Chapter III

METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the method used to gather data, the scope of the research, the method used for data analyses and the problems faced when gathering the data.

3.1 Scope of the Research

Data about the Peranakan literature was mainly gathered through OPAC searches. The main concern of this study is on Baba Malay language translated works from Chinese classics. Nevertheless, there are a small number of Baba translations of English works. There are Bible translation works and hymn song by the Christian missionaries. William G. Shellabear was one of the translators. He had also translated John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress* entitled, *Charita Orang Yang Chari Slamat* in Baba Malay in 1905.

There were few English literature translations into Baba Malay by the Babas. *Chrita der-hal Florence Nightingale* was one of them, which was translated by Goh Hood Keng in 1908. The same translator had translated another story entitled *Si Hitam yang Chantik* (Black Beauty) in 1913, published by Methodist Publishing House, Singapore. These works would not be included in the present study.

To identify the existence of Chinese literature translation to Baba Malay, a search was made of eight major library catalogues. However, only six libraries hold the Baba collection, and these include the University of Malaya Library (UML), Dewan

Bahasa dan Pustaka Library (DBPL), National Library of Singapore (NLS), National University of Singapore Library (NUSL), University of Science Malaysia (USML) and the British Library (BL). National Library of Malaysia and National Archives of Malaysia do not hold any such collections. The National Museum of Singapore is also one of the libraries that owned a small number of Baba publications (Proudfoot, 1989).

The catalogues of the NLS, NUS, and BL were searched through the Internet and the records are downloaded. UML and USML catalogues were search directly through their OPAC. For the DBPL, a card catalogue search was made since their library's online catalogue is still under construction.

It was found that UML possesses the largest collection of the Baba translated works currently. It has a total of 61 titles, followed by DBPL with 20 titles, USML with 24 titles, NLS holds 24 titles, NUSL holds 16 titles and BL holds 9 titles. The total number of Baba translated works retrieved was 154 titles. However, among these, duplicate copies were identified. Only 68 unique titles were finally chosen for analyses.

Only the collection of UML and the DBPL were being accessed physically. The majority of the Baba publications are kept as part of the various libraries' rare collection. In other words they are kept in closed stacks. The UML keeps these publications mostly in the Za'ba Memorial Library, except for copies on microfilms and microfiches, which were stored in the main library. The DBPL keeps the Baba collection in the Documentation Department, which was also the closed stack

section. However, a small number of the Baba collections are displayed at the open shelves in DBPL. The advantage of the open shelf copies is that they can be borrowed and photocopied freely by researchers. This is totally different with the UML, which only allowed limited photocopying at the Za'ba Memorial Library.

The Za'ba Memorial Library was founded in 1976 and hold the bequest of the personal library of Tan Sri Zainal Abidin bin Ahmad. However, the library began collecting Baba literary works only in the late 1970s (according to the ex-officer of the library, Mr. Ibrahim Ismail). The Baba works are shelved according to Library of Congress Classification scheme and only restricted access is allowed.

The Baba translated works can be accessed either at the library reference hall within the premises of the Za'ba Memorial Library. The collection is in poor condition with the majority damaged by the book pests. A photocopy and bound version of the collection can also be referred to within the library's reference hall. Four titles of the translated works held in UML, are in microform (either microfilm or microfiche form).

DBPL mainly served researchers in the field of Malay literature and languages. The library holds a small collection of Baba literature. The books of DBPL are arranged in the Dewey Decimal Classification scheme. The OPAC of the library is not ready and library search has to be conducted through the card catalogue. To identify the relevant titles, a search was made under "fiksyen cina" (Chinese Fiction). Four *Peranakan* titles are kept on the open shelves and one is kept in microfilm form. The rest is stored in the Documentation Department. As these books were obtained

from private donations from the public, the conditions of some of the books are poor. One fifth of the DBPL's Baba publication cannot be traced (6 given titles cannot be located). It is suspected that the titles may have been discarded during previous weeding processes. Some of the books are being bound and no duplicate copies were made.

3.2 Data Collection

After accessing the translated works from both UML and DBPL, it was found that the books contains valuable information about translation scripts, advertisements, announcement of new publications, introduction of the translators, publishers etc. Only titles that have been accessed were selected for an in-depth study. Each title was entered into an Excel databases and presented in tables. For some of the title published in numerous volumes, each volume is entered separately. The rationale is that each volume might have different information such as year of publication, printing company and even title. If a book contained two different stories, the information is entered into the column for note. Each story is entered separately as a different record. Any peculiarities about the book, such as differences in the title found on the cover and the title page will be noted in the "notes" column.

