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Javanese patriarchal culture of gender stereotypes in the English translation of *Gadis Kretek*: a critical discourse analysis

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ABSTRACT

The persistence of Javanese patriarchal culture and gender stereotypes is a pressing concern in contemporary Javanese society. Consequently, in recent years, a growing number of literary works have been translated into English to portray the patriarchal culture globally. This study aims to conduct a critical discourse analysis of the English Translation of a novel entitled *Gadis Kretek* to examine how the translation of the novel portrays gender roles and stereotypes within the Javanese patriarchal culture. The findings of this study revealed that five out of the ten components of sexist discourse appear in the translation of the novel 'Cigarette Girl' by Ratih Kumala including negative evaluation of women, males as the norms, women are weak, women are no more than possession, and valuing women based on their appearance. These elements highlight various forms of sexism in discourse, particularly in the portrayal of women. This research implication highlights the critical role translators play not just as linguistic bridges, but as active cultural mediators whose choices can either challenge or hold entrenched gender biases on a global scale.

1. Introduction

The Javanese patriarchal culture, deeply rooted in the cultural heritage of Indonesia, is often characterized by rigid gender roles and stereotypes (Smith-Hefner, 1988). In this patriarchal system, women's access to education and their appearance and public are restricted (Koentjaraningrat, 1994, p. 245). This cultural phenomenon is reflected in various aspects of Javanese society, including literature. The English translation of *Gadis Kretek*, a novel by Ratih Kumala, is a significant work that sheds light on the complexities of Javanese patriarchal culture and its impact on gender roles.

Gadis Kretek is Ratih Kumala's popular novel published by PT Gramedia on February 25, 2012. It is set in Indonesia in the 1960s, where the characters interact amidst the social, political, and cultural conditions of that era. It regained fame in Indonesia following the release of the Netflix series *Gadis Kretek*, directed by Kamila Andini and Ifa Isfansyah, which premiered on November 2, 2023. This novel sparked renewed public interest and discussions on social media platforms. People admired the female main character of the series, Jeng Yah, who succeeded in the kretek industry in the city of M. During that time, there were not many women involved in the kretek industry. The issues discussed in the novel include the ups and downs of a cigarette factory business intertwined with romanticism and issues concerning women that are still relevant and impactful in contemporary life. Moreover, it is seen as beneficial for shaping a better future, particularly for women (Auliadinanti et al., 2025). Dasiyah (Jeng Yah) is portrayed as a representation of female strength and independence, addressing stereotypes about women, and implying that literature can act as a model for changes in society. Furthermore, an author's background, which includes her life experiences and social identity, can influence the perspectives and

themes in their literary works, although this influence is not always deterministic. Hardiyanti et al. (2018) and Rahayu et al. (2021) state that the way women are portrayed in Ratih Kumala's *Gadis Kretek* can be seen through a gendered lens that shows, at least in part, the author's experiences and position as a woman in Indonesian society.

Several previous studies (Sari et al., 2024; Susanti et al., 2023) on gender stereotypes in Indonesian literature have explored the portrayal of gender roles and stereotypes in various literary works. Moreover, novels from the Reformation Era, including *Saman* by Ayu Utami, *Geni Jora* by Abidah El Khalieqy, *Nayla* by Djenar Maesa Ayu, and *Tanah Tabu* by Anindita Thayf, have been identified as reflecting patriarchal ideologies and societal expectations of women, frequently reinforcing 'familialism' and 'motherism' (Yulianeta et al., 2016). However, there is a lack of critical analysis focusing specifically on the translation of Indonesian literature into English, particularly how gender stereotypes are reflected in English translation. Additionally, limited studies have concentrated on Javanese cultural influences and their impact on gender stereotypes within these translated works.

This study aims to conduct a critical discourse analysis of the English Translation of *Gadis Kretek* to examine how the translation of the novel portrays gender roles and stereotypes within the Javanese patriarchal culture. Furthermore, it seeks to explore how the process of translation itself might function as an active agent, not merely reflecting but potentially reshaping or reinforcing these gender ideologies for a global audience, thereby internationalizing local patriarchal discourses. By examining the English translation of *Gadis Kretek* through the lens of critical discourse analysis, this study aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of the Javanese patriarchal culture, and the role of literary translation in the cross-cultural transmission and potential reinforcement of such ideologies.

