

A Comparative Cross-cultural Investigation of Feline Proverbs in English and Malay Languages: From the Perspective of GCM Theory

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Abstract: This study aims at analysing the disparity of the feline representations with the search for their cross-cultural differences between English and Malay feline proverbs. It is an attempt to scrutinize the influence of distinctive cultural backgrounds behind the inauguration of feline representations in the proverbs. 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, with a focus 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 findings from this study indicate that customs, religion, and the core values of the particular cultural background, 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 on the comparison and contrast analysis of proverbs between different languages, particularly the English and Malay languages, besides adding new insights on the cross-cultural aspects, which would be beneficial for language learners, primarily foreign learners, to enhance their cultural knowledge.

Keywords: *Feline proverbs; Malay language; English language; cross-cultural study; Great Chain of Metaphor Theory; Lakoff and Turner*

1. Introduction

As mentioned by [1], “language is a symbolic presentation of a culture” (p.213) in which language and culture have a very close relationship and 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 in their particular society, which is then passed down to the next generations [2]. Proverbs are created based on variety of sources, where most of them are established according to the

experiences and observations of their everyday lives and surroundings [3]. As a result, one of the main sources that provides adequate metaphorical expressions in proverbs is by using the animal as a matter of comparison and symbolism, which is due to the close association between humans and animals in the surroundings [4].

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 [5]. The experience that humans encounter daily is considered an abstract concept, where humans are likely to compare the experience

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with something that they have recognised and perceived beforehand, which then leads to metaphorical conceptualizations [6]. Therefore, 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.

There are a few numbers of studies done related to the use of feline proverbs in different languages [7,8], and to the best of our knowledge, there has been less previous evidence of studies that focused specifically on the feline family lineage as a whole. The researchers were therefore interested to execute the similar analysis to explore the cross-cultural differences in English and Malay proverbs that can be perceived from the respective culture by utilizing Lakoff and Turner's Great Chain Metaphor Theory (1989). The outcomes from this study can beneficially help the readers from local and international contexts to understand and appreciate the uniqueness of the selected animals from both cultures. Moreover, awareness of animal extinction can also be instilled through this research to protect the endangered feline animals for future generations.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Proverbs

As denoted by [8], proverbs are produced based on the results of social values, cultural, and political influences, therefore recognising the difference between one proverb and another is based on their pervasiveness in time by countries and societies.

(1) Old Literature

The famous vital sources of the English proverbs' origins are from folklore [9], Holy Scripture, as well as literary works, with particularity to the works by William Shakespeare [9]. To support the preceding assertions, [10] observed that the materials used to teach English proverbs among native speakers were originated from ancient Greek's myths and legends, including the prominent folktales. The researcher then added the famous play by Shakespeare as well as 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 [11]. 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 [12]. Most of the historical folklore in Malay classical literature are assimilated into the Malay proverbs such as the "Hikayat Hang Tuah, Mahkota Segala Raja-Raja, Sha'ir Bidasari, Hikayat Dunia dan Hikayat Abdullah" [12].

(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 of connections with other cultures [9]. Furthermore, it is also stated that the root of English proverbs is conventionally branched into native and borrowed ones, which are usually from Latin and French [9]. On the other hand, [12] mentioned in his paper that some of the Malay proverbs originated from another language, where the process of loaning words between the Malay language and other foreign languages has taken place. This is mainly due to the location of "Tanah Melayu" (the Malay land) as the popular trading center where eastern and western cultures clash [12].

(3) Religion

As Christianity is the main religion in the English-speaking countries, it can be noted that there are numerous sources of proverbs with reference to characters or events in the religion's sacred book, which is the Bible [10]. The Bible, as a broadly translated book, plays a crucial role in the dissemination of conventional proverbs [3]. Hence, it becomes the main source for believers to follow and practise the advised acts. To support this, [10] mentioned that the Bible is the important essence of Western civilisation, which helps to craft the Western civilisation more particularly than any other reference since it is a well-known book among mankind. In contrast to Malaysia, since Islam is the main religion of the country, the attributes of its people are greatly rooted in Islamic values, especially among the Muslims. As stated by [13], the basis values of the Malay civilisation are deeply constructed in accordance to the Islamic values and the concept of faith as evidenced by Malay expressions such as proverbs, similes and sayings. He then further stated that the creativity of the people to generate proverbs and sayings, intended to be as a guide, example, and boundary in the process of socialisation, has crafted the cultural values among the people.

