Nazam Aceh in Translating the Qur'an: A Review of the Vernacularization of the Qur'an in Tafsir Pasé

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Abstract

This article aims to uncover the vernacularization activities of the Qur’an in the Aceh region. One of the efforts made by Indonesian scholars, including Acehnese scholars, in spreading Islamic teachings is the vernacularization (localization) of the meaning of the Qur’an so that its usefulness can be felt by all circles, as done by T. H. Thalhas et al. in the book of *Tafsir Pasé*. Through the descriptive-analytical method, it was found that *Tafsir Pasé* was the first interpretation to use the medium of nazam to interpret the meaning of the Qur’an in the Acehnese language. All the surahs on Juz ‘Ammah and the letter Al-Fatihah are presented with the original text, Arabic, then accompanied by translations into Indonesian and Nazam Aceh. The vernacularization of verses of the Qur’an through Nazam Aceh on *Tafsir Pasé* focuses more on *tarjamah tafsiriyyah*, i.e., free translation, which is not too tied to the meaning of the original Arabic language. However, it refers to explaining the intention of words in Acehnese without limiting the original wording or consideration of language structure.

**Keywords:** Nazam Aceh; Tafsir Pasé; Vernakularization.

Abstrak

*Nazam Aceh dalam Menerjemahkan Al-Qur’an: Tinjauan Vernakularisasi Al-Qur’an dalam Tafsir Pasé* Artikel ini bertujuan untuk mengungkap aktivitas vernakularisasi al-Qur’an di wilayah Aceh. Salah satu usaha yang dilakukan oleh ulama-ulama Nusantara

**Kata Kunci**: Nazam Aceh, Tafsir Pasé, Vernakularisasi.

**Introduction**

As a book of reference and guidance in carrying out life on this earth, the Al Qur’an has never finished being a discourse that is continuously discussed and studied by researchers, including non-Muslim groups. Human curiosity about something new makes them more diligent in reading, researching, and studying so that they can uncover the secrets of knowledge that are so vast. Many scholars advocate the Qur’an as an initial education that must be taught to children; as Ibn Khaldun once expressed, "the material for Islamic education in childhood is teaching the Qur’an because absorbing the Qur’an in the heart will strengthen faith". This means that before developing other potentials they have, children should be able to read or even memorize the Qur’an, which in the end can help them explore the sea of educational interpretations that exist in the Qur’an (Mays Brim Bahari, M. Zainul Mustofa, 2018, pp. 217–218).

The command to read is also an important recommendation based on the first revelation revealed to the Prophet Muhammad:

"Read in the name of your Lord, who created. He has created man from a clot of blood. Read, and your Lord is the Most Glorious. Who teaches a man with a pen? He taught man what he did not know."

So it is not surprising that the teaching method using the Qur’an even makes the Qu’ran the primary material in education and teaching, which is very relevant for
humanity, especially for Muslims to this day (Triyoga & Sulistyani, 2021, pp. 1463–1480). So various kinds of research and studies related to the Qur’an continue to emerge.

The research that appears is also very diverse; sometimes, research is in terms of a particular theme, as recently there have been many languages, namely regarding childfree. Even though the Qur’an has long ago responded to how the Qur’an responds to the issue of childfree. In verses 38–39 of Ali Imran’s letter, one of the goals that husband and wife hope for after marriage is to have children. Because it is through this child that Maqashid Hifz al-Nasl (guarding offspring) will be created (Wijaya, 2022, p. 56). Likewise, the problem of religious moderation is also one of the themes that continue to be studied from various perspectives, including research that tries to explain how the views of religious scholars on the meaning of religious moderation are based on the arguments of the Qur’an so that Muslims are considered to have a moderate character without leaning towards excess. excess (ifrāf) or vice versa, namely underestimating (tafrīth) in various issues related to religion and the world (Khairul Mufti Rambe, 2023, p. 18). Sometimes studies in the form of manuscripts try to examine directly the writings of previous scholars who were still handwritten. Research on this manuscript is also very important to study because it is a great text that will elevate the dignity and writing works of previous scholars academically and be more authoritative for the digital generation, especially in the field of the Qur’an (Che Omar & Ariffin, 2022, p. 2).

