

Investigating *Di*, *Dalam*, and *Di Dalam* ‘In(side)’ in Standard Malaysian Malay Using Corpus Data*

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In Standard Malaysian Malay, a prepositional concept can be expressed in three forms: [Locative], [Relational Noun] or [Locative + Relational Noun]. In this study, we focus on *di*, *dalam*, and *di dalam*, all of which mean ‘in(side)’ (*di* also means ‘at’). Most previous studies on Malay have detailed the meanings of one or more prepositions, while only a few have discussed the presence or absence of elements in some of these different forms. Rarely have they focused on distinguishing meaning differences between *di*, *dalam*, and the combination *di dalam* using quantitative measures. In the prestigious Malay dictionary *Kamus Dewan*, the meanings of *di*, *dalam*, and *di dalam* show a good deal of overlap. The dictionary definitions are circular — the definition of *di* overlaps with *dalam*; the word *dalam* is used to define *di*; and *di dalam* is used to define *dalam*. This paper claims that it is important to investigate the collocates of these three forms, as they reflect high semantic closeness yet with subtle differences. No previous work has looked into the neighboring nouns of *di*, *dalam*, and *di dalam* in a large corpus. This study employs both syntagmatic analysis, which tests the plausibility of using each of the three forms with similar nouns, and paradigmatic analysis, which identifies the groups of nouns that may appear after each form. The results show that all three forms differ in most of their collocates and that each form might depict locations that are general or specific.

Key words: Malay, locative prepositions, *di*, *dalam*, *di dalam*, semantics

1. Introduction

The preposition (*Kata Sendi*) constitutes a chapter in most Malay grammar books. Research on Malay prepositions concentrates mostly on their semantics, their colloquial uses, or cross-linguistic comparisons. Studies of prepositions are not new, and different varieties of Malay have been inspected. Examples of studies of Malay prepositions (in

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different varieties) are seen in Djenar's (2007) work on Indonesian prepositions *di*, *pada*, and *dalam* (glossed as 'on', 'in', and 'at' respectively), Nomoto's (2006) work on the polysemy of the preposition *kat* (short form of *dekat* 'near/close to') in colloquial Malay, Chung's (2004) analysis of the spatial concept of *dalam* 'in(side)' in Malaysian Malay, and a series of works by Ho-Abdullah on Malay *antara/di antara* 'among' or 'between' (Ho-Abdullah 2005); on *di atas* 'above' versus *di bawah* 'below' (Ho-Abdullah 2006); and on the Malay-English comparison of *in* (Ho-Abdullah 2002), as well as on Arabic and Malay *at* by Hasan & Ho-Abdullah (2008). Some studies have inspected a single form, while many more have compared two or more different forms which are near-synonyms or antonyms. Very rarely has a set of closely related forms been contrasted as this study intends to do. The target items for analysis in this work are *di*, *dalam*, and *di dalam*, which all mean 'in(side)'. (In addition to 'in(side)', *di* also means 'at'.) These three forms are not often discussed at once because most grammar books and dictionaries consider them to possess similar meanings and functions. These three forms can sometimes be followed by a similar noun, as shown in (1) below. (1a) shows an example of *di*, (1b) shows an example of *dalam*, and (1c) & (1d) show examples of *di dalam*. All three forms are followed by *kawasan* 'area', either as *kawasan hutan* 'forest area' ((1a) & (1b)) or *kawasan perumahan* 'housing area' ((1c) & (1d)). (Free translation by the author.)

- (1) a. *Albader Parad dan lima rakannya terbunuh dalam pertempuran dengan tentera laut di kawasan hutan di kaki Gunung Tucay...* (0119.txt)
 "Albader Parad and five of his friends were killed in the combat with the navy in the forest area at the bottom of Tucay Mountain..."
- b. *Beliau berkata, bagi pemegang Lesen Perjanjian Pengurusan Hutan Mampan (SFMLA), mereka perlu menyediakan pelan tindakan mencegah kebakaran dalam kawasan hutan masing-masing.* (0433.txt)
 "[Honorable] He said, for license holders of the Sustainable Forest Management License Agreement (SFMLA), they will need to prepare an action plan to prevent fires from occurring in their respective forest area."
- c. *Ketua Jabatan Siasatan Jenayah Kelantan, ACP Mazlan Lazim berkata, mereka ditahan pukul 11.20 malam tadi dalam operasi mencegah jenayah di dalam kawasan perumahan tersebut.* (1858.txt)
 "The head of the Kelantan Criminal Investigation Division, ACP Mazlan Lazim, said they [the criminals] were detained at 11.20 last night in an operation to abolish [originally, 'to avoid'] crime in that housing area."
- d. *"Selain itu, program seperti ini memupuk kesedaran serta semangat kejiranan apabila duduk di dalam kawasan perumahan yang sama",*

katanya ketika ditemui baru-baru ini. (4168.txt)

““Other than that, a program like this raises awareness as well as neighborhood spirit when residing in the same housing area’, he said when interviewed [originally, ‘when met’] recently.”

All these examples show that *kawasan* ‘area’ is a plausible noun following *di*, *dalam*, or *di dalam*. All three forms can denote the location of an area, or put differently, the concept of an area can be used with all three forms. Yet the same does not occur for all types of nouns. In order to see how native speakers responded to the use of *di*, *dalam*, and *di dalam*, a short experiment was carried out by the author. Six native speakers of Malay in Malaysia were asked questions modified from the sentence in (1a) above, which is shown again in (2) below.¹ The corresponding questions are placed in square brackets in (2). The responses are given in (3).²

- (2) *Albader Parad dan lima rakannya terbunuh dalam pertempuran [question 3a] dengan tentera laut di kawasan hutan [question 3b] di kaki Gunung Tucay, [question 3c].... (0119.txt)*

“Albader Parad and five of his friends were killed in the combat [question 3a] with the navy in the forest area [question 3b] at the bottom (feet) of Tucay Mountain, [question 3c]....”

Not all subjects responded to every option, although the instructions said to do so (see (3) below). Most of the time, only one ‘best answer’ was given. The analysis thus provided the number of responses we received from the six subjects; ‘6/6’ indicates six out of the six subjects selected a particular answer.

- (3) Instructions: Please write ‘best answer’, ‘possible answer’, or ‘impossible answer’ after each option. You can choose more than one best, possible, or impossible answer, if any.

a. *Ahmad dan lima rakannya terbunuh _____*
[Ahmad and three of his friends were killed _____]

¹ A simple sentence structure was used in the questionnaire to speed up the answering process and to reduce the subjects’ reluctance to read long sentences. The meaning of each sentence was maintained in all the questions. Four questions were asked. The first three questions were on *di dalam* (shown in (3)) and an additional question of *di bawah* was also included (to be discussed in example (12) in a later section).

