# [LITERATURE REVIEW OF MALAY COMIC TRANSLATION INTO FOREIGN LANGUAGES]

### SOROTAN LITERATUR PENTERJEMAHAN KOMIK MELAYU KE BAHASA ASING

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### Abstract

The translation of literary works, particularly comic text genres, is not only neglected in Malaysia's academic scholars, but it is also a difficult and demanding task. This is especially true when translating language pairings from various language families. This is because the translation of such works is packed with unique linguistic styles and cultural elements, and it is frequently considered as a "plagiarized" creative output, even though these translated works play an equal role as other scholarly works. As a result, the purpose of this study is to identify previous research on the translation of comic texts into foreign languages, as well as to characterize the gaps that experts have yet to fill. This is a qualitative study with a content-analysis design. Data from specified sources, such as books, proceedings, journal articles, and theses, is then collected and examined descriptively. The study's findings show that the translation of Malay comic texts into foreign language pair and usingcomic texts as a corpus have yet to be empirically and extensively researched. As a result, it is provided that this study would contribute to the field of translation while also stimulating the agenda of global language and cultural knowledge transmission by internationalizing the Malay language through translation.

**Keywords:** literature review, translation, Malay-Arabic comics, language and culture aspects; translation approaches

### Abstrak

Terjemahan karya sastera terutamanya genre teks komik bukan sahaja lesu dan kurang mendapat pengiktirafan daripada dunia akademik di Malaysia, malahan merupakan satu tugasan yang mencabar dan rumit. Apatah lagi jika melibatkan terjemahan pasangan bahasa daripada keluarga bahasa berbeza. Hal ini kerana teriemahan karva ini sarat dengan gaya bahasa dan unsur budaya yang unik serta hanya dianggap sebagai hasil kreatif "ciplak", meskipun peranan terjemahan karya ini setaraf dengan peranan karya akademik yang lain. Oleh itu, kajian ini bertujuan mengenal pasti kajian lepas berkaitan penterjemahan teks komik ke bahasa asing serta memerihal kelompangan yang belum dikaji oleh para sarjana. Kajian ini merupakan kajian kualitatif menggunakan reka bentuk analisis kandungan. Data yang diperoleh melalui bahan-bahan tertentu seperti buku, prosiding, artikel jurnal dan tesis kemudiannya dikumpulkan dan dianalisis secara deskriptif. Dapatan kajian menunjukkan karya terjemahan teks komik berbahasa Melayu ke bahasa asing masih amat sedikit berbanding dengan usaha sebaliknya. Sementara, banyak lagi aspek bahasa, budaya dan pendekatan terjemahan yang memfokuskan pasangan bahasa Melayu-bahasa Arab dengan menggunakan teks komik sebagai korpus belum dikaji secara empirikal dan komprehensif. Sehubungan dengan itu, kajian ini diharap dapat memberi input dalam bidang penterjemahan sekaligus merancakkan agenda pemindahan ilmu bahasa dan budaya global di samping mengantarabangsakan bahasa Melayu melalui terjemahan.

*Kata Kunci*: sorotan literatur, penterjemahan, komik Melayu-Arab, aspek bahasa dan budaya; pendekatan terjemahan

Article Received: 19 May 2024 *Article Reviewed:* 8 November 2024 *Article Published:* 26 December 2024

#### INTRODUCTION

Translation is the practice of comparing two cultures using language as a medium. As a result, translation involves more than just the process of transferring information between two languages; it also functions as a means of communication between two distinct cultures. According to Nida (1964: 244), in a broader cultural context, the essential aim is to interpret the meaning or message given. To create more effective intercultural communication, translation is critical as a vehicle for the sharing of cultural information and should be done methodically, especially in high-value literary works. In general, literary translation refers to the translation of literature with distinctive aesthetic values from other language pairings. This statement is consistent with Goh's (2016) study, which discovered that literary translations contain a wealth of cultural information from the source language intended for target readers. According to Watkins in Rudi (2017), literary works are classified into three categories: poetry, prose fiction, and drama. Prose fiction consists of works that are read as short stories or novels, as well as graphic novels, commonly known as comic books.

