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The Evolution of Translation Ideology in the 2019 Edition of Qur'an Kemenag: A Comparison with Translations by Shihab, Thalib, Ali, and Pickthall

Evolusi Ideologi Penerjemahan dalam Qur'an Kemenag Edisi 2019: Perbandingan dengan Terjemahan Shihab, Thalib, Ali, dan Pickthall

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Abstract

This article examines the evolution of translation ideology in the 2019 edition of the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs' Qur'an translation (Qur'an Kemenag) by comparing it with the 1965, 1971, 1989–1990, and 2002 editions. It also compares selected renderings with Indonesian translations by M. Quraish Shihab and Muhammad Thalib and, where relevant, the English translations of Abdullah Yusuf Ali and Marmaduke Pickthall. Using comparative textual analysis, the study evaluates translation method, diction, language style, and the treatment of verses with political and theological implications. The analysis finds that the 2019 edition gives greater priority to domestication than to foreignization, particularly through contextual equivalents and explanatory notes. This orientation differs from the stronger foreignizing tendency of the earliest edition. In politically contested verses, especially those involving awliyāʾ and qawwāmūn, the 2019 edition adopts more contextual and politically moderate renderings than earlier editions. In verses concerning divine attributes, its explanatory notes generally accord with Ashʿarī theology, the dominant theological orientation among Indonesian Muslims. Overall, the 2019 edition is more informative and context-sensitive than its predecessors. Its development illustrates how an official Qur'an translation negotiates linguistic accessibility, state responsibility, political contestation, and theological plurality.

Keywords: *Qur'an translation; Qur'an Kemenag; translation ideology; domestication; foreignization*

Abstrak

Artikel ini mengkaji evolusi ideologi penerjemahan dalam terjemahan Al-Qur'an Kementerian Agama edisi 2019 (Qur'an Kemenag) dengan membandingkannya dengan edisi 1965, 1971, 1989–1990, dan 2002. Analisis juga membandingkan sejumlah terjemahan dengan karya M. Quraish Shihab dan Muhammad Thalib dalam bahasa Indonesia serta, pada kasus tertentu, terjemahan bahasa Inggris Abdullah Yusuf Ali dan Marmaduke Pickthall. Dengan analisis tekstual-komparatif, penelitian memeriksa metode penerjemahan, diksi, gaya bahasa, serta perlakuan terhadap ayat yang memiliki implikasi politik dan teologis. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa edisi 2019 lebih mengutamakan domestikasi daripada foreignisasi, terutama melalui penggunaan padanan kontekstual dan catatan penjelas. Orientasi ini berbeda dari kecenderungan foreignisasi yang lebih kuat pada edisi awal. Dalam ayat yang diperdebatkan secara politik, khususnya yang memuat kata awliyāʾ dan qawwāmūn, edisi 2019 menggunakan terjemahan yang lebih kontekstual dan moderat daripada edisi sebelumnya. Pada

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ayat tentang sifat-sifat Tuhan, catatan penjelasnya secara umum selaras dengan teologi Asyʿari yang dianut mayoritas Muslim Indonesia. Secara keseluruhan, edisi 2019 lebih informatif dan peka terhadap konteks. Perkembangannya memperlihatkan cara terjemahan resmi Al-Qur'an menegosiasikan keterbacaan bahasa, tanggung jawab negara, kontestasi politik, dan keragaman teologis.

Kata kunci: *penerjemahan Al-Qur'an; Qur'an Kemenag; ideologi penerjemahan; domestikasi; foreignisasi*

Introduction

Some readers of Indonesian Qur'an translations, particularly the version issued by the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA), identify mismatches between linguistic form and Indonesian cultural context, as well as inconsistencies in method, diction, context, and meaning. Muhammad Thalib[1] criticized MORA's translation and proposed corrections concerning creed, sharia, Islamic economics, and the rendering of the term "tuhan" (God). Muchlis Muhammad Hanafi,[2] Syahrullah,[3] and Muhammad Chirzin[4] responded to this critique. The debate between these positions contributed to the continuing reconsideration of MORA's translation ideology and reinforced the need to revise the translation in response to contemporary linguistic and interpretive developments. It also encouraged the production of alternative Indonesian Qur'an translations, including those by M. Quraish Shihab,[5] A. Hassan,[6] Muhammad Thalib,[7] and Aam Amiruddin.

In response to recommendations from Qur'an commentators, translation specialists, and the public, MORA gathered feedback through the 2016 Public Consultation[8] and the 2019 Ijtimak Ulama Al-Qur'an.[9] This consultation informed the preparation of the 2019 edition. MORA's translation was produced by a committee of specialists in tafsir, language, and translation and therefore had to

1 Muhammad Thalib, *Koreksi Tarjamah Harfiyah Al-Qur'an Kemenag RI; Tinjauan Aqidah, Syari'ah, Mu'amalah, Iqtishadiyah*, 2nd ed. (Yogyakarta: Ma'had An-Nabawy, 2011).

2 Muchlis Muhammad Hanafi, "Problematika Terjemahan Al-Qur'an Studi pada Beberapa Penerbitan Al-Qur'an dan Kasus Kontemporer," *Suhuf: Jurnal Pengkajian Al-Qur'an dan Budaya,* vol. 2, no. 2 (2011), https://doi.org/10.22548/shf.v4i2.53.

3 Syahrullah Syahrullah, "Tarjamah Tafsiriah terhadap Al-Qur'an: Antara Kontekstualisasi dan Distorsi," *Journal of Qur'an and Hadith Studies* 2, no. 1 (2013), https://doi.org/10.15408/quhas.v2i1.1307.

4 Muhammad Chirzin, "Dinamika Terjemah Al-Qur'an (Studi Perbandingan Terjemah al-Qur'an Kementerian Agama RI dan Muhammad Thalib)," *Jurnal Studi Ilmu-Ilmu Al-Qur'an dan Hadis* 17, no. 1 (2016).

