CHAPTER 2 : LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter explores the pertinent theoretical framework and literature related to Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), particularly Fairclough's 3-Dimensional framework, some CDA research conducted in the Malaysian context before focusing on the social construction of disability and its relations to CDA.

2.1 CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS (CDA)

2.1.1 What is 'Discourse'?

'Discourse' imparts various meanings for various researchers. Generally, Foucault (1972) describes 'discourse' as individual acts of language or language in action that allows us to make sense of ideas and statements. It is through discourse that meanings, subjects and subjectivities are formed (Foucault, 1972). Lemke (1995) asserts that discourse not only reaffirms existing social relationships and patterns of behaviours in society, it also introduces new meanings and behaviours. In other words, discourse is socially active. For Fairclough (1989 & 1995a), 'discourse' is a form of social practice where language is imbricated in social relations and processes which systematically determine the variations in its properties, including the linguistic forms of texts. Here, we can subscribe to the idea that 'discourse' is language use in social contexts that reflects and can affect the social construction in a discourse community (*cf. Section 1.7*).

2.1.2 The Conception of CDA

CDA's roots can be traced back to Marxism social theory and organisation, the quantitative-correlative sociolinguistics of William Labov (Wodak, 1996), Althusser's theories of ideology, Bakthin's genre theory and the philosophical traditions of Gramsci and the Frankfurt school (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997; Titscher et al, 2000). CDA can be viewed as a branch of applied linguistics rooted in the tradition of 'critical social scientific theory' (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999:18). The term 'critical' is a key theoretical concept in CDA. Firstly, it is based on ideas of the Frankfurt School, especially the works and ideas of Jurgen Habermas, and secondly, it shares the tradition with critical linguistics (Teo, 2000).

As mentioned above, the notion of 'critical' social science and analysis is associated with the Frankfurt School (theories of western Marxism) in the 1920s. This neo-Marxism moves away from the economical dimension of classical Marxism. In Habermas's concept of an ideal speech situation, he cites the role of rational discourse in overcoming ideologically impaired discourse, cautioning how ideology can be neatly embedded in language which may have detrimental effects on classes of people in society (Fairclough, 2001).

The critical perspective within linguistics first emerged in connection with studies carried out by Fowler and Hodge & Kress in the 1970's (Tistcher et al, 2000). These critical linguists seek to make clear the connections between language and other elements in social life which are often obscured. Discourse cannot exist without social meanings; there is a strong relation between linguistic and social structures.

CDA subsequently assimilates the Hallidayan systemic functional grammar (Halliday, 1978) to deal with clause-level constitution of representation combined with Foucault's exploration of the nexus of power and knowledge. More recently, CDA has also developed a more sophisticated methodology to semiotic analyses in modalities such as images, graphics, sounds and films in line with modern multi-semiotic trends in contemporary media practices (Fairclough, 1995b; Kress and van Leeuwen, 1990). This suggests that CDA is relevant, practical and able to meet the demands of evolutions in contemporary digital media communication.

2.1.3   Principles of CDA

Teun van Dijk (1993 & 2001a), a prominent proponent of CDA explains what CDA is by outlining what it is not. He claims that CDA is not a subdiscipline of discourse analysis but can be combined with any approach of subdiscipline in the humanities and social sciences. As such, CDA is a critical perspective on doing scholarship that focuses on social problems specifically on the role of discourse in the production and reproduction of power abuse or domination. CDA pursues 'solidarity with the oppressed' 'with an attitude of opposition' and dissent against those who abuse text and talk in order to 'establish, confirm or legitimate their abuse of power' and defends the dominated group (van Dijk, 2001b:96). This differentiates CDA from Discourse Analysis (DA) where the former surpasses not just what is found in a text but how the language in the text works and the effects it brings to the consumers of texts. In simple words, CDA does not stop at looking at the 'what', but goes on to answer the 'how', 'so what' and 'why so' questions.

