Vernacular Tafsir in Madura
Negotiating Human Equality in a Social Hierarchical Tradition

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VERNACULAR TAFSIR IN MADURA: NEGOTIATING HUMAN EQUALITY IN A SOCIAL HIERARCHICAL TRADITION

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Abstract: The Madurese tradition has three hierarchical levels that symbolise the social stratification expressed in its daily language. However, the Qur’ān teaches human equality before God. This article investigates how vernacular tafsir – Al-Qur’an dan Terjemahnya Bahasa Madura – negotiates between the Madurese language and cultural background of social stratification on one side and the Qur’ānic spirit of human equality on the other side. The socio-historical approach and linguistic interpretation are employed to pursue the goal. This article finds that translation of the Qur’ān is a cultural work besides being religious. So, the relationship between Madurese translation as vernacular tafsir of the Qur’ān and local tradition is reciprocal. The vernacular tafsir negotiates the idea of human equality in two ways: choosing the kasar (lower level) style among other styles available in the Madurese language and shifting the base of levels from social hierarchy among human peers to the hierarchy between God and His creatures.

Keywords: vernacular, Madurese, Indonesia, translation, human equality, stratification

INTRODUCTION

In an expansive definition, tafsir means every human effort to understand the words of God according to each person’s ability.1 Based on this definition, the translation of the Qur’ān is a tafsir. Translation is not just about changing and representing language to another. The translation is constructing the events and characterising them in another language.2 Thus, translators or interpreters can either undermine or strengthen aspects of the narratives they mediate implicitly or explicitly.3 The role of translators of the Qur’ān is pretty much the same as the mufassir (interpreter/exegete of the Qur’ān).

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In the vernacular process, translators are challenged to determine specific meanings among various meanings available for every single word and choose which words are most relevant to the local social ethics. The translator’s task is to bridge two different cultures. The task grows more challenging when the two traditions are inconsistent in key ways. This is exactly the situation between the Qur’anic human equality norm and the Madurese tradition of social stratification.

Almost every word in Madurese belongs to one of three or six levels and most levels have a particular word totally different from other levels, as will be explained later. These language levels express social stratification and signal social inequality. Every sentence used by an individual automatically shows which level the speaker is assuming vis-à-vis an addressee. Theoretically, to bridge both cultures, in this case, is impossible or at least hard to do. This article examines a non-Arabic-speaking society (Madura). The work reveals a dynamic engagement between Al-Qur’an dan Terjemahnya Bahasa Madura (The Qur’ān and its Translation: Madurese Language) and Madurese efforts to incorporate the Qur’ān into their culture. This article tries to capture how vernacular tafsir in Madura negotiates egalitarianism in the Qur’ān using the well-known Madurese culture of elitism expressed in their own tradition of language levels.

There are several works in Qur’ānic translation to Madurese, but the MORÅ (Ministry of Religious Affairs) edition is the only subject of this article for three reasons. First, it is the most recent edition published of Madurese translation of the Qur’ān. Second, this edition has not yet been the subject of scholarly research. Previous research available in Qur’ānic Madurese translation examined different works, namely the edition of Lajnah Penerjemahan dan Pengkajian Al-Qur’an (The Committee of Qur’ānic Translation and Studies) and the edition

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10 Two previous works are available on this subject, which are written by Arini Royyani and Ulya Fikriyati. See Arini Royyani, “Al-Qur’ān Tarjāmah Bhāsa Madhurā (Studi Kritik Atas Karakteristik Dan
of Terjemah I’roban Keterangan Madhurah Atoro ’Lil-Jalalain (A Grammar-based Madurese Translation of the Qur’ān According to Tafsir al-Jalālayn). Third, the published research about the Madurese translation of the Qur’ān is rather scanty up to the time of writing. The three studies mentioned earlier represent all the works published on the Madurese translation of the Qur’ān.

The English translation of the Qur’ānic verses will be attached to accommodate the non-Madurese speaking reader. The English translation is quoted from “English Sahih International” of the Qur’ān in Word, an application produced by MORA of Indonesia.

Socio-historical and linguistic-interpretation approaches are employed in this research. The article consists of three main parts. The first part displays the socio-historical structure of the Madurese people according to their elitist-culture expressed through their language levels and the Qur’ānic idea of human equality. The second describes Al-Qur’an dan Terjemahnya Bahasa Madura as the research subject and the last part examines the way Madurese translation of the Qur’ān negotiates the idea of human equality using their well-known tradition (social hierarchy in the linguistic expression).

