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## Abstract

### **Figuration, Lexis and Cultural Resonance: A corpus based study of Malay**

This paper is a corpus based study of the cultural meaning of figuration in the Malay lexicon. Initially, polysemy is examined for evidence of figurative conceptualisation at the single word level for two body part terms, *mata* ‘the eye’ and *kaki* ‘the foot /leg’. Compound forms are then examined to identify the extent to which similar conceptualisations are found. Finally, figurative phraseological units (*simpulan bahasa*) are examined for figurative conceptualisations. We consider the relationship between figurative meaning at the phraseological and lexical levels. The identification of figurative language is made with reference to dictionaries and its saliency is gauged with reference to a corpus of contemporary Malay.

A methodology is proposed for the description of cultural resonance. This involves the identification of conceptual keys that, it is suggested, underlie figurative uses of language. Identification takes place by selecting a number of surface forms which share the same underlying idea and calculating the sum of their tokens in the corpus. Illustration is provided of conceptual keys and their cultural resonance; where relevant, comparison is made with English phraseology. A corpus based study of figurative language is, potentially, of great importance in understanding the relationship between lexis and culture in Malay and provides the bedrock for further cross-linguistic research.

## 1. Introduction

This paper explores figuration in the Malay lexicon and argues that lexical productivity provides a source of cultural insight. It is argued that figuration - and here we use figuration as a superordinate term for metaphor, metonymy and other tropes - motivates polysemy, compounding and phraseological creation. It is also proposed that there is a bi-directional relationship between meanings at single and multi-word levels. That is to say phraseological and compound meanings may derive from polysemous meanings and polysemous meanings may derive from phraseological meanings. It is argued that figuration is indicative of the resonance of certain concepts within Malay culture.

It is proposed that what may be termed ‘cultural resonance’ can be accessed through identification of a conceptual basis. We propose that this conceptual basis may be represented by the formal statement of an idea that can be inferred from the evidence offered by various figurative surface forms of language. Although Lakoff & Johnson (1980) use the term image schema to refer to an idea that underlies surface metaphors, we prefer to call this a conceptual key. The conceptual key may include reference to the semantic and/or pragmatic meanings shared by these surface forms and is therefore an underlying proposition that bridges language and thought. It may include, conceptual metaphors, conceptual metonyms, conventional scripts and other types of knowledge drawn from everyday experience. It is a point of contact between language and culture and is a means of representing the modes of thought that are resonant within a culture.

Conceptual keys should capture phraseological meanings that are not predictable from a single surface form alone. Many fixed phrases have a pragmatic role in offering a culture specific evaluation and therefore have a connotational meaning, but this pragmatic meaning only becomes transparent from an examination of a number of surface phraseological forms. An example of this can be found in Malay figurative units containing *kaki* ‘the leg’ or ‘the foot’. There are many phraseological forms which contain *kaki* ‘foot’ and they always signal a negative evaluation; for example,

*kaki perempuan* – foot woman – means ‘someone who cannot stop themselves from chasing after women’; *kaki kuda* – foot horse – means ‘someone who is addicted to betting on horses’. Yet this negative meaning is not found at the single word level where the affective meaning is ‘someone who likes doing something very much’ (translation from Kamus Dewan 1995). We propose the conceptual key: ‘A *KAKI* IS SOMEONE WHO IS ADDICTED TO DOING SOMETHING BAD’. This conceptual key captures some special cultural and pragmatic meanings found at the phrase level which are resonant in Malay culture.

The accurate identification of conceptual keys is important because it provides a point of access into cultural meaning. We share the view of Quinn (1991) that metaphors are selected to fit a preexisting culturally shared model and the views of Russian phraseologists (Teliya et al 1998) that common kernel metaphors serve as superordinates for many surface phraseological forms. Charteris-Black (1995a) illustrates the role of metaphor in conceptualisation across languages in a cross cultural study of Malay, Moroccan Arabic and English. Finally, we believe that identification of the figurative processes underlying the lexical productivity of Malay provides the basis for further cross linguistic analysis; for as Cameron (1999:82) observes: ‘How far the metaphors of language are universal or culture-specific remains a vast question in need of empirical exploration, and will be illuminated through cross-cultural and cross-linguistic studies’. We hope to commence here an exploration of cultural resonance in Malay.

## **2. Problems and Solutions in cross-cultural and cross linguistic studies**

It may be helpful to provide a brief definition of the term “culture”; the original meaning of cultivation (as in agriculture) has been largely replaced in the social sciences with the meaning of “the characteristic beliefs and attitudes which are common to a particular social grouping” (Stubbs 1996:191). There is an implicit assumption that these will exert a strong influence on the patterns of behaviour of a social group. Since language is one form of behaviour through which group members interact with each other we can anticipate that evidence of culture will be present in the recurring phrases of a language. Cross cultural research with an anthropological bias (e.g. Goddard 1997) identifies the methodological problem of establishing a

theoretical description of cultural outlooks that is independent of the language in which these outlooks are communicated. This is a well known problem in much cross-linguistic research: inevitably, the language which is used to present a particular cultural position will - like a stained glass window - impose its own forms and cast its own hues on the observed language. One solution developed by Anna Wierzbicka and colleagues is a 'natural semantic metalanguage' (cf. Wierzbicka 1972, 1980, 1992, 1996, Goddard & Wierzbicka 1994 and Goddard 1997). This consists of a core set of semantic primes - or lexical universals - through which meanings may be conveyed unambiguously. These semantic primitives are established with reference to the role that a concept plays in defining other concepts and the range of languages in which a concept has been lexicalised (Wierzbicka 1992).