Another advocate of CDA is Norman Fairclough (Fairclough, 1989, 1995a, 1995b & 2003; Fairclough & Wodak, 1997). Fairclough advocates that CDA provides theories and methods for the study of the relations between discourse, social and cultural developments in different social domains. It systematically explores the relationships of causality and determination between discursive practices of the media, events and texts with the social and cultural structures in society (Fairclough, 1995a). It investigates how such practices, events and texts are ideologically shaped by relations of power and struggles over power.

Titscher et al (2000) have summarised the principles of CDA as formulated by Wodak (1996). For them, discourse is a form of social and cultural behaviour and must be understood in relation to its historical context. Language can constitute and reconstitute society and thus could be ideological. CDA studies both 'power in discourse' and 'power over discourse' to investigate their interpretations and social effects (Titscher et al, 2000:148). Since discourse analysis is interpretative and dynamic in nature, CDA would provide a systematic and scientific methodology to link the three elements of social conditions, ideologies and power relations.

In brief, CDA is concerned with the linguistic characters in the social cultural construction of a society. Language and culture are dialectically related and mutually reinforcing. Language is potentially ideological; CDA highlights the power play within discourse and those who have power over its construction. This can contribute towards resisting 'social power abuse', 'dominance' and 'inequality' (van Dijk, 2001a:353).

Being transdisciplinary and multidisciplinary, CDA also requires an understanding of related social cultural, philosophical, anthoropological, political or even economic principles that have enacted the linguistic choices. CDA researchers must equip themselves with more than just linguistic knowledge to enable them to draw out these complex inter-relationships.

2.2   FAIRCLOUGH'S 3-DIMENSIONAL FRAMEWORK

This subsection illustrates Fairclough's 3-dimensional framework which is employed as the analytical framework in this dissertation. Fairclough's framework is felt apt for this study as it consists of a set of theoretical methods, methodological guidelines and specific techniques for linguistic analysis (*cf. Sections 2.2.1-2.2.3 and 3.2.2*).

Fairclough (1992a) uses the term 'discourse' to analyse discourse in a three dimensional conception of text, discursive practice and social practice that can be diagrammatically encapsulated in Figure 2.1:
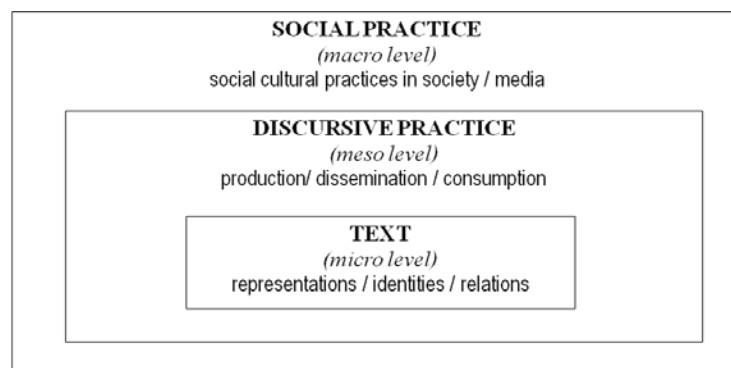

Figure 2.1 : Fairclough's 3-dimensional Framework (Fairclough, 1995a:59)

The three elements at the micro, meso and macro levels are inter-related and inextricably bound. This order of levels also reflects the way texts are analysed in Fairclough's framework.

2.2.1   Discourse as Texts

'Texts' in Fairclough's term is referred to the realisation of discourses in spoken, written or visual forms. Drawing from Systemic Functional Linguistics (Halliday, 1978), Fairclough (1995a:58) views texts from multifunctional perspectives labelled as *representations*, *relations* and *identities* which can effective mediators of reality.

Texts are *representations* or recontextualisations of social practices which could be ideological. This perspective relates to ways texts signify the world and their processes, entities and relations which is similar to Halliday's (1978) ideational function. Secondly, in texts as *relations*, texts are action that construct the social relationship between a writer and a reader (e.g. formal or informal, close or distant). It relates how the social relationships between discourse participants are enacted and negotiated. This is similar to Halliday's interpersonal function. Thirdly, texts as *identities*. Texts function as identification of persons, in particular, the constructions of status and roles of writer and reader identities. This relates to ways in which social identities are set up in discourse. Halliday does not differentiate a separate function for *identities*. In simpler terms, Fairclough views texts from multifunctional perspectives. There is a need to view the relationship of text to the event (*ways of acting*), to the wider physical and social

world (*ways of representing*) and to the persons involved in the event (*ways of being*) (Fairclough, 2003:27).

