

Susan Keeney. *Malay Phrasebook*, Victoria, Australia, Lonely Planet Publications, 2002. p. 308.

Hasan Muhammad Ali, Mohd Nadzar, Mohd. Shariff, Wan Mansor, Wan Dewa, *Kamus Imbuhan Bahasa Melayu*, Shah Alam, Selangor: Fajar Bakti. 2001. p. vi + 394.

Kit Lee (Annotator and Illustrator), *Keli Dua Selubang (2 Catfish in the Same Hole and 99 Other Malay Sayings)*. Singapore: Times Media Private Limited. 2001. p. 104.

Asmah Haji Omar, *Malay Perception of Time*. Kuala Lumpur: Akademi Pengajian Melayu, Universiti Malaya, 2000. p. x +104.

First published in 1996, the pocket size traveller's booklet by Keeney is currently in its second edition. This book consists of 18 chapters, two sets of glossary, and an index. Both English-Malay and Malay-English word lists are available. The first three chapters are a useful introduction as the first chapter offers a short history on the rise of Malay as the national language of Malaysia. Keeney also records the change of terminology from *Bahasa Malaysia* (Malaysian language) to *Bahasa Melayu* (Malay language) in the first chapter (p. 10):

Bahasa Malaysia, 'the language of Malaysia' was considered a unifying name, implicitly for Malaysians of all origins. In 1989, however, the members of *Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka* (The Hall of Language and Publishing), who are predominantly Malay, decided to change it back to Bahasa Melayu 'the language of the Malays'. This move was seen by some to be a racially possessive, 'our language, not yours' move. It remains the official name.

The second chapter informs on the pronunciation of Malay in terms of consonantal and vowel combination as well as diphthongs of vowels sequences. Keeney offers a good example of mispronouncing the consonant /h/ in the second chapter:

Words ending in h have some rules all of their own. An (h) indicates a breathy h sound at the end of a syllable, and a slight lengthening of the vowel sound, which can indicate a different meaning. Don't get caught out! *Dadah dah-dah(h)*, means 'illegal drugs' and *dada, dah-duh*, means 'breast'. It's not unusual for tourists ordering a nice bit of chicken in a restaurant to accidentally ask for narcotics! (p. 17).

The third chapter spells out some grammar points, which include word order such as the noun adjective sequence, personal pronouns, function words, modals and question words. Keeney describes superlative in Malay as the formation of noun followed by *paling* (the most) followed by adjective; examples are *paling murah* 'cheapest', and *paling bagus* 'the best' (p. 24). The examples fail to include the noun, which was introduced as part of the linguistic structure of superlative in Malay. This may confuse the speakers using the book. Keeney can also include the affix *ter-* as the marker for superlative, which can be handy and/or easy to some speakers:

*Tercantik* : ter + *cantik* 'pretty' > 'prettiest' > *baju tercantik* 'the pretties shirt'

*Terpanjang* : ter + *panjang* 'long' > 'longest' > *pantai terpanjang* 'the longest beach'

*Tersedap* : ter + *sedap* 'tasty' > 'most tasty' > *makanan tersedap* 'the most tasty food'

There appears to be some errors in the Malay-Indonesian vocabulary comparison provided in the first chapter. Instead of *dapat* or *boleh* the word 'can' is glossed as *bisa* for Malay and *boleh* for Indonesian, and instead of *kereta* the word 'car' (following *can*) is glossed as *boleh* for Malay (p. 11). The word 'cold' is glossed as *sejuk* for Malay and *dingin* for Indonesian. I learnt from my Indonesian friend Evie that both *sejuk* and *dingin* are used in Indonesian only that *dingin* is colder than *sejuk*. On a cultural specific note, the Malay

*sejuk* is commonly used to refer to objects such as ‘cold water’ (*air sejuk*) whereas *dingin* refers to a state such as ‘cold weather’ (*hawa dingin*) or ‘lukewarm reception’ (*sambutan dingin*).

Keeney uses *jumlah* pronounced as *joom-lah(h)* to mean ‘let’s get to it’ as a phrase to invite the readers to begin the lesson in the book (p. 11). The particle *lah* is attached to the word of Penang Malay origin *jum* ‘let’s go’. However, *jumlah* also means ‘total’ when taken as a whole word. I suggest that *jum* by itself is sufficient because *jum* encompasses *lah* as it is glossed as *marilah* (*mari* ‘come’ + *lah*) in *Kamus Dewan Bahasa* (1989: 505).

The remaining 15 chapters offer areas of common interest and useful conversation topics such as *Meeting People*, *Getting Around*, *Accommodation*, *Family*, *Health*, *Food*, *Shopping*, *Numbers* and *Amounts*. In each chapter a topic is provided with a brief introduction in English followed by a series of subtopics concerning the main area of discussion. In the seventh chapter, for example, the discussion about *Around Town* (*Di Bandar*) is explained with the typical time that shops close in Malaysia and the significance of ‘night market’ glossed as *pasar malam*, and phonemically represented as *pah-sahr mah-lahm*. The chapter is divided into various subtopics such as *looking for*, *at the bank*, *at the post office*, *telecommunications*, *sightseeing*, and *paperwork* (p. 87-98). Each subsection is supplied with typical speech patterns and related vocabulary. The subsection on *post office*, for example, contains three English speech templates with interlanguage homonym and the standard Malay equivalents. Examples of the speech template are as follow (p. 91):

<i>English speech templates</i>	<i>Interlanguage homonym (printed in purple)</i>	<i>Standard Malay phrases</i>
I want to buy...	<i>Sai-yuh nah(k) membe-lee...</i>	Saya nak membeli ...
Envelopes	<i>Sahm-pul soo-raht</i>	Sampul surat
Postcards	<i>Pos-kahd</i>	Poskad
Stamps	<i>Se-tehm</i>	Setem

Representing the Malay words with similar English sounds is the typical trademark of Keeney's book. Each Malay word is equated with similar English sound syllables printed in purple. This interlanguage homonymy capitalises on the phonetic similarity between the source language of the speaker, which is English, and the target language the speaker is learning, which is Malay. As such the principle of cross-language homonymy is used to the advantage of foreign speakers in learning Malay. This is indeed a feasible way of teaching Malay pronunciation and that the book is into its second edition suggests that the method is acceptable to the foreign speakers.

