

Embodied Mappings of Love: Force, Falling, and Illness Schemas in English and Malay Romantic Metaphors

Edina Mohd Nasser

Pusat Pengajian Asasi Seni Kreatif

Akademi Seni Budaya dan Warisan Kebangsaan (ASWARA)

edina@aswara.edu.my

ABSTRACT

Romantic metaphors in English and Malay reveal how speakers conceptualize love through embodied schemas grounded in force, movement, and affective disturbance. Drawing on a bilingual corpus of 180 metaphors, this study examines how two linguistic systems map embodied experience onto the abstract domain of romantic emotion. Using Cognitive Metaphor Theory (CMT) as the primary analytic framework, the analysis demonstrates that English metaphors overwhelmingly realise the mappings Love Is Violence, Love Is Physical Impact, and Love Is Catastrophic Source, whereas Malay metaphors foreground Love Is Falling, Love Is Internal Affective Movement, and Love Is Pathology. These patterns reflect divergent conceptualizations of emotional causality: English tends to externalise romantic experience as imposed force, while Malay internalizes it within the *hati* (heart/soul), which functions as a culturally salient affective locus. While sociocultural factors influence metaphor selection, the study shows that both languages rely on shared embodied foundations such as loss of balance, physical injury, and sickness. These convergences support the universalist claims of CMT, while the divergences highlight culture-specific elaborations of bodily experience. The study argues that cross-linguistic metaphor analysis illuminates how conceptual mappings organise emotional reasoning and structure the phenomenology of romantic experience.

Keywords: metaphor, cultural semiotics, language and power, cognitive linguistics.

1. INTRODUCTION

Romantic emotion is an abstract, multidimensional experience, yet across languages it is commonly described through highly concrete bodily metaphors. Cognitive Metaphor Theory (CMT) proposes that such metaphors are not merely expressive but constitute a primary mechanism through which speakers conceptualize abstract domains (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). Within this framework, mappings from embodied source domains—such as force, balance, motion, or physical harm—structure how individuals understand love, longing, and attachment. This study investigates how English and Malay romantic metaphors draw on these embodied domains to construct distinct but overlapping conceptualizations of love.

Previous research demonstrates that romantic metaphors often cluster around a small set of embodied schemas, including Falling, Force, Illness, Heat, and Madness (Kövecses, 2010; Gibbs, 2008). However, the extent to which these schemas are similarly or differently elaborated across linguistic communities remains a key question in metaphor scholarship. English has been shown to favour mappings such as LOVE IS A VIOLENT PHYSICAL FORCE or LOVE IS A CATASTROPHE, whereas Malay linguistic and cultural traditions often conceptualize emotion through internal somatic states involving the *hati*, a culturally specific affective organ central to Malay cognition.

By examining a bilingual corpus of 180 metaphors, this study compares the metaphorical mappings used in English and Malay to determine (a) which embodied schemas are shared, (b) how these schemas are elaborated differently, and (c) how cultural models shape the instantiation of universal mappings. This comparative approach contributes to ongoing debates regarding universality versus cultural specificity in conceptual metaphor, offering insights into how emotional concepts are grounded in both bodily experience and culturally structured cognition.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The study of romantic metaphors occupies a central position within Cognitive Metaphor Theory (CMT), which argues that metaphors are not ornamental linguistic devices but fundamental cognitive structures that shape how individuals conceptualize abstract experience (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Gibbs, 2008). Within this framework, the domain of love is structured through entrenched mappings from embodied source domains such as force, motion, falling, illness, and physical containment. These mappings give rise to conventional conceptual metaphors such as LOVE IS A FORCE, LOVE IS A JOURNEY, LOVE IS FALLING, and LOVE IS ILLNESS, which organise emotional reasoning across cultures (Kövecses, 2010). The present study draws primarily on this theoretical lineage to analyse how English and Malay speakers conceptualise romantic experiences through embodied schemas, while acknowledging that cultural elaboration plays a significant role in shaping metaphorical selection.

