

CHAPTER EIGHT

METHODOLOGY

8.0 Introduction

This study was conducted to investigate the presentation of Malay meanings of English womanword entries in two English-Malay dictionaries. It involves a search in bilingual dictionaries, for Malay words and meanings, for the English entries making the study a form of textual analysis. The approach taken is basically synchronic as it compares language data that was recorded at one point in time. This chapter discusses the methodology used to gather and analyse the data.

8.1 The Data

The data for this study comprises, the corpus of womanwords collected from various sources (discussed in 1.3). The corpus of woman words selected, represents a wide range of concepts referring to women as shown below:

1. general lexical items referring to the female person such as “woman”, “lady” and “girl” and related compounds.
2. female kinship terms including “mother”, “daughter”, “aunt” and “grandmother”.
3. feminine pronominals and generic pronouns including “she”, “her” and “he”.
4. structurally marked womanwords such as “actress” and “usherette”.

5. semantically marked womanwords such as “hen-pecked” and “lady-killer”.
6. the “man” generics, “man” and “mankind” and affixal “man-” and suffixal “-manship”.
7. forms of address for women, for example “Miss”, “Lady” and “mummy”.
8. names and labels for women, for instance, “fair sex”, “floozy” “whore”, “blonde”, “chick”, “nymphet” and the like; and
9. male/female lexical items showing asymmetrical usage such as “dog/bitch”, “governor/governess” and the like.

However, these categories are not mutually exclusive for each womanword. Many words have an overlap of grammatical function and this is taken into account in the categorisation and analysis.

No deliberate attempt is made to restrict the corpus to only items from standard usage. The corpus will consist of items that are entries in either bilingual dictionary under study. Therefore the limitations placed on the types of entry words by the dictionary compilers will be the basis for the selection of the womanwords corpus.

An English wordlist, rather than a Malay one, is used as a starting point for the study for various reasons. Firstly, the focus of the study is a passive dictionary, that is, a English-Malay dictionary. This type of dictionary is used mainly for comprehension and understanding of English words, or for translating English texts into Malay. It is a useful dictionary for students,

teachers and the general public who use English as a second or third language. Since the entry words in the dictionaries are English words, it is only logical to begin with this list.

In relation to the above, the study restricts itself to analysing the Malay meanings of English words given in the dictionaries under study. Users of such a dictionary are learning a new language (English) via a familiar language (Malay). Therefore, this study can help to understand how the dictionary can better contribute to English language learning, by studying how English words are presented in the Malay language.

Another reason for the choice of an English wordlist is the availability of resources for the selection of the corpus. Many more wordlists in the English language, like thesauruses, encyclopaedias and books exist compared to such lists in the Malay language. The selection of the corpus of womanwords is therefore made easier and more economical.

Furthermore, this study examines only the lexical items of the two languages. Emphasis is not placed on the contexts of the lexical items. This is because a dictionary entry is presumed to be the result of the initial extraction of meaning from language in use. As far as dictionary production is concerned, the English language has been far more researched for language in use than the Malay language. The contexts of use of the English lexical items are already inherent in the English entry words of the dictionary. As Anglin states:

While the meaning of the sentence is largely given by the words that make it up, the converse is equally true: the meaning of a

word is largely given by the sentence in which it occurs. We sometimes learn a word's meaning by resorting to a dictionary. This, however, is not the usual case and clearly not the most basic. For dictionary construction relies upon the initial extraction of meanings from the language, and dictionary use presuppose the comprehension of the terms making up a definition.

(1970 : 4)

This makes the English words more suitable and to a certain extent more reliable as starting-off data, especially since the study is limited to lexical items only, not lexical items in contexts.

Finally, research about sexism in the English language has shown that the standard English language is the male form while the female form is a "deviant" (Thorne and Henly, 1975 : 9) or variant form. This has been claimed to be a universal aspect of language (Lakoff, 1975 : 9) So this characteristic of English words is investigated in the Malay language, making the English words a suitable list with which to begin.

Competent bilinguals and native speakers of Malay and English will be approached to gather more information about words and their meanings. The main purpose of these informants will be

- (a) to establish and confirm the Malay equivalents themselves.
- (b) to establish and confirm collocability of lexical items.
- (c) to establish anisomorphism in contrast with the source language.
- (d) to find other equivalents and meanings.

Fluent English-Malay bilingual informants will be asked about preferred and other meanings in cases where dictionary meanings are vague or ambiguous. They will not be allowed to use a dictionary for the

purpose, as the investigation intends to identify the differences between what is written in the dictionary and what intuitions the informants have about the words

8.2 Data Analysis

Two methods of analysis will be employed to analyse the different categories of womanword entries and the Malay equivalents and meanings. They are componential analysis and conceptual analysis. Each category of words will be analysed separately using the relevant semantic components.

