

Toward a Gender-Sensitive Translation of the Qur'an: A Study of the Revised *Al-Qur'an dan Terjemahnja* by the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs

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Abstract:

Al-Qur'an dan Terjemahnya, published by the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs (MoRA), has often been criticized by scholars for reflecting gender-biased interpretations. However, the revisions conducted between 1998 and 2002 indicate attempts to address gender-related concerns in the Indonesian translation of the Qur'an. This article examines how gender discourse influenced the revision of the translation during the Reformasi period. Using a qualitative descriptive approach and Roger Fowler's critical discourse analysis, this study analyzes linguistic changes introduced in the revised edition of *Al-Qur'an dan Terjemahnya*. The analysis shows that several translation choices were modified to reflect a more gender-responsive perspective. For instance, the term *wanita* was replaced with *perempuan*, the description of women's creation was reformulated, and the term *pemimpin* (leader) was translated as *pelindung* (protector). In addition, women were no longer consistently positioned as direct objects of male desire. These revisions indicate a shift from a more patriarchal orientation toward a gender-responsive translation. The study argues that this transformation was closely linked to the expanding gender discourse during the Reformasi era, particularly the institutionalization of gender mainstreaming policies in Indonesia.

[*Al-Qur'an dan Terjemahnya* yang diterbitkan oleh Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia (MoRA) sering dikritik oleh sejumlah sarjana karena dianggap merefleksikan interpretasi yang bias gender. Namun demikian, revisi yang dilakukan pada periode 1998–2002 menunjukkan adanya upaya untuk merespons isu-isu gender dalam penerjemahan Al-Qur'an ke dalam bahasa



Indonesia. Artikel ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji bagaimana diskursus gender memengaruhi proses revisi terjemahan tersebut pada masa Reformasi. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan deskriptif kualitatif dengan memanfaatkan analisis wacana kritis Roger Fowler, yang memandang bahasa sebagai praktik sosial yang tidak netral, melainkan mencerminkan sekaligus mereproduksi ideologi dan relasi kekuasaan. Analisis difokuskan pada perubahan linguistik yang muncul dalam edisi revisi *Al-Qur'an dan Terjemahnya*. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa sejumlah pilihan terjemahan mengalami perubahan untuk mencerminkan perspektif yang lebih responsif gender. Misalnya, penggunaan istilah *wanita* diganti dengan *perempuan*, deskripsi mengenai penciptaan perempuan dirumuskan kembali, serta istilah *pemimpin* diterjemahkan sebagai *pelindung*. Selain itu, perempuan tidak lagi secara konsisten diposisikan sebagai objek langsung dari hasrat laki-laki dalam beberapa ayat yang diterjemahkan. Perubahan-perubahan tersebut menunjukkan adanya pergeseran dari orientasi penerjemahan yang lebih patriarkal menuju terjemahan yang lebih responsif terhadap isu gender. Studi ini berargumen bahwa transformasi tersebut berkaitan erat dengan menguatnya diskursus gender pada era Reformasi, khususnya melalui institusionalisasi kebijakan pengarusutamaan gender di Indonesia.]

Keywords:

Gender-Sensitive Translation, Qur'anic Translation, Al-Qur'an dan Terjemahnja, Critical Discourse Analysis, Indonesian Qur'an Translation

A. Introduction

Many studies have been conducted that link translation and gender. Likewise, gender studies in translated holy books have received a lot of attention from scholars along with the development of the ongoing discourse on the issue. However, studies that connect translation and gender in *Al-Qur'an dan Terjemahnya* (shortened to be QT) by the Ministry of Religious Affairs, as one of the products of Al-Qur'an translation in the world, still receive minimal attention.¹ Several studies on gender in the QT have provided sharp criticism. One of the critics are that the QT was very gender biased because it was translated by male scholars.² However, this

¹ Johanna Pink, *Qur'an Translation in Indonesia, Scriptural Politics in A Multilingual State* (Routledge, 2024), 3–4.

² See: Moch. Nur Ichwan, 'Negara, Kitab Suci Dan Politik: Terjemah Resmi al-Qur'an Di Indonesia', in *Sadur: Sejarah Terjemah Di Indonesia Dan Malaysia*, ed. Henry Chambert

criticism was refuted by the revision of the Quran in 1998-2002. The revisions during this period were crucial, as they signaled a significant change in the way verses related to women were viewed.

