



Negotiating Indonesian Cultural Identity in the Arabic Translation of the Novel *Gadis Kretek*

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ABSTRACT

Cultural translation in novels requires balancing fidelity to the source culture with acceptability in the target culture. This study examines the negotiation of cultural identity in the Arabic translation of *Gadis Kretek*. Using a qualitative descriptive design with comparative and interpretative approaches, the research analyses linguistic units, words and phrases reflecting Indonesian culture and their Arabic equivalents. The data sources include Ratih Kumala's *Gadis Kretek* and its Arabic version *Fātatu As-Sajair*, translated by Mohammed Ramadhan. Data were collected through reading and note-taking, then analysed by classification, comparison, interpretation, and conclusion drawing. The findings indicate that cultural identity negotiation occurs across various domains, including material culture, social practices, address forms, religious expressions, ecology, gestures, and political references. The negotiation is primarily shaped by linguistic and cultural differences between Indonesian and Arabic. The translator successfully maintains a balance between cultural fidelity and readability in the target text. This study contributes to cultural translation and intercultural communication research by demonstrating how cultural meanings are mediated and transformed. It underscores the need for translators to understand socio-cultural contexts to preserve message authenticity and intercultural intelligibility.

1. INTRODUCTION

The practice of translating cultural identity has become a complex discourse among researchers. This condition is because the perspectives used in translating cultural identity are highly diverse (Olalla-Soler, 2019). This complexity stems from the translator's efforts to convey cultural identity in the target language (Blenkinsopp & Pajouh, 2010). From the translator's perspective, Olk (2009) states that a lack of cultural knowledge of both the source and target languages can hinder the translation of cultural identity. Meanwhile, from a cultural standpoint, Zagood et al. (2023) emphasise that the greater the cultural gap, the more challenging it is to translate cultural identity. As a result, translators need to negotiate with the target culture. In fact, Tessicini (2014) asserts that every translation process involves negotiation. Negotiation can be understood as a "middle ground" in addressing cultural differences between the source and target languages. In this case, the translator can engage in bargaining by adjusting the target language culture (Bedecker & Feinauer, 2006). Based on this phenomenon, it is clear that negotiation plays a crucial role in shaping the dynamics of cultural identity translation.

Negotiation in translation is a process of finding equivalence between two languages and cultures. This process involves not only the transfer of meaning but also the consideration of emotions, values, and cultural nuances (Eco, 2013). In translating cultural identity, negotiation is necessary to convey meaning accurately while preserving the original cultural identity. Cultural identity encompasses various aspects that shape a community's character. Newmark (1988) classifies cultural identity into six main categories: ecology, material culture, social culture, religion, political and administrative systems, and gestures and customs. In translation, these elements often pose challenges due to differences in the cultural systems of the source and target languages. When no direct cultural equivalent exists, the translator must find a way to convey the concept. Some translators choose a literal approach to preserve the hidden meaning in the source text (Brislin & Freimanis, 2001). However, this approach can lead to ambiguity in the target text because the language's culture heavily influences meaning. Therefore, cultural negotiation is a crucial step in balancing the accuracy of meaning and the readability of the target text, ensuring that the cultural message is understood within the target-language context (Redelinghuys, 2019).

In the translation of novels, there is often a negotiation of Indonesian cultural identity to align the meaning with the target culture context. This statement is because each language has its own value system and culture (Bonvillain, 2019). Based on this argument, translators must choose an appropriate approach to convey the message without losing its original meaning (Newmark, 1988). Indonesian culture is rich in local terms, traditions, and history that lack direct equivalents in Arabic, making negotiation efforts essential. Several studies have shown that literary translation often struggles to preserve the source text's cultural identity. For instance, the research by Al-Hamzi et al. (2024) indicates that translating literary texts into a target language often requires cultural negotiation to align with the prevailing norms and values. Moreover, the study by Sumartanto et al. (2025) on translating Indonesian cultural identity into foreign languages emphasises the importance of negotiation without losing the

essence of the source culture. Therefore, translating cultural identity reflects a complex negotiation of cultural identities.

To date, studies on the translation of cultural identity have primarily focused on four main areas: analysis based on resistance and negotiation, translation strategies, translation techniques, and translation procedures. Research on the translation of cultural identity from the perspective of resistance and negotiation has been conducted by several scholars (Arrasyid & Sajarwa, 2023; Sajarwa et al., 2023). In addition, researchers have explored analyses based on translation strategies (Abdelaal, 2024; Al-Tenaijy & Al-Batineh, 2024; Farkhan et al., 2020). Meanwhile, some scholars have focused on translation techniques as their area of study (Anis & bin Syed Abdullah, 2023; Sukaesih et al., 2025; Zagood et al., 2023). Several researchers have also focused on translation procedures (Amenador & Wang, 2022; Kurnia & Bram, 2021). These studies have shown that previous research has primarily focused on the translation of cultural identity. However, studies examining how cultural identity resists and negotiates have been scarce. Building on this gap, the present research offers a novel examination of the negotiation of Indonesian cultural identity in its translation into Arabic in the novel *Gadis Kretek*. Unlike previous studies that emphasise strategies or techniques, this study focuses on the dynamic process of cultural negotiation and reinterpretation, revealing how Indonesian identity is reshaped through intercultural interaction in the target text.