8.2.1 Componential analysis

The primary method of analysis for the lexical items in this study will be by componential analysis. Componential analysis was devised by anthropologists (for example Nida: 1958) to compare vocabulary from different cultures. In this approach lexemes are analysed according to various semantic features or components. In this thesis the components will be capitalized to show that they are conceptual categories, not other English words. For example, the components MALE/FEMALE, ADULT/NON-ADULT can be used for the following:

English	<div>Woman: (ADULT, FEMALE) girl : (NON-ADULT, FEMALE)</div>
Malay	<div>perempuan: (ADULT, FEMALE) budak perempuan: (NON-ADULT, FEMALE)</div>

Plus (+) and minus (-) signs are also used to show contrasts in componential analysis. The examples above can be shown in the following way:

	ADULT	FEMALE
woman	+	+
girl	-	+

	ADULT	FEMALE
perempuan	±	+
budak perempuan	-	+

The analysis becomes more productive and more interesting as the range of semantic features or components increases. For example:

	ADULT	FEMALE	HUMAN	GENERIC	WIFE	LOVER
WOMAN	+	+	+	+	+	+
perempuan	+	+	+	±	+	-
wanita	+	+	+	±	-	-
orang perempuan	+	+	+	+	-	-
orang rumah	+	+	+	-	+	-
mak we	+	+	+	-	-	+
kaum wanita	+	+	+	+	-	-

The analysis will show how meanings of English entry words and their range of meanings are realized by the Malay equivalents (or other methods of translation) in the bilingual dictionaries. The matrix format will enable identification of lexical gaps that may exist between lexemes of the source

and target languages.

Componential analysis is not devoid of problems. Its goal seems to be to discover and describe "how the people themselves use their terms to classify the phenomena of their world" (Burling, 1970:42-43). Componential analysis which uses systems of classification for the terms to be analysed, assumes that the study is one of investigating cognition, which is far too ambitious a goal.

Eastman (1975: 99) outlines two more problems. One is the uncertainty related to the data to be analysed. One cannot be sure if all the words for a chosen field are covered. In addition, it cannot be confirmed if the semantic components used are the aspects of meanings which the language users attach to the words.

Lipinska (1980: 150) is of the view that traditional componential analysis is insufficient for linguistic purposes. One objection is that "the process of decomposition of meaning can be carried on almost without finding any stopping place" (1980: 150). She propounds the view that to know and understand a word appropriately, a word must be analysed in all its contexts. Burling (1970: 42-43) views these problems as problems associated with semantic analysis. He suggests that some solution can be obtained by a proper and precise specification of components and description of the objects to which these specifications are applied.

Nida (1975: 23) in his study restricted the choice of components to those that were significant and which indicated unity and consistency.

In this study, the use of componential analysis is made viable by various methods. Firstly, the corpus is restricted to one semantic field. The data is a sample of lexical items from this semantic field, not all the items in the field. As informants and monolingual dictionaries of both languages, will be used in the study, the problems associated with the choice of semantic components will be reduced, if not nullified. With these adaptations, componential analysis will be able to yield information that is both valid and useful.

8.2.2 Conceptual analysis

Conceptual analysis may be used for purposes of counterchecking and cross-referencing of meanings for some core lexical items in the corpus or the Malay translation for example “woman”/“lady”, “wanita/perempuan” and “emak/ibu”. It will enable the researcher to establish the consistent features of the concepts associated with the lexical items under study. Conceptual analysis will therefore help to measure the degree of equivalence especially, so that the acceptability and congruence of each set of lexemes can be assessed.

For the social sciences, Dahlberg (1981: 19) has proposed two groups of characteristics of concepts: essentialia and accidentalia. In the first group, essentialia, the characteristics of the concepts are vital and necessary, whereas in the latter, they are additional and possible but not inevitable.

There are two basic steps in conceptual analysis (Lane, 1982: 219-

231, cited in Sarcevic, 1989). The first step involves the determination of the conceptual characteristics of the source word and the equivalents in the target language and qualifying them as either essential or accidental. The constituent characteristics of the concepts will be decided on by looking up monolingual dictionaries for both the lexemes and then establishing their scope of application, their structure or classification and their social effects (if any).