THE MADURESE SOCIAL STRATIFICATION AND THE QUR’ĀNIC IDEA OF HUMAN EQUALITY

The Madurese people, originally indigenous to Madura Island East Java, Indonesia, are naturally and historically unique. The name Madura originates from Maddhuna Saghara meaning honey of the sea. Madura is surrounded by an archipelagic area of fewer than 5,304km² and has more than 4 million inhabitants. In line with the natural situation, historically, Madura was influenced by Hinduism before the 17th century before the arrival of Javanese Islamic empires, such as Gresik and Demak. From the last few decades of the 18th century, Dutch colonials governed Madura, and since the independence of the Republic, it has served as an East Java province. Among the influential figures of the island is Syaikhana Khalil Bangkalan (1820-1923), a charismatic Jawi scholar in Mecca who had a strong influence on

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the preservation of the traditional ulama (Islamic cleric) network as well as the foundation of Nahdlatul Ulama.\textsuperscript{14}

Besides the ecological and historical setting, Madurese have unique social and cultural characteristics. Primarily, they are known for their emigration, which has made it the fifth-highest ethnic group nationally.\textsuperscript{15} With this tribal migration, Madurese have a solid attachment for lineage solidarity (settong dhârâ) and cooperation among their resettlement brotherhoods (satarétanana).\textsuperscript{16} Last but not least, Madurese are also known for their respect for authority, entrusting dominant figures to support the authority, either in domestic or public life, such as religious organisations and political parties.\textsuperscript{17} This feudalistic structure has impacted the shape of the society’s stratification and will be explored below.

The notion of inequality that has been generated through intergenerational transmission and differential association shapes the interactive expression among the classed groups. In this unequal relationship, the communication mechanism takes place.\textsuperscript{18} Generally, Madurese communication is differentiated by three class divisions: lower class (orèng kènè’), middle class (pongghâbâ) and higher class (prijiïjì).\textsuperscript{19} The lowest class in this society is supposed to submit their loyalty to the highest and refers to the working class, such as farmers, fishermen and craftsmen. Research by Humaidy\textsuperscript{20} attests that orèng kène’ remains the most economically disadvantaged group, an unfortunate position stimulating emigration. The middle class was largely formed during the Dutch colonial government era. The Dutch had replaced the role of

\textsuperscript{14} Established in 1926 by a group of kyai (Islamic traditional cleric), including Kyai Wahab Hasbullah and Kyai Hasyim Asyari, Nahdlatul Ulama is the largest social Islamic organisations in Indonesia. The organisation bases its teaching on a set of Sunni schools (madhab), commonly known as ahl al sunnah wal jamaah (aswaja). Among its essential teachings are the theological concept of Al Maturidi, Islamic jurisprudence teachings (fiqh) of Al Asy’arie, and it accepts the Sufi teachings of al-Ghazali. These teachings influence society in a big way, such as the role of Kyai as part of Sufi Syeikh, whom the members pay respects. Mohammad Hefni, “Patron-Client Relationship Pada Masyarakat Madura” [Patron-Client Relationship in Madurese Society], Karsa Journal of Social and Islamic Culture 15, no. 1 (2009): 20, https://doi.org/10.19105/karsa.v15i1.110.


According to the 2010 census, Madura as an ethnic group comprises more than 7 million (equals 3% of the total population), making it among the ten highest ethnic populations in Indonesia. BPS Statistics Indonesia, Populasi of Indonesia Population Census 2010 (Indonesia: Badan Pusat Statistik, 2013), https://www.bps.go.id/publication/2013/03/05/becb3c0fa2bc4af7a24430/penduduk-indonesia-hasil-sp-2010.html.


\textsuperscript{18} Wendy Bottero, Stratification, Social Division and Equality (London; New York: Routledge, 2005), 3-4.

\textsuperscript{19} Kuntowyijoyo, Perubahan Sosial, 306.

the Madura noble family to the chosen administrators, consisting of officers and civil servants working to organise the sources of villages. The most advantageous class of Madurese is the highest class, with support from the middle one. Prijaji is the most respected class, which entails their guardianship over the whole society. This class serves as the patron leaders of various authorities, including the kalèbun (village head), representing formal authority; the kiai (expert in Islam), embodying religious authority; and the blatèr (strongman), carrying cultural authority.

Unlike the triadic model of modern society in which the middle class mediates the other two, Madurese society is characterised by its hierarchical patronage. The Madurese agricultural society sets this intermediary class as a supportive source for a patron-client structure. The group tends to function as brokers, serving the upper class through the loyalties and significant help of the lower class of orëng kênè’. There are at least two reasons for this. First, the lack of economic resources has made the lower class give their loyalty to the highest group of kiai, blatèr and kalèbun. Given their relatively flexible position, the middle class is supportive of such a relationship. Serving the higher class has economic advantages, which then helps both lower classes survive. The intermediary position increases the social prestige and cultural identity of the middle class.22

Another reason that supports the patron-client system is the guardian position of the higher class. The higher class is charged with responsibilities for economic resources, knowledge authority and guarantor of security, which has created their position as guardians of the community. The wider the invested responsibility they have in the community, the broader influence they will receive.23 Faithfulness toward the higher class is also supported by the teachings of honouring elders: bupa, babu, guru, rato (father, mother, teacher, king). This norm necessitates double dedication; the lower classes should respect these figures and symbolically imply a standardised morality to determine an individual’s goodness, decency and politeness. Finally, this power distribution process has a significant effect on the socio-cultural construction of the Madurese community as a whole. Thus, this patronage practice has shaped the social structure of the Madurese, where language became a salient expression of the respect toward the guarantors and need to gain protections in life.