This study aims to analyse the negotiation of Indonesian cultural identity in the translation of the novel *Gadis Kretek* into Arabic. The story encompasses cultural identities, including traditions, history, and local wisdom, particularly in relation to the cigarette industry. These cultural identities change both form and meaning when translated into Arab culture. In translation, differences in value systems and cultural concepts between Indonesia and the Arab world can lead to negotiation efforts. This study examines how cultural identity is negotiated within Arab culture and explores the cultural equivalence. Based on this, the study addresses two main questions. First, how is the pattern of cultural identity negotiation in the translation of *Gadis Kretek* into Arabic? Second, what factors cause the negotiation of cultural identity? The answers to these two questions will provide insight into how Indonesian culture is negotiated within a different cultural identity context in translation.

2. METHODS

The data in this study consist of cultural identities expressed as linguistic units, including both words and phrases. Meanwhile, the data source is the novel *Gadis Kretek* by Ratih Kumala (Kumala, 2012) and its Arabic translation, *Fātatu As-Sajā'ir*, by Mohammed Ramadhan (Ramadhan, 2018). *Gadis Kretek* was chosen because it has attracted significant attention both domestically and internationally (Pratiwi & Darni, 2024). Its popularity indicates that the novel has a strong cultural appeal and is relevant to study in the field of translation. Moreover, the book contains numerous cultural terms that represent Indonesian cultural identity, including traditions, the history of the clove cigarette industry, and the social and historical values of Javanese society (Hardiyanti et al., 2021). The selection of this novel

is also based on the complexity of its cultural elements. As a literary work rich in local nuances, this novel poses challenges in translation, particularly in conveying cultural identity in Arabic.

The research method used in this study is a qualitative descriptive method. According to Creswell & Creswell (2017), the qualitative descriptive method is employed to gain a deep understanding of phenomena through the analysis of textual data. This method is also applied in translation studies, as demonstrated by several researchers (Anis et al., 2024; Hanifa et al., 2025; Husna et al., 2024; Kurniawan et al., 2023; Nurmala et al., 2022). In this study, the method is used to identify cultural identity in the source text (ST) of the novel *Gadis Kretek* and the target text (TT) *Fātatu As-Sajā'ir*. Cultural identity is determined through expressions that represent Indonesian culture and how these elements appear in the Arabic translation. In addition, a comparative method is used to examine similarities and differences in cultural identity between the ST and the TT. This method helps reveal how cultural negotiation occurs in the translation process and to what extent Indonesian cultural identity is preserved or altered in the target text. An interpretative method is also employed in this study. This method is used to interpret expressions that represent cultural identity in both the source and target texts. The interpretation takes into account the social, cultural, historical, and linguistic contexts underlying the texts.

Data collection followed systematic steps. The novel *Gadis Kretek* and its Arabic translation *Fātatu As-Sajā'ir* were first read to understand the story's context and cultural elements. Cultural identities in both texts were identified and documented as linguistic units (words and phrases) in a comparative table, showing translation negotiation patterns. The Arabic data were transliterated for accurate comparison, and each item was numbered for classification and consistency. Data analysis involved classifying cultural identities using Newmark's (1988) framework, including ecology, material culture, social culture, religion, political systems, and customs based on 33 data excerpts representing Indonesian cultural identity, with several representative examples analysed in each category to illustrate patterns of cultural negotiation. Comparisons between source and target texts identified how cultural elements were preserved or adapted. Differences were interpreted by considering linguistic and cultural factors influencing translation choices. Conclusions highlighted the negotiation of cultural identity in translating *Gadis Kretek* into *Fātatu As-Sajā'ir* and the implications of these translational variations.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Results

Indonesia is the world's largest archipelagic country, stretching from Sabang to Merauke, and is rich in cultural and traditional diversity. Cultural diplomacy is one of the ways Indonesia introduces its cultural identity to the international stage, including to the Middle East. The translation of Indonesian literature, such as Ratih Kumala's *Gadis Kretek*, into Arabic is a concrete form of this effort. The novel *Gadis Kretek* not only tells the story of the clove cigarette industry but also reflects the social, cultural, and political dynamics of Indonesia in the past. Through cultural negotiation in translation, Indonesia's local values can be widely introduced. This statement, in turn, can strengthen Indonesia's

diplomatic relations with Middle Eastern countries. Negotiation can be seen in the translation of material culture elements. Material culture is a part of culture manifested in a society's physical objects and architecture. This Data includes clothing, tools, buildings, art, and other objects used in daily life. The data presented below illustrates negotiation in various types of material culture.

