Semantic Analysis of Pillar Structures in Malay Archipelago Architecture Based on Sulalatus Salatin

Julaina Nopiah[1], Muhammad Danial Afham Zailan[2], Mohd Faizal Mohamed Nor[3]

[1]Department of Malay Language, Kulliyyah of Sustainable Tourism and Contemporary Languages, International Islamic University Malaysia, Pagoh, Muar, Johor, Malaysia.

[2]Linguistics Study Program, Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Universitas Sebelas Maret, Surakarta, Indonesia.

[3]Department of Electrical Engineering, Centre for Diploma Studies, Universiti Tun Hussein Onn Malaysia, Malaysia.

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ABSTRACT

Traditional literature and architecture are two fields that embody the philosophy and symbolism underlying the intellectual depth and the Malay mind of earlier Malay society. The Malay mind is manifested through architectural lexical items in Sejarah Melayu, also known as Sulalatus Salatin. This study focuses on analysing architectural lexical items associated with Malay Archipelago architecture in Sulalatus Salatin through the Inquisitive Semantics approach. The study identifies and analyses lexical items classified under the Tiang (Pillar) theme, particularly tiang (pillar) and tangga (stairs), which evoke metaphors of social hierarchy as well as the customs, cultural values and religious beliefs of the Malay-Muslim community. The lexical data are analysed using the Cross-Reference Framework within Relevance Theory before being examined through Inquisitive Semantics (script semantics, resonance semantics and inquisitive semantics). The findings indicate that lexical items referring to architectural structures in the manuscript do not merely function as physical components of a house; they also represent Malay cultural values rooted in human nature, including nobility, humility and strength. This study contributes to the preservation of local architectural identity and strengthens understanding of Malay cognitive thought through traditional literary works.

Keywords: Sulalatus Salatin, Malay architecture, Inquisitive Semantics, Malay mind, classical Malay literature.

INTRODUCTION

Malay Archipelago architecture is a manifestation of the intellectual depth and akal budi of earlier communities and is rich in symbolism and implicit philosophy. Beyond functioning as a physical structure, architecture in Malay society reflects social hierarchy, customs and Islamic religious values inherited across generations (Zaini & Jalaluddin, 2019). This symbolism can be observed in architectural elements such as roofs, pillars, walls, stairs and doors recorded in classical Malay manuscripts, particularly Sulalatus Salatin.

Sulalatus Salatin, or Sejarah Melayu, is a major work of classical Malay literature that records the history of Malay sultanates and documents symbolic and metaphorical elements associated with architecture (Anis, 2017). In the modern context, however, modernisation has contributed to the erosion of symbolic values in Malay architecture, which are now less understood by contemporary society (Majid, 2017). This situation highlights the need to revisit this classical work to strengthen understanding of Malay cultural heritage and architectural identity.

This study adopts the Inquisitive Semantics approach developed by Jalaluddin (2014) to identify architectural lexical items associated with Malay Archipelago architecture in Sulalatus Salatin. The approach comprises three

analytical levels: script semantics, resonance semantics and inquisitive semantics. These levels are used to uncover the implicit meanings and deeper philosophies underlying each selected lexical item.

Through semantic analysis, this study seeks to uncover Malay philosophy and akal budi (Malay mind) embedded in the classical manuscript. Previous studies have shown that architectural symbolism reflects significant social, religious and cultural values in Malay society (Hakimi et al., 2023). Therefore, this study contributes to linguistics and classical Malay literary studies while supporting efforts to strengthen the identity of Malay Archipelago architecture in contemporary development.

This study is expected to encourage contemporary society to understand the philosophical richness of Malay architecture and to help restore traditional values within local architectural practice. Accordingly, it focuses on three main objectives:

a. To identify architectural lexical items associated with Malay Archipelago architecture in Sulalatus Salatin.
b. To analyse the purposes served by architectural lexical items in Sulalatus Salatin using the Inquisitive Semantics approach.
c. To uncover the philosophy and Malay mind underlying architectural lexical items in Sulalatus Salatin through the Inquisitive Semantics approach.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A major work such as Sulalatus Salatin is not merely a historical record but a repository of Malay mind that preserves the philosophy of Malay life, including architectural thought. This review discusses previous studies under three main themes: the crisis and symbolism of Malay architecture, Sulalatus Salatin as a cultural source, and the application of Inquisitive Semantics in literary studies.

