

## CHAPTER 1 : INTRODUCTION

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Modern studies in sociology perceive disability and writings on disability as contentious. Disability is viewed as a social rather than medical construct particularly in the media discourse. A conventional discourse analysis would view a text as an end in itself while a critical discourse approach would see representations of disability as products of discursive and social practices. This study aims to investigate how *The Star* represents the social images of the disabled people in a set of 179 news reports and articles published between 1 July 2004 and 30 June 2005. These images will be grouped into three categories, namely the misrepresentation of the disabled self, representation of an inferior in social standing and objectification of the disabled in charity discourse. Adopting Fairclough's 3-Dimensional framework (1995) (*cf. Section 2.2*), the study will examine how textual and intertextual elements are framed in the texts studied and further investigate how these features reflect the existing social practice in Malaysian society.

In this introductory chapter, the background and social position of the disabled as well as the selective practices in Malaysian journalism are presented as justifications for the study to be made here. This chapter then proceeds with the aim and research questions, significance of findings and limitations of investigation. Definitions of the three concepts in this study, namely *social construction*, *representations* and *self* are then explained.

## **1.1 BACKGROUND TO STUDY**

### **1.1.1 News Reporting in Malaysian English Mainstream Press**

Shakila (1999 & 2008a) claimed that in the new millennium, the Malaysian media, particularly the mainstream press should provide more space for the interaction and contestation of differing voices, viewpoints and discourses. However, if we go by the coverage of a controversial public figure like Anwar Ibrahim, sensational stories of rape victims and alleged rapists and murderers, these episodes have been negatively represented in the press, often biased in coverage. Shakila (1999:1 & 2008a) discovered that the discourses in the Malaysian newspapers (*New Straits Times* and *The Star*) do not reflect reality in a neutral manner but instead have often been ‘interpreted’, ‘organised’ and ‘classified’, attributing such practices to the fact that newspapers in general have to operate within discursive, cultural, political and economic constraints.

Furthermore, this biasness in news reporting specifically in *The Star* has been publicly admitted by Donald Lim, one of the former Vice Presidents of the Malaysian Chinese Association (MCA) (The Sun, 2008). MCA, the country’s biggest Chinese political party, is a stakeholder of *The Star* (cf. Section 3.1.1). Lim claimed that the biasness in reporting was due to the decisions of certain editorial staff; he urged *The Star* to re-evaluate its operation and MCA to give up its stake in the daily. This would contribute towards freedom of speech and fair reporting to ensure that this medium could perform its basic function as the voice of the people (The Sun, 2008). This mirrors Fowler (1991) and Hodge & Kress’s (1993) assertion that media texts can be biased and represent choices made by a select few. Fairclough (2001:43) has also purported that

‘the media operate as a means for the expression and reproduction of the power of the dominant class and bloc’.

How does biasness in reporting affect the disabled in the country? These can be linked to the construction of disability via discursive practices where media texts can be shaped to propagate views and interests of certain parties particularly the stakeholders. Baskaran (2004), Alexander (2004) and Mac (2004) highlighted the struggles and needs of the disabled community in Malaysia at the Second International Conference of Languages, Linguistics & The Real World held in Kuala Lumpur in December 2004. Baskaran (2004) claimed that how these groups of citizens were described or rather ‘packaged’ by the media affected how they were judged by others. She emphasised the plight of this community through the analysis of newspaper contents on the disabled in general and those with speech disorders in particular. Alexander (2004) drew attention to the problem of access to mainstream schools and social welfare support for children with autism, while Mac (2004) focused on voices of those with dyslexia.

The media discourse is linguistically constructed (Simpson, 1993 & Shakila 2008a). Socially constructed, the media may not reflect reality but ‘encode a particular view of reality’ (Fowler, 1991:4). In other words, reality represented by media texts is filtered and manipulated to tailor a particular viewpoint of a particular group with perhaps vested interest, vis-à-vis Thomas & Wareing (1999:50) who opine that mediation can ‘affect representation of people and event’. The message communicated may not be complete and ‘polysemic’ in meanings (Deacon et al, 1999:2); in short, it is not unitary

but a constructed, generalised and presumed social reality for the group of disabled people in the country.

