# The GLOCAL CALA 2023

The Conference on Asian Linguistic Anthropology 2023

Conference Proceedings Papers

SOAS GLOCAL, University of London, U.K. May 16-19, 2023



The Global Council for Anthropological Linguistics ISSN: 2707-8647

Editors: Michael Hadzantonis and Asmah Haji Omar

## The GLOCAL 2023

The Global Council for Anthropological Linguistics 2023, in Asia

The SOAS GLOCAL, The University of the Philippines May 16-19, 2023

ISSN: 2707-8647

# The SOAS GLOCAL Conference 2023 in Asia (The SOAS GLOCAL CALA 2023)

"Symbol and Society"

### Selected Conference Proceedings Papers

May 16-19, 2023 The SOAS GLOCAL CALA, University of the Philippines

Hosted by

The Global Council for Anthropological Linguistics

The SOAS GLOCAL Conference 2023
ASIAN LINGUISTIC ANTHROPOLOGY 2023
Conference (University of the Philippines, Quezon City, the Philippines)
https://glocal.soas.ac.uk/cala2023-proceedings/

Editors: Michael Hadzantonis and Asmah Haji Omar

#### The Proceedings of the 2023 GLOCAL Conference on Asian Linguistic Anthropology

ISSN 2707-8647

Subscriber Categories

Linguistics, Anthropology, Social Sciences, Humanities, Interdisciplinary Studies, Cultural Studies, Sociolinguistics, Language and Society

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#### **Foreword**

Dear Authors, Participants, Contributors, and Esteemed Readers,

The GLOCAL Conference 2023, in Asia, The Conference on Asian Linguistic Anthropology 2023, at the Philippines Diliman, on May 16-19, 2023, hosted by the SOAS GLOCAL, with major publishing affiliate Taylor and Francis Publishing and Springer, was an immense success, despite the prevalence of the COVID-19.

The GLOCAL has now developed and sustains a strong tradition of localized Linguistic Anthropology for Asia, and for the world. This effort has found support in its extensive number of global affiliate institutions, publishing companies, and its global sibling conferences (The COMELA, The MEALA, The AFALA, The COOLA, The SCAALA). The GLOCAL 2023, and the GLOCAL as a whole, have brought together researchers, academics, and professionals from the world over, who are experts in Asian Linguistic Anthropology, Language and Society, Sociolinguistics, Cultural Anthropology, Critical Studies, Music Anthropology, Gender Studies, Literary Studies, and related fields. The papers provided scientific knowledge within these pertinent fields, which this book is now publishing.

Themed *Symbol and Society*, The GLOCAL 2023 saw the gathering of a global group of scholars who sought to engage in progressive discussion on a range of issues significant to the field of Asian Linguistic Anthropology. The scholarship from these interactions was no less than academically groundbreaking, and these contributions structured The GLOCAL 2023 Conference in Asia to become the outstanding event that it was. The GLOCAL 2023 Conference Central Committee are

Conference Chair: Associate Professor Michael Hadzantonis, SOAS, University of London.

In addition to the contributed papers, the two invited keynote speakers were Professor Michael Lempert of the University of Michigan, and Professor Asmah Haji Omar, of the University of Malaya.

We thank all authors and participants for their significant contributions.

The GLOCAL Conference, in Asia 2023,

The Conference on Asian Linguistic Anthropology 2023, in Asia.

#### **Editor's Note**

The GLOCAL Conference 2023, in Asia, The Conference on Asian Linguistic Anthropology 2023, at the University of the Philippines Diliman, May 16-19, 2023, hosted by the SOAS GLOCAL, with major publishing affiliate Taylor and Francis Publishing and Springer, was a success, despite the prevalence of the COVID-19.

We thank all those who presented and who have achieved a tremendous feat with their work on the Linguistic Anthropology of Asia.

Michael Hadzantonis Asmah Haji Omar

#### Malaysian Government's Multi-Vocational Roles: A Conceptual Metaphor Analysis

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#### Abstract

Conceptual metaphor theory was introduced by Lakoff and Johnson in the early 1980s. This analysis of the metaphor highlighted the fact that humans often make sense of unfamiliar or abstract concepts through something concrete or dear to them. The conceptual metaphor does not only govern the way we think but also the way we act and the decisions we make. In political discourse, certain conceptual metaphors appear to not only facilitate comprehension but also to serve the rhetorical function of persuading the people. Apart from the above, the conceptual metaphor is also a useful tool with which to uncover ones' identities.

