

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

#### 5.0 Introduction

This chapter concludes the research by presenting the overall discussion in relation to the research questions. It also includes implications of the study as well as recommendations for future studies.

#### 5.1 Summary of the Findings

This section reports the summary of the findings and discusses the research questions.

**Research question 1** : *How the editorials published by the New Straits Times construct the discursive field of teaching of mathematics and science in English*

From the analysis carried out, it can be concluded that the discursive field, which is the policy of teaching mathematics and science in English is constructed through the means of specific types of discourse. The findings sustain the idea that there is a dialectical relationship between language and society– “the linguistic phenomena are social and social phenomena are linguistic” (Fairclough: 2009).

At the same time, language is also observed to be connected to power and ideology. In the context of this study, the influential people behind NST had to a certain extent, defined how the language in the editorials could be used to establish their opinion. Being influential, these

writers could play the sensitive issue of the teaching of mathematics and science policy safely, by foregrounding specific issues while backgrounding others. Hence, the research question of how the editorials published by the *New Straits Times* construct the discursive field of teaching of mathematics and science in English is relatively answered.

It is observed that the discursive field of teaching mathematics and science in English in NST is constructed by foregrounding the language sentiments and the issue of culture brought in by the critiques of the policy (i.e., Dong Zhao Jong, Gapena, certain politicians, NGOs, Malay educationists and Troika). These groups are made the centre of discussion by the writers of the opinion editorials. At the same time, what is back grounded is the issue that the government, led by UMNO the main component in the Barisan Nasional (BN) coalition that governs the country amends its own decision of the policy made in 2002. The move to have Science and Mathematics taught in English in schools was actually the result of proposals made by, of all people, Malay educationists in 2001, and supported no less by the Umno supreme council not long after (Syed Nadzri 20 November 2007: p 11).

Since NST is a highly circulated English newspaper in the country, the readers are reached out through the discussion of this issue in the opinion editorials. They are made to use their own justification to judge the issue. The intention is, to make Malaysians see the importance of the English language in keeping up with the global needs - *all for the future of the country*. Malaysians are advised by the media (i.e., NST), one of the components of ideological state apparatuses (Althusser 1971) to not to be confused like the group of critiques mystified by the values of English in this non-English speaking country.

**Research question 2 :** *How the various moments of interdiscursivity (i.e pedagogic, political, and perception of national interest) intersect with the discursive field of teaching of mathematics and science in english?*

In the opinion editorials the writers constructs moments of interdiscursivity (e.g., mixing the party politics with the national interests). For instance, by (1) foregrounding the language issue brought in by the critiques and (2) back grounding the issue of the government amending their own policy the writers of the editorials create such moments of interdiscursivity. In the opinion editorials as the authors give their opinions politics and national interests are being discussed which may sound very ideological. Specific politicians are criticized in the name of national interests

*“I managed to wrangle an invitation to the fifth Ministry of Education roundtable to discuss the teaching of Science and Mathematics in English, and I came out convinced that we, as a nation are capable of politicking almost anything, even the colours of the traffic lights, if we could .” (Zainul Arifin 17 December 2008: p 13)*

Politics and national interests are portrayed as two major elements intersecting by these writers. The readers are presented with the ideology of politics interfering with the country’s need to be compatible in the global needs by highlighting the importance of the English language. In the quest of influencing the readers, they may have succeeded, to a certain extent. However, in another light, in convincing the government, they may have failed.

## 5.2 Implication of the Study

This study has contributed in expanding the horizon of Critical Discourse Analysis where the Dialectical Relational Approach is concerned. Fairclough (2009) had used the approach in analyzing a political speech. This study, in all its significance looked at the discussion of a sensitive issue (i.e., the policy of medium of instruction) in opinion editorials. The findings are hoped to guide other researchers in terms of the use of this framework in other forms (i.e., news paper articles, letters to editors) thus further provide a variety in the application of this framework.

Apart from what is mentioned, this study is hoped to provide a foundation to future researchers to see the intricate and complex relations in the construction of a discursive field involving various moments with regards to language and power.

Last but not least, it is also hoped to serve as an eye opener to the government in the sense that the construction of an education policy is not only for the Ministry of Education alone. Different stakeholders take part in constructing the policy. Meanwhile it is the media that offers the space to these stakeholders to construct, debate, and reflect on the issue, not to forget that the arguments reported are mediated by the stance of the media. In fact, it is constructed by the media as well. This is because, the newspaper as a major link between the government and the people, has the capacity to manipulate an issue which comes together with any new policy.

### 5.3 Recommendation for Future Studies

This study was not carried out without any limitations and as a result there is considerable potential for future research in this area. The limitations are as follows:

1. The study has limited generalisability owing to the fact that the issue discussed evolves from nine editorials selected from only one English daily newspaper in Malaysia. Richer analysis of a larger sample of newspapers would widen the scope and increase the generalisability of the findings of a study.
2. A longitudinal study of editorials from selected newspapers expanded over the years; for example during different eras of premiership (e.g., Mahathir Mohammed, Abdullah Badawi and Najib Razak). The way how the media looked at the epistemological changes and how they constructed the issue can be observed and explored to a greater extent.
3. This study has particularly used Fairclough's latest framework, i.e., the Dialectical Relational Approach (2009) and only opinion editorials written by group editors were analyzed. Considering this framework to be the latest in the field of Critical Discourse Analysis studies, it is recommended that the approach (DRA) is used on other types of genres, not necessarily from the print media, like newspaper and magazines. Instead, it can be used to analyze genres from electronic media. Apart from that, this approach can also be used to analyze other moments of interdiscursivity beside politics and national interests.
4. This study only involves sample editorials from one culture. For future studies, a study involving a larger sample of editorials from different cultures and languages is suggested. Such study would be oriented towards investigating the textual properties of the genre,

thus, would enlighten the overall generic structure of the genre and the degree of its uniformity and universality across cultures and languages.

## **5.4 Conclusion**

From the research carried out, it can be concluded that the conventions set by a social institution is mostly shaped by power relations that the agents enjoy there. In other words, a discourse is being determined by the social structure which later contributes to social change. Language on the other hand is seen as a part of the social process as it is a socially conditioned process by part of the society (Fairclough, 2009) - in the context of this study, by the writers of the opinion editorials. To put it succinctly, by using Fairclough's words:

“How discourses are structured in a given order of discourse, and how structuring change over time, are *determined* by changing relationships of power at the level of the social institution or of the society” (italics added, Fairclough, 2000 : p. 25).