In short, Fairclough believes that texts are bound by the discursive practices of the media which are further constituted by social practices in the society. They are representations and recontextualisations of social practices carrying particular ideologies. In the present study, this framework is deemed appropriate to show that texts signify the social processes and relations of entities in them i.e. the subject (the disabled community), the actors (the various voices in texts) and the producers of texts as well as the wider society. Texts can provide a microscopic view of behaviours and practices in a society.

2.2.2   Discourse and Discursive Practices

'Discursive practices' involves the production, dissemination and consumption of texts which include how texts are created, received and interpreted (Fairclough, 2001). These practices mediate text production and consumption. 'Production' involves a set of institutional routines, for example, news gathering, writing and editing while 'consumption' refers to ways readers read and interpret texts as intended by the writer via deliberate linguistic, discoursal and discursive choices and decisions. In short, this level of analysis focuses on the art, skills and process of creating a text that has the potential to manipulate and influence readers.

2.2.3   Discourse and Social Practices

Discourse as social practice refers to the whole process of social interaction of which a text is part of. Language is a form of social practice (Fairclough, 2001) from 3 aspects. Language is a part of society and there is a dialectical relationship between language and society. Secondly, language is a social process where linguistic phenomena and social phenomena are inter-related. The way people speak, listen, read or write is determined socially and have social effects. Language activities in social contexts are not merely a reflection or expression of social processes and practices but is part of them. Thirdly, language is a socially conditioned process, conditioned by other non-linguistic parts of society. Text is a product rather than a process; it is a product of the process of text production.

Social practices are also accounts of communication in the mass media. Firstly, this reflects access to the media. Often those who have forms of economic, political or cultural power have the best access and control over public discourse (van Dijk, 1998). Secondly, the economy of the media. Media are open to commercial pressures; dominant voices could determine what news and in what ways such news is to be published (Sheyholislami, 2007). Thirdly, the politics of the media. The stakeholders can contribute to reproducing social relations of domination and exploitation (Sheyholislami, 2007).

Synthesising all the above aspects, it appears that texts are products of the institutional processes (editorial procedures) and discourse processes (changes texts go through in production and consumption of texts) to determine what to weed out and what is to be published or propagated. These choices are influenced by the societal forces namely the social practices, social structures and social institutions. How these domains are inextricably bound has been comprehensively enveloped in Fairclough's 3-dimensional framework (*cf. Figure 2.1*).

It is the aim of CDA to contribute to social change along the lines of more equal power relations in communication processes and society in general (macro level). It is critical in the sense that it could reveal the role of discursive practice (meso level) in the maintenance of the social world through studies at the micro level which consists of texts (Fairclough, 2003). Therefore, CDA engages in concrete, linguistic textual analysis of language use in social interaction. It adopts an interdisciplinary perspective which combines textual and social analyses. Hence, text analysis is an essential part of CDA which in this sense can complement social studies.

Thus, the next commonly asked question by new readers of CDA is how a critical discourse analyst analyses a text. In general, Fairclough examines texts from two perspectives. The first is a *linguistic/textual analysis* which studies the lexical-grammatical and semantic properties that contribute to interpretations and consumptions of texts. Second, the *intertextual analysis* examines how different discourse, genres and styles are articulated together as a text (Fairclough, 1995a). The researcher here has

diagramatically represented these in Figure 2.2 (below) and summarised Fairclough's framework in Appendix A.