There are some problems with Wierzbicka's approach; it is hard to see how specific meanings can be produced by the very limited set of terms which are common to definitions of a range of concepts. We know from frequency lists of languages that the most common words are grammatical or non-content words such as pronouns and articles and it is doubtful that much of conceptual significance can be conveyed with such a restricted vocabulary. There is also the danger that a new language may be identified in which one of this minimal set of terms is unavailable, although, admittedly, this is a possibility which any universalist position faces. Even Wierzbicka is circumspect about the value of such an exercise:

I think that the lexicons of different languages indeed suggest different conceptual universes, and that not everything that can be said in one language can be said (without additions and subtractions) in another, and that is not just a matter of certain things being easier to say in one language than in another. (Wierzbicka 1992:20)

Goddard (1997:183), in a study of Malay, seeks to 'uncover the links between particular ways of speaking and the cultural values and attitudes of the people concerned' through the use of Wierzbicka's notion of cultural script; this is a hypothesis about a particular cultural norm which is specified in terms of a set of rules using the 'natural semantic metalanguage'. Subsequently, these insights are supplemented by other types of data: *peribahasa* (familiar sayings), or typical ways

drawn from the author's own experience of how Malay people react in familiar situations, although we may well ask how reliable the latter are - independently of other sources.

The proposed methodology here is to explore the relationship between language and culture specific outlooks by examining the patterns of language use within a specific domain in a chosen corpus of language; for as Stubbs (1996:21) points out: "Much of this deep patterning is beyond human observation and memory. It is observable only indirectly in the probabilities associated with lexical and grammatical choices across long texts and corpora". The methodology of this paper therefore has a linguistic rather than a socio-psychological orientation and is quantitatively basis. It is proposed that salience will be related to the frequency with which words and combinations of words co-occur in a corpus of language. In this respect the approach will be in line with the Firthian notion of meaning as function in context; the meanings of particular idioms will be explored within their collocational settings as defined by Firth as the 'company words keep'. It is proposed that high frequency figurative collocations will provide evidence of the cultural resonance of certain concepts that are important to Malay culture.

It may seem too easy a solution to propose that statistical probability alone is an accurate gauge of resonance, but we should recall that the initial selection of patterns on which to collect frequencies will be with reference to forms which have become idiomatic because of their popular use. As Stubbs (1996:158) comments:

....recurrent ways of talking do not determine thought, but they provide familiar and conventional representations of people and events, by filtering and crystallising ideas, and by providing pre-fabricated means by which ideas can be easily conveyed and grasped.

It should also be noted that where equivalencies are claimed between languages - this is necessarily an approximation (as noted above) and specific meanings can only be established with reference to the specific linguistic and pragmatic contexts within which a particular pattern is found.

This procedure is in keeping with Stubbs (1996:169) view that:

Fixed and semi-fixed expressions (collocations, catch phrases, cliches and idioms) encode cultural information. Such recurrent phrases, which derive partly from works of literature and cultural history, are one of the ways in which experience is represented and transmitted. The study of recurrent wordings is therefore of central importance in the study of language and ideology, and can provide empirical evidence of how culture is expressed in lexical patterns.

### **3. Methodology**

Tracing the link between polysemy, compounding and phraseology with reference to a corpus can provide an effective methodology for the identification of conceptual keys because it is one that is not based on introspection alone. A corpus can be used to identify the frequency of words, compounds and phraseological units; salience provides evidence of their resonance in the language; conceptual keys should aim to capture both salience and resonance. We will expect the most productive conceptual keys to correspond with a wide range of types and with a considerable number of tokens for some of these types. We should also accept that further insights offered by additions to a corpus may lead to modification or fine tuning of the conceptual keys.

The corpus used in this study is one held by the Malaysian Language Agency (Dewan Bahasa) in Kuala Lumpur. The part of the whole corpus used in this study is a written corpus taken from publications taken from 1960 until the present day. It is comprised of 12,000,000 words of fiction, 10,000,000 words from newspapers and 3,340,000 words of magazines. The present study does not involve a comparison between the three sub corpora, although there is no reason why this should not be done at a later stage. This is believed to be the first corpus based study of figuration in Malay and the first attempt to use data on the salience of phraseological forms as evidence for cultural resonance in Malay.

Figuration will be illustrated with reference to the semantic field of human body parts. This is for two reasons: because Lakoff and Johnson (1980) argue that metaphors are based on fundamental bodily experiences of the world and because the human body is a highly productive source domain for figurative language in Malay. For example, in an analysis of Malay idiom types (known as *simpulan bahasa*) taken from Hasan Muhamed Ali (1996) we find that 15% of the total number of types contain one body part term. If we include internal body parts (*hati* ‘liver’; *perut* ‘stomach’; *darah* ‘blood’; *tulang* ‘bone’; *otak* ‘brain’) this figure goes up to over 20% of the phraseological stock. In this paper we will describe, analyse and, where possible, compare, the conceptual basis for two body parts: *mata* ‘the eye’, and *kaki* ‘the foot/leg’. We have selected these as they are frequently lexicalised in Malay, because they provide a more diverse pattern of contrast than parts such as hand and foot that form natural pairs and because their centrality to human physical experience suggest that they may offer potential for cross linguistic comparison.

