



# The use of footnotes in the Malay translation of *A Thousand Splendid Suns*

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**Abstract:** Footnotes are paratextual elements which appear at the bottom of a page in a text. In translated literary texts, translators may employ footnotes to assist readers in their understanding of the translation. Despite the use of footnotes in literary translation, there are few studies which have looked into their use in translations in Malaysia. This paper thus aims to explore the use of footnotes in a literary translation from English into Malay. More specifically, the aim is to determine the types of words which are footnoted in the Malay translation of the English-language novel, *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, and to determine the information provided in the footnotes. The paper also aims to determine the function served by the footnotes in the translation. To carry out this study, the footnotes in the Malay translation are collected and their content examined. The analysis reveals that the footnotes are generally linked to culture-bound words which are transferred unchanged from the source text to the translation. In terms of their content, the footnotes provide mainly dictionary-like definitions of the foreign words in the Malay translation. As such, the footnotes serve a purely informative function. This paper argues that footnotes must be used judiciously in a translation. Informative footnotes can play an important role in enhancing the readers' understanding of the text and in bringing the text closer to the readers; measures, however, must be taken to ensure the accuracy of the content of the footnotes if they are to benefit the readers.

**Keywords:** paratext, peritext, footnotes, translation procedure, literary translation

## 1. Introduction

Paratexts are “those liminal devices and conventions, both within the book (peritext) and outside it (epitext), that mediate the book to the reader: titles, and subtitles, pseudonyms, forewords, dedications, prefaces, intertitles, epilogues and afterwords” (Genette, 1997, p. xviii). Paratexts are thus materials which accompany the text and which help present the text to the readers.

There are different types of paratexts within the book itself. Pellatt (2013) divides paratexts appearing within the book into four different categories: (1) external paratext, which includes the design on the cover; (2) verbal external paratext, which includes titles and promotional précis (‘blurb’), (3) non-verbal internal paratext, which includes the layout, illustrations and decorations; and (4) verbal internal paratext, which includes the preface, introduction, chapter headings, footnotes and endnotes.

In the field of Translation Studies, analysis of the various paratextual elements in the translated text has been carried out by a number of scholars, for example, Kovala (1996), Tahir Gürçağlar (2002), Marín-Dòmine (2003) and Pellatt (2013), with the focus being on how different paratextual elements assist in the reception of the translated text in the new environment. Some other studies focused on a particular type of paratext, for example, external paratexts in the form of titles (Gerber, 2012; Yuste Frías, 2012); internal

paratexts in the form of translators' prefaces (Dimitriu, 2009; Haroon, 2017; Hosseinzadeh, 2015; McRae, 2012; Norberg, 2012); and internal paratexts in the form of translators' notes (Luo & Zhang, 2018; Paloposki, 2010; Sanchez Ortiz, 2015; Tian, 2014; Toledano Buendía, 2013).

In translated texts, the use of paratexts in the form of notes is not uncommon, particularly when there is a need to supply additional information in the translation for the target readers. The additional information may appear in different places, for example, within the text itself, in page footnotes, chapter endnotes, or in notes or a glossary at the end of a book (Newmark, 1988, p. 92). Pym (2004) provides a similar explanation regarding the location of these paratextual elements, pointing out that "notes can be at the bottom of the page, the end of the chapter, the end of the book, in a supplementary glossary or even in specialized dictionaries" (p. 100). Toledano Buendía (2013), meanwhile, defines notes as "statements of variable length which are always connected to more or less definite segments of the text and they are usually found printed at the bottom of the page or in its margins, although they can also be included at the end of each chapter or book" (pp. 150-151). Regardless of where they are positioned in the text, notes are important as they are "a means by which the translator or other mediators may bring the text closer to the reader" (Kovala, 1996, p. 125).

One category of notes is those which appear at the bottom of a page in a text – i.e., footnotes. The focus on footnotes in translation is exemplified by the studies carried out by Paloposki (2010) and Sanchez Ortiz (2015). Paloposki (2010), for instance, examined the use of footnotes in Finnish translations from 1870 to 1929. From a total of 98 translations, it was found that 57 of those translations contained footnotes, whose use appeared to vary between different translators and different genres. Sanchez Ortiz (2015), meanwhile, examined four Spanish translations of Oscar Wilde's novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and found that the four translators differed in their use of footnotes. In the Malaysian context, the study carried out by Haroon and Abdul Majid (2015) found that some of the book translations into Malay published by the national language and literary agency of Malaysia, Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, do contain footnotes, which perform an explanatory function in the texts (p. 143). The study, however, does not provide any quantitative analysis on the use of footnotes in translation as it does not focus specifically on this aspect.

Although in general footnotes are a common device in translated texts, their use in translations in Malaysia has been largely overlooked. This paper is an attempt at redressing that oversight by examining the footnotes in a translated text published in Malaysia. In doing so, the study takes into account Paloposki's (2010) suggestion on the ways through which the study of footnotes in translated texts may be carried out. According to Paloposki (2010), this may involve an overview of the practice of providing footnotes in translation – for example, on a national or regional scale – or it may involve individual case studies of translated texts with footnotes (p. 91). This study focuses on the latter. More specifically, the aim of the study is to examine in detail the use of footnotes in *Seribu Matahari Syurga*, the Malay translation of Khaled Hosseini's English-language novel *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, and to find answers to the following questions: (1) What category of words are footnoted in the Malay translation?, (2) What kind of information is contained in the footnotes?, and (3) What functions do the footnotes have in the translation? It is hoped that the present study shows the extent to which footnotes play a role in enhancing the readers' understanding of the text and in bringing the text closer to the readers.