2. Literature review

2.1. Javanese patriarchal culture and its impact on gender roles

Knauss (1987) defined patriarchy as a male-dominated hierarchical authority structure where women are treated as permanent minors under men's control. Similarly, Lerner (1987) also defined patriarchy as a societal structure where men hold the primary positions of authority, dominating social organization. In this system, men exercise control over women, children, and property. Gender-based violence frequently arises from these patriarchal norms (Walby, 1989). Patriarchy is a social and ideological construct that considers men (who are the patriarchs) as superior to women. It imposes masculinity and femininity character stereotypes in society, reinforcing iniquitous power relations between men and women (Rawat, 2014).

Patriarchy exists in various forms, including compound, vertical, horizontal, structural, and collective patriarchy (Akgul, 2017). Patriarchal system emphasizes that women are subordinate to men (Bennett & Royle, 2016, pp. 152–153). As a social structure, patriarchy positions men as holders of primary power and dominant roles, such as political leadership, moral authority, social privilege, and property ownership. In both the home and society, the dominance of the father or male figure is evident. Patriarchal ideas often stress hierarchical relationships and are associated with both individuality and collectivism (Yoon et al., 2020). Additionally, patriarchal systems are frequently linked to attitudes and actions of violence against women, influenced by both personal and environmental factors (Crittenden & Wright, 2013).

Most cultures worldwide, including Javanese culture, are based on the patriarchal system. For instance, there are social and cultural norms known as *masak, manak, and macak*, which translate as 'applying makeup, giving birth, and cooking'—that create the stereotypes associated with Javanese women (Imama & Yoneno Reyes, 2021). Moreover, Nugroho et al. (2024) stated that women were connected with the concept of *kanca wingking* (women's principal tasks that is serving their husbands in terms of a sexual relationship) since their responsibilities were limited. This is the outcome of social construction, in which women in Java are viewed as less valuable than men. As noted by Mawaddah et al. (2021), patriarchal ideology is deeply ingrained in Javanese culture, proven by the fact that women are trained from a young age to be subservient to males and to be a woman who always obeys a man's wishes. Therefore,

living in the grip of a patriarchal culture has resulted in Javanese women having the limited space to create their own identity.

2.2. The concept of gender stereotypes and their manifestation in literature

Gender stereotypes in literature often reflect broader societal beliefs about the roles and behaviors appropriate for men and women. These stereotypes can be restrictive, shaping characters and narratives in ways that reinforce traditional gender roles (Savitt, 1982). For instance, women in literature are frequently depicted in roles that emphasize passivity, emotionality, and domesticity, while men are portrayed as active, rational, and public figures (Smith et al., 2019). Gender stereotypes are the overgeneralization of certain characteristics of a group of people based entirely on that group's gender (Fiske & Taylor, 2013). These stereotypes affect the way people attend to, interpret, and remember information about themselves and others (Ellemers, 2018).

Gender stereotypes in literature often perpetuate traditional roles and expectations for men and women. These stereotypes can influence readers' perceptions and reinforce societal norms as explored by Priyashantha et al. (2023) that the outcomes of gender stereotype changes in literature often reflects and reinforces gender roles, impacting readers' beliefs and behaviors. Furthermore, gender stereotypes in media representations, including literature, play a significant role in shaping societal attitudes towards gender as it has been stated by Santoniccolo et al. (2023) who reviewed the literature on gender stereotypes, objectification, and sexualization in media and found that these representations often reinforce traditional gender roles and contribute to gender inequality.

The profound significance of literature in both reflecting and shaping societal norms lies in its powerful capacity to either challenge or reinforce gender stereotypes (Hamilton et al., 2006). When authors present characters that defy traditional gender roles, they offer new perspectives; however, literature that aligns with these stereotypes can reinforce existing biases and limit social progress (Aghasiyev, 2015). Therefore, in literature, presenting more diverse and complex characters is important not only for gender equality in literature but also for accurately reflecting the complexity of human experiences, potentially driving societal change (Davis & Williamson, 2019).

2.3. Previous studies on gender representation in Indonesian literature

Previous studies on gender stereotypes in Indonesian literature have explored the portrayal of gender roles and societal norms in various literary works. For instance, research by Yulianesta (2014) analyzed the representation of gender ideology in Indonesian novels during the Reformation Era, highlighting the prevalence of patriarchal gender ideologies and the domestication of women's roles. The study found that the novels portrayed women as submissive and obedient, often struggling for their rights over their bodies and experiencing gender inequality in various forms, including marginalization, repression, subordination, and domination.