Table 1. Negotiation Patterns in the Translation of Material Culture

| Number | ST | TT |
|--------|---|--|
| 1 | Ia masih teringat aroma <i>tingwe</i> bikinan Dasiyah. (GK, VIII/148) | كان ما يزال يستطيع شم رائحة <i>سجائر</i> داسيا <i>Kāna mā yazālu yastathī'u syamma rā'ichata <i>sajā'ir</i> Dāsiyā</i> (FS, VIII/155) |
| 2 | Bagaimana tidak, <i>kretek</i> mampu membuat seseorang merasa ketergantungan. (GK, XIII/221) | ولم لا، و <i>السجائر</i> تجعل المرء يشعر بالانتماء <i>Wa lima lā, wa <i>as-sajā'ir</i> taj'alu al-mar'a yasy'uru bil-intimā'</i> (FS, XIII/237) |
| 3 | Lalu membungkus bayi merah itu dengan <i>jarit batik</i> sebagai bedong (GK, VI/103-104) | لقت الطفلة في قطعة من <i>القماش</i> ومن ثم <i>Wa min tsumma laffat ath-thiflata fī qith'atin min <i>al-qimāsyi</i></i> (FS, VI/107) |
| 4 | Ia ingin mengenakan <i>kebaya</i> Jawa beludru hitam, dengan <i>sanggul</i> sasakan serta <i>selop</i> penuh berhiaskan manik-manik. (GK, XIII/223) | وخططت لارتداء <i>بلوزة</i> جاوية بقُطيفة سوداء مُقلّمة، و <i>كعكة</i> رسمية في شعرها، وفي قدميها <i>حذاء</i> مغطى بالخرز المزخرف <i>Wa khaththathat li-irtidā'i <i>blūzah</i> jawiyyah bi-qatīfah sawdā'a muqallamah, wa <i>ka'katun</i> rasmiyyatun fī sya'rihā, wa fī qadamayhā <i>chidzā'an</i> mughaththayan bil-kharazi al-muzakhraf</i> (FS, XIII/240) |
| 5 | Sebelum pergi, Mak Iti' berpesan, "ari-arinya ditaruh di <i>kendil</i> , kubur di depan rumah, kasih <i>sentir</i> , biar terang. (GK, VI/104) | قبل أن تغادر، قالت ماك آتي لموريا: "لقد وضعت المشيمة البرطمان، ادفنه أمام المنزل، وأشعل <i>مصباحاً</i> حوله في هذا <i>Qabla an tughadira, qālat Māk Atī li-Mūriyā: "Laqad waḍa'tu al-masyīmah fī hādzā <i>al-barthamān</i>, idfinhu amāma al-manzil, wa asy'il <i>mishbāchan</i> ḥawlahu</i> (FS, VI/108) |
| 6 | Ibarat <i>lakban</i> , uang yang ditempelkan ke mulut orang-orang itu mampu menempel sedemikian rekat sehingga Soeraja bisa menjalani kehidupan layaknya orang | الأموال الأفواه فصار وك <i>الشريط اللاصق</i> ، أغلقت سويراجا يعيش حياته مثل الآخرين <i>Wa ka-<i>asy-syarith al-lāshiq</i>, aghlaqat al-amwāl al-afwāh faṣāra Suwīrājā ya'isyu ḥayātahu mithla al-ākharīn</i> |

| | | |
|----|--|---|
| | kebanyakan. (GK, XIII/239) | (FS, XIII/256) |
| 7 | Idroes Moeria pernah mendengar ramalan itu dari Kyai yang dia temui di langgar (GK, III/49) | سمع إدروس موريا ذات مرة عن نبوة الشيخ في مسجد <i>Samī'a Idrūs Mūriyā dhāta marratin 'an nubu'ati asy-syaikh fī al-masjid</i> (FS, III/59) |
| 8 | Dua kuli muncul mengangkat sebatang kayu fondasi (GK, V/100) | عاملان كانا يحملان إطاراً خشبياً من أجل أساس المنزل <i>'Amilāni kānā yahmilāni ithāran khasyabiyyān min ajli asāsi al-manzil</i> (FS, III/105) |
| 9 | Bahkan makanan yang bisa dikatakan lebih cocok untuk pesta pun ada yang membawanya: tumpeng nasi kuning , dan ayam utuh yang kelihatannya dipanggang. (GK, VIII/146) | ويشمل هذا الطعام الذي بدا جيداً جداً ويكأنه معد لحفلة: كرات الأرز والدجاج المقلي <i>Wa-yasymulu hādḥā al-tha'āmu alladhī badā jayidan jiddan wa-kannahu mu'addun li-chaflah: kurātu al-aruzzi wa-al-dajāji al-maqlī</i> (FS, VIII/153) |
| 10 | Lebih dari itu, kretek tidak seperti benda propaganda lain semacam umbul-umbul atau selebaran politik. (GK, XIII/221) | كما أن السجائر ليست مثل غيرها من أشكال الدعاية، أو المنشورات السياسية مثل اللافئات <i>Kamā anna al-sajā'ira laisat mitsla ghairihā min asykal al-da'ayah, mitsla al-lāfitāt au al-mansyūrāt al-siyāsiyyah</i> (FS, XIII/237) |
| 11 | Mak Iti' memotong tali puser dengan sembilu (GK, VI/103) | بواسطة سكين قطعت ماك أي الحبل السري للطفلة <i>Qatha'at Māk Itī al-chabla as-surrī lil-thiflati bi-wāsithati sikkīn</i> (FS, VI/107) |

