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Nationalism in the translated literary titles during the Japanese occupation: A study of Djawa Baroe

Idrus Idrus^{1*}, Noriko Hiraishi², Fithyani Anwar³, Ladyanna Sonezza⁴, Helmita Helmita⁵

¹ Universitas Andalas, Jl. Limau Manis, Padang, Indonesia

² University of Tsukuba Malaysia, Wisma R&D, Universiti Malaya Jalan Pantai Baharu, 59100 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

³ Universitas Hasanuddin, Jl. Perintis Kemerdekaan KM.10, Makassar, Indonesia

⁴ Hankuk University of Foreign Studies, 107 Imun-ro, Dongdaemun-gu Seoul, Seoul, 02450 Republic of Korea

⁵ Universitas Ekasakti, Jl. Veteran Dalam No.26B, Padang, Indonesia

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Abstract

This study investigates the representation of nationalism in the translation of literary titles published in *Djawa Baroe*, an Indonesian-language magazine circulated during the Japanese occupation from 1942 to 1945. It focuses on the translation strategies and ideological meanings conveyed through lexical choices and symbolic narratives. The analysis identifies twenty-six translated titles and examines three representative examples in detail to illustrate how linguistic adaptation intersects with nationalist discourse. Employing Vinay and Darbelnet's translation model, the study distinguishes between direct and oblique strategies to explain how titles were modified to fit Indonesian conventions while resonating with nationalist sentiments. Additionally, Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) situates these strategies within broader ideological and socio-political contexts, allowing the research to capture micro-level textual operations and reveal how translation acted as discourse production embedded within wartime power structures. Findings demonstrate that translators utilized deliberate techniques such as modulation, equivalence, and orthographic adjustment to enhance readability and embed ideological content, foregrounding themes of patriotism, sacrifice, and devotion to the motherland. This highlights that translation in *Djawa Baroe* was far from a neutral linguistic transfer; instead, it emerged as a politically charged act of cultural mediation. By illustrating how Japanese occupation propaganda intersected with Indonesian nationalist discourse through translation, this study contributes to translation studies by underscoring the ideological role of translation as an instrument of power, identity, and cultural hegemony.

Abstrak

Kata Kunci:

Djawa Baroe; masa
pendudukan Jepang;
penerjemahan sastra;
representasi
nasionalisme;
strategi penerjemahan

Penelitian ini mengkaji representasi nasionalisme dalam terjemahan judul-judul sastra yang diterbitkan di *Djawa Baroe*, sebuah majalah berbahasa Indonesia yang beredar pada masa pendudukan Jepang tahun 1942–1945. Fokus kajian diarahkan pada strategi penerjemahan serta makna ideologis yang disampaikan melalui pilihan leksikal dan narasi simbolik. Analisis berhasil mengidentifikasi dua puluh enam judul terjemahan, dengan tiga contoh representatif dikaji secara mendalam untuk memperlihatkan bagaimana adaptasi linguistik beririsan dengan wacana nasionalis. Metodologis, penelitian ini memanfaatkan model penerjemahan Vinay dan Darbelnet yang membedakan strategi langsung dan tidak langsung untuk menjelaskan bagaimana judul-judul dimodifikasi agar sesuai dengan konvensi bahasa Indonesia sekaligus beresonansi dengan sentimen nasionalis. Selain itu, Analisis Wacana Kritis dari Fairclough digunakan untuk menempatkan strategi penerjemahan ini dalam konteks ideologis dan sosial-politik yang lebih luas, sehingga penelitian dapat menangkap operasi tekstual pada tataran mikro sekaligus mengungkap fungsi penerjemahan sebagai produksi wacana yang tertanam dalam struktur kekuasaan masa perang.

* Corresponding author:
idrus@hum.unand.ac.id

Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa penerjemah menggunakan teknik seperti modulasi, ekivalensi, dan penyesuaian ortografis tidak hanya untuk meningkatkan keterbacaan, tetapi juga untuk menyisipkan muatan ideologis yang menonjolkan tema patriotisme, pengorbanan, serta pengabdian kepada tanah air. Dengan demikian, penerjemahan di *Djawa Baroe* terbukti jauh dari sekadar alih bahasa yang netral, melainkan muncul sebagai tindakan mediasi budaya yang sarat muatan politik. Melalui penjelasan mengenai bagaimana propaganda pendudukan Jepang beririsan dengan wacana nasionalis Indonesia, penelitian ini memberi kontribusi bagi studi penerjemahan dengan menegaskan peran ideologis penerjemahan sebagai instrumen kekuasaan, identitas, dan hegemoni budaya.

