

AL-TURATH: JOURNAL OF AL-QURAN AND AL-SUNNAH

VOLUME 10 ISSUE 2 2025

E-ISSN 0128-0899



INDEXED BY MYCITE

HOME PAGE: <https://www.ukm.my/turath/>

Copyright Information:

This article is open access and is distributed under the terms of Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License.

Publisher Information:

Research Centre for al-Quran and al-Sunnah
Faculty of Islamic Studies
The National University of Malaysia
43600 UKM Bangi, Selangor Darul Ehsan, Malaysia
Tel: +60 3 8921 4405 | Fax: +60 3 8921 3017
Email: alturathjournal@gmail.com

Journal QR Code :



IDEOLOGICAL CONTESTATION IN VARIOUS TRANSLATIONS OF THE QUR'AN IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

Abidah Al-Adawiyah^{1*}, Asyiq Billah Ali², Wildah Nurul Islami³

^{1,2,3} Fakultas Ushuluddin dan Filsafat, Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Ampel, Surabaya, Indonesia

*Corresponding author: 07020322027@student.uinsby.ac.id

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.17576/turath-2025-1002-06>

Article history

Received: 05/11/2025

Revised: 22/11/2025

Accepted: 16/12/2025

Published: 30/12/2023

Abstract

This article discusses the dynamics of al-Qur'an translation in Southeast Asia, particularly in relation to the diversity of characteristics and differences in translation. The main focus of this study is to examine ideological contestation in Qur'anic translations across five Southeast Asian countries by comparatively analysing how theological orientations are constructed through translation. This study uses a literature review approach, followed by descriptive-comparative analysis of the data to find answers to the focus of this study. The findings indicate that the translations of the Qur'an into various languages in the Southeast Asian region have their own characteristics. Five of the eleven countries in the Southeast Asian region have translations of the Qur'an published by institutions outside their countries. Some are the result of cooperation between the two countries, while others are not (purely translations published by institutions outside the country). As for the substance of Qur'an translations produced outside Southeast Asia, the majority are imbued with the ideology of the publishers who produce them, although some follow the theological ideology of the target country. This can be seen after comparing the translations of QS. 2:115, QS. 2:255, QS. 20:5, and QS. 38:75, which focus on the terms *wajh*, *kursi*, *istawa*, and *yad* taken from the Indonesian, Tagalog, Tamil, Thai, and Vietnamese translations of the Qur'an.

Keywords: translation of the area; Southeast Asia; al-Qur'an Translation; ideology

INTRODUCTION

The language of the Qur'an is Arabic because the Prophet Muhammad (as the recipient of miracles) was an Arab and, of course, based on Allah's words in QS. 14:4, that Allah did not send a messenger (read: prophet/messenger) except in the language of his people, so that he (the messenger) could explain to them (Nurtawab, 2017). On the other hand, Muslims are encouraged to read the Qur'an every day, and in certain situations (such as during the process of learning Islam), they are required to understand its meaning (Nurtawab, 2020). The problem is that eighty percent of the Muslim population are not native Arabic speakers, and the Qur'an, as the main textual source of Islam, can only be accessed through their respective languages. Therefore, the approach of translating the Qur'an is a significant contribution, both to the modern intellectual history of Islam and to Muslims themselves (Mykhaylo Yakubovych, 2024).

The Qur'an has become one of the most translated books in the world (Nurtawab, 2017). The translation of the Qur'an is an important topic in the field of Qur'anic studies today, especially since the first-place non-Arabic readers (including Muslims) will turn to in order to understand their holy book is the translation of the Qur'an. Despite this, the majority of Muslims do not consider translations of the Qur'an to be equivalent to the Qur'an itself (Saeed & Syamsuddin, 2020). Historically, the controversy surrounding translations has indeed been met with pros and cons among scholars, but all agree that translations are not the Qur'an and cannot replace the position of the Qur'an as a holy book. Translations of the Qur'an are nothing more than simple interpretations that serve as evidence of efforts to make it easier for non-Arab Muslims to understand the words of Allah (Hanafi, 2011).

As stated in the speech delivered by the Head of the Research, Development, and Training Agency of the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs (now the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia), that understanding the al-Qur'an in its original Arabic language is certainly not easy for Muslims, especially Indonesians, the majority of whom are Muslim. Therefore, a translation of the al-Qur'an into Indonesian is necessary (RI, 2011), and this statement has been realized through several government products in the form of translations and interpretations of the al-Qur'an.

Indonesia is not the only country that has undertaken efforts to translate the Qur'an. As a country in Southeast Asia, a region with many different languages and dialects (Arjuna & Munfarida 2023), it is likely that neighboring countries in Southeast Asia have also translated the Qur'an. As in the case of Malaysia, tracing the history of the translation of the Qur'an in Malaysia is an important descriptive study among their academics, such as the research conducted by Mohd Fahimi Zakaria (Zakaria & Raup 2024). In Thailand, based on research by Amanee Samae (2018), the Thai people need various translations of the Qur'an into Thai, but it turns out that there are not many works that completely present the translation of the thirty juz of the Qur'an in their language.

In some of these regions, several translations of the Qur'an into various languages have been produced by institutions outside those countries. For example, five translations of the Qur'an into the languages of the Philippines, Indonesia, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam are translations produced by institutions outside those countries. From this, it can be seen that several countries in the Southeast Asian region have their own history of Quran translations, whether they are domestic translations or translations from institutions outside their respective countries.

In this study, the term ideological contestation refers to the interaction, negotiation, and tension between different theological orientations embedded in Qur'anic translation practices. Rather than viewing translation as a neutral linguistic process, ideological contestation highlights how specific interpretive frameworks—such as literalist and non-literalist approaches—are articulated, accommodated, or contested within translated Qur'anic texts. In the Southeast Asian context, this contestation becomes particularly visible when Qur'anic translations produced or mediated by Saudi-affiliated institutions encounter local Sunni theological traditions that historically employ *tafwid* and *ta'wil* in interpreting anthropomorphic verses. Then, How is ideological contestation manifested in Qur'anic translations across selected Southeast Asian countries? and how do theological orientations—particularly literalist and non-literalist approaches—shape the translation of anthropomorphic verses in Qur'anic translations produced by different institutions?

Prior to this study, there had been previous research examining the translation of the Qur'an in the Southeast Asian region by carefully examining the characteristics of works found in various countries in the Southeast Asian region, namely research conducted by Klawing Arjuna and Elya Munfarida (Arjuna & Munfarida 2023). Therefore, this article aims to examine the ideological contestation embedded in Qur'anic translations in Southeast Asia by comparatively analysing the translation of selected anthropomorphic verses (QS. 2:115, QS. 2:255, QS. 20:5, and QS. 38:75) across five languages, with particular attention to the theological orientations

reflected in translations produced by Saudi-affiliated institutions and their interaction with local Sunni traditions.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a qualitative library-based research approach within the field of Qur'anic translation studies. (Samsu, 2021) The qualitative design is employed to examine Qur'anic translations not merely as linguistic renderings but as interpretive and ideological products shaped by specific theological frameworks. This approach is particularly appropriate for analysing ideological contestation and theological orientations embedded in translated Qur'anic texts.

The scope of the study is limited to Qur'anic translations produced or mediated by Saudi-affiliated institutions in five Southeast Asian countries, namely the Philippines (Tagalog), Indonesia (Indonesian), Singapore (Tamil), Thailand (Thai), and Vietnam (Vietnamese). These cases were selected due to their relevance in representing encounters between Saudi-based translation initiatives and local Sunni theological traditions in Southeast Asia, where interpretive approaches such as *tafwīd* and *ta'wīl* have historically been influential.

Data were collected through documentary analysis of officially published Qur'anic translation texts, obtained from printed editions and authorised digital platforms, including institutional publications and QuranEnc.com. The primary data consist of translated Qur'anic verses in the respective target languages. From this corpus, four anthropomorphic verses were purposively selected because of their polemical nature in Qur'anic interpretation, particularly in the theological debates concerning divine attributes. The selected verses are QS. 2:115 (*wajh*), QS. 2:255 (*kursī*), QS. 20:5 (*istawā*), and QS. 38:75 (*yad*).

The collected data were analysed using descriptive and comparative methods. Descriptive analysis was employed to examine how each translation renders key theological terms and whether explanatory strategies—such as literal translation, paraphrasing, or the use of footnotes—are utilised. Comparative analysis was then conducted across the five translations to identify similarities and differences in theological orientation, particularly between literalist and non-literalist approaches. Through this analytical process, the study identifies patterns of ideological contestation, highlighting how competing theological perspectives are articulated, negotiated, or prioritised within Qur'anic translation practices in Southeast Asia.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Five Portraits and Characteristics of al-Qur'an Translations in Southeast Asia

The study found five of the eleven countries, namely translations of the Qur'an into Tagalog (Philippines), Indonesian (Indonesia), Tamil (Singapore), Thai (Thailand), and Vietnamese or Tiếng Việt; Việt ngữ (Vietnam). The study was only able to display the covers of these five translations of the Qur'an due to the difficulty of accessing the other translations. The following are portraits and characteristics of the five translations of the Qur'an, which will be displayed as screenshots of the front cover, the first page of the translation of Surah Al-Faṭḥah, QS. Al-Baqarah verses 112 and 255, QS. Tāḥa verse 5 and QS. Sād verse 75, as well as footnotes where found:

1. Philippines (Tagalog)

This translated product has a unique cover and bright colors, displaying the translated title “*Ang Paglilinaw sa Salin ng mga Kabulugan ng Marangal na Qur'an sa Wikang Filipino* (Tagalog)”, which means “Clarifying the Translation of the Meanings of the Qur'an in Filipino (Tagalog)”. This translation was published by QuranEnc.com, namely “*Kapisanan ng Paglilingkod ng Nilalamang*

Islāmiko sa Maraming Wika” (Multilingual Islamic Content Service Association), whose logo appears on the front and back covers. This translation does not appear to be the result of cooperation with the Philippine government, as there is no official introduction from that country.

The characteristics of this translation are that each page of the Qur’an is presented on one page with its translation (in the target language, Tagalog), with the translation on the left side and the Arabic text of the Qur’anic verse on the right side. Each page contains the page number, surah information in the form of the surah number and its name in Hijaiyah and alphabetical order. Each verse has its own line so that it looks neat and is easy on the eye. Each page includes footnotes where necessary to explain the translation of the verse in question. Each page has the same consistent ornamentation. The paratext in this work consists of a foreword from QuranEnc.com and an index of surahs and page numbers at the end of the book, as well as a back cover with Arabic writing that differs from the front cover, which is in the alphabet (*Al-Tarjamah li at-Tishlati wa Tafniyati al-Ma’lumati-T*, 2023).

