

# **TRANSLATION IN ASIA: THEORIES, PRACTICES, HISTORIES**

Organized by Asia Research Institute and Department of Malay Studies,  
National University of Singapore

**5-6 March 2009**

## **Discourse on Translation Involving the Malay Language**

**Haslina HAROON**

**Malay Language, Translation & Interpretation Section  
Universiti Sains Malaysia**

[haslina@usm.my](mailto:haslina@usm.my)



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**FRIDAY, 6 MARCH 2009**

09:00 - 09:30	<b>REGISTRATION</b>	
<b>PANEL 5: THE POETICS OF TRANSLATION</b>		
	<b>CHAIRPERSON: SYED MUHD KHAIRUDIN ALJUNEID</b> Department of Malay Studies, National University of Singapore, Singapore	
09:30	<b>INDAH FAJAR WAHYUNI</b> Ahmad Dahlan University, Indonesia	Difficulties in Translating Javanese Performance
10:00	<b>EDWIN WIERINGA</b> Department of Oriental Studies, University of Cologne, Germany	Negotiating Chineseness in Late 19 <sup>th</sup> -Century Surabaya: The Social Logic of a Javanese Versification of the Chinese Confucian Treatise "Maxims for the Home" ( <i>Zhuzi Zhijia</i> <i>Geyan</i> )
10:30	<b>THARAKESHWAR V.B</b> Department of Translation Studies, Kannada University-Hampi, India	Translation Poetics in Kannada During the Medieval Period
11:00 - 11:30	<b>TEA BREAK</b>	
<b>PANEL 6: TRANSLATION AND MEDIA</b>		
	<b>CHAIRPERSON: HENDRIK MAIER</b> University of California Riverside, USA	
11:30	<b>PAUL RAE</b> Department of English Language and Literature, National University of Singapore, Singapore	In Tongues: Translation, Embodiment, Performance
12:00	<b>JERRY C. RESPETO</b> Department of Filipino, Ateneo de Manila University, Philippines	The Seven "Kisses" of Judas ( <i>The Translation of Foreign Plays for Filipino Contemporary</i> <i>Audience</i> )
12:30	<b>MIE HIRAMOTO</b> Department of English Language & Literature, National University of Singapore, Singapore	<i>Hey, you're a girl?: Gendered Expressions in the Popular</i> <i>Japanese Anime, Cowboy Bebop</i>
13:00 - 14:00	<b>LUNCH</b>	
<b>PANEL 7: TRANSLATION AND IDENTITY</b>		
	<b>CHAIRPERSON: MAX LANE</b> Department of Malay Studies, National University of Singapore, Singapore	
14:00	<b>SANDRA KHOR MANICKAM</b> Research School of Pacific and Asian History, Australian National University, Australia	Weaving Race into the History of the Malay Archipelago
14:30	<b>HASLINA HAROON</b> Malay Language, Translation & Interpretation Section, Universiti Sains Malaysia, Malaysia	Discourse on Translation Involving the Malay Language
15:00	<b>SANJEEV SREEDHARAN</b> Independent Scholar	Translator Beings, Translated Beings
15:30 - 16:00	<b>TEA BREAK</b>	
<b>PANEL 8: TRANSLATION AND RELIGION</b>		
	<b>CHAIRPERSON: HARRY AVELING</b> La Trobe University, Australia and Ohio University, USA	
16:00	<b>BERNARD ARPS</b> Department of Languages & Cultures of Indonesia, Leiden University, The Netherlands	The Sounds of Timeless Texts, Now: Translations of Scripture on Indonesian Audio Recordings
16:30	<b>VIJAYAKUMAR M. BORATTI</b> University Evening College & University of Mysore, India.	Re-Thinking Oriental Discourse/s: Translation, Administrators and Missionaries in Colonial India
17:00	<b>DONG ZHAO</b> School of English and International Studies, Beijing Foreign Studies University, China	Ideology and The Sacred: Translation of Buddhist Scriptures and the Christian Bible in China
<b>17:30 - 18:00 CONCLUDING DISCUSSIONS AND CLOSING REMARKS</b>		
	<b>JAN VAN DER PUTTEN</b> Department of Malay Studies, National University of Singapore	
18:15	<b>CONFERENCE DINNER</b> (For Speakers, Chairpersons and Invited Guests Only)	