5 M Quraish Shihab, *Al-Qur'an dan Maknanya,* 3rd ed. (Tangerang Selatan: Lentera Hati, 2021).

6 A Hassan, *Al-Furqān Tafsir Quran: Edisi Bahasa Indonesia Mutakhir,* 2nd ed. (Jakarta Selatan: Universitas Al Azhar Indonesia, 2010).

7 Muhammad Thalib, *Al-Qur'anul Karim Tarjamah Tafsiriyah: Memahami Makna Al-Qur'an Lebih Mudah dan Cepat*, 2nd ed. (Yogyakarta: Ma'had An-Nabawi, 2011).

8 https://lajnah.kemenag.go.id/berita/200-lpmq-gelar-konsultasi-publik-penyempurnaan-terjemahan-al-Qur'an

9 https://lajnah.kemenag.go.id/berita/452-ijtimak-ulama-al-qur-an-forum-uji-sahih-terjemahan-al-qur-an-kemenag

balance fidelity to the Qur'anic message with state ideology and national interests. Although intended for Indonesia's diverse Muslim communities, it also had to accommodate different interpretations and social developments that did not conflict with the Qur'an or national principles. Two prominent controversies illustrate this challenge: the rendering of *awliyā'*[10] in al-Mā'idah [5]:51 during the 2017 Jakarta gubernatorial election and the rendering of *qawwāmūn* in al-Nisā' [4]:34 during debates over Megawati Soekarnoputri's presidential candidacy.

A further consideration is the committee-based character of MORA's translation. Producing a translation through the contributions of specialists from different disciplines and methodological backgrounds requires careful harmonization of style, translation technique, and equivalence. Differences in scholarly background may also generate competing ideological positions when politically or theologically contested verses are interpreted.

Previous studies of Qur'an translation ideology have generally examined translation dynamics or compared particular translations. These include studies by Istianah,[11] Muhammad Chirzin,[12] Betty Maulirosa Bustam and Rika Astari,[13] Marjan Fadil,[14] Mohamad Zaka Al Farisi,[151617] Nurun Nisaa Baihaqi and Aty Munshihah,[18] and Mukhammad Lutfi.[19] None, however, focuses specifically on the evolution of

10 https://lajnah.kemenag.go.id/berita/197-soal-terjemahan-awliya-sebagai-teman-setia-ini-penjelasan-kemenag

11 Istianah Istianah, "Dinamika Penerjemahan Al-Qur'an: Polemik Karya Terjemah Al-Qur'an HB Jassin dan Tarjamah Tafsiriyah Al-Qur'an Muhammad Thalib," *Maghza: Jurnal Ilmu Al-Qur'an dan Tafsir* 1, no. 1 (2016), https://doi.org/10.24090/maghza.v1i1.695.

12 Muhammad Chirzin, "Dinamika Terjemah Al-Qur'an (Studi Perbandingan Terjemah al-Qur'an Kementerian Agama RI dan Muhammad Thalib)," *Jurnal Studi Ilmu-Ilmu Al-Qur'an dan Hadis* 17, no. 1 (2016), https://doi.org/10.14421/qh.2016.1701-01.

13 Betty Maulirosa Bustam and Rika Astari, "Meaning Differences Between Two Quran Translations in Activism Era in Indonesia (Ideology in Translation Analysis)," *Analisa: Journal of Social Science and Religion* 3, no. 1 (2018), https://doi.org/10.18784/analisa.v3i1.602.

14 Marjan Fadil, "Nalar Eksklusif Penafsiran Al-Qur'an Studi Terjemah Depag dan Tarjamah Tafsiriyah," *Journal of Qur'an and Hadith Studies* 5, no. 2 (2019), https://doi.org/10.15408/quhas.v5i2.13422.

15 Mohamad Zaka Al Farisi, "The Impact of Techniques and Translation Ideology on the Clarity of Pragmatic Meanings Translation of the Quranic Imperative Verses", *Indonesian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, vol. 7, no. 3 (2018), https://doi.org/10.17509/ijal.v7i3.9818.

16 Mohamad Zaka Al Farisi, "The Impact of Using Foreignization and Domestication on the Translation Accuracy of the Quranic Metaphor (Kinayah) Verses," *Scientific Journal of King Faisal University Basic and Applied Sciences* 21, no. 1 (2020), https://doi.org/10.37575/h/rel/1966.

17 Mohamad Zaka Al Farisi, "Acceptability of the Quran Translation," *Al-Jami'ah* 61, no. 2 (2023), https://doi.org/10.14421/AJIS.2023.612.329-363.

18 Nurun Nisaa Baihaqi and Aty Munshihah, "Studi Komparatif Terjemah Surah QS. al-Mu'awwidzat: Antara Terjemah Al-Qur'an Kementerian Agama RI dan Tarjamah Tafsiriyah Muhammad Thalib," *Jalsah: The Journal of Al-Qur'an and As-Sunnah Studies* 2, no. 2 (2022), https://doi.org/10.37252/jqs.v2i2.315.

19 Mukhammad Lutfi, "Studi Komparatif Al-Qur'an Tarjamah Tafsiriyah M. Thalib dan Terjemah Kemenag

translation ideology across successive editions.

The political and theological dimensions of MORA's translation have been examined by Moch. Nur Ichwan,[20] Hamam Faizin,[21] and Fadhli Lukman.[22] Ichwan identifies state-ideological and sectarian biases in the translation. Faizin traces linguistic, thematic, and theological changes across revisions produced under the Old Order, New Order, Reformasi, and post-Reformasi periods. Lukman develops Ichwan's argument by examining the politics of revision and the state-oriented ideological vocabulary embedded in the official translation.

While much previous research emphasizes the linguistic dimension of translation ideology, this study examines its evolution across linguistic, political, and theological dimensions. Unlike the work of Ichwan, Faizin, and Lukman, which concentrates on political regimes and successive editions of the official translation, the present study compares MORA's translation with non-state translations from Indonesia, represented by Shihab and Thalib, and with selected English renderings by Ali and Pickthall.

