CHAPTER 3

Social Orientations

The *polis* is always the arena in which discourse takes place, the source of issues, arguments, audiences, conventions - and the prize that is ultimately at stake.
Carolyn Miller (1993:81)

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 Importance of Social Data

According to Fairclough (1990:65) discourse analysis requires the mapping onto one another of accounts of three sorts: descriptive accounts of texts, accounts of interactional discourse processes, and social scientific accounts of social events and their relationship with social structures.

It is the purpose of this chapter to outline the social co-ordinates through which the discoursal graphs are drawn and which, therefore, become prerequisites for the effective reconstitution of the meaning of the discourse itself and the linguistic choices made therein. It is hoped that the information discussed in this chapter will be relevant in understanding this study, at least at four levels:

*At the level of validation of the objectives of the study.* In its analysis of the discourse of the Annual Reports, this study attempts to link rhetorical
choice with social significance. The issue of language choice is a classic case.

Three language-related areas of tension characterize the life of the Malaysian businessman who is an international player:

a whether to use English or B. Malaysia or one of the other local languages (e.g. Mandarin or Tamil) in his communication with others;

b if he should choose English, whether he should use English only as code but use the discourse style of Malaysians or use English as both code and discourse;

c related to b above, what version of "self" (both the individual self of the corporate man as well as the self of the company) should he represent in his discourse? In Fairclough's terms, what social relations and identities, what "subject positions" should he adopt? He has the option of either adopting the apparently universal values of business as a domain as reflected in the discourse practices of mainstream players and in the injunctions and observations of business gurus or he has the option to adopt his own cultural values e.g. in the kind of images he projects and in the kinds of evidence he presents in support of his claims.

On the face of it, these appear to be purely rhetorical choices but these choices are not situation-independent and situated choices always have social roots. The choices that the Malaysian businessman makes and the changes that he makes to those choices over time can only be fully understood within the context
of the economic, political and social tensions amidst which the textual choices gain their discoursal significance. Without an understanding of the wider political, economic and social issues that engage the Malaysian today, the choice of language medium would appear like a merely microlevel choice. Its macrosocial significance would elude the reader uninitiated in the hopes, aspirations and strife of the Malaysian at the macrosocial level.

*At the phenomenological level.* The discourse of a document as important as the Annual Report obviously cannot but mention phenomena which are specifically Malaysian. Some of these may be trivia but the trivia may be elements in a larger sociological matrix without recognition of which it may not be possible to evaluate their true significance. For example, when the Annual Report of a company mentions the installation of computers to do labour-intensive, routine work, these can be seen as merely incidentals that a company needs to mention as part of its review of operations.

However, when the same phenomenon is seen in the light of the *Challenge to the South* and *Vision 2020*, it is part of a historic struggle of a developing country attempting to increase its competitive edge. To what extent the discourse of the Annual Reports reflects regional and national realities, aspirations and priorities and in reflecting them, reinforces these same realities, aspirations and priorities are questions that can only be answered by reference to the larger social
process as defined by national and regional documents such as Vision 2020 and the Challenge to the South.

At the discoursal level. A recognition of social structure is also necessary to enable the researcher and the reader to understand the significance of the discourse strategies used in the Annual Reports: the social assumptions that are left unexplained in the argument structure; the discoursal prominences that are given to issues (e.g. what is thematized and what is backgrounded; what modality is chosen, where and why; what actions are passivized and for what effect) as well as how social facts are used discoursally (e.g. as explanations of successes and failures, as descriptions of shared values).

At the level of theory. As pointed out in Chapter 1, one of the objectives of this study is to test out some theoretical stances and to use observation-based data, to evolve new theoretical insights or to fine-tune existing ones. The testing of some of these theories at least requires relevant social knowledge. I will use Lemke's theory of the multisemiotic nature of meaning constitution as a case in point. Lemke states that three kinds of semiotic systems function simultaneously in establishing the significance of any communicative event. These he calls the linguistic semiotic system (LgS), the social action semiotic (AcS) and the abstract thematic system (ThS). According to Lemke:

...it is rather difficult to decide on the basis of LgS alone just how one should represent most usefully the AcS and the ThS so as to make it relatively easy to see all the kinds of interrelations of the
three in a community's conjoint use of them. So the basic question should not be how AcS and ThS affect choices in LgS, but how choices in all three are patterned against one another globally; across different activity types, thematic systems and occasions of language use.

(Lemke, 1992: 285)

If one adopts this approach to text analysis or chooses to test out its viability, then one needs to have a working knowledge of social structure and practices. How else would one understand, for example, the illocutionary and perlocutionary force of an action within the social action semiotic, except by reference to the system of practice that determines what an act "counts as"? How does one decide on whether something is an "allowable contribution" (Bhatia, 1993) or not except by reference to normative practice in that area?

3.1.2 Levels of Operation of Social Process

This study looks at social process as operative at several levels:

a at the level of discourse trends, both locally and globally. Trends are processes of change and genre are social as they are the sites of human contact, the instruments of negotiation in recurrent social events and the products of group creativity. In this sense discoursal trends are seen in this study not merely as providers of some indices of social process but as social processes in their own right.
at the global level of political and economic change and challenge. The focus here would be the social changes and the concomitant changes in language choice that come from the tension between the struggle for cultural identity and differentiation on the one hand and the need for development through international participation on the other.

at the intranational level. Here language - its choice and use - are focused on main of attention. The focus is not on the microproceses of languages studied by such people as Platt and Weber (1980) but with macroprocesses of language planning and social engineering and their impact on choice at all levels.

at the level of international and local business. Here the focus will be on discourse as a mirror of the continuous process of change that characterizes this domain.

3.1.3 Outline of the Chapter

This Chapter therefore seeks to provide the sociological data necessary to understand these processes under the following headings:

3.2 The political and economic aspirations that guide the direction of growth and the terms and indices that would be used to evaluate development
3.3 Trends in business practice that affect discourse

3.4 The linguistic situation in Malaysia

3.5 The discoursal practices of Malaysian business

3.6 Common sociocultural norms in Malaysia and their discoursal concomitants

3.1.4 Problems related to approach

Two issues problematize this approach. The first relates to the dangers of oversimplification and reductive essentialism and the occlusion of variety that will inevitably result from any attempt to encapsulate within a few pages the rich and complex issues that characterize each of the topics listed above. To minimize these effects, the principle of "key informant" has been adopted in the selection of sources of information, especially in those areas that are doxastic or opinion-based. To validate the authority of each source, an attempt has been made to describe those aspects of each source that legitimize its use as a key information source in the sections in which that source has been relevant.

