The Role of Translation in ISIS Propaganda: International Online Radicalization Methods and Its Influence on Extremism in Indonesia

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Abstract

This research aims to compile data and information that will contribute to the understanding of the online radicalization phenomenon through translation. There are many studies on internet use and propaganda in the terrorism context. However, only a handful studied the relationship between translation and terrorism propaganda, especially in Indonesia. There was little discussion on the role of translation in bridging communication between different nations, cultures, and languages and using it to propagate radical/propaganda narratives worldwide and amplify those messages to its target audience. The research method is descriptive qualitative using primary and secondary data; the sample is taken from the book of *Nadharat Fi Al Ijma' Al Qath'i* and previous findings and news. This research revealed at least ten roles of translation in the online radicalization phenomenon; among others, translation of the target language can be used to identify the propagandist's target audience, and many terrorist sympathizers were willing to translate the propaganda voluntarily. Although translation is used to leverage the spread of propaganda, it can also assist law enforcement officers in combating terrorist/propaganda narratives. Indonesian law enforcement officers may use translation as part of their counter-terrorism efforts because Indonesia has hundreds of vernacular languages that can potentially be used to 'encrypt' and disseminate their extremist narratives.

Keywords: Radicalization; Translation; Propaganda.

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A. INTRODUCTION

One of the terrorist organizations, ISIS (Islamic State of Iraq and Syria), was able to create an image of a utopian world of the Islamic Khilafah, which then considered as real by many delusional cyber surfers. According to IPAC (2014), in 2013, 8000 fighters from 74 countries were involved in the conflict in Syria, and around 50 were Indonesian nationals. The emerging trend of cyberspace phenomenon is now part of communication because of its practical and efficient nature (Jain & Vaidya, 2021). Through the internet, we can reach all parts of the world beyond geographical barriers. It is also easy to operate by anyone regardless of their age.

Through social media, ISIS can convey extremist ideology and destructive messages to the world. One of the countries targeted for ISIS recruitment is Indonesia. Among other tasks assigned to *Khatibah Nusantara*, the ASEAN branch of ISIS was translating ISIS materials from Arabic to Indonesian and working with ISIS *al-Hayat* Media Center to put subtitles on extremist videos and making this organization to work

as an intermediary culture/linguistics to facilitate ISIS' globalization efforts in reaching Southeast Asia (Moir, 2017; Melki & Jabado, 2016). They often made videos encouraging people to join them, and had design and edits sections controlled by ISIS propaganda division, such as the video showing Bahrumsyah alias Abu Muhammad Al-Indonesi who invites Indonesian Muslims to join ISIS (Jordan, 2017). There is also a video from Abu Jandal Al-Indonesi challenging Commander Moeldoko to fight in Syria (Widodo, 2014; Shaban, 2020). Provocative and propaganda videos like these may brainwash young people and those who sympathize with ISIS (2017).

Many studies examined the relationship between the use of the internet and propaganda in a terrorism context. However, there were only a few that examined the link between translation and terrorism propaganda, especially in Indonesia. There was little discussion on the role of translation in bridging communication between different nations, cultures, and languages, as well as its role in the dissemination of radical narratives/propaganda throughout the world and its capability to amplify propaganda messages to the target audiences (Borau & Wamba, 2019; Lieberman, 2017).

The translation may help law enforcers not only in monitoring international terrorist propaganda activities and using them as an indicator to identify how terrorist organizations manage their forces or resources but translation can also help antiterrorism efforts by disseminating counter-narratives into various languages, supporting law enforcement apparatus (APH) in deciphering terrorist information/messages that have been 'encrypted' in specific languages, for example, Arabic or other languages used by terrorists in their propaganda narratives or extremist messages; this is following the results of research by Habibie (2022) and Wu (2015). Translation can also help law enforcement apparatus to identify the target of extremist/terrorist groups from the translation that these groups made (Mansour, 2018; Awan, 2017).

The discussion on the role of translation in terrorist propaganda is relevant because the internet and Dark web technologies allow anyone to access propaganda messages, translate them, upload them to the internet and then disseminate them (Hossain, 2015). Anyone without translation skills can still access extremist messages with Google's machine translator. However, it seems that this phenomenon has not received much attention or responses from the government and the public in general, even though they have to be aware of the dangers that might arise through the translation of radical narratives. The danger is evident, and law enforcement has arrested several perpetrators who spread and translated propaganda narratives (Blaker, 2016). This year alone, on March 24, 2022, it was announced that Detachment 88 (Densus 88) had arrested five suspected terrorists in several cities for translating and distributing ISIS propaganda materials. Then on May 23, 2022, Densus 88 arrested a 22-year-old student in Malang City, East Java, for spreading ISIS propaganda, both narratives which are still in Arabic or those that have been translated. While in the United States, Tarek Mehanna was successfully sentenced to 210 months in prison by the Court on charges of providing

"material support" to a terrorist organization, translating Arabic books and videos into English for the *Tibyan* website. The translated material supported and encouraged its readers to join al-Qaeda and kill American soldiers in Iraq (Stern, 2014; Maras, 2017).

