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Literal Translation, Sacred Scripture and Kitab Malay

Abstraksi: Sejak berabad-abad yang lalu, bahasa Melayu telah tersebar luas di Kepulauan Indonesia dan di Dunia Melayu pada umumnya sebagai bahasa perantara (*lingua franca*), selain juga menjadi media dakwah agama Islam. Tak heran jika sastra Melayu, yang kebanyakan tertulis dengan huruf Arab, sejak awal telah menyebar pula ke seluruh dunia Nusantara. Perkembangan bahasa Melayu di Nusantara ini, tampaknya juga tidak dapat dilepaskan dari konteks islamisasi yang terjadi saat itu. Dengan peranannya sebagai bahasa dakwah dan pengajaran agama, bahasa Melayu banyak digunakan oleh para ulama untuk menulis berbagai teks keagamaan, baik yang berupa karangan asli maupun berupa terjemahan dari bahasa lain, seperti Arab misalnya.

Hanya saja, dalam hal teks keagamaan yang berupa terjemahan dari bahasa Arab, bahasa Melayu yang dipergunakan tidak jarang dianggap oleh sebagian sarjana sebagai “menyimpang” dari ketentuan bahasa Melayu pada umumnya, terutama jika dibanding dengan bahasa Melayu yang digunakan dalam berbagai karya sastra. Selain karena terjemahannya lebih bersifat harfiah, juga karena secara linguistik, bahasa Melayu yang digunakan lebih mencerminkan struktur bahasa Arabnya, dibanding bahasa Melayu itu sendiri. Dengan asumsi semacam ini, bahasa Melayu dalam teks-teks keagamaan (*Kitab Malay*) dianggap oleh sebagian sarjana sebagai bahasa Melayu yang buruk (*atrocious Malay*), dan menjadi tidak penting dipertimbangkan sebagai bagian dari struktur bahasa Melayu itu sendiri.

Artikel yang ditulis oleh Peter G Riddell ini mencoba mengemukakan sebuah pembahasan linguistik terhadap bahasa Melayu *Kitab*, dengan mengambil kasus bahasa Melayu yang digunakan dalam *Kitab Tarjumân al-Mustafid*, sebuah kitab tafsir terjemahan pertama dalam bahasa Melayu, karangan seorang ulama Melayu ternama asal Aceh,

'Abd al-Rauf al-Singkili (w. 1693). Selain itu, untuk melakukan kontrol kebahasaan dalam kajiannya, Riddell juga menyertakan beberapa contoh bahasa Melayu non-Kitab, yang diambilnya dari sebuah karya sastra Melayu awal abad ke-17, yakni Hikayat Aceh.

Untuk memberikan penilaian atas gaya bahasa Melayu terjemahan dalam Kitab Malay itu, sesungguhnya banyak hal yang harus dipertimbangkan, terutama menyangkut motivasi dan tradisi yang berkembang dalam penerjemahan kitab-kitab suci pada umumnya. Dalam tradisi agama Kristen dan Budha periode awal misalnya, beberapa terjemahan kitab sucinya memang lebih banyak menggunakan teknik terjemahan harfiah daripada teknik lainnya. Hal ini tampaknya banyak dipengaruhi oleh keinginan untuk menjaga "keaslian" bahasa sumbernya, sehingga pada gilirannya diharapkan pula dapat tetap mempertahankan "kesucian" teksnya.

Bisa jadi, gaya para penerjemah Muslim Melayu pun sedikit banyak dipengaruhi oleh tradisi penerjemahan kitab-kitab suci periode awal tersebut. Apalagi, dalam konteks Islam, upaya penerjemahan al-Quran ke dalam bahasa lain ini sempat mendapat tantangan keras dari sebagian Muslim ortodoks, yang menganggap bahwa tidak ada bahasa lain yang dapat merepresentasikan secara utuh makna yang dikandung oleh bahasa Arabnya al-Quran. Pada perkembangannya, penentangan terhadap upaya penerjemahan al-Quran ini agak mereda dengan muncul dan diterimanya teknik terjemahan antarbaris, yang lebih bersifat harfiah, dan dianggap tidak terlalu banyak memasukkan unsur interpretasi dari penerjemah.

Dalam artikel ini, Riddell ingin memberikan penjelasan kenapa karakteristik dan struktur bahasa Melayu Kitab, terutama yang berupa terjemahan antarbaris, berbeda dengan karakteristik dan struktur bahasa Melayu pada umumnya? Menurut Riddell, perbedaan tersebut memang akibat kuatnya pengaruh bahasa Arab sebagai bahasa sumbernya. Kendati demikian, kuatnya pengaruh bahasa Arab ini harus ditempatkan dalam konteks motivasi dan tradisi penerjemahan yang berkembang dalam penerjemahan kitab-kitab suci di atas, dimana sang penerjemah berusaha menjaga keaslian bahasa sumber, yang diyakini akan berimplikasi pada kesucian teksnya.

Yang jelas, menurut Riddell, kuatnya pengaruh bahasa Arab dalam bahasa Melayu Kitab tersebut tidak sepatutnya dipandang sebagai sesuatu yang buruk, justru sebaliknya sebagai sebuah kreasi yang beralasan, dan karenanya menjadi penting.

Literal Translation, Sacred Scripture and Kitab Malay

خلاصة: لقد انتشرت اللغة الملايو انتشارا واسعا في أرخبيل إندونيسيا وعالم الملايو منذ قرون كلفة وسيطة (*lingua franca*) ووسيلة للدعوة الإسلامية أيضا، فلا عجب أن ينتشر الأدب الملايو المستعمل الحروف العربية (Aksara Jawi) منتشرا أيضا في جميع أجزاء الأرخبيل.

