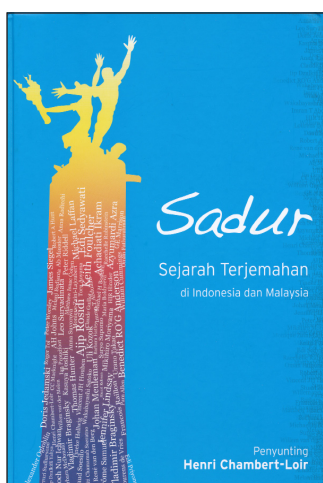


BOOK REVIEWS

Henri Chambert-Loir (ed.), *Sadur; Sejarah terjemahan di Indonesia dan Malaysia*. Jakarta/Bandung: Kepustakaan Populer Gramedia, École française d'Extrême-Orient, Forum Jakarta-Paris, Pusat Bahasa, Universitas Padjadjaran, 2010, 1160 pp. ISBN 9789799102140. Price: IDR 107,500 (hard cover).



Benny H. Hoed

Faculty of Humanities, University of Indonesia
hoed.benny@gmail.com

This collection of articles takes us to the amazing world of translation activities in the history of the Nusantara region, a cultural area nowadays known to us as Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, a part of the Philippines, and Thailand. The articles constitute a picture of Nusantara's cultural, socio-economic, and socio-political history. The book is written in Indonesian. Its title, *Sadur*, literally means 'to adapt'. Referring to Newmark (1988: 45-53), "adaptation" is considered one of eight translation methods. Adaptation is a "target-language emphasis" translation method, which we will see prevails in most of the translations studied in this book, and how the adaptation-type of translations has given impact on the cultural dynamics in the Nusantara region.

The volume consists of ten sections. Section 1 contains seven articles on translation activities from foreign languages into local languages; Section 2 has seven articles about translations between local languages; Section 3 provides seven articles about linguistic assimilation; Section 4 has seven articles about the translation of religious texts; Section 5 contains five articles about the translation of technical terms; Section 6 presents six articles about the relation between translation, authority, and society; Section 7 contains five works about the phenomena of metamorphosis and transfer as the impact of translation activities; Section 8 has five articles about the translation of performing arts texts; Section 9 presents eight articles about the inter-language transfer of ideas as a result of translation activities; and Section 10 has seven articles about translators.

Most of the articles are about translation activities in ancient and Western colonial times and involve 13 foreign and local languages in the Nusantara region, covering the period of one millennium. In total, the book contains 65

articles written by 59 scholars. The whole book consists of 1160 pages including a rich bibliography of no less than 49 pages. Since the book is intended for an Indonesian-language public, 54 articles that had originally been written in English and French had to be translated into Indonesian. I personally would have preferred these articles to have been published in their original languages, as Umberto Eco states in the title of one of his books, translation is *Dire presque la même chose* (Saying almost the same thing) (Eco 2006).

The lengthy and detailed introductory notes by Henri Chambert-Loir, the editor of the book, portrays the history of translation and covers three major influences: those of Indian, Islamic, and Western civilizations. These 36-page notes give us an idea of what the book contains; translation activities in the Nusantara region involving Sanskrit, Arabic, Persian, Urdu, Chinese (unspecified), Japanese, and various European languages (including Dutch, English, French, Russian) as their source languages; and Javanese, Malay, Sundanese, Balinese, Sasak, Acehnese, Batak, Buginese, Makassarese, and Indonesian as target languages. Starting with the year 996 AD, it covers the three periods of the history of Nusantara (Indian, Islamic, and Western) and different types of translation activities (from “proper” translation to adaptation, including also translations of translations).

