

Descriptiveness of Common Bird Names in the Malay Language

Nasri Rifin, Hasnah Mohamad, Norazlina Mohd Kiram, Zuraini Jusoh

Department of Malay Language, Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication,
Universiti Putra Malaysia, 43400 Serdang, Selangor

To Link this Article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARBSS/v13-i8/17599> DOI:10.6007/IJARBSS/v13-i8/17599

Published Date: 18 August 2023

Abstract

Understanding the level of descriptiveness in common bird names is essential for evaluating the quality of bird names. However, there is currently a scarcity of information regarding the level of descriptiveness for common bird names in the Malay language. Therefore, this study was conducted with two objectives: to identify the descriptiveness of common bird names in the Malay language and to discuss the descriptiveness of common bird names in the Malay language based on Gilreath's approach 1993. This study used document analysis and was conducted according to the Delphi method, involving five experts in bird identification and taxonomy. Finding revealed that there were three distinct levels of descriptiveness for common bird names in the Malay language. The results of this study can serve as an essential reference for assessing the level of descriptiveness of common bird names, particularly in the Malay language.

Keywords: Descriptiveness, Common Name, Bird Name, Lexeme, Malay Language.

Introduction

One aspect that can be observed in evaluating common bird name for standardization purposes is the aspect of descriptiveness (Shaw, 2016). Descriptiveness refers to the level that indicates the ability of a common bird name to describe the actual characteristics of the referred bird species. This aspect of descriptiveness can be assessed by examining the degree of connection between the literal meaning and the actual meaning contained within a common bird name (Gilreath, 1993). The connection between these two meanings can indicate the correlation between the meanings present in the linguistic elements of a common bird name and the actual characteristics possessed by a group or species of bird (Mulyanto et al., 2020). Information about the descriptiveness of common bird names is essential to create and selecting high-quality common bird names.

Problem Statement

Information regarding the descriptiveness of common bird names, especially in Malay, remains limited. This limitation might be due to the existing dictionaries and glossaries primarily focusing on providing definitions and information related to the literal meaning of the common bird names (Mai, 2019). For example, the common name 'ayam belanda' (dutch chicken) is defined as 'a type of large chicken with a bald head, loose and wrinkled skin on the neck' (DBP, 2020). This definition does not describe the linguistic element 'belanda' (dutch) that is present in the common name 'ayam belanda'. Meanwhile, the definition of 'belanda' refers to 'a country located in Western Europe' (DBP, 2020). Thus, the meaning in the dictionary fails to clarify the relationship between the linguistic elements in the common bird name. Furthermore, existing dictionaries and glossaries do not provide information about the correlation between the linguistic elements in a common bird name and the actual characteristics possessed by the bird species (Mulyanto et al., 2020). The limitation of this information makes it difficult to assess the relationship between the common bird names and the characteristics of the birds described. Consequently, the ability of a common bird name to describe the actual characteristics of a bird species cannot be measured or determined. This situation can impact the evaluation process of common bird names.

Objective

The main motivation behind this study is to obtain valuable information about the ability of common bird names in the Malay language in describing the characteristics of the referred birds. With this motivation in mind, the study aimed to gather comprehensive information on the level of descriptiveness of these names. This was achieved through the following objectives

1. To identify the descriptiveness of common bird names in the Malay language based on Gilreath's approach (1993), and
2. To discuss the descriptiveness of common bird names in the Malay language based on Gilreath's approach (1993)

Literature Review

According to Skrebova et al (2022), descriptiveness is a measure of the level that indicates whether the information in a common name is easy or difficult to understand. This level is determined through the selection and arrangement of linguistic elements found within a common name. The linguistic elements constituting a transparent common name make the information contained within the name easy to understand. Furthermore, descriptiveness indicates the extent to which information about the referred entity in the common name can be predicted or unpredicted (Skrebova et al., 2022). A common name with a high level of descriptiveness comprises language elements that facilitate the reader's ability to predict the information contained within the name more easily. Based on the information from the study conducted by Skrebova et al (2022), the researchers have identified and discussed the descriptiveness of common bird names in the Malay language based on the predictability of the information contained within the language elements present in a common bird name.