The triadic model of Madurese society implies the layered class on the use of language. The Madurese language has two basic systems: the style system and reference system. The first system denotes social status and familiarity between addressee and speaker within a communication system. The second system deals with two positions: the social-power

22 Hefni, “Patron-Client Relationship,” 22.
reference to a high-status person in a discourse level and the signification of persons’ belongings or actions, which are generally shaped by wealth, lineage/nobility, education, occupation and age.24 Stevens has elaborated four features of the style system: kasar (coarse), alos (refined), tânga (middle) and biasa (ordinary).25

Several research studies denote the use of the style system in a more comparative way, sometimes used together with the highest level (alos) as a way to express gratitude and respect (kramanisasi). Both are used for speakers lower than the addressees’ level. In contrast, the bhâsa kasar [coarse language] are used in alos thêngghi [high-refined] talks to compromise or accommodate humour and flexible way. A study by Mulyadi and Bukhory found the interchange use of the Madurese levels into two situations. First, the bhâsa kasar for an informal of awkward situation, used by religious of village leaders accommodating a message with humorous terms and attract the audiences’ feeling, so the audience will follow the meaning easily. Second, the highest level of language is used to emphasise the sense of messages’ urgency by those higher classes actors and the interlocutors are required to pay attention to the message. Last, the bhâsa têngghi [highest language] is used to put respect and prestige on the presentation, particularly during rituals or festivals.26

Other research found the complex use of the Madurese style system, ondhâggâ bhâsa (levels of language), which reflects the direct use of the hierarchical pattern of society. Samsiyadi, Kusnadi and Badrudin elaborate this use of language rank in the pesantren situation and found three levels of interaction among the ranked actors. Among the three qualities of ranks – enje’ iyeh (yes-no at coarse level), engghi enten (yes-no at middle level) and èngghi bhunten (yes-no at refined level) – the pesantren students interact with the teachers by èngghi bhunten, reflecting the paternalistic and respect relation between them. Second, enje’ iyeh is used during the santri (who [ever] follows Islamic education in Islamic boarding schools) interaction as a sign of friendship and solidarity. Last is the polite engghi enten between senior and junior santri.27 The above research resembles Stevens’ argument that a higher level and style are used when speaking to a social superior, such as an older member of the family, in a formal situation, and to some extent, it became the proper way to strengthen the message of the communication.28

The previous paragraphs show how the Madurese uphold social stratification in their daily life interaction: a tradition the Qur’ân has rebuffed. From its beginning, the Qur’ân teaches egalitarianism: a noble is as equal as a commoner, a female is as equal as a male, coloured skin

is as equal as white skin, and so on. It opposes the Arab and whole world tradition that time and the Madurese tradition today, as described above. People are distinguished into several social levels according to something they have no choice to make. Certain levels possess a superiority, while others must bow due to inferiority based on unessential things. The Qur’ān emphasises human equality that all mankind shares as equal in creation. It said in surah Al-Ḥujurāt [49]:13:

Yā ayyuhā al-nās innā khalaqnākum min dhakar wa unthā wa jaʿalnākum shuʿūban wa qabāʾil li taʿārafū inna akramakum ‘ind Allāh atqākum innā Allāh ‘alīm khabīr.

O mankind, Indeed we have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you. Indeed, Allah is Knowing and Acquainted.

Ibn ‘Āshūr explains the asbāb al-nuzūl of the verse is when the Prophet asks Banī Bayāḍah (one of a noble tribe in Anṣār) to arrange a marriage of one of their girls to Abū Hind, their slave in Jāhilīyah. Banī Bayāḍah denied the order and said: “How could we ask our daughter to marry our slave?” then Allah revealed this verse to reprove Banī Bayāḍah.31

Quraish Shihab adds another riwāyah and says the verse was revealed when Bilāl ibn Rabāḥ sounded the azan in the Kaʿbah and Usaid ibn Abī al-Āṣ said sarcastically: “Praise be to Allah that my father passed away when it is going on” or an anonymous man said: “Is it too hard for Muhammad to find another man to sound azan in Kaʿbah except for this raven?”32 On the one hand, Bilāl is one of Muhammad’s coloured skin companions and a slave in Jāhilīyah. On the other hand, he was very close to the Prophet and gifted a golden voice. That is why the Prophet asks him to sound the azan in Kaʿbah. Thus, the historical context of the verse’s circumstance explains that treasure, wealth, heredity and even skin colour do not actually point to people of honour.33

The universal message of the Qur’ān requires Muslims to continually transform, negotiate and emphasise the fundamental unity of humankind in its origin and creation by the Divine Being.34 The following parts will display how the Madurese translation of the Qur’ān negotiates this fundamental concept of human equality through their hierarchical language expression.

