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Abstract

In this paper I suggest that we need to take a broader focus on figurative language within a cross-linguistic framework by considering whether languages consistently show a preference for metaphor as compared with other figures of speech such as metonymy. Employing a cognitive semantic approach, I compare figurative uses of three oral body parts ‘mouth’, lip’ and ‘tongue’ in English and Malay phraseology. I find that while each language shows evidence of both figures, and of blends of these figures, English has a general tendency towards metonymy while Malay has a tendency towards metaphor. This is in cases where figurative language is being employed for the similar discourse function of offering an evaluation. I explain the English preference for metonymy on the basis that English speaking cultures place less constraint on facial expression and has a stylistic preference for hyperbole. By contrast, the Malay preference for metaphor is explained by a culturally driven stylistic preference for euphemism. This is because there are cultural pressures to make negative evaluations less directly in order to show respect towards other people’s feelings and therefore towards the more heavily encrypted style of metaphor. Identification of differences in how figurative language is employed to make evaluations is important for second language learners and translators. In addition, a better knowledge of the linguistic characteristics of figurative phrases provides a rich source of insight into cultural differences.

1. INTRODUCTION

Researchers in the areas of second language learning and translation have explored differences between the metaphor systems of languages with a view to facilitating the learning of second language phrases and idioms that have a metaphorical component or improving translation (cf. Cameron & Low 1999a & b for overviews). A number of these have attempted to develop comparative systems by drawing on the cognitive semantic notion of a conceptual metaphor (e.g. Charteris-Black 2001 a & b, 2002, Deignan et. al. 1997). Such approaches distinguish between the surface forms of particular metaphors and the underlying cognitive motivations that account for clusters of metaphors. This can lead to typologies of metaphor comparisons that reveal similarities and differences between languages either in linguistic forms or in underlying conceptual bases or in both of these. In this paper I hope to show that while conceptual metaphors are useful in cross-cultural and cross-linguistic research, the focus on *metaphor* alone – as if it were the *only* type of figure motivating figurative language - can be very limiting. Cross-cultural issues can also be investigated by gaining a better understanding of cross-linguistic differences in the choice of actual types of figure – for example, whether there is a tendency towards metaphor or metonymy.

In this paper I will suggest that we need to take a broader focus on figurative language within a cross-linguistic framework by considering whether languages consistently show a preference for metaphor as compared with other figures of speech such as metonymy. In particular, I hope by comparing the phraseology of a particular source domain (that of the oral body parts ‘mouth’, ‘lip’ and ‘tongue’) in English and Malay to illustrate that - while each language shows evidence of both figures - English shows a preference for metonymy while Malay shows a preference for metaphor. This is in cases where figurative language is being employed for the similar discourse function of offering an evaluation. I will argue that there are linguistic differences in how figurative senses are typically communicated (metaphor as opposed to metonym) and this that can be explained by a culturally driven stylistic preference for euphemism or hyperbole. Therefore, a better knowledge of the linguistic characteristics of figurative phrases provides a rich source of insight into cultural differences.

I will briefly illustrate this as follows: both English and Malay have similar metaphors in the expressions ‘fork-tongued’ and *lidah bercabang* (tongue forked) ‘hypocritical’ that convey the same negative evaluation. They also both have the expressions *lidah manis* (‘tongue sweet’) and ‘a silver tongue’ to convey a positive sense of someone who speaks in a charming or attractive way. However, English has *very few* such adjectival uses in its phraseology and more typically uses verbal expressions such as *to keep one’s mouth shut*, and *to bite one’s tongue*. I would like to suggest that this is because English typically uses metonyms in which an accompanying action stands for a result. For example, in both *to keep one’s mouth shut*, and *to bite one’s tongue* a physical action that either is, or, more importantly, could be, undertaken refers to the result ‘not talking’. The physical action has this sense because in our experience we are aware of the contiguous relation between placing physical constraint on a speech organ and the outcome of not speaking. The metonymic interpretation is based on what is potentially an actual world event that links an oral body part with talking or not talking.

Conversely, adjectival phrases are *very typical* in Malay figurative phrases – while an oral body part still has a metonymic reference to speech - the *primary* sense originates in a metaphoric use of an adjective (e.g. *lidah panjang* ‘tongue long’ meaning ‘talkative’). The difference in these two types of figurative language can be traced to cultural differences; for example, a tendency to greater use of the face muscles and gesture, and a stylistic preference for hyperbole in English and for euphemism in Malay. Hence there is a less covert figurative encoding in English as compared with Malay. Linguistic and conceptual differences in figurative expressions therefore provide insight into specific cultural differences.

2. METONYMY, METAPHOR AND CONCEPTUAL KEYS

Given that a main argument of this paper is that there are different preferences between languages in the selection of metaphor and metonymy, in this section I will summarise some of the current views on the cognitive and linguistic differences between these two types of figure.

Warren explains the distinction between the two figures as follows:

The difference between metaphor and metonymy is traditionally said to be that metaphor is based on resemblance relations whereas metonymy is based on contiguity. (Warren 1999: 130)

As a result since metaphor is based on resemblance there are two separate conceptual domains while only a single conceptual domain is involved in metonymy. This is summarised by Lakoff (1987: 288) as follows: ‘A metonymic mapping occurs within a single conceptual domain....’ whereas ‘metaphoric mapping involves a source domain and a target domain’. Other semanticists agree with this point of view:

....metaphor is a mapping between two domains that are not part of the same matrix... in metonymy, on the other hand, the mapping occurs only within a domain matrix ... We will call this conceptual effect domain highlighting, since the metonymy makes primary a domain that is secondary in the literal meaning. Croft (1993: 348)

Because two domains are involved with metaphor there is a case for arguing that it is less direct than metonymy; as Pauwels (1999: 256) explains ‘The central element differentiating metaphor and metonymy seems to be the greater cognitive distance (to put it in spatial terms) between the concepts involved in metaphor’. This is important because it suggests that interpretations of metaphor require more cognitive effort than interpretations of metonymy. As Warren argues:

For metaphor one attribute of the target is perceived as reminiscent of one attribute of the trigger. Both target and trigger must come from different domains/categories and can involve one or more attributes - working out several links may cause interpretation to be richer but less straightforward than metonymy that requires working out only one relation. Therefore interpreting metaphors often varies with the interpreter. (Warren 1999)

If Warren is right and that the interpretation of metaphors is less straightforward than that of metonyms this would also suggest that metaphor is more likely to convey euphemism. However, we should be cautious here since (Pauwels 1999) claims that metonymy too functions as a kind of avoidance strategy and can also carry connotations of euphemism or, conversely, of overstatement.

