

Exploring the Noble Values of Humanism in Said Ramadhan Al-Buthi's *Syarah Al-Hikam*: A Systemic Functional Translation Studies Approach

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Abstract—This research aims to explore the noble values of humanism contained in Said Ramadhan al-Buthi's *syarah al-Hikam*. One important problem to explore in relation to the noble values of humanism in this book is the problem of inequality. Therefore, the research questions in this study can be formulated as follows: (1) how are the noble values of humanism interpreted in *syarah al-Hikam* based on a Systemic Functional Translation Studies (SFTS) approach, and (2) what strategies are designed to reduce tensions of inequality based on the Sufi texts. The data in this study are the source text (L1) (Arabic) and the target text (L2) (Indonesian and English) in Said Ramadhan al-Buthi's monumental book *syarah al-Hikam*. The general design of the research is a descriptive qualitative study. The data analysis uses Spradley's model, including: (1) a domain analysis to map the information structure in *syarah al-Hikam*, (2) a taxonomic analysis to elaborate the noble human values in the book, (3) a componential analysis to unify the information structure and human values found in the Sufi texts, and (4) an analysis of cultural themes, which concludes that the text of *al-Hikam* not only examines spiritual issues but also strives comprehensively to show the implementation of human values in everyday life. The contribution of this research is an attempt to reduce tensions of inequality based on Sufi texts and to interpret the Arabic text based on a linguistic approach.

Index Terms—human values, tensions of inequality, *syarah al-Hikam*, Said Ramadhan al-Buthi, Systemic Functional Translation Studies (SFTS)

I. INTRODUCTION

This research elaborates the noble values of humanism contained in the book *syarah al-Hikam* by Said Ramadhan al-Buthi. The research data are taken from the text of *syarah al-Hikam*. *Syarah* means explanation, and in this case, it refers to an explanation of the text of *al-Hikam*. The main urgency of this study is that noble values of humanism are generally difficult to separate from religious texts, especially texts about Sufism. This study attempts to prove that the noble values of humanism can be extracted from the text of Said Ramadhan al-Buthi's monumental work, *syarah al-Hikam*. One approach that can be used to reveal the noble values of humanism in religious texts is a linguistic approach, specifically an approach related to Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), which was first introduced by Halliday (Bloor & Bloor, 2004; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). This approach has been developed more comprehensively with the translation approach often referred to as SFTS (Systemic Functional Translation Studies) (Wang & Ma, 2021, p. 4), which aims to describe the linguistic phenomenon and the translation phenomenon simultaneously.

Previous studies with references to Sufism are found to be highly partial. The first impression that emerges from these studies leans dominantly towards the religious approach. Studies on Sufism that are specifically elaborated from a Systemic Functional Linguistics perspective based on noble human values have never been conducted by previous researchers (Muhammad, 2023; Dadzie et al., 2024). The study of inequality must continue to be developed, especially in the study of religious texts. The book *al-Hikam* has previously been studied by numerous researchers (Abdullah, 2018; Rahem, 2017; Anis et al., 2021; Damayanti, 2014; Soemarsono, 2004; Anis & Arifuddin, 2023; Sakhok et al., 2019; Aryati, 2017; Anis et al., 2022), but none of these studies discusses in detail the aspects of Systemic Functional Linguistics or the essence of noble human values, especially the negative impact of inequality. While a number of studies discuss the noble values of humanism, they do not specifically examine the religious aspects (Rüsen, 2021; Almirzanah, 2020; Bryson, 2022; Kulzhanova et al., 2021; Yigit, 2021; Sabirov et al., 2021). Thus, it can be concluded that the novelty of this article

is its model of analysis of Arabic religious texts that have been translated into Indonesian and English, to reveal the values of humanism based on the theory of functional linguistics.

The general aim of this research is to elaborate the noble values of humanism contained in the book *syarah al Hikam* by Said Ramadhan al-Buthi. In addition, the research attempts to explain the strategies that are utilized to reduce tensions of inequality in the Sufi texts. The data in this study are the source text (Arabic) and the target text (Indonesian) in Said Ramadhan al-Buthi's monumental book *syarah al-Hikam*. To strengthen the analysis, the study uses additional secondary data, namely the text of *al-Hikam* with an explanation in English (Iskandari & Gangohi, 2014). The English text is used as a means of validating and verifying the aspects of religiosity and humanism in the textual analysis based on the theory of functional linguistics.

