Malay Terminology: The Craft of Songket Weaving in Malaysia

Puteri Roslina Abdul Wahid
Department of Malay Language, Academy of Malay Studies,
University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.
puteri61@um.edu.my

ABSTRACT

This paper focuses on the coining of terms in the Malay craft of songket weaving. The research looks into the application of the concepts and the system of concepts in the preparation of a terminology glossary using the native words in the Malay language. The traditional approach in the field of terminology correlates with the relationship of concept and term. The research focusses on the use of native creations when coining terms in a specific field that is the Malay songket weaving. Songket is hand-woven in silk or cotton known as a small cottage industry of Kelantan and Terengganu. There is a need for knowledge transfer from the older generations to the younger one. Thus, a more systematic approach of transferring the art of songket weaving begins with the use of terminology. The terminology practice in Malaysia is basically a translation-oriented. The formation of terms in a specific field still remains a topic of interest among terminologists. This is a qualitative research and data was collected by interviewing and observing weavers from the songket industry in Kelantan and Pahang. The data are then transcribed and analyzed. About 200 terms are collected and analyzed. This research is a practical application of the traditional approach of coining terms in the Malay terminology. The concept and the concept system are one of the important aspects in the preparation of a terminological glossary. Findings show the native formation can be seen in the formation of terms using native words, namely one word, compound word and reduplication. In the context of terminology, the characteristics plays an important role in providing a definition when using a generic concept system. Definitions in a terminological (conceptual) glossary often specify relationships with the key concept, such as tools or techniques in the songket weaving. The use of mother tongue in coining new terms will help to introduce the Malay word to the international.

Keywords: Malay language, culture, songket, terminology, concept system, native words, weaving

Introduction

Terminology is an important aspect in language planning, particularly in the Malay language. Terminology is the study of terms and their use. Malay terminology also seems to be less important due to changes in attitude among educators who stresses English as a means of communication whole wide. In the Malaysian context, the international language is English. English should be studied because of its function, but not to take the current status of the Malay language written in the constitution. In Malaysia, the Malay language is the language of communication between citizens and reflect their identities. Malay dynamism can be seen in the creation of the term and flexibility of the Malay language to absorb foreign elements. Terminology is an important tool for experts because terminology can help to spread the knowledge in a particular field.

MALAY TERMINOLOGY: THE CRAFT OF SONGKET WEAVING IN

Terminology is basically the process of giving names. Any term, phrase or word used in any language which refers to the same matter is known as the 'science of terminology' which differs from 'science of language', which was widely accepted in the middle of the 18th century (Alain Rey,1995). Terminology is a field within the language for special purposes (LSP) and related to lexicography. Terminology differs from lexicography as it involves the study of concepts, conceptual systems and their labels (*terms*), whereas lexicography study words and their meanings. The debate still continues whether the terminology is said to be a science or an interdisciplinary methodology depends on its relationship with linguistics, ontology, computer science, and other disciplines.

In Malaysia, the term official language and national language brings its own interpretation. The national language is a language that symbolizes the identity and sovereignty of the country and serves as a tool for unity. The official language emphasizes the use of language in formal situations such as administration, education system, trade, business, official events, and so on. According to Asmah Haji Omar (2002), 1966 to 1974 was the era of the terminology performed for the purposes and within the context of Malaysia alone. Relatively dynamic development began in late 1973 when the national education policy began to change. Implementation of the language policy of the Malay language as the language of instruction in primary, middle and right up to the tertiary level. She also stated that development of Malay terminology began with the establishment of the Language and Literature Agency, widely known as Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka (DBP) on 22nd. June 1956.

Malay terminology throughout the years has developed into an important area for the dissemination of information and knowledge. Malaysia also has an international terminology relationship through INFOTERM in Vienna. Regionally, in the ASEAN countries, the Brunei-Indonesia-Malaysia Language Council or known as MABBIM plays an important role of spreading the Malay term in various fields of science. One that is often emphasized is the use of words in languages other than English. This approach is said to be the creation of the native terms specifically in the Malay language. The discussion in the paper will be centered on the establishment of the terminology of songket weaving which shows the elements of the native Malay language.