Symbolism and the Crisis of Malay Archipelago Architecture

Kassim et al. (2019) argue that classical Malay architecture is not a fixed system of rules but encompasses a range of formal styles carrying distinct philosophical meanings, particularly through cosmological symbolism associated with upper, middle and lower spaces. In the context of traditional mosques, Hakimi et al. (2023) identify 32 principal findings and classify architectural symbolism into three frameworks: cosmology, the spirituality of tawhid, and sociocultural values. For example, tiered roofs and the number of pillars, such as six pillars representing the articles of faith, illustrate how physical architectural elements can embody religious values.

From a practical perspective, Alim and Omar (2022) examine the implementation of traditional features in modern architecture in Selangor. Although features such as carved ornamentation and raised pillars are recognised as markers of ethnic identity, financial constraints and maintenance requirements pose major challenges to their sustainability. These studies provide a basis for examining whether theories of origin and physical characteristics correspond with the architectural features described in classical texts.

Sulalatus Salatin as a Historiographical and Cultural Source

Sulalatus Salatin has often been analysed through pragmatic and historical perspectives. Anis (2017) uses Relevance Theory (RT) and the Cross-Reference Framework (RRS) to demonstrate that Malay utterances in the text contain implicatures reflecting loyalty and dignity. Osman and Jalaluddin (2018), meanwhile, examine critical metaphors in the legend of Puteri Gunung Ledang, showing how physically unrealistic demands, such as a golden bridge, function as criticism of royal leadership.

In addition, Hakimi and Hamdan (2024) discuss religious syncretism in the text, in which Hindu-Buddhist and Islamic elements are actively combined to strengthen the political legitimacy of kingship through the concept of daulat. These studies reinforce the position of Sulalatus Salatin as a rich linguistic corpus for exploring the Malay mind (akal budi), including through architectural lexical items.

Inquisitive Semantics in Literary Studies

Baharum (2015) examines the relationship between landscape and security in traditional Malay literature, arguing that settings in Sulalatus Salatin function as mechanisms of self-defence rather than merely serving as aesthetic backgrounds. Meanwhile, Zaini and Jalaluddin (2019) apply Inquisitive Semantics to analyse the architectural element tangga (stairs) in Malay proverbs. Their findings demonstrate that stairs are not merely structural features but may also symbolise social hierarchy and balance in life. The analysis proceeds through three levels: script, resonance, and inquisitive semantics. This study provides a methodological reference for examining other architectural lexical items in Sulalatus Salatin.

Overall, the literature reveals a research gap concerning the relationship between architectural lexical items in Sulalatus Salatin and the cognitive processes underlying Malay cultural thought, as examined through Inquisitive Semantics. Existing studies have primarily focused on landscape representation in traditional literature or architectural symbolism in Malay proverbs. To address this gap, the present study investigates the meanings and philosophical perspectives underlying architectural structures represented in Sulalatus Salatin, with particular attention to the cultural knowledge and Malay mind (akal budi) reflected in these lexical items.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This qualitative study examines the student edition of Sejarah Melayu, also known as Sulalatus Salatin, edited by A. Samad Ahmad (2018). The study focuses on architectural lexical items found in the text that represent structural components of traditional Malay houses in the Malay Archipelago. A total of nine lexical items were identified and categorised into three thematic domains, namely Bumbung (roof), Dinding (wall), and Tiang (pillar). These lexical items were selected based on their relevance to traditional Malay architectural structures and their potential symbolic and metaphorical meanings (Zaini & Jalaluddin, 2019). Each lexical item was subsequently examined within its textual context to determine its semantic significance and contribution to the narrative.

The data collection process commenced with the identification of architectural lexical items representing the structural components of traditional Malay houses in Sulalatus Salatin. The identification process involved a systematic full-text reading complemented by a keyword search of the manuscript to locate lexical items referring to architectural structures and components. Through this procedure, nine lexical items were identified and subsequently categorised into three thematic domains, namely Bumbung (roof), Dinding (wall), and Tiang (pillar). Although all identified lexical items were documented and classified according to their respective themes, the Tiang theme was selected for in-depth analysis due to its relevance to the research objectives and its significant representation of structural, cultural, and symbolic aspects of traditional Malay architecture. The identified lexical items and their literal meanings are presented in Table 1.