I would also like to consider some of the differences in function between metaphor and metonymy. Most researchers agree the function of metonymy is referential (e.g. Dirvin 1993, Pauwels 1999, Seto 1999). While both metaphor and metonymy are cognitive, metonymy typically avoids ambiguity and is motivated by the desire for economy of effort and ease of access to the referent (cf. Cruse 2000, Blank 1999). This may account for why most examples of metonymy involve nouns and follow concepts such as CONTAINER FOR CONTAINED and PLACE FOR INSTITUTION. However, the functions of metaphor are primarily either understanding (Lakoff & Johnson 1980) or expressive communication (Dirvin 1993) and this may explain why metaphors can involve any word class.

Some researchers see an overlap between metaphor and metonymy while others (e.g. Croft 1993) argue that they are quite distinct from each other. For example, Goosens (1995) suggests a distinction between “metaphor from metonymy” and “metonymy within metaphor” but also claims that it is not always easy to draw a boundary between the two – they are both, after all, primarily cognitive. I suggest that the issue of whether they are distinct depends on whether the focus of interest is on the cognitive process or on the linguistic realisation of figurative language. While metaphor and metonymy are distinct cognitive processes, in practice they frequently co-occur in figurative phrases that contain a body part lexeme. Goosens examples of ‘metaphor from metonymy’ are all figurative phrases: *talk with one’s tongue in one’s cheek*; *beat one’s breast*; *close-lipped*. Similarly, his examples of ‘metonymy in metaphor’ are also figurative phrases: e.g. *bite one’s tongue off*; *shoot one’s mouth off*; *catch someone’s ear*. These clearly differ from non-phraseological instances of metonymy such as those in which the container stands for the contained (e.g. *the bottle* for ‘alcohol’), the place for the institution (e.g. *Downing Street* for ‘the government’) or clothes for people (e.g. *a suit* for ‘a businessman’). In these nominal forms there is only a single cognitive process whereas Goosens examples of body part figurative phrases show evidence of both figures. While prototypical examples of metonymy exclude metaphor, in practice there is much linguistic evidence in phraseology that the two figures occur in combination with each other.

Grady et al. (1997: 108) refers to a principle of ‘Metonymic tightening’ in which ‘relationships between elements from the same input should become as close as

possible within the blend'. I would agree that that metonymy and metaphor can be blended in a cognitive sense and also propose that many conventional figurative phrases provide linguistic data on such blending. I propose the term 'figurative blend' to refer in general to figurative phrases where there is evidence of more than one type of cognitive process – such as when metaphor and metonymy are both present. I also propose the term 'metaphoric figurative blend' for figurative phrases where an evaluation comes from a metaphoric element. While my concept of figurative blend is not based on Grady et. al.'s notion of blending theory it is nevertheless congruent with this theory because it offers the possibility of input spaces, a generic space and a blended space.

I also propose that underlying cognitive processes – whether metaphor or metonym - may be captured by what I have termed 'conceptual keys' (cf. Charteris-Black 2000); following Lakoff, these are shown in upper case and they may take a metaphoric form (e.g. A IS B) or a metonymic one, (e.g. A FOR B). A conceptual key is a broader notion than a conceptual metaphor because it may take the form of a conceptual metaphor or a conceptual metonym or some other type of conventional script. A conceptual key is preferable to the term 'conceptual metaphor' because we need a more general notion when comparing figurative phrases in different languages; this is because figurative phrases with the similar discourse role of evaluation may differ between languages as to whether they are primarily metonymic or metaphoric.

3. FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE, SPEECH ORGANS AND EVALUATION

Moon (1998) argues for the importance of metaphor in making evaluations in phraseology; she finds that around a third of all fixed expressions (including idioms) in her database are 'canonically either positive or negative in orientation' (ibid.:246) and that twice as many are negative as positive. She distinguishes between evaluation that is based in the culture at large and evaluation that reflects the speaker/writer's point of view. She also distinguishes between synchronic evaluation based on the connotations associated with real world knowledge and diachronic evaluation based on the specific origins of a metaphor. She notes that in cases such as *a rolling stone gathers no moss* the evaluation can be positive in some contexts and negative in others. She also claims idiom schemas 'encompass canonical evaluations as

institutionalized in the culture' (ibid: 259). While these perspectives have been kept in mind in this study, the issues that I am mainly concerned with are the linguistic means by which evaluation is realised in the figurative expressions of different languages and how, and why, image schemas may work differently across cultures. Charteris-Black (1995) explores differences in cultural attitudes towards speech and silence by examining proverbs in the domain of speech and silence from 41 different languages.

In a study of metonymic expressions related to the movement of visible speech organs such as those in which body part metaphors are implicit (e.g. *keep one's mouth shut*; and *tongue-in-cheek*), Pauwels, & Vandenberg, (1995) identify two types of metaphor based on the domain of linguistic action. The first is those based on non-verbal communication such as *pat on the back*; *put the finger on* and the other is based on restricted movement e.g. *guard one's tongue*. They also identify two types of value judgement for linguistic action on the basis of concrete or abstract criteria. Concrete criteria include metaphors based on lack of skill (e.g. *fumble*) objectionable behaviour (e.g. *throw dust in someone's eyes*) or aggression (e.g. *backbite*). Abstract criteria: include intensity (e.g. *shut one's mouth*) and frequency (e.g. *rub something in*). Value judgements can also either be context independent (e.g. *backbite*) or context dependent (e.g. *mouthpiece*; or *to find one's tongue*) - where value pragmatic factors can override a prototypical value judgement. They see value judgements as originating in donor domains or in image schemata for example *take the words out of someone's mouth* implies removal from a container. However, they question the usefulness of such knowledge if we do not know the level of abstraction at which a particular phrase is positioned - especially if the 'the relevance of these different levels of abstraction may vary from expression to expression, depending on its position on a scale.' (ibid.:67).