The purpose of this study is to compile data and information that will contribute to the understanding of the phenomenon of online radicalization through translation practices. The researcher intends to draw the attention of the law enforcement apparatus, the government, and the public to translation and terrorism propaganda issues, thus making them well aware of propaganda narratives designed to aim at members of the target community, helping the law enforcers and the government in formulating strategies to combat terrorism, one of which is by using translation in countering propaganda narratives (Borelli, 2021; Galiliy et al., 2016; Tsesis, 2017).

The topic of this research is the role of translation in terrorism propaganda, especially how translation plays its role in bridging communication between people of different nations, cultures, and languages. The radical/terrorist groups make use of it to their advantage for propagating radical/extremist terrorist narratives and amplifying propaganda messages to their target audiences all around the world. Several studies have been conducted on the use of the internet and propaganda within a terrorist context. However, there are only a few that have examined the relationship between translation and terrorism propaganda, especially in the Indonesian context. One of the studies that examined the relationship between translation and propaganda is the study by (Iliescu Gheorghiu, 2018) which discusses cultural products made entirely based on translation and intended as a propaganda tool in the communist era of twentieth-century Romania.

B.   LITERATURE REVIEW
1. Propaganda and Efforts to Form Perception

According to (Mahood & Rane, 2017), propaganda itself is a deliberate and systemic effort to shape perceptions, manipulate cognitions, and direct behavior to achieve a response that helps realize the propagandist's intentions. Propagandists have a goal or set of goals, and to achieve it, they deliberately select facts, arguments, and symbols and present them in the ways they think are most effective (Lannes, 2021). The internet aids the propagandist's cause by providing a relatively unregulated and unrestricted place where terrorists can create and disseminate propaganda through countless websites and social media platforms, tailoring their word of persuasion to target thousands of potential followers join their organization and help make their dreams come true (Lieberman, 2017).

The desire of terrorist propagandists to spread their ideology cannot be separated from the role of translation because translation is an inseparable part of globalization. Translation has mediated and bridged the distance between people, languages, and cultures of different countries. As a result of translation and globalization, humans are increasingly familiar with the linguistic differences between society and culture.

Translation has become an essential factor in developing world culture and literature. In fact, in the era of globalization, translators have become a necessity (Kumari, 2019).

2. Translation and Its Role in Propaganda

According to (Hoed, 2011), translation is an effort to translate from the source language to the target language or an attempt to re-express a message in another language. Hoed said that reviewing and developing translation in Indonesia can be carried out by looking at the purpose of translation and its impact on the readers and target community. This perspective is known as Skopos[1] in translation theory. Still, according to Hoed, in the past, translators held a critical position as they were part of the elites who were close to the center of power. Hoed borrows a term used by Pym (2004), which refers to the translator as a mediator (intermediary) between the source text and the target audience; it can be said that they acted as agents of change who succeeded in structuring the social history of that period because they changed the cultural structure of their time through their translation work.

The translation is believed to be a process practiced by translators to convey specific ideas, sometimes influenced by their culture, beliefs, institutional agenda, and religion. It indicates that translation is a means of intercultural communication; therefore, the translator can manipulate the source text to influence the reader based on their ideology. This is investigated by (El-Haj Ahmed & Shabana, 2017), who examined the ideological influence of Palestinian translators on their translation methods and strategies. The research findings show that it is indeed true that ideology may affect translators' methods and strategies. The results revealed that when they are dealing with sensitive terms that are relatable to their own experience, the translators weren't able to remain neutral, they get emotional and ideologically partial.

The translation is used not only by the terrorist groups/perpetrators but it is also used by the law enforcers to circumvent, address and counter radical narratives/terrorist propaganda. This endeavor was studied by (Erez et al., 2011) which highlighted the importance of having an accurate and reliable translation of jihadist source materials for intelligence and law enforcement activities and examined the issue of whether Muslim Arabic speakers make high-quality, authentic, or authentic translations which are free from bias. The study can be made by comparing translations by Arab Muslim coders with non-Arabic and non-Muslim coders.