### 1.1.2 Who are Categorised as the Disabled in Malaysia?

The Department of Social Welfare of Malaysia (Department of Social Welfare, 2005) revealed that as at 2003, only a total of 132,655 were registered as ‘disabled’ as shown by the breakdown in the following table :

*Table 1.1 : Registered Distribution of the Disabled According to States*

No.	State	2001	2002	2003
1.	Johor	12,988	14,089	15,543
2.	Kedah	7,973	8,305	9,823
3.	Kelantan	10,383	11,149	12,763
4.	Melaka	3,865	4,197	4,775
5.	Negeri Sembilan	4,632	5,138	5,826
6.	Pahang	3,762	4,088	4,791
7.	Perak	13,363	15,755	13,892
8.	Perlis	2,152	2,382	2,866
9.	Pulau Pinang	7,750	8,476	8,165
10.	Selangor	12,516	13,837	16,174
11.	Terengganu	6,616	7,208	8,123
12.	W.P.Kuala Lumpur	10,523	10,920	11,857
13.	W.P. Labuan	248	250	320
14.	Sabah	8,258	8,462	9,067
15.	Sarawak	7,595	7,833	8,670
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>112,624</b>	<b>122,089</b>	<b>132,655</b>

*Source :Department of Social Welfare (2005)  
Retrieved 17 August 2005 at <http://www.jkm.gov.my/statistik.htm>*

Mohd Sharani (2004) estimated that an average of 1.2 to 2.3 percent of the Malaysian population or 312,000 to 598,000 of 26 million people are disabled. The most recent statistics are not available for public scrutiny. Accurate prevalence figures are difficult

to obtain due to definitional problems, changing diagnoses, the presence of multiple handicaps as well as the stigma of identification and survey problems (Mohd Sharani, 2004). These processes of re-labellings and redefinitions have contributed to making it difficult to clearly identify who the disabled are, and to reach out to them (Mohd Sharani, 2004).

Generally, people with disability are those who require special help due to their physical, physiological or neurological disabilities, be they congenital or caused by external factors in the environment. Most dictionaries would simplistically refer 'disability' to the condition of being crippled, injured or incapacitated. However, the United Nations (1983) further divides the general term of 'disability' into 3 sub-categories:

*Impairment: Any loss of abnormality of psychological or anatomical structure or function.*

*Disability: Any restriction or lack (resulting from an impairment) of ability to perform an activity in the manner or within the range considered normal for a human being.*

*Handicap: A disadvantage for a given individual, resulting from an impairment or disability, that limits or prevents the fulfillment of a role that is normal, depending on age, sex, **social and cultural factors**, for that individual.*

*Source : United Nations (1983:1)*

Whether they are 'impairment', 'disability' or 'handicap', these terms seem to be measured against 'normality' and social integration. Disability is a function of the relationship between disabled persons and their environment. It occurs when they encounter cultural, physical or social barriers that deny them access to the various

systems in society. Thus, handicap is viewed as the loss or limitation of opportunities to take part in the life of the community on an equal level with others (United Nations, 1983). This definition reflects the idea that to a large extent, disability is a social construct.

In the Malaysian context, the Department of Social Welfare (2005) stipulates a disabled person as :

*'Seseorang yang tidak berupaya menentukan sendiri bagi memperoleh sepenuh atau sebahagian daripada keperluan biasa seseorang individu dan tidak dapat hidup bermasyarakat sepenuhnya disebabkan sesuatu kekurangan samada dari segi fizikal atau mental dan samada ia berlaku semenjak lahir atau kemudian dari itu.'*

*Source : Retrieved 17 August 2005 at <http://www.jkm.gov.my>*

Translated by the researcher here as:

*One who is entirely or partially incapable of being self-sufficient or unable to live in a society independently due to a lack of the physical or mental ability prior to birth or thereafter.*

Even with the legislation of The Persons With Disabilities Act 2008, the disabled are still defined as those who *'lack the long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory abilities, when met with various obstacles, preventing their full interaction with the society'* (Department of Social Welfare, 2009:1). In both old and new Malaysian definitions, one who has a physical or mental defect that results in the inability to fit into society is considered disabled. These definitions seem to require the disabled to fit into society rather than vice versa. This is similar to the definition of disability used by the United Nation's. This is another example of social construction of disability when society discriminates against an individual who may have an impairment without a

corresponding functional ability. This also manifests the worldwide arguments by sociologists and social scientists that the disabled are incapacitated by the social construction of the society they live in, rather than the medical or rehabilitation assistance required (Kaplan, 2000). Disability is linked to the cultures and practices in society. Being unable to blend into society, one can be perceived as an outcast, a stranger, an outsider not belonging to the ‘norm’ at large (Shakespeare, 1997).

The Department of Social Welfare of Malaysia (2005) further sub-categorises ‘disability’ within 6 broad categories namely the *hearing-impaired*, *visually-impaired*, *physically-impaired*, *cerebral palsy*, *learning difficulty* and *others* (see Table 1.2):

**Table 1.2 Registered Categories of Disabled in Malaysia**

	<b>Category</b>	<b>Description</b>
1	<i>Hearing - impaired</i>	<i>Not inclusive of the deaf and dumb :</i> <i>a) Mild - (20 - &lt; 30 db)</i> <i>b) Moderate - (30 - &lt; 60 db)</i> <i>c) Severe - (60 - &lt; 90 db)</i> <i>d) Profound - (&gt; 90 db)</i>
2	<i>Visually - impaired</i>	<i>a) Blind – Vision less than 3/60 on the better eye with the utility of aids (spectacles).</i> <i>b) Limited vision (Low Vision/Partially Sighted) – Vision less than 6/18 but equal or better than 3/60 of the eye with better vision with the utility of visual aids (spectacles).</i>
3	<i>Physically-disabled</i>	<i>Physical disability for example those with Polio, Maimed, Muscular Dystrophy, Myopathy, Neuropathy, Osteogenesis Imperfecta etc.</i>
4	<i>Cerebral Palsy</i>	<i>a) Hemiplegia - Cerebral Palsy that involves one side of the body.</i> <i>b) Diplegia - Cerebral Palsy that involves both legs</i> <i>c) Quadriplegia - Cerebral Palsy that involves both hands and legs.</i>
5	<i>Learning Difficulty</i>	<i>Medical diagnosis under this category includes:</i> <i>a) Global Development Delay (for children below 3 years old)</i> <i>b) Down' Syndrome / Autism</i> <i>c) Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder (ADHD)</i> <i>d) Mental Retardation (for children above 3 years old)</i> <i>e) Specific learning disabilities such as dyslexia, dysgraphia, dyscalculia etc.</i>
6	<i>Others</i>	<i>Medical diagnosis under this category includes disabilities that are not described in this format.</i>

Source : Department of Social Welfare (2005)  
Retrieved and translated 17 August 2005 at <http://www.jkm.gov.my/statistik.htm>

It could be argued that such pre-determined rigid and specific descriptions would be vital for an effective, fair identification and dissemination of medical, financial and social welfare assistance to those who genuinely need help. On the other hand, as implications of linguistic choices used by the authority, these labellings, definitions and descriptions appear to have become the official yardsticks to legitimately spell out and construct the disabled, their disabilities and eventually their social standing in society. Language is hereby used to formally and lawfully define, label and stigmatise a person as officially disabled by the authorities. It allows the authorities to transcend their power, acknowledging the authority as the 'giver' and the disabled 'the receiver', thus separating the 'us' and 'them'. These practices could also possibly risk society reacting to, looking down on and discriminating the disabled (Mohd. Sharani, 2004).