**THURSDAY, 5 MARCH 2009**

08:30 - 09:00	<b>REGISTRATION</b>	
09:00 - 09:30	<b>WELCOME &amp; INTRODUCTORY REMARKS</b>	
09:00	<b>LILY KONG</b> Director, Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore	
09:15	<b>RONIT RICCI</b> Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore	
09:30 - 11:00	<b>PANEL 1: THEORIES OF TRANSLATION</b>	
	<b>CHAIRPERSON: MICHAEL FEENER</b> Asia Research Institute & Department of History, National University of Singapore, Singapore	
09:30	<b>THOMAS M. HUNTER</b> Faculty of Letters, Universitas Udayana, Indonesia	Translation in a World of Diglossia
10:00	<b>TORSTEN TSCHACHER</b> Department of Modern South Asian Languages & Literatures, South Asia Institute, Heidelberg University, Germany	Commenting Translation: Concepts and Practices of Translation in Islamic Tamil Literature
10:30	<b>PETER GERARD FRIEDLANDER</b> Centre for Language Studies & South Asian Studies Programme, National University of Singapore, Singapore	Translations and Transcreations: Hindi Versions of 'High School Musical'
11:00 - 11:30	<b>TEA BREAK</b>	
11:30 - 13:00	<b>PANEL 2: TRANSLATION AND POLITICS</b>	
	<b>CHAIRPERSON: TIM BARNARD</b> Department of History, National University of Singapore, Singapore	
11:30	<b>DIDI KWARTANADA</b> NABIL Foundation, Indonesia	Inventing Chinese Tradition Through Romanized Malay: Translations and the Revival Of Chineseness Among the <i>Peranakans</i> in Java (1880s-1911)
12:00	<b>JOSE MARIO C. FRANCISCO</b> Loyola School of Theology, Ateneo de Manila University, Philippines	Translating Vice into Filipino: Religious, Colonial and Nationalist Discourses on Sloth
12:30	<b>MICHAEL M. COROZA</b> Department of Filipino, School of Humanities, Ateneo de Manila University, Philippines	Translation as a Tool for National Enlightenment: The Role of Literary Translation in the Struggle for Philippine Independence (1896-1946)
13:00 - 14:00	<b>LUNCH</b>	
14:00 - 15:30	<b>PANEL 3: VOCABULARIES OF TRANSLATION</b>	
	<b>CHAIRPERSON: RONIT RICCI</b> Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore, Singapore	
14:00	<b>ERLINDA K. ALBURO</b> University of San Carlos, Philippines	"Riddling-Riddling of the Ghost Crab": Literary Translation in Cebuano
14:30	<b>LIN HUNG-HSIU EILEEN</b> Department of Translation & Interpreting, Wenzao Ursuline College of Foreign Language, Taiwan	The Interplay of Functional Equivalence and Ideology in Cultural Translation: A Look Into 龍 in Political Texts
15:00	<b>MICHAEL BURTSCHER</b> University of Tokyo, Japan	Coming to Terms with the Epistemological Turn: Translation and Conceptual Change in Early Meiji Japan
15:30 - 16:00	<b>TEA BREAK</b>	
16:00 - 17:30	<b>PANEL 4: THE POLITICS OF TRANSLATION</b>	
	<b>CHAIRPERSON: JULIUS BAUTISTA</b> Asia Research Institute & Department of South East Asian Studies, National University of Singapore, Singapore	
16:00	<b>ANJALI GERA ROY</b> Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore, Singapore and Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur, India	Writing and Translating the <i>Sthalapurana</i>
16:30	<b>SUCHORITA CHATTOPADHYAY</b> Department of Comparative Literature, Jadavpur University, India	Survival of a Colonial Legacy: A Comparative Study of the Bangla Translations of Shakespeare's <i>Macbeth</i>
17:00	<b>INDAH SANTI PRATIDINA</b> Institute for the Study of Global Issues, Hitotsubashi University, Japan	Japan Image-Shifting through Translation in Southeast Asia: The Toyota Foundation "Know Your Neighbor Translation-Publication" Program
18:00	<b>END OF DAY 1 CONFERENCE</b>	

## ABSTRACT

Discourse on translation is taken to mean any text which expresses the writer's views and thoughts on translation, which may include methods and principles of translation. Although discourse on translation is a key component in the Malay translation tradition, this aspect of translation has received very little attention in discussion on the history of translation involving the Malay language. The aim of this paper then is to examine early discourse on translation involving the Malay language, as expressed by three different writers: Abdullah bin Abdul Kadir Munsyi, Zainal Abidin Ahmad (Za'ba) and C.C. Brown. More specifically, the aim of the paper is to discuss their respective translation methods, especially in view of certain concepts such as 'faithfulness' and 'fluency'. It is believed that this aspect of translation should not be ignored as it is through an examination of the various thoughts on translation that we are able to see the similarities and differences in terms of how translation is viewed by different writers at different times. Such an examination will also allow us to evaluate their relevance to and implications on current translation practice and thus contribute to a more complete picture of the translation tradition in the Malay Peninsula.