Comics are seen as a sort of literary art that is not only significant, but also demands serious public review and criticism (Norzaliza & Zeety, 2021). According to McCloud's (1993) definition, comics are images and other symbols placed in a specified order to communicate information or elicit an aesthetic response from the viewer. Meanwhile, Mohd. Noor Khalid (1990) characterizes comics as hilarious, lively pictures that can inspire viewers to reflect and be conscious of current events. These definitions show that this medium is important for imparting knowledge, education, and both explicit and implicit signals about the local community's noble ideals and culture.

Furthermore, the study investigates factors that have not yet been thoroughly investigated, such as language style, cultural features, and translation methodologies, including procedures, strategies, and ideologies, utilizing comics as a corpus. This is critical in the quest to generate natural and high-quality translations, elevating the Malay language's standing as a beautiful

literary language and encouraging translators to export Malay literary works to an international readership. Moreover, it advances the agenda of global linguistic and cultural information transmission, as well as the Malay language's internationalization through translation

# LITERATURE REVIEW

Several past studies have discussed various aspects of comic texts. These include historical aspects (Muliyadi 2012; Nasya et al. 2014; Faryna et al. 2020), comparisons between Malay comics and Japanese manga (Roslina et al. 2015; Roslina et al. 2019), linguistics (Rohaidah et al. 2020; Norzaliza & Zeety 2021; Khazriyati 2022), comics and education (Farah et al. 2014; Farah et al. 2015; Roslina et al. 2015; Mohamed Igbal et al. 2018; Hadi 2020), literary sociology (Nurul Syazwani & Wan Hasmah 2020), visual culture (Shaliza et al. 2014; Nasa'ie & Mulyadi 2018), semiotic aspects (Federico 2010; Jenny 2016; Maria 2018; Norzaliza et al. 2018), and narrative (Sarah 2009; Qiang & Sabzdi 2015; Nasya et al. 2014; Chin et al. 2017; Fatemeh & Zahra 2018; Muhamad Quzami et al. 2022). However, past studies focusing on the translation of comic texts into foreign languages remain insufficient. Among the studies discussing translation and comic texts are Zakiah et al. (2017), Carisya (2019), Fun & Hasuria (2019), Sarinah & Saliza (2021), Ahmad Jalaluddin et al. (2022), and Rue et al. (2022). Zakiah et al. (2017) analyze the process of translating comic texts and applying translation theory to this genre. In this study, the comic text "Muhammad Al-Fatih: Perang Varna" by Indonesian artist Handri Satria was studied for its English translation process using a combination of Newmark's (1988) and Vinay & Darbelnet's (1958) procedures. Tense, proper nouns and onomatopoeia were among the topics addressed in this comic texts. According to the findings, in order to accurately and successfully express the content and meaning of comic texts, the translator must have a broad vocabulary as well as general and specialized knowledge of the source and target cultures. However, the study's findings concentrated on the preliminary technical procedures before translation work began. Statements about language and cultural factors, as well as the translation approach, were not addressed fully and adequately.

Unlike Zakiah et al. (2017), Carisya (2019) addresses translation issues related to comic elements using Newmark's (1988) V Diagram, which includes semantic and communicative methods, scientific terms of psychiatric treatment, onomatopoeia, metaphors, and proverbs. This study makes use of Darryl Cunningham's comic book "Psychiatric Tales" which has been translated into Indonesian. Carisya (2019) finds from her research that the translation of this comic text uses communicative methods more frequently, despite the fact that the source text is a creative genre.

The existence of scientific jargon of mental therapy complicates the translation challenge because the target audience wants particular explanations to fully understand them. This study is one of the most recent and innovative studies in the field of translation in Indonesia, as it addresses the issue of scientific words utilizing an English-language comic novel translated into Indonesian as the corpus. However, parts of the translation approach, such as theories, procedures, or translation techniques, are not adequately covered when translating scientific words, linguistic, and cultural aspects found in the comic text. Furthermore, Fun and Hasuria (2019) investigated the translation of the Japanese comic text "Kimi No Na Wa" into Malay. The purpose of this study was to look into the translation techniques of giongo and gitaioga, two terms commonly used in Japanese comics. Although international researchers have undertaken research on the translation of giongo and gitaioga, the translation techniques for these features have not been investigated in Malaysia. Giongo and gitaioga, commonly known as onomatopoeia, are important components of Japanese comics because they transmit messages, meanings, and characters' emotional states. However, their translation study concentrated solely on one linguistic component, onomatopoeia, by examining many appropriate translation techniques without considering other translation approaches.

