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## ***Farādīs al-Jinān*: A Compact Acehese Translation for Learning Jurjānī's Rudimentary Arabic Grammar in Aceh**

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### **Abstract**

*Arabic, regarded as the language of the educated in both present and past Aceh, facilitates the comprehension of numerous Islamic didactic texts authored by scholars from the Arab world and other Muslim regions. A widely studied text connecting the Acehese people to this scholarship is Jurjānī's manual, designed to introduce basic grammatical rules to Arabic beginners. Toward the end of the twentieth century, the prolific Acehese scholar Abu Teupin Raya (Teungku Muḥammad 'Alī Irsyād) translated Jurjānī's text into the Acehese language under the title *Farādīs al-Jinān fī Tarjamah al-'Awāmil al-Jurjānī bi Lisān al-'Ulamā' al-Qudamā' bil-Āsyī*, aiming to simplify Arabic grammar for Acehese students. This paper explored into the oral features of the text, examining the constants and patterns in the relationship of Arabic, Malay, and Acehese languages. It highlighted the authors' method of using Acehese language to render the original Arabic source and discussed the exclusivity of Acehese as an official language within the *dayah* (traditional Islamic schools). Using the Faircloughian Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) approach, the text was analyzed as discourse fundamentally linked to its socio-political context. The study employed a three-layer interpretation (micro, meso, and macro levels), as suggested by the approach. The findings revealed that the literal translation technique employed by Abu Teupin Raya reflects an oral translation mode commonly practiced by teachers in Acehese traditional Islamic schools. Furthermore, the awareness of Aceh as a distinct nation was already evident during the authors' lifetime, highlighting the linguistic distance between Acehese and other languages, especially Arabic and Malay.*

**Keywords:** Acehese, Arabic grammar, literal translation, *dayah*.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Being bilingual or multilingual is commonplace among Acehese people. Despite exposure to multiple native tongues, Acehese language is often preferred in certain circumstances, particularly in pedagogical settings (Mulyani et al., 2024). While mastery of Malay (or Indonesian) is actively promoted in government-run educational institutions, especially in urban areas with linguistically diverse students, Acehese remains the main instructional language in traditional schools like *dayah* (traditional Islamic schools) (Hadi, 2014). One notable example supporting this assertion is the composition of didactic texts in Acehese by *dayah* scholars.

In Acehese manuscript culture, some 'foreign' texts were rendered into Acehese language to reach a wider audience. Texts selected for Acehnization (locally termed *peu'acèh*) are usually framed in two widely used metres, *sanjak* (an old Acehese prose literary work featuring stories, laws, and genealogies with fictional, religious, historical, or biographical elements, read for entertainment or inspiration), and *nazam* (a traditional literary work passed down through generations and is part of Acehese and Gayo poetry, typically written and recited in a rhythmic manner) (Samad, 2015; Yunus, 2023). The text *Hikayat Tanbéhōy Rafilin* by Jalāluddīn Lamgut is a free Acehese adaptation of the Arabic *Tanbīh al-Gāfilīn* by Abū Laiš al-Samarqandī. The jihad exhortation in this *hikayat* was widely embraced before the composition of the most celebrated Acehese literary text, *Hikayat Prang Sabi* by Teungku Chik Pante Kulu, which gained immense popularity during the Dutch occupation. The author of this *Hikayat Prang Sabi* took liberties in adapting selected parts of the Arabic text *Masyāri' al-Asywāq ilā Maşari' al-'Usyāq wa Muşir al-Garām ilā Dār al-Salām, fī al-Jihād wa-Fadā'ilih* by Ibn al-Nahhās (Rizki & Manan, 2023). Another work of Samarqandī, *Masā'il*, was commented on by Nawāwī al-Bantānī. Tuwanku Raja Keumala later translated it into Acehese and titled it *Hikayat Teureujeumah Qaṭrulgais Syarah Masā'il Abī Laiš* (Manuscript No. 07\_838 at the Aceh Museum). The boldest rendering into Acehese is likely the free poetic translation of the Qur'ān by Jusuf (1995), which some perceive as a threat to other authoritative interpretations endorsed by religious scholars (Wieringa, 2023).

While studies of written Acehese language have primarily focused on its literary functions, scant attention has been paid to its scientific function. The perceived prestige of Arabic as the language of Acehese religiosity and Malay as a widespread native tongue has resulted in an abundance of texts written in these languages (Gallop & Fathurahman, 2022). Conversely, the Acehese language, which predominantly occupies the domain of oral communication, has been less frequently documented in written form. Therefore, the few authors who chose to write their texts, whether original works, adaptations, or translations, in Acehese deserve recognition and thorough linguistic study.

A translation technique still practiced in Aceh today is the oral literal translation of Arabic texts (Iankovskaia, 2024). The twentieth-century text *Farādīs al-Jinān* (hereinafter, FJ) is a focus of this study because its author, Teungku Muḥammad 'Alī Irsyād (the founder of Darussa'adah Islamic traditional school in Teupin Raya, Pidië Regency of Aceh), successfully documented the oral translation practices that reflect a real *dayah* pedagogical setting. The FJ is a translation and concise commentary on *Al-'Awāmil al-Mi'ah* (The One Hundred Agents) by 'Abdulqāhir bin 'Abdurrahmān al-Jurjānī, a Persian grammarian from Gorgan (d. 471 AH/1078 AD). *Al-'Awāmil* further lists determinant factors of case endings for nouns and the vowels following the final consonants of verbs.

This study thus aimed to address the following questions:

1. How did Abu Teupin Raya use the Acehese language to render *Jurjānī's* text, and how are Acehese oral features reflected in the rendering?
2. How is the Acehese language perceived as a marker of identity within the *dayah* scholarly community?