Furthermore, research by Susanti et al. (2023) applied a gynocritical reading to the novel *Laut Bercerita* by Leila S. Chudori, analyzing the representation of female characters in contemporary Indonesian children's literature. The study found that the novel challenged traditional gender roles and stereotypes by portraying female characters with diverse personalities and resilience, highlighting the need for more diverse and empowering representations of women in Indonesian literature.

These studies collectively demonstrate the ongoing exploration of gender representation and stereotypes in Indonesian literature, especially in the context of novels. They highlight the prevalence of patriarchal gender ideologies and traditional gender roles, as well as the emergence of more modern and empowering representations of women in contemporary literature. However, there are notable gaps in the previous studies. First, there is a lack of critical analysis focusing specifically on the translation of Indonesian literature into English, particularly how gender stereotypes are reflected in translation. Second, while there has been significant attention on general Indonesian literature, fewer studies have concentrated on Javanese cultural influences and their impact on gender representation within these translated works. Therefore, this study aims to fill these gaps by examining the Javanese patriarchal culture of gender stereotypes in the English translation of *Gadis Kretek* through critical discourse analysis.

2.4. The significance of analyzing gender stereotypes in translated works

In the 1980s, when translation studies underwent a cultural shift, feminist translation researchers set out to investigate the connection between gender and translation (Wang et al., 2020). Feminist theorists noted a connection between women's status, which is often reduced to a position of discursive inferiority in society and literature and the status of translations, which are frequently regarded as inferior derivatives of the original (Simon, 2005; Von Flotow, 2016).

In order to address gender-related issues from a variety of angles, modern translation, and gender researchers frequently seek beyond this feminist stance. Therefore, gender awareness in translation practice raises issues regarding the politics of language and cultural diversity, the relationships between social stereotypes and linguistic forms, the ethics of translation, and the significance of the cultural context in which translation is performed (Von Flotow, 2016, p. 14).

Analyzing gender stereotypes in translated works allows for a critical examination of how cultural and linguistic differences impact the representation of gender roles and identities (Zhu, 2024). Translation plays a significant role in shaping the perception of gender in different cultures and societies, as it involves the transfer of not merely linguistic meaning but also embedded cultural norms, power dynamics, and ideological frameworks that can perpetuate or challenge existing inequalities (Monzó-Nebot & Tasa-Fuster, 2025; Williams, 2022). By examining the translation of gender stereotypes in literary works, insights into the evolution of gender studies and the intersection points of gender and language can be gained (Huang & Valdeón, 2022).

Furthermore, translation poses as an active process of negotiation and representation, in addition to its role in reflecting existing societal structures. Translators are demanded to be able to navigate the complex landscape of gender stereotypes present in the source text, particularly when rendering culturally specific gender dynamics for an audience unfamiliar with the source culture. Their choices can either challenge or mitigate these stereotypes, or, conversely, amplify and solidify them. This further underscores the necessity of critically analyzing translated works, as they play an imperative role in spreading the transmission of gender ideologies, as well as their potential reification or exoticization across linguistic and cultural boundaries. Accordingly, the process of translation step in as a context in which cultural significations, including those pertaining to gender, are reinterpreted and reintroduced.

3. Methodology

This study employs Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to examine the representation and potential reinforcement of Javanese patriarchal gender stereotypes in the English translation of *Gadis Kretek*. CDA is an analytical approach that investigates how language constructs, maintains, and challenges power relations and ideologies (Fairclough, 1995; van Dijk, 1987, 2008). Specifically, the present research employs the CDA model operationalized by Darweesh and Abdullah (2016), which integrates S. Mills (1998, 2002, 2008) feminist linguistic approaches to sexism with T. A. van Dijk (2008) socio-cognitive model of discourse. In this context, van Dijk's socio-cognitive approach stands out as a particularly pertinent framework, as it enables the examination of how social representations, such as gender stereotypes, are formed, shared, and reproduced through text and discourse within a specific socio-cultural context. In this instance, the focus is on the Javanese patriarchy as it is mediated through the process of translation. This framework will guide the analysis of linguistic and discursive translation strategies to reveal the underlying ideology and detect the use of aspects of the ten elements of sexist discourse (Darweesh & Abdullah, 2016). The framework also examines the exact words used in the English translation version and how they may be genderedly unfair (Mills, 1998, 2008), and critically links this to the way Javanese society speaks, writes, and spreads ideas and stereotypes, which keeps them alive in the minds and society (van Dijk, 2008).

3.1. Data collection and analysis procedures

The novel of *Gadis Kretek* was selected because it is a significant work in contemporary Indonesian literature that reflects Javanese cultural norms and gender roles. The English translation is particularly

relevant as it presents an opportunity to analyze how gendered discourse and patriarchal ideologies are conveyed across languages.

