1. Introduction

Colloquial Malay possesses several lexical items which are not used in the written variety of the language. This paper takes up one of them, namely kat. Morphosyntactically this word is classified as a preposition. However, it is not a commonplace preposition but quite a unique one in that it corresponds to many different prepositions in the written variety. For instance, kat can convey the meanings denoted by di ‘at’, ke ‘to’, pada ‘to, with’ and so on. (The polysemy of kat shall be discussed later.) Prepositions like kat can be termed ‘multi-purpose preposition’ since they can be substitutes for many different other prepositions. What is characteristic of multi-purpose prepositions is that the substitution relationship holds between the spoken and the written style. In the case of kat, the relationship also holds within the spoken styles, but not within the written style, as the use of kat is limited to the spoken style while that of the corresponding prepositions like di, ke and pada are not. To the best of my knowledge, sama is another multi-purpose preposition in Malay/Indonesian (cf. den Besten 2005). The preposition dengan ‘with’ is a likely candidate for yet another multi-purpose preposition in Malay.

In this paper, I will describe the meanings of kat and attempt to account for its polysemy. The remainder of this paper is organised as follows. Section 2 explains the object of description of the present paper, i.e. Colloquial Malay, and the sources of the data. In section 3, I will review the previous treatment of kat in the literature. Section 4 describes various meanings of kat and puts forward a hypothesis about the semantic representation of kat. Section 5 discusses the relation between kat and dekat, the origin of kat. Finally, section 6 is the conclusion.
2. Object of description and the data

2.1 Colloquial Malay

To begin with, it might be necessary to explain the variety of Malay discussed in this paper, namely Colloquial Malay. As the Malay language is spoken by as many as more than two hundred million people in a fairly wide area which covers Malaysia, Singapore, Brunei, Indonesia, East Timor and southern Thailand, it has a number of geographical and socio-economical varieties. Among them, this paper deals with the standard colloquial variety used in Malaysia. By ‘standard’ I mean the language used among speakers from different parts of Malaysia. There are several geographical dialects inside Malaysia such as the Kelantan dialect, the Kedah dialect and so on (Asmah 1985). The term ‘colloquial’ can be understood as nearly the same as ‘spoken’. The choice of the former is due to the fact that the variety meant here is primarily used in the spoken style but it may be written as well, though there is no standardised orthography for this variety. Cliff Goddard describes the same variety as follows:

Colloquial Malay designates the sort of oral language Malays use among themselves in informal everyday interaction. It can also be found in ephemeral printed materials such as entertainment and humour magazines and cheap novels, and in television and radio talk-back shows, comedies and dramas. (Goddard 2002: 87)

Although this variety is oral in essence, it is never spoken in formal situations such as in the Prime Minister’s speeches and television and radio news programmes. Therefore a more apt term would be ‘informal’ or ‘casual’ as opposed to ‘formal’.

Colloquial Malay is different from Written Malay in many respects. Here are some of them. First, some words are shortened.

(1) tidak ‘not’ ➔ tak
    hendak ‘to want’ ➔ nak
    ini ‘this’ ➔ ni (also written as nie or nih)
    tetapi ‘but’ ➔ tapi
    sahaja ‘only’ ➔ saja, aja, ja (also written as saja, aje, je or jer)
    pergi ‘go’ ➔ gi, pi

Second, there are some words which are only used in Colloquial Malay (e.g. *dek* ‘because’, *kot* (a word used when guessing or confirming something not so certain) etc.) or used with different meanings from Written Malay. For example, the word *kena* means ‘have to’ in Colloquial Malay in addition to the meanings which are common to both Colloquial and Written Malay such as ‘to hit’ and ‘suitable’. The multi-purpose preposition *kat* exemplifies both the first and second characteristics. It is a shortened form of *dekat* ‘near, close’, which expresses many other meanings.
than ‘near, close’ in the colloquial style, e.g. ‘at’ and ‘to’. Third, some affixes including the active voice marker meN-, are seldom used in the colloquial style, which makes the language look like an isolating language and blurs the language’s voice system. Fourth, some constituents are not expressed overtly, which is usually analysed as ellipsis. This phenomenon is partly governed by some rules (see Ramli (1989) for VP ellipsis, and Wong (1995) and Nomoto (2006) for null subjects). Fifth, the boundaries of sentences are sometimes not clear-cut\(^1\). In such cases, sentences become very lengthy, though, as pointed out by Nik Safiah et al. (1993: 32), many sentences in the colloquial style are shorter and simpler than those in the written style. Lastly, in the colloquial style, code-mixing and code-switching are frequently observed.

(2) is given as an example of Colloquial Malay. It is taken from an advice column in a magazine. In the written style, the words shown in italics cannot be used as they are and should be changed into some appropriate forms. Mixed English words are represented in boldface.

\[
(2) \text{Sebenarnya problem aku macam ni, aku ada sorang bestfren ni, kiranya aku dengan dia memang rapat giler. Pastu, aku couple ngan sorang mamat ni, tak lama lepas tu boyfren aku cakap yang aku ni macam tak pentingkan dia, kalau aku dengan member aku, dia rasa macam tak wujud jer. Camner ni, aku tak nak dikatakan lupa member & aku tak nak kehilangan boyfren aku tu.}
\]

‘Actually, my problem is like this; I have a best friend; she and I are really, really close. Then, I met a guy; soon after that my boyfriend said I didn’t, kind of, care about him; compared to the closeness between my friend and me, he felt as if he didn’t exist. What should I do now; I don’t want my friend to say I’ve forgotten her and I don’t wanna lose my boyfriend either.’

(Utopia 67, 01/10/2005, p. 30)

From (2) the readers can know visually how wide the gulf between the spoken and written form of Malay is.

2.2 The data
I use two types of data in this study, each representing the spoken and written style of Colloquial Malay.

The first is a corpus built by a research project at Tokyo University of Foreign Studies (21st Century Centre of Excellence Programme: Usage-Based Linguistic Informatics), which I joined. I call this corpus ‘UKM Corpus’ because it was made in cooperation with Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM). It consists of 30 sessions of casual conversation between two university students.