(4) Environment

The language used and the concept of thinking by a society are determined by the way the speakers observe and treat their surroundings, hence every single aspect of the world influences the meaningful comprehension of the society, which is then utilised in the language [11]. Therefore, it can be understood that the Malay's advice and hints are obtained from the relationship with the environment, for instance the human characteristics are reflected from the attributions and the nature of plants and animals [12].

2.2. Animals

Considering that animals are part of the living creatures in the surrounding of human beings, the attributes and

characteristics of the animals as well as the expressions they make can be used to identify how a particular society observes and defines animals, which then helps to grasp or determine the cultural background and differences of each society [14]. [15] also stated that one of the ways to characterise someone or make comparisons in proverbs from various language styles or symbolic languages is through the utilisation of animal elements. This is because animals have been vital influences and have existed in the surrounding of human life since before, and it is possible for people to utilise the animal's elements to characterise the facets of human life [15].

2.3. Feline Metaphors

To view from the global context, there are some studies that compare the feline metaphors in proverbs between English and other languages. One of the studies is by [14], whose paper investigated the semantic and cultural study of animal expressions in English and Persian. The findings indicated some of the semantic features of the selected expressions and one of the animals, which is the cat is used to symbolise shamelessness. The study concluded that proverbs are used as a reflection of speakers, perceptions, cultures, beliefs, and behaviours and they can be based on the individual as well as social thoughts.

Based on research by [4], it was found that in English proverbs, the cat is used to symbolise negative attributes such as greed in the context of business transactions, and also selfishness. However, their findings showed that in the Malay proverbs, cat expressions are used to indicate both negative and positive attributes depending on the situations, for instance the cat is symbolised as authoritative, fierce, pretentious, cowardly, useless, lazy, opportunistic, insignificant, as well as shameless. These findings are based on human characteristics and attributes that are conceptualised based on the aspects carried by the cat [4].

Another feline metaphor study by [16] revealed that differences exist in feline representations in English and Malay proverbs are resulted based on the association of positive and negative traits of a particular culture towards the feline despite being available in both nations. The researchers also mentioned that the relationship between humans and animals in their surroundings is one of the fragments that shaped the representations in both language communities. To support the previous findings, [16] indicated that the use of animals' expressions in proverbs shows the value that is available in that particular society. They further elaborated that the Malays' way of reasoning in using the animal-oriented proverbs can only be understood if the implicit meanings beyond the exquisitely arranged words are comprehended successfully.

[17] in her paper investigated the comparative study of

English and Chinese animal proverbs from the perspective of metaphors. According to the paper, animal proverbs were divided into three types. Firstly, the type that are identical in both animal images and meanings that consisted of wolf and bee; the second type includes animals which are identical in animal images but meanings such as dragon, dog and cat; the third type includes animals which are identical in meanings but animal images such as tiger and lion as well as cattle and horse. The results from the study showed that metaphor is a part of people's lives where it represents the culture of society. The paper also concluded that proverbs are not only regarded as the carriers of information, but also the carrier of cultural and social cultures.

In addition, [14] applied cognitive semantic analysis in his paper, where he analysed proverbs related to dogs in the Malay language. The Great Chain of Being metaphor has been utilised in order to identify the cognitive mechanism of dog proverbs according to the hierarchical chain in the surrounding. Through his findings from 4 dog proverbs, he stated that dogs in the Malay culture are regarded as despicable, weak, and bad animals. This finding is contradictory to [18]'s study, in which they mentioned that a dog is a loyal and reliable animal. The paper concluded that the experience of interacting with animals among different folk cultures and knowledge was reflected in the different metaphorical proverbs in their specific language.