#### **4. Analysis 1: *Mata* ‘eye’**

The dictionary produced by the Malaysian language agency, known as Kamus Dewan, (1995), has six separate headword entries for the Malay word *mata*. The first of these is ‘the organ of sight’. It is preferable to treat the other meanings as etymologically distinct terms or homonyms. The core meaning is determined from the most productive lexeme which has the following related meanings:

1. organ of sight
2. a sharp instrument for cutting
3. something with an aperture
4. the space between the rungs of a ladder
5. indicating exactly central location
6. the shoot of a potato
7. the source of something
8. a classifier for marks in an examination
9. a classifier for the courses of a meal

The meaning of compound forms is based on mutual selection of the sub meanings of each polyseme. While each element has a range of possible meanings when occurring in isolation (as we have seen in the case of *mata* above) only one of these meanings is selected in the compound meaning. In this respect, we propose that the meaning in compound forms is analysable to the extent that it can be readily traced to a particular lexical meaning. Indeed it seems that the facility with which native speakers recognise the link between the semantic basis of a compound form and a polysemous meaning determines the classification of a multi word unit as a compound form or as a figurative phraseological unit (*simpulan bahasa*). However, classification as compound or phraseological unit can be a somewhat arbitrary business; for example, the above classification is based on Zainal Abidin Safarwan (1995), whereas Masri (1997) classifies *mata air*, *mata angin*, *mata benda*, *mata pelajaran*, and *mata wang* as idioms (*simpulan bahasa*). Transparency is not therefore an objective feature of language but dependent on the perception of language users.

The following table shows the frequency of compound nouns occurring more than five times in the corpus; the semantic basis is established by identifying which of the lexical meanings is closest to the compound meaning and the semantic focus of the meaning. There are three major groups of compounds motivated by the first meaning of *mata* as ‘the organ of sight’; these can be classified as agent-focussed, patient-focussed and figurative respectively (shown as A, P or F in table one). With agent-focussed compounds *mata* serves as a metonym for the subject or agent of sight or the physical ability to see e.g., *mata mata* ‘policeman’ and *kaca mata* ‘spectacles’; we also find this meaning in the English transitive verb *to eye*. In patient-focussed compounds *mata* serves as a metonym for the object or patient of sight, i.e. that which is seen: *mata benda* ‘treasure’; we find this in English compounds such as *eye-catching* or *eyesore*. Figurative compounds show evidence of an intervening layer of simile. They share the idea that the referent resembles the eye, for example: *mata ikan* ‘toe’ and *mata kaki* ‘ankle’ resemble the eye in terms of their size (small) and shape (round). They are also vulnerable parts of the anatomy. We find the figurative basis of appearance in the English idioms ‘*the eye of the storm*’ and ‘*cat’s eyes*’.

**Table 1: *Mata* – ‘eye’: Frequencies Compound Nouns (>5 occurrences)**

MALAY COMPOUND	LITERAL TRANSLATION	NATURAL TRANSLATION	BASIS	FOCUS	TOTAL
<i>Air mata</i>	Water eye	tear	7	F	1,433
<i>Cermin mata</i>	Mirror eye	spectacles	1	A	147
<i>Kaca mata</i>	Glass eye	spectacles	1	A	341
<i>Mata air</i>	Eye water	Spring*	7	F	23
<i>Mata angin</i>	Eye wind	Direction from which the wind comes	7	F	31
<i>Mata benda</i>	Eye thing	Treasure	1	P	18
<i>Mata huruf</i>	Eye letter	Character	1	F	6
<i>Mata ikan</i>	Eye fish	Toe	1	F	9
<i>Mata jarum</i>	Eye needle	Eye of a needle	3	F	37
<i>Mata kail</i>	Eye fish hook	Fishhook	3	F	77
<i>Mata kaki</i>	Eye foot	Ankle	1	F	5
<i>Mata kucing</i>	Eye cat	Semi-precious stone	1	F	12
<i>Mata mata</i>	Eye eye	Policeman	1	A	38
<i>Mata mata gelap</i>	eye dark	Private investigator	1	A	44
<i>Mata panah</i>	Eye arrow	Arrowhead	2	F	5
<i>Mata pelajaran</i>	Eye study	Subject of instruction	8	F	1,645
<i>Mata rantai</i>	Eye chain	Link	3	F	9
<i>Mata sasaran</i>	eye aim	Bull’s eye	5	F	5
<i>Mata susu</i>	eye milk	Nipple	7	F	7
<i>Mata tangga</i>	Eye ladder	Rung on a ladder	4	P	7
<i>Mata wang</i>	eye money	Currency	7	F	2,768

\* See also table 5

We may note in terms of frequency of both types and tokens that the most salient conceptualisations are figurative; these may be appearance based or based in the notion of the eye as a source or an origin of something – lexical meaning seven (e.g. *air mata* ‘tear’, *mata air* ‘spring’, *mata wang* ‘currency’). It is likely that the influence of figuration at the compound level can involve activation of more than one lexical meaning; for example, *mata susu* (eye milk) ‘nipple’, has the notion of potency (meaning seven) but also those of central location (meaning five) and resemblance to an eye (meaning one). We also find this dual conceptualisation at the lexical level

where the meaning of *matahari* (eye day) as the ‘sun’ can be related to meanings five, seven and one. Figuratively motivated interaction of semantic bases is likely to enhance cultural resonance.

The majority of types that are motivated by this conceptual key are nominal and refer to particular attributes of a general class of entity; for example *mata ikan* – eye fish – ‘boils’ is grounded in the similar shape and size of ‘boils’ and ‘fish eyes’. *Mata kaki* – eye foot – meaning ‘ankle’ is grounded in the comparable attributes of shape and vulnerability that characterise ‘ankle’ and ‘eye’.

Other significant conceptualisations are based on meaning three: the notion of the eye as an aperture – *mata jarum* ‘the eye of a needle’ and *mata kail* ‘a fish hook’. We also find evidence of this in the English *window* whose original meaning is that of an aperture and originates from the Old Norse *wind eye*. It is still active in English as we can see from contemporary phrases such as *a window of opportunity* or the software programme *Windows*. This suggests that this is a cross-linguistic conceptualisation rather than one with a particularly Malay cultural resonance.