² The original corpus sentence is given in (2). The author tested the plausibility of using a different form for each underlined phrase.

- A. **dalam** pertempuran dengan tentera laut. [DALAM combat with the navy.]
(6/6 ‘best answer’)
- B. **di dalam** pertempuran dengan tentera laut. [DI DALAM combat with the navy.]
(2/6 ‘possible answer’)
- C. **di** pertempuran dengan tentera laut. [DI combat with the navy.]
(1/6 ‘possible answer’; 1/6 ‘impossible answer’)
- b. Mereka terbunuh _____
[They were killed _____]
- A. **di** kawasan hutan. [DI forest area.]
(6/6 ‘best answer’)
- B. **dalam** kawasan hutan. [DALAM forest area.]
(2/6 ‘possible answer’)
- C. **di dalam** kawasan hutan. [DI DALAM forest area.]
(2/6 ‘possible answer’)
- c. Hutan itu _____
[The forest _____]
- A. **dalam** kaki Gunung Tucay. [DALAM feet of Tucay Mountain.]
(2/6 ‘impossible answer’)
- B. **di** kaki Gunung Tucay. [DI feet of Tucay Mountain.]
(5/6 ‘best answer’; 1/6 ‘possible answer’)
- C. **di dalam** kaki Gunung Tucay. [DI DALAM feet of Tucay Mountain.]
(2/6 ‘impossible answer’)

The subjects’ responses are summarized in (4) below. The impossible ones are marked with asterisks.

- (4) Albader Parad dan lima rakannya terbunuh **dalam pertempuran** [dalam >> di dalam >> di] dengan tentera laut **di kawasan hutan** [di >> dalam/di dalam] **di kaki Gunung Tucay**, [di >> *dalam/*di dalam].... (0119.txt)
“Albader Parad and five of his friends were killed in the combat with the navy in the forest area at the bottom of Tucay Mountain,....”

All the ‘best answer’ responses corresponded to the corpus example, although some subjects agreed that there was more than one acceptable form. For instance, *pertempuran* ‘combat’ and *kawasan hutan* ‘forest area’ can be used with all three forms but in a different order of preference. *Kaki Gunung Tucay* ‘the bottom/feet of Tucay

Mountain’ can only be used with one form — *di*. This short experiment showed that the native speakers knew which option was the best answer, but some also believed that other forms were possible. As answers other than the ‘best answer’ sometimes received inconsistent replies, the experiment suggested that the distinction between the three forms deserves more research. Since all the subjects knew which ‘best answer’ should go with which of the three forms, the nouns that follow these three forms also deserve some attention. It is thus postulated that: (a) the three forms (*di*, *dalam*, and *di dalam*) have subtle semantic distinctions; and (b) the differences between the three forms can be identified by examining the types of nouns that follow each of the three forms respectively. Therefore, our research questions are as follows:

- (a) What are the possible differences between *di*, *dalam*, and *di dalam* in Standard Malaysian Malay?
- (b) How can a corpus-based study reveal information that can help to distinguish between these closely related forms?

In order to answer the above questions, the three forms were inspected using a one-million-word corpus of Standard Malaysian Malay. The intention was to examine the most frequent types of nouns that co-occur respectively with *di*, *dalam*, and *di dalam* in a large set of authentic data. A corpus-based analysis of the collocates of *di*, *dalam*, and *di dalam*, and an interpretation of their semantics, were then carried out. The section below presents the different terminologies given to the three forms.

2. Terminology of *di* and *dalam*³

By definition, Malay prepositions are a closed class. However, different scholars have suggested that there is a slight variation in this closed set of prepositions. Many (e.g. Nik Safiah et al. 1997, Sneddon et al. 2010) have considered *di* a preposition which shows position or direction.⁴ Table 1 below summarizes the list of prepositions given by two scholars (Ho-Abdullah 2002:113, Nik Safiah et al. 1997:402) on Standard Malaysian Malay.

The list in Table 1 does not include prepositions such as ‘between’, ‘under’, ‘down’, etc., which are usually listed when a search for English ‘prepositions’ is conducted.

³ Most studies have investigated only *di* and *dalam*. Their combination (*di dalam*) usually reflects a merge of the two.

⁴ Adelaar (2005) claims that the passive *di-* in Malay is developed from the preposition *di*. However, the development of *di* into other forms is beyond the purpose of this work.

Among the prepositions in Table 1, Sneddon et al. (2010:195) state that only the first three (*di*, *ke*, and *dari*) “indicate position and direction” while the others do not.⁵

Table 1: List of prepositions in Malay (translation by the author)

<i>di</i>	<i>ke</i>	<i>dari</i>	<i>daripada</i>	<i>kepada</i>	<i>pada</i>	<i>untuk</i>	<i>dengan</i>	<i>sejak*</i>	<i>tentang</i>	<i>sampai*</i>	<i>bagi</i>	<i>demi</i> [#]
at ⁶	to/ toward	from (place)	from (person)	to	at	for	with	since	about	till/until	for	for

*Not in Ho-Abdullah (2002:113); [#]not in Nik Safiah et al. (1997:402).

For many scholars, the terminology of *di* is less varied, as it is recognized as both a ‘preposition’ and a ‘locative’ marker. Blust (1989:197) calls it an ‘adhesive locative’ while Blust (1997:45) calls it a ‘generic locative marker’. Huumo (1996:265), on the other hand, calls the locative phrases ‘locative adverbials’: “[T]he primary function of locative adverbials is to introduce different types of spaces, scenes, or background, in relation to which other elements in the sentence are perceived.” Blust (1989:198) cites examples from Chamorro and Malagasy, explaining that *gi* and *am* in *gi-tatten* ‘behind’ (Chamorro) and *am-bany* ‘below’ (Malagasy) are adhesive locatives, while *tatten* and *bany* are called ‘specifiers’.

Comparatively, the names given to words appearing at the same place as these ‘specifiers’ are termed more variedly. For instance, Sneddon et al. (2010:195) call them ‘locative nouns’. In Wienold & Rohmer’s (1997:169) typological study on the lexicalization of dimensional expressions, such as *long-short*, *wide-narrow*, etc., they explain that the Indonesian *dalam* is a ‘relational noun’ that means ‘inside’. Djenar (2007), also dealing with Indonesian, uses terms such as ‘general localizer’ (p.37), ‘locatives’ (book title), ‘prepositions’ (p.1), and ‘locative prepositions’ (p.1) interchangeably. Broschart (1997:287), in his analysis of Tongan, has used the terminology ‘local nouns’ or ‘prepositional nouns’ to refer to the nouns that follow the locative markers.