4. BACKGROUND TO MALAY CULTURE AND LANGUAGE

Malay has a strong preference for the use of figurative language to communicate culturally encoded meanings. In a number of corpus based studies (e.g. Charteris-Black 2000, 2001 b, 2002) I have demonstrated that the type of two word phraseological category known as *simpulan bahasa* is both very common and is based on both metaphoric and metonymic conceptualisations. I have also argued that for

cultural reasons figurative language is one of the main means for the transmission of characteristic Malay beliefs and attitudes. Goddard (1997 and 2000) also includes a number of figurative phrases in his application of Ann Wierzbicka's "cultural scripts" approach to Malay. In particular, I have argued that the pattern whereby a human body part is combined with an adjective or a noun is both very frequent in Malay - accounting for around 20% of the total phraseological stock (Charteris-Black 2000: 284) and is a culturally-based means for placing an evaluation on social behaviour (ibid.: 294-296). This is often with the purpose of placing constraints on types of behaviour that are socially disapproved. In phraseological units that contain a speech organ body part; the speech organ typically serves as a metonym for speaking while the adjective or noun both describes and places an evaluation (usually negative) on a particular way of speaking:

Mulut bocor - mouth rotten - 'someone who cannot keep secrets'

Bibir nipis - lip thin - 'to like telling tales'

Lidah tak bertulang - tongue not bone - 'to make unreliable promises'

Mulut gatal - mouth itchy - 'to like to criticise'

Lidah biawak - tongue monitor lizard - 'hypocritical'

Mulut jelabas - mouth bubbling - 'to be a chatterbox'

In each of these, a culturally-rooted evaluation is communicated by combining a figurative sense of the body part - a metonym in which a speech organ signifies talking - with the figurative sense of the accompanying element. This is a metaphor containing some type of evaluation. The figurative meaning is the result of a combination of a referential sense of the body part to its function of speech, with an expressive metaphoric sense of the accompanying adjective or noun. The cultural-specific figurative meaning - access to which is a necessary prerequisite for full participation in a Malay speech community - is arrived at by blending the metonym with the metaphor. For this reason I describe this type of figurative phrase as a 'metaphoric figurative blend'.

When comparing English and Malay figurative language, there are some basic concepts which share the type of evaluation that is expressed by the metaphoric element. For example, *nipis* 'thin' connotes negatively in both languages. Evidence

for this is found in the English expressions *thin-skinned*, *thin end of the wedge*, *thin on top*, all of which are negative and in the Malay expressions *telinga nipis* – ear thin – ‘hot tempered’ or ‘easily angered’ and *bibir nipis* – lip thin – ‘to like telling tales’. Interestingly, the opposite adjective ‘thick’ also conveys a negative evaluation in both languages; in English *thick as two short planks*, *a thick ear* and *to have a thick skin* and in Malay *tebal kulit* – thick skin – ‘insensitive’, *tebal telinga* ‘thick ear’- ‘indifferent’ and *tebal hati* – thick liver – ‘cruel’. Similarly, sweet has a positive connotation in both languages. We find this in the English expressions *sweetness and light* and *to keep someone sweet* and in the Malay *lidah manis* – tongue sweet ‘speaking in a charming way’, *bibir manis* – lip sweet – ‘kind words’ and *hitam manis* – black sweet – ‘an attractive dark skin colour’.

However, in a smaller number of cases there are differences; for example, in English, *cold hearted* has a negative connotation whereas in Malay *hati sejuk* - cold liver - ‘a feeling of relief about something’ has a positive connotation. I have also demonstrated that different value judgements and pragmatic meanings may be attached to actual body parts in the two languages: for example *kaki* ‘foot’ carries an exclusively negative evaluation in Malay that is not necessarily the case in English (cf. Charteris-Black 2000). However, in the case of the speech organs it seems that this is not the case since in both languages the evaluation comes from the adjective, verb or noun that accompanies an oral body part – rather than from the body part itself. This suggests that figurative phrases are to some extent compositional in both languages and that evaluation may only occur within the space in which metaphor and metonymy are blended.

The problem for L2 learners is how to access the semantic contribution of figurative components and the cultural and linguistic knowledge on which they are based. For example, in Malay *kaki* ‘foot’ is a part of the body that may represent the whole person (e.g. *kaki judi* -foot gamble - ‘someone who is addicted to gambling’ - Charteris-Black (2000b: 294) gives other examples of synecdoche for this body part). This is not the case in English. Conversely, some synecdoches in which a speech organ such as ‘mouth’ may refer to a person are transferable across languages. For example in English there are the expressions *loudmouth* and *blabbermouth*, and in Malay there are the expressions *mulut tempayan* – mouth large earthenware jar – ‘someone who

talks too much' and *mulut murai* - mouth sparrow – 'a chatterbox'. In this paper I hope that analysis of the conceptual and linguistic characteristics of the speech organs will reveal whether cognitive processing in each language relies primarily on metaphor or metonymy. It is anticipated that analysis of linguistic and conceptual differences assists in understanding the cultural basis of figurative language and therefore in understanding the complex triadic relationship between language, cognition and culture.

5. RESEARCH APPROACH

Initially, I chose to examine oral body parts because a brief survey of phraseological forms in each language suggested that they were quite common and were also often used to convey evaluations. The next stage was to examine reference works in each language to identify phraseological units that were both figurative and contained the oral body parts. For the English data I employed the Collins Cobuild Dictionary of Idioms, the Oxford Dictionary of Idioms and the Oxford Dictionary of Phrase Saying and Quotation; for the Malay data I referred to Hasan Muhamed Ali (1996), *Kamus Besar* and *Kamus Perwira*. The next stage was to identify the occurrence of these phraseological forms in two corpora. For the English data I used the sample corpus from the Cobuild Bank of English owned by Collins at the University of Birmingham (available on the world wide web at <http://titania.cobuild.collins.co.uk/form.html>). For the Malay data I used a corpus owned by the Malay Language Planning Agency *Dewan Bahasa* in Kuala Lumpur (not available on the web). The English corpus was comprised of approximately 26 million words taken from books, newspapers (The Times and Today) and magazines. The Malay corpus also comprised a little over 25 million words from the same three types of text. The aim here was to use corpora that were well matched as regards both size and composition.

