Article

Helming Malaysia: Najib Razak's Metaphors in Malaysian Supply Bills

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Abstract

This paper discusses the vocational roles constructed by Najib Razak, the sixth Prime Minister of Malaysia for himself, his government, and relational identities for the Malaysian people and others, through Supply Bills. I model the study on Charteris-Black's Critical Metaphor Analysis and Sack's Membership Categorisation Analysis, as frameworks.

The findings indicate that Najib Razak and his government enacted a role as a ship captain, where the Malaysian people were positioned as passengers, sailing in a sea of world economy, and heading towards a status as a high-income developed nation. Through these metaphors, the people were reminded that without the government as helm of the ship, it is to reach the intended destination. Therefore, the use of metaphors in the Supply Bills serve predicative, empathetic, ideological, and mythical purposes, to legitimize both the government and its purposes as agents of governmentality.

Keywords: *Metaphor, political identity, prime minister, Ideology, linguistic anthropology*

2

Helming Malaysia:
Najib Razak's Metaphors in Malaysian Supply Bills
JALA, The Journal of Asian Linguistic Anthropology

Introduction

Democratic countries are structured in such a way so as to allow citizens to vote in referenda, on law, and on many other issues, not least of which are elections. Officials elected reflexively represent the people, while campaigning through rhetoric; in speeches, media, advertisements, and through written policies.

In Malaysia, election processes have historically been colourful, due in part to its multi-racial make up. As a country in Southeast Asia, its 32.6 million people reside across its 13 states and three federal territories, with a total of 576 seats for the state legislative assembly and 222 parliamentary seats, all contested in its general parliamentary election every five years. Since its independence from Britain in 1957, and until 2018, Malaysian politics had been dominated by the *Barisan Nasional Party* (the National Front Party). However, in its final few years of ruling, the popularity of the party significantly dwindled, while the party faced strong challenge from its opposition. The sixth Prime Minister of Malaysia, Dato' Sri Mohammad Najib bin Tun Haji Abdul Razak (hereafter referred to as Najib Razak), worked to obtain and to maintain social trust, for himself, and for his political party as a whole. Through his constructed rhetoric, Najib attempted to convince the larger public sphere of his diligence towards both country and society alike. In the process, Najib constructed a set of roles and identities for himself as Prime Minister, for the government, and for the public, which would subsequently alter social ideologies. His uniquely designed discourse communicated these roles and identities through the use of specific and strategic conceptual metaphors, as rhetorical devices that drew on the cultural psychology of Malaysian society at large. Through such conceptual metaphors in political discourse, the government was able to frame itself positively, while constructing myths that assigned its political rhetoric a persuasive tone.

Little work has emerged on the discourses of the Malaysian political party under Najib Razak. As a pivotal political leader for an extended period of time, and more so one with rhetoric that altered both national and regional ideologies, I see it as necessary to pay attention to the shaping of his discursive style.

By drawing on Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) conceptual metaphor theory, Charteris-Black's (2014) framework on critical metaphor analysis, and to this, integrating Harvey Sacks' (1995) membership categorization procedures, in this paper, I analyze nine supply bills presented by Najib Razak during his tenure as the sixth Prime Minister of Malaysia. Throughout the analysis, I determine that Najib's rhetoric was laden with specific conceptual metaphors which were unique to Prime Minister Najib, as the political leader of Malaysia. As such, throughout this paper, I focus on the government's roles and identities that it constructed during Najib's tenure, which are relational to other political parties, and to Malaysian and Southeast Asian regional society.

3

Helming Malaysia:
Najib Razak's Metaphors in Malaysian Supply Bills
JALA, The Journal of Asian Linguistic Anthropology

I thus structure the paper as follows: In the second section, I present a critical analysis of literature pertaining to Malaysia, discourse studies, and the analytical frame I draw on for this paper. In the third section, I discuss the methodical framework, the data, and how both of these are positioned to maximize my analysis of the current theme. In the fourth section, I discuss the data, and present the analysis grounded in theory. In the final section, I conclude with some suggestions for further work and application of the data.

The Conceptual Metaphor, Identity, Discourse, and Politics

Through discourse, a speaker constructs, negotiates, reinforces, and subverts identity (Koller 2012). As discourse allows meaning to be emitted, gathered, and appropriated (Gee 1999), it serves as a means for action and interaction, through which individuals strategically position themselves in social and temporal spaces (Almeciga 2013), apart from structuring the complex relationships between the self and the world.

The collective identities of a participant in a conversation are often identified through their social activity (Simpson and Mayr 2010). This idea was largely pioneered by Sacks (1985), who, through his work on membership categorisation analysis, argued that social membership is often described through one's activities or actions (Category-bound activity) and characteristics (category-bound predicates). As "membership categories are tied to category-bound activities" (Augoustinos, Walker, and Donaghue 2014, p. 102), conventional predicates attached to a membership category can be index one's membership. Sacks further explained that categories can be linked together through a membership categorisation device, which further categorizes the participants in new ways. Such categorisation can only be determined by examining the context and culture of interaction (Stokoe 2003; King 2010).