\(^1\) This point also applies to Classical Malay literature such as Sejarah Melayu or Sulalatus Salatin (The Malay Annals; 16th century?) although they are obviously ‘written’. Considering the fact the that same applies to Japanese classical literature such as Genji Monogatari (The Tale of Genji; 11th century), obscure sentence boundaries may be a common feature of pre-modern written languages, at least in Malay and Japanese.
The number of participants is 20, half of them students in linguistics and another half in the English language who take the Japanese language as their minor. They come from various parts of Malaysia (Johor 6, Kelantan 2, Kedah 2, Kuala Lumpur 2, Melaka 2, Perlis 1, Perak 1, Pahang 1, Selangor 1, Negeri Sembilan 1, Sabah 1), but the use of dialects is very rare. The corpus is thus without doubt one of the standard variety. As this corpus is still under construction, its exact size is uncertain. The total recording time is approximately 30 hours, two thirds of which have been transcribed.

The second type of the data is an entertainment magazine for teenagers *Utopia*. This magazine contains comic strips in addition to text. As in (2), Colloquial Malay is used not only in the comic strips but also in the texts.

3. **Previous treatment of kat**

Colloquial Malay has not been studied well compared to Written Malay. This is partly because the former lacks the kind of authority assigned to the latter, which has been actively developed as the national language of the country. On top of that, the colloquial style of a language tends to be considered as only a simplified version of the written style. As a result, little attention has been paid to Colloquial Malay before.

However, there are at least two reasons that necessitate the study of Colloquial Malay. Firstly, the widespread assumption that the colloquial variety is merely a simplified version of the written variety is not true. In addition to the lexical differences between the two styles, Colloquial Malay involves much more pragmatic phenomena (Nor Hashimah 2003). The second reason concerns language teaching and learning, especially as L2. The colloquial style is as important as the written style for most non-native speakers since they have to learn how to use both. Using different styles appropriately depending on the situation is indispensable for good communication, for the way one speaks is considered as an indicator of politeness or *budi bahasa*, which literally translates as ‘wisdom of language’. One must speak in the written variety in delivering a speech at a formal meeting. On the other hand, the same person must use the colloquial style when talking with his or her friends. Otherwise, he or she will come across as being aloof.

Unfortunately, the materials published thus far hardly help learners learn Colloquial Malay. Let us take *kat* for example. Despite its high frequency, all the Malay dictionaries that I consulted do not contain it except *Kamus Dewan*, which is the most authoritative dictionary of the Malay language, and two dictionaries which were made based on *Kamus Dewan*.

*Kamus Dewan’s* description (3), however, is not only unsatisfactory but misleading in a sense.

(3)  
\[ kat \, hp \, dekat \]  
(Kamus Dewan, p. 583)
The information that one can get from (3) is that the word *kat* is a colloquial expression (*bp = bahasa percakapan*) meaning *dekat*. It is evident that the compilers of this dictionary simply assume that the colloquial variety is no more than a simplified version of the written formal variety. Looking up the word *dekat* reveals that in fact it is not.

(4) **dekat 1.** tidak jauh jaraknya atau antaranya dr, hampir: …; **2.** hampir (bkn waktu, masa, jumlah, dll): …; **3.** *bp* kata yang menunjukkan tempat, di: …; **4.** tidak lama lagi, hampir (akan berlakunya sesuatu): …; **5.** rapat (bkn hubungan, persahabatan, persaudaraan, dll), karib: …;

‘dekat 1. not distant from, near: …; 2. almost (of time, period, amount etc.): …; 3. colloquial a word that indicates place, at: …; 4. soon, approaching (something will take place): …; 5. close (of relation, friendship, kinship etc.), intimate: …;’

(Kamus Dewan, p. 284)

What is misleading with the description in (3) is that it fails to state which one of the five meanings of *dekat* in (4) is intended. Actually, only the third meaning of *dekat* is intended in (3). The word *dekat* in the example sentence for the third meaning can be replaced by *kat* while that in the others cannot.

(5) **dekat 1 = near**
Rumah-nya dekat/*kat* dengan kedai.
house-his near with store
‘His house is near the store.’

(6) **dekat 2 = almost**
Siang tadi aku tidur dekat/*kat* se-jam lamanya.
daytime past I sleep almost one-hour length
‘I slept almost one hour during the day.’

(7) **dekat 3 = at**
Makan dekat/*kat* rumah kita pun hendak pakai garpu.
eat at house we too will use fork
‘When eating at home, we use forks too.’

(8) **dekat 4 = approaching**
Peperiksaan akhir tahun sudah dekat/*kat*.
examination end year already approaching
‘Now the year-end examination is approaching.’

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2 The real shortcoming of *Kamus Dewan* lies in the fact that it does not contain any syntactic information. The ungrammaticality is because of the mismatch of syntactic category, not because of semantic incompatibility. *Dekat* is basically an adjective or adverb except the third one whereas *kat* is always a preposition.
Penghulu kampung itu dekat/*kat benar dengan anak buah-nya.
head village that intimate very with nephew/niece-his
‘The village head is on very intimate terms with his nephews and nieces.’

One can possibly infer the compilers’ intention from the style specification *bp*, which appears only in the third meaning of *dekat*. However, the description (3) is still unsatisfactory since the word *kat* (and *dekat*), in addition to expressing static location which is usually expressed by the preposition *di* ‘at’, can also express other relations. Onozawa (1996: 223) and Abdullah (2005) did not miss them.

(10) Dia suka *kat* Aminah.
He like KAT Aminah
‘He likes Aminah.’
(Onozawa 1996: 223)

(11) Hantar *(de)kat* siapa?
send (DE)KAT who
‘Who should I send it to?’
(Abdullah 2005)

In these examples, *kat* does not introduce place but person. As will be discussed later, these uses of *kat* are not rare at all but, on the contrary, very productive. It can be thus seen that the description in Kamus Dewan is not sufficient.

It seems that Onozawa and Abdullah have the common attitude towards Colloquial Malay as pointed out earlier that the colloquial variety is a simplified version of the written variety. As a consequence, they simply show the corresponding prepositions in Written Malay rather than describe its meanings. For instance, Onozawa says that *kat* plays the same roles as the prepositions *di* ‘at’, *ke* ‘to’ and *pada* ‘to, with’. Abdullah goes further and insists that *kat* should be replaced by the corresponding prepositions in the written variety in the process of making the spoken corpora.