Radical groups have realized the importance of translation, this has been demonstrated in research carried out by (Haniff Hassan & Mohamed, 2012) who examined the radical website *Maktabah Al-Tawhid Wal Jihad* (MTJ). Hassan and

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[1] Skopos theory was developed in Germany in the late 1970s by Hans J. Vermeer. The term Skopos was introduced by Vermeer (1979: 100) to refer to the purpose of translation as the main factor guiding the translation process. See the Theoretical Framework section below for more on Skopos' Theory

Mohammed found that MTJ was not the first Indonesian library for Radical Islam or a pioneer in translating radical material into Indonesian but what is interesting about the MTJ translation initiative is that it was translated by volunteers. The site manager imitated Wikipedia which works as a free encyclopedia that thrives on the contributions of its volunteers. The site manager will upload some texts that must be translated and edited, then invite visitors and account owners to do it voluntarily. They also encourage parties who have translated material to send them so they can be included in the MTJ library.

The translated material can be used as an indicator of the volunteers' preferences as it can be assumed that someone would not be bothered to translate anything if it's not interesting or not in line with their thoughts. The MTJ translation highlighted the fact that sources in Arabic play an important and influential role for Indonesian radical groups, therefore it is necessary to consider the translation of counter-radical material from Arabic to Indonesian, in particular the revisionist works of the Egyptian leader *Al-Jamaah Al -Islamyiah* and Sheikh Abdul Qadir Abdul Aziz, alias Dr. Fadl, who is now Al-Qaeda's toughest critic.

3. Extremists' Strategies and the Use of Social Media

Several transnational groups such as ISIS, Jabhat Al Nusra, and Al-Qaeda have been proven to use social media to communicate with their supporters because they publicly disseminate their activities in the name of "Jihad". One of the strategies used by Al-Qaeda is translating propaganda materials into several languages and disseminating those materials on social media to gain more supporters, especially from Western countries (Ryanta, 2022). Meanwhile, (al-Lami, 2019) found that translation could be a sign of ISIS media return during the first half of 2018 when the group offered regular English translations sourced from its official media to the messaging app Telegram. The translation made by an ISIS affiliate channel called "Nashir News Agency-English" was the first propaganda translation that was carried out systematically, periodically, and promptly and indicated the recovery of ISIS media until this research was written, around June 2018.

Research (Azani & Dotti, 2021) also described a similar picture of ISIS's translation efforts through their propaganda magazine, *Dabiq*, and how its content has successfully captured Western audiences for its high-quality production and translation into several languages such as English, French, and German. The findings made by (Termeer & Duyvesteyn, 2022) revealed that the translations of Dabiq and Rumiyah magazines may indicate the target audience, which is most likely women beyond the Middle East because the material is translated into English. Whereas the manifesto or open statement from ISIS women's brigade unit was more targeted at women within the area because ISIS did not translate the manifesto document.

The studies above have examined and focused their research on terrorist recruitment, propaganda narratives, and radicalization, including self-radicalization via the internet as well as counter-propaganda measures. However, it has not specifically touched upon the role of translation in reaching a global audience, particularly the terrorist efforts in recruiting potential members and propagating radical narratives/propaganda around the world. There is no conflicting or different opinion regarding the findings of these previous studies, all of them are complementing each other, but of seven studies, only two discussed the context of propaganda in Indonesia and raised the issue of how Al-Qaeda utilized translation as part of their strategies to gain more followers. These studies have not specifically addressed the role of translation in terrorism propaganda activities, especially in the Indonesian context.

Finally, most of these researches focused solely on the link between the internet and propaganda. These rationales encourage researchers to compile research on the role of translation in terrorist propaganda because the internet and Dark web technologies enable anyone to access propaganda messages, translate them, upload them to the internet, and then disseminate them. This study does not intend to examine one particular case but rather to raise awareness about the role of translation in extremist propaganda. This research is expected to complement previous studies on the internet and its relation to the threat of global terrorism propaganda.

C. METHOD

The research uses the qualitative method. Qualitative research examines the natural condition of objects, where the researcher as the key instrument, is inductive, and the results would emphasize the process and meaning rather than generalization (Samputra, 2021). The research design is descriptive and aims at accurately and systematically describing a population, situation, or phenomenon. Descriptive research design can answer the what, where, when, and how questions but does not answer the why questions. Descriptive research is the right choice for research aiming at identifying characteristics, frequencies, trends, and categories. The methods used for data collection are primary and secondary data. Primary data was obtained from a sample taken from the book titled *Nadharat Fi Al Ijma' Al Qath'i*, and secondary data was obtained from various news and research findings (McCombes, 2022).