## 2. Footnotes in translated texts

Within the field of Translation Studies, the use of footnotes is regarded as one of the procedures that the translator has at their disposal when translating. Notes, whether in the form of in-text annotations, footnotes, endnotes or glossary entries, may be employed when there is a need to provide additional information, which may be cultural, technical or linguistic in nature, in a translation (Newmark, 1988, p. 91).

The use of footnotes is also mentioned by Nida (1964). In the context of Bible translation, a translator may have to resort to literal translation, in which case an explanatory footnote would have to be provided (p. 238). Footnotes, according to Nida (1964), perform two major functions, that is, “to correct linguistic and cultural discrepancies” and “to add information which may be generally useful in understanding the historical and cultural background of the document in question” (pp. 238-239).

The use of footnotes is one of the two techniques which are subsumed under the procedure of specification, based on the study by Haroon and Daud (2017). In their study of the procedures used in the Malay renderings of foreign words in *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, they identified 174 words in the Dari and Pashto languages in the English novel, 46 of which are translated using the procedure of specification. This procedure involves the retention of a foreign word in the translation and the explanation of its meaning, either through the use of footnotes or through the use of in-text explanation. According to Haroon and Daud (2017), 44 of the 46 words are translated using footnotes. However, apart from a few examples illustrating the use of footnotes in the Malay translation, the study does not describe in detail the information contained in the footnotes as used in the Malay text.

Words which are footnoted are most often words which carry a cultural, technical or linguistic meaning (Newmark, 1988, p. 91). With respect to literary translation, footnotes are one of the ways through which the translator can address the gap in the target readers’ knowledge of the source-language culture (Landers, 2001, p. 93). The use of footnotes to explain culture-bound items is also illustrated in the study carried out by Herrero (2005) on the translation of an Indian novel into English. Herrero (2005) explains that “footnotes are tied to those terms identifying items that best account for the cultural burden of a community, such as meals and food, clothes and accessories, beliefs and customs...” (p. 230). This view is echoed by Luo and Zhang (2018), who assert that “paratexts can help to promote a better understanding of the source culture” (p. 608). It is important, however, to understand that although the footnotes provided may help explain culture-specific elements to the target readers, the notes provided cannot be said to fully represent what the readers do not know. Instead, the footnotes indicate, quite rightly, the translator’s beliefs and assumptions regarding what the readers do not know (Kovala, 1996; Paloposki, 2010).

In the context of religious translation, specifically the translation of Qur’anic text, Abdul-Raof (2001) refers to textual difficulties confronting the translator of the Qur’an as “the fog of language”, which can be cleared up through the use of footnotes, which act as “demisting devices” (p. 139). Carrying the image further, he explains that “a footnote or even an extended commentary can function as a torch that can penetrate the fog of language and culture-specific religious words and concepts...” (p. 140). Footnotes, according to Abdul-Raof (2001), can be used to elucidate the following elements in the Qur’an: historical facts, geographical facts, ecological words, metaphor, cultural expressions, legal/instructional discourse, abrogating and abrogated structures, intertextuality, religious concepts, scientific facts, cryptic letters, ambiguity, euphemism, parables, lexical meaning, elliptical structure meaning and evocative names (pp. 142-174).

Meanwhile, in the context of Bible translation, Blight (2005) points out that footnotes may be useful in terms of providing three types of information to the readers: (1) background information, which includes unknown geographic locations, unknown historical background, unfamiliar symbolic actions, unknown objects and occupations, different beliefs, and references to information contained in other parts of the Bible, for example, references to people, events, customs, quotations from the Old Testament and parallel passages; (2) linguistic information, for example, the meaning or sound of a particular word in Greek or Hebrew and explanations of figures of speech or symbols; and (3) interpretational information, for example, in cases where there are textual variants, literal translations, alternative interpretations and puzzling statements (pp. 11-14).

In terms of function, Toledano Buendía (2013) divides notes into two main types: those which serve to inform or explain, and are used to supplement the text, and those which have a performative function and are used to comment on the text (p. 157). Supplementary notes provide information that may help readers to make sense of the meaning of the text by clarifying obscurities. Toledano Buendía (2013) explains that “the main function of explanatory notes is to provide additional information that is considered necessary in order to achieve a perfect understanding of the source text and to reproduce all the effects of the original text in the target language” (p. 157). In most cases, the notes provide information that is “verifiable and objective” (p. 157) and they have “an erudite tone” (p. 158).

Meanwhile, notes which serve a performative function provide explanation which conveys the opinion and judgement of the translator (Toledano Buendía, 2013, p. 159). If there are elements in the text which run counter to contemporary beliefs or which may result in a different or incorrect interpretation of the translation, the translator intervenes by way of the notes and offers his point of view so as to ensure that the text is correctly interpreted and understood by the target readers (Toledano Buendía, 2013, p. 159).

Tian (2014), meanwhile, proposes a more comprehensive framework which consists of four categories of notes: informative, expository, critical and mixed (p. 5). Tian’s (2014) informative notes are similar to Toledano Buendía’s (2013) explanatory notes in that they are used to provide linguistic and cultural information. Expository notes, meanwhile, are used by the translator to describe the translation methods and strategies adopted (Tian, 2014, p. 5). Tian’s critical notes are similar to Toledano Buendía’s (2013) performative notes in that they are used by the translator to express his or her own views and opinion. Finally, mixed notes combine two or all of the features of the first three mentioned types (Tian, 2014, p. 6).

Footnotes assist readers by offering information which may be of use to them while they are reading a text. Regardless of whether they perform an explanatory, expository or performative function, footnotes in a translation also help translators, by effectively making them more visible. It is through the footnote that the translator establishes contact with their target readers and makes his presence felt and voice heard. Toledano Buendía (2013), in fact, comments that the translator becomes more visible in the case of notes which serve a performative function, as the translator, through their comments, surpasses the narrator and becomes the principal storyteller (p. 160).