## INTRODUCTION

Research in the field of translation in Malaysia has rarely focused on the history of translation in the country. The subject, has for the most part, received cursory treatment by translation scholars in the country, who prefer to engage in discussion on methods and strategies of translating. The importance of translation history is underlined by Bassnett (1996, p. 39) who pointed out that "no introduction to Translation Studies could be complete without consideration of the discipline in a historical perspective". The importance of the history of translation is also acknowledged by Woodsworth (1998), who asserts that the history of translation is in fact closely related to the issue of translation methods and strategies.

According to Woodsworth (1998: 10), research in the field of translation history can focus on practice or theory or both practice and theory:

A history of the practice of translation deals with such questions as what has been translated, by whom, under what circumstances, and in what social and political context. History of theory, or discourse on translation, deals with the following kinds of questions: what translators have had to say about their art/craft/science; how translations have been evaluated at different periods; what kinds of recommendations translators have made, or how translation has been taught; and how this discourse is related to other discourses of the same period. Or, both theory and history can be investigated at once: how can the reliability and relevance of texts on translation be determined? What is the relation between practice and reflection on translation.

This paper will focus on the history of translation theory by looking into early discourse on translation involving the Malay language in the Malay Peninsula. To this end, the views put forth by Abdullah, Za'ba and Brown with regard to translation will be examined.

## ABDULLAH BIN ABDUL KADIR MUNSUYI

Abdullah bin Abdul Kadir Munsyi (1795-1852) was one of the first few translators in the Malay Peninsula to present his views on translating, much of which can be found in his memoirs entitled *Hikayat Abdullah* (literally 'The Story of Abdullah'). In discussing Abdullah's views on translation as gleaned from *Hikayat Abdullah*, it must be borne in mind that *Hikayat Abdullah*, written between 1840 and 1843 and first published in 1849, contains Abdullah's own accounts of life during the early years of British colonization and his own observations and descriptions

of life in the Malay Peninsula in the nineteenth century. As such, it is not a work about/on translation methods and principles *per se*. To add, apart from a brief examination of Abdullah's views on the role of translation in language learning (Haslina 2003), no attempt has been made to examine Abdullah and his views on methods and principles of translation. This is despite the fact that Abdullah himself was a prolific translator, having been involved in various translation work as he himself explained and discussed in *Hikayat Abdullah*. In trying to uncover Abdullah's views on translation in this paper, the translation of *Hikayat Abdullah* into English by A.H. Hill, which was published in 1970, is used.

The readers of *Hikayat Abdullah* get the first glimpse of Abdullah's thoughts on translation in the chapter entitled 'The Anglo-Chinese College'. Abdullah meets the Rev. William Milne for the first time, and during their brief meeting Abdullah was given one volume of a Bible which had been translated from the Dutch into Malay. This was probably the Malay Bible published in 1731 which was translated by the Dutch medical doctor, Melchior Leidekker. Abdullah recounts his experience reading the Malay translation of the Bible for the first time:

As soon as I had reached my home I sat down and read it, noting carefully all the punctuation marks. After I had read the first page I continued reading with speed all through the night until I had almost finished the book. The letters and the forms of the words were proper Malay but the style of writing was not. Furthermore, words were used in impossible places, or put together in impossible combinations. Therefore I found I could not understand the real meaning of the book. It all sounded very clumsy to my ear, and I was inclined to say "This is a book of the white man, and I do not know the white man's language." I was much intrigued as I sat thinking about the book for I was attracted by its printing, the lettering being very fine. Only the words were unintelligible, being neither Malay nor English. And I could not fathom them. I thought "It was useless to produce such a book. I know not how much money and energy had been spent on it but its phraseology makes it valueless". (p. 106)

It is clear from the excerpt above that from Abdullah's point of view, any text that is translated into Malay should adopt the use of Malay grammar. The replacement of foreign words with words in Malay alone is not enough in producing a translation. The translator must attempt to translate the source language into the target language, in the way that the target language is habitually used by the target readers. To translate into a target language by retaining the grammar of the source language, according to Abdullah, is clearly a useless and futile act.