Problem Statement

The craft of songket weaving is a form of material culture in the Malay society. Consequently, the craft will diminish if it's not passed to the younger generations. These generation is having problems with understanding the terms used by the older generations. According to June Ngo (2010), the numbers of songket weavers have dwindled over recent years. Most songket weavers are women who have learned their weaving skills from their more experienced elders. The young generation does not see this craft a source of viable income. The weaving is mainly done in the Malay villages. Thus, a more systematically approach of transferring the art of songket weaving begins with the use of terminology. Hence, in order to address this issue, there should be efforts to preserve the native terminology so the knowledge of this art can be passed generation to generation.

The terminology practice in Malaysia is basically a translation-oriented. Knowledge transfer in training for professional or non-professional used language as a medium of instruction. In addition, in the era of globalization, more information is transferred into various languages. Thus, there is a need to preserve the Malay terms in this specialized field. In the art of songket weaving, Malay language is used widely. The corpus of this research is the collection of terms of *songket* weaving.

Purpose of the Study

The objectives on the research of Malay terminology is to see how native words can be integrated into the terminology of knowledge and as a tool for dissemination of information. Terminology also borrows concepts and methods of semiotics, epistemology, classification, and so on. Thus, the research focusses on the use of native creations when coining terms in a specific field that is the Malay songket weaving and also looks into the application of the concepts and the system of concepts in the preparation of a Malay terminology glossary.

Literature Review

The term *songket* comes from the Malay word *menyongket* referring to "to embroider" (Norwani Mohd. Nawawi, 1989). Songket are classified to the brocade family of textiles. Songket are handwoven from gold or silver threads into silk or cotton yarns. The composing of warp and weft threads interlaced with gold or silver threads is the fundamental characteristics in songket weaving. Songket is mostly worn as traditional ceremonial costumes weddings, festivals and formal occasions such as the royal installations. Lately, songket has been transformed into apparel and in the fashion line for accessories such handbags, table runners etc. Norwani Mohd. Nawawi stated that the modern designs in songket making and the application of the 'ikat technique'.are innovations in songket weaving. According to Selvanayagam (1991), the songket artifacts can be seen from the context of the community whose culture is based on Islam. Siti Zainon Ismail (1994) studies, namely, the Malay textile, the textile culture area, and the Malay traditional textiles which included the types and categories of the Malay songket. She also studies the social function of the Malay songket. Another researcher who studied in depth, the motives and symbolism in Malay songket is Haziyah Husin (2006). But none of the scholars yet did a scientific approach from the discipline of terminology.

The disciplinary nature of terminology is widely known in the European countries compare to Malaysia. It was recognized towards the middle of the 20th. century. Terminology is the study of and the field of activity concerned with the collection, description, processing and presentations of terms, i.e. lexical items belonging to the specialized area of usage of one or more languages (Sager, 1990). Some of the recent researchers introduced a different approach such as socio terminology by Gambier (1973) and Gaudin (1993 and 2003). Cabré stresses the communicative theory of terminology in addition to the cognitive and linguistics aspects. Temmerman (2000) highlighted the need for a definition of concept to be based on prototype theory. She stresses the inclusion of diachronic and social perspective in the descriptions of terms. Other scholars in the Malay world who had written about terminology are Wan Patanah Wan Yusof (2011), Hasnah Mohamed (2008), Nathesan (2001), and Sulaiman Masri (1993). Most of the research concentrates on the formation of terms in the technical field such as the evolution the mathematical terminology, terminology of science in Malay, mass media and communication and so forth. In Malaysia, the Language and Literature Agency is responsible for the coining and dissemination of terminology.

Theory and Methodology

The researcher has taken the traditional approach in terminology work suggested by Wuster which deals with the concept and the concept system. A concept is defined as an element of thinking, which consists of an aggregate of characteristics which themselves are concepts (Felber, 1984, p.102). The relationship between concept and terminology can be seen in the Wuster's term model in Figure 1. A concept is the meaning of an object which is represented by a symbol or term and the interrelated relationship between the three is as shown below in Figure 1.

