

# Utilization Of Semantic Values And Local Community Metaphor In Creating Furniture Identity

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**Abstract:** Investigating furniture metaphor and identity are challenging because the metaphors are mostly deliberated in the context of language. This paper explores how the extent to which a source represents the meaning a designer intends to convey and is related to a target affect the selection of that source. By providing a thorough analysis of metaphor's characteristics and express meanings to users via furniture form and appearance, systematic research survey was employed to obtain the first-hand data in presenting identity of Sarawak in furniture design that focus on local content of Dayak and Orang Ulu's of Sarawak. Findings of the studies and provisional results are discussed from a theoretical and practical point of view, and recommendations for generating successful furniture design according to popular metaphors. The researchers believe, by embedding the semantic values and mapping local identity metaphor in the product aesthetics increase consumers desire to pay furniture items with high value for quality products rather than buying products at low prices. In conclusion, this paper aims to identify Sarawak's local identity that potential to be a design elements of furniture design; Finally, this research intentions to analyze, identify and apply biomimicry of Sarawak local's identity that able to symbolize furniture of Sarawak.

**Index Terms:** Design metaphor, furniture, identity, semantic values

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Furniture industry in Malaysia is considered one of the most profitable industries. The exportation of timber products from Malaysia in year 2010 has increased a massive income in which 4 billion Ringgit Malaysia has been generated according to Sakina Mohamed [1]. This phenomenal triggered the creation of job opportunities for more than 5,000 peoples under furniture projects that was revealed by the Malaysia Industrial Development Authority in year 2011. Evidence shows very high prospects for Malaysia's local cultures to become crucial cultural elements in future design applications due to the demand of product that able to portray local identity. Consequently, Sarawak is picked as a subject reference because of beautiful and unique visual arts and crafts. Emaria in [2] stated that Sarawak's aboriginal cultures and identities offer great potential for enhancing design value and becoming recognized in the global market due to cultural beliefs, values, and social practices. Featherstone also mentioned that the awareness in study of the relationship of metaphor, identity and sentiments among the researcher has aroused in these decades [3]. Narotzky in [4] has mentioned that most of the researchers nowadays interested and focused in the study of relationship between national identity and product designs.

## 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Metaphor as design creativity aids

According to Wiley in [5], metaphor frequently used to describe objects and it has been referred to transfer and construe of source properties to target in a conceptual level of the study. Furniture is a build subject of the tangible artefact that formulated from metaphor assets. In order to interpret a metaphor, researchers are required to create the appearance of a source visible in the appearance of its target. Two distinctive sources mapping are utilizing to manifest the tangible form which are semantic and physical mapping. In this study, the semantic elements to describe Sarawak is selected from cultural material of Iban tribe known as Terabai (one example out of many). Terabai or known as shield by the Dayaks in Sarawak are used during the war in the past years

(Refer to figure 1). According to Anggat in [6], Terabai has unique tattoo and motifs pattern carved on the shield which purposely to scare the enemies. Terabai are also described as the toughest shield which represents the attributes of bold, strong and indigenous. Researchers believed metaphors functions as a design creativity tools in providing cues to end users of how to understand products that are familiar and personify. Metaphorical reasoning is an iterative process (design process) through which designers gradually increase their knowledge of a design situation and stimulate design creativity. The design process starts from creating a thumbnail sketch, drawing, development of idea, final design, technical drawing, mock-up and prototype and final production; Design, as a process, has been severely confined as a management strategy for delivering products that conform to customers' specifications



*Figure 1 Terabai, known as Dayak's shield  
(Photo by Alexander, 2017)*

## 3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research embarks quantitative methodologies in which the application of semantic differential (SD) approach is employed to measure consumers' perceptions. Musdi Shanat in [7] stated that if SD questionnaires is disseminated together with actual scaled prototype, the research finding will be able to provide a proximity precise prediction and suggestions what to embed into furniture creation in order to increase consumers' satisfaction and fulfil end user preferences. The application of five to seven-point rating scale are common for