The research procedure was first to identify from the reference sources figurative phrases in which the keyword ¹ (indicated typographically) was an oral body part (mouth, lip or tongue). These formed the basis for examination of the corpora; only

¹ Phraseological units that contained an oral body part but not as the keyword were excluded e.g. *look a gift horse in the mouth* is best investigated as a horse metaphor rather than an oral body part metaphor (cf. Deignan this volume p.17)

those for which there was evidence in the corpora were retained for further analysis. Figurative phrases were analysed for evidence of metaphor, metonymy or figurative blending (i.e. where there is evidence of both figures). A classification was made of the conceptual basis for each figurative phrase and of the type of evaluation that the writer intended to communicate. Similarities and differences between each language as regards either a) evidence of oral body parts in figurative phrases b) conceptual and cognitive basis for metaphor or metonym and c) evaluation conveyed by the figurative phrase were then explained with reference to cultural and linguistic factors.

6. FINDINGS

6.1 OVERVIEW

The analysis of reference works indicated that the oral body parts occurred in a total of 44 English and in 50 Malay phraseological units. ‘Mouth’ and its Malay translation equivalent ‘*mulut*’ occurred as a headword in 17 English units and ‘in 22 Malay phraseological units (see appendix 1). ‘Lip’/‘*bibir*’ occurred as a headword in 14 English and in 9 Malay phraseological units (see appendix 2). ‘Tongue’ / ‘*lidah*’ occurred in 13 English and in 19 Malay phraseological units (see appendix 3). This provides clear evidence that oral body parts frequently occur in the phraseologies of the two languages.

6.2 FINDINGS: ENGLISH CORPUS

6.2.1 General

Corpus analysis of the figurative phrases occurring in the reference works showed a total of 31 figurative phrases. Of these, 17 were metonyms, 4 were metaphors and 10 were metaphoric figurative blends. This shows a strong preference in English for metonymy; for example, over 80% of all the corpus lines analysed contained a figurative phrase that showed some evidence of metonymy; 54% were metonyms alone, while less than 20% of lines were classified as pure metaphors. These findings support Goosens (1995) claim that figurative language in English is orientated to metonymy; he found that 67 out of 109 instances of a body part in figurative

expressions were metonyms. I therefore claim that English figurative phrases containing an oral body part are typically based on a metonymic conceptualisation. I will consider metonyms first, the metaphorical figurative blends and then metaphors.

6.2.2 Metonyms

Metonyms fall into three main types. The first is one in which a physical action that is a cause stands for an effect. In figurative phrases such as *keep one's mouth shut*, *hold one's tongue* and *bite one's tongue* the combination of a verb and an oral body part refers to 'not talking', and *watch one's tongue* refers to 'caution in speech'. These metonyms may be related using the conceptual key ACCOMPANYING ACTION FOR RESULT. The second type is a figure in which the physical behaviour that accompanies a particular psychological state stands for the psychological state. The accompanying behaviour refers to a psychological state that is contiguous to this behaviour; for example, smacking one's lips typically accompanies eating and therefore can refer to any state of anticipation; frothing or foaming at the mouth accompanies the state of anger and therefore can refer to it. These metonyms can be represented conceptually by the conceptual key BEHAVIOUR FOR PSYCHOLOGICAL STATE. The third type of pure metonym is a nominal one in which 'tongue' is to refer to 'language' as in *speaking in tongues* and *gift of tongues*; here the tongue is contiguously related to language in that we know that control of the tongue is necessary in speaking languages. These metonyms can be conceptually represented as TONGUE FOR LANGUAGE.

All the figurative phrases in the first two types of metonym commence with verbs and it is often ambiguous as to whether or not the action in fact actually occurs; consider the following which are distinguished according to whether the action probably does occur or where it probably does not:

Action likely to occur

Stuffed that time.' Ah, yes." Oracle licked her lips at the lubricious memory. Small, muscular buttocks, actually licked her lips. She allowed the edge of and you can make it even quicker. Lick your lips, it's chocolate time. That eyes gleamed in anticipation, and he licked his lips. Take her," Keriog

Action unlikely to occur

profile in the Tour so far must be licking his lips in anticipation of the and Orrell and Leeds union clubs are licking their lips at the prospect of Offa That Thing') it was like he was licking his lips at the prospect of If some of the names have you licking your lips, a book available at the

Moon (1998: 163) refers to expression such as these as examples of idiom schemas that are embedded in a culture. In this case licking the lips is a very visual gesture for expressing anticipation – and one for which English speakers have some type of a mental script in which this is a prelude to some form of sensual gratification. We may consider here the possible sexual connotation, but this script may not be applicable in cultures where it is not acceptable to express sensual anticipation in this way. There is clearly an interaction here between language, cognition and culture and one that could form the basis for instructing L2 learners in the type of associations that are attached to specific physical gestures in English.

The speaker's evaluation in metonyms is usually neutral, though, as we will see, in some cases they may be mixed or refer to positive experiences of the subject – but this should not be confused with speaker evaluation. For example, *smack one's lips* and *lick one's lips* are culturally normative ways of showing anticipation, but they are not necessarily forms of behaviour that are positively evaluated by the person who uses the phrase. We will recall here Moon's distinction between evaluation in the culture and speaker/writer's evaluation. Metonyms are descriptive rather than evaluative expressions within a colloquial register and are very commonly hyperbolic because, as we have seen, the action – although it may occur – may well, fortunately, not occur; consider, for example, *froth at the mouth* and *bite one's tongue*.