Concept (reference)
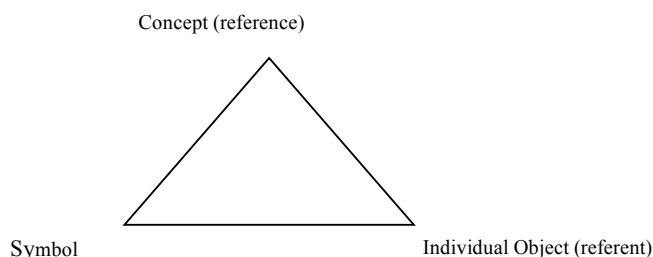
Symbol

Individual Object (referent)

Figure 1 : Wuster's Term Model (Translation by H. Felber 1980; in brackets terms used by Ogden 1923)

The above triangle was first introduced by Gomprez (1980). Later on, this model was modified by several other scholars like Dittrich (1913), Ogden (1923) and Knobloch (1959). Wüster (1984) later altered the model by incorporating Ferdinand de Saussure's theory and produced a terminology model which includes a symbol, meaning and object. Based on such an approach, Wuster explained that any terminological work begins with a concept. The purpose of which is to limit the concept itself.

In summary, the traditional approach, in the field of terminology correlates with the relationship of concept and term. Terminological work begins from concept and due attention is given to the current structure of concepts and its representation. In this framework, concept plays a very important role. The concept is the cornerstone of the GTT (General Theory of Terminology) and it is the starting point of any work on terminology. Concept system are the outcomes of relations established between concepts. The following are descriptions of concept system:

1. Arntz & Picht (1989, p.76)
Relationships between the concepts of a special subject area of ontological relationships. Such a system is constituted by horizontal and vertical series of concepts in the form of concept systems.

2. ISO/R 1087
A concept system is a set of concepts connected by logical and ontological relationships. Such a system is constituted by horizontal and vertical series of concepts, or at least by one such series.

3. Pitch & Draskau (1985, p.85)
Mixed system is a system of concepts in which two or more types of relations are combined. By this method, the flexibility of the system is considerably increased, and many more concepts of various types may be incorporated into the same system. This means in practice that the inventory of concepts of a special subject field can be registered better and more exhaustively.

In order to support this argument, Felber named three important aspects in terminology. First, the terminology is a deliberate creation. In general language, the standard refers to the usage of language, while in terminology, any arbitrary use of language will result in confusion. Second, standardization of a terminology requires solid translinguistic guidelines. Third, terminology places more importance to the written form rather than the phonics form. The research field, we are talking about is a practical application of the traditional approach

in coining terms in the Malay terminology which also implies using native creations in the process. The main activities include, but are not limited to the following:

– identifying concepts and concept relations;
– analyzing and modeling concept systems on the basis of identified concepts and concept relations;
– establishing representations of concept systems through concept diagrams;
– defining concepts;
– attributing designations (predominantly terms) to each concept in one or more languages; and,
– recording and presenting terminological data, principally in print and electronic media (terminography). ISO/R 1087. (1990)

In the formation of these terminologies, a classification of concept was used to map the terms. This method stresses on the formation of native creations. The classification of concept in a specific field is important to identify objects and pool them to meaningful units as a term. "Characteristic" is an element of the concept which functions to describe or identify the quality of an individual object. Thus "characteristic" itself is a concept. Characteristics are used in concept comparison, concept classification, concept meaning, summary, formulation of the definition of the concept and in the formation of a terminology which is being matched with the concept (Felber:1984).

According to the G*eneral Guidelines for the Formation of Terms in Malay (2005*), there are three sources available for the formation of terms. First, from the vocabulary of the common Malay word, that is, any common word in Malay (including words from dialects or archive languages) could be made terms on condition that the particular word gives the exact meaning, concept, process, situation or characteristics intended. The second source is from the vocabulary of words in the Malay language family. As such if the required term cannot be found in Malay, then it has to be searched for in other languages of the same Malay family. The third source is from the vocabulary of words in foreign languages. If the required term cannot be found in Malay, and other languages of the same Malay language family, then the word could be derived from foreign languages. In writing these terms, priority should be given to the spelling of the source language form (i.e. to be adapted, as required), and the pronunciation should be according to the Malay sound system. For the sake of uniformity, the most popular international language (i.e. English) becomes the source unless the English language itself does not have that particular concept.