Researchers who gather corpora from colloquial language like this will face a big dilemma. Should we researchers analyse these corpora as they are? Or do we need to purify them in advance? If they are not purified, we are bound to consider the locative function ‘near’ with the preposition *dekat* to have changed into *di* [‘at’], *pada* [‘to, with’], *kepada* [‘to’], *ke* [‘to’] and *bagi* [‘for’]. In actual fact, that is not the case. (Abdullah 2005: 7)

Thus, he virtually identifies *kat* with the corresponding prepositions like *di* ‘at’, *pada* ‘to, with’ and others, for otherwise one cannot replace *kat* with them and purify the corpora. I believe that his
choice of purism or prescriptivism rather than descriptivism is strongly influenced by his long passionate commitment to the country’s language planning, though undoubtedly he started his academic career as a genuine descriptivist (Abdullah 1974, 1989). Although I acknowledge the significance of the presence of an established norm for a young national language like Malay, I would rather take the descriptivist position as a foreign researcher and learner of Malay.

Equating *kat* with other prepositions in the written variety is only beneficial as a good approximation. This is because a preposition normally has many distinct meanings and it is often not the case that *kat* has all of those meanings too. According to Onozawa (1996), the *kat* in (10) can be replaced by *pada* ‘to, with’. But these two prepositions are not always interchangeable. For example, *pada* that introduces time expressions cannot be replaced by *kat*.

(12) Eminem dah kahwin pada/*kat* tahun bila?
Eminem already marry in year when
‘What year did Eminem get married?’

(Utopia 60, 15/06/2005)

Moreover, the *kat* in (10) can be replaced by prepositions other than *pada* as well.

(13) Dia suka *kat/pada/akan/dengan/kepada/Ø* Aminah.
*(pada = ‘to, with’; akan = ‘towards’; dengan = ‘with’; kepada = ‘to’)*

In this way, the interchangeability with other prepositions only means that the meanings of *kat* have intersections with those of other prepositions. A true description must uncover what those intersections are. The meanings of *kat* need to be investigated independently.

It is now clear that we cannot look on Colloquial Malay as a simplified version of Written Malay. Rather it has its own system. In conjunction with this, an important fact that we tend to forget is that spoken language is (or ‘was’ in the case of languages whose contemporary spoken and written language are drastically different from each other) the basis of written language and not the other way round. There are languages that are spoken but have never been written, but there is no language that is written but not spoken.

Lastly, Goddard (2002: 146) also touches on *kat*. He calls it a ‘non-standard oblique marker’ and states that it only occurs in stative locational meanings like English *at*. This is not correct. As shall be discussed in the next section, it can also express non-stative spatial meaning like the English *to.*
There are two *kat’s* in (14). The first one is stative but the second one is not. Although whether *kat* is an oblique marker or not depends on how one defines the notion ‘oblique’, there are instances in which it does not mark obliques but direct objects.

The verb *sapu* takes a direct object. Hence the preposition *kat* in (15) is unexpected.

4. The meanings of *kat*

4.1 Eight meanings of *kat*

In this section, I will describe the various meanings of the multi-purpose preposition *kat*. They can be classified into eight groups, i.e. Location, Goal, Direction, Source, Source of Information, Object of Feeling, Agent and Patient. Some of them have many instances while others do not. I consider a meaning to be frequent if it has more than 10 instances in the UKM corpus. Frequent meanings will be marked with + in superscript. Other prepositions that are interchangeable with *kat* will be also shown for reference, though they provide nothing more than a good approximation as I have said in the last section. All the example sentences in section 4.1 are from the UKM Corpus unless otherwise indicated.

A. Location+

A large majority of instances of *kat* belong to this group. It introduces the location where a state holds or an action takes place. Interchangeable prepositions include *di* ‘at’, *pada* ‘to, with’ and *dengan* ‘with’.

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3 The term ‘oblique’ is used here to refer to ‘any syntactic element accompanying a verb which is not a subject or object, or the equivalent’ (Matthews 1997: 253).
(16) Kalau aku tak kerja kat bandar ni, nak la duduk kat kampung.
if I not work KAT city this want PART live KAT village
‘If I don’t work in a city, I want to live in a village.’

The location must not necessarily be a physical place. It can be a person too.

(17) Ibu bapa tadi tu tinggal anak kat dia, lepas tu keluar bekerja ….
mother father aforesaid that leave child KAT her after that go.out work
‘The parents left their child to her and then went to work ….’

Like the preposition di ‘at’, kat is often used with place nouns (kata arah).

(18) A, satu letak kat belakang, satu letak kat depan.
right one put KAT back one put KAT front
‘Right, put one at the back and another at the front.’

(19) Em, mak saudara aku tidur kat dalam bilik.
‘Um, my aunt slept in the room.’

B. Goal"

This group of kat introduces the goal of the action denoted by the verb. The verbs involve physical motion of entities, which can be both concrete (e.g. rumah ‘house’) and abstract (e.g. arahan ‘instruction’). The interchangeable prepositions are ke ‘to’ and kepada ‘to’. One of the verbs that typically occur with this group of kat is verbs of motion 4 (e.g. pergi ‘to go’, datang ‘to come’, balik ‘to return’, masuk ‘to enter’ etc.).

(20) Kalau kau ada peluang, ko nak ke pergi kat negara diorang ni?
if you have chance you want Q go KAT country their this
‘Do you want to go to their country if you have the chance?’

Another is verbs of sending, carrying and change of possession (e.g. hantar ‘to send’, bawa ‘to carry’, bagi ‘to give’, jual ‘to sell’ etc.).

(21) … aku rasa aku ada bagi mesej kat engkau tau.
‘… you know, I think I did send a message to you.’

---

4 The names of verb classes employed in this paper are adopted from Levin (1993).
Like the preposition *ke* ‘to’, *kat* can be accompanied by place nouns.

(22) Hantu masuk *kat* dalam badan pawang tu la ….

‘The ghost entered the medicine man’s body ….’