Apart from the category-bound activity and predicate, in identifying occupational-based identities (vocational roles, for example), it is also important to identify expected or obligated actions, behaviours, routines, and beliefs associated with a vocation. Such traits often materialize through descriptive job titles and the use of language, such as conceptual metaphors (Koller 2012). Within spoken language, the conceptual metaphor allows "both participants and researchers to examine the difficult concept of identity development in vivid and insightful ways" (Thomas and Beauchamp 2011, p. 764). Lakoff and Johnson's experientialist conceptual metaphor theory asserts that conceptual metaphors guide understandings of a complex abstract idea through a perceivable object or concept. For example, an abstract concept of time may be understood through the perceivable object or concept of 'money.' Due to its ideological existence, a conceptual metaphor is written in CAPITAL LETTERS, while its linguistic representation appears through italicized sentence cases. The linguistic metaphor, e.g. *I don't want to waste time*, produced by a speaker/writer, signifies the conceptual metaphor TIME IS MONEY, understood through mapping the source domain (money) to the target domain (time) (Lakoff 1986).

4

Helming Malaysia:
Najib Razak's Metaphors in Malaysian Supply Bills
JALA, The Journal of Asian Linguistic Anthropology

These conceptual metaphors are often grouped under subcategories, which in turn characterise an entailment relationship (Lakoff and Johnson 1980b). Since TIME IS MONEY, and money is a limited resource, it follows that TIME IS LIMITED RESOURCE. As a limited resource is a valuable commodity, it further follows that TIME IS VALUABLE COMMODITY (Table 1).

Target domain	Metaphor
MONEY	TIME IS MONEY
is	entails
A LIMITED RESOURCE	TIME IS LIMITED RESOURCE
is	entails
VALUABLE COMMODITY	TIME IS VALUABLE COMMODITY

Table 1: Metaphorical entailment relationship (Lakoff and Johnson 1980b, p. 457)

As conceptual metaphors are strongly grounded the human experience, in ideology (Johnson 2005), and in the embodiment (Gibbs, Lima and Francozo 2004; Grady 1999; 2005; Yu, 2009) of symbols, a conceptual metaphor does not only reflect speaker worldview, belief, and ideology, but can assist the individual to bridge social-cultural contexts discursively present (Maalej 2007). Charteris-Black (2012) argues, in work on critical metaphor analysis (CMA), that the choice of one particular metaphor over another presupposes its purpose. Such a preference "seeks to connect the purpose, including ideological motivation, behind metaphor choices and provide evidence of their impact" (Charteris-Black 2012a, p. 12). Such a framework becomes useful in excavating both interactive and dynamic relationships between the pragmatic and linguistic signification of the metaphors in this study, thus rendering visible the speakers' intentions and purposes. Employed systematically, these metaphors do not only gain attention, and facilitate understanding and framing issues, but most importantly, "create political myths and discourses of legitimisation and de-legitimisation that give rise to ideologies and world views" (Charteris-Black 2014, p. 174). This phenomenon becomes possible through a process which

> identifies and investigates metaphors that are employed systematically to represent vulnerable social groups in a negative way, or to represent policies – such as war – as being in the interests of all.
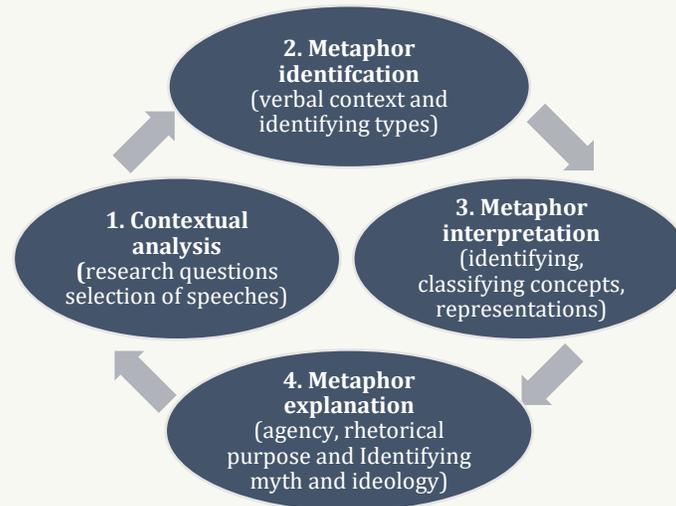
(ibid)

5

Helming Malaysia:
Najib Razak's Metaphors in Malaysian Supply Bills
JALA, The Journal of Asian Linguistic Anthropology

Figure 1. Stages of Critical Metaphor Analysis (Charteris-Black, 2014, p.175)

Methodical Framework

For this paper, I have selected Charteris-Black's critical metaphor model, to analyze my data. The model combines four principle stages; (i) contextual analysis, (ii) metaphor identification, (iii) metaphor interpretation, and (iv) metaphor description, all within a particular ethnographic context. However, despite my numbering of these stages, they are not linear, but rather, appear as complex permutations, and mostly in cyclical fashion (Figure 1).

Through a study of metaphor discourse, I locate vocational roles and relational identities, which the Malaysian government constructed of itself, of the Malaysian people, and of others. These constructions appear in nine Supply Bills read by Najib Razak during his tenure as the sixth Prime Minister and Minister of Finance of Malaysia. To categorize these identities and roles, I also draw on Sacks' (1995) membership categorization model. In line with this, I have developed a model which caters to the Malaysian context. I label this model the Malay Metaphor Identification Procedure (MMIP), but which builds on two frameworks, Pragglejaz's metaphor identification procedure (MIP) and Steen et. al.'s (2010) metaphor identification procedure (MIPVU).

In the contextual analysis stage, research questions emerge, to which I respond by producing and drawing on a dataset comprising nine Supply Bills, read in the Malay language by Najib Razak (between the years 2010 and 2018). This corpus of 104, 000 words is the MyBuS corpus, that is, the 'Malaysian Budget Speeches.' These Supply Bills and their English translations are available on the Malaysian Ministry of Finance official portal archive (http://www.treasury.gov.my/index.php/en/archives).