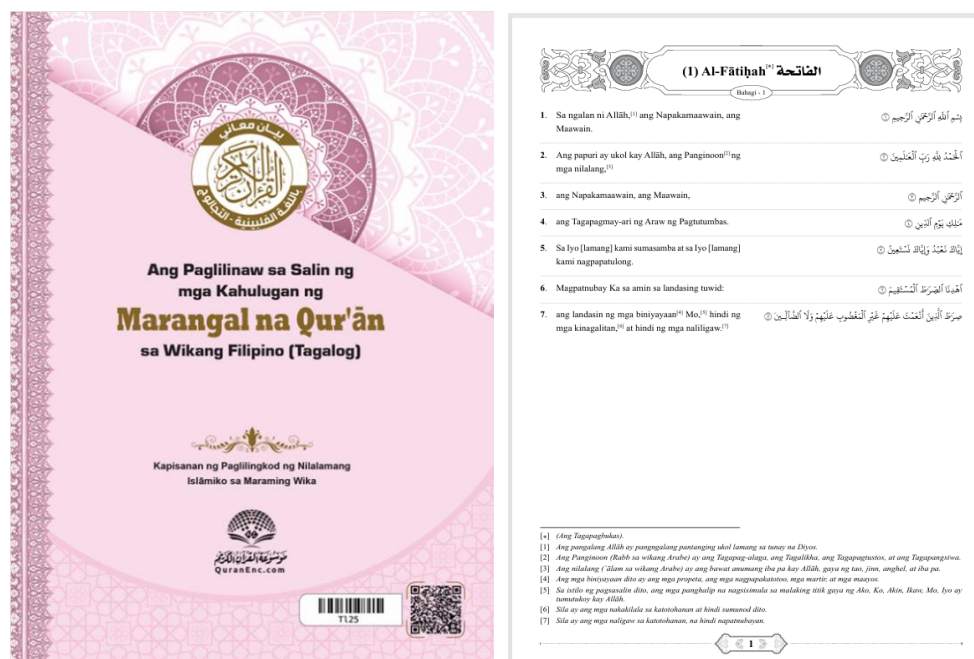


Figure 1. Front cover and the opening page of Surah al-Fātiḥah in the Tagalog translation of the Qur’an.

Figure 1 presents the front cover and the opening page of Surah al-Fātiḥah in the Tagalog translation of the Qur’an. The cover employs bright and contrasting colours, indicating an intention to attract a wide readership, particularly non-Arab Muslim audiences. The title explicitly states that the work is a “clarification of the translation of the meanings of the Noble Qur’an in Filipino (Tagalog),” signalling that the translation positions itself as an explanatory rendering rather than a replacement of the Qur’anic text. The opening page shows a parallel layout in which the Arabic text is placed on the right side and the Tagalog translation on the left, separated by a clear visual boundary. This layout reflects a common pedagogical format aimed at facilitating direct comparison between the source text and the target language.

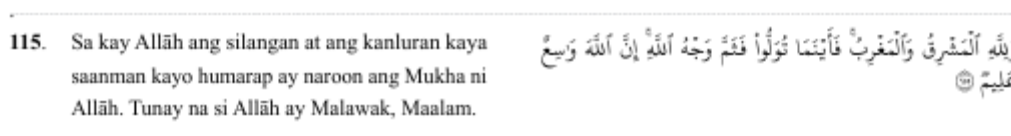


Figure 2. QS. 2:115 in the Tagalog translation of the Qur’an.

Figure 2 displays the translation of QS. 2:115. The verse is presented line by line, with each Qur’anic verse occupying a distinct line, contributing to visual clarity and ease of reading. The Tagalog translation renders the key term *wajh* literally as “Face of Allah,” without additional explanatory notes or interpretive footnotes. The absence of marginal commentary suggests that the translation prioritises textual simplicity and directness, leaving interpretive engagement largely to the reader.

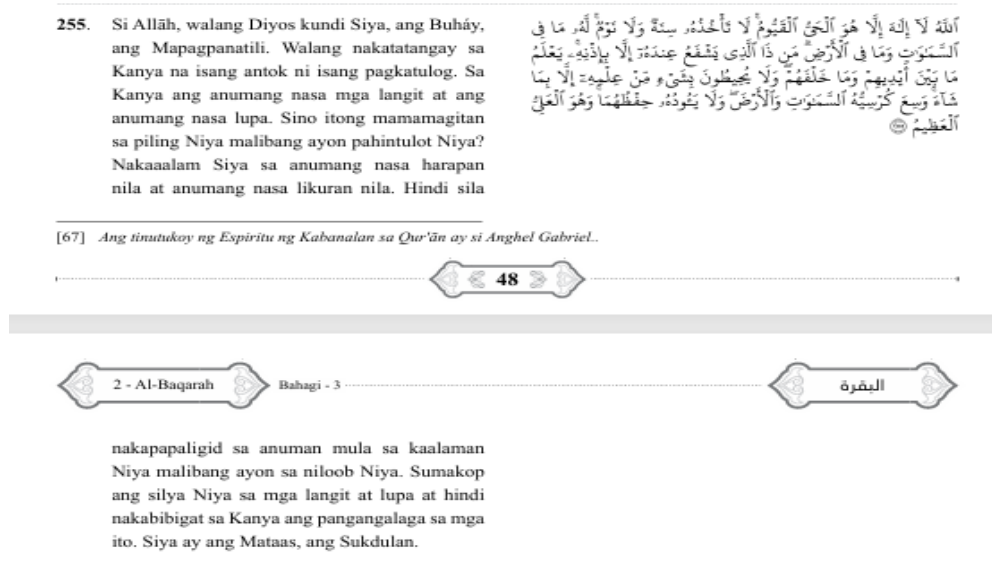


Figure 3. QS. 2:255 in the Tagalog translation of the Qur’an.

Figure 3 illustrates the rendering of QS. 2:255 (Āyat al-Kursī). The verse is presented in full, maintaining the same consistent layout as previous figures. The term *kursī* is translated directly as “Throne,” following a common literal rendering found in many modern translations. Notably, this page does not contain a footnote clarifying alternative interpretations of *kursī*, such as its metaphorical understanding as divine knowledge or authority. The presentation therefore reflects a descriptive translation strategy without explicit theological elaboration.



Figure 4. QS. 20:5 in the Tagalog translation of the Qur’an.

Figure 4 shows the translation of QS. 20:5, which contains the term *istawā*. The Tagalog translation renders this verse in a straightforward declarative form, describing the Most Merciful as being “seated on the Throne.” The layout remains consistent with previous figures, and no footnotes are provided to explain or contextualise the theological implications of this expression. This presentation indicates a tendency toward surface-level translation without interpretive mediation.

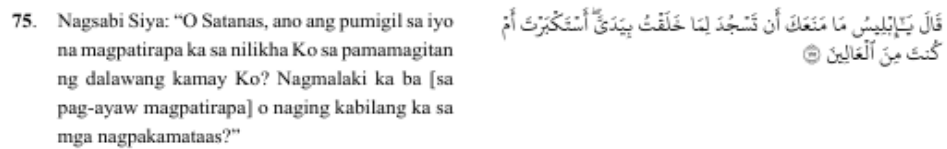


Figure 5. QS. 38:75 dalam Terjemahan Al-Qur'an Bahasa Tagalog

Figure 5 presents QS. 38:75, focusing on the term *yad* (“hands”). The translation renders the phrase “with My two hands” in a literal manner, closely following the structure of the Arabic text. Similar to the previous figures, this page does not include explanatory footnotes or alternative interpretations. The uniformity of presentation across Figures 2–5 demonstrates editorial consistency, but also reveals a general absence of paratextual guidance for verses traditionally considered theologically sensitive.

2. Indonesia (Indonesian)

The cover of this translation is similar to the cover of the Thai translation. This translation is a collaboration between official Indonesian government institutions, as can be seen in the foreword and introduction. The cover has an artistic feel with its dark brick red color, giving it a classic look. This work is titled “*Al-Qur'an dan Terjemahnya*” (The Qur'an and Its Translation), which further displays pages showing a form of cooperation with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Both countries provided a foreword and introduction as a form of official cooperation, with Saudi Arabia as the printer of the work and Indonesia as the creator of the substance of the translation of the Qur'an. This work also includes a 145-pages introduction to the science of the Qur'an with various sub-chapters, followed by references and transliterations used.

Next, there is a new page separating the introduction from the Indonesian translation of the Qur'an. In terms of presentation, each page has floral ornaments, which are consistent throughout to the last page. Each outer page contains the page number, the serial number and name of the surah, and its meaning in Indonesian, while the inner pages contain the Indonesian translation on the left side and the Qur'anic verse on the right. This work also provides further explanations in footnotes when necessary. This work is quite different from the others because while the other four go directly to the translation of the Qur'an, this work not only presents an introduction in the form of *ulum al-Qur'an*, but also presents an introduction and conclusion to each surah, such as a *muqaddimah* in the form of the number of verses, information about whether it is *makkiyah* or *madaniyah*, the main points of the surah according to its aspects, and a conclusion in the form of the relationship between the surah and other surahs (*Al-Qur'an dan Terjemahnya*, 1971).

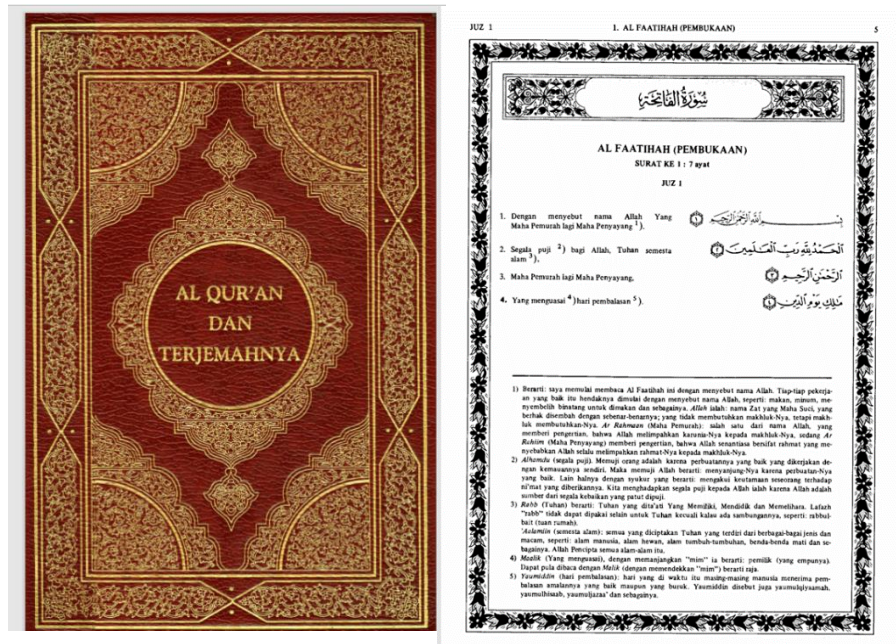


Figure 6. Front cover and the opening page of Surah al-Fatihah in the Indonesian translation of the Qur'an (Saudi Arabia edition).