2.4. Cross-cultural Variation

One of the predominant contributions related to the study of metaphors is through the studies of cross-cultural variations, which involve the area of comparison of different metaphorical concepts and the expressions used in numerous cultures and languages [19]. Based on Boers's envision, there are three types of cross-cultural variation in the usage of metaphor [3], which are:

- i. Differences with regard to the particular source-target mappings that have become conventional in the given cultures.
- ii. Differences with regard to value judgements associated with the source or target domains.
- iii. Differences with regard to the degree of pervasiveness of metaphor as such, as compared with other (rhetorical) figures.

It is also noted that among the three types of variations, the most familiar variation in metaphor studies is the first type that concerns the differences in the specific source-target mappings in the given cultures [19]. [3] further explained that this cross-cultural variation in conceptual metaphors transpires when two languages exhibit the same mappings of the source-target domains. Besides, findings indicated that in different cultures, metaphors can have different source

domains that are mapped onto the same target domain [19]. [20] also indicated that in the process of conceptualization of a target domain, there can be a variant range of source domains that languages and cultures possess. Focusing on the first variation, cross-cultural comparison can be perceived in the way people explicate the relationship and connection between things in the world [19]. Hereby, [21] portrayed the relationship through the form of the GREAT CHAIN OF BEING metaphor.

2.5. Great Chain of Being Metaphor Theory

Arthur O. Lovejoy (1914) demonstrated in his book “The Great Chain of Being” that all creatures and objects, from the lowest to highest possible kind of existents constitute to a hierarchical order. In which each and every creature or thing in this world is fixed at a certain level of the chain [5]. To understand the relationship of metaphors from the directionality of proverbial metaphors, George Lakoff and Mark Turner utilised some variants of the Great Chain of Being, which was elaborated in the book, *More Than Cool Reason*, in 1989 [5]. The proposed tool by [5], which is known as the GREAT CHAIN METAPHOR (GCM), comprises four components in order to answer the peremiological problem related to the way people understand the figurative meaning of proverbs [5]:

- (1) The Naïve Theory of the Nature of Things (further: TNT);
- (2) The Great Chain of Being (further GCB) qualified as a cultural model;
- (3) The GENERIC IS SPECIFIC metaphor (further GISM);
- (4) The Maxim of Quantity (further MQ).

Additionally, the Great Chain of Metaphor Theory has evolved to determine how proverbs are understood and comprehended, especially the animal metaphors underlying them, and at the same time mentioned that the four components mentioned above carry their own independent identities, which is vital in analysing the proverbs [22].

2.6. The Naïve Theory of the Nature of Things

In the Theory of the Nature of Things, [5] agreed that this theory is a commonplace to indicate the form of being in which every form of being has the essences that help to guide the way it behaves and functions. They also indicated the physical attributes of a particular being resulted in essential physical behaviour that is, “the relationship between what things are like and how they behave” [5]. For instance, plants possess essential biological natures that lead to essential biological behaviour, like how a tree drops its leaves and a flower follows the direction of the sun [5]. In other words, our knowledge regarding things and attributes is unconscious

and automatic, which leads to a certain way of behaving [5]. In addition, when the Great Chain of Being metaphor is combined with the knowledge of the Nature of Thing, a hierarchical folk theory can be gained. The examples of Nature of Things combined with the Great Chain of Being metaphor are as shown below [5]:

- (1) Human > higher order attributes > higher order behaviour.
- (2) Animal > instinctual attributes > instinctual behaviour.
- (3) Plants > biological attributes > biological behaviour.
- (4) Complex objects > structural attributes > structural behaviour.
- (5) Natural physical object > natural physical attributes > natural physical behaviour.

From the combination of both the Nature of Things and the Great Chain of Being theories, a complex common-sense theory can be formed, which acts as a crucial ingredient in understanding proverbs.