The principal object of analysis is the 2019 edition, the most recent official Qur'an translation issued by MORA. It was selected because of its status as a state-authorized translation, its wide circulation among Indonesian readers, and its place within a sequence of revisions published in 1965, 1971, 1989–1990, and 2002, and 2019. The edition is available through the Qur'an Kemenag website, mobile application, and downloadable document formats.

The study uses the 2019 MORA translation published on quran.kemenag.go.id and in the "Qur'an Kemenag" application. Selected passages are compared with translations by Shihab and Thalib. Shihab was chosen as a prominent contemporary Indonesian scholar of tafsir, whereas Thalib was selected because of his sustained criticism of MORA's translation. Where relevant, the analysis also consults the widely

terhadap Kata 'Fitnah' Pada Surat al-Baqarah," *Islamic Insights Journal* 5, no. 1 (2023), https://dx.doi.org/10.21776/ub.iij.2023.05.1.2.

20 Moch. Nur Ichwan. 'Negara Kitab Suci dan Politik: Terjemahan Resmi Al-Qur'an di Indonesia', in Henri Chambert-Loir (ed.), *Sadur Sejarah Terjemahan di Indonesia dan Malaysia*. (Jakarta: Kepustakaan Populer Gramedia, 2009), pp. 417–433.

21 Faizin, Hamam. 'Sejarah Penerjemahan Al-Qur'an di Indonesia (Studi Kasus *Al-Qur'an dan Terjemahannya* Kementerian Agama RI). PhD dissertation: UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, 2021.

22 Fadhli Lukman, *The Official Indonesian Qur'ān Translation: The History and Politics of Al-Qur'an dan Terjemahnya*. (Cambridge, UK: Open Book Publishers, 2022), https://doi.org/10.11647/OBP.0289

cited English translations of Abdullah Yusuf Ali[23] and Marmaduke Pickthall[24] as presented in the Quranic Arabic Corpus (version 0.4).

Ideology in Indonesian Qur'an Translation

In translation studies, ideology refers to principles or beliefs concerning what counts as "right" or "wrong" in translation practice.[25] A successful translation is generally expected to transfer a source-language text into a target language, but the criteria of success remain contested. In debates over Indonesian Qur'an translations, "right" and "wrong" may also mean acceptable or unacceptable, and good or poor, for particular readers. Judgments therefore depend on the intended audience and purpose of the translation, both of which shape the ideology adopted by the translator.

Translation ideology is commonly described through two poles: domestication and foreignization.[26] A domesticating translation is considered acceptable when it conforms to the linguistic and cultural expectations of target-language (TL) readers and reads as part of the TL's written tradition. A foreignizing translation, by contrast, preserves the cultural and linguistic presence of the source language (SL), even when this produces a degree of unfamiliarity. It seeks to expose readers to the values and texture of the source text. The choice between these orientations also involves mediation or intervention,[27] which may operate minimally, maximally, or selectively in the translation process.[28]

Which ideology, then, characterizes MORA's translation? The first translation committee explicitly addressed the problem of words that permit more than one interpretation. In the preface to *Al-Qur'an dan Terjemahannya* (1969), Soenarjo, chair of the translation board, stated that when a word supported two opinions, both would be presented in a footnote. He also maintained that the translation should remain as literal as possible, with additional explanations supplied in brackets or footnotes where necessary.[29] This policy indicates a foreignizing orientation intended to preserve

23 Abdullah Yusuf Ali, *The Holy Quran: Translation and Commentary* (Birmingham: Islamic Vision, 2001) in https://corpus.quran.com/translation.jsp

24 Pickthall, Marmaduke. *The Meaning of the Glorious Koran.* New York: Plume, 1997 in https://corpus.quran.com/translation.jsp

25 Benny H. Hoed, "Ideologi dalam Penerjemahan," in *Proceeding Kongres Nasional Penerjemahan* (Surakarta: Fakultas Sastra dan Seni Rupa dan Program Pascasarjana, 2003).

26 Lawrence Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility* (London: Routledge, 2003).

27 Hoed, "Ideologi dalam Penerjemahan."

28 Basil Hatim and Ian Mason, *The Translator as Communicator* (London: Routledge, 1997), 147–160.

29 Hanafi, "Problematika Terjemahan Al-Qur'an Studi pada Beberapa Penerbitan Al-Qur'an dan Kasus Kontemporer," 180.

the meanings, atmosphere, and cultural setting of Qur'anic Arabic through reference to tafsir, *asbāb al-nuzūl*, and the historical context of revelation. Its limitation is that culturally unfamiliar renderings may remain difficult for readers without adequate explanation.

The choice of translation ideology must be accompanied by the selection of an appropriate method, diction, and style. This enables the Qur'an to be translated into a language and culture that is as close as possible to that of the time of its revelation without creating a sense of distance between the translation and its readers. However, the message of the Qur'an may not be fully understood when translated into Indonesian. In such cases, the intervention or mediation of the translator is necessary. The translator must provide additional explanations of verses that may be difficult to understand for the average reader to bridge the linguistic and cultural gap between the SL and TL.

Translation Methods in MORA's Translation

One point of debate between Hanafi and Thalib concerns the method employed in MORA's translation. Thalib argued that the translation was excessively *ḥarfiyah* (literal) and that the Qur'an should instead be translated *tafsīriyah* (interpretively). Hanafi responded that MORA combined literal and interpretive methods and used interpretive translation, footnotes, or supplementary explanations in parentheses when a literal rendering was inadequate.[30]

Translation scholars have proposed numerous methods, among which Newmark's classification is one of the most widely cited.[31] Newmark identifies four source-language-oriented methods—word-for-word, literal, faithful, and semantic—and four target-language-oriented methods—adaptation, free, idiomatic, and communicative. The debate over literal and interpretive Qur'an translation does not, however, follow Newmark's categories directly; it draws primarily on classifications developed within scholarship on Qur'an translation.