In Wienold & Rohmer (1997), the combination *di dalam* shows a locative marker plus a relational noun. In Nik Safiah et al. (1997), a Malaysian grammar book, the words in the similar position of *dalam* (such as *bawah* ‘below’, *atas* ‘above’, *belakang* ‘back’, *utara* ‘north’, *selatan* ‘south’, etc.) are named ‘directional nouns’ (viz. *Kata Nama Arah*).⁷

⁵ Nonetheless, it should be noted that the grammar book by Sneddon et al. (2010) is based on Indonesian Malay. Only when the meaning given is comparable to that of Standard Malaysian Malay (judged by the author) will the description be taken into consideration.

⁶ When appearing on its own, *di* is more appropriately translated as ‘at’ rather than ‘in’. Further discussion regarding this issue will follow, with reference to Figure 1.

⁷ See also Adelaar (1992) for a discussion of these directional terms.

On the other hand, since expressions such as *di dalam* carry a locative meaning, scholars working on case semantics consider them one of the 'cases'. Fillmore (1968:25) defines 'locative' as a 'case' "which identifies the location or spatial orientation of the state or action identified by the verb." Similarly, Blake (2001:33) classifies locative markers as 'local cases', aside from the five "core cases" of 'nominative', 'accusative', 'ergative', 'genitive', and 'dative'. The 'local cases' comprise notions such as location (*at*), destination (*to*), source (*from*), and path (*through*).

Despite the above, some scholars (e.g. Datang 1989, Lapoliwa 1992, Ramlan 1980, Tjia 2007, Vimala 1984) working on Indonesian and the different dialects of Malay still prefer to use the traditional labeling of 'preposition' for both *di* and *dalam*, as well as words carrying similar functions. In Malaysian Malay, the same reference to use the term 'preposition' is usually seen. In order to refer to all three forms (*di* only, *dalam* only, and the combination *di dalam*), the term 'prepositional concept' is adopted to refer to the meaning as a group. Like many previous studies, this paper uses 'relational noun' to refer to *dalam* in the [Locative + Relational Noun] construction. In what follows, we shall first discuss what previous literature has said about the presence or absence of *di* or *dalam* in a sentence.

3. Previous studies on *di* and *dalam*

Studies discussing *di*, *dalam*, and *di dalam* will be presented below. Studies on Malay varieties other than Standard Malaysian Malay will also be discussed to see whether the same meanings exist in these varieties. In Indonesian, Djenar (2007:220) lists three senses for *di* and fourteen senses for *dalam*, given below in (5) and (6), respectively (underlines added).

(5) Senses for *di*

- a. X occupies the same portion of physical space as Y
- b. Event X happens at the same time as event Y
- c. Abstract concept X is associated with physical/abstract space Y

(6) Senses for *dalam*

- a. X is inside three-dimensional space Y
- b. X is inside two-dimensional space Y
- c. X is below Y's surface
- d. X is part of Y's structure/composition
- e. X is in state Y
- f. X is in group/category Y
- g. X is in the sense/context of Y

- h. X occurs during activity Y
- i. X is within abstract linear space Y
- j. Activity X is part of the set of practices of Y
- k. Feature X is part of linguistic concept Y
- l. Position X is part of hierarchy Y
- m. Event X occurs some time during time span Y
- n. Event X pertains during time span Y

Based on (5) and (6), *dalam* seems to have more extended meanings than *di* does, including various ‘part-of’ meanings ((6d), (6j), (6k), and (6l)). Other meanings of *dalam* show a mixture of space ((6a), (6b), and (6i)), state (6e), activity (6h), etc. For *di* and *dalam* in Indonesian, both can refer to time ((5b), (6h), (6m), and (6n)), but only *dalam* refers to both three- (6a) and two-dimensional space (6b).⁸ Although Djenar claims that *dalam*, *di*, and *pada* are interchangeable, many of Djenar’s examples (e.g. *di kita ini* ‘in-us-this’, meaning ‘in our community’) cannot be found in Standard Malay in Malaysia.

In an earlier study by the author, Chung (2004) investigated the word *dalam* or any derived forms of it, including sentences in which it appears as a preposition or an adjective (see (8a)),⁹ and its derivational forms, such as *pe-dalam-an* ‘inner land’. As a preliminary study, Chung found three main image schemata, listed in (7), and a series of meaning extensions given for *dalam* (cf. Table 2 to follow).

- (7) Image schemata of *dalam* (modified from Chung 2004:150)
- | | | |
|-------------|------------|----------------------------------|
| a. Schema 1 | CONTAINER | Inside a three-dimensional space |
| b. Schema 2 | NEAR-FAR | Far from the side of a boundary |
| c. Schema 3 | MASS-COUNT | Among; in between |

⁸ Djenar (2007:93) states that *di* and *pada* are similar when “denoting a location” but are different in that “*pada* but not *di* can occur with human Landmarks”. On Malaysian Malay, Ho-Abdullah (2002:116), in a comparison of the English preposition *in* and the Malay *dalam*, states that for examples such as *He was shot at 8 o’clock*, *He was hot on Monday*, and *He was shot in 1996*, the preposition *pada* will be used in translating these sentences.

“In each case a single dedicated Malay sendi nama, i.e. *pada*, is used to locate an event as a point in temporal space; to locate an event as being in ‘contact’ with a time or period of time; and to locate an event as being enclosed in some time span. Thus, the metaphorical extensions of *in* into other conceptual domains are not necessarily mirrored by the equivalent spatial preposition *di dalam* (and there is no reason to assume that it should)” (originally underlined). However, since the current focus of this paper does not include *pada*, its comparison with *di* will not be further discussed.

⁹ *Dalam* also appears as other parts-of-speech; however, its different meaning extensions will not be discussed in this paper.

The examples for CONTAINER are given in (8) below, taken from *Sejarah Melayu* (SM), a classic Malay manuscript. Glosses are modified from Chung (2004:150).

- (8) a. SM 99:15 *jika dalam paya yang dalam, atau duri*
 if DALAM swamp REL DALAM or thorn
yang semak,...
 REL bushes
 ‘If (it is) inside a deep swamp or within thorny bushes...’
- b. SM 13:32 *...masuk ke dalam laut*
 enter LOC DALAM sea
 ‘...go into the sea...’

In (8a), the first *dalam* is a relational noun, and the second one is an adjective; *dalam* in (8b) is a relational noun following the locative marker *ke*. To test the different forms, a second look at (8a) shows that the addition of *di* before the first *dalam* will bring about a different reading — [*di dalam paya yang dalam*], although it will be translated similarly in English. The new reading refers to a more specific, although unidentified, location, usually but not necessarily closer to the center of the swamp (Figure 1c), rather than a general ‘inside the swamp’ meaning (Figure 1b). *Di paya yang dalam* probably refers to the swamp as a location (Figure 1a). Example (8b) refers to a motion toward a deeper level of the sea because of the presence of *ke* ‘toward’.

