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Article

Toward a Theory of Transnuancing: A Product-Oriented Analysis of Indonesian and Javanese Senandung of Short Qur'anic Verses

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A B S T R A C T

In Indonesia, to strengthen the memorization and comprehension of holy Qur'anic verses among youth, short verses are often adapted into senandung (chanting). This phenomenon is of academic urgency to study as it involves issues of preserving the accuracy and sacredness of the transadapted verses while simultaneously lyricizing them into songs. We argue that this specific transadaptation deserves a new term as a point of departure. We called it transnuancing, a portmanteau of translation and nuancing. To support the claim, we formulated the research questions: 1) what is transnuancing? 2) what are the characteristics of transnuancing? To address the questions, we employed the theories of transadaptation by Purnomo et al. (2022), musical nuance by Roholt (2014), sonic theology by Beck (2021), Maclean, Bryant, and Bradley (1987), and paraphrasing by Gorleé (2005) with analysis techniques by Spradley (2016) in a qualitative design context. Theoretical triangulation was implemented to ensure the data's validity. The findings indicate that to preserve the accuracy and sacredness of the transadapted verses in Javanese and Indonesian, the translators pay close attention to the nuances of the translation. We classified the nuancing into semantic, aesthetic, and contextual nuancing. Through semantic nuancing, the translation is taken from official translations of the Qur'an. Through aesthetic nuancing, background music or a genre considered solemn was selected to accompany the translation. Through contextual nuancing, the context surrounding the translation was considered. Future studies could investigate the parameterization of the nuancing to determine their numerical weights by involving audience receptions. Through this parameterization process, assessment rubrics that include nuancing as one of the elements could be designed.

I. INTRODUCTION

In Indonesian Islamic kindergartens, to sing transadapted short verses of the Holy Qur'an like *Surah Al-Fatihah*, the first *surah* of the Qur'an and a mandatory chapter that every Muslim has to memorize, has become a common practice. The purposes of this transadaptation are to enhance the memorization of the verses and the comprehension of the children regarding the verses. To achieve the objectives, some Islamic kindergartens in Indonesia, as studied by Mulyasari, Fitroh, and Oktavianingsih (2021), even make the practices of singing the transadapted chapter a daily activity at the start of the learning and teaching session in the form of *senandung*. Possible problems arise in regard to what Pezzini (2008) calls a shift of emphasis. In the context of *senandung*, the problem of emphasis shift is perceived from whether the emphasis is on the memorization of Qur'an, the

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memorization of the *senandung* itself or both as source and target texts.

In the lens of translation, these transadapting practices indicate the implementation of what Reiss and Vermeer (2014) call as *skopos* translation where purposes define the translating actions. Since purposes are the main concern and reason for the translation, issues like *carte blanche* might arise. In the context of verses-to-senandung rhymes transadaptation, the issues encompass those of accuracy and sacredness. The former revolves around whether the translation only concerns the literal meaning of the verses or also considers their spiritual meaning, while the latter is on the transformation from a verse to be recited into a song, which is assumed to degrade the sacredness of the verses. To comprehend the necessity of preserving the sacredness of the verse, as implied by Akhtar (2025), indicates an ethical process of translation. In the context of short Qur'anic verses-to-*senandung* transadaptation, the translators have to address the issues while creatively transforming the verses into nursery rhymes.

One of the examples regarding the issues is the implementation of a contrafactum in the translation process. Contrafactum, as studied by Falck (1979), is a song recontextualization where the music of a song is employed as a lyrical enclave for different lyrics. The transadaptation of *Surah Al-Ikhlas* that informs the readers on the natures of Allah with a contrafactum of a children's song entitled Naik Delman, roughly translated into 'Riding a Carriage', might trigger an impact on the sacredness of the *surah*. The translation indicates a creative attempt to instill mnemonic memorization of the *surah* meaning but to some extent the transadaptation might lead to the distortion of the sacred nuance of the *surah*.

Some scholars have investigated the translation of chanting and texts with prosodic qualities. Rasmussen (2001) discussed the musical oratory of Qur'anic verses in Indonesia. Anderson (2005) investigated the translation of Sami Yoik, an ancient tradition of the Sami tribe. Jeffery (2005) discussed liturgical translation tradition from the perspectives of a chant historian. Shayakhmetova (2014) talked about the musical intonation of Qur'anic verses. Peattie (2016) examined neumatic language in the transcription and translation of chant notation. Anis and Arifuddin (2023) investigated the domestication of aphorism in the translation of Al Hikam. These previous studies suggest the importance of maintaining the accuracy of sacred texts while also preserving their sacredness. Equivalences selected as a textual response to the source text might pose a shift in sacredness. Thus, accuracy in the context of sacred text translations is not only about preserving the meaning but also about maintaining the source sacredness.