If we look at the Al-Qur’an that we are reading today, it is the same Al-Qur’an that was recited by the Companions during the time of the Prophet, as well as during the tabi’ and tabi’ tabi’in eras until now. This further emphasizes that there is still a lot of knowledge that can be continuously explored in the Qur’an. Along with the development of Islamic teachings in various parts of Indonesia and even throughout the world, scholars are motivated to produce works of interpretation of the Qur’an into varieties of languages. From arrangements using local (read: regional), national, and even International languages, namely English. The translation of the Qur’an using local languages or the local language of the Qur’an is then referred to by Anthony Johns as vernacularization (Ariffin, 2018, p. 15).
The form of translation of the Qur’an produced in various local languages is strongly influenced by the socio-cultural background and style of thought of the mufassir so that we will find various alwan (shades of perspective) in the writing of the book of tafsir, sometimes, isyari, fiqhi, falsafi and ‘ilmi (Muhammad Amin Suma, 2001) with different methodologies both ijma’i (global), maudhu’i (thematic), muqarran (comparison) and tahlili (analytical) (Thalhas dkk, 2001). The Qur’an has thus inspired people to reflect over the centuries (Campanini, 2018).

The emergence of the complete 30 Juz tafsir book entitled Turjuman al-Mustafidh by Abdurrauf al-Fansuri al-Sinkili also known as Syiah Kuala is the first Malay tafsir book present in the Southeast Asian region in the 17th century (1675 AD) and became the forerunner of the presence of other tafsir books.

Furthermore, the translation of the Qur’an continued to develop even to various regional languages such as Tafsir Qur’an Karim by Mahmud Yunus who was present in the 20th century and then refined by Ilyas Muhammad Ali and H. M Kasim Bakrie in 1938 AD, there is also Tafsir Qur’an al-Furqan written by A. Hassan, so on Tafsir al-Qur’an An-Nur written by T.M Hasbi Ashiddiqie, Tafsir al-Azhar written by Hamka. In the Java archipelago, there is also a book of interpretation written by KH. Bisri Mustofa used the Javanese dialect in the Pegan script entitled Tafsir al-Ibriz. There is also Tafsir al-Huda written by Bakri Syahid in 1972 (Fikri Ys, 2021, p. 158). In the Kalimantan region, the book Tafsir al-Qur’an al-Karim bi al-Lugah al-Bugisyyah was published by Anregurutta Yunus Maratan (Salim & Abbas, 2020, p. 129). In the 21st century, through the hands of M. Quraish Shihab also produced a very large commentary book and is often used as a reference, especially by students. And there are many more translations of the Qur’an using regional languages and Indonesian which continue to emerge to this day.

The reality of the lives of people who live and settle in Aceh shows that not all Acehnese can speak Indonesian, let alone Arabic. Because the Acehnese people themselves consist of various ethnic groups and have their regional languages such as Acehnese,¹ Aneuk Jamee, Gayo, Alas, Tamiang, Singkil, Pakpak, Haloban, and others.

¹ The common language that is widely known and used by the people of Aceh
The presence of various kinds of interpretation books using local languages has become one of the media of da’wah for scholars to spread Islamic teachings in the archipelago so that the message of the Qur’an is more easily conveyed to the reading community, or to domesticate and bridge the gap between the language of the Qur’an and the Arabic language locally (Gusmian, 2016, p. 25).

Interpretation of the Qur’an using the Acehnese nazam approach as practiced by Thalhas et al. in the book Tafsir Pasé is a form of vernacularization (localization) of the Qur’an, which can be a solution as well as a starting point for the indigenization of the meanings of the Qur’an to all layers of society, especially Aceh. Based on this review, the researcher wants to see more about how the Aceh Nazam is used in the process of interpreting the verses of the Qur’an in the book of Tafsir Pasé.

Methods

In conducting this research, the researcher used a descriptive analysis method and applied it through a literature-based approach. To collect data, the researchers used various previous studies with the theme Tafsir Pasé, both in the form of books and scientific works such as theses, dissertations, and journals, which are secondary references for researchers. At the same time, the researcher’s primary concern adheres to the Book of Tafsir Pasé itself. The descriptive concept included here is to fully present the actual situation, in this case, the book of Tafsir Pasé, so that a phenomenon can be stated and clarified.