This first encounter between Abdullah and Milne led to a closer relationship between the two. One of the main factors which brought Abdullah and Milne closer was the fact that Milne himself had requested Abdullah to teach him the Malay language. Abdullah's account of his own experience teaching Malay to Milne and a German missionary by the name of Claudius Thomsen is also another important aspect of *Hikayat Abdullah* from the point of view of translation, as it brings to light Abdullah's firmly-held belief with regard to translation. The following is Abdullah's observation of Thomsen and his attitude in learning the Malay language:

When he made a translation from English into Malay he was in the habit of following English idiom so that it was only a partial translation from English into Malay and the construction sounded very strange in the Malay language. Several times I intervened to stop him doing this, but still he was unable to find the right idiom. (p. 120)

The excerpt above illustrates two main points. The first is that translation can be an essential and useful tool in language learning. The second and more important point, to which Abdullah

attached a great deal of importance, is the fact that a translation must conform to the rules of the target language.

Thomsen featured rather prominently in *Hikayat Abdullah*, mainly because of his frequent arguments with Abdullah, especially with regard to his approach in translating which Abdullah did not agree with. Although Thomsen did change his ways and improved, it was not long before he "returned to his old ways", and Abdullah, unhappy with Thomsen's obstinacy "made corrections to all those phrases which followed English idiom and sounded awkward to the ear of a Malay" (p. 131). Abdullah also explained that it was also because of Thomsen's quarrelsome nature that there were mistakes in the Gospel according to St. Matthew, which they had translated from Javanese Malay into Malay. Abdullah recounted how he became involved in the undertaking:

Mr. Thomsen had said to me one day "Now I want to do a revision of the Gospel according to St. Matthew from Javanese Malay into proper Malay. For at present there is only a Dutch version which is not in correct Malay. Let us therefore rewrite it changing all the phrases which are unidiomatic." I replied "If, sir, you wish to change the wording of the book you had better explain the meaning carefully to me until I have grasped it, and then I can supply the Malay words. Do not force suggestions on me but be patient. Moreover, I would like a promise that you will not dispute anything which I consider correct." (p. 131)

Abdullah attached great importance to understanding the source text and its content prior to carrying out any translation work. Despite coming to an understanding with Thomsen as to how the translation should be carried out, the work could not proceed smoothly due to Thomsen's obstinate nature, and it was precisely because of this that mistakes abound in the Malay translation of the Gospel according to St. Matthew. Abdullah warned the readers of these mistakes in the translation and at the same time defended himself against possible attacks from his readers:

So there remain several obscure renderings for which I will not quote chapter and verse, for readers of this book will perfectly will understand. But if they come across any mistakes in the Gospel according to St. Matthew due to Mr. Thomsen's clumsy renderings in the Malay language, they should kindly remember I was acting under instructions and could do nothing to add or remove a single word without Mr. Thomsen's full authority. I myself have fully realized that in this Gospel there are many awkward-sounding passages, and words used in impossible contexts. Because of these solecisms people are liable to misconstrue the sense. But what could I do, especially as I did not know the original language of the Gospel which, I believe, is a translation from the Greek? If it had been partly at least in English I would have understood a little. I hope that in view of all these troubles my readers will not heap insult and calumny upon my reputation on the grounds that I was Mr. Thomsen's teacher. (p. 132)

It is apparent from this excerpt that Thomsen, who was of the habit of using the style of the English language when translating from English into Malay while he was learning the Malay language from Abdullah, adopted this same approach in translating the Gospel according to St. Matthew into Malay, resulting in a highly deficient translation, according to Abdullah. Abdullah also cautioned that one the shortcomings of such a deficient translation was that it would lead to misinterpretation and misunderstanding.