In the analysis of nine supply bills, I discovered that the Malaysian government portrayed itself as holding 39 different vocational roles. These jobs range from managers, professionals, associate professionals, service providers, skilled agriculturalists, craftsmen, elementary occupation, and armed forces. The government is creating an image of itself as a selfless hero doing the impossible, working diligently to ensure that the people and the country thrive under its administration.

Keywords: Discourse and identity, supply bills, conceptual metaphor, linguistic anthropology

#### Discourse and Identity: Vocational Roles and Relational Identities

Discourse constructs, negotiates, reinforces, and subverts identity (Koller 2012). As discourse facilitates the gathering, appropriation, and emission of meaning (Gee 1999), it serves as a means for individuals to act and interact, and to position themselves and be positioned in a social space (Almeciga 2013). Apart from the ever-changing co-formations of complex relationships between the self and the world (Almeciga 2013), discourse also plays a significant role in forming and transforming participants' identities as individual, collective, or relational.

A discourse participant's collective identities often appear through their occupation and social activity (Simpson and Mayr 2010). Occupational-based identities, most often labelled as vocational roles, refer to the expected or obligated actions, behaviour, routines performed, and beliefs held by individuals which are associated with jobs, vocations, and occupations. They are often identified through descriptive job titles, and described through the use of linguistic features such as verbs and nouns. For instance, one who plays the vocational role of a doctor may identify and treat diseases, while those playing the role of a gardener may plant and take care of trees, plants, and shrubs.

In addition to the above, relational identities refer to one's identities which exist due to his/her relation to the roles played by other individuals. For example, the process of learning from someone who plays the vocational role of a teacher motivates the other to adopt student relational identities.

These vocational roles and relational identities are indexed in the discourse through several linguistic features including metaphors (Koller 2012). The metaphor is chosen in this study as it allows "both participants and researchers to examine the difficult concept of identity development in vivid and insightful ways" (Thomas and Beauchamp 2011, p. 764).

#### **Conceptual Metaphor Theory**

The metaphor, which was once dubbed as nonexistent or referred to as nothing more than linguistic ornamentation by Chomsky, Katz, and Kintsch's anomalous view (Ortony, Reynolds and Arter 1978; Gentner and Bowdle 2001), was chosen over other linguistic features owing to its cognitive characteristics. Lakoff and Johnson's experientialist conceptual metaphor theory (CMT) asserts that metaphors are strongly grounded in human experiences, cognitive schemas (Johnson 2005), embodiments (Gibbs, Lima and Francozo 2004; Grady 1999; 2005b; Lakoff 2013; Yu 2009) and neuron circuits (Feldman 2006; Feldman and Narayanan 2004; Lakoff 2008a). This cognitive-based neurologically supported theory further explains that human thoughts are metaphorically structured and guided. Therefore, the linguistic metaphor (e.g. *I don't want to waste time*) produced by a speaker/writer is a reflection of a predominant Western conceptual metaphor (TIME IS MONEY), understood through mapping the source domain (Money) to the target domain (Time) (Lakoff 1986a).

As there is a considerable number of human activities explained by and tied to conceptual metaphors, these conceptual metaphors are often grouped through subcategories, and these subcategorisation relationships characterise the 'entailment relationship' (Lakoff and Johnson 1980c). The fact that TIME IS MONEY, and that money is a limited resource, entail that TIME IS LIMITED RESOURCE. The fact that the limited resource is a valuable commodity further entails that TIME IS A VALUABLE COMMODITY (see Figure 1).

	1-300 150 150 d 56
MONEY	TIME IS MONEY
15	entails
A LIMITED RESOURCE	TIME IS LIMITED RESOURCE
is	entails
VALUABLE COMMODITY	TIME IS A VALUABLE COMMODITY

From Lakoff and Johnson (1980c), p. 457

#### Membership Categorisation Analysis

Through Sacks' (1995) membership categorisation analysis (MCA), individuals' rights, obligations, knowledge, competencies, and attributes associated with membership categories such as age, sex, race, and occupation are invoked within naturally occurring ordinary activities (Augoustinos, Walker, and Donaghue 2014). As "membership categories are tied to category-bound activities" (Augoustinos, Walker, and Donaghue 2014, p. 102), one's membership can be implied based on the conventional predicates attached to a membership category. As people are expected to behave in accordance with normative expectations, those who deviate are seen as not behaving appropriately.

In this paper, the membership categorisation analysis is limited to the rights, obligations, knowledge, competencies, attributes, and expectations associated with vocational membership categories. Vocation is chosen over occupation as vocation denotes one's calling, and hence the task is completed whole-heartedly and through passion rather than financial motivation (Buijs 2005), which is the most sought-after characteristic in a political leader. This paper focuses on the social vocational group-based identities (Brewer 2001) constructed by the government for itself.