Table 1 LLexical Items Categorised by Architectural Theme and Their Meanings

Theme	Lexical	Meaning
Bumbung (roof)	bumbungan	The upper part of a house, building, or other structure that covers the entire building and serves as protection from rain, heat, and other environmental elements.
	atapnya	The roof of a house or building; the covering structure forming the uppermost part of a building.
	atap	Roof.
Dinding (wall)	pintu	An opening or access point used to enter a house, room, or other enclosed space.
	dinding	A vertical structure that encloses, separates, or partitions a space; the wall of a house or building
	birai	The frame, edge, border, or rim of an object; the margin or outer boundary of a surface.

Tiang (Pillar)	bertiang	Having pillars or posts; supported by upright structural members typically made of wood, iron, or similar materials, functioning as supports for a building or its components.
	tiangnya	Its pillar or post; the structural support element of a building.
	tangga	A staircase or series of stepped structures used for ascending and descending within a building.

Following the identification and classification of the lexical items, data analysis was conducted using Inquisitive Semantics, an approach that investigates meaning in depth by examining the relationship between linguistic expressions, cultural knowledge, and the cognitive processes underlying interpretation (Jalaluddin, 2014). The analysis considers data validity, semantic meaning, cultural context, and the cognitive context of the text before relating these elements to the Malay mind (akal budi). The analytical procedure involves three main levels: script semantics, which examines literal meaning; resonance semantics, which explores meaning within cultural and historical contexts; and inquisitive semantics, which investigates deeper meanings and the philosophical insights underlying the lexical items.

Although nine architectural lexical items were identified across the bumbung, dinding, and tiang themes, this study focuses specifically on lexical items classified under the Tiang (Pillar) theme, namely tiang and tangga. The selection was guided by the central role of pillar-related structures in traditional Malay architecture and their symbolic significance within the text. Accordingly, the analysis of the Tiang theme aligns with the study's objective of examining the semantic representation of architectural lexicons and elucidating the akal budi Melayu embedded in the manuscript through the application of the Inquisitive Semantics framework.

To strengthen the interpretation of meaning, the study also employs the Cross-Reference Framework (RRS) within the framework of Relevance Theory, drawing on Kempson (1986) and Sperber and Wilson (1995). RRS facilitates the interpretation of ambiguous expressions by connecting them with additional premises derived from cultural knowledge and discourse context. Data interpretation was supported by library research, drawing primarily on Kamus Dewan (4th ed., 2015), previous studies, and corpus-based linguistic analysis.

The analytical procedure described above is summarised in Figure 1. Figure 1 illustrates the analytical process employed in Inquisitive Semantics. It describes the progression from Script Semantics to Resonance Semantics and finally to Inquisitive Semantics, demonstrating how literal meanings are progressively interpreted within cultural and cognitive contexts to uncover the underlying philosophical meanings and manifestations of akal budi Melayu.