Unfortunately, little has been said about the tremendous impact translation activities had and still have on the dynamics of the cultures of the target languages. I will not comment on the philological or literary historical aspect of the articles as these are not my fields of specialization, but will focus on *the contribution of translation to the cultural development of the target language communities*. I will review the work from the perspective of translation theory by using the following five principles:

- Translation is viewed as a process as well as a product.
- The act of translation is always unidirectional, but during the act, there is always a dialogue between the translator and the source text and in this dialogue, the translator may take a “visible” or “invisible” position. When a text looks like a translation, the translator is said to be “visible”. When a translator takes an “invisible” position, the result is a translation, which does not look like a translation. The translators do not show themselves as such. “The more fluent the translation, the more invisible the translator [...]” (Venuti 1995: 2). “The translated text is “transparent”, it “seems ‘natural’, i.e., not translated” (Venuti 1995: 5). A transparent translated text is said to be “domesticated” (see Venuti 1995: 5). At this juncture, we may talk about “translating in a limited sense” (first position) versus “authoring” (second position) (Venuti quoting Trask in Venuti 1995: 7). In the act of translation, authoring finds itself at the adaptation-type of translation. These two poles form a *continuum*, namely “the source-language emphasis” at one pole versus “target-language emphasis” at the other (see Newmark 1988). Most translators, especially in the case of literary types or other culture-bound texts, tend to take the second position. In extreme cases of the second position, the translator

may even take over the role of the author in order to meet the needs of the prospective reader. This translation act may have an impact on the ethnolinguistic vitality of the target language culture (this is probably the reason why the book is entitled *Sadur*, meaning 'to adapt').

- Translation – with a target-language emphasis – is an innovative act and may contribute to culture change.
- The “Sapir-Whorf hypothesis” may apply to the role of translation within the dynamics of a culture.

In short, I will discuss the role of those translation activities that are especially related to their purpose and to their consequences for the dynamics of *the culture* of the target language. As little study has been carried out in this particular area, I see room for scholars – particularly in Indonesia – to study the impact translation has on the dynamics of the target language culture. Even-Zohar (in Venuti 2000: 192) made this important statement:

In spite of the broad recognition among historians of culture of the major role translation has played in the crystallization of national cultures, relatively little research has been carried out so far in this area.

My view in this is far from original. The study of translation and its impact on culture can be found, for example, in the 649-page book edited by Weissbort and Eysteinnsson (2006: 1). The essence of the book (Weissbort and Eysteinnsson 2006: 1) is in the following questions:

How do works of literature and scholarship acquire international status? How have ideas and theories, learning and religion, historical and practical knowledge, traversed the globe? How have various transactions between groups and nations with different customs and conditions been facilitated? How do we learn of what has transpired in distant places?

and the answer to these questions

To a large extent by building linguistic bridges across the channels that divide language spheres and cultural regions (...) by individuals who possess knowledge in more than one language and can therefore act as cultural mediators.

It is about the role translation and translators have played in world civilization. The focus of my review will be on the role of translation in Nusantara, particularly Indonesia, during ancient and colonial times. Four long and four short articles from the book, which I consider representative, will be discussed below.

Hunter (pp. 23-28) focuses on translations from Sanskrit into Old-Javanese and their impact on the ethnolinguistic vitality of Old-Javanese and the development of the Javanese culture from the sixth to the fifteenth century. Hunter argues that translations from Sanskrit into Old-Javanese resulted in “transculturation” and “translocal identity”. My view is that translated works should be seen as *œuvres* in themselves, with their own identity. According

to Hunter, translation activities had developed into a bilingual situation in Javanese society, ultimately ending in Old-Javanese taking over of the role of Sanskrit in religious and social activities. Translation activities resulted in the enrichment of the Old-Javanese script and language. There was a situation of strengthened ethnolinguistic vitality that had an impact on the cultural dynamics of the society of the target language. Seen from a translation theory point of view, this phenomenon is called “domestication” (see Venuti 1995: 5-19), which in this case resulted in “vernacularization”, in Hunters’ term, from Sanskrit to Old-Javanese. It was a process, which resulted in the evolutionary formation of a “new” language and a “new” culture, but still within the “Sanskrit cosmopolis”. The translated texts are transparent, the translator is invisible.