2.1 Cognitive Metaphor Theory and Embodied Emotional Schemas

CMT proposes that abstract concepts are structured by systematic cross-domain mappings from recurring patterns of bodily experience, or image schemas (Johnson, 1987). In the domain of romantic emotion, three schemas are especially salient: FORCE, FALLING, and ILLNESS, each of which reflects primary embodied experiences. The Force schema underlies English expressions such as “she hit me hard” or “love struck him,” which conceptualize romantic affect as an external, coercive impact. The Falling schema, associated with gravitational loss of balance, appears in “falling in love” and Malay expressions like *jatuh hati*. The illness schema maps physiological dysregulation onto

emotional disturbance, producing expressions such as “lovesick” or Malay *angau*. These schemas form the conceptual grounding for cross-linguistic metaphors of passion, longing, and romantic destabilization.

Cross-linguistic research confirms that such schemas recur widely, though languages differ in how they elaborate them (Kövecses, 2005). For example, Spanish metaphors foreground weaponry (*me flechó*, “she arrowed me”), while Japanese metaphors often emphasize spatial alignment or distance. This suggests that the embodied basis of metaphor is universal, but languages select and elaborate schemas in ways shaped by cultural salience and discourse practices. The comparison of English and Malay therefore offers insight into how two typologically distinct languages draw on shared bodily experiences while developing distinct metaphorical repertoires.

2.2 Universal and Culture-Specific Aspects of Romantic Metaphor

CMT distinguishes between primary metaphors, grounded in universal human experience, and complex metaphors, shaped through cultural combination and elaboration (Grady, 1999). Primary metaphors such as Emotional Intensity Is Heat, Love Is An Illness, or Affection Is Warmth evolve from early sensorimotor experience and appear across languages. In contrast, complex metaphors, such as Malay’s *jatuh hati* (“the heart falls”) or *hati tersentuh* (“the heart is touched”), arise from the interaction of primary schemas with culturally specific understandings of the body and emotion. Such elaborations reflect local ontologies of affect and embodiment.

In the Malay cultural-linguistic context, the *hati*—a term combining aspects of heart, liver, and inner self—functions as the

primary emotional organ (Asmah Haji Omar, 1995; Mohd Taib Osman, 1989). This differs significantly from Western conceptualizations of emotion centred on the anatomical heart. Metaphors involving the *hati* thus provide culturally rich elaborations of universal schemas: “touched heart” and “fallen heart” retain the universal mappings of contact and falling, but are instantiated through a culturally specific emotional locus. These distinctions highlight the value of cross-linguistic research for teasing apart universal embodiment from cultural modelling.

2.3 Romantic Metaphor in English: Force, Rupture, and Externality

English metaphor research has extensively documented the dominance of FORCE and VIOLENCE metaphors in conceptualizing romantic intensity (Fetterman et al., 2016; Landau et al., 2018). Expressions such as “heartbroken,” “crushed,” “shattered,” or “devastated” frame romantic experience as an encounter with overwhelming physical force. These metaphors instantiate complex mappings in which ‘emotional harm is physical harm’, deriving from the primary metaphor ‘emotional pain is physical pain’ (Kövecses, 2010). Catastrophe metaphors—“swept away,” “blown apart,” “a whirlwind romance”—use natural-force schemas to project instability and loss of control onto the emotional experience.

These English patterns align with broader tendencies in Western discourse to conceptualize emotional life through external forces acting upon the self. While socio-cultural factors shape these preferences, from a CMT perspective they reflect elaborations of core embodied schemas related to force dynamics, motion, and structural integrity.