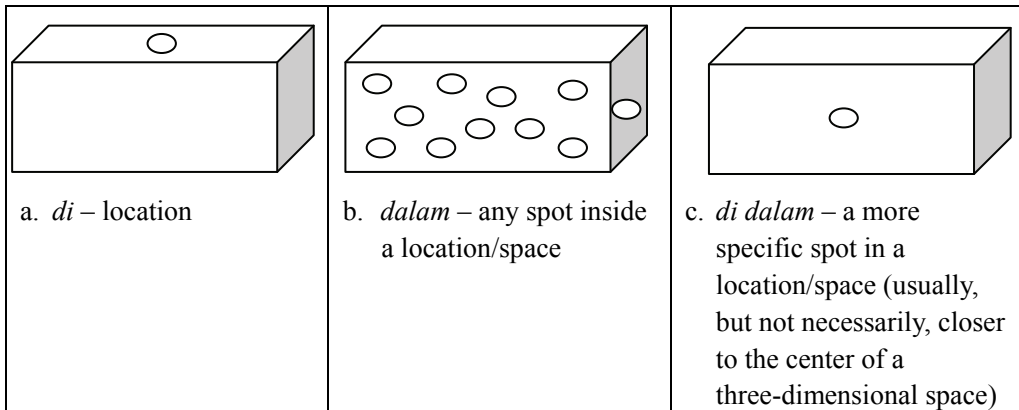


Figure 1: Possible representations of *di*, *dalam*, and *di dalam*

As *dalam* means both ‘inside’ as a relational noun and ‘deep’ as an adjective, Blust (1997:44) mentions that *dalam* with “the meaning ‘deep’ [...] do[es] not refer to e.g. deep holes, or other solid structures, but generally to deep water.” Blust also cites

Dempwolff's (1938) discussion that the meaning of *dalam* should not be seen as modifying a three-dimensional object but as the meaning 'under a planar surface' (cf. discussion in Chung 2004).¹⁰ Nevertheless, from Djenar's (cf. (6) above) and Chung's study, both seem to agree that there is a three-dimensional space meaning accorded to *dalam*. In addition, if we contrast *dalam* and *di dalam*, as is done above in (8a) by adding *di* before the corpus sentences containing *dalam*, the meaning without *di* seems to mean 'under a planar surface of a three-dimensional object', while *di dalam* indicates a more specific location.

Using image schemata as a model for discussion, Chung examines the possible meaning extensions of *dalam*. For the NEAR-FAR schema, Chung (2004:152) uses the derived form of *dalam* — *pe-dalam-an* 'inner land' — as an example, which refers to a concept far away from a boundary of a two-dimensional object, like that of a map of a city. For MASS-COUNT, Chung uses Lakoff's (1987) explanation of a high-above view of 'amongst' when referring to an object within a mass group of things. Other meaning extensions of *dalam* are given in Table 2 below, most of which can be matched to those of Djenar's sense in (6b), although with some differences.

Table 2: Other meanings of *dalam* and their possible image schemata
(taken from Chung 2004:154)

Meanings of <i>Dalam</i>	Image Schemata
a) during; within a duration	PATH
b) while; in the process of	PATH
c) (be) at the stage of	LOCATION
d) inside, within, (an organization, a family, a matter, a program, a context, an issue, a report, etc.)	CONTAINER
e) in the state of (emotion, sadness, quietness, etc.)	CONTAINER
f) not little; more than what is enough	CONTAINER
g) profound	CONTAINER
h) inner; internal; not obvious from the outside	CONTAINER
i) (literal) palace area; royal	CONTAINER

As for *di*, Ho-Abdullah (2006:282) found that the difference between *Dia di restoran* 'He is at [the] restaurant' and *Dia di dalam restoran* 'He is inside [the] restaurant' lies in "how a speech community structures or conceptualizes a target as a location, and

¹⁰ As pointed out by the second reviewer, these authors might be referring to meanings of *dalam* in different eras or its use before a new meaning evolved. Their arguments are thus given here for reference, in that *dalam* might have had different meanings in different varieties of Malay at different stages of its meaning development.

how that speech community wishes to conceptualize a particular target following the meaning intended to be portrayed or factors surrounding the speaker” (translated by the author). Ho-Abdullah provides the following Figure 2 as an explanation to differentiate between *di* and *di atas* ‘above’ (Ho-Abdullah 2006:288, new labels by the author):

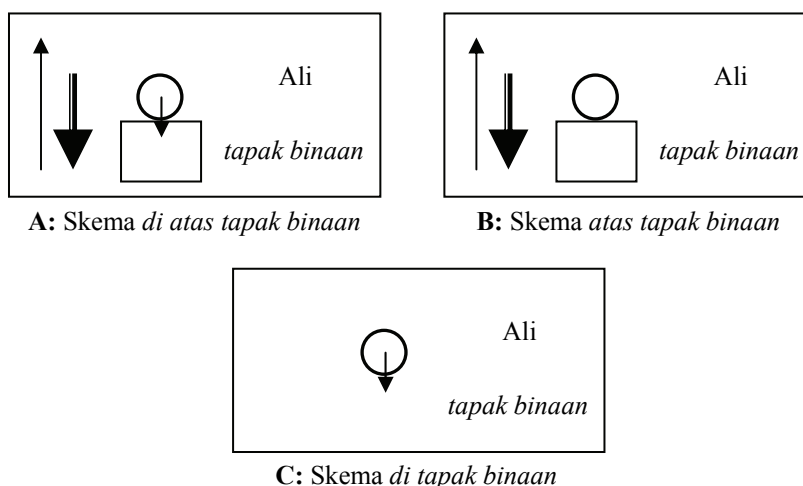


Figure 2: Schemata of *di*, *atas*, and *di atas* by Ho-Abdullah (2006:288)

Ho-Abdullah’s (2006) analysis follows the ‘conceptual schema’ explained in Navarro i Ferrando & Tricker (2000-01:297), defined as follows:

A force-dynamic axis is determined by the functional front of the trajector as oriented towards the landmark, so that their relationship adopts a particular **directionality**. [...] Trajector and landmark bear, or tend to be in, a *topological* relationship of *contiguity*, which does not necessarily imply **contact**. (Originally in italics; bold added)

For *atas* represented above, the topological configuration refers to the contact between the trajectory and the landmark.¹¹ A force-dynamic configuration of *atas* refers to the kinetic space that is formed through a vertical orientation such that a vertical force is formed between an object and the force of gravity (cf. Ho-Abdullah 2006:286-287).