This research is significant because it exhibits the diverse role of the Acehese language in education and culture. Despite widespread bilingualism, Acehese remains vital in traditional *dayah* settings for literary and didactic purposes through Acehnisation. By examining texts in

*Jurjānī*, the study reveals how translation practices preserve cultural heritage and shape identity, while also addressing the underexplored scientific function of written Acehnese.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The tendency of Acehnese people to prefer one or more languages while discarding others in certain cultural or political contexts highlights the languages in the region carry ideologies over indefinite periods. These external factors can either enrich or potentially eliminate regional languages and cultures (Harianto II & Syukri, 2023). When studying the ideology of dialects in Switzerland, Watts (1999) identified three features ensuring a language ideology. First, a language ideology is closely linked to a symbolic representation of national identity, marked by a codified standard language variety. This variety typically reaches a degree of legitimacy, functioning in educational settings and non-print media. Second, a language can embody resistance values, both culturally and politically, against potential invasions. Finally, language use preferences reflect language users' beliefs about language structure and use.

A large portion of Aceh's inhabitants are speakers of more than one language. Among the 11 vernacular languages in Aceh (Faridy et al., 2023), the Acehnese language has the largest number of speakers. For Acehnese people, there are situations where using Acehnese feels more comfortable and less overwhelming than other languages such as when using the local language to integrate into their social groups, with male speakers favouring it more than females to demonstrate their adaptability in peer interactions (Rizki et al., 2022). Occasionally, this language choice due to specific circumstances leads to the neglect of other languages, as observed in pedagogical settings.

Although some research pointed out the efficacy of directly using a target foreign language in teaching, certain conditions make this approach less viable. Intensive use of a foreign language, such as English for Indonesian students, can lead to misunderstandings of teachers' instructions due to insufficient exposure (Hawa et al., 2021). Outside of Aceh, the Acehnese language binds the Acehnese diaspora together, reinforcing their collective origin. For example, in Malaysia, a village called Kampung Aceh is renowned for its Acehnese-origin settlers, who maintain the use of the Acehnese language, to preserve their identity as *ureuëng Acèh* (Yusuf et al., 2013). Moreover, the conscious choice of a specific language to express ideas reflects social awareness. In this respect, Missbach (2016) noted an Acehnese informant who stressed the importance of "using the right language in the right place" to avoid jealousy and feeling of exclusion from others.

Unlike modern communicative teaching methods that discourage the use of the first language in foreign language classes, the use of Acehnese in learning Arabic does not signify a lack of motivation that leads students to resort to their mother tongue due to the target language's complexity. Instead, the timely use of the first language is often perceived positively, as a means of normal communication and as a tool for facilitating foreign learning (Pablo et al., 2011). Attempts to exclude it completely could leave students feeling disoriented, powerless, and ultimately demotivated (Littlewood & Yu, 2009). Similarly, manifesting language in textual form involves selective gestures by its users, often oriented toward national identity.

### 2.1 Textuality

Arguably, being a text is not an inherent attribute of any given object. Textuality is assigned to an object by the readers and by wider cultural processes that constitute the very possibility of reading (Wilson, 2012). It is a mode of apprehension through which verbal content is abstracted from its material manifestations, such as writing and printing. The oral phase in Aceh's history never completely faded, notwithstanding the rise of written literature. Appreciation of prevalent orality is essentially an appreciation of the natural habits of language itself. This is because written texts require a connection to the world of sound, either directly or indirectly, to convey meaning (Ong & Hartley, 2012). Thus, as secondary habitats for language, writing, and print do not

diminish orality; rather, they enhance it by providing a medium for oral texts to be studied, as oral delivery often leaves no tangible traces.

It is worth mentioning that a vast number of Acehese texts are orally transmitted (Safriandi et al., 2022), composed for collective consumption, freely disseminated without copyright restrictions, and open for addition and modification. Most of these texts are literary in nature, with users or readers rarely concerned about the adaptations they have undergone. However, texts of a religious nature intended to be studied in the presence of a teacher are not performative or literary but still retain the quality of collective ownership. The FJ's style of translating Arabic into Acehese exemplifies the oral translation practices commonly employed in Acehese *dayah* settings. While Acehese society can hardly be regarded as a purely oral society in terms of knowledge transmission, traces of orality remain observable in written texts produced in the region. For texts originating in foreign languages, a reliable translation technique, however literal, is essential.

## 2.2 Literal Translation

Literal translation is not unique to one particular culture; it is widely observed in communities that seek to translate sacred texts (Naudé, 2020). The Qur'ān in Arabic, for example, contains divine words that must be carefully communicated, especially V linguistic boundaries to reach non-Arabic-speaking Muslims. 'Abdurra'ūf al-Singkīlī, a *qāḍī* who served under Aceh's first queen, Sultānah Ṣafīyatuddīn (r. 1641-1675), was credited as the first Malay translator of the scripture. Analysing his literal translation style, Riddell (2002) proposed three plausible motivations. First, the translator aimed to preserve the source language words for readers, even if it compromised clarity to some extent. Second, the translation sought to expose readers to the salient features of the sacred language and its theological content. Third, the translator intended to sensitize people to the Arabicized Malay resulting from the literal translation technique, encouraging appreciation of the unfamiliar linguistic style. The literal translation conducted by Abu Teupin Raya in Acehese reflects the oral translation familiar to his community. Simultaneously, it emphasizes the Acehese language's role as an identity marker.