The method used to answer the two problems above is a linguistic qualitative method. A number of texts from Said Ramadhan al-Buthi's *syarah al Hikam* (Al-Buthi, 2003; Al-Būthiy, 2010) were randomly selected to be elaborated using a Systemic Functional Translation Studies (SFTS) approach. In order to make the results of the study more focused, the main data in the study were limited to the second part of the book. The reason for choosing SFTS was that its highly specialized language approach examines the meaning of language based on function and translation context. In SFTS, text is regarded as a language phenomenon that is very close to two contexts in society, namely the cultural context, and the situational context (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014; Bloor & Bloor, 2004). It is hoped that the results of this study will provide an innovative model for the implementation of SFTS theory in Arabic Sufi texts.

This research aims to reveal the cultural context and the situational context in *syarah al Hikam*, in the hope that these two contexts will be able to explain the relationship between the religious texts and the noble values of humanism. The process of revealing these two contexts in the exploration of the values of humanism is based on Spradley's qualitative analysis model (Spradley, 2016; Spradley, 1980), which includes a domain analysis, taxonomy analysis, componential analysis, and cultural theme analysis (Santosa, 2021).

II. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Interpretation of Humanism Values Based on Systemic Functional Translation Studies (SFTS)

One of the main approaches used to elaborate the values of humanism found in *syarah al-Hikam* is to review the information structure contained in the book. According to the theory of SFL (Systemic Functional Linguistics), there are two kinds of information structure, namely theme and rheme. Themes consist of old information or information that is already known by the reader and writer, while rhemes contain new information for the reader. Themes can be divided into four main types: (1) unmarked topical theme, (2) marked topical theme, (3) interpersonal theme, and (4) textual theme. Based on the theory of functional linguistics, this research attempts to reveal the values of humanism contained in a book that discusses Islamic Sufism, namely *syarah al-Hikam*. The text is well known in the Muslim community, and has been translated into various languages, including English and Indonesian. A special method of analysis is required to reveal the values of humanism that have been translated from Arabic (L1) into Indonesian (L2a) and English (L2b). This method involves the elaboration of the different types of themes found in the Arabic source text. The results of the interpretation of the values of humanism contained in the *al-Hikam* aphorisms can be viewed in the following table. The table is organized based on several important chapters of *syarah al-Hikam*. The selection of these chapters was based on the substance of the meaning and the interpretation of the values of humanism.

TABLE 1
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THEME TYPE, TRANSLATION TECHNIQUE, TRANSLATION METHOD AND IDEOLOGY

The Book of Wisdom: <i>Kitab Al-Hikam</i> , a Collection of Sufi Aphorisms	Systemic Functional Translation Studies (SFTS)		
	Type of Theme	Translation Technique	Translation Method and Ideology
On knowledge	العلم النافع هو الذي ينسبط في الصدر شعاغه، وينكشف به عن القلب قباغه. Beneficial knowledge is the one whose ray of light expands in the breast and uncovers the veil over the heart. Theme: Unmarked Topical (phrase)	Established Equivalent	Target Language Orientation (Domestication)
On repentance	كيف يُشرق قلب صنور الأكوان مُنطبعة في مرآته؟ أم كيف يرحل إلى الله وهو مُكبَّل بشهوآته؟ How can the heart be illumined while the forms of creatures are reflected in its mirror? Or how can it journey to God while shackled by its passions? Theme: Unmarked Topical (question marks)	Established Equivalent	Target Language Orientation (Domestication)
On sincerity	الأعمال صنور قانمة، وأرواحها وجود سر الإخلاص فيها Actions are lifeless forms, but the presence of an inner reality of sincerity within them is what endows them with life-giving Spirit. Theme: Unmarked Topical (single noun)	Established Equivalent	Target Language Orientation (Domestication)
On ritual prayer	الصلوة طهرة للقلوب من أدناس الذنوب، واستفتاح لباب الغيوب، Ritual prayer is a purification for hearts (from the impurities of sins) and an opening-up of the door of the invisible domains. Theme: Unmarked Topical (single noun)	Generalization	Target Language Orientation (Domestication)
On solitude and detachment	ما نفع القلب شيء مثل عزلة يدخل بها ميدان فكرة. Nothing benefits the heart more than a spiritual retreat wherein it enters the domain of meditation. Theme: Marked Topical	Modulation	Target Language Orientation (Domestication)
On time and its importance	ما من نفس تبديه.. إلا وله قدر فيك يمضيه. Not a breath do you expire but a decree of destiny has made it go forth. Theme: Marked Topical	Modulation	Target Language Orientation (Domestication)

Based on Table 1 above, it can be concluded that the texts containing values of humanism are spread across several major themes, such as: (1) knowledge, (2) repentance, (3) sincerity, (4) ritual prayer, (5) solitude and detachment, and (6) time and its importance. Humanism is a view that regards humans as the main locus of discussion. One of the basic characters in the locus of human discussion is “science”. From the data above, it can be understood that (العلم النافع) is translated into English as (beneficial knowledge), using an official and standard translation technique (established equivalent). Based on the data (on knowledge), it can be concluded that the application of the established equivalent translation technique shows that the translator is more inclined to target a language-oriented translation (Newmark, 1988) using domestication ideology (Venuti, 2019).