ويبدو أن تطور اللغة الملايو لم يكن منفصلا عن توسع انتشار الإسلام حينذاك، فبفضل دورها كوسيلة للدعوة وتعليم الدين استعملها كثير من العلماء في نشر الكتب الدينية سواء كانت من مؤلفاتهم الخاصة أم ترجمة من اللغات الأخرى كالعربية مثلا. بيد أنه فيما يتعلق بالنصوص الدينية المترجمة من اللغة العربية لاحظ الباحثون وجود انحراف عن الالتزام بقواعد اللغة الملايو، وخاصة إذا قورن باللغة الملايو المستخدمة في مختلف الأعمال الأدبية، والسبب أنه بجانب كون الترجمة أكثر حرفية فإنه من الناحية اللغوية كانت اللغة الملايو المستخدمة تعبر عن التكوين اللغوي للغة العربية أكثر منه إلى اللغة الملايو نفسها، وهكذا فإن اللغة الملايو في النصوص الدينية تعد لغة ملايو سيئة وتغيب عنها أهميتها كجزء في بناء اللغة الملايو ذاتها.

ومثل هذا الرأي تبناه ريتشارد وينستد (Richard Winstedt) الذي قدم نقدا للغة الملايو المستخدمة في ترجمة النصوص الدينية المكتوبة باللغة العربية، ويصرح وينستد بناء على مثال اللغة المستخدمة في كتاب تاج السلاطين أن مؤلفيه أفسدوا المصطلحات في اللغة الملايو واستبدلوها بمصطلحات أصلها عربية يصعب فهمها.

على أنه من أجل إصدار حكم على أسلوب اللغة الملايو في النصوص المترجمة يقتضي أن يوضع في الاعتبار أمور كثيرة خاصة فيما يتعلق بالدوافع والمنهج السائد في ترجمة الكتب المقدسة عموماً، ففي المسيحية والبوذية في فترة الأوائل كان الأسلوب السائد أن تسير الترجمة بشكل أكثر حرفياً منه إلى الأساليب الأخرى، وهذا يرجع فيما يبدو إلى الحرص على الاحتفاظ بأصالة اللغة المصدر وبالتالي يرجى الاحتفاظ كذلك بقدسية النص.

ويحتمل أن يكون أسلوب المترجمين من المسلمين بالملايو متأثراً بذلك النظام السائد في ترجمة الكتب المقدسة في فترة الأوائل، وخاصة كانت ترجمة القرآن الكريم بالنسبة للإسلام إلى اللغة الأخرى تتعرض لبعض المعارضات من المسلمين السنة الذين يرون أنه ليس هناك لغة أخرى تستطيع أن تعبر عن المعنى الذي تشتمل عليه عربية القرآن، وقد تراجعت هذه المعارضة في تطور لاحق عندما نشأ أسلوب ترجمة السطور (*interlinear translation*) التي كانت أكثر حرفية والتي يعتقد فيه خلوه من تدخل المترجم بتفسير.

وهذا المقال الذي كتبه بيتر ج ريدل (Peter G Riddell) يحاول أن يعرض بحثاً لغويًا عن لغة الكتب الدينية بالملايو (*Kitab Malay*) وذلك باتخاذ اللغة الملايو المستخدمة في كتاب ترجمان المستفيد وهو أول كتب في ترجمة القرآن وتفسيره باللغة الملايو ألفه عالم مشهور من آتشيه هو عبد الرؤوف السنكلي المتوفى ١٦٩٣م، وبجانب ذلك ومن أجل التحقيق اللغوي في بحثه فقد أرفق ريدل أمثلة من اللغة الملايو غير الكتب الدينية التي أخذها من الأدب الملايو في أوائل القرن السابع عشر الميلادي وهو كتاب *Hikayat Aceh* (حكايات آتشيه).

ويريد ريدل بهذا المقال أن يكشف النقاب عن اختلاف طبيعة البناء اللغوي في الكتب الدينية وخاصة الكتب المترجمة التي تستخدم أسلوب ترجمة السطور وبين طبيعة البناء اللغوي في اللغة الملايو عموماً، فيرى ريدل أن هذا الاختلاف يأتي نتيجة لقوة تأثير اللغة العربية وهي مصدر الترجمة، على أن هذا التأثير القوي يجب أن ينظر إليه في إطار الدوافع والنظام السائد في ترجمة الكتب المقدسة المشار إليها حيث يحاول المترجم أن يحتفظ بأصالة اللغة المصدر وبالتالي الاحتفاظ بقدسية النص.

بل المثير حقاً في رأي ريدل هو كيف استطاع مترجم وهو هنا في هذا المقال عبد الوؤف السنكلي من خلال ترجمته أن يحاول التعبير عن لغتين مختلفتين في طبيعتها وتكوينها وبنائها. والواضح كما يرى ريدل أن قوة تأثير اللغة العربية على اللغة الملايو في هذا الكتاب الديني لا ينبغي النظر إليه على أنه لغة سيئة بل العكس كان ذلك إبداعاً له ما يبرره ولذلك يكتسب أهمية ويستحق وضعه في الاعتبار.

Atrocious Malay?

The Malay language has for many centuries been the most widely used means of inter-ethnic communication throughout the Southeast Asian archipelago. Literature in Malay dates back to the 14th century. In the 20th century, dialects of Malay were established as the national languages of Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore and Brunei. At the turn of the 21st century, there were perhaps 20 million native speakers of Malay, with over ten times that number speaking the language as a second or national language (Kratz, 1999: 47).

The study of Malay dialects was a specialist concern during the period of Dutch colonisation of Indonesia and British colonisation of the Malay peninsular. In recent times, the Malaysian National Language Council, the Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, and its Indonesian counterpart, the Pusat Pembinaan dan Pengembangan Bahasa (PPPB), have devoted considerable resources to the study of Malay dialectology. Such dialect studies have necessarily had a geographical focus, by way of descriptive grammars of Malay dialects spoken in particular areas. Examples are the studies of Pontianak Malay (Kamal et. al. 1986) and Palembang Malay (Aliana et. al. 1987) published by the PPPB.

The variant of Malay under examination in this present paper is not peculiar to a particular town, city or region. It crosses geographical boundaries; it is, nevertheless, subject to certain delimitations. The variant in question has at times been referred to as *Kitab* Malay, and this is the term that will be used throughout this paper. It refers to the Malay used in religious writings, which are translations or renderings of, or closely based on, original works written in Arabic. It has received occasional attention from scholars, with some focusing on the use of specific lexical items (Drewes, 1950; Kaptein, 1995), and others undertaking a more systematic analysis of the syntax and semantics of *Kitab* Malay works (Ronkel, 1899; Fokker, 1909; Riddell, 1979; Riddell, 1990).