The figurative phrase *tongue-in-cheek* is, I suggest, based on a conceptual key: BEHAVIOUR FOR STANCE because an action that could possibly occur (putting the tongue in the cheek) is used to refer to an ironic stance on the part of subject. Unlike most metonyms, there is often (though not necessarily) a positive evaluation of the subject's stance as in:

Viewers loved the tongue-in-cheek advertisement. But the nudge-nudge occasionally refreshingly tongue in cheek free 'zine from Tufnell Park women, exotic locations and tongue-in-cheek humour. But building the most

Arnie's on vintage tongue-in-cheek muscle form and Curtis in on a 4AD release, but it's tongue-in- Al Fayed - doubt it, check out two new tongue-in-cheek offerings. star Madonna aspired in her tongue-in-cheek song, Material Girl, but it could As Ken says with tongue in Cheek, 'The prime aim of Quality

Many of these positive evaluations seem to occur in reviews of artistic and media performances and reflect a positive cultural stance towards complex styles of expression where this is a deliberate tension between what is said and what is meant. It is very difficult to trace the origin of metonymic phrases such as these: do English speakers in fact move the tongue towards one side as a gesture to indicate irony? Were speakers at one time aware of actually undertaking this concealed action when intending their meaning to be interpreted ironically or indirectly? Evidently it refers to a cultural preference for a specific style of communication and one would hope that this positive association would be explained to learners of English and recognised in translations.

6.2.3 Metaphoric Figurative Blends

In metaphoric figurative blends the oral body part always refers to the function of speaking but there is also a metaphorical element in an accompanying adjective or verb that is the basis for the evaluation. Two conceptual keys are necessary to describe the two figures; the metonym is always BODY PART FOR FUNCTION while the conceptual key for metaphor differs. For example, in *shoot your mouth off* it is TALKING IS SHOOTING, in *tongue-lashing* it is CRITICISM IS WHIPPING and in *someone's lips are sealed* it is THE MOUTH IS A CONTAINER.

The evaluation in metaphorical figurative blends can be either positive – as in *silver tongue*, *honey tongue* or *to read someone's lips* or negative as in *tight-lipped*, *tongue-tied* and *forked tongue*. But often the evaluation is fairly transparent because it is not culture-specific; for example, we know that silver and honey are highly valued across cultures and as we will see when we examine the Malay data adjectives that imply physical constraint 'tight' or 'tied' convey something that is negative.

An interesting contrast is that between *tight-lipped* and *someone's lips are sealed* because the former implies a negative evaluation of taciturnity whereas the latter implies a positive evaluation:

Negative evaluation

Swiss banks are notoriously tight-lipped about their activities, but the UBS
On Monday, local activists a tight-lipped bunch who primly refuse to discuss
move has freed her of those tight-lipped, middle-class roles she was so
looked ashen as they trooped tight-lipped to their coach particularly Mark
suicidal". De la Billiere, tight-lipped, was furious to learn of Moss's
insurer. In the obscure and tight-lipped world of insurance, that was

Positive Evaluation

weeks. More than that, my lips are sealed. As are Eva's - but she's only
around and told us his lips were sealed. He was in a terribly good mood.
did not reply because his lips were sealed. In his stead the three French
year marriage, insisting My lips are sealed on that one." But his immediate
she's dying, though her lips remain sealed as to the identity of Abram's dad.

It is interesting here how the adjective 'tight' conveys a negative sense of constriction whereas 'sealed' does not carry this sense but instead implies that something should not be opened except by the right recipient. As we have noted above Pauwels & Vandenberghe (1995) relate evaluation to concrete criteria and I would suggest that it is our awareness of the uncomfortable feeling of physical constraint that accounts for the negative evaluation of 'tight'. This contrasts with 'sealed' that has a positive association of the confidence that can come from maintaining private communication between individuals – for example, we would rather receive a letter that was sealed rather than one that was unsealed. Nuances and connotations such as these may present L2 learners with difficulties and illustrations supplied by a corpus may provide insight into the figurative meanings to which native speakers may be unconsciously attuned when encountering such phrases.

6.2.4 Metaphors

Pure metaphors can be verbal or adjectival and are motivated by conceptual keys such as SAYING IS NOT BELIEVING for *pay lip service to*, and PSYCHOLOGICAL

STATE IS TEXTURE for *a stiff upper lip*. What metaphors share in common is that they all make some type of evaluation – usually speaker disapproval of some form of behaviour as in the following:

by their partners. You can't just pay lip service to human rights by
 It paid lip service to the notion of self- will grow.
 although most gardening experts pay lip-service to the need for rotation,
 Although A&L is still paying lip-service to mutuality, the move was
 mistrusts Lee, accusing him of paying lip service to reunification while
 trophy 11 days ago. While paying lip service to the tradition of golf's
 and warned: 'Some people while paying lip service to a free Press would
 is a lot of companies simply pay lip service to employee benefits. And a
 is killing off ambition. Stop paying lip-service to equal opportunities.

These phrases imply that something that is valued by the writer is not sincerely valued by the subject and that the subject is both wrong not to place value on it and hypocritical in pretending to do so. There seems to be a convergence here of evaluation within the culture and speaker/writer evaluation. This may originate from the use of the phrase in the Bible: 'This people honours me with their lips, but their heart is far from me'². It seems that even where we are ignorant of the origin of phrases, their evaluation is just as influential since the value is instilled in the culture. However, we can imagine other cultures where what is said may be considered as more important than what is felt and which place a positive evaluation on choosing the right words for a situation.

The figurative phrase *stiff upper lip* - that can be conceptually represented as PSYCHOLOGICAL STATE IS TEXTURE - refers to a psychological or intentional emotional constraint. It is particularly interesting to note that the corpus lines indicate that this can imply either positive or negative by the writer or the person with 'the stiff upper lip'. Consider the following:

Positive

yet as British as the stiff upper lip, and that's oddly reassuring. It is
 we should adopt a suitably stiff upper-lip and not allow the terrorists to
 where a macho image and 'stiff upper lip' are prized. There is no occupation
 her readers to keep a stiff upper lip at all costs and deny the difficult
 says Pincon. 'The British stiff upper lip was much admired. Another

² See also Isaiah XXIX, 13)

In these lines emotional constraint that is typically associated with British – mainly from an earlier period in the nation’s history – is positively evaluated as a sign of resolution and strength. Conversely in other contexts the speaker/ writer sees emotional constraint as a barrier to effective emotional development:

Negative

The tightly buttoned, stiff upper lip is seen as a sign of coldness rather than ethnic insult, having a stiff upper lip and arms glued to the side, masters severe stress the British stiff upper lip leads people to believe that they London. It is the stiff upper lip, the British syndrome. I want the DJ? Maintaining a stiff upper lip whilst having shite piled on one

Such divided evaluation is uncommon in figurative phrases³ and clearly has the potential to cause difficulty in L2 learning situations. One could perhaps explain this distinction along the lines of clothes – whereas clothes that are stiff may convey a level of formality that is appropriate in some circumstances but they are not very comfortable when a more relaxed dress style is required. Discussion of the different connotations of the phrase according to whether the traditional constraint on expression of the emotions is positively or negatively viewed would be an insightful way of investigating changing cultural behaviour in British society.