The second issue can perhaps be characterized as ontological - whether it is within the disciplinary domain of a discourse analyst to make pronouncements on the achievement or lack of achievement of national objectives. This study takes the stance that the subject positions and social identities that companies give themselves and the images they strive to project of themselves can be good indices of the extent to which the values of Vision2020 provide explicit
orientations for their perception of where their work is heading or should head and what they perceive as the evaluative criteria that society would use to judge their performance. The thrust of the thesis is to describe not truth but representation of truth and this surely is within the purview of a discourse analyst.

3.2 Political and economic aspirations

This study has relied very heavily on two sources of information: a very well-known document called Malaysia: the Way Forward (more popularly known as Vision 2020) and a less-known but extremely important report called The Challenge to the South. It has chosen the first as its primary source of information for this section because it is the text of a paper presented by the Prime Minister of Malaysia, Dr Mahathir Mohamad, specifically to the business community in Malaysia at the Inaugural Meeting of the Malaysian Business Council on 28 February, 1991, outlining his vision of making Malaysia a developed country by the year 2020. Subsequently, the considerable power of the government mechanism has been thrown into the effort of making the pronouncements of this document the primary heuristic for change for the entire nation. Vision 2020, in this sense, is a classic example of the use of the power of discourse in the service of nation-building, in particular, in projecting desired representations of collective identities and thereby attempting to negotiate changes in the representation of identities or selves at institutional and individual levels. Using the "conversations" of this text as a reference point, a sort of
benchmark of what we *ought* to be doing, creates at least one advantage as far as the objectives of this study are concerned: it enables the researcher to use a comparison of the two discourses – the discourse of Vision 2020 and the discourse of the Annual Reports – as a means of discovering to what extent and in what ways the social process of translating national objectives into day-to-day practices is moving in the intended direction.

One objection that may be raised is that pertaining to the credibility of the Annual Report as a source of truth, given the general belief that many of the statements, especially in the Chairman’s Statements, are nothing but advertising hype, produced, as Marshall McLuhan would claim, more to create heat than shed light. However, this is not a serious objection in view of the intentions of this study. This study is not predicated on the premise that the function of discourse is to discover “the Truth”, as much of the Greek classical rhetorical study was. This study is not interested in truth, only in representations of it. So the issue of whether Malaysian businessmen are falsely representing themselves, whether there is in fact a gap between what the businessmen say they are and have achieved and the reality as measured by a more objective method than the words of the businessmen, is really a non-issue. What are more important issues are (1) the degree of congruence between what the businessmen want to be taken as and how they strategize the discoursal moves to achieve this image and (2) how much of the system of values, beliefs and attributes they assign themselves in their self representations are echoes of the values and attributes highlighted in the
discourse of Vision 2020; reverberations of the key notes sounded at the national and regional level modulated in an institutional and individual key.

I have chosen to include excerpts from The Challenge to the South (henceforth The Challenge) even though many of the issues it raises are essentially the same as those raised by Vision 2020. The reason for this is to make the further point that the struggles and tensions that shape the discourse that this study is specifically concerned with have a wider application and therefore greater social significance; the Malaysian situation is a special case of a power struggle not merely contained within national boundaries. It allows us to see the aspirations of Malaysia as those of three quarters of humanity i.e. the aspirations of all the people of the South, spread all over the world and fighting to etch a niche for themselves within a world order that privileges the powerful North’s ways of doing things over the ways the rest of humanity does things. The researcher has chosen to adopt this report’s way of representing the realities of the South because the report is the product of research done by the people of the South themselves under the leadership of intellectuals of the South like Julius Nyerere and Manmohan Singh.

The following summary of issues is not intended to be exhaustive nor representative of the relative prominence that these documents give to each of the issues raised. It is intended to work rather like a collage, with quick impressions of their content and the tenor in which the content is expressed. The researcher
could have more efficiently summarized the key issues but she chose rather to include the voices of these documents to provide the reader not only with their substantive points but also to give the reader some intimation of the tenor of their representation in these documents.

3.2.1 Recognition of the need to take a proactive role in effecting change

Both The Challenge (explicitly) and Vision 2020 (implicitly) recognize the need to prepare for the future:

There is no doubt that the twenty-first century will see the emergence of a new international system.... This process has already begun, in that the industrialized countries are defining the areas in which they wish to see change, identifying the changes that their interests demand, and presenting them to the developing countries virtually on a take-it-or-leave-it basis.... For its own sake and for the sake of humanity, the South has to be resolute in resisting the present moves by the dominant countries of the North.

(The Challenge :285-286)

There is also the conviction that the South must take a proactive role in designing this future:

The future is not foreordained. It will evolve from the interplay of many forces. It will be the outcome of contending interests and new ideas, of human creativity and organization. It will be conditioned by existing and new problems, and by the way in which the world — both North and South — responds to them and deals with the dilemmas and conflicts that are bound to arise.... The South must not be a passive bystander in this process of change. It must seek to exercise the maximum influence on the
course of events, inspired by the kind of world it wants and guided by the long-term interests of its people.

(The Challenge, 1990: 271)

3.2.2 Attributes the nation's economy (and by inference, each institution and individual within it) should possess

Below is Dr Mahathir's definition of the Malaysian economy he visualizes. For easy recognition of the attributes key words are put in bold in the excerpts quoted:

- A diversified and balanced economy with a mature and widely based industrial sector, a modern and mature agricultural sector and an efficient, productive and equally mature services sector.

- An economy that is quick on its feet, able to quickly adapt to changing patterns of supply, demand and competition;

- An economy that is technologically proficient, fully able to adapt, innovate and invent, that is increasingly technology-intensive, moving in the direction of higher and higher levels of technology

- An economy driven by brainpower, skills and diligence in possession of a wealth of information, with the knowledge of what to do and how to do it.

- An economy with high and escalating productivity with regard to every factor of production.

- An entrepreneurial economy that is self-reliant, outward looking and enterprising

- An economy sustained by an exemplary work ethic, quality consciousness and the quest for excellence.

