. Here, visual imagery facilitates concretization by guiding readers toward an affective interpretation without fully determining it.

Similarly, in Pastoral, visual imagery constructs a natural and rural landscape that grounds the poem’s philosophical meditation. Images such as the “dike on a river’s edge” (C1), the simile of “the shoulders of an ox” (C4), and “lotus to water green to leaf” (C11) provide spatial and chromatic cues that structure the reader’s imaginative engagement. The translator’s faithful rendering of these visual elements preserves their schematic nature, ensuring that concretization remains an active readerly process rather than a fixed visual depiction.

Across the three poems, the translator’s treatment of visual imagery generally facilitates concretization by preserving perceptual cues while avoiding over-specification. Where minor modulation occurs, it tends to clarify rather than constrain interpretation. As a result, visual

imagery functions as a structural anchor for poetic meaning, enabling readers to complete the poems' philosophical and emotional dimensions through imaginative participation. This confirms that the successful transfer of visual imagery is central to achieving aesthetic equivalence in the translation of Goenawan Mohamad's poetry.

b. Tactile Imagery

Tactile imagery, though less frequent than visual imagery in the translated corpus, remains crucial in connecting physical sensation with emotional and existential meaning. In *Circus*, tactile expressions such as "peeling off memories" (A8) and the implied heat in "hoop of fire" (A15) demonstrate Goenawan Mohamad's characteristic use of touch to articulate abstract processes. Similarly, *About Someone Killed Around Election Day* employs tactile contrast—"the cold of the man's cheeks" versus the "warmth of paddy" (B1–B2)—to concretize death through bodily sensation. In *Pastoral*, expressions like "the day itches" (C12) and "touch the petals of putrimalu" (C14) render time and memory as physically uncomfortable experiences.

This finding both aligns with and diverges from Shafwan (2017), who identifies tactile imagery as dominant in GM's Asmaradana poems. Unlike Shafwan's source-text-focused study, the present research finds that tactile imagery, while still significant, is no longer dominant in translation. This difference may be attributed to the shift from stylistic analysis of the original poems to a comparative translation context, where tactile imagery—often culturally embedded and metaphorically dense—risks attenuation and is sometimes supported or partially compensated by visual or kinesthetic cues. The translator's strategy thus appears to preserve tactile imagery selectively, prioritizing its emotional function rather than its frequency.

c. Auditory Imagery

Auditory imagery in the translated poems functions less as background sound and more as symbolic or dramatic emphasis. The striking simile in *Circus*—"the call to prayer like the scream of an ambulance" (A3)—juxtaposes sacred and secular soundscapes, reinforcing cultural dissonance. In *About Someone Killed Around Election Day*, auditory references such as "the silence that follows a dog's howl" (B1) and "leftover whispers on the veranda" (B4) construct an atmosphere of shock, secrecy, and political tension. Compared with previous translation studies that treat auditory imagery as supplementary, these findings suggest that

auditory imagery in GM's poetry carries ideological and emotional weight that translators tend to preserve with minimal alteration, likely because sound-based metaphors remain intelligible across cultures. This supports Leech and Short's (2007) claim that foregrounded stylistic deviation intensifies thematic meaning. The translator retains this simile without simplification, suggesting a strategy of preserving marked stylistic contrast.

d. Gustatory and Olfactory Imagery

Gustatory and olfactory imagery appear with the lowest frequency across the corpus, yet their strategic placement enhances thematic intensity. Olfactory references such as "fetid smell" (B2) and "death's acrid odor" (C11) immediately signal decay and mortality, grounding abstract concepts in primal sensory experience. Gustatory imagery is limited to a single explicit instance—"tasting the stream" (C2)—which functions to emphasize bodily immersion in nature. The scarcity of taste and smell imagery contrasts with their high affective power, suggesting that the translator retains these senses precisely because of their strong evocative potential. This finding supports broader poetry-translation research indicating that low-frequency imagery types are often preserved for their symbolic efficiency rather than their descriptive value. This selective preservation supports Nida's (1964) concept of dynamic equivalence, where translators prioritize receptor response over formal replication. Even with low frequency, smell imagery is preserved because of its immediate affective impact on readers.

e. Kinesthetic Imagery

Kinesthetic imagery emerges as the second most dominant category, confirming the dynamic nature of GM's poetic vision. In *Circus*, images such as "sky as if convulsed" (A3), "bears wobbling" (A12), and "acrobatic leaping through a hoop of fire" (A15) emphasize instability and performance. *About Someone Killed Around Election Day* uses movement metaphorically, as in "cranes sailed towards day's end" (B8), suggesting transition and historical passage. *Pastoral* is saturated with motion—from "driving away birds" (C1) to "butterflies falling from a branch" (C17)—inviting readers into a physical experience of change. Compared with earlier studies that emphasize GM's reflective stillness, this finding highlights how translation foregrounds movement, possibly to enhance narrative flow and reader engagement in the Target Text.