This is a qualitative research and data was collected by interviewing and observing weavers from the songket industry in Kelantan and Pahang. The data are then transcribed and analyzed. About 200 terms are collected and analyzed. For the purpose of this paper, the findings are only based on the interviews and the observations done on the weavers in the *menyongket* process. Discussed below are examples of the concept system in the terminology of songket craft.

Findings and Discussions

Objects, concepts, designations and definitions are fundamental to terminology work. The native formation can be seen in the formation of terms using native words. The songket weaving process can be divided into the following steps: designing, dyeing, winding (*menerai*), making a warp *(menganing)*, rolling *(menggulung),* sleying the reed *(menyapuk),* setting up the loom, setting up a double heddle *(mengarat),* picking up the pattern

(menyongket), saving the pattern (*mengikat butang*) and weaving *(menenun)*. According to Cabré (2010), the main purpose of traditional terminology was to assign a new term (*torak*) to a new concept (*tool*) that appeared in a language (Figure 2). In the naming process, terminologists started from the concept, which they placed into a concept system, on the basis of which it had been defined before being named as a term (the onomasiological approach). Their main focus was on exploring the ways in which to make terminology as efficient and unambiguous as possible. They were adherents of monosymy (the precision of concepts) and univocity of the term (absence of synonymy). Their objective was to achieve a standardization of terminology – a tool for reaching unambiguous and clear communication, independent of cultural differences. The formation of terminology is done by using the whole Malay vocabulary and its rules. In the *songket* weaving, the terms coined as one word are *belira, sikat/jentera, caman, karat, pasung, pesa, cuban,* etc. Terms coined with two words or compound words representing new concepts are *papan duduk* (bench), *kayu pesa* (front beam), *kayu pijak karat* (treadles), *tali caman* (shaft's string), and *kayu sumbi* (selvedge stick) (Figure 3). These are done through the addition of prefixes and suffixes, compounding and reduplications. Prefix (meN-), middle fix "pe - an" and suffix "-an" are the most commonly used in the formation of the Malay culture terminology.
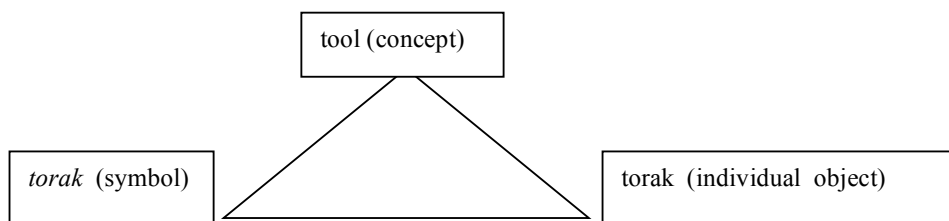

Figure 2: Basic concept of tool in songket weaving

A root word is fixed accordingly to picture the concept features based on a terminology like nomenclature, process, technique, etc. For example the main process of *songke*t weaving are mencelup *benang* (dyeing of yarns), *menerai benang* (winding of threads), *menganing benang* (warping), menggulung *benang* (winding of warp threads), *menyapuk benang* (sleying the warp threads), mengarat (making of string heddles), *menyongket* (making songket patterns), and *menenun* (weaving). All the terms are formed by using the bound morpheme in Malay that is *meN-* (*celup, terai, aning, gulung, sapuk, karat, songket, and tenun*). Reduplication acts as one unit and is spelled independently like *kekuda (*from the root word *kuda*, gegancu from *gancu*, *gegigi* from *gigi*) etc.

Native Creations	Malay Terms
One word	*belira* (shed stick)
	karat (harness or shaft heddles)
	pasung (wood guide)
	pesa (front beam)
	cuban (small shuttle)
	caman (pulley from bamboo)
	torak (shuttle)

Native Creations	Malay Terms
	rahat (equipment to wind the threads)
Two words/Compound Words	*papan duduk* (bench)
	kayu pesa (wood for the front beam)
	tali caman (shaft's string)
	kayu sumbi (selvedge stick)
	kayu pijak karat (treadles/foot paddles)
	tali karat (heddle)
Prefix/Sufix/Reduplication	*mencelup benang* (dyeing of yarns)
	menerai benang (winding of threads)
	menganing benang (warping),
	menggulung benang (winding of warp threads
	menyapuk benang (sleying the warp threads)
	mengarat (making of string heddles),
	menyongket (making songket patterns
	menyongket (making songket patterns