1 Introduction

The Japanese occupation of Indonesia (1942–1945/2602–2605) marked a decisive moment in the nation's cultural and political history. Within the broader context of World War II, the Japanese military administration actively sought to shape public opinion through propaganda disseminated across mass media channels. Among the most prominent of these was *Djawa Baroe*, an official magazine created to advance the ideology of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere. Its content emphasized themes of sacrifice for the war effort, loyalty to the state, and strong anti-Western—particularly anti-Dutch—sentiments (Anwar, 2020). However, beyond its overt ideological messaging, *Djawa Baroe* incorporated translated cultural materials, notably literary works and film titles. Within these translations, the present study locates its central inquiry: how nationalist ideology was articulated and mediated through specific translation strategies.

The strategic role of *Djawa Baroe* magazine in constructing nationalist discourse and supporting Japanese hegemony has been the focus of several previous studies. *Djawa Baroe* served as one of the propaganda tools employed by Japan during its occupation of Indonesia (Hashina Rosalini & Dwi Prianti, 2022). This is evident in both the written content and visual elements featured in each article. The Japanese government and its allied nations were portrayed as entities that would assist in Indonesia's independence, emphasizing Japan's benevolence and its recognition as the “elder brother.” The magazine's editorial structure further reinforced its propagandistic function. It was divided into three main sections: the first contained current news from domestic and international sources, though limited to regions under Japanese control; the second was a cultural section featuring writings by Indonesian intellectuals, which implicitly supported Japanese agendas; and the third was a trivia section that included elements of Japanization, such as Japanese recipes, fashion trends, and Japanese language lessons on the back pages (Waworuntu & Tjahjowulan, 2020). This pattern illustrates how *Djawa Baroe* functioned not merely as an informational medium but as an ideological apparatus aligning Japanese colonial interests with Indonesian nationalist narratives.

Further studies have also examined the literary content of *Djawa Baroe*, particularly focusing on the presence of Japanese authors whose works appeared in the magazine from 1943 to 1945 (Anwar, 2024). Within *Djawa Baroe*, three categories of Japanese writers were identified: those who had lived in Indonesia, those who were active during the occupation, and those who likely never visited Indonesia but whose works were reprinted. The study identified a total of 18 Japanese authors whose literary works were published over the years of the magazine's circulation. These findings suggest that such literary contributions played a significant role in disseminating wartime propaganda and influencing both the political direction and literary development in Indonesia.

Despite the existing body of research, the aspect of translation—particularly the translation of Japanese literary titles featured in *Djawa Baroe*—has received relatively little scholarly attention. Literary titles are not merely linguistic elements; they serve as interpretive entry points that carry

significant semiotic and ideological weight. Titles often contain cultural terms, which are predominantly translated into Indonesian using borrowing strategies (Halim & Asmarani, 2019). The selection of a title is a crucial part of the creative process, as it can clarify the central message of a literary work (Lodge, 1992). In the context of translation, the title becomes a site of meaning negotiation, involving the cultural and ideological dimensions of both the source and target languages.

The translation of literary titles in *Djawa Baroe* cannot be understood merely as a linguistic activity, but rather as a discursive practice situated within the colonial space. Titles such as *Panggilan Iboe* ("Call of the Mother") or *Semangat Berdjoeang* ("Fighting Spirit") do not simply convey information; they function as vehicles for the transmission of values—either reinforcing the ideological dominance of the Japanese Empire or, conversely, subtly implying symbolic resistance to that authority. Therefore, it is essential to analyze the extent to which these translated titles represent, negotiate, or obscure nationalism within the colonial context.