6

Helming Malaysia:
Najib Razak's Metaphors in Malaysian Supply Bills
JALA, The Journal of Asian Linguistic Anthropology

In Stage 1, contextual analysis, I selected the Supply Bills (a.k.a. Appropriation Bills), which were read at the party's annual readings by the Minister of Finance and Prime Minister Najib Razak. These annual readings constituted a much-awaited and attended event by Malaysians and the country's stakeholders. The Supply Bill does not only present the ruling government's plans to utilize the country's resources, but also its methods for increasing its income through taxes, levies, etc. The Bill also highlights mega-development projects that are instituted during each upcoming year. Furthermore, the size of the Malaysian audience and its low resistance to the political persuasive attacks opportune the ruling party to boast its achievements and to belittle the opposition (Chi-Chang 2009). This rhetorical act thus allows for the construction and assignment of roles and identities of the government and the Malaysian people.

In stage 2, metaphor identification, I manually annotated the data through a bottom-up process. Here, I verified that all metaphors are included. Since the raw data is in the Malay language, I developed the MMIP to address several issues, such as whether to consider

- words with identical base forms such as head (noun) and the head (verb) as one lexical unit
- the historical semantics of the phrase
- the lexical unit in Malay
- whether idioms, proverbs, and similes as one lexical unit
- the appropriate dictionary
- the linguistic items whose meanings are contradictory, globally
- which basic meaning to adopt

In line with this, the MMIP is structured as follows: The process begins with a reading of the entire corpus, to establish a general understanding of the meaning. Following this, I determine the lexical units, and then locate inflectional and derivational words which have been reduced to their roots, unless they have been listed as headwords in the *Kamus Dewan* (4th edition) or *Kamus Dewan Perdana*. I consider proper nouns, salutations + names, titles + names, numbers, percentages, written numbers, phrasal verbs (e.g., simpan buang (to keep)), routine formulas (*selamat pagi* (good morning)), multi-word expressions such as proverbs (*peribahasa*), idioms (*simpulan bahasa*), and similes (*perbandingan*), and also reduplication and conventional compounds each as the one lexical unit. However, I consider novel formations of compounds, for example *pasaran buruh* (labour market) as two separate lexical units, as readers must understand each word before it is taken as one. I consider discourse markers (e.g. *walau bagaimanapun* (nevertheless)) as separate lexical items. Finally, in addition to the above, I mark idioms, proverbs, and similes, as well as items where denotation and contextual meaning do not contradict locally but rather, globally, as metaphor-related words.

7

Helming Malaysia:
Najib Razak's Metaphors in Malaysian Supply Bills
JALA, The Journal of Asian Linguistic Anthropology

Three additional stages that I consider are as follows: I establish the meaning of each lexical unit in the text, in both local and global contexts, i.e., how it applies to an entity, relation, or attribute in the situation evoked by the text (contextual meaning). Here, I account for what comes before and after the lexical unit. I then determine if the lexical set exhibits grater denotation in contexts other than the given. At this point, I decide whether the contextual meaning, which may contrast with the denotative meaning, but can be understood in comparison with it (adapted from Pragglejaz 2007). If yes, then, I mark the lexical unit as a clear metaphor-related word. If no, I mark the lexical unit as not a metaphor-related word. Otherwise, and if in doubt, I subject the word to inter-rater scrutiny. Following this, and if I still have doubts, I label the word as metaphor-related (following Steen et. al. 2010c and Krenmayr 2008b). To increase the reliability of judgment of the metaphors, I enlisted ten undergraduate students as raters to work with me as adjudicators.

In the third stage, metaphor interpretation, I organize the conceptual metaphors either by source or target domains, or into their shared semantic fields, for which I draw on Sacks' (1995) membership category analysis. I subject these metaphors to Maalej's two-step interpretative act, where I map between the ontological and epistemic correspondences, and then make inferences, and thus process the metaphors into inferences.

In an additional step, metaphor description, I comment on the functions of metaphors, and on the influences of metaphors on people and other language components and ideologies. I model this explanation on Charteris-Black's (2014) persuasive purposes of the metaphor; (i) gaining the audience's attention, (ii) heuristic, (iii) predicative, (iv) empathetic, (v) aesthetic, (vi) ideological and (vii) mythical purposes. Such a strategy assists to "explain how and why such metaphors provide coherent representations of a story" (Charteris-Black 2014, p.196). Charteris-Black further argues that such discussions or licensing stories lead to the identification of ideology and worldview of the orator as expressed in the metaphors. To complete the analysis, then, I compare these ideologies to the use of the metaphor by politicians, in terms of metaphors selected, and the concepts, ideologies, and myths that underlie these metaphors.

Findings

Category-bound Activities

Although the Supply Bills were read by the one individual, Najib Razak, the supply bills were narrated by his different selves: Here, we see Najib Razak as (i) the government, (ii) himself, (iii) the Prime Minister, (iv) the Minister of Finance, and (v) the president of UMNO and Barisan Nasional. In this set of data, Najib Razak represents both the government and the Prime Minister.

I now begin to discuss Najib's conceptual metaphors, that describe the government as a ship. As such, and in line with the different selves portrayed by Najib, he not only frames the

8

Helming Malaysia:
Najib Razak's Metaphors in Malaysian Supply Bills
JALA, The Journal of Asian Linguistic Anthropology

government as a ship captain (GOVERNMENT IS CAPTAIN), but also the prime minister (PRIME MINISTER IS CAPTAIN).