QT is a unique work that is interesting to study from several perspectives, including a gender perspective, because *firstly*, QT is not personal or individual work, but it is a work of a team (collective collegial), consisting of many persons (committees) under Badan Penjelenggara Penterjemah al-Qur'an (The Board of Committing of Translation of Qur'an).³ So that why QT is official⁴ and standard work of Indonesia government. QT is a reference work for other Qur'an translation versions and has significant authority.⁵ *Secondly*, QT has been printed massively as the project of Departemen of Religious Affairs and has been distributed to muslim society freely. So, QT is the most affordable and obtainable translation of the Qur'an in Indonesia.⁶ Therefore, QT deserved the attention of Indonesia muslim. The attention could be appreciation and also criticism. QT has been criticized in the early period until now by Indonesia muslim scholars.⁷

Loir (Gramedia, 2009); Moh. Mansyur, 'Studi Kritis Terhadap Al-Qur'an Dan Terjemahnya Departemen Agama Republik Indonesia' (Institut Agama Islam Syarif Hidayatullah, 1998).

³ See R. H. A. Soenarjo, 'Pengantar Kata', in *Al-Quraan Dan Terjemahnja*, by Departemen Agama, Djuz 11 - Djuz 20 (JAMUNU, 1969).

⁴ The word "resmi" is taken from Ichwan, 'Negara, Kitab Suci Dan Politik: Terjemah Resmi al-Qur'an Di Indonesia', 417.

⁵ AH. John, 'Qur'anic Exegesis in the Malay World: In Search of a Profile', in *Approaches to the History of the Interpretation of the Qur'an*, ed. Andrew Rippin (Clarendon, 1988), 279.

⁶ Baharuddin, 'Maintaining Source Language in Translating Holy Book: A Case of Translating Al-Qur'an into Indonesian', paper presented at International Seminar 'Language Maintenance and Shift', 2 July 2011, 324.

⁷ Among them are Ahmad Husnan, *Jangan Terjemahkan Al-Qur'an Menurut Visi Injil Dan Orientalis* (Media Dakwah, 1987); Mansyur, 'Studi Kritis Terhadap Al-Qur'an Dan Terjemahnya Departemen Agama Republik Indonesia'; Ismail Lubis, *Falsifikasi Terjemahan Al-Qur'an Departemen Agama Edisi 1990* (Tiara Wacana, 2001); Fadhil AR. Bafadal, 'Dinamika Peran Lajnah Pentashihan Mushaf Al-Qur'an Departemen Agama', *Jurnal Lektur Keagamaan* Vol. 2, no. 2 (2024); Ichwan, 'Negara, Kitab Suci Dan Politik: Terjemah Resmi al-Qur'an Di Indonesia'; Muhammad Thalib, *Koreksi Tarjaman Harfiyah Al-Qur'an Kemanag RI: Tinjauan Aqidah, Syariah, Muamalah, Iqtishadiyah* (Ma'had An-Nabawy, 2011); Abdul Muta'ali, 'The Repercussion of Grammatical and Cultural Culpability of the Holy Qur'an Translation to Religious Harmony in Indonesia', *Journal of Ondonesian Islam* Vol. 8, no. 1 (2014); Nashruddin Baidan, *Terjemahan Al-Qur'an: Studi Kritis Terhadap Terjemahan al-Qur'an Yang Beredar Di Indonesia* (Pustaka Pelajar, 2016).

Thirdly, based on the critics, the Department of Religious Affairs has revised QT. The Department of Religious Affairs used the words '*penyempurnaan* or '*perbaiki*' rather than revise or *revisi*.⁸ *Penyempurnaan* is equivalent to *complete*, and *perbaiki* is equivalent to *to fix*. The government did not use the word *revisi* that equivalent to *revise*. QT was revised four times, namely 1974, 1989-1990, 1998-2002, and 2016-2019. Among these revision periods, the 1998-2002 revision was an important revision related to gender issues. Some pivotal events happened in this period.