Nadharat Fi Al Ijma' Al Qath'i contains a discussion on the opinion of Sheikh Abdul Qadir bin Abdul 'Aziz who claimed the certainty (*ijma' qath'i*) for the infidelity of the apostate government per its individual (ta'yin). The book's title was translated into Indonesian as *Ramai-Ramai Mengkafirkan para Pembela Thaghut: Haruskah Mengkafirkan Setiap Individunya?* (Collectively Declaring Thaghut Defenders as Infidel: Should it be Designated Individually?). The book was translated by a team of 3 by name of Abu Anas, Abu 'Ammar, and Abu Musa. The translated book was chosen as the primary data source as it indicated that the police, national army, and intelligence services are part of the

Thaghut government, including the ulama assembly, journalists, and mass media as pro-Thaghut for defending the secular government (thaghut).

The author will take a sample of some excerpts from the translated sentences to be analyzed. Whereas, secondary data was taken from ten research findings and news extracts, nationally and internationally. The analytical method is descriptive qualitative, namely analyzing, describing, and summarizing various conditions and situations from the collected data (Winartha, 2006). The data analysis technique is an interactive model qualitative approach initiated by Miles and Huberman, consisting of data collection, data presentation, data reduction, and conclusions drawing or verification (Miles et al., 2014).

D. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### 1. The Evolution of Jihadist Communication

Just like the development of internet technology, the communication used by the jihadists is also evolved. Leone's findings (2015) revealed that after the September 11 attacks, terrorist groups' communication has evolved, and their communication targets have also changed. Osama Bin Laden's video initially targeted Arabic and Muslim audiences while the West could only access its content through the linguistic and cultural mediation of translators and interpreters. However, they no longer aimed at Western audiences as their targets to be attacked but also as potential followers to be recruited. That is why the language used in terrorist propaganda narratives has been geared toward English, French, Russian, German, and Italian. Leone argued that this shift in communication posed three significant security risks, namely the indoctrination of young Europeans by ISIS propaganda to get involved in terrorist activities in the Middle East, the return of European fighters to their home countries after being indoctrinated and trained militarily with the agenda and ability to carry out significant attacks similar to the incidents happened in Belgium, France and Denmark and ISIS supporters in Europe gained detailed knowledge, primarily via the internet, to launch attacks on civilians in European cities.

Terrorist groups such as Al-Qaeda, ISIS, and Jabhat Al-Nusra have several online publications as their means of communication. Al-Qaeda has Inspire, Jabhat Al-Nusra has *Al-Risalah*, while ISIS has *Dabiq*, *Amaq* News and *Rumaiyah*. *Rumaiyah* has been *Dabiq's* successor since 2016, and although not that much different from its predecessor, *Rumaiyah* is far more influential in the world of jihadist propaganda due to its broader reach. *Rumaiyah* is translated into ten languages: English, Indonesian, Bosnian, French, German, Kurdish, Pashtun, Russian, Turkish, and Uyghur. *Rumaiyah* also complements two other ISIS publications released in Arabic, namely *Al-Naba* (released weekly) and *Amaq* News Agency (released daily) (Mahzam, 2017). Dabiq itself is known for its high-quality production, making direct appeals to Western audiences and providing translations into languages such as English, French, and German (Azani & Dotti, 2021).

FIG. 5.5 - THE POSTER INTRODUCING THE ITALIAN TRANSLATION OF
ABU BAKR AL-BAGHDADI'S LAST SPEECH

FIG. 5.6 - THE ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF THE OFFICIAL STATEMENT
REGARDING THE DEATH OF LORENZO ORSETTI
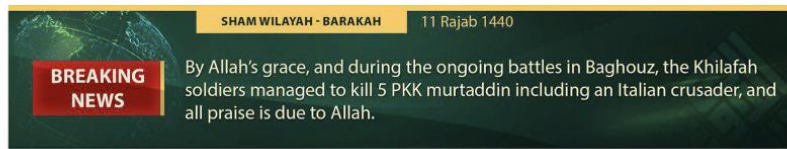
Figure 1. Examples of Translations of Posters and News in Italian and English
Source: Mazzoni (2019, 103-105)

The findings of Mazzoni's research (2019) in Italy revealed that translations of bulletins, official statements, and infographics sourced from *Al-Naba*, were broadcasted via Telegram by a channel called *'Ghulibati a Rum* (GaR),' which means Conquest of Rome. According to Mazzoni, GaR is not an official channel of ISIS, like *Halummu*, which distributes materials in English, and *Infos an-Nur* (IaN), which distributes materials translated into French. GaR has three channels: GaR 10, GaR 11, and GaR 14. GaR 10 is the main channel and the first to broadcast messages translated into Italian. In addition to the Telegram channel mentioned above, (Mazzoni, 2018) found that other channels translated original statements or newsletters in Arabic into German, such as Journalist Schwarz and Mr. Sommer and Somali Makawi News. Then there is Meydan Haber which translated into Turkish and *Al Bayynah* which translated into various Eastern European languages, such as Albanian, Russian and Bosnian.