The theoretical framework of this study is grounded in the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) approach developed by Fairclough. Within this perspective, discourse is viewed as a social practice intricately linked to structures of power and ideology. The analysis is conducted through three dimensions: (1) textual analysis (linguistic structure and lexical choices), (2) discursive practice (processes of text production and consumption), and (3) social practice (historical and ideological context) (Fairclough, 2010). CDA is not a methodology in itself, but rather an umbrella term referring to a set of theories and practices that share specific principles in their approach to language studies, or what may be considered a "school of thought" (Wodak & Meyer, 2009). In the context of translation, this framework is reinforced by the translation strategy model, which consists of seven translation strategies: borrowing, calque, literal translation, transposition, modulation, equivalence, and adaptation (Vinay & Darbelnet, 1958). Furthermore, translation is positioned as a non-neutral ideological act, particularly within colonial contexts that are deeply embedded in power relations (Hatim & Mason, 1997).

Unfortunately, studies that specifically examine the translation of Japanese literary titles in *Djawa Baroe* remain scarce. Previous research has tended to focus on editorial content, visual propaganda, or thematic elements within literary texts, without addressing the strategic dimension of title translation as an entry point into ideological discourse. Yet, within a colonial context, translation is always situated in a field of tension between power and resistance.

The novelty of this study lies in its specific focus on the practice of translating literary titles in *Djawa Baroe* as a complex site of nationalist representation. As an official Japanese propaganda medium, the magazine presented translated texts that functioned not only as vehicles of cultural transfer but also as instruments for meaning-making within a hegemonic ideological framework. Accordingly, this study aims to analyze how nationalism is represented through the translation of Japanese literary titles in *Djawa Baroe*, and whether such representations reflect ideological manipulation, symbolic resistance, or a hybridity of meanings that emerged within the translation practices of the Japanese colonial period in Indonesia.

2 Methods

This study employs a qualitative-descriptive approach aimed at uncovering the meanings, strategies, and ideological content embedded in the translation of literary titles published in *Djawa Baroe* during the Japanese occupation (1942–1945). In analyzing the data, the research integrates Critical Discourse Analysis (Fairclough, 2010; Jorgensen et al., 2010) with translation strategy theory (Vinay & Darbelnet, 1958) as its conceptual foundation. Vinay and Darbelnet's model was selected over other translation strategy frameworks (Baker, 1992; Newmark, 1988) due to its closer temporal proximity to the publication period of *Djawa Baroe*, making it more contextually appropriate. Critical

Discourse Analysis is employed to trace the relationship between language, power, and ideology within the colonial context, particularly in the nationalist narratives constructed through translated texts. Meanwhile, translation theory is used to identify and classify the strategies applied by translators in rendering Japanese literary titles into Indonesian.

2.1 Sources and Techniques of Data Collection

The data sources for this study consist of primary and secondary materials. The primary data include Japanese literary titles and their translations published in *Djawa Baroe* magazine during the Japanese occupation (1942–1945). The secondary data comprise previous studies on *Djawa Baroe*, literature from the occupation period, propaganda, historical archives, magazine catalogs, and scholarly works on ideology and nationalism during the Japanese colonial era. Data were collected using documentation techniques, involving the compilation of *Djawa Baroe* editions from the national library, digital archives, and cultural institutions. Literary titles were then identified and selected by focusing on translated works featured in the magazine. A total of 26 literary works translated from Japanese into Indonesian were identified, three of which contained strong propagandistic elements aimed at shaping Indonesian nationalism. Finally, the data were recorded in the form of a comparative list of original and translated titles, along with their publication context (year, author, genre, etc.).

To ensure data validity, this study employed methodological and analytical triangulation by cross-referencing primary sources from *Djawa Baroe* with historical archives and scholarly literature, while integrating Vinay and Darbelnet's translation model with Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis. This multi-layered approach strengthens the reliability of interpretations and highlights how translation practices reflect ideological dynamics within the colonial context.

2.2 Stages and Techniques of Analysis

The data analysis in this study was conducted in stages using a qualitative approach that is descriptive and interpretative in nature. The following outlines the steps and analytical techniques employed:

2.2.1 Classification by Literary Genre

The first stage involves classifying the literary titles according to their genre, namely short stories, poetry, timeless works, and films. The purpose of this classification is to identify differences in translation tendencies based on literary genre.

2.2.2 Analysis of Translation Strategies

Following the classification, the next stage is to analyze the translation strategies employed in rendering the literary titles. This analysis refers to the translation strategy theory proposed by Vinay and Darbelnet, which includes seven principal strategies: borrowing, calque, literal translation, transposition, modulation, equivalence, and adaptation. This stage aims to uncover the linguistic transformations from the original titles to their translated counterparts.