Figure 6 presents the Indonesian translation *Al-Qur'an dan Terjemahnya* published by the King Fahd Qur'an Printing Complex. The layout follows an official and formal design, characterised by a clean typographic structure and a clear separation between the Arabic text and its Indonesian translation. The presentation reflects an institutional style commonly associated with government- or state-supported Qur'anic publications. The absence of decorative elements highlights the emphasis on textual authority and readability.

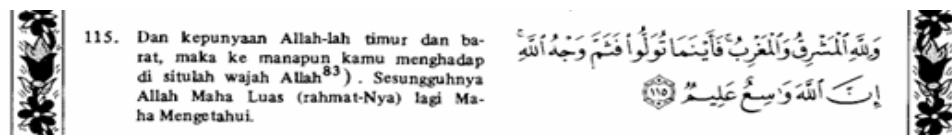


Figure 7. QS. 2:115 in the Indonesian translation of the Qur'an (Saudi Arabia edition).

Figure 7 displays the translation of QS. 2:115 in the Indonesian edition. The verse is rendered in standard Indonesian, with the translation positioned directly beneath or beside the Arabic text. The term *wajh* is translated explicitly as “wajah Allah,” following a literal lexical rendering. But, there is a notes or footnotes, see the figure 8, that's containing interpretative of *Wajh*.

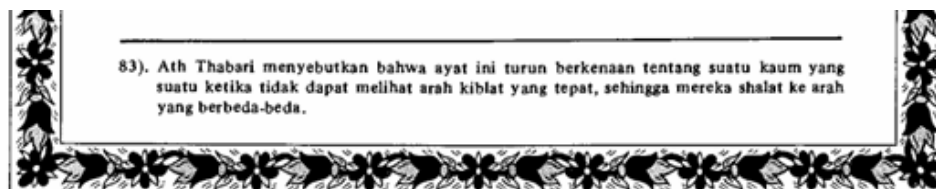


Figure 8. Footnote of QS. 2:115 in the Indonesian translation of the Qur'an (Saudi Arabia edition).

Figure 9 presents QS. 2:255 in Indonesia translation, containing the term *Kursi*. There is a footnote to explain the term *Kursi*, see figure 10.



Figure 10. QS. 2:255 in the Indonesian translation of the Qur'an (Saudi Arabia edition).

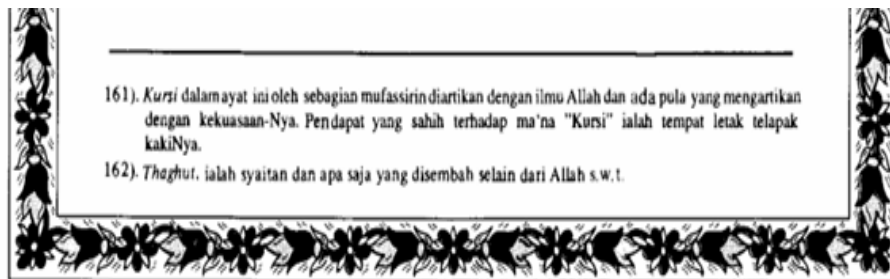


Figure 9. Footnote of QS. 2:255 in the Indonesian translation of the Qur'an (Saudi Arabia edition).

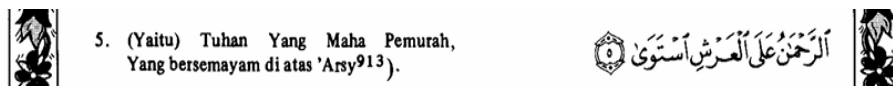


Figure 11. QS. 20:5 in the Indonesian translation of the Qur'an (Saudi Arabia edition).

Figure 11 shows the Indonesian translation of QS. 20:5 (*istawā*). The verse is translated concisely, by changing the translation structure to suit the target language. And there is footnote to explain the term *Istawā*., see figure 12 and 13.

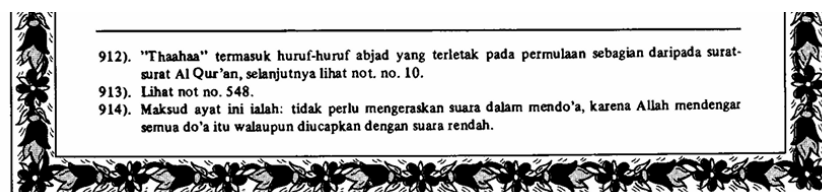


Figure 12. Footnote of QS. 20:5 in the Indonesian translation of the Qur'an

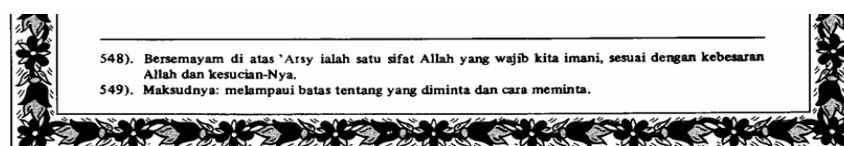


Figure 13. Cross-referenced footnote related to QS. 20:5 in the Indonesian translation of the Qur'an (Saudi Arabia edition).

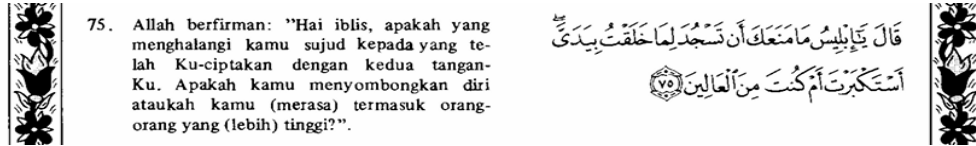


Figure 14. QS. 38:75 in the Indonesian translation of the Qur'an (Saudi Arabia edition).

Figure 14 presents the Indonesian translation of QS. 38:75. focusing on the expression *yad*. The Indonesian translation renders the phrase “dengan kedua tangan-Ku” in a literal manner. The page does not provide interpretive clarification regarding alternative theological understandings of divine attributes. The presentation maintains uniform spacing and typography, reinforcing the formal character of the publication. The Indonesian rendering translates *yad* using a literal equivalent referring to “hands.” The layout is clean and text-focused, with the Arabic verse followed by the Indonesian translation. No paratextual commentary is visible, suggesting that the translation prioritises clarity and linguistic directness over interpretive mediation.

3. Singapore (Tamil)

This translation work titled “தமிழ் மொழியில் கண்ணியமிகு சுற்றா புறங்கள் விகலம்” which means “Explanation of the meaning of the Quran in Tamil”. This work was published by the Rawadud Tarjamah Umar Syarif Al-Ghanimi Translation Center and supported by QuranEnc.com with a bright green cover, white background, and floral ornaments. This work is not a collaboration between the two countries, but rather an initiative of the Saudi Arabian translation center. The front cover uses Tamil script, while the inner cover uses Arabic script, and there is a foreword before the translation. The pages contain page numbers, the names of the surahs in Arabic and Tamil, followed by the Tamil translation on the left side, separated by a center line, and the verses of the Qur'an on the right side. This work has no footnotes at all, and before the back cover there is a table of contents of the Qur'an. This translation has errors in the surah names written in Arabic in the upper right corner of page, which can cause confusion for readers when scrolling through the pages manually. To solve this problem, readers can go directly to the surah index located at the end of the product to facilitate their search. It is recommended that the institution concerned be more careful with its translation products (Al-Qasimi, 2022).

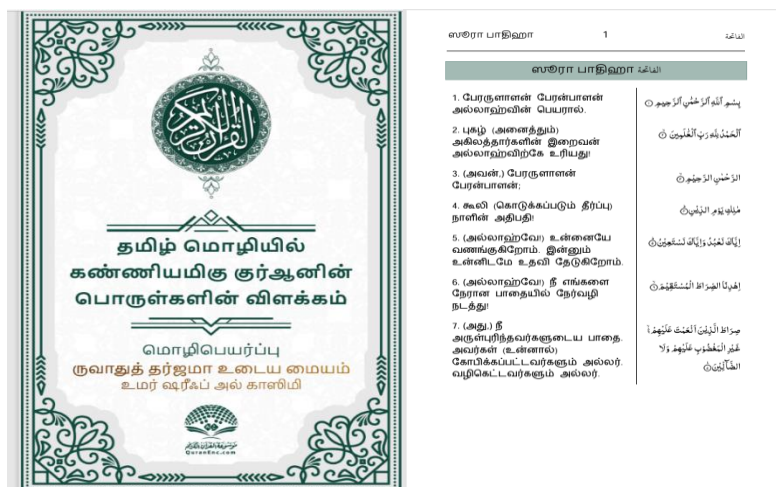


Figure 15. Front cover and the opening page of Surah al-Fātiḥah in the Tamil translation of the Qur'an.

Figure 15 presents the front cover and the opening page of *Surah al-Fātiḥah* in Tamil translation and presents the Tamil translation of the Qur'an published by the King Fahd Qur'an Printing Complex. The layout reflects a formal and institutional design, characterised by a clear typographic structure and systematic arrangement of the Arabic text alongside the Thai translation. The publication style emphasises readability and textual authority, with minimal decorative elements. This presentation suggests an intention to provide an official and standardised reference for Thai-speaking readers.

115. இன்னும், கிழக்கும் மேற்கும் அல்லாஹ்வுக்கே உரியன. ஆக, நீங்கள் எங்கெல்லாம் (முகத்தைத்) திருப்பினாலும் அங்கு அல்லாஹ்வுடைய முகம் இருக்கிறது! நிச்சயமாக அல்லாஹ் விசாலமானவன் நன்கறிந்தவன் ஆவான்.	وَبِلَهُ الْمَشْرِقِ وَالْمَغْرِبِ فَأَيُّمَا تَوَلَّوْا فَوَجَّهَ اللَّهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ ٥
---	--

Figure 16. QS. 2:115 in the Tamil translation of the Qur'an.