These studies leave a gap in the topic of strategies and the phenomenon of transadaptation, specifically in the context of translating Qur'anic short verses into nursery rhymes. This gap signifies academic urgency since the sacredness of the source texts and the memorization purposes through *senandung* require a translational negotiation. Departing from the gap, we planned to propose transnuancing. Through this new term, it is expected that the issues of accuracy and sacredness, while creatively transforming the translated verses into a chant, could be theoretically examined. This study limited its scope to exclude audience receptions toward transnuancing, which future studies could address. The term *nuance* in this article is limited to linguistic, melodic, and pragmatic elements that emerge from transadaptation. The term does not extend to theological interpretation or detailed phonological study of *qirāʾah*. To address the issues, we formulated the research questions as follows:

1. What is transnuancing in regard to the translation of song lyrics?
2. What are the characteristics of transnuancing in regard to the translation of song lyrics?

The proposal of transnuancing aligns with methodological practices in translation research traditions, emphasizing building a concept when existing frameworks are insufficient for addressing emerging translation phenomena. As Hönig (1998), Pym (2010), and Gambier (2016) note, translation studies revolve around theoretical dynamics, where scholars often coin new terms to describe hybrid, multimodal, and culturally embedded translation events. Continuing this tradition, transnuancing is introduced. By grounding transnuancing, this study follows the tradition of descriptive translation studies where theory emerges from data rather than being imposed onto it.

This study made use of *skopos* as the underlying theory due to the transadaptation nature

of the study. In theory, translation choices are motivated by the intended function of the target text within its sociocultural context (Reiss & Vermeer, 2014). The *senandung* transadaptation of short Qur'anic verses operates in a dual fashion: to facilitate memorization among children and to preserve the sacredness of the sacred source text. This *skopos* determines which adaptations are permissible, e.g., nursery rhyme, and which are constrained, e.g., semantic distortion. Positioning transnuancing within this functional framework clarifies that micro shifts serve a pedagogical aim while remaining within the boundaries of sacredness.

In their study, Purnomo et al. (2022) suggest that the transadaptation of a fable into a parable has an impact they term the drifting effect. This impact highlights that the possibility of narrative unity distortion is imminent. This might also be true for verse-to-senandung rhyme transadaptation. The possibilities of the distortion are derived from the different natures of the texts. Qur'anic verses are divine in nature, while songs like nursery rhymes are humane. The divine nature, as studied by Rahman (1988), makes it hard for the translation of the verses of the Holy Qur'an to reach a satisfactory level of accuracy. The accuracy might further be degraded when meaning transfer is exercised through transadaptation. When sacredness becomes the mode of the multimodal elements in a parametric context, it suggests that the accuracy levels of the sacred text transadapted into a song require a reformulation. The reformulation, besides addressing sacredness, should address the issues of negotiation of meaning between preserving sacredness on one hand and finding equivalences that might not distort the meaning.

The ideology of transadaptation, as investigated by Al Adba (2022), tends to be that of domestication. Due to this domestication, equivalences on the level of textual elements are not only the challenging parts but also the other elements that construct the transadapted objects. In the context of songs, prosodic elements require investigation for proper domesticated equivalence. To address the issues, paraphrasing, as studied by Gorleé (2005), which comprises rephrasing, rewording, restyling, and summarizing, might be implemented. Through paraphrasing, it is expected that domestication will not only address the lyrical meaning but also the prosodic element of the chants. The problems with domestication, in the context of sacredness preservation, are the possibilities of having different constructs of sacredness. Polarized differences in sacredness might occur due to the necessity of transforming the source sacred text into a sound local one.

Chanting, as studied by Anderson (2005), plays a significant role as a vocal art that embodies spirituality. Spirituality, as investigated by Gorlée (2005), is conveyed through a specific music or genre, such as a hymn. The solemn nuance of the hymn is expected to evoke spirituality in both the reciters and the listeners. In the context of translation, as implied by Franzon (2005), nuance holds a significant role. The significance extends not only to the context of song translation but also to the transadaptation of non-lyrical texts into lyrical texts, such as songs, or the transadaptation of lyrical texts into different forms of lyrical texts. Although transadaptation is applied, the primary concern in song lyrics translation, namely singability, must be the keyword. Since singability becomes the main concern, negotiations between the semantic and stylistic aspects come into light. In the context of sacred text translation, singability becomes more challenging since sacredness becomes a crucial parameter. In the theory of sonic theology by Beck (2022), nuances in religious chants may be thematically delivered to gain a deeper understanding of the Divine. Therefore, when a text is transadapted into a chant, challenges arise regarding how to maintain accuracy and sacredness that need to be considered. Through thematic investigation, the process of nuance might result in a better degree of acceptability.

Musical nuance, as studied by Roholt (2007), is analytically and *engagedly* examinable. Through analytical examination, prosody might become one of the concerns. In the context of transadaptation from non-lyrical to lyrical texts, rhythms and rhymes may be aesthetically added, considering the semantic elements of the source texts. The possibility of having a drifting impact may occur, and thus, careful selection of semantic elements in aesthetic contexts tends to take the form of meaning negotiation. If translators prioritize aesthetics over semantics in the context of religious text adaptation, accuracy and sacredness may be compromised.