Figure 3: Terminology in Songket Weaving

As for the preparation of a glossary for the songket weaving terminology, the concept and the concept system are one of the important aspect (Figure 4) Concept mapping will help a terminologist to form the definition of a terminology glossary.
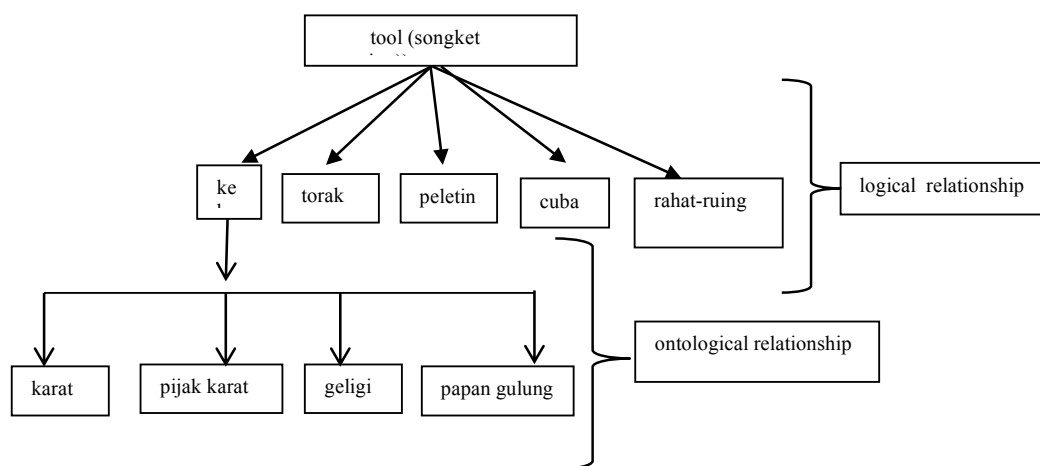

Figure 4 : Concept Mapping for tools in songket weaving

Dictionaries alphabetize entries as lists but a conceptual glossary has to classify concepts in order to learn how they related to each other. The above figure demonstrates the logical and ontological relationship in a concept mapping for tools in songket weaving (Figure 3). A logical relationship is a relationship based on similarities of intention in a concept and also known as generic or abstract relationship. In this relationship, the superordinate is known as the generic concept while subordinate concept is known as the species. This relates to the preparation of the definition in the glossary. Definition by genus and species is a method for determining the superordinate concept, that is the concept that occupies the upper level or a higher level. The definition is also generated through partitive relations. Each definition has its own role. The definitions of the terms above are as follows:

Logical Relationship
1.   *alat* (tool) – *Barang apa yang diperlukan untuk membuat atau menghasilkan sesuatu.*
2.   *kek – Alat menenun kek yang terdiri daripada kepala kek, badan kek dan hujung kek.*
3.   *torak – Alat seperti tabung yang diperbuat daripada kayu, plastik atau buluh untuk menempatkan peleting yang berisi benang pakan.*
4.   *peleting – Alat daripada uluh atau plastik untuk menggulung benang tenun.*
5.   *cuban – Alat daripada buluh yang berfungsi sebagai jarum yang diisi benang emas atau benang berwarna sebagai benang pakan untuk menenun corak bertabur.*
6.   *rahat – Alat untuk menggulung benang tongkol dari ruing.*

Ontological Relationship
1.   *karat – Bahagian badan kek yang terdiri daripada benang asing dan dua pasang geligin yang berfungsi untuk menurun danmenaikkan bennang lungsin.*
2.   *pijak karat – Bahagian bawah badan kek yang berupa kayu yang digantungkan pada karat untuk menaikkan dan menurunkan karat semasa menenun.*
3.   *Bahagian karat yang berupa kayu nibung yang digunakan untuk mengapit dan meregangkan benang karat.*
(Glosari Budaya Malaysia: Seni tenun, 1993)

From the above list of a short definition for each term denotes the term as a tool for the weaving process. In the context of terminology, the characteristics plays an important role in providing a definition when using a generic concept system. Definitions in a terminological (conceptual) glossary often specify relationships with the key concept, such as a tool in the songket weaving. A conceptual glossary has to classify concepts in order to learn how they are related to each other in a specific field of knowledge. Without a concept description, it's difficult for anyone to understand this relationship.