In Table 1, the term *tingwe*, which refers to hand-rolled cigarettes (*nglinting dewe*), is translated as سجاير /*sajā'ir*/ (1), while *kretek* is also translated as سجاير /*sajā'ir*/ (2). Traditional Javanese clothing, such as *jarit batik*, is translated as القماش /*al-qimāsyi*/ (3), while *kebaya* is rendered as بلوزة /*blūzah*/ (4a). Accessories like *sanggul* (hair bun) and *selop* (slippers) are translated as كعكة /*ka'katun*/ (4b) and حذاء /*chidzā'*/ (4c) according to their form and function. In the category of household items, *kendil* (earthenware pot) is translated as البرطمان /*al-barthamān*/ (5a), while *sentir* (oil lamp) is translated as مصباحاً /*mishbāchan*/ (5b). Adhesive tools such as *lakban* (duct tape) are translated as الشريط اللاصق /*asy-syarīth al-lāshiq*/ (6). In terms of architecture, *langgar*, a small place of worship, is translated as مسجد /*masjid*/ (7). Construction materials like *kayu fondasi* (foundation wood) are rendered as إطاراً خشبياً من أجل أساس المنزل /*ithāran khasyabiyyān min ajli asāsi al-manzil*/ (8). In the culinary domain, *tumpeng nasi kuning* is translated as كرات الأرز /*kurātu al-aruzzi*/ (9). Decorative elements such as *umbul-umbul* are translated as اللافئات /*al-*

lāfitāt/ (10). Meanwhile, *sembilu*, which refers to a sharp blade or bamboo splinter, is translated as *واسطة سكين /wāsithati sikkīn/* (11).

Table 2. Negotiation Patterns in the Translation of Social Culture

| Number | ST | TT |
|--------|---|--|
| 12 | Erik memberikan ancer-ancer Rumah Rasta, demi kian ia menyebut tempat tinggalnya. (GK, II/21) | وصف إريك العنوان التقريبي لبیت الراستا الذي وأيضاً كاستوديو خاص به للعيش يستخدمه كملجأ <i>Washafa Īrik al-‘unwān at-taqribī li-baiti ar-Rāstā alladzī yasta‘miluhu kamalja’ lil-‘aisyi wa-aidhan ka-ustūdiyū khāshan bihi</i> (FS, II/32) |
| 13 | Simbok tersenyum melihat anak semata wayangnya tiba-tiba rajin begitu rupa (GK, IV/69) | ابتسمت الأم حين رأت ابنها فحأة يواضب على صلواته <i>Ibtasamat al-umma chīna ra’at ibnuhā faja’atan yuwādlibu ‘alā shalawātihi</i> (FS, IV/75) |
| 14 | Ibu, masih diliputi rasa cemburu, sekaligus sedih karena suaminya sakit keras dan sebentar lagi ‘lewat’ . (GK, XV/264) | ما زالت أمي كما هي، تخلتط مشاعر الغيرة والحزن داخلها، ومعرفتها أن زوجها قد يموت <i>Mā zālat ummī kamā hiya, takhtalithu masyā’iru al-ghīrah wa-al-chuzn dākhilahā, wa-bima’rifatihā anna zaujahā qad yamūtu</i> (FS, XV/285) |
| 15 | Romo sekarat. Berhari-hari dia mengigau-igau sebuah nama: Jeng Yah (GK, I/1) | أبي يحتضر، لأيام ظلّ يهذي منادياً اسم "جينج يا" <i>Abī yachtadhiru li-ayyāmin dzalla yahdzī munādiyan isma "Jinj Yā"</i> (FS, I/7) |
| 16 | Ya Mas Djagad, <i>wong</i> namanya saja Klobot Djagad. Mau beli, Mas? (GK, II/65) | السيد دجاجاد، لذلك سماها سجائر دجاجاد، هل ترغب في شراء البعض سيدي؟ <i>As-sayyid Dajajād, li-dzālik samāhā saǰā’ir Dajajād, hal targhabu fī syirā’il -ba’idhi, sayyidī?</i> (FS, III/73) |
| 17 | Simbok telah pula menyebutkan sejumlah nama gadis desa yang cantik dan dinilai derajatnya sama dengan Idroes Moeria (GK, IV/69) | كانت أمه تقترح عليه بنات آخرون من جميلات البلدة موريا الاجتماعي لكنهم في نفس مستوى <i>Kānat ummuhu taqtarihu ‘alaihi banātan ākharūna min jamilāt al-baldah, lākinna-hunna fī nafsi mustawā Mūriyā al-ijtimā’ī</i> (FS, IV/75) |