Interlanguage homonymy is currently the method used by *Streamline Marketing* to teach foreign language on the internet. As many as twelve languages, including Malay, are taught in this method under the service provider's unforgettable languages series.

[http://www.unforgettablelanguages.com/frames\\_a30.html](http://www.unforgettablelanguages.com/frames_a30.html) Here are some examples of interlanguage homonymy for Malay words derived from the service provider and highlighted in systematically in a Malay discussion (Sew 2004).

<i>Malay word</i>	<i>Interlanguage homonym</i>	<i>English Equivalent</i>
<i>KEJU</i>	<i>KAYJOO</i>	<i>CHEESE</i>
<i>SUSU</i>	<i>SOOSOO</i>	<i>MILK</i>
<i>KISMIS</i>	<i>KEESMEES</i>	<i>RAISINS</i>
<i>LADA</i>	<i>LADA</i>	<i>PEPPER</i>
<i>TELUR</i>	<i>TELUR</i>	<i>EGGS</i>
<i>ROTI</i>	<i>ROTEE</i>	<i>BREAD</i>

Interestingly, the chapter on *Going Out* contains a subsection on *Dating & Romance* that has a brief explanation as follows:

Remember the different pronouns in Malay. Usually the more casual, intimate and egalitarian pronouns (*aku* or *ku* for ‘I’ and *engkau* or *kau*, *kamu* or *mu* for ‘you’) are used in dating situations, especially after the first date or two (p. 101).

Caution on the use of the second person pronoun *kau* in Malay oral communication is necessary. While *kau* may sound casual it does not sound polite to the Malays. My Malay friend joked that *kau* is for ‘cow’ in English and ‘dog’ in Hokkien (Fujian) a Chinese dialect (as *kau* is homonymic to *cow* in English and *dog* in Hokkien).

Keeney is a current writer who sees her readers coming from all walks of life. Knowing the needs of some tourists visiting Malaysia with varying desires in mind she offers a subsection to gay travellers. Responsible is a trait of Keeney as she cautions them with this write-up (p. 180):

Despite negative views of homosexuality and laws which allow for the punishment of homosexual acts by imprisonment or caning, Malaysia is amazingly tolerant...Public displays of affection are not okay, however.

Being gay is not something Malaysians talk about openly. The social support for gays is limited to a handful of organisation, although Marina Mahathir, the daughter of the former Malaysian Prime Minister, champions fiercely for AIDS awareness and prevention in Malaysia.

Keeney, who is culturally sensitive, knows the origins of many festivals celebrated in Malaysia including *Hari Raya Haji*, the lesser known Muslim festive occasion, to foreigners:

This Muslim festival commemorates Ibrahim’s devotion to God. On being ordered by God to kill his son, Isaac, Ibrahim was about to do the deed when

God put a stop to it and told him to kill a sheep instead. It's the day upon which the Muslim pilgrims to Mecca complete the pilgrimage... (p. 194).

Keeney informs that the sacrifice of a goat or sheep is re-enacted in many parts of Malaysia during Hari Raya Haji. This piece of information is important to tourists especially those who love sheep, for without which, the visitors might witness something gruesome without prior warning should they mistakenly generalise the English meaning of festival to this specific Muslim celebration.

As Malaysia is focussing on the implementation of English as a medium of instruction at the national level (Jayasankaran 2002), books on Malay pedagogy written for the non-natives are always a welcome. This book shows that the need to learn a language infused with cultural knowledge is of paramount importance. Let's hope that the days of learning a foreign language with dry phonetic drills and floating phrases in a vacuum end soon. The need to anchor sentences in socio-cultural context of the speech community as exemplified by the chapters in this book should continue to motivate language gurus to produce more sensible textbooks and make foreign language a pleasure rather than a chore. This book is a significant contribution to the study of Malay pronunciation as it records a changing approach in Malay learning, especially to foreign speakers.

The dictionary compiled by Hassan, et al., informs on the various forms of affixation in Malay. The dictionary was first published in 1993 and subsequently republished five times before this second edition appears. The compilers inform that the second edition had words removed and new entries added and it is hoped that the society at large will benefit from the current edition. In its instruction to the users, the compilers explain that the word class is provided to the affixed word. The meaning of the affixed word is supplied and it is followed by a sentence in which the affixed word appears grammatically (p. v).

As an agglutinative language, Malay has many forms of affixation. A word stem can be converted into different word classes depending on the affixation. *Jalan* ‘road’, for example, becomes a verb: with *ber-* (*berjalan*) to mean ‘to walk’, with *meN-...-i* (*menjalani*), ‘undergoing’, with *meN-...-kan* (*menjalankan*) ‘carry out’; *jalan* becomes a noun with: *peN-* to designate *pedestrian* (*pejalan*), with *peR-...-an* to designate *journey* (*perjalanan*) etc. While Malay is often claimed to be the easiest language to learn in the world, most of my students think otherwise. These are native as well as near native students who had studied Malay language as second language for more than 6 years in their primary school years. English has been a competing language to Malay for Yasmin Basir and Jaslin Sulaiman, my 2004 O-level students, as they speak English most of the time.