## 2.3 Language Identity

The term 'language identity' is conceivable in at least two ways: as an attribute that distinguishes a language from others, and as an indicator of an individual's identity through their use of language (Thim-Mabrey, 2003). Endorsing certain language use to establish national identity is rarely overlooked, though it is often articulated indirectly. Edwards (2009) opined that ethnonationalist movements do not constitute linguistic movements. While language occupies an important position therein, attempts to preserve, promote, and sustain ancestral languages are rarely the main agenda.

In multilingual societies promoting one language and discouraging others might result in an ambivalent attitude within ethnonationalist movements (Conversi, 1990; de Bres et al., 2020). Although the temptation to designate a single ethnic language for official use is strong, such movements need to accommodate the languages of other ethnic groups residing in the territory they govern. This phenomenon occurred once in Aceh when a provincial law (*qanun*) stipulating the requirements for those wanting to serve as *wali nanggroe* (guardian of the state) was promulgated in 2012. One of the requirements is that a candidate must exhibit proficiency in *bahasa Aceh*. Though the *Qanun* clarified that the term essentially refers to all the languages spoken in the province of Aceh, the phrase *bahasa Aceh* has long been associated specifically with the language spoken by the Acehese ethnic group. This has sparked tensions among non-members of the ethnic group, such as the Gayo people in hinterland Aceh, who do not refer to their language using this term (Prasetya et al., 2022).

Regardless, although ethnonationalist impulse is usually accompanied by linguistic sentiment, these sentiments may be less evident when individuals adopt a certain language without questioning their motivation. Engaging with a language, whether receptively or

productively, may occur consciously or as a result of environmental factors. Significant effort may be required to use a language under external pressure, especially if one lacks competence in it. However, competence provides the lexical material and grammatical structure necessary to build proficiency (Knorr, 2019).

### 3. METHODS

Given the research questions (on the mode of Acehnese use, orality features, and nationality-marking function) and the fact that the subject of the study was a written text, a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) approach was warranted. This approach treats the text as discourse bound to the socio-political dynamics surrounding its production, dissemination, and reception. Following Fairclough's (2013) guidelines, the analysis extended beyond the concrete text to include a transdisciplinary analysis of the relationship between discourses. It focuses on a systematic analysis of the text rather than a general commentary and adopts a normative stance rather than a purely descriptive one. Practically, the analysis involves three levels of interpretation for the text. For the FJ, textual aspects such as language choice and text organization were analyzed at the micro level. Issues of text production and the targeted audience were addressed at the meso level. Finally, issues of textuality and societal events that affected the text were discussed at the macro-level.

In a society where a text is regarded as collective property, its meaning derives not merely from its author but also from its receivers (e.g., audience and readers). An in-depth analysis of the studied text can yield information regarding the social contexts surrounding its production and use. The main data for this study, the FJ text, is treated as a 'flexible' text, not reductively perceived as mere written work silenced into permanent pen-scratch. Instead, this text is an example of a visual transformation of vocal sounds occurring during the author's life, albeit within an imagined oral delivery setting conceived by the author. Noticeably, the FJ exhibits a typical trait of an orally delivered text before it was committed to writing, as Ong and Hartley (2012, p. 14) stated, "orality needs to produce and is destined to produce writing".

For this study, the Jawi text of the FJ was first Romanized for practicality before it was thoroughly reviewed. Words and phrases indicative of the text's oral features were compiled, and utterances by the author that alluded to social, educational, or political motifs were highlighted for further analysis.

### 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This discussion addresses the inquiries posed in the introduction section, specifically on how Abu Teupin Raya employed the Acehnese language in his rendering of Jurjānī's text, focusing on the integration of distinct Acehnese oral features into the adaptation, and the perception of the Acehnese language as a marker of identity within the *dayah* scholarly community. It reflects the importance of Arabic for Acehnese scholarship and highlights the need for translating its grammar manual into Acehnese, signifying the national identity of its users.

The command of Arabic in Acehnese *dayahs* functions instrumentally to facilitate comprehension of classical Arabic texts; most of which are religious. Since strong reading comprehension is unattainable without mastery of grammar, learning Arabic grammar manuals is considered equally religious as learning other texts on Islamic law, theology, Sufism, and ethics. In educational milieus like *dayahs* where secular subjects are often perceived as affairs without direct orientation toward success in the 'second life', learning Arabic, including its grammar and vocabulary, is oriented toward theological and jurisprudential instruction. To enhance the religious significance of learning grammar, students are sometimes told mesmerizing stories. For instance, a popular belief in *dayah* milieus recounts that the author of the *Ājurrūmiyyah* (the text studied after mastering *Jurjānī's 'Awāmil*) casted the manuscript draft of the text into the sea to ascertain his sincerity in its composition. Since the manuscript was not carried away by the water,

he concluded that he had already obtained God's approval to disseminate the text. This story was narrated by Al-Kafrāwī in his commentary on the *Ājurrūmiyyah* (Al-Ḥāmidī, 2016).

Teaching foreign language grammar to beginner learners may be more effective if conducted in their language native (or the language they understand). In Acehese *dayahs*, Arabic grammar classes frequently involve extensive use of Malay and Acehese languages to facilitate deeper understanding. Most students and teachers in Darussa'adah are likely native speakers of both Malay and Acehese, albeit with varying levels of mastery depending on their preferences for daily use.