Because social culture is closely tied to both connotative and denotative meanings, several terms were selected to better align with the target language culture. In Table 2, the term *ancer-ancer*, which refers to an estimate of a location or a directional clue, is translated as العنوان التقريبي /*al-‘unwān at-taqrībī*/ (12). The phrase *anak semata wayangnya*, which emphasises that someone has only one child, is translated as ابنها /*ibnuhā*/ (13). In addition, the Indonesian euphemism *lewat*, often used to refer to death, is rendered as يموت /*yamūtu*/ (14). In the realm of social culture, the use of address terms in relational functions is a crucial element of Javanese communication. The term *Romo*, used in Javanese culture to address a father or spiritual figure, is translated as أبي /*Abī*/ (15), which aligns with the Arabic concept of 'father'. Similarly, the honorific *Mas*, which is used to show respect to an older male or someone of higher social status, is translated as سيدي /*sayyidī*/ (16), which carries a similar connotation in Arabic culture. Meanwhile, *Simbok*, a Javanese term of address for 'mother,' is adapted as أم /*ummun*/ (17), a commonly used Arabic term for 'mother.'

Table 3. Negotiation Patterns in the Translation of Ecological Terms

| Number | ST | TT |
|--------|---|--|
| 18 | Matanya melotot, mengubah nyali kami jadi semungil biji selasih (GK, I/2) | شعرت بأن رجولتنا قد انكسشت في حجم بذور البازلاء الحلوة <i>Sya'artu bi-anna rujūlatanā qad inkamasyat fī chajmi budzūr al-bāzilā' al-chulwah</i> (FS, I/8) |
| 19 | Ibunda Roem begitu girang telah jadi eyang, hingga pagi-pagi sudah pergi sendiri ke kebun di belakang, mencari daun katuk agar air susu putrinya lancar (GK, VI/104) | كانت أم روميسا شديدة الفرح بطفلة ابنتها، وفي هذا الصباح الباكر خرجت نحو الباحة الخلفية للبيت لتجمع أوراق نبات الكشمش لكي تغليها حتى تنثرها روميسا من أجل أن يتدفق الحليب بكثافة <i>Kānat 'Ummu Rumaisā' syadīdah al-farach bi-thiflati ibnatihā, wa fī hādzā ash-shabāch al-bākir kharajat nachwa al-bāchah al-khalfiyyah lil-bait li-tajma' aurāq nabāt al-kisymisy likai taghlīhahā chattā tasyrabahā Rumaisā' min ajli an yatadaffaq al-chalīb bikatsāfah</i> (FS, VI/109) |
| 20 | Tanpa ragu, Idroes Moeria mengambil sebatang tingwe bikinan Dasiyah dan diletakkan di antara kembang setaman miliknya (GK, VIII/146) | نعم ودون تردد أخرج إحدى سجاجير داسيا التي لفتها بنفسها ووضعها في زهرة النبتة التي اشتراها <i>Na'am wa dūna taraddud akhrajā ichdā saajā'ir Dāsiyā allatī laffathā binafsihā wa wadla'ahā fī zahrah an-nabtah allatī isytarāhā</i> (FS, VIII/153) |
| 21 | Dasiyah merunduk seperti | أحنت داسيا جبهتها المتوردة في حجل |

| | | |
|----|--|--|
| | kembang sepatu . Malu-malu. (GK, VIII/149) | <i>Achannat Dāsiyā jabhatahā al-mutawarridah fī khajal</i> (FS, VIII/156) |
| 22 | Ia ingat sempat berpikir, bahwa masyarakat Temanggung bisa hidup hanya dengan dua tanaman: pohon tembakau dan pohon pisang. (GK, XI/198) | وتذكر اعتقاده أن الناس في تيمانجانج يمكنهم العيش على نباتين فقط: التبغ وأشجار الموز <i>Wa tadzakkara i'tiqādahu anna an-nās fī Timanjāng yumkinuhum al- 'aisyi 'alā nabātain faqath: at-tubāgh</i> <i>wa asyār al-mauzu</i> (FS, XI/214) |
| 23 | Ingatan Tegar melanglang pada hari ketika ia pertama menginjak Desa Legoksari di Gunung Sumbing, Temanggung, tempat mereka membeli tembakau srinthil (GK, XI/198) | حنحت ذاكرة تيجار للمرة الأولى التي وضع فيها قدمه في قرية ليجوكساري على جبل سوبينج، في تيمانجانج، حيث قاموا بشراء التبغ <i>Janahat dzākirat Tījār lil-marrati al- ūlā allatī wadla'a fihā qadamahu fī qaryati Lijuksārī 'alā jabal Sūbing, fī Tīmānjāng, chaitsu qāmū bisyirā'i at-tubāgh</i> (FS, XI/213-214) |

In addition to material and social cultural elements, ecology also has a strong relationship with culture. Table 3 presents various adaptations of ecology-related terms. For instance, *biji selasih* is translated as بذور البازلاء الحلوة /*budhūr al-bāzilā' al-chulwah*/ (18) to match Arabic terms better. Likewise, *daun katuk* is rendered as أوراق نبات الكشمش /*aurāq nabāt al-kisymisy*/ (19), considering similarities in function and form within the local ecosystem. Furthermore, *kembang setaman* is rendered as زهرة البنتة /*zahrah an-nabtah*/ (20), while *kembang sepatu* is rendered as المتوردة /*al-mutawarridah*/ (21), aligning with terms more familiar to the target culture. Meanwhile, *pohon tembakau* and *tembakau srinthil* are both translated as التبغ /*at-tubāgh*/ (22) and (23), since this term is already commonly used in Arabic and does not require further modification.