The study follows a systematic process for data collection and analysis, which include:

3.1.1. Text selection

Passages containing explicit or implicit representations of gender roles and stereotypes were identified in both its original version (Indonesian and Javanese) and its English translation. These passages were selected based on key themes of patriarchal discourse, such as power relations, women's roles in society, and male dominance.

3.1.2. Categorization of sexist discourse

The analysis applies the ten elements of sexist discourse outlined by Darweesh and Abdullah (2016), builds upon Mills (1998, 2008) model of sexism and van Dijk (2008) socio-cognitive framework, which include:

1. Negative evaluation of women
2. Males as the norm (women as dependent)
3. Women depicted as weak or lacking ability
4. Comparison of women to inanimate objects
5. Semantic derogation of women
6. Women as possessions
7. Valuing women based on appearance over intellect
8. Glorification of mistreatment of women
9. Vulgar language directed at women
10. Overall negative representation of women

3.1.3. Linguistic and discursive strategies analysis

These elements are further examined through linguistic strategies, which include rhetorical strategies, metaphor, simile, semantic strategies, presupposition and implication, insult terms, negative lexicalization, proverbs, sexist slurs, structural strategies, and disclaimers (Darweesh & Abdullah, 2016).

The technique of analyzing data is used in discourse analysis. This research used a model applied by Darweesh and Abdullah (2016) in their study to analyze sexism in discourse. The model is adopted primarily based on Mills' model of sexism and van Dijk's socio-cognitive framework. The basic elements are: (1) Negative evaluation of women; (2) Males as the norm, that is, females appear as dependent beings and as followers; (3) Women are weak, lacking in strength and ability; (4) Comparing women to inanimate objects; 5) Semantic derogation/disparagement of women; (6) Women are no more than possessions; (7) Valuing women based on their appearance rather than their intelligence or personality; (8) Glorifying the maltreatment/mistreatment of women; (9) Vulgarity when speaking about women; and (10) Negative presentation of women. Darweesh and Abdullah (2016) also compiled the strategies of the above elements, such as rhetorical strategies, metaphor, simile, semantic strategies, presupposition, and implication, insult terms, negative lexicalization, proverbs, words or statements with a negative connotation, sexist slurs and disgusting statements, structural strategies, and disclaimers.

This study collected data through a systematic selection of text passages to provide more transparency and reproducibility. The criteria for selecting these passages included relevance to the research topic, representation of diverse perspectives, and richness in content for analysis. The process involved coding the data by identifying instances of the basic elements outlined above. Each passage was carefully examined and categorized based on the presence of these elements. This systematic approach ensured a thorough and unbiased analysis of the discourse, allowing for a comprehensive understanding of how sexism is manifested in language.

4. Findings and discussion

It was revealed that five out of Darweesh & Abdullah's 10 basic elements (2016) appeared in the translation of the novel *Cigarette Girl*. Therefore, the findings of this present study supported Darweesh and Abdullah's (2016) contention that sexism in discourse might be analyzed through identifying the 10 sexist elements.

4.1. Negative evaluation of women

This element highlights the various ways of language and cultural norms which can be used to portray women in a negative light. It examines how women might be judged harshly.

> On the other hand, when they saw Garwo Kulo, or My Woman, they were reminded of their wife at home, who rarely wore makeup, dressed slovenly and never stopped nagging them. (Chapter 12)

The description of the wife focuses on negative qualities associated with her appearance (dressed slovenly) and communication style (never stopped nagging). These portrayals paint her in an unfavorable light and contribute to a stereotype of women being unkempt and difficult to deal with. This portrayal exemplifies the 'negative evaluation of women' element of sexist discourse, where women are judged harshly based on perceived flaws.

Moreover, the focus on the domestic sphere (at home) reinforces a traditional gender role. Taking care of housework and potentially being the source of nagging reinforces the idea that women are primarily responsible for domestic duties and can be a source of annoyance. The term 'nagging' itself holds a negative connotation. It implies that the wife's communication is unwelcome, repetitive, and potentially manipulative. This reinforces the stereotype of women being nagging and difficult. From CDA perspective, the socio-cognitive approach sees this as a phenomenon where language actively constructs and normalizes negative social representations of wives who deviate from prescribed domestic and aesthetic norms. Within Javanese culture, such descriptions subtly contrast with expectations like *macak* (applying makeup) and reinforce the traditional view of women's roles being confined and potentially burdensome if not conforming, aligning with restrictions on women's appearance and public presence.