Figure 16 displays the Tamil translation of QS. 2:115, focusing on the rendering of the term *wajh*. The Thai translation presents the verse in a straightforward sentence structure, closely following the syntactic order of the Arabic text. The translation appears without footnotes or marginal explanations, indicating a preference for direct lexical rendering rather than interpretive commentary. The visual layout remains consistent with the previous figure, reinforcing editorial uniformity.

255. அல்லாஹ் - அவனைத் தவிர (உண்மையில் வணங்கத்தகுதியான) இறைவன் அறவே இல்லை. அவன் (என்றும்) உயிருள்ளவன். (தன்னில்) நிலையானவன். (படைப்புகளை நிர்வகிப்பவன்.) அவனுக்குள் சிறு உறக்கமும் பெரும் நித்திரையும் நிகழாது. (-அவனை சிறு உறக்கமும் பெரும் நித்திரையும் ஆட்கொள்ளாது.) வானங்களில் உள்ளவையும் பூமியில் உள்ளவையும் அவனுக்குரியனவே. அவனின் அனுமதியுடனே தவிர அவனிடம் (எவருக்கும்) யார் பரிந்துரைப்பார்? அவர்களுக்கு முன்னுள்ளதையும் அவர்களுக்குப் பின்னுள்ளதையும் (எல்லாக்	اللَّهُ إِلَهٌ إِلَّا هُوَ الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّومُ لَا تَأْخُذُهُ سِنَةٌ وَلَا نَوْمٌ لَّهُ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ مَنْ ذَا الَّذِي يَشْفَعُ عِنْدَهُ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ يَعْلَمُ مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمَا خَلْفَهُمْ وَلَا يُحِيطُونَ بِشَيْءٍ مِنْ عِلْمِهِ إِلَّا بِمَا شَاءَ وَسِعَ كُرْسِيُّهُ السَّمَوَاتِ
---	--

ஸுரரா பகரா

83

البقرة

காலத்தையும்) அவன் நன்கறிவான். அவன் நாடியதைத் தவிர அவனுடைய அறிவிலிருந்து எதையும் அவர்கள் தழுந்தறிய மாட்டார்கள். அவனுடைய குர்சிய் - பாதஸ்தலம், வானங்களையும் பூமியையும் விட விசாலமாக (- பெரியதாக) இருக்கிறது. அவ்விரண்டையும் பாதுகாப்பது அவனுக்குச் சிரமமளிக்காது. அவன் மிக உயர்வானவன், மிக மகத்தானவன் ஆவான்.	وَالْأَرْضِ وَلَا يَئُودُهُ حِفْظُهُمَا وَهُوَ الْعَلِيُّ الْعَظِيمُ ٥
--	--

Figure 17. QS. 2:255 in the Tamil translation of the Qur'an.

Figure 17 illustrates the Tamil translation of QS. 2:255 (*Āyat al-Kursi*). The term *kursi* is translated using a literal Tamil equivalent referring to “throne” or “seat,” maintaining semantic proximity to the Arabic expression. The verse is presented in a continuous textual format without additional explanatory notes. The consistency in typography and spacing mirrors the approach observed in other Thai verses.

5. ரஹ்மான், அர்ஷுக்கு மேல் உயர்ந்து விட்டான்.	الرَّحْمَنُ عَلَى الْعَرْشِ اسْتَوَى
---	---

Figure 18. QS. 20:5 in the Tamil translation of the Qur'an.

Figure 18 shows the Tamil rendering of QS. 20:5, which contains the term *istawā*. The translation presents the verse in a declarative form that reflects the surface meaning of the Arabic text. No interpretive footnotes are provided to contextualise alternative theological readings. The presentation style remains uniform, highlighting editorial consistency across different theological verses.

75. (அல்லாஹ்) கூறினான்: “இப்லீஸே! நான் எனது இரு கரத்தால் படைத்தவருக்கு நீ ஸஜ்தா செய்வதிலிருந்து உன்னை தடுத்தது எது? நீ பெருமையடிக்கிறாயா? (இதற்கு முன் நீ பெருமையடித்ததில்லையே!) அல்லது, (இதற்கு முன்னரும்) நீ பெருமையடிப்பவர்களில்தான் இருந்தாயா?”	قَالَ يَا إِبْلِيسُ مَا مَنَعَكَ أَنْ تَسْجُدَ لِمَا خَلَقْتُ بِيَدَيَّ أَتَسْتَكْبِرُ أَمْ كُنْتَ مِنَ الْعَالِينَ
---	--

Figure 19. QS. 38:75 in the Tamil translation of the Qur'an.

Figure 19 presents the Tamil translation of QS. 38:75, focusing on the expression *yad*. The translation renders the phrase referring to “hands” in a literal manner, closely aligned with the Arabic wording. As with the preceding figures, no paratextual explanations accompany the verse. The uniform layout and absence of commentary suggest an emphasis on textual clarity and simplicity for readers.

4. Thailand (Thai)

At first glance, this translation has the same color and pattern on the cover as previous Indonesian translations of the Qur'an, with a floral pattern and a blood-red color similar to brick red. This is not a coincidence, but rather a result of the collaboration between Thailand and Saudi Arabia. as seen in the foreword and introduction in each language and the bottom of the front cover, which reads, “นี่เป็นการกุศล จาก กษัตริย์ ที่ออก บิณฑบาตอะชีซ อาล- จูวุด ประเทศซาอุดีอาระเบีย ห้ามจำหน่าย,” meaning that this work is a charitable publication by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, while the content was produced by the Thai Arab Alumni Association.

The front cover has the title “พระมหาคัมภีร์ อัลกุรอาน พร้อมคำแปล เป็นภาษาไทย,” which means “The Quran with Thai translation” In its presentation, each page contains the page number, surah number, juz order, and surah name in Arabic and Thai at the top of the page. The Thai translation is presented on the left side, separated by a center line from the Arabic text on the right side. This work has footnotes, and each surah has a brief introduction containing the number of verses and the category of the surah (makkiyah or madaniyah). Before the back cover, there are several pages containing a table of contents or index of surahs and closing remarks in Thai and Arabic (Thailand, 1998).



Figure 20. Front cover and the opening page of Surah al-Fātiḥah in the Thai translation of the Qur'an.

Figure 20 presents the front cover and the opening page of *Surah al-Fātiḥah* in the Thai translation of the Qur'an. Visually, this translation adopts a design highly similar to the Saudi–Indonesian edition, characterized by a dark brick-red background and floral ornamentation. This visual resemblance is not merely aesthetic but reflects institutional cooperation between Thailand and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The layout consistently places the Thai translation on the left side and the Arabic Qur'anic text on the right, separated by a vertical line. Each page includes structured metadata, such as the surah number, juz order, and surah name in both Arabic and Thai, indicating a systematic and reader-oriented presentation.

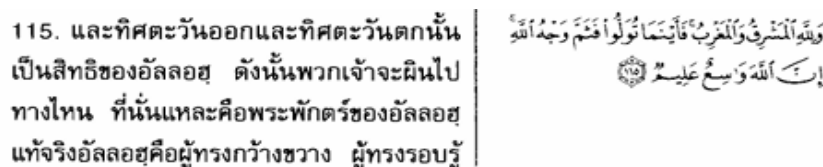


Figure 21. QS. 2:115 in the Thai translation of the Qur'an.

Figure 21 displays the Thai translation of QS. 2:115, a verse containing the anthropomorphic term *wajh* (face). The Thai rendering closely follows the Arabic structure and maintains a literal semantic equivalence by translating *wajh Allāh* as “the face of Allah.” No interpretive paraphrasing or theological mitigation is visible within the main text. This literal approach positions the translation within a scripturalist reading, leaving theological interpretation to the reader and reinforcing the tendency toward textual fidelity rather than contextual adaptation.

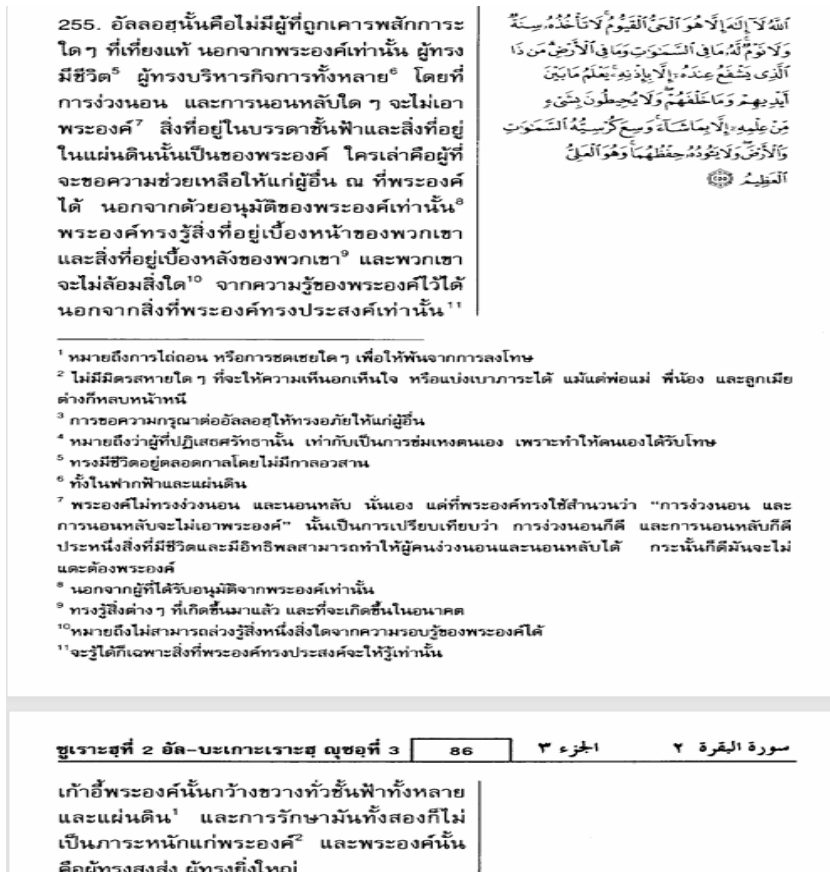


Figure 22. QS. 2:255 in the Thai translation of the Qur'an.

Figure 22 presents QS. 2:255 (*Ayat al-Kursi*) in the Thai translation. The term *kursi* is translated straightforwardly as “Throne,” aligning with a literal understanding rather than metaphorical interpretations such as divine knowledge or authority. While the main text itself does not elaborate, this figure must be read alongside the accompanying footnotes (shown in subsequent figures), which indicate attempts to explain or justify the translation choice. Nevertheless, the dominant presentation in the main body of the text reflects a literal theological orientation that prioritizes textual clarity over doctrinal negotiation within the translation itself.