### **1.1.3 Towards a Caring Society : A Socio-Political Effort**

In 1991, the then Malaysian Prime Minister, Mahathir Mohammad called for an aspiration of a caring society as one of the nine challenges of a fully developed and industrialised Malaysia by the year 2020 (Economic Planning Unit, 2006). Despite the intermittent calls from politicians particularly from the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development, the advocacy activities to reduce biasness towards the disabled in Malaysia are yet to be at the forefront.

The Malaysian Chinese Association (MCA), one of Malaysia's leading Chinese political parties introduced the Lifelong Learning Campaign on 8 October 2004. It identified the *Seven Pillars* (i.e. *Caring Society, Living Skills, Education Revitalisation,*



*Moral Building, Culture & Arts, National Integration and Youth Development*) that were aimed at cultivating love for knowledge, particularly in information technology and culture, and ultimately shaping a refined Malaysian society (MCA Secretariat, 2005). The first *pillar* of Caring Society was launched on 26 March 2005 at Sunway Pyramid Shopping Mall in Petaling Jaya. At the initial stage, it focused only on four groups – the autistic and dyslexic children, the elderly, the disabled and single parents. In its programme booklet, its then President of MCA, Ong Ka Ting wrote:

*‘In our pursuit of knowledge, let us not forget about their **mental, physical and environmental plights**. It is our responsibility that social cohesion is achieved and that the existing **knowledge gap** be narrowed to enable them to play their roles in society more effectively.*

*We sincerely hope that the Caring Society Pillar will provide **equal opportunities** in seeking knowledge for people from all walks of life. Through the programme, may we all be more active citizens and strive to **reduce marginalisation** for a more loving and caring society.’*

*Source: Caring Society Pillar, MCA Secretariat (2005:1)*

In the above extract, the political leader openly highlighted and admitted the ‘mental, physical and environmental plights’ and the existence of ‘knowledge gap’, and ‘[un]equal opportunities’ for the disabled in the country. This calls for a reduction in their ‘marginalisation’, which is fundamental towards achieving the national aspiration of a caring society. This realisation has perhaps come late after 49 years of the country’s independence and 14 years after the inception of Vision 2020, but at least, this situation has now been identified and given due consideration.

The acknowledgement of the rights of the disabled in the country was only lawfully materialised in 2008. The Persons with Disabilities Act 2008 (Akta OKU 2008) was passed in Parliament on 24 December 2007, gazetted on 24 January 2008 and came into force on 7 July 2008, after the Malaysian Government signed the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities on 8 April 2008 (Department of Social Welfare, 2009). The Convention calls for governments to take steps to ‘ensure and promote the full realisation of all human rights and fundamental freedom for all persons with disabilities without discrimination of any kind on the basis of disability’ (Department of Social Welfare, 2009:1). In short, this act acknowledges the rights of disabled people and moves away from a welfare-based to a rights-based concept. Although this appears to represent a small but significant step forward, the Malaysian Bar Council has criticised it for not being comprehensive nor inclusive enough (Kesavan, 2009). It seems to be purely an administrative act as there are no punitive measures for non-compliance or acts of discrimination. Kesavan (2009) points out that the Federal Government and the public will still enjoy exclusion from any wrongdoing. This exemption casts serious doubt on the commitment to the rights of persons with disabilities. Furthermore, disabled individuals have little or no recourse to legal remedies if they face discrimination in areas such as public transport, housing, education, employment and health care (Kesavan, 2009). This socio-political agenda of a caring society needs to be further counter-checked.

#### **1.1.4 Voices from the Disabled People's Movement**

Reports in the press by both able-bodied and disabled writers have revealed how the disabled people in this country are generally discriminated, particularly in areas of education, social welfare and employment (*cf. Appendix B for list of reading*). Despite the presence of many recognised welfare organisations, the disabled community still cry about the lack of space and opportunities to speak for themselves.