2.2.3 Analysis of Nationalist Representation

The final stage of the analysis involves identifying forms of nationalist representation embedded in the translated titles. This approach draws on postcolonial perspectives on nationalism, utilizing the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) framework developed by Fairclough to examine how nationalist narratives are constructed through translated texts within the colonial context.

3 Findings

To gain a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of translation and ideological representation in literary works during the Japanese occupation, the findings of this study are

presented systematically in three main sections. Each section is designed to address the research focus while demonstrating the interrelation between linguistic form, translation strategies, and the ideological content embedded in the texts. The first section provides a general description of the data corpus, including the publication background, historical context, and the linguistic and thematic characteristics of the literary titles examined. The second section discusses the translation strategies employed in rendering these titles, based on the classification proposed by Vinay and Darbelnet, encompassing both single and combined strategies. The third section analyzes how nationalism is represented in the translated titles, both explicitly and implicitly, and how the chosen translation strategies contribute to the construction of nationalist meaning within the colonial and political context of the period. This structure is intended to facilitate a thorough and organized analysis.

3.1 Overview of the Analyzed Literary Titles

Based on an examination of the literary works featured in *Djawa Baroe*, the following categories were identified: Indonesian short stories and their translations into Japanese; Japanese short stories and their translations into Indonesian; timeless narratives and their translations into Indonesian; Japanese film reviews and their translations into Indonesian; Indonesian film reviews and their translations into Japanese; Japanese-language dramas; and Indonesian poetry written by both Japanese and Indonesian authors. The titles of literary works originally written in Japanese and translated into Indonesian are presented in the table below.

Table 1: Translated Literary Works Featured in Djawa Baroe Magazine

Data	Titles	Translated	Genre	Authors, Translator	Issue
1	男の意気 (おとこのいき)	Semangat Lelaki	Film	Not indicated	15 June 1943, Vol. 12, Hal. 30
2	女の教室 (おんなのきょうしつ)	Soeka-doeka Peladjar-wanita	Film	Not indicated	15 July 1943, Vol. 14, Hal. 30
3	英国崩るゝの日 (えいこくくずるるのひ)	Sa'at Inggeris Roentoech	Film	Not indicated	1 August 1943, Vol. 15, Hal. 30
4	翼の凱歌 (つばさのがいか)	Kemenangan Sajap	Film	Not indicated	15 August 1943, Vol. 16, Hal. 30
5	母子草 (ははこぐさ)	Panggilan Iboe	Film	Not indicated	15 September 1943, Vol. 18, Hal. 30
6	シンガポール総攻撃 (シンガポールそうこうげき)	Penjerangan Oemoen di Singapoera	Film	Not indicated	1 October 1943, Vol. 21, Hal. 30
7	軍馬吉蔵の出征 (ぐんばきちざうのしゅっせい)	Kitjizo ke Medan Perang!	Short story	Rosihan Anwar	1 January 1944, Vol. 1, Hal. 27-30
8	海鷲の揺籃地にて (うみわしのようらんちにて)	Ditempat Asoehan Garoeda!	Short story	Hoemio Niwa/Rosi Tani	15 January 1944, Vol. 2, Hal. 27-31
9	男 (おとこ)	Djantan	Film	Not indicated	15 January 1944, Vol. 2, Hal. 32

