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## **A SEMANTIC PROSODY ANALYSIS OF THE LEXICAL *HALAL***

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### **ABSTRACT**

Language analysis in *real world linguistic* is a method in observing language usage phenomena that is mobilized by a process or the social practice of a society. The usage phenomenon is represented by lexical (word) choice of language users in a society. This is because every lexical item of a language would be based on meaning and values that would capture and highlight the cultural expressions of a nation. Based on this premise, this study aims to specifically discuss the cultural expressions identified from the investigation on the lexical item *halal* that is often used by society in discussing matters pertaining to everyday life. This analysis utilizes the cognitive linguistics perspective in explaining the usage of the lexical *halal* that can be visualized in schematic representation form. Aided by the display of *concordance* and *wordlist* from the *Antcom* program, this study discovered that the lexical *halal* is used in a variety of domains and is not restricted to food only. In addition, the lexical *halal* is also able to explain issues pertaining to *livelihood*, *wealth*, *items/objects* and issues that touch on *status*.

**Keywords:** usage phenomenon, cultural expressions, *halal*, cognitive linguistic, schematic representation

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Language can be viewed as the verbal manifestations<sup>1</sup> of ideas or thinking of language users to relay information. As verbal manifestations, observations on language is not just on its forms but also the philosophy behind it. Hashim (2006) states that philosophy is research that is based on observations and speculations on the cause, state and the whole characteristics of human knowledge that become the essence of human knowledge. Through philosophical interpretations, language that is considered as the symbol of manifestations will be presented through the general structure of human conceptualization and through empirical and intellectual methods.

One of the approaches to highlight the manifestations of a language is by analyzing the form, structure and patterns of a lexical item as it is used by the language community. This is based on the understanding that there is a close-knit relation between meaning, values, culture and the concept of embodiment when a particular lexical item is being used. Ibarretxe-Antunano (2008) states that the close relation between the four components (meaning, values, culture and embodiment) is said to assist in highlighting the conceptual motivation of a lexical item and explaining its manifestations. Accurate explanation on the manifestations of a lexical item will consequently help in understanding the language culture of a language community.

For example, there are various interesting language usage patterns that are often used by the Malays (in this context, the Malays referred to are the Muslims) in using the lexical *halal*. Generally, in everyday usage the common interpretation for *halal* is almost always associated with food (and drinks), or the source of the food (and drink). However, assumptions based on introspection and intuition, unfortunately, are not always accurate as what we think how the language might be used might not be as what it is used everyday. This is proven from the definitions given in general dictionary such as *Kamus Dewan* (2005:502) which lists the meaning of *halal* as “1. the ruling that permits a particular act to be perform (in Islam); 2. a form of idiom (pertaining to something that is obtained, formed); 3. archaic form (pertaining to forgive, sorry); 4. archaic form (pertaining to consent). Similar definitions for *halal* in *Tesaurus Bahasa Melayu Dewan* (2005:286) are also observed. *Halal* is defined as “approved, permitted, allowed, consented”. To analyze the usage meanings and patterns of the lexical *halal* among the Malay (Muslim) speakers empirically, a corpus-based study was conducted. However, before the lexical analysis of *halal* is presented a general perspective on *halal* in Islam will be explained.

## ‘HALAL’ IN ISLAMIC CONTEXT

From language perspective, *halal* is borrowed from Arabic which means something that is allowed or is permitted by the *Syarak* law (Yusuf Qardawi, 2002). The term *halal* in *syarak* denotes something that should or could be performed, something that has an underlying forbidden or prohibitive measure or something that is permitted by *syarak* law (Yusuf Qardawi 2002). Therefore, *halal* is not just about the product of *rezeki* (such as food and drink) but rather the lexical item also encompasses the various aspects of livelihood, its sources and the process of how an item (food or drink) is obtained.