Figure 23. QS. 20:5 in the Thai translation of the Qur'an.

Figure 23 shows the translation of QS. 20:5, which contains the highly debated term *istawā*. In the Thai translation, *istawā* is rendered using a literal expression equivalent to “sits” or “is established upon the Throne.” This wording reflects a direct lexical transfer from Arabic to Thai without semantic abstraction. The absence of interpretive qualifiers in the main text suggests a preference for preserving the surface meaning of the verse. However, this literal rendering potentially opens space for anthropomorphic interpretation, especially in theological contexts where *istawā* is traditionally approached through *tafwīd* or *ta'wīl*.

๑ แต่เราให้มันลงมาเพื่อเป็นความเมตตาและความสุขแก่เจ้า มีรายงานกล่าวว่า เมื่ออัลกุรอานถูกประทานลงมาแก่ท่านรซูลุลลอฮ์ คือลลิลลอฮ์อะลียะฮ์วะซัลลิม ท่านได้ละหมาดพร้อมกับบรรดาสาวกของท่าน แล้วท่านได้ทักะหมัดให้นาน เมื่อพวกเขาได้เห็นเข้าก็กล่าวว่าอัลลอฮ์มิได้ประทานอัลกุรอานนี้ลงมาแก่ัมมัมมัด เว้นแต่เพื่อให้เขาลำบาก ดังนั้นอายะฮ์นี้จึงถูกประทานลงมา

² คือมอหินที่ได้รับแสงสว่างจากอัลกราน

³ โปรดดูคำอธิบายเกี่ยวกับเรื่องนี้ในชวาระฮัลละฮ์รอฟ (หน้า 362) และชวาระฮ์อีรเราะฮอด (หน้า 583)

4 จุดมุ่งหมายของอายะห์นี้คือ ให้ความอบอุ่นใจแก่ท่านร่อซูลุลลอฮฺ คือลลิลล่อฮุอะลียะฮฺวะซัลลัม ว่าพระเจ้าของเขานั้นทรงไถ่โทษเขาเสมอ พระองค์จะไม่ทรงปล่อยให้เขาอยู่อย่างเดียวดาย ในการเผชิญหน้ากับพวกกัฟฟารอย่างแน่นอน

Figure 22. Footnote of QS. 20:5 in the Thai translation of the Qur'an.

¹ การวิ่งวอนขอของเขาเต็มไปด้วยความมั่นใจที่จะได้รับ

² หมายถึงฝน หนึ่งทุกครั้งที่จะมีฝนตกจะต้องมีลมพัดล่วงหน้ามาก่อนเพื่อเป็นสัญญาณให้ผู้คนทราบ อัน
นับเป็นความกรุณาอันสำคัญยิ่ง

³ คือได้พัฒนาเมฆฝนมารวมกันไว้ในสภาพที่หนักอึ้งประหนึ่งแบกมันไว้

⁴ คือให้ลมทอบเมฆฝนนั้นไป

⁵ คือออกมาจากหลุมศพอย่างง่ายดายด้วยเสียงแตร เช่นเดียวกับได้ให้ผลไม้สดด้วยน้ำฝน

⁶ คือเมืองที่มีดินดี

⁷ คือไม่ออกเงยในสภาพที่สมบูรณ์เพราะขาดปีก และแม้จะออกผลก็ไม่ให้ประโยชน์อะไร

⁸ คือกลุ่มชนที่ใช้ปัญญาพิจารณาแล้วพวกเขาก็ทราบในความกรุณาของพระองค์ พวกเขาจึงเป็นกลุ่มชนที่ขอบคนพระองค์

Figure 23. Footnote no. 362 in the Thai translation of the Qur'an.

1 คือต้นไม้มากมายชนิดได้รับแหล่งน้ำเดียวกัน และดินชนิดเดียวกัน แต่พืชผลที่ออกมามีชนิดและรสชาติแตกต่างกันออกไป

2 หากเจ้า (ผู้มีมัต) ฉงนในเรื่องใด แต่ที่นางนงยิ่งกว่าก็คือคำกล่าวของพวกปฏิสเอศตรีทหาที่ว่า เมื่อเราตายและกลายเป็นผุยผงไปแล้ว เราจะเกิดใหม่หรือไม่ เพราะการปฏิเสของพวกเขาก็เกี่ยวกับการฟื้นคืนชีพ นี่แหละมันน่าฉงนยิ่งกว่า เพราะว่าผู้ทรงเดชานุภาพในการสร้างชั้นฟ้าและแผ่นดิน ได้มีพืชผลต่าง ๆ นานา น้ำ และแม้ว่าลำคลอง แม่น้ำอันพระองค์ยอมสามารถที่จะให้พวกเขากลับฟื้นคืนชีพขึ้นมาอีกได้หลังจากที่ได้ตายไปแล้ว

³ พวกเขาเร่งร่ำอยากเห็นการลงโทษในโลกนี้ ตามที่ผู้ข่มมัด คือลัลลอฮุอะลัยวะซัลลาม ได้กล่าวเตือนพวกเขา ทั้งนี้เป็นการทำหายและเย้ยหยันจากพวกเขา

⁴ คือการลงโทษผู้ปฏิบัติผิดศรัทธา แต่พวกเขาก็หาได้ยึดถือเป็นบทเรียนและข้อเตือนใจไม่

Figure 24. Footnote no. 583 in the Thai translation of the Qur'an.

Figures 24–26 collectively illustrate how footnotes in the Thai translation of the Qurʾan function as a paratextual mechanism to reinforce a literal theological reading of anthropomorphic verses, particularly QS. 20:5. The footnote to *istiwāʾ* explicitly affirms it as a divine attribute that must be accepted according to Allah’s greatness, without offering metaphorical interpretation or delegating its meaning through *tafwīd*. The additional cross-referenced footnotes (nos. 362 and 583) do not provide further analytical clarification but instead reiterate acceptance of the attribute as transmitted in the text. Taken together, these footnotes do not serve as interpretive mediation but rather as doctrinal reinforcement, indicating that the Thai translation employs paratexts to stabilize a literalist theological stance rather than accommodating interpretive traditions such as *taʾwīl* or *tafwīd* commonly found in Southeast Asian Sunni contexts.

75. พระองค์ตรัสว่า อิบลิสเอ๋ย อะไรเล่าที่ขัดขวางเจ้ามิให้เจ้าสujudต่อสิ่งที่ข้าได้สร้างด้วยมือทั้งสองของข้า เจ้าเยอหยิ่งจองหองนักหรือ หรือว่าเจ้าอยู่ในหมู่ผู้สูงส่ง

قَالَ يَا إِبْلِيسُ مَا مَنَعَكَ أَنْ تَسْجُدَ لِمَا خَلَقْتُ بِإِيْدِي
أَسْكَرْتُمْ أَمْ كُنتَ مِنَ الْعَالِينَ ﴿٧٥﴾

Figure 25. QS. 38:75 in the Thai translation of the Qur'an.

Figure 27 presents the Thai translation of QS. 38:75, a verse containing the anthropomorphic expression *bi-yadayya* (with My two hands). In this figure, the Thai rendering translates the phrase in a direct and literal manner, preserving the explicit reference to “hands” without semantic abstraction, metaphorical reformulation, or theological qualification within the main text. The verse is displayed using the same consistent layout as other passages, with the Thai translation placed alongside the Arabic text, emphasizing textual fidelity and formal symmetry. Notably, no explanatory footnote accompanies this verse in the Thai edition, which means that the literal wording stands on its own without paratextual mediation. This presentation indicates that the translation adopts a straightforward scripturalist approach, allowing the anthropomorphic expression to remain unproblematised and leaving theological interpretation to the reader. As such, *Figure 27* reinforces the broader pattern observed in the Thai translation, where literal rendering of divine attributes is prioritized over interpretive strategies such as *ta'wil* or *tafwid*.

5. Vietnam (Vietnamese)

This translation has a bright cover, light blue with a white background and matching ornamental patterns. The title of the work is on the front cover, “Ban ản Dịch Nội Dung Ý Nghĩa Kinh Qur'an Bằng Việt Ngữ,” which translates to “Translation of the Meaning of the Quran in Vietnamese.” This work was published by “Biên dịch Trung tâm dịch thuật Ruwad,” namely the Ruwad Translation Center, and is distributed online by QuranEnc.com. This translation is not a collaboration between two countries, but was published directly by them. This work is different from others because it only presents the Vietnamese translation without the verses of the Qur'an. Each page contains the page number, the name of the surah in Latin script, which is then translated into Vietnamese, the translation according to the verse number, and footnotes if further explanation is needed. Before the back cover, there is a table of contents of the surahs in Latin script and Vietnamese according to their page numbers (*Bản Dịch Nội Dung Ý Nghĩa Kinh Qur'an Bằng Việt Ngữ*, 2019).

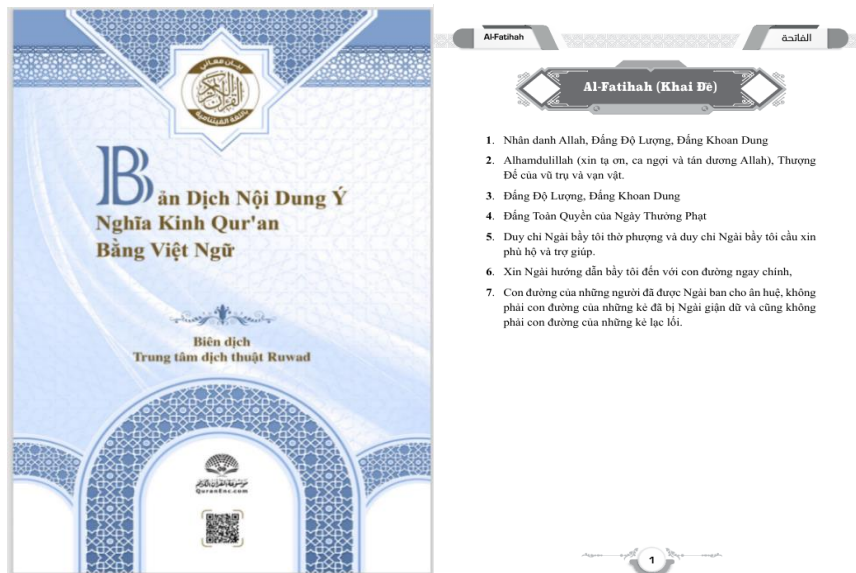


Figure 26. Front cover and the opening page of Surah al-Fatihah in the Vietnamese translation of the Qur'an.