Apart from being agglutinative, the affixation can be polysemous. While a noun like *jalan* becomes a verb *berjalan*, another noun *tulang* ‘bone’ becomes an adjective *bertulang* ‘boney’. *Bertulang* can further be used as freezes in proverbs like *lidah tak bertulang* ‘tongue without bone > making empty promises’ (cf. Charteris-Black 2003). The dictionary has captured the polysemous of *peN-...* on page 280 when it affixes to *sabar* ‘patience’ since *penyabar* is glossed with two meanings, namely patient (adjective), and a patient person (noun). The meanings of *peN-* provided in secondary school textbook lacks the adjectival meaning and very little information on the semantics of *peN-* is provided (see *Jendela Bahasa* 2003: 39). A dictionary explicating the intricacies of Malay affixation is definitely a useful reference to many who need to use well conjugated Malay words to write, speak, read and answer comprehensively either in written or oral communication.

The entries are in alphabetical order in the dictionary and each base word is not accorded with any word class until it is affixed. This is wise as Malay words are basically amorphous in that the word class is not predetermined until it appears in a sentence construction. The word *jalan* can mean ‘road’ or ‘walk’ or *move* depending on the context of usage:

1. *Jalan itu sempit*

Road that narrow

That road is narrow

2. *Jalan! Sekarang*

Go Now

Move immediately

3. *Jangan jalan di atas rumput*

Neg walk on top grass

Don't walk on the grass

However, when a word is affixed the word class is determined by the meaning inherent in the affix. Here is part of a comprehensive entry for the word *dapat* 'able' on page 63 in the dictionary (the English glosses are mine).

*dapat*

*dapatan k.n. (noun) penemuan* 'discovery'; *hasil* 'benefit': *Ahli sains berjaya memberikan suatu dapatan baru tentang nyamuk Aedes* 'The saintis succeeded to offer a new discovery on the Aedes mosquitoes'.

*didapati k.k. (verb) diketahui* 'discover': *Rumah orang kaya itu didapati telah dimasuki pencuri.* 'It was discovered that the rich man's house was entered by thieves'

*kedapatan k.n. (noun) ditemui* 'found'; *diketahui* 'discovered': *Di sekolah itu kedapatan murid-murid yang lemah tidak diberi bimbingan* 'It was found out that weak students were neglected in that school'

The Malay word *dapat* can have meanings varying from 'obtain' or 'able', to 'can', among others:

4. *Dia tak dapat pergi ke sekolah kerana hujan*

s/he neg can go to school because rain

She could not go to school due to the rain

5. *Dia dapat nombor satu dalam kelas*

s/he obtain number one in class

S/he obtained the first position in the class

6. *Dia dapat menolong anda.*

s/he able meN-help you

S/he is able to help you

The Malay word *bom* ‘bomb’ is missing in the dictionary. The verbal affixation of *bom* with *meN-* to form *mengebom* ‘to bomb’ is quite an established morphology in Malay vocabulary (see *Kamus Dewan* 1998: 170). One morphology rule should be understood in the affixation of a monosyllable word in Malay with *meN-*, namely the insertion of *-nge-* between the affix and the base word. This rule is observed in the dictionary for *cat* (paint) as in *mengecat* (to paint) (p. 51), *pos* (post) as in *mengepos* (to send by post) (p. 254) and *lap* ‘wipe’ as in *mengelap* (to wipe) (p. 179).

A O-level student who attempts to answer the passage that requires them to provide the accurate affixation for the verbs in bold below might be puzzled with many choices (*Pancaran Bahasa* 1997: 73):

*Oleh itu, marilah kita **renung** dan berfikir **jenak** tentang perkara ini.*

That’s why, let’s us ponder and think for a while about this matter.

The child might associate the possible affix choice for *renung* ‘ponder’ with that of *berfikir* ‘think’ as both are connected with *dan* ‘and’, the conjunction that usually groups similar categories. By using this dictionary and checking-up on *renung* the child will realise that *renung* has no *ber-* affixation and hence use *merenung* (p. 272), the next most likely

verbal affixation in the sentence construction. The sentence above poses a further problem to the child, as there is no entry for *jenak* in the dictionary. This is an area for improvement as the affixation of Malay is more complicated than those covered in the dictionary. *Jenak* designates a short while (*Kamus Dewan* 1998: 530). *Se-* in Malay designates singularity and *sejenak* simply means awhile. From the cognitive aspect of lexicology, *sejenak* is a lexical item at a more entrenched level as Malay speakers do not tease out the base word *jenak* and use it freely. Non-native students of Malay require more time to understand and master the usage of this well affixed lexical item in Malay.

Some interesting affixations can be included in the future edition of this dictionary. Words like *peluru* ‘bullet’, which is an affixation of the *luru* ‘rush’ with *pe-* and *pembuluh* ‘vein’, which is the affixation of *buluh* ‘bamboo’ with *peN-*; and more entrenched constructions such as *perempuan* ‘woman’, the affixation of *empuan* ‘lady’, with *per-* would entice Malay lexicographers.

This dictionary is a useful reference material for students and Malay learners to find out on the meanings of various morphological formations. The coverage of the affixation in Malay is adequate to students of Malay even though the breath of the lexicology in this dictionary can be regarded as the simplified version of the authoritative *Kamus Dewan*. It is for this reason the dictionary offers a handy and speedy reference to students of Malay language at the secondary school level. I recommend this as a relevant reference material to the secondary schools that offer Malay in the national examination at the Ordinary and Normal Academic level of the Cambridge Examination Syndicate.