According to this figure, *di atas tapak binaan* in (A) is different from *atas tapak binaan* in (B) (both mean ‘on the construction site’) because *di* serves as the connector between two entities. (The trajectory is the round object and the landmark is the

¹¹ Note that *atas* can also denote a ‘without contact’ meaning.

construction site.) With both *di* and *atas* in (A), the relationship and the topological function, as well as the aspect of the dynamic force, are present; with *atas*-only in (B), the relationship between the two is unstated, but the focus of the topological function and the aspect of the dynamic force in the ‘above’ orientation is present; with *di*-only in (C), the relationship between the trajectory and the landmark is present; (interpretation based on the quotation below).

Kata sendi *di* memprofitkan hubang kait antara tanda tempat dan trajektor, tetapi senyap tentang aspek fungsi topological dan dinamik daya. Manakala penggunaan kata nama arah sahaja adalah senyap tentang hubung kaitan lokasi tetapi terfokus kepada konfigurasi topological, dinamik daya dan fungsi dalam satu ufuk menegak. (Ho-Abdullah 2006:289)

Sneddon et al. (2010) say that in cases where the location is understood, the noun can be omitted (thus, (C) in Figure 2 above). Ho-Abdullah (2006) further explains that the removal of the relational noun *atas* will also remove the topological function and the dynamic force given to the ‘above’ orientation that is present in (A) and (B). Such an approach explains the three forms for *atas* but leaves unclear how other relational nouns could be explained with the same ‘conceptual schema’. Furthermore, the addition of empirical data will provide specific information regarding the differences between these forms.

Taking a different perspective, we shall turn first to dictionaries, and then to corpus data. Our study aims to examine the patterns of the nouns that co-appear with each form to distinguish the meanings of the three forms. The following section compares the dictionary meanings found for *di* and *dalam* in Malaysia.

4. Dictionary meanings of *di* and *dalam*¹²

According to *Kamus Dewan*, a prestigious Malay dictionary in Malaysia, *di* has three meanings, while *dalam* has four meanings (see Table 3). One of the meanings of *di* (sense 3) belongs to the Minangkabau dialect, and thus will not be discussed further. Sense 1 of *di* states clearly that *di* is a preposition that indicates location. Sense 2 defined *di* as ‘at, inside’ — ‘in(side) the eyes’ and ‘in the next day’. For *dalam*, its sense 4 refers particularly to time or duration, and only *dalam* has a ‘while’ reading (sense 3).

The relationship between *di*, *dalam*, and *di dalam* can be seen in sense 2 of *di*, where the meaning of *di* overlaps with *dalam*. The word *dalam* is used to define *di* (in

¹² *Di dalam* is usually not defined as a separate entry. It will appear under *di* and *dalam*.

bold) and both *di* and *dalam* are used to define *dalam* (see sense 2 of *dalam* in bold). Therefore, it is highly probable that *di*, *dalam*, and *di dalam* greatly overlap, and they all contain the prepositional concept of ‘in(side)’; in addition, they are treated as the varied forms of a similar set with similar functions.

Table 3: Comparisons of *di* and *dalam* in *Kamus Dewan*
(translation by the author; underlines and bolds added)

<i>Di</i>	<i>Dalam</i>
1. kata sendi name yg menunjukkan tempat dll: <i>ketika cuti sekolah, Busu lebih suka duduk ~ rumah drpd berjalan-jalan; ~atas, ~bawah.</i> “Preposition that shows location, etc.: During a school holiday, Busu prefers staying <u>at</u> home rather than going out; <u>above</u> , <u>below</u> .”	1. antara, di kalangan: ~ mereka yg bertiga belas itu ada yang bergirang-girang. “Between, among: <u>Among</u> the thirteen people, there are some who are excited.”
2. pada, dalam : wajah Mawi terbayang ~ mata Aini; ~ hari kemudian. “At, inside : Mawi’s face is reflected in the eyes of Aini; <u>in</u> the next day.”	2. di dalam (bukan di luar lingkungan dsb sesuatu): ~ Wilayah Persekutuan; ~ bidang mata pelajaran tersebut. “ Inside (not out of the scope, etc., of something): <u>In</u> the municipality (directly under the jurisdiction of the Central Government); <u>inside</u> the subject (of learning).”
3. Mn pada, kepada, akan, oleh, dari: datang ~ air datang dr sungai. “Mn [Minangkabau] at, to, about, by, from: to arrive by river.”	3. sambil: ~ kita berharap keadaan akan bertambah baik kita mesti juga beringat-ingat. “While: <u>While</u> we are hoping that the situation will become better, we should always remind ourselves (of something).”
	4. pd waktu (tertentu): jika berharap keadaan akan bertambah baik ~ tahun hadapan; dia masih ~ pantang lagi. “At a (certain) time: If (someone) hopes that the situation will be better <u>at</u> the year ahead...; he is still <u>at</u> his rebellion stage.”

Given that the meanings in the dictionary do not satisfy our need to distinguish the three forms, they are re-evaluated in the section below.

5. Re-evaluating *di*, *dalam*, and *di dalam*

The differences between *di*, *dalam*, and *di dalam* are never obviously laid out, especially with explicit examples of nouns that follow each of these. Datang (1989:76-77) says that *di* can be followed by nominals that are both non-living and concrete, and *dalam*

is different in that it denotes all kinds of nominals ((non-)living, abstract, and concrete, as well as human nominals and pronominals). The original source is as follows (originally underlined and in upper case):

Perposisi di hanya dapat diikuti nomina yang bersatuan semantic TAK BERNYAWA dan KONKRET...Lain lagi halnya dalam, preposisi ini dapat diikuti baik nomina BERNYAWA maupun TAK BERNYAWA, baik nomina ABSTRAK maupun nomina KONKRET, dan nomina dan pronomina INSANI.

Datang's work is corpus-based, as it takes examples from printed materials collected in 1988. Nonetheless, it would be more promising to look not just at the sentences but also at the patterns in the corpus, including the nouns that follow each form.

In this paper, the two main steps for the evaluation of *di*, *dalam*, and *di dalam* were, first, a re-evaluation of the meanings from the dictionary (as shown in Table 3 above), and second, an investigation of the noun collocates of the three forms. A search in a self-compiled one-million-word corpus consisting of 4,669 news articles from *Utusan Malaysia* was undertaken. *Utusan Malaysia* (<http://www.utusan.com.my>) is one of the main Malay newspapers in Malaysia. The data used herein come mainly from 2010, but a small portion of data from 2005 is also present.¹³ The use of *di*, *dalam*, and *di dalam*, along with their collocates, was inspected using the AntConc concordance 3.2.2.1w (Anthony 2005). The top noun collocates of each form were recorded by looking at the immediate collocates.¹⁴ If an immediate collocate appeared to be a classifier (*se-buah* 'one-CLASS') or a number (*satu* 'one'), a second-level search was further conducted to find the nouns that follow the classifier or number.

Table 4 gives the meaningful top ten nouns which include all immediate nouns and examples of nouns that appear after a classifier or number. The total number of hits in the second row for *dalam* excludes all instances of *di dalam*.