Another form of negative evaluation of women found in the novel is:

> Don't worry. That's just how women are. They are difficult to understand. (Chapter 14)

The way the sentence is phrased contributes to a negative evaluation. Phrases like 'That's just how women are' dismiss the possibility that a woman's behavior might be caused by a specific situation or external factors. It suggests that her behavior is simply her inherent nature, something she cannot control and something men have to passively accept. This takes away any agency or individuality from women.

Moreover, the sentence paints all women with the same brush, implying that they are inherently 'difficult to understand.' This generalization ignores the vast diversity of personalities, experiences, and emotions that women possess. It reduces women to a single, frustrating stereotype, failing to acknowledge the complexity and richness of their individual lives. This gendered discursive jam perpetuates the stereotype of women as irrational or inherently complex, thereby undermining their agency and individuality. From the Javanese socio-cognitive standpoint, such generalizations contribute to the reproduction of stereotypical schemas about women, influencing perceptions of an entire gender group.

The element of negative evaluation of women was found in the novel as some sentences portray women in a negative light. The English translation used describes negative qualities and stereotypes of women associated with their appearance and personality as well as communication style.

This finding echoed the results of the previous study done by Meng (2020) that women in English translation of literary works are often negatively evaluated to influence the readers' judgment in which the evaluation might include their personalities.

4.2. Males as the norm

> The fact that Djagad had dared propose to Roemaisa made Idroes Moeria furious. He ravished his wife on their wedding night, the feelings of restrained anger erupting in a tempest of passionate lovemaking. Idroes Moeria imagined the look on Djagad's face if he saw them making love so passionately, and he felt victorious. (Chapter 3)

The excerpt shows males as the norm. Idroes Moeria's actions are centered around his feelings and reactions, positioning him as the normative subject. Roemaisa is not given agency or voice in this scenario, which suggests she is a dependent being and follower. Meanwhile, CDA views the verb 'ravished' as a way to describe Idroes Moeria's actions on their wedding night, alongside his visualization of Djagad's reaction, discursively frames Roemaisa as an object or possession to be claimed and used at his discretion for the assertion of male dominance.

29
I don't want Roemaisa's husband to be less learned than she is,' the scribe explained. 'The man is the head of the family, after all. How could he lead if he is ignorant?'

21
The statement 'The man is the head of the family' aligns with the idea of males being the norm, where the male figure is assumed to be the leader and decision-maker within the family structure. These possessive and decision-maker mindsets social-cognitively reflect the deeply ingrained patriarchal ideology in Javanese culture, which stresses hierarchical relationships and male dominance, not only at home but also the broader society. The translation directly conveys this cultural expectation, presenting to the English reader the traditional Javanese societal belief that a man's knowledge is principal for family leadership, thereby preserve this specific cultural nuance of male authority.

hen Lebas had first announced that he didn't want to work for their family business, Soeraja had sworn at him, and had threatened to cut him out of his will and remove his name from the list of heirs to the Djagad Raja clove cigarette fortune. (Chapter 2)

The excerpt focuses on male characters (Lebas and Soeraja) and their interactions, which implicitly upholds males as central figures. The absence of female perspectives or roles in this decision-making context can be seen as reinforcing the idea that males are the primary actors. Moreover, this sentence shows patriarchal control by Soeraja's action, by threatening to disinherit Lebas underscores a traditional patriarchal power structure. Soeraja's action of threatening to disinherit Lebas further underscores a traditional patriarchal power structure where men control family wealth and lineage, reinforcing the idea that males are the normative figures in such significant matters within Javanese society. In many cultures and narratives, men often control family wealth and legacy, further embedding the idea that males are the normative figures in such important matters.

Unfortunately, the sounds of the neighborhood men enjoying themselves at her house kept awake Roemaisa's little baby, and therefore Roemaisa herself. The smoke that was being exhaled by their loud mouths billowed throughout the entire house, seeping into the room where she was tending to her child, and making the baby cry on and on, possibly because she wasn't getting enough fresh air. (Chapter 8)

The excerpt above shows that male as the norm, the men's enjoyment and behavior are portrayed as dominant and intrusive, disregarding Roemaisa's need for a quiet environment. Their actions are seen as normative and acceptable, while the impact on Roemaisa and her baby is neglected. The neighbor should have taken care of Roemaisa and her baby instead of smoking and disturbing them. The excerpt also shows women are no more than possessions. This discourse normalizes male comfort and privilege over female and child welfare, implicitly positioning the men's actions as a standard, while the negative impact on Roemaisa is neglected. The men's takeover of the house and their lack of consideration for Roemaisa and her baby suggest that they see the house (and by extension, its occupants) as their domain. This can be interpreted as treating Roemaisa and her home as possessions to be used at their convenience. Furthermore, this finding implies a treatment of Roemaisa and her home as spaces to be used at males' convenience, akin to possessions. Javanese socio-cognitive perspective sees this narrative as a reinforcement of the societal beliefs where male desires supersede female needs, reflecting the diminished value of women in Javanese social construction.