After the end of the authoritarian New Order government under Suharto, although very limited to universities and NGOs (Non-Governmental Organizations), feminist thought and ideas began to return to the forefront of discourse. Contemporary feminist thought began to feel increasingly stronger approaching the Reformation era, namely in the mid-1990s, and was very noticeable since 1998. There are two schools of thought that developed before and during the Reformation era. *First*, the deconstruction of sexist discourse upholding feminist knowledge by developing journal activities, book publications, research, and literature. *Second*, the emphasis on the discourse of pluralism, equality, and transnationalism. These two schools of thought influence how women's issues are colored by a feminist perspective. The perspective of feminism in the contemporary era is different from that in the previous era. In the contemporary era, feminist theories play a role; the intellectual basis of feminism is very much felt in the movement. The use of a feminist perspective sharpens the issues raised in the contemporary era, for example, issues of violence against women, trafficking, sexuality, polygamy, development, democracy, and human rights.

Based on that context, it is interesting to examine the connection between the context in which the QT was revised between 1998 and 2002 and the results of those revisions. Without this study, the public will be unaware of a significant change: the government, through the LPMQ

⁸ The diction used by The Ministry of Religious Affairs is *penyempurnaan* (completion) not *revisi* (revision). On the contrary, many scholars on translation study often used revision. In *Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia* the word *Penyempurnaan* means process, way, and the action to complete. Revision means to review for repairing. See Departemen Pendidikan Nasional, *Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia*, Edisi Keempat (Gramedia Pustaka Utama, 2008), 1302 The word *menyempurnakan* implied no wrong at all. Revision implied wrongs.

(Religious Affairs and Religious Affairs Institute), has addressed gender issues and implemented them in its translation of the Qur'an.

Therefore, this article aims to refute the accusation that QT is a gender-biased translation. This is because QT was revised between 1998 and 2002 and has addressed gender issues. It will also demonstrate that a translation does not arise out of thin air but is heavily influenced by the prevailing discourse at the time.

B. Methode

This article is qualitative research. The substantial data on changes (words, phrases, sentence structures, captions, and footnotes) are then analyzed critically by considering the context and discourse surrounding them. Words, phrases, sentence structures, and captions are the domain of applied linguistics, where the relationship between language, power, and ideology becomes a crucial focal point. Ideology in translation is usually related to both the process and the product of translation. Translation ideology resides not only in the translated text but also in the translator's voice and stance, and its relevance to the receiving audience.

Fowler argues that language is not just a tool for communication, but a means of shaping perception, controlling thought, and maintaining dominance in society. His approach, often referred to as critical linguistics, laid the groundwork for modern critical discourse analysis. Every linguistic choice (wording, sentence structure, etc.) carries ideological meaning. Writers and speakers frame events in ways that reflect their social position, values, and power. Fowler believed that language doesn't simply describe the world — it constructs how people understand that world. Through repeated use, certain language patterns become normalized and accepted as "common sense."⁹

Language should be studied not just in isolation but within its social, political, and cultural context. Who is speaking, to whom, in what setting, and for what purpose — all these shape meaning. Fowler focused much of his work on media discourse, showing how news reports and headlines

⁹ Rusul Abdulkareem Ato, 'Language and Power: A Critical Discourse Analysis of Political Speeches in English', *Journal of Asian Multicultural Research for Social Sciences Study* Vol. 6, no. 3 (2025).

subtly promote certain worldviews by the way they present facts or label groups. 1990 and earlier editions will be examined by this theory.¹⁰

C. Result and Discussion

To start with, it is helpful to introduce the context when the QT was revised from 1998-2002. The edition of 2002 QT has been published and printed after at least four years of discussions by the committees of translation, starting from 1998 to 2002. Several important political policies happened at the range of those years. The fall of Soeharto and the Reform Era has marked a new era for Indonesia people. One of the most important policies was about **women's status and rights**. **Following the inception of the Reform Era in Indonesia in 1998**, discussions among Indonesian Islamic scholars on women's status and role have become more common. A significant event in 1997 was the possibility that Siti Hardijanti Rukmana (**Mbak Tutut**), **Soeharto's daughter**, would be a vice-presidential candidate. **Moreover, Megawati Sokarnoputri's nomination as a presidential candidate in 1999** not only triggered a massive religious debate on Islamic justification for a female president, but also broke the stereotype that women were not capable of participation in the public sphere.¹¹