*Figure 2.2 Fairclough : Text Analysis*
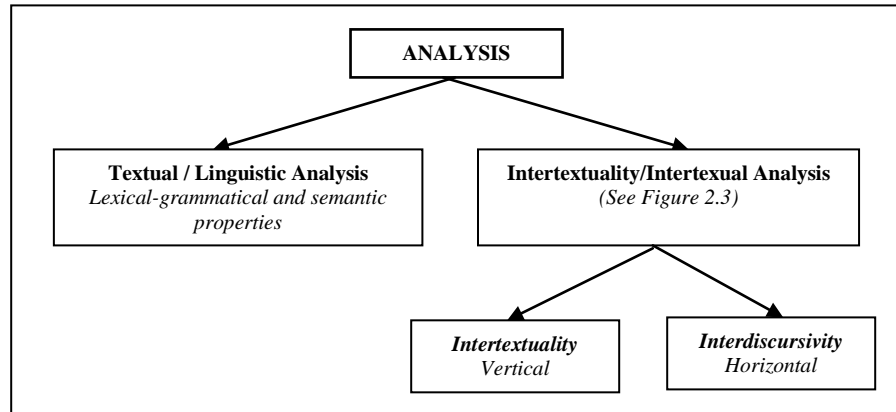
To new readers of CDA, perhaps, Fairclough has not clearly explained how texts can be analysed at the micro level. Although he has given a 'mini reference manual' in the form of questions and subquestions (Fairclough, 1989:106) and exemplified his analyses in Fairclough (1995a & 2000), this may not be sufficient when most of Fairclough's works have been presented with complex theorising and in rather convoluted style of writing. Flowerdew (2008:200-203) has put forward a 'toolkit list' from van Dijk (2000b:99), Huckin (2005) and Jager (2001:55-56). However, these are still presented as separate individual lists. The researcher here still sees a need for a complete and comprehensive compilation of the potential linguistic tools that could be adopted at the micro level analysis. This is hoped that Fairclough's framework will become more comprehensible, accessible and user-friendly, particularly to new readers of CDA.

2.2.4   Further on 'Intertextuality'

Intertextual analysis or 'intertexuality' (a generic label) examines the incorporation of sets of other texts or voices into a text. It is capable of highlighting the heterogeneous feature of a text.

Intertextuality could be further subdivided into *horizontal* intertextual relations (intertextuality) and *vertical* relations (interdiscursivity). The *horizontal* intertextuality studies the discourse representations of voices (direct and indirect speeches) in a text (*c.f Section 3.2.2.1*). The *vertical* intertextual feature relates the incorporation of relationships with other conventions such as genres (e.g. narrative, interview), orders of discourse (e.g. promotional discourse) and other activity types (Fairclough, 1995a). Texts have not only a horizontal axis that connects author to recipient but also a vertical axis that connects a text to other texts (Kristeva, 1986). Intertexuality can be summarised in the Figure 2.3.