Braginsky (pp. 59-117) discusses translation from Persian into Malay during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Following Barthes, Braginsky claims that a literary text is a composite of citations originating from innumerable centers of culture. As a matter of fact, this refers to Barthes’ article “The death of the author” in which he sees a text as the “the total existence of writing” meaning that:

a text is made of multiple writings, drawn from many cultures and entering into mutual relations of dialogue, parody, contestation, but there is one place where this multiplicity is focused and that place is the reader, not, as was hitherto said, the author (Barthes 1977: 148).

We see from Braginsky’s article that translation activities were carried out for a certain purpose, that is to enrich Malay literature with elements from Persian literature. This is a phenomenon of “skopos” in Vermeer’s term, that is ‘purpose-based translation’ or ‘reader-based translation’:

Any action has an aim, a purpose. [...] the word skopos, then, is a technical term for the aim or purpose of a translation. [...] Further: an action leads to a result, a new situation or event, and possibly to a “new” object (Vermeer 1989 in Venuti 2005: 221).

In the spirit of “skopos”, translation activities were focused on the needs of the readers as the target community. At a certain moment, the translator – as the reader of the original work – took over the role of the author to meet the needs of the target reader of his/her translation. The translator made her/himself “invisible”.

Interestingly, according to Braginsky the works did not originate from palaces. The original texts were popular literary epics (heroic narratives or poems). Referring to Brakel’s work on the *Hikayati-i-Muhammad-i Hanafiyah*, who argues that its translations into Malay took place between 1250 and 1390 in Pasai, Braginsky considers the Malay translation as the prototype of *Hikayat Melayu*. Beside the *hikayat* as a genre, the translation also resulted in the adaptation of *maqatal* (epic martyrs’ stories), which are still popular in present-day Iran. It is a story about Hasan and Husain, the two sons of Caliph Ali, who died as martyrs (*syahid*) in their struggle to defend Islam. The story

was translated into Malay, but was adapted to local needs. As there were anti-Shiite feelings at that time, the translator transformed the story into a history of Islam, known as *Hikayat Muhammad Hanafiyah*. Translation was thus a means of transferring the “good” elements of the Persian people’s Islamic culture to the local (Malay) people. Braginsky’s article shows that translation activities were carried out for disseminating Islam’s socio-religious teachings as well as the spirit to defend Islam against external forces. Here we witness the phenomenon of “authoring” in translation.

In his article, Abdullah (pp. 215-264) shows that translation also involved local languages. This is the case with translations from Malay (and later Indonesian) into Acehnese from the sixteenth century through the New Order period (1967-1998). According to Abdullah, in the region presently known as the Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam Province, there are four distinct ethnic languages beside Acehnese (Gayo, Alas, Tamiang, and Jamee). In social practices, Acehnese functioned as a kind of “*lingua franca*” because demographically Acehnese speakers constitute a majority compared to speakers of the other four languages. For a long time, Acehnese was used for the dissemination of Islamic teachings apart from being the language of the economy and the administration in the region.

However, Islam during ancient times used to be disseminated in the area through Malay (known as *Jawoe*). After the fall of Malacca (now part of Malaysia) to the Portuguese in 1511, the centre of Islamic teaching dissemination shifted to Aceh. During that period, and especially during the time of the glory of the Aceh Kingdom, translators translated Islamic teachings from Malay – a language most people in the region did not master – into Acehnese to make the dissemination more effective for the public at large. Interestingly, translators not only translated, but also transformed the prose narratives into poems (called *sanjak*). The purpose of this was to facilitate the oral teaching of religion through memorization, especially among the younger generations. Consequently, the written form was “forgotten” as it was replaced by the oral form. The poetic form was easy to memorize and people tended to rely more and more on memorization and oral recitation. Translation resulted in an interesting ethnolinguistic vitality development where, contrary to the views of many scholars, the written form came first and the oral form later. Another by-product of these translation activities was the Malay-Acehnese written-to-be-oralized dictionary in poem form as in the following example:

Berdiri *tadong* [to stand], duduk *taduek* [to walk], berjalan *tajak*, sendiri *sidroe* [alone; the words in italics being the Acehnese equivalents].