Malay sayings form an important cultural institution of Malay values and Malay worldview. Each Malay saying is an iota of Malay ancient wisdom that offers guidance to its listeners. As the world is fast becoming a global village and exotic cultures are diluted by mass media disseminating certain dominant cultures, collections of cultural institution like

the present annotation and illustration of Malay sayings are all the more important. The significance of this effort increases with time as we enter the digital and virtual world of the twenty first century.

Changing language and education policies like the recent decision to teach Mathematics and Science in English in the local primary schools in Malaysia from 2003 onwards adds to the need of recording Malay cultural genres like Malay sayings. The possibility of looking at Malay sayings as cultural relics, though far-fetched now, might be valid in another century or two. Malay sayings as cultural treasures that hold imprints of the Malay tradition are learnt in school rather than acquired naturally by many young modern Malays in the Malay Archipelago. In fact, the present collection of Malay sayings, which is transliterated and explained in English, can be regarded as a pointer to an anthropological transition in the Malay world.

There are at least more than 4000 Malay sayings recorded (Abdullah 1991). Kit Lee's book records a hundred of them in an interesting fashion. They are categorized into eight themes, namely Kampung Life, Vegetarian Food-For Thought, Crawling, Hopping, Buzzing & Ambling Things, Of Pachyderms & Microbes, Anatomical Anomalies, Tools of the Trade, and Fishy Business.

In each category, each of the Malay sayings is given an English transliteration followed by either one or a few explanations of the intended meaning(s). Here is one example from the Kampung Life theme (p. 19):

*Bunga layu kembang semula*

A faded flower blooms anew

— Vindicated by time, making a comeback, reinstated into favour

— Making a futile attempt at staying fashionable

— Mutton dressed as lamb

The illustration of this Malay saying is an old man donning a cap, short pants, and a T-shirt with the word “YO!” roller blading passed a stunned female Malay student, who is in the *baju kurung* school uniform complete with the *tudung* or veil. This illustration clearly depicts the second set of meaning.

While the illustration is interesting as it provides a good contrast of old and young, as well as an attempt of the old trying to catch up with modernity, the original meaning of the Malay saying is debased. As I understand it, this Malay saying refers to the first meaning as provided by Lee. The creative interpretation of this saying shown in the depiction is innovative but not convincing and perhaps a disservice to the conventional meaning of this Malay literary institution.

A better illustration that captures the transliteration justly is provided to the Malay saying *ludah ke langit (timpa muka sendiri)* (p. 30-31). The depiction shows a man being hit by his own spit on his eye when he spat upwards. This depiction clearly shows a foolish act that affects the doer and it can be related with some of the explanations provided by Lee, namely ‘slander flings stones at itself’, ‘speak ill of your family and the injury recoils on yourself’, and ‘people in glass houses shouldn’t throw stones’.

From here one might appreciate the importance of a good collection of Malay sayings. Apart from being a log of wisdom inherited from the forefathers, Malay sayings can be used as a source of moral values. By apprehending this saying one would then understand the dynamics of traditional Malay values, which uphold the importance of benevolence and filial piety. Malay sayings may be a further reference that provides an additional eastern perspective to studies of family relations.

There are close to fifty illustrations in this collection and all the illustrations are presented in comical forms. The illustrations are creative and naughty at times. Lee

qualifies his creative and innovative effort with the claim that parents and schoolteachers have diluted the ribald connotations of some Malay sayings before passing the proverbs to the children (p. 8).

The saying *musuh dalam selimut* transliterated as ‘an enemy in the blanket’ is explained as ‘a traitor in the household’. This saying is depicted by a smiling wife, sleeping next to her husband, having something on top of her covered by the blanket. The saying is also annotated as a typical usage against unfaithful wives (p. 35). This was not what I learnt from my Malay teachers. The Malay saying originally refers to ‘a spy’, ‘camouflaged enemy’, ‘espionage’ or ‘a member of a group who betrays the rest of his associates’. I am not sure if I should believe the extra innuendo supplied by Lee in this book.

The illustration provided to the Malay saying, *bulan jatuh ke riba* transliterated as the moon falls into one’s lap (p. 85) is another creative sketch loaded with a suggestive idea. The meanings provided by Lee include ‘unexpected good fortune’, and ‘in luck’s way’. The illustration depicts a seated Muslim woman covered in black totally, including a black veil across her face, holding a crescent moon with smacking lips on her lap. There is a little bearded man donning a turban gazing from behind a tree in the background. The depiction might provide a tilted impression on the Malay saying, which was originally understood as synonymous to the Malay proverb *durian runtuh* (falling durians), i.e. ‘windfalls’.

This review would not be complete without checking the Malay saying in the title of this book. *Keli dua selubang* transliterated as ‘two catfish in the same hole’ is explained as a saying with a least three popular interpretations (p. 102):

- (i) of one mind, alike in nature, birds of a feather;
- (ii) arch-rivals, as in *harimau dua sekandang*  
(two tigers in the same cage);
- (iii) a woman with two lovers or a cuckolded husband.

Unfortunately, *Kamus Dewan* the authentic Malay dictionary only list the third meaning hence the first explanation might be based on guesses like only catfish of the same kind would be comfortable with each other. It is also erroneous to liken catfish with tigers and establish the two as bearing the same meaning as implicated in (ii). As Malays prescribe attributes more or less specifically to different animals like mouse deer as intelligent, crocodile as insidious, ox as stupid and tiger as fierce and stupid, lion as majestic, and rooster as proud and silly one needs to be more careful before associating one animal with another in Malay sayings.