Ali bin Sulaiman al-Abid identifies three methods of Qur'an translation: (1) *ḥarfiyah*, (2) *lafẓiyah*, which approximates faithful translation, and (3) *tafsīriyah*.[32] This article adds a fourth category, *maʿnawiyah*, corresponding broadly to semantic

30 Hanafi, "Problematika Terjemahan Al-Qur'an Studi pada Beberapa Penerbitan Al-Qur'an dan Kasus Kontemporer," 180.

31 Peter Newmark, *A Textbook of Translation,* (New York: Prentice Hall, 1988).

32 Ali bin Sulaiman al-Abid, *Tarjamah Al-Qur'ān Al-Karīm: Ḥaqīqatuhā wa Ḥukmuhā*, (Madinah: Majma' Malik Fahd, 2002).

translation and already evident in Indonesian Qur'an translations.[33] The four methods are therefore arranged as *ḥarfiyah*, *lafẓiyah*, *maʿnawiyah*, and *tafsīriyah*.

The *ḥarfiyah* method reproduces the words and order of the Qur'anic text as closely as possible, with little or no explanation. The *lafẓiyah* method remains close to the source wording but adjusts the form to target-language rules and conventions. The *maʿnawiyah* method provides contextual or interpretive clarification where necessary, often in parentheses or footnotes, on the basis of tafsir and *asbāb al-nuzūl*. It does not explain every word. The *tafsīriyah* method, by contrast, incorporates explanations drawn from tafsir directly into the translation without consistently marking them through brackets or notes. Al-Abid therefore considers it more appropriate for translating a tafsir work than for translating the Qur'an itself.[34]

To understand these four methods, it is important to know the differences in their applications. These differences can be seen in the translation of Surah al-Fātiḥah [1]:7:

Table 1. Translation comparison with the ḥarfiyah, lafẓiyah, maʿnawiyah, and tafsīriyah methods[35]

Ḥarfiyah *Jalan orang-orang memberi nikmat Engkau atas mereka bukan yang dimurkai atas mereka dan bukan orang-orang sesat.* The path of people bless You of them, not those who have incurred on them, nor people astray	*Lafẓiyah* *Jalan orang-orang yang Engkau beri nikmat kepada mereka, bukan orang-orang yang dimurkai dan bukan orang-orang yang sesat.* The path of those whom You have blessed, not those who have incurred Your wrath, nor those who have gone astray.
Maʿnawiyah *Jalan orang-orang yang telah Engkau beri nikmat kepadanya; bukan (jalan) mereka yang dimurkai (Yahudi); dan bukan (pula jalan) mereka yang sesat (Nasrani).* The path of those whom You have blessed; not (the path) of those who have incurred Your wrath (the Jews); and not (the path) of those who have gone astray (the Christians).	*Tafsīriyah* *Agama yang diikuti oleh orang-orang yang telah Engkau karuniai hidayah Islam sampai mati, bukan agama kaum Yahudi yang dihinakan oleh Allah, dan bukan pula agama kaum Nasrani yang mengingkari kenabian Muhammad.* The religion followed by those whom You have blessed with the guidance of Islam until death, not the religion of the Jews who are despised by Allah, nor the religion of the Christians who deny the prophethood of Muhammad.

33 Hidayatullah, *Jembatan Kata: Seluk Beluk Penerjemahan Arab-Indonesia*, 78.

34 al-Abid, *Tarjamah Al-Qur'ān Al-Karīm: Ḥaqīqatuhā wa Ḥukmuhā*, 15.

35 Hidayatullah, *Jembatan Kata: Seluk Beluk Penerjemahan Arab-Indonesia*, 80.

The first example is deliberately word-for-word and therefore sounds unnatural in Indonesian. The second is more idiomatic but does not explain the referents of *dimurkai* (those who incurred wrath) and *sesat* (those who went astray). The third supplies those referents and restores the omitted word *jalan* (path) in brackets. In the fourth, interpretive explanations are incorporated directly into the translation. Among these methods, *ḥarfiyah* translation of the Qur'an is generally rejected,[36] whereas scholars differ over the permissibility of the *lafẓiyah* method.[37] The *maʿnawiyah* and *tafsīriyah* methods are therefore the more widely accepted options.

MORA's translation is not strictly *ḥarfiyah*, because it does not reproduce the Qur'an word for word and it adds explanations in parentheses, footnotes, or the translated text when required.[38] A close reading indicates an eclectic combination of *lafẓiyah*, *maʿnawiyah*, and *tafsīriyah* methods. The *lafẓiyah* method is used when no cultural equivalent or extended explanation is needed, whereas the *maʿnawiyah* and *tafsīriyah* methods are used when the verse requires contextual clarification.

Diction in MORA's Translation

Diction in translation may be evaluated at five levels: lexical, syntactic, idiomatic, aesthetic, and ethical.[39] These levels are particularly relevant to Qur'an translation because lexical choice is inseparable from religious and moral meaning. At the lexical level, the Arabic word *fitnah* illustrates the need to consider context. MORA renders it as *fitnah* (*cobaan*, "trial") in al-Baqarah [2]:102; as *fitnah* without explanation in al-Baqarah [2]:193; as *fitnah* (*azab akibat dosa-dosa mereka*, "punishment resulting from their sins") in al-Māʾidah [5]:71; and as *siksaan* ("punishment") in al-Anfāl [8]:25. The lexical environment and tafsir context determine these choices.

In Shihab's translation, the word fitnah is translated as cobaan[40] (trial) in al-Baqarah 102; fitnah (penganiayaan dan atau syirik,[41] 'persecution and/or polytheism') in al-Baqarah [2]:193; bencana[42] (disaster) in al-Māʾidah [5]:71; and siksa[43] (torture)

36 al-Abid, *Tarjamah Al-Qur'ān Al-Karīm: Ḥaqīqatuhā wa Ḥukmuhā*, 21.