II. METHODS

The orientation of this translation research

employed product-based research as proposed by Saldanha and O'Brien (2014). This type of translation research orientation emphasizes the importance of understanding the nature and characteristics of both the source and target texts. The data of this qualitative study were in textual. They were acquired from a corpus of nursery rhymes adapted from short verses of the Qur'an and the source short verses. The term *corpus* was employed to describe the data collected from YouTube and kindergarten field observations. The word *corpus* refers not to the large-scale computational-related objects. The emphasis was on the phenomenon evoked by the data collected. It refers to a qualitative data set consisting of selected performances of *senandung* as the results of the transadaptation of Qur'anic verses. The selection was criterion-based, aiming to capture diverse modes of transadaptation across digital and pedagogical contexts. The criteria encompass relevance, authenticity, and linguistic and musical clarity. Videos selected were transadaptations of short Qur'anic verses, while field sites were selected for their active use of *senandung* in early childhood religious education. This dual-source approach allows for a comparative understanding of digital and embodied forms of Qur'anic transadaptation. These dual sources were articulated through coding that addressed words that became the data unit along with their transadapted versions, the sacred source texts, and the *senandung*. Validation was exercised through theoretical triangulation as detailed in the technique of analysis paragraph below.

The selected Qur'anic short verses were *Al Fatihah* and *Al Ikhlas*. The first *surah* was selected due to its obligatory nature – every Muslim is required to memorize it for recitation during the five daily prayers (*salah*). The second *surah* was selected since the *surah* was the second most recited *surah* after *Al Fatihah*. The data were collected by observing several Indonesian Islamic kindergartens that incorporate senandung as part of their daily learning routines. The data were also digitally acquired from YouTube to expand and enrich the findings in terms of *senandung,* which was delivered in an audiovisual fashion. The data were analyzed using Spradley's (2016) theory, which comprises domain, taxonomy, componential, and cultural theme phases.

Although the primary dataset consists of selected *senandung* performances from YouTube and kindergarten cases, this phenomenon is not unique to these examples. Preliminary comparisons with other cases, such as "senandung pengantar tidur" that incorporate Qur'anic phrases, local nazam and qasidah practices, and additional YouTube examples of surah Al-Falaq and An-Nas rendered in melodic formats, suggest that the transadaptation of short Qur'anic verses into musical pedagogical genres is a recurring phenomenon across Malay–Indonesian communities. The selective corpus, therefore, functions as a representative set of cases for developing the theoretical concept of *trans-nuance*.

In the domain phase, the transadaptation theory, as proposed by Purnomo et al. (2022), was employed to reveal how the selected nursery rhymes were adapted from Qur'anic short verses. The results indicate a typological pattern in the strategies and impacts implemented through the transadaptation. These results were further examined through the theory of nursery rhymes by Maclean, Bryant, and Bradley (1987), musical nuance by Roholt (2014), and sonic theology by Beck (2021), which indicate the preservation of accuracy and sacredness in the source short verses in the form of nursery rhymes. To determine whether preservation is influenced by paraphrasing or not, the theory of song lyrics paraphrasing by Gorleé (2005) was applied. The results of each phase were connected in the last phase, cultural theme analysis, to construct a theoretical framework of transnuancing.

III. RESULT

This section is divided into two subsections. The first subsection discusses the definition of transnuancing, while the second subsection examines its characteristics. Javanese and Bahasa Indonesia examples of the transadaptation versions are given to enhance the clarity and comprehension of transnuancing and its characteristics.

Nuances in translation, as studied by Shabani-Jadidi (2020) and Vishwakarma (2023), tend to contextually link with the cultural elements of the source and target texts and evoke challenges for translators to convey, especially in relation to the semantic elements of the texts. In the context of song lyrics translation, the cultural nuances encompass not only the meaning of the lyrics themselves but also the cohesion between the lyrics and the cultures of the singers, the singing, and the singing venues. To address these issues, as implied

by Tervo (2014), localization is often implemented in the process of translating a song. The localization might result in alterations of the prosodic structures of the source songs, from syllable numbers to rhythm. These alterations may be made to maintain narrative cohesion between the lyrical texts, the singers, the singing, and the singing venues.

In dealing with narrative cohesion, as studied by Hargood, Millard, and Weal (2011), logical sense, themes, genre, narrator, and styles should be taken into consideration. In the context of nuances in song transadaptation, logical sense might deal with how the nuances are logically made sense with the messages of the songs, themes with how the themes align with the nuances, genres with the cohesion of the song structures with the nuances, narrators with the synchronicity between the singers and the nuance, and styles with the coherence between the intrinsic and extrinsic elements of the songs and singers with the nuance.

The challenges of nuancing a song through transadaptation incline when the nuancing involves sacred texts. As studied by Sawyer (2012), in Islam, the translation of the Qur'an is forbidden due to the incapability of humans to comprehend God's words. The translation should be exercised to provide basic literal understandings of God's words. To comprehend deeper God's words, studying the exegeses or *tafsir* of Qur'an from reliable scholars is a must. In the context of *senandung*, a transadapted version of short verses from the Qur'an, the aims are to introduce fundamental knowledge of Islamic teachings, especially to children. This didactic purpose is facilitated through a cohesion between the characteristics and natures of children and their distinctive learning characteristics, with songs as the medium. To ensure that the didactic purpose is achieved without staining the sacredness of the source text, focuses and highlights on nuance are necessarily considered. Through these considerations, the translation and transadaptation processes must center on nuances. Thus, it implies the necessity of providing a new domain of study in translation – transnuancing.