For most titles, the information found on the cover is used as the title of the record. Baba translated works seldom provides title pages. Most books merged the title page and the first page of the content into one page. For this study, only selected information was chosen for analysis. They are mainly divided into five categories and this is indicated in Table 3.1.

Table 3. 1: Selected Information for Analysis

Persons Involved	Publishers	Contents	Physical Description	Library Holdings
Translator Editor Illustrator Chinese reader Romanised Malay reader Helper	Publisher Place of Publication Year of Publication Address of Publisher Printing Company Address of Printing Company	Content	Title from Front Page Title from Title Page Parallel Title Design of the book Size of the book Pagination Illustration Volume Price Edition	Location

As a result of the poor condition of some titles and many were unprofessionally published, full information about some titles cannot be determined. In such a situation a question mark (?) will be entered in the appropriate columns. For example, a question mark will be noted at the edition column, if the edition cannot be found and *San.* or *s.l.* was entered where ever the name of the publisher or place of publication cannot be determined. However, for some titles' information was obtained from the government gazette, contemporary advertisement and announcement found in the published book. Another major source of information is *Early Malay Printed Books* by Proudfoot (1993).

3.2.1 Persons Involved

The persons involved refers to the following persons together with the designation used to establish their roles (given within brackets):

- Translator (tr.)
- Editor (ed.)
- Illustrator (ill.)

- Chinese reader (C.re.)
- Romanised Malay reader (RM.re.)
- Helper (he.)

Most of the translated works were translated from the Chinese popular fiction and the author of the original story cannot be traced. The story itself could already be popular before it was written into a book. According to Teo (1980), the translations were mostly written by someone who had often listened from a storyteller. In this study, the author of works is not indicated. For example, the translator of *Botan Kiang Choo* was indicated to be: Wan Boon Seng (tr.). Since the translated work of the Baba is the focal point, the role of a translator will be given more attention than the other roles. The editor normally coordinates the translator and illustrator for published works. In *Ang Bin Sio Chia*, "Itu Baba Seng [Wan Boon Seng] sudah ator-kan ini chrita punya peratoran chakapan dan ehjaan surat (spelling)..." [Baba Seng has arranged (edited) the story in terms of sentence structure and spelling]. However, the editor sometimes could also be the translator.

The illustrators were less recognised and their names were seldom mentioned in books. Their names were sometimes printed beside the illustrations. For most works, illustrators were not mentioned. The Chinese reader was the ones who understood and read the Chinese story to the translator or the helper. The Romanised Malay reader was a bilingual (Baba Malay and Chinese) person who was illiterate. His role was to interpret the Chinese stories into Baba Malay language for the translator. The role of a helper was not well defined in the book. Their jobs were probably to assist the translator or read to the translator.

Three types of information are obtained for the persons involved. This comprises chronological analyse of persons involved, their principle roles and their other roles. Lastly, those who played more than a role will be mentioned in detail. Five of the most active persons involved will be studied in depth.

3.2.2 The Active Publishers of Baba Translated Works

The field "publisher" contains the following data: publishers, place of publication, year of publication, address of publishers, printers and address of printers. The data of the propiertor or sales agents which can be found in the books, is not included in this analysis. 'Publishers' information is used to analyse the publishers and printing company involved and the category of the publishers involved.

Sometimes the translator might also be the publisher of a publication. They might publish their own works by hiring helpers (assistants). It could be a Chinese reader or Romanised Malay reader. This situation makes it difficult to differentiate the role of a person. In such cases, additional evidence is searched to resolve the confusion. However this is not always possible because of the limited resources.

3.2.3 Contents of the Baba Translated Works

One of the most important information being analysed is the content of the book. The books are divided into five categories. Each category reflects different emphasis of the stories. However, the description about the contents of the book is subjective.

The purpose of analysing the content is to trace the interest of the readers and the expertise of the persons involved in early 20th century. The contents are described in accordance to the following five categories,

a. Folklore

The titles in this category cover traditional beliefs. Normally, it encompasses stories told by the elders in a community, handed down from generation to generation. Examples are, *Gong Kiah Sie, Ngo Chu Low Tang Kia* and *Song Kang.*

b. Romances

These are love stories. Normally, the moral behind the stories upholds the love between lovers or passion towards a country. Stories such as, *Gnoh Bee Yean, Pat Bee Toh* and *Kek Hua Sio Chia* bear such features.