I developed the concepts GOVERNMENT IS CAPTAIN and PRIME MINISTER IS CAPTAIN from three metaphors; *nakhoda* (captain), *layar* (the sail cloth), and *kemudi* (the helm). In Excerpt set 1 below, ([E1], [E2], and [E3]), these words appear as metaphors, and not an actual ship. As the denotation and contextual meaning of these words are incongruent, I note that the words are metaphors.

Excerpt Set 1	
E1	"Dalam menakhoda bahtera Malaysia ini"[1] (Malaysian Supply Bills 2018, Para 246)
E2	"Saya akan ... menaikkan layar Bahtera Malaysia menuju ufuk negara maju"[2] (Malaysian Supply Bill 2011, Para 2)
E3	"Dalam mengemudi Malaysia menjadi negara maju"[3] (Malaysian Supply Bill 2011, p. 106))

As a ship's captain, Najib Razak as both the government and the Prime Minister is expected to perform several vocational roles (category-bound activities) and to possess several category-bound predicates. The vocational roles of a captain include ensuring the seaworthiness of the ship, locating the destination, charting the routes, reading the weather, planning the voyage, recruiting the crew, and most importantly, enacting the category-bound predicate of loyal attendance.

Role 1: Ensuring Seaworthiness of the Ship

Prior to launching a sea vessel, the captain must ensure that everything is in order. I observe the same suggestion in the following excerpt, by the prime minister:

Excerpt set 2	
[E4]	"Saya ... memahat paku-paku pelengkap sekaligus menaikkan layar Bahtera Malaysia menuju ufuk negara maju"[4] (Malaysian Supply Bill 2011, Para 2).

The phrase *menaikan layar* refers to the act of hoisting the sails; however, contextually, menaikan layar refers to the readiness of the government to transform Malaysia into a developed country, and is thus metaphorically appropriated. The action of the Prime Minister chiseling the final nails and hoisting the sails appears to be an act of ensuring the seaworthiness of the ship he is to helm.

Seaworthiness is used to describe the state of a vessel (Wiweko, Thamrin and Edi 2015). A vessel is considered seaworthy if it is free of physical defects, has a competent crew, a stowage

9

Helming Malaysia:
Najib Razak's Metaphors in Malaysian Supply Bills
JALA, The Journal of Asian Linguistic Anthropology

technique, and sufficient fuel, which are important for it to endure "the perils which can foreseeably be encountered on the contemplated voyage" (Jumani 2014, p. 28). In the excerpt, Najib Razak as captain is responsible for the seaworthiness (readiness) of Malaysia (the ship / vessel). With the assistance of members of the cabinet (crew) and financial liquidity (fuel), the vessel should sail smoothly across economic contexts (seas and oceans) in order to become a developed country (destination). As a ship's seaworthiness is authenticated with the issuance of letters and certificates (Wiweko, Thamrin and Edi 2015), the acceptance and signing of treaties mark the seaworthiness of a country. For a national leader (PRIME MINISTER IS CAPTAIN) to freely sail his ship (country) in respective regions (economic zones), a treaty must first be signed. For instance, all South-East Asia nations receive 0-5% discount on common external (but within ASEAN) tariffs on imported goods as the result of signing the ASEAN Free Trade Area treaty. Signing awards all ships (countries) 'seaworthiness' to sail the sea / ocean (economic zones).

Thus, for a country as a ship to sail through economic conditions, the prime minister ensures that all members of his cabinet are competent, and that the country as a ship has adequate financial liquidity to operate. Through this conceptual metaphor, the government created a positive image for itself, as an representation of knowledge, skill, and responsibility, aiming to enhance the audience's trust on the government and the prime minister.

Role 2: Locating the Destination

The second significant role shouldered by the ship's captain (the prime minister) is to safely dock the ship (the country) at its destination port. In the Supply Bills, the captaincy is identified through the use of several conceptual metaphors; *layar* (sail), *kemudi* (helm), and *menuju* (to go to). As I previously identified layar and kemudi metaphors, I here also label the transitive verb 'menuju' (to head to) as a metaphor. While the below excerpts contain non-human inanimate objects, the denotations index human or animate subjects. In excerpts [E5] and [E6] below, the metaphor *menuju* signals destination, as the developed country and the year 2020. The year 2020 as a destination also connotes a developed and high-income nation.[5] The prepositional collocation *ke* (to) and verbal collocation *menjadi* (to be) help index the destinations of the metaphorical verbs layar and kemudi. For instance, in [E7] the destination is *mercu jaya* (height of success) while in [E8] the destination is again a developed country.

Najib Razak creates a positive image for himself and the government through the use of the PRIME MINISTER IS CAPTAIN conceptual metaphor. The destinations to which the country is sailing are its status as a developed country, the year 2020, and the peak of success. These metaphors serve a predicative purpose for the government and the prime minister leading the ship. Through these metaphors, the government clarifies the destination, assisting in the reduction of anxiety through a 'guessing game,'[6] and thus increasing public trust in the government and in the Prime Minister, a leader who is helming the country.

10

Helming Malaysia:
Najib Razak's Metaphors in Malaysian Supply Bills
JALA, The Journal of Asian Linguistic Anthropology

Excerpt set 3	
E5	"Menaikkan layar Bahtera Malaysia menuju ufuk negara maju"[7] (Malaysian Supply Bill 2011, Para 2)
E6	"Menuju ke tahun 2020, menjadi sebuah negara maju berpendapatan tinggi"[8] (Malaysian Supply Bill 2013, Para 76)
E7	"Merupakan siri-siri bajet yang akan membawa Malaysia …, melayari bahtera ke mercu jaya"[9], (Malaysian Supply Bill 2014, Para 227)
E8	"Mengemudi Malaysia menjadi negara maju"[10] (Malaysia Supply Bill 2011, Para 106)

Role 3: Charting the Routes

Throughout the data, to reach its destination as a developed country, Najib comments that he as Prime Minister and as ship captain must sail the country of Malaysia (the ship) in the following way:

Excerpt set 4	
[E9]	"Lautan dunia yang tidak menentu"[11] (Malaysian Supply Bill 2012, 124).