C. **Direction**

This group of *kat* introduces the place or person at which the action denoted by the verb directed. It differs from Goal in that the verb does not involve any physical motion. The interchangeable prepositions include *ke* ‘to’, *kepada* ‘to’, *pada* ‘to, with’, *akan* ‘towards’, *dengan* ‘with’ and *bagi* ‘for’.

(23) ... dah tak ada apa nak buat *kat* kereta kan?

‘... you’ll have nothing more to do to your car, won’t you?’

(24) Lepas tu masa tengok *kat* bawah tu takde kaki.

‘And then I looked downwards to find she had no legs.’

This group of *kat* is frequently used with verbs of communication and introduces the person to whom some information is conveyed (e.g. *cakap* ‘to say’, *cerita* ‘to report’, *bagitau* ‘to tell’, *jawab* ‘to answer’, *tunjuk* ‘to show’, *ajar* ‘to teach’, *cadangkan* ‘to suggest’ etc.).

(25) Alamak, aku nak describe macam mana *kat* kau ni!

‘Oh, how should I describe this to you?’

D. **Source**

This group of *kat* introduces the place from which the action denoted by the verb takes place. The interchangeable prepositions include *dari* ‘from’ and *daripada* ‘from’.

(26) Lagipun makanan-makanan macam sayur tu, ulam-ulam tu, buah-buahan moreover food like vegetable that raw.vegetable that fruit tu petik je *kat* pokok.

‘Moreover, you can just pick food like vegetables and fruits from trees.’
The fact that *kat* has this meaning may be hard to believe since it means that a single lexeme expresses two conflicting orientations, namely Goal/Direction and Source\(^5\). Imagine how it is like if there were no distinction between *to* and *from* in English. The two meanings are always distinguished overtly in languages like English and Japanese. In both languages, the former meaning, i.e. Goal/Direction, is unmarked.

(27)  
- a. go abroad  
  b. return *(from) abroad

(28)  
- a. sigoto (ni) iku  
  work to go  
  ‘go to work’  
  
- b. sigoto *(kara) kaeru  
  work from return  
  ‘come home from work’

In the above examples, the adpositions expressing Source are obligatory, hence marked. The same is not the case in Malay, however. Both the prepositions expressing Goal/Direction and Source can be omitted\(^6\). The correct meaning is retrieved from the context. The phrase ‘*balik* NP’ means ‘return to (*balik ke*) NP’ in (29) but ‘return from (*balik dari(pada)* NP’ in (30).

(29)  
- a. Hari yang *balik Kelantan* tu *balik sekali ramai-ramai?*  
  day that return Kelantan that return together many  
  ‘The day you went back to Kelantan, were you with many others?’
  
- b. Habis tu menangis *balik rumah* tu budak-budak tu.  
  finish that cry return home that children that  
  ‘And the children went home crying.’

(30)  
- a. … pagi kena kerja, sampai petang, petang *balik kerja.*  
  morning have.to work until evening evening return work  
  ‘… you have to go to work in the morning, work until the evening, and then you can go home from work.’
  
- b. Tetapi dia duduk kat bus stop tunggu budak-budak *balik sekolah.*  
  but he sit at bus stop wait children return school  
  ‘But he’s just sitting at the bus stop waiting for the other children returning from school.’

\(^5\) According to Yoichiro Tsuruga and Yuji Kawaguchi (p.c.), the preposition *à* in French also expresses these two conflicting orientations, though historically the two senses originate from two distinct lexemes.

\(^6\) It is expected that the omission of the prepositions expressing the two meanings does not occur equally. Since Source is marked as opposed to Goal/Direction (see the next paragraph), the omission of the prepositions of Source is probably less frequent. I leave this problem to future research.
Even so, using *kat* to mean Source is actually not common at all. (26) is the only instance of this use of *kat* in our corpus. There are three conceivable possibilities to this. First, (26) is an accidental error and can be ignored. Second, it is likely that this type of *kat* is only found in some dialect(s). Sentence (26) is uttered by a man from Perak. But evidence is too scant to conclude that such a use of *kat* is peculiar to the Perak dialect as there are five or six distinct dialects spoken in the state of Perak (Zaharani 1991: 5-7). Having said so, one thing that I can state confidently is that *kat* meaning Source is used in the Patani dialect. I heard the sentence in (31) uttered by a few people when I visited Yala, Thailand in 2005.

(31) Mari *kat* mana?
    come KAT where
    ‘Where are you from?’

Thus, the first possibility is ruled out. The third possibility is that this group of *kat* is indeed part of the standard usage but simply seldom used. If this possibility turns out to be true, the rarity of *kat* in this meaning will evidence the marked status of Source as opposed to Goal/Direction in Malay. The issue of whether this use of *kat* is really a dialectal phenomenon (and, if so, exactly which dialects) calls for further investigation.

E. Source of Information+
This is the group of *kat* which introduces the source from which certain information is obtained. The possible sources of information are seemingly restricted to print and image media. Other sources of information (e.g. other people) were not used with *kat*. The nouns introduced by *kat* in this group include TV, CD, surat khabar ‘newspaper’, majalah ‘magazine’, berita ‘news’, cerita ‘story (of TV programmes or films)’ and so on. The interchangeable prepositions include dalam ‘in’, di ‘at’, daripada ‘from’ and dari ‘from’.

(32) … berdasarkan aku baca *kat* paper …. 
    be.based.on I read KAT newspaper
    ‘… I read in the newspaper saying…’

It must be noted that this group of *kat* can be substituted not only by prepositions typical of Source meaning such as *daripada* ‘from’ (33) but also by ones expressing static location such as *dalam* ‘in’ (34), although the heading of this group includes the word ‘source’.

(33) Tapi tu aku ada baca *daripada* majalah Mastika kot, …. 
    but that I have read from magazine Mastika suppose
    ‘But I suppose I did read about that in the magazine Mastika, …’
Aku baca dalam majalah hari tu, ….  
I read in magazine day that  
‘I read in a magazine the other day, ….’