- An economy that is subject to the full discipline and rigour of market forces. (Vision 2020: 409)
3.2.3 **The importance of economic imperatives**

This is a keynote in both *The Challenge* and in *Vision 2020*:

In international relations the emphasis should be less on politics and ideology and more on economic imperatives. Small though we may be we must strive to influence the course of international trade.... A country without adequate economic defence capabilities and the ability to marshal influence and create coalitions in the international economic arena is an economically powerless state. This Malaysia cannot afford to be.

*(Vision 2020: para 82)*

3.2.4 **The importance of private enterprise.**

This is particularly emphasized in *Vision 2020*:

For the foreseeable future, Malaysia will continue to drive the private sector, to rely on it as the primary engine of growth ...Privatization will continue to be an important cornerstone of our national development and national efficiency strategy.

*(Vision 2020:para 38)*
3.2.5. Importance of directions of growth of the economy.

Both *The Challenge* and *Vision 2020* emphasize the need for regional co-operation as a method of self protection:

> It is increasingly difficult for countries to insulate their economies and societies from processes, actions, and decisions in the broader global setting...Developing countries are in the most vulnerable position in the face of these trends.

(*Vision 2020: 283*)

Countries of the South therefore have to

> acquire the maximum countervailing power through increased exploitation of the South’s collective resources. ...The South as a whole has sufficient markets, technology, and financial resources to make South-South co-operation an effective means of widening the developmental options for its economies...The South must build its capacity to sustain a fast pace of growth even if the Northern engine is in low gear.

(*The Challenge: 286-287*)

Just as we must diversify the products we export so must we diversify the markets we export to. Malaysian exporters must look also at the non-traditional markets....Alone they may be small but cumulatively the market of the developing Asian, African and Latin American countries is big.

(*Vision 2020: para 53*)
3.2.5.1 Diversification of industries and products:

Measures must be taken to diversify and broaden our industrial base through the generation of new growth industries  

(Vision 2020: )

3.2.5.2 Joint ventures and partnerships:

They (the private sector) must be prepared to think longer-term, to venture forth into competitive new markets... The private sector too must engage the foreign investor in mutually beneficial partnerships and joint ventures.  

(Vision 2020: para 88)

3.2.5.3 Competitiveness:

Entry into the world market pits our companies against all comers and subjects them to the full force of international competition. This is a challenge we must accept not simply because the domestic market is too small but because in the long run it will actually enrich our domestic market and reduce our dependence on export  

(Vision 2020: para 54)

3.2.6 Importance of technology.

This is repeatedly emphasized in The Challenge:

In the past, there were great civilizations in the South that were fertile in scientific ideas, but the bulk of new knowledge now originates in the developed countries of the North.... Unless the South learns to harness the forces of modern science and technology, it has no chance of fulfilling its developmental
aspirations or its yearning for an effective voice in the management of global interdependence. All its societies must therefore mount a determined effort to absorb, adapt, and assimilate new technological advances as part of their development strategies. Simultaneously, their technological, economic, and social structures must acquire a built-in inducement and capacity to generate new technologies in accordance with their developmental needs.... neglect of new technologies may permanently foreclose the future development options of the South and thereby deepen its dependence on the North.

(The Challenge : 278-279)

Productive enterprises in the South – in the public as well as the private sector – have a major responsibility for contributing to efforts to overcome the South’s knowledge gap. They must create an environment that places a premium on technological innovation and creativity. There must be built-in inducements and pressure mechanisms to promote technical change and to encourage a spirit of enterprise and innovation.

(The Challenge : 278-279)

Essentially the same focus is also given to technology in Vision 2020. For example the sixth of the nine challenges posed in Vision 2020 relates to technology:

6th challenge – “establishing a scientific and progressive society, a society that is innovative, and forward-looking, one that is not only a consumer of technology but also a contributor to the scientific and technological civilization of the future”

(Vision 2020: para 12)
3.2.7 **Importance of the human resource.**

This is a repeated theme in both *Vision 2020* and in *The Challenge*. They touch on various aspects of the human resource as is evident from the excerpts quoted below. The most important to note from the point of view of the concerns of this thesis are the attributes of the Malaysian businessman as an individual and of the community as a group. To expedite quick perception of the key attributes, the researcher has highlighted the key descriptive terms.

...it is blindingly clear that the most important resource of any nation must be the **talents, skills, creativity and will of its people.** What we have between our ears, at our elbows and in our hearts is much more important than what we have below our feet and around us.

*(Vision 2020: para 64)*

In general terms, the countries of the South need to evolve a **value system that prizes creativity, innovation and the spirit of enterprise** and is at the same time **moved by concern for the underprivileged and the unfortunate...utmost emphasis on efficiency** has to be built into economic processes.

*(The Challenge : 275)*

A critical factor in how the South itself confronts the challenge is its choice of development patterns and lifestyles. **It cannot be “a replica of the past” or “a blind copy of the consumerist models of the advanced industrial societies of the North”**

*(The Challenge :272)*
The other critical requirement is that the people themselves should be involved in the process of development, and should have the opportunity to influence it... All these elements are vital for constructing durable national structures in which the State and civil society reinforce each other in effecting the social and economic transformation of the South.

(The Challenge: 278)

3.2.8 Importance of sustainable growth and the preservation of the environment.

The following are some statements made on this issue:

Three-fourths of humanity live in the South. The South has to be vitally concerned about safeguarding the life-support systems of the planet.

The South’s development strategies must take explicit account of the finite nature of the world’s natural capital. The concept of sustainable development serves to draw attention to the need for compatibility between growth and the preservation of the environment and to warn against a narrow-minded and short-sighted approach to development and economic modernization.

(The Challenge: 280)

3.3 Trends in world business practice that affect discourse

As this study’s concern is with giving some intimation of the potential inherent in text as a resource for discourse study, its focus is more on suggesting the kinds of analysis that are possible with text as resource rather than with
reporting exhaustively on every possible adumbration of a line of inquiry or the findings obtainable from any one location of investigation. Only selective attention is paid within every area of research.

In delineating world trends, therefore, this study relies on only two sources: Toffler and Toffler's (1994) *Creating A New Civilization* and Tom Peters' (1987) *Thriving on Chaos*. The authors of these two books have been used as key informants because they have been very influential in identifying and shaping the "winning ideas" in business.