29 Jawwād ‘Ali, Al-Muṣaffal Fī Ṭārīkh Al-ʿArab Qabla Al-Islām [Details of the Pre-Islamic Arabs’ History] (Baghdad: Jāmiʿah Baghdād, 1993), 541.
34 Sachedina, The Islamic Roots, 27.
MADUРЕSE TRANSLATION OF THE QUR’ĀN; AN OVERVIEW

Conveying the message of God, normatively, was the responsibility of Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him). It is explicitly expressed in the Qur’ān, especially at surah al-An’ām verse 19 and al-Mā’idah verse 67: “It is the Prophet’s responsibility to warn you thereby and whomever it reaches” (li ‘undhirakum bih wa man balagh) and “announce that which has been revealed to you from your Lord” (balligh mā unzila ilayk min rabbik). At the end of the prophetic period, the expansion of Islam extended beyond the Arab world. So, there was a need to transmit warnings, followed by his successive generations – successors, followers and ulama – according to the language of his target community.

Translating the Qur’ān to several languages was one of many steps to socialise the Islamic teachings.35 The task of translating the Qur’ān became more complicated as it expanded beyond the region where it was born. Understanding the Qur’ān in its original language is not available to all Muslims. Vernacular Qur’ān or its tafsīr helps them to face inevitable problems. That is why translation of the Qur’ān is essential.

Initially, discussions about the translation of the Qur’ān into a non-Arabic language (‘ajam) were a subject of debate among scholars. Riddell recorded the dynamic views among scholars surrounding the translation of the Qur’ān before the 20th century. During the 20th century, the views of Muslim scholars around the translation of the Qur’ān underwent a change.36 The wave of translating the Qur’ān in several locations triggered efforts in other parts of the Muslim world. For example, in South-East Asia, Abdur Rauf Singkel (1615-1693) tried to publish the Qur’ān and its interpretation in Malay.

In Indonesia, pesantrens (traditional Islamic boarding schools) use the local language for daily communications and academic purposes. In Madura, Java, Sunda and other regions, the kiai explains Arabic books in the local language. The bandongan pattern (classical learning system in a pesantren with kiai reading and explaining the content of kitāb) is the most appropriate example of applying this method. Thus, vernacular classical Arabic books are familiar in the pesantren milieu. The Madurese language and Qur’ān are part of the objects of these vernacular works.37

Tafsīr Jalālāyn written by Sheikh Jalāl al-Dīn al-Mahallī and Sheikh Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī is the most familiar tafsīr in the pesantren, as well as pesantren in Madura. The translation of Tafsīr Jalālāyn into the local language circulates mainly in local markets.38 The Madurese

35 Ahsin Sakho Muhammad, Membumikan Ulumul Qur’an [Grounding the Qur’ānic Studies] (Jakarta: Qaf, 2019), 140.
36 Peter Riddell, “Menerjemahkan Al-Qur’an Ke Dalam Bahasa-Bahasa Di Indonesia” [Translating the Qur’ān into Indonesian Local Languages], in Sadur: Sejarah Terjemahan Di Indonesia Dan Malaysia [Sadur: The History of Translation in Indonesia and Malaysia], ed. Henri Chambert-Loir (Jakarta: KPG, 2009), 397-98.
38 Van Bruinessen confirmed that, in the 19th century, pesantren in Madura and West Java did not use their own regional languages but had Javanese as a medium; when Arabic texts were translated here, it was into Javanese. This, too, has changed and there are now kitab kuning in Madurese and Sundanese as well. See
translation of Tafsīr Jalālayn by Abdul Majīd Tamīm from Pamekasan and Muhammad ʿĀrifun from Bangkalan are widely known nowadays.

Such facts show the vernacularisation of the Holy Scriptures has been ongoing. In Madurese traditions, the teaching of kitab kuning (yellow book; an idiom used to call the Islamic classic books) with its various disciplines was presented and improvised in local languages. When a kiai reads a book, he relays it by reading the Arabic book’s text then translating it into the local language. So, when reading a book of tafsīr, the kiai also translates and explains it in local languages. With this situation, the translation of the Qur’ān into Madurese is not rejected within the community. The problem arises around the translation model, whether a literal (based on grammatical structures) or communicative translation model is used. As Abadi states, the communicative translation model represents a better option for the content of the Qur’ān.