37 al-Abid, *Tarjamah Al-Qur'ān Al-Karīm: Ḥaqīqatuhā wa Ḥukmuhā*, 14.

38 Hanafi, "Problematika Terjemahan Al-Qur'an Studi pada Beberapa Penerbitan Al-Qur'an dan Kasus Kontemporer," 18.

39 Parakitri T. Simbolon, "Masalah Pilihan Kata dalam Penerjemahan" in Hidayatullah, 51–53.

40 Shihab, *Al-Qur'an dan Maknanya*, 16.

41 Shihab, *Al-Qur'an dan Maknanya*, 30.

42 Shihab, *Al-Qur'an dan Maknanya*, 120.

43 Shihab, *Al-Qur'an dan Maknanya*, 179.

in al-Anfāl [8]:25. In Thalib's translation, fitnah is translated as menguji keimanan[44] (testing faith) in al-Baqarah [2]:102; gangguan terhadap kehidupan beragama[45] (interference with religious life) in Surah al-Baqarah [2]:193; kerusakan di muka bumi[46] (destruction on earth) in al-Mā'idah [5]:71; and azab (punishment)[47] in al-Anfāl [8]:25.

Comparison of the three translations indicates different ideological tendencies. MORA and Shihab generally retain the lexical form of *fitnah* while adding contextual clarification, whereas Thalib more consistently translates the implied interpretation. In this example, all three move toward *ma'nawiyah* or *tafsīriyah* translation and therefore toward domestication.

The syntactic level must be applied when translating the following verse of Al-A'raf [7]:97:

> *Apakah penduduk berbagai negeri ini merasa aman akan datangnya azab Kami kepada mereka pada malam hari, saat mereka sedang tidur?*
>
> *Did the people of these lands feel secure that Our punishment would come upon them at night, while they were sleeping?*

If syntax is ignored, the clause *wa hum nā'imūn* may be rendered as "and they were sleeping" rather than "while they were sleeping." The particle *wāw* functions here as *wāw al-ḥāl*, introducing a circumstantial clause. MORA and Shihab translate it as *saat mereka sedang tidur* ("while they were sleeping"),[48] whereas Thalib adds the adverb *nyenyak* in *saat mereka sedang tidur nyenyak* ("while they were sleeping soundly").[49] Thalib's rendering is more interpretive, while MORA and Shihab remain closer to a *ma'nawiyah* approach.

The idiomatic level is applied to translate verses such as al-Isrā' [17]:24. The phrase janāḥ al-dzull is translated as dengan penuh kasih sayang 'with great affection' in MORA's translation; (didorong) oleh rasa kasih sayang[50] 'driven by affection' in Shihab's translation; and dengan sikap rendah hati[51] 'with a humble attitude' in Thalib's translation. However, these three translations do not capture the idiomatic aspect of janāḥ al-dzull. In the English translation, this phrase is rendered as 'wing

44 Thalib, *Al-Qur'anul Karim Tarjamah Tafsiriyah*, 17.

45 Thalib, *Al-Qur'anul Karim Tarjamah Tafsiriyah*, 31.

46 Thalib, *Al-Qur'anul Karim Tarjamah Tafsiriyah*, 120.

47 Thalib, *Al-Qur'anul Karim Tarjamah Tafsiriyah*, 181.

48 Shihab, *Al-Qur'an dan Maknanya*, 163.

49 Thalib, *Al-Qur'anul Karim Tarjamah Tafsiriyah*, 164.

50 Shihab, *Al-Qur'an dan Maknanya*, 284.

51 Thalib, *Al-Qur'anul Karim Tarjamah Tafsiriyah*, 285.

of humility' (Ali's translation) and 'wing of submission' (Pickthall's translation). This prompts the following question: does the idiom have equivalent comprehension in both Indonesian and English contexts? Upon the proper comprehension of the aforementioned elements, the translation is regarded as adequate from an idiomatic perspective. However, if this is not the case, the equivalent of a similar idiom in the TL must be identified. In the event that this proves unfeasible, a neutral equivalent should be identified, as was the case in the translations of the three Indonesian Qur'an translators.

The aesthetic level can be applied to verses with literary nuances, such as the final rhyme in each verse of al-Nās [114]. The following column offers a comparison of the translations.

Table 2. Comparison of Surah al-Nās in the translations of MORA, Shihab, and Thalib

Verse	MORA's Translation	Shihab's Translation	Thalib's Translation
1	*Katakanlah (Nabi Muhammad), "Aku berlindung kepada Tuhan manusia,* Say (Prophet Muhammad), "I seek refuge in the Lord of mankind,	*Katakanlah, wahai Nabi Muhammad saw.: "Aku berlindung kepada Tuhan Pemelihara manusia,* Say, O Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him): "I seek refuge in the Lord of mankind,	*Wahai Muhammad, katakanlah: "Aku berlindung kepada Tuhan yang menguasai manusia dan jin,* O Muhammad, say: "I seek refuge in the Lord of mankind and jinn,
2	*raja manusia,* the King of mankind,	*Maha Raja (yang menguasai) manusia,* the King (who rules) mankind,	*raja manusia dan jin,* the King of mankind and jinn,
3	*sembahan manusia* the God of mankind,	*Tuhan (yang disembah dan dipatuhi) manusia* the God (who is worshipped and obeyed) by mankind	*sesembahan manusia dan jin,* the God of mankind and jinn,

Verse	MORA's Translation	Shihab's Translation	Thalib's Translation
4	*dari kejahatan (setan) pembisik yang bersembunyi* from the evil (of the whispering devil) who hides,	*Dari kejahatan (setan) pembisik yang bersembunyi* From the evil of the whispering devil who hides,	*dari keburukan pembisik yang licik,* from the evil of the whisperer
5	*yang membisikkan (kejahatan) ke dalam dada manusia,* who whispers (evil) into the hearts of mankind,	*yang membisik di (dalam) dada manusia* *dari jin dan manusia* who whispers in the hearts of mankind, from jinn and mankind,	*yang membisikkan kejahatan ke dalam hati manusia,* who whispers evil into the hearts of mankind,
6	*dari (golongan) jin dan manusia."* from (the group of) jinn and mankind."	*dari (golongan) jin dan manusia."* from the jinn and mankind."	*pembisik kejahatan dari golongan jin dan manusia."* the whisperer of evil from among the jinn and mankind."