It is now our intention to analyse the conceptual basis of meaning in the figurative units known as *simpulan bahasa* and, in particular, to identify the extent to which the figurative meanings identified at the word and compound level can also be found at the phraseological level. As indicated above, we aim to capture cultural and pragmatic meanings through the identification of conceptual keys and I will now present the findings and analysis for each of the conceptual keys in order of their resonance - gauged as a function of their attested types and their tokens.

**Table 2: Frequency of Malay Figurative Units based on the concept: ‘SEEING IS KNOWING/FEELING etc.’ (n= 9)**

FIGURATIVE UNIT	TRANSLATION	CONCEPTUAL KEY	TOTAL 25m words	FREQUENCY / MILLION WORDS
Mata kepala Eye head	That which is truthful	SEEING IS KNOWING (or other mental process)	88	3.52
Menjolak mata Poke eye	To see something embarrassing or hurtful		58	2.32
Mata hati Eye liver	1) intuition *		55	2.20
Buka mata Open eye	to realise		54	2.16
Mengabui mata Throw dust eye	To confuse someone		47	1.88
Silap mata Error eye	A magic show		47	1.88
Mata batin Eye pagan	Intuition		26	1.04
Mata duitan Eye money	Someone whose only interest is in money for its own sake		23	0.92
Tanda mata Sign eye	Souvenir gift		20	0.80

\* See also table 6

The conceptual key SEEING IS KNOWING is the most resonant for this body part. The conceptual key can take either an affirmative or a negative form; for example, *buka mata* - open eye - means ‘to realise’ whereas *mengabui mata* – throw dust eye – means ‘to confuse’; in both cases a mental sense is conveyed by a physical metaphorical vehicle. The mental sense is most commonly ‘knowing’ this is similar to KNOWING IS SEEING (Lakoff & Turner 1989: 190-91). In Malay the conceptual pattern may also include other mental verbs such as ‘wanting’ (*mata duitan* refers to someone who wants money), or ‘remembering’ (*tanda mata* refers to something which helps us to remember). As Lakoff & Turner’s metaphor implies, we find mental conceptualisations for sight in English figurative units such as ‘in my mind’s eye’, and ‘see eye to eye with’.

The extension from the physical to the mental as regards this body part has a certain universality for which there is evidence in other Romance language in which states of cognition are lexicalised with reference to a word that originally meant ‘seeing’ or ‘sight’ (cf. Sweetser 1987 & 1990). These conceptualisations imply the primacy of sight as a source of knowledge. Since lexicalisation offers evidence of the convergence of perceptual and mental meanings we may conclude that they are from

the same mental or abstract domain and therefore metonymic. However, there also appears to be metaphoric domain transfer in that one sees or perceives *concrete* objects as in *tanda mata* - sign eye - 'souvenir'. In this respect I propose that the conceptual key SEEING IS KNOWING is best described as a figurative blend in which metonymy and metaphor are both present.

There is evidence of a negative version of the conceptual key, i.e.: NOT SEEING IS NOT KNOWING in the Malay data in *silap mata* - error eye - 'a magic show' where the eye is deceived by what it has seen. This can be compared the English *sleight of hand*. The Malay concept highlights the effect of a magic trick while the English concept highlights its cause. In English we also have a similar concept APPEARANCES ARE DECEPTIVE for which evidence can be found in phraseological units such as *more to this than meets the eye* and *more than the eye can see*. In these figurative blends the metonymic element is uppermost as they retain the role of the eye either in experiencing or causing the illusion.

**Table 3: Frequency of Malay Figurative Units based on the concept: 'X LOOKS LIKE THIS' (where X = referent) (n = 5)**

FIGURATIVE UNIT	TRANSLATION	CONCEPTUAL KEY	TOTAL 25m words	FREQUENCY / MILLION WORDS
Cahaya mata Gleaming eye	A much loved Child	X LOOKS LIKE THIS	208	8.32
Mata dunia Eye world	Held in high regard		133	5.32
Mata kasar Eye hard	To see with the naked eye		98	3.92
Gelap mata Dark eye	Obtaining wealth through deceit		21	0.84
Mata dekat Eye near	Short sighted		18	0.72

The most resonant conceptual basis for Malay figurative units is based on a physical resemblance between the target and lexical vehicle captured by the conceptual key X LOOKS LIKE THIS where 'X' is the target (or referential meaning) and 'this' is the lexical content (i.e. metaphorical vehicle). The conceptual key makes explicit what in the traditional terminology of metaphor would be the 'grounds'. We can find evidence of a similar appearance-based conceptualisation in the English figurative units *the eye of the storm* and *cat's eyes*. The content of the physical attribute (or the grounds for the resemblance) comes from the adjective or noun that pre- or post-modifies the body

part. In the case of adjectives these signify a salient attribute of eyes; for example *cahaya mata* – gleaming eye – refers affectionately to ‘a child’ since, stereotypically, children have gleaming eyes. *Gelap mata* - dark eye - refers to ‘someone who obtains wealth through deceit’ since absence of light implies absence of knowing. Stereotypically darkness implies absence of knowledge (as in the English phrase *to keep someone in the dark*). In these cases the property expressed by the adjective is the figurative head and conveys the expressive meaning.

At this point I will consider those more opaque figurative units in which the direction of transfer is from the internal experience via the eye to the outside.