Kitab Malay emerged during the early period of Islamisation of the Malay World. Kratz expresses well the way in which translation intersected with the spread of the new faith:

‘Places of religious learning were involved constantly in translating from Arabic and Persian into Malay; even if the pure Islamic scholar of South East Asian origins still would prefer to use Arabic above any other language - including his own mother tongue, Sufi treatises, Quranic studies, and the hadith would be translated into Malay for the purpose of *da'wah* and for the benefit of the *ummat* at large. The stories of the Prophet and his Companions, hagiographies and other treatises would be translated and adapted.’ (Kratz, 1999: 54)

The earliest Islamic texts in Malay of which we have surviving examples date from the late 16th to early 17th centuries. They were produced during a period of great literary activity in Malay. These religious texts were contemporaneous with a large number of secular historical and folk stories that were composed by anonymous authors. These stories include such classics as the *Sejarah Melayu* (Malay Annals) and the various epic writings that are considered as classic Malay *Hikayat*.

At the beginning of the 20th century, the British scholar Richard Winstedt made a study of the language of the great Malay secular classics, and presented his analysis in the form of a reference grammar of what was, in effect, Classical Malay. In a chapter of his grammar entitled 'Style', Winstedt identifies what he calls four styles of Malay as follows (Winstedt, 1927: 177-182):

1. Bazaar Malay
2. Polite Malay
3. Court Malay
4. Literary Malay

He makes no mention of the Malay used in religious texts in his reference grammar, but he does refer to such a variety of Malay in his other writings. In discussing the religious classic *Tāj al-Salâṭīn*, Winstedt writes:

'...its date (1603) makes it probable that the translation was done at Aceh, then the first Muslim power among the Malays. Translation there would also condone the atrocious Malay idiom.' (Winstedt, 1958: 114)

He lays the blame for what he saw as poor Malay squarely at the feet of Muslim writers who produced their works in Aceh:

'... these Muslim teachers... murdered Malay idiom and introduced for Arabic theological terms Malay synonyms as unintelligible as those employed by some British translators of Hegel and Kant.' (Winstedt, 1958: 113)

With such an opinion, it is not surprising that Winstedt did not include the Malay of religious works as one of the recognised styles of Malay in his reference grammar.¹

These comments by Winstedt imply that we should dismiss the language of Malay religious texts as being a virtual aberration unworthy of serious linguistic study. But there is much more to this question than meets the eye. In order to give such a language variant the

attention it deserves, we need to look briefly at the historical background of translation theory and practice.

Translation Types

In his study of the categories of translation, Newman (1980:100 ff) lists five major types:

1. Referential (e.g. instruction manuals, scientific/technical works)
2. Literary/poetic ('...semantic information is chiefly filtered through the aesthetic medium...')
3. Creative (interpretative and symbolic effort)
4. Literal interlinear ('...strives to be faithful to the syntactic form of the original even at the expense of violating the norms of the T(arget) L(anguage)...')
5. Scholarly ethnographic (conveys meaning in the light of the social and cultural setting).

For our purposes, type (4) above is of particular relevance. Newman points out that in the literal interlinear translation, doctrinal, ideological and pedagogical considerations come into play, as will be discussed later.

Katherine Barnwell draws a twofold distinction at the macro-level in types of translations, comprising literal translations, which follow 'as closely as possible the form of the language which is used in the original message', and meaning-based translations, which aim 'to express the exact meaning of the original message in a way that is natural in the new language' (Barnwell, 1992: 13).

Thus literal translation is well established as an element in the mosaic of translation techniques. It achieves particular prominence in the translation of sacred scripture in widely divergent religious traditions.

Literal Translating in the Judeo-Christian and Buddhist Traditions

The early translations of the Hebrew Bible into Greek undertaken by Aquila, Theodotion and Symmachus in the 2nd Century A.D. were the result of literal techniques of translation (Sawyer, 1999:90). Writing of Aquila's translation, Nida notes that Aquila 'composed barbarous Greek in an attempt to be faithful to the Hebrew original' (Nida, 1964: 23). It is worth noting that although the texts, and indeed the religions, in question were very different, Nida's opinion of the ('barbarous') language of Aquila's target text is reminiscent of Winstedt's

attitude towards the ('atrocious') Malay of religious works translated from Arabic.

In referring to Aquila's translation, Pattie takes a somewhat more tolerant view:

'His was an extremely literal version of the official Hebrew text, which reproduced in Greek not only the sense, but also the idiom, grammar and even the etymology of the Hebrew, sometimes at the expense of clarity... Its great merit was that it could be used to translate back into Hebrew with absolute reliability, and readers could therefore be sure that God's words had suffered no corruption. To those who knew no Hebrew, however, this translation made awkward reading.' (Pattie, 1979: 7)

In this statement, Pattie introduces an additional dimension to the purpose of literal translation; namely, the facilitation of readers' access to the form of the original source text.

In the middle of the 16th Century, Arias Montanus in the Antwerp Polyglot translated the Old Testament into Latin with a very literal style. Nida reports that he invented new Latin words to enable him to translate the same Hebrew stem by a single corresponding Latin stem, and by so doing, he 'violated the good canons of Latin usage' (Nida, 1964: 23).

Similarly Jerome's translation of the New Testament from Greek into Latin appears to have been rather cumbersome stylistically. He was concerned to render all the minutiae of the source text, stating that 'every word, syllable, accent and point is packed with meaning' (Sawyer, 1999: 109, citing Kelly). It is reported that at the time of the Reformation, Cardinal Bembo avoided reading Jerome's translation for fear that it would corrupt his Latin style!