2.7. The Great Chain of Being

Focusing on the second component, which qualified as a cultural model, Lakoff and Turner put their focus on the basis model of a great chain of being, in which those beings that are listed higher the hierarchy possess higher faculties and those that are listed lower possess lower faculties [22]. For instance, in the hierarchy, human beings are located at the highest level, followed by animals, plants, and lastly inanimate things, besides, each of the levels contains their own sublevels, such as in the animal level, big animals like horses are located at a higher position in the hierarchy as compared to insects [22]. The purpose of this Great Chain of Being metaphor is to understand the “general human character in terms of non-human attributes” and conversely, to perceive the “non-human attributes in terms of human characteristics” [19].

2.8. The GENERIC IS SPECIFIC Metaphor

As for the third concept, GENERIC IS SPECIFIC METAPHOR is a single generic-level metaphor that maps “a single specific-level schema onto an indefinitely large number of parallel specific-level schemas” which all convey the same generic-level structures, namely the source domain schema [21]. In other words, the source domain is narrowed to a specific-level schema and the target is in the general-level schema [22]. Besides, from the facilitation of the GENERIC IS SPECIFIC metaphor, it “allows us to apply the generic interpretation to a specific case that has the appropriate underlying generic structure” [22].

2.9 The Maxim of Quantity

The Maxim of Quantity is a portion of Grice's communicative principle in which speakers are believed to provide as much information as required for identification, and no more [8]. In the metaphor study, the Maxim of Quantity has its restrictive function on the scope of given information, where it functions to only elect the highest-ranking properties that are possible in every situation [18]. As mentioned by [18] in their book, the style maxim of quantity functions in such a way that since the Great Chain of Being is presented in hierarchy order, where the beings located at the higher level usually embrace the properties of the beings below them, therefore when a speaker is referring to a particular being in the hierarchy, the speaker actually has given out a lot of information about the lower properties, and this can be "a great deal of superfluous information" [18].

3. Method

A total of 66 proverbs were analysed using the qualitative method, with English having 21 proverbs and Malay having 42 proverbs. The amount that was selected is based on the availability of the proverbs in the respective language's sources, with a focus on the proverbs that are expressed in a metaphorical form (consisting of metaphors) and are related to feline animals only. British English proverbs were chosen by the researchers as it was intended to focus on one culture since the American proverbs would be based on another culture. The data for this study was later analysed using the Great Chain of Metaphor Theory (GCM) framework by [18]. Both English and Malay feline proverbs were collected from printed materials, as well as online databases. The English proverbs were collected mainly from the Little Oxford Dictionary of Proverbs (2016) edited by Knowles and the Internet (Phrasefinder and Collins Dictionary). 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. Note that the sources for this study were selected

following past studies which have utilised them as their main corpus for the collection of proverbs [14,4], however the dictionaries of proverbs being used in this study were among the latest editions of the said publication.

As mentioned above, the data for this study was primarily based on feline proverbs that are available in English and Malay languages. The selection of proverbs as the data was based on their metaphorical language use, as stated by [3] that proverbs are the "short, generally known sentences of the folk that contain wisdom, truths, morals, and traditional views in a metaphorical, fixed, and memorisable form and that are handed down from generation to generation" [23,24,3]. Later, certain proverbs from the English and Malay languages were included as the data because they conveyed specific characteristics in order to analyse the representations of the feline from both societies, and those without the characteristics were not selected.

The specification of the criteria for collecting the data was adopted from a study by [4] and they were adapted to fit the current research. For example, in choosing the Malay feline proverbs, those which are categorised as Perumpamaan (simile) were excluded, as the proverbial construction is different from metaphors, where "they make direct comparison using explicit comparative markers such as 'like' and 'as' in English and seperti, bagai, laksana, ibarat, umpama, bak and macam in Malay" [4].