Data	Titles	Translated	Genre	Authors, Translator	Issue
10	石 (いし)	Batoe	Short story	Tetsoekitji Kawai/ Rosi Tani	1 February 1944, Vol. 3, Hal. 27-30
11	野菊の兵士 (のぎくの へいし)	Peradjoerit Nogikoe	Short story	Kan Kikoetji/ Rosi Tani	15 February 1944, Vol. 4, Hal. 27-31
12	望樓の決死隊 (ぼうろ うのけっしたい)	Barisan Mati dimenara Pendjaga	Film	Not indicated	15 February 1944, Vol. 4, Hal. 32
13	銀婚式 (ぎんこんし き)	Perkawinan 25 Tahoen Babak 1	Drama/play	Takamaroe Sasaki	1 March 1944, Vol. 5, Hal. 27-31
	銀婚式 (ぎんこんし き)	Perkawinan 25 Tahoen Babak 2	Drama/play	Takamaroe Sasaki	15 March 1944, Vol. 6, Hal. 27-31
14	魚雷 (ぎょらい)	Torpedo	辻小説 (street literature)	Tomoichiro Inoue	1 April 1944, Vol. 7, Hal. 30
15	母 (はは)	Iboe	辻小説 (street literature)	Rokurobei Akiyama	1 April 1944, Vol. 7, Hal. 30
16	新雪 (しんせつ)	Saljoe Soetji	Film	Not indicated	1 May 1944, Vol. 9, Hal. 31
17	海軍 (かいぐん)	Angkatan Laoet	Film	Not indicated	15 May 1944, Vol. 10, Hal. 27-31
18	出征前12時間 (しゅっ せいまえ12じかん)	12 Jam Sebeloem Berangkat kemedan Perang	Film	Not indicated	15 July 1944, Vol. 14, Hal. 32
19	熱風 (ねっふう)	Neppuu	Film	Not indicated	1 August 1944, Vol. 15, Hal. 32
20	不沈艦撃沈 (ふちんか んげきちん)	Torpedo Tempaan Djiwa	Film	Not indicated	15 August 1944, Vol. 16, Hal. 31
21	艦の名とその心 (かん のなとそのころ)	Nama-nama Kapal Perang dan Artinja	辻小説 (street literature)	Miyauchi Kanya	1 November 1944, Vol. 21, Hal. 30
22	茄子といのち (なすと いのち)	Terong	辻小説 (street literature)	Sakurai Chuunon	1 November 1944, Vol. 21, Hal. 30
23	地図を描く老人 (ちず をえがくろうじん)	Peta Boemi dan Penggambarnja	辻小説 (street literature)	Hata Kooichi	1 November 1944, Vol. 21, Hal. 31
24	敬禮 (けいれい)	Memberi Hormat	辻小説 (street literature)	Ryuu Kankichi	1 November 1944, Vol. 21, Hal. 31
25	路上 (ろじょう)	Ditengah Djalan	辻小説 (street literature)	Hanihara Ichijou	1 November 1944, Vol. 21, Hal. 32
26	闘志 (とうし)	Semangat Berdjoeang	辻小説 (street literature)	Kitamura Komatsu	1 November 1944, Vol. 21, Hal. 32

The table presented in this section contains comprehensive data on a selection of Japanese literary works and their translations published in *Djawa Baroe* during the Japanese occupation of Indonesia (1942–1945/2602–2605). Each column in the table is designed to provide specific information relevant to the analysis. The "Literary Title" column lists the original titles in Japanese, while the "Translated Title" column presents their Indonesian versions. The "Genre" column classifies the form of the work, such as film, short story, drama, and street literature. The "Author/Translator" column includes the names of the original authors, film directors (for reviews), and translators. Lastly, the "Publication Date" column indicates the date or year when the work was first published in the magazine.

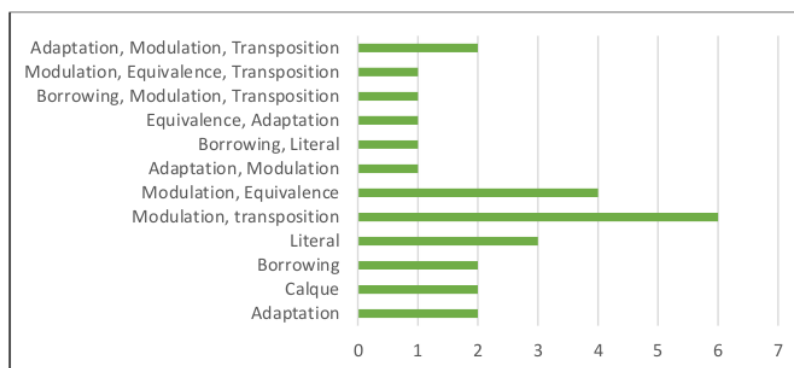
The data presented in the table reveal that *Djawa Baroe* featured translated literary works across various genres, including 13 film reviews, 4 short stories, 1 drama, and 8 street literature published between 1942 and 1945. From the overall dataset, several prominent thematic patterns can be identified, particularly the dominance of war-related themes and nationalist sentiment. These themes appear consistently across different genres. For instance, the film review titled シンガポール総攻撃 (*Penjerangan Oemoem di Singapoera*), published on October 1, 1942; the short story 野菊の兵士 (*Peradjoerit Nogikoe*), published on January 1, 1944; and the street literature 闘志 (*Semangat Berdjoeang*), published on November 1, 1944—all present narratives of heroism, military struggle, and nationalist spirit within the ideological framework of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere.