The social change in disability movement was spearheaded by the blind. John Kim (1991), one of the founding members of the Society of the Blind, ascribed ignorance and negative attitudes by society to the relegation of the disabled people to 'second-class citizens' and 'lesser people':

*'I am saying this because the disabled have been excluded from the general development of the country. From the construction of public roads, buildings and schools, to access to supermarkets, public transport and recreational parks, the special needs of the disabled have not been catered for. This is due to lack of consultation with the disabled to ascertain their views and needs.'*

*Source : J.Kim (1991:9)*

Thanasayan (1995a & 1995b), another outspoken disability activist and a long-time columnist of 'Wheel Power' in *The Star* and a paraplegic himself, in 1995, led a movement of peaceful protest against the management of the Light Rail Transport System (LRT) for their reluctance in providing the necessary facilities for wheelchair-users. He alleged that:

*'It's not our disability that we cannot overcome but the establishment that has not provided the facilities necessary for us to grow and function normally'.*

*Source : A.Thanasaysan (1995a:10)*

In other words, Thanasayan claims that wheelchair-users are not paralysed by their own physical disabilities. Instead, they have been handicapped by the failure of society and authority to provide the necessary infrastructure for them to function independently.

Another key spokesperson for the disabled people, Godfrey Ooi (1991), who has participated in all major dialogues with the government officials, affirms that the disabled people are deprived of rights due to public apathy, discrimination and prejudice. Ooi stresses that there is a need for a change in the approach to providing social services from one based on charity which implies goodwill and low standards, to one based on social responsibility and human rights. This would enable the disabled to claim their rights as human beings who are not constantly put on the receiving end. It also appears that the policy makers have been making decisions based on what they think the disabled would need. Ooi has also criticised that there is no consultation and mechanism for the disabled to be directly involved in the decision-making process for themselves (Jayasooria, 2000), thus denying the disabled their voices in deciding their own fate.

The Deputy President of Society of the Disabled Persons of Penang has been lauded for laws and guidelines to enable disabled persons to obtain jobs against any intentional or unintentional discrimination against them. He further claims that the disabled must be

given a chance to earn a living with dignity and pride. They should not remain objects of charities and handouts but be given equal access to full participation in all aspects of life (Tan, 2004).

Similarly, the Deaf in Malaysia are calling for deaf empowerment, especially through sign language. The Deaf (spelt with a capital 'D') want themselves and their language to be seen as a distinct linguistic minority group, who are equally capable and independent and 'speak' a language of their own (Mak, 2009 & Thanasayan, 2004). Sign language has been sidelined, unrecognised as a language as its own right (Zubaidah & Ho, 2009) and not even as medium of teaching in the education setting (Abdullah & Che Rabiaah, 2009). Correspondingly, this Malaysian setting is comparable to Hong Kong's, where it is common to see the Deaf and sign language being undervalued or even ignored in different sectors of the communities, and hence, what more in the other poorer regions in the world (Sze, 2009). Empowerment will reduce the cultural biasness on deafness and social behaviour that perceives being deaf as the inability to identify with society rather than a pathological condition. Empowerment must be materialised or the Deaf will continue to suffer discrimination (Zubaidah & Ho, 2009; Mak, 2009).

With the above state of affairs as a background (*cf. Sections 1.1.1-1.1.4*), this study seeks to show how the marginalisation of the disabled is reflected, i.e. how this social practice is mediated in the media texts. Media are often the main means to disseminate information and news to the society. How the disabled are socially constructed in news reporting often result in them being indiscriminately judged by society. Hence, it would

be critical and worthwhile to analyse how the linguistic options in the media discourse disseminate information, and simultaneously represent, construct or define the disabled and their social images.