From the collocates of *di*, one can see that *dalam* is the fifth top noun collocate (after *bawah* 'below'), indicating its high collocation with *di* compared with other relational nouns, such as *luar* 'outside' (thirteenth), *atas* 'above' (nineteenth), *antara* 'among' (twenty-fifth), etc.

From Table 4, one can see that the collocates for *di* are mostly location or place (country, area, compound of area, state, etc.). The use of the pronouns *sini* 'here' and *mana* 'where' cannot be found with the other two forms (**dalam sini/*di dalam mana*).

¹³ The time difference should not affect the results, as new meanings did not evolve over these years.

¹⁴ Other modifiers such as adjectives in Malay often appear after the noun (e.g. *bunga merah* 'flower-red' '[a] red flower').

Table 4: Top ten noun collocates of *di*, *dalam*, and *di dalam* in a Malay corpus

	<i>Di</i>	<i>Dalam</i>	<i>Di Dalam</i>
Total Hits	26,398	12,386	605
Top Ten Collocates	<i>Sini</i> ‘here’ (3131) <i>Kawasan</i> ‘area’ (867) <i>Negara</i> ‘country’ (800) <i>Bawah</i> ‘below’ (723) <i>Dalam</i> ‘inside’ (605) <i>Kalangan</i> ‘area compound’ (542) <i>Negeri</i> ‘state’ (500) <i>Malaysia</i> ‘Malaysia’ (403) <i>Seluruh</i> ‘whole’ (380) (country, world, state, Malaysia) <i>Mana</i> ‘where’ (356)	<i>Negeri</i> ‘state’ (820) <i>Tempoh</i> ‘period’ (430) <i>Satu</i> ‘one’ (369) (truth, operation, ambush, accident) <i>Bidang</i> ‘field’ (334) <i>Keadaan</i> ‘situation’ (294) <i>Usaha</i> ‘attempt’ (232) <i>Masa</i> ‘time’ (198) <i>Kejadian</i> ‘incident’ (170) <i>Kes</i> ‘case’ (124) <i>Kenyataan</i> ‘truth’ (124)	<i>Sebuah</i> ‘One-Class’ (22) (room, place, things) <i>Negara</i> ‘country’ (18) <i>Rumah</i> ‘house’ (17) <i>Kawasan</i> ‘area’ (13) <i>Bilik</i> ‘room’ (13) <i>Kereta</i> ‘car’ (12) <i>Penjara</i> ‘prison’ (10) <i>Diri</i> ‘self’ (10) <i>Bidang</i> ‘field’ (10) <i>Tong</i> ‘tank’ (8)

As for *dalam*, the most frequently seen noun is *negeri* ‘state’, followed by *tempoh* ‘period’. Another time-related noun, *masa* ‘time’, was also found among the top ten collocates of *dalam* only. When a second search was conducted, *masa* ‘time’ was found to occur 36 times with *di* but only the future time was referred to (*di masa depan*, *di masa hadapan*, *di masa akan datang*; see (9a) & (9b)). When a duration of time is meant, *dalam* will be used instead (see (9c) & (9d)). *Masa* ‘time’ is never used with *di dalam*.

- (9) a. *Karnival itu, katanya, diharap dapat memberi peluang kepada bakal graduan UTeM untuk merancang kerjaya mereka **di masa depan**.* (1924.txt)
 “The carnival, he said, is hoped to give chances to the graduates-to-be of UTeM [a local university] to plan their career in the future.”
- b. *Menurut beliau, kerajaan negeri kini sedang merangka strategi pertumbuhan ekonomi Perak **di masa akan datang** dengan penekanan kepada pelan pembangunan Perak Aman Jaya.* (4529.txt)
 “[Honorable] He said, the present state government is structuring strategies for the growth of the economy in Perak in the future by emphasizing the building plans of Perak Aman Jaya.”
- c. *Saya akan buat satu kertas kerja bagaimana untuk mendapatkan jumlah itu **dalam masa setahun ini**,....* (0778.txt)
 “I will do a working paper on how to obtain that amount of money within a year,....”
- d. *Beliau berkata, berikutan itu, jumlah anggota dan pegawai polis wanita yang kini 11 peratus akan ditambah kepada 20 peratus **dalam tempoh***

lima tahun. (0175.txt)

“[Honorable] He said, following this, the total number of female police teams and police officers will increase from 11 per cent now to 20 per cent within five years.”

As *di* denotes future time (with the words *masa depan/hadapan*), it usually refers to an indefinite time in the future; *dalam* can only be used to refer to a range of time (usually with the word *tempoh* ‘duration’), regardless of speaking time. When *dalam* plays the role of indicating the range of time, there is no need to add *di* before it to make it more specific by further indicating the point of time in the duration. This explains why there is no instance of *di dalam* with either time or duration in our corpus.

In order to see how our interpretation of *dalam* could be generalized to explain other relational nouns, examples of *bawah* ‘below’ are shown in (10) below, where three different forms are found to co-occur with *pokok* ‘tree’.

- (10) a. *Dilarang membuang air kecil **di bawah pokok** yang berbuah dan tempat berteduh*. (0793.txt)
“[You are] forbidden to urinate under a tree that bears fruits or in a shielded place.”¹⁵
- b. *Penduduk diminta tidak menggantung plastik-plastik sampah **di pokok** serta di pagar rumah....* (4669.txt)
“Residents were asked not to hang garbage in plastic bags at the tree and at the gate of [their] house....”
- c. *Dalam cerita ‘Dewan Undangan Negeri Perak’ ada kisah bersidang **bawah pokok** sehingga pokok tersebut dijadikan satu tempat bersejarah*. (3206.txt)
“In the story ‘Dewan Undangan Negeri Perak’ there is an incident about meeting under the tree which makes the tree become a historical spot.”
[Literally, ‘until the tree becomes a famous spot’.]