As the successor of Soeharto, BJ. Habibie (1998-1999) launched the policy of **acknowledge for women's right as human right** by issuing the 1999 Act No. 39 on Human Rights that particularly regulated to protect women's rights (dalam Undang-undang disebut Hak Wanita) among the women's rights are 1) Acknowledgement the women's right as human right; 2) The guarantee of women's representative in the system of general election, party, government (legislative, executive and judicative); 3) Right for education; 4) Right to vote and to be voted and the protection of reproduction right. By the time of President Abdurrahman Wahid (November 1999-July 2001), some policies were issued as the 2000 president's instruction No. 9 on gender mainstreaming in national development.¹² Those policies have colored the Indonesian's world view on women. The 1998 to 2002 revision of QT happened in the context of the discourse of **women's status and rights**. So, several translations of gender-related verses have changed to be more

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Kurniawati Hastuti Dewi, 'Perspective versus Practice: Women Leadership on Muhammadiyah', *Journal of Social Issue in Southeast Asia* Vol. 23, no. 2 (2008): 166.

¹² Neng Dara Affiah, *Potret Perempuan Muslim Progresif Indonesia* (Yayasan Obor Indonesia, 2017), 191.

sensitive. And as Flotow said, a combination of gender interests, translation, historical research, and revisionism has been the most productive of new knowledge.¹³ Here are the samples of verses that show us the shifting paradigm in the translation of the **Qur'an in Indonesia**. The **shift** is moving from a biased gender to a responsive gender.

1. From *Wanita* to *Perempuan*

In the theory of critical discourse analysis, it was said that words or diction limit the perspective and worldview. The word or diction also affects marginalization (ignoring others).¹⁴ The pivotal change in the translation of 2002 QT is a substitution of the word *wanita* with *perempuan*. The words *nisa*, *imra'ah*, and other words related to women were translated as no more *wanita*, but *perempuan*. The word *nisa* is mentioned about 56 times in the **Qur'an**.¹⁵

Historically, the word *wanita* was commonly used in the new order of Soeharto. Soeharto named one of his ministries Menteri Peranan Wanita (The Ministry of Women's Role), **hoping that it could increase women's role**.¹⁶ So, in the earlier QT, the words *nisa* and *imra'ah* were translated as *Wanita*.

The words *wanita* and *perempuan*, after the Reformation Era, were contested because each original root of the two words implied how the owner language sees women. Both the words *wanita* and *perempuan* were Java. Based on Java etymology, *wanita* means '*wani ditoto*', (brave to be instructed/arranged by man). The word *wanita* is described as a passive object. It also implies the woman underestimates. Based on that philosophical view, it will be difficult for women to have control over themselves or even over society. While the word *perempuan* is derived from *empu* (having), meaning the owner, someone who has power. *Perempuan*

¹³ Luise Von Flotow, 'Gender and Translation', in *A Companion to Translation Studies*, ed. Piotr Kuhlczak and Karin Littau (Multilingual Matters Ltd., 2007), 97.

¹⁴ Eriyanto, *Analisis Wacana: Pengantar Analisis Teks Media* (LKIS, 2001), 148–49; The words are repository of meanings. The word is like bricks arranged to build the language. The words are the first unit in translation, see Andrew Chesterman, *Memes of Translations: The Spread of Ideas in Translation Theory* (John Benjamin Publishing Company, 2016), 18.

¹⁵ Muhammad Fuad Abd al-Baqi, *Al-Mu'jam al-Mufahras Li Alfadz al-Qur'an al-Karim* (Dar al-Fikr, 1982), 699.

¹⁶ Lucas Anton, 'Wanita Dalam Revolusi: Pengalaman Semua Penduduk Dan Revolusi 1942 - 1950', *Jurnal Prisma*, 1996.

indicates a woman having authority to control her body and to be the owner of herself. *Perempuan* has *freedom*, meaning **no obligation to “serve” and “wanted.”**¹⁷ Accordingly, activists having equality of gender chose the word *perempuan* rather than *wanita*.¹⁸ The decision to choose *perempuan* rather than *wanita* was not a careless one, but it was made to respect women.

See the comparison of the translation of the word *nisa* in the following examples of each QT edition.