## **1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

The preceding section has established that there is an existing issue of social marginalisation of the disabled that could affect some 2.3 percent of the Malaysian population (*cf. Sections 1.1.2 - 1.1.4*). This calls for more studies on the media representation of disability which at the moment, very few and far in between, both at the international and local scenes (*cf. Sections 2.3 & 2.5.2*). Moreover, most previous studies in the area of disability have approached this subject matter typically only as social researches (*cf. Sections 2.5.1 and 2.5.2*). Many scholars are now viewing disability as an epistemological phenomenon of social construction that can be linguistically enacted in the media and implicate in negative social and power relations (*cf. Sections 1.1.1 & 2.5.2*). Thus, in this sense, there is a current need for a transdisciplinary study on the disability site, particularly the socio and linguistic. The present study here is felt apt and timely to show how the disabled have been linguistically represented in the media discourse as the alien other, challenge some accepted prevailing discursive and social practices, and eventually suggest specific forms of social action that ought to be taken to empower the disabled (*cf. Sections 1.5, 5.1 & 5.2*). With human development as its guiding principle, it is hoped that the current mainstream journalism will do more justice in representing the social images of the disabled people in the country.

### **1.3 AIM**

This paper aims to study how the social images of the disabled people are represented in the printed media texts via critical discourse analysis.

### **1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

This study attempts to provide answers to the following research questions:

- a) How are the disabled self misrepresented lexically through euphemistic terms?
- b) How is the social standing of the disabled as a member of the community represented lexically through evaluative words and metaphorical expressions as well as discourse representation?
- c) How are the disabled objectified in charity discourse textured in news reporting?

The above questions will be discussed in relation to the social practices in society.

### **1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY**

To the world of academia particularly in the local Malaysian context, this study will help fortify that linguistics in general and CDA in particular, are complementary to sociology. CDA can be an indispensable tool to outline the power of language in constructing the social reality of the disabled in this case; how language could arise and be ideologically shaped by relations of power and struggles over power. The analysis also strengthens CDA's pre-eminence that identifies and interprets the multifunctionality of texts as representations, identities and relations and also explains the mechanisms employed (*cf. Section 2.2.1*).

This study will reveal the prevailing low social standing of the disabled in society as positioned by the media, highlighting the marginalisation of the disabled in the country. Revelations made will be a humble proposition to the authorities concerned towards meeting the needs of this disadvantaged group. It is hoped that this will lead to the provision of better social welfare and infrastructural facilities for the disabled, propagate self-advocacy, independence, equality and more empowerment for the disabled in the future. CDA can eventually lead to a ‘democratization of society’ particularly for the disabled community in Malaysia (Shakila, 1999:11).

## **1.6 LIMITATIONS OF STUDY**

This study is limited only to the analysis of English Language texts from only one major Malaysian English daily within the time frame of 1 July 2004 to 30 June 2005 (*cf. Chapter 3*). A study beyond this scope may present a different finding.

It must be acknowledged that *The Star* does provide space for writings from the disabled community as well as publish reports on the capability and independence of the disabled community (*cf. Section 3.1*). However, as most critics of CDA have mentioned (*cf. Section 2.4*), the selection of data for this study is often skewed towards those that fit the research questions; in this case, those that carry negative representations. As argued by van Dijk (1999), there is a need to take this explicit position to understand and expose ideological work in discourse (*cf. Section 2.4*).



A small-scale study of this nature will also be based on the researcher's own interpretations. The tone of discussions may be biased towards the discursive practice of the media and social structure of society. This is only meant to suggest and caution any possible detrimental implications that could arise from the discourse choices in texts. The texts studied may or may not have been originally intended to propagate any agenda at all.

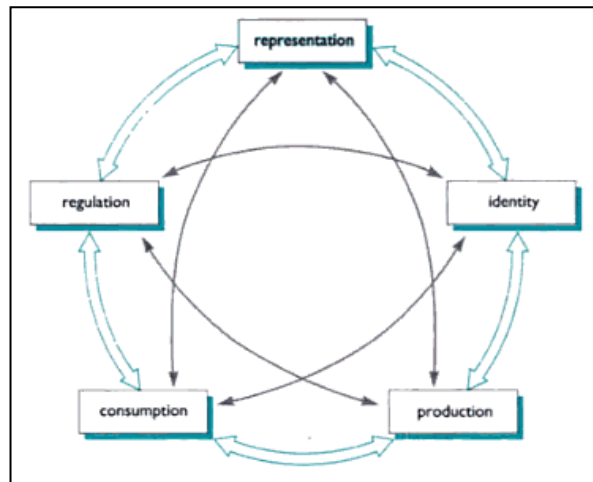
## **1.7 KEY CONCEPTS**

The three key concepts discussed in this study are *social construction*, *representation* and *self* which will be further explained below.