f. Organic Imagery

Finally, organic imagery plays a vital role in transferring emotional and existential depth. In *Circus*, expressions such as “tired district” (A5), “fear” (A16), and “did not cry” (A2) project internal states onto external realities. About *Someone Killed Around Election Day* intensifies emotional absence through “He had no one to cry for him because we couldn’t” (B5), while *Pastoral* explores transience through “I still fear” (C11) and “Those who make love will cease to make love” (C15). These findings align with previous stylistic research emphasizing GM’s lyric introspection, yet they also show that translation tends to maintain organic imagery faithfully, likely because emotional states remain cross-culturally accessible. This aligns with Perrine’s (1974) classification of imagery as inclusive of internal sensation and emotional states. Because organic imagery directly encodes universal human experiences, it is less susceptible to cultural loss in translation.

Compared with earlier stylistic studies that emphasize tactile dominance in GM’s original poetry, this research demonstrates a sensory redistribution in translation: visual and kinesthetic imagery become structurally dominant, while tactile and organic imagery function intensively but selectively. Thus, the study contributes to Indonesian poetry translation research by demonstrating how sensory hierarchy may shift across linguistic boundaries while maintaining Ingardenian concretization and readerly engagement.

2. The Dominance of Imagery Types and Strategic Implications.

This discussion also addresses the second research question concerning the dominant types of sensory imagery and their consequential effect on the translation process. The quantitative findings indicate that the most dominant imagery type is Visual Imagery, which is then analyzed alongside the less dominant yet qualitatively significant types (Tactile, Gustatory, and Auditory). The analysis specifically interprets how the dominance of one imagery type influences the translator's choice of strategy—e.g., favoring Literal Translation for the dominant type, while resorting to Modulation or Reduction for the less dominant ones—to maintain the overall aesthetic equivalence of Goenawan Mohamad's poetry in English. This strategic differentiation highlights the translator’s effort to manage the tension between formal equivalence

(often achieved through literal transfer of visual elements) and dynamic equivalence (required for transferring the deeper, often non-visual, sensory experience).

CONCLUSION

This study investigated the distribution and dominance of imagery types in three translated poems—“*Circus*,” “*About That Man Killed Sometime Around Election Day*,” and “*Pastoral*”—from Goenawan Mohamad, translated into English by Laksmi Pamuntjak. The findings confirm that the translated texts preserve the full range of sensory representation embedded in the source poems.

All six major external sensory typologies—Visual, Auditory, Tactile, Kinesthetic, Gustatory, and Olfactory—are present, alongside Organic Imagery. The six typologies correspond to perception through the external senses, whereas Organic Imagery represents internal bodily and emotional states such as fear, fatigue, and grief. Rather than functioning as a separate sensory category, Organic Imagery operates as an affective mediator that connects sensory perception with existential reflection. Its consistent preservation indicates that the emotional and philosophical depth of the poems remains accessible in translation.

Quantitative analysis reveals that Visual Imagery (36 occurrences) and Kinesthetic Imagery (31 occurrences) are dominant. The prominence of visual imagery provides a stable perceptual framework that facilitates readerly concretization of the poetic world, while kinesthetic imagery foregrounds motion, instability, and transition—central themes in Goenawan Mohamad’s poetics. This sensory hierarchy suggests not mere replication but adaptive redistribution in translation, where perceptually accessible imagery is foregrounded to sustain clarity and engagement in the target language.

The translator’s strategy extends beyond a general notion of “strategic compensation.” The findings indicate three interrelated mechanisms: (1) preservation through close or literal rendering of visually concrete images; (2) redistribution, where reduced tactile density is balanced by intensified visual or kinetic cues; and (3) selective retention of emotionally charged Organic imagery to maintain affective equivalence. Thus, imagery transfer operates as functional

recalibration rather than mechanical reproduction.

Although Gustatory and Olfactory imagery occur infrequently, their limited distribution does not imply marginal significance. Their strategic deployment—particularly in references to decay and mortality—carries concentrated symbolic weight, reinforcing the poems' existential resonance.

Overall, this study demonstrates that poetic translation entails the reconfiguration of sensory hierarchy while preserving relational coherence between perception, movement, and inner experience. In Goenawan Mohamad's translated poetry, philosophical depth survives not through identical sensory proportions but through adaptive equivalence that sustains aesthetic and cognitive impact across languages.

This study is limited by its focus on three poems and a single translator, as well as its qualitative textual orientation. Future research may expand the corpus or incorporate comparative and reception-based approaches to further examine sensory transformation in Indonesian poetry translation.

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