

**SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES OF  
ENGLISH AND MALAY FELINE PROVERBS:  
A CONCEPTUAL METAPHOR APPROACH**

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by

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**PERSAMAAN DAN PERBEZAAN PERIBAHASA KELUARGA KUCING  
DALAM BAHASA INGGERIS DAN MELAYU: PENDEKATAN METAFORA  
KONSEPSI**

**ABSTRAK**

Kajian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis perbezaan perlambangan keluarga kucing dengan mencari persamaan dan perbezaan diantara mereka serta meneroka perbezaan silang budaya di antara peribahasa haiwan berkaitan keluarga kucing dalam bahasa Inggeris dan Melayu, masing-masing dengan 24 dan 42 jumlah peribahasa. Kajian ini juga berusaha untuk meneliti makna-makna yang mendasari konseptualisasi haiwan dari keluarga kucing dan juga pengaruh latar belakang sesebuah budaya dalam penubuhan perlambangan haiwan tersebut di dalam peribahasa. Analisis dua fasa yang terdiri daripada kerangka Teori Metafora Konsepsi oleh Lakoff dan Johnson (1980) dan kerangka Teori Metafora Rantaian Utama Makhluk oleh Lakoff dan Turner (1989) digunakan di dalam process untuk mencapai tujuan kajian ini. Kerangka pertama merangkumi pengenalpastian domain konsepsi dan perlambangan yang dibawa peribahasa berserta dengan variasi yang terdapat di dalam kedua-dua bahasa, manakala kerangka seterusnya memfokuskan kepada empat komponen iaitu kerangka Naif dalam Perkara Semulajadi (Naïve Theory of the Nature in Things), Rantaian Utama Makhluk (Great Chain of Being), Metafora Spesifik Mewakili yang Generik (Generic is Specific Metaphor) dan Maksim Kuantitas (Maxim of Quantity) untuk meneroka perbezaan berdasarkan faktor silang budaya dalam peribahasa. Hasil kajian menggambarkan bahawa terdapat sedikit bilangan metafora konsepsi yang terkandung dalam peribahasa haiwan dari keluarga kucing dalam bahasa Inggeris berbanding

dengan bahasa Melayu, dan metafora konseptualisasi haiwan dari keluarga kucing yang dijumpai tidak terhad kepada domain manusia sahaja, tetapi juga termasuk bersama domain lain yang terdiri daripada aspek urusan, pangkat, cuaca, tujuan dan kehidupan. Selain itu, terdapat beberapa persamaan dan perbezaan yang dijumpai berdasarkan perlambangan haiwan dari keluarga kucing yang dipengaruhi oleh perbezaan unsur positif dan negative yang tertanam dalam konseptualisasi haiwan tersebut. Hasil kajian juga menunjukkan bahawa adat, agama dan nilai-nilai asas dari latar budaya tertentu serta sikap pilih kasih, kewujudan di sekeliling dan kedudukan teratas haiwan dalam hierarki adalah faktor-faktor yang mempengaruhi penghasilan perlambangan yang berbeza dalam lingkungan sesebuah budaya. Kajian ini membantu mengisi jurang penyelidikan lampau berkaitan perbandingan peribahasa antara bahasa yang berlainan, terutamanya mengenai bahasa Inggeris dan bahasa Melayu selain menambahkan pengetahuan baru yang menarik berkenaan aspek silang budaya. Ia juga menyokong dakwaan Muhammad, N. N. & Rashid, S. M. (2014), bahawa maksud yang dimanifestasikan kepada haiwan yang sama mungkin berbeza dari satu bahasa kepada bahasa yang lain atas pengaruh sosial dan persekitaran sesuatu masyarakat. Cadangan untuk penyelidikan lebih lanjut berkaitan dengan bidang analisis metafora menggunakan ciri bahasa kiasan lain akan mendatangkan manfaat kepada pelajar bahasa, khususnya pelajar bahasa asing demi meningkatkan pengetahuan budaya mereka serta menghargai keunikan dan kecantikan sesuatu bahasa tersebut.

**SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES OF ENGLISH AND MALAY FELINE  
PROVERBS: A CONCEPTUAL METAPHOR APPROACH**

**ABSTRACT**

This study aims at analysing the disparity of the feline representations with the search for their similarities and differences, as well as exploring the cross-cultural differences between English and Malay feline proverbs, with 24 and 42 proverbs respectively. It is an attempt to scrutinize the underlying meanings associated with the conceptualisation of feline animals and the influence of various cultural backgrounds behind the inauguration of feline representations in the proverbs. A two-phase analysis comprises of the Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) framework by Lakoff and Johnson (1980) and the Great Chain of Metaphor Theory (GCM) framework by Lakoff and Turner (1989) is utilised in the process to achieve the purposes of this study. The first framework entails the identification of conceptual domains and representations that the proverbs carry along with the commonalities and variations available in both languages, and the latter framework focuses on the four components, namely the Naïve Theory of the Nature in Things, the Great Chain of Being, the Generic is Specific Metaphor, and the Maxim of Quantity; to explore the differences based on the cross-cultural factors in the proverbs. The results of the study revealed that there are fewer conceptual metaphors available in the English feline proverbs compared to the Malay feline proverbs, and the metaphorical conceptualization of the feline animals in the proverbs is not restricted to the domain of people only, but also incorporated into other domains, including the aspects of affairs, rank, weather, purpose, and life. Furthermore, there are several similarities and differences found based on the feline representations,