No	Chapters and Verses	QT 1990	QT 2002
1	Q 4:4	Berikanlah maskawin (mahar) kepada wanita (yang kami kawini) sebagai pemberiaan dengan penuh kerelaan	Dan berikanlah maskawain (mahar) kepada perempuan (yang kamu nikahi) sebagai pemberian yang penuh kerelaan
2	Q 4:3	Kawinilah wanita-wanita (lain) yang kamu senang...	Nikahilah perempuan (lain) yang kamu senang...
3	Q.4:24	Dan (diharamkan juga kamu mengawini) wanita yang bersuami...	Dan (diharamkan juga kamu menikahi) perempuan yang bersuami...
4	Q 4:75	...baik laki-laki, wanita-wanita maupun anak-anak yang semuanya berdoa...	...baik laki-laki, perempuan maupun anak-anak... yang berdoa...
5	Q 7:81	Sesungguhnya kamu mendatangi lelaki untuk melepaskan nafsumu (kepada mereka) bukan kepada wanita	Sungguh, kamu telah melampiasikan syahwatmu kepada sesama lelaki bukan perempuan
6	Q 12:30	Dan wanita-wanita di kota berkata	Dan perempuan-perempuan di kota berkata...
7	Q 12:50	...bagaimana halnya wanita-wanita yang telah melukai tangannya	...bagaimana halnya perempuan-perempuan yang melukai tangannya

¹⁷ Sudarwati and D. Jupriono, 'Betina, Wanita, Perempuan: Telaah Semantik Leksikal, Semantik Historis, Pragmatik', *Journal FSU* Vol. 5, no. 1 (1997).

¹⁸ Anton, 'Wanita Dalam Revolusi: Pengalaman Semua Penduduk Dan Revolusi 1942 - 1950'.

Later, Wasisto Raharjo Jati explained why the word "*wanita*," which originally held the meaning of nobility for women/females, has now become pejorative (worsened). Wasisto began his analysis from the concept of "*wanita*," which he said means "*wani ing tata*." "*Wani ing tata*" is an abbreviation of the Javanese word "*wanita*" (woman). "Wani" in Indonesian means brave, and "ing tata" means to organize. The word "*wanita*" in the past. Initially, the concept of "*wani ing tata*" was a noble concept that placed women as beings with an honorable and dignified position. In the matrifokus system, it is stated that Javanese women are actually powerful women who can manage men and their environment. The word "*wanita*" itself is actually a functional status of the three functions carried out by women besides "*wanodya*" and "*putri*." All three symbolize the multifunctional role of women, both as caregivers, educators, and balancers. Therefore, the concept of "*wani ing tata*" is actually the embodiment of women's emancipation, that women are beings equal to men in general. This emancipation was then manifested in the form of Javanese female leadership in various Hindu-Buddhist kingdoms, such as Tribhuana Tungga Dewi (Majapahit), Ratu Shima (Kalingga), and also Suhita (Majapahit) in Javanese leadership.¹⁹

This contestation of women's discourse is so compelling that it has infiltrated the debate over the Ministry of Religious Affairs' translation of the **Qur'an**. If the use of the word "*perempuan*" is considered part of respect for women and part of gender equality, then the 2002 and 2019 editions of QT have addressed this.

2. Creation of Woman

There has long been an entrenched view that women were created from the rib of a man. This view makes men superior and women inferior. Women are subordinate to men. This view stems from an understanding of QS. An-Nisa' [4]:1 and a number of hadiths that support it. This understanding is reflected in the 1990 and earlier editions of the Ministry of Religious Affairs' translation of the Qur'an.

In the 1990 edition or earlier, there was a footnote stating: "According to the majority of commentators, it came from a part of the body (rib) of the Prophet Adam (peace be upon him), based on the narrations of al-Bukhari and Muslim. Furthermore, some interpret it as coming from a similar

¹⁹ Wasisto Raharjo Jati, 'Wanita, Wani Ing Tata: Konstruksi Perempuan Jawa Dalam Studi Postkolonialisme', *Jurnal Perempuan* Vol. 20, no. 1 (2015).

element, namely the soil from which the Prophet Adam (peace be upon him) was created." This footnote led readers to believe that women were created from Adam's rib. Women were created from a part of Adam. This understanding has sparked a long debate regarding male superiority.