Mazzoni's research (2019) also compared the total translations broadcasted by each ISIS affiliate channel on Telegram, such as the Nashir News Agency (NNA), from March 17 to May 7, 2019. It was identified that the NNA channel, which broadcasted the English translations made by the Halummu channel, has distributed 303 translations out of 355 official announcements. Meanwhile, the IAN channel broadcasted ISIS media productions in French, distributing translations of 163 Amaq News Agency bulletins, eight bulletins, and 56 official statements of the group, including the bulletins, which are considered significant about the Battle for the Vengeance of the Blessed Sham Wilaya Operation (Battle of Revenge from the Blessed Sham Region), ISIS first operations in Mali and Congo and their claimed attacks in Bangladesh, the publication of Abu Bakr al-

Baghdadi videos and attacks carried out in Sri Lanka. Meanwhile, GaR only translated 26 of the 722 official media productions released by this terrorist organization.

FIG. 4.8 - THE ITALIAN TRANSLATION, RELEASED BY GaR,
OF THE OFFICIAL STATEMENT REGARDING THE ATTACKS CARRIED OUT
IN SRI LANKA IN 2019

Figure 2. Example of translation in Italian about the Attack on Sri Lanka in 2019
Source: Mazzoni (2019:108)

Apart from GaR, Italian ISIS followers' involvement in opening channels for the translation of media products can also be seen from the emergence of the *Al Mutarjim* (The Translator) project. Although *Al Mutarjim* only operated briefly and closed its Italian language channels, it had branches that disseminated official ISIS or *Amaq* News Agency communications into German, Spanish, Farsi, French, Filipino, Bengali, Pashtun, Urdu, and Indonesian. Other international projects are connected to the universe of ISIS supporters, which at the time of Mazzoni's research, were in the process of expansion and were able to encourage online da'wah activities in Italy. Among this network are the *Anis Almohadin* channel and Ash Shaff News. Anis Almohadin aimed at translating ISIS statements and original works by other channels associated with ISIS support networks such as Al Battar Media, *Al Saqri* Military Foundation, and Al Abd al Faqir into various languages. *Anis Almohadin* has Russian, French, English, Filipino, and Spanish translation channels. Meanwhile, *Ash Shaff* News disseminated translations of ISIS official statements with more detailed and in-depth coverage compared to the news officially reported by ISIS. *Al Mutarjim, Ash Shaff* News, and *Anis Almohadin* have official accounts that often ask volunteers to help their network with translation.

After its defeat, ISIS was trying to rebound, and a sign of ISIS media revival was seen in the first half of 2018. Research (al-Lami, 2019) found that ISIS began to offer regular English translations of its official media output on Telegram. This effort was initiated in February and consolidated in April when the ISIS-affiliated channel, Nashir News Agency-English, was active alongside the Arabic version of Nashir's account. Although an English translation of ISIS-affiliated media is not new, this is the first time that such translation has been carried out in a systematic and timely manner for ISIS propaganda, and is still being carried out regularly.

Meleagrou-Hitchens (2020), who wrote about Anwar al-Awlaki's jihad journey, stated that the first step to making the ideology of Salafi-jihadism accessible to Western audiences and increase the number of potential followers is to ensure that the works of influential ideologues are translated into English because most of these works were only available in Arabic. In 2009, Awlaki explained his motivation for translating and analyzing jihadist messages, was that most of the jihadist literature was only available in Arabic. No publisher would take the risk to translate them. The only party who spent money and time translating the jihadist literature were Western intelligence agencies, which obviously would never be willing to share the translations. After moving to England, Awlaki began to orally translate The Book of Jihad of the fourteenth-century Muslim scholar and warrior, Ahmad Ibrahim Muhammad al-Dimashqi al-Dumyati, also known as Ibn Nuhaas. The reason was that most of his audiences did not recognize this book which has been viewed by the jihadist groups as an essential contribution and often referred to it as a justification for jihad in the modern era.

Figure 3. *Al-Mutarjim* **Terjemahan Translation Channel Logo Example**
Source: Mazzoni (2019:110)

In addition to Awlaki's translation works, another jihadist, Muhammad Mahmud, translated the al-*Maqdisi* pamphlet into German to enrich the pro-jihadist Egyptian fatwa Ahmad Ashush (Fisher & Prucha, 2019). However, Hitchens argued that Awlaki's translation was very influential and that his quotes remain popular and are frequently referred to by ISIS followers from the West. The fact was revealed in many terrorist trials mentioning Awlaki's 2005 oral translation, Constants on the Path of Jihad, had inspired violence. In 2008, the US Department of Homeland Security received an assessment from their Extremism and Radicalization Unit which disclosed that the English transcripts and recordings of Constants on the Path of Jihad circulating on the internet and in hard copy have incited American Muslims to carry out violent attacks at home, and against US targets abroad. His lectures were also tailored to insulate readers with widely circulated non-violent messages.
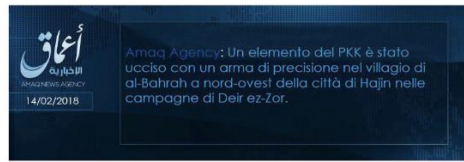
Figure 4. Examples of translated text superimposed on the *Amaq* News Agency Design Page and Graphic Design of the GaR Channel
Source: Mazzoni (2019:96-98)