F. Object of Feeling*

The multi-purpose preposition *kat* can introduce the object of feeling or belief. Some of the common feelings that co-occur with *kat* include *minat* ‘interested’, *suka* ‘to like’, *cinta* ‘to love’, *rindu* ‘to miss’, *risau* ‘restless’, *takut* ‘afraid’, *kesian* ‘pity’, *percaya* ‘to believe’, *dengki* ‘envious’, *jatuh hati/cinta* ‘to fall in love’ and so on. The interchangeable prepositions are many, i.e. *pada* ‘to, with’, *akan* ‘towards’, *terhadap* ‘towards’, *dalam* ‘in’, *kepada* ‘to’, *tentang* ‘about’ and *dengan* ‘with’.

Tapi kan, kalau makan ### situ kan … terubat jugak rindu aku *kat* kampung, Lan, ingatlah jugak aku *kat* negeri aku kan.7  
‘But, if I eat there…, Lan, my homesickness will be healed, and at the same time I’ll remember my native state of Kelantan also.’

G. Agent

The UKM corpus contains two instances of *kat* which can be analysed as marking the agent of the action denoted by the verb. Both instances appear in *kena* adversative passive sentences. The interchangeable preposition is *oleh* ‘by’.

Sekali kerja tak siap *kena* marah *kat* bos, ….  
‘If you haven’t finished your work, you’ll be scolded by your boss, ….’

H. Patient

A patient is the place that a particular action is targeted at and is affected by that action. Syntactically, the complement NP of *kat* is normally realised as a direct object, which immediately follows the verb. Hence this group of *kat* has no interchangeable prepositions unlike other groups. Example (15) is repeated below as (37).

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7 ### represents the part that could not be transcribed due to unclarity.
Lepas tu sapu *kat* tingkap.

‘Then we gave the windows a wipe.’

The logical meaning will not change if *kat* is eliminated from (37). The function of *kat* is to vaguely specify the meaning of ‘place’. Japanese *n(o) toko(ro)* ‘place of’ serves a similar function.

Mado-*n(o) toko(ro)* huite.

‘Wipe (around) the windows.’

### 4.2 Semantic network of *kat*

The preceding sections revealed that the multi-purpose preposition *kat* has many meanings which can be expressed by other prepositions as well. In this section, I will attempt to explain its polysemy theoretically. In other words, I will explore the issue of what the mental representation of the meanings of *kat* is like. Some approaches to lexical semantics simply list in the lexicon all the meanings which are putatively distinct as homonyms. I do not take such a position since it fails to capture an important fact, i.e. that every meaning is associated with others in a systematic fashion. The task then is to find out the system underlying behind such associations.

To begin with, two kinds of meanings must be distinguished. They are those which are stored in the long-term memory and those which are not. The former is written in the lexicon while the latter is constructed on-line. The principled distinction between the two is what Lakoff (1987) failed to make, which led to an unconstrained polysemy network (Kreizer 1997). Developing ‘the principled polysemy model’, Tyler & Evans (2003: 42-43) proposes two criteria for determining distinct senses. First, a distinct sense ‘must contain additional meaning not apparent in any other senses associated with a particular form’. By this criterion, spatial and non-spatial meanings are regarded as distinct. Among the eight meanings of *kat* listed in the last section, Source of Feeling, Object of Feeling and Agent are non-spatial meanings while the other meanings are spatial. It is noteworthy here that some words have both spatial and non-spatial meanings. For example, *marah* means ‘to scold’ as a verb and ‘angry’ as an adjective. Thus *dia masih marah kat aku* is ambiguous between ‘she is still scolding me’ and ‘she is still angry with me’. In the former interpretation *aku* ‘me’ is the Direction of the act of scolding while in the latter interpretation it is the Object of Feeling.

The second criterion is that a distinct sense must ‘not be inferred from another sense and the context in which it occurs’. Goal and Direction can be grouped together since the distinction between them can be inferred from the type of verbs with which *kat* occurs. If it occurs with verbs of motion, it expresses the Goal of that motion; otherwise, it expresses the Direction of the action denoted by the verb. Compare (39) and (40) below.
The object of *kat* in (39), i.e. *kampung* ‘village’, is interpreted as the Goal of the motion of going (*gi*) while that in (40), i.e. *orang* ‘people’, is interpreted as the Direction of the act of asking (*tanya*).

The rest of the eight meanings, i.e. Location, Source, Source of Information, Agent and Patient can be considered as distinct senses of their own. Source and Source of Information are two distinct senses since the latter also contains the static meaning which the former lacks. This distinction is partly supported by the different interchangeable prepositions between the two senses. Only *kat* meaning Source of Information can be substituted by *dalam* ‘in’ and *di* ‘at’ (section 4.1 D-E). Likewise, Patient is distinct from Goal/Direction. The former has an additional meaning that the latter lacks, i.e. direct influence by the action denoted by the verb. In the case of (39), for example, wiping (*sapu*) will clear the dirt off the window (*tingkap*). Moreover, only *kat* introducing Patient has no interchangeable prepositions (section 4.1 H).

If we are to follow the standard analyses of polysemy in the cognitive framework, the next step is to determine a single primary or central sense from which the other distinct senses are derived. Tyler & Evans (2003) calls it ‘proto-scene’. Although this approach has been successful in the analyses of polysemy in many languages including Malay, it is not applicable to the analysis of *kat* (and presumably other multi-purpose prepositions). This is because its wide range of meanings, some of which conflicting with each other, does not allow one to decide on which one of them is primary. One might argue that Location is the proto-scene on the grounds of frequency. Indeed, Location does stand out in terms of frequency. But frequency is not a reliable factor as it is largely influenced by the co-occurring verbs. Alternatively, one might posit an abstract schema as the proto-scene of *kat*. Once again, the characteristic property of multi-purpose prepositions, i.e. a wide range of meanings, makes the schema too abstract to function effectively. Therefore, I must give

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8 Some static uses of Source of Information can be treated as Location too. For example, if one attends a meeting and obtains some information there, the meeting can be Location when its aspect as a place is more prominent in that person’s construal than its function of exchanging information is. In the latter case, the meeting is Source of Information, rather than Location.

9 Langacker’s (1992) analysis of the English preposition *of*, I think, suffered the same fate.
up adopting the standard approach to polysemy in cognitive linguistics.