1965-1969, 1971, and 1990 editions	2002 edition
<p>Hai sekalian manusia, bertakwalah kepada Tuhan-mu yang telah menciptakan kamu dari diri yang satu, dan darinya²⁷⁶Allah menciptakan isterinya; dan dari keduanya Allah mengembangbiakkan laki-laki dan perempuan yang banyak. Dan bertakwalah kepada Allah yang dengan (mempergunakan) nama-Nya kamu saling meminta satu sama lain²²⁷, dan (periharalah) hubungan silaturredahmi. Sesungguhnya Allah selalu menjaga dan mengawasi kamu.</p>	<p>Wahai manusia! Bertakwalah kepada Tuhanmu yang telah menciptakan kamu dari diri yang satu (Adam), dan (Allah) menciptakan pasangannya (Hawa) dari (diri)-nya; dan dari keduanya Allah memperkembangbiakkan laki-laki dan perempuan yang banyak. Bertakwalah kepada Allah yang dengan nama-Nya kamu saling meminta,¹⁷² dan (peliharalah) hubungan kekeluargaan. Sesungguhnya Allah selalu menjaga dan mengawasimu.</p>
<p>276). Darinya menurut Jumhur mufasir ialah dari bagian tubuh (tulang rusuk) Nabi Adam A.S. berdasarkan hadis riwayat al-Bukhari dan Muslim. Di samping itu, ada pula yang menafsirkan darinya adalah dari unsur yang serupa, yakni tanah yang darinya Nabi Adam A.S. diciptakan.</p>	<p>No Footnote here.</p>

In the 2002 edition, however, the footnote was removed, and no further explanation was provided. By removing the footnote, the 2002 edition appears to have avoided opening up the debate and sought to close down the view that "Eve was created from Adam's rib." The decision to omit the footnote was certainly not merely a technical matter, i.e., to reduce the number of footnotes. Rather, it arose from an awareness and understanding of the verse, suggesting that arguing that Eve was created from a part of Adam was no longer relevant.

The attempt to close the debate about the creation of Eve from Adam's body is also evident in a footnote in the 2019 edition. In the footnote, it is stated that the creation of Adam and Eve did not occur as humans in general, and even the mechanism cannot be explained scientifically. In the book

Tafsir Ilmi, the Lajnah Pentashihan Mushaf Al-Qur'an team states that the creation of Eve from Adam is a form of interpretation of *israiliyyat* (the story of Jews and Christians). The debate about the meaning of *nafs wahidah, minha, zaujaha*, is indeed very complicated, considering that Adam and Eve were the first creatures of Allah. Therefore, moderate efforts to avoid this debate are to leave the matter to Allah.

M. Atho Mudzar—who was once the Head of the Research, Development and Training Agency (Balitbang) of the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs, when the QT revision was being drafted in 1998-2002—once wrote in his paper and later published a book regarding verses that make women inferior to men. Quoting Rashid Ridha, Atho stated that women are equal to men, because the word *minha* (*min nafsi*) refers to the same “species” as in QS. Ar-Rum [30]:21; At-Taubah [9]:129; Ali Imran [3]:164, 72 and Fus}si}lat [42]:11). Atho also cited the views of other scholars who defend women, such as Mahmud Shaltut, Fatimah Mernissi and Munawir Sjadzali.²⁰ Thus, along with the development of understanding of hadith and the concept of gender, input and understanding of misogynistic hadith have “forced” translators to revise their gender-biased translations by eliminating misogynistic hadith statements.

3. From *Pemimpin* (leader) to *Pelindung* (protector)

Most of the discussion on women's status, violence against women revolves around the Chapter an-Nisa, 34th verse. There are at least three key terms contested among the scholars: *qawwamun*, *nusyuzahunna*, and *wadhribuhunna*. This part will only discuss the word *qawwamun*. In the 1990 edition of QT, the word *qawwamun* was rendered as *pemimpin* (leader). So, the complete translation would be “*Kaum laki-laki itu adalah pemimpin bagi kaum wanita, oleh karena Allah telah melebihkan sebahagian mereka (laki-laki) atas sebahagian yang lain (wanita) ...*” (*The men are the leaders for the women, because God has given more to them (the men) than others (the women)*). But in the 2002 edition of QT, the translation of *Qawwamun* has been changed to be *protector* (*pelindung*), see the comparison in Chapter/Verse Q 4:34 below:

²⁰ Mohamad Atho Mudzhar, *Islam and Islamic Law in Indonesia: A Socio-Historical Approach* (Office of Religious Research and Development Training, Ministry of Religious Affairs, Republik Indonesia, 2003), 161.

Translation of QT 1990	Translation of QT 2002
Kaum laki-laki itu adalah pemimpin bagi kaum wanita , oleh karena Allah telah melebihkan sebahagian mereka (laki-laki) atas sebahagian yang lain (wanita)....	Laki-laki (suami) itu pelindung bagi perempuan (isteri) , karena Allah telah melebihkan sebagian mereka (laki-laki) atas sebagian yang lain (perempuan)...