The Great Chain of Metaphor Theory (GCM) framework by [18] was utilised in this study to execute the cross-cultural comparison and contrast analysis. The source-domain-oriented analysis was used to identify the cross-cultural differences between both languages in conceptualising the feline proverbs. The Conceptual Keys or Representations were referred as the basis to discover the cross-cultural differences in this study, where they are generated from a number of conceptual metaphors. The examples of the process of establishing the conceptual keys are illustrated in the table below:

Table 1. Establishing the Conceptual Keys

Language	Proverb	Source domain (stated in the proverb) = types, physical attributes & characteristics	Target domain (taken from the meaning)	Conceptual metaphor (A IS B)	Conceptual key (Representation)
Malay	(Har1) "Harimau tidak merendahkan dirinya untuk menangkap cicak sebagai mangsanya" (a great person would not commit the act that can downgrade his level)	Adult tiger	A great person	PEOPLE ARE TIGER A GREAT PERSON IS TIGER	PEOPLE ARE TIGER
	"Harimau puntung kena penjara, pelanduk kecil menolakkan mara" (sometimes the troubles of the great people can be helped by the weak and small people)	Adult tiger	A great person	PEOPLE ARE TIGER A GREAT PERSON IS TIGER	
	(Har12) "Gajah harimau di hutan hendak diburu, pijat-pijat di bantal tak dapat dihapuskan" (the wickedness of the great people is being eradicated while the wickedness of the closed person cannot be overcome)	Adult tiger	A great person	PEOPLE ARE TIGER A GREAT PERSON IS TIGER	

Based on the table, the conceptual metaphors and conceptual keys are the abstract inferences of metaphors that are yielded on the linguistic instantiations, in which the reasoning of conceptual metaphors from the linguistic metaphors helps interpret the relationship among metaphors, rendering their meanings. In the same way, the interrelation process of conceptual metaphors in order to identify the conceptual keys can help to render coherence in a specific discourse. Therefore, the construction of conceptual keys can be achieved through the classification of conceptual metaphors that consist of source domains and target domains as

presented in the table above. Furthermore, because there is no feline proverb in English that refers to an adult tiger or a tiger cub, the not available (N/A) sign was inserted in the table.

As the Great Chain of Metaphor Theory (GCM) framework involved four important components, which were the Naïve Theory of the Nature in Things, The Great Chain of Being, The Generic is Specific Metaphor, and the Maxim of Quantity components, hence the hierarchical classification was also involved in order to distinguish the rank and order

of the feline in both cultures. The method of utilising the Great Chain of Metaphor Theory (GCM) in exploring proverbial understanding is presented below:

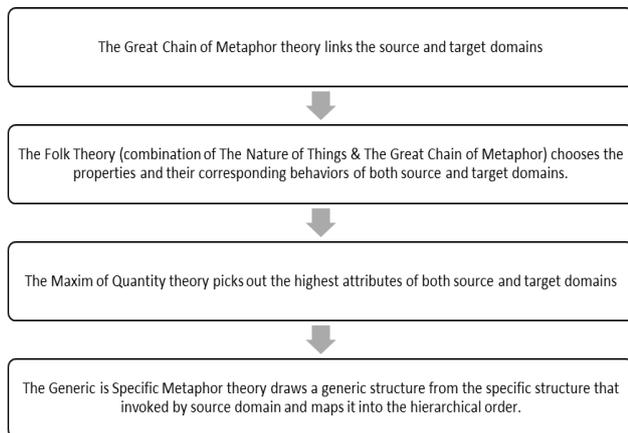


Figure 1. The Process of Great Chain of Metaphor Analysis

The method of utilising the Great Chain of Metaphor Theory (GCM) in exploring proverbial understanding is presented. According to the figure above, the Great Chain of Metaphor theory was used to connect and identify the relationship between the source and target domains in a proverb through the application of broad knowledge. At the same time, the Nature of Things theory was contacted so as to choose and relate the properties to the behaviours found in both domains. Since these two theories were compatible and could operate together at the same level, the combination of both theories was identified as the Folk Theory, which was mentioned at the second stage of the analysis. Next, the Maxim of Quantity theory was utilised in the third stage to determine the highest attributes of both domains and to ensure the correlation and description were precise and concise. In the last stage, the Generic is Specific Metaphor was employed to map the generic structure found in the source domain onto the hierarchical order of the Great Chain of Metaphor properties as stated in Literature Review section. The above process is crucial as it was used in line with the explanation of the cross-cultural comparison and contrast analysis, where the sources of proverbs were included to explore the differences available. In addition, this approach was a helpful tool to manifest their different cultural beliefs, such as religions, historical backgrounds, and surroundings.