Table 4. Negotiation Patterns in the Translation of Gestures and Habits

| Number | ST | TT |
|--------|--|---|
| 24 | Jangan-jangan dalam hati ngenyek kalau tulisan tangannya buruk (GK, II/66) | كان يأمل في نفسه ألا يكون هؤلاء التجار يسخرون سراً من خط يده <i>Kāna ya'mulu fī nafsihi allā yakūna hā'ulā' at-tujjār yaskharūna sirran min khaththi yadihi</i> (FS, III/74) |
| 25 | Aku sudah lama ndak ngeses , tapi sekarang keliatannya saat yang tepat buat ngretek (GK, XV/274) | لم أدخن منذ فترة طويلة، لكن يبدو أن هذا هو الوقت المناسب كي أفعل هذا! <i>Lam adkhan mundzu fatrah thawīlah, lākinnahu yabdū anna hādzā huwa al-waqtu al-munāsib kai af'ala hādzā!</i> |

| | | (FS, XV/296) |
|----|--|---|
| 26 | “Hari ini kamu ngelinting saja, biar bisa dapat sari kretek yang banyak buat Bapak, ya?” (GK, VII/133) | اليوم عليك أن تلفي معي السجائر لكي نحصل على عصارة التبغ من أجل أبينا <i>Al-yaumu ‘alaiki an taliffi ma’i as-sajā’ir likai nachshul ‘alā ‘ashārat at-tubgha min ajli abīnā</i> (FS, VII/138) |

Translating habits and gestures that do not involve spoken language can be complex. This Data is because, in certain situations, the way something is described may differ from its actual purpose. Based on Table 4, *ngenyek*, which refers to the act of mocking or belittling someone, is translated as *يسخرون /yaskharūna/* (24). Furthermore, *ngeses* in the source language refers to the habit of smoking, and it is translated as *أدخن /adkhan/* (25), which directly denotes the act of smoking in the target language. Meanwhile, *ngelinting*, which refers to the process of rolling or preparing a cigarette, is translated as *تلفي /taliffi/* (26), which is adjusted to the Arabic term for the act of rolling.

Table 5. Negotiation Patterns in the Translation of Religious Terms

| Number | ST | TT |
|--------|--|--|
| 27 | Tirakatan pun dimulai (GK, VIII/146) | بدأت عملية الصوم وتقدم القرابين <i>Bada’at ‘amaliyyah ash-shaum wa taqdīm al-qarābīn</i> (FS, VIII/152) |
| 28 | Mak Iti’ menyuruh Idroes Moeria mengumandangkan adzan di telinga bayi merah tersebut (GK, VI/104) | موريا أن عليه أن يُكبر في أحبرت ماك أني إدروس أذن طفلته الصغيرة الحمراء <i>Akhbarat Māk Itī Idrūs Muriyā anna ‘alaihi an yukabbira fī udzun thiflatihi ash-shaghīrah al-chamrā</i> (FS, VI/108) |
| 29 | Telah pula disuruhnya pemuda itu untuk beristikarah, minta petunjuk pada Yang Kuasa (GK, IV/69) | حتى أنها سألت ابنها أن يصلي لاستخارة الله <i>Chattā annahā sa’alat ibnuhā an yushalliya li-istikhārat Allāh</i> (FS, IV/75) |
| 30 | Suaranyalah yang benar-benar membangunkan orang orang kampung sehingga terpaksa melek dan bergesang mengambil air wudhu (GK, VI/103) | جعلهم صوتها يتقلبون في سرائرهم لكي يقوموا من نومهم من أجل الصلاة <i>Ja’alahum shautuhā yataqallabūna fī sarā’irihim likai yaqūmū min naumihim min ajli ash-shalāh</i> (FS, VI/107) |

Translating religious terms often involves negotiating perspectives between cultures. In the source culture, religious concepts may carry broader meanings, whereas in Arabic, these terms are adjusted to fit more specific structures and interpretations.

Based on Table 5, *tirakatan*, which in Javanese culture refers to a practice involving meditation, fasting, and offering, is translated as عملية الصوم وتقدم القرابين /*‘amaliyyat ash-shaum wa taqdīm al-qarābīn/* (27). The term *mengumandangkan adzan*, meaning to call for prayer, is rendered as يُكَبِّرُ /*yukabbira/* (28), aligning with the Islamic practice of calling worshippers to prayer. *Yang Kuasa*, a term in the source language referring to a supreme power or deity, is translated more specifically as الله /*Allāh/* (29), which relates directly to God in Islam. Meanwhile, *mengambil air wudhu*, meaning to perform ablution, is translated as أجل الصلاة /*ajli ash-shalāh/* (30), emphasising its purpose as a prerequisite for prayer.