Transnuancing

Drawing on the findings, we constructed a definition of transnuancing. This neologism refers to the transadaptation of religious texts into chants, considering the semantic, aesthetic, and contextual nuances of the original texts. Semantic nuancing focuses on referring the transadaptation process to the official or canonical translations of the Qur'an, aesthetic nuancing on adjusting the sacred nuance of the short verses with solemn background music or specific genre considered to be able to convey the meaning of the verses, and contextual nuancing on considering the contexts that background the reasons of the transadaptation. Based on the findings, these three types of nuancing work together to deliver the messages of the transadapted religious texts. Thus, on a single line, the combination of semantic, aesthetic, and contextual nuancing is put into use. The following example might help illustrate the statement:

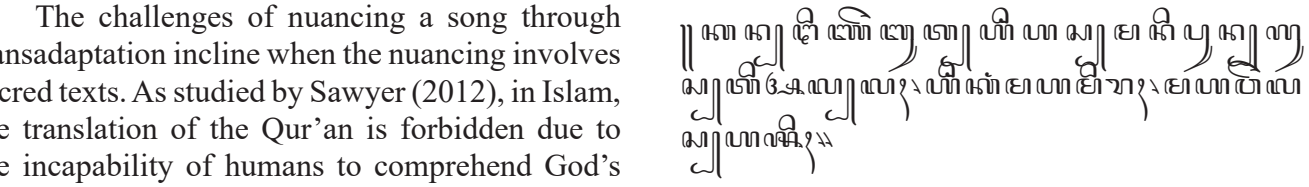
ST:

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

BT1:

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

TT:



"Kanthi nyebut ing asmanipun gusti Allah, ingkang Maha Mirah, Maha Welas Asih"

BT2:

By evoking the name of God, Allah the Most Generous, Truly the Most Merciful

The excerpt was taken from Sangsurya TV, airing a child *dalang*, shadow puppet (*wayang*) master. He recited the Javanese translation of *Al Fatihah* in *Dhandhanggula*, a category of *Macapat*, a traditional Javanese poetry with particular metric lines and melodic rules, recited in ten varying syllables and rhymes of i-a-e-a-u-a-i-a-a-i. This *Macapat* is often played as the opening and closing of *wayang* performances and recited also on a particular scene where a king delivers his advices. Through the advice, spiritual and mystical rejoice is delivered.

The example indicates the combination of semantic, aesthetic, and contextual nuancing. Semantic nuancing is seen from the referential translation of الرَّحِيْمِ translated into . This translation shares a similar wording of *Maha Pengasih* – the Most Gracious – in the official translation of the Indonesian Ministry of Religious

Affairs. Having an official reference on the canonical translation ensures the accuracy of the translation, while having a genre as a reference ensures the sacred nuance of the transadaptation. The use of *Macapat*, specifically the use of *Dhandhanggula,* through its solemn tone, evokes spiritual and mystical immersion that demands contemplation from the listeners. The contemplation might evoke love for Allah, the Most Gracious and the Most Merciful. Through nuancing, sacredness in terms of the atmosphere of what Gumbrecht (2012) calls *stimmung* is achieved.

That *Macapat* aims at delivering didactic and pedagogical values further indicates the suitability of nuancing as the strategy to preserve accuracy and sacredness in the transadaptation of *Al Fatihah* into Javanese in *Dhandhanggula* form. The learning of these values, besides being captured through the whole line of the translation of *Al Fatihah*, is also perceived from the specific use of honorific for God. The Javanese translation employs ꦒꦱ꧀ꦠꦶ (*gusti*). The word is equivalent to 'Lord' in English. This honorific is mentioned twice. First, it is employed as an individual word of God, and second as an honorific of Allah. This repetition of ꦒꦱ꧀ꦠꦶ has iterative and emphasizer functions to which the listeners have to pay attention. That Allah is the only God all have to worship is the message attempted to be delivered through the use of ꦒꦱ꧀ꦠꦶ. Through these didactic and pedagogical teachings, contextual nuancing is established. The fusion between semantic, aesthetic, and contextual nuancing preserves the accuracy and sacredness of the transadaptation of *Al Fatihah* into Javanese.

Contextual nuancing might also take the form of where the transadaptation, in the form of chanting, is recited. Based on our observation in Islamic kindergartens in Indonesia, the transadaptation of *Al Fatihah* into *Senandung Al Fatihah* is performed before the start of the class. The students recite the *Senandung Al Fatihah* when they are in a ceremonial rank or when they are in the classroom. The students chanted the *senandung* in an acapella. Some chanted the *senandung* with minimalist background music. The minimalist use of background music is intended to preserve the sacred nuance. Through an acapella, sounds from musical instruments that might reduce or distort sacredness are prevented.