Next, Shaw's (2016) demonstrates that descriptiveness can be utilized as one of the aspects in evaluating common names. According to Shaw (2016), descriptiveness is the degree to which the language elements in a common name can convey information about the type or species being referred to. This criterion helps determine whether the elements in a common

name are chosen arbitrarily or intentionally planned. The selection of elements in a planned manner results in a descriptive common name (Shaw, 2016). Descriptive common names consist of language elements that can convey information about the referred species either literally or metaphorically (Shaw, 2016). For instance, 'large blue' and 'sooty copper' are common names of butterflies that are mannerly planned and have descriptive characteristics. These two names have different levels of descriptiveness. The common name 'large blue' utilizes the modifier lexeme 'large' to directly convey information about the blue butterfly's significant body size. Meanwhile, the common name 'sooty copper' employs the modifier lexeme 'sooty' to metaphorically convey information. It indirectly refers to the sooty state to describe the grayish-black color found on the wings of a copper butterfly. The difference in the characteristics of the language elements discussed in Shaw's (2016) study shows that the common name in English has different level of descriptiveness. This study on the level of descriptiveness will be applied in the context of common bird names in Malay language.

A common name that has language elements capable of describing information about the referred species literally is considered a transparent common name (Šokčevićová, 2015). This transparent common name is easy for readers to understand due to its high level of descriptiveness. According to Zörnig et al (2014), a common name with a high level of descriptiveness contains a modifier lexeme consisting of adjectives. For example, the common name of the bird 'dadali leutik' in Javanese contains the modifier lexeme 'leutik' which is an adjective. The meaning of the adjective 'leutik' is 'small', and this modifier lexeme indicates that the referred bird species has a small body size (Mulyanto et al., 2020). Common names that contain adjectives can clearly show the characteristics of a species or type of bird. These three studies can guide discussions on the characteristics and factors that influence the construction of transparent common names.

In addition, there are also studies that indicate the existence of translucent common names. According to the study by Syafitri et al (2022), translucent common names refer to those names that exhibit a lesser degree of descriptiveness compared to transparent common names. These translucent common names contain implied meanings (Syafitri et al., 2022). For example, there is a translucent common name called 'pare siang' in Kanekes language. The common name 'pare siang' refers to a type of rice. Literally, the modifier lexeme 'siang' refers to 'daytime'. However, the implied meaning of the modifier lexeme 'siang' in its common name 'pare siang', refers to the yellow color on the skin of the rice that is similar to the color of morning sunlight. This implied meaning causes the common name to be translucent.

Other than implied meanings, Doskočilová (2014) shows that translucent common names can also be formed due to the absence of complementary language elements that contain important information about the referred species. For example, there is a translucent common name for a plant called 'primrose' in English, which refers to a 'flowering plant that blooms early in the spring' (Doskočilová, 2014). The common name 'primrose' only has the modifier lexeme 'prim', which literally refers to 'first'. This common name lacks complementary language elements that directly explain the "blooming occurrence" and "spring season" related to the referred 'primrose' flower. The absence of these important complementary language elements causes the common name 'primrose' to be translucent. Both studies by Syafitri et al (2022); Doskočilová (2014) on plants provide a basis for researchers to investigate translucent common names of birds in the Malay language.