Table 6. Negotiation Patterns in the Translation of Political and Administrative Terms

| Number | ST | TT |
|--------|---|---|
| 31 | Jika Pemerintah mengadakan proyek percontohan rumah tangga yang baik dan benar, maka pasti yang dipilih adalah orangtuaku (GK, I/2) | في الحقيقة لو أن الحكومة تبحث عن أسرة مثالية لكي تكون مثلاً يُحتذى به لكان أبي وأمي هما الاختيار الأفضل <i>Fī al-chaqīqah, lau anna al-chukūmah tabchatsu ‘an usrah mitsāliyah likay takūna mitsālan yuchtadzā bih, lakāna abī wa-ummī humā al-ikhtiyār al-afdlal</i> (FS, I/8) |
| 32 | Hatinya begitu gembira ketika usaha lobinya pada PKI berhasil (GK, XIII/221) | قلبه يقطر سعادة مع نجاح ارتباطه بالحزب الشيوعي <i>Qalbuhu yaqthuru sa‘ādatan ma‘a najāch irtibāthihi bil-chizbi asy-syuyū‘ī</i> (FS, XIII/237) |
| 33 | Ketika TNI tidak cuma mengobok-obok markas PKI (GK, XIII/226) | عندما قام الجيش الإندونيسي، بالتوجه إلى المقر الرئيس للحزب الشيوعي <i>‘Indamā qāma al-jaisyu al-Indūnīsī, bi-tawajjuh ilā al-maqari ar-ra‘īs lil-chizbi asy-syuyū‘ī</i> (FS, XIII/243) |

Table 6 illustrates the negotiation of political and administrative cultural identity through the translation of governmental and institutional terms. For instance, *Pemerintah* is translated as الحكومة /*al-chukūmah/* (31), reflecting the general concept of government administration. The abbreviation PKI, which refers to the *Indonesian Communist Party*, is translated as الحزب الشيوعي /*al-chizbu asy-syuyū‘ī/* (32), maintaining its ideological and political reference in the target language. Similarly, TNI, the abbreviation for Tentara Nasional Indonesia, is translated as الجيش الإندونيسي /*al-jaisyu al-Indūnīsī/* (33).

3.2 Discussion

Differences in interpreting material culture make negotiation an effort to overcome them. Material culture encompasses the physical objects used by society, such as clothing, food, and architecture (Dant, 1999; Knappett, 2010; Sheumaker & Wajda, 2007). In

translation, negotiating material culture involves adaptation and equivalence to ensure the concepts are understood in the target language. In the novel *Gadis Kretek*, several terms undergo negotiation. *Tingwe* and *kretek* are translated as سجائر /sajā'ir/, as Arab culture does not recognise specific distinctions between hand-rolled cigarettes and clove cigarettes. *Jarit batik* is adapted as القماش /al-qimāsy/, emphasising the fabric rather than the form. *Langgar*, a small place of worship, is translated as مسجد /masjid/ because of its functional equivalence in Islam. Negotiation arises from differences in cultural systems (Brett, 2000). Javanese culture holds strong symbolic meanings (Amin, 2012), while Arab culture tends to emphasise practical functions (Kassab, 2010). As a result, the translator adjusts terms to remain communicative in the target language. This process is also influenced by conceptual gaps across cultures, in which elements lacking direct equivalents are translated through description or substitution with more familiar terms.

Differences in linguistic and socio-cultural concepts influence the translation process (Abdulgader & Hamza, 2020). Both Indonesian and Javanese cultures tend to use euphemisms and metaphorical expressions (Hermandra et al., 2024), whereas Arabic is generally more explicit. These differences require translators to carefully choose equivalent words so that the meaning remains clear and acceptable within the target-language culture. In *Gadis Kretek*, several terms are adjusted accordingly. The word *ancer-ancer*, which means directional clue or location hint, is translated as العنوان التقريبي /al-'unwān at-taqrībī/, emphasising the aspect of approximate location. Meanwhile, *anak semata wayang*, a term referring to an only child and often implying exclusivity or special status (Magdalena et al., 2020), is translated as ابنتها /ibnuhā/, omitting the exclusive nuance, as similar expressions are rare in Arab culture. Additionally, the euphemism *lewat*, used in Indonesian to refer to death, is translated more explicitly as يموت /yamūtu/.

Negotiation also pertains to differences in social relations. In Javanese society, the use of address forms plays a crucial role in reflecting social relationships and status between the speaker and the interlocutor (Andriyani et al., 2024). Terms of address, such as *Romo* for father or a spiritual figure, *Mas* for an older male or someone of higher social status, and *Simbok* for mother, not only indicate kinship but also convey social status and levels of familiarity between individuals. These terms are adjusted in the Arabic translation, with *Romo* rendered as أبي /Abī/, *Mas* as سيدي /sayyidī/, and *Simbok* as أم /ummun/. These adaptations reflect the translator's effort to preserve both the connotative and denotative meanings in alignment with the target culture. This approach aligns with translation theories that emphasise the importance of negotiating cultural identity to achieve semantic equivalence between the source and target languages (Sajarwa et al., 2023).