Translations of sacred scripture into Greek and Latin were by no means the only ones to rely upon a literal technique of translation. In a monumental study of translations of the Bible into English from the earliest period, Pope (1952) shows clearly that literal techniques characterised the early translations of the Old and New Testaments into Old and Middle English. Around 1000 A.D. the English monk Aelfric translated various books of the Bible into Anglo-Saxon. In his work, Aelfric stated clearly his principles of translating as follows:

'Nothing should be written in English but what is found in the Latin, nor should the order of the words be changed, except when the Latin and English modes of expression differ.' (Pope, 1952: 24)

Another Englishman, Richard Rolle, undertook the translation of various parts of the sacred scriptures some 350 years later. But despite the lapse of time, it seems that the techniques of translation had developed little. Pope describes Rolle’s method as ‘...pure glossing; there is no attempt at translating or producing a running version which could be read currently...’ (Pope, 1952: 27). This is clear from Rolle’s rendering of Psalm 1:2:

1	Et	in	lege ejus	meditabitur	die	ac	nocte
	And	in	his laghe	he shall thynke	day	and	night

= “And on his law he meditates day and night.”

It should be noted that the literal technique of translation has by no means disappeared in the modern era when translating Christian sacred scripture. Multilingual Bibles such as that by Green (1986) will still often present the original Hebrew or Greek text with interlinear glossing in English to enable the reader to come to terms with the grammatical structure of the original text in Hebrew or Greek. However, in such modern cases, there will also usually be a freer translation into English in the margin.

The use of interlinear or literal techniques for translation of sacred literature is also found within the Buddhist tradition. OKell made a linguistic study of Nissaya Burmese, which is the style of Burmese used in translations of Buddhist sacred texts from Pali. Each word or phrase of a Pali text is followed immediately by its Burmese translation.

In the following example (OKell 1965:223), which is taken from a text translated in the second half of the 18th century,² the Nissaya Burmese is given under the Pali as a gloss, which more clearly indicates the word-for-word nature of the translation:

2	Tato	patthaya	Bodhisatassa		yaso	
	Thui akha mha	ca rwe’	Bhura’lon”	i	cann’cim	khyam’sa
	That time	begin	Lord-to-be	GEN	luxury	wealth

		maha				ahosi
	sann	mya”		sann		∅
	NOM	great		PRED. ADJ.		was

= ‘From that time onwards, the Bodhisatta lived in great wealth and luxury.’

OKell says that the Nissaya texts:

‘...were intended not only to give the reader the meaning of the Pali text but also to enable him to construe its grammar... the Nissaya writers were able to represent, with remarkable accuracy, the inflections and syntax of Pali, an Indo-European language, in unrelated Burmese, which belongs to the Sino-Tibetan family and is largely mono-syllabic.’ (OKell, 1965: 187)

This echoes Pattie’s previously mentioned observation about one of the functions of literal translation techniques in the biblical context.

Literal Translating in the Muslim World

What of the translation techniques used in the Muslim world? This issue arose in the early centuries of Islam, as the new faith conquered vast areas and substantial populations. Many non-Arab subjects in the Islamic empire converted to Islam and posed a challenge to scholars regarding their right and method of access to the Arabic text of the Qur’an. In response, the law schools of the majority Sunni community opposed formal translation of the Qur’anic text into other languages.

However, after continuing debate over time, scholars came to accept the notion of rendering the Qur’an in the form of a commentary in other languages. ‘Thus manuscripts of the Qur’an might be provided with an interlinear (quasi-)translation’ (Paret, 1986: 429), but this was seen merely as commentary, with the inclusion of the Arabic text being obligatory.

A literal method of translation was simultaneously used by Arab translators working on Greek philosophical texts, and had become the established technique during the reign of the ‘Abbasid Caliph al-Ma’mûn (r. 813-833) in the ninth century. The Arabs had themselves borrowed this technique from earlier Syrian translators who had used it in translating Greek Christian literature based on sacred scripture (Peters, 1968: 64-65).

The fourteenth-century Muslim biographer, al-Safadî, identified two distinct methods being used in the Arab world in his time for the translation of Classical Greek philosophical works into Arabic; these methods reflect the twofold distinction mentioned by Barnwell previously:

1. A word-for-word correspondence technique, which imported Greek syntactic features into the Arabic of the translation on a massive scale.

2. A freer technique, where the meaning content of each Greek sentence was translated without adhering to Greek syntactic patterns. The Arabic of such translations adhered to the syntactic norms of literary Arabic. (Peters, 1968: 63-64)

So when Malay Islamic scholars went to study in Arabia from the 16th century onwards, they would have encountered a variety of methods of translation. Furthermore, they would have been aware of the earlier debate surrounding translation of the Qur'an into languages other than Arabic. At this time, the only acceptable technique among Muslim orthodoxy of rendering the Qur'an into other languages was the interlinear method.

Thus it was a well-established practice within diverse religious traditions to use literal techniques as the primary method in translating sacred texts from the original language to a target language. Let us now turn our attention to examining the effect of this translation technique on a particular target language: Malay.

Kitab Malay

For this paper we will consider the influence from Arabic on the Malay language of *Tarjumân al-Mustafid* (TM), the Qur'anic rendering and commentary written by 'Abd al-Ra'uf al-Singkili around 1675. This provides us with an appropriate example of Kitab Malay.

In assessing the 'aberrant' nature of 'Abd al-Ra'uf's Kitab Malay, we need a model of 'standard' non-Arabicised Literary Malay to serve as a control. For this purpose we have chosen a work which is broadly contemporaneous with *Tarjumân al-Mustafid*, and is not a translation from Arabic or directly influenced by Arabic religious or philosophical doctrine. The work in question is the *Hikayat Aceh* (HA), an anonymous work which was apparently commissioned by Sultan Iskandar Muda, the most famous ruler of the Kingdom of Aceh (r. 1607-1636). It thus dates from the early part of the 17th century. It begins with a detailed genealogy of Iskandar Muda and the greater part is devoted to singing the praises of this monarch under whose rule Aceh reached the peak of its power and influence.³

Some biographical notes on 'Abd al-Ra'uf will help us to understand the sources for the enormous degree of Arabic influence on his life and work. He was born in about 1615 in the town of Singkel in Southern Aceh on the West coast of Sumatra at a time when the Muslim Acehnese Empire was at its peak. His early life coincided

with the writing of the *Hikayat Aceh*, so the Malay of the HA and the Literary Malay he would have encountered as a young adult must have been virtually identical. He spent the period 1642-1661 studying the Islamic sciences in the Arab world, including periods in Mecca, Medina, Jeddah and also at al-Azhar University in Cairo. On his return to Aceh he established a madrasa (Islamic school for study of the Qur'an), at which he taught his approach to the Islamic sciences, including mysticism.