**Table 4: Frequency of Malay Figurative Units based on the concept: ‘THE EYE TRANSMITS COVERT INFORMATION ABOUT THE FEELINGS’ (n = 5)**

FIGURATIVE UNIT	TRANSLATION	CONCEPTUAL KEY	TOTAL 25m words	FREQUENCY / MILLION WORDS
Mata merah Eye red	crying	EYE TRANSMITS COVERT INFORMATION ABOUT THE FEELINGS	41	1.64
Bermain mata Play eye	To flirt with sidelong glances		37	1.48
Mata keranjang Eye rough basket	Someone who is lecherous		16	0.64
Bertemu mata Meeting eye	To exchange romantic glances		8	0.32
Mata gelap Eye dark	Become crazy with anger		5	0.20

The third most resonant conceptual key is THE EYE TRANSMITS COVERT INFORMATION ABOUT THE FEELINGS. It accounts for quite a large number of types that occur with a low frequency in the corpus; for example, only three types occur more than ten times. We also find this conceptual basis in English; for example, in *to make eyes at someone*, *to have eyes for someone* and *can't take your eyes off someone* – although these seem to have a strong association with sexual interest. In both languages there is evidence that these phraseological forms are motivated by common encyclopaedic knowledge that associates behaviour of the eyes - for example in terms of their movement - with emotionally aroused states.

In both languages it is likely that conceptual metonymy is employed with the intended rhetorical effect of greater indirectness. This is because in both cultures there are

constraints on direct reference to the feelings - in particular those of a sexual nature and those that relate to other taboo emotions such as fear. Even though the comprehension of figurative language does not necessarily require any greater cognitive demands than literal language (cf. Gibbs 1994) this is only because of the availability of a conventional conceptual framework in a language. Indirectness arises from knowledge of a cultural framework and its cultural resonance; understanding pragmatic meaning within a cultural system relies on accessing the conceptual keys and connotational values that underlie that system.

One other conceptual key is based on an identical meaning to lexical sense seven:

**Table 5: Frequency of Malay Figurative Units based on the concept: ‘THE EYE IS THE SOURCE’ (n = 3)**

FIGURATIVE UNIT	TRANSLATION	CONCEPTUAL KEY	TOTAL 25 m words	FREQUENCY / MILLION WORDS
Mata pencarian Eye means of livelihood	A bread & butter job	EYE IS THE SOURCE	127	5.08
Mata air Eye water	A lover		10	0.40
Mata gergaji Eye earnings	To flatter		10	0.40

We have noticed that the conceptual basis THE EYE IS THE SOURCE is found at both the level of single and compound words. Evidence of the productivity of this conceptual metaphor is that it also motivates the less transparent units classified as *simpulan bahasa* where meaning extension is more opaque than for the compound level. For example, both *mata gergaji* – eye earnings – ‘to flatter’ and *mata pencarian* – eye livelihood – ‘a bread and butter job’ seem to extend the notion of source or origin from a vehicle domain of fertility (represented by *mata*) to a metaphorical target of self-advancement (earnings, livelihood). The eye is conceptualised as a source of gain because it is associated with fertility in the figurative system; we have seen this from the above analysis of the two senses of *mata air* - eye water - ‘spring’ (classified as a compound) and ‘lover’ (classified as a *simpulan bahasa*). The figurative sense ‘lover’ may originate from an association between water and the physical secretions from different bodily orifices and there may also be an oblique association between love and crying because of *air mata* - water eye - ‘tear’. This is a

case of synecdoche in that a salient part ‘tear’ may stand for the whole ‘lover’ – interpretation clearly requires encyclopaedic knowledge of a scenario in which tears stand in some relation to the experiences of lovers. This type of figurative blending in which metonym and metaphor are combined characterises poetic language.

Finally, I will consider those figurative units that are primarily metonymic:

**Table 6: Frequency of Malay Figurative Units based on the concept: ‘BODY PART FOR FUNCTION’ (n = 2)**

FIGURATIVE UNIT	TRANSLATION	CONCEPTUAL KEY	TOTAL 25m words	FREQUENCY / MILLION WORDS
Menjamu mata To entertain eye	To feast your eyes on something beautiful	BODY PART FOR FUNCTION	12	0.48
Mata hati Eye liver	2) a personal representative for someone		12	0.48

The conceptual key BODY PART FOR FUNCTION is essentially metonymic rather than metaphoric in nature. In this case *mata* ‘the eye’ stands for ‘seeing’ (rather than ‘knowing’). As noted above, where the figurative head is *mata* the expressive sense is conveyed by the modifier (as in *mata hati* and *mata menjolok*). Although most of the units in the table have an expressive meaning; this originates in the metaphorical content of the modifier rather than the metonymic content of the body part.

The conceptual keys and typical connotations for *mata* figurative units are summarised in table 7 below:

**Table 7: *Mata* ‘eye’ - Resonance of Conceptual Keys**

Conceptual key	Sum of types	Sum of tokens	Resonance (types X tokens)
SEEING IS KNOWING	9	418	3,762
X LOOKS LIKE THIS	5	478	2,390
MATA GIVES COVERT INSIGHT INTO THE FEELINGS	5	107	535
MATA IS THE SOURCE	3	147	441
BODY PART FOR FUNCTION	2	24	48

We have seen in the above discussion that there are a wide range of attributes of the eye which motivate its use in figurative language: these range from its appearance, behaviour and association with consciousness – we may think here of its iconic value in Buddhist culture and the notion of ‘the evil eye’ in the Arab world. The eye clearly has a function to provide information regarding the outside world as well as providing others with information about the state of mind of its owner and this reciprocal directionality is evident in both English and Malay. This duality leads to the eye being interpreted as a mysterious organ and it is, therefore, not surprising that it is frequently found in phraseological units from different languages. To the extent that there are identifiable conceptual keys and corpus based evidence of their cultural resonance we can claim that phraseological units are structured categories rather than unmotivated, unanalysable units. We argue that cultural meaning can be accessed through identifying semantic and pragmatic meaning and that then be represented in conceptual keys which operate at the interface of semantics and pragmatics. We have also argued that identification of figurative processes assists in explaining the productivity of *mata* in Malay lexicalisation and provides insight into Malay cultural resonance.