Sneddon et al. (2010:196) say the following regarding the omission of a relational noun in Indonesian (termed ‘locative noun’ below):

The locative noun can be omitted [...] if it refers to a position which is normally understood; thus **di laci** for **di dalam laci** ‘in(side) the drawer’, **di meja** for **di atas meja** ‘on (top of) the table’. If, however, some other position is referred to,

¹⁵ This is stated in an article outlining the manner of urinating in Islam.

the locative noun is necessary: **di bawah meja** ‘under the table’.... For many speakers **di** is omitted before a locative noun if figurative space is referred to; in this case, the locative noun occurs alone as a preposition. [originally bolded]

Although this reasoning seems to make sense, it is hard to define an ‘understood’ position. For example, following Sneddon et al. (2010), if the location under a tree where someone is forbidden to urinate can be expected (it is usually anywhere surrounding the tree trunk at a person’s height), *di bawah pokok* in (10a) can be replaced with *di pokok*, which is the form in (10b) that means ‘at the tree’. This seems possible theoretically but it might sound a little strange because it gives the impression that the tree is either shorter than or at the same height as the person, so that the action of urinating can be done ‘at the tree’.¹⁶ Conversely, *di pokok* is plausible in (10b) because the action of hanging the rubbish usually refers to doing so on the branches of the tree. This may reflect Sneddon et al.’s (2010) argument that the position no longer needs to be defined. For (10c), ‘to meet under the tree’ uses the form *bawah pokok* without *di*. According to Sneddon et al.’s explanation, the position under the tree could mean a figurative space in the sense that it no longer refers to a real place but a space where people gather after meals to discuss certain issues. However, from the following context, one can see that this non-specific space (*bawah pokok*) has become a specific one because the tree has become a historical spot; therefore, it must be a specific tree.

In our questionnaire, we also added a sentence with *bawah*, where the word *program* appears with *di bawah* and refers to a specific activity (original sentence in (11) and experimental sentence in (12)).

- (11) *Ini adalah salah satu aktiviti **di bawah program** tanggungjawab zakat korporat yang sudah dilaksanakan sejak 2006 lagi.* (4615.txt)

“This is one of the activities under the program responsible by the tithe corporate, which has taken place since 2006.”

- (12) *Ini adalah salah satu aktiviti _____*
[This is one of the activities _____]

A. ***di** program tanggungjawab zakat korporat.* [DI program responsible by the tithe corporate.]

(2/6 ‘impossible answer’)

B. ***di bawah** program tanggungjawab zakat korporat.* [DI BAWAH program responsible by the tithe corporate.]

¹⁶ The author is aware that this might be due to the difference between Malaysian and Indonesian Malay. This interpretation is based on Malaysian Malay.

(5/6 ‘best answer’; 1/6 ‘possible answer’)

- C. *bawah program tanggungjawab zakat korpora*. [BAWAH program responsible by the tithe corporate.]
(1/6 ‘best answer’; 1/6 ‘possible answer’)

From the subjects’ responses in (12), ‘program’ allows both *di bawah* and *bawah* (*di bawah* >> *bawah* >> **di*). The fact that *bawah program* is also a possible form complies with Sneddon et al.’s (2010) observation on figurative space as well as with our results above concerning abstract nouns (that is, *program* is an abstract space under which certain rules function).

Given our observation above, it seems possible that the general or specific location of the thing being referred to might have to do with the form selected. We found the possibility of specific location to collocate with *di dalam* while *di* serves more as a location, and *dalam* to be followed by an abstract noun.

As proposed in Figure 1 previously, and from the corpus results, it seems possible that [*di* + location] refers to a place in general (thus, *di pokok/di kawasan hutan* refers to the location, not any particular spot), while [*dalam* + abstract noun] can indicate time within a certain boundary, which can be represented as any spots in a space of time. This meaning could also include a metaphorical space. In contrast, [*di dalam* + concrete noun] often refers specifically to a spot in a particular place which is usually more definite in size, such as a house, a prison, etc. Subjects who selected *di dalam pertempuran* ‘in the combat’ (3a) were probably referring to a specific point in the combat, but the majority still preferred *dalam pertempuran* (‘best answer’), which refers to the combat as an abstract space. This interpretation might echo Ho-Abdullah’s (2006) claims about the conceptualization of a speech community and how this speech community wishes to portray a particular meaning. Following the above discussion, one can see why *kawasan* ‘area’ in (1) earlier can be used with all three forms — because as an area, *kawasan* can accommodate any information of orientation and all forms of *di*, *dalam*, and *di dalam* refer to a space in(side) the area.

6. Discussion and conclusion

Studies on prepositions have been widely discussed from the cognitive linguistic perspective (e.g. Brugman 1988, Lakoff 1987, Lindner 1981, 1983). Cross-linguistic studies on prepositions are also abundant, for example, Hawkins’ (1993) study on English and Japanese, and Brée, Smit & Werkhoven’s (1990) work on English and Dutch, among many others. In addition, investigations of at least one preposition in a single language can also be found in Kristoffersen (2001) on Norwegian *mot* ‘toward, against’ and

Cuyckens (1993) on Dutch *in*. Not many studies have looked at the nouns that follow a closed set of prepositional concepts in Malay.

Beitel et al. (1997:256) cited Leech (1969) in that the “‘contiguity’ [feature] can account for all different uses of *on*” such that in {*The house rests on the foundation.*}, {*The dog is on the leash.*}, and {*The fish is on the surface.*}. Yet a separate discussion of these senses “does not describe important conceptual and functional distinctions between these uses.” Our paper suggests that, by looking into the change of a word in a fixed frame (e.g. [(*di*) *dalam* + noun]), one can observe the kind of semantic development of the same nouns (e.g. from space to time) in a similar prepositional construction.

By investigating the nouns that follow the three forms, our results definitely shed light on meaning extension within one form or across all three forms. For example, for *di*, it is not hard to see the extensions among the different locations which differ in size, such as a country, an area, a state, etc. As *di* indicates a location, it can refer both to a two-dimensional object (a map of a country, for instance) and a three-dimensional space (the real country). Similarly, *di dalam* also serves this function and one can see that words such as *negara* ‘country’ and *kawasan* ‘area’ also co-occur with *di dalam*. However, *di dalam* seems to refer to a more specific location, usually smaller or more definite in size, such as a car, a prison, a house, a room, etc. *Dalam*, in contrast, is more different than the other two. Most of its nouns are abstract nouns and this might reflect what Sneddon et al. (2010) have said about figurative space. Nonetheless, the pragmatic argument of Sneddon et al. (that a known location allows the removal of *dalam*) cannot be proven because, if their argument is correct, most second mentions of *di dalam* should be conveniently changed to *di* only. However, from the passage below in (13) about decorating a house using tangerine trees, all three mentions are still *di dalam rumah* ‘inside the house’ (only important sentences are translated freely into English by the author).

(13) *Hiasan limau digemari pelbagai kaum* (3927.txt)

Sabah & Sarawak

KUCHING 12 Feb. – Hiasan pokok limau bukan sahaja menarik perhatian masyarakat Cina, malah ia turut menarik pembeli pelbagai kaum di bandar raya ini. Tinjauan Utusan Malaysia mendapati masyarakat Melayu turut meminati hiasan pokok limau yang menurut mereka amat cantik untuk dijadikan hiasan landskap.

...