As a result, IAIN (State Islamic Institute) Madura collaborates with associated institutions and published Al-Qur’an dan Terjemahnya Bahasa Madura (The Qur’ān and its Translation: Madurese Language). It was launched and published in 2018, as well as two other vernacular translations of the Qur’ān into the Bugis and Acehnese languages. IAIN Madura cooperates with the Puslitbang Lektur (Research and Development Center for Religious Literature, the Religious Treasury and Organization Management) and Kemenag RI (Ministry of Religious Affairs, Republic of Indonesia) to publish Al-Qur’an dan Terjemahnya Bahasa Madura.

Alongside the Ministry of Religious Affairs, IAIN Madura also involves the Pakem Maddhu foundation. IAIN Madura’s team focuses on translating the Qur’ān into Madurese, while alignment of the Madura language aspect used in the translation becomes the domain of the Pakem Maddhu foundation. This non-governmental organisation was established in 1992 to focus on the Madura language, involving conservation and development of Madura’s language and literature. The Puslitbang Lektur and Kemenag RI published and distributed Al-Qur’an dan Terjemahnya Bahasa Madura to the public.

This translation required a long period with several short steps and processes. As the translation team proceeded, these gradual and lengthy processes evaluated the validity of translation work. Therefore, IAIN Madura’s team worked with the Balitbang Kemenag RI (Center for Research and Development of Literature, the Religious Treasury and Organization Management) and Kemenag RI to hold several workshops for media evaluation, alignment and validation of the Qur’ān’s translation.

The Qur’ān and its translation in Madurese were printed in 866 pages, not including the copyright page and introduction. It uses a Madurese batik cover with a domination of green and red colours. The cover with a batik motif symbolises an appreciation for traditional local arts. The first printed copies (November 2018) of the Madurese translation of the Qur’ān are published by the Center for Research and Development of Literature, the Religious Treasury.


and Organization Management, Ministry of Religious Affairs Republic of Indonesia, with its distinct task for Madura as an organisation for preparing the translated Qur’ān in Madurese.

**Picture 1: The batik cover of Al-Qur’an dan Terjemahnya Bahasa Madura**

This translation generally uses a communicative model, not strictly following the grammatical rules of the Arabic text, also considering the audience’s worldviews, as Abadi
An alternative model of this type is used to help the readers grasp the meaning of the Qur’ān, even if readers do not ignore its grammatical understanding.

The team respects the guidelines in the face of obstacles in the translation process. One of the decisions taken was to make Tafsīr Jalālayn a focus alongside other interpretations, such as Tafsīr al-Qur’ān al-‘Aẓīm by Ibn Kathīr. In some cases, the team of Madurese translating the Qur’ān added an annotation to certain Qur’ānic verses to make the translation clearer. For example, when translating ummatan wasaṭan with ommat sè panengga (a middle nation) in surah al-Baqarah verse 143, the translator adds an annotation that explains “a middle nation” as balanced people in the affairs of the world and the afterlife, and does not focus too much on either of them. Annotations are commonly added in translations when it is hard to capture the holistic meaning of a word/idiom.

NEGOTIATING THE IDEA OF HUMAN EQUALITY IN AL-QUR’AN DAN TERJEMAHNYA BAHASA MADURA

As previously described, the idea of human equality is against the deep-seated tradition of social stratification in Madura. The following parts explain how to deal with the idea of human equality in al-Qur’an dan Terjemahnya Bahasa Madura from two dialogue patterns: the dialogue between God and His creatures and the dialogue between the creatures.

The Translation of Dialogues Between God and His Creatures

Several Qur’ānic verses record dialogues between created beings and God, such as the dialogues between God and the angels, God and the prophets, God and ordinary human beings or God and demons. The team of Madurese translating the Qur’ān agreed to choose the level alos tèngghi in translating all dialogues addressing God by His creatures. There is no difference if the speakers are humans, angels or even demons. By contrast, every speech by God addressing creatures is translated in bhāsā kasar, such as shown in the following table.