Previous studies also indicate the presence of opaque common names. According to Gilreath (1993), these opaque common names have a lower level of descriptiveness compared to

translucent common names (Gilreath, 1993). This is because the meaning conveyed by the modifier lexeme in these common names refers to objects and matters that are unrelated to the characteristics of the referred bird (Subramanian, 2022). For example, the common name 'wahlberg's eagle' falls into the category of opaque common names. The common name 'wahlberg's eagle', refers to a type of eagle, uses the name "wahlberg" to honor Johan August Wahlberg, a Swedish explorer and collector who made significant contributions to the field of ornithology (Koopman, 2017). However, the modifier lexeme 'wahlberg' in this common name does not provide any description regarding the characteristics of the referred eagle species. Studies by Gilreath (1993); Subramanian (2022); Koopman (2017) can serve as a guide in this study to identify and discuss the existence of opaque common bird names in the Malay language.

Methodology

This study utilizes a qualitative research design. The study material consists of 551 common bird names in Malay language from the MyBIS database (2020). To achieve the objectives of this study, the level of descriptiveness of these common bird names was analyzed based on the Onometric model introduced by (Gilreath, 1993). According to the principles of this model, descriptiveness refers to the extent to which the elements within the term describe the actual meaning, in other words, the extent to which the literal meaning corresponds to the actual meaning of a lexeme within a term (Gilreath, 1993).

This Onometric model also specifies that there are three levels of descriptiveness: transparent, translucent, and opaque (Gilreath, 1993). The transparent level represents the highest level of descriptiveness. The transparent level indicates that a term contains its actual meaning that is easily understood from its form. For example, the term 'econometrics' contains the element 'metrics' that clearly indicates that the term refers to the actual meaning, which is 'measurement and statistics' in the field of economics. These transparent terms have linguistic elements that show a very close relationship between the literal and actual meanings. Next, the translucent level is lower than the transparent level. The translucent level indicates that a term contains an implied actual meaning. For example, the term 'equivocality' literally means 'same name'. However, the implied actual meaning of 'equivocality' is 'using the same name for different references'. Understanding the true meanings of linguistic elements in translucent terms requires logical thinking from the reader. Lastly, the lowest level of descriptiveness is the opaque level. This level indicates that a term contains elements that neither directly nor indirectly portray the thing being referred to. For instance, in the term 'Murphy's Law,' the element 'Murphy' refers to the name of a prominent figure in engineering. However, the meaning of the element 'Murphy' has no directly or indirectly correlation to the law being referenced.

Based on the Onometric model, a research procedure has been developed as follows:

Step 1

A total of 551 common bird names in the Malay language were selected from the MyBIS database 2020. These selected common names consist of two lexemes, the common name with a head lexeme and a modifier lexeme. For example, a chosen common name is 'helang merah' (red eagle). This common name consists of two lexemes, with 'helang' as the head lexeme and 'merah' as the modifier lexeme.

Step 2

The literal meaning of the modifier lexeme in these common bird names was collected from the Dewan Perdana Dictionary (DBP, 2020). This dictionary is the most comprehensive and up-to-date source for referencing the meanings of lexemes in the Malay language.

Step 3

The actual meaning of the modifier lexeme in these common bird names was collected from field guides and encyclopedias written by (Robson, 2020; Ibrahim et al., 2019; Nik et al., 2017; Jeyarajasingam et al., 2016; Davison & Yeap, 2010). These references provide information on bird’s characteristics related to the actual meaning of the modifier lexeme found in the common bird names.

Step 4

The relationship between the literal and the actual meaning of the modifier lexeme in these common bird names was investigated and listed as shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Relationship between literal meaning and actual meaning.

Common name	Modifier lexeme	Literal meaning	Actual meaning	Meaning Relationship
Helang merah (Red eagle)	Merah (Red)	Color like blood.	The reddish color of the eagle's feathers.	Color = Bird's color
Belatuk bitnik (Spotted woodpecker)	Bintik (Spotted)	Pattern of dots on something.	The spotted pattern was found on the underside of the woodpecker's body.	Pattern = Bird's pattern
Punai zamrud (Emerald dove)	Zamrud (Emerald)	A type of rock that is valuable and green-colored	The shiny green color of the dove's feathers.	Type of rock = Bird's color

Step 5

A questionnaire form was created. This questionnaire form comprises eight components: compilation of common bird names and their corresponding modifier lexemes, literal meanings, actual meanings, meaning relationships, descriptiveness levels, verification space, and additional notes space. The following Table 2 is an example of the designed questionnaire form.