Sarinah & Saliza (2021), Ahmad Jalaluddin et al. (2022), and Nurul Asmira & Suhaila (2023) all use the Malay comic text "Budak Kampung" as a corpus in the field of translation, with each focusing on cultural elements present in the comic text. Similar to Sarinah and Saliza's (2021) study, which used a combination of translation procedures introduced by Newmark (1988) and Abdullah and Ainon (2007) to translate cultural elements, Ahmad Jalaluddin et al. (2022) used Newmark's (1988) procedures to translate cultural elements present in this comic text. However, the differences between their investigations are in the translation outcomes and language pairs, specifically Malay-Japanese and Malay-Arabic.

There is currently a scarcity of research on comic text translation in terms of language and culture. Most previous studies have only addressed linguistic and cultural characteristics within corpora and language pairings. These include cultural elements in translation (Nur Hafeza & Goh, 2013), translation procedures and strategies (Cho Minsung, 2016), cultural element categories (Mazlan et al., 2020), translation ideology (Sulhah & Arnida, 2021), and cultural element meaning (Arnida & Lubna, 2021).

However, previous research focusing on the translation of language and cultural characteristics in Malay comic texts into foreign languages is still scarce and highly rare. There are only two studies linked to translation, cultural components, and humorous writings, notably the study by Sarinah and Saliza (2021) and two more studies by Ahmad Jalaluddin et al. (2022) dan Nurul Asmira & Suhaila (2023).

Previous research on cultural factors in Malay literary works include Nur Hafeza & Goh (2013), Mazlan et al. (2020), and Sarinah & Saliza (2021). Nur Hafeza and Goh (2013) analyzed the translation of mentifacts cultural components from Malay to English in A. Samad Said's novel "Sungai Mengalir Lesu". In this study, they suggested that research on the translation of thought patterns or mentifacts existent in a cultural element, particularly ideas and values, is critical given the current dearth of research in this area. The study's findings show that, while translating Malay mentifacts into foreign languages is difficult, it can nevertheless be done using a mix of three different translation procedures. However, the research findings largely focus on belief and value translation strategies, as well as the elements that influence their selection. This study also did not address statements about cultural elements viewed through the lens of cultural forms such as sociofacts and artifacts.

In contrast to Nur Hafeza and Goh (2013), Mazlan et al. (2020) focus their research on a variety of material cultural factors, specifically food and beverages. The corpus for this study is a poetic literary work titled "Bijak Si Katak Bijak" that has been translated into Japanese. Furthermore, the study is to compile a list of cultural words connected to food and beverages in this poem, as well as to identify the translation approaches employed by translators to address cultural element translation challenges. In contrast to other categories within the material cultural element, Mazlan et al. (2020) study only reports on two of them.

Similarly, Sarinah and Saliza (2021) examined six cultural factors from Newmark's categories of social culture, cultural practices, customs, and ideology. Examples include birth ceremonies, head shaving, circumcision, Quran recital, traditional games, and marriage. In this context, the study discusses the translation of Malay cultural elements into Japanese, with a focus on the translation procedures used by translators Naoki Souda and Natsue Hieda in the comic "Lat: Budak Kampung," which was published as a collaboration between ITBM and Tokyo University of Foreign Studies in 2014. However, Sarinah and Saliza's (2021) study differs significantly from previous local researchers in that it is the only one to use Malay comedic texts as a corpus in the field of translation, with an emphasis on the Malay-Japanese language pair.

Similarly, Ahmad Jalaludddin et al. (2022) address the translation of cultural components in the Arabic-language comic "Tiflu Al-Qaryatt," which was translated from Dato Lat's original comic "Budak Kampung". The study's findings show that the cultural characteristics in this comic make it difficult for translators to translate into the target language. As a result, selecting appropriate and relevant translation techniques is critical in helping translators produce highquality translations. This work, like Nurul Asmira and Suhaila (2023), is regarded as pioneering translation research in that it uses comic texts as the research corpus and focuses on the Malay-Arabic language pair.