According to sociological and psychological theories, the social world is a phenomenon invented or constructed by participants in a particular culture or society. *Social construction* refers to the meanings people assign to things, how they understand their environment and introduce order in the world (Burr, 1995). It involves looking at the ways social phenomena are created, institutionalised, and made into tradition by society (Searle, 1995). Berger and Luckmann (1966) argue that knowledge is created by and through social interactions. Socially constructed reality is perceived as a dynamic on-going process; reality is reproduced by people acting on their interpretations and their knowledge of it (Searle, 1995). In simpler terms, people interact with their respective understanding and perceived social reality; this knowledge of reality then becomes common and acceptable. This would mean that perceptions would be typified and made common sense and mutually reinforced. Following the works of a French philosopher,

Michel Foucault, social scientists regard discourse as an institutionalised way of thinking that can be manifested through language, a social boundary defining what can be said about a specific topic (Fawcett, 2000). Thus, one of the means to unravel this social construction of reality and social position of the disabled is through a critical analysis on related discourses.

**Representations** are symbols, signs and images that encapsulate thoughts, emotions, ideas and concepts. Language operates on this ‘representational systems’ and hence **representations** are products of the meanings of concepts and ideas in our minds (Hall, 1997:1). Language is inseparable from culture. Hall’s (1997) model of Circuit of Culture (cf. Figure 1.1) designates that **representations** are part of production, consumption and regulation of culture in a society.



**Figure 1.1 The Circuit of Culture**  
Source : S.Hall (1997:1)

*Representations* involve the process of coding and encoding in meaning making with shared understanding in a particular culture or society. Meaning can construct identity and convey how a culture is then marked to maintain identity within and between groups (Woodward, 1997). Relating this to social construction, *representations* in this study is referred to linguistic resources (lexical items, structures, grammar), discourse and genre which are incorporated in media texts to construct the social images of the disabled.

The third key concept is *self*. Typically *self* denotes the distinct individuality, identity or the state of being which includes the physicality and characteristics of a person. In this present critical discourse study, *self* refers to the identity and existence/being of a disabled, a social subject often positioned in dichotomy with the ‘others’ (Foucault, 1972; van Dijk, 1991). These selective versions of *self* have cultural values that entail them. This construction of ‘social identity’ or the *self* is associated with specific domains and institutions that are constantly ‘redefined’ and ‘reconstituted’ by the social practices in the discourse community (Fairclough, 1992a:137).

These three key ideas can be encapsulated in texts and crucial towards the enactment of social subjects, social events and discourse.

## **1.8 CONCLUSION**

CDA provides theories and systematic methods to unravel the relationships of causality and determination between discursive practices of the media, events and texts with the social and cultural domains (Fairclough, 1995a). In this first chapter, the researcher here has shown how disability can be advocated as a CDA site with much potential for exploration in advocating a more equitable social representation of the disabled in society. CDA is capable of illustrating how society's perception of the disabled can be interpellated and constructed via representations in media texts.

The next chapter will outline the bases and review some important theoretical frameworks and literatures with regard to CDA and the social construction of disability. The third chapter outlines the procedures and methods of data compilation and analyses. The fourth chapter will be the crust of this study, delineating how the social images of the disabled are represented through lexical choices, adoption of discourse representation, as well as the texturing of charity discourse in news reporting. These will show how these could implicate in interpellating the social subjects in the discourse studied and thus, what it reveals about the social practice in society. Several recommendations based on the whole study will conclude this dissertation.