In terms of aesthetic equivalence, the translations by MORA and Shihab preserve the concise structure of the surah more effectively than Thalib's. Thalib's consistent use of interpretive expansion reduces the formal parallelism and rhyme of the verses.

The ethical level is relevant when a source text contains language that may sound harsh or offensive in the target culture. The translator must preserve the meaning while selecting an equivalent appropriate to the target audience. For example, *al-sufahā'* in al-Baqarah [2]:142 is rendered as *orang-orang yang kurang akal* ("people of limited understanding") by MORA, *orang-orang yang picik* ("narrow-minded people") by Shihab,[52] and *orang-orang dungu* ("foolish people") by Thalib.[53] MORA's choice is the most restrained, while Shihab's more directly reflects the contextual criticism of the verse.

Each translation therefore has different strengths. Thalib provides the most explicit lexical interpretation, while all three handle the syntax accurately. At the idiomatic level, none reproduces the source metaphor fully because Indonesian lacks a natural equivalent. Shihab performs most strongly at the aesthetic level, followed by

52 Shihab, *Al-Qur'an dan Maknanya*, 22.

53 Thalib, *Al-Qur'anul Karim Tarjamah Tafsiriyah*, 23.

MORA and Thalib. At the ethical level, MORA and Shihab employ more restrained diction than Thalib.

Language Style in MORA's Translation

Although the Arabic language style of the Qur'an has been widely studied, its reproduction in Indonesian translation has received less attention. Existing studies by Nurul Murtadho,[54] Nasimah Abdullah, Lubna Abd. Rahman, and Saifulah Samsudin,[55] and Mohamad Zaka Al Farisi[56] mainly classify rhetorical forms, including metaphor, simile, personification, irony, antithesis, repetition, and alliteration. Their translation into Indonesian can reveal ideological orientation: a rendering that retains Arabic rhetorical features tends toward foreignization, whereas one that prioritizes natural Indonesian expression tends toward domestication. Surah Maryam [19]:4 provides one example.

Table 3. Comparison of Surah Maryam [19]:4 in the translations of MORA, Shihab, and Thalib[57],[58]

MORA's Translation	Shihab's Translation	Thalib's Translation
...kepalaku telah dipenuhi uban... ...my head is covered with grey hair...	*…telah berkobar kepalaku oleh uban (pertanda usia telah lanjut)…* ...my head has been burning with gray hair (a sign of advancing age)...	*...kepalaku telah dipenuhi uban...* ...my head is covered with grey hair...

MORA and Thalib render the metaphor in similar, natural Indonesian language, while Shihab remains closer to the Arabic image and adds an explanation in parentheses. MORA and Thalib therefore adopt a more domesticating approach, whereas Shihab's rendering is comparatively foreignizing. His translation of *ishtaʿala*

54 Nurul Murtadho, "Metafora dalam Al-Qur'an dan Terjemahan dalam Bahasa Indonesia: Kajian atas Metafora Cahaya, Kegelapan, dan Beberapa Sifat Allah," (Depok: FIB UI: 1999), *Dissertation*.

55 Nasimah Abdullah, Lubna Abd. Rahman, and Saifulah Samsudin, "Terjemahan Kinayah Dalam Wacana Al-Qur'an: Analisis Teori Komunikatif Newmark," Journal of Islamic, Social, Economics and Development (JISED) 5, no. 30 (2020).

56 Al Farisi, "The Impact of Using Foreignization and Domestication on the Translation Accuracy of the Quranic Metaphor (Kinayah) Verses."

57 Shihab, *Al-Qur'an dan Maknanya*, 305.

58 Thalib, *Al-Qur'anul Karim Tarjamah Tafsiriyah*, 306.

as *telah berkobar* ("has flared up") deliberately preserves the Qur'anic metaphor.

A similar difference appears in the translation of Surah al-Takwīr [81]:18, where the image of dawn "breathing" tests whether the translators preserve the source metaphor or replace it with a more familiar target-language expression.

Table 4. Comparison of Surah al-Takwīr [81]:18 in the translations of MORA, Shihab, and Thalib[59]

MORA's Translation	Shihab's Translation	Thalib's Translation
demi subuh apabila (fajar) telah menyingsing, for Fajr when it dawns,	*Dan demi subuh apabila mulai menyingsing!* And for the sake of dawn when it dawns!	*Demi Shubuh ketika ia muncul.* For the sake of dawn, when it appears.

MORA and Shihab render *tanaffasaa* as *menyingsing* ("dawning"), while Thalib uses *muncul* ("appears"). The more literal equivalent is *bernapas* ("breathes"), which is also reflected in the English translations of Pickthall and Ali. The three Indonesian translations thus favor domestication, whereas the two English versions retain a more foreignizing metaphor.

Another discourse pertaining to the linguistic style of the Qur'an pertains to the translation of al-Nūr [24]:35.