2.4 Romantic Metaphor in Malay: Falling, Illness, and Internal Resonance

By contrast, Malay metaphors rely more heavily on FALLING, ILLNESS, and INTERNAL MOVEMENT schemas. The prevalence of *jatuh cinta* (“fall into love”) and *jatuh hati* (“the heart falls”) illustrates gravitational metaphors that conceptualize romantic attraction as an involuntary descent. Illness-based expressions such as *angau* (“love-sickness”), *demam rindu* (“fever of longing”), and *mabuk cinta* (“drunk on love”) map physiological dysregulation onto emotional vulnerability. Central to Malay metaphor is the *hati*, which serves as the site of emotional sensation, moral reasoning, and intuitive knowledge. This cultural model gives rise to metaphors such as *hati tersentuh* (“heart touched”) or *hati terpihat* (“captivated heart”), where the affective experience is localized internally rather than conceptualized as external force.

These patterns reflect culturally specific elaborations of universal schemas. The FALLING schema is universal; its use in Malay aligns with gravitational metaphors found cross-linguistically. The ILLNESS schema is also widely attested. However, the *hati* introduces a culturally distinct emotional topology that modulates how schemas are instantiated, reinforcing the value of Malay as a comparative case in conceptual metaphor research.

2.5 Additional Perspectives: Semiotics, Affect, and Discourse

While the present study centres on CMT, other theoretical traditions contribute complementary insights. Semiotic perspectives emphasize how repeated metaphorical expressions naturalize certain

conceptualizations (Barthes, 1972). Affect theory highlights how emotional discourse circulates culturally, influencing the salience of certain metaphorical frames (Ahmed, 2004). Feminist linguistic studies show how certain metaphors—particularly those involving pursuit, conquest, and capture—reflect and reinforce gendered relational dynamics (Cameron, 1990). While these frameworks are not the primary focus of this study, they provide valuable supporting context for understanding how embodied metaphors operate within broader cultural and discursive systems.

3. METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative, schema-based approach grounded in Cognitive Metaphor Theory (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Kövecses, 2010) to examine how English and Malay conceptualize romantic emotion through systematic cross-domain mappings. The primary objective of the methodology is to identify the embodied image schemas underlying metaphorical expressions in each language and compare how these schemas are selected, elaborated, and distributed.

3.1 Corpus Construction and Sampling

A bilingual metaphor corpus of 180 expressions was compiled, comprising 110 English and 70 Malay metaphors related to romantic love. A purposive sampling strategy was used to ensure broad representation across linguistic registers. English items were drawn from contemporary literature, film dialogue, popular music, online discourse, and conventional idioms. Malay data were sourced from *pantun*, *syair*, song lyrics, conversational usage, social media expressions, and culturally salient idioms involving the *hati*.

Metaphors were included if they:

1. referred directly to romantic affect, attraction, longing, or heartbreak;
2. involved figurative cross-domain mapping; and
3. were recurrent or recognisable within each language.

Idioms tied exclusively to sexual desire, familial affection, or religious devotion were excluded unless they overlapped with romantic conceptualization. Malay items were restricted to Peninsular Malaysian usage to maintain dialectal consistency.

3.2 Identification of Conceptual Metaphors and Image Schemas

Analysis followed a CMT-driven procedure in which linguistic expressions were used to infer underlying conceptual metaphors (CMs) and corresponding image schemas (Johnson, 1987). Each metaphor was first examined for its surface figurative domain (e.g., violence, falling, pathology). Then, expressions were grouped according to the deeper embodied schemas they instantiate, including:

- Force/Impact Schema
- Falling Schema
- Illness/Pathology Schema
- Structural Integrity/Rupture Schema
- Motion and Directionality Schema
- Possession/Control Schema

From these schema clusters, broader conceptual metaphors—such as LOVE IS A VIOLENT FORCE, LOVE IS FALLING, and LOVE IS AN ILLNESS—were identified for each language. This allowed for cross-linguistic comparison of conceptual structure independent of surface lexical choices.