Now let us discuss how the seven distinct senses are related to one another. First, the seven senses can be divided into two, i.e. spatial and non-spatial sense. This level can be considered to be what is generally referred to as ‘semantic field’ or ‘domain’. Many linguists agree that among all the domains the spatial domain has a special fundamental status (Jackendoff 1983, 2002; Lakoff 1987; Tyler & Evans 2003 among others). This insight applies to the multi-purpose preposition kat as well. Etymologically kat emerged from an adjective expressing a short distance, i.e. dekat ‘near, close’ (see section 5). It is generally known that there are striking syntactic and conceptual parallelisms between the spatial domain and non-spatial domains. Consider (41) below.

(41) a. The messenger went from Paris to Istanbul. [change of location]
b. The inheritance finally went to Fred. [change of possession]
c. The light went/changed from green to red. [change of properties]
d. The meeting was changed from Tuesday to Monday. [change of schedule]

(Jackendoff 2002: 356-357)

Notice that the preposition to is used to express the end of change in four different domains. It is expected that the spatial and non-spatial domain of kat can be related in a similar way.

Keeping this in mind, let us next focus on the organisation within each domain. It is true that all the senses are distinct, but some of them have elements in common. In the spatial domain, Patient can be analysed as an extension from Goal/Direction with an additional meaning of direct influence by the action denoted by the verb. As for the three distinct senses in the non-spatial domain, there seems to be no such extension.

In order to complete the whole semantic network of kat, it is necessary to examine to what extent the parallelism between the spatial and non-spatial domain is observed. How are the two domains connected? The interchangeable prepositions for each sense are helpful here. The same prepositions used in two different senses indicate the association between the two senses. Note here that the preposition dengan ‘with’ cannot be taken into account here since, as indicated at the beginning of this paper, it is a likely candidate of multi-purpose preposition. Firstly, Goal/Direction shares three prepositions with Object of Feeling (i.e. kepada ‘to’, pada ‘to’ and akan ‘towards’), which guarantees the strong association between these two senses. Location shares one preposition with it (i.e. pada ‘to, with’), hence a weaker association than Goal/Direction. These two links are in line with our intuition well. For example, the beginning of love is expressed as jatuh hati/cinta ‘to fall in love’ using a motion verb jatuh ‘to fall’. In other words, love is conceived as a motion from the state of not loving to that of loving. This is corroborated by one of the words to mean ‘feeling’ in Malay, gerak hati, which literally translates as ‘movement (gerak) of mind (hati)’. A long-lasting feeling is a state rather than a motion, hence the association with Location. Next, Source of Information can also be analysed as an extension from Source with an additional meaning of static
location. Through this additional meaning, it is also connected with Location. It shares the prepositions *daripada* ‘from’ and *dari* ‘from’ with Source and *di* ‘at’ with Location. Finally, it is quite probable that Agent is related to Source though the two share no preposition. Agent is more like Source than Location and Goal/Direction since it is usually the initiator of an action. In spatial terms, the initiator is the starting point or Source. Although I have not found any evidence from Malay, the following Japanese phrase obviously reflects such reasoning.

(42) Shinchan-wa maikai Misae-kara nagurar eru.

Shinchan-TOP every.time Misae-KARA is.hit

‘Shinchan is hit by Misae in every episode (of the cartoon).’

In (42) the Agent *Misae* is marked with *kara*, which also introduces Source as in *Tokyo kara* ‘from Tokyo’. Of course, one can also use such typical agent markers as *ni* and *niyotte* ‘by’ instead.

The whole semantic network of *kat* is thus like Figure 1.

![Figure 1. The semantic network of kat](image)

The heavy lines connecting the two domains show the parallels between the two domains. The senses surrounded by heavy lines show that they are used frequently (see section 4.1).

There are two major ways to capture these parallels among semantic fields. Firstly, cognitive linguists make use of metaphor or image-schema transformation, which is the mapping from a ‘source domain’ to a ‘target domain’ (Lakoff & Johnson 1980). They derive non-spatial senses from the spatial senses. The parallels between different semantic fields become possible since the target domain is structuralised in the same way as the source domain as a result of the mapping process. Secondly, in Conceptual Semantics pioneered by Ray Jackendoff, the parallels are treated as senses related by feature variation. The four *to’s* in (41) are formally represented as in (43).
(43) \( \text{to in (41a)} = T_{\text{Spatial}} \) (spatial domain)
\( \text{to in (41b)} = T_{\text{Temporal}} \) (temporal domain)
\( \text{to in (41c)} = T_{\text{Poss}} \) (possession domain)
\( \text{to in (41d)} = T_{\text{Ident}} \) (identificational domain)

TO is a function that is field-neutral. The subscription specifies the semantic field. The three core spatial senses in Figure 1, i.e. Location, Goal/Direction and Source, correspond to Jackendoff’s functions AT, TO and FROM respectively.

Lastly, it is necessary to add that a totally free extension (or mapping) to a non-spatial domain is not allowed. The possible extensions are determined idiosyncratically. The Location meaning of \textit{kat} cannot be extended to the temporal domain while that of \textit{di} ‘at’ can.

(44) a. Awak tak perlu lagi kerja di/kat kilang ni.
    ‘You don’t need to work at this factory any longer.’

b. Awak tak perlu lagi kerja di/*kat masa depan.
    ‘You don’t need work any longer in the future.’

5. From \textit{dekat} to \textit{kat}

This section discusses two problems concerning the relation between \textit{dekat} and \textit{kat}. We saw in section 3 that \textit{kat} is the shortened form of \textit{dekat} and the former does not have all the meanings that the latter has. The question arises now as to whether the reverse is true. Does \textit{dekat} have all the meanings of \textit{kat}? This is the first problem. The answer seems to be positive.

(45) … lepas tu dia akan bagi \textit{dekat} family diorang kan, \textit{dekat} Indon, …
    ‘… after that s/he will give \textit{DEKAT} family their \textit{not DEKAT} Indonesia’

(46) Mak dia pernah cerita \textit{dekat} dia, …
    ‘Her mum has told her, …’

(47) Nama dia sedap tu, aku dengar \textit{dekat} TV hari tu pun ada kan.
    ‘The name sounds nice; I heard it on TV the other day too.’
(48) ... sangat kesian dekat dia.
    very pity DEKAT her
    ‘... I feel so sorry for her.’