ST:

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ
اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ رَبِّ الْعٰلَمِيْنَۙ
الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِۙ
مٰلِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّيْنِۗ
اِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَاِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِيْنُۗ
اِهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيْمَۙ
صِرَاطَ الَّذِيْنَ اَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ ۙ غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوْبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّاۤلِّيْنَ

BT1:

In the Name of Allah—the Most Compassionate, Most Merciful.
All praise is for Allah—Lord of all worlds
the Most Compassionate, Most Merciful,
Master of the Day of Judgment
You alone we worship and You alone we ask for help.
Guide us along the Straight Path,
the Path of those You have blessed—not those You are displeased with, or those who are astray

TT:

Dengan menyebut nama-Mu ya Allah
Yang Maha Pengasih, Penyayang
Segala puji bagi-Mu Ya Allah
Pemelihara seluruh alam raya
Engkaulah Maha Pengasih dan Penyayang
Yang menguasai Hari Pembalasan
Hanyalah kepada-Mu kami menyembah
Dan pada-Mu kami mohon pertolongan
Tunjukkanlah kami ke jalan yang lurus
Jalan orang-orang yang Kau beri nikmat
Bukan jalan yang Kau murkai
Dan bukan pula jalan mereka yang sesat

BT2:

By evoking Your Name O Allah the Most Gracious, Merciful
All praises for You O Allah
The Sustainer of All Worlds
You are the Most Compassionate and the Most Merciful
Who rules over the Day of Judgment
Only to You we worship
And to You we seek for help
Show us to the right Path
The Path of those whom You grant blessings
Not the Path that You despise
And not the Path who are astray

Nur Irsyad, who wrote the *senandung*, arranged the lines into three stanzas with each stanza consisting of four lines. The lines are structured in 9-12 syllables, allowing the reciters to have a consistent tempo and melody. The use of 9-12 syllables tends to align also with the source text, and thus, it is expected that accuracy and

sacredness could be preserved. The consideration of syllable counts signifies the efforts of avoiding any distortion of the meaning when the transadapted version is recited in a melodical manner. Based on our observation in the annual talent show of Islamic students, contextually, when the transadapted version was sung in choir fashion, the modification of the syllable was not evident. This was aimed at staying faithful to the arranged stanza and syllables to ensure that the prosodic elements did not negatively influence the meaning accuracy.

The Characteristics of Transnuancing

Semantic Nuancing

As studied by Levi, Hosseini, Diab, and Broniatowski (2019), nuances could be semantically constructed through semantic and linguistic cues. In the context of musical nuances, one of these cues is the use of accent. Through accent, as implied by Friedrich (1997), semantic nuance is established. Since focusing on semantics, as investigated by Shabani-Jadidi (2020), might sacrifice the cultural nuance of a translation text, careful construction of semantic nuance should be taken into consideration. One of the considerations is the attempt to make the transadapted version singable by adding more lines.

ST:

قُلْ هُوَ اللّٰهُ اَحَدٌۚ
اَللّٰهُ الصَّمَدُۚ
لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُوْلَدْۙ
وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَّهٗ كُفُوًا اَحَدٌ

BT1:

Say, O Prophet, "He is Allah—One and Indivisible;
Allah—the Sustainer needed by all.
He has never had offspring, nor was He born.
And there is none comparable to Him.

TT:

Katakanlah Dia-lah Allah yang Maha Esa
Allah tempat meminta segala sesuatu
Allah tidak beranak dan tidak pula diperanakkan
Dan tidak ada yang setara dengan Dia… Hey
Surat Al Ikhlas ada empat ayat
Surat Al Ikhlas turun di Kota Mekkah
Memurnikan keesaan Allah artinya
Kita manusia wajib menyembah-Nya

BT2:

Say He is Allah the One
Allah to Him we ask anything
Allah He has never had offspring, nor was He born
And there is none comparable to Him… Hey
Surah Al Ikhlas has four *ayah*
Surah Al Ikhlas was revealed in the City of Mekkah
Confessing the Oneness of Allah means
We, mankind, are obligatory of worshipping Him only

The example was taken from HD Priawisata. The addition of the interjection 'hey' and an extra four stanzas have both positive and negative semantic impacts. Positively, the additional stanza provides structural, historical, and exegesis information of *Surah Al Ikhlas*. The structural information is perceived from the information of the *ayah* or verse numbers of the *surah*. This information acts as an emphasis that *Surah Al-Ikhlas* is a short verse. In the context of memorization by children, this information provides an initial positive affirmation that memorizing *Al Ikhlas* will be proven to be easy to do. Mnemonically, by informing the verse number, children are expected to remember the order of the verses.

The addition of historical information also results in positive impacts in terms of *surah* comprehension. Comprehending the classification of *Makkiyah* (verses revealed in the City of Mekkah) and *Madaniyah* (verses revealed in the City of Madinah) is crucial in the process of learning Qur'an. *Makkiyah* tends to have short verses while *Madaniyah has* longer. This classification eases the memorizers in giving the priorities of which verses to memorize first.

The addition of exegesis information, as seen in the third and final line of the additional stanza, helps children understand the importance of worshipping Allah alone. Providing information on exegesis also strengthens the memorization of an *ayah,* as comprehending its meaning may create a mnemonic link with the syntactic elements of the memorized verse. The exegesis requires two lines to deliver points on the scale of priority. Emphasizing the exegesis indicates the alignment with the nature of an *ayah*: meaning (exegesis), structure, and history. This semantic priority further highlights how semantic nuance is established through the inherent nature of semantic meaning.