The length of time which 'Abd al-Ra'uf spent in the Arab world undoubtedly had an effect on his command of the Malay language. He spent the crucial years in terms of the formation of his particular religious doctrine studying and writing in Arabic and situated in an Arabic milieu. One could reasonably assume that he would have felt some degree of linguistic dislocation on his return to Aceh in 1661. Voorhoeve makes several revealing comments on the Malay of 'Abd al-Ra'uf's writings:

'... his translations from the Arabic are so literal that they are unintelligible without knowledge of that language...' (Voorhoeve, 1960: 88)

and further:

'... the Sultan (of Aceh) engaged Abdurrauf to write a *fiqh* (jurisprudence) work in Malay; the request was refused as he didn't have a proper command of Bahasa Melayu Pase due to the length of time he had spent in the Arab world.' (Voorhoeve, 1980: 4)

It is fair to assume that 'Abd al-Ra'uf did not feel totally at ease in Malay when he returned to Aceh after an absence of nineteen years. However, several factors must be remembered if we are to make an accurate assessment of his facility with Malay. Firstly, he spent the first twenty-six years of his life as the subject of an empire where Malay was the established language of administration. Acehnese was not used as a written language until some 100 years later. Moreover, he was in Aceh from 1661 until his death in 1693, a period during which he wrote prolifically, so he must have been in a position to regain any lost mastery of Malay during that time.

The fact remains that his translations from Arabic, as exemplified by *Tarjumân al-Mustafid*, are very literal. He frequently used a technique of word for word correspondence between the Arabic and Malay and gave little regard to adhering to standard Literary Malay syntac-

tic patterns, with the result that the product is virtually Arabic in syntax and Malay in vocabulary. This of course raises several crucial questions: can these stylistic features be held up as proof that 'Abd al-Ra'uf merely had a poor grasp of Malay, or did he have some other purpose in translating with such a style? Why didn't he adhere to Literary Malay syntactic norms?

The answer lies primarily in the apparent conviction of the translator that he was engaged in a task of 'sacred reproduction' in which he had to change the original divinely inspired revelation as little as possible on the one hand, while making the message accessible to his Malay-speaking readers on the other.

When 'Abd al-Ra'uf was studying in the Arab world during the 1640s and 1660s, he would have encountered a variety of translation techniques, ranging from the literal to the freer methods, as we saw in previous discussion. It would appear that he settled on the literal method of translation as the only appropriate technique for the rendering of sacred scriptures into Malay. This was consistent with well-established approaches to translating sacred scripture within other religious traditions, as we have seen.

Thus Arabic, a language from the Semitic family with a reasonably sophisticated system of inflection, was mirrored in many ways in the Kitab Malay used by 'Abd al-Ra'uf, although the standard Malay of the period belonged to a totally different language family (i.e. Austronesian) in which verbal inflection was not productive. This parallels the case of Nissaya Burmese, cited previously.

Arabic Influence on the Syntax of Kitab Malay

We will now focus more specifically on the system of Arabic verb inflection, its rendering in the Kitab Malay of Tarjumân al-Mustafid, and certain types of morpho-syntactic influence upon the Kitab Malay of this text.

The Arabic verb is inflected for the following categories:

- Aspect: perfective, imperfective
- Voice: active, passive
- Mood: indicative, subjunctive, jussive, energetic, imperative
- Person: 1st, 2nd, 3rd
- Number: singular, dual, plural
- Gender: masculine, feminine

Verbal Inflections for Aspect

Many traditional grammars of Arabic take the view of Thatcher (1942: 62) who writes:

‘The verb has two main tenses: the Perfect ... denoting a finished action, and the Imperfect ... denoting unfinished action.’

However, the Arabic Perfect and Imperfect are not primarily concerned with time relations, namely past, present and future, which is characteristic of the category of Tense (Trask, 1999: 311). Rather they are aspectual distinctions, referring to the state of the action and the degree of its completion. Thus the perfective aspect generally refers to a finished act and the imperfective aspect denotes an unfinished act; namely one that is just beginning or is in progress.

The aspectual distinctions in Arabic are well exemplified by the verb *‘arafa* (‘to know’).

3	‘araf	- tu	dhâlika
	know	1 st SING. PERF.	that

= ‘I (come to) know that.’

4	kun	-tu	a-	‘rif	-u	dhâlika
	be	1 st SING. PERF.	1 st SING. IMPERF.	know	IMPERF.	that

= ‘I knew that.’

5	a-	‘rif	-u	dhâlika
	1 st SING. IMPERF.	know	IMPERF.	that

= ‘I know that.’

In example 3, the perfective verb *‘arafu* indicates a completed event, namely ‘I came to know that’. It is not a translation for ‘I knew that’, which semantically is a continuing state in the past. This state is rendered by the imperfective verb in example 4. It is placed in past time by the use of the verbal auxiliary *kuntu*.

The imperfective verb in example 5 refers simply to the continuing state of knowing, without specifying time.

We now turn to the verbal system of Literary Malay as seen in the *Hikayat Aceh*, mentioned earlier. Literary Malay verbs were not in-

flected for aspect like Semitic verbs, as examples 6, 7 and 8 demonstrate:

6	Maka	mereka	itu	ber-	tahan	di	Suka	Mandi.	(HA 173: 254) ¹
	Then	they (S)	ADJ	INTRANS-	Stand firm	in	Suka	Mandi.	

= ‘Then they made a stand in Suka Mandi.’

7	Tuanku,	orang	Aru	meng-	amuk	(HA 84: 40)
	My lord	people	Aru (S)	SUBJ. FOC.	pillage	

= ‘My Lord, the Aru are running amok.’

8	Maka	hendak	di-	Langgar	orang	Aceh	kota	itu	(HA 180: 271)
	Then	Wish	OBJ. FOC.	Invade	people (S)	Aceh	town (O)	ADJ	

= ‘The Acehnese wanted to attack that town.’