Footnotes can thus be seen in a positive manner. However, their presence is not always considered in a positive light. There must be a restriction in terms of the length of each footnote and the number of footnotes provided in a particular text; otherwise, instead of becoming useful, they run the risk of causing inconvenience to readers (Newmark, 1988). Footnotes also distract readers by interrupting the flow of reading (Landers, 2001). Toledano Buendía explains that both explanatory and performative notes disturb and disrupt the flow of the text. The difference between the two is that “explanatory notes set

out a minimal bifurcation in order to favour the main flow, whereas the latter abruptly take the reader to another order of reality” (Toledano Buendía, 2013, p. 161). In other words, performative notes cause more disruption to the flow of reading than do explanatory notes.

In the light of the foregoing discussion, this study will now examine the words which are footnoted in the Malay translation of *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, and consider the content of the footnotes and the function served by them in the translation.

### 3. Methodology

This section describes both the source text and the target text used in this study. It also describes the steps taken in order to carry out the study.

The novel *A Thousand Splendid Suns* is Khaled Hosseini’s second English-language novel, the first being *The Kite Runner* (2003). *A Thousand Splendid Suns* was first published in 2007 by Bloomsbury in London and comprises 51 chapters which are divided into four main parts. The novel is set in Afghanistan and, although written in English, incorporates words from the Dari and Pashto languages, the two official languages in Afghanistan, and also a number of Russian words. These foreign words are marked in italics in the English novel. The English novel, however, does not include a glossary to explain the meaning of the foreign words marked in italics. There are also no footnotes in the text. In spite of this, it is possible for readers to make sense of the meaning of some of these foreign words based on contextual information.

The Malay translation is given the title, *Seribu Matahari Syurga*, a literal translation of the English title. It was published by Pelangi Novel Sdn. Bhd. in Johor Bahru, Johor, Malaysia in 2012. The name of the translator, Mohamad Farhan bin Mahadi, is not printed on the front cover but is mentioned on the copyright page. The Malay translation is, in many ways, similar to the English text. It retains the structure of the English text, with 51 chapters spread over four main parts. The Malay translation also employs the use of Dari and Pashto words, which are clearly marked in italics in the translation. However, it differs from the English text in that it does use footnotes – a total of 53, which are numbered consecutively throughout the translation, from Chapter 1 to Chapter 51.

In considering the use of footnotes in the Malay translation of *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, this study refers to the study carried out by Haroon and Daud (2017), who identified a total of 174 foreign words in the English novel, which are clearly marked in italics in the source text. They also found that from these 174 italicised foreign words, only 44 words are retained in italics in the Malay translation and at the same time given footnotes. The other foreign words are translated using a number of different procedures, for example, retention (without footnotes), specification in the form of in-text explanation, generalisation, substitution and omission (Haroon & Daud, 2017). Considering that there is a total of 53 footnotes in the Malay translation, a total of nine footnotes are not accounted for in the study by Haroon and Daud (2017). This, however, can be explained by comparing the Malay translation and its English source text. An examination of the texts shows that the nine words which are not accounted for in the study are words which are footnoted in the Malay translation but are not italicised in the English source text. These words are not taken into consideration by Haroon and Daud (2017) as their study only examined words which are italicised in the source text. Because this present study focuses on the use of footnotes in the Malay translation, it will look at all the 53 words which are given footnotes in the Malay translation.

The footnotes in the Malay translation of *A Thousand Splendid Suns* are analysed in the following way. First, in order to identify the category of each foreign word, its respective meaning needs to be determined. For this purpose, native speakers of Dari and Pashto were consulted. This enabled the researcher to not only find the correct meaning of the words but also check whether there are discrepancies between the information given by the native speakers and that provided by the translator in the footnote. Next, the content of each footnote is analysed. This enables the researcher to determine not only the information contained in the footnote but also the function of the footnotes in the Malay translation, by drawing on the four types of notes proposed by Tian (2014).

#### 4. Footnotes in the Malay translation of *A Thousand Splendid Suns*

The 53 words which are footnoted in the Malay translation of *A Thousand Splendid Suns* can be seen in Appendix A. Based on the analysis carried out, these words fall into 12 general categories, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Categories of words which are footnoted in the Malay translation of *A Thousand Splendid Suns*

Category	Number of words
<b>Food and cooking-related items</b> <i>tandoor, shalqam, sabzi, aush, aftawa, okra, borani, aushak, shorwa, cilantro, halwa, pakora, jelabi, naswar, samovar</i>	15
<b>References to people or beings</b> <i>akhund, dokhtar jo, moochi, khala jan, hamshira, badmash, mozahem, giryanok, ambagh, dozd, babaloo</i>	11
<b>Clothing and material</b> <i>burqa, chapan, poostin, suede, pakol, tumban, pirhan-tumban</i>	7
<b>Utterances</b> <i>bas, na fahmidi, tashakor, pajalusta, ho bacha, loftan, goh</i>	7
<b>Music-related items</b> <i>shahnai, dohol, ghazal</i>	3
<b>Abstract concepts</b> <i>zahmat, noor, interim</i>	3
<b>Plants</b> <i>rue, sweetbriar</i>	2
<b>Transportation</b> <i>gari</i>	1
<b>Sports</b> <i>buzkashi</i>	1
<b>Religious element</b> <i>iftar</i>	1
<b>Proper name</b> <i>Saratan</i>	1
<b>Building</b> <i>kolba</i>	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>53</b>

Almost all of the footnoted words are ones which carry a cultural meaning. That is, they are generally bound to the culture of Afghanistan, which is the setting of the English novel. As mentioned previously, 44 of the 53 footnoted words are also italicised in the English source text – these are the words from the Dari and Pashto languages. The other nine are words which are not italicised in the English text, but are italicised by the translator in the

Malay translation (with the exception of the English word ‘rue’, which is not italicised in the Malay translation but is footnoted). Of these nine, only two (*‘burqa’* and *‘tandoor’*) are from Dari/Pashto. One (*‘samovar’*) is from Russian, while the other five (*‘okra’*, *‘suede’*, *‘cilantro’*, *‘interim’* and *‘sweetbriar’*) are from English. As mentioned previously, the word ‘rue’ is footnoted but not italicised in the Malay translation.