Acehese language is extensively used in Arabic grammar classes as it is the language most teachers and students use in daily communication. During oral literal translations of Arabic texts, teachers typically begin with Malay, which often deviates from the modern standardized Malay/Indonesian and is therefore not regarded as "*bahasa yang baik dan benar*" (good and correct language). This is immediately followed by Acehese language for deeper elaboration, analogies, and examples. Acehese-speaking teachers sometimes teach classes where only a few students have limited productive skills in the language but can understand it reasonably well. Such conditions do not justify a complete switch to Malay. The goal of grammar classes in *dayahs* is to introduce Arabic as an instrumental linguistic skill, primarily for students to progress to higher classes where textbooks are written in complex Arabic. Therefore, the primary focus is on enabling students to vowelize diacriticless sentences correctly and comprehend them adequately. Productive skills, such as writing and speaking, in Arabic are not strictly demanded. Hence, the complete discard of the native tongue for in favour of greater exposure to Arabic is not applicable in this pedagogical setting.

#### 4.1 Texts on Jurjānī's Grammar in the Malay World

Jurjānī's text became widely circulated in the Islamized Southeast Asian regions thanks to scholars who studied in Arabia. Recognizing its effectiveness for non-Arab learners, these scholars brought the text home for use in their native contexts. Syaikh Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad Zain al-Faṭānī (d. 1325 AH/1908 AD) wrote a commentary on the *'Awāmil* entitled *Tashīl al-Nail al-Amānī fī Syarḥ 'Awāmil al-Jurjānī*. He also composed a summary of it in versified poetry called *Manzūmāt al-'Awāmil*, which was believed to be completed in a single day, on Friday, 19 Sya'bān 1296 AH/7 August 1879 AD (Rajab et al., 2015).

Nowadays in Aceh, *Tahrīr al-Aqwāl* is the most studied commentary on Jurjānī's *'Awāmil* and is designated as the first textbook for studying Arabic grammar. The format of its pages is divided into two sections: the narrow upper space for the directly quoted text of Jurjānī, and a broader lower space containing commentary by an unknown author. Rarely is the work recognized by its own title, *Tahrīr al-Aqwāl*. Rather, it is often referred to as kitab *Awamè*, underscoring the focus on Jurjānī's contribution in the grammar instruction. This aligns with Hurgronje's (1906) observation that the *'Awāmil* is the first grammar treatise studied before one is allowed to progress to *Matn al-Ājurrūmiyyah* by Ibn Ājurrūm al-Ṣanhājī, *Mutammimah al-Ājurrūmiyyah* by Syamsuddīn al-Ṭarābulṣī, *Al-Fawākih al-Janniyyah 'alā Mutammimah al-Ājurrūmiyyah* by 'Abdullāh ibn Aḥmad al-Fākihī, *Alfiyyah* by Ibn Mālik al-Andalusī, and *its* commentary by Ibn 'Āqil.

#### 4.2 An Inherited Guideline from Past Aceh

The writing of the FJ was accomplished on 1 Muḥarram 1402 AH/7 November 1981 AD. By the late of the twentieth century, reading Malay or Acehese texts in the Rumi script was likely unproblematic. However, the FJ is written in Jawi with Acehese as the main language, deliberately interwoven with Arabic and Malay. In environments like Acehese *dayahs*, using Jawi to write texts is always preferable despite familiarity with the Rumi script due to Islamic association, either naturally or intentionally. Its use highlights not only the distinction between Islamic texts written in Jawi and secular texts in Rumi script but also an attempt to maintain the literacy practices inherited from predecessors of such milieus.

Basically, the choice of producing a text in Jawi or Rumi scripts is subject to personal preference. While Rumi texts often win a wider readership due to their practicality, Jawi texts secure readership because of their perceived intimate link with Islamic religiosity. This perception can influence text choices, even when a work exists in both Rumi and Jawi versions. Interestingly, there are cases where a religious text originally written in Rumi by its first author was later rendered into Jawi, as the latter could perceptibly denote the religious nature of the content better.

Due to the absence of a convention attempted by the respective government or scholars to standardize Acehnese Jawi spelling, authors often develop their own methods when writing in the script. Abu Teupin Raya's conscious use of parentheses, quotation marks, and other punctuation marks, features uncommon in Acehnese Jawi manuscripts, reflects his exposure to lithographic printing styles prevalent in his era. Besides, his Arabic calligraphy skill is exhibited throughout the whole pages, including the cover with the illumination he designed himself.

Regarding the contents, the FJ consists of five sections: (1) Acehnese literal translation of the *'Awāmil: Jurjānī's one hundred agents*, likely copied from *Tahrīr al-Aqwāl* (pp. 1-52), (2) *Talkhīṣ al-'Awāmil*, a summary of the first section (pp. 53-62), (3) *Nazām 'Awāmil*, a versified version of the previously presented summary (pp. 63-76) and composed in a metrical system called *nazām* with rhythmic endings, (4) *Qā'idah I'rāb*, containing a set of fixed rules regulating the ending vowels of words (pp. 77-80), and (5) *Tamrīn al-I'rāb*, showing some selected Qur'ānic verses translated into Malay/Acehnese languages with detailed word inflections (pp. 81-102).

Simplifying the teaching of *Jurjānī's 'Awāmil* was a deliberate action disclosed by Abu Teupin Raya. Other textbooks he produced for instructional purposes in his institutions also clearly indicate such a simplification intention. In the FJ's preface, he expressed the purpose, as shown in the following Excerpt 1, FJ, p.1 below:

- (1) *Ammā ba'du maka inilah terjemah kitab Al-'Awāmil al-Jurjānī dengan bahasan (cara) yang dipergunakan oleh kebanyakan ulama-ulama Aceh yang mu'tabar dahulu demi untuk mempercepatkan paham kitab-kitab 'Arab kepada murid bangsa Aceh yang baru belajar ilmu nahwu. Dengan cara demikian mereka dapat dengan segera meng-i'rabkan segala kalimat yang telah diartikan karena sudah ada pegangan dengan sebab ada arti yang telah ditentukan menurut kaidah i'rāb yang berlaku di Aceh. (Abu Teupin Raya) [After that, this is the translation of Al-'Awāmil al-Jurjānī with the discussion (strategy) used by the majority of respected Acehnese scholars of the past to facilitate understanding among Acehnese students who are new to learning Arabic grammar. Using this approach, they can inflect every translated word immediately because they already have a guideline, namely a translation model, as prescribed by the inflection rules used in Aceh. (Abu Teupin Raya)]*