Despite the comments, there is something one can learn from this book. The author respects the original message and intention of the Malay sayings. At the same time, fresh interpretations are provided to the Malay sayings. The new perspectives chronicle the growing meanings of Malay sayings. Consequently, this pragmatic development sustains their relevance of Malay sayings in time. As I review, it suddenly dawns on me that the extra nuances of some Malay sayings are adaptations of various social phenomena in the current Malay world.

From the educational viewpoint, the illustrator has indirectly applied the approach of Multiple Intelligences (cf. Gardner 1993) to offer a more vigorous and rounded presentation of Malay sayings. The depictions are tapping into the readers' visual spatial intelligence to facilitate and enhance their linguistic intelligence. This is a good way of combining our intelligences to understand Malay sayings since Malay sayings are rich with graphic imageries. The Malay saying, (*seperti*) *tulis di atas air* transliterated as 'writing on water' is a case in point. The proverb is explained aptly as 'ineffective gesture', 'useless effort', 'cutting no ice', and 'whistling in the wind' (p. 96). The meaning is cleverly sketched with a man in uniform writing the words, "We're looking into it" on the surface of a river with a villager watching from behind.

This book is a basic source of reference to students studying Malay in countries like Australia, New Zealand, Singapore, United Kingdom and United States because the English transliteration and explanation enable the book to be a reliable self-guide. The book should be read with care and whenever there is doubt to the array of explanations readers of Malay, as a foreign language might like to clarify it with reliable resources like *Kamus Dewan* and *Kamus Istimewa Peribahasa Melayu*. Native Malays will find this book thought provoking and creative. This is certainly a welcome collection of modern Malaysiana for libraries around the world.

Asmah's book is a varying introduction of time in Malay in comparison to, say, European and African languages. The author offers a Malay worldview of time by examining the temporal words and provides an emic insight to the Malay perception of time. The temporal words are either content or grammatical lexical items in Malay. In the analysis of content words, she is quick to point out the historical origins of many Malay words, which are mainly taken from Sanskrit and Arabic as well as English. As such, the book reads like a complete lexicography record of Malay temporal words.

Words like *jam* 'hour', *pukul* 'o'clock', *tahun* 'year', *takwim* 'calendar', and *jadual* 'time-table' are examined at the beginning of this book (p. 3-6). From these concrete terms the analysis proceeds to less concrete terms like *kala* 'time', *ketika* 'moment', *tatkala* 'that time', *manakala* 'when', *apakala* 'when', *bilakala* 'when' (p. 9-10). The author derives a proto-Malay word for time, i.e. *la* from the word *bila* 'when' and *kelak* 'in the future' (p.15). She treats the final k in *kelak* as a glottal stop and supports the point with the Iban temporal word *ila*, which is also pronounced with a final glottal stop.

*Masa* 'time' is said to be an original Malay lexical item whereas *waktu* 'time' comes from the Arabic *wakt* 'time, hour, moment, season' (p. 12). The latter is used as collocation

for different segments of Malay prayers. The Malay prayer times always begin with *waktu* followed by the corresponding word in relation to the position of the sun at the time of speaking, e.g. *waktu subuh* ‘dawn prayer’, *waktu zohor* ‘midday prayer’ and *waktu puasa* ‘fasting time’. In this context, *waktu* denotes a shorter time span compared to *masa*, which is the prototypical reference of time.

Apart from being thorough in comparing the meanings of synonymous Malay temporal words, the author points out a linguistic difference between Malay and Indonesian. While *masa kemakmuran* ‘prosperous time’, and *masa pemerintahan Jepun* ‘Japanese occupation period’ are good expressions in Malay *waktu kemakmuran* and *waktu pemerintahan Jepun* are only accepted in Indonesian (p. 13).

The author claims that the Malay way of looking at time is a linear movement in which the speaker moves from the past to the present. The movement halts in the present time frame and the speaker waits for the future to come to him because the Malay word for future is *masa akan datang*, literally ‘time will come’ (p. 21). Following this point closely, the author seems to contradict herself with the diagram on page 21 in which the Malay time is depicted as a unidirectional linearity from the past to present to future (the glosses are mine).

*Masa dahulu/dulu* etc. —————> *sekarang* —————> *kelak/nanti/masa depan*  
 time of the past                                      present time                                      future

It is more accurate to represent the author’s intention with a bi-directional temporal movement that comes both ways from the past and the future to present.

*Masa dahulu/dulu* etc. —————> *sekarang* <————— *kelak/nanti/masa depan*  
 time of the past                                      present time                                      future

This representation makes more sense in depicting the Malay ego who remains in his time and faces his future as suggested by Malay terms like *masa depan* ‘front time’, *masa akan datang* ‘time will come’, *hari muka* ‘face day’. The author did not discuss the last

example, whereby *muka* ‘face’ is used as the metaphor for future. This is a support to the suggested diagram since the concept of face is used as a metonymic reference point in the Malay experience to *face* the arrival of the future. Currency as the most salient feature in Malay can be gauged from the fact that tense is not marked in Malay verbs (Sew 1999). That both the past and the future arrive in the presence might be the underlying explanation to this temporal feature in Malay grammar.

A Malay day is divided into day and night and the word *hari* ‘day’ represents the bright part of the day (p. 24). Interestingly, a full Malay day comes in a cycle of 12 segments (p. 25, glosses mine):

*subuh* ‘dawn’ > *awal pagi* ‘early morning’ > *pagi* ‘morning’ > *rembang* ‘mid morning’ > *tinggi hari* ‘pre-noon’ > *tengah hari* ‘noon’ > *beralih hari* ‘high noon’ > *petang* ‘afternoon’ > *senja* ‘evening’ > *malam* ‘night’ > *tengah malam* ‘midnight’ > *dinihari* ‘pre-dawn’ > *subuh* ‘dawn’.