### 5. Analysis 2: *Kaki* ‘leg/ foot’

Kamus Dewan, (1995) has five separate headword entries for the Malay word *kaki*. As with *mata*, the core meaning is determined from the most productive lexeme which in this case is ‘the part of the body from the thigh downwards’. Unlike English, Malay does not distinguish between the foot and the leg. *Kaki* has the following related senses:

1. part of the body from the thigh down used for walking
2. the part of the body from the heel to the toe.
3. the part of something that is used to support the rest as for a chair, a table etc.
4. the lower part of something e.g. mountain
5. numeral classifier for objects with stems or handles e.g. flowers, umbrellas etc.
6. measurement of length equivalent to 12 inches.
7. a person who likes doing something

We may note that all of these senses except five and seven would translate into English as either ‘leg’ or ‘foot’. Sense five forms part of the Malay system of numeral classifiers. These are certain nouns that are placed between numerals and the nouns they refer to and are dependent on the size, shape or function of this noun. Sense six is a conceptual borrowing from English and is what has been described as a Malay equivalent substitute for the English word (Heah Lee Hsiah 1989:90). Sense seven only applies to the occurrence of *kaki* when used as a premodifier of a following verb or noun; we suggest this is a figurative extension of a phraseological meaning and is an example of active metaphor. Polysemous senses of *kaki* suggest different underlying figurative conceptualisations: sense three is based on the functionality of the leg/foot and sense four is based on its spatial location; in senses three to six there is a transfer of meaning from the animate to the inanimate domain. At the compound level table eight shows entries taken from Zainal Abidin Safarwan (1995) that occurred more than five times in the corpus:

**Table 8 *Kaki* ‘leg/foot’: Frequencies of Compound Nouns (>5 occurrences)**

MALAY COMPOUND	LITERAL TRANSLATION	NATURAL TRANSLATION	SEMANTIC BASIS	FOCUS	TOTAL
Kaki bukit	Foot hill	Foot of a hill	4	Spatial	142
Kaki gunung	Foot mountain	Foot of a mountain	4	Spatial	136
Kaki kain	Foot cloth	Hem	4	Spatial	10
Kaki langit	Foot sky	Horizon	4	Spatial	110

The most salient meaning extension for Malay compound nouns is based on lexical meaning four and is focussed on spatial metaphor. This could be captured in the following formulation: THIS PART OF A THING IS LIKE A LEG/FOOT IN TERMS OF ITS PERIPHERAL LOCATION. In English this location is solely in a downwards direction (e.g. *foot of a hill*, *foot of a mountain*); however, in Malay the periphery is less dependent on directionality. For example, while *kaki bukit* - foot hill - means the lower part of a hill as in the English ‘foot of a hill’; *kaki kain* - foot cloth - means ‘the hem of a piece of cloth’, but this may be at the edge rather than the bottom of the cloth (although it would be downwards if the cloth were worn). We also find evidence of a peripheral rather than a directional conceptualisation in two compound nouns which occurred less than five times in the corpus: *kaki awan* ‘foot cloud’ means ‘the edge of a cloud’ - not necessarily the lower part; similarly, *kaki hutan* - foot jungle - means ‘the edge of the jungle’. Again, this could be the lower part of the jungle, since jungle is often located in the hilly interior of Malaysia but it may not necessarily be so. In meaning extensions of *kaki*, spatial conceptualisation can be vertical or horizontal whereas for ‘foot’ it is exclusively vertical.

Tham Seong Chee (1990:37) comments on the importance of spatio-orientation in Malay cognition and sees this as evidence of a rural-agrarian cognitive substratum. The high saliency of spatially motivated compound nouns in the Malay corpus is indicative of the productivity of spatial metaphor. However, we may also note that, as with *mata* compounds, all these compound nouns have a referential rather than an expressive meaning. It will of particular interest to identify the extent to which the conceptual keys of *kaki* phraseological units are motivated by similar or different metaphors as compared with compound forms and whether there is evidence of pragmatic meaning. The results of the analysis of *kaki* phraseological units are shown in table nine:

**Table 9: *Kaki* ‘Foot’ - Resonance of Conceptual Keys**

CONCEPTUAL KEY	Types	Sum of Tokens	Resonance (types X tokens)
TO BE, TO DO, OR TO BE ADDICTED TO DOING, SOMETHING NOT GOOD	11	195	2,145
BODY PART STANDS FOR ITS FUNCTION	3	97	291
METONYM: SIZE STANDS FOR THE OBJECT	1	271	271
APPEARANCE BASED SIMILE	1	15	15

The figurative meaning of *kaki* is a way of liking something that is so intense that it overcomes the will of the individual to resist it. It can therefore be translated into English as ‘addiction’ or ‘obsession’; I use these terms because they convey an important negative connotation that I will argue is central to the phraseological meaning of *kaki* as in seen in table 10 which summarises the data on the most productive conceptual key:

**Table 10: Frequency of Malay figurative units based on the concept: TO BE, TO DO, OR TO BE ADDICTED TO DOING, SOMETHING NOT GOOD (n = 11)**

FIGURATIVE UNIT	TRANSLATION	CONCEPTUAL KEY	TOTAL 25 m words	FREQUENCY/ MILLION WORDS
Kaki lawan Foot fight	To enjoy fighting	TO BE, TO DO, OR TO BE ADDICTED TO DOING, SOMETHING NOT GOOD	126	5.04
Goyang kaki To shake foot	Someone who lives comfortably but is apathetic		45	1.8
Kaki judi Foot gamble	Someone who has a gambling habit		34	0.96
Kaki perempuan Foot woman	Someone who is crazy about women		14	0.56
Kaki botol Foot of the bottle	Someone who drinks heavily		13	0.52
Kaki pukul Foot strike	Bouncer		10	0.40
Kaki minum Foot drink	Someone who is crazy about drinking		9	0.36
Kaki gaduh Foot quarrel	A hooligan		8	0.32
Kaki kuda Foot horse	Someone who loves betting on horses		8	0.32
Kaki bola Foot ball	To be crazy about football		7	0.28
Kaki wayang Foot screen	Someone who adores films		5	0.25