Examples of tendentious messages conveyed through translations can be found in the excerpts of *Nadharat Fi Al Ijma' Al Qath'i*; for example, the Publisher's Preface, is written as follows:

The secular government that governs Muslim lands with applicable laws from the Age of Ignorance (*Jahiliyyah*) and abolished Islamic laws has been one of the greatest calamities for Muslims for more than half a century. One of the problems that stemmed from this is the legal status of the defenders and guardians enforcing those secular systems. The most prominent defenders and guardians of the *thaghut* government (*Anshar thaghut*) are the police, the national army, the intelligence service, the assembly of *thaghut* ulema, pro-*thaghut* journalists, and the pro-*thaghut* mass media. …Some scholars believed that the defenders and guardians of the *taghut* government, of them, must be declared infidel individually *(takfir mu'ayyan)* because there are no barriers in them that prevent them to be infidels (*mawani' takfir*) (page vi)

Furthermore, there are sentences stating that the highest level of monotheism (tawhid) is striving for overthrowing the *thaghuts* and declared jihad against them. The highest level of tawhid and its highest peak would be trying to overthrow these *thaghuts* and declaring jihad against them (p. ix). On another page of the Preface, it is also stated that anyone who becomes a soldier without coercion has not avoided *thaghut*, which means they do not belong to the tawhid or Muslim.

Anyone who makes himself a soldier, helper, assistant, and guard of the *thaghut* voluntarily, not forced or obliged (in military service, --translator), certainly has not avoided *thaghut*. Moreover, anyone who does not avoid *thaghut* is not practicing tawhid and is not a Muslim as they have not realized the lowest level of tawhid yet... How can these people avoid thaghut while they are obedient soldiers, their eyes do not sleep to protect the infidel laws, they wasted their youth and age to defend it, and they sacrificed their blood and lives to strengthen, execute, and enforce the law? (p. x)
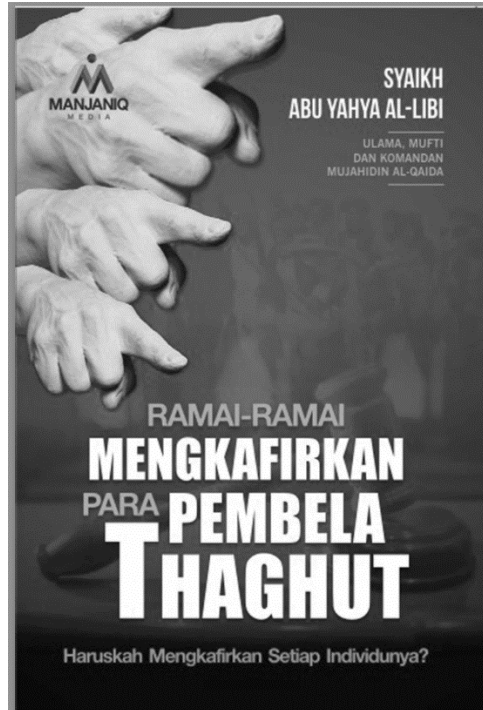
Figure 5. Cover of *Nadharat Fi Al Ijma' Al Qath'i*

The following example is a sentence that conveys the statement of Islamic scholars that "Whoever does not declare infidels as an infidel then they are also an infidel." (Qaid, n.d., p. xiv). The translation of this book can be downloaded from the internet by anyone, and if one does not read it carefully, it may potentially lead to misunderstanding. However, the threat of propaganda expanded by translation does not come only from 'human' translators but also 'machine' translators, namely Google Translate. In 2021, Andrew Dymock was found guilty of terrorism and hate crimes. He used the online platform to raise funds for the System Resistance Network (SRN), one of the several groups which tried to take over the far-right National Action (NA) group. An examination of Dymock's computer revealed that his extremist views began when he was 17 years old, they also found a Google translation of the words "kill all Jews" (Quinn, 2021).