which are impacted by the disparity between the positive and negative attributions that are embedded in the conceptualisations of the animals. The findings also indicated that customs, religion, and the core values of the particular cultural backgrounds, with the touch of favouritism, existence in the surroundings, and the top position of the feline animals, are the factors that influenced the different representations generated within the cultural notions. This study helps to fill the gaps of past research related to the comparison of proverbs between different languages, particularly the English and Malay languages, besides adding new and intriguing insights into the cross-cultural aspects. It also supports the claims made by Muhammad, N. N., and Rashid, S. M. (2014) that the meanings ascribed to the same animal may differ from one language to another due to the social environment of the society. Recommendations are made for further research relating to the area of metaphorical analysis with regards to other figurative language features, as it would be beneficial for language learners, primarily foreign language learners, to enhance their cultural knowledge and appreciate the uniqueness and beauty of that particular language.

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 General Introduction

In this introductory chapter, the idea and background of the study were foregrounded for review. The objectives and research questions were presented in order to guide the researcher in analysing the main aim of the study, which is to investigate the representations of the feline characteristics used in English and Malay feline proverbs. In achieving the aim, a brief statement of the problem, the significance of the study, the scope and limitations of the study, as well as the organisation of the study were discussed in this chapter.

### 1.2 Background of the Study

As mentioned by Mahadi and Jafari (2012), “language is a symbolic presentation of a culture” (p.234) in which language and culture have a very close relationship and they are interconnected to each other. Through language, ones can express and demonstrate the uniqueness of their culture to others. This can be done by establishing their own identity and personality, disclosing their life continuity, and conveying the wisdoms of life of their particular society which then passed down to the next generations (Rashidi & Ghaedi, 2013). Since language is the main device for people to communicate and to convey ideas, there are various ways of utilizing the language in delivering the ideas, thoughts and information to others, and one of them is through the use of proverbs (Riyanto, 2018).

Different ideologies have different views on the meanings of proverbs. Generally, proverbs are perceived as short sentences that comprise of wisdom, truth,

lesson and conventional views regarding human life which appeared in metaphorical, fixed and memorisable forms (Noah & Ismail, 2008). Proverbs, as part of the figurative language's umbrella is one of the common ways to transmit knowledge, wisdom and truth, where they have been in continuous use from the past up to the current days (Rashidi & Ghaedi, 2013). Additionally, proverb coiners in the past would utilize the figure of speech in proverbs to creatively convey ideas which were comprehended in a dynamic and impressive way, plus making the expressions more interesting, meaningful and enchanting towards the people (Akinmade, 2009).

In addition, proverbs have been regarded as a part of the cultural specification in a particular language society because they hold the social facts and they were shaped based on the values, traditions, wisdom as well as the beliefs of a society (Riyanto, 2018). This can be seen from the functions of proverbs in the English society, where most of the proverbs were used to convey praises, like giving appreciation and admiration to something that was deemed to be good, beautiful, handsome and courageous; to convey advices like giving teachings and suggestions about the goodness of something; to convey warnings like giving advice in the form of message or reminder; to convey enthusiasm like giving motivation to do an action and lastly to convey moral formation, like explaining the doctrines of the good and bad actions (Riyanto, 2018). Besides, the English proverbs were usually created to imply the features of the English people, such as "restraint, politeness, reasonableness, discretion, tact, laconism, tolerance, diligence, love and admiration" (Goshkheteliani, 2011, p. 7).

Proverbs were an important tool in shaping the values of the people in Malay society, which was well known for its polite and well-mannered traits (Ismail et al, 2017). Besides, proverbs also acted as the mechanism to explain the civilisation and



the minds of the Malay people, where commonly, they were created based upon their surroundings, including the flora and fauna, which have affected the language and the traditional Malay literature, primarily poetries (Ismail et. al, 2017). Since the Malay people were familiarly known as a polite society, proverbs have been regarded as one of the means of human communication and interaction in order to show manners and respect to the other party (Norazlina, 2002, as cited in David & Noor, 2013).

Furthermore, proverbs were created based on a variety of sources, where most of them were established according to the experiences and observations in their everyday life and surroundings (Mieder, 2004). It is inescapable that the close relationship between people and nature has played the main influence on the scholars' minds in making them as an inspiration and mirrors of comparison for human behaviour (Ismail et al, 2017). As a result, Muhammad, N. N and Rashid, S. M. (2014) indicated that one of the main sources that provided adequate metaphorical expressions in proverbs was by using animals as a matter of comparison and symbolism, which is conceivably due to the close connection between humans and animals in the surroundings.

As mentioned by Lakoff & Johnson (2003) in their book, metaphor has become a part of human life, where it does not merely occur in the language that humans utter but also in the cognitive and physical aspects of humans. Plus, the experience that humans encounter daily is considered an abstract concept, where humans are likely to compare the experience with something that they have recognised and perceived beforehand, which then leads to the metaphorical conceptualizations (Marz, 2002). It can be seen that the creation and usage of animal metaphors in proverbs vary according to society's views and experiences of their surroundings. Therefore, feline animals

were chosen in this study as they are prominent and can be found in both societies' surroundings, some of which are even influential in the respective culture.