Toffler and Toffler (1994) use what they call "social 'wavefront' analysis". Their approach looks at history as "a succession of rolling waves of change and asks where the leading edge of each wave is carrying us". Using this mode of analysis Toffler and Toffler draw the conclusion that there have been three major waves in human civilization:

At some point about ten millenia ago, the agricultural revolution began and crept slowly across the planet spreading villages, settlements, cultivated land and a new way of life.

This First Wave of change had not yet exhausted itself by the end of the seventeenth century when the industrial revolution broke out over Europe and unleashed the second great wave of planetary change...Today the First Wave has virtually subsided. Only a few tiny pre-agrarian populations in South America remain to be reached by agriculture...

Meanwhile, the Second Wave, having revolutionized life in Europe, North America and some other parts of the globe in a few short centuries, continues to spread, as many countries – until now
basically agricultural – scramble to build steel mills, auto plants, textile factories, railroads and food-processing plants...(p22) Industrial civilization, the product of this second wave, then dominated the planet in its turn until it, too, crested. This latest historical turning point arrived in the United States during the decade beginning about 1955 – a decade that saw white-collar workers outnumber blue-collar workers for the first time...It was precisely during this decade that the Third Wave began to gather its force in the United States. Since then it has arrived at slightly different dates in most other industrial nations. (p24)

...The more basic political question, as we shall see, is not who controls the last days of industrial society but who shapes the new civilization rapidly rising to replace it. (p.25)

...It is only against this wide-screen background that we can begin to make sense of the headlines, to sort out our priorities, to frame sensible strategies for the control of change in our lives. (p26)

This way of looking at the alignment of forces in the world, is pertinent to this study for at least two reasons. Firstly, it provides at least one coherent social framework within which the aspirations of Vision 2020 can be seen in perspective. It provides the link between the statements in Vision 2020 and the wider alignments implied in The Challenge to the South. Clearly, Malaysia is one of the many countries – until now basically agricultural – scrambling to build steel mills, auto plants, textile factories, railroads and food-processing plants.

The rhetoric of Vision 2020 corroborates this claim:
But let us never forget that technology is not for the laboratory but the factory floor and the market.

(Vision 2020: 75)

But the rhetoric of Vision 2020 and the Challenge to the South also makes Malaysia a striver after the characteristics of the third wave economy:

Unless the South learns to harness the forces of modern science and technology, it has no chance of fulfilling its developmental aspirations or its yearning for an effective voice in the management of global interdependence. All its societies must therefore mount a determined effort to absorb, adapt, and assimilate new technological advances as part of their development strategies. Simultaneously, their technological, economic, and social structures must acquire a built-in inducement and capacity to generate new technologies in accordance with their developmental needs. Neglect of new technologies may permanently foreclose the future development options of the South and thereby deepen its dependence on the North.

(The Challenge : 278-279)

In fact, there is explicit reference to the “waves” in the discourse of Vision2020:

In the information age that we are living in, the Malaysian society must be information-rich. Then came the second wave, the age of Industrialization. Smokestacks rose where the fields were once cultivated. There was a time when land was the most fundamental basis of prosperity and wealth. Now increasingly, knowledge will not only be the basis of power but also prosperity. Again we must keep up...No effort must be spared in the creation of an information-rich Malaysian society.

(Vision2020: para 79)
This perception of the link between Malaysia’s and the Third World’s struggle and the world-wide movement of civilization, enables the discourse analyst to be aware not only of the implications of the emergent discourse patterns for the understanding of the immediate culture of the organization and country but also provides the means to understanding the larger borderless/global struggle of people caught between “waves” of civilization. The wave theory directs one to attend to the significant indices of change e.g. what proportion of the country’s corporate elite strive to acquire “yesterday’s marks of modernity” (e.g. mass production, economies of scale, bureaucracy, market-orientation) and what proportion are tuned in to the wavelength of tomorrow (e.g. de-massification, information technology). It also directs one to larger questions like, Where is the leading edge of this wave we are currently riding carrying us and is this where we want to be carried? What other option(s) do we have in terms of means and destinations? What attributes do we need to nurture and what skills do we need to harness as means to arrive at our preferred destinations?

Secondly, in talking of the waves, Toffler and Toffler spell out the characteristics of each “wave”, particularly the second and third wave. In Chapter 4 entitled, ”The Way We Make Wealth”, Toffler and Toffler compare the Second Wave company with the Third Wave company along ten parameters. The table below summarizes the main points:
Table 3.1  Key Features of Second Wave and Third Wave Companies According to Toffler and Toffler

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parameters</th>
<th>Second Wave Companies</th>
<th>Third Wave Companies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Factors of Production</td>
<td>Main factors: land, labour, raw materials and capital.</td>
<td>Main factor: knowledge which includes data, information, images, symbols, culture, ideology and values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intangible Values</td>
<td>A  Company measured in terms of: physical assets like buildings, machines, stocks, inventory, trucks, assembly lines</td>
<td>Company measured in terms of its capacity for acquiring, generating, distributing and applying knowledge strategically and operationally.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B  Mass production</td>
<td>Real value seen as depending on ideas in heads of employees, in data banks and patents the company controls. Capital increasingly based on intangibles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C  mass market</td>
<td>a  smaller, more efficient units of production. Firms install information-intensive-often robotized manufacturing systems capable of endless cheap variation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>D  mass advertising</td>
<td>b  break up into differentiated market niches. Growing diversity of marketing channels – specialty stores, boutiques, TV home-shopping, computer-based buying and selling etc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>c  advertising targeted at smaller and smaller market segments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parameter</td>
<td>Second Wave Company</td>
<td>Third Wave Company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work</td>
<td>Low-skilled, essentially interchangeable muscle work. Factory style education prepared workers for routine, repetitive labour. Value-added – associated solely with those on factory floor who actually make the product.</td>
<td>Growing non-interchangeability. Increasing levels of specialized skills. At least as much value is produced by “indirect” as by “direct” labour – if not more. Initiative and new ideas from all levels of workers highly prized.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innovation</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Constant innovation needed to compete – new ideas for products, technologies, processes, marketing, finance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scale</td>
<td>Vast numbers of workers doing much the same muscle work. Economies of scale valued. Therefore large organizations.</td>
<td>Small differentiated work teams. Bigger is better idea debunked. Economies of scale outweighed by diseconomies of complexity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>Pyramidal, monolithic, bureaucratic</td>
<td>“Re-engineering”, buzzword in management seeks to restructure the firm around processes rather than markets or compartmentalized specialties. Matrix organizations, “adhocratic” project teams, profit centres. Growing diversity of strategic alliances, joint ventures and consortia – many of these crossing national boundaries.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parameter</td>
<td>Second Wave Company</td>
<td>Third Wave Company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------</td>
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<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Systems Integration</td>
<td></td>
<td>New forms of leadership requires extremely high order of systemic integration that requires high volume of information to pulse through organization.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infrastructure</td>
<td>Roads, electricity and water</td>
<td>Electronic networks that link computers, data bases and other forms of information technologies together.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As one question that may arise is whether this analysis of the winning company of the future is representative of business thinking today, the pronouncements of Tom Peters, the writer of several business bestsellers are tendered to show the degree of concurrence there is in the views expressed in the two works, written nearly a decade apart, about the attributes of the winning company of today. After an elaborate and well-documented analysis of several US companies, Peters concludes: “Take all the evidence together, and a clear picture of the successful firm in the 1990’s and beyond emerges.”