Conclusion

Language has always been a major medium in the preservation of cultural and artistic elements that exist within a society. In the contexts of art and culture of the Malays, the language shows its dynamism by coining terms in the native language and thus enrich the language without compromising the identity of the Malay. Terminology involves the coining of terms that is traditionally done by definitions. Characteristics are elements of the concept which explain or identify an object that represents a concept. Characteristics are important in comparing concept, classifying of concepts, defining the definition of the concept, and giving

the names or symbols (terms) that describe the concept. In short, characteristics can be used to formulate the definition of the concept, thus creating a term that represents the concept. The formation of the terms in a native language will help to standardized Malay craft terms at the international level, which indirectly will reflect the culture of the Malay community.

References

Alain Rey 1995 *Essay on terminology* Philadephia: John Benjamins Pub. Co.

Arntz R. (1993). *Terminological Equivalence and Translation.* In: Sonneveld (H.) et Loening (K.), éd., *Terminology. Applications in interdisciplinary communication.* Amsterdam et Philadelphia, John Benjamins Publishing Company, p. 5-19.

Asmah Haji Omar. 2002. *Kaedah Penyelidikan Bahasa di Lapangan.* Kuala Lumpur : Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka.

Cabré, M.T. (2009). *Terminology, theory, methods and applications.* (Edited by Juan sager, translated by Anne deCesaris). Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

Felber, H. 1995. *Panduan Peristilahan.* Terj. Zahrah Abd. Ghafur dan Salamiah Mat Sah. Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka.

Hartmann, R.R.K (ed.). 1993. *Leksikografi : Prinsip dan Amalan.* Terj. Zainab Ahmad. Kuala Lumpur : Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka.

Hasnah Mohamed (2008) Penterjemahan biologi : Perbandingan tiga dekad. dlm. *Jurnal Bahasa.* Jil. 2, Disember.

Haziyah Husin (2006). *Motif alam dalam batik dan songket Melayu.* Kuala Lumpur : Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka.

ISO/R 1087. (1990) *Vocabulary of terminology.* International Organization for Standardization (ISO), Vienna : Infoterm.

Jawatankuasa Tetap Bahasa Melayu. 2004. *Pedoman Umum Pembentukan Istilah Bahasa Melayu.* Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka.

Nathesan (2001) Istilah sains dalam bahasa Melayu : Aspek pengupayaannya. Tesis Phd. Universiti Malaya.

Ngo, J.S.K. (2010). Songket kontemporari Malaysia tenunan tangan untuk pasaran global. Faculty of Applied and Creative Arts, UNIMAS. Yet to be published.

Norwani Mohd. Nawawi (1989). *Malaysian songket.* Kuala Lumpur : Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka.

Pihkala, T. 2006. *Socioterminology.* http://www.tsk.fi/fi/ti/ti101_teksti.html [02 Januari 2017]

Pitch, H. & Draskau, J. 1985. *Terminology, An introduction.* Wien: K.G. Saur.

Sager J.C. 1990. *A practical course in terminology processing* Philadelphia : John Benjamins Pub. Co.

Sager, J.C. 2000 *Essays On Definition* Philadephia : John Benjamins Pub. Co.

Selvanayagam, Grace, I. (1991) *Songket Malaysia's woven treasure.* New York ; Oxford University Press.

Siri Glosari Budaya Malayasia : Seni Tenun 1992 Kuala Lumpur : Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka.

Siti Zainon Ismail (1994). *Keindahan budaya tradisional nusantara : Tekstil tenunan Melayu.* Kuala Lumpur : Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka.

Sulaiman Masri (1993) *Ketepatan istilah media dan komunikasi dalam bahasa Melayu : Satu analsis keserasian konsep dengan istilah dan kesempurnaan bentuk.* Tesis Phd. Universiti Sains Malaysia.

Temmerman, R. 2000. *Towards new ways of terminology description. The sociocognitive approach*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Wan Patanah Wan Yusof (2011). Perkembangan istilah matematik dan sikap pengguna. Tesis Phd. Universiti Malaya.