In Table 1, it can be seen that one of the values of humanism in the book *al-Hikam* is presented by applying an explanation of one of the basic rituals in human life, namely prayer. The unmarked topical theme in the chapter (الصلوة) is translated as (ritual prayer) using the generalization technique (Molina & Albir, 2002). It can be understood that “ritual prayer” is one of the generalized forms of the word (prayer/*shalat*) in Arabic. The translator’s choice to use the generalization technique aims to make the humanism value of ritual more easily understood by the target language reader.

One of the key points in humanism is “solitude”. Humans need quiet conditions (*uzlah* - عُزْلَة) to experience a sense of calm. Likewise, humans also need an element of “detachment” in their lives. A life filled with routine and tedious work activities needs to be balanced with times of quiet, so that people can perform their acts of worship to the fullest (ميدان - the domain of meditation). The chapter “on solitude and detachment” shows the application of a marked topical theme. A marked topical theme is a fairly long theme that appears at the beginning of a sentence. The difference between unmarked topical themes and marked topical themes is that unmarked topical themes are simpler in form (for example: single noun and phrase), while marked topical themes are more complex (ما نفع القلب شيء مثل عُزْلَة).

The marked topical theme (ما نفع القلب شيء مثل عُزْلَة) is translated as (*nothing benefits the heart more than a spiritual retreat*). Based on the data, it can be concluded that the translator uses the modulation translation technique (Molina & Albir, 2002). In this case, the translator tries to change the point of view in the Arabic text by adding the words “more than”. The translator shows a different point of view of the Arabic word (*uzlah* - عُزْلَة) by positioning it as a “spiritual retreat”. The application of the modulation technique is one of the important choices made by the translator, which aims to make the values of humanism in the *al-Hikam* aphorisms more easily understood by the reader (*uzlah* is a part of spiritual retreat), so that the application of the values of humanism based on the Sufi texts can be applied on a much larger scale in society.

Unmarked topical themes are themes that are attached to the subject. To determine the values of humanism found in *syarah al-Hikam*, the reader can look in detail at the themes that appear in the unmarked topical themes. Meanwhile, to strengthen the clarity of the values of humanism in *syarah al-Hikam*, the reader can look more closely at the information

that appears before the subject. The information that comes before the subject is called the “marked topical theme”. Finally, to determine the strategies that can be used to reduce the values of inequality, the reader can observe the textual themes and interpersonal themes found in *syarah al-Hikam*. In this case, textual themes are used to show the relationship between one clause and another in the text of *syarah al-Hikam*, while interpersonal themes are used to show the relationship between the reader and the author of the text. In this case, interpersonal themes are used very sparsely.

To explain the analysis of the theme types in *al-Hikam* (Arabic - English), the following data were collected from *al-Hikam* to explain chapter 1 “on knowledge”:

العلمُ النافعُ هو الذي ينبسطُ في الصدرِ شُعاعُهُ، ويُنكشِفُ به عن القلبِ قِنَاعُهُ.

Beneficial knowledge is the one whose ray of light expands in the breast and uncovers the veil over the heart.

(Iskandari & Gangohi, 2014)

In the data above, it can be seen that the phrase (العلمُ النافعُ) is an unmarked topical theme. By looking at the unmarked topical theme in this Arabic religious text, the reader can obtain information about values of humanism. It can also be ascertained from the data above that the values of humanism can be understood based on the concept of useful knowledge. This is seen in the “rheme” (هو الذي ينبسطُ في الصدرِ شُعاعُهُ), which appears as an explanation of the unmarked topical theme, explaining that knowledge is considered to be a light that illuminates human values in the world. Therefore, it is important to understand the structure of information. In addition, it cannot be denied that the science of translation also has the ability to reveal the values of humanism in an Arabic-English text.