*Bagi Mohd. Shamsuddin Mokhtar, 70, pokok limau amat menarik jika dijadikan hiasan **di dalam rumah**. [For Mohd. Shamsuddin Mokhtar, 70, tangerine trees are attractive if [they] become a decoration in the house.]*

*Siti Badariah Abdullah, 54, turut tertarik dengan hiasan pokok limau **di dalam rumah**. [Siti Badariah Abdullah, 54, is always attracted by the decoration of tangerine trees in the house.]*
*Menurutnya, warna buah limau memberi keceriaan kepada persekitaran **di dalam rumah**. [According to her, the color of the tangerine fruits gives brightness to the environment in the house.]*

The second and third mentions of *di dalam rumah* do not have *dalam* removed because all three examples refer not to location but to the space inside the house. Therefore, it is uncertain, or at least hard to prove, how an understood place can have its relational noun omitted. In addition, it is also harder to identify whether the relationship between the topological function and dynamic force (cf. Ho-Abdullah 2006) is present with *di dalam rumah* (13) versus *dalam rumah* (see (14) below), where the relationship is unstated.

- (14) “*Mereka gemar atap jenis ini kerana ia menjadikan suasana **dalam rumah** lebih nyaman dan sejuk berbanding atap nipah atau daun kelapa, apatah lagi atap zink lebih panas*”, *katanya*. (4399.txt)
 “‘They like this kind of atap [roof] because it makes the environment in the house more pleasant and cooling compared to atap [roof] of thatch palm leaves, not to say the heat of a zinc atap [roof]’, he said.”

In our analysis, *dalam* denotes an abstract space (or time). Here, *dalam rumah* in (14) refers to the ‘in-house’ environment, which is neither a location (*di* only) nor a specific space (*di dalam*), as in (13). That is the reason *dalam rumah* in (14) is used instead. In our corpus, the collocate of *rumah* is not a prominent collocate of *dalam*. There are only 20 instances (0.16%) from the 12,386 instances of *dalam*, indicating a very low number of a specific location needed to be made an abstract space.

To summarize, a majority of collocates for *di* denote location, while a minority of collocates denote future time; moreover, *dalam* denotes location, time, and more abstract concepts such as a process, a situation, and an incident. Only *di* can be used to refer to future time. Many of the noun collocates of *dalam* are nominalized forms of nouns, such as *keadaan* ‘situation’, *kejadian* ‘happening’, and *kenyataan* ‘truth’. *Di dalam* refers more to the space of a location than to the location itself.

Our results further capture the differences between *di* and *di dalam* (e.g. abstract concept, nominalized form) that were not found in the sense-listing earlier. A corpus-based study like this one not only provides a discussion of the semantics of these closely related prepositional concepts, but also enables inference based on distributional data to see what patterns of selectional restriction, if any, are available for each of these concepts.

Previously, most scholars have tended to view the locative clauses as a single unit, as Greenberg (1974) and Givón (1979) (cited in Givón 1995:47) have presented in (15) below:¹⁷

- (15) Most likely reference (REF) and definiteness (DEF) status of main clausal participant-types:
- a. Verb/predicate: Nearly 100% NON-REF
 - b. Agent/subject: Nearly 100% REF and DEF
 - c. Patient/object: 50% to 80% REF and DEF
 - d. Dative/benefactive: Nearly 100% REF and DEF
 - e. Manner, instrument: Nearly 100% NON-REF
 - f. Locative: Nearly 80% REF and DEF**
 - g. Time: Nearly 100% REF and DEF**

According to (15), the locative case tends to be 80% referring and definite, while the temporal case tends to be 100% referring and definite. In English, a specific point has to be referred to as *at* (e.g. for address), whereas *on* (e.g. a street) can be non-specific. In Malay, Sneddon et al. (2010) comment on the difference between general and specific locations presented by the presence of one or both of the elements in the [Locative + Relational Noun] construction. Our results provide evidence that the three similar forms can serve this function in the order presented below in (16):

- (16) General *di* >> *dalam* >> *di dalam* Specific

The order of generality/specificity is also reflected in the corpus frequency in Table 4.

In a work by Cuyckens (1993:27), three functions of prepositions were postulated: (a) to “indicate the *spatial* relation between two arguments x and y, i.e. how x and y relate to each other in space” (by focusing on the relation of x and y in *the books* (x) *on the table* (y)); (b) to “describe the place/location of x (in other words, they assign x to a particular place) by using the argument y as reference” (by focusing on the location of x in *the books* (x) *on the table* (y)); and (c) to “*locate* x with respect to y, or rather the place of y” (*He washed his car in the garage* — to locate the *car* is *in the garage* indirectly). Here, we can say that *di dalam* serves the function of (a) as an indicator of location between x and y; *di* serves the function of (b) to describe the location; and *dalam* possibly serves the function of (c) by providing the environment or space rather than the location itself. In addition, Dirven (1993:73) has said the following about meaning extensions:

¹⁷ This, by no means, implies that Greenberg and Givón give no attention to the differences in the specificity of the locatives. Their results stated in (15) show only a tendency they found.

The basic spatial conceptualizations can be and are projected onto ‘mental space’, i.e. they may form chains of meaning covering various conceptual domains such as time, state, area, manner or means, circumstance, cause or reason, etc.

These “extensions of meanings of a preposition from physical space via time into more abstract domains do not occur in any haphazard way but follow a path of gradual increasing abstractions” (Dirven 1993:76). Many studies, especially in cognitive linguistics, have looked into the grammaticalization paths or meaning extensions of prepositions, of which Taylor (1993) calls ‘polysemization’. Taylor suggests several strategies to disambiguate PLACE, PATH, GOAL, and RESULT, or a combination of these. Our study found that Malay *di*, *dalam*, and *di dalam* each has a specific function, and meaning extensions occur within one form (for *di* as a location and *di* as a two-dimensional or three-dimensional space; and for *dalam* to denote duration as well as an abstract concept within a bounded time). For *di* as a location but *di dalam* as a specific area in the space, one can see a metonymic relationship. However, as Adelaar (1992) has pointed out, language change is not a simplex process but one that requires historical analyses across different varieties of a language family. Further research is definitely required in order to see how these three forms might have developed throughout history.

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基於語料庫分析馬來語空間概念「裡面」 ——以 *Di*、*Dalam* 和 *Di Dalam* 為例

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同一空間概念在馬來西亞標準馬來語裡可以出現三種形式——[方位詞]、[關係名詞] 以及 [方位詞＋關係名詞]。本文旨在探討 *di*、*dalam* 和 *di dalam* 三種形式在表達同一概念（空間概念「裡面」）的異同。此三種形式在辭典的定義高度重疊，但僅有少數前人研究辨析差異。本文採用橫組合和縱聚合兩種研究方法，深入查閱此三個形式於大型語料庫的鄰近名詞。研究結果發現此三種形式的確有語意上細微的差異，如：廣泛/指定位置、慣用搭配名詞等。

關鍵詞：馬來語，空間「裡面」，*di*，*dalam*，*di dalam*，方位詞，介系詞