3.3 Coding Procedures and Reliability

Two coders with training in metaphor analysis independently classified each expression by (a) image schema, (b) dominant conceptual metaphor, and (c) secondary elaboration (if present). Ambiguous cases—particularly in Malay metaphors involving the *hati*—were discussed until consensus was achieved. Inter-coder reliability reached $\kappa = .86$, indicating a high level of agreement.

English metaphors often expressed a clearer mapping to external cause schemas (e.g., force, impact), whereas Malay metaphors frequently required identification of internal-state schemas connected to the *hati*. To avoid culture-specific bias, coders analysed Malay metaphors first at the level of embodied schema before considering cultural elaborations.

3.4 Analytic Framework

The analysis proceeded in three steps:

1. Schema Identification: Determine which embodied schema(s) each metaphor activates (e.g., *falling*, *rupture*, *impact*, *motion*, *illness*).

2. Conceptual Metaphor Mapping: Group related expressions into conceptual metaphors based on shared mappings (e.g., *heartbroken, crushed, shattered* → LOVE IS PHYSICAL INJURY).
3. Cross-Linguistic Comparison: Compare the prevalence and elaboration of schemas across English and Malay to determine:
 - which mappings are universal (e.g., FALLING, ILLNESS),
 - which are language-specific elaborations (e.g., Malay *hati* as emotional locus), and
 - how cultural models influence schema selection without contradicting embodied foundations.

3.5 Cross-Linguistic Considerations

Because English and Malay differ typologically and culturally, comparison focused on conceptual architecture rather than direct lexical equivalence. English metaphors tend to foreground external force dynamics, while Malay metaphors emphasise internal affective movement within the *hati*. These differences were analysed as elaborations of shared underlying schemas rather than independent metaphor systems.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

All informal expressions from social media were paraphrased to avoid traceability. As the study analysed linguistic artefacts rather than human subjects, no formal ethics approval was required.

4. RESULTS

The analysis of the bilingual corpus revealed both shared and divergent conceptual structures in how English and Malay speakers map embodied experience onto the abstract domain of romantic emotion. Across both languages, three image schemas—Force, Falling, and Illness—emerged as the dominant grounding structures for romantic metaphor. However, the elaboration and distribution of these schemas differed substantially, particularly in relation to how each linguistic system localizes emotional causality and affective experience.

4.1 Dominant Image Schemas Across the Corpus

Three schemas accounted for the majority of metaphors in both languages:

1. Force/Impact Schema (e.g., *being struck, hit, crushed, broken*).
2. Falling Schema (e.g., *losing balance, downward motion*).
3. Illness/Pathology Schema (e.g., *fever, debilitation, intoxicatio...*

Additional but less frequent schemas included Possession/Control, Catastrophe, and Motion/Directionality. These schemas served as the basis for identifying the following dominant conceptual metaphors (CMs):

- LOVE IS A VIOLENT PHYSICAL FORCE
- LOVE IS FALLING
- LOVE IS AN ILLNESS
- LOVE IS A NATURAL CATASTROPHE

- LOVE IS LOSS OF CONTROL
- LOVE IS POSSESSION

4.2 English: External Force, Rupture, and Structural Damage

In the English dataset, romantic affect is predominantly structured through the schemas of **FORCE** and **VIOLENCE**, which construe love as an external agent acting upon the experiencer. Common expressions such as *falling for him*, *being swept away*, and *struck by love* position the subject as the target of an outside force that exerts pressure, movement, or impact. For instance, in the utterance *I was swept off my feet the moment I met him*, love is represented as an agentive force that destabilizes the subject's equilibrium. Although English also employs falling metaphors, these frequently co-occur with violent or force-based entailments, suggesting not inward vulnerability but subjection to an overpowering external cause. Taken together, these patterns reflect a dominant model of **external affective causality**, in which love is experienced as something that happens *to* the individual rather than emerging *within* them.