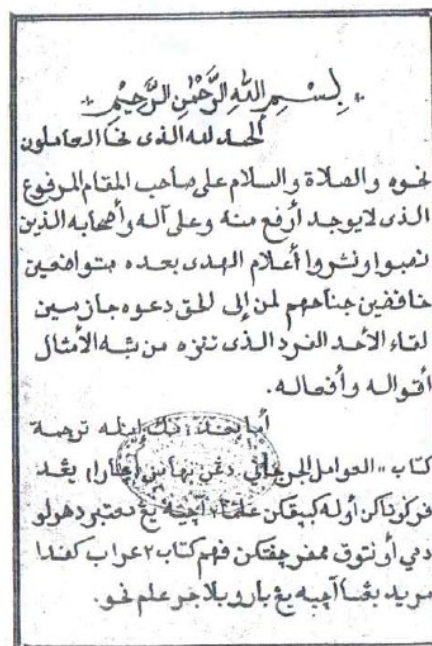


Figure 1. Preface of the *Farādīs*.

### 4.3 Framing the Acehese in the FJ

The author titled the work *Farādīs Al-Jinan fī Tarjamah Al-'Awāmil Al-Jurjānī bi Lisan Al-'ulamā' Al-Qudamā' bil-Āsyī*. It has been a long tradition for texts from Aceh to bear Arabic titles given, regardless of the language used for the substantial content. This is particularly true for several early, widely popular Malay texts from Aceh, authored by renowned figures such as Ḥamzah Faṅṣūrī, Jalāluddīn al-Tarusānī, Syamsuddīn al-Sūmaṭrā'ī, Nūruddīn al-Rānīrī, and 'Abdurra'ūf al-Singkīlī.

Abu Teupin Raya's calligraphy handwriting is prominently displayed on the book cover and throughout the text. The text lines are stretched quite loosely, leaving comfortable spacing readers who wish to add diacritics, notes, or punctuation marks. The broad margins surrounding the text block are reserved for the text of *Al-'Āwāmil al-Mi'ah*. The layers of Arabic, Malay, and Acehese seamlessly combine to form the whole text body of the *kitab*.

Explaining the temporal sequence of the actual use of the three languages in the Aceh context, Durie (1996) outlined an imagined frame. He observed that Acehese texts meant for public reading and listening usually incorporate Malay and Arabic languages. This is exemplified by public speeches that begin in Arabic (mostly in the form of Islamic conventional *muqaddimah*), followed by Malay and Acehese for substantial content, and often closed in Arabic. Such a framework might not fully align with non-performative texts like the FJ. While the *muqaddimah* typically begins in Arabic, and the remainder is predominantly in Malay. The Jurjānī's rewritten text remains in Arabic. Despite Abu Teupin Raya's stated intention to use Acehese language for the writing, his readers, primarily students accustomed to untranslated Arabic and Malay terminology, would not have expected the text to be entirely in Acehese. Additionally, the character-based Jawi script allows flexible spellings across different languages and dialects, facilitating the inclusion of Arabic and Malay terms.

### 4.4 Traditional Literal Translation

As mentioned earlier, in the traditional setting of Acehese *dayahs*, especially in classes with Arabic textbooks, a teacher would first recite some diacriticless (unvowelled) Arabic sentences, enabling students to practice vocalizing them and applying diacritics where necessary. This sequence is called *bōh baréh* in Acehese (applying diacritics) (Kausar, 2020). The teacher would then translate the sentence word by word using the method, clarifying each word's grammatical status. This is followed by the *surah* (discussion) from the teacher, which often sounds more like a free paraphrase of the translation. Whenever the teacher determines a certain portion of the text has been sufficiently read and discussed, he might pause and invite students to repeat the reading, the literal translation, and the discussion. If time permits, the session may continue with further reading or an expanded discussion of the text already covered.

In this regard, Riddell (2002) introduced the term *kitab Malay* to describe the Malay used in religious writings that are renderings or translations of works originally written in Arabic, as seen in the Malay literal translation of the Qur'ān by 'Abdurra'ūf al-Singkīlī. He proved that the literal translation technique is not unique to Malay when it comes to rendering sacred texts. Rather, it is observable in the Judeo-Christian and Buddhist traditions, driven by the urge to provide readers with the closest possible rendering of the original text source (Riddell, 2002).

The Acehese language used in the FJ illustrates its capability as a descriptive instrument for scientific writing. This is particularly noteworthy because Acehese when written, has often been perceived merely as a language for literary texts, which are invariably produced in rhythmic verses, except for the text *Qawā'id al-Islām* (a treatise on Islamic monotheism and law), which is composed in prose. While Acehese literary texts showcase the language's aesthetic and creative potential, Acehese *kitab*, especially in oral translation forums, is intended not only to convey meaning but also to explicate the grammar and syntactical functions of words. Without ample knowledge of basic Arabic grammar or, at least, sufficient exposure to this translation style, Acehese speakers might find it unfamiliar and impractical.

For example, the translation method clarifies the word inflection status as a *mubtadā'* and *khobar* by using the signs of *bermula* and *itu*, respectively (Table 1). Learners accustomed to this translation style over time will most likely continue practicing it to ensure correct construal of sentence inflection. Sometimes, a less *naḥwu*-oriented translation can be found in public religious forums where the participants, mostly unfamiliar with Arabic grammar, listen to an invited teacher who recites and translates an Arabic text. In such cases, the teacher normally refrains from elaborating on every inflectional detail of the translated text to avoid overwhelming the audience.