c. Chivalrous stories

These stories normally portray the characters of knights or warriors and highlight the spirit of courage, loyalty, devotion to the weak and helpless. Normally these knights had supernatural powers, such as characters in *Flying Swords, Lek Boh Tan* and *It Ki Mui Peng Suanh Chat.* Usually, the Chinese traditional value will apply in the story, such as *It Ki Mui* (1936) which mentioned in the preface that '*Orang benar pulang di benar atau Orang baik mesti dapat pembalasan yang baik*' [The right prevails or good deed will always receive good returns].

d. Legends

These stories normally highlight the characteristics of godliness or the mysticism. The story normally involved supernatural or imaginary persons. For example, *Kou Hey Thian* tells the story of how a monkey which had supernatural power, succeeded in obtaining scriptures from the West. *Hong Sin* and *Chay Kong Wak Hood* are the other two stories that revealed stories of similar characteristics.

e. Historical stories

These titles usually narrated true stories in the past. The historical story did not necessarily describe times of war but could be recorded as an imperial history, such as *Cheong Moh Inn, Cheng Teck Koon Yew Kang Nam* and *Khian Leong Koon Yew Kang Nam.*

Sometimes it is difficult to ascertain the true content of a title. It could be a story of historical romances, such as the story of *Cheong Moh Inn,* which elaborated on the plight of an empress who was ugly (blue-faced) but intelligent. It tells about the bitter-sweet romances between Cheong Moh Inn and the emperor. The categorisation of works is therefore subjective. The analyses here stress on the trend of story contents over the sixty-year period, which reflected the interest of readers during that time.

3.2.4 Physical Description

In this section, information of the physical description of a book will be collected. The objective of capturing these information is to give a full description and documentation on the literature. In this study, no graph or chart will be presented.

Solely description regarding the book will be mentioned. For instance, the style of the title, the normal size of the book, the elements found on the preface, the effect of the illustration and the design of the book will be studied as a whole.

3.2.5 Library Holdings

Library holding is analysed to indicate the location of each publication found in Malaysia and Singapore. Mainly six libraries have catalogued their Baba translated works under the subject of Peranakan fiction, Peranakan literature, Chinese fiction, Chinese literature, and Chinese literature translation into Malay (according to Library of Congress Subject Headings)

In this section, the location of a book is indicated by institutions holding it and excluded the shelve numbers given. However, for publications in microforms, the microform number is indicated. The same title could be located in several libraries at the same time, such as *Kou Chey Thian* is located in all libraries except the British Library.

The size of the collection in the libraries will be examined, and the proportion of each collection which comprises unique items will be presented. The unique items are those not held in the other five libraries.

3.3 Data Analysis

The data is analysed using Windows Excel. The raw data is converted into conventional graphs with corresponding legends or table. It is used to analyse the five major categories of persons involved, publishers involved, library holdings, and

contents. The results are presented in the form of linear graphs, pie charts and bar graphs with explanations.

In short the data will be keyed to serve two purposes, one is to present a bibliographic list and another is to be used for analysis. For the bibliographic list, more data will be keyed in. The findings and description is given in Chapter four. The bibliographic list is presented in the appendices of this paper.

3.4 Problems of the Study

A number of bibliographies on Baba literature have been published. University Malaya has published *Koleksi Sastera Peranakan* (1998) and *Early Malay Printed Books* by Ian Proudfoot (1993). Proudfoot did not include the collection from USML. The National University of Malaysia (UKM) has also published *Katalog Induk Koleksi Sastera Cina Peranakan* which lists Malaysian Baba and Indonesian Peranakan literature (1988). Scholars like Teo Lay Teen (1980), Tan Chee Beng (1981) and Claudine Salmon (1987) have also listed a substantial number of Baba literatures in their papers respectively. They listed the translated literature according to translators rather than chronologically. In short, there is no one source which collates all published Baba literature.

One of the main problems of collecting data on this subject is the fact that some literatures are held in the foreign collection such as the British Library. The British Library kept this collection in their Oriental Collection. According to Proudfoot (1989), most of the Oriental Collection can only be accessed through card catalogue. The National Museum of Singapore is facing the same problem. Here, the Baba

collection is treated as material for exhibition. As a consequence, it is not accessible on the OPAC.

Difficulties of physically accessing are another obstacle to this study. The Baba translation works were distributed in limited copies and very few were reprinted (excepts *Sam Kok, Hong Keow*). Hence, such translation works have become rare and are kept as rare collections in libraries. This has made access to it difficult. A number of the collection is in private individual collection which also make access difficult. The difficulties are further exacerbated by incomplete library catalogue holdings.

3.5 Summary

This chapter explains the method and types of data to be collected for the study. The scope of the Baba literature is narrowed down to Baba translated works of Chinese classics. The Baba literatures are analysed in accordance to five categories, persons involved, publishers, contents, physical description and library holdings.