The term 'ocean' here refers to the global economy. To safely reach the destination, the captain must prepare and check a map prior to setting sail (Wiweko, Thamrin and Edi 2015). In preparing the map, the captain consults a nautical chart, which guides the ship towards the destination and away from dangerous waters (James and Stull 2019). More so, valuable information on tides and oceanic currents assists the captain to plan safe routes that are cost and time efficient. Sailing against the current will result in strong drift, therefore delaying the arrival of the ship.

To reach its destination, the government has created and has developed several programs, within several sectors, as the main currents that will more quickly carry the country to its destination. The major currents mentioned in the Supply Bills aim at transporting all people, regardless of race (Malaysian Indian Development Program), gender (women's roles), and education and qualifications levels (pre-school and technical and vocational education), in the vast ocean that is the country's economic predicament. By working with major currents, the government ensures that all people, as passengers of the ship, reach their destination, through a time and cost effective strategy. I note here that the use of metaphors in the Supply Bills has served a heuristic purpose, in that it assists people to conceptualize the significance of the programs and policies introduced by the government, while the metaphors contribute significantly to boththe intra- and inter-textual coherence of the discourse.

11

Helming Malaysia:
Najib Razak's Metaphors in Malaysian Supply Bills
JALA, The Journal of Asian Linguistic Anthropology

Role 4: Reading the Weather

In sailing, the waves and wind are important natural forces: The wind propels the sailboat (Anderson 2008), yet also conditions the waves and the sea at large (James and Stull 2019). In the text, lexical items signify various wind intensities: These words include *angin* (wind), *berpuput* (softly), *ribut* (storm), and *badai* (typhoon). While good news such as winning a by-election is presented as light wind [E10], an economic slowdown is presented as a storm [E11], and people's life challenges are described as a typhoon [E12].

Excerpt set 4	
E10	"Angin kemenangan besar Pilihanraya Negeri Sarawak, yang telah berpuput-puput bayunya ke Pilihanraya Kecil di Sungai Besar" (Malaysian Supply Bill 2017, Para 333)
E11	"Malaysia mengharungi ribut ekonomi yang sukar pada tahun ini" (Malaysian Supply Bill 2017, Para 56)
E12	"Bergelut dengan badai demi mencari rezeki" (Malaysian Supply Bill 2010, Para 41)

As clouds indicate changing weather, a ship's captain must attend to cloud formation and direction. In the Supply Bills discussed, the government appropriates talk of cloudy days as a metaphor for a bad economy. In [E13] "Berdasarkan semua yang dinyatakan tadi, moga beraraklah awan mendung dan sinar mula menampakkan wajahnya"[12] (Malaysian Supply Bill 2010, Para 17), a bright sunny day signifies a healthy economic situation with the sun representing developed nations.

Excerpt set 5	
[E13]	"Berdasarkan semua yang dinyatakan tadi, moga beraraklah awan mendung dan sinar mula menampakkan wajahnya"[13] (Malaysian Supply Bill 2010, Para 17)

Such notions create a coherent image of the country's economic state, through sailing and weather metaphors. Such a continuous use of metaphors from similar source domains creates legitimacy and is thus essential for creating intra-and inter-textual coherence.

Helming the country as a ship in the ocean of world economy, these natural forces are beyond the captain's control. By framing an economic slowdown as cloudy weather, such a storm creates challenges in the form of big waves, which, the government leverages in order to inform the public that they are not to be blamed for the fatal effect of economic slowdown or downturn. Such a leverage emanates from an expression of sympathy, and hence relinquishes the government of responsibility for the storm's effects. In addition to this, the government presents

12

Helming Malaysia:
Najib Razak's Metaphors in Malaysian Supply Bills
JALA, The Journal of Asian Linguistic Anthropology

itself as the entity responsible for braving the storm, where damages to the ship and passengers are not the captain's doing. As such, the people, the oppositional parties, and others, must bear the grunt of the damage, as the government steers the country to calm seas.

Role 5: Planning the Voyage

Once the destination, the route, and the water and weather conditions, have been identified, the ship's captain must develop an adequate voyage plan, also known as a passage plan, as "a document generated through careful planning of the vessel's voyage, which fulfils the pre-set operational aims for the vessel" (Wolejsza and Kulbiej 2017, p. 91). With this document, the bridge team identifies the route and potential hazards, to ensure that the vessel safely reaches its destination (Bhattacharjee 2019). A reading of [E14] "Jelasnya, bajet ini ialah dokumen berevolusi yang dipersembahkan untuk tahun 2014, merupakan siri-siri bajet yang akan membawa Malaysia … melayari bahtera ke mercu jaya dan kompetitif di persada antarabangsa" [14] (Malaysian Supply Bill 2014, 227) reveals that the Supply Bills can be interpreted as the voyage plan of Malaysia, as the ship.

In the same way that a voyage plan is divided into four parts, that is, the appraisal, planning, execution, and monitoring (Wolejsza and Kulbiej 2017), a Supply Bill specifies the overall main theme, purpose / focus / strategy, and the estimates of expenditure to be met by a consolidated fund. Both the Supply Bill and Voyage Plan detail the destination of the country and ship, respectively. While the ship's destination is the port of arrival, the country's destination is high-income and its development. While the passage plan details the upcoming route, the Supply Bills detail the strategies to be implemented by the government in order to reach its destination.