Table 2

Questionnaire to validate the level of descriptiveness.

Common name	Modifier	Literal meaning	Actual meaning	Meaning Relationship	Descriptiveness Level	A	N	N A	Additional notes
--------------------	-----------------	------------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------------	------------------------------	----------	----------	------------	-------------------------

	lexeme								
Helang merah (Red eagle)	Merah (Red)	Color like blood.	The reddish color of the eagle's feathers.	Color = Bird's color	Transparent				
Belatuk bitnik (Spotted woodpecker)	Bintik (Spotted)	A pattern of dots on something.	The spotted pattern was found on the underside of the woodpecker's body.	Pattern = Bird's pattern	Transparent				
Punai zamrud (Emerald dove)	Zamrud (Emerald)	A type of rock that is valuable and vivid green-colored	The shiny green color of the dove's feathers.	Type of rock = Bird's color	Translucent				
...				

Step 6

The relationship between the common bird names and the meanings listed in the questionnaire form was analyzed using the Delphi method, involving five bird experts to validate the level of descriptiveness for each common bird names listed. The analysis conducted with the Delphi method in this study consisted of three rounds of validation. During the first round, all experts were given the same questionnaire form. Then, the feedback from these experts was collected and used to improve the second questionnaire form. In the second round, all experts were provided with the updated questionnaire form based on the feedback from the first round. Lastly, the feedback from these experts was gathered and used to improve the questionnaire form for the third round. In the third round, all experts reached a consensus on the descriptiveness level and descriptions for all the common bird names that had been updated from the first and second rounds.

The data that has been analyzed through the six steps in this procedure has provided findings to achieve both objectives of this study. The combination of methods and reference sources used in this procedure has aided in identifying and discussing the descriptiveness level of common bird names in the Malay language.

Research Findings

This study identified and discussed the descriptiveness aspects of common bird names in the Malay language. The study's results show three levels of descriptiveness found in common bird names in the Malay language, as indicated in the following Table 3.

Table 3

The number of common bird names according to the level of descriptiveness.

Descriptiveness level	Number of common bird names
Transparent	164
Translucent	379
opaque	8

Based on Table 3, the analysis of 551 Malay common bird names revealed that 164 names were classified at transparent level, 379 names at translucent level, and 8 names at opaque level. The number of common bird names at the transparent level is higher, with 164 names, compared to the 8 names at the opaque level. However, the number of common bird names at the transparent level is lower, with 164 names, compared to the 379 names at the translucent level. Furthermore, the translucent level has the highest number of common bird names, with 379 names, surpassing both the transparent level (164 names) and the opaque level (8 names). On the other hand, the opaque level has the lowest count of common bird names, with only 8 names, compared to the counts of common bird names at the transparent and translucent levels.

Transparent Common Bird Names

This study found that 164 common bird names fall into the transparent level of descriptiveness in the Malay language (Refer to Table 3). Examples of common bird names at the transparent level are 'enggang hitam' (black hornbill), 'helang merah' (red eagle), 'merak hijau' (green peacock), 'camar angguk' (nodding pigeon), 'merbah lorek' (striped bulbul), 'cekup jalur' (striped sunbird), 'bangau besar' (great egret), and 'camar kecil' (small tern). The common names at the transparent level are easier to understand compared to those at the translucent and opaque levels. In Malay, the meanings conveyed by the common names at the transparent level can be understood without requiring advanced knowledge and logical reasoning from the readers. This is because the literal and the actual meaning of the common names at the transparent level are the same and share the same reference. Both of these meanings have a very close relationship in describing the characteristics of the birds referred to in the common names (Gilreath, 1993). Readers can directly learn about the characteristics of the referred birds based on a common bird name at the transparent level.