In the grammar of Malay time, three agglutinative-morphological templates are identified as temporal anchorage, namely prefix-root, circumfix-root and prefix-reduplication-(suffix) (p.31). These Malay morphological structures can denote inchoativity or progression of action or continuity of time (p. 32-34). While the Malay prefixes *meN-*, *ber-* *se-* and the suffixes *-an*, *-kan* are provided, the adverbial-forming function of *se-* in *serentak* ‘simultaneously’, *serempak* ‘all at once’, *semula* ‘again’, *sekonyong-konyong* ‘suddenly’, and *semata-mata* ‘alone’ (cf. Liaw 1999: 186) is not mentioned in this book.

Grammar comprises words strung together in a systematic way but grammar is not the device that arranges man’s way of thinking in his utterance. According to the author, grammar consists of vocabulary items that form the contents of thought and arranged according to grammatical rules (p. 30). This is a basic definition that fails to take into consideration the communicative rules that predetermine the content of one’s thought and

utterance in many cultural settings. The importance of culture in language has brought forth the term language as *languaculture* in view of the fact that each speech act is bounded with culture (Agar 1994), and gender difference to a certain extent (cf. Sew 1997a).

Six stages of time in Malay aspect are provided, namely action in waiting, progressive action, non-progressive action, action done, action completed, action experienced (p. 36). The author teases out the difference between *sedang* and *tengah* from *masih*. The first two are regarded as Malay aspect verbs that denote progressiveness whereas *masih* is deemed as a non-progressive aspectual verb. Her argument is based on her examples of *masih* as a grammatical modifier for adjectives, e.g. *masih kecil* ‘still small’ and *masih murah* ‘still cheap’ whereas *sedang* and *tengah* are considered as bad modifiers for these adjectives (p. 38). This claim is unwarranted because *tengah murah* is a good expression to describe a sale that has the prices going down as in:

*Pergilah beli baju sekarang, tengah murah ni*

go-lah buy shirt now, middle cheap here

Please go and buy the shirt now, it is going cheap at the moment

It is possible to use *sedang* as a modifier for adjectives as in this Malay example:

Jangan petik bunga yang sedang mekar itu

don't pluck flower Rel in progress bloom that [Rel = relative word]

Don't pluck that blooming flower

On the other hand, *masih* can be used to elaborate a progressive action. I use the morphological template of the Malay progressive structure provided in the book, i.e. prefix-reduplication, with *masih*:

*Kita sudah terlambat tetapi dia masih berlengah-lengah lagi*

we already ter-late but s/he still ber-delay-delay still

We are already late but s/he is still dilly-dally at her leisure

More vigorous syntactic tests are needed to stipulate the semantics of the Malay aspectual verbs. Furthermore, the temporal qualities within the verbs must be taken into consideration as the confusion between aspect and aktionsart is quite imminent when it comes to aspectual analysis (cf. Sew 1998).

One particularly interesting area in the discussion is temporal prepositions. There are at least two types of temporal prepositions in Malay, namely prepositions of a temporal point like *pada* ‘at’, *di* ‘on’; and prepositions of a time frame like *daripada...hingga* ‘from...to’, *sejak...sampai* ‘since...until’ etc. (p. 39-40). These temporal prepositions are crucial to categorise Malay verbs in terms of aspect. The work of Dowty (1979) who introduced the frame and point adverbials in Montague Grammar is not mentioned in the book (cf. Sew 1999).

Time frames in Malay are divided into two categories, namely the two-dimension and the three-dimension temporal frames. The former is signaled by prepositions like *pada* ‘at’, *dari* ‘from’, *hingga* ‘to’, *sampai* ‘until’ etc. (p. 40). The latter is designated by temporal preposition *dalam* ‘in’ as in *dalam masa itu* ‘in that time’, *dalam minggu itu* ‘in that week’ (p.39). However, three-dimension time frame is considered ungrammatical in the Malay prescriptive grammar learned in school. School children are taught to use *pada* ‘at’ for temporal frame as in *pada masa itu* ‘at that time’.

Time is captured in subordinative clauses and coordinative clauses in Malay. A subordinative clause functions as the adverb of time in which the action denoted by the verb of the main clause takes place (p. 41):

*Dia datang ketika kami sedang bermesyuarat*

S/he arrived when we were having a meeting

In the example above, *ketika* functions as the adverb of time and allows the arrival of the subject to concur with the main event, i.e. the meeting.

There are two types of coordinative clauses. The first type shows a flow of action in which one follows another (p. 43):

*Dia membuka pintu itu lalu masuk perlahan-lahan*

S/he opened the door, and then entered (the room slowly)

The second type shows a time frame that has more than one action (p. 43- 44):

*Dia menjawab salam kami serta menjemput kami masuk*

S/he responded to our greetings as he invited us to go in

It can be said that *lalu* ‘then’ is a serial temporal marker for coordinative clauses as *lalu* sequences the order of actions whereas *serta* ‘together’ is a connective temporal marker that combines actions in a coordinative clause. Other connective temporal markers are *sambil* ‘simultaneously’ and *seraya* ‘while’ (cf. p. 44). The author fails to realize that there are temporal adjectives that can be modified by aspectual verbs. Temporal adjectives can be modified by ‘again’ as in the following contrasts:

Temporal Adjective	Non-temporal Adjective
She is <i>thin</i> again	*The paper is <i>thin</i> again
The sky turns <i>blue</i> again	*The burnt jeans turns <i>blue</i> again
The rabbit becomes <i>alive</i> again	*The dried fish becomes <i>alive</i> again