Inadequate or mis planning of the voyage may negatively affect the captain and the ship. The failure of a ship to dock at its destination port would cause uproar among passengers and other stakeholders. Najib failed to bring the ship to its destination, that is, to developed-country status by the year 2020, and hence failed to retain the trust of the people in the Malaysian 14th general election, at a time when his party lost the election to a newly formed coalition, Pakatan Harapan. Living with the vision for 30 years yet failing to achieve this vision aggravated the Malaysian people, thus turning trust into skepticism at best, and into patent mistrust at worst.

Role 6: Recruiting the Crew

Despite the absence of explicit seamanship, I explore the concept, owing to the metaphoric content inferable to descriptions of the sea. In sailing a ship, the captain cannot alone operate all things, but rather, requires the assistance of the crew. The crew's knowledge and experience are vital for the ship's maintenance (Wiweko, Thamrin, and Edi 2015). The captain is responsible for recruiting the crew, and often selects a crew with whom the captain has had previous experience, in addition to the credentials of each member of the crew (Bielic, Predovan and Culin 2017).

13

Helming Malaysia:
Najib Razak's Metaphors in Malaysian Supply Bills
JALA, The Journal of Asian Linguistic Anthropology

On board both Malaysia and the Barisan Nasional Party as ships, the Prime Minister as captain had agency for the selection of the crew. The Prime Minister, in a parliamentary system, is given a "commanding position vis-a-vis his colleagues. He selects cabinet ministers and may also dismiss them when he is not satisfied with their performance" (Farooqi 2000, p. 248). Furthermore, the Prime Minister has the power to recruit candidates, in order to contest an election (Brahim 2017). I therefore infer that ministers and the members of the coalition are analogous to a ship's crew.

In addition to recruiting, the captain may also dismiss his crew (Toremar 2000), a privilege which is also afforded to a prime minister (Farooqi 2000), who may dismiss ministers consequent to their substandard performance. By creating an analogy between the ministers and a crew, and between the prime minister and a captain, these metaphors serve the predicative purpose of justifying certain government and Prime Ministerial unfavored actions, such as the sacking of a deputy Prime Minister, a state-level minister, and a former cabinet minister (Harun and Anwar 2016). Here, the government and the Prime Minister adhered to these decisions, seeing these as the duties of strong leadership, and therefore leading the crew of the ship to its destination port.

Category-bound Predicates

Responsibility

One of the captain's legal responsibilities as set out in the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) convention is "to operate under the principles of prudent seamanship, which means caring for the safety of crew and passengers" (Must a Captain 2012, Online). This includes the fact that he should be the last to abandon the ship. Failure to do so may subject the captain to imprisonment.[15]

As loyalty in attending to the crew and passengers is also expected from the Prime Minister as a ship's captain, the conceptual metaphors PRIME MINISTER IS CAPTAIN and GOVERNMENT IS CAPTAIN serve both general rhetorical and predicative purposes. These metaphors have painted a picture of a truly responsible and trustworthy government and prime minister, who have assured the people that they will not be abandoned during a storm such as an economic slowdown.

Relational Identities

Extending on from the discussion above, I infer that with the Prime Minister as captain, we can describe Malaysia as the ship, ministers as crew members, and the general public as passengers.

14

Helming Malaysia:
Najib Razak's Metaphors in Malaysian Supply Bills
JALA, The Journal of Asian Linguistic Anthropology

Relational Identity 1: Malaysia as Ship (Jong)

I have described Malaysia as a ship or vessel, captained by the Prime Minister, following rhetoric by the Prime Minister that includes the metaphor *bahtera* (ship) in excerpts below.

Excerpt set 6	
E14	"Dalam menakhoda bahtera Malaysia ini" (Malaysian Supply Bills 2018, Para 246) and
E15	"Melayari bahtera ke mercu jaya" (Malaysian Supply Bills 2014, Para 227)
E16	"Saya ... memahat paku-paku pelengkap sekaligus menaikkan layar Bahtera Malaysia menuju ufuk negara maju" (Malaysian Supply Bill 2011, Para 2)

In the Supply Bills, the government does not only frame itself as the captain of the ship, but also provides hints on the category of ship. These hints appear in two idiomatic phrases "*memahat paku*" (chiselling the nails) and "*menaikkan layar*" (raising the sails).

The act of 'memahat paku,' or chiselling the nails, is an action performed on the jong, a traditional Malay ship built from hardwood and wooden pegs. The nails in the Supply Bills refer to these chiseled wooden pegs, as a well-known traditional Malay skill and craft (Mohd Nawi 2015). These wooden pegs were chosen over iron nails, as wet wood frequently deteriorates from metal corrosion (Baker 1980). These thermal pegs also reduce the effect of thermal stress,[16] thus strengthening the frame of the ship. The use of this metaphor summons conceptions of Malaysia as a strong ship that will not deteriorate with corrosion and heat. In addition, the government has discussed [E17] "menaikkan layar"[17] (raising the sail) (Malaysian Supply Bill 2011, Para 2), aligning with mention in third and eighth century classical Chinese texts of the Malay jong as having four sails (Kapal Melayu Lebih Besar 2016) (Figure 2).
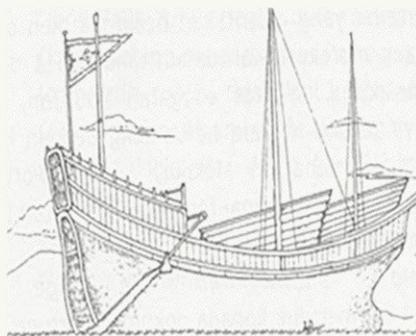