Figure 28 presents the front cover and the opening page of *Surah al-Fatihah* that this translation presents only the target-language text without the Arabic Qur'anic verses, indicating a communicative orientation aimed at non-Arab readers. In Figure 29 shows QS.2:115 in Vietnamese translation.

115. Hướng đông và hướng tây đều là của Allah, cho nên, dù các người có quay mặt về hướng nào đi chăng nữa thì cũng đều hướng đến Allah cả. Quả thật, Allah là Đấng Bao La, Đấng Hiểu Biết.

Figure 27. QS. 2:115 in the Vietnamese translation of the Qur'an.

(24) Có lời Tafsir rằng Kursi là Ngai vương và Bệ gác chân. Và cũng có lời Tafsir rằng Kursi muốn nói trong câu Kinh này ám chỉ kiến thức của Allah, và đây là sự lựa chọn của học giả Al-Qurtubi.



Figure 30. Footnote of QS. 2:255 in the Vietnamese translation of the Qur'an.

However, Figure 30 (QS. 2:255) translates *kursi* literally as “footstool,” a choice reinforced by the explanatory footnote in Figure 31, which aligns with a Salafi literalist interpretation. A similar literal approach is evident in Figure 32 (QS. 20:5) and Figure 33 (QS. 38:75), where *istawā* and *yad* are translated directly without theological mitigation or *tafwīd*.

255. Allah (là Thượng Đế), không có Thượng Đế (đích thực) nào ngoài Ngài, Đấng Hằng Sống, Đấng Bất Diệt, Ngài không ngủ và cũng không buồn ngủ. Tất cả vạn vật trong các tầng trời và tất cả vạn vật trong trái đất đều thuộc về Ngài. Không ai có quyền can thiệp (biện minh, cầu xin ân xá cho ai) trước Ngài trừ phi Ngài cho phép. Ngài biết hết mọi điều xảy ra phía trước họ và đằng sau họ, không một ai đủ năng lực biết được kiến thức của Ngài ngoại trừ điều nào Ngài muốn cho y biết. Kursi⁽²⁴⁾ (Bệ gác chân) của Ngài bao trùm hết cả các tầng trời và trái đất, và việc quản lý trời đất không làm Ngài mệt mỏi bởi Ngài là Đấng Tối Thượng, Vĩ Đại.

Figure 31. QS. 2:255 in the Vietnamese translation of the Qur'an.

5. (Đó là) Đấng Độ Lượng an vị trên chiếc Ngai Vương.

Figure 28. QS. 20:5 in the Vietnamese translation of the Qur'an.

75. (Allah) phán: “Này Iblis! Điều gì ngăn nhà ngươi quỳ lạy thứ mà TA đã tạo ra từ chính đôi Bàn Tay của TA? Có phải nhà ngươi ngạo mạn (xem thường vật TA tạo) hoặc có phải nhà ngươi đã ngạo mạn và tự cao (đối với mệnh lệnh của TA từ trước)?”

Figure 29. QS. 38:75 in the Vietnamese translation of the Qur'an.

Overall, these figures reveal an inconsistent theological approach within the Vietnamese translation, marked by a dominant literal reading of anthropomorphic verses that suggests a stronger influence of the translators' ideological framework than adaptation to Southeast Asian Sunni theological traditions.

Comparative Analysis of QS. 2:115, QS. 2:255, QS. 20:5, and QS. 38:75 in Various Language Translations of the Qur'an in Southeast Asia

From a number of regions in Southeast Asia, it is identified five al-Qur'an products and their translations into local languages that were printed or published by institutions outside the region. In these five countries, there are two translations of the Qur'an produced as a form of cooperation between two countries, namely the local country and Saudi Arabia, while the other three are translations of the Qur'an produced by foreign institutions outside the scope of Southeast Asia, namely Saudi Arabian institutions.

Accordingly, this study focuses on an in-depth examination of these five translation products. Two of them were the result of collaboration with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, namely Indonesia (1971) and Thailand, while the other three (the Philippines, Singapore, and Vietnam) were translations launched by Rabwah, Riyadh, under the auspices of the King Fahd National Library Cataloging publication. Previous research by Mykhaylo Yakubovych indicates that Qur'anic translations produced by Saudi-affiliated institutions often reflect specific ideological orientations; this study builds on that framework to examine similar tendencies in the Southeast Asian context (Mykhaylo Yakubovych, 2024).

The term 'translation movement' is used here to describe the complex and persistent efforts of individuals and institutions inside Saudi Arabia to produce translations of the Qur'an and to develop a more or less fixed 'hermeneutical standard' for those translations. That is, it refers to both the initial translation process and the secondary process of revising both new and pre-existing translations to conform to an approved set of standards. Some of the roots of this movement were closely tied to basic features of Salafi theology that generally treated non-Arabic renderings of the Qur'an as the 'translation of the meanings' [*tarjamat al-ma'ānī*]-a concept discussed in Chapter One.

Some of the main underlying ideas held in Salafi Islam, such as the focus on returning to the sources, the Qur'an and Sunna and the concept of the re-orientation of Islam in accordance with the supposed righteous creed of the first Muslims who witnessed the revelation, have opened up a big window of opportunities for Saudi translators. Another opportunity came with the expansion of Islamic missionary activity, as this led to the political involvement of the Saudi state in religion, both of which were inextricably intertwined with the development of the Qur'an translation movement. The proactive, positive stance on Qur'an translation that was adopted by the state as part of its political effort to establish religious leadership in the Muslim world effectively closed off any avenue for opposition. In contrast to Egypt, where a powerful anti-translationist movement criticised anything labelled a 'translation' of the Qur'an, religious circles in Saudi Arabia very quickly recognised how useful translation could be as a tool for the promotion of Islam (or, rather, their specific 'Salafi' version of Islam) around the world. A complete understanding of this powerful trend in modern Muslim intellectual history, namely, an analysis of who publishes Qur'an translations in Saudi Arabia and why and how they do so will lead to a better understanding of how the Qur'an figures in the modern Muslim imagination as both a source of belief and a book of guidance for everyday life. On another level, it will also cast light on the role and use of religion as soft power in foreign relations and on how Saudi Arabia has tried, and continues to try, to position itself as the leading power in the Muslim world.

The above narrative can be summarized by saying that the term 'translation movement' is used here to describe the complex and persistent efforts of individuals and institutions in Saudi Arabia to produce translations of the Qur'an and develop their 'hermeneutical standards'. Even religious scholars in Saudi Arabia quickly realized how useful translation was as a tool for promoting Islam (or, more precisely, their specific 'Salafi' version) throughout the world. Based on this understanding, This study seeks to examine whether Qur'anic translations produced by institutions originating from Saudi Arabia indicate the dissemination of Salafi ideological orientations, and whether such tendencies are consistently reflected across translations in different languages. If not, it still need to be known the consistency of these publishers regarding their attitude towards verses that contain ideological aspects. The analysis focuses on four selected verses that represent key ideological dimensions in Qur'anic translation, namely those containing the terms *Wajh*, *Kursi*, *Istawa*, and *Yad*:

The words of Allah SWT in Surah al-Baqarah (2:115):

﴿فَقَالَ يَا إِبْرَاهِيمُ مَا مَنَعَكَ أَنْ تَسْجُدَ لِمَا خَلَقْتُ بِإِيْدِي ۖ أَنتَ كُنْتَ مِنَ الْعَالِينَ﴾

The words of Allah SWT in Surah al-Baqarah (2:255):

﴿لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ ۖ الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّومُ لَا يَأْخُذُهُ سِنَةٌ وَلَا نَوْمٌ ۚ لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ ۚ مَنْ ذَا الَّذِي يَشْفَعُ عِنْدَهُ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ ۚ يَعْلَمُ مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمَا خَلْفَهُمْ ۚ وَلَا يُحِيطُونَ بِشَيْءٍ مِّنْ عِلْمِهِ إِلَّا بِمَا شَاءَ ۚ وَسِعَ كُرْسِيُّهُ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْأَرْضَ ۚ وَلَا يَئُودُهُ حِفْظُهُمَا ۚ وَهُوَ الْعَلِيُّ الْعَظِيمُ﴾

The words of Allah SWT in Surah al-Taha (20:5):

﴿الرَّحْمٰنُ عَلَى الْعَرْشِ اسْتَوٰى﴾

The words of Allah SWT in Surah al-Sad (38:75):

﴿وَلِلْمَشْرِقِ الْمَشْرِقُ وَالْمَغْرِبِ فَلْيَنْمَلِكُنَّ وَلُفْتَمَّ وَجْهُهُ ۖ إِنَّ اللَّهَ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ﴾

The term “Salafi” is far above the previous ones. According to Pink’s explanation in his research, Salafis are adherents of scripturalism who consider the Qur’an and Sunnah as the only authoritative sources of religion. They advocate literal interpretation, which results in a way of life that follows the beliefs and practices of the original Islamic community as imagined during the time of the Prophet and his companions. In principle, Salafis reject the authority of later scholars, although in reality, there are some scholars whom they tend to grant a high level of authority because they have applied Salafi methodology (Pink 2019). Given the focus on Qur’anic translation products published by several Saudi-affiliated institutions, this study draws on Nur Khalik Ridwan’s definition of Salafism as articulated in his work (Ridwan, 2020).

Kelompok Salafi (notabene Salafi-Wahhabi) mendefinisikan Salafiyah merujuk pada sifat-sifat yang dihubungkan dengan generasi Islam awal terdahulu, yakni generais Sahabat, Tabi’in (yang mengikuti sahabat) dan alba’at at-Tabi’in (yang mengikuti Tabi’in). menurut kalangan Salafi karena telah timbul beragam sekte, maka salaf memiliki dua definisi. Pertama, aspek keteladanan dari tiga generasi Islam tersebut. Kedua, aspek manhaj (cara) mereka sehingga abarang siapa mengikuti manhaj mereka, maka ia dianggap mengikuti Salafiyah. Namun kenyataannya, kaum Salafi-Wahhabi tidak mengikuti dua tradisi salaf, yaitu mengikuti tafwidh (menyerahkan makna kepada Allah dan beriman atasnya) dan takwil (memalingkan arti teks agar sesuai dengan ayat-ayat dan teks lain). mereka justru berpegang pada lahir teks, karen aitu, mereka terjatuh pada paham mujassimah-musyabah ketika membaca teks-teks mutyasabihat dalam kaitannya dengan sifat-sifat Allah.