Polysemy in adjectives is universal as the Malay counterparts for the above examples behave in the same manner. Instead of *kurus* ‘thin’, which cannot be used for inanimate object in Malay *nipis* (thin) is used for paper in the first pair of the examples:

Temporal Adjective	Non-Temporal Adjective
<i>Dia menjadi kurus kembali</i>	* <i>Kertas ini menjadi nipis semula</i>
<i>Langit menjadi biru kembali</i>	* <i>Seluar jeans yang terbakar menjadi biru kembali</i>
<i>Arnab itu hidup kembali</i>	* <i>Ikan kering itu hidup kembali</i>

Based on two words *malam* ‘night’ and *kelam* ‘dark, of atmosphere’ the author derives *-lam* as the common root word in Malay that refers to darkness (p. 50). If this conjecture is

accurate, *-lam* can be associated with ‘grue, the cool colors’, which is the opposite of macro red or the hot colors in the study of color terms (cf. Wierzbicka 1990).

One might want to know how is time measured in Malay. The author has some interesting thing to say about Malay temporal measurement:

In the old days Malays were guided by the frequency of crowing in the early mornings of the fasting month. It is said that the first crowing woke them up from sleep to prepare their food. This first crowing only has one crowing from a single cock [sic]. The second crowing[,] which has two occurrences of crowing should coincide with the time of eating. The third crowing with three occurrences should signal the end of eating and drinking (p. 56).

Other everyday events in the Malay world that are used to measure time include *sepenanak* ‘the time taken to cook rice’, *sekelip mata* ‘the time taken to close the eyes’, *sejurus lamanya* ‘the time taken to water a plant’, *belum panas tempat duduk* ‘the seat has not yet become warm’, *setahun jagung* ‘the life-time of a corn plant i.e. 6 months’, *bunting gajah* ‘the pregnancy of an elephant i.e. beyond 9 months’ etc. (p.56). These are important expressions of time that are disappearing rapidly from the Malay usage among modern Malay youngsters.

Metaphors of time are derived based on the common expressions of time in Malay. Malay time can be metaphorically regarded as frame and receptacle, chain, agent of action, frequency, vehicle, entity with exponents, object, commodity and goal (p. 58-66). The Malay metaphor for time as an entity with exponents simply means specific periods of time in relation to certain events or (in)famous characters, e.g. *masa penyiaran* ‘broadcasting time’, *zaman penjajahan* ‘colonial time’ (p. 63), or *zaman Mahathir* ‘Mahathir’s government’.

The author writes that *muda* ‘young’ and *tua* ‘old’ are used in the description of human beings and claims that *muda* is not used for animals and plants (p. 68). This is not true as *pucuk muda* ‘young shoots of vegetables’ and *tunas muda* ‘young sprout’ are good

Malay phrases. A popular collocation of *muda* with plant is *kelapa muda* ‘young coconut’, an important feature of Tropicana. *Kelapa muda* refers to green coconuts that contain sweet coconut juice and tender succulent flesh. The brown ones are called *kelapa tua* ‘old coconut’. Its thick white flesh produces coconut oil and coconut milk ‘essential for cooking curry’.

From a cross-cultural viewpoint, the author explains that the social concept of Malay time is embedded in frames rather than in point (p. 85). As such, appointments and social functions are taken to be continuous rather than terminative at a certain point in time. This might be an explanation for the variation of punctuality across cultures. Along this line, the author examines the notions of monochronic in which people only do one thing at a time and polychronic whereby more than one thing or topic occur in a time frame. The author prefers the terms monothematic and polythematic because within a frame of time one or more themes may unfold (p. 87).

Monothematic, according to the author, is a western import as Malay has many idioms that advocate several themes within a time frame. *Sambil menyelam, sambil minum air* (as you dip into the water, you drink it) (p. 45), a proverb that encourages a person to do more than one thing at a time is provided as an example. Here are more examples of multitasking in Malay maxims (Abdullah 1991):

— *Sambil berdiang nasi masak*

While lighting the candle rice is cooked

Killing two birds with one stone

— *Pukul anak sindir menantu*

Hit the son to tease in-law

Hinting to a person by acting on someone else

— *Mulut disuapi pisang, pantat dikait dengan onak*

Mouth stuffed banana behind stung with thorn

Evil intention behind sweet talks

In time, the Malay human cycle comes in two categories. The traditional Malay cycle consists of *kanak-kanak kecil* ‘young children’, *budak-budak* ‘teenagers’ and *tua* ‘old age’ (p. 69). As the civilization prospers, new concepts have been incorporated into the modern Malay society and the present human cycle comprises *bayi* ‘infancy’, *kanak-kanak* ‘children’, *remaja* ‘teenagers’, *dewasa* ‘adult’, *pertengahan umur* ‘middle-age’ and *tua* ‘old-age’ (p.70-71). The division between adult and child for the Malays is marked by the *akil baligh* ‘puberty’ stage, whereby a person is supposed to have common sense upon puberty.

Since tense is not marked in Malay verbs, a traditional storyteller would indicate the passing of time in his discourse by using temporal words; these temporal markers are called punctuation words (p. 89). There are two types of punctuation, namely *kata pembuka cerita* or what the author calls story openers and *kata penyambung cerita* ‘event connectives’. The former includes *alkisah, adalah, sebermula, bermula, sekali peristiwa* (p. 91) and the latter are *maka, setelah itu, setelah sudah, selepas itu, hatta, kalakian, arakian, setelah itu setelah sudah* [sic] (p. 93).