2. The Development of Extremist Propaganda Translation in Indonesia

Meanwhile, in Indonesia, translation has long played a role in spreading extremism. The influx of thoughts from Muslim Brotherhood figures such as Sayyid Qhutub, Sayyid Hawwa, and Hasan Al Banna towards the followers of Darul Islam (DI) in Solo and Yogyakarta occurred through books written by Muslim Brotherhood clerics that had been widely translated since the 1970s (Solahudin, 2011). Until now, the translation still plays a central role in global terrorism and radicalization both offline and online. Terrorist groups and supporters also rely on translation as part of their strategic moves in disseminating propaganda materials. For example, Aman Abdurrahman, in

addition to acting as the leader of *Jamaah Ansharut Daulah* (JAD), was also known as the translator of 150 ISIS writings into Indonesian (Nathaniel, 2018). Aman is diligent in translating pro-ISIS materials from Arabic into Indonesian and disseminating them to his students via the internet (Jordan, 2017).

In 2022, Densus 88 arrested five suspected terrorists supporting ISIS who had direct ties to ISIS propaganda in the Middle East. According to a police spokesman, the five suspects actively received materials from the terrorist group and translated them into Indonesian before sharing them on social media. The five were arrested in different places and were members of the *'Annajiyah* Media Center' whose role was to distribute digital posters for terrorism propaganda (Batubara, 2022). Then in Malang, East Java, a student with the initials IA was arrested for spreading ISIS videos in Arabic and also those that he has translated and subtitled into Indonesian (Habibie, 2022). While in the United States, Benjamin Carpenter, alias Abu Hamza, from Tennessee, was accused of translating ISIS propaganda materials into English. He was charged with leading the *Ahlut-Tawhid* publication which translated and published ISIS and pro-ISIS materials (Kompas, 2021).

Terrorist groups have utilized translation for so long in their favor, but law enforcement officials have been doing the same thing as well, making use of translation to counter terrorism. For example, in the United States, the Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP), under the Department of Justice, has established a robust and competent anti-terror infrastructure, including an administrator and assistant administrator to oversee collaboration and communication among BOP Liaisons, for example between those who are posted in National Joint Counter-Terrorism Task Force in FBI with those working under BOP Counterterrorism Unit. Their missions include 'identifying and validating detained terrorists, providing translation and transcription services, monitoring and analyzing terrorist communication, developing intelligence products that would enable the staff to make informed decisions, develop and organize practical and relevant anti-terror training as well as coordinating and liaising with the intelligence community (Morton & Silber, 2018). This effort is significant because, according to (Fisher & Prucha, 2019), one of the factors that enabled ISIS to operate efficiently online was the 'protection' of their secret network by the Arabic language, which was compulsory for those who would like to access the network, while hardly any researchers speak in Arabic. This has created a linguistic firewall (linguistic security system).

Another measure that law enforcers may take in addition to mastering the terrorists' language, is reading the translations of terrorist propaganda materials. Mazzoni's research findings revealed that after reading the translation from the Italian GaR channel, it can be identified that the translator is not a native Italian speaker because the translations were full of misspellings, syntax, and grammatical errors. Moreover, the more complex the translations were, the more errors can be found until the text in Italian became too difficult to understand. Thus, it is highly likely that the GaR translator is not

a native who was born and raised in Italy and they have very limited knowledge of Italian. The translations also have linguistic calques[2], possibly due to mistranslation from French to Italian.

However, law enforcement officers cannot work alone in tackling acts of terrorism; collaboration with relevant stakeholders is required. (Chen, 2012) described that several non-profit and profit organizations were engaged in the anti-terror field and provided translation services for the interest of law enforcement. For example, the Middle East Media Research Institute (MEMRI), a Washington-based non-profit, regularly translated media and annotated videos, news articles, and websites of the Middle East region from Arabic, Persian and Turkish. The Institute also provides supporters of Islamic reform with a platform to translate their ideas and thoughts. In addition, MEMRI also established The Jihad and Terrorism Project to bridge the language gap between the West and the Middle East by providing a timely translation of Arabic, Farsi, and Hebrew documents. There is also SITE (Search for International Terrorist Entities), formed in 2002 by Rita Katz, which monitored terrorist activities, stored translations of terrorist media and documents, and made them available to the media, governments, and companies that subscribed to their organizations, The Site Intelligence Group.

3. Multilingual Problems in Translation

Multilingual problems are critical nowadays, especially in Dark Web research because much of Jihadist content is written in various languages, such as Arabic, German, French, etc. Various ways to process multilingual content have been carried out to execute translation tasks, one of which is by using a machine translation-based approach, a corpus-based approach, and a dictionary-based approach. One of the most popular machine translation applications is Google Translation because it provides translation functions into more than 80 languages. The language detection and language translation APIs that this automatic machine translator provides can be integrated into web pages using JavaScript to automatically translate other languages into English (Chen, 2012). Despite this fact, the use of Google Translate must be done carefully, especially in policing domain to avoid unwanted things like the case in 2012 when the Copenhagen Police, in Denmark, accused a Kurdish man of financing terrorism crime based on evidence of text messages which was translated using Google Translate. The accused reportedly felt disturbed after interrogation, and his lawyer asserted that using Google Translate cannot be considered lawful in legal proceedings (CPHPost, 2012).