**Table 1.** Examples of signs of word inflection.

Trans.: 'The agents of inflection in Arabic grammar are one hundred'.					
	<i>al-'awāmilu</i>	<i>fī</i>	<i>al-naḥwi</i>		<i>mi'atun</i>
	agents of inflection	in	grammar		one hundred
<i>bermula</i>	<i>sigala amè</i>	<i>dalam</i>	<i>naḥwu</i>	<i>itu</i>	<i>Sireutōh</i>
to begin with	all agents of inflection	in	grammar	that	one hundred

Other inflection statuses are marked with certain Malay signs in the translation (Table 2, numbers 3, 4, and 5). The rest of the signs (numbers 6 to 17) are question words (or phrases) that introduce a skeptical tone, keeping the reader attentive to the correct grammatical analysis of Arabic sentences. These questions can make the translated text sound relatively communicative, as the teacher might pause slightly, expecting the students to guess, even if their Arabic command is limited and they cannot independently search for the answers. However, such pauses are not insistently demanding. These questions do not strictly require answers but are almost invariably uttered in an exclamatory manner. Hence, to highlight this dynamic, we append the interrobang (?) to these questions (as seen in Table 3).

**Table 2.** List of inflection statuses and their signs.

No.	Inflection status		Sign	
1.	<i>mubtadā'</i>	the subject of a sentence which begins with a noun	<i>bermula</i>	to begin with
2.	<i>khobar</i>	the predicate of a subject of a noun sentence	<i>itu</i>	is/are
3.	<i>fā'il</i>	the subject-doer	<i>oleh / lah</i>	By
4.	<i>nā'ib fā'il/ maf'ūl</i>	the object whose subject-doer is not named/ object	<i>akan</i>	intention to (to form a transitive)
5.	<i>ṣifah</i>	adjectives	<i>yang</i>	that/ which (rel.)
6.	<i>badal</i>	permutatives	<i>toh?</i>	which?
7.	<i>ḥāl</i>	the circumstantial qualifier	<i>pakri?</i>	how?
8.	<i>tamyīz</i>	the specific element	<i>apa?</i>	what?
9.	<i>muḍāf ilaih</i>	the annexed to the annexation	<i>bagi?</i>	Of
10.	<i>bā'</i>	with	<i>bangon?/ pangon?</i>	with what?
11.	<i>min; 'an</i>	from	<i>pane?</i>	from where?
12.	<i>ilā</i>	to	<i>ho?</i>	where to?
13.	<i>kāf</i>	like	<i>pakri?</i>	how?
14.	<i>lām</i>	to	<i>pakon?</i>	why?
15.	<i>fī; 'alā</i>	in/ insidè on/above	<i>pat?</i>	Where?
16.	<i>in</i>	if	<i>peuë syarat?</i>	what is the requirement?
17.	<i>īzan</i>	when	<i>pajan masa?</i>	when is the time?

A sentence example taken from the section of *ḥurūf jarr* (prepositions) shows the use of two prepositions, *min* (from) and *ilā* (to), which prompted the inclusion of two question sentences in the oral translation. The Acehnese translation would read: *ulôn jak pane ulôn jak? dari nanggroë Basarah, ho ulôn jak? u nanggroë Kuphah*, using the subject-verb (SV) order instead of the verb-subject (VS) order of the original Arabic sentence.

**Table 3.** Example of the inclusion of question sentences as an orality feature.

Trans.: 'I walk, from where do I walk? from Basra, where do I walk? to Kufa'.							
<i>sir</i>	<i>-tu</i>		<i>min</i>	<i>al-Baṣarati</i>		<i>ilā</i>	<i>al-Kūfati</i>
walk	1 <sup>st</sup> sing. perf.		from	Basra		to	Kufa
<i>jak</i>	<i>ulōn</i>	<i>pane ulōn jak?</i>	<i>dari</i>	<i>nanggroë Baṣarah</i>	<i>ho ulōn jak?</i>	<i>u</i>	<i>nanggroë Kuphah</i>
walk	1 <sup>st</sup> sing.	from where do I walk?	from	Basra city	where do I walk?	to	Kufa city

Moreover, it is observable that in this example, the concern over clarifying the perfective aspect of the verb is absent. This distinction becomes noticeable only when examples for perfective, imperfective, and imperative verbs are juxtaposed for differentiation purposes. As shown in Table 4, the Malay word *telah* (already) marks the perfective aspect of the Arabic verb *ḍ-r-b*, whereas *lagi akan* (will) suggests its imperfective aspect. The verb in the imperative mood is translated using the pronoun *gata* (2<sup>nd</sup> sing.).