Figure 2. An Illustration of the Malay Traditional Ship (Jong) (Utusan Malaysia 2016)

These four sails importantly propel the ship. As Malaysia (as a ship) is traversing the ocean of world economy, alongside other countries as ships, these sails provide Malaysia with that

15

Helming Malaysia:
Najib Razak's Metaphors in Malaysian Supply Bills
JALA, The Journal of Asian Linguistic Anthropology

competitive edge, so as to aid the economic development introduced in the Supply Bills, which in turn is indexed by the sails. This indexicality is evident in the translation of the Supply bill on the Prime Minister's Office website, in [E18] "the Government has taken measures to propel the country towards becoming a developed and high-income economy" (Malaysian Supply Bills 2011, Para 2). With the introduction of new economic development measures, the government has expressed that it hopes to propel the ship towards becoming a high-income country and a developed nation.

Excerpt set 7	
[E17]	"Menaikkan layar"[18]
[E18]	"The Government has taken measures to propel the country towards becoming a developed and high-income economy" (Malaysian Supply Bills 2011, Para 2).

Comparing the to the government's ideological vessel, the government attempts to sustain its Southeast Asian identity, indexing pride and representation by the government and the Prime Minister culminating in both regional and historical identities. In addition to this, the government is propagating Mahathir's verbalized intentions of the early 1970s that Malaysia will develop itself as a technologically advanced state, and will in this way reach its destination.

The metaphors contribute significantly to the coherence of the government's myth vis-a-vis the vocational roles constructed by the government for itself. These metaphors thus aesthetically function to convince the public to better construe abstract concepts which index the economy and economic development, while also coloring ideologies of a country needing to experience hardship in order to transform into a developed nation. Yet, without a crew, the ship will not travel and hence will not reach its destination.

Relational Identity 2: Ministers as Crew Members

As the captain's role is to hire or select the crew, the Prime Minister, as the ship's captain, is also expected to do the same. The ministers that he as Prime Minister has selected to join his cabinet form his crew. On board a sailing ship, several of the crew are described in respective parts of his speeches, each of which has their respective role and function. These members are stationed in particular ways, each of which is predicated on the professional qualifications, skills, and experiences of the person. Such a metaphor, that is, the selection of the crew members by the captain, indexes in the public a reassurance of the fact that the ministers are competent nation builders, and hence, sailors who are able to both weather the storm and to direct the ship to its intended destination, as highly skilled seafarers.

16

Helming Malaysia:
Najib Razak's Metaphors in Malaysian Supply Bills
JALA, The Journal of Asian Linguistic Anthropology

Each of a ship's crew members is assigned special roles and tasks, and is expected to stay focused, where, the ship's performance is contingent on the crew members' performance. Similarly, ministers must correctly perform their roles, as the country's performance reflects the government's or the Prime Minister's efforts. Yet, the Prime Minister's performance relies heavily on the performance of his ministers. As the crew is subjected to the captain's scrutiny, the crew remains fully obedient to the captain (Bielic, Prudovan and Culin 2017). The Prime Minister has similarly politically socialized his cabinet and ministers to abide with his requests, fearing a walking of the plank into shark infested waters, as it were.

Relational Identity 3: People are the Passengers

In addition to the above, a relational identity that the PRIME MINISTER IS CAPTAIN conceptual metaphors can infer is the notion of 'people are passengers.' The captain verbally guarantees the passengers' safe delivery to their destination, while the people do not have agency for any interruption to this schedule, as the natural forces of the environment are beyond their control. Only the captain is in a position and is able to conquer these forces. As passengers, the people are portrayed as entities without decision-making authority. The captain is to make all decisions, reflected in the morphosis of programs and policies implemented by the government.

By framing people as the passengers, the government paints a portrait of the people as dependent on the captain and crew. However, the government frames itself as an independent entity, where, without the government as the captain and the ministers as the crew, working independently of the people, the public would not succeed in arriving at their destination, that is, as a high-income and developed nation. Rather, the people will remain alone on a perpetually stationary ship. Here, the public people most fear remaining alone on the ship during stormy weather (an economic slowdown). In such a context, the people require reassurance from and the exercising of specific skill by the government as captain, and by the ministers as crew.

Finally, the discourse positions the public in a role which requires the public to express gratitude for their imminent and safe arrival, and to thus applaud the captain for his excellent helming skills, as any crew would be inclined to do (Toremar 2000). Such a suggestion of required gratitude further corroborates and hence legitimizes the captain's power over all others.

Discussion and Conclusion

In comparison to the British leaders (e.g., James Callaghan, David Cameron, Margaret Thatcher, Theresa May), and the American leaders (e.g., Barack Obama, George W. Bush, George Bush, Richard Nixon, Ronald Raegan), who commonly employ the GOVERNMENT IS DRIVER metaphor, Najib Razak is known for his PRIME MINISTER IS CAPTAIN metaphor. Najib Razak often appropriated this conceptual metaphor, in order to legitimize his interests, before and