Table 5. Comparison of Surah al-Nūr [24]:35 in the translations of MORA, Shihab, and Thalib[60]

MORA's Translation	Shihab's Translation	Thalib's Translation
Allah (pemberi) cahaya (pada) langit dan bumi. Allah (the giver) of light (in) the heavens and the earth	*Allah (adalah Pemberi) cahaya langit dan bumi.* Allah (is the Giver) of the light of the heavens and the earth.	*Allah itu sumber cahaya yang menerangi seluruh langit dan bumi* God is the source of light that illuminates all the heavens and the earth

MORA consistently uses domestication by adding contextual information in parentheses, as does Shihab. Thalib inserts the explanatory material directly into

59 Shihab, *Al-Qur'an dan Maknanya*, 586.
Thalib, *Al-Qur'anul Karim Tarjamah Tafsiriyah*, 587.

60 Shihab, *Al-Qur'an dan Maknanya*, 354.
Thalib, *Al-Qur'anul Karim Tarjamah Tafsiriyah*, 355.

the translated sentence. MORA's rendering remains closer to the stylistic economy of the Qur'anic phrase than the other two, but all three reduce some of its literary ambiguity in favor of readability. This illustrates a recurrent tension in recent MORA editions between linguistic accessibility and the preservation of Qur'anic style.

Political and Theological Verses in MORA's Translation

Several politically and theologically contested verses have generated debate over MORA's translation. In the 2002 and 2019 editions, *awliyāʾ* in al-Māʾidah [5]:51 is translated as *teman setia* ("loyal friends"), whereas the 1989–1990 edition used *pemimpin-pemimpin* ("leaders").[61] The 1965 edition retained the word *wali* and explained it in a note.[62] The 2002 wording was therefore not introduced in response to the 2017 Jakarta gubernatorial election, although the controversy surrounding the verse intensified during that election.

The 2019 edition highlights the meaning of the word *awliyā'* in the Qur'an in footnote 88 when translating Surah Āl ʿImrān [3]:28:

> *Kata auliyā' adalah bentuk jamak dari kata waliy. Secara ḥarfiyah kata ini berarti 'dekat' sehingga menunjukkan makna 'teman dekat', 'teman akrab', 'teman setia', 'kekasih', 'penolong', 'sekutu', 'pelindung', 'pembela', dan 'pemimpin'. Kata waliy dan auliyā' dalam Al-Qur'an diulang 41 kali. Maknanya berbeda-beda sesuai dengan konteks ayat.*
>
> *The word auliyā' is the plural form of waliy. It literally means 'near' and thus indicates the meaning of 'close friend', 'intimate friend', 'loyal friend', 'lover', 'helper', 'ally', 'protector', 'defender', and " leader.' The words waliy and auliyā' are repeated 41 times in the Qur'ān. Their meanings vary according to the context of each verse.*

This note is cross-referenced in the explanation of *awliyāʾ* in al-Māʾidah [5]:51. Hanafi observes that the 1965 edition also included a shorter note defining *awliyāʾ* as *teman yang akrab* ("close friends").[63]

The note situates *wali* and *awliyāʾ* within their lexical and textual contexts. Their different Indonesian equivalents follow from collocation and verse context. The use of *teman setia* in the 2002 and 2019 editions represents a revision of the 1989–1990 rendering, which itself revised the 1965 edition. The 2019 treatment combines a domesticating orientation with an interpretive explanation.

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61 Tim Penyelenggara Penterjemah/Pentafsir Al Qur'an Departemen Agama RI, *Al-Qur'an dan Terjemahannya* [Edisi Terjemahan 1989–1990] (Madinah: Mujamma' Al Malik Fahd, 1997), 169.

62 https://lajnah.kemenag.go.id/berita/197-soal-terjemahan-awliya-sebagai-teman-setia-ini-penjelasan-kemenag

63 https://lajnah.kemenag.go.id/berita/197-soal-terjemahan-awliya-sebagai-teman-setia-ini-penjelasan-kemenag

Shihab retains *wali* and adds *teman dekat dan penolong* ("close friend and helper") in parentheses,[64] thereby combining foreignization with explanatory mediation. Thalib translates the term as *pemimpin-pemimpin* ("leaders") without brackets or a note,[65] reflecting a domesticating and explicitly political interpretation. Methodologically, Shihab employs a *maʿnawiyah* approach, whereas Thalib uses a *tafsīriyah* approach.

MORA's rendering of *qawwāmūn* in al-Nisāʾ [4]:34 has also been accused of political bias. The 1989–1990 edition translated it as *pemimpin* ("leader"), the 2002 edition as *pelindung* ("protector"), and the 2019 edition as *penanggung jawab* ("responsible for"), accompanied by a note explaining the husband's responsibility to protect, care for, and promote the welfare of the family. The 2019 translation therefore situates the verse within family relations rather than political leadership. This contextual reading is comparable to "protectors and maintainers" in Ali and "in charge" in Pickthall.[66]

The verse has nevertheless been used to oppose women's candidacy for national and regional executive office.[67] Some commentators have even declared such leadership forbidden.[68] One argument rests on the translation of *qawwāmūn*,[69] while other institutions, including the Indonesian Ulama Council, have rejected that conclusion.[70] The issue therefore remains a matter of *khilāfiyah* and *ijtihād* rather than a settled implication of the verse.

The 2019 edition confines *qawwāmūn* to family responsibilities, whereas the 1989–1990 wording allowed a broader political reading. The 2002 edition had already begun to narrow the term to the family context, although without an explanatory note. The 2019 edition makes this contextualization explicit and adopts a more interpretive, domesticating approach than the earlier editions.

Shihab translates *qawwāmūn* as *pemimpin dan penanggung jawab* ("leaders and those responsible") and clarifies *al-rijāl* as husbands and *al-nisāʾ* as wives,[71] thereby placing the verse within family relations. Thalib uses *pemimpin* ("leader")[72]

64 Shihab, *Al-Qur'an dan Maknanya*, 117.

65 Thalib, *Al-Qur'anul Karim Tarjamah Tafsiriyah*, 118.

66 https://corpus.Qur'an.com/translation.jsp?chapter=4&verse=34

67 https://www.bbc.com/indonesia/articles/c1ml75j109jo

68 https://data.tempo.co/MajalahTeks/detail/ARM2018061294454/fatwa-haram-presiden-perempuan

69 https://almanhaj.or.id/3933-apakah-wanita-dibolehkan-menjadi-pemimpin.html

70 https://news.detik.com/berita/d-160786/mui-fatwa-haram-presiden-perempuan-tak-perlu-ditanggapi

71 Shihab, *Al-Qur'an dan Maknanya*, 84.

72 Thalib, *Al-Qur'anul Karim Tarjamah Tafsiriyah*, 84.

but defines the *ṣāliḥāt* as wives who attend to their husbands' interests; his rendering therefore also indirectly frames the verse in a domestic context.