There was also an Arabic-Acehnese dictionary in the same form, as in the following example:

Asma’ *deungo* [to hear], harijad *narid* [to narrate, to tell], ana wahid *ulön sidroe* [I am alone; the words in italics being the Acehnese equivalents].

From Abdullah's article, we see that lexicography has accompanied translation in Aceh for almost five centuries.

Malay-Acehnese translation activities continued during the war in Aceh against the Dutch colonialists (1873-1912). The purpose of these activities was to strengthen the spirit of the people in their struggle against the "kafirs" (the Dutch, who were Christians, were seen as *kafirs*). Abdullah argues that Malay literary works such as *Hikayat Perang Sabil* (translated as *Hikayat Prang Sabi* in Acehnese) were translated for a religious purpose. This epic work refers to stories about Prophet Muhammad's struggle to defend Islam. The stories in the *Hikayat* were translated and adapted into the *tambéh* (local moral teachings) form and thus yet again we see the phenomena of "authoring" and "domestication" in translation.

During the New Order period, the teaching materials of the government's Pancasila ideology and family planning guide documents were translated from Indonesian into Acehnese. Abdullah shows us that the translation tradition in Aceh is centuries long and its main feature was the adaptation of prose material into poems, which resulted in the creation of an oral tradition. Translation activities were carried out with the aim of strengthening the Islamic faith. The "skopos" phenomenon prevailed here.

Suryadinata (pp. 156-169) shows how translation activities gave birth to a "new" culture. He discusses translation from Chinese into Malay (unfortunately, the author does not specify which Chinese language he is talking about, but I suppose it is Classical Chinese and Mandarin). Translations were made into a Malay dialectal variety he calls "Chinese-Malay", which overseas Chinese used as their oral vernacular language to communicate among themselves as well as with other ethnic groups, particularly "indigenous" (*pribumi*) people. The written form of Chinese-Malay came into being when, in 1880, translators translated Chinese works into Chinese-Malay to introduce "the culture of the ancestors". Overseas Chinese, who had assimilated themselves into the "Malay world", did not master Chinese, but still needed to identify themselves culturally as Chinese. Translations of epics and literary works from Chinese into Chinese-Malay helped them to maintain cultural links with their ancestors in China.

Translation activities had thus given birth to new ethnolinguistic vitality, that is the development of a new written culture, which strengthened feelings of overseas Chinese cultural identity. Here, the phenomena of authoring and domestication are evident. Overseas Chinese culture, known in Malaysia and Singapore as "Baba" or "Peranakan" culture, was recognizable not only from their material culture (among others in their clothing and cuisine), but also from their newly formed written and literary language. In Indonesia, the translation of Chinese texts into Chinese-Malay continued until the end of President Soekarno's administration. According to my observations, this ethnolinguistic vitality decreased during President Soeharto's time. Later, after the start of the *Reformasi* era in (1998) - especially under the influence of President Abdurrachman Wahid - there was a revitalization of overseas

Chinese culture in Indonesia, but there was no sign of any ethnolinguistic revitalization of the Chinese-Malay language. Interestingly, unlike in Malaysia and Singapore, there is no special name for Indonesian Chinese culture. Many Indonesian Chinese tend to identify themselves more as Indonesians than as Chinese.

Transliteration and translation are two different types of interlingual processes: the first being “the transfer of orthographic systems”, while the second involves “the transfer of message and language, including the orthographic system”. Articles written by Tol, Van der Molen, Chambert-Loir, and Kozok deal with these two types of interlingual processes (pp. 309-338).