These common bird names can clearly describe the characteristics of a bird because it is constructed with a modifier lexeme, which is an adjective (Zörnig et al., 2014). The selected adjectives used in forming the transparent common bird names have a literal meaning that directly refers to the actual characteristics of the bird. For example, the common bird name 'enggang hitam' (black hornbill) can clearly describe the characteristics of the *Anthracoceros malayanus* species. The common name is formed by combining the head lexeme 'enggang' (hornbill) with the modifier lexeme 'hitam' (black), which is an adjective that directly indicates that this hornbill species is black in color (Robson, 2020). The actual meaning within this common bird name can provide information about the bird's characteristics directly without

requiring additional knowledge from the reader to understand the relationship between the literal and the actual meaning contained in the common bird names.

Other than that, there are common bird names at the transparent level that were constructed with a modifier lexeme which is not an adjective. However, this modifier lexeme functions as an adjective. For example, the common bird name 'camar angguk' (nodding tern) can clearly describe the characteristics of the *Anous stolidus* species. This common name is formed by combining the head lexeme 'camar' (tern) with the modifier lexeme 'angguk' (nodding). The modifier lexeme 'angguk' is a verb that functions as an adjective. The lexeme 'angguk' directly describes the characteristics of a 'tern' species, indicating their behavior of nodding their heads during the breeding season (Jeyarajasingam et al., 2016). The literal meaning of the lexeme 'angguk' is the same as the actual meaning. This similarity makes the actual meaning, which contains information about the bird's characteristics, easier to understand within the transparent common bird names.

This study was conducted based on Gilreath's Onometric Model (1993), highlights that the transparent level is the highest level of descriptiveness observed in common bird names in the Malay language. It reveals that there are common bird names in Malay with same literal meaning as their actual meaning. The relationship between the literal and the actual meaning in common bird names at the transparent level is very close. These common bird names can directly and clearly describe the characteristics of the referred birds. The characteristics of the birds described through transparent common bird names are easier to predict and understand by readers.

Translucent Common Bird Names

In the Malay language, there are 379 common bird names with a degree of descriptiveness at the translucent level (Refer to Table 3). Translucent common names include bird names such as 'punai zamrud' (emerald dove), 'enggang badak' (rhinoceros hornbill), 'kesumba harimau' (tiger shrike), 'kelicap jantung' (heartleaf whistler), 'rimba hwamei' (forest hwamei), 'merpati perak' (silver pigeon), 'belatuk emas' (golden woodpecker), and 'bayan api' (fire parakeet). The actual meaning contained within these translucent common bird names is difficult to understand. This is because the literal and the actual meaning of these common names have a distant relationship. This situation poses a challenge in uncovering the information about the bird's characteristics that are contained within the translucent common bird names. However, a reference to the connection between the literal and actual meanings of the lexemes in the translucent common bird names still exists. Readers require logic and additional knowledge to understand the actual meaning and obtain information about the bird's characteristics contained within the translucent common bird names.

The translucent common bird names are present in the Malay language because there are names that consist of modifier lexemes with implied meanings. These implied meanings represent the actual meanings concealed behind the literal meanings. The literal meanings of the modifier lexemes in the translucent common bird names are not directly refer to the characteristics of a bird species. Instead, they refer to an object or thing that can provide an analogy of the characteristics belong to a bird species (Syafitri et al., 2022). These described characteristics represent the actual meaning of the modifier lexemes in the translucent common bird names. For example, the common bird name 'punai zamrud' (emerald dove) is a translucent common name. This common name consists of a head lexeme 'punai' and the modifier lexeme 'zamrud'. The modifier lexeme 'zamrud' has an implied actual meaning that is hidden behind the literal meaning. The literal meaning of the modifier lexeme 'zamrud'

does not directly refer to the characteristics possessed by the 'punai zamrud' bird. Instead, the literal meaning of the lexeme 'zamrud' refers to a "type of precious green gemstone". The shining green color of the gemstone 'zamrud' describe the color on the body of the 'punai zamrud' bird (Jeyarajasingam et al., 2016). This described color represents the actual meaning of the modifier lexeme 'zamrud' in the common bird name 'punai zamrud'. Understanding the implied actual meanings in these translucent common bird names requires logical reasoning and pre-knowledge about the characteristics of the object or anything associated with the referred bird species.