**Table 4.** Example of a perfective marker for an Arabic verb.

Trans.: 'Zaid struck 'Amr'.					
	<i>ḍarab</i>	<i>-a</i>	<i>Zaidun</i>	<i>'Amran</i>	FJ, p. 46
	strike	3 <sup>rd</sup> sing. perf.	Zaid	'Amr	
<i>telah</i>	<i>dipoh</i>		<i>oleh si Zaid</i>	<i>akan si 'Amr</i>	
already	strike		Zaid	'Amr	

**Table 5.** Example of imperfective marker of an Arabic verb.

Trans.: 'Zaid strikes 'Amr'.					
	<i>yadrib</i>	<i>-u</i>	<i>Zaidun</i>	<i>'Amran</i>	FJ, p. 46
	strike	imperf.	Zaid	'Amr	
<i>lagi akan</i>	<i>dipoh</i>		<i>oleh si Zaid</i>	<i>akan si 'Amr</i>	
will	strike		Zaid	'Amr	

**Table 6.** Example of imperative marker of an Arabic verb.

= 'Strike 'Amr!'		
<i>iḍrib</i>	<i>'Amran</i>	FJ, p. 46
strike	'Amr	
<i>poh olèh gata</i>	<i>akan si 'Amr</i>	
you strike	'Amr	

#### 4.5 Acehese Language Identity and the Aceh Nation

Language is analogous to a pillar of identity whose existence is necessary, although it is not sufficient by itself (Edwards, 2009). A study on a selection of teenage students at an international school in Jakarta revealed that the participants perceived the language of their homeland as a source of identity (Sukamto et al., 2021). Before judging the role of the Acehese language in Acehese nationalism, one question needs to be asked: When exactly was the Aceh nation characterized by its language? The idea that Aceh is currently imagined by some local elites as an independent entity might result from a continued recognition of the Acehese language as a defining feature. This corresponds to Johann Gottfried Herder's assertion (as cited in Edwards, 2009) that as long as speech communities maintain their language as cultural inheritance, they will remain discrete entities. Moreover, the sense of belonging to a certain group cannot exist without reference to a language, followed naturally by efforts to preserve the language. Once a relationship is established between a particular language and a particular group, protecting the language becomes necessary (Edwards, 2009).

However, ethnonationalist sentiment that emphasizes the importance of a language does not necessarily endorse the original or ancestral variety of the language (Edwards, 2009). In the context of the Acehese language, one should first determine the ancestry of the language before assessing whether the ethnonationalist movement is focused on promoting the 'original' variety of the language. Furthermore, when discussing the Acehese in Jawi script, which accommodates

a broad range of spoken dialects in Aceh and reflects a more independent and expressive use of the language, one would hardly encounter any prescriptivist attitudes that tend to discourage certain varieties and endorse in favour of a single unified language version. Even until now, no holistic effort has been made to standardize the Jawi spelling for Acehnese.

Generally, the vast majority of students in *dayahs* across Acehnese-speaking areas, particularly those at the Darussa'adah Islamic school, belong to a generation that is first acquainted with literacy in reading and writing in the Rumi script. Literacy in Arabic orthography is mostly acquired indirectly in Qur'ān recitation classes, which are stratified into several levels: from learning how to pronounce individual letters and joined letters of words to reciting selected excerpts from the Qur'ān. The ultimate goal is for students to recite Qur'ānic verses independently, adhering to the *tajwīd* rules. The next stage involves mastering reading Malay Jawi through learning materials used beyond Aceh. Reading Acehnese Jawi is typically mastered later through reading literary texts.

In a multilingual community like the Acehnese *dayahs*, where each person's proficiency in one language differs from another, a preference for using one particular language more frequently indicates an attempt to identify with a specific group. In this regard, [Thim-Mabrey \(2003\)](#) exemplified two situations: one where multilinguality has already prevailed in a country, and the other where one has to acquire a lingua franca outside their native-tongue-speaking area. The use of a particular language in such situations signifies someone's affiliation with a social group, stabilizing the group's identity from within, identifying it, and fencing it off from outsiders.

Such multilingualism, which frequently involves varied and unmeasured command of Arabic and Malay vis-à-vis Acehnese, might inform us about the Acehnese people's language identity. [Durie \(1996\)](#) opined that for the Acehnese people, Arabic constitutes the most external language, symbolizing solidarity with the wider Islamic world. Malay functions as a lingua franca for communication with people from neighbouring regions, while Acehnese is an exclusive language, rarely intended to transcend the borders of its speaking 'circle'.

Abu Teupin Raya overtly disclosed his intention of writing, which was to help accelerate understanding of books written in Arabic. Besides his earlier statement, in which he referred to the students as 'the students of the Aceh nation,' another similar statement is seen in the closing remark of his other book, *Abū al-'ulūm* ([Irsyād, 1991](#)), stating that the Acehnese translation is also expected to benefit grammar teachers, as shown in Excerpt 2 by *Abū al-'ulūm* ([Irsyād, 1991](#), p. 237):

- (2) *Dan adalah kitab ini sengaja saya karang khusus untuk murid2 bangsa Aceh yang minat belajar 'ilmu nahwu karena terkandung di dalamnya cara2 mengartikan kitab 'Arāb dan cara-cara meng-i'rābnya seperti yang telah dipergunakan oleh 'ulama' di Aceh yang dahulu. Dengan cara demikian segeralah berhasiil faedah bagi murid2 bangsa Aceh dan memudahkan pula bagi guru-guru yang mengajarnya. Dan jadilah kitab ini pendahuluan 'ilmu nahwu. (Abū al-'ulūm) [And I deliberately wrote this book for the students of the Aceh nation who want to learn the Arabic grammar, for in it are ways of translating Arabic books and ways of inflecting the word status as used by former Acehnese in the past. These strategies enable the students of the Aceh nation to gain benefits and make it easier for the teachers who instruct them. Thus, this book serves as an introduction for Arabic grammar. (Abū al-'ulūm)]*

The fact that the remark is conveyed in Malay, rather than in Acehnese, and contains numerous Arabic terms that are 'unrenderable' in Acehnese does not seem to be an issue at all. Most likely, for him, being part of the Aceh nation does not require a person identifying as Acehnese to completely strip away all attributes of non-Acehnese languages.