English metaphors overwhelmingly instantiated mappings based on the Force/Impact schema, producing conceptual metaphors such as:

- LOVE IS PHYSICAL INJURY (*heartbroken, crushed, shattered, hurt me*).
- LOVE IS A VIOLENT FORCE (*hit me hard, she struck me, swept me away*).
- LOVE IS A CATASTROPHE (*devastated, wrecked, torn apart*).

Frequency counts show that Force/Impact-based mappings accounted for 28%, the highest proportion in English. These expressions rely on embodied experiences of rupture, trauma, and external pressure, foregrounding a model in which emotional experience results from forceful external causation.

English also made frequent use of Weaponry-based extensions of the FORCE schema (e.g., “Cupid shot me,” “pierced my heart”), reinforcing an external-agency conceptualization of romantic affect.

Overall, English patterns emphasize:

- externality
- coercion by force
- loss of structural integrity

4.3 Malay: Falling, Internal Affective Movement, and the “Hati”

In the Malay dataset, romantic affect is predominantly structured through the schemas of FALLING and ILLNESS, which construe love as an internally unfolding state rather than an externally imposed force. Expressions such as *jatuh cinta* (“fall into love”) and *jatuh hati* (“the heart falls”) conceptualize attraction as an involuntary inward descent localized within the *hati*, a culturally salient locus of emotion, moral intuition, and inner thought in Malay cognition. For example, in the utterance *Saya jatuh hati padanya tanpa sedar bila ia bermula* (“I fell in love with her without realizing when it began”), the experiencer is not an active agent but the site of affective change.

Illness-based metaphors such as *angau* (“love-sick delirium”) and *demam rindu* (“fever of longing”) further frame romantic emotion as a condition of bodily dysregulation arising from within. Together, these patterns reflect a dominant model of **internal affective causality**, in which love is experienced as something that happens *within* the self rather than something that acts *upon* it.

Malay metaphors were dominated by the Falling schema, which accounted for 27% of the corpus, producing conceptual metaphors such as:

- LOVE IS FALLING (*jatuh cinta* “fall into love”; *jatuh hati* “heart falls”).

These metaphors rely on embodied experiences of gravitational loss of control but differ from English in centering inward emotional descent rather than external impact.

The second most frequent cluster involved Illness/Pathology schemas:

- LOVE IS AN ILLNESS (*angau* “love-sick delirium”; *demam rindu* “fever of longing”).
- LOVE IS INTOXICATION (*mabuk cinta* “drunk on love”).

These expressions conceptualize romantic emotion as a condition of bodily dysregulation.

A culturally specific elaboration occurred through metaphors involving the *hati* (heart/liver), functioning as the affective locus in Malay cognition:

- *hati tersentuh* (“heart is touched”)
- *hati hancur* (“heart shattered”)
- *hati terpiakat* (“heart captivated”)

While these map onto universal schemas of CONTACT, RUPTURE, and CAPTURE, their internalization within the *hati* differentiates Malay emotional conceptualization from English’s external-force orientation. Malay patterns emphasize:

- internal affective movementsomatic sensation localized in the *hati*gravitational inevitabiliillness as emotional dysregulation. Although both English and Malay employ shared embodied schemas such as FALLING and ILLNESS, the causal logic they encode diverges: English metaphors predominantly construe love as an externally imposed force acting upon the experiencer, whereas Malay metaphors frame romantic affect as an internally unfolding state localized within the *hati*.

4.4 Cross-Linguistic Comparison of Schema Distribution

Schema	English (%)	Malay (%)	Dominant Mapping
Force/Impact	28.1%	15.7%	LOVE IS A VIOLENT FORCE

F a l l i n g / Instability	13.6%	27.1%	LOVE IS FALLING
Illness/Pathology	15.4%	21.4%	LOVE IS AN ILLNESS
Catastrophe/ Natural	19.0%	11.4%	LOVE IS A NATURAL FORCE
W e a p o n r y / Penetration	12.7%	10.0%	LOVE IS A PENETRATING FORCE
P o s s e s s i o n / Captivity	10.9%	14.3%	LOVE IS POSSESSION

This comparison reveals:

- English → prefers Force/Impact, Rupture, Catastrophe
- Malay → prefers Falling, Illness, Internal Movement (*hati*)
- Both → share Loss of Control, Disruption, Involuntariness

From a CMT perspective, both languages rely on universal embodied schemas, but cultural elaboration determines which schemas receive emphasis and how they are instantiated.