Results and Discussion

The Naming of the Book of Tafsir Pasé

As it is known, the Book of Tafsir Pasé is the collective result of several interpreters, including T.H. Thalhas, H. Hasan Basri, Zaki Fuad, A. Mufakhir Muhammad, and Mustafa Ibrahim. These five interpreters also have different scientific disciplines and the environment and means of conveying material, so this will impact the style and pattern of their interpretation in interpreting the verses in surah Juz
‘Amma. The following are four brief biographies of the author of Tafsir Pasé, while Mustafa Ibrahim’s biography was not found.

Teuku Hasan Thalhas

He is a native son of North Aceh, born on April 5, 1934, on Pumpkin Island. He started to enter formal education at the Peusangan al-Muslim Madrasah in 1948, then continued at the Lhokseumawe pre-SMI Institute under the tutelage of T.M. Hasby Ash-Shiddieqie. He once studied Islamic religious knowledge at the Kutaraja and Bogor State PGAs, from 1951 to 1958. He also received higher Islamic education in the same city from 1958 to 1961 until he obtained a BA degree. He also studied at the Ushuluddin Faculty, State Islamic Institute (IAIN), Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, majoring in comparative religion. Apart from having a formal education in the field of religion, he also took formal education in economics in Jakarta in 1974 (T.H. Thalhas, 2008).

Hasan Basri

Hasan Basri bin Ahmad’s full name was born in Pante Geulima, Meureudu, Pidie, Aceh, on May 2, 1963. 1986 he took a formal BA (Bachelor of Arts) education in Surakarta. He studied at the Sabran Islamic Boarding School in Solo City, Central Java, in 1986. At the strata 1 level, the Ar-Raniry Negri Islamic Institute was his choice, namely at Fajultas Tarbiyah, and he won his Doctorate (Drs) in 1990. As for his master’s education (Master of Art), he obtained it from Leiden University in the Netherlands in 1997 (Basri Hasan, 2000).

A. Mufakhir

He is a lecturer at the Tarbiyah Faculty of IAIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh. born on March 2, 1963, in Glumpuk Bungkok, Sigli Banda Aceh. He completed his educational career at the Madrasah Ibtidaiyah level in 1975 at Cot Glumpang, then completed his Tsanawiyah level at Kampung Tanjung in 1978. Language education was also studied at LIPIA in Daurah at-Tarbiyah in 1992. He earned a master’s degree in Tafsir at the Postgraduate Faculty of IIQ Jakarta in 2002.2

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2 Source of reference from the scientific work (thesis) of Mufakhir Muhammad when carrying out his
Zaki Fuad

The son, born in North Aceh Peusangan on March 14, 1964, is a teaching staff member at IAIN Ar-Raniry Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam (NAD) at the Faculty of Syari’ah. He started his career at the Ibtidaiyah level at Matang Geulumpang Dua in 1976, and Madrasah Tsanawiyah Education was carried out at the same place in 1980. Then he continued to the Aliyah level in 1983 and completed the Strata 1 program in 1988 at IAIN, where he served. And finally, he completed his Master’s level at Syarif Hidayatullah in 1996 (Siregar et al., 2021, p. 11).

The Methodology for Writing the Book of Tafsir Pase

Abd al Hayy Al-Farmawi, in his book, mentions, there are at least four methodologies used in writing a book of commentaries including the tahliili method, ijmali method, muqarran method, and maudhu’i method (Abd al Hayy Al-Farmawi, 1994). Even though this book of Tafsir Pase’ was written by five authors, they have agreement and comfort in determining the discovery methodology. This is done to facilitate and provide alignment in the search system.

In completing the verses of the Qur’an, the compiling method uses a combination of tahliili and maudhu’i. Although the two approaches are not fully applied in full to every poem to be interpreted due to the discussion being too long as well as time and space limitations. But they also should have paid attention to the two methods. For example, in discussing/expressing verses, paying attention to the order or arrangement of verses and letters, asbab al-nuzul, and quoting the opinions of scholars who are considered relevant. On the other hand, in hiding the constituent verses, it contains verses that correlate with the theme or topic of each verse fragment (Thalhas dkk, 2001).