The *kitab*-flavoured Acehnese discussed here is a unique instance where a profusion of untranslated Arabic words and phrases are freely employed, albeit in a way that may appear peculiar to those with little exposure to such a linguistic style. Virtually, all the Arabic grammatical terms in Table 2 have never been translated. Only upon pronunciation does it become noticeable that some of those terms sound Acehnese in the sense that they are pronounced in a way that sounds more familiar to Acehnese people. Most likely, such Acehnicised pronunciation might have arisen from unsuccessful attempts to pronounce the original Arabic words. For example, instead of saying *tamyīz*, an Acehnese speaker might prefer *tamyèd*. The unwritten

convention to replace *l* with *y* is applied to Arabic ل (lam), as in *badal*, which is pronounced *baday*. In this regard, Aziz et al. (2023) highlighted that the phoneme /u/ is typically a marker of Acehese identity. In the FJ, for example, this phoneme appears to replace the Malay /a/ (e.g., *aneuk* for *anak*), and /ə/ (e.g., *seugala* for *segala*). It is sometimes also inserted between consonant clusters (e.g., *hareuta* for *harta*). Again, as previously mentioned, the Jawi orthography is fairly flexible to accommodate a broad range of language dialects, whether Malay or Acehese.

The awareness of Aceh as a nation obliged to partake in a political struggle was once articulated by Teungku Muhammad Daud Beureu'éh as cited in Geulanggang (1956, p. 558):

- (3) "O, my children, respect your Aceh brothers! Keep your honour and pride, greatness, and fame of your Aceh ancestors! Bear in mind the attitude of T. Umar Djohan Pahlawan who was highly loyal to his national struggle, to the Aceh state."

Still, according to Damanik (2010), at that stage, Beureu'éh did not provoke any ethnonationalist movement largely obsessed with stressing a separate Acehese identity. Rather, he was attempting to sensitize people to the urgency of participating in building an Islamic state of Indonesia (NII), as attempted by Kartosuwiryo in West Java. Later, the term '*bangsa Aceh*', together with '*bangsa Aceh-Sumatra*', was frequently used by Hasan di Tiro, the central figure of the *Gerakan Aceh Merdeka* (GAM, or Free Aceh Movement), almost every time he referred to the Acehese populace. Besides being notorious for his unconditional rejection of the Indonesian national ideology of *Pancasila*, his antipathy toward any qualities that can make a person identify as an Indonesian is mirrored in his perception of which languages are worth accommodating in the idea of "Acehneseness". For him, the fact that today's national language of Indonesia is called *bahasa Indonesia* is disesteemed, thus having no immediate relevance to the Acehese identity. Arguably, once an Acehese identity is defined, one might observe different reactions from those included in the defined identity and those excluded from it (Lan, 2006).

Further regarding Di Tiro's stance on language use, an inference can be drawn from a published script of his speech in English, which is translated into the 'Malay language of Aceh-Sumatra.' A sentence on its cover reads: "[d]iterjemahkan dari bahasa Inggris ke Bahasa Melaju Atjeh Sumatera bukan "bahasa Indonesia" Djawa" ("translated from English into Acehese-Sumatran Malay, not Indonesian Javanese language"). Here, Indonesian is blatantly rejected, while the 'Acehese-Sumatran' Malay is justified, thus positioning the former as an unapproved version of Malay. Juxtaposing Aceh and Sumatra vis-à-vis the Malay language might imply an attempt to gain support from neighboring polities that he assumed shared the same independence aspirations, for "language became a rallying-point, something to galvanize the downtrodden, to rally supporters, and to alarm the rulers" (Edwards, 2009, p. 208)". Additionally, as recorded in his diary, Di Tiro once advised an Acehese man to be aware of the significance of the Acehese language, which is exclusively understood by a limited number of speakers. He equated it with the blood one inherits from one's father (Tiro, 1984). He further expressed a confident linguistic assessment that Acehese is by no means a dialect of Malay, for it has its own structure (Tiro, 1999). After all, stating these points, we do not imply that the FJ's author conceived the Aceh nation in exactly the same way as the aforementioned nationalists. Rather, the emphasis is that his productive lifetime coincided with a period when the rising awareness of the Acehese people as a nation identified by language use was prevalent.

## 5. CONCLUSION

The renowned Jurjānī's *Al-'Awāmil*, an Arabic grammar textbook, has been studied by beginner Arabic learners in Aceh since at least the nineteenth century. Abu Teupin Raya's simplified summary of the Jurjānī's text, *Farādīs al-Jinān*, exhibits feature that reflect the orality phases once predominantly used as a means of knowledge transmission. The fact that the FJ is written in Jawi orthography indicates the phenomenon of mastering reading and writing in the Jawi script (Malay and Acehese), which is acquired indirectly through a series of Qur'ān learning

classes. Abu Teupin Raya's deliberate intention to use Acehnese is clarified in some prefaces of his books, that is, to facilitate quick understanding among students of the Aceh nation. It can be inferred that the idea of endorsing the Acehnese language as a determinant of one's "Acehneseness" was indeed popular during his productive lifetime, primarily promoted by the ethnonationalist movements that considered the language an important attribute characterizing the nation.

Given the limited written evidence, Acehnese's role as a scholarly language may be questioned. However, this investigation of the FJ emphasizes that the language, in its written form, performs effectively not only in its stylized and versified manifestations but also as a record of teaching-learning activities involving the translation of non-Acehnese texts. It is important to note that this study provided only an aperçu of the didactic aspect of orally used Acehnese in the specific setting of traditional Islamic schools in Aceh, as reflected in written works of that environment. This occurred in the midst of the Acehnese society's tacit admission of the language's role as a nationality marker. Further investigations into the scholarly quality of Acehnese, as proven by remaining accounts left by its users throughout Aceh's history, should be highly encouraged.

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