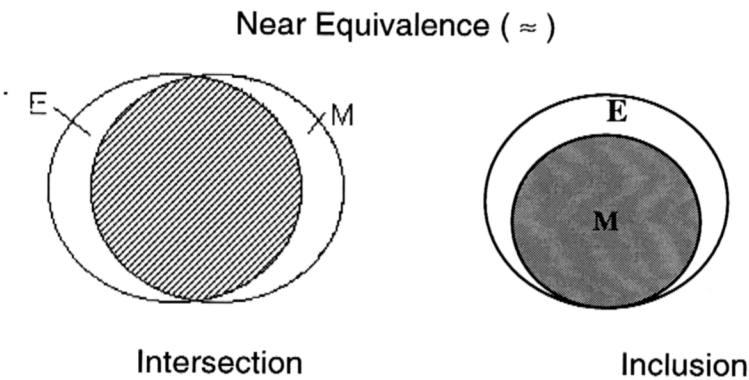
In the second step of the analysis a matching of the characteristics of the two sets of lexemes is undertaken. Three types of information can be obtained from this procedure.

- (a) If all the essential characteristics match up, and a few accidental ones do not, then the concepts are identical (denoted by [=]).
- (b) If most of the essential and some of the accidental ones are the same, then the concepts are similar (denoted by [±]).
- (c) If only a few or none of the essential characteristics coincide, the two concepts are non-equivalent (denoted by [≠]). (Lane : 1982 : 224-5)

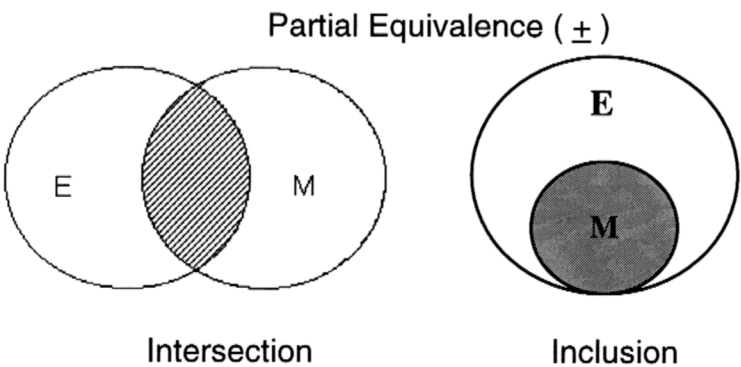
An adaptation of the above procedure and that put forward by Sarcevic (1989: 280-281) will be used in this study. In her categorisation, Sarcevic goes further by using the notions of intersection and inclusion. Intersection occurs when two concepts contain common characteristics and also additional ones not found in the other. Inclusion occurs when one concept contains all the characteristics of the other, and some more additional features. Based on the above, four categories of equivalence can

be identified.

Near equivalence occurs when there is an intersection of all the essential and most of the accidental characteristics of the concepts of the English (E) and the Malay (M) item, or when all the characteristics of concept M are contained in concept E, and concept M contains all the essential and most of the accidental characteristics of concept E (inclusion) or vice-versa. Near equivalence is denoted by the symbol (\approx).

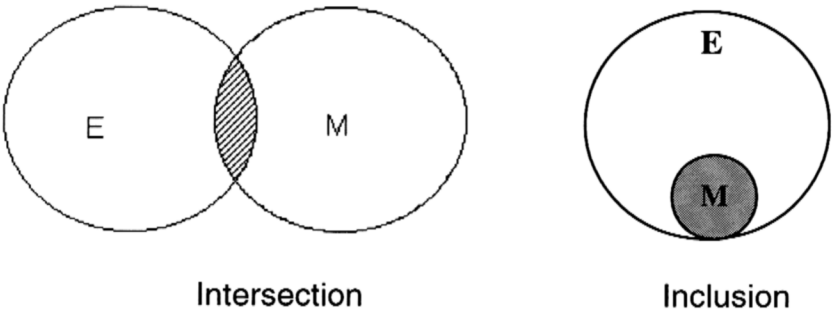


When most of the essential and some of the accidental characteristics of concepts E and M intersect, or when all the characteristics of concept M are contained in concept E and concept M contains only most of the essential and some of the accidental characteristics of concept E or vice-versa, then partial equivalence occurs. Partial equivalence is denoted by the symbol (\pm).



When a few or none of the essential features of concepts E and M intersect, or if all the characteristics of concept M are contained in concept E and concept M contains only a few of the essential features of concept E, then non-equivalence occurs. This is denoted by the symbol (\neq).

Non-Equivalence (\neq)



Zero representation occurs when concept E is non-existent in the language of concept M or vice-versa. This is designated by the symbol (0).

Zero representation (0)