4.5 Shared Universal Schemas

- Falling
- Illness
- Loss of control
- Force dynamics

Language-Specific Elaborations

- English elaborates Force/Impact via injury, rupture, and weaponry.
- Malay elaborates Falling/Illness via the *hati* and somatic dysregulation.

These patterns support the CMT claim that:

- embodiment provides shared cognitive grounding,
- cultural models provide distinct elaborations,
- linguistic metaphors offer insight into the conceptual structuring of romantic emotion.

5. DISCUSSION

The findings of this study contribute to ongoing debates in Cognitive Metaphor Theory regarding the relationship between universal embodied schemas and culturally specific elaborations. English and Malay share a common set of embodied foundations for conceptualizing romantic emotion—namely the Force, Falling, and Illness schemas—yet diverge significantly in how these schemas are selected, foregrounded, and elaborated.

5.1 Universal Embodiment and Shared Conceptual Mappings

The presence of parallel metaphors such as “falling in love” and *jatuh cinta*, “heartbroken” and *hati hancur*, or “lovesick” and *angau*, indicates that speakers of both languages draw on similar

sensorimotor experiences—gravitational imbalance, physical rupture, and physiological dysregulation—to structure the domain of romantic emotion. These patterns support the CMT claim that conceptual metaphors reflect recurring bodily experience, producing cross-linguistic stability in image-schematic grounding (Kövecses, 2010).

The shared mapping LOVE IS FALLING reflects the universality of gravitational experience as a basis for describing unintentional emotional descent. Similarly, LOVE IS AN ILLNESS appears in both languages due to the common experience of physical symptoms accompanying intense emotion. These convergences reinforce the view that embodied cognition constrains how humans conceptualize affective states.

5.2 Language-Specific Elaboration of Shared Schemas

Although the same schemas are available across languages, English and Malay differ in how they elaborate them. English metaphors frequently invoke external physical force, producing complex mappings such as LOVE IS A VIOLENT FORCE, LOVE IS PHYSICAL INJURY, and LOVE IS A CATASTROPHE. These elaborations extend the Force schema into rupture, fragmentation, and impact, reflecting a conceptualization of emotional experience as externally caused and structurally disruptive.

In contrast, Malay metaphors elaborate the Falling and Illness schemas through a culturally specific emotional topology centred on the *hati*, the internal organ associated with affective experience, moral intuition, and inner thought. Metaphors such as *hati tersentuh* (“heart is touched”) and *hati terpijat* (“heart captivated”) maintain

universal schemas of contact and capture but instantiate them through an internalised emotional locus. This suggests that while embodiment provides the conceptual groundwork, cultural models influence the site and texture of emotional experience.

5.3 Internal vs. External Causation in Conceptualization

A key difference emerging from the analysis concerns the perceived causality of romantic emotion. English metaphors represent love as an external force acting upon the individual—something that “hits,” “strikes,” or “breaks.” Malay metaphors, by contrast, conceptualize love as a state that arises within the self, often framed as falling, resonating, or becoming ill. This distinction highlights how the same schema (e.g., Falling) can be elaborated differently depending on cultural understandings of the body and affect.

5.4 Implications for Cross-Linguistic Conceptual Metaphor Research

These findings underscore the importance of distinguishing between universal schemas (shared bodily grounding) and cultural elaborations (local instantiations of schemas). By comparing two typologically and culturally distinct languages, this study provides empirical support for a view of conceptual metaphor that integrates both embodiment and cultural modelling. The Malay data in particular demonstrate how embodied schemas such as Falling or Illness can be enriched by culturally specific notions such as the *hati*, resulting in conceptual metaphors that are simultaneously grounded and culturally distinctive.