In Critical Discourse Analysis theory, diction limited the perspective. Diction also contributed to marginalization (eliminating or considering others to be unimportant). In short, *leaders (pemimpin-pemimpin)* will **limit the readers' perspective that only men/males** can be leaders and women cannot. But if *qawwamuna* is translated to be *pelindung*, women can be leaders too.

The issue of *qiwamah*. One interpretation that has not yet been resolved is related to the issue of women's leadership, starting from household leadership, national leadership, and leadership in prayer. The verse that is often debated regarding women's leadership is QS. 4:34, with the root of the debate being the word *qawwamun*. The meaning of this word varies from leader, guardian, person in charge, having the power or authority to educate women, managing women's issues, and so on.

During the period of the Soeharto era and the Reformation, media coverage highlighted public debate about verse 34 of Surah An-Nisa. At least four groups were involved: traditionalists, modernists, Islamists, and liberal Muslims. Islamists and conservative factions, situated between the traditionalist and modernist mainstream, rejected female leadership and relied on the Prophet's hadith, Islamic jurisprudence, and the Quran. Regarding hadith and fiqh, three propositions were highlighted by the media: a) the hadith that "a country will not succeed if its leader is a woman," b) the hadith that "the supreme leader of a Muslim country must be an intelligent adult male from the Quraysh tribe," and c) the hadith that "the supreme leader is a man." The Qur'anic argument in Surah an-Nisa' verse 34, they translate as "men are the protectors (*Qawwamun*) and guardians of women," because Allah has given superior strength to one of you and because men support women out of their superiority." Theological discussions centered on these arguments and led to an exchange of interpretations in public discourse. Opponents of these theological claims argue that hadith and fiqh sources should be placed in their historical context. The weaknesses and biases of these interpreters should be

considered. It is also considered to the differences and inconsistencies when these sources are compared with other hadith and fiqh sources.

Meanwhile, regarding the Quranic verses, according to Lies Marcoes-Natsir and Qodir, mainstream and liberal Muslims state that Surah an-Nisa verse 34 should be seen as informative, not normative. Furthermore, they also question the term *qawwamun*. Some translate it as "leader," but progressive Muslims understand it as "protector." These groups seem to want to present the voice of the masses; everyone wants to speak about "true Islam," Indonesian Islam, or the Muslim community. The arguments for and against are predictable, sometimes contradictory, and often do not form a consistent stance from the group as a whole. Instead, they present differing ideas within groups, parties, or organizations. This is especially true for mainstream organizations like Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah. Here, we see the extent to which the conservative factions of these two groups have absolutized their understanding of the holy book. The moderate and progressive factions of the same mainstream do not support conservative claims. Regarding the modern organization, Muhammadiyah, they are largely silent on the issue and do not clearly define their opposition or approval. Modernists are known to support women's freedom in education and the public sphere. This is in line with the 1976 Agreement, which was concluded at a national meeting that Muhammadiyah would accept women as public leaders. The then-chairman of Muhammadiyah, Amien Rais, voiced support for women in politics, citing examples of women leaders in Pakistan and Bangladesh. Similarly, Chamamah Soeratno, head of Aisyiyah, the Muhammadiyah women's organization, suggested that those who reject female leadership are living in the past.²¹

According to Fowler's critical discourse analysis theory, language is a classification system that describes how the world is perceived, enabling individuals to control and organize their experiences within social reality. The smallest component of language is vocabulary. Vocabulary provides guidance to audiences on how reality should be understood. In fact, words not only constitute limitations but can also constitute judgments. Vocabulary also influences how people understand and interpret events, as well as limiting the audience's perspective or perspective on an event. In this

²¹ Sonjaya van Wichelen, *Religion, Politics and Gender in Indonesia, Disputing the Muslim Body* (Routledge, 2010), 26–27.

regard, vocabulary must be understood within the context of discourse struggles.