Chambert-Loir argues that three types of orthographic systems in Nusantara are derived from foreign systems, namely Indian, Arabic, and European (I would prefer to say Latin, because in Europe there is also the Cyrillic orthographic system which is not used in Nusantara). As a matter of fact, the three types of orthographic systems, like other linguistic elements, as we can see in Hunter’s and other articles in this book, were derived from – or came out of – translation activities. Chambert-Loir sees this phenomenon as “ideological cultural acts”. Referring to Foucault, I may say that there is a “power relationship” between the source and the target languages, of which the orthographic system is an integral part. The translator saw the source text as a representation of a “superior” civilization. Interestingly, the result of this power relationship was the birth of new orthographic systems, which enriched the target language culture. As becomes evident from Hunter’s article, the new orthographic system (which came together with translation) strengthened the ethnolinguistic vitality of Old-Javanese, which took over the role of Sanskrit as the language for the dissemination of Hindu religious teachings. The shift from Sanskrit-based Old-Malay to Arabic-based writing after the arrival of Islam in Sumatra must have been an impact of the power relationship between Arabic (source language, representing Islam as the prevailing religion) and Old-Malay (the target language, representing the local culture).

Tol (pp. 316-320) describes orthographic systems in South Sulawesi. He argues that there are four systems of writing in this part of Nusantara, namely (chronologically) Old-Makassarese, Bugis-Makassarese, and Arabic and Latin-based orthographic systems. He argues that the Old-Makassarese and Bugis-Makassarese orthographic systems can be traced back to a very old Indian writing system called Brahmi. He sees that both systems were derived from the same model, which was close to the Kawi system. Although historically, the prevailing orthographic systems were Arabic and Bugis, the latter came more and more in use, while Arabic letters usually were used to write Arabic words. Old-Makassarese faded out in the eighteenth century and was replaced by Bugis. Although Tol does not discuss the cultural dynamics, I would argue that the Bugis orthographic system ultimately strengthened the vitality of Bugis, the local language that took over the role of Arabic. This seems similar to the case of Old-Javanese as Hunter reported.

Van der Molen (pp. 320-324) argues that the Javanese orthographic system has been in use since the eighth century. Similar to many other philologists, he also argues that the Javanese orthographic system was derived from an Indian orthographic system. He also states that the Javanese orthographic system was not only used to write Javanese, but also for other ethnic languages such as Sundanese, Madurese, and Sasak while a similar system has also been in use in Bali. He continues that unlike in other parts of Nusantara where Islam prevailed, in Java, the Javanese orthographic system has played a more important role than that of Arabic, although Islam was also the prevailing religion. This confirms once again the view that there is a power relationship between languages, in this case between Javanese culture and other cultures that adopted the Javanese orthographic system.

Kozok (pp. 311-316) offers an interesting description of the history of the orthographic systems used in Sumatra. The population of Sumatra was identified as Malays. The influence of India in Sumatra started 2000 years ago. Inscriptions in Pallava characters (originally from South India) discovered in Kedah (Malaysia, fifth century) and Sriwijaya (South Sumatra, seventh century), reveal that the Malays were adaptable to foreign cultures. The presence of India in Sumatra, thanks to the island's strategic location in the India-China maritime economic path, brought economic advantages to the people and the authorities of the island. Most scholars agree that local authorities disseminated Indian-based culture. The Pallava orthographic system was in use in Sumatra from the seventh to the fourteenth century. However, as early as the eighth century, it was gradually replaced by a Pallava-derived local orthographic system called Kawi. Here we witness the amazing phenomenon of what I would call "indigenouization" (I invented the term), while Hunter names this process "transculturation" and the formation of "transculture identity" (see Hunter above) similar to "domestication" in Venuti's term (Venuti 1995: 5-19).