When viewed from the point of view of monitoring sources, Tafsir Pase’ tries to use the understanding of bi al iqtirani, namely when explaining the verses besides explaining his personal opinion but also quoting some of the views of the interpreter and even corroborating several narrations from the Prophet. Meanwhile, in explaining lecture assignments at the Jakarta Institute of Al-Qur’an Science (IIQ), 2002, author biography section.
the verses of the Qur’an, *Tafsir Pase* tends to use the *muqarin* method, namely trying to compare poetry with verses that discuss the same topic, poems with hadiths, or with the opinions of interpreters and interpreters by highlighting aspects of different. The compilers of the *Tafsir Pase* also try to use the *ijtinabi* interpretation method, namely by hiding the verses of the Qur’an in detail and detail with a lengthy description so that the explanations conveyed are obvious, as can be seen when Talhah et al. revealed Surah Al Fatiyah which reaches 30 pages because of the discussion that very detailed (Ar-raniry & Aceh, 2012; Djalal, 2022, pp. 101–102).

**Systematics of Writing Tafsir Pasé**

As mentioned in the title of this tafsir book, *Tafsir Pasé* only focuses on discussing Surah al-Fatiyah and surahs in Juz ‘Amma. *Tafsir Pasé* can be classified as a modern *tafsir* because of two factors. First. When we look in terms of substance and the second when viewed in terms of methodology. This means that the author of *Tafsir Pasé* tries to present a reading related to the interpretation of the verse of the Qur’an which is organized in such a way as to also discuss contemporary issues in society so that it can be consumed by readers (Fauzi Saleh, 2012, P. 386)

The preparation of the book of *Tafsir Pasé* is done very systematically. The author presents the verse text of each surah as a whole, followed by a translation in Indonesian and by the name Acehan, not forgetting the author also added Acehnese name so that it can be understood by ordinary people, especially the people of Aceh, an overview of the content of each surah is also included along with the central theme in each surah, other discussions such as *muqaddimah surah, asbabun nuzul* verse, topics in each verse fragment, *munasabat* verse and finally *mau’izhah* are also presented. It can be said that in the process of writing the book, Thalhas et al. used *mushafi* writing systematics, namely compiling the tafsir book according to the order of the letters in the Qur’an (Abrar Indal, 2004).

*Tafsir Pasé* begins with the explanation of Surah al-Fatiyah as done by other scholars. Because Surah al Fatiyah is the opening letter of the Qur’an (*Ummul Kitab*) and contains the main content that will explain the meaning of the Qur’an as a whole and is often read in prayer. The explanation of the book of *Tafsir Pasé* also starts from
short letters and then new long letters, namely from An-Naas to An-Naba' in contrast to other interpreters who discuss from the beginning of an-Naba' to the letter an-Nas. Before the verse-by-verse fragment is explained, the author first presents the entire text of the verse in full along with its translation in Indonesian and translation in the form of Acehnese *nazam* as the follow:

Figure 1. The mention of Surat, Tarjamah and Nazam Aceh

All surahs presented in *Tafsir Pasé* are mentioned in full Arabic text, followed by Indonesian and finally, the translation in the form of Acehnese *nazam*.

Figure 2: Mention of Overview

The overview presented by the interpreter aims to provide an initial overview of the meaning of the interpretation to be explained and to anticipate an ambiguous understanding of the description of the interpretation and *nazam* that will be presented.
Because *Tafsîr Pasé* is compiled by five interpreters who have different backgrounds, the overview that is presented also has its characteristics. Likewise, *muqaddimah*, *asbabun nuzul*, verse-by-verse topics, *munasabat* verses and *mau‘izah* are all mentioned by the interpreter in each surah that will be described as explained below.