4. Women as direct object to be women as indirect object.

The structure of the sentence in translation also limits the perspective of readers. In the translation of the QT 1990 edition, the woman was positioned as direct object, so the woman was just like a thing. Otherwise, in the translation of the 2002 edition, women were not the direct object anymore. There is a eufimisme to expose woman especially in terms of sexual matters. See the comparison in Chapter/Verse Q 4:24 below:

Translation of QT 1990	Translation of QT 2002
<p>...Maka isteri-isteri yang telah kamu ni'mati (campuri) di antara mereka, berikanlah kepada mereka maharnya (secara sempurna</p> <p>... so the wives you have enjoyed among them, give their dowries (completely)</p> <p>My understanding: After you have enjoyed/ pleased your wives, give them a dowry</p>	<p>... Maka karena kenikmatan yang telah kamu dapatkan dari mereka, berikanlah maskawinnya kepada mereka sebagai suatu kewajiban</p> <p>... so because of the enjoyment you got from them, give them a dowry as an obligation</p> <p>My understanding After you got enjoyment/ pleasure from your wives, give them a dowry as an obligation.</p>

In QT 1990, the translation “... so the wives you have enjoyed among them, give their dowry (completely)” was changed to be “... so because the enjoyment you got from them, give them dowry as an obligation.” It is vividly in the 1990 edition of QT that women are the object of desire or enjoyment. But in 2002, QT, the impression of women as object disappeared. So, the sentences in translation are not only the grammatical technique, but also deciding the meaning within the structures.

5. From *sesuatu* (something) to *seseorang* (someone)

The 1990 edition of QT translated Q. 19:23 *qalat ya laytani mittu qabla hadza wa kuntu nasyan mansiyya* as “*aduhai, alangkah baiknya aku mati sebelum ini, dan aku menjadi sesuatu yang tidak berarti lagi dilupakan (oh, it was better for me to die before this and I will be a useless and forgotten something)*”. But in 2002 edition, the portion of this verse was translated to be “*Wahai, betapa (baiknya) aku mati sebelum ini, dan aku menjadi*

seseorang yang tidak diperhatikan dan dilupakan.” (Hey, how (it is better) if I died before this, and I would be someone forgotten and uncared).

Verse	1965-1969, 1971 dan 1990 edition	2002 Edition
فَأَجَاءَهَا الْمَخَاضُ إِلَىٰ جِذْعِ النَّخْلَةِ قَالَتْ يَا لَيْتَنِي مِتُّ قَبْلَ هَذَا وَكُنْتُ نَسِيًّا مَنْسِيًّا	Maka rasa sakit akan melahirkan anak memaksa ia (bersandar) pada pangkal pohon kurma, ia berkata: “Aduhai, alangkah baiknya aku mati sebelum ini, dan aku menjadi sesuatu yang tidak berarti lagi dilupakan.	Kemudian rasa sakit akan melahirkan memaksanya (bersandar) pada pangkal pohon kurma, dia (Maryam) berkata: “Wahai betapa (baiknya) aku mati sebelum ini dan aku menjadi seorang yang tidak diperhatikan dan dilupakan

So, Maryam is someone who is forgotten or ignored. Making Maryam something—as translated in the 1990 and earlier editions of QT—is a form of objectification of women. Women are considered something, not someone. And this is what develops in patriarchal societies. The development of understanding of gender, once again led translators to respect the figure of women by negating the objectification of women, namely changing the translation of nasyan from something forgotten to someone forgotten, as translated in the 2002 edition of QT. This translation (Maryam, someone forgotten) remains unchanged in the 2019 edition of QT. The translation of Q.19:23 shows us that the revision from the 1990 edition to the 2002 edition has become more responsive and sensitive to the issues of gender. Women are not deemed as something anymore, but they are human.

D. Conclusion

Based on the changes from 1990 QT to 2002 QT, it can be concluded that the worldview and perspective of translators will influence the translation. Besides, the context and also the discourse in which the translation is produced also force the translation to get involved in the discourse. As the public services, the government also should respons the voice of the people, so should the translation of the **Qur'an**. Gender equality is the demand of women in Indonesia, so the government should answer that demand, one of which is by giving gender-sensitive translation of the **Qur'an**.

The examples of changing translation of Qur'an (from 1990 QT to 2002 QT) have shown that the translation of Qur'an of the Ministry of Religious Affairs has shifted from patriarchal toward sensitive or responsive-gender translation. Once again, it is still in process toward sensitive or responsive gender translation. I said "toward" because the translation is a process, not a final work. So, the available 2002 QT should be revised and revised regularly (once in ten years) to respond the challenges of the era. []

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