6. CONCLUSION

This study examined how English and Malay conceptualize romantic emotion through embodied metaphorical mappings, focusing on the FORCE, FALLING, and ILLNESS schemas that structure both languages' metaphorical repertoires. The findings support the central claim of Cognitive Metaphor Theory that abstract emotional experience is grounded in recurrent bodily patterns, giving rise to stable cross-linguistic conceptual metaphors such as LOVE IS A FORCE, LOVE IS FALLING, and LOVE IS AN ILLNESS.

At the same time, the cross-linguistic comparison demonstrates that cultural models play a decisive role in shaping how these shared schemas are elaborated. English predominantly externalizes romantic affect through metaphors of force, rupture, and catastrophe, construing love as an external agent acting upon the experiencer. Malay, by contrast, favors metaphors of falling, illness, and internal affective movement localized within the *hati*, conceptualizing love as an internally unfolding state. This contrast reveals a fundamental difference in affective causality: love is experienced in English as something that happens to the self, whereas in Malay it is experienced as something that arises within the self.

These divergent metaphorical patterns carry broader sociocultural implications. The prominence of FORCE and VIOLENCE metaphors in English romantic discourse aligns with feminist critiques of romantic language that emphasize conquest, domination, and asymmetrical power relations. While such metaphors do not determine social behavior, they may contribute to the normalization of relational dynamics framed through impact, injury, and loss of control. In contrast, the Malay emphasis on inward affective states foregrounds emotional

vulnerability and moral interiority, offering a different orientation toward romantic experience that centers endurance, resonance, and internal transformation. Neither model is inherently prescriptive or evaluative; rather, their contrast illustrates how metaphor participates in shaping culturally specific emotional logics.

By integrating schema-based analysis with cross-linguistic comparison, this study contributes to ongoing debates concerning universality and cultural specificity in conceptual metaphor research. The findings underscore the value of examining how universal embodied foundations interact with culturally situated models of emotion, morality, and agency. Future research could extend this approach through diachronic analysis, the inclusion of additional Austronesian languages, or interdisciplinary engagement with gender studies, affect theory, and discourse analysis. Such work would further illuminate how metaphor organizes emotional reasoning and structures the lived experience of romantic attachment across culture.

REFERENCES

- Ahmed, S. (2004). *The cultural politics of emotion*. Routledge.
- Asmah Haji Omar. (1993). *Nahu Melayu mutakhir*. Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka.
- Asmah Haji Omar. (1995). *Bahasa dan alam pemikiran Melayu*. Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka.
- Asmah Haji Omar. (2008). *Ensiklopedia bahasa Melayu*. Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka.
- Barthes, R. (1972). *Mythologies* (A. Lavers, Trans.). Hill and Wang. (Original work published 1957)
- Barthes, R. (1977). *Image, music, text* (S. Heath, Trans.). Fontana Press.
- Berlant, L. (2011). *Cruel optimism*. Duke University Press.