In Islam, the main objective of the *syariah* law is to guard man’s every effort and actions. Thus, this implies that looking for something that is *halal* as the source of one’s livelihood and daily usage is compulsory for every Muslims. As such, someone who obtained or procured something through *halal* means would strengthen one’s faith, one’s *doa* being fulfilled and good deeds accepted by Allah SWT. Conversely, consuming something that is *haram* (opposite of *halal*) would then block one’s *doa* and good deeds from being accepted by Allah SWT (Wan Mohammad Abdul Aziz. 2010). There have been a few studies conducted on the various perspectives of *halal* (Salma 2011; Abdul Basit & Sahilah 2010; Nur Haslizatul Liza 2011; Mohd Yusrin 2010; Siti Norlina, Zamzarina, Maznah, Zulkifli, Mohd Nasir, Kamarul Azmi, & Ahmad Kilani 2005). However, these studies looked at *halal* from social, economy and legal perspectives. Studies that look at the *halal* theme from linguistic perspective have not been fully explored. This study, therefore, aims to demonstrate and describe the usage of the lexical *halal* among Malay (Islam) speakers in various contexts.

## SEMANTIC PROSODY APPROACH AND INFORMATION ON TEXTS CHOSEN

Semantic prosody approach is an approach that investigates the variety of expressions associated with a lexis. Sinclair (1996) asserts that the usage phenomenon in semantic prosody is a process in examining the expressions of a particular lexis in terms of its presence (by looking at its combination, collocation and its adjacent) with other lexis. Louw (1993) on the other hand introduces a concept that he labels as “consistent aura”. He defines consistent aura as “meaning with which a form is imbued by its collocates” (Louw 1993:157). This can only be shown through examining a large number of collocation patterns of a lexical item. Whether we realize it

or not every lexical item can be evaluated based on its combination, presence and collocations with other lexical items (Nygard, Herorold & Namy 2008).

A semantic prosody analysis on the usage of a lexical item will display information on its values, functions and its presence by looking at its attached meaning. Stewart (2010) defines attached meaning as meaning (and values) that are attached to a particular lexical item by examining other lexical items that are combined, adjacent and collocate with it. For example, Hunston (2002) examines *sit through* which is inclined to have a negative value as the phrase is often used with other lexical items that point to a long and boring session. Therefore, indirectly, lexical with negative value such as *boredom* has attached its meaning to *sit through*.

An object or concept that is attached to something implies that it has gone through a transfer process – from one place to another. In semantic prosody, the product of an attached meaning implies that there exist a shift in meaning. Stewart (2010: 42) states that, "the assumption that meanings are „attached, taken on, or acquired“ would suggest that they have arrived from elsewhere, and there is no doubt that the idea of semantic transfer is crucial to a great many descriptions of semantic prosody". Both, attached and transferred meanings, are the strengths in semantic prosody that highlights the *consistent aura* concept and we believe that the semantic prosody approach is able to highlight the various manifestations of *halal* and the various meanings attached to it.

#### DATA ON HALAL FROM CORPUS

Data on *halal* from the corpus that we have chosen has been able to assist us in displaying the various meanings attached to *halal*. Data for this study are taken from 3 sets of corpus, namely, corpus from Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka databank, (Pusat Rujukan Persuratan Melayu, DBP, 2012), UKM-DBP corpus, and data from webcorp corpus. Table 1 shows the general statistics of the data used in this study.

**Table 1: Source, Frequency and Tokens of the lexis *halal***

Data	Frequency	Tokens
Data DBP	8, 091	91, 425
Data DBP-UKM	1, 355	18, 740
Data webcorp	21, 903	205, 006
Jumlah	31, 349	315, 171

Table 1 shows that the total frequency of [halal] is 31, 349 against 315, 171 token with the highest frequency found in webcorp corpus at 21,903 (69.8%). This is followed by [halal] in DBP corpus at 8,091 (25.8%) and finally [halal] from DBP-UKM corpus at 1,355 (4.3%). The basic statistics presented can be considered as representative on the usage of [halal] among Malay language community.

#### ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSIONS

The usage patterns of the lexical [halal] will be shown from the three sets of data below.