**Figure 3. Mentions of Central Theme, Muqaddimah, Asbabun Nuzul, and Topic of Verse Passages**

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**Figure 4. Mention of Mau‘izah**

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Nazam Aceh in *Tafsir Pasé*

*Nazam*, as mentioned in the Indonesian dictionary, is a poem of Persian origin, consisting of twelve lines, rhyming two-two or four, the content is about loyal palace servants and Budiman. The range of *nazam* is also very diverse, sometimes in the form of advice, for example, *nazam* death advice:


Meaning: “Die die we will die. Do not live forever in the world. The world is only a transitory place. The hereafter is the place of eternal life”(Kasmi, 2019)

Nazam is a form of knowledge such as:


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Figure 5. Example of mentioning the Munasabah verse
Meaning: “We should know all the prophets, dear Taulan. 25 prophets are mentioned in the Qur’an. The first is Prophet Adam. That is the indatu oh teungku of all human beings. The second is Prophet Idris. In heaven in the eyes covering the devil”.

And sometimes also nazam in the form of honest advice, especially those related to religious values. This makes nazam identical to religious works because it contains spiritual direction (Kasmi, 2019) and its delivery usually uses a certain rhythm.

For the people of Aceh, nazam is not a new, but it has been cultivated and inherited from generation to generation. Nazam even became one of the media used by ulama in broadcasting Islam, because Acehnese nazam contains many religious values both are about apostolic history, religious law, and others. Even this nazam is one of the local wisdom that must be preserved. Especially nowadays, there are so many generations who do not know what the nazam itself looks like.

One of the uniqueness of Tafsir Pasé is the combination of the language of Qur’anic elements with cultural values, namely by combining the original language (read: Arabic) with Indonesian and also local languages. The local language displayed is also a unique local language, namely the one that rhymes with Acehnese, also known as the name of Acehnese. The interpretation using Acehnese nazam will make readers more familiar with their mother language, especially for the people of Aceh. Besides, the discussion and description of verse by verse are also presented in Indonesian. So that all circles can still enjoy the artistic and literary value contained in the book of Tafsir Pasé. The translation using Acehnese nazam is only as a complement, not a repetition of the form of translation of the Indonesian language or from Arabic (read: verse of the Qur’an), but only as an introduction and appreciation of the beautiful value in rhyme and to enrich the treasures of understanding the Qur’an.

Introduction and appreciation of the beautiful value in rhyme and to enriching the treasures of understanding the Qur’an.

Here are some examples of al-Qur’an translations using Acehnese nazam at Tafsir Pase:

1. Surah al-Fatihah
Meaning: 1) In the name of Allah, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful, 2) all praise be to Allah, Lord of the worlds, 3) the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful, 4) The Lord of the Day of Judgment, 5) only to You do we worship and only to You do we seek help, 6) show us the straight path, 7) the path of those whom You have favored, not the path of those who are wrathful, nor the path of those who are misguided

Nazam Aceh of surah al-Fatihah:

(1) Dungon nan Allah lon peuphon surat
Tuhan Hadharat Nyang Maha Murah
Tuhan lon Sidroe geumaseh that-that
Donya akhirat rahmat Neulimpah
(2) Sigala pujoe bandum lat batat
Bandum nyan meuhat milek potallah
Nyang peujut alam timu ngon barat
Bandum lat batat peunujeut Allah
(3) Tuhan lon sidroe geumaseh that – that
Donya akhirat rahmat Neulimpah
(4) Droenuh nyan Rajan uroek akhirat
(5) Amai dum meuhat sinan Neubalah
(6) Keu droenuh hai Po kamoe ibadat
Tulong Meularat Droueneuh nyang peuglah
(7) Neutunyok kamoe wahe Hadharat
Bak jalan teupat beu roh meulangkah
(8) Bak jalan urueng nyang Neubri nikmat
Jalan seulamat bek jalan salah
Bek roh bak jalan ureung nyang sisat
Ureung nyang batat meureuka

2. Surah al-Qari’ah
Meaning: 1) Al-Qāri‘ah (the Day of Resurrection that shakes), 2) What is al-Qāri‘ah, 3) Do you know what al-Qāri‘ah is? 4) On that Day, people will be like moths scattering, 5) and the mountains like feathers scattering, 6) He who weighs the scales of his good deeds, 7) he will be in a pleasant life, 8) As for he who weighs the scales of his good deeds lightly, 9) his place of return will be Hawiyah, 10) Do you know what Hawiyah is? 11) It is a very hot fire.