Peters summarizes these attributes three times within the space of a few pages (on page 37, 39 and again on pages 52 and 53) but for ease of comparison with Toffler and Toffler’s views, the ideas in the three summaries are conflated.
here so as to make the points of correspondence between the two more immediately noticeable:

Table 3.2  Peters’ Summary of Key Features of “Winners” of the Future

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Was/Is</th>
<th>Must become</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Marketing</td>
<td>Market creation, niche focus; Ceaseless differentiation of product (no matter how mature)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International</td>
<td>Focus on new market creation essential strategy for firms of all sizes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International as an adjunct activity. For big firms only</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>Short runs, flexibility, people supported by automation Part of product design team from the start.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emphasis on volume, cost, hardware, functional integrity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales and Service</td>
<td>Heroes, relationship managers, major source of value added, prime source of new product ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second class citizens</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innovation</td>
<td>Small starts in autonomous, decentralized units the key. Everyone’s business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Driven by central R &amp;D, big projects the norm. Limited to new products</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People</td>
<td>People as prime source of value added, can never train or involve too much, big financial stake in the outcome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need tight control</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structure</td>
<td>Flat. Functional barriers broken. First line supervisors give way to self-managed teams.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hierarchical, functional integrity maintained</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>Leader as lover of change and preacher of vision and shared values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detached, analytic, centralized strategy planning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management Information system</td>
<td>Information use and direct customer/supplier linkups as a strategic weapon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centralized. Internally aimed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The summaries of Peters and the Tofflers proffer a theoretical basis for the selection of indices in the discourse that might be used in determining the

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economic status quo and orientations of Malaysian companies. Quite clearly, some of these indices—e.g. systemic integration, electronic infrastructure, simultaneous engineering—are probably best observed at the worksite, in the day-to-day operations of the companies. Nonetheless, as one of the primary objectives of this study is to test the limits of text as a resource for understanding discourse and society, this study will concentrate on the kinds of information about social change that text alone can provide. As Annual Reports are specifically written to account for how wealth was made (or not made) during the year, they should be good locations for seeking evidence of what measures are deemed appropriate in characterizing the performance of a company in Malaysia. A question could be raised as to how reliable the data obtained from the Annual Reports would be. Again, the response would have to be that this is a study of discourse, of how people choose to represent themselves and their actions; it is not about Truth. What the study seeks to do is to see to what extent such ideas as those raised by Toffler and Toffler are consciously invoked by the companies in their depiction of themselves and their corporate image and in this way to determine to what extent Malaysian companies have bought into the ideas that fuel the Third Wave. In this sense the study is a barometric reading of change-in-process within that community upon which Vision 2020 places the burden of change by calling it "the primary engine of growth". The study attempts to do this by using discoursal indicators—e.g. lexical and syntactic choice, content of "conversations"—found in a key text of the target community.
3.4 Language Choice in Social Process

This thesis is predicated on a definition of language as integrally implicated in social process. It is an attempt to account for language use in terms of its embedding in the social, economic and political struggles of the people within the country as well as the country in its bid to define a niche for itself in the wider world in which it exists.

This section will therefore attempt to provide a suggestive summary of the social forces that motivate linguistic attitudes. As the literature on language choice is enormous, this section will confine itself to those aspects of linguistic sociology and history that it is felt maximally help in the understanding of the choices the writers of the Annual Reports make in relation to their choice of which language(s) they will use in presenting their account of their performance in the Annual Reports.

As we saw in section 3.2, one of the tasks that the countries of the South like Malaysia have to engage in is the task of moving from the position of nominal political sovereignty at the point of obtaining independence from the colonizers to a position in which they have functional sovereignty in determining the kind, degree, pace and direction of growth in the political, economic and cultural domains.
This struggle often brings with it the demand for national and cultural differentiation (which requires a country to sustain and develop the traditions and values that mark it as distinct from every other country) as well as the demand to modernize, to increase its competitive edge in the international arena (which requires the country often to adopt and accommodate foreign elements). Those who see language as a bearer of culture and foreign "habits of thinking" (Fernando, 1986) see these two demands as conflicting. Those that see a language like English as "neutral" would see the demands as complementary. They would argue that English is now no longer the cultural property of the English but is a functional language that can become one of the languages through which a region expresses its own selfhood and achieves its own goals. Whatever way we choose to regard the struggle, what emerges as indisputable is that language is a key player in the management of identity. This section will therefore briefly historicize the language scene in Malaysia to provide the cultural and historical frame within which the choice of language in the Annual Reports derives its social significance.

Asmah (1992) states in her book, *The Linguistic Scenery in Malaysia* that at a conservative estimate roughly eighty languages are spoken in Malaysia. However, since this thesis is concerned with Annual Reports of companies in West Malaysia alone, the four languages to which the issue of choice is effectively confined - Bahasa Malaysia, English, Chinese and Tamil - will be the main focus of attention in this section.
3.4.1 Bahasa Malaysia

This is the national language and sole official language of Malaysia and the medium of instruction in all Government or government-aided schools as well as in all six of the local universities. The following conclusions can therefore be made regarding this language:

1. this is the primary language of most, if not all, Malaysians and therefore access to information in this language should not be a problem to anyone in the country. If Bahasa Malaysia is not used as the medium for conveying any information, the reason for its non-use must be sought elsewhere than in its lack of access to any community within Malaysia.