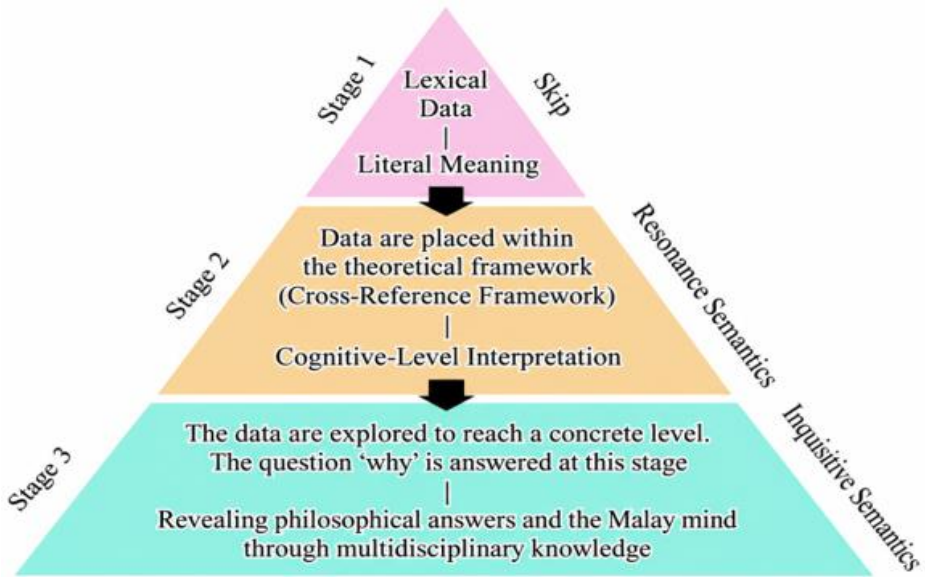


Figure 1 Inquisitive Semantics Analytical Approach (Nor Hashimah Jalaluddin, 2014)

FINDINGS

Among the three architectural themes identified in Sulalatus Salatin, namely bumbung (roof), dinding (wall), and tiang (pillar), the theme of tiang was selected for detailed semantic analysis. This selection is based on its prominence as a fundamental structural component in traditional Malay architecture and its potential to reflect deeper cultural meanings beyond its literal function. Several lexical items occur repeatedly throughout the text while retaining their architectural meanings within different narrative contexts. Although some lexical items share the same meaning but differ in spelling and structure. These lexical items reflect important elements of traditional Malay house architecture and carry symbolism related to power, protection, social hierarchy and the philosophy of traditional Malay life. Table 2 presents the identified architectural lexical items and their symbolic contexts.

Table 2 Architectural Lexical items within the Tiang Theme in Sulalatus Salatin and Their Symbolic Contexts

Lexical item	Extract	Narrative context
Tiang (pillar)	"besar tiangnya sepemuluk"	Describes the grandeur of Sultan Mansur Syah's large and solid palace architecture, reflecting governmental stability and the integrity of the kingdom.
Tangga (stairs)	"ke bawah tangga istana itu, maka Hang Tuah"	The stairs indicate the palace structure or a building raised above an open undercroft.

The table presents selected architectural lexical items categorised under the Tiang (Pillar) theme identified in Sulalatus Salatin. The extracts are accompanied by their respective narrative contexts, providing insight into the architectural representations embedded within the text. The analysis focuses on uncovering the semantic and philosophical dimensions associated with pillar-related structures in traditional Malay architecture through the application of the Inquisitive Semantics framework. Attention is given to how these lexical items reflect cultural values, social organisation, and the manifestation of akal budi Melayu in both their literal and implied meanings.

Analysis of Lexical Items within the Tiang (Pillar) Theme

The following table presents selected extracts from Sulalatus Salatin associated with the Tiang (Pillar) theme in Malay Archipelago architecture. The extracts comprise lexical items classified under this theme, together with their corresponding narratives or episodes and page references. This classification facilitates the examination of the semantic and philosophical significance embodied within the architectural elements represented by the theme.

Table 3 Analysis of Extracts Representing the Tiang (Pillar) Theme

Extract	Narrative/Episode	Page	Lexical item
"besar tiangnya sepemuluk"	The Fight between Hang Tuah and Hang Jebat	143	tiang
"kaki tiangnya ke atas"	Raja Iskandar's Departure for the Shore	70	tiang
"ke bawah tangga istana itu, maka Hang Tuah"	The Fight between Hang Tuah and Hang Jebat	140	tangga

(a) Script Semantics

In Sulalatus Salatin, tiang refers to a vertical structure that supports a building. Kamus Dewan Edisi Keempat (2015) defines it as a principal element contributing to a building's stability. Extracts such as "besar tiangnya sepemuluk" and "kaki tiangnya ke atas" describe physical dimensions and changes in the position of pillars, which are significant in depicting the integrity or disorder of a palace structure. The term tangga also appears in

the extract “ke bawah tangga istana itu, maka Hang Tuah”, indicating a raised building supported above ground, consistent with the features of traditional Malay houses. At the script-semantic level, both terms carry literal meanings related to physical structures and provide a basis for interpreting pillars and stairs as symbols of stability and structure in Malay palace architecture before further symbolic and cultural analysis.