4. Results and Discussion

The Great Chain of Metaphor Theory (GCM) by [18] is crucial in analysing the cross-cultural aspects of the feline representations between the different languages used. As mentioned in the previous section, this study employed the four important 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. Therefore, the explanation of the feline representations used in English

and Malay proverbs was in accordance with the process of the Great Chain of Metaphor analysis to probe the cross-cultural comparison and contrast that arise based on the feline representations used in the proverbs.

It is beyond dispute that the association of animal features and attributes together with human beings is extensively used to express one's thoughts and views in human communication. The detailed representation of certain animal proverbs shows how valuable the animal is to the respective nation or even culture. As mentioned by [9], each nation possesses its own favoured animal and it is usually implemented as a "totem" towards the people, therefore exerting a strong influence on their language. Although the human understanding of the world is similar, however the comprehensive knowledge of the world would be diverse to different nations due to the differences in surroundings, lifestyles, values, beliefs and history. Additionally, the use of some animal representations in languages is the outcome from the particular cultural backgrounds, where in this study the representations are influenced by customs, religion, and the core values of the nations.

4.1. Customs

Tiger

The first notion that comes to the surface is customs, which exist in every culture in the world. According to the analysis, one of the obvious feline animals that radiated the cross-cultural differences between English and Malay cultures is the "tiger". This can be seen where both of the metaphorical conceptualizations of tiger in the English proverbs expressed negative attributions, which are mainly due to the western culture that positions tiger lower than lion in the animal hierarchy despite coming from the same group of lineages. Moreover, there are not many metaphorical expressions regarding tigers in English, and the only conceptual key discovered is AFFAIR IS ANIMAL. This occurrence is due to the lack of tiger proverbs in the said language, which is understandable given the fact that tigers are not endemic to the western region and its surroundings.

Furthermore, to fortify the cross-cultural differences in the aspect of custom, the Malay culture's views on tigers are also explicated, where in Malay culture, tigers are greatly treasured among the people. This can be manifested through the inclusion of tigers in Malaysia's Coats of Arms [18], besides having one of the biggest cat species which is only available in Asia in its forest [19]. Furthermore, the existence of wild tigers in the jungles of Malaysia proves the close relationship of the said animal with the people, which can be seen from the detailed use of the tiger's characteristics and trails in the conceptualizations. From the animal hierarchical order, it is undeniable that Malay people placed tiger at the top level of the hierarchy, where they regarded tigers as "Raja Rimba", or in English known as the "king of the beast", as

stated by [19].

This can be proven from the findings where tiger is used to show positive attribution in comparison to other animals in some of the proverbs where tiger is considered a powerful animal or entity. There are proverbs which are related to the physical attributes of a tiger, such as the tiger's stripes (*belang harimau*) (Har11, Har12 & Har14) and the tiger's claws (*kuku harimau*) (Har13 & Har15), which have drawn the PEOPLE ARE ANIMALS conceptual key. In order to know the level of respectability of a tiger in the Malay culture, a proverb related to the tiger's stripes is taken as an example, where it can be seen that the proverb is used to summarise a person's life, meaning that when a good person dies, that person leaves his or her good name (Har12).

Also, in the animal hierarchical order of the Malay culture, the tiger is without a doubt positioned at the highest level among other animals, which shows its power as the "king of the beast". This can be proven by comparing a tiger to other animals in the proverbs, such as the comparison between a tiger and a buffalo. In the proverb, the tiger is conceptualised as a powerful person (Har17), whereas the buffalo is used to manifest the opposite manner, which is an unlucky situation. This representation shows that the tiger, as an animal from the upper level carries the features of the animals under its position, which in this case, is the buffalo.