2. if an issue of "language loyalty" ever arose in Malaysia, it is this language that would have the chief claim to loyalty among Malaysians. Its use in some contexts, especially its use in conjunction with another language like English, can "count as" an assertion of loyalty to language and nation.

3. If Bahasa Malaysia alone is used, then perhaps no access to international investors/bankers/insurers etc. is sought.

3.4.2 Chinese
According to the 1980 census (the 1991 census does not give any statistics on language use), 96% of the Chinese or 33% of the Malaysians can speak Chinese. However, unlike Bahasa Malaysia and to some extent English, this language is only spoken by the ethnic Chinese in Malaysia, and written and read only by a small fragment of the Chinese community. However, as the Chinese community had, and to some extent still has, hegemony in the domain of business, it can be said to be the language of local business. There are at least two limitations to its power in this domain. One, Chinese only gives access to the ethnic Chinese businessman and written Chinese communication only gives access to Chinese-educated businessmen. Two, with increasing globalization of business and the greater entry of Malays into local business, Chinese has become inadequate as the sole lingua franca among businessmen. Three, although we talk of "the Chinese language" the population that speaks Chinese is fragmented by the different dialects that each group within it speaks. This means that access is further limited to dialect groups when spoken Chinese is used. From these social facts, two main conclusions can be drawn about the choice of Chinese for written communication:

(a) access is sought only to Chinese-educated Chinese and not even to the entire Chinese population as many among the Chinese in Malaysia are not literate in Chinese;

(b) access to others is either not necessary or is sought through the
simultaneous use of another language (e.g. Bahasa Malaysia or English) that provides more universal access.

3.4.3 Tamil

Tamil is the language of less than 10% of the population and only a very small percentage of this population is involved in business of any kind. Those that are involved in business are mainly in retail trading, owning small bookshops, sundry goods shops or news agencies. Economically-speaking, the speakers of Tamil are a powerless and disenfranchised group. The economically better-off Tamil group are generally not literate in Tamil, having been educated in English schools in the colonial and early post colonial periods and now in national schools where the medium of education is Bahasa Malaysia. Two conclusions can be drawn from this:

1. Public documents where universal access is sought would be very unlikely to be written in Tamil.

2. If a document does get written in Tamil, it must be aimed specifically at those Tamil speakers who cannot be accessed through either Bahasa Malaysia or English or because some political or cultural solidarity is sought through identification with a symbol of group solidarity such as the use of the Tamil language.
English use in Malaysia, as in most ex-colonial countries, is both a vexed and vexing question. As in most other former British colonies, it has played many key roles in the social processes involved in nation-building.

For example, it has been an agent for creating class differences and creating elites. It has held a gatekeeping function in certain politically and economically-contested areas of struggle. In this sense, the English language - its choice and use - can be deemed a critical index of social change in Malaysia, a means of relating language choice to on-going social development at many levels, material as well as spiritual.

Constitutionally, English is deemed "the second most important language" in Malaysia but because of its history and position both in Malaysia and the world its intranational significance is enmeshed in various areas of power struggle.

One of the ways in which English is perceived is as the language through which unequal distribution of wealth is allocated and sustained. Most of the political and economic elite in Malaysia both during the colonial period and now
are English-speaking. During the colonial period English gave access to the choicest positions in government service. Today foreign education helps to perpetuate and exacerbate the existing power gap by providing greater opportunities for entry into the most lucrative sectors of the economy. One common denominator that is highly visible and distinctive in all these foreign-educated, wealthy individuals is their proficiency in English. As English serves a gate-keeping function in many domains, particularly in the private sector, it has become implicated in the tussle between the economic and political haves and have-nots; English as the language of the privileged is pitted against B. Malaysia which is the language of the struggling majority. Not coincidentally, English as a language of the West, is also seen as an adversary of B. Malaysia as the carrier of the values of Islam. English was the language of education of most non-Malays during the colonial period. One remnant of this fact is that any inability or refusal to use B. Malaysia among the non-Malays can count as "anti-national", as affiliation to English and western values. In this way, English becomes enmeshed in ethnic struggles too.

However, English is not always perceived as villainous. It is seen as implicated in positive struggles too. It is seen as a tool of social and economic advancement. English is, in this context, touted as the means to knowledge and modernization. Ungku Aziz (1980: vii) states the case for English in this way:
The main door to a whole world of knowledge, of science and technology in particular, could only be opened by acquiring a mastery of one of the world's major languages.

*The Challenge to the South* (1990:277-279) eloquently and poignantly presents the arguments for acquiring knowledge from the west instead of relying only on our own resources:

We live in an age in which the role of science-based technologies as a major determinant of the pace of social and economic change, as well as of global power structures, has become even more pronounced. In the past there were great civilizations in the South that were fertile in scientific ideas, but the bulk of the knowledge now originates in the developed countries of the North.... Unless the South learns to harness the forces of the modern science and technology, it has no chance of fulfilling its developmental aspirations or its yearning for an effective voice in the management of global interdependence...neglect of new technologies may permanently foreclose the future development options of the South and thereby deepen the dependence on the North.

3.5 **Discoursal Trends in the World Today**

The twentieth century has seen a number of social changes whose impact has pervaded life at every level of existence. One obvious example of such changes is globalization: globalization of business, globalization of knowledge, particularly knowledge of science and technology, and the globalization of entertainment and news, especially through syndication. Another phenomenon that has revolutionized the way we live has been the extent and pace of
technological development. Another, perhaps less noticed phenomenon, is the way in which, with the development of knowledge-based industries, knowledge and the discourse necessary in the transmission of knowledge have themselves become commodities to be traded. These changes have brought in their wake many discoursally significant corollaries. Fairclough (1997), in fact goes so far as to claim,

contemporary social life and processes of social change are centrally and essentially linguistically mediated - there is a widespread acceptance of this in recent social theory.