Additionally, these translucent names exist because there are common bird names that have been created using unstable borrowed modifier lexemes from other languages. The literal and actual meanings of these modifier lexemes do not have references in the Malay language and culture. However, the literal and actual meanings of these modifier lexemes have references in the borrowed foreign language. These foreign language references can describe the actual characteristics possessed by the referred bird species in the translucent common bird names. For example, the common bird name 'rimba hwamei' is a translucent common bird name. This common name is created by combining the head lexeme 'rimba' and the modifier lexeme 'hwamei'. The modifier lexeme 'hwamei' is a borrowed lexeme that is not yet stable in Malay. The literal and actual meanings of the modifier lexeme 'hwamei' do not have references in the Malay language. Instead, the literal and actual meanings of this modifier lexeme have references in the borrowed Chinese language. In Chinese, the meaning of the modifier lexeme 'hwamei' refers to the pattern on the eye of the 'rimba hwamei' bird, which appears to be painted with white paint (Strange, 2000). Therefore, readers need additional knowledge about the borrowed language elements to understand the actual meaning that contains information about the characteristics of a bird species in the translucent common bird names.

Next, the omission of linguistic elements such as words and affixes during the construction of common bird names also contributes to the existence of translucent common bird names in the Malay. These omitted linguistic elements carry meanings and information that can show the relationship between the literal and the actual meaning in the common bird names. The omission of these elements causes the relationship between both meanings to be more distant. For example, the common bird name 'kelicap jantung' (heart sunbird) is a translucent common bird name. It becomes translucent because certain linguistic elements have been omitted from this common name to make it more concise. Among the omitted linguistic elements are the phrase 'penghisap madu' (nectar-sucker) and the word 'pisang' (banana) from the extended version of common bird name 'kelicap penghisap madu jantung pisang' (banana heart nectar-sucking sunbird). The phrase 'penghisap madu' provides information about the feeding behavior of the *Arachnothera longirostra* species, which feeds by sucking nectar (Davison & Yeap, 2010). The word 'pisang', on the other hand, indicates a type of plant with purple-skinned and tear-shape blossom that contain nectar. This blossom know as "banana heart. The omission of these linguistic elements results in a greater distance between the literal and the true meaning in the common bird name. Consequently, the common bird name becomes translucent. Understanding the actual meaning and information about the characteristics conveyed by translucent common bird names requires readers to have additional knowledge about the relationship between the remaining linguistic elements in the shortened common names.

The findings of this study, in line with Gilreath's (1993), reveal that translucent common bird names exhibit a lower level of descriptiveness compared to transparent common bird names.

While these names can still provide some description of the characteristics of the referred bird groups, the information conveyed through translucent common bird names is more challenging for readers to predict and comprehend. To comprehend the characteristics described in the translucent common names, readers require additional information and knowledge that can show the connection between the literal meaning and the actual meaning found in these common bird names. However, the number of translucent common bird names is greater than transparent common bird names in the Malay language. This indicates that there are other aspects prioritized besides descriptiveness in the formation of existing Malay common bird names.