To comprehend further on the variations of animal metaphors' meanings associated, the researcher is motivated to explore the conceptual metaphors and the cultural differences that underlie in the feline proverbs due to the different propositions claimed and to effectuate the gaps mentioned by past studies. Therefore, this study has analysed the representations of the feline characteristics used in English and Malay feline proverbs by examining the similarities and differences in the underlying representations by using the Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) as well as to explore the cross-cultural differences between the two societies though the utilization of the Lakoff and Turner (1989)'s The Great Chain Metaphor Theory.

### **1.3 Statement of the Problem**

Considered as one of the main sources of proverb's conceptualization, animals were commonly used metaphorically with relation to the human beings in order to express certain meanings (Barasa & Opande, 2017). This can be observed through the expanding body of research that gives evidence to the prominent use of animal expressions in association with human attributions. Based on past research (Sameer, 2016; Muhammad, N. N. & Rashid, S. M., 2014; Liu, 2013; Estaji & Nakhavali, 2011), it is inevitable that some of the meanings associated with proverbs may be similar or different according to the metaphorical conceptualizations of the respective language and culture in a society. There are also different propositions found by past studies that are crucial to be explored in order to reaffirm the outcomes claimed by them.

In this study, the metaphorical conceptualization of animal expressions, particularly in feline proverbs, was explored according to their usage and

interpretation. The specification criteria for collecting the data were adopted from a study by Muhammad, N. N. and Rashid, S. M. (2014) and they were adapted to fit the current research.

Additionally, the interpretations of animal proverbs among different speech communities have led to the misconception of the intended meaning that people wish to convey. This can be seen as proverbs were created based from various aspects of human life such as from one's experience, observation and views of the surroundings (Samaah, 2015). There was abundance of studies that have been done related to animal proverbs by utilising the framework of Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) by Lakoff and Johnson in 1980, to identify the conceptualizations of the metaphors and the representations of the animals in proverbs of different languages. Additionally, through this study, the cultural comparison between English and Malay feline proverbs served as the main focus to venture in searching for the commonalities and differences between the two languages and cultures involved.

Some of the findings found that the metaphor conceptualizations between both languages did not comply with the common proposition of the selected animals since both of the proverbs were conceptualized from different social and cultural views (Salehan et. al., 2018; Muhammad, N. N. and Rashid, S. M., 2014). However, Salehan et. al. (2018) did not specifically cover the cross-cultural differences between the two languages studied, as their paper focused generally on the differences of conceptual metaphors that were available in the chosen proverbs.

On the other hand, Barasa and Opande (2017)'s findings showed that there were no differences in the proposition and metaphorical schemas in the proverbs conceptualizations although they were utilized in different languages, which mainly due to the same social and cultural beliefs of the Bukusu and Gusii's speech

communities (Barasa & Opande, 2017). Based from Barasa and Opande (2017)'s paper, it can be seen that there were not enough comparisons to be made from the languages that evolved from the same social and cultural perspectives. Apart from that, Liu (2013)'s findings revealed that there were both similarities and differences in the used of animal metaphorical meanings between Chinese and English proverbs. Liu (2013) also suggested that in order to have a great understanding of the animal proverbs, ones should understand the connotations of the words used, in the metaphorical representations. Looking at the different outcomes established by past studies, which are believed to be influenced by cultural and environmental contexts, further exploration is needed with regards to the use of different languages from different contexts in order to reaffirm the findings and unravel new insights related to this particular area of study.

Majority of these studies revealed that animals were generally used metaphorically to express human behaviours across cultures, as evidenced by the results based on Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT). Besides, Pourhossein (2016) mentioned that the degree of cultural specificity in proverbs' conceptualizations and the type of animal used to note the human traits were parts of the factors to compare in the study of proverbs. Although Kövecses (2010) mentioned that CMT was bound to the aspects of human experience, in which it covered the way people experience, think and act in daily life, that later inspired the conceptualization of metaphors, Fernandez (1991) as cited by Pourhossein (2016), believes that the foible part of this theory is associated with the description of cultural variation.

Furthermore, with regard to the cultural variation between different languages, Ramirez (2015) suggested that further research was required in order to explore the commonality and variation between proverbs cross-culturally. Since studies involved

with animal proverbs' metaphorical conceptualization in different languages showed the inconsistency of the findings (Salehan et. al., 2018; Barasa & Opande, 2017; Liu, 2013), hence it was pivotal for the researcher to explore the commonalities and differences between English and Malay feline proverbs in terms of the propositions and metaphorical meanings associated with them.

Considering that there were a few studies done related to the use of feline proverbs in different languages (Salehan et. al., 2018 & Muhammad N.N. and Rashid, S. M., 2014), there has been less previous evidence of studies that focused specifically on feline family lineage as a whole thus far. Therefore, it is deemed beneficial for the researcher to explore the commonalities and differences between English and Malay feline proverbs in terms of the proposition and metaphorical meanings associated through the utilisation of Lakoff and Johnson's Conceptual Metaphor Theory (1980) and Lakoff and Turner's Great Chain Metaphor Theory (1989) which adopted from Muhammad N.N. and Rashid, S. M. (2014). The first theory is used to identify and analyse the different representations of the feline characteristics available in both languages, and the latter theory acts as the supplementary part to provide the perceptions from the cross-cultural aspects.

#### **1.4 Research Objectives**

There are three research objectives for this study, which are:

1. To identify the representations of the feline characteristics used in English and Malay feline proverbs.
2. To examine the similarities and differences in the underlying feline representations between English and Malay feline proverbs.
3. To identify the cross-cultural differences in English and Malay feline proverbs.