An analysis of the content of the footnotes reveals that the footnotes are used to supplement the text, thus making the meaning of the foreign words clear to the target readers. The translator uses the footnotes to explain the meaning of the Dari/Pashto words which are used in the English text and retained in italics in the Malay translation. This can be seen in the following example.

#### Example 1

- ST: Whip-toting, *naswar*-chewing Talibs patrolled Titanic City on the lookout for the indiscreet laugh, the unveiled face. (p. 318)  
 Para petugas Talib lalu-lalang, mempamerkan cemeti mereka, mengunyah *naswar*<sup>46</sup>, berkawal di bandar Titanic, mencari-cari ketawa yang terlalu kuat atau muka yang didedahkan. (p. 546)

In Example 1, the word ‘*naswar*’ is used in the novel in English and is printed in italics. The author does not provide the readers with a footnote or a glossary that can help explain the meaning of the word ‘*naswar*’ in the novel in English. In the Malay translation, the word ‘*naswar*’ is retained and is also printed in italics. The word ‘*naswar*’, however, is given a footnote in the Malay translation to help explain its meaning. In this example, the readers are told in footnote 46 that ‘*naswar*’ is ‘*tembakau*’ (lit. tobacco). The footnote in this case helps make the reference clear to the readers.

Another example where a footnote helps to clarify the meaning of an unknown word can be seen in the following example.

#### Example 2

- ST: She thought longingly of the wide-open skies of her childhood, of her days of going to *buzkashi* tournaments with Babi and shopping at Mandai with Mammy, of her days of running free in the streets and gossiping about boys with Giti and Hasina. (p. 224)  
 Dia merindui langit masa kecilnya yang terbentang luas hingga ke cakerawala, hari-hari menonton perlawanan *buzkashi*<sup>38</sup> bersama-sama ayahnya, dan membeli-belah di Mandai bersama-sama ibunya, juga hari-hari dia berlari bebas di jalan dan bergosip bersama-sama Giti dan Hasina tentang budak lelaki yang dikenali mereka. (p. 382)

Example 2 shows the use of the word ‘*buzkashi*’ in both the novel in English and its translation in Malay. The meaning is not explained in the English text. In the Malay translation, a footnote is provided. Footnote 38 tells the readers that ‘*buzkashi*’ is ‘*sejenis sukan yang popular dari Afghanistan. Dipanggil juga perlumbaan mengheret kambing, sukan ini dimainkan dengan menunggang kuda*’ (lit. a type of popular sport from Afghanistan. Also called the goat-dragging race, the sport is played on horseback). The information provided in the footnote not only gives the readers a clearer picture of the meaning of the foreign word ‘*buzkashi*’ but also exposes them to the way of life of the people in a foreign land.

All the footnotes are in fact similar to the footnotes in Examples 1 and 2 in that they reflect an attempt by the translator to provide the meaning of the words to the target readers. The footnotes provide definitions not unlike those which can be found in dictionaries. In short, based on Tian’s (2014) classification, the footnotes found in the Malay translation of *A Thousand Splendid Suns* all fall into the category of informative footnotes. A detailed

analysis of the content of the footnotes shows that they are not used by the translator to explain the translation strategies used. Neither are they used to convey the translator's opinion and judgement.

In spite of the use of informative notes throughout the translation in order to tell the target readers the meaning of certain words with which they may be unfamiliar, it must be noted that the translator also inserted footnotes in cases where the meaning of the foreign word is already clear from the context of the sentence. This can be seen in the following examples.

#### Example 3

- ST: She saw musicians blowing the *shahnai* flute and banging on *dohol* drums, street children hooting and giving chase. (p. 10)
- TT: Mariam dapat melihat para pemuzik meniup seruling *shahnai*<sup>2</sup> dan memalu gendang *dohol*<sup>3</sup>, sementara anak-anak kecil berlari-larian mengejar rombongan pengantin. (p. 15)

In Example 3, the words '*shahnai*' and '*dohol*' which are used in the novel in English are also used in the Malay translation. It is highly likely that readers will understand the meaning of these words as used in the novel in English, as the word '*shahnai*' is followed by the word 'flute' and '*dohol*' by the word 'drums' – thereby implicitly defining each, in a general way at least. The translator retains this same style in the translation in Malay, but using the grammatical structure of the Malay language. The word '*shahnai*' is preceded by the word '*seruling*' (lit. flute) while the word '*dohol*' is preceded by the word '*gendang*' (lit. drum). In spite of the fact that the translation already specifies what the foreign words refer to, a footnote is still added to make the meaning of these objects clearer to the readers. In footnote 2, the readers are told that '*shahnai*' refers to '*sejenis seruling yang mengembang di bahagian hadapan*' (lit. a type of flute which broadens out in front) and '*dohol*' refers to '*sejenis dram besar berbentuk silinder dengan dua permukaan kulit; biasanya dipukul di kedua-dua belah dengan batang kayu atau tangan*' (lit. a type of drum which is cylindrical in shape with two sides which are covered in animal hide; both sides are beaten using wooden sticks or the hands').