Opaque Common Bird Names

Table 3 shows that there are eight opaque common bird names in Malay. The opaque common bird names include 'merpati kayu' (wood pigeon), 'kedidi kayu' (wood swallow), 'segan blyth' (blyth's hawk-eagle), 'petral wilson' (wilson's petrel), 'kedidi timmink' (timmink's flycatcher), 'rimba timmink' (timmink's babbler), 'petral bulwer' (bulwer's petrel), and 'tukang bonaparte' (bonaparte's nightjar). These common bird names have literal meanings that are neither directly nor indirectly related to their actual meanings (Subramanian, 2022). In other words, the reference for the literal meaning does not correspond to the reference for the actual meaning contained in these opaque common bird names. This means that information about the bird characteristics contained in these opaque common bird names cannot be explored based on the literal meaning found in the common names. Although readers may use logic to understand the actual meaning and obtain information about the bird characteristics contained in these opaque common bird names, this effort can be considered impossible without knowledge of the bird nomenclature history.

One of the reasons contributing to the opaque common bird names exist in Malay was due to incorrect translations. These translations do not accurately capture the original context and actual meaning of the bird names in the source language. The literal meanings derived from these wrong translations do not align with the actual characteristics of the birds being referred to. For example, the common bird name 'merpati kayu' is an opaque common bird name. This name was created from the translation of the English common bird name 'wood pigeon'. The translation of 'wood' as 'kayu' was an error. The literal meaning of the lexeme 'kayu' (hard material from a tree) do not describe the characteristics of the 'wood pigeon' either directly or indirectly. The correct translation for the lexeme 'wood' should be 'hutan' (a small forest) because the 'wood pigeon' or *Columba vitiensis* is a species of pigeon that inhabit the small forest (Gibbs et al., 2001). The translation error resulted in the literal meaning being unrelated to the actual meaning contained in the opaque common bird name. As a result, readers are unable to understand the actual meaning and information about the characteristics of the referred bird through the opaque common bird name.

In addition, opaque common bird names also exist in Malay because they are created based on unrelated objects or things relative to the birds' characteristics. These objects or things have no direct or indirect relationship to the characteristics of the birds referred to in a common bird name. For example, the common bird name "petral wilson" is an opaque common bird name. This common bird name was created in honor Alexander Wilson, who made significant contributions to naturalism and ornithology (Lederer, 2019). However, using the name of this person in the common bird name "petral wilson" does not accurately describe the characteristics of the bird itself. The person has no similarities or connections to

the actual characteristics of the named bird, whether directly or indirectly. As a result, the literal meaning associated with this opaque common bird name does not correspond to its actual meaning.

This study highlights that among all the category, the opaque common bird names have the lowest level of descriptiveness according to the Onometric model by Gilreath (1993). It demonstrates that these common names exist in Malay because there are common bird names that contain literal meanings and actual meanings that are unrelated to each other. The opaque common bird names fail to describe the actual characteristics of the referred birds. As a result, the characteristics of the birds described in these opaque common bird names are very difficult to predict and it may be impossible for readers to understand. Although readers might use logic to understand the relativity of the opaque common name to the bird's characteristics, the logical effort might be disconnected without prior knowledge of the history of bird nomenclature.

Conclusion

The findings of this study lead to the conclusion that common bird names in the Malay language display three levels of descriptiveness: transparent, translucent, and opaque. This study offers valuable information about the different ability and quality of the common bird names in describing the characteristics of the referred birds. Furthermore, the findings regarding the level of descriptiveness based on the relationship between literal and actual meanings in common bird names offer important guidance for developing a rubric to evaluate the quality of common bird names in Malay. Additionally, this study found that the formation of transparent common bird names is less common compared to the formation of translucent common bird names, despite transparent common bird names having the highest level of descriptiveness. This finding show that there are other aspects prioritized in the formation of Malay common bird names besides descriptiveness. These aspects should be identified and thoroughly discussed in future studies to gather additional significant information that can enhance our knowledge and facilitate the evaluation and selection of high-quality common bird names in the Malay language.