Furthermore, studies on cultural elements in various genres of works, languages, and dimensions have also been discussed by Nurul Asmira & Suhaila (2023), Sulhah & Arnida (2021), Arnida & Lubna (2021), Ahmad Jalaluddin et al. (2021), Minsung (2016), Idris (2015), and Noor Eliza et al. (2015), each focusing on translation studies of the cultural material identity of Malay society in the "Budak Kampung" comic into Arabic, Translation of techniques, language, and culture aspects in Quran translation, translation of cultural aspects meanings in the Arabic novel "Saacah Baghdad: Riwayah" into English by e-translation application, translation procedures of ecological cultural elements in the Quran, translation of cultural aspects from Korean to Malay in the short story anthology "Perjalanan ke Samp'o," issues in Arab literary texts, "Rihlah Ibn Battutah" into Malay, and cultural elements in the script of the drama "Flag of Truth" from Arabic to MalayStudies related to translation approaches consisting of procedures, methods, strategies, and translation ideologies have been conducted extensively, including those by Noor Eliza et al. (2015), Woo & Rokiah (2018), Mohammed Igbal et al. (2018), Muazah (2019), Aminoh (2019), Ou-Hssata & Tounsi (2019), Obeidat & Tengku Sepora (2019), Mazlan et al. (2020), Ahmad Jalaludddin et al. (2021), Sarinah & Saliza (2021), Salwani et al. (2021), and Nurul Asmira & Suhaila (2023).

The studies' corpus and focus are diverse, including translation strategies of Arabic cultural aspects into Malay in Arabic drama scripts to issues of language style, cultural words, proper nouns, and compound sentence structures in tourism catalogs, which are addressed using a combination of translation procedures by Newmark (1988) and translation strategy tendencies by Venuti. Other focuses include the use of transliteration in digital comics, "Kaifa Haluka" utilizing bilingualism, Arabic, and Malay as mediums for interactive learning, translation procedures of Arabic ecological cultural elements into Malay in Hadith texts, a combination of translation procedures by Newmark (1988) and Aixela (1996) in translating Malay cultural terms in novels into Thai, and Venuti's (1995) translation strategy tendencies in translating cultural elements in Arabic. Venuti's (1995) translation strategies in translating cultural collocations in religious categories in Arabic novels into English, and eclectic translation methods to address food and beverage-related cultural words in Malay poetry into Japanese, translation procedures of Arabic ecological cultural aspects into Malay in the Quran, translation procedures of Malay cultural aspects into Japanese in comic texts, and translation procedures of Arabic character names into Malay in the Quran.

However, there has been no complete study that discusses micro and macro translation methodologies employing comic texts in the Malay-to-Arabic language combination. There are just two empirical studies in the field of translation, Ahmad Jalaludddin et al. (2022) and Nurul Asmira & Suhaila (2023), that investigate translation techniques employing comic texts in the Malay-Arabic language pair. However, these research solely address microtranslation techniques.

This literature study reveals the lack of previous research on language and cultural aspects in Malay literary works. The language and cultural aspects of numerous categories have not been thoroughly explored, particularly those involving the Malay and Arabic language pairs in Malay comic texts as the corpus. As a result, it is recommended that translation research utilizing Malay comics as the corpus, with language and cultural aspects as the focus, be given more attention and pursued energetically. This research is also expected to serve as a guide for translators who will be translating language and cultural aspects in comic texts using the Malay and Arabic language pairs. In conclusion, the translation of literary works from many genres remains underappreciated and appears slow in both the translation arena and academics. This is due to the difficulty of translating these works, which includes not only language transfer but also cultural elements and literary values that differ from those in the target language (Hassan & Abdeljalil, 2019; An Gang & Tengku Sepora, 2020; Farah Nur Dini & Maheram, 2020; Nur Anis & Anis Shahirah, 2020; Mohammed & Rola, 2021). Furthermore, in the Malay-Arabic language combination, such efforts are substantially less common than in the reverse (NoorSyuhada & Maheram, 2015). In actuality, data shows that there are just three empirical research that use Malay comics as the corpus for the Malay-Arabic language pair, notably the works of Nurul Asmira & Suhaila (2023), Ahmad Jalaluddin et al. (2021), and Mohammed Iqbal et al. (2018).