The following is another example of the inclusion of a footnote by the translator despite the fact that the meaning of the foreign word is already clear from the context.

#### Example 4

- ST: It happened on a Thursday. It must have, because Mariam remembered that she had been restless and preoccupied that day, the way she was only on Thursdays, the day when Jalil visited her at the *kolba*. (p. 3)
- TT: Hari itu hari Khamis. Ya, Mariam pasti kerana dia masih ingat lagi betapa kelamkabut dan sibuknya dia pada hari itu. Kesibukan yang berlaku pada setiap hari Khamis, hari ayahnya, Jalil, akan datang melawatnya di *kolba*<sup>1</sup> itu, gubuk buruk tempat dia dan ibunya berteduh daripada hujan dan panas. (p. 2)

In this example, the word '*kolba*' is used in both the English text and its Malay translation. The passage tells the readers that Jalil goes to see Mariam every Thursday at the '*kolba*'. It is assumed that the translator feels that the meaning of '*kolba*' is not clear to the readers; therefore, he intervenes and makes the meaning of the word explicit by adding extra information in the text itself. As can be seen in the excerpt, the translator explains that '*kolba*' is '*gubuk buruk tempat dia dan ibunya berteduh daripada hujan dan panas*' (lit. 'an old shack where she and her mother shelter from the rain and sun'). This additional explanation in the text appears to make the meaning of the word '*kolba*' clear to the readers. The translator, however, does not seem satisfied with only this approach and therefore inserts Footnote 1, which defines '*kolba*' succinctly as '*pondok kecil*' (lit. a small hut). This example is



interesting as it shows the translator providing extra information in the form of a footnote when the in-text explanation already makes the meaning of the word ‘*kolba*’ clear to the readers. In other words, the translator operates in an invisible manner inside the text and at the same time, makes himself visible in the paratext. While it is not clear why both approaches are employed by the translator, it can be assumed that this reflects the translator’s attempt to ensure the readers’ full understanding of the foreign word.

An analysis of the content of the footnotes also points to instances where the footnotes provide information which is inaccurate. This can be seen in the following examples.

#### Example 5

ST: She poured water for him from the *aftawa* to wash his hands with. (p. 68)

TT: Mariam menuangkan air dari *aftawa*<sup>17</sup> untuk Rasheed mencuci tangannya. (p. 118)

In Example 5, it is not difficult for readers to deduce that ‘*aftawa*’ is a type of container that can be used to hold water – in this case, for washing the hands. The word ‘*aftawa*’ is retained in the Malay translation and footnote 17 in the translated text tells the readers that ‘*aftawa*’ is ‘*mangkuk untuk mencuci tangan*’ (lit. a bowl for washing the hands). This information is felt to be slightly inaccurate. Although ‘*aftawa*’ is indeed used to store water, it is not in the shape of a bowl and is in fact a water pitcher from which water is poured for washing the hands after meals.

Meanwhile, in the next example, the translator attempts to explain the meaning of the word ‘*moochi*’ as used in the Malay translation.

#### Example 6

ST: "He's a shoemaker," Khadija was saying now. "But not some kind of ordinary street-side *moochi*, no, no. He has his own shop, and he is one of the most sought-after shoemakers in Kabul..." (p. 46-47)

TT: "Rasheed itu seorang pembuat kasut," Khadija pula bersuara. "Tapi bukan *moochi*<sup>12</sup> di tepi-tepi jalan tu! Bukan! Bukan! Dia ada kedai sendiri dan merupakan pembuat kasut paling terkenal di Kabul..." (p. 81)

In this excerpt, Khadija, one of Jalil's wives, tells Mariam what her future husband does for a living. In the Malay translation, Khadija tells Mariam that he is ‘*pembuat kasut*’ (lit. shoemaker) but he is not ‘*moochi di tepi-tepi jalan*’ (lit. *moochi* by the road-side). Khadija further explains that ‘*dia ada kedai sendiri dan merupakan pembuat kasut paling terkenal di Kabul*’ (lit. he has his own shop and he is the most popular shoemaker in Kabul). The translator then tries to explain the meaning of the word ‘*moochi*’ by way of a footnote. The readers are told in footnote 12 that ‘*moochi*’ refers to ‘*orang biasa atau peminta sedekah*’ (lit. ‘an ordinary person or a beggar’). The information provided in the footnote comes across as rather odd and in fact does not fit in with the information in the text itself. Jalil, the readers are told, is a shoemaker, has his own shop and is the most well-known shoemaker in Kabul. Therefore, it is not likely that he is merely an ordinary person or a beggar, as explained in the footnote. In this example, the word ‘*moochi*’ refers to a shoemaker.

Still another example of inaccurate information provided in the footnote can be seen in the following example:

#### Example 7

ST: It was a hot, dry summer night, typical of the month of *Saratan* in Kabul. (p. 233)

TT: Udara musim panas terasa kering dan menyengat, seperti biasanya bulan *Saratan*<sup>41</sup> di Kabul. (p. 396-397)

This excerpt describes the weather in Kabul in the month of ‘*Saratan*’. The word ‘*Saratan*’ which is used in the novel in English is retained by the translator in the Malay translation. The translator then includes a footnote at the bottom of the page. Footnote 41 tells the readers that ‘*Saratan*’ ‘*bermaksud tertentu*’ (lit. ‘means something specific’). This information is also inaccurate, as ‘*Saratan*’ refers to the fourth month of the Afghan calendar, roughly from 21 June to 22 July. In short, while the translation employs informative footnotes, some of them do not serve a purely informative function due to an oversight on the translator’s part.