The reader can also look at some of the unmarked topical themes in Arabic that use the verb form (يُنكشِفُ). The reader can observe the verb (انكشِف), which means lexically (to be revealed, to be *uncovered*, to come to light). This verb is a well-known verb in Muslim Sufi circles. Therefore, it is important for the translator to take great care when translating this verb because if the quality of the translation is not accurate, the values of humanism in the Sufi texts will not be revealed properly to the reader. It can be seen from the data above that an unmarked topical theme in Arabic can be a verb (يُنكشِفُ). To see the new information (rheme) in the data above, the reader can look at the information that comes after the verb which functions as an unmarked topical theme (... به عن القلبِ قِنَاعُهُ). Thus, it can be concluded that when translating from Arabic to English, it is important to look carefully at the verb that serves as the unmarked topical theme. The role of SFTS in this analysis is to model the elaboration of unmarked topical themes translated from the source language (Arabic) into the target language (English). If the result of the translation is accurate and acceptable, then SFTS can be deemed successful in interpreting the central information structure (unmarked topical themes).

Based on the analysis of translation techniques, this study shows that the modulation technique is used when translating from Arabic into English. The modulation technique is a translation technique that the translator applies by changing the point of view, especially in Arabic texts (Anis & Arifuddin, 2023). The modulation technique can be seen in the following data example.

العلمُ إن قَارَنَتْهُ الخَشْيَةُ... فَتَلِكْ، وَإِلَّا فَعَلَيْكَ.

In the above data, it can be seen that the word */al-'ilmu/* occupies the position of an unmarked topical theme and acts as the starting point of an utterance. However, the translation shows modulation, or a change in point of view. This can be seen in the following data.

If fear is united with knowledge, then it is for you; if not, then it is against you.

In the sentence above, it can be seen that the words “if fear” are the starting point of the translation. Thus, it can be concluded that there is a modulation from the word (*/al-'ilmu/*) in the source language to (if + fear) in the target language. The use of the modulation technique is one of the findings analyzed in this study, in particular in relation to the quality of the translation and values of multiculturalism, specifically human values.

B. Strategies to Reduce Tensions of Inequality Based on Arabic Sufi Texts

Inequality is a problem faced by many countries in the world. The most widely discussed problem of inequality is economic inequality. In Indonesia, economic inequality has become a serious problem, especially since the pandemic. One of the main problems that have led to pessimism in society is the death of the heart (Arabic: *maut qalbi*). This is referred to in the following statement written by Said Ramadhan al-Buthi.

من علامات موت القلب عدم الحزن على ما فاتك من الموافقات وترك الندم على ما فعلته من الزلات
ما المراد بحياة القلب وموته، في مصطلح التربية النبي نحن بصددها؟

Apa yang dimaksudkan dengan hati yang hidup dan hati yang mati dalam istilah pendidikan keimanan?

What is a living heart and a dead heart in terms of faith education? (Data 1 –unmarked topical theme)

Based on data 1 above, it can be concluded that one of the main causes of pessimism in society due to inequality is the death of the heart (موت القلب). In this case, Said Ramadhan al-Buthi offers a new concept, namely the life of the heart (حياة القلب). By observing the data above more closely, it becomes clear that Said Ramadhan al-Buthi is asking the reader to pay more attention to (المراد) or “the aim”. It is important that the process of cultivating noble values of humanism is based on the identification of whether our hearts are dead or alive. One of the main characteristics of a dead heart is that there is

no sorrow and no remorse for sin. Therefore, the heart of a person who is pessimistic due to a condition of inequality needs to be revived immediately by continuing to glorify the greatness of Allah. In addition to paying attention to the information contained in the subject, the reader should look at what comes before the subject, which in the Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) tradition is called the marked topical theme. This can be observed in more detail in the following words of Said Ramadhan al-Buthi.

عندما يكون القلب عامرا بمشاعر حب الله وتعظيمه والخوف منه، فهو إذن قلب حي

Ketika dalam hati tumbuh dan berkembang kesadaran akan cinta kepada Allah, pengagungan, dan takut kepada-Nya, itulah hati yang hidup.

When in the heart grows and develops an awareness of love for Allah, adoration, and fear of Him, that is a living heart (Data 2 – marked topical theme)

Based on data 2 above, it can be concluded that the reader can find noble values of humanism in the information that comes before the subject. The substance of this information relates to human values that can reduce the negative impact of the problem of "inequality", including love of God, honoring God, and fear of God. Based on these aspects, the human heart that has become pessimistic due to the condition of inequality will become alive again. The information that comes before the subject is called the marked topical theme.

To extract the values of humanism from the Sufi texts based on the SFL approach, the reader must have the ability to see the relationship between the writer and the reader. This is known as the interpersonal theme. An example of an interpersonal theme can be seen in the words of Said Ramadhan al-Buthi in the following extract of *syarah al-Hikam*.