**Data from webcorp (21, 903 / 69.8%)**

1. . *Undang-undang yang digunakan dalam pensijilan **\*\*halal\*\*** Malaysia menggunakan...* (H/DWC416)  
The law adhered to in **\*\*halal\*\*** certification in Malaysia is based on...
2. *Negara sedang berusaha bagi mewujudkan **akta** **\*\*halal\*\*** dan mencadangkan agar JAKIM dan Jabatan Agama Islam ...* (H/DWC346)  
The country is pushing for the **\*\*halal\*\*** Enactment Act and suggest that JAKIM and the Islamic Religious Department ...
3. *... ditanggung oleh syarikat yang memerlukan **tanda** **\*\*halal\*\*** pada setiap kali sijil halal dikeluarkan.* (H/DWC200)  
...to be borne by the company that needs the **\*\*halal\*\*** stamp everytime a *halal* certificate is issued.
4. *... sijil halal dan tidak hanya mempamerkan **logo** **\*\*halal\*\*** sahaja," katanya ketika dihubungi Bernama.* (H/DWC4)  
...the halal certificate and did not only display the **\*\*halal\*\*** logo, he said when contacted by BERNAMA. **DBP data (8, 091 / 25.8%)**
5. *Mencari **rezeki** **\*\*halal\*\*** adalah salah satu cabang iman.* (H/DBP23)  
To look for *rezeki* that is **\*\*halal\*\*** is one of the tenets of faith.
6. *Sebelum kedatangan Islam lagi, Abu Bakar sering berdagang ke Syam (Syria) untuk mencari rezeki yang **\*\*halal\*\***.* (H/DBP66)  
Before the advent of Islam, Abu Bakar often goes on business excursions to Syam (Syria) in search for *rezeki* that is **\*\*halal\*\***.
7. *Sistem itu juga membaiki keadah sekarang apabila syarikat pengurus dana syariah terpaksa melakukan pemeriksaan secara manual untuk menilai taraf sesebuah syarikat awam tersenarai dan **bidang pelaburan** yang mereka ceburi sama ada **\*\*halal\*\*** atau tidak, kata Rohani, yang menerajui Agam sejak tiga tahun lalu.* (H/DBP6)  
This system has improved the current approach whereby the company manager of a syariah fund has to examine manually to evaluate the rank of a particular public-listed company and to determine whether the investment that they have undertaken is **\*\*halal\*\*** or otherwise, said Rohani who has helmed Agam for the past three years.
8. *"Ini adalah kerana **perundingan** **\*\*halal\*\*** di negara ini masih tidak mencukupi dan tidak menyeluruh untuk mengisytiharkan sama ada produk itu sesuai untuk orang Islam," katanya.* (H/DBP17)  
"This is because consultation regarding **\*\*halal\*\*** in this country is still inadequate and does not include notification whether a product is deemed suitable for Muslims," he said.

9. **Industri makan** **\*\*halal\*\*** mempunyai permintaan tinggi, terutama untuk pasaran eksport. (H/DBP72)

There is a high demand for the **\*\*halal\*\*** food industry, especially for export.

10. Dr Nik Abd Rashid berkata, syarikat merancang meneroka lebih banyak pasaran baru di rantau berkenaan yang dilihat mempunyai potensi besar bagi pasaran pelbagai **produk makanan** **\*\*halal\*\***.

Dr. Nik Abd Rashid said the company is planning to venture into new market in the region which seem to have a big potential for marketing **\*\*halal\*\*** food product.

#### DBP-UKM data (1, 355 / 4.3%)

11. IPOH, Khamis – Malaysia mampu muncul sebagai pusat pengeluar makanan **\*\*halal\*\*** antarabangsa (H/EBPUKM20).

IPOH, Thursday – Malaysia is capable of becoming the international center for **\*\*halal\*\*** food producer.

12. *Sehubungan itu, dengan mempunyai 316 modul pemasarannya menjelang tahun 2004, Pizza Station mampu membanggakan negara dalam usaha memasarkan **produk makanan** **\*\*\*halal\*\*\*** bertaraf dunia.* (H/EBPUKM2)

In relation to that, with 316 marketing module by 2004, Pizza Station is capable to make the country proud in their effort to market **\*\*halal\*\*** food product internationally.