Figure 2.3 Intertextuality

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┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│                        INTERTEXTUALITY                          │
│                    (heterogeneity of texts)                     │
│  (Kristeva. 1986 : 39 - insertion of text and of this text into │
│                          history)                               │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
         ↙                                              ↘
┌─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ┐        ┌─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ┐
│      Horizontal       │        │            Vertical            │
│   INTERTEXTUALITY      │        │       INTERDISCURSIVITY        │
│ (voices brought in :   │        │ (incorporates relationships    │
│ Direct / Reported      │        │ with conventions : genres,     │
│ Speeches)              │        │ discourses, other activity     │
│ Discourse representation│        │ types)                        │
└─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ┘        └─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ┘
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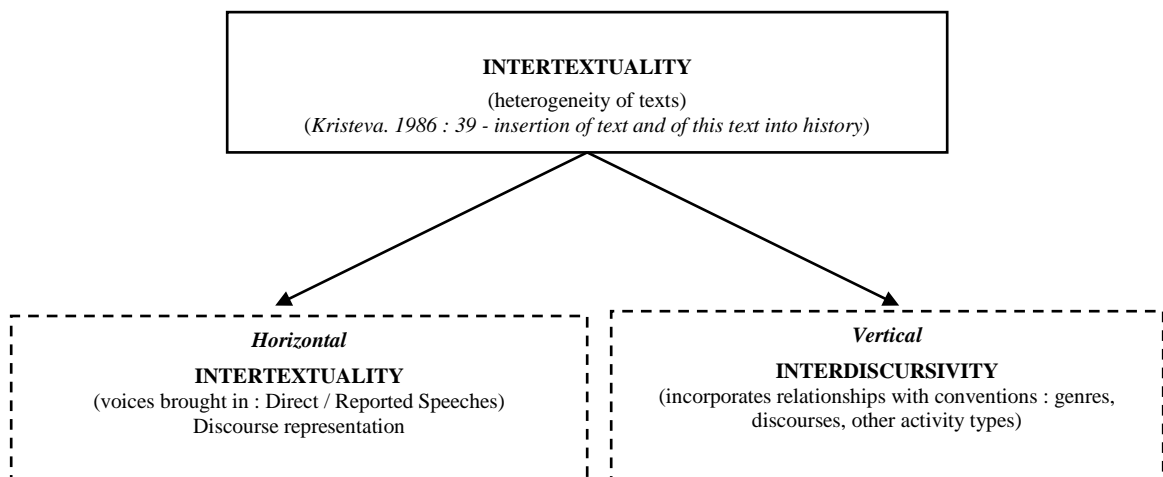
Kristeva (1986:39) who coined the word 'intertextuality', expresses 'intertextuality' as a matter of 'the insertion of history (society) into a text and of this text into history'. By this, she means a text absorbs and is constructed or reconstructed out of texts from the past. Intertexuality responds to, reaccentuates and reworks past texts. This history then contributes to a wider process of change as well as shape subsequent texts. Similarly, Bakhtin (1986:65) affirms that intertextuality is the 'drive belt from the history of society to history of language'. He adds that 'intertextuality' is a 'property of texts being full of snatches of other texts' which may have been 'explicitly demarcated or embedded in and which a text may assimilate, contradict or echo'. Simply put, intertextual analysis illustrates how texts may re-accentuate genres and how they may transform these social and historical resources. It also questions who is speaking whose words and the roles taken by the voices in the speech. This is supported by Tannen's (1989) explanation that :

> *'..all interactions are made up of prior texts that we draw upon in new ways: both the meanings of individual words...and the combinations in which we put them are given to us by previous speakers...traces of whose voices and contexts cling inevitably to them.'*
>
> *(Tannen, 1989:100)*

Thus, one major concern in intertextuality is the process of subject constitution, i.e. 'constitution of subjects through texts and the contribution of changing discursive practices to changes in social identity' (Fairclough, 1992a:133). Intertexuality highlights how the identity and social position of a subject can be 'configured' by the texturing of other texts or voices. Some voices may get heard while others are silenced. Moreover, how texts are manipulated to sustain authority and legitimacy is also

potentially ideological; texts could use a range of 'legitimised voices as sources of facts' to 'substantiate other facts' to validate claims made (Zuraidah & Lean, 2002). According to van Dijk (1998:40) 'unless inconsistent with their own beliefs and experiences', recipients tend to accept the knowledge and opinions they see as 'authoritative, trustworthy or credible sources'. An intertexual analysis can caution the discursive strategy used in text and talk to legitimate control or dominance and naturalise social order particularly relations of inequality (Fairclough, 1985).

On the whole, intertextual analysis is indeed necessary to complement linguistic analysis in understanding social practices. It mediates as well as connects language and social contexts, facilitating a substantive bridging of gap between texts and contexts. It is also capable of unveiling the influence or mediation of power struggles and relations. Intertextuality can address issues of power, empowerment and disempowerment as well as caution any hegemonic process.

2.3   MALAYSIAN STUDIES OF CDA

CDA is gaining popularity in the Malaysian linguistic researches. Below are some notable local findings on social issues.