## **1.5 Research Questions**

In this research, the researcher endeavours to seek answers for the following questions:

1. What are the representations of feline characteristics used in English and Malay Feline proverbs?
2. What are the similarities and differences in the underlying feline representations between English and Malay feline proverbs?
3. What are the cross-cultural differences in English and Malay feline proverbs?

## **1.6 Significance of the Study**

As suggested by Moreno (2005), although the proverbs expressions may differ across cultures and convey non-identical cultural scripts, “the cognitive mechanisms speakers use in order to understand and produce them are the same” (p. 12). Since this study has compared the similarities and differences between English and Malay feline proverbs and explored the cross-cultural factors that influenced the interpretations, the outcomes from this study are believed to contribute to the expansion of the knowledge related to the field of metaphors, specifically in English and Malay proverbs. Also, this research helps to fill the gap as suggested by Ramírez (2015), that some further research related to the exploration of proverbs cross-culturally with regard to similar and different expressions was needed, as proverbs that have a “similar set of stereotypical assumptions can be found across different cultures” (p. 30).

Furthermore, feline animals were chosen for this study because they are common in both societies which able to help readers from both local and international contexts to understand and appreciate the uniqueness of the selected animals from both cultures. Besides, the sense of awareness towards animal extinction is also another significant aspect that the readers can gain through this research to protect the

endangered feline animals for future generations. In addition, the use of feline animal proverbs in this study has provided dependable results that consecutively supplement the findings by Muhammad, N.N. and Rashid, S. M. in 2014 that objected the general proposition of cats by Lakoff and Turner (1989).

This research explicitly shows the methods used in identifying and comparing the feline proverbs in both languages by using the Conceptual Metaphor Theory by Lakoff and Johnson (1980) and the Great Chain Metaphor Theory by Lakoff and Turner (1989). The Conceptual Metaphor Theory, as proposed by Lakoff and Johnson (1980) was utilised to analyse the role of metaphors that existed in a particular discourse, which provided a better explanation of the metaphor conceptualizations aside from other approaches (Jafari, 2014). On the other hand, The Great Chain of Metaphor Theory, as initiated by Lakoff and Turner (1989), was used as a supplementary theory to describe how proverbs were understood and the reasoning behind such conceptualizations (Pourhossein, 2016). Moreover, executing a cross-cultural study on different languages resulted in a better understanding of the reasons for “metaphorical system convergence and divergence of languages at hand” (Almirabi, 2015, p. 6). Consequently, by employing the above-mentioned frameworks, this study has contributed a substantial method of analysis that can be replicated by future researchers that are interested in this field of study, therefore adding new and intriguing insights to the existing body of knowledge.

### **1.7 Scope and Limitations of the Study**

The scope of this study focused on the aspects of metaphor conceptualizations and cultural similarities and differences between English and Malay feline proverbs by analysing the representations of the feline characteristics in the proverbs, exploring

the commonalities and variations of the expressions, and investigating the differences based on the cross-cultural factors in the proverbs. In accordance to the objectives of this research, the Conceptual Metaphor Theory by Lakoff and Johnson (1980) and the Great Chain of Metaphor Theory by Lakoff and Turner (1989) were implemented. Efforts were made to present a detailed view of the process by displaying the findings in tables and figures.

This study faced several limitations related to the data collection procedure. Due to the time constraint, the corpus used for this study was limited as the English proverbs were selected mainly from the Little Oxford Dictionary of Proverbs (2016) edited by Knowles and the Internet (Collin's Dictionary website). As for the Malay proverbs, the data were selected from *Kamus Istimewa Peribahasa Melayu Edisi Kedua* (2017) by Hussain and online databases, which were the *Pusat Rujukan dan Persuratan Melayu (Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka)* and *Institut Alam dan Tamadun Melayu (ATMA) Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia*. The sources for this study were selected following to past studies which have utilized them as their main corpus for the collection of proverbs (Ho, 2011; Muhammad, N.N. & Rashid, S. M., 2014; Al-Khresheh, M.H. & Almaaytah, S.A, 2018), on top of that, the dictionaries of proverbs being used in this study were among the latest edition of the said publication. The readers should bear in mind that this study was based on the selected corpus, in which the imbalance number of proverbs between English and Malay languages was one of the constraints on generalizability that have been discussed in the later part of this study. Hence the findings presented in this study were based on the particular feline proverbs in both languages.



## **1.8 Definition of Terms**

In this study the following keywords are defined as:

### **1. Proverb**

There is a slight difference between the English and Malay proverbs, in which proverb in English refers to the utterances that convey the experience, knowledge, ethics, guidance, righteousness and other good moral standards (Gorgian, 2008, as cited in Rashidi and Ghaedi, 2013), while the Malay proverbs can be divided into different subclasses which are “*Simpulan Bahasa*” (idiom), “*Perumpamaan*” (simile), “*Bidalan*” (proverb), “*Pepatah*” (saying), and “*Kata-Kata Hikmat*” (words of wisdom) (Zaitul, A. Z. and Ahmad, F., 2011 as cited by Nurulhanis, I., 2014). In this study, proverbs are understood as the conventional and metaphorical sayings that contain the implied meanings related to animal representations with human behaviours.

### **2. Feline**

According to Hunter (2015), there are eight feline lineages which are the Felis Lineage, Prionailurus Lineage, Puma Lineage, Lynx Lineage, Leopardus Lineage, Caracal Lineage, Pardofelis Lineage and Panthera Lineage (p. 9). In this study, the term “feline” is used to indicate the species listed under the cat’s family lineage.