Lion

Another feline animal that shows the cross-cultural differences between both cultures is the "lion". As mentioned before, English people positions the tiger second to the lion in the animal hierarchy, as they regard the lion as the "king of the jungle". This can be agreeable based on the superior number of lion proverbs with positive attributions found in English compared to Malay. There are also three major conceptual keys found, namely PEOPLE ARE ANIMALS, RANKS ARE ANIMALS and WEATHER IS ANIMAL. These representations are made clear following the lion's top position in the animal hierarchical order in English culture. The rich cultural representations of lions in English culture are also deemed as another reason why the animal is substituted with tigers in Malay culture. In contrast, there is not much finding found in relation to lions in the Malay culture as there is only one proverb available. According to the proverb, the lion is perceived as an enemy that conveys negative attributions, which can be presumed through the less rich cultural representation of the feline animal in the Malay culture compared to the English culture.

4.2. Religion

The next cross-cultural aspect is religion, where in this study, English and Malay cultures portray different beliefs in accordance with the official religion as well as the total population that embraces the religion. It is clear that the

majority of the English people believe in Christianity as it is the largest religion in England, with 59% of the total population, as stated by the Office of National Statistics [25], while in Malaysia, since the official religion is Islam, the number of believers is quite high, with a proportion of 61.3% of the total population [6]. Based on this analysis, it is without a doubt that animal preferences play a significant role in the metaphorical conceptualizations of the feline animal.

Cat

The representations of cats in English proverbs convey how people view cats in their surroundings. In English, dogs are more popular among people as they believe that dogs possess trustworthy and loyal personalities towards their owners, hence resulting on the lack of fondness around cats. This can be agreed based on a survey by Statista in 2019/2020 that showed the percentage of the UK households owning dogs as their pets is higher than cats, with 5% and 16%, respectively [2]. This preference explains why there are so many negative attributions in cat conceptualizations. Other than that, the representation of PEOPLE ARE ANIMALS is less used in English, demonstrating that cats have had poor relationships with people in the past, which then influenced the proverb's creation. Furthermore, from the animal hierarchy, it can be seen that the position of cats is lower than dogs in English culture, which is mainly due to the larger physical characteristics of dogs.

In comparison to that, the most popular feline animal among the Malay people is the cat, which is radiated through the high number of positive attributions regarding cats in the proverbs. Furthermore, cats are believed to have a major role in Malay culture based on the significant number of PEOPLE ARE ANIMALS' representations used in the proverbs, therefore affirming the close relationship between humans and cats. Also, according to a survey, Malaysia ranks in first place among Southeast Asian countries with 15% of the people owning cats as their pets [1]. Besides, one of the significant grounds for this preference is that of the Islamic teachings that inculcate believers to practise "Ihsan" towards animals by raising pets such as cats as stated on the Pejabat Mufti Wilayah Persekutuan's official website [26].

Cats, which are popular among people, are sometimes used as "keepers" of houses for a variety of reasons, including assisting in the control of destructive pests such as rats. This can be agreed upon by the findings of four proverbs that compare cats with rats (Kuc1, Kuc2, Kuc5 & Kuc10). In these proverbs, cats are conceptualised as someone who is feared and as an influential person, while rats are conceptualised contradictorily to show the status of these animals. It can be seen that rats in these proverbs are associated negatively, resulting from their nature as house pests as well as carriers of diseases. Observing from the animal hierarchical order, cats are situated in an upper

position compared to rats, which is seemingly based on the cat's physical characteristics and its hunting skills, which can be a threat to the pest.

4.3. Fundamental Values

The third aspect of cross-cultural differences found in the analysis is the fundamental values, with the addition of the basis of language used in both cultures. Between the English and Malay feline proverbs, the differences can be noted from the values they carry, where most of the proverbs in English evolve around moral values with high attention to individualistic traits, such as perseverance, commitment, respect for boundaries and many more. Some of these values, as taken from the Oxford Dictionary, are radiated through the examples of proverbs below:

(1) Tig1: "He who rides a tiger is afraid to dismount".

meaning: Once a dangerous venture is begun, the safest course is to carry it through the end.

(2) Cat2: "A cat always lands on its feet".

meaning: A cat's natural agility typifies its ability to escape trouble.