All the research findings above demonstrated the relationship between translation and terrorist propaganda activities. In line with Skopos's theory, the translation of propaganda narratives is made with the purpose that is to expand the 'reach' of

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[2] Kalke is a technique of translating words or phrases from the source language to the target language, both lexically and grammatically. See KBBI https://kbbi.kemdikbud.go.id/entri/kalke accessed on 2 October 2022

propagandist communication outside the country of origin of the terrorist groups/actors. As part of the global terrorism phenomenon, propaganda activities stretch out worldwide, where translation becomes one of the spearheads for propagandists to achieve their goals. According to Hoed, for a such a long time, translators have been considered agents of change who are capable to change the structure of social history, this conclusion is still valid today because the translated propaganda narratives may 'influence' the mindset of the readers.

In the translation manuscript of *Nadharat Fi Al Ijma' Al Qath'i*, the publisher has clearly stated the purpose of the translation, which is to provide a comparison to the translation of Sheikh Abdul Qadir bin Abdul Aziz teachings which had been widely circulated among *da'wah* activists for eight years. The publisher hoped that the translation may contribute to mutual respect, understanding, and love among the da'wah activists who 'coincidentally' chose different *tarjih*[3] results in this ijtihad. Thus, the publisher's statement of intent is clearly in line with Skopos theory which explains that translation is often done to fulfill certain goals (needs).

Based on the research results abovementioned, several things can be identified; first, translation can be used to disseminate radical narratives/extremist propaganda, for example, the excerpt from the book of *Nadharat Fi Al Ijma' Al Qath'i* above. Second, the translation of a target language can indicate the audience the propagandists aimed at, as suggested by Termeer & Duyvesteyn's findings about *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah* magazines translated into English to target women outside the Middle East region. Third, anyone can volunteer to help translate the propaganda narrative as Tarek Mehanna and Awlaki, and volunteer translators for the radical website *Maktabah Al-Tawhid Wal Jihad* (MTJ) did. Fourth, translation may help law enforcement officers to reveal 'information' that has been 'encrypted' in Arabic or other foreign languages used by terrorists in their propaganda, as demonstrated in Ali Fisher and Nico Prucha's research. Fifth, a translation could also help counter-terrorism endeavors to counter terrorist/propaganda narratives, as done by the Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP). Sixth, translation may assist law enforcement officers in monitoring the activities of terrorist propagandists; this activity can be carried out by non-governmental organizations such as MEMRI and SITE. Seventh, machine translators, such as Google Translate, Bing, and the like, can help both law enforcement officers and terrorist group sympathizers to understand and spread propaganda narratives. Eighth, any machine translator cannot be used solely; a 'human' translator is still needed, especially in pro-Justitia cases; this is important to avoid the same mistakes as the police in Denmark did. Ninth, translation can be used to amplify the 'message power' towards the target audience, as *Ash Shaff* News had done which provided translations with more information compared to the news coverage broadcasted by the terrorist groups. On the other hand, it can be helpful for law

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[3] Stronger opinion

enforcement officers in 'disseminating counter-propaganda narratives.' Finally, law enforcement officers may use translation as benchmarks or indicators for identifying how terrorist organizations manage their forces and resources.

E.   CONCLUSION

The findings of this study revealed how online radicalization can be further expanded and better 'understood' by the citizens of the world through translation. In responding to this phenomenon, law enforcers in Indonesia should be more vigilant, considering hundreds of vernacular languages in Indonesia which can be potentially used to 'encrypt' and propagate their extremist narratives. Therefore, optimizing counter-terrorism efforts by involving the translation aspect may seriously be considered, especially knowing the rapid growth of technological advances in machine translation applications such as Google and Bing Translate. Counter-narratives in the terrorist language of operations or target audience's language are needed. Considering that the enemy is making this massive and systematic translation, encouraging their sympathizers to translate voluntarily, the public, through non-governmental organizations working in the anti-terror sector, should be aware of this situation and assist the law enforcement officers in translating extremist/terrorist counter-narratives materials. While the government, on the other hand, may consider devoting adequate resources to provide translations from various foreign or vernacular languages into Indonesian and vice versa to tackle terrorism in Indonesia. This research has many limitations, but the researcher hopes that the results may encourage other studies to examine similar topics related to the role of translation in countering terrorism, one of them is translation forensics which is closely connected to forensic linguistics and gradually plays a significant role but not received enough attention.

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