### **3. Conceptual Metaphor**

Conceptual metaphors can be understood by mapping one conceptual domain of source into another target domain, and they are used as a tool to link the two conceptual domains (Kobia, 2016). According to Lakoff and Johnson (1980), the source domain consists of the attributions that are placed in the mind, while target domain is abstract in nature and they connect with each other through

the “metaphorical link” (p.258). For instance, as stated by Lakoff and Johnson (2003), the conceptual metaphor arises when the concept of ‘argument’ is viewed and structured as a ‘war’ based on the conceptual metaphor ‘ARGUMENT IS WAR’. Although ‘*argument*’ and ‘*war*’ exhibit different meanings, where argument is a verbal discourse and war is the armed conflict, the conceptualization of ‘argument’ is based on the later notion.

## **1.9 Organisation of the Study**

This study is organised into five chapters. Chapter one yields on the background of the study, a brief statement of the problem, research objectives, the main research questions, the significance of the study, the scope and limitations of the study, as well as a brief definition of terms in the study.

Chapter two indicates a review of literature that covers from the general ideologies of proverbs, the context of usage of the proverbs, the sources of proverbs and the effects of proverbs. Since, the study also involves analysing the data using some specific theories, hence the historical background of metaphor, Lakoff & Johnson’s (1980) Conceptual Metaphors Theory (CMT) and the cross-cultural theory, which is the Great Chain of Metaphor Theory (GCM) by Lakoff & Turner (1989) are also being reviewed in this chapter.

Chapter three explores the methodology of this study, where it discusses the research design, theoretical framework, the steps of data collection, the rationale of choosing the data, and the data analysis procedure.

Next, chapter four focuses on the analysis of the data, in which it covers the data presentation, interpretation as well as the discussion and they are stipulated

extensively in this chapter. Each of the research question is used as the main topic to elaborate on the findings.

Moreover, the discussion of each research question, conclusion, together with the recommendations and suggestions for future research are included in chapter five of this research. Finally, the references and appendices involved are placed at the end of this thesis.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter covers the area of proverbial studies, which includes the definitions, sources, and contexts, as well as the notion of cultures and languages in proverbs. Since the data of the present study encompasses of feline proverbs, an overview of feline lineages is also appended for further understanding. Besides, a recap of the two main theories, which are the Conceptual Metaphor Theory and the Great Chain of Metaphor Theory is incorporated into the following subchapters. Lastly, the related studies on the theories adopted in this study are foregrounded for review, in accordance with the metaphorical conceptualization of the proverbs in different languages.

#### **2.2 Proverbs**

The varied features available in different proverbs have resulted in the establishment of many definitions, which makes it hard to create a specific meaning that covers all of the proverbs' features and allows people to identify them (Can, 2011). The term 'proverb' actually originated from the Latin word 'proverbium', which was formed through the combination of the prefix "-pro" that refers to the meaning of "forth" and the root "verbum" that conveyed the meaning of "word" respectively (Can, 2011). Through this combination, it can be understood that the literal meaning of the term "proverb" is viewed as "a set of words put forth" (D'Angelo, 1977, as cited in Can, 2011, p. 22).

Another notable attempt of producing proverb's definition is by Mieder (2004), where the researcher stated that the possibility of formulating the general description below was resulted through a frequency study of the words used in over fifty definition attempts.

“A proverb is a short, generally known sentences of the folk which contains wisdom, truth, morals and traditional views in a metaphorical, fixed and memorisable form and which is handed down from generation to generation” (Mieder, 1985, p. 119; Mieder, 1993, p. 24, & Mieder, 2004, p. 2).

In addition, Ismail et al. (2017) indicated that proverbs were the set of speech dispositions that have been used and spoken by people for quite a while, as they were nice to utter and contained judiciously selected words, with broad comprehension and genuine purpose which utilized in deeming the comparison, examples and the indoctrinates held. Kobia (2016) in his study of “peremiology” (the study of proverbs) explicated that a proverb, as one of the genres of the oral literature, consisted of peculiar features. The features can be seen via the characteristics of shortness, conciseness, wittiness in the form of phrase or a sentence to assert the common truths, societal frustrations, aspirations, experiences and desires of a community that were intensely embedded in the people's historical, cultural and environmental heritage.

Proverbs as part of the figurative language were considered as one of the rhetorical elements in languages, together with other elements such as simile, metaphor, allegory and others (Razaei, 2012). As proverbs were acknowledged for their devotion upon descriptive symbols and other forms of figurative expressions, the figure of speech was utilized in the use of proverbs to convey concisely, the different aspects and concepts in order to build a powerful as well as decisive point or idea (Akinmade, 2009). Finnegan (2014) also stated that “the figurative quality of proverbs

is especially striking” (p. 380) in which one of the perceptible characteristics is through the proverbs’ allusive wording that commonly seen in the metaphorical form.

### 2.3 Classification of Proverbs

In Malay, proverbs were divided into five different categories while in English, proverbs stand on its own where it cannot be differentiated according to different categories unlike the prior language.