6.3 FINDINGS – MALAY CORPUS

6.3.1 *General*

A total of 28 phrases that occurred in the phraseological reference works also occurred in the corpus. Of these a total of 18 were classified as metaphoric figurative blends, 7 were classified as pure metaphor and only 3 were classified as metonyms. 94% of all corpus lines containing these figurative phrases showed some evidence of metaphor and 43% of all corpus lines were pure metaphors; Malay figurative phrases therefore show a strong tendency to metaphor – either with or without metonymy. There is evidence, then, that the cognitive processing of Malay figurative phrases is primarily based on metaphor and that metonymy is a subsidiary type of

³ See also Moon’s discussion of A rolling stone gather no moss Moon 1998: 248-9)

conceptualisation. As regards evaluation, a total of 17 of the 28 figurative phrases communicate a negative evaluation, while only 3 communicate a positive evaluation. It seems, then, that typically metaphor is used in Malay figurative phrases with a discourse function of providing a heavily encoded evaluation. In a discussion of figurative language in English, Cameron & Low (1999b: 86) argue:

Not only does metaphor shield a proposition from direct discourse, as nothing literal has been said, but it has the inestimable advantage of combining the fact that the speaker cannot be held responsible for the message with the flagging of the fact that there is a message being conveyed which cannot be discussed openly.

I will argue in the next section that such covert evaluations are even more typical of Malay than of English.

6.3.3 Metaphorical Figurative Blends

Metaphoric figurative blends were most typical of the Malay data; 6 of these were nominal and 12 were adjectival. All the nominal figurative blends conveyed a negative evaluation due to the negative association of the nominal elements; typically these were animals: *buaya* ‘crocodile’ (as in *lidah buaya* ‘a broken promise’) and *biawak* ‘monitor lizard’ (as in *lidah biawak* ‘hypocritical’). Both animals are associated with duplicity and untrustworthiness and can be described using conceptual keys such as UNTRUSTWORTHINESS IS A CROCODILE. There is evidence that they are often used to refer to evaluate negatively aspects of human behaviour in Malay proverbs (*peribahasa* – cf. Winstedt, 1981) consider for example:

Terlepas dari rahang buaya, masuk ke dalam mulut harimau
Escaped from jaws crocodile, enter to inside mouth tiger
Out of the jaws of the crocodile into the mouth of the tiger
Out of the frying pan into the fire

Air tenang jangan disangka tiada buaya
Water still don’t guess not crocodile
Don’t think that a man who is quiet is not dangerous

Indeed the extent to which proverbs such as these are familiar in the culture can be gauged from the following corpus lines that all directly refer to the proverb:

"Rupa-nya *terlepas dari mulut buaya, masok ka-mulut naga*."

Apparently out of the crocodile's mouth, into the mouth of the dragon

mulut harimau, masuk pula ke mulut buaya'. "Mengapa bonda?" ta
mouth tiger, again into the mouth of the crocodile. "Why mother?"

Nyai Semi untuk *lepas dari mulut buaya* Kasim, telah muncul pul

Nyai Semi got out of the mouth of the crocodile Kasim, already appearing above the surface

yang dikatakan, lari *daripada mulut buaya masuk ke kandang harimau*
who was advised, run from the crocodile's mouth into the tiger's lair

It is also easy to see the nature of the evaluation from the adjectives in the metaphorical figurative blends. Again, these were typically negative and evaluate some aspect of speech. They are based on metaphorical conceptualisations; for example: *Bercebang* 'forked' in *lidah bercebang* 'hypocritical' is based on DUPLICITY IS DUAL; *tak bertulang* 'not boned' in *lidah tak bertulang* 'make promises easily' is based on RELIABILITY IS FIRMNESS; and *gatal* 'itchy' in *mulut gatal* 'like to criticise' is based on CRITICISM IS IRRITATION. The evaluations of '*besar*' 'big and *panjang* 'long' *tebal* 'thick' and *nipis* 'thin' may not be immediately obvious but they become easier to understand if we consider the use of an adjective of size in a figurative phrase as implying too much or too little of something. So using the conceptual key: BEHAVIOUR IS SIZE – a size that is non-normative (i.e. too much or not enough) refers to a type of behaviour that is negatively evaluated. So *mulut besar* – mouth big – means 'bumptious', *lidah panjang* – tongue long – means 'talkative', *bibir tebal* – lip thick – means 'silent' and *bibir nipis* – lip thin – means 'to like telling tales'. Only three figurative blends conveyed a positive evaluation; these were *bibir manis* and *mulut manis* both of which can be translated as 'softly spoken'; and *lidah lembut* 'respectful choice of words'.

6.3.3 Metaphors

The instances of pure metaphor in these figurative phrases are nominal and did not refer to speech but to the appearance or to some type of spatial relation. For example, *lidah tanah* ‘a spit of land’ seems to be appearance based and similar to the polysemy that we are familiar with in English expressions such as *the foot of a mountain* or *the leg of a table*. *Bibir mata* ‘very near’ seems to be based on knowledge of the spatial proximity of these body parts (represented conceptually as DISTANCE IS THE SPACE BETWEEN BODY PARTS) however, it seems impossible to interpret the meaning as metonymic since distance is not central to our experience of these body parts. Figurative phrases such as these do not convey evaluation and are primarily descriptive.

7. COMPARATIVE FINDINGS

As far as target meanings and concepts are concerned, there is evidence of both similarities and differences.