Fairclough (1989, 1994, 1997) has noted a number of distinctive features of twentieth century discourse. As the purpose of this study is not to be exhaustive but only to be suggestive of the possible kinds of process-related data and insights that an analysis of texts can provide, I shall merely confine investigation to four of the kinds of discourse processes he mentions viz,

a) the globalization, conventionalization and "technologization" of discourse

b) the hybridization of discourse genres and the dissolution of genre boundaries

c) the colonization of other discourses by advertising discourse

d) the increasing degree of multisemiotic resourcing in discourse.

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3.5.1 Globalization, conventionalization and technologization

One clear centripetal tendency in discourse is towards greater and greater homogenization of certain kinds of routine discourse. This tendency is probably fueled by such phenomena as the spread of multinationals, the existence of watchdog bodies like the Institute of Accountants that serve a gatekeeping and standards maintaining function. Another trend that promotes and sustains this centripetal tendency is what Fairclough has called "technologization", the analysis of design of discourse for recognition of and possible redesign of generic stereotypes and the subsequent training of personnel into effective use of such discourse as part of their acculturation into institutional culture. Fairclough sees this tendency as not merely confined to institutional or national levels. He sees a "globalization of discursive practices" that "appear increasingly to "flow" across boundaries of culture and language". He cites as examples of such globalization new workplace practices, such as the "quality circle", the 'Americanization' of political discourse on TV and the use of the 'leaflet' as a communicative form in marketing public and private services as well as commodities.

3.5.2 The hybridization of discourse genres

An opposing centrifugal tendency that has also been observed. According to Geertz, (1983) and Fairclough, (1994), the boundaries between genre are
getting blurred and there is increasing hybridization. This is detectable in detailed text analysis.

Fairclough (1989, 1997) for example, cites the fusion of "selling and telling" in public service documents as well as in academic administration. Another area in which this hybridization is noticed is in media discourse where entertainment and news comingle in the same discourse. Hybridization also manifests itself through other ways than in the mixing of more than one register. For example, there can be heterogeneity in the participant relationships projected in the texts. A doctor, for example, could be alternately talking as professional and as concerned friend in doctor-patient talk.

3.5.3 The colonizing influence of advertising discourse

Another tendency prevalent in modern discourse is the increasing tendency of the promotional function of language to infiltrate other kinds of discourse traditionally unrelated to promotion, e.g. academic discourse or public service brochures.
3.5.4 The multisemiotic nature of modern discourse

With the production and reproduction of graphics and other forms of non-verbal signs made easy through modern technology and with the increasing need of the busy modern person to conserve time, texts are becoming more and more multisemiotic in that they habitually orchestrate semiotic resources other than language in their mode of presentation of text.

3.6 Business Discourse in Malaysia

3.6.1 Significance of local discourse for this study

If we hold that the significance of any choice can only be determined by reference to the array of alternatives from which the choice is made, then one logical site for investigation would be the discoursal alternatives from which the Malaysian businessman chooses his way of expressing himself in the Annual Reports. The section on discoursal trends in the world accounts for the choices implicit in the current trends in English discourse. This section looks at the choices that could be available to him from within Malaysian business discourse practice. This study looks at this issue first from the point of view of language choice and then from the point of view of discourse strategies used in local business.
3.6.2 Types of Business Organizations in Malaysia

Although this cannot be ascertained by reference to any objectively conducted study of the situation, very few Malaysians would dispute the claim that all three “waves” of human development mentioned by Toffler and Toffler co-exist in various spheres of Malaysian business. At the level of the aboriginal people, business is probably done through face-to-face exchange and no documentation in the form of promissory notes or bills of exchange or invoices is used. The language of these exchanges is probably the native language of the interlocutors. According to Asmah Hj. Omar (1992:1) there are "more or less 80" of these.

Then there is business at the level of the small and medium-sized industries (SMIs). These include retail shops, small manufacturing units and services of various kinds. Here again, the language would be the L1 of the interlocutors when the interlocutors share the same native language: Cantonese if the buyer and seller are Cantonese speakers, Malay, if buyer and seller are Malays and so on. However when the L1 of the interlocutors is not the same, Bahasa Malaysia serves as the lingua franca.

Where the business enterprises are larger warehouses and factories, the language of documentation and even face-to-face negotiation tends to be Mandarin or one of the Chinese dialects as Chinese hegemony in the area of local
business persists with the business network of production, warehousing, transport and retailing of goods still in the hands of the Chinese.

At this level, English has no role. At the level of large-scale local and international business, which is the level to which this thesis addresses itself, English is the ambient language.

3.6.3 Absence of alternatives to Western discourse tradition

Now for local alternatives to Western discourse forms. To the best of the researcher's knowledge, no such alternative exists. A number of social realities seem to have precluded the emergence of such alternatives. One is the fact that big international business of the kind that requires modern documentation only came to Malaysia with the coming of the British and even when it did, ownership of these companies was in the hands of the British. For obvious reasons, English was the language of choice of these enterprises and British discourse tradition the *de facto* mode of self representation. It is true that Malaysians did engage in international trade with Arab and Indian merchants and later with the Portuguese and Dutch when they came in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries but these engagements took place at the pre-modern period when modern requirements for documentation were probably not operational. Even if some form of spoken business discourse did develop, this has not been studied and is therefore not available for discussion here.
These historical setbacks to the development of Malaysian business discourse have been exacerbated by the fact that even in modern times, the conditions for the development of a distinctively Malaysian discourse style have not been found. The sustained and far-ranging experience of business situations which seems to be a precondition for the evolution of a local norm in discourse has been only available to the Chinese whose discourse is primarily conducted in Chinese. This has worked against the development of Malaysian business discourse in two ways. One is that Chinese business practices work on the basis of family relationships, based on mutual trust and conventional practice with little need for documentation. Another is that, what little documentation there may be and whatever discoursal norms may have evolved through them remained inaccessible to the non-Chinese as Chinese is known only to the Chinese in Malaysia. This has precluded the evolving discourse patterns, if such patterns actually existed, from seeping into the communication of the other races and thus prevented the evolution of a recognizable Malaysian business discourse tradition. One other circumstance has also contributed to the non-emergence of a distinctively Malaysian business discourse style. This is the fact that even when Bahasa Malaysia, which is universally accessible to Malaysians, has been used, it has seldom been other than a transposition of an English discourse model into the Malay discourse environment. One possible reason for this could be the legal requirement early in Malaysia's history as an independent nation to submit two versions of documents, the English version and the Malay version. At this
point, the English version, which modelled itself on existing generic prototypes was produced first. The Malay version was derived by translating the English original.