#### 2.3.1 Classification of Malay Proverbs

To understand the classification of proverbs in the Malay language, there are five different aspects that fall under the main proverb’s umbrella. According to Zaitul Azma Zainon and Ahmad Fuad (2011) as cited by Nurulhanis Ibrahim (2014), the classifications of Malay proverbs consisted of (1) “*Simpulan Bahasa*” (idiom), (2) “*Perumpamaan*” (simile), (3) “*Bidalan*” (proverb), (4) “*Pepatah*” (saying), and (5) “*Kata-Kata Hikmat*” (words of wisdom). The classification of proverbs in Malay can further be understood in the diagram below:

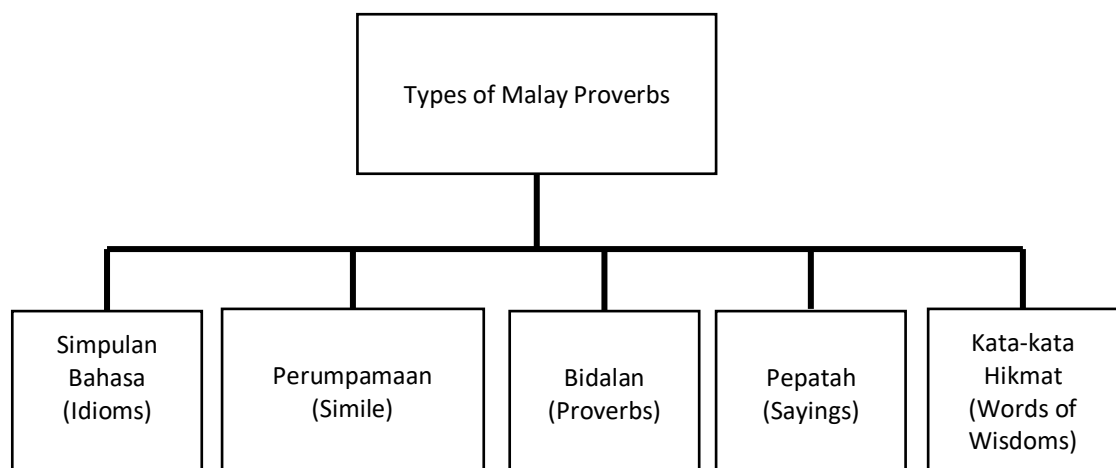


Figure 2.1 The Classification of Malay Proverbs adapted from “*Jenis-jenis Peribahasa Melayu*” by Zaitul Azma Zainon & Ahmad Fuad (2011) as cited in Nurulhanis Ibrahim, 2014, *Analisis Strategi Pertejemahan Peribahasa Melayu ke Bahasa Arab*, p. 31.

The paper describes all the five types of Malay proverbs and the interpretations based on their functions. The explanations and examples for each type are listed and explained below:

**1) *Simpulan Bahasa* (Idiom)**

*Simpulan Bahasa* or Idiom in English was constructed based on people's observation of the surroundings (Nurulhanis Ibrahim, 2014). This type of proverb usually consists of two words, and the literal meaning of the proverb is conveyed differently from the real one (Abdullah & Ainon, 2001 as cited in Mohd Azrul Sulaiman, Khirulnizam Abd Rahman & Shahrul Ridzuan Arshad, 2014).

Example: "*Langkah kanan*" literally means "the right step", however the real meaning of the proverb is "lucky" (Abdullah & Mat Noh, 2012, p. 198).

**2) *Perumpamaan* (Simile)**

Nurulhanis Ibrahim (2014) stated *perumpamaan* or in English known as Simile, can be identified through the words' arrangements, which indicate the meaning differently from the implied ones. Asraf, Rosnita Abdullah and Surinah Adam (2009) indicated in their book, that *Perumpamaan* usually used the words "*bagai*", "*ibarat*", "*laksana*" and "*seperti*" which are understood in English by the word 'like' or 'as' to compare two unlike things. Moreover, Abdullah and Ainon (2001) as cited in Mohd Azrul Sulaiman, Khirulnizam Abd Rahman and Shahrul Ridzuan Arshad (2014) mentioned that *perumpamaan* was a phrase that started with the usage of the words "*seolah-olah*", "*bak*", "*terindah*", and "*macam*". The example is as stated below:

Example: “*Bagaikan pinang dibelah dua*” (p. 63) literally means the areca nut is cut or divided equally, but the real intended meaning is compatible or looks good together.

### 3) ***Bidalan* (Proverb)**

*Bidalan* or in English called as proverb, has the implied meanings behind the words used, and it contains the value of knowledge and teachings, examples, warnings, sarcasms, as well as advice (Nurulhanis Ibrahim, 2014). Moreover, Asraf, Rosnita Abdullah and Surinah Adam (2009) illustrated that *Bidalan* expressions did not have any specific words or markers like what ‘perumpamaan’ (simile) was used.

Example: ‘*Air dicencang tiada putus*’ literally means “the chopped water will not break”, but the real meaning was “two or more siblings cannot be separated through disputes or fights” (Ashraf, Rosnita, A. & Surinah, A., 2009, p. 130).

### 4) ***Pepatah* (Saying)**

*Pepatah* or saying in English is almost the same as ‘*bidalan*’ (proverbs), but it usually comes in a paragraph (Nurulhanis Ibrahim, 2014). Asraf, Rosnita Abdullah and Surinah Adam (2009) in their book stated that “saying” was the type of proverb that came in paragraphs and consisted of repetition in order to indicate the affirmations, philosophy, or teachings. In addition, *pepatah* was a type of proverb that consisted of advice and teachings for the listeners (Abdullah & Ainon, 2001 as cited in Mohd Azrul Sulaiman, Khirulnizam Abd Rahman & Shahrul Ridzuan Arshad, 2014).

