# A Cognitive Linguistic Analysis of the Polysemy of Verbs in English Textbooks for Malaysian Students: The Case of Upper-Intermediate Full Blast Plus 4

**Dr. Hicham Lahlou**
*University Sains Malaysia, Malaysia*

## Abstract

Although polysemy is common in natural languages, it has garnered limited interest in mainstream literature across linguistics, language philosophy, and education. In particular, previous research on vocabulary prioritised breadth - the number of form-meaning pairings acquired by learners - over depth of vocabulary knowledge, which encompasses a broader range of lexical features beyond basic form-meaning connections. Nevertheless, recent studies have begun to acknowledge the significance of polysemous senses in vocabulary education, especially from a cognitive linguistics perspective. Despite this progress, few studies have examined sense relations in educational materials. This paper addresses the research gap by examining the core and peripheral meanings of polysemous verbs in English textbooks. The main objective of the paper is to explore the sense relations of polysemous verbs in the English textbook *Full Blast Plus 4* (Mitchell & Malkogianni, 2018) for upper secondary students and to determine the cognitive processes underlying the semantic extensions of the dominant polysemous verbs under investigation. This qualitative, corpus-based research uses *Sketch Engine*'s Word List and Concordance tools to compile a list of polysemous verbs and examine their semantic relationships. The Concordance tool is also applied to find metaphorical senses, which are manually analysed to find incongruous vehicle verbs and their context or co-text and determine conceptual metaphors that underpin them. The results have significant implications for comprehending, as well as applying, polysemy in second and foreign language learning.

**Keywords:** English; vocabulary; polysemy; core and peripheral meanings; conceptual metaphor