(3) Lio1: "An army led by a lion would be more formidable than one of lions led by a stag".

meaning: Courage and tenacity can be negated by poor leadership, while a strong leader can provide crucial encouragement for weak forces.

(4) Leo2: "By seeing one spot, you know the entire leopard.

meaning: A person cannot change their essential nature.

On the other hand, in Malay, the majority of the proverbs focus more on social values, which is in line with the collectivistic traits among the people. These findings manifest that the values which have been embedded in the Malay culture are seen in line with the collectivism, that emphasizes more on "the people" than "a person" of the individualism in the English culture. The examples which portrayed some of the values are presented below:

(1) Har12: "*Harimau mati meninggalkan belang, gajah mati meninggalkan daging, manusia mati meninggalkan nama*" (Kamus Istimewa Peribahasa Melayu DBP, 2017, p.79)

meaning: A good person dies leaving his (good) name, a bad person dies leaving a bad name.

(2) Har16: "*Harimau puntung kena penjara, pelanduk kecil menolakkan mara*" (p.79)

meaning: There are times when influential people are helped

by those who are poor and weak.

(3) Sin1: "*Hendak singa di tengah padang lagi, daripada ular di dalam rumput*" (p.82)

meaning: It is better to face a big enemy in the open than a small enemy in a concealed place.

(4) Kuc13: "*Jangan bangunkan kucing tidur*" (ATMA UKM)

meaning: Do not disturb a quiet enemy.

This can be agreed based on a BBC article written by [27] about the influence of geography on our reasoning, especially "behaviourism". The author stated that, based on studies, people in the West are prone to being "more individualists" while people from Asian countries like "India, Japan, or China" are prone to being more "collectivists" [27]. To add on, Great Britain, Australia, Canada, and the US are some of the individualistic societies that highlight the individual's and his or her family's self-interest, which includes "personal autonomy, privacy, self-realization, individual initiative, independence, individual decision making, and an understanding of personal identity", as well as putting "less concern about the needs and interests of others" [18].

Alongside with the findings, there is another enticing difference that can be noticed in the proverbs of the two languages, which is based on the basis of the language used. From the analysis, it is apparent that Malay people frequently utilise the word "jangan", meaning "do not". Here is one such example:

(1) Har2: "*Anak harimau jangan diajak bertampar, ingat-ingat kukunya*" (p. 8)

meaning: Do not make enemies with people who are stronger than you.

In this example, the proverb hinders people from making enemies with strong people or those who come from the upper level of society. The word "jangan" here is utilised to give assertive advice in the figurative expression. Since Malay people value politeness in their culture, the usage of the negative words in the proverb is not combined with the negative consequences of the actions directly, as they are portrayed metaphorically in the proverbs, and it deems the people to ponder on the implications by themselves. This outcome complements the values of the Malay culture since politeness is considered an important value to uphold among the Malay people to avoid sounding harsh or inconsiderate to the other person.

5. Conclusion

The findings provided in this study help to explore the cross-cultural differences in the feline representations between the

two societies involved, mainly in English and Malay. The noteworthy findings which are apparent in this study are based on the cross-cultural aspects between English and Malay's differing cultural backgrounds. The factors which played a substantial role in the establishment of different representations include notions such as customs, religion, and the core values of the particular cultural background. In addition, the favouritism of the people towards the feline animals, the existence of the feline animals enclosing the country's areas, and the top position of the feline animals in the hierarchy are among the grounds that influenced the different representations generated within the cultural notions.

The outcomes from the present study contribute additional insights into the area of metaphor conceptualization with an essential focus on proverbs, specifically the animal proverbs, which then help to unravel the underlying meanings behind the unique and beautifully arranged expressions. On that account, further research relating to the area of metaphorical analysis with regards to other figurative language aspects is believed to be beneficial for students, primarily foreign language learners, to enhance their cultural knowledge. It is hoped that the utilisation of proverbs and other metaphorical expressions will never be outdated, or as the saying in Malay goes, "*tak lapuk ditelan zaman*" in our everyday communication, be it in written or spoken form.

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