Apart from the positive impacts, the additions also trigger a negative impact. This impact is perceived through the use of the interjection 'hey' following the last line of the translation. The interjection serves as a semantic and musical marker for the song "Naik Delman." In the song, the key interjection is *hey*. The *hey* is intended as

an expressive marker of being happy. Although a positive nuance is preserved, the use of 'hey' leaves an impression that the transadapter tends to lean heavily on the source song. Possible intertextual meaning of *Naik Delman* that tells about a picnic to a city by horse carriage, and the exegesis of *Al Ikhlas* might be woven – that will deteriorate and distort the accuracy and sacredness of the *surah*.

Aesthetic Nuancing

Aesthetically nuance, as studied by Genette (1999), is related to meaning. This condition implies that employed words signify the nuance intended to evoke. In the context of translation, the failure to transfer a meaning, as implied by Michael (2017), would result in the loss of nuance. This loss suggests that accuracy may not be achieved solely through semantic views, but also through aesthetic considerations.

ST:

The same example on semantic nuancing

BT1:

The same example on semantic nuancing

TT:

Katakanlah Allah itu satu
Tempat berpadu dan tempat mengadu
Tidak ber-ayah dan tidak ber-ibu
Tiada yang lain selain dirimu

BT2:

Say that Allah is one
To Him we belong and pray
Without a father, without a mother
None comparable to You

The *senandung* lyric was composed by Hanik Rosyada, the vocals by Ghazia Lubna Wijaya, and the music by Agsa Padon. This *Al Ikhlas senandung* attempts at making a rhymical translation through the use of a-a-a-a rhyme. This rhyme was articulated through the consistent use of 'u' letter as seen from *satu* (one), *berpadu* (belong), *mengadu* (pray), *ibu* (mother), and *dirimu* (You). This rhymical composition mnemonically might assist children in memorizing the *senandung* from which the meaning of *Al Ikhlas* might be grasped. The problem with this rhymical endeavor is possible misinterpretation of the selected word. First is the word *berpadu*. Based on *Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia* (KBBI), one of the credible dictionaries of Bahasa Indonesia, *berpadu* has four meanings: becoming one, frozen, solid due to fusion, and mixed. If seen from denotative perspectives, *berpadu* might raise concerns on the issues of وحدة الوجود or ꦩꦤꦸꦁꦒꦒꦭꦶꦁꦏꦮꦸꦭꦭꦤ꧀ꦒꦸꦱ꧀ꦠꦶ 'Manunggaling kawula lan Gusti' roughly translated into the unity of God and His creation that sparks controversy. If viewed from a connotative or implied meaning, berpadu might teach children that, as creations, everyone must submit themselves to the Will of Allah. These consequences that result from the necessity of rhyming the translation suggest that aesthetic aims at lyrical beautification might sacrifice the semantic meaning of the source text in the target text.

The second problem is the use of *tidak ber-ayah* (without father) and *tidak ber-ibu* (without mother). The absence of expressions that precede or succeed *tidak ber-ayah* and *tidak ber-ibu* that indicate 'not begetting nor begotten' might trigger a misinterpretation. The absence might suggest that *tidak ber-ayah* and *tidak ber-ibu* are synonymous with being an orphan. Further explanations on the intended meaning are required to avoid any misinterpretation. The presence of follow-up explanations in the context of *senandung* might suggest that *senandung* is treated as a part of multimodality, where the *senandung* itself is only one of the modes employed to learn and memorize Qur'anic short verses.

Multimodality, in the context of aesthetics, as studied by Tønnessen and Forsgren (2018), implies the necessity of addressing affective, embodied, and cultural dimensions. In the context of the transadaptation of short verses into chanting, these dimensions are negotiated and articulated through careful crafting of semantic and aesthetic elements. Through the affective dimension, the chanting should evoke certain intended feelings that are aligned and synced with the meaning of the source short verses. Through the embodied dimension, the chanting should reference canonical translations to avoid misinterpretation. Through cultural dimension, the chanting should be based on particular styles that are considered befitting to the nuance evoked from the source short verses.

Contextual Nuancing

Nuances, as implied by Michael (2017), are not only related to meanings but also to aesthetics. This state implies that nuances might operate contextually. Through contexts, nuances are

signified. In this study, contextual nuancing refers to the practice of applying transadaptation to construct narrative cohesion between the transadapted short verses, the reciters, and the extra-linguistic aspects to which the transadaptation is assigned.

One of the examples is reciting *Senandung Al Fatihah* in a school context. In Indonesia, to raise the importance and awareness of discipline, schools arrange their students in lines in the morning before school starts. In some Indonesian Islamic kindergartens, especially those affiliated with Aisyiyah or Muhammadiyah, one of the distinctive activities performed during the lining is reciting the *senandung*. The line-making and the reciting are cohesive in the narratives of discipline. Through line making, solemn nuances are constructed. The presence of this solemnity is expected to prevent the distortion of nuance in the source texts.