Nazam Aceh of surah al-Qari‘ah:

Dungon nan Allah lon peupon surat
Tuhan Hadharat Nyang Maha Murah
Tuhan lon Sidroe geumaseh that-that
Donya akhirat rahmatb Neulimpah
(1) Qari‘ah nyan uroe kiamat
(2) Tapeugah siat peue roh Qari‘ah
(3) Na droenuh teupue Qari‘ah nyan
(4) Insan watee nyan hanaban peugah
Meusiseue bandum meuhambo yoh nyan
Ka lage Bambang dalam blang luwah
(5) Buket ngon gunong lagee bulee gapeuh
Lagee ka geupruh meuhambo beukah
(6) Teuma beurangkasoe nyang brat timbangan
(7) Seunang that gopnyan udep lam mewah
(8) Teuma beurangkasoe nyang fui timbangan
(9) Teumpat awak nyan dalam Hawiyah
(10) Na droenuh teupue peue nyan Hawiyah nyan
(11) Tutong hanaban neuraka juwah

If we look at some examples of nazam above, we find that the author of the tafsir book does not try to explain the meaning of the nazam couplets that have been described. This will make readers from outside Aceh confused and curious about the meaning of Acehnese nazam; even for some Acehnese the words used in writing nazam
also still sound very foreign, because the Acehnese language used is the old version of Acehnese language not commonly used in everyday life. As in Surah al Fatihah verse 4 the words of Allah Swt which read:

مَالِكُ يَوْمِ الذَّيْنِ

In the English translation, it means "the one who controls the day of retribution," while in the Acehnese nazam, it is stated "Droenuh nyan Raja uro okhirat Amai dum meuhat sinan Neubalah." If this Acehnese nazam is translated into Indonesian, the meaning is not the same as the original translation, meaning that the meaning has been interpreted as "you are the king in the hereafter, all deeds will be rewarded."

The next example is in Surah al Qari'ah verse 4, the words of Allah swt which reads:

ۗيَوْمِ يَكُونُ النَّاسُ كَالْفَرَاشِ الْمَبْثُوْثِ

In the English translation: "On that day, humans will be like scattered seeds." While in the nazam of the book of Tafsir Pasé, it means "Insan watee nyan hanaban peugah, meusiseue bandum meuhambo yoh nyan, ka lagee bambang in blang luwa." If this Acehnese nazam is translated into Indonesian, the meaning is not the same as the initial translation, meaning that the contents have been interpreted as "humans at that time were speechless, scattered everywhere."

The Qur'an translation using nazam was conducted by Thalhas et al. Aceh is more towards tarjamiyah tashriyyah or ma'nawiyah, which is a free translation that is not too bound by the meaning of the original language, instead interpreting the importance of the Qur'anic verse itself (Zihabi, 2005, p. 28). This is by the purpose of the nazam itself, which is a literary work containing advice and reminders, especially on religious matters. And this is what the interpreter tries to show in the nazam described in the book of Tafsir Pasé.

**Conclusion**

Based on the data exposure, it can be concluded that the Book of Tafsir Pasé by Thalhas et al. one of the works of tafsir that is enough to contribute to the interpretation of the Qur'an in Aceh, especially using the local language. Using a combination method
between tahlii and maudhu’i, Tafsir Pasé is written very systematically by presenting the verse text of each letter as a whole, tarjamah in Indonesian and Acehnese nazam, an overview of the content of each surah, the central theme in each surah, muqaddimah surah, asbabun nuzul verse, the topic of the verse fragment, munasabah verse, and mau’izah, making readers able to get full knowledge when reading the book of Tafsir Pasé. In interpreting the poetry of the Qur’an using Acehnese nazam, Thalhas et al. focus more on using tafsiriyyah translation, which is a translation that is not bound by the word-for-word by the verses of the Qur’an but rather the content of the verse. This is by the meaning of the nazam itself, which is an old literary work that is more focused on raising religious matters and advice.
Reference