(b) Resonance Semantics

At the level of resonance semantics, tiang in Sulalatus Salatin conveys meanings beyond its physical function as a structural component. It functions as a symbol of stability, institutional strength and social status in traditional Malay architecture and culture. The lexical meaning of tiang is extended to the broader structural domain represented by the palace narrative. Figure 2 illustrates the Cross-Reference Framework (RRS) mapping that helps readers infer the implicit meaning of this lexical item.

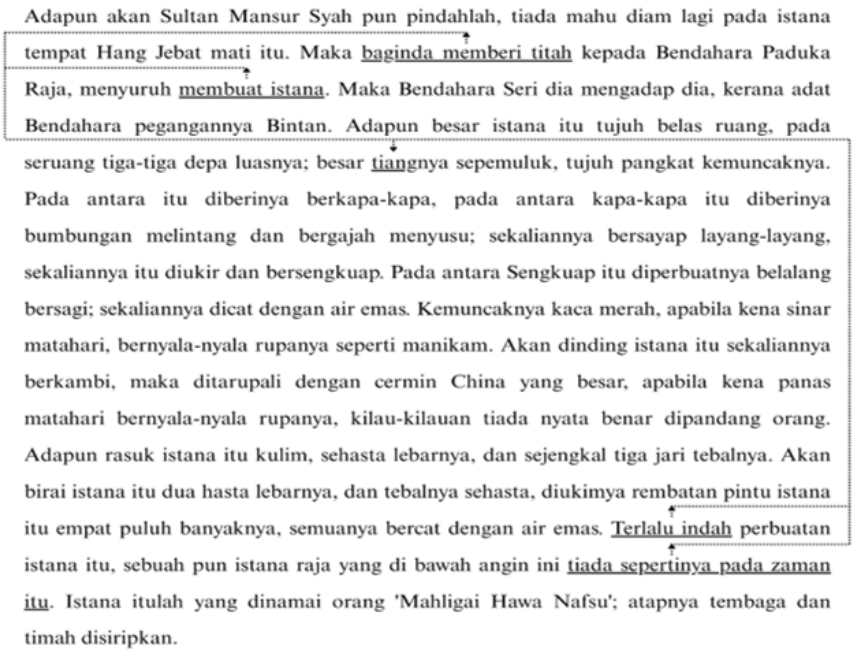

Adapun akan Sultan Mansur Syah pun pindahlah, tiada mahu diam lagi pada istana tempat Hang Jebat mati itu. Maka baginda memberi titah kepada Bendahara Paduka Raja, menyuruh membuat istana. Maka Bendahara Seri dia mengadap dia, kerana adat Bendahara pegangannya Bintan. Adapun besar istana itu tujuh belas ruang, pada seruang tiga-tiga depa luasnya; besar tiangnya sepemuluk, tujuh pangkat kemuncaknya. Pada antara itu diberinya berkapa-kapa, pada antara kapa-kapa itu diberinya bumbungan melintang dan bergajah menyusu; sekaliannya bersayap layang-layang, sekaliannya itu diukir dan bersengkuap. Pada antara Sengkuap itu diperbuatnya belalang bersagi; sekaliannya dicat dengan air emas. Kemuncaknya kaca merah, apabila kena sinar matahari, bernyala-nyala rupanya seperti manikam. Akan dinding istana itu sekaliannya berkambi, maka ditarupali dengan cermin China yang besar, apabila kena panas matahari bernyala-nyala rupanya, kilau-kilauan tiada nyata benar dipandang orang. Adapun rasuk istana itu kulim, sehasta lebarnya, dan sejengkal tiga jari tebalnya. Akan birai istana itu dua hasta lebarnya, dan tebalnya sehasta, diukimya rembatan pintu istana itu empat puluh banyaknya, semuanya bercat dengan air emas. Terlalu indah perbuatan istana itu, sebuah pun istana raja yang di bawah angin ini tiada sepertinya pada zaman itu. Istana itulah yang dinamai orang 'Mahligai Hawa Nafsu'; atapnya tembaga dan timah disiripkan.