It is interesting to note that besides the use of footnotes to explain the meaning of words which are retained in italics in the Malay translation, they are also used to explain the meaning of certain words which are *not* italicised by the author in the original English text but *are* italicised by the translator in the Malay translation. This involves two Dari/Pashto words, as seen in the following examples:

#### Example 8

- ST: Their mothers walked in groups of three or four, some in burqas, others not. (p. 64)  
 TT: Ibu-ibu mereka berjalan dalam kumpulan tiga atau empat orang. Ada yang memakai *burqa*<sup>14</sup> dan ada yang tidak. (p. 111-112)

In this example, the author uses the word ‘*burqa*’ in the novel in English. The word is not printed in italics in the English text. The word ‘*burqa*’, however, is italicised in the Malay translation. The translator also inserts a footnote, which explains that ‘*burqa*’ is ‘*pakaian yang menutupi seluruh badan dan muka*’ (lit. ‘a garment which covers the whole body and face’).

Another Dari/Pashto word which is not italicised in the English text but is italicised by the translator in the translation is ‘*tandoor*’, as seen in the following:

#### Example 9

- ST: He added a tandoor outside for making bread... (p. 10)  
 TT: Sebuah tempayan *tandoor*<sup>4</sup> besar diletakkan di luar untuk tempat Nana membakar roti. (p. 17)

In this example, the translator explains that ‘*tandoor*’ refers to ‘*ketuhar untuk membakar roti*’ (lit. ‘an oven for baking bread’).

The decision on the part of the author to not italicise the words ‘*burqa*’ and ‘*tandoor*’ in the source text in English may be due to the fact that these words have become part of the English vocabulary. Many words from the Islamic world have entered popular usage in English (Mohamed Ali & Haja Mohideen, 2012). In the *Collins Dictionary*, there is an entry for ‘*burqa*’ (burqa, n.d.a), with the words ‘*burka*’ and ‘*burkha*’ listed as its variant spellings. The word ‘*tandoor*’ (tandoor, n.d.a) can also be found in the dictionary. The word ‘*burqa*’ (burqa, n.d.b) can also be found in the *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* but it is stated that it is a variant spelling of ‘*burka*’ (burka, n.d.a). Similarly, the word ‘*tandoor*’ (tandoor, n.d.b) is also listed in the *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*. The *Oxford Learner’s Dictionary*, meanwhile, has an entry for ‘*burka*’ (burka, n.d.b) but the words ‘*burkha*’ and ‘*burqa*’ are listed as its variants. There is no entry for ‘*tandoor*’ in the *Oxford Learner’s Dictionary*; however, the word ‘*tandoori*’ (tandoori, n.d.) is listed, and the meaning of the word ‘*tandoor*’ can be found within the explanation for the word ‘*tandoori*’.

Meanwhile, the decision on the part of the translator not only to italicise the words ‘*burqa*’ and ‘*tandoor*’ in the Malay translation but also to provide footnotes for them reflects his belief and assumption that their meanings are not clear to his readers. The extent to which these words actually pose a problem to the target readers, however, is questionable. Many words of Arabic

origin have entered common usage in Malay and have become fully absorbed into the Malay language (Zaidan, Zailani & Ismail, 2015). It must be noted, however, that there is no entry for ‘burqa’ in *Pusat Rujukan Persuratan Melayu, Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka* (PRPM DBP), the most authoritative Malay-language reference source in Malaysia. The word ‘burka’ (burka, n.d.c), however, is listed. Similarly, there is no entry for ‘tandoor’; there is, however, an entry and explanation for the word ‘tanduri’ (tanduri, n.d.), which carries the same meaning as the English ‘tandoori’. It must also be noted that although the word ‘tandur’ (tandur, n.d.) is listed in *PRPM DBP*, the meaning of the Malay word ‘tandur’, which is ‘*tali untuk menurun-naikkan bidai*’ (lit. the cord used to lower or raise blinds) has little to do with the meaning of the English word ‘tandoor’.

There are also non-Dari/Pashto words which are not italicised by the author in the English text but are italicised in the Malay translation. These comprise English words and borrowings from other languages which are now commonly used and understood in English. The following is one example:

Example 10

- ST: There is a pomegranate tree in the yard and a thicket of sweetbriar bushes. (p. 396)  
 TT: Sebatang pohon delima berdiri tegak di halaman, berhampiran rumpun belukar *sweetbriar*<sup>53</sup>. (p. 683)

In Example 10, the word ‘*sweetbriar*’ is italicised in the Malay translation and is defined in footnote 53 as ‘*sejenis pokok mawar*’ (lit. ‘a type of rose’). Other non-Dari/Pashto words which are also footnoted are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Non-Dari/Pashto words which are given footnotes in the translation

Footnoted word	Footnote number	Explanation provided in footnote and its meaning
<i>okra</i>	footnote 22 (p. 134)	<i>bendi</i> (lit. the Malay word for okra/lady's finger)
<i>suede</i>	footnote 23 (p. 149)	<i>bahan kulit tiruan</i> (lit. artificial leather)
<i>cilantro</i>	footnote 33 (p. 260)	<i>daun ketumbar</i> (lit. coriander leaves)
<i>rue</i>	footnote 40 (p. 394)	<i>sejenis tumbuhan renek berwarna hijau dan berbau kuat</i> (lit. a type of evergreen shrub with a strong odour)
<i>samovar</i>	footnote 50 (p. 634)	<i>sejenis bekas logam yang secara tradisional digunakan untuk memanaskan dan mendidihkan air</i> (lit. a type of metal container traditionally used to heat and boil water)
<i>interim</i>	footnote 51 (p. 648)	<i>bersifat sementara</i> (lit. temporary in nature)