The connection between Saudi Arabia and the explanation above is that this country (Saudi Arabia) is part of a region known not only for its cultivation of Arab identity (called ‘urūba) but also as a center of religious fundamentalism, typically associated with the Wahhabi or Salafi movements in Sunni Islam. The fact that Saudi Arabia is a major global player in the production and distribution of Qur’an translations (Mykhaylo Yakubovych, 2024), cannot be denied, as many of its translations can be found. This study explores ideological dissemination in Qur’anic translations released by Saudi-affiliated institutions through the analysis of four selected sample verses as mentioned above.

Discussing the term “Salafi” would be incomplete without mentioning “Wahhabism.” (Ali & Sudiman, 2016). Wahhabism is one of the trends in the Salafiyya (purification) movement, which aims to “regenerate Islam by returning to the traditions represented by the righteous ancestors (al-Salaf al-Salih).” The foundations of this movement, which is also often referred to as *islah* (reform) and *tajdid* (renewal), were laid by a number of classical Salafi articulators, including Ahmad ibn Hanbal (780-855 H) and Ahmad ibn Taymiyyah (1263-1328 H). They advocated a return to pure Islam and an understanding of doctrine based on the Qur’an, Sunnah, and the traditions of the *Salaf al-Salih*. Their efforts inspired Muhammad ibn al-Wahhab to launch what is known as the Wahhabi movement in the 18th century (Ali & Sudiman, 2016). In current Islamic discourse, the terms “Salafi” and “Wahhabi” are often used interchangeably, with some saying that the two terms are one and the same, while others are still confused between the two. In short, Salafism and Wahhabism began to be associated around the 1970s, and in the early 20th century, the Wahhabis began to refer to themselves as Salafis (Ali & Sudiman, 2016).

The Wahhabi movement itself is attributed to the followers of Muhammad bin Abdul Wahhab, who then called themselves followers of Salafiyah (following the traditions of the early generations of Islam, namely the generations of the companions, tabi’in, and tabi’at tabi’in). However, in reality, Wahhabis do not follow the traditions of the Salaf, such as *tafwidh* (surrendering its meaning to Allah and believing in it) and *takwil* (deflecting the meaning of the text to fit other verses and texts) in terms of interpretation. Instead, they (Wahhabis) adhere to the literal meaning of the text. Because they are preoccupied with everything that must be brought into the literal realm of the text, their reading of verses related to the nature of God seems to fall into the interpretation of the mujassimah, namely texts that literally indicate the physical nature of God (Ridwan, 2020). And when linked to Salafi-Wahhabism, as stated by Mohammed bin Ali, the use of the term ‘Salafi’ today has a definition of Muslims who advocate literal interpretation.

Regarding *tafwidh*, takwil, literal-reading (the literal meaning of the text, In the first three centuries of the Hijri calendar, as noted by Rippin, there appears to have been no attempt to distinguish terms such as tafsir, takwil (explanation), and ma'na (meaning) as technical terms for the activity of interpretation. Between the second and fourth centuries of the Hijri calendar, Esack notes that the word tafsir was distinguished from the word takwil, which had connotations of esoteric interpretation, leading to the determination of the semantic aspects of the text or words of the Qur'an, a process that implied an increase in the speculative and intellectual understanding of the process (Nurtawab, 2018).

Accordingly, this study investigates whether Qur'anic translations produced by Saudi-affiliated institutions reflect the dissemination of particular ideological orientations, as well as the extent of variation in content across different translations. The analysis is conducted through a comparative examination of five translations using four selected sample verses as analytical entry points. In addition, this comparison is carried out to determine the extent to which Saudi Arabia is consistent in translating this verse into various languages in the Southeast Asian region. This is because, based on the Kalam school of thought, Southeast Asia, where the Malay ethnic group is the largest ethnic group residing in Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Singapore, and southern Thailand, adheres to its own Kalam school of thought in accordance with the region.

In Fabian Fadhly's research, Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, Singapore, and the Philippines have Muslim majorities that follow Sunni Islam (which in interpreting *mutasyabihah* verses uses two approaches, namely *tafwidh* and *takwil* and these approaches follow the traditions of the Salaf), the theology of *Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah*, which is a teaching and doctrine that cannot be separated from the rituals of monotheism of the Malay community, although they do not negate other schools of thought (Fadhly, 2018). Thus, the ideology of the five regions differs from that of Saudi Arabia in terms of theological schools, with its translations spreading throughout Southeast Asia. This article will discuss how they treat anthropomorphic verses, whose translation is not intended for the Arab community itself, but is intended for non-Arab Muslim countries because it has been translated into the target language of those countries. Does the translation adapt to the socio-cultural context of the target country, or does it impose a translation that aligns with the socio-cultural context of Saudi Arabia as the agent of the Qur'an translation? The following table compares the translations based on these aspects:

Table 1. The Comparison between Five Translations of Holy Qur'an

Words <i>wajh</i>					
Surah/ Verses	Indonesian	Thai	Tagalog	Tamil	Vietnamese
QS:2:115	(figure 7) 115. And to Allah belongs the east and the west, so wherever you face there is the face of Allah ⁸³ . Indeed, Allah is All-Encompassing (His mercy) and All-Knowing	(figure 21) 115. And to Allah belongs the East and the West, so whichever way you turn, there is the face of Allah . Indeed, Allah is Ample-Capturing, Knowing.	(figure 2) 115. To Allah belong the East and the West, so wherever you turn, there is the Face of Allah . Indeed, Allah is All-Encompassing, All-Knowing.	(figure 16) 115. And to Allah belong the East and the West. So wherever you turn, there is the Face of Allah . Indeed, Allah is All-Encompassing, All-Knowing.	(figure 29) 115. To Allah belong the East and the West, so whichever way you turn, it is towards Allah . Indeed, Allah is the All-Knowing, the All-Knowing.
Footnote	(figure 8) 83). Ath Thabari stated that this verse was revealed regarding a people who were once unable to see the correct direction of the Qibla , so they prayed in different directions.	none	none	none	none

Approach to verses (theological approach)	Takwil	Makna literal (tajsim)	Makna literal (tajsim)	Makna literal (tajsim)	Takwil
Words <i>kursi</i>					
Surah/ Verses	Indonesian	Thai	Tagalog	Tamil	Vietnamese
QS. 2: 255	(figure 9) 255. Allah, there is no god but He, the Ever-Living, the Sustainer of all things; He neither slumbers nor sleeps. To Him belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth. None can intercede with Allah except by His permission. Allah knows what is before them and what is behind them, and they know nothing of His knowledge except what He wills. The Throne ⁽¹⁶¹⁾ of Allah encompasses the heavens and the earth. And Allah is not burdened with the preservation of both of them, and Allah is High and Great.	(figure 22) 255. Allah- there is no true worshipper except He, the Living, the Ruler of affairs. Neither drowsiness nor sleep persecutes Him. Whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth is His. Who intercedes with Him for anyone except by His permission? He knows what is before them and what is behind them. And they cannot encompass anything of His knowledge except what He wills. His throne spans the heavens and the earth, and His maintenance is not a burden on Him. And He is the Most Merciful, the Most Great.	(figure 3) 255. Allah-there is no deity except Him, the Ever-Living, the Sustainer of [all] existence. Neither drowsiness overtakes Him nor sleep. To Him belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth. Who is it that can intercede with Him except by His permission? He knows what is before them and what is behind them, and they encompass not a thing of His knowledge except for what He wills. His Throne extends over the heavens and the earth, and their preservation tires Him not. And He is the Most High, the Most Great.	(figure 17) 255. Allah- there is no god but He. He is the Ever-Living, the Self-Subsisting. There is no slumber or slumber in Him. To Him belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth. Who can intercede with Him except by His permission? What is before them and what is behind them? He knows all things (and time). They encompass nothing of His knowledge except what He wills. His Throne is wider than the heavens and the earth. He is not weary of guarding them both. He is the Most High, the Most Great.	(figure 31) 255. Allah (is God), there is no god but Him, the Ever-Living, the Ever-Everlasting. He neither sleeps nor slumbers. To Him belongs all that is in the heavens and all that is on the earth. No one has the right to intercede before Him except by His leave. He knows all that is before them and all that is behind them, and no one has the power to know His knowledge except what He wills to be known. Kursi ⁽²⁴⁾ (footstool) covers the heavens and the earth, and the management of them does not weary Him; He is the Exalted, the Great.
Footnote	(figure 10) 161). The word “Kursi” in this verse is interpreted by some commentators as meaning Allah’s knowledge, while others interpret it as meaning His power. The correct opinion regarding the meaning of “Kursi” is the place where His feet are placed.	(figure 22) (none) There are many footnotes but they do not explain the meaning of the word <i>kursi</i> >	none	none	(figure 30) (24) It is said in Tafsir that Kursi is the Throne and the Footstool. And it is also said in Tafsir that Kursi meant in this verse the knowledge of Allah, and this is the choice of Al-Qurtubi.
Approach to verses (theological approach)	Takwil = The word “Kursi” in this verse is interpreted by some commentators as meaning Allah’s	Takwil (<i>kursi</i> meaning His throne)	Takwil (<i>kursi</i> meaning His throne)	Takwil (<i>kursi</i> meaning His throne)	Takwil (<i>kursi</i> > meaning throne; knowledge) Ma’na literal (tajsim) = the meaning of

	knowledge, while others interpret it as meaning His power Ma'na literal (tajsim) = the meaning of "Kursi" is the place where His feet are placed. [seems to accommodate opinions but prioritizes opinions that tend towards literal meaning]				"Kursi" is footstool [seems to accommodate opinions but the translation shown in the text is a literal meaning model]
Words Istawa					
Surah/ Verses	Indonesian	Thai	Tagalog	Tamil	Vietnamese
QS. 20: 5	(figure 11) 5. (Namely) the Most Gracious God, Who is situated above the Throne ⁽⁹¹³⁾ .	(figure 23) 5. The Compassionate One sits on the throne.	(figure 4) 5. The Most Merciful is seated on the throne [as befits His greatness].	(figure 18) 5. The Most Gracious has risen above the Throne.	(figure 32) 5. (It is) the Merciful One seated on the Throne.
Footnote	(figure 12 and 13) 913). See no 548). Resting on the Throne is an attribute of Allah that we must believe in, in accordance with the greatness of Allah and His holiness.	(figure 24, 25, 26) 3). Please see the explanation of this matter in Surah Al-A'raf (p.362) and Surah Ar-Ra'd (p. 583). <i>(The footnote directs you to open the page as written but when referred to there is no explanation that is in line with Surah Thaba verse 5)</i>	None	none	none
Approach to verses (theological approach)	Takwil	Ma'na literal (tajsim)	Tafwidh	Takwil (istawa> meaning 'has risen', not 'is seated' or 'who is situated' as other)	Ma'na literal (tajsim)
Words Yad					
Surah/ Verses	Indonesian	Thai	Tagalog	Tamil	Vietnamese
QS. 38: 75	(figure 14) 75. Allah says: "O devil, what prevents you from bowing down to what I have created with My two hands . Are you proud of yourself or do you (feel) that you are among those who are (higher)?"	(figure 27) 75. He said: O Iblis, what is it that prevents you from prostrating yourself before what I have created with My hands ? Are you very proud, or are you of the high ones?	(figure 5) 75. He said: "O Satan, what prevented you from prostrating yourself before what I created with My two hands ? Are you arrogant [in refusing to prostrate yourself] or are you among the arrogant?"	(figure 19) 75. (Allah) said: "O Iblees! What prevented you from prostrating yourself to him whom I created with My two hands ? Are you arrogant? (You have never been arrogant before!) Or were you (before this) of the arrogant?"	(figure 33) 75. (Allah) said: "O Iblis! What prevents you from prostrating yourself to what We have created with Our own hands ? Are you arrogant (toward what We have created) or are you arrogant and haughty (toward My command)?"