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40 Ibid.
### Table 1: The dialogues between God and His creatures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The dialogue figure and the surah</th>
<th>Arabic transliterated text of the Qur’an</th>
<th>Madurese translation</th>
<th>English translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Angels and God (Al-Baqarah [2]:30)</td>
<td>Wa idh qāl Rabbuk li al-malā’ikah innī jā’i fi al-arḍ khalīfah. Qālū ataj’al fīhā man yusifī fīhā wa yasfīk al-dīmā’ wa nahnu nusabbīhu bi ḥamdik wa nuqaddīs lak. Qāl innī a’lam mā là ta’lamūn</td>
<td>(Ěng’a bā’na Muhammad) nālēkana Pangērānā bā’na adḥābū dā’ Malaēkāt. “Saongghuna Sēngko’ madāddhi khalīfah neng bhumē”. Maka Malaēkāt mator: “Ponapa Ajunan abhādiyā neng bhumē orēng sē bhākāl abhādihi karosaghān sareng madumpa dārā, ēngalē kaulā sadhājā atasbhi kalabān mojhi Ajunan sareng manyoçočē dā’ Ajunan?”. Sālērānā Allah adḥābū: “Saongghuna Sēngko’ tao dā’ pa apa sē bā’na kabbhī la’ tao”.43</td>
<td>And [mention, O Muhammad], when your Lord said to the angels, “Indeed, I will make upon the earth a successive authority.” They said, “Will You place upon it one who causes corruption therein and sheds blood, while we declare Your praise and sanctify You?” Allah said, “Indeed, I know that which you do not know.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human and God (Āli ‘Imrān [3]:35)</td>
<td>Idh qālat imra’at ‘Imrān Rabbī innī nadhart lak mā fi batnī muharrarān fataqabbal minī innak ant al-samī’ al-‘alīm</td>
<td>(Ěng’a bā’na Muhammad) nālēkana binēnā ‘Imron ngōca’: Du, Pangērān kaulā, saēstona kaulā ampon anadzar dā’ Ajunan, pa-ponapa sē neng dālem kandungan kaulā (panēka) dḥādhi kabulā sē ngabdhi, lajhu narēmma Ajunan dārī kaulā. Saēstona Ajunan Maha Mēyarsa, Maha Ngaghālī.44</td>
<td>[Mention, O Muhammad], when the wife of ‘Imran said, “My Lord, indeed I have pledged to You what is in my womb, consecrated [for Your service], so accept this from me. Indeed, You are the Hearing, the Knowing.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The four examples of Madurese translation noted that three different words are used to translate an Arabic word qālaqālat (En: said): adḥābū, mator and ngōca’. The three words have the same meaning but are used at different levels. Adḥābū is the translation of qāla in the highest-level language, mator is the medium and ngōca’ is the lowest. In the reference system,  

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43 Translation Team, _Al-Qur’an Dan Terjemahnya_, 6.  
44 Ibid., 64.  
45 Ibid., 396.  
46 Ibid., 190.
**adḥâbu** is the *alos tenggi* version and *mator* is the *alos mandhâp*. The translation of *adḥâbu* is attributed only to God as Lord, while each angel, humans and demon uses the words *mator* or *ngoca’.* The difference in usages is based on the addressee. The word *mator* is used to translate the *qāla* spoken by the creature to God directly, such as recorded in a dialogue of angels and God in Al-Baqarah [2]:30; Zakariya and God in Maryam [19]:10; and a demon and God in Al-A’râf [7]:14-15. Actually, all creatures should express themselves in the *kasar* style, but when the addressee is God, it shifts to *alos* style and *alos mandhâp* level and the whole sentence at *alos tengghi* level:

Zakariya *mator* (in *alos* style and *alos mandhâp* level): “*Ḍu, Pangèran kaulâ, parèngè kaulâ sèttong tanâhâ*” (in *alos tengghi* reference level).

On the other side, the translator chooses the word *ngoca’* to translate *qālat* in Āli ‘Imrān [3]:35. He does so because the wife of ‘Imran talked to herself, not God. According to the Madurese tradition, it would be inappropiate when a person points at themselves in *alos tengghi* language. It seems the translator interpreted the narration as if the wife of ‘Imran said to herself and not to God directly, whereas the Arabic text of the verse only records “*qālat*” with no supplementary information about her talking to herself or God directly. Thus, *qālat imra’at Īmrán* is translated as *binèna ‘Imron ngoca’* (En: the wife of Imran said) in coarse style level, rather than *binèna ‘Imron mator* (En: the wife of Imran said) in refined style level.

On the contrary, when translating the whole sentence of Imran’s wife “*Ḍu, Pangèran kaulâ, saèstona kaulâ…*” (En: Oh my Lord, Actually I…), the translators determined to apply the *alos tengghi* language level. The only reason is that the wife of ‘Imran refers to her subconscious phrase to God. It shows how the Madurese is respecting God through their language expression. Every single word addressing God directly or indirectly should be expressed in the *alos tengghi* language levels.

All creatures remain the same before God. Their talks to Him are translated in the highest courtesy expression through the *alos tengghi* language level. The use of the word *Ajunan-kaulâ* (as the translation of the word *anta/ka-ana/nī* [En: you/your-I/me]) and all the remaining sentences of these previous four verses point out that humans, angels and demons are tied together as creatures, even though in many other verses it is explained that humans occupy the top hierarchy of the creature pyramid.47 No speech by them addressing God should be translated in coarse or even the middle levels.