The aim of constructing a narrative cohesion requires a thorough measurement. To achieve cohesion, as studied by Hargood, Millard, and Weal (2011), a narrative should be structured by logical sense, themes, genre, narrator, and style. In the context of *Senandung Al Fatihah* recited collectively in acapella fashion in a line, the logical sense is captured through the intertextual similarities between the nuance evoked through the *senandung* and the line making. The themes of molding a disciplined self are also indicated through the *senandung* and the line making since both aim at molding the students into a person with religious and physical discipline. Through the absence of music, relying on an acapella, the distortion of the sacredness of the source text might be prevented. Doing so implies that the nuance of the genre is deemed to befitting with the line-making that is metonymically associated with and metaphorically analogous with the military. The narrators of the *senandung* comprise the students and the teachers of kindergartens. The teachers act like a conductor to guide the harmony and melody of the *senandung* recital while the students are the singers. This orchestral nuance signifies the *senandung*. That the students and the teachers sing in an a acapella style is stylistically signified not only through rhythmical and rhymical arrangement to fit the nuance but also the styles of line making and the uniforms donned by the students. Through these stylistic combinations, the contextual nuance of being solemn and disciplined is expected to emerge.

In the audiovisual context of *senandung* recital, selections and preferences on sonic configurations, visual considerations, camera angles, and other video-making related elements are employed as part of contextual nuancing. The use of animation and a child singer in the music video of *Senandung Al Ikhlas* suggests that nursery rhyming might become the focus of the contextual nuancing. The fact that the music video focuses on the singing of the singers further signifies that it falls into the category of performance video. Frith (1988) classifies music videos into conceptual, narrative, and performance. The first refers to the emphasis over symbols and signs, the second on stories, and the singing itself. In the context of *Senandung Al Ikhlas,* delivered through performance, signifies an alignment between the active nature of children and the music videos. The use of performance-based music videos also suggests a didactic purpose. Through performance music video with karaoke-like subtitles, the music videos could be employed as a way to learn the *senandung* recital.

Digital and Field Domain Categorization

Digital domains as seen from YouTube videos and field domains from kindergartens, due to their distinct natures, influence how the transadaptation is exercised. Though they are distinct by nature, the domains are interconnected. If perceived from Jenkins (2018), convergence, participatory culture, and collective intelligence play their roles. Transnuancing occurs when the transadapted lyrics performed by children in kindergartens are transferred into shareable media, such as YouTube. The convergence might also take place in a reversal fashion when the performances refer to particular videos that display a *senandung* transadapted from Qur'anic short verses. To perform this convergence, participatory cultures are required from the transadapters, the singers, and those involved in every mode-making process. Collective intelligence makes the process possible and plausible with the knowledge of the sacred source texts, song lyrics translation, and multimodality as the backgrounding factors.

Differences in the domain usher in differences in the characteristics of transnuancing. Semantic nuancing in the context of digital domain, *Surah Al Ikhlas* transadapted in the tones of *Naik Delman* case for example, has to address the visual and operative anatomies of YouTube. The

video signifies cheerfulness due to the necessity of proairesis for children and narrative alignment to the source tones. This decision highlights the importance of what Kress and van Leeuwen (2020) refer to as the information zone, where different visual constructions convey distinct information. In the context of music videos, these information zones, as implied by Frith (2017), are embodied either through narratives, concepts, or performances. Narrative embodiment involves the presence of story, concepts conveyed through signs, and performances that incorporate actions such as singing and playing music. Addressing these information zones, the semantic nuancing might holistically and intratextually be linked with aesthetic nuancing or contextual nuancing.

Unlike the digital domain, the field domain might consider the anatomy of events where the transadapted verses are put into a *senandung* recital performance. In the cases of kindergartens that employ *senandung* before the lessons start, semantic nuancing, due to its pedagogical roots, might be evoked from what Skaftun (2025) calls dialogic eventness. Through this Bakhtinian concept of eventness, dialogues become the axis that constructs and shapes the eventness between those involved in the dialogues. Dialogic eventness emerging from the sacred source texts may undergo shifts when transadapted, as the dialogues of the source text may involve the Creator ordering the created. Transadapted, the dialogic eventness might involve the creation of the created also – the transadapted *senandung*. Semantically, the dialogic eventness might change along with shifts in sacredness.

IV. DISCUSSION

Senandung in the Context of Transnuancing

Senandung, as studied by Sahril (2018), is characterized through its elegiac nuance linguistically marked by interjections and prosodically indicated by non-meaningful syllables. In the context of elegy, as implied by Kennedy (2007), *terza rima* e.g. aba bcb cdc is often employed as the rhyming device. Through *terza rima*, words are carefully selected to convey both intended meaning and rhyming aesthetics in three stanzas. This specific use of stanzas is not found in either *Senandung Al Fatihah* or *Al Ikhlas*. The absence of the three stanzas points out that the use of the word *senandung* might refer only to the elegiac nuance of the genre, not its defining prosodical structures.