Shakila (1999) conducted a stylistic analysis of the coverage of the Anwar episode and the Reformasi movement by a local press, the *New Straits Times* (*NST*) via lexical items and Halliday's Transitivity's Analysis (Halliday, 1978). She discovered that the monologic pattern ascribed by *NST* did not square with the journalistic notions of

fairness, objectivity and social responsibility and such phenomena 'can be a deterrent to further democratisation of society' (Shakila, 1999:11). In Shakila (2008a & 2008b), studies on vocabulary and transitivity structures again reveal how the news actors in *The Star* and *NST* have been negatively characterised. A guest relation officer had been blamed for a crime as she had challenged the conservative and patriarchal norms, thus legitimising the stereotyping of woman as a seductress and her alleged rapist cum murderer/lover as only a victim of circumstances. Dominant discourse has shaped the press' perspectives and choice of linguistic structures, privileging certain viewpoints over others whilst negotiating power and ideology (Shakila, 2008a & 2008b).

Kamila (1999 & 2004) studied 15 speeches at the United Malays National Organisation (UMNO) General Assembly made by the fourth Malaysian Prime Minister, Mahathir Mohammad cum UMNO President from 1982-1996. Originally a Ph.D thesis (Kamila, 1999) and later published as a book (Kamila, 2004), Kamila employed Fairclough's framework (1995a) and van Dijk's (1993) notion of discourse and social power. She pointed out that the propaganda or national ideology embedded in Mahathir's speeches reflect 'social engineering' and 'mental management' which was 'a conscious and non-clandestine effort' (Kamila, 2004:43).

Zuraidah & Lean (2002 & 2006) and Lean (2005) did a longitudinal study on the discursive construction of reports on the Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS) when the Time Magazine first touched on AIDS in 1983. They learnt how the media had recontextualised the scientific discourse, how power and subjectivity was embedded in the construction of AIDS through 'common sense'. AIDS thus became a

social construct dependent on what was deemed to be important by those responsible for its constructions and influenced how the society would respond to it i.e. instilling AIDS as a fearful phenomenon (Zuraidah & Lean, 2002 & 2006).

In the field of gender studies, Zuraidah (2003:263) studied '*looksism'* or idealised feminine beauty in advertisements of beauty products as a 'mythical discourse' (Zuraidah, 2003:267). In another study, Zuraidah & Knowles (2007) revealed the commodification of normal versus ageing female body in a consumer culture. Both studies suggest a perpetuating gender inequality, how the female body in particular, has become the object of money making in the beauty industry.

In terms of the disability site, many studies have approached it as solely social researches (*cf. Section 2.5*). As far as the library search for this study shows, there are only two studies on media representation of the disabled from a linguistic perspective. Lynn & Suad (2007) studied the collocation of words used in naming disabilities in Malaysian press and its implications. However, they stopped at phrasal level without looking at the larger discourse and without questioning the social practices. The only local CDA study closely related to disability is one done by Haque (2005). Despite being a minute part of his doctoral thesis, the finding made is undoubtedly significant. In his study on exclusionary practices of job advertisements in Malaysia, he found that besides the more common 'factors of exclusion' (e.g. gender, age, ethnicity and language), job advertisers are 'more stringent' and do not openly invite the disabled community to apply nor give special consideration to them (Haque, 2005:289). By

failing to mention or encourage the disabled to apply for jobs is in a way implying that the disabled are to be excluded. This echoes studies on subalterns in which Beverly (1999) claims that the lack of discussion of the subalterns implies the process of othering (*cf. Section 2.5.2)*. This exclusion according to Haque (ibid) is unethical, unfair and oppressive.

Generally, there seem to be some common patterns that emerge from both small and big scales Malaysian CDA studies. Firstly, it is apparent that there is a movement from the popular analysis of political issues towards social concerns. Shakila (1999) & Kamila (1999 & 2004) started off with political issues that were later linked to the formation of identities of the actors - Anwar Ibrahim and the Malays respectively. Perhaps this is an influence of the origin of CDA where it was originally employed to analyse Marxism practices and before being eventually adopted to examine power struggles in social issues. As Fairclough (1995a) himself has mentioned, CDA is a dynamic tool for social research that has the capacity to bring about social justice through the analysis of linguistic and discoursal features of texts.

Secondly, CDA as a 'young science' (Teo, 2007:7) indeed is gaining popularity. It appears that there is an inclination towards CDA in discourse analysis which does not only dissect linguistic structures per se but is often linked to the social practices