Example: ‘*Ada ubi ada batas, ada budi ada balas*’ (Abdullah & Mat Noh, 2012, p. 2) means if someone helped you or gave you a hand, then you should take the chance to repay the kindness.



## 5) *Kata-Kata Hikmat* (Words of wisdom)

*Kata-Kata Hikmat*, or the words of wisdoms are sentences that are usually written simpler in forms, but are subtle and easy to pronounce, hence they are used as slogans, or metaphors in spoken or written languages (Nurulhanis Ibrahim, 2014). Asraf, Rosnita Abdullah and Surinah Adam (2009) also mentioned that the “words of wisdom” frequently appeared in the Holy Scriptures, or the utterances of famous and wise people.

Example: “*Bersatu teguh, bercerai roboh*” means together, we can be stronger and if we are apart, we will be weakened (Ashraf, Rosnita, A. & Surinah, A., 2009, p. 165).

### 2.4 Context of Convention/Usage

The use of proverbs in a specific society or culture is mirrored based on the respective features they carry, where different countries may consist of peculiar features that convey the different conventions of proverbs in their particular society (Barasa & Opande, 2017). Some of the various contexts of the conventions of proverbs are further elaborated.

#### 2.4.1 Language and Culture

Language, to Sariyan (2009) and Nor Hashimah (2014) is a pivotal element in expressing the philosophy, knowledge, and thoughts of people, as well as a tool of human creativity that covers the varied ways of life (Kasdan, Jalaluddin, & Ismail, 2016). The choice of language reveals a lot about the person and the national culture he or she represents, as it is reflected in the manner in which it is used, the style of communication, the words used, and the degree of politeness (Goshkheteliani, 2011). Over the use of proverbs, the implied messages that occur in the distinctive language

pattern of a society are able to be transmitted (Azhar, I. N., 2012). In such a way, proverbs are considered as “the cream of language” (p. 14) as they mirrored the relationship between the language and culture (Fu, 2008).

Rashidi and Ghaedi (2013) mentioned that proverbs were a part of every language and culture where they helped to convey the norms and values of cultures as well as to expose the insight and wisdom of the people. The outcomes later explained that, although the use of proverbs might be different from one society to another, the typical aspect that can be observed is that proverbs cover the concerns and activities of humans since languages are the representation of cultures and can assist in showing the differences. Moreover, the results of the study also stipulated that the differences in culture, beliefs and values in different speech communities are the determining cause of differences in the manifestation of proverbs of the two languages (Rashidi & Ghaedi, 2013). Therefore, as language and culture are interrelated to each other, the use of proverbs is commonly based on the cultural background of a specific society.

The powerful connection between proverbs and culture cannot be overlooked, as mentioned by philosopher Francis Bacon that “the genius, wit and spirit of a nation are discovered in its proverbs” (Can, 2011, p. 47). Proverbs as the cultural models in representing the folk wisdom, popular truths as well as the values of a particular society (Can, 2011) are deemed to be the crucial heritage of a respective discourse community to “preserve the culture” and to “facilitate the perception and understanding of the world” to the current and future generations (Hidasi, 2008, p. 103). These notions are not only focusing on the figurative type of proverbs, but also including the literal proverbs that are “culturally-oriented” (p.45) since they are all developed based on the experiences of the society (Can, 2011). Therefore, the similarities and differences exist when the proverbs across different cultures are

analysed as proclaimed by Can (2011). While culture is highly related to the ways of life, it can be said that culture also determines how a society communicates with each other, as different cultures have different ways of living (Gunarwan, 2014, as cited in Widyastuti, 2010). Accordingly, it cannot be refuted that the connection between language and culture is one of the essential influences in the creation of proverbs where it helps to express and demonstrate the norms of a society.

## **2.5 Effects of Proverbs on the Speaker**

Although proverbs are the reflection of tradition in a particular culture, they are multifunctional and flexible in nature, based on people's everyday reasoning (Laukahangas, 2007). Since proverbs are regarded as a part of the human life, the effects of its usage are crucial in shaping the minds and perspectives of the people.

### **2.5.1 Self-Confidence and Encouragement**

Other than to express an idea effectively, proverbs are also used to enhance and boost one's self-confidence. Ogwudile (2016) stated that there were proverbs which are utilised as discourse markers, and the production of the proverbs is directly exerted to convey the sense of fearlessness, confidence and self-reliance. This can be viewed among the adults of the Oghe community, where they used proverbs and other linguistics forms in their conversations and utterances to encourage and motivate others when facing certain situations (Ogwudile, 2016). Another example can be seen in the Amhara society, where one of the main usages of proverbs was to encourage the people to go through their challenges (Chernet, 2015). The example of the proverb written in Amharic language is stated below:

**Proverb:** “ምክረው ምክረው እምቢ ካለ ሙከራ ይምክረው” (p.73)

**Meaning:** Continuously advice the person, and if he or she refuses then let

the problem advises him.

Based on the Amharic proverbs above, the Amharic community uses the proverb in order to give a touch of encouragement as well as a lesson for the particular person to be more open in accepting advice (Chernet, 2015). These findings can be supported by Indirawati Zahid (1998), where she revealed that the utilisation of proverbs has its own objective in which to avoid the listener and readers from being easily offended in a communication.