This finding is in line with the results of the previous study done by Göttgens et al. (2023) that gender norms are societal beliefs and expectations about how people with different gender identities should act and interact with one another. They **35** are part of a gendered socialization and stereotyping process. The findings above focus on males as the norm that has a crucial role. From a translation perspective, the interplay between gender and translation is crucial, as it has been investigated about how

stereotypical portrayals are mediated and potentially reinforced when translated across cultures (Zhu, 2024).

4.3. Women are weak

One of the sentences which indicate this element is

The girl sulked, as he had expected. She was quite sensitive and emotional when it came to dealing with her problems. (Chapter 15)

The use of the word 'sulked' to describe the girl's behavior also implies that she is acting in a way that is unacceptable or unbecoming of a woman. This reinforces the idea that women are expected to conform to certain gender norms and behave in a way that is deemed appropriate by society.

This sentence reinforces the stereotype that women are weak, lacking in strength and ability. This is evident in the description of the girl as 'sensitive and emotional,' which implies that she is unable to handle her problems effectively. This portrayal of women as weak and emotional is a common trope in gender representation, where women are often depicted as being more emotional and less capable of handling challenges than men. This stereotype is perpetuated through the use of language that empha-sizes the girl's emotional state, rather than her abilities or strengths. Furthermore, the sentence implies that the girl's emotional response is a problem that needs to be managed or controlled. From a critical perspective, this discourse discursively frames female emotionality as a flaw or deficiency, contrasting it with an unstated male norm of rationality and composure. Such framing reinforces Javanese patriarchal power structures by suggesting women are inherently less capable of independent problem-solving and require male oversight.

Another sentence in the novel which indicates this element is

She was a vulnerable woman and needed a man's shoulder to lean on for strength and support. (Chapter 16)

This is evident in the description of the woman as 'vulnerable,' which implies that she is weak and in need of protection or support. This portrayal of women as weak and vulnerable is a common trope in gender representation, where women are often depicted as being less capable than men. The use of the word 'vulnerable' to describe the woman also implies that she is open to harm or exploitation, which reinforces the notion that women are in need of protection or guidance from men.

Furthermore, the sentence implies that the woman is unable to handle her problems effectively with-out the support of a man. This reinforces the stereotype that women are weak and unable to handle challenges on their own. The implication that the woman needs a man's shoulder to lean on for strength and support also reinforces the notion that women are dependent on men for their strength and support. This reinforces the patriarchal power structure where males hold authority and females are relegated to secondary roles. Social cognitive lens sees this as an active construction of a narrative of female depen-dence on men. Women are positioned as recipients of male strength and protection. This directly mirrors the Javanese patriarchal cultural expectation that women are cultivated from a young age to be subser-vient to males and to obey a man's wishes. This severely limits women space to create their own identity.

The findings are in line with the theory of language sexism. Darweesh and Abdullah (2016) stated that women often defined as emotional creatures is deemed sexist since it shows women as weak and dominated by emotion rather than the brain. From a translation studies perspective, this aligns with the observation that translated literary works can perpetuate gender stereotypes by presenting women as emotional and passive, thereby influencing readers' judgments and reinforcing existing biases (Meng, 2020).

4.4. Women are no more than possessions

The element 'Women are no more than possessions' is a pervasive and insidious aspect of sexism, where women are reduced to objects that can be owned, controlled, and used by men. This reduction of women to possessions is often achieved through language, where women are referred to as 'belonging' to men, or where their bodies are described as 'property' to be claimed and controlled. This element is

particularly pernicious because it erases women's agency and autonomy, treating them as commodities rather than as individuals with their own thoughts, feelings, and desires. In the novel, there are several excerpts which contain this element.