Note that examples 6-8 were not marked for either aspectual or temporal factors. In Literary Malay, these features were usually evident from context.

Example 6 has been translated with a verb in the past tense in English as the use of *maka* suggests a narrative in the past.

Example 7 has been translated with a present continuous verb in English as it occurs in dialogue and refers to a continuous action. However, we must note that the verb itself does not play any role in specifying such temporal or aspectual notions.

Example 8 shows the verb taking the prefix *di-*, but this signifies an object focus construction only.⁵ Time notions, reflected in the past tense of the English translation, are obtained from the presence of *maka*, as well as the context within the broader discourse.

Let us now consider the Kitab Malay of *Tarjumân al-Mustafîd* and the way in which the Arabic aspectual distinctions were rendered by ‘Abd al-Ra’uf.

Example 9 (following) demonstrates the type of influence upon ‘Abd al-Ra’uf’s Kitab Malay syntax which was caused by Arabic perfective aspectual inflections contained in the Qur’anic text.

9	inna	-hum	fityatun		
	Verily	3 rd PLUR.	youths		
	Bahwa sanya	mereka itu	segala jemaah	yang	telah
	Verily	3 rd PLUR.	youths	REL	already

âman	-û	bi	rabbi	-him	Q 18: 13 ¹
believe	3 rd PLUR. PERF.	in	Lord	3 rd PLUR.	
percaya	mereka itu	akan	Tuhan	mereka itu	TM 18: 13 ²
believe	3 rd PLUR.	in	Lord	3 rd PLUR.	

= 'Verily they were young men who had believed in their Lord.'

According to the norms of standard Literary Malay as represented by the *Hikayat Aceh*, *telah* is not necessary as the narrative context would specify perfective aspect. However 'Abd al-Ra'uf inserts *telah* in order to render the perfective aspect of the Arabic verb *âmanû*. This use of *telah* occurs frequently throughout *Tarjumân al-Mustafid*, reflecting the occurrence of the perfective in the Arabic original. It appears again in example 10:

10		labith	-nâ	yawman	aw	ba`da	yawmin	Q 18:19
		stay	1st PLUR. PERF.	day	or	part	day	
	Telah	berhenti	kita	sehari	atau	setengah	hari.	TM 18:19
	Already	stay	1st PLUR.	day	or	part	day	

= 'We have tarried a day, or part of a day.'

Here *telah* is also unnecessary if we adhere to the norms of Literary Malay. In renderings of the Qur'an into modern Indonesian/Malay, neither *telah* nor *sudah* (its synonym) occurs in the translations of this passage (*Al Quraan Dan Terjemahnya*, 1974: 446; Junus, 1977:267; Jassin, 1978: 399). Thus there would appear to be less interference from the Arabic perfective aspect in modern Qur'anic Malay than in 'Abd al-Ra'uf's *Tarjumân al-Mustafid*.

Verbal Inflections for Person and Number

Verbal inflections for person and number in Arabic were the cause of a considerable amount of morpho-syntactic interference in the Kitab Malay of 'Abd al-Ra'uf's *Tarjumân al-Mustafid*.

If we refer back to example 9, this type of interference is in evidence. In the Malay, *mereka itu* is included after the verb *percaya* in order to render the 3rd person plural inflection *-û* on *âmanû*. In Arabic, the verb in the relative clause is inflected to agree with the person

and number of the antecedent in the main clause. Thus 3rd person plural *-û* agrees with *fityatun*, one of the plural forms of *fatan* (Wehr, 1976: 69). Such agreement did not occur in Literary Malay. However, ‘Abd al-Ra’uf inserts *mereka itu* in the relative clause as a rendering for *-û* on *âmanû*, thus following Arabic grammatical patterns and violating Literary Malay morpho-syntactic norms.

Furthermore, the Arabic dual number makes an appearance in the Kitab Malay of ‘Abd al-Ra’uf in a way which would not be found in Literary Malay.

11	Fa-	arad	-nâ	an	yubaddil	-a	-humâ
	CONJ	wish	1 st PLUR PERF	that	exchange	SUBJ	3 rd PLUR DUAL
	Maka	kami	kehendaki	bahwa	diganti		
	CONJ	1 st PLUR	wish	that	exchange		

	rabbu	-humâ		
	God	3 rd PLUR DUAL		
oleh	Tuhan	keduanya	akan keduanya	dengan
by	God	both	for both	with

khayran	minhu	Q18:81
better	than him	
yang lebih baik	daripadanya	TM 18:81
better	than him	

= ‘So we wished that the God of them both would substitute a more virtuous one for (the benefit of) them both.’

The presence of two instances of *keduanya* in the Kitab Malay of example 11 is dictated by the Arabic dual forms *yubaddilahumâ* and *rabbuhumâ*. Such repetitious use of this term is not a feature of Literary Malay.

This feature is not peculiar to the Kitab Malay of ‘Abd al-Ra’uf. Consider example 12, drawn from the Malay commentary on Sura 18 held in the Cambridge University library, focusing on verse 61:

12	Fa-	lammâ	balagh	-â	majma`a	bayni	-himmâ
	CONJ	when	arrive	DUAL	junction	between	DUAL
	Maka	tatkala	sampailah	keduanya	kepada... majma` al-bah**rayn		
	CONJ	when	arrive	two	to the junction		

nasiy	-â	hûta	-humâ
forget	DUAL	fish	DUAL POSS.
lupalah	keduanya	akan ikan kering itu	
forget	two	that dried fish	

= "When the pair arrived at the junction (of the two seas) they both forgot their fish..."

In example 12, the Arabic original includes four inflections marking the dual number. The Malay translator has chosen to render two of these, presumably not rendering all four, as this would have produced an unacceptably cluttered sentence in Malay.

Word Order Considerations

The language of the *Hikayat Aceh* suggests that the preferred word order in Literary Malay sentences according to verbal prefixes was as follows, in order of priority:

1. SVO (ber-/me-/pe-/Æ- verbs) – the unmarked word order
2. VS(O) (di- /Æ- verbs, Object focus sentences)

Examples 6 and 7 exemplify the SVO group, while example 8 shows the order in sentences with *di-* verbs in Literary Malay.