The decision on the part of the translator to italicise and footnote some of these words is indeed surprising and questionable. The words ‘okra’ and ‘cilantro’ both have equivalent Malay words, which are ‘*bendi*’ and ‘*ketumbar*’ respectively. As such, the footnotes here can be considered as unnecessary. In-text replacement would have been a more appropriate solution. The word ‘*interim*’ also does not require a footnote, as the word has been absorbed into the Malay language. If there are doubts on the translator’s part regarding the ability of the target readers to understand the meaning of the word, replacing the word ‘*interim*’ with the Malay word ‘*sementara*’ (lit. ‘temporary’) in the text itself would have been a more viable option. It must also be noted that although there is no equivalent Malay word for ‘suede’ and

the translator may have felt fully justified in footnoting the word; however the description provided is inaccurate, as 'suede' is not '*bahan kulit tiruan*' (lit. 'artificial leather') but rather 'leather with a napped surface' (suede, n.d.).

The translator's decision to provide footnotes for these words is seen as even more puzzling considering that the names of certain other plants mentioned in the source text are translated using their Malay equivalents. For instance, 'pomegranate' in Example 10 is translated using its accepted Malay equivalent, '*delima*'. In another example, 'honeysuckle' is also translated using its Malay equivalent, '*pokok buas-buas*' (p. 63). While words such as 'suede' and 'interim' are italicised and at the same time footnoted, there are also words which are italicised in the Malay translation but not footnoted, for example '*parakeet*' (p. 15), '*marigold*' (p. 78), '*radish*' (p. 134), '*ravioli*' (p. 511), '*quince*' (p. 657), '*buttercup*' (p. 665), and '*suite*' (p. 675).

At the same time, the English word 'rue' is not italicised in the Malay translation, but it is given a footnote which explains its meaning. There are some other English words which are also not italicised in the Malay translation but, unlike the word 'rue', these words are not footnoted. Examples include the words 'pistachio' (p. 6), 'trout' (p. 14), 'milkweed' (p. 63), 'willow' (p. 135), 'daisy' (p. 360), 'tulip' (p. 360) and 'flamingo' (p. 554).

Footnotes may be important in a translation in order to explain to the target readers the meaning of certain words which are culturally distant, for example, '*samovar*', '*chapan*' and '*buzkashi*'. An understanding of these words may help the readers visualise more clearly what the foreign words refer to. Footnotes, however, need to be used in a judicious manner. They need not be supplied by the translator if the meaning of the foreign word is already clear from the context. In the case of informative or explanatory footnotes, care must be taken to ensure the accuracy of the information provided in the footnotes if they are to serve their purpose.

## 5. Conclusion

This study which focuses on the use of footnotes in the Malay translation of *A Thousand Splendid Suns* reveals that most of the words which are given footnotes are words which carry cultural information. The footnotes supplement the text by adding information which the readers may use to understand the text. The information provided is in the form of definitions or literal translations of the foreign expressions used. The translator does not use the footnote to explain his translation strategies, and neither does he use the footnote to convey his own opinion. It can therefore be said that in this particular case, the footnotes serve a purely explanatory or informative function.

Paratextual information in a translated text can help facilitate intercultural communication (Luo & Zhang, 2018, p. 597). As one aspect of paratext which helps present the translation to the readers, footnotes generally assist readers in understanding the source culture by providing information which may be important in their effort to understand the translation. Footnotes, therefore, may help bring a translation closer to its readers. This, however, is only true if the information provided by the translator is accurate.

By focusing on the translated text, this study can only determine the kind of paratextual information which is provided in the translation by the translator. It cannot explain the translator's rationale regarding footnotes – for example, why they are given when the meaning is already clear from the context, or used for certain English words. It is recommended that further investigation be carried out, with focus not on the text but on the translator. The present study can be complemented by one that investigates the translator's decision-making process, so that we are able to understand not

only what was done by the translator but also why he chose to do it in that way.

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## Appendix

Words which are given footnotes in the Malay translation of *A Thousand Splendid Suns* and details of the footnotes.

No.	Words in the Malay translation which are given footnotes	Page	Footnote details
1.	<i>kolba</i>	(p. 2 )	<b>Footnote 1:</b> Pondok kecil
2.	<i>shahnai</i>	(p. 15 )	<b>Footnote 2:</b> Sejenis serunai yang mengembang di bahagian hadapan
3.	<i>dohol</i>	(p. 15 )	<b>Footnote 3:</b> Sejenis dram besar berbentuk silinder dengan dua permukaan kulit; biasanya dipukul di kedua-dua belah dengan batang kayu atau tangan
4.	<i>tandoor</i>	(p. 17 )	<b>Footnote 4:</b> Ketuhar untuk membakar roti
5.	<i>shalqam</i>	(p. 26)	<b>Footnote 5:</b> sayur
6.	<i>sabzi</i>	(p. 26)	<b>Footnote 6:</b> Bermaksud sayuran hijau, bermaksud juga pelbagai sayuran hijau yang dimasak secara stuw atau rendidih dengan bahan-bahan lain seperti daging dan herba
7.	<i>akhund</i>	(p. 27)	<b>Footnote 7:</b> Guru beragama Islam atau ustaz
8.	<i>Dokhtar jo</i>	(p. 56)	<b>Footnote 8:</b> Bermaksud 'saudari'
9.	<i>bas</i>	(p. 60)	<b>Footnote 9:</b> Bermaksud 'cukup' atau 'sudah'
10.	<i>aush</i>	(p. 70)	<b>Footnote 10:</b> Sejenis sup Afghan yang dibuat daripada mi dan pelbagai sayuran dalam sup tomato, ditambah dengan yogurt dan hirisan daun pudina
11.	<i>na fahmidi</i>	(p. 77)	<b>Footnote 11:</b> Bermaksud, 'Tidak, nak'
12.	<i>moochi</i>	(p. 81)	<b>Footnote 12:</b> Bermaksud orang biasa atau peminta sedekah
13.	<i>tashakor</i>	(p. 103)	<b>Footnote 13:</b> Bermaksud 'Terima kasih'
14.	<i>burqa</i>	(p. 112 )	<b>Footnote 14:</b> Pakaian yang menutupi seluruh badan dan muka
15.	<i>Khala jan</i>	(p. 114)	<b>Footnote 15:</b> Bermaksud 'mak cik'
16.	<i>Hamshira</i>	(p. 116)	<b>Footnote 16:</b> Bermaksud 'cik'
17.	<i>affawa</i>	(p. 118)	<b>Footnote 17:</b> Mangkuk untuk mencuci tangan
18.	<i>gari</i>	(p. 124)	<b>Footnote 18:</b> Sejenis pedati
19.	<i>chapan</i>	(p. 125)	<b>Footnote 19:</b> Kaftan; baju lelaki yang longgar dan labuh
20.	<i>poostin</i>	(p. 127)	<b>Footnote 20:</b> Sejenis kot yang diperbuat daripada kulit haiwan
21.	<i>iftar</i>	(p. 133)	<b>Footnote 21:</b> Waktu berbuka puasa
22.	<i>okra</i>	(p. 134 )	<b>Footnote 22:</b> Bendi