> Mira is mine! You get it? (Chapter 11)

In the given phrase 'Mira is mine' explicitly states ownership over the character named Mira (the female factory worker), implying that she is a possession of the speaker (her fiance). This reduction of Mira to a possession diminishes her agency and autonomy, treating her as a commodity that can be claimed and controlled by the speaker. Furthermore, the use of the possessive pronoun 'mine' emphasizes the idea that Mira is a possession that belongs to the speaker. This possessive language reinforces the notion that Mira is not an independent individual with her own thoughts, feelings, and desires but rather an object that can be claimed and controlled by the speaker. This direct assertion of ownership explicitly indicates the 'Women are no more than possessions' element.

The sentence can also be seen as a form of patriarchal control, where the speaker is asserting dominance over Mira. The use of the phrase 'You get it?' can be interpreted as a way of implying that the listener should understand and accept the speaker's ownership of Mira. This can be seen as a form of patriarchal control, where the speaker is asserting dominance over Mira and expecting the listener to conform to this dominant narrative. This linguistic choice, based on critical analysis perspective, actively constructs a power dynamic where female identity is subsumed by male proprietorship. An ingrained patriarchal ideology reflects the views that women are as belonging to men rather than as autonomous individuals. This discourse also functions to normalize the reduction of women to commodities within the narrative. The sentence reinforces the idea that women are possessions that can be owned and controlled by men, which is a harmful and oppressive attitude that perpetuates sexism and gender inequality.

Another sentence found in the novel which indicates this element is

> But her husband had pulled her away cruelly, like Kurawa who had won Drupadi from Yudhistira in the Mahabharata. (Chapter 16)

The sentence above reinforces the notion that women are no more than possessions to be won or taken away. This is evident in the comparison of the woman's situation to the story of Drupadi being won by Kurawa in the Mahabharata. This reinforces the notion that women are possessions to be owned or controlled by men, and that they are valued based on their ability to be won or taken away. The implication that the woman is a possession to be won or taken away also reinforces the notion that women are dependent on men for their strength and support, and that they are unable to handle challenges on their own. This comparison directly draws upon a foundational epic to legitimize the idea of women as objects of male conquest and ownership as well as highlighting the 'Women are no more than possessions' element.

Furthermore, the sentence implies that the husband's actions are the normative standard, as they are compared to the actions of Kurawa in the Mahabharata. This reinforces the notion that men's actions are the standard against which women's actions are measured, and that women are expected to conform to certain gender norms. The implication that the husband's actions are the normative standard also reinforces the notion that men are the default or normative gender and that female are secondary or subordinate. This reinforces the patriarchal power structure where males hold authority and females are relegated to secondary roles. From critical standpoint, this intertextual reference not only naturalizes the husband's violent assertion of control but also social cognitively and explicitly links it to ancient narratives that codify female subjugation and male dominance within a culturally recognized framework. This understanding emphasizes idea that women are property where it also becomes societal construction deeply embedded in Javanese patriarchal culture.

The findings are in line with the previous study conducted by Azim (2019) that women are nothing more than possessions that a masculine figure will spend his money to get. This finding also aligns with research showing how translated texts can negotiate gender stereotypes, sometimes resulting in the metamorphosis of female characters into more objectified or passive roles (Wang et al., 2020), or explicitly transforming expressions that reduce women to inert objects or commodities (Evayani & Sajarwa, 2024).

4.5. Valuing women based on their appearance

This element suggests that women are often evaluated and valued based on their physical appearance rather than their intellectual abilities, personality, or accomplishments. By valuing women based on their appearance, this element perpetuates harmful gender stereotypes and reinforces the idea that women are primarily objects of desire rather than individuals with their own autonomy. There are several excerpts which indicate this element in the novel.

> It is a pity when a girl as pretty as you doesn't pursue her education. (Chapter 10)

In this sentence, the speaker's initial comment about the girl's physical appearance (as pretty as you) sets the tone for the rest of the sentence, implying that the girl's beauty is the primary consideration. The phrase 'doesn't pursue her education' is then framed as a pity, implying that the girl's failure to pursue education is somehow related to her physical appearance. This suggests that the speaker believes the girl's beauty is the primary factor in her decision-making, rather than her intellectual abilities or personal goals. This statement critically represents the 'Valuing women based on their appearance' element. This representation discursively links a woman's educational choices to her physical attractiveness rather than her cognitive abilities or aspirations. The combination of the linguistic choice, informed by patriarchal ideology, holds the Javanese cultural emphasis on female appearance (e.g. *macak*) over intellectual pursuits. Thus, women's perceived societal roles are cognitively limited to aesthetic contributions rather than professional or academic achievements.