Ecology, as the natural environment, constitutes a significant element in shaping culture, as it influences the lifestyle, values, and cultural practices of a society (Sahlins, 2013). When translating ecology-related terms, translators face the challenge of adapting terminology that may differ from the environmental context of the target culture. For instance, the translation of *biji selasih* into بذور البازلاء الحلوة /budzūr al-bāzilā' al-chulwah/ demonstrates the translator's attempt to find an equivalent based on similarities in form and function within the local ecosystem. Similarly, *daun katuk* is rendered as أوراق نبات الكشمش /aurāq nabāt al-kisymisy/, reflecting an effort to match the ecological context of both

cultures. Ecological translation notes that translators often need to adapt to the local context so that cultural messages can be adequately understood (Pym, 2004). Furthermore, the translation of *kembang setaman* as زهرة النبتة /zahrah an-nabtah/ and *kembang sepatu* as المتوردة /al-mutawarridah/ also reflects adjustments to align with more familiar terms in the target culture.

Nonverbal practices in society can also be categorised as culture (Afifi, 2013). This statement is evident in the translation of habits and gestures, which often pose challenges due to differences in how actions are described across the source and target cultures. For instance, the term *ngenyek*, which refers to the act of mocking or belittling someone, is translated as يسخرون /yaskharūna/, which leans more toward the meaning of “ridiculing” in Arabic. Likewise, *ngeses*, referring to the habit of smoking, is translated as أَدخِن /adkhan/, which clearly denotes the act of smoking in the target language. In this case, the translator emphasises matching the relevant social and cultural meaning. Additionally, *ngelinting*, meaning to roll a cigarette, is translated as تلفي /taliffī/, aligned with the term commonly used in Arabic to describe this process.

Negotiating religious perspectives in translation reflects the importance of adjusting terms so that cultural meanings can be understood within more specific religious contexts. In the source culture, the term *Tirakatan* refers to meditation, fasting, and offerings. However, it is translated into Arabic as عملية الصوم وتقديم القرابين /amaliyyah ash-shaum wa taqdīm al-qarābīn/, which more closely refers to Islamic practices of fasting and offering (sacrifice). This statement shows an adjustment made to align the meaning with religious practices more specific to the target language. Furthermore, the phrase *mengumandangkan adzan* is translated as يُكَبِّر /yukabbira/, which refers to the Islamic call to prayer, reflecting an adaptation to the religious context. The translation of *Yang Kuasa* as الله /Allāh/ also illustrates an effort to name God in a way that is more specific to Islamic belief. The translation of *mengambil air wudhu* into أجل الصلاة /ajli ash-shalāh/ clarifies its function as preparation for prayer, in accordance with Islamic teachings. Al-Khalafat & Haider (2022) suggest that translators must consider the cultural and religious differences between the source and target languages and adapt terms accordingly to avoid distortion of meaning.

Politics and administration are two essential aspects of the social and governmental structure that are interrelated. Both are part of cultural identity (Newmark, 1988), making it crucial to ensure that these concepts from the source culture can be understood within the context of the target culture. According to Shamsan et al. (2025), the translator acts as a mediator between two different cultural systems, ensuring that the original meaning remains intact despite social and political differences. The term *Pemerintah* is translated as الحكومة /al-chukūmah/ in Arabic, reflecting the general concept of government administration. This process shows an adaptation that considers functional equivalence in the political context of both cultures. Similarly, the term *PKI*, referring to the Indonesian Communist Party, is translated as الحزب الشيوعي /al-chizb ash-syuyūī/, preserving its ideological and political connotation in Arabic. Additionally, the translation of the acronym *TNI* (Tentara Nasional Indonesia) into الجيش الإندونيسي /al-jaisy al-Indūnīsī/ aligns the institution's identity with an administrative structure more familiar in the Arab culture. This form of negotiation shows how the translator seeks to maintain political and

administrative relevance without removing the original context of the terms.

4. CONCLUSION

The present research reveals that the negotiation of Indonesian cultural identity into Arab culture in the Arabic translation of the novel *Gadis Kretek* involves various patterns influenced by significant factors that shape meaning adjustment. The identified negotiation patterns include those related to material culture, social culture, forms of address, religious terms, ecology, gestures and habits, and political-administrative aspects. The main factor influencing this negotiation process is the difference in linguistic and cultural systems between Indonesian and Arabic, particularly in the conceptualisation of cultural objects, social relations, religious perspectives, and political structures.

In line with the research objectives, these findings highlight the translator's role in maintaining a balance between fidelity to the source culture and the need for effective communication within the target culture, ensuring that cultural meanings are conveyed accurately and meaningfully to Arabic readers. The limitation of this study lies in its narrow focus on the translation of a single literary text, *Gadis Kretek*, which may restrict the generalizability of the findings. Additionally, this research does not yet examine the reader's reception or the impact of meaning negotiation on audience understanding. Future studies are encouraged to expand the analysis to include diverse genres and explore the role of technology and digital media in shaping translation practices and intercultural interaction within the broader context of globalisation.

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