These findings align with the argument put forth by Sholeka and Sasmita, who assert that *Djawa Baroe* functioned as a Japanese propaganda medium in Java, covering domains such as education, literature and the arts, socio-cultural affairs, and the military (Sholeka & Sasmita, 2021). It is undeniable that under the strict control of the Japanese occupation, literary sections featuring expressive forms such as short stories and reviews often carried implicit ideological content that supported the political agenda of the colonizers, while also potentially serving as spaces for symbolic resistance. Therefore, analyzing the structure and content of translated literary titles in *Djawa Baroe* is crucial for understanding how these texts represent nationalism—both as instruments of propaganda and as expressions of residual national identity.

3.2 Title Translation Strategies

Vinay and Darbelnet categorize translation strategies into two main types: direct translation and oblique translation. Direct translation encompasses three techniques—borrowing, literal translation, and calque—while oblique translation consists of four techniques: transposition, modulation, equivalence, and adaptation. Based on the data on literary titles featured in *Djawa Baroe*, as presented in the previous table, it was found that some titles were translated using a single strategy, whereas others resulted from a combination of two to three strategies. This variation in strategy reflects the translator's flexibility in adapting meaning, cultural context, and ideological intent between the source and target texts.

Graph 1. Strategies for Translating Literary Works in Djawa Baroe



Based on Graph 1, it is evident that two literary titles were translated using the borrowing strategy (data 14 and 19), two with calque (data 4 and 17), and two with adaptation (data 2 and 22). A combined strategy of modulation and transposition was applied in six titles (data 3, 12, 18, 24, 25, and 26), while a combination of modulation and equivalence was found in five titles (data 1, 5, 9, 16, and 20). In addition, one title each employed a combination of adaptation and modulation (data 5), borrowing and literal translation (data 11), as well as equivalence and adaptation (data 13). Notably, one title utilized a combination of three strategies—modulation, equivalence, and transposition (data 21)—and two titles applied a blend of adaptation, modulation, and transposition (data 8 and 23).

4 Discussion

4.1 Nationalist Representation in Translated Titles

During the Japanese occupation of Indonesia (1942–1945), media and literary works served as crucial instruments for disseminating the ideology of the Japanese Empire, including through the publication of Indonesian-language magazines such as *Djawa Baroe*. In this context, translated literary works from Japanese into Indonesian functioned not only as tools for entertainment or education but also as ideological instruments. *Djawa Baroe* operated as a cultural propaganda medium, aiming to construct Japan's image as the “elder brother” while instilling the spirit of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere among indigenous readers. Titles such as *Ditempat Asoehan Garoeda!* (translated from 海鷲の揺籃地にて) and *Sa'at Inggeris Roentoeh* (translated from 英国崩る々の日) contain symbolic narratives that explicitly or implicitly convey elements of nationalism—both within the framework of Japanese propaganda and in the construction of Indonesian national consciousness.

The translation strategies employed in these works, particularly in the selection of title diction, reflect a negotiation between Japanese ideological messaging and local interpretations of nationalist sentiment. This aligns with the findings of Pratama and Indriyanto, who argue that during the Japanese occupation, Indonesian authors and translators often embedded covert nationalist meanings in works that formally adhered to military censorship, using subtle and distinctive literary styles (Pratama & Indriyanto, 2022). Therefore, examining the representation of nationalism in translated literary titles from this period is essential for understanding how translation contributed to shaping nationalist discourse under the ideological pressures of Japanese colonialism.

The following section presents an analysis of nationalist representation in the titles of literary works published in *Djawa Baroe* and their translations. The film title 母子草, translated as *Panggilan Iboe* (“Call of the Mother”), reveals a strong ideological dimension when interpreted through the lens of nationalism. Literally, 母子 means “mother and child,” while 草 refers to “grass” or “wild plant”—

a flower that, in Japanese culture, symbolizes the affectionate bond between mother and child. However, the translation *Panggilan Iboe* departs from literal rendering and instead applies modulation and cultural adaptation, transforming a personal maternal symbol into a collective national metaphor. This shift amplifies the connotative meaning, embedding the title with emotional and ideological weight within the Indonesian context. The deliberate use of the historically resonant spelling “Iboe” is especially significant, as it evokes nationalist discourse and cultural identity prevalent at the time.