This type of language reinforces the idea that women are valued primarily for their physical appearance, rather than their intellectual or personal qualities. By focusing on the girl's appearance, the speaker is essentially saying that her worth is tied to her physical attractiveness, rather than her potential or achievements. Furthermore, this type of language can also be seen as a form of objectification, where the girl is reduced to her physical appearance. The speaker's comment is not about the girl's intelligence, personality, or potential, but rather about her physical appearance. This type of language perpetuates harmful gender stereotypes and reinforces the idea that women are primarily valued for their physical appearance, rather than their intellectual or personal qualities.

Another sentence found in the novel which indicates this element is

> When they saw the ad for Lady cigarettes, people were inspired to fantasize about a stylish, young, beautiful woman, someone who aroused them and made them feel masculine (Chapter 12).

The sentence meticulously outlines desirable physical traits 'stylish, young, and beautiful.' These descriptors prioritize superficial qualities over any potential depth or substance the woman might possess. The sentence banks on the idea that men will be attracted to this idealized image. It assumes physical beauty is the key to sparking male interest and achieving some form of societal validation.

By focusing on appearance and linking it to male desire, the sentence used in the novel contributes to the objectification of women. The woman is not presented as a whole person with thoughts and feelings, but rather as a visual stimulus meant to arouse a specific reaction. This portrayal powerfully exemplifies the 'Valuing women based on their appearance' element by reducing the female figure to an object of male fantasy and desire, with her sole purpose being to arouse and affirm male masculinity. From a socio-cognitive lens in CDA, this discursive strategy not only objectifies women but also reinforces a societal schema where female value is inextricably tied to their attractiveness to men. This condition enforces a Javanese patriarchal norm that undermines women's autonomy and intellectual worth.

The results are consistent with Meltzer's (2020) previous research, which found that women's self-esteem is negatively impacted when males prioritize their sexuality and physical appearance. This finding resonates with findings that media representations, including translated literary works, often reinforce gender stereotypes, objectification, and sexualization, which can negatively influence readers' perceptions of women (Meng, 2020; Santoniccolo et al., 2023). Such portrayals in translation contribute to the normalization of valuing women primarily for their physical attributes, thereby impacting self-perception.

5. Conclusion and implication

The findings of this study revealed that five out of the ten basic elements proposed by Darweesh and Abdullah (2016) appear in the translation of the novel *Cigarette Girl* by Ratih Kumala. These elements highlight various forms of sexism in discourse, particularly in the portrayal of women. The negative evaluation of women, for instance, is evident through descriptions that emphasize undesirable traits such as being unkempt and nagging, thereby perpetuating stereotypes that women are difficult and primarily confined to domestic roles. Such portrayals contribute to a broader cultural narrative that diminishes the value and complexity of women, reinforcing traditional gender roles and biases.

Moreover, the element of 'males as the norm' is prominent in the novel. Male characters are frequently depicted as central figures with dominant roles and decision-making powers, while female characters are often sidelined or portrayed as dependents. For example, the narrative centers around male characters like Idroes Moeria and Soeraja, whose actions and decisions underscore traditional patriarchal values. These depictions reinforce the idea that males are the default leaders and figures of authority, further embedding gender biases within the cultural context of the novel. Such portrayals align with broader patriarchal structures where men control wealth and legacy, marginalizing women's roles and perspectives. Additionally, the novel portrays women as weak and dependent on men, further perpetuating traditional gender stereotypes. Descriptions of women as 'sensitive and emotional' or 'vulnerable' imply their incapacity to handle challenges independently, reinforcing the notion that women require male support and protection. This element, along with the portrayal of women as possessions and valuing them based on their appearance, underscores a pervasive sexist attitude. By reducing women to objects of desire or commodities to be owned, the novel strips women of their agency and autonomy. These findings reflect the entrenched gender biases that continue to shape societal attitudes and behaviors, highlighting the need for critical analysis and awareness in the translation and interpretation of literary works.

Finally, the linguistic choices made in the English translation actively participate in representing and, in these instances, reinforcing Javanese patriarchal ideologies for an international readership. Consequently, the act of translating literature in this case functions as a conduit through which these patriarchal norms are internationalized, underscoring the substantial ethical responsibility of translators in mediating cultural representations. This highlights the critical role translators play not just as linguistic bridges, but as active cultural mediators whose choices can either challenge or hold entrenched gender biases on a global scale.

Author contributions

Credit: **Nunun Tri Widarwati**: Conceptualization, Data curation, Formal analysis, Funding acquisition, Investigation, Methodology, Resources, Validation, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing; **Budi Purnomo**: Writing – review & editing.

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Data availability statement

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author, [Widarwati], upon reasonable request.

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