(UKM Corpus)

In (45) the first dekat expresses Goal and the second one Location. The dekat in (46), (47) and (48)
means Direction, Source of Information and Object of Feeling respectively. Our corpus contains no
instance of the other three groups of the meanings, i.e. Source, Agent and Patient, presumably
because these two meanings are far less frequent than the others.

The second problem concerns the genesis of the multi-purpose preposition kat. I would like to
make conjectures upon the diachronic development of kat based on synchronic facts. Since kat is
peculiar to Colloquial Malay, there is no data old enough to make a discussion on its historical
development possible. In Malay-speaking area, just as in other parts of the world, literacy had long
been the monopoly of the upper class and the written language has been very different from the
spoken language used by ordinary people in their everyday conversation. Only in the last century
did ordinary people start to record and write what they speak. Nowadays more and more Colloquial
Malay is being written owing to the advent of the computer age. For instance, many, but not all,
Malay-speaking bloggers use Colloquial Malay rather than written formal Malay.

Originally, the word dekat, which later develops into kat, must have been used only as an
adjective, meaning ‘near, close (of distance)’.

(49) Tak pa, Kausar [AP [A dekat] [PP dengan fak kita]].
    no what Kausar near with faculty our
    ‘Never mind because Kausar is near our faculty.’

(UKM Corpus)

As an adjective, dekat takes a PP as its complement to form an AP. In Malay, prepositions which
head the PP complements to verbs and adjectives are often dropped. This preposition drop process
gives rise to the next stage. Suppose the preposition drop happened to the AP headed by dekat. The
resultant structure would be [AP [A dekat] [PP ___ NP]]. As the PP is not headed by a preposition any
more, it would be reanalysed as an NP, creating the structure [AP [A dekat] NP]. This structure led to
a further reanalysis since an adjective cannot take an NP as its complement. Thus, dekat turned
from an adjective into a preposition. As Yoichiro Tsuruga (p.c.) points out, the intermediate stages
are only hypothetical and therefore what he calls ‘structural gaps’ do not exist. The change of
syntactic category must have happened at the same time as the preposition drop, for the
intermediate structures hypothesised above are all illicit.

In the course of the change of syntactic category, its semantics also underwent a common
process of change, namely ‘bleaching’. The specification of distance became increasingly unclear
and finally it was completely lost, leaving a vague meaning of place. This vagueness explains why *dekat* could evolve into a multi-purpose preposition with its core senses in the spatial domain. However, it might not have trod such a path without any strong motivation. I deem that the course to a multi-purpose preposition was taken since Malay was the lingua franca of the Malay Archipelago, where a great number of people of different linguistic origins were calling for a word that could be used for various purposes. Choosing correct adpositions is one of the most troublesome tasks for many learners of foreign languages. Figure 2 below summarises the entire scenario of the development of *kat* from *dekat*.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SYNTAX</th>
<th>SEMANTICS</th>
<th>PHONOLOGY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[ AP [A dekat] [PP dengan NP] ]</td>
<td>NEAR</td>
<td>/dekat/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[ AP [A dekat] [PP ___ NP] ]</td>
<td></td>
<td>/dekat/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[ AP [A dekat] NP ]</td>
<td>Place</td>
<td>~ /kat/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[ PP [P dekat] NP ]</td>
<td>various meanings in the spatial domain</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>extension to the non-spatial domain</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 2. The development of *kat* from *dekat***

A piece of evidence for the conjecture above is the fact that in present-day Colloquial Malay *dekat* seldom conveys the original meaning of vicinity when it is followed by a complement NP. Our corpus has no instance of *dekat* in this meaning in this environment. The meaning of vicinity can be freely expressed by *dekat* in other environments (e.g. (49)).

6. **Conclusion**

As its name suggests, the multi-purpose preposition *kat* has varied meanings which are usually expressed by several different prepositions. It only occurs in Colloquial Malay. In section 3, I claimed that Colloquial Malay should not be looked on as a simplified version of Written Malay. Working on such a false assumption, previous treatments of *kat*, be they dictionaries, language textbooks or articles, were on the whole unsatisfactory. They just tried to describe the meanings of *kat* by means of other interchangeable prepositions. Contrary to the widespread assumption, Colloquial Malay is actually worth investigating in its own right. This paper endorsed the validity of such an attitude by giving a more elaborate description and account of the meanings of *kat*. I
classified them into eight groups: Location, Goal, Direction, Source, Source of Information, Object of Feeling, Agent and Patient (section 4.1). These eight meanings are not isolated but related to one another in a systematic fashion. In section 4.2, I explored the issue of the semantic representation of kat and presented a model of its semantic network (see Figure 1). Section 5 dealt with two problems concerning the relation between dekat and kat. It is probable that dekat can express all the meanings that kat has. I put forward a somewhat conjectural view that the multi-purpose preposition kat evolved from an adjective dekat with the meaning of vicinity ‘near, close’ through the reanalysis of syntactic category as a consequence of the preposition drop, and the concomitant semantic bleaching. I also indicated the significant role of the wide use of Malay as a lingua franca.

An intriguing issue relating to multi-purpose preposition is the fact that another multi-purpose preposition sama, which is mainly used in Indonesia¹⁰, has a similar distribution of meanings (den Besten 2005). This word basically means ‘same’. Thus the course of its development must have been different from that of kat. The question is why the distribution of the meanings of the two largely overlaps. Are there any universals behind it?

References

Langacker, Ronald. 1992. The symbolic nature of cognitive grammar: The meaning of of and

¹⁰ To the best of my knowledge, kat is used in Malaysia, Singapore and Southern Thailand but not in Indonesia.