Figure 2: Cross-Reference Framework (RRS) Mapping for the Term Tiang

The phrase “besar tiangnya sepemuluk” describes the dimensions of a structure, with sepemuluk indicating a size comparable to a person’s embrace. However, this premise alone does not explain why the structure was built in this way. Additional premises from Sulalatus Salatin are therefore used to interpret the pillar as reflecting power and Malay mind. The expressions “baginda memberi titah” and “membuat istana” contribute to this interpretation. Baginda refers to the ruler, Sultan Mansur Syah, and establishes the relevant context.

In this passage, Sultan Mansur Syah orders Bendahara Paduka Raja to build a magnificent palace with large pillars. The interpretation is reinforced by the expressions “terlalu indah” and “tiada sepertinya pada zaman itu”. The latter suggests the ruler’s desire for a palace without equal, reflecting the grandeur of the Melaka Sultanate at the time. Thus, “besar tiangnya sepemuluk” portrays the palace’s strength and magnificence as symbols of the authority and prestige of the Melaka Sultanate. The word sepemuluk refers to a size comparable to the span of a person’s embrace (Kamus Dewan, 2015). Figuratively, it suggests the extensive influence and unmatched grandeur of the Malay sultanate.

In the episode concerning the conflict between Hang Tuah and Hang Jebat, the phrase “ke bawah tangga istana itu, maka Hang Tuah” also indicates that the palace floor was elevated above ground, creating a physical and symbolic hierarchy between the two characters. Hang Jebat is positioned above, while Hang Tuah stands below the stairs, a position interpreted in the manuscript as reflecting obedience and loyalty to the royal institution. The stairs are not merely a physical passage; they form a symbolic boundary between rebellion and obedience, and between popular power and royal authority, or justice and loyalty.

This context can be compared with the Malay proverb "naik tangga dari bawah" (ascending the stairs from below), which refers to progressing according to one's rank and position or adhering to an established order. As Zaini & Jalaluddin (2019) explains, a person's status in relation to a staircase is shaped by the social relationship and purpose involved. Hang Tuah's request for permission to enter the palace and ascend its stairs illustrates the etiquette expected in a royal setting, even when the encounter is intended to culminate in combat.

Overall, tiang and tangga in Sulalatus Salatin function as symbolic resonances of power, social hierarchy and character dynamics in the historical narrative. They are not merely physical architectural elements but also embody philosophical ideas about authority, social structure and Malay cultural order. The analysis demonstrates that architecture in the text is not only an empirical setting but also a manifestation of local knowledge and the layered akal budi of traditional Malay society.

(c) Inquisitive Semantics

At the inquisitive semantic level, tiang is interpreted not merely as a physical component supporting a building but as a symbol of strength, traditional roots and the Malay-Islamic civilisation that underpins the identity of Malay Archipelago architecture. In Malay-Muslim society, pillars can represent spiritual and social foundations, supporting not only a building but also the strength, dignity and philosophy of its community.

In the episode concerning the fight between Hang Tuah and Hang Jebat, the phrase "ke bawah tangga istana itu, maka Hang Tuah" occurs when Hang Tuah calls on Hang Jebat to come down and fight fairly. Hang Jebat refuses to descend because he feels unsafe outside, knowing that villagers may seek to kill him because his earlier actions are regarded as treason. Instead, he invites Hang Tuah to ascend the stairs and enter the house, where their conflict can be resolved in a more enclosed space away from outside interference. Implicitly, the pillar and stairs are associated with safety and strength: the stairs separate a threatening exterior from a safer interior. They also symbolise social stratification, as those positioned above may enjoy strategic, physical and security advantages.

The passage also reflects the value placed by Malay society on resolving conflict in an orderly and dignified manner rather than in public view. The interior space, accessed by stairs, becomes a place of protection in which a dispute can be settled away from external interference. The stairs thus function as a medium of security and strength as well as a physical feature. In traditional Malay architecture, stairs indicate that a house is raised on pillars, a feature associated with Malay palaces and aristocratic residences.

Research on Kampung Laut Mosque in Kelantan by Hassan (2010) suggests that its pillar structure symbolises humility before God. The elevated structure serves not only as a practical response to tropical conditions, including floods and rainfall, but also reflects the community's intention to elevate the place of worship as an expression of reverence for God. This architectural principle is also evident in traditional Malay houses, where raised structures fulfil practical functions while expressing cultural identity and distinctiveness. The cultural buildings such as Kampung Laut Mosque illustrate how pillars connect physical structures with the value systems of Malay-Muslim society.