When interpreted as a reference to *Ibu Pertiwi* (Motherland), the translation moves beyond familial intimacy and situates the text within the ideological project of the Japanese occupation. In this context, the “call of the mother” becomes a metaphorical summons from the nation to its children, urging loyalty and sacrifice in line with propaganda promoting devotion to the homeland and participation in the Greater East Asia War. Thus, the translation functions as more than linguistic transfer: it becomes an ideological intervention that reframes maternal imagery into nationalist symbolism.

The archaic spelling “Iboe” further anchors the text within the cultural and political discourse of 1940s Indonesia, reinforcing its resonance with nationalist aspirations. Through this choice, the translator not only conveys meaning but also aligns the text with broader efforts to construct national consciousness. In this regard, translation operates as an ideological practice, deliberately privileging contextual and symbolic equivalence over literal accuracy. The strategy employed—an interplay of modulation and equivalence—demonstrates how translation can actively shape representations of nationalism and function as a cultural instrument of ideological persuasion.

The short story title 軍馬吉蔵の出征 was translated into Indonesian as *Kitjizo ke Medan Perang!* (“Kitjizo to the Battlefield!”). In Japanese, 軍馬 means “warhorse,” 吉蔵 is the name of the horse, and 出征 refers to “departure for the battlefield” or “deployment to the front lines.” Together, the original title narrates the departure of a warhorse named Kichizō to the battlefield—a metaphor embedded with notions of sacrifice, loyalty, and patriotic devotion. Within Japanese wartime discourse, animals such as horses often functioned as symbols of unwavering service and sacrifice for the nation, thereby reinforcing ideals of military discipline and collective duty. The Indonesian translation captures this symbolic weight while adapting it to the linguistic and cultural expectations of its readers.

The translation employs modulation, altering structure and perspective to fit Indonesian linguistic norms and cultural resonance. The name Kichizō becomes Kitjizo, reflecting adjustments to the old Indonesian spelling system and preserving phonetic familiarity in a form accessible to local readers. This orthographic modification also situates the text within the linguistic landscape of 1940s Indonesia, subtly reinforcing a sense of historical authenticity. Meanwhile, the phrase *no shusse* (“departure for the battlefield”) is rendered more dynamically as *ke medan perang!*, a communicative phrasing reinforced by the exclamation mark, which intensifies its emotional and ideological charge. The addition of this exclamation mark is not trivial; it dramatizes the narrative and echoes the rhetorical style of propaganda slogans widely circulated at the time.

From an ideological standpoint, this translation operates as more than a linguistic shift: it transforms the Japanese metaphor into a nationalist allegory tailored for Indonesian readers under Japanese occupation. In *Djawa Baroe*, where literature functioned explicitly as a propaganda instrument, the valorization of Kitjizo symbolizes not only the bravery of a horse but also the idealized image of the citizen—loyal, self-sacrificing, and ready to fight for the “greater cause.” The anthropomorphization of the horse implicitly conveys that even non-human agents can embody values of devotion and heroism, thereby normalizing the expectation that human citizens must do the

same. This kind of symbolic projection allowed propaganda to operate on both affective and moral levels, embedding ideological messages in seemingly simple narratives.

Accordingly, the title *Kitjizo ke Medan Perang!* should not be read as a simple narrative of an animal's deployment but as an ideological construct designed to mobilize nationalist emotion. The translation reframes an act of departure into a heroic call to arms, aligning Indonesian readers with the broader militaristic values promoted by the Japanese empire. By employing modulation and equivalence, the translation prioritizes contextual resonance and ideological persuasion over literal fidelity. In this way, translation is revealed as a political act—an active agent in shaping national consciousness, embedding propaganda within cultural expression, and appropriating local linguistic resources for imperial ideological ends. This demonstrates how translation strategies, far from being neutral, can be instrumentalized as tools of power, reinforcing colonial narratives under the guise of shared nationalist sentiment.