While the author provides an excerpt from the Malay Annals to illustrate the use of punctuation words, (p. 90), she fails to draw attention to the overwhelming repetition of the punctuation words, especially *maka* and *pun*, within the short paragraph. Repetition is a pan-Malayan feature of *languaging*, i.e. the ongoing process of using language (Sew 1997b). Becker (1988) points out that repetition is an answer to subsequent reference for languages without the grammatical word ‘it’. If repetition is a technique of cataphoric reference it is an abstract temporal marking technique as repetition sustains a coherent continuity of discourse and helps to maintain the focus on a subject in reference.

*Pun* has attracted a considerable amount of attention in Malay discourse and conversation analyses. The author stops short in this book by saying *pun* is a cohesive device that indicates the passing of time (p. 95). Hopper (1983: 75) has showed that *pun* is used as a fronting device to separate the noun phrase from the rest of the clause to the effect of forcing a VSO word order in Malay classical text (Hopper 1983: 72-71):

*Maka segala penggana itu pun di bahagikanlah kepada segala budak-budak...*

and all cakes the PUN PASS distributeLAH to all boy: PLUR

Then all the cakes were passed around to all the boys [PASS = passive, PLUR= plural]

As a result, the Malay clause becomes ergative and the dislocation effected by *pun* gives rise to an anaphoric continuity. *Pun* is not merely a cohesive device but it differentiates the ergative from the passive structures in certain Malay discourse.

It is a pity that the presentation in the book is choppy with short paragraphs. While shorter paragraphs make the book reader friendly the format of this presentation leaves one wondering if the content was rushed out to meet the deadline. There are many points that call for follow-ups, especially the morphological and semantic aspects of Malay temporal anchorage and the notions of time in Malay axioms.

Despite what has been said in this review, I find this book informative. Anyone interested in a Malayan notion of time can learn something from this book. Take for example the origins of *minggu* ‘week’ in Malay. Not many would know that it originates from Portuguese, *Santa Domingo*, i.e. *hari Domingo* ‘Domingo day’ > *hari minggu*, which fell on a Sunday and from then onwards *hari minggu* becomes Sunday in Malay (p. 48). This explanation tells us that *hari minggu* came from Malacca where this once world-renowned seaport was under the Portuguese rule or *zaman Portugis* between 1511 and 1649.

In terms of lexicography, the author has done a handsome job in keeping track with the lexical development of Malay temporal words. Given that the *languacultural* explanation

is rich and insightful, dictionary compilers will find this work valuable when it comes to the identification of etymology in Malay temporal words. Since expressions and knowledge pertaining to Malay temporal reference provided are aplenty, this book can be regarded as an effort to contain language loss in Malay. Students and teachers of Malay will find the book a welcome exposition of Malay time by a knowing native speaker.

## References

- Agar, Michael. 1994. *Language Shock: Understanding the Culture of Conversation*. New York: William Morrow.
- Abdullah Hussain. 1991. *Kamus Istimewa Peribahasa Melayu*. Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka.
- Becker, Alton. 1988. Language in Particular. A Lecture. In *Linguistics In Context: Connecting Observation and Understanding*, Deborah Tannen (ed.), 17-35. New Jersey: Ablex.
- Charteris-Black, Jonathan. 2003. Speaking With Forked Tongue: A Comparative Study of Metaphor and Metonymy in English and Malay Phraseology. *Metaphor and Symbol* 18(4): 289-310.
- Dowty, David R. 1979. *Word Meaning and Montague Grammar*. Dordrecht: Reidel.
- Gardner, Howard. 1993. *Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences*. New York: Basic.
- Hopper, Paul J. 1983. Ergative, Passive, and Active in Malay Narrative. In *Discourse Perspectives on Syntax*, Flora Klein-Andreu (ed.), 67-88. New York: Academic Press.
- Jayasankaran, S. 2002. Bahasa Blues. *Far Eastern Economic Review* June 20: 23.
- Jendela Bahasa (buku teks)*. 2003. Singapore: SNP Pte. Ltd.

- Kamus Dewan*. 1998. Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka.
- Kamus Dewan*. 1989. Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka.
- Liaw, Yock Fang. 1999. *Malay Grammar Made Easy: A comprehensive Guide*. Singapore: Times Book International.
- Pancaran Bahasa (Buku Kerja)*. 1997. Singapore SNP Publishing.
- Sew, Jyh Wee. 1999. 'Kata Kerja: Mempelopori Suatu Penilaian Semantik Baru' (Malay Verbs: In Search of New Semantics). *Jurnal Dewan Bahasa* 43: 6, 530-537.  
<http://dbp.gov.my/dbp98/majalah/bahasa99/j05mantik.htm>
- Sew, Jyh Wee. 1998. Review of Carl Bache et al. eds. Tense, Aspect and Action. *Australian Journal of Linguistics* 18:2, 214-217.
- Sew, Jyh Wee. 1997a. Review of Mary Crawford. Talking Difference. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology* 16:1, 89-95.
- Sew, Jyh Wee. 1997b. Repetition in Malay Languaging. *Proceedings of the 1<sup>st</sup> International Conference of Malaysian Studies (CD ROM)*. Kuala Lumpur: Universiti Malaya.
- Sew, Jyh Wee. 2004. Dari Kertas ke Skrin (From Paper to Screen) *Dewan Bahasa* 4:5, 12-19.
- Wierzbicka, Anna. 1990. The meaning of color terms: semantics, culture, and cognition. *Cognitive Linguistics* 1:1, 99-150.

JYH WEE SEW

*SH MRL, School Cockpit Coordinator, CHIJ ST Theresa's Convent, Singapore*