Senandung, as implied by Anshor and Triyanto (2018), Sahril (2018), and Pangaribuan (2021), is identical to Malay culture. This association of *senandung* with Malay culture signifies how the culture might shape the semantic and semiotic aspects of the genre. The transnuancing of *Al Fatihah* and *Al Ikhlas* into *senandung* might relate to the Malay culture that roots from Islamic teachings. Further studies are required to delve deeper into these cultural topics to elucidate whether *Senandung Al Fatihah* and *Al Ikhlas* are culturally related to Malay culture. The relation might be signified through the structural elements of *senandung* and the contextual use of *senandung* in Malay culture. Through this combination, in the context of transnuancing, one could perceive whether the transnuanced *senandung* aligns structurally or contextually with Malay culture.

In regard to the culture-bound frame of *senandung*, since nuancing operates semantically, aesthetically, and contextually, the transnuanced *senandung* requires an accuracy rubric different from that of translation in general. The addition of nuance and that transnuancing is associated with song lyrics translation requires a transnuancing quality assessment on accuracy that addresses both elements as parameters. The problems of nuance, as implied by Cunningham (2004), are its possible 'enlargements' or rendering of the audible into the audible, from musical into non-musical, e.g., history and culture. This 'enlargement' might trigger the presence of different points of departure in defining and characterizing a nuance. Thus, when a rubric of transnuancing accuracy is an attempt of being designed, the parameters of nuance have to be based on certain theories. Doing so might lead to the design of a transnuancing accuracy rubric with qualitative flexibilities.

The transadaptation of short Qur'anic verses into *senandung* reflects what O'Halloran et al. (2016) call *intersemiotic translation*—the transfer of meaning across semiotic systems such as text, sound, rhythm, and gesture. Seen from this perspective, *senandung* functions as a performative translation of Qur'anic messages into culturally resonant melodic patterns that engage affective and mnemonic properties of early learners. The *senandung* case indicates how sacred text could

be recontextualized through sound, showing that translation can operate through melody as much as through lexicon. This situates the translator as both interpreter and performer—a role long acknowledged in chant and hymn adaptations (MacInnis, 2022). In the context of style, this further suggests, as studied by Qassem and Sahari (2024), that accuracy and clarity should be considered when styles become one of the focuses.

From pedagogical perspectives, the *senandung* serves as an instance of translanguaging pedagogy, where learners utilize their full linguistic, musical, and cultural domains for meaning-making (Li & García, 2018; Cole, 2019). In the context of kindergartens, the adaptation of Qur'anic verses into simple and repetitive melodies enables affective engagement and memorability. This condition aligns with the findings of Barrett et al. (2019) on the role of music in early childhood education as an emotionally supportive and socially unifying medium. In *senandung*, musical phrasing and repetition operate as channels for transmitting both meaning and emotion—qualities that may be lost in text-based translation approaches.

In this light, *senandung* exemplifies a hybrid pedagogy where sacred recitation intersects with local musical heritage, positioning translation as a pedagogical act as well as a cultural negotiation. The findings suggest that Qur'anic instruction for young learners can benefit from an integrative design that combines melodic, rhythmic, and linguistic elements to deepen affective connections and comprehension. This study advocates for a more comprehensive understanding of translation as a multifaceted, embodied, and culturally situated practice that extends beyond linguistic transfer to enhance the learning of Qur'anic short verses.

V. CONCLUSION

The phenomenon of transadapting Qur'anic short verses especially *Al Fatihah* and *Al Ikhlas* into *senandung* evokes a new domain in the field of translation studies. Translators in performing this specific type of transadaptation have to consider not only the accuracy of the transadapted texts into *senandung* but also the sacredness. This issue urges us to disclose a discussion from which further studies could depart. We propose that this specific transadaptation should have a neologism to initiate the discussion. We call this phenomenon transnuancing.

Transnuancing emphasizes considering three types of nuancing to preserve the accuracy and sacredness of the source short verses. They are semantic, aesthetic, and contextual nuancing. Through semantic nuancing, canonical translations by those with authority in Qur'an translation are employed as a primary source of translation. To fit with the prosodic elements of senandung, their syntactical elements are aesthetically nuanced through the careful use of rhymes and rhythms. The careful considerations are also employed by considering the contexts where the *senandung* is recited, what format the *senandung* is intended to, and who recites the *senandung*.

The novelty of this research lies in conceptualizing Qur'anic translation as a multimodal act that integrates language, sound, and pedagogy. However, this study is limited by its relatively small corpus, drawn from selected YouTube materials and a few kindergartens, as well as by its focus on observable linguistic and musical patterns rather than learners' cognitive or affective outcomes. Overall, this study points out that Qur'anic translation through *senandung* is not merely textual but multimodal, affective, and communal, where melody functions as both a vehicle of meaning and a bridge between sacred expression and local pedagogy.

Future studies could employ the findings of this research by researching the acceptability level of the transadapted short verses into *senandung*. One of the paths that could be taken is to examine it by employing prosodic approaches of *senandung*. A rubric of assessment could be constructed by having the parameters of sacredness. Future researchers could employ the theories of sacred sound as the theoretical foundations e.g. sonic theology by Beck (2022) or orality and literacy by Ong and Hartley (2018).

ETHICS STATEMENT

The authors have read and followed the ethical requirements for publication in Jurnal Arbitrer and that the current work does not involve human subjects, animal experiments, or any data collected from social media platforms.

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The authors declare no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have influenced the work reported in this paper.

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