The title 闘志 literally means “fighting spirit” or “will to fight,” a term historically associated with determination, courage, and patriotic sacrifice in militaristic discourse. Its Indonesian translation, *Semangat Berdjoeang*, not only preserves but also amplifies this ideological charge. The deliberate use of the archaic “dj” spelling situates the translation within the sociopolitical atmosphere of the Japanese occupation, aligning it with nationalist rhetoric and linguistic forms familiar to Indonesian readers of the 1940s. This orthographic choice alone signals an attempt to embed the translation within the broader nationalist linguistic landscape, lending it an air of authenticity and immediacy for its target audience.

From a translation-theoretical perspective, the rendering reflects the strategy of equivalence, privileging pragmatic and emotional impact over literal fidelity. Rather than a direct equivalent such as *hasrat bertarung*, which might sound more individual and less culturally embedded, the translator opts for *Semangat Berdjoeang*, a phrase deeply rooted in nationalist discourse and collective mobilization. By doing so, the translation reshapes the meaning of the original term, shifting it from an abstract concept of inner determination into a communal slogan that resonates with collective struggles. This transformation illustrates how translation can strategically manipulate semantic choices to create ideological resonance within a specific sociopolitical context.

The ideological implications of this translation are profound. In the wartime context, *Semangat Berdjoeang* was not simply a descriptive phrase but functioned as a performative slogan—an exhortation for Indonesians to channel their loyalty and energy toward Japan's Greater East Asia War. This means that translation here was not a neutral act of linguistic transfer but a deliberate ideological maneuver designed to align Indonesian nationalist sentiment with the interests of the Japanese imperial agenda. In this way, the translation simultaneously appealed to existing cultural values while redirecting them to serve colonial propaganda. It demonstrates how linguistic equivalence can be manipulated to disguise imperial control under the familiar guise of nationalist aspiration.

The text thus operates simultaneously on two levels: as a concise, emotionally charged title and as a symbolic construction of nationalist values redefined through colonial power relations. Its brevity and intensity made it particularly effective as a propaganda tool, easy to remember and repeat, thereby embedding ideological persuasion into everyday discourse. In this sense, the translation illustrates how meaning in one culture can be appropriated and recontextualized to fulfill the political and ideological agenda of another. Ultimately, the rendering of 闘志 as *Semangat Berdjoeang* exemplifies the role of translation as an ideological practice—an instrument not only of cultural transfer but also of political control and the shaping of national consciousness during a period of occupation.

In summary, the analysis of the three titles reveals that translation in Djawa Baroe functioned not as a neutral transfer but as an ideological production. Through strategies such as modulation and equivalence (Vinay & Darbelnet, 1958), the texts were recontextualized within the socio-political framework of the Japanese occupation, aligning nationalist discourse with propagandistic aims. This confirms that translation is embedded in discourse and ideology, reproducing power relations (Fairclough, 2010; Hatim & Mason, 1997; Wodak & Meyer, 2009).

5 Conclusion

This study highlights the pivotal role of Djawa Baroe, a prominent print outlet during the Japanese occupation (1942–1945), in employing literary translation as a vehicle for ideological dissemination. The translated materials—from film titles to short stories, dramas, and popular street literature—consistently foregrounded war, resistance, and loyalty themes. Such thematic framing not only advanced the propaganda of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere but also provided a subtle platform for articulating nationalist sentiment. From the translation studies perspective, the strategies employed correspond to Vinay and Darbelnet's framework, which includes borrowing, literal translation, modulation, transposition, equivalence, and adaptation. These strategies went beyond the mechanics of linguistic transfer, functioning instead as tools to negotiate meaning within a specific ideological and historical context. The use of modulation and equivalence, in particular, illustrates how translation operated simultaneously to reinforce colonial authority and as a vehicle for expressing national identity. When examined through Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis, these choices reveal how translation practices were embedded in broader discourse formations and sociocultural structures, reflecting prevailing power relations while mediating local nationalist aspirations within the apparatus of Japanese wartime propaganda. In this sense, translation emerges as a linguistic activity and a discursive practice tied to broader struggles over power and ideology. The study further highlights the importance of translated titles—often overlooked but crucial sites of ideological mediation—in shaping cultural meaning and identity under colonial conditions. Looking ahead, comparative studies with other wartime or colonial publications, or interdisciplinary approaches that link translation studies with media history, cultural studies, and discourse analysis, would further illuminate translation's role as a cultural and political practice in times of conflict.

Disclosure Statement

The authors claim there is no conflict of interest.

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