و إني لأفترض أنك قد تسأل ناقدا، أو مستشكلا، بعد أن عرفت معنى كل من القلب الحي و القلب الميت : لماذا لا تكون علامة القلب الميت ارتكاب الزلات، من حيث تكون علامة القلب الحي النهوض بسائر ((الموافقات)) أي الطاعات.

Setelah tahu makna hati yang hidup dan hati yang mati barangkali Anda bertanya dengan kritis: Mengapa tanda matinya hati bukan melakukan dosa, sedangkan hati yang hidup tandanya bukan melakukan ketaatan?

After knowing the meaning of a living heart and a dead heart, you may ask critically: Why is it that the sign of a dead heart is not committing sins, while a living heart is the sign of disobedience? (Data 3 – Interpersonal theme)

In the data above, it is clear that Said al-Buthi calls the reader "you" or "Anda" (Indonesian) or "tas'al" or "annaka" (إنك) - (تسأل) (Arabic). This shows that in the context of *syarah al-Hikam*, Said al-Buthi is endeavoring to establish a sense of closeness with the reader, and to convince the reader by using the interpersonal theme "you". The author's mention of the reader is important because he is trying to emphasize the noble values of humanism in *syarah al-Hikam*. The last SFL tradition of detecting information structure is to identify textual themes in a religious text. Textual themes are information structures that connect clauses in a religious text. One example of a significant textual theme in *syarah al-Hikam* is when Said Ramadhan al-Buthi makes a conclusion using the word (إذن). More details can be seen in the data below.

إذن فالكيان الإنساني يحوي طاقة علوية تتجه بالحب والحنين إلى المألى الأعلى، وتتمركز هذه الطاقة في الروح التي تعكس إحياءاتها إلى القلب.

Jadi, dalam diri manusia terkandung kemampuan mulia yang tercermin dalam cinta dan kerinduan kepada alam arwah, kemampuan ini terpusat di roh yang kemudian memantul ke hati.

So, within human beings there is a noble faculty that is reflected in the love and longing for the spirit world, this faculty is centered in the spirit which then bounces to the heart (Data 4 – textual theme).

In the data above, the phenomenon of a textual theme (إذن) (Arabic) or (so) (English) is a strategy chosen by Said Ramadhan al-Buthi to explain the noble values of humanism by prioritizing love and longing for the spirit world. Human beings must continue to remember the essence of the spirit and the heart. Al-Buthi uses the strategy of concluding with the word "idzan" (إذن) to emphasize the noble values of humanism, in particular to reduce the negative impact of inequality.

III. CONCLUSION

This study is a step towards finding a model that captures the values of humanism in religious texts. This is important because religious texts cannot be separated from noble human values. Based on a study of SFL (Systemic Functional Linguistics), the noble values of humanism can be seen in four constituent elements of information, namely: (1) unmarked topical themes, (2) marked topical themes, (3) interpersonal themes, and (4) textual themes. One way of maximizing the interpretation of these values based on Systemic Functional Translation Studies (SFTS) is to review the types of themes in the information structure. Based on the analysis of the various themes in the *al-Hikam* aphorisms, it can be concluded that the unmarked topical themes and marked topical themes contain elements of humanism values. In the unmarked topical themes, the themes are arranged simply in phrases and single nouns. On the contrary, the form of marked topical themes is more complex. One of the methods used by the translator to ensure that the translation is oriented to the target language is the application of domestication ideology by using established equivalent and modulation translation

techniques. Based on the analysis, both of these translation techniques are quite effective in maintaining the humanism values in the Sufi texts.

One of the strategies used by Said Ramadhan al-Buthi to reduce aspects of inequality is to remind the reader of *al-murad* or “the aim” of *maut qalbi* (the death of the heart) and *qalibun hayyun* (the life of the heart). Meanwhile, one of the strategies used by Said Ramadhan al-Buthi to explore the noble values of humanism in marked topical themes is to strengthen the understanding of love for Allah, glorifying Allah, and fearing Allah (*taqwa*). The next strategy implemented by Said Ramadhan al-Buthi to emphasize the noble values of humanism is the use of interpersonal themes which include the word “you” (أَنْكَ) or *annaka* (Arabic). This research focuses on the study of neutral (حياد) aspects and aspects of inequality. In the future, this study can be developed further to include other humanism values, such as humanity (الإنسانية), impartiality (تجرد), and independence (حرية), and examine the ways they relate to religious texts, especially Islamic Sufi texts. This study endeavors to ensure that religious texts continue to synergize with the noble values of humanism.

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