In table ten we see evidence of a negative pragmatic meaning in phraseological units in which *kaki* occurs; the most salient meaning is one in which *kaki* serves as a

euphemism for some form of social behaviour that is negatively evaluated. This is an interesting semantic divergence from the single word data, none of which contain any negative evaluation; compound nouns exploit the spatial meaning of *kaki* and lexical meaning six is simply ‘someone who likes doing something’. We find evidence in Malay phraseology of what Moon (1998:210), while developing Halliday’s (1985) notion of grammatical metaphor, suggests is a pragmatic motivation for figurative phraseological units in English phraseology:

Material processes are inevitably associated with fact and objective report, whereas mental and relational processes are associated more with evaluation and subjective comment. By disguising the second as the first, subjective opinions may appear more objective, more purely descriptive of some actual physical situation, although in reality they communicate an interpretation and evaluation of that situation.

We suggest that the figurative meaning of *kaki* to signify addiction is highly productive at the phraseological level and is therefore resonant in the culture. We can see evidence of this resonance in its use in what have been referred to as hybrid creations; these are defined as follows:

The hybrid creation is a lexical form in which is combined both native and imported elements. Hybrid creations involve a kind of “reverse substitution”, in which loan morphemes are filled into native models...Hybrid creations should be distinguished from loanblends since they did not come into being as imitations of foreign models and, therefore, are not part of the borrowing process. Heah Lee Hsia (1989:202)

In the newspaper section of the corpus, we find that a number of these hybrid creations are used to fill semantic gaps to describe certain patterns of contemporary social behaviour:

*1. Kita harap ia memberi pengajaran kepada "kaki Internet" supaya tidak menyalahgunakan kemudahan berkenaan.*

We hope he give instruction on foot Internet” in order to not abuse new appeal.

‘We hope he gives instruction on “Internet addiction” so as not to misuse something novel and appealing.’

2. *Jangan sekali-kali menjadi "kaki gosip" Ini mudah.*

Never excessively become “foot gossip” this easy.

‘We advise against addiction to gossip – this is all too easy to do.’

3. *Malah anda bukan sahaja dilabel kan sebagai "kaki gosip" tetapi anda juga mungkin kehilangan ramai teman.*

Furthermore you not only be label and type “foot gossip” but you also perhaps lose many companion

‘Moreover you may not only be labelled a gossip but you may also lose a lot of friends.’

4. *Kalaupun ada mereka yang disebut oleh senator tadi, mungkin sebilangan kecil bapa-bapa yang kaki judi, kaki `enjoy' atau kaki perempuan.*

Although there are they who be mention by senator just now, perhaps every small father-father who foot gamble, foot enjoy or foot woman

‘Although there are those who have just been referred to by the Senator, perhaps he was referring to every gambler, hedonist and playboy.’

Clearly the use of figurative phraseological units with a modifying verb or noun has a strong pragmatic force in communicating the writer’s negative evaluation of certain types of social behavior. This pragmatic role is superimposed upon the semantic meanings identified at the lexical and compound level and cultural resonance can be represented by the conceptual key: TO BE ADDICTED TO DOING SOMETHING NOT GOOD. Those habits referred to by these figurative meanings, such as adultery or gambling, are ones that are forbidden by the Islamic system of religious belief and therefore are socially disapproved. It is common in Muslim societies for religious values to take on a strong socio-cultural role and this is manifested at the phraseological level in the case of Malay. We would agree with Moon (1992:25) who writes of fixed expressions:

These expressions generalize by conjuring up schemata which concretize assumptions and evaluations, that is, by alluding to something what is

more general and abstract in terms of something more specific and concrete. The very concreteness of such expressions and their roots in a shared cultural understanding prevent or suppress critical consideration of a judgement.

The productivity of this type of evaluation framework is evidence of its cultural resonance. For example, we have an extension of the meaning of ‘addiction’ to behavior that is not prohibited or negatively evaluated; however, people’s attitude towards it is such that it recalls the behavior of those who are addicted to forbidden types of behavior. A good example of this is *kaki bola* - foot ball - ‘to be crazy about football’; while enjoyment of football is not sinful in itself, over indulgence can have a negative connotation. Such negative meanings are lexicalised in English by the notion of addiction. We may also recall the use of *fan* in English; this term originated in *fanatic* but now the metaphorical meaning is less active. We would suggest, nevertheless, that it is dormant and can readily be reactivated when in collocation with words such as *hooligan*. We have further evidence of the productivity of pragmatically motivated cultural resonance when the conceptual key TO BE ADDICTED TO DOING SOMETHING NOT GOOD is extended to TO BE SOMETHING NOT GOOD, as in *kaki gaduh* - foot quarrel - ‘a hooligan’ and *kaki pukul* - foot strike - ‘a bouncer’. In these cases we find evidence of grammatical metaphor in that a verbal notion is nominalised. We would not anticipate that the conceptual key should be constrained by grammatical categories.