13. ... antarabangsa dengan mengetengahkan **konsep penyembelihan** **\*\*halal\*\*** dalam penyediaan makanan. (H/EBPUKM22)

...internationally by proposing the **\*\*halal\*\*** concept in slaughtering in the preparation of food.

14. . ...tapi yang memberi lesennya ambil rasuah, maka yang ambil rasuah tak **\*\*halal\*\*** dan yang beri rasuah pun tak halal. (H/EBPUKM22)

...but those who issue license accept bribes, therefore those who received bribes are not **\*\*halal\*\*** and those who give out bribes are also hot halal.

Examples 1-12 are some of the examples that extracted from all three set of corpora that exhibit the usage of the lexical [halal]. The attached and transferred meanings of [halal] is derived by observing its collocation with the lexicals before and after [halal]. These observations enable us to see the patterns often used by Malay speakers.

Examples (1) and (2), exhibit the usage of [halal] pertaining to the status of *halal* in Malaysia. This can be proven from the collocations of [halal] with lexical items that relates to the status of *halal* such as [undang-undang/law] and [akta/act]. Examples (3) and (4) point to the usage of [halal] in discussing issues relating to certification and verification of *halal* status. This shows that in situations that involves status (as in 1-4), evaluation of the status is given after the process of certification and verification. In this case, the collocations of [halal] with lexicals such as [tanda/stamp] and [logo] serve as the proofs.

On the other hand, examples (5) and (6) are examples that relate to *rezeki* when [halal] collocates with [rezeki]. Details pertaining to *rezeki* are found in (7) and (8) that show activities that one goes through in search for *rezeki*. Some of the activities observed are investments and consultations (based on the collocations of [halal] with [pelaburan/investment] and [perundingan/consultation]). Other examples pertaining to investments are example (9) and (10) where some investments are undertaken as a way to gain *rezeki* that is *halal* where [halal] collocates with lexicals such as [industri makanan halal/the halal food industry] and [produk makanan halal/halal food product].

Apart from using *halal* with activities, *halal* is also discussed in relation to product or *rezeki*. Examples (11) and (12) show that [halal] collocates with lexicals that indicate it is a *halal* product such as [produk makanan/food product] and [makanan/food]. The lexical [halal] also did not escape from being the topic of debate in debating issues concerning food, the concept of slaughter and corruption. This can be observed in examples (13) and (14) where [halal] collocates with lexicals such as [konsep penyembelihan/the concept of slaughter] and [rasuah/bribes].

Based on all the examples presented that were taken from all three sets of corpus, it shows that the usage of the lexical [halal] is rather complex. Starting from issues that relate to *rezeki*, information retrieved from the corpus and analyzed through semantic prosody approach, it unfolds that [halal] has various additional meanings attached to it. *Rezeki* that is *halal* can be obtained from various sources, for example from activities that produce *halal* items or food. Investment is an example of activity that contributes towards *rezeki* that is *halal* where the investment is put in companies that produce *halal* food.

In terms of *halal* product, there are various food products that were referred to and products for everyday use. There are also instances where issues are brought up in the application of *halal* certification. These issues often relate to the products being used, activities related to the issuance of *halal* certificate such as slaughter and corruption. Finally, the application for *halal* status will be marked with the *halal* logo and stamp that is issued and certified as *halal* by the fatwa and consultative organization.

## CONCLUSION

The fact that speakers have the tendency to use a particular lexical item in his or her everyday conversation paves the way for a critical analysis the lexical items in order to look for meanings attached to the lexical which might also include information on values and culture. This also proves that there is an implicit and explicit relationship between the reality of language usage and the reality in a social community (Crystal 1987; Wardhaugh 2002; Holmes 2008). The analysis conducted in this study has successfully proven that the usage patterns of the lexical [halal] by speakers of Malay is very complex that transcends the domain of *halal* food. This has been shown that *halal* is also used in issues pertaining to the source of *rezeki*, products and the status of *halal*. The detailed analysis presented in this paper has shown that language in "real world linguistic" is an approach which observes language usage that are often tied to the social practice of the community.

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