Upon the completion of the task, Mr. Thomsen, still oblivious to his own weaknesses and faults in translating, put forth another suggestion to Abdullah. This time, Thomsen suggested that they undertake a translation of the Act of the Apostles. Abdullah, who by now was more than aware of Thomsen's flaws, was quite wary of the idea. Despite his initial misgivings, he finally

gave in, only to regret it later. Abdullah was clearly unhappy with the translation produced, and this is reflected in the following excerpt:

I tried my hardest to infuse into the translation a character sufficiently Malay for it to be at least intelligible. Thus I went over it each day a little at a time. For I had much other work to do, so that I accomplished it only after delays and many arguments. It was still Mr. Thomsen's habit always to be guided by English or other language in his Malay translation, paying no attention to Malay idiom. Therefore people quickly recognize any work done by Mr. Thomsen, the words only being in Malay, the construction in English which does not resemble Malay style. This is a most important consideration in translating from one language into another. (p. 133)

That a translation must be intelligible in the target language is constantly emphasised by Abdullah, to the point that Abdullah declared this as "a most important consideration in translating from one language into another". Abdullah's experience with Thomsen had clearly caused him great disappointment and left him embittered. In another instance, while discussing the importance of learning proper Malay, Abdullah again stressed the importance of adopting the style of the target language in translating. He mentioned the tendency of many foreigners to retain the style and manner of the source language when translating.

When he translates English into Malay he is unaware that only the individual words sound like Malay, the idiom being English. When a Malay reads the work he is at his wits' end, being unable to fathom its meaning because it is not in his own idiom. Is such an accomplishment of any value? Then thousands of copies are printed, a waste of money and paper and energy. (p. 226)

The last line of the excerpt certainly reminds us of the earlier incident when a copy of the Malay Bible translated by the Dutch was given to Abdullah by Milne during their first encounter, and Abdullah's remark that "I know not how much money and energy had been spent on it but its phraseology makes it valueless".

Abdullah's views of the proper way of translating, that is, by using the idiom and style of the target language, is also seen in his attempt to produce a grammar of the Malay language. Abdullah explained:

When I say that I would like to compile a grammar of the Malay language, I do not mean one like that produced by the Dutch who translated the Gospel into Malay some centuries ago, or the similar one by Mr. Robinson who applied the grammatical rules of English and Latin and other languages to Malay without understanding its idiom. The Malay style was clumsy [...] I noticed that in the old Dutch translation of the Gospel the particle "lah" had been everywhere used to denote the past tense. I noticed too that in the Gospel according to St. John, translated by Englishmen who claimed a knowledge of Malay, were written words like "keshorgaan", "kebuangan", "kemudaan". These translators applied rules of English grammar to Malay without realizing that such words are not permissible in the Malay language and that people merely laugh and make jokes about them. Further, it is a sure sign that the person who did the work had no understanding of Malay style, for he used impossible words. [...] What I would like to do in making a Malay grammar is to take words from the Malay language itself and classify each of them according to its type, the rule governing its use, and its position. This would allow us to follow proper Malay idiom, preventing each person drawing on his powers of invention... (p. 246)

The mistakes in the translation of the Bible which Abdullah undertook with Thomsen probably had always troubled him, and when he was he was asked to assist John Stronach, a Bible translator with the London Missionary Society to revise the translation, Abdullah jumped at the chance. Abdullah remarked that the translation made with Thomsen "contained incorrect renderings of the original meaning and its style was poor". Abdullah also explained that "these defects had arisen because of Mr. Thomsen's obstinacy and lack of understanding". Abdullah agreed to work on correcting the mistakes made in the earlier translation and together with Stronach "started afresh on the Gospel as though making a new translation". Abdullah also mentioned some other factors that had made the task a relatively easy one:

...Mr. Stronach was a good Greek scholar, besides knowing some Malay and also Chinese. He was exceptionally good in his own language, that is to say English. In addition there were many books of reference which were helpful to us; that is, commentaries in which learned men had expounded the sense, the real meaning and the intention of the Gospel story. It was therefore an easy matter to revise the text, and to rewrite it in the proper Malay style. (p. 294)

Despite the fact that the task undertaken with Stronach did not pose much of a problem to Abdullah compared with his collaboration with Thomsen, he commented on the fact that "there still remained a few obscure phrases. For the missionaries did not approve of my changing a number of expressions which are not normally used by Malays" (p. 294). Abdullah's greatest fear was the fact that "they must necessarily sound awkward in the ears of any Malays who hear them in time to come" (p. 294). Abdullah again defended himself from any future criticism from the readers and made it clear that he should not be blamed for the mistakes in the translation. He also hoped that the mistakes would be corrected by the missionaries involved and added that