Footnote	none	none	none	none	none
Approach to verses (theological approach)	Ma'na (tajsim) literal	Ma'na (tajsim) literal	Ma'na (tajsim) literal	Ma'na (tajsim) literal	Ma'na literal (tajsim) [but but there is a difference from the others, this translation uses the subject 'we'- 'our' instead of 'me'- 'my' like the others]

Based on the comparison table above, it can be described as follows: Two translations of the Qur'an are the result of official cooperation between two countries, namely Indonesia-Saudi Arabia and Thailand-Saudi Arabia, and three others are translations published by institutions in Saudi Arabia, namely the Philippines, Singapore, and Vietnam. 1) The Indonesian translation of the Qur'an, according to Fabian Fadhly's research, Indonesia has a Muslim population that is predominantly Sunni, so the above translation is somewhat in line with Indonesian Muslim theology. However, some translations tend to follow the theology of the publisher, Saudi Arabia, as can be seen from two terms, yad and kursi, whose footnotes seem to accommodate opinions but favor literal interpretations.

This reinforces the assumption that Wahhabi ideology has been inserted into these translations, as suspected by Gus Dur, even the Ministry of Religious Affairs and representatives from Saudi Arabia have not spoken openly about the insertion of Wahhabi ideology into these translations (Faizin, 2021). Even though it is clear in the foreword that the Indonesian side is responsible for the substance of the translation, the content should be in accordance with the social conditions or ideology embraced by Indonesia. 2) For the Thai translation, it seems to lean towards the publisher's side. One of the four examples of verses is in accordance with Thai Sunni theology, but the other three tend towards a literal reading. For the other three translations published by an institution in Saudi Arabia (Ruwad Translation Center, and distributed online by QuranEnc.com), the explanations are as follows: 3) Tagalog from the Philippines and 4) Tamil (Singapore) translations combine three methods of reading, tafwidh, takwil (which is in accordance with Thai state theology) and literal meaning, which proves that even though they try to follow the ideology of the target country, the translators still try to insert their literal interpretation, while 5) the Vietnamese translation (Vietnam) of 3 of the example verses follows the literal reading and only 1 example is in accordance with the ideology-theology of that country, so this translation clearly leans towards the ideology-theology of the translators, namely the Ruwad Translation Center, and is distributed online by QuranEnc.com.

The results of the analysis show that they (Saudi Arabia as the agent translating the Qur'an into various languages) do not always impose their theological ideology to be applied in the Qur'an translations they produce. This shows that their efforts to spread their theological ideology (Saudi Arabia) are not as intense as Yakubovych stated in his research, especially in the Southeast Asian region. However, there are still some literal readings mixed with the reading methods adopted by the target countries, even as if trying to accommodate opinions. This shows the inconsistency of the reading model of *mustasyabihat* verses in accordance with the theological-ideological school of thought adopted by the target countries and also shows that the agenda of disseminating ideology in the Qur'an translation products carried out by Saudi Arabia is true. This also proves that the movement or activity of translating the Qur'an cannot be separated from the ideology of the translator, and this research complements research based on the variety of Qur'an translations, especially in the Southeast Asian region, as mentioned in the previous introduction.

CONCLUSION

This paper finds that there is complexity in the content, form, and theological approach of Qur'an translations originating from outside Southeast Asia, particularly in five countries, namely the Philippines, Indonesia, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam. A comparative analysis of verses QS. 2:115, QS. 2:255, QS. 20:5, and QS. 38:75, which focused on the terms *wajh*, *kursi*, *istawa*, and *yad*, shows that translations published by institutions in Saudi Arabia, despite attempting to adapt to the theological ideologies embraced by the target countries, still attempt to insert the theological ideologies embraced by Saudi Arabia. At first glance, the publishers and producers of these translations of the Qur'an in various languages do not explicitly impose their theological ideology, but they consistently insert it little by little. This shows inconsistency in the interpretation of *mutasyabihat* verses that are not in accordance with the theological school of thought of the target country.

This study also confirms that Saudi Arabia's agenda of spreading ideology in its translations of the Quran does exist, especially in Southeast Asia, but its intensity is not as strong as stated in Yakubovych's study. Furthermore, this study shows that the activity of translating the Quran cannot be separated from the ideology of the translator, and these findings complement previous studies on the various translations of the Quran in the Southeast Asian region. One suggestion for further research is to focus on digital versions of Southeast Asian translations of the Quran in applications or websites that provide translations of the Quran in various languages.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The authors would like to express their sincere appreciation to all parties who supported the completion of this study. This research did not receive any specific grant from funding agencies in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors. The authors also acknowledge the academic environment and institutional support provided by Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Ampel Surabaya, which contributed to the development of this research. Any remaining limitations are the sole responsibility of the authors.

AUTHORS CONTRIBUTIONS

This article has been collaboratively worked on from the initial draft until publication. All authors have read it and agreed to accept the published manuscript version.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there are no known financial, personal, or professional conflicts of interest that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

ETHICS STATEMENT

This study did not involve human participants, animals, or any intervention requiring ethical approval. All data analysed in this research were obtained from publicly accessible and published sources. Therefore, ethical clearance was not required.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) GENERATED TEXT DECLARATION

The authors declare that Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools were used in a limited manner during the preparation of this manuscript. AI-based tools were employed solely for language refinement, grammar checking, and improving clarity of expression. No AI tools were used to generate original ideas, conduct data analysis, interpret findings, or replace the authors' intellectual contributions.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The data supporting the findings of this study are included within the article. Further inquiries regarding the data or materials used in this research may be directed to the corresponding author.

REFERENCES

- Ali, M. Bin, & Sudiman, M. S. A. S. bin. (2016). *Salafis and Wabbabis, Two Sides of the Same Coin?* RSIS Commentary: Nanyang Technological University.
- Al-Qasimi, U. al-S. (2022). Tamil Mozhiyil Kanniyamigu Qur'ānin Poruḷḡaḷin Viḷakkam. QuranEnc.com.
- Al-Qur'an Dan Terjemahnya*. (1971). Lembaga Percetakan Al-Qur'an Raja Fadh.
- Al-Tarjamah li at-Tishala>ti wa Tafniyati al-Ma'lu>ma>ti-T, R. (2023). *Ang Paglilinaw Sa Saling Ng Mga Kabulugan Ng: Marangal Na Qur'an Sa Wikang Filipino (Tagalog)*. QuranEnc.com.
- Bản Dịch Nội Dung Ý Nghĩa Kinh Qur'an Bằng Việt Ngữ*. (2019). Biên dịch Trung tâm dịch thuật Ruwad & QuranEnc.com.
- Fadhly, F. (2018). Pemahaman keagamaan Islam di Asia Tenggara abad XIII-XX. *Millah: Journal of Religious Studies*, 18(1), 51–78. <https://doi.org/10.20885/millah.vol18.iss1.art4>
- Faizin, H. (2021). Sejarah dan karakteristik al-Qur'an dan Terjemahnya Kementerian Agama RI. *Subuf*, 14(2), 283–311. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.22548/shf.v14i2.669>
- Mykhaylo Yakubovych. (2024). *The Kingdom and the Qur'an: Translating the Holy Book of Islam in Saudi Arabia*. Open Book Publishers. <https://doi.org/10.11647/OBP.0381>
- Nurtawab, E. (2017). Qur'anic translations in Malay, Javanese and Sundanese A commentary or substitution ? Dalam M. Daneshgar (Ed.), *The Qur'an in the Malay-Indonesian World: Context and Interpretation* (hlm. 39–59). Taylor and Francis.
- Nurtawab, E. (2018). *Jalalayn pedagogical practice: Styles of Qur' an and tafsir learning in contemporary Indonesia Anthropology – School of Social Sciences Faculty of Arts Monash University 2018*. Monash University.
- Nurtawab, E. (2020). *Qur'anic Readings and Malay Translations in 18th- Century Banten Qur' ans A. 51 and W. 277*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13639811.2020.1724469>
- RI, K. A. (2011). *Mukadimah Al-Quran dan Tafsirnya*. Widya Cahaya.
- Ridwan, N. K. (2020). *Sejarah Lengkap Wahhabi* (M. I. Wahyudi, Ed.). IRCiSoD.
- Saeed, A., & Syamsuddin, (Terj) Sulkhah & Sahiron. (2020). *Pengantar Studi Al-Qur'an* (M. N. Prabowo & F. Y. Iwanebel, Ed.; 3 ed.). Baitul Hikmah Press.
- Samsu, S. (2021). *Metode Penelitian: (Teori Dan Aplikasi Penelitian Kualitatif, Kuantitatif, Mixed Methods, Serta Research & Development)*. Query date: 2024-04-03 08:51:23.
- Thailand, A. A. A. dan. (1998). *Phra Maha Khampḥi Al-Qur'ān Phrom Khwām Māai Phāsā Thai*. Pusat Percetakan Al Quran Raja Fahad Saudi, Al-Madinah Al-Munawarah Kerajaan Arab.
- Zakaria, M. F., & F. S. A. Raup. (2024). Fenomena terjemahan al-Quran dalam Bahasa Melayu: Satu kajian linguistik. *Asian Journal of Research in Education and Social Sciences* 6(3), 390-400.