**Translation Pattern of Dialogue Among Fellow Beings**

While the previous section explains creatures’ equality before God, this section mainly discusses human equality, considering the language levels used in daily human interactions. The discussion focuses on two examples: wife–husband and commoners–nobles dialogues. The two conditions culturally (in Madura) require the polite communication expressed in *alos*

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47 Such as written in the Qur’ān: Al-Baqarah [2]:34; Al-A’râf [7]:11; al-Isrā’ [17]:61; al-Kahf [18]:50; Ṭāhâ [20]:116.
language levels, but are not found in the following translation of Yūsuf [12]:25 and Al-Kahf [18]:94-95.

**Wife’s dialogue to her husband**

Yūsuf [12]:25 records a dialogue between the ruler of Egypt and his wife in an unexpected incident involving Yūsuf.

The text of the Qur’ān:

Wa istabaqā al-bāb wa qaddat qamīṣah min dubur wa alfayā sayyidahā ladā al-bāb qālat ma jazā’ man arād bi ahlik sū’a illā an yusjan aw ‘adhāb alīm

Madurese translation:

Bân orèng kaḍuwā jāreyā bâng-tabângan nojjhu labāng bân (orèng binè’ jāreyā) najhâ’ kalambhina Yusuf dāri budi sampè’ sèbbhît, bân sè kaḍuwā ngatalè jhâraghānna neng aḍâ’na labâng. Orèng binè’ jâreyâ ngoca’: “Apa taḍâ’ bâlessân dâ’ orèng sè amaksod jhubâ’ dâ’ binèna bâ’na, kajhâbhâ èkarangkèng otabâ sèksa sè nyakèyaghi?”

English translation:

And they both raced to the door, and she tore his shirt from the back, and they found her husband at the door. She said, “What is the recompense of one who intended evil for your wife but that he be imprisoned or a painful punishment?”

The language style of the Madurese translation tells the readers that the wife defends herself in front of her husband at bhāsa kasar level. There are several words indicating kasar style in the translation, such as apa (what) (its alos version is ponapa), jāreyā (this), tadâ’ (there is no), binèna (wife of) and bâ’na (you) (alos version: panèka, sobung, raji and panjenengan). Kasar style words are the leading indicator of social equality interaction between speaker and addressee. Only people with equal or higher social status and degree of familiarity may express themselves in kasar style dialogue. The translation indirectly demonstrates that a husband’s status is not higher than his wife’s. Therefore, the wife may talk to her husband in kasar style. It could be the contrary if the translator determines to translate the dialogue in alos style. Thus, the translation indicates the translator’s idea of human equality and, at the same time, gives the readers the proof of negotiation.

**Dialogue between nobles and commoners**

The second translation indicates that human equality interaction is present in dialogue between nobles and commoners. Al-Kahf [18]:94-95 represents the dialogue between people who live between two mountains (the commoners) and Dhū al-Qarnayn (the noble):

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48 Translation Team, *Al-Qur’an Dan Terjemahnya* 303.
The Arabic text:

Qâlî yâ Dhâ al-Qarnayn inna ya ‘jûj wa ma ‘jûj muṣīdûn fî al-arḍ fa hal naj ‘al lak 61ISO 61g ‘alâ an taj ‘al baynâna wa baynahum sadâdâ qâl mà makkânî fîh Rabbî khayr fa a ‘îmûnî bi quwwah aj ‘al baynakum wa baynahum radmâ.

Madurese translation:

Rèng-orèng jâreyya ngoca’: “Hè Dhuzlcarnain, saongghuna Ya ‘jûj bân Ma ‘jûj jâreyya, rèng-orèng sè aghâbây karosaghn neng bhumè. Maka, apa bisa sèngko’ majâr bâ’na (asâl) bâ’na aghâbây keďdung (sè koko) èantara sèngko’ bân rèng-orèng jâreyya?” Dhulqarnain ngoca’: “Apa sè èparèngaghi tang Pangèran ka sèngko’ lebbi bhâghus, maka bhânto sèngko’ kalabân kakowadhân (tokang-tokang), dâgghi’ sèngko’ aghâbâhayaghina këdđhun (sè koko) èantara bâ’na bân rèng-orèng jâreyya”.

English translation:

They said, “O Dhul-Qarnayn, indeed Gog and Magog are [great] corrupters in the land. So may we assign for you an expenditure that you might make between us and them a barrier?” He said, “That in which my Lord has established me is better [than what you offer], but assist me with strength; I will make between you and them a dam.”