Textual extracts from Sulalatus Salatin, such as "besar tiangnya sepemuluk" and "kaki tiangnya ke atas," illustrate how pillars can be interpreted metaphorically in relation to the integrity or collapse of a social structure. The lexical item kaki (foot or base) may symbolise strength and grandeur, whereas the expression "kaki tiangnya ke atas" suggests structural instability or the disruption of the functions that sustain a structure. At a metaphorical level, this disruption may be interpreted in relation to customs, authority and the values that underpin society. This interpretation may be considered alongside Ahmad (2003) discusses "kaki" as a symbol of strength in Malay metaphor. Expressions such as "kaki bola", "kaki masjid", and "kaki buku" refer to individuals who are strongly associated with particular activities, conveying the intensity of their interests and commitment in everyday life. According to Dewek and Ali (2024), the image of the foot also evokes strength and repeated action because the feet are among the body's most active parts.

In architectural terminology, "kaki tiang" refers to the base of a pillar that supports the structure above it. Within the context of this study, this physical function provides a basis for interpreting the pillar as a representation of

structural strength and stability. Just as a tree derives stability from its roots, a house depends on its supporting pillars for structural strength. This comparison also provides a starting point for examining how architectural features may acquire broader cultural and philosophical meanings. Overall, the lexical items tiang and tangga in classical Malay texts and architecture are not merely building elements but symbols of the foundations of Malay-Islamic civilisation. They preserve the relationship between human beings and God and uphold a social system based on values and traditions. Malay Archipelago architecture therefore reflects the collective akal budi of its community, with the pillar serving as a metaphor for foundational strength connecting heaven and earth, and this world and the hereafter.

Discussion of the Research Findings

Figure 3 and Table 4 below illustrate the symbolism connecting traditional Malay house design, the human body and local wisdom, or Malay mind. Othman Yatim (2013) divides the Malay house into three principal parts: the roof, walls and pillars. Each structure reflects significant aspects of Malay identity and thought.

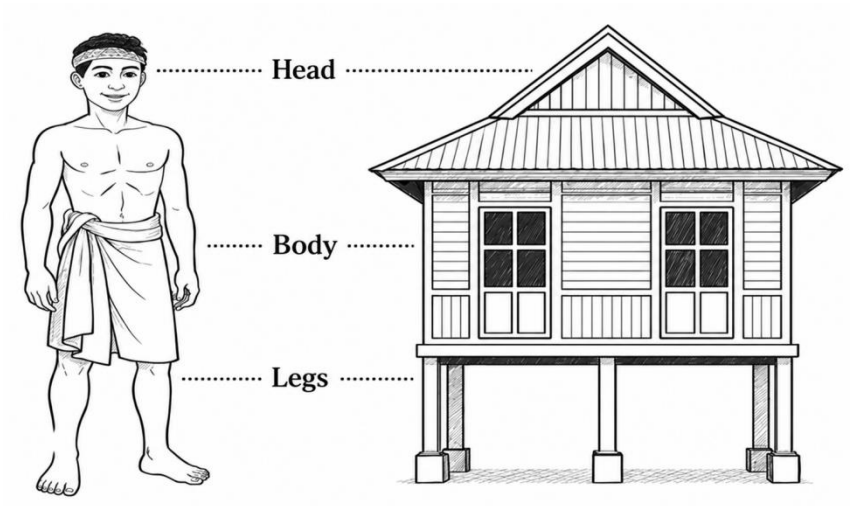


Figure 3: The Relationship between the House and the Human Body

Table 4. Human Body, House and Malay mind

Human body	Malay house structure	Philosophy / akal budi
Foot	Pillar / stairs	Strength / national identity

Based on the findings and semantic analysis, the architectural elements of pillars and stairs can be interpreted through their symbolic relationship with the human body, particularly the feet, which provide support, balance and strength. This relationship illustrates how traditional Malay house structures were conceptualised through an understanding of the human body as a model of architectural organisation. Such an interpretation reflects the philosophical understanding that human beings are created by Allah in the best form, as stated in Surah At-Tin, verse 4, which means, “Indeed, We created humankind in the best form and with the most suitable constitution.” From this perspective, the relationship between architectural structures and human anatomy extends beyond physical resemblance to reflect the integration of Islamic beliefs, cultural knowledge and the intellectual traditions of the Malay community. The interpretation of pillars and stairs therefore provides an insight into how traditional Malay builders incorporated their understanding of the human body into architectural design, reflecting the values and local wisdom embedded in the akal budi Melayu (malay mind).