If they do not do so I am absolved from any blame on their account and people will not be able to cast aspersions on my reputation or say that the expressions I used were wrong. For once before I had suffered from Mr. Thomsen's pigheadedness when we were translating the Gospel. He ordered me to use expressions not permissible to Malay idiom, and people still speak of me as his teacher. They do not realize that he refused to use the phrases given him by his teacher, preferring to display his own cleverness. (p. 294)

It is apparent that Abdullah stressed a great deal of importance on producing a translation that read smoothly in the target language. It also seems clear that Abdullah never quite fully recovered from his unpleasant experience with Thomsen, for Abdullah again took this chance to express his bitterness over the collaboration with Thomsen and consequently to launch his attack on Thomsen.

Abdullah's views on the principles of translation are made clear through his own observations of translated work, his own experience in teaching Malay to British officers and missionaries, and based on his own experience in translating into Malay. From the excerpts above, it seems clear that as a translator, Abdullah's overriding concern was on producing a translation that read well in the target language. In other words, a major consideration in translating is producing a fluent translation that can be clearly understood in the target language. From Abdullah's point of view, if a translation is to serve its purpose and to fulfil the aim of transmitting knowledge to the audience to whom it was intended, it must be in a language and style that the target readers are familiar with.

### **ZAINAL ABIDIN BIN AHMAD (ZA'BA)**

Zainal Abidin bin Ahmad (1895-1973) or Za'ba is widely known in the field of Malay language studies in the Malay Peninsula for his contributions to the development of Malay language,

specifically Malay grammar. Starting his career as a teacher, Za'ba left the teaching profession when he was offered the post of a translator at the office of the Director of Education in the Straits Settlements and the Federated Malay States in May 1923. From April 1924 to September 1939, Za'ba worked at the Sultan Idris Teacher Training College (SITC). Za'ba was instrumental in the setting up in 1925 of the Translation Bureau, which later became known as Pejabat Karang-Mengarang, an office responsible for the translation and production of books for schools and for the general public in the Malay Peninsula. In the field of translation, Za'ba is known for his work entitled *Anak Raja Dengan Anak Papa*, the Malay translation of Mark Twain's *The Prince and the Pauper*. The translation was published in 1958 and became the first work published by the national language and literary agency, *Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka*, after the independence of the country in 1957.

One of the most important works written by Za'ba is *Ilmu Mengarang Melayu* (Knowledge on Malay Composition), which was first published in 1934. *Ilmu Mengarang Melayu*, as the title indicates, is a manual on writing in Malay. Although there is no specific chapter on methods of translating between two languages, Za'ba has devoted an entire chapter to the topic of "Memindahkan Bahasa" (literally 'transferring language'). In *Ilmu Mengarang Melayu*, Za'ba uses the term "*memindahkan bahasa*" to refer to the practice of rephrasing or rewriting within one single language. This is equivalent to Jakobson's 'intralingual translation', which is defined as "the interpretation of verbal signs by means of other signs in the same language" (1959/1966:233), as opposed to 'interlingual translation' or translation proper, which Jakobson defined as "an interpretation of verbal signs by means of some other language" (1959/1966:233). Therefore, much of what will be discussed here with regard to Za'ba is related to his views on intralingual translation, as found in *Ilmu Mengarang Melayu*. In spite of this, Za'ba's views are still seen as important due to the fact that Za'ba himself was a prominent translator during his lifetime and also due to the fact that much of what he observed with regard to intralingual translation is extremely relevant to interlingual translation and in fact can be applied to interlingual translation.

In defining "*memindahkan bahasa*" or "transferring language", Za'ba (1934/2002, p. 91) remarked that "it is also a type of translation, through the process of which words are changed and replaced with other words while retaining the same meaning as the original (*my translation*)". Za'ba then proceeded to explain the various elements that needed to be considered in transferring language.

First, Za'ba (1934/2002, p. 91) stressed the importance of having a complete understanding of the original text by saying that "prior to anything else, there is a need to fully understand the meaning of the text whose language is to be transferred (*my translation*)". A close and careful reading of the original text is recommended so that one is able to fully understand its meaning.

The reader is also told by Za'ba (1934/2002, p. 92) that "in transferring meaning, it is not sufficient to take those words that first come to mind (*my translation*)". In other words, words must be chosen carefully to fully reflect the original. Za'ba recommends having several sentences with alternative words and structures so that the best and most appropriate sentence can be chosen. Za'ba also cautioned against the use of difficult words when much easier ones exist.