According to data from the Malaysia Institute of Translation and Books (ITBM), only 23 Malay works were translated into Arabic between 1995 and 2012, including the comic "Budak Kampung" by Dato Lat and the novel "Ustaz" by National Laureate S. Othman Kelantan. This is substantiated by a study conducted by Noor Syuhada and Maheram (2015), which found a substantial gap in activities and efforts to translate Malay literary works into Arabic as compared to the reverse efforts.

Furthermore, the difficulty in obtaining near and precise counterparts is worsened by the cultural divide between two diverse cultures (Idris et al., 2021; Seong, 2016), exacerbating the current situation. These types of challenges are common for new translators. Tuan Nur Aisyah (2019) voiced the similar sentiment, stating that the lack of a corresponding cultural feature in the target language makes it difficult for translators to find appropriate word equivalents to represent that element.

This remark is supported by the perspectives and experiences of Idris et al. (2021), who had difficulty when translating historical genre books such as "Raja Bilah and the Mandailings in Perak: 1875-1911," which are rich in diverse cultural, thematic, and sociolinguistic elements.

To overcome the challenges of negative perceptions of study corpus such as comic texts and other literary works, cultural gaps, and issues of untranslatability, Lefevere (1992) advises translators to continue translation efforts, analyze translations, and emphasize the role of translation in literature and culture of the target language. He believes that by using these three disciplinary methods, a more favorable attitude of the role of translation in cross-cultural interactions and translation studies can be promoted.

In conclusion, literary translation, particularly of humorous texts, should be regarded as a creative endeavor in the target language literary world, as such translations play an important role in introducing cultural values and linguistic distinctiveness that are not present in target language literary works. As a result, this paper will highlight previous studies on the translation of comic texts into foreign languages and explain gaps that have not been addressed by researchers, serving as a guide for future research initiatives.

## **RESEARCH FINDINGS**

According to a literature study, research on the translation of literary works into foreign languages across many genres, both domestically and internationally, is extremely limited. Furthermore, discussions among scholars are dominated by the use of language pairs from Western European and Asian countries, with Malay-Arabic language pairs being relatively new in the field of translation studies in Malaysia. This observation is supported by previous study by Nur Hafeza and Seong (2013), Pogadaev (2015, 2016), Congcong (2015), Funada (2015), Haslina (2016), Aminoh (2019), Nor Huwaida Mohd Hasan et al. (2020), Mazlan et al. (2020), and Ijlal Saja et al. (2020).

Most academics have concentrated on translating Malay literary works, mainly novels and poetry, using language pairs such as Malay-English, Malay-Japanese, Malay-Russian, Malay-Chinese, and Malay-Thai as their primary focus. However, studies on translating Malay comic texts into foreign languages are quite rare. According to the findings, only three research have been conducted on translating cultural aspects and Malay comic texts into foreign languages: Sarinah & Saliza (2021), Ahmad Jalaludddin et al. (2022), and Nurul Asmira & Suhaila (2023). Each of these studies focuses on Malay-Japanese and Malay-Arabic language pairs as central themes.

As a result, this gap must be addressed as soon as possible by focusing future research efforts on it. Additionally, studies on language features, cultural aspects, and general translation approaches are extremely popular. For example, studies that do not include a full translation of every cultural factor identified in a literary work may not significantly add to target readers' understanding, particularly when such characteristics involve Malay-Arabic language pairs within Malay comic texts as the corpus. This scenario emphasizes the importance of conducting research on translating language aspects and cultural aspects in terms of classification by translation scholars, features, components, and translation approaches such as procedures, strategies, and ideologies, with comic texts serving as the corpus.

### CONCLUSION

Research into the translation of Malay comic texts into Arabic can provide useful information and act as a new reference source in the fields of translation studies and Malay literature. Furthermore, this study is intended to serve as a guide for future researchers. With such research, it is hoped that more local researchers, particularly those studying Arabic, will be encouraged to conduct translation studies focusing on linguistic and cultural aspects using Malay literary works, particularly comic texts, as the corpus, given the scarcity of research in this area. Finally, the release of this study is expected to serve as a beginning point for future translation research

### ACKNOWLEDGMENT

This study was conducted using funding from GUP-2015-106 and GUP-2022-034. We express our heartfelt gratitude to UKM for providing the funding to conduct this research.

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