The case in Qur'anic Arabic is somewhat different, as it has a preference for verb-initial sentences (Cowan, 1958: 57). Example 13 shows the unmarked VSO word order in Classical Arabic:

13	Wa	idh	qâl	-a	Mûsâ	li	fatâhu	Q18: 60
	And	when	say	3 rd SING. PERF.	Moses (S)	to	his servant	
			dikata		oleh Musa	akan	orang mudanya	TM 18: 60
			say		Moses (S)	to	his servant	

= '... Moses said unto his servant ...'

In Qur'anic Arabic, case markers on nouns specify syntactic functions such as subject and object, allowing a measure of word order

flexibility. When added emphasis is required, the subject is placed before the verb, producing a marked word order of SV (O), as example 14 shows:

14	Naḥnu	na -	quṣṣ	-u	'alayka	Q18: 13
	We (S)	1 st PLUR. IMPERF.	tell	IMPERF.	to you (O)	
	Kami		ceritakan		atasmu	TM 18: 13
	We (S)		tell		to you (O)	

= 'We will relate unto thee'

In Arabic sentences where the subject is marked by a verbal inflection and there is no independent subject, this inflection is attached to the end of the stem of perfective verbs (examples 3 & 10) and at the front of the stem of imperfective verbs (examples 4 & 14).

So how was Literary Malay, with an unmarked SVO structure, going to adapt to the syntactic patterns of Qur'anic Arabic, which was VSO in unmarked form? The method of adaptation had several interesting manifestations.

Firstly, 'Abd al-Ra'uf's Kitab Malay depended heavily on the use of *di-* verbs, which as we have seen is the verbal form which most commonly allows a marked VSO word order. Although in Literary Malay OVS was also a common pattern for sentences with *di-* verbs, this particular word order pattern rarely occurs in the 'Abd al-Ra'uf text.

The second major effect that manifested itself in the Kitab Malay of 'Abd al-Ra'uf's *Tarjumân al-Mustafid* relates to the *ber-* verbal prefix. In Literary Malay, *ber-* verbs typically occurred in SV(O) structures. This was seen in example 6 above. A further example, taken from the 17th century *Hikayat Muhammad Hanafiyyah* (Zaini-Lajoubert 1983:113), is as follows:

15	Ia	-lah	yang	ber-	Binasa	negeri	hamba
	3 rd SING (S)	EMPH	REL	TRANS	Destroy (V)	country (O)	1 st SING

= 'It was he who destroyed my country.'

In an earlier examination of 206 sentence examples taken from 17th century Literary Malay texts, I found that almost 25% of verbs used were *ber-* prefixed, with around nine in ten following an SV(O)

pattern (Riddell 1990:87). However, in *Tarjumân al-Mustafid*, *ber-*verbs occurred far less frequently (in less than 10% of examples surveyed). Where it did occur, it was frequently in a verb initial clause situation, as can be seen in example 16 following.

16	la	wallay	-ta	min	-hum	Q18: 18
	verily	turn away	2 nd SING. PERF. (S)	from	3 rd PLUR.	
	Niscaya	berpaling	engkau	daripada	mereka itu	TM 18: 18
	verily	turn away	2 nd SING. (S)	from	3 rd PLUR.	

= 'Truly you turned away from them.'

Causes of this type of interference were two-fold:

1. Pressures from the Arabic VSO system
2. Influence from inflections for person and number, which were attached to the end of Arabic verbal stems in perfective aspect.

In the case of the imperfective aspect in Arabic, the subject is signalled by an inflection at the front of the verbal stem. It would be instructive to see if in such cases the Malay subject was placed before the verb in 'Abd al-Ra'uf's *Tarjumân al-Mustafid*. Indeed, this proves to be a major factor affecting the placement of subject before verb in the Kitab Malay, as example 17 shows:

17	li	na-	bluw	-a		-hum	Q18: 7
	so that	1 st PLUR. IMPERF. (S)	test	SUB- JUNC TIVE		3 rd PLUR. (O)	
	supaya	Kami	cobai		akan	mereka itu	TM 18: 7
	so that	1 st PLUR. (S)	test		Obj MKR	3 rd PLUR. (O)	

= 'So that We put them to a test.'

So again we find the Arabic verbal inflection for person and number being instrumental in determining the Kitab Malay word order.

A third major effect of Arabic syntactic interference in the Kitab Malay of 'Abd al-Ra'uf's *Tarjumân al-Mustafid* was that *meN-* verbs did not occur to the same degree of frequency as was the case in the primary Literary Malay source consulted, the *Hikayat Aceh*. In my earlier research, I had found that 32% of the Literary Malay clauses in my corpus were built on *meN-* verbs, with almost all following an

SVO pattern (Riddell 1990:87). However, *Tarjumân al-Mustafîd* used *meN-* verbs much more sparingly, with this form appearing in only 13% of cases examined (Riddell 1990:89). This is due to the fact that the unmarked SVO pattern in *meN-* clauses in 17th century Malay did not sit comfortably with the unmarked VSO pattern of Arabic.

When it did occur in *Tarjumân al-Mustafîd*, word order varied between VSO and SVO. When *meN-* verbs occurred in SVO sentences, this word order was often a reflection of an original marked SVO pattern in the Arabic, as can be seen in example 18:

18	wa	kalbu	-hum	bâsiṭun	dhirâ'	-ay	-hi	Q18: 18
	And	dog (S)	3 rd PLUR.	extending (AP)	paws	DUAL	3 rd SING.	
	Dan	anjing	mereka itu	mengham- parkan	dua	tangan	-nya	TM 18:18
	And	dog (S)	3 rd PLUR.	extending (AP)	two	paws (O)	3 rd SING.	

= '... and their dog was stretching out his paws.'

In this example, *menghamparkan* renders the Arabic active participle *bâsiṭun*. Active participles, although taking the normal noun case endings, nevertheless retain a verbal function in Arabic by taking a subject in nominative case and any object if it occurs in accusative case. The word order in such Arabic sentences is SVO. Thus *meN-* verbs being active and transitive in Literary Malay represented the obvious way of rendering the active participle in Arabic. Here again the Arabic was the conditioning factor in the manner of use of a Kitab Malay form.