So, although the issue of alternatives to English discourse in the writing of the Annual Reports seems an important consideration at the level of logical potential, at the empirical level, this does not appear to be a site of struggle. However, although this line of inquiry has drawn a blank at the level of textualization, at the level of the value orientations that can underlie discourse, there appears to be very real conflicts that need resolution. It is to this value orientation that the next section addresses itself.

3.6.4 Common Malaysian Values

In view of the absence of a distinctively Malaysian business discourse practice, we need to look at general sociorhetorical practice and the value assignments Malaysians make vis-à-vis different communicative behaviours. For this, the researcher's primary source of data is Asma Abdullah's book, *Going Glocal*, which is on how to be "open to new ideas and yet embedded in one's own culture, i.e. globally appropriate and culturally relevant." As the blurb to her book describes it, Asma has drawn from her day-to-day experiences of teaching, training, consulting, and counselling with both Malaysian and foreign managers to document observations about the "values and practices at the intracultural level of
interactions within the same ethnic group, at the intercultural level with different
ethnic groups in Malaysia and at the cross-cultural level of Malaysians interacting
with foreign nationals at the workplace". Much of what Asma talks about is
perhaps only observable in the context of face-to-face interaction. The researcher
shall in this section merely summarize some of the main features she observes. It
is not the intention of this study to investigate each of the attributes she mentions
to see if it manifests in the discourse of the Annual Reports. The brief sketch of
cultural characteristics given here is intended more to give a broad-angled view of
the cultural terrain in which the Malaysian businessman is rooted and from which
he habitually derives his notions of what is appropriate and acceptable behaviour.

Asma’s book is a web of several interrelated ideas and therefore defies
easy summarization. For the purposes of this study the researcher will focus
attention on three common cultural values of Malaysians which appear to her to
be of more direct relevance to this thesis as they have linguistic and discoursal
concomitants that distinguish a Malaysian orientation from a Western orientation
and hence serve as indices of Malasianness in the discourse of the Annual
Reports.

3.6.4.1 Malaysians are collectivistic rather than individualistic

There is a “we” orientation among Malaysians. In the workplace this
tends to manifest itself in a number of ways in their communication:
non-assertiveness because self assertion could be seen as tantamount to self-glorification and also because harmony with group decisions is prioritized over manifestations of ability to “think for oneself.”

arguments that adduce cooperation rather than confrontation are more likely to be persuasive.

interpretation of “success” for the group would be more acceptable when success is spelt out in terms that foreground, or at least include, the group (e.g. the Company, the nation). Success conceived in terms of an individual’s (e.g. the Chairman’s) achievement would concomitantly be deemed less Malaysian.

3.6.4.2 Malaysians are hierarchical.

Asma points out that a study by Hofstede (1988) identifies Malaysia as one of the countries with the highest power distance. This, she explains, means that Malaysians in general are willing to accept the fact that inequality in power is considered normal, whether this inequality arises from seniority in age or from
position. Linguistically and discoursally this high power distance manifests itself in the following ways:

a the value of respect for elders and people in power is seen in the insistence on the use of honorifics and titles in communication and observation of protocol and ceremony.

b the inappropriateness of informal language e.g. the use of first names in the communication of or in communication with people in power (e.g. the Chairman of a company)

c The authority of power holders is unquestioned, especially by their subordinates for “to do so would be considered rude and improper on their part” (Asma, 1996:105)

d The acknowledgement of the exact relationship between the interlocuters and the degree of politeness that needs to be sustained can be seen in the number of kinship terms used in Chinese and Tamil and the number of pronouns used in Bahasa Malaysia for the pronoun you in English.
3.6.4.3 Malaysians are relationship-oriented

Private lives and businesses are inextricably enmeshed in what Asma calls "the art of reciprocal obligations". Establishing and maintaining relationships is given higher priority than getting a task done or being timely and efficient. This in sociological lingo is what would be called a "high context" culture where contextual features (including psychological context) are as important as the verbal in the determination of illocutionary force. One attendant feature of this prioritizing of relationships is the preservation of "face" and face, according to Asma, is "the reciprocated compliance, respect or deference that each party expects from and extends to the other party. It means maintaining a person's dignity by not embarrassing or humiliating him in front of others".

This value orientation is immanent in a number of discoursal practices:

- indirect and subtle forms of communication at the expense of accuracy, speed and efficiency. Efficacy is measured in terms of the ability to maintain harmonious relationships.

According to Asma (1996),

In interacting with others, both verbal messages and the circumstances surrounding the communication event
must be taken into consideration. An inferential, implicit and more detailed information is often transmitted through continuous and imprecise, sometimes non-verbal formats among established networks of friends and relatives.

b negative communications (e.g. criticism of performance) are often accomplished through an intermediary.

c there is a need to maintain polite silence when an elder or superior commits an act which deserves censure.

When we compare these values to the value orientations of modern business that we discussed in section 3.3, it becomes eminently clear that the local-global dialectic determining the values the discourse will uphold will be a particularly vexed issue since, on the face of it, the values of modern business and the traditional values of Malaysian society appear to be oriented in opposite directions.
3.7 Summary of Issues

A stock-taking summary of the issues that emerge as a result of the social phenomena discussed above perhaps can take the form of specific research questions they raise for this study:

a  What "special topics" or *topois*" seem to engage the writers of the Annual Reports? In what ways, if any, do these topics reflect the priorities of nation-building as expressed in *Vision 2020* and *The Challenge to the South*? Do they reflect the struggles discussed in this chapter? In what ways do they do so?

b  What choice of language do the Annual Reports make? What implications do these choices have for the direction of the social process of "going glocal" i.e. of seeking global effectiveness while retaining local integration?

c  What social identities and subject positions do local companies adopt? What do these identities and subject positions reflect of their stage of development vis-à-vis world business trends as well as the national and regional aspirations?
d What representation of themselves as leaders do chairmen of local companies seek to project? Which, if any, of the attributes they seek to project of themselves reflect local values and which ones more global business values?

e Does the discourse of the Annual Reports reflect any of the world discourse trends discussed in this chapter? In what ways?

f If we view culture as a process (Fairclough, 1994) what kind of hybridity of past and future, local and global, do we see in the discourse of the Annual Reports at this stage in the country's transformational process?