As we noted above, phraseological units with the conceptual key THE BODY PART STANDS FOR ITS FUNCTION indicate a figurative blending of the core meaning of the body part and a metaphorical meaning of the accompanying verb or adjective. We find further evidence of this with verb + noun combinations in which *kaki* occurs. In each case the metaphorical meaning comes from the modifiers *angkat*, *pasang* and *patah*; *kaki* stands simply for the function of movement or motion. It is important - particular for language learners when interpreting meaning - to identify that what we might call the ‘figurative head’ is not necessarily in the body part term. The data for this conceptual key are summarised in table 11 below:

**Table 11: Frequency of Malay figurative units based on the concept: BODY PART FOR FUNCTION (n = 3)**

FIGURATIVE UNIT	TRANSLATION	CONCEPTUAL KEY	TOTAL 25 m words	FREQUENCY/ MILLION WORDS
Angkat kaki Raise foot	To leave in a hurry	BODY PART FOR FUNCTION	57	2.28
Pasang kaki Adjust foot	To ask someone to spy for you		27	1.08
Patah kaki Broken foot	Someone who no longer has the means to do something		13	0.52

Table twelve (below) shows a salient metonym: *kaki lima* - ‘foot five’- which originates from a British colonial law that pavements must be at least five foot wide, hence ‘five foot’ came to be a standard lexicalisation meaning ‘pavement’. This is motivated by the metonym QUANTITY STANDS FOR THE OBJECT; we find this in English when we talk about ‘a ten horse power’ to refer to an engine, ‘a thirty footer’ to refer to a boat, or ‘a three pounder’ to refer to a fish. This idiomatic use of *kaki* is non-productive and is therefore not classified as having a conceptual key. There are no other phraseological forms motivated by this metonym. It is an almost completely opaque example of a cultural fossil; because the original metaphorical motivation is lost to most speakers of the language it has therefore lost its cultural resonance.

**Table 12: Frequency of Malay figurative units based on the concept: QUANTITY FOR OBJECT (n = 1)**

FIGURATIVE UNIT	TRANSLATION	CONCEPTUAL KEY	TOTAL 25 m Words	FREQUENCY/ MILLION WORD
<b>Kaki lima</b> Foot/ leg five	Pavement/covered walkway	QUANTITY FOR OBJECT	271	10.84

Finally, there is an appearance based simile summarised in table 13:

**Table 13: Frequency of Malay figurative units based on APPEARANCE BASED SIMILE (n=1)**

FIGURATIVE UNIT	TRANSLATION	CONCEPTUAL KEY	TOTAL 25 m words	FREQUENCY/ MILLION WORDS
Kaki ayam Foot chicken	barefoot	APPEARANCE BASED SIMILE	15	0.60

This unit is an opaque reference to the appearance of an animal body part and perhaps has slightly negative connotations since the chicken connotes lack of intelligence in another appearance based figurative *mata ayam* – eye chicken – ‘an escaped convict’.

It is important to note that spatial metaphor - which was found to be productive at the compound level for *kaki* - is not found at the phraseological level. This is because, as we have claimed above, phraseological meanings have an expressive meaning, in contrast with referential meaning of compound forms. It is, therefore, pragmatic meaning which is productive at the phraseological level and may restrict the productivity of other types of motivation for figurative uses of language such as spatial metaphor. We suggest that cultural resonance originates in the socio-cultural saliency of the ‘foot’ in Malay culture. This can be explained with reference to traditional views of the social order whereby that which is *atas* (above or on top) signifies high status - by analogy with the *raja* or king - and that which is *bawah* (below) - as with the common people - signifies low status. While spatial metaphor does not in itself signify a negative evaluation in Malay we can see that it can do when it is associated with the lower part of the human body. This is evidence of a culture specific adaptation of the cross-linguistic image schema UP IS GOOD, DOWN IS BAD. When this is applied to the domain of the human body those parts that are at the top when we are standing up are positively evaluated while those parts which are lower are negatively evaluated. We can find evidence for this cultural model in the characteristic behaviour in Malay society: the shoes are obligatorily removed from the feet on entering a house and it is considered impolite to show the soles of your feet; for example, by placing them on a stool. Address titles for sultans include reference to the addressor not being fit to kiss the dust in front of the sultans’ feet. While the social practices may be associated with traditional society, we believe that the phraseological productivity of *kaki* - as evident from its use in contemporary

hybrid creations - provides linguistic evidence for the resonance of this cultural model.

## 6. Conclusion

Certain patterns have begun to emerge from this analysis of the cultural resonance of the human body in Malay lexicalisation. First, we have identified some underlying metonymic basis for body parts and represented this as THE BODY PART STANDS FOR ITS FUNCTION, which in the cases described here are sight and motion. However, the pragmatic force comes from a metaphorical meaning of the modifier; this suggests that they may best be described as figurative blends. Areas for future research are the extent to which these figurative blends are found for the same body parts in other languages and in Malay phraseological units containing other body part terms. Spatially based metaphors seem to characterise the compound rather than the phraseological level and this seems to be related to the primarily referential meaning of compound nouns as compared with the characteristically expressive or pragmatic meaning of phraseological units.

There is also evidence that the pragmatic meanings of the phraseological level can motivate polysemy at the lexical level; we have suggested that this is the case the meaning of *kaki* as ‘compulsively liking something’ and we have presented Malay corpus evidence for this in contemporary hybrid creations involving *kaki*. This is important as it shows that figuration at the phraseological level may motivate polysemy at the lexical level and this may also occur in other languages. We hope we have also illustrated the pragmatic importance of figurative meaning in providing speaker evaluations and how the identification of the conceptual basis for these evaluations provides a valuable source of insight into their culture specific basis. In addition, we hope to have illustrated one way in which phraseological data can be quantified so as to provide a more precise way of measuring cultural resonance and therefore demonstrated an empirical way of providing insight into cultural models. The description of cultural resonance through the identification and quantification of conceptual keys can be of considerable importance to linguistic anthropologists, translators, language teachers and others interested in the methodology of both cultural and cross-cultural studies of language.

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