Example 19 shows another incidence of this usage of *meN-*:

19	fa	la'alla	-ka	bâkhi'- un	nafsa	-ka	Q 18: 6
	so	perhaps	2 nd SING. (S)	destroy	self	2 nd SING. (O)	
		mudah- mudah	engkau	membina- nasakan	diri	-mu	TM 18: 6
		perhaps	2 nd SING. (S)	destroy	self	2 nd SING. (O)	

= 'Perhaps you will destroy yourself'

Conclusion

We have seen that a literal technique of translation adopted by ‘Abd al-Ra’uf in producing *Tarjumân al-Mustafid* has resulted in the Malay rendering being significantly influenced by the syntax of the Arabic source text. This is clear from a perusal of examples 9-19, which highlight the striking degree of resemblance between the word order of the Qur’anic Arabic original sentences and the Kitab Malay rendered versions in *Tarjumân al-Mustafid*. The result, no doubt, was that Malay speakers who had little or no knowledge of Arabic would have encountered inevitable difficulty in understanding and interpreting the text of the rendering in Kitab Malay.

Such a style of ‘religious’ Malay is by no means limited in its use to works composed during the 16th and 17th centuries. In the modern era, the Malay/Indonesian of Islamic religious texts, particularly of translations from Arabic, still has a tendency to reflect certain Arabic syntactic and morphological features. In effect, Kitab Malay is alive and well.

This attracts criticism from some modern Southeast Asian writers and critics who claim that the language of religious texts should adhere to the syntactic norms of standard Indonesian/Malay. Thus Muhammad Radjab, in his autobiography entitled *Semasa Kecil di Kampung*, bewails the fact that he had to battle his way through such a tedious style of Malay when he was studying religious texts in an Islamic school in the 1930s in the Minangkabau area of Sumatra (Radjab, 1950: 81). He describes the Indonesian/Malay language of these texts as follows:

‘...why was the translation into Indonesian so long-winded and repetitive, with the vocabulary half Indonesian and half Arabic, and the grammar completely Arabic?’⁸

Radjab cites the following as an example of the Arabised Malay with which he had to familiarise himself:

‘*Bermula yang kalam, bagaimana mulanya, yang dikatakan kalam ialah lafaz, yang tersusun, yang memberi faedah dan wadhak.*”⁹

Somewhat later Oemar Bakry (1981: 58) wrote in a similarly critical vein of the language of religious books:

‘The saddest situation concerns the language of religious texts. Only very few contain language which is correct and accurate... The language of most follows Arabic language structures. Only the vocabulary is Indonesian. The style of the language, the word order, and the grammar is little different from Arabic. It could be called Indo-Arabic.’¹⁰

It is of no comfort to such modern critics to know that most of their 17th century Malay scholarly counterparts probably had even greater headaches trying to understand ‘Abd al-Ra’uf’s Qur’anic commentary. However to dismiss such a style of Malay as being inferior, poor language, ignores the fact that the authors of Kitab Malay texts, such as ‘Abd al-Ra’uf, belonged to a long line of translators of religious literature from diverse faith traditions, who were motivated by a number of very specific purposes. These were as follows:

- a) A wish to preserve the form of the source language as far as possible in the target language text in order to maximise the sacredness of the rendered text;
- b) A wish to impart to readers the salient features of the sacred language of revelation as well as the theological content of the original text;
- c) A possible recognition that the ‘translationese’ resulting from literal translation, such as Arabicized Malay, represented something of a status symbol in societies contemporaneous with the translation itself.

After our glimpse into certain features of Kitab Malay, the following statement by Aminurrashid (1966: 15) represents a clarion call for greater effort, rather than complaint, on the part of readers of Kitab Malay texts:

‘... it is necessary to study in detail the Malay language of religious texts in order to read them in such a way as to grasp the literary meaning intended by the religious scholars concerned.’¹¹

Endnotes

1. Winstedt's views are by no means unique to him. In fact, they point to a long-running debate over the relative merits of particular varieties of Malay since the early period of colonisation in the Malay world. For details of this debate, cf. Hoffman 1979.
2. OKell also presents other examples from earlier centuries, and argues for the conservative nature of this literary genre, stating that "there is nothing to distinguish a nissaya rendering of 1491 from one of 1910" (OKell 1965:187).
3. For a more detailed study of the morphology and syntax of four 17th century Malay works (*Hikayat Sri Rama*, *Hikayat Indraputra*, *Hikayat Tanah Hitu*, *Hikayat Muhammad Hanafiyah*), cf. Zaini-Lajoubert 1983.
4. The number before the colon refers to the page in Iskandar's 1958 edition, and the second number refers to the MS page on which Iskandar's edition was based.
5. In discussing subject focus and object focus constructions, I am drawing upon the work of Yohanni Johns (1995, forthcoming).
6. The number before the colon refers to the chapter of the Qur'an, and the second number refers to the verse in focus.
7. The number before the colon refers to the Qur'anic chapter being commented upon, and the second number to the verse in focus.
8. The text in Indonesian is as follows: '*... mengapa bahasa Indonesia terjemahannya berbelit-belit dan berulang-ulang, kata-katanya setengah Indonesia setengah Arab, dan susunannya Arab sama sekali?*'
9. His rendering of the above into everyday Indonesian is as follows: '*Kalimat ialah susunan kata-kata yang dapat dipahamkan dan disengaja mengucapkannya.*'
10. The original text is as follows: '*Yang lebih menyedihkan ialah bahasa buku-buku agama. Tidak berapa jumlahnya yang baik dan benar bahasanya... Banyak bahasanya menurut susunan bahasa Arab. Perkataan-perkataan saja yang bahasa Indonesia. Rasa bahasa, susunan kalimat, tata bahasanya tidak berapa bedanya dengan bahasa Arab. Jadi boleh dikatakan bahasa Indonesia-Arab.*'
11. The original text is as follows: '*... bahasa Melayu kitab-kitab ugama itu terpaksa berguru untok membacanya supaya kita faham maksud sastera yang ditulis oleh alim ulama itu.*'

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