- Cameron, D. (1990). *Feminism and linguistic theory*. Macmillan.
- Citron, F. M. M., & Goldberg, A. E. (2014). Metaphorical sentences evoke sensory simulations more strongly than literal sentences. *Journal of Cognitive Neuroscience*, 26(11), 2604–2617. https://doi.org/10.1162/jocn_a_00654
- Eco, U. (1984). *Semiotics and the philosophy of language*. Indiana University Press.
- Fasoli, F., Suitner, C., Maass, A., & Carnaghi, A. (2021). When love hurts: How romanticized violence in metaphors shapes tolerance of harmful behaviours. *Sex Roles*, 84(3–4), 191–204. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-020-01179-w>
- Fetterman, A. K., Segerstrom, N. S., & Robinson, M. D. (2016). Grappling with love: Violent metaphors for passionate romantic love increase perceptions of romantic intensity. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 33(8), 1174–1195. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0265407515612448>
- Gibbs, R. W. (2008). *The Cambridge handbook of metaphor and thought*. Cambridge University Press.
- Gill, R. (2006). *Gender and the media*. Polity Press.
- Grady, J. E. (1999). A typology of motivation for conceptual metaphor: Correlation vs. resemblance. In R. W. Gibbs & G. Steen (Eds.), *Metaphor in cognitive linguistics* (pp. 79–100). John Benjamins.
- Haron Daud. (1994). *Pantun dan pembentukannya*. Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka.
- Haron Daud. (1998). *Kesusasteraan Melayu tradisional*. Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka.
- Illouz, E. (1997). *Consuming the romantic utopia: Love and the cultural contradictions of capitalism*. University of California Press.
- Illouz, E. (2012). *Why love hurts: A sociological explanation*. Polity Press.
- Ismail Hamid. (1988). *Falsafah peribahasa Melayu*. Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka.
- Kövecses, Z. (2010). *Metaphor: A practical introduction* (2nd ed.). Oxford University Press.

- Lakoff, G., & Johnson, M. (1980). *Metaphors we live by*. University of Chicago Press.
- Landau, M. J., Robinson, M. D., & Meier, B. P. (2018). The power of metaphor: Examining its influence on social life. *Review of General Psychology*, 22(2), 137–152. <https://doi.org/10.1037/gpr0000145>
- Lazar, M. M. (2005). *Feminist critical discourse analysis: Gender, power and ideology in discourse*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Lotman, Y. M. (1990). *Universe of the mind: A semiotic theory of culture*. I. B. Tauris.
- Mohd Taib Osman. (1989). *Malay folk beliefs: An integration of disparate elements*. Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka.
- Nik Safiah Karim, Onn, F. M., Hashim Haji Musa, & Abdul Hamid Mahmood. (2008). *Tatabahasa Dewan* (3rd ed.). Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka.
- P. Ramlee. (1956). *Engkau laksana bulan* [Song]. EMI Malaysia.
- P. Ramlee. (1960). *Getaran jiwa* [Song]. EMI Malaysia.
- P. Ramlee. (1960). *Antara dua darjat* [Film]. Shaw Brothers Malay Film Productions.
- P. Ramlee. (1962). *Ibu mertuaku* [Film]. Shaw Brothers Malay Film Productions.
- Saussure, F. de. (1959). *Course in general linguistics* (W. Baskin, Trans.). McGraw–Hill.
- Searle, K., & Bracewell, R. (2020). Metaphor framing and relationship dynamics: How figurative language shapes emotional regulation and conflict interpretation. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 37(9), 2455–2478. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0265407520914085>
- Shamsul, A. B. (1996). ‘Nations-of-intent’ in Malaysia. *Southeast Asian Studies*, 34(3), 271–286.
- Shamsul, A. B. (2001). A history of identity, an identity of a history: The idea and practice of “Malayness” in Malaysia reconsidered. *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 32(3), 355–366.
- Sunderland, J. (2004). *Gendered discourses*. Palgrave Macmillan.

- Thibodeau, P. H., & Boroditsky, L. (2011). Metaphors we think with: The role of metaphor in reasoning. *PLoS ONE*, 6(2), e16782. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0016782>
- Williams, L. E., Nicholson, T., Galdus, A., & Farias, M. (2019). Metaphors and romantic beliefs: How figurative language shapes expectations in intimate relationships. *Communication Research*, 46(2), 179–206. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0093650215627483>
- Zawawi Ibrahim. (1996). *The Malay labourer: By the window of capitalism*. SIRD.
- Zawawi Ibrahim. (2010). *Cultural complexity in contemporary Malaysia*. SIRD.