Za'ba (1934/2002) also warned against the use of literal translation. What needs to be transferred, however, is the meaning as a whole. The method of replacing one word with another word of similar meaning alone will not be enough and will produce an awkward translation. Transferring also does not necessarily involve transferring each individual word.

Za'ba (1934/2002, p. 91) mentioned that "the most important consideration in transferring meaning is ensuring that one does not depart or stray from the original meaning (*my translation*)". In other words, it is extremely important that the meaning of the original be

retained. In transferring meaning, one should not leave out anything that was in the original and neither should one add elements which did not originally exist in the original.

The final consideration, according to Za'ba (1934/2002) is the aesthetics of the final product. A number of elements need to be considered here. First, the structure of the language must be correct. The different parts of the text should also agree with one another and the text should read smoothly. Finally, to ensure clarity in meaning, it is important to ensure that the text can be fully and completely understood by those who have never come across the original text.

With regard to unveiling Za'ba's thoughts on proper interlingual translation, much remains to be done. Apart from a study (Haroon, 2006) involving a comparison between Za'ba's renowned translation, *Anak Raja dengan Anak Papa* and the source text, *The Prince and the Pauper*, which was carried out with the aim of understanding Za'ba's method of translating, not much has been written about Za'ba's own views on translation methods and strategies. This is mainly due to the fact that not much has been uncovered. Considering that Za'ba was a prominent and prolific translator at the Pejabat Karang-Mengarang of SITC, it is highly likely that Za'ba's own thoughts and views on translation methods and strategies may have been recorded or documented. It is hoped that further research will uncover more documents that perhaps will be able to shed some light on Za'ba's own thinking on the art of interlingual translation.

### C. C. BROWN

Charles Cuthbert Brown (1888-?) first set foot in the Malay Peninsula in 1911. He was the British advisor in the Malay state of Trengganu from 1932-1933 and became the British Resident in the Malay state of Pahang from 1935-1941. Brown wrote extensively about life in the Malay Peninsula, focusing mainly on the people and their customs. Brown was said to have spoken fluent Malay and upon retiring from Civil Service in the Malay Peninsula, Brown was appointed as a lecturer in Malay Studies at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) at the University of London. Besides documenting various aspects of life in the Malay Peninsula, Brown was involved in the translation of *Sejarah Melayu* or the *Malay Annals*, which was published in 1952. In undertaking the translation, Brown received assistance from a number of people, one of whom was Za'ba.

Brown's views of translation are documented in his work entitled *A Guide to English Malay Translation*. Brown worked on the book while he was a lecturer at SOAS. Published in 1956, the book is divided into two parts. Part I, entitled *The Method of Translating*, contains Brown's thoughts on how to approach a translation task. Meanwhile, Part II, entitled *Specimen Translations*, contains samples of works translated from English into Malay, comprising historical pieces and more contemporary pieces. Brown (1956, p. 12) mentioned that the purpose of the book was "to indicate the lines on which translation from English into true Malay should be done".

In relation to this, it is perhaps relevant that the circumstances surrounding language use in the Malay Peninsula during this time be explained. Brown's use of the term "true Malay" is extremely significant, as it is used to mean Malay as it is originally spoken and used by the Malays. At the same time when the use of "true Malay" was deteriorating, what was slowly becoming fashionable was the use of "modern Malay", which was often fashioned after Indonesian and also the English language. Brown lamented the fact that "modern Malay" was slowly becoming the norm and becoming the style of Malay writers, especially those who had undergone English education. Brown (1956, p. 12) commented:

It seems to me therefore that there *is* a case for doing what is after all the natural thing to do, viz., to use true Malay for contemporary Malay literature rather than to accept as a substitute "modern Malay" (or Indonesian) which is

foreign, possessed of no intrinsic superiority whatsoever over the old language and intelligible only to a small fraction of the Malay population of the Peninsula.