7.1 Similarities

In both languages there is extensive evidence of figurative expressions in which an oral body parts refers in some way to the domain of speech; this has been represented by a conceptual key BODY PART FOR FUNCTION. In addition, to this universal anatomical knowledge, as Deignan suggests (this volume), figurative language reflects users’ shared awareness of prototypical events and behaviour in a culture. For example, TALKING IS SHOOTING seems to underlie both *to shoot your mouth off* and *mulut rambang* – mouth random aim ‘to talk too much’; and DUPLICITY IS DUAL motivates both *forked tongue* and *lidah bercebang* - tongue forked – ‘hypocritical’. MANNER IS TASTE motivates both *honey-tongued* and *lidah manis* – tongue sweet – ‘softly spoken’. We also find instances of BEHAVIOUR IS SIZE which motivated the use of Malay adjectives such as *besar* ‘big’ and *panjang* ‘long’ in English phrases that did not occur in this study such as *big mouth* or *pea brained*. Cases of similar metaphors such as these suggest awareness of prototypical events, cultural behaviour and preferences that are common to English and Malay.

There are also some similarities in evaluation; in both languages figurative phrases with an oral body part communicate negative evaluations (though more so in Malay than in English). In the figurative phraseology of both languages ‘mouth’ nearly always conveys negative evaluations, ‘tongue’ more commonly communicates neutral evaluations than the other oral body parts and ‘lip’ can communicate positive, negative or neutral evaluations.

Pauwels & Vandenberg, (1995) propose that value judgement for linguistic action in English is sometimes based on abstract criteria such as frequency, speed and intensity. But they argue that there is no correlation between high and low value on one of the scales and a positive or negative value: ‘Having more or less of something may be either good or bad, desirable or undesirable’ (1995: 123). They illustrate this with reference to quantity in the English *phrases full-blooded argument, loudmouth*, quantity also seems present in *all-mouth*; in these cases – as with the Malay figurative phrases that are motivated by size concepts - having more of something is negatively evaluated because it is non-normative. Given the common concepts and frequent negative evaluations motivating such phrases we would expect them to present few problems for L2 learners or translators and identification of the shared conceptual basis may be helpful to both groups. However, from a cross-linguistic perspective it seems that conventional figurative expressions generally employ normative entities to give positive evaluations. It would be interesting to test this hypothesis against evidence offered by other languages.

7.2 Differences

However, there are also a number of conceptual differences, in particular as regards the cognitive process of metonymy. In English we have seen that over half the figurative phrases in this domain were pure metonyms, while in Malay as many as 94% showed evidence of metaphor and 43% were pure metaphors. Many English figurative phrases were motivated by a CAUSE FOR EFFECT class of metonym that can be represented by a conceptual key ACCOMPANYING ACTION FOR RESULT while others are motivated by BEHAVIOUR FOR PSYCHOLOGICAL STATE. Why is it that metonymy should prevail so strongly in English? One possible explanation of

this is that some physical manifestations of underlying feelings and attitudes are more permissible in English speaking cultures. Facial expressions such as being tight-lipped or licking your lips have culture-specific meanings. If this is the case then it would seem advisable to educate second language learners from backgrounds that place more constraint on facial expressions – or who use different facial expressions – to the semiotic role of facial expression in English. It was also found that many English figurative phrases were hyperbolic – and therefore that this is a preferred stylistic feature in the conventional figures of English. Conversely, the strong tendency to metaphor in Malay may be explained by the desire to conceal the source domain of metaphor – the use of the body parts – in order to achieve a more encrypted meaning. As Goddard (2000: 92) summarises:

Cultural commentators invariably mention that Malay culture greatly values the capacity of a person to be “sensitive”, “considerate”, and “understanding” of others, and therefore to always speak with care lest the other person has his or her feelings hurt (*tersinggung*)....Rogers stresses “the great emphasis placed on harmonious personal relations” in Malay culture (1993:30).

The preference for metaphor over metonymy in Malay figurative phrases can therefore be described as a euphemistic style in contrast to the hyperbolic style that is preferred in English. As Goddard (1997: 189) points out there are a number of Malay sayings that exhort caution in speech: *Kalau cakap fikir lah sedikit dulu* ‘if you’re going to speak, think a little first’ and *jaga hati orang* ‘mind people’s feelings’. He goes on to note that it is ‘very difficult to voice criticisms of any kind directly’ (ibid. 190). It seems that the use of metaphor in figurative phrases is motivated by this concern for the feelings of others and to make any criticism less direct.

The cultural-specific preference for metaphor is, then, a way of encrypting an evaluation; this is because the cognitive process is more complex. Warren explains why this may be the case:

Perhaps the most important difference between metaphor and metonymy is that metaphors often involve hypothetical thinking... metonymy does not involve hypotheses. Perhaps we can explain this difference by pointing out that metonymy is based on relations which presuppose actual coincidence, whereas metaphor, which involves finding a match for an attribute among all the

mentally stored attributes, is freed from constraints of what could actually occur or coincide. Warren (1999: 131)

If metaphor is freed of the constraint of *actual* occurrence in the real world, then presumably working out the speaker's meaning requires the formation of a range of hypotheses; this is therefore more complex than metonymy which only requires the working out of relations that exist in the real world. As Dirven notes

In metaphor, too, elements are brought together, but one of these i.e. the source domain is mapped onto the target domain. Hence the existences of the source domain is wiped out, but in the process some or other aspects of its structure are transferred to that of the target structure. (Dirven 1993: 21)

To decipher metaphor requires selecting the relevant attributes from a source domain entity – which may not be easy if it is ‘wiped out’ and applying these to the target domain of speech. This is quite different from metonymy in English – where, as we have seen, there is often the possibility that a hyperbole accesses a particular mental script or schema in which the action referred to in the figurative phrase actually occurs. In this respect metonymy is a less heavily encrypted style of communication than metaphor although it has the potential for hyperbole.

8. CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The tendency in English to metonymy and hyperbole and in Malay to metaphor and euphemism – and the presence in both of metaphorical figurative blends are important findings for those – such as translators and language educators - who are interested in the relation of language, cognition and thought. Identification of the conceptual basis through conceptual keys explaining the relatedness of figurative phrases can potentially assist in the understanding and use of such phrases. Identification of the type of evaluation conveyed is also likely to be of use in translation and language learning. This is particularly the case in figurative phrases where the evaluation is complex as we have seen in the case of *a stiff upper lip* and *tongue-in-cheek* in English.