Dictionaries


口語マレー語の多目的前置詞 kat

野元 裕樹

口語マレー語には kat という特殊な多目的前置詞が存在する。この語は、口語マレー語のみに現れ、文語マレー語には見られない。「多目的前置詞」と呼ぶのは、いくつかの異なる前置詞で表わされる意味が 1 つの kat という形式で表わされるためである。本稿では、kat の実に多様な意味を記述し、各意味間の関係を考察する。

先行研究における kat の扱いは、概して不十分なものであった。それは 1 つの誤った前提による。すなわち、口語マレー語が文語マレー語の簡略化されたものであるという考えである。このような前提を背景に、先行研究では kat の意味は置き換える可能性他の前置詞によってしか記述されてこなかった。具体的には、「kat は di, ke, pada の意味を表わす」という具合にである。本稿では、そのような姿勢を排除し、口語を文語と同等の研究対象と考える。

口語コーパスに現れる多くの例を見た結果、kat には次の 8 つの意味があることが分かった。すなわち、「場所」、「着点」、「方向」、「起点」、「情報源」、「感情の対象」、「動作主」、「被動者」である。以下に、各意味の例文を挙げる。

①場所
Kalau aku tak kerja kat bandar ni, nak la duduk kat kampung.
「もし街で働かないだったら、村に住みたいよ。」

②着点
Kalau kau ada peluang, ko nak ke pergi kat negara diorang ni?
「もし機会があったら、彼らの国に行きたい？」

③方向
… dah tak ada apa nak buat kat kereta kan?
「…もう車にするのは何もなくなるでしょう？」

④起点
Lagipun makanan-makanan macam sayur tu, ulam-ulam tu, buah-buahan tu petik je kat pokok.
「それに、野菜とか果物みたいな食べ物なんて木から採って来ればいいんだよ。」

⑤情報源
… berdasarkan aku baca kat paper …. 
「…僕が新聞で読んだところによれば…。」

⑥感情の対象
Tapi kan, kalau makan ### situ kan … terubat jugak rindu aku kat kampung. Lan, ingatlah jugak aku kat negeri aku kan.
「でもさ、そこで食べると、村への恋しさが発されもするし、それにさ、ラン、俺の故郷の州のことを思い出しもするんだ。」

⑦動詞主

Sekali kerja tak siap kena marah kat bos, ….  
「もしも仕事が仕上がってなかったら、上司に怒られるんだ…。」

⑧被動者

Lepas tu sapu kat tingkap.  
「それから窓を拭いたの。」

これら8つの意味は、互いに孤立した関係にあるのではなく、体系的な結びつきを持っています。本稿では、多目的前置詞katの意味表示として意味運のモデルを提案する。まず、一般に、意味は、心的盛書に記載されるべきものと、そうでなくその場で構築されるものに分かれる。上の8つの意味のうち、「着点」と「方向」の意味の区別は、共通する動詞の種類により予測可能である。移動動詞と共起するときにはkatは「着点」を導き、移動動詞以外と共起するときにはkatは「方向」を意味する。よって、この2つの意味は意味運関においては単一の意味として扱う。これを「着点・方向」とする。その他の意味は、それぞれ心的措書に書かれる必要がある。

次に、意味は、空間的意味と非空間的意味に分類できる。katの意味のうち、「場所」、「着点・方向」、「起点」、「被動者」は空間的意味、「情報源」、「感情の対象」、「動作主」は非空間的意味である。空間的意味と非空間的意味は、意味表示において異なる意味領域（あるいは意味場）に位置する。意味検索者の多くが、空間領域がすべての意味領域の根幹にあると考え、空間領域と非空間領域の間には並行関係があることを指摘している。本稿でもその考えを踏襲する。

分類が終わったところで、次に各意味領域の内部構成を考える。意味の中には共通する要素を持つものが存在する。それらは、意味表示上で結びつきを持っている必要がある。具体的にそれに該当するのが、空間領域における「着点・方向」と「被動者」である。これらはともに動作の向けられる事物を導入する。「被動者」には、動作の直接的影響という追加の意味がある。

多目的前置詞katの意味運関のモデルを完成させるには、意味領域間の結びつきを考える必要がある。本稿では、2領域間の並行関係が、共通する交換可能な前置詞に反映されていると考える。それにより、意味表示上で、2領域に存在する異なる意味が結びつけられる。まず、非空間領域の「感情の対象」は、空間領域の「場所」、「着点・方向」と結びつこう。共通する交換可能な前置詞は、前者の場合がkepada「…に」、pada「…に」、akan「…に対して」の3つ、後者の場合がpada「…に」である。次に、非空間領域の「情報源」は、空間領域の「場所」、「起点」と結びつく。共通する交換可能な前置詞は、前者の場合がdi「…で、に」、後者の場合が daripada「…から」、dari「…から」の2つである。最後に、非空間領域の「動作主」であるが、これは空間領域のどの意味とも共通する交換可能な前置詞を持たない。しかし、動作主は通常、動作の始動者であり、これは場所論的捉え方をすれば、起点になる。そこで、非空間領域の「動作主」と空間領域の「起点」の間に結び
つきがあると考える。このようにしてできる意味表示が、本文中の図1の意味連関のモデルである。

本稿では、katとその元来の形式 dekatの関係についても議論する。2つの問題がある。第一は、両者がそのすべての意味において全く等価であるか、という問題である。katはdekatの持つすべての意味を表わすことはできない。それに対し、dekatはkatの持つすべての意味を表わし得るようである。第二の問題は、どのようにして多目的前置詞 katがdekatから発達したのか、というものである。口語マレー語には、通時的研究を可能にするだけの十分な資料が存在しないので、共時的研究を元に推測することしかできない。まず、dekatは最初は「近い」という意味の形容詞であった。よって、補部には前置詞句を取り、[AP [A dekat] [PP [P dengan] NP]]という統語構造である。次の段階として、マレー語文法で頻繁に観察される、前置詞脱落が起こった。その結果、前置詞句は主部を欠くため、名詞句と再分析された。つまり、[AP [A dekat] NP]という統語構造が生じた。しかし、形容詞は補部に名詞句を直接取ることが許されない。そこで、dekatの品詞が形容詞から前置詞に転じた。この統語範疇の変化に伴い、意味においても「漂白」という変化が起こった。具体的には、「近い」という意味から、距離の指定がなくなり、場所一般に括がった。そして、多目的性が獲得された。さらに、マレー語が東南アジア島嶼部でのlingen・フランカとして使用されていたことも重要な役割を果たしたと考えられる。katの発達の全過程は、本文中の図2のようにまとめられる。