In these four short articles, we witness how translation activities were followed or accompanied, by the development of local orthographic systems that ultimately resulted in the formation of "new" orthographic systems, which agreed more to local needs. Here we witness a phenomenon of domestication in translation activities.

Sadur is a voluminous work. However, we can grasp the gist of the 65 articles as follows:

- Most of the articles are studies in philology and literary history, but in each of them, the author focuses on translation.
- The book covers the history of translation in Nusantara over a period of one thousand years.
- The main focus of the articles is on translation activities (which include transliteration) in ancient and the colonial times.
- Most of the texts that were translated were religious, literary, and some administrative.
- The articles discussed above, and other articles in the book, confirm that

translation – in a broad sense – has had an impact on the target language culture. In the history of translation in the Nusantara area, translation activities were accompanied by language change, new orthographic system formation, the adoption of literary genres, and the development of other kinds of ethnolinguistic vitality leading to a culture change, which I would call a “cultural metamorphosis”.

- Domestication and authoring are evident in most of the studies in this volume. Based on this ideology, translation activities were aimed at meeting the needs for opening a society’s culture to new, exterior, elements.
- We have seen the role of translators as “cultural mediators” (see Eysteinnsson and Weissbort quoted above).

Chambert-Loir certainly has done a great job by inviting a large number of scholars in philology and literary history to write articles specially focused on translation. Scholars in translation theory agree that translation is culture-bound. While the translator takes an “invisible” position, there is a notion of a “high-low” relationship between “source” and the “target” texts in the sense that translators see the original text as “superior”.

The articles in *Sadur* show how “invisible” translators were; they played roles beyond those of translators. They even took over the role of the author of the original texts by developing “new” texts acceptable and useful to the target readers. Their “*skopos*” spirit guided them in fulfilling the needs of their target readers (or listeners). The translators’ ideology of “domestication” (in Venuti’s term, or “vernacularization” in Hunter’s sense) and “authoring” (quoted from Trask by Venuti 1995) had important repercussions for a large number of cultural changes in the societies of the target languages. The four short articles show that translations were also decisive in the formation and development of orthographic systems. However, the purpose remained to tap the “good” elements (message) from the original text and to present them to the target readers.

The articles moreover reveal that the people in Nusantara during ancient times were open to foreign cultures. More research still needs to be done in this area. Philologists, linguists, translation researchers, and other specialists, such as economic and political historians, as well as anthropologists, can work together to discover the process of “cultural metamorphosis” in Nusantara and by so doing confirm that translation study is basically interdisciplinary. Even-Zohar (in Venuti 2000: 192-193) wisely writes about literary translation:

Moreover, there is no awareness of the possible existence of translated literature as a particular literary system. [...] To say that translated literature maintains a central position in the literary polysystem means that it participates actively in shaping the center of the polysystem. [...] an integral part of innovatory forces [...].

More is still to be discovered through the study of translation, especially by focusing on the role of translators as “an integral part of innovatory forces”

that have the potential to contribute to culture change as we have learned from *Sadur*.

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Mikihiro Moriyama and Manneke Budiman (eds), *Geliat bahasa selaras zaman; Perubahan bahasa-bahasa di Indonesia pasca-Orde Baru*. Jakarta: Kepustakaan Populer Gramedia, 2010, xx + 423 pp., illustrations. ISBN 978-4-86337-052-4. Price: IDR 38,700 (soft cover).

F.X. Rahyono

Faculty of Humanities, University of Indonesia
frahyono.hum@ui.ac.id

The book *Geliat bahasa selaras zaman; Perubahan bahasa-bahasa di Indonesia pasca-Orde Baru* edited by Mikihiro Moriyama and Manneke Budiman explores the way power and power-created socio-political circumstances influenced language profiles in Indonesia. Power constraints and shackles caused the national language to lose its vitality and creativeness but also local languages were suppressed in favour of the National Unitary State. Language under the New Order regime showed a high degree of productive euphemisms. The policy to implement proper and correct Indonesian language use suppressed