Even where the conceptual basis may not be activated in native speaker processing of figurative language it may still provide a way of systematising relations between different figurative phrases and in their classification for pedagogical or comparative purposes. Accessing the type of cognitive process at work – metaphor or metonymy – has also been valuable as a source of insight into the influence of culture on language and preference for hyperbole or euphemism as a stylistic outcome of culture seems to an important hypothesis for further research to investigate. We have seen that particular figurative phrases such *as pay lip service to* and *tongue-in-cheek* in the case of English express particular cultural perspectives on - and evaluations of - social situations. Proficient users of both languages would need to be aware of the subtleties of expression that can be conveyed by particular figurative phrases and will benefit from the cultural insight that they may be employed to provide.

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Appendix 1

English and Malay Phraseological units containing 'Mouth' / 'Mulut'

ENGLISH	MALAY: LITERAL TRANSLATION	MALAY: NATURAL TRANSLATION
A bitter taste in the mouth	<i>Mulut becok</i> Mouth noisy	talkative
A shut mouth catches no flies	<i>Mulut berbiasanya</i> Mouth poisonous	Saying hurtful things
All mouth (and no trousers)	<i>Mulut berkembang</i> Mouth open	A gentle way of speaking
Down in the mouth	<i>Mulut brus</i> Mouth brush	talkative
Foam at the mouth	<i>Mulut besar</i> Mouth big	bumptious
Froth at the mouth	<i>Mulut bisa</i> Mouth venom	Words said in anger
Give someone a mouthful	<i>Mulut bocor</i> Mouth rotten	Not good at keeping secrets
keep your mouth shut	<i>Mulut busuk</i> Mouth smelly	Offensive speech
Laugh out of the other side of your mouth	<i>Mulut gapil</i> Mouth interfere	Very talkative
Make your mouth water	<i>Mulut gatal</i> Mouth itchy	Like to criticise
Open your mouth	<i>Mulut hodoh</i> Mouth ugly	Speaking too quickly
Put words in someone's mouth	<i>Mulut jelebas</i> Mouth bubbling	chatterbox
Say a mouthful	<i>Mulut kelembai</i> Mouth female ghost	chatterbox
Shoot your mouth off	<i>Mulut kerajaan</i> Mouth government	Government spokesman
Shut your mouth	<i>Mulut kotor</i> Mouth dirty	swearing
Take the words out of someone's mouth	<i>Mulut laser</i> Mouth laser	Saying hurtful things
Talk out of both sides of your mouth	<i>Mulut lucak</i> Mouth shameless	Offensive language
	<i>Mulut manis</i> Mouth sweet	Softly spoken
	<i>Mulut murai</i> Mouth sparrow	Repeating what people say
	<i>Mulut rambang</i> Mouth random aim	To talk too much about anything
	<i>Mulut tajam</i> Mouth sharp	Words said in anger
	<i>Mulut tempayan</i> Mouth large jar	Not able to keep secrets

Appendix 2 English and Malay Phraseological units containing 'Lip' / 'Bibir'

ENGLISH	MALAY: LITERAL TRANSLATION	MALAY: NATURAL TRANSLATION
Bite one's lip	<i>Bibir belanga</i> Lip earthenware pot	Edge of an earthenware pot
Button one's lip	<i>Bibir cawan</i> <i>Lip cup</i>	Edge of a cup
Curl your lip	<i>Bibir hutan</i> Lip jungle	Edge of the jungle
Give lip service to something	<i>Bibir limau seulas</i> Lip lime pio durian	A beautiful lip
Pay lip service to something	<i>Bibir manis</i> Lip sweet	Kind words
A stiff upper lip	<i>Bibir mata</i> Lip eye	Very near
There is many a slip twixt cup and lip	<i>Bibir nipis</i> Lip thin	To like telling tales
Lick your lips	<i>Bibir tabir</i> Lip curtain	The edge of a curtain
On someone's lips	<i>Bibir tebal</i> Lip thick	silent
Read someone's lips		
Seal someone's lips		
Smack one's lips		
Someone's lips are sealed		
Tight-lipped		

Appendix 3 English and Malay Phraseological units containing 'Tongue' / 'Lidah'

ENGLISH	MALAY: LITERAL TRANSLATION	MALAY: NATURAL TRANSLATION
Bite one's tongue	<i>Lidah air</i> Tongue water	Fresh rainwater
Forked tongue	<i>Lidah api</i> Tongue fire	Rain glowing like fire
Gift of tongues	<i>Lidah bengkok</i> Tongue bent	Not fluent at speaking
Hold your tongue	<i>Lidah bercebang</i> Tongue forked	hypocritical
Honey tongue	<i>Lidah biawak</i> Tongue monitor lizard	hypocritical
Keep a still tongue in one's head	<i>Lidah buaya</i> Tongue crocodile	Untrustworthy speech
Rough side of one's tongue	<i>Lidah kelu</i> Tongue dumb	dumbfounded
silver tongue	<i>Lidah keras</i> Tongue hard	Not fluent at speaking
still tongue makes a wise head	<i>Lidah lembut</i> Tongue soft	Respectful choice of words
Speaking in tongues	<i>Lidah manis</i> Tongue sweet	Softly spoken
Tongue-in-cheek	<i>Lidah masin</i> Tongue salty	Effective way of making a request
Tongue-lashing	<i>Lidah ombak</i> Tongue wave	Very heavy rain
Tongue-tied	<i>Lidah panjang</i> Tongue long	Talkative
Watch your tongue	<i>Lidah patah</i> Tongue broken	Not fluent at speaking
	<i>Lidah pendeta</i> Tongue shivering	Wise words
	<i>Lidah tajam</i> Tongue sharp	Words said in anger
	<i>Lidah tergalang</i> Tongue barred	Not able to speak (through sense of indebtedness)
	<i>Lidah tak bertulang</i> Tongue not boned	Make promises easily
	<i>Lidah tanah</i> Tongue earth	Spit of land (cape)