### **2.5.2 Identity, Personality and Intellectuality**

Another context of convention of the proverb is explicated through the basis of the language employed by a particular speech community. This can be evidenced through the findings by Sibarani and Robert, (2004), as cited in Riyanto, (2018), that any form of words including simple sentences in a language shows the identity and personality of the mind, which are underlying in the culture of a respective nation. In addition, a folkloristic study by Krikmann (2001) sustained the view of proverbs as other folklore types in which they arise as variants in the actual usage of a language. Besides, Riyanto (2018) mentioned that the form of proverb is the result of human intellect, which consists the elements of culture and wisdom of a particular society as it is conveyed through the language they use. Additionally, the meanings carried in these proverbs can determine the peculiar identity of a society since they are thoughtfully associated with the culture of the native speakers (Riyanto, 2018). Therefore, it cannot be denied that proverbs play such an important role in every culture as they portray the identity, personality, as well as intellectuality of the people, which is expressed through the language.

### **2.5.3 Persuasion**

Laukahangas (2007) mentioned that although proverbs are known for their origins which are based on the traditions, cultures and customs of a society, they are also famous for their hidden intentions that can influence the listener's mind and viewpoints. This can be seen in the public and inner speeches, where the proverbs are rhetorical in nature and are used to protect the personal attributes of a person by relating them to the third party, hence supporting the persuasiveness of the speaker towards the authorities (Laukahangas, 2007). The researcher then stated that through the usage of proverbs, relationships among people or things can be strengthened where people can easily explain the reasons of a situation to others and persuade them based on the behaviour that they have seen using the proverbs (Laukahangas, 2007). It can be understood that the way people act and express their perspectives towards the surrounding are shaped according to the traditions, cultures as well as customs of a respective society, which are enunciated through the use of proverbs.

Moreover, proverbs are also popular in the advertising fields as they are commonly used to persuade and catch the readers' attention. As mentioned by Mansor, and Ishak (2011), the media channels are using proverbs in their advertisements to attract the attention of the readers and listeners. Indirawati Zahid (1998) also revealed that the utilisation of proverbs has its own objective in order to avoid the listener and readers from being easily offended in communication. Other than that, utilising proverbs in advertisement slogans can make the readers, especially the consumers feel more involved due to their familiarity with the sentence, hence the product will be entrusted as something close to them (Duarte et. al, 2006). One of the examples from a local newspaper advertisement which was taken from 'Perodua' (a renowned car manufacturer company in Malaysia) is:

*“Kami bawa anda **makan angin** kerana anda keutamaan kami”* (p. 7)

The idiom “*makan angin*” above is literally translated as to eat the air, however the intended meaning of the idiom is to express the act of going for sightseeing or driving around (Sabran, 1985, p. 276 as cited in Mansor, & Ishak (2011).

## **2.6 Sources of Proverbs**

As denoted by Celo and Danaj (2017), proverbs are produced based on the results of social values, cultural, and political influences, hence in recognising the difference between one proverb and another is based on their pervasiveness in time by countries and societies. Looking back into the sources of proverbs, there are a variety of sources that have become the main contributors to the creation of proverbs in many languages.

### **2.6.1 Old Literature**

In China, the literary classics like the works of literary, fables, fairy tales as well as legends are some of the sources of proverbs (Xiangyang, 2016). For example, one of the proverbs that can be found in the famous Chinese classic novel “Romance of the Three Kingdoms” is “three fools are the equal of one wise man”, where it is meant as “two heads are better than one” (Xiangyang, 2016). Besides, as mentioned by Xiangyang (2016), the environmental condition is also one of the sources in the creation of Chinese proverbs, as there are some proverbs that are created based upon agriculture, as it is China’s national economy. Some of the examples are “If the tiller is industrious, the farmland is fertile” and “a farmer never leaves his fields, nor a scholar his desk”.

Furthermore, Ivanov and Petrushevskaia (2015) also stated that the root of English proverbs is conventionally branched into native and borrowed ones, which are

usually from Latin and French. They then listed the famous vital sources of the English proverbs' origins, such as from folklore, Holy Scripture, as well as literary works, which particularly to the works by William Shakespeare (Zimovets & Matveeva, 2013, as cited in Ivanov & Petrushevskaja, 2015). To support the preceding assertions, Xiangyang (2016) observed that the materials used to create English proverbs among native speakers were derived from ancient Greek myths and legends, as well as well-known folktales. The researcher then added the famous play by Shakespeare and Aesop's fables, which are frequently attributed to various English proverbs as the cultural sources.

Another study on Malay proverbs indicated that proverbs are the style of speech that originated and can be found in the old literature to display the way people thought in the past (Ismail et al., 2017). Proverbs, which are known as a part of Malay literature, exist in a variety of oral literary genres where they represent the essence of the Malays' ways of life from time to time, especially among the pre-literate society (Ming, 2009). Most of the historical folklore in Malay classical literature is assimilated into Malay proverbs, such as the "Hikayat Hang Tuah, Mahkota Segala Raja-Raja, Sha'ir Bidasari, Hikayat Dunia and Hikayat Abdullah" (Ming, 2009, p. 8).

### **2.6.2 Historical Context**

The English proverbs' sources are varied and governed by the attributes of the historical change of the English language, particularly from British culture and also the outcome from connections with other cultures (Ivanov & Petrushevskaja, 2015). Furthermore, Ivanov and Petrushevskaja (2015) also stated that the root of English proverbs is conventionally branched into native and borrowed ones, which are usually from Latin and French.