To create and inflict power on others, supply bills rely on the referential and affective functions of language (Charteris-Black 2011; Fairclough 1989; Husin 2007; Johnson and Taylor 1981; Thomas, Wareing, Singh, Peccei, Thornborrow and Jones 1999). In the process of producing a political meaning, the metaphor is one of the master tropes that contributes to both the referential and affective functions of language. It reinforces and creates particular mental models in the reader's mind through conceptual and semantic mechanisms (Chilton and Schaffner 2011; Koller 2004; Lakoff and Johnson 1980b; Tomoni 2012), thus emphasising the successful roles played by the metaphor as a rhetorical and ideology transfer tool in political discourse (Charteris-Black 2007, 2011, 2014; Goatly 2011; Underhill 2013). For this motive, the metaphors present in a political discourse are products of careful selection, and their presentation is well-crafted by the rhetors. It is so as "politicians and political institutions are sustained by 'persuasive' or 'manipulative' uses of language of which the public are only half-aware...This is important as political realities are constructed in and through discourse" (Chilton and Scahffner 2011, pp. 304-305).

#### Research Methodology

As "the institution's power and politics are frequently exercised through the discourse of their members" (Simpson and Mayr 2010, p. 7), the current study analyses the Malaysian Supply Bills or budget speeches. These bills are considered a good source of political narratives as they include not only the financial and statistical reports but also the social, political, and historical contexts of the discourse. Supply bills are suggested to be deliberative oratory due to several factors: (i) They discuss how the government will collect and spend its income in the future, (ii) they aim at gaining the members of parliament's support on the proposed budget, and (iii) mentions in the Supply Bills often result in the introduction of new government policies.

This paper examines how the government as the dominant group discursively positions institutional dominance (Simpson and Mayr 2010) by constructing its vocational roles. These vocational roles are identified through linguistic metaphors present in the supply bills and Sacks' (1995) membership categorisation analysis (MCA).

Scrutiny of 104,000 words in MyBuS data reveals that the supply bills are laden with metaphorically used words, similes, idioms, and proverbs. However, this paper only lists 218 linguistic metaphors, two idioms, and one metaphorically used item of jargon (labelled as jargon as no entry can be found in either Kamus Dewan or the Macmillan English Dictionary for Advanced Learners). These metaphors are identified and selected based on Sacks' membership categorisation analysis. Metaphorically used lexical items are selected if they signal activities (category-bound activities) or characteristics (category-bound predicates) of any vocation. Other linguistic metaphors such as those on the writing process, textual organization, beliefs, and customs are not reported here.

In coming out with the list of metaphorically used words, I stumbled upon the complex system of Malay language derivational affixes (nine prefixes, three suffixes, four infixes and thirteen circumfixes) (Lee, Liow and Wee 1998). Even though the morphological boundaries of Malay words are easily defined as roots, prefixes, suffixes, infixes or circumfixes (Sulaiman, Gasser, Kubler n.d), "the loose restriction on word formation and the productive nature of certain affixes in Malay results in a large number of possible affix patterns" (Sulaiman, Gasser and Kubler n.d, p. 2). Therefore, in this paper, the metaphorically used lexical items are presented according to their lexemes.

221 metaphorically used lexemes served as indices to 39 vocational roles constructed by the government for itself. Among these vocational roles are GOVERNMENT IS DOCTOR, GOVERNMENT IS CAPTAIN, GOVERNMENT IS SOLDIER, GOVERNMENT IS BUILDER, GOVERNMENT IS GOLDSMITH, GOVERNMENT IS WEAVER, and

GOVERNMENT IS COMPOSER. These vocational roles of the governments have been identified following Sacks' (1995) MCA. In this analysis, the metaphorically used lexemes identified are categorised according to category-bound predicate and category-bound activity of a vocation. The findings support Simpson and Mayr's (2010) proposition of the fact that, when discourse participants are categorized by what they do, they are categorized based on functionalization.

Since conceptual metaphors provide access to one's schema (Lakoff and Johnson 1980c), the conceptual metaphor behind each metaphorically used linguistic unit is identified. These conceptual metaphors are framed as indices of the government's vocational roles. The metaphors create positive representations of the government, which is a personified professional, reliable, and able being. As a professional, the government is portrayed as a competent person / body, therefore legitimising the person's / its actions. In the bills, these roles and identities are constructed, negotiated, and reinforced but never subverted. The fact that the discourse under study is produced by the government itself may explain factors contributing to its partial alignment with Koller's (2012) proposition on the effect of a discourse on identity.

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