The continuity of traditional architectural knowledge can be observed in heritage buildings on the Malay Peninsula, particularly Kampung Laut Mosque in Tumpat, Kelantan. This is described as the oldest surviving mosque on the peninsula and is believed to have been built in the eighteenth century. It was constructed using cengal timber pillars without nails and features a three-tiered roof resembling the design of traditional Malay

houses (Mustafar, 2021). Its design reflects the traditional architecture of the Malay Peninsula and makes the mosque a symbol of Javanese and Malay-Islamic cultural identity in the Nusantara region.

Beyond the symbolic significance of pillars and stairs, traditional Malay architecture also embodies environmental wisdom through its structural design. Traditional Malay houses incorporate environmental considerations through features such as the tebar layar which is located at the roof. It functions as a system for lighting and ventilation, while large windows and the raised underfloor space allow outside air to enter naturally without modern mechanical systems (Mohamad Rasdi et al., 2004). These features demonstrate that earlier Malay builders possessed local knowledge of adapting houses to their environment, making ventilation an important element in the philosophy of life and the well-being of occupants.

Functional zoning plays an important role in supporting natural ventilation in traditional Malay houses. Spaces such as the rumah ibu and serambi are commonly characterised by raised floors, high roofs and wide openings that facilitate air circulation and help regulate indoor temperatures. These features demonstrate that Malay houses are designed not only to provide shelter but also to breathe, making the house structure a living 'body'. The walls symbolically correspond to the human body, guarding, filtering and protecting life within. The ventilation system of Malay houses is therefore not merely a climatic solution but a reflection of civilisational values aligned with Islamic principles and Malay customs.

This study is significant because it clarifies concerns about local architectural identity in contemporary Malaysia. Many modern buildings, including contemporary housing forms that no longer incorporate raised-floor structures or traditional architectural principles, have departed from the original values of Malay architecture rooted in the human-body philosophy, Islamic values and local customs. This study demonstrates that Sulalatus Salatin can serve as a historical benchmark and source of evidence for strengthening national architectural identity. The text is not only a historical narrative but also a living cultural document relevant to fields such as architecture, science and economics. Understanding its symbolism is therefore important not only for academic purposes but also for policymakers, architects and the public seeking to restore a Malaysian architectural identity rooted in its own cultural foundations.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study has described architectural lexical items associated with Malay Archipelago architecture in Sulalatus Salatin through Inquisitive Semantics, which comprises three analytical levels: script semantics, resonance semantics and akal budi (Malay mind). The findings show that architectural elements such as pillars do not merely represent physical structures but also function as symbols reflecting human nature and the philosophy of life in earlier Malay society. Pillars represent strength and national identity, consistent with the view that the traditional Malay house was inspired by the human body as a metaphor for a complete and harmonious life in submission to the Creator. This understanding is in line with the meaning of the Quranic verse in Surah Adh Dhariyat, verse 56, which states that Allah created jinn and humankind solely to worship and serve Him.

Based on the meaning of this divine verse, the study concludes that the values underlying the findings, namely dignity, nobility, leadership, humility, modesty and strength, help explain why the author of Sulalatus Salatin incorporated these philosophies to encourage society to attain the highest spiritual station in its relationship with the Creator. These findings open new perspectives in literary and linguistic studies and offer a scholarly warning about the erosion of local architectural identity through external influences and the neglect of cultural values (Mohamad Rasdi et al., 2011). Sulalatus Salatin is not merely a historical record but also a primary source rich in heritage values, worldviews and structures of Malay thought. The study therefore recommends more in depth interdisciplinary research on classical Malay works, including cultural anthropology, architecture and sociology, so that this heritage can be preserved in forms that remain relevant, contextual and rooted in local civilisation. The findings also emphasise that a nation's physical development cannot be separated from its cultural roots and spiritual values, which underpin its identity and strength.

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