17

Helming Malaysia:
Najib Razak's Metaphors in Malaysian Supply Bills
JALA, The Journal of Asian Linguistic Anthropology

throughout his tenure as leader, that is, from 2009 to 2018. For instance, as the Deputy Prime Minster, commenting on earlier prime ministers of Malaysia in 2005, Najib was quoted saying "All the five Prime Ministers have ascended to the helm of the political apex at times when it suited their presence" (Mohammed 2005, p. 39). In March 2009, as vice President of UMNO, he delivered a speech entitled 'Menakhoda Zaman' (helming the times) to UMNO women and youth members. This speech was later published in 2011with his other speeches in a collection entitled 'Menakhoda Zaman' (Helming the Times). In this book, UMNO has been framed as the ship (UMNO IS SHIP), with Najib Razak as captain (PRESIDENT IS CAPTAIN). In 2016, unsurprisingly, the National Blue Ocean Strategy was introduced as part of the 11th Malaysia Plan, the nation's five-year economic strategic plan to become a developed nation. Here, Najib's preference towards the PRIME MINISTER IS CAPTAIN metaphor may have been motivated by the fact that narrating a sea voyage myth presents itself as more heroic and more challenging than a myth of driving of a vehicle on roads. Najib may also have been inspired by his descendancy from Bugis royalty, who migrated to Malaysia from Indonesia in the 18th century (Elias 2009), and who were known in the Malay world as famous seafarers, warriors, and traders (Abd Razid 2017).

Throughout my discussion, I evidence the fact that metaphors are deployed to contribute to the intra-textual and inter-textual coherence of the Bills. A denser network of metaphors contributes to the creation of a coherent political myth, which in turn assists the government to better legitimize its ideologies, decisions, and actions. As discovered, coherent myths are enlivened by both the government and the people, working in unison, but not always in transparency. Such a strategy functions to structure the creation of consequent political myths, which then become further embedded in the ideologies of the people, and, in turn, become manifested as belief and action. To this, the Najib government often developed policies from the same domain as the myth, in order to develop its programs and policies. Such coherent myths motivated the government's approach to problem-solve through strategies and solutions. For example, the government introduced the 'arus' (current) and the Blue Ocean set of strategies, as to ground the GOVERNMENT IS CAPTAIN myth.

While the findings inthis paper reaffirm Charteris-Black's (2011) proposition that the conceptual metaphor contributes to the building of a political myth by the politician, it also reasserts that identity is a process accomplished through communication (Ainsworth 2001). The metaphor PRIME MINISTER IS CAPTAIN has positively represented the Najib Razak government, and has personified the government as a reliable and able entity. Interestingly, the policies embedded within these Supply Bills were constructed, negotiated, and reinforced, but were at no point in time, by any party, challenged nor subverted.

18

Helming Malaysia:
Najib Razak's Metaphors in Malaysian Supply Bills
JALA, The Journal of Asian Linguistic Anthropology

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19

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20

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JALA, The Journal of Asian Linguistic Anthropology

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21

Helming Malaysia:
Najib Razak's Metaphors in Malaysian Supply Bills
JALA, The Journal of Asian Linguistic Anthropology

Endnotes

1 [E1] in steering the nation

2 [E2] I will ... raise the sail of Malaysia (ship) heading to a developed country (the Government has taken measures to propel the country towards becoming a developed and high-income economy).

3 [E3] In steering Malaysia towards a developed nation

4 [E4] Literally translated as "I... have chiselled the nails, and raise the sail of the ship (Malaysia), heading towards the dawn of a developed nation". (The Government has taken measures to propel the country towards becoming a developed and high-income economy.)

5 Year 2020 refers to Vision 2020. Vision 2020 reflects Malaysia's long-term vision of becoming a fully developed country by the year 2020. It was the brainchild of Malaysia's fourth Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir bin Mohamad. It was first outlined during the sixth Malaysia Plan presentation in 1991. It received due recognition locally and internationally. Since then many countries have their long-term aims set as national agendas.

6 An IBM study found that 60% of projects fail to meet schedule, budget and quality goals due to baseless estimations or as a result of a 'guessing game' (Banks, 2018).

7 [E5] Literally translated as "and raise the sail of the ship (Malaysia), heading towards the dawn of a developed nation".

8 [E6] Literally translated as "heading towards the year 2020, to become a high-income country".

9 [E7] literally translated as "a series of supply bills that will Malaysia..., to sail the ship to the height of success".

10 [E8] Literally translated "to helm Malaysia to become a developed country".

11 [E9] Literally translated "An ocean of unpredictable world"

12 [E13] Literally translated as "based on what have been mentioned, it is hoped that the cloud will be blown away, and the light will reveal its face".

13 [E13] Literally translated as "based on what have been mentioned, it is hoped that the cloud will be blown away, and the light will reveal its face".

14 [E14] The 2014 Budget will take Malaysia to greater heights and competitiveness in the international arena.

15 Captain Francesco Schettino, Captain Lee Joon-Seok and the captain of a river cruise Dong Fang Zhi Xing was sentences to imprisonment for abandoning their ships and caused death to the passengers on board.

16 Thermal stress is created by thermal expansion or contraction. This stress can lead to fracture or deformation of the material.

17 [E17] "saya akan meletak bata-bata pengmuktamad serta memahat paku-paku pelengkap sekaligus menaikkan layar Bahtera Malaysia menuju ufuk negara maju" (Malaysian Supply Bill, 2011, Para 2). Literally translated as "I... have chiseled the nails, and raise the sail of the ship (Malaysia), heading towards the dawn of a developed nation". (The Government has taken measures to propel the country towards becoming a developed and high- income economy.)

18 [E17] "saya akan meletak bata-bata pengmuktamad serta memahat paku-paku pelengkap sekaligus menaikkan layar Bahtera Malaysia menuju ufuk negara maju" (Malaysian Supply Bill, 2011, Para 2). Literally translated as "I... have chiseled the nails, and raise the sail of the ship (Malaysia), heading towards the dawn of a developed nation". (The Government has taken measures to propel the country towards becoming a developed and high- income economy.)