In his introduction in Part I, Brown (1956, p. 3) stated very clearly "the rule that governs all translation", which is the fact that "what is being translated must be reproduced in the language into which it is being translated in the way that the sense of the passage is ordinarily expressed in that language". Brown stressed the importance of producing a translation which is written in the style in which the target language would normally be written, and rejected the tendency to follow the style of the English language in translating, in which case the translator "would not be *translating* at all, in the true sense of the term: he would simply be using Malay words (of a sort) instead of English ones without however producing the Malay equivalent of the English". The adoption of the style of the English language by Malay writers was observed not only when they translated from English into Malay but also when they wrote/composed in Malay. Brown recounted his experience marking essays written by students of English schools, the majority of whom were Malays. Brown (1956, p. 4) expressed his disappointment upon seeing the written work, in the following terms:

...they were supposed to be Malay essays: but in thought and in form they were English. Many of the writers had something to say that was worth reading, and they knew how to say it - in an English way. But they had been told to write Malay essays, so they had to compose in Malay: which was just what they could not to, when "Malay" meant true Malay, the language in which they were being examined, as opposed to Indonesian Malay or "modern Malay".

Brown continued by saying that he does not object to the use of foreign vocabulary in the Malay language but he disapproves the use of English style. This he explained in the following:

A page of the *Sejarah Melayu* may contain a score of Arabic words, but the sentences in which those words occur are still in true Malay style: so that once the meaning of the Arabic has been mastered, the whole page is intelligible to the Malay reader. But in "modern Malay" the sentences are constructed in the English fashion and the sense they are intended to express is conveyed in the English way even though no English words may be used. A "modern Malay" sentence is in fact an English sentence with Malay words substituted for English ones. (p. 7)

Having presented his argument against using "modern Malay" in translating, Brown went on to deal with translation methods proper. Brown remarked (1956, p. 12) that "the translator's first business is to make sure of the meaning of what he is about to translate". Brown also acknowledged the fact that even at this early stage, the translator may face problems, which may be caused by "the obscurity of style" in the original text, and also by certain ambiguities present in the English text, which he then proceeded to illustrate by way of sentences in English.

Once the translator has fully understood the meaning of the original English text, the translator now comes to the stage which Brown (1956, p. 18) described as "the most difficult part of his work". This is further explained by Brown (1956, p. 18):

He has to ask himself, "Is the English in the Malay form, i.e. is the idea which it contains expressed *in the way in which it would be expressed in Malay*? If it is not, how should the English be paraphrased for translation purposes so as to bring it into the Malay form?"

Brown, therefore, recommends that the original English be paraphrased or rewritten in English in such a way that it would be understood by the Malays, if the text were in Malay. Brown

again proceeded to illustrate this by presenting texts in English and by rephrasing those texts into a form that he felt would be better understood by the target readers.

The last of the translator's task according to Brown (1956, p. 24) is "that of putting into the best Malay at his command the English which he has, if necessary, paraphrased...". Brown (1956, p. 24) remarked that

For Malays, the question "how is this best expressed in Malay?" should present little difficulty. They have only to ask themselves "how should I say this in Malay if I wanted to make it clear to my grandfather who has never learnt English?": and the answer will probably be the correct translation of the passage in question.

This excerpt clearly reiterates the point made earlier by Brown (1956, p. 3) that "what is being translated must be reproduced in the language into which it is being translated in the way that the sense of the passage is ordinarily expressed in that language". Brown (1956, p. 24) attempts to make his point clearer by saying that

The essence of the matter is that *the Malay version should shew (sic) no traces of the influence of English*. It may of course have to contain words new to the translator's grandfather, some or most of them quite possibly borrowed from English: but care must be taken to rid it of any signs of English idiom predominating over Malay idiom.

Brown, in short, placed special emphasis on producing a fluent translation in Malay, that is, a translation which adopts the style normally used for writing in the Malay language and which bears no resemblance the style of the original English.

## CONCLUSION

The paper has attempted to examine early discourse on translation involving the Malay language, as expressed by three different writers: Abdullah bin Abdul Kadir Munsyi, Zainal Abidin Ahmad (Za'ba) and C.C. Brown. Although it can be said that there is nothing new or revolutionary about the views presented by these writers/translators in the context of translation method and strategy at present, they nevertheless represent some of the earliest thoughts on translation into Malay in the Malay Peninsula. Because of this, the works of Abdullah, Za'ba and Brown may be considered as seminal works in the field of translation history in Malaysia. Although much remains to be done in terms of locating and uncovering documents containing early discourse on translation involving the Malay language in the Malay Peninsula, it is hoped that this discussion, although brief, may serve as a starting point and can contribute to a more complete picture of the translation tradition in the Malay Peninsula.

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