23.	<i>suede</i>	(p. 149 )	<b>Footnote 23:</b> Bahan kulit tiruan
24.	<i>borani</i>	(p. 150)	<b>Footnote 24:</b> Sejenis hidangan salad
25.	<i>aushak</i>	(p. 150)	<b>Footnote 25:</b> Sejenis ladu pasta yang berisi sos tomat berdaging, dengan yogurt dan daun pudina
26.	<i>ghazal</i>	(p. 185)	<b>Footnote 26:</b> Lagu-lagu cinta atau puisi cinta
27.	<i>badmash</i>	(p. 200)	<b>Footnote 27:</b> Perkataan Hindi yang bermaksud ‘jahat’
28.	<i>shorwa</i>	(p. 219)	<b>Footnote 28:</b> Sejenis sup tradisional Afghanistan
29.	<i>mozahem</i>	(p. 219)	<b>Footnote 29:</b> Seorang yang berpura-pura
30.	<i>giryank</i>	(p. 223)	<b>Footnote 30:</b> Bermaksud ‘mudah menangis’
31.	<i>pakol</i>	(p. 232)	<b>Footnote 31:</b> Sejenis topi
32.	<i>pajalusta</i>	(p. 243)	<b>Footnote 32:</b> (bahasa Rusia) bermaksud ‘sila’ atau ‘terima kasih kembali’
33.	<i>cilantro</i>	(p. 260)	<b>Footnote 33:</b> Daun ketumbar
34.	<i>ho bacha</i>	(p. 279)	<b>Footnote 34:</b> Bermaksud, ‘hei budak’
35.	<i>tumban</i>	(p. 337)	<b>Footnote 35:</b> Sut
36.	<i>loftan</i>	(p. 350)	<b>Footnote 36:</b> Bermaksud ‘Tolong’
37.	<i>ambagh</i>	(p. 356)	<b>Footnote 37:</b> Bermaksud isteri yang dimadukan suami
38.	<i>buzkashi</i>	(p. 382)	<b>Footnote 38:</b> Sejenis sukan yang popular dari Afghanistan. Dipanggil juga perlumbaan mengheret kambing, sukan ini dimainkan dengan menunggang kuda
39.	<i>dozd</i>	(p. 387)	<b>Footnote 39:</b> Bermaksud ‘pencuri’
40.	<i>rue</i>	(p. 394)	<b>Footnote 40:</b> Sejenis tumbuhan renek berwarna hijau dan berbau kuat
41.	<i>Saratan</i>	(p. 397)	<b>Footnote 41:</b> Bermaksud tertentu
42.	<i>halwa</i>	(p. 414)	<b>Footnote 42:</b> Puding
43.	<i>zahmat</i>	(p. 434)	<b>Footnote 43:</b> Bermaksud ‘kesusahan’
44.	<i>pakora</i>	(p. 506)	<b>Footnote 44:</b> Sejenis makanan seperti jemput-jemput sayur atau tempura
45.	<i>jelabi</i>	(p. 515)	<b>Footnote 45:</b> Donut
46.	<i>naswar</i>	(p. 546)	<b>Footnote 46:</b> Tembakau
47.	<i>babaloo</i>	(p. 596)	<b>Footnote 47:</b> Bermaksud ‘momok’ atau sejenis hantu yang disebut-sebut untuk menakut-nakutkan kanak-kanak
48.	<i>noor</i>	(p. 603)	<b>Footnote 48:</b> Cahaya
49.	<i>goh</i>	(p. 610)	<b>Footnote 49:</b> Bermaksud ‘tahi’



50.	<i>samovar</i>	(p. 634)	<b>Footnote 50:</b> Sejenis bekas logam yang secara tradisional digunakan untuk memanaskan dan mendidihkan air
51.	<i>interim</i>	(p. 648)	<b>Footnote 51:</b> Bersifat sementara
52.	<i>pirhan-tumban</i>	(p. 662)	<b>Footnote 52:</b> Sejenis pakaian tradisional Afghan
53.	<i>sweetbriar</i>	(p. 683)	<b>Footnote 53:</b> Sejenis pokok mawar