Overall, this study on descriptiveness of common bird makes a valuable contribution by offering important details for devising strategies in the standardization process of common bird names in the Malay language. This can provide an advantage to linguistic and ornithology experts involved in the standardization process to ensure that standardized common bird names in the Malay language can clearly depict the characteristics of the referred birds. Besides, this study makes a contribution to increasing awareness in descriptive qualities of common bird names, which can benefit educational initiatives, especially in the fields of terminology, translation, natural sciences, and biology. Hence, it can facilitate the teaching and learning process by providing meaningful connections between language and the natural world.

References

- Davison, G. W., & Yeap, C. A. (2010). *A Naturalist's Guide to the Birds of Malaysia and Singapore*. John Beaufoy Pub.
- DBP. (2020). *Kamus Dewan Perdana*. Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka.
- Doskocilova, I. (2014). *Semantic Shift in Plant Names*. [Thesis]. The University of South Bohemia

- Gibbs, D., Barnes, E., & Cox, J. (2001). *Pigeons and doves: a guide to the pigeons and doves of the world (Vol. 13)*. A&C Black.
- Gilreath, C. T. (1993). Onometrics: The formal evaluation of terms. *ASTM Special Technical Publication, 1166(1)*, 75-75.
- Jeyarajasingam, A., Norhayati, A., Arifin, Y. M., & Ilias, R. (2016). *Burung-burung Malaysia: Malaysia Biodiversity Information System (MyBIS)*. Penerbit UKM.
- Koopman, A. (2017). Surname dynamics in avian nomenclature. *Nomina Africana: Journal of African Onomastics, 31(2)*, 141-152.
- Lederer, R. J. (2019). *The Art of the Bird: The History of Ornithological Art Through Forty Artists*. University of Chicago Press.
- Mai, T. T. T. (2019). Semantic nuances of vietnamese lexical units and the teaching of these units to foreign students. *Journal of Science: Social Sciences and Humanities, 16(7)*, 168-178.
- Mulyanto, D., Iskandar, J., Madani, A., Gunawan, R., & Partasmita, R. (2020). Folk name and lore of birds from the Sundanese of West Java, Indonesia: An ethno-ornithological survey. *Biodiversitas Journal of Biological Diversity, 21(9)*. 4384-4395.
- MyBIS. (2020). *Discover by Species*. Malaysia Biodiversity Centre: Ministry of Natural Resources, Environment and Climate Change. <https://www.mybis.gov.my/one/>
- Shaw, P. (2016). Three types of zoological common names and their formation-processes. *Nordic Journal of English Studies, 15(2)*, 171-187.
- Robson, C. (2020). *Field guide to the birds of South-East Asia*. Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Skrebova, E. G., Martynova, Y. A., & Bokova, M. M. (2022). Systemic and linguistic principles of the analysis of texts of the english-language automobile media discourse in the aspect of the category of descriptiveness. *Russian Linguistic Bulletin, 2 (30)*. 1-4.
- Sokcevicova, H. (2015). *An Analysis of Compound Plant Names*. [Thesis]. The University of South Bohemia
- Strange, M. (2000). *A photographic guide to the birds of Southeast Asia: including the Philippines and Borneo*. Princeton University Press.
- Alagappan, S. (2022). The Names of Land, Field, and Soil in Madurai District – A Linguistic Study. *Language in India, 22 (12)*.
- Syafitri, H., Franco, F. M., Suhaimi, A. (2022). Folk Plant Names Are Condensed Forms of Traditional Knowledge: Case Study with the Urang Kanekes of Banten, Indonesia. In: Franco, F.M., Knudsen, M., Hassan, N.H. (eds) Case Studies in Biocultural Diversity from Southeast Asia. Asia in Transition, vol 19. Springer, Singapore.
- Zornig, P., Stachowski, K., Popescu, I. I., Miangah, T. M., Mohanty, P., Kelih, E., ... & Altmann, G. (2014). *Descriptiveness, activity and nominality in formalized text sequences: Studies in Quantitative Linguistics*. Lüdenscheid