MORA's translation has also served as a vehicle for theological interpretation. One recurring example is *istawā* in Ṭā Hā [20]:5, translated as *bersemayam* in the 1989–1990, 2002, and 2019 editions. The 2002 edition provides no further explanation, while the 1989–1990 and 2019 editions explain that God's "being established above the Throne" is an attribute to be affirmed in a manner appropriate to divine majesty and transcendence, with reference to the note on al-Aʿrāf [7]:54. The explanatory note associates MORA's rendering with an Ashʿarī approach to verses concerning divine attributes, in contrast to approaches that avoid figurative interpretation.

Shihab renders the phrase as *bersemayam* and adds "rules and regulates all that He has created so that it functions as He wills,"[73] making his domesticating and Ashʿarī interpretation explicit. Thalib translates the phrase as *naik ke atas* ("ascends above").[74] His rendering is also interpretive and therefore domesticating, although it differs theologically from Shihab's explanation.

A similar case can be found in the translation of the word *yad* in al-Fatḥ [48]:10, which has theological nuances. In the 2019 edition, this word is translated as *tangan* (hand) and is footnoted as follows:

> *Ini termasuk ayat-ayat sifat. Ahli tafsir berbeda pendapat mengenai ayat ini. Sebagian menjelaskan bahwa yang dimaksud tangan adalah kekuatan dan kekuasaan Allah. Sebagian yang lain memahaminya sebagai pengawasan Allah akan janji setia yang diberikan oleh beberapa orang kepada Nabi Muhammad saw.*
>
> *This is one of the verses of attributes. The commentators differed on this verse. Some explain that what is meant by the hand is the power and authority of Allah. Others understand it as Allah's supervision of the pledge of allegiance given by some people to the Prophet Muhammad.*

The translation *tangan* is also found in the 2002 edition, but without the provision of further information. This is in contrast to the 1989–90 edition, which includes a lengthy explanation in the footnotes:

> *Orang yang berjanji setia biasanya berjabatan tangan. Caranya berjanji setia dengan Rasul ialah meletakkan tangan Rasul di atas tangan orang yang berjanji itu. Jadi maksud tangan Allah di atas tangan mereka ialah untuk menyatakan bahwa berjanji dengan Rasulullah sama dengan berjanji dengan Allah. Jadi seakan-akan tangan Allah di atas tangan mereka yang berjanji itu. Hendaklah diperhatikan bahwa Allah Maha Suci dari segala sifat yang menyerupai makhluk-Nya.*

73 Shihab, *Al-Qur'an dan Maknanya*, 157.

74 Thalib, *Al-Qur'anul Karim Tarjamah Tafsiriyah*, 158.

> *People who pledge allegiance usually shake hands. The way to pledge allegiance to the Messenger is to place the hand of the Messenger over the hand of the pledger. So the meaning of the hand of Allah on their hands is to declare that pledging to the Messenger is the same as pledging to Allah. So it is as if the hand of Allah is over the hands of those who promise. It should be noted that Allah is Most Pure from any attribute that resembles His creatures.*

If the accompanying notes are disregarded, translating *yad* simply as *tangan* ("hand") appears foreignizing because it preserves the source image. The 1989–1990 and 2019 notes, however, interpret the expression through divine power, authority, or supervision and therefore reveal an Ashʿarī theological orientation.

Shihab translates the phrase as *tangan (kekuasaan, kekuatan, dan anugerah) Allah di atas tangan mereka* ("God's hand—His power, strength, and grace—is above their hands"),[75] explicitly combining domestication with Ashʿarī interpretation. Thalib retains *tangan* without explanatory material or a footnote,[76] adopting a comparatively foreignizing approach.

Conclusion

The 2019 MORA translation employs a combination of *maʿnawiyah* and *tafsīriyah* methods similar to that of the 2002 edition. Its principal difference lies in the restoration and expansion of explanatory notes. These notes resemble those in the 1989–1990 edition but provide fuller contextual information and reflect later developments in Qur'anic interpretation. The diction of the 2019 edition likewise responds to contemporary Indonesian usage, while its general stylistic orientation remains continuous with earlier editions.

Overall, the 2019 edition gives greater priority to domestication than to foreignization, departing from the stronger foreignizing orientation of the first edition. Domestication improves accessibility but can also generate controversy when translated terms become entangled in political competition or theological conflict. An official translation cannot represent every position equally; nevertheless, a workable approach combines domestication and foreignization while giving greater weight to contextual Indonesian expression and providing relevant alternatives in explanatory notes. In politically contested passages, contextual and moderate renderings can reduce misapplication. In theological passages, the 2019 edition generally follows the Ashʿarī orientation of the majority of Indonesian Muslims while acknowledging interpretive difference.

75 Shihab, *Al-Qur'an dan Maknanya*, 512.

76 Thalib, *Al-Qur'anul Karim Tarjamah Tafsiriyah*, 513.

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Author Contributions

Moch Syarif Hidayatullah conceived the study, drafted the manuscript, conducted the analysis, and revised the article. Karlina Helmanita and Mirwan Akhmad Taufik contributed to the conceptual framework, evaluated the findings, and recommended relevant literature. All authors reviewed and approved the final manuscript.

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All data supporting the findings are contained in the article; no additional source data are required.

Conflict of Interest

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