Ibn Kathîr said Dhû al-Qarnayn is a well-known king and a prophet. He was also known as Alexander the Great. So, Dhû al-Qarnayn supposedly occupies the highest position either as a king in social life or a prophet in spiritual life. According to Madurese tradition, an individual with such status is free to talk at all language levels; otherwise, all people should talk in high refined language to him. Observing the Madurese translation of Al-Kahf [18]:64-65 leads us to conclude there is no level difference between Dhû al-Qarnayn’s speech and that of the people. Both parties (noble and commoners) use the same language style (kasar style) to interact with each other. It could not be an accident. The translators’ choice is the only explanation for the translation appearing in kasar style.

A further example that displays the equality in interaction is Moses’ expression toward his teacher Khîdîr, such as recorded in Al-Kahf [18]:66-67:

The Arabic text:

Qâl lah Mûsâ hal attabi’uk ‘alâ an tu’allimani mimmâ ‘ullimta rushdâ. Qâl innak lan tastaﬁ’ ma ‘iy sabrâ.

Madurese translation:

Musa atanya ka abâ’na (Khîdîr): ‘Apa (olle) sèngko’ noro’ bâ’na, sopajâ bâ’na ngahârî sèngko’, èlmô sè bhender, èantara èlmô-èlmô sè ella èajhârraghi ka bâ’na?’ Khîdîr ngoca’: ‘Saongghuna bâ’na ta’ bhàkal bias sabbhâr, abhârèng sèngko’.

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50 Translation Team, Al-Qur'an Dan Terjemahnya, 392.
53 Translation Team, Al-Qur'an Dan Terjemahnya, 388.
English translation:

Moses said to him, “May I follow you on [the condition] that you teach me from what you have been taught of sound judgement?” He said, “Indeed, with me you will never be able to have patience.”

The teacher has a noble status in Madurese society as they are known for Madurese local wisdom: “Bupa, babu, guru, rato (father, mother, teacher, and king).” These four elements are culturally respected and all speech addressing them directly or indirectly should be expressed at the alos bèngghi language level. However, the above translation in Moses’ dialogue demonstrates the opposite. Moses’ dialogue uses the kasar language level even to address Khidr (Moses’ teacher). The words apa (what), sèngko’ (I), noro’ (follow) and bâ’na (you) demonstrate that. So, it is not surprising when Khidr, as a teacher, also talks in the kasar style level to his student as proven by the words ngoca’ (said), bâ’na (you) and sèngko’ (I). Even though Moses and Khidr are prophets, their status is different. Khidr’s status as a teacher is higher than Moses, according to the four respected social elements in Madurese tradition. This choice demonstrates that negotiation is possible in Madurese translation. It seems the translator is trying to convey that a teacher and their student are equal in social interaction through these vernacular choices in Qur’ān translation. The translators set aside the alos bèngghi language level and choose the kasar level to replace it.

CONCLUSION

Generally, the negotiating of the idea of human equality in Madurese translation of the Qur’ān is successfully presented in several parts by shifting the base of language levels from social hierarchy among human peers to the hierarchy between God and His creatures. Almost all dialogues among humans are translated in kasar style, excpet for a few parts that are translated in alos mandhāp or alos bèngghi style, such as in children’s dialogues with their parents: Ibrāhīm with his father, Joseph with his father, the sons of Jacob with Jacob and even the son of Noah (who is described as a wicked son) with his father. All these dialogues are translated at alos bèngghi level. This subject needs further investigation.

This negotiation is dynamic, used to resolve some matters over which two or more independent parties are in conflict. Such negotiation is primarily a process of reconstructing, building and maintaining relationships. It does not involve replacing one culture with another. The translators initiate the negotiation in two respected settings in Madurese society: guru and rato (teacher and king). They seem to put the two first, bupa and babu (father and mother),

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54 Syukron Affani (Team of the Qur’ān and its Translation: Madurese Language), interview by Ah. Fawaid, Pamekasan Madura, August 14, 2021.
55 Translation Team, Al-Qur’ān Dan Terjemahnya, 169.
56 Ibid., 300.
57 Ibid., 24.
58 Ibid., 288.
aside. Ignoring the language levels in children–parent dialogues would be risky for Madurese people; rather than conveying the Qur’ānic idea of equality, a translation that equates children and parents would be judged as a wrong translation from the first view. It would evoke images of a rude prophet in Madurese consciousness. It is not just a matter of moving from cognitive and cultural frames, but in some conditions the translators have to decide which have the least bad effects (akhaff dararayn). Making the translation of the Qur’ān more approachable and easier to understand in the light of local culture is the main goal of vernacular tafsir. Thus, local readers feel the Qur’ān is addressing them too and was not just revealed to the Arab peoples.

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\footnote{The term cognitive and cultural framing block is usually used to prove that the translators’ social background plays an important role in shaping a translation. Robert Bascom, “From the Embodied Mind to the Social Brain: The Negotiation of the Self and Translation,” The Bible Translator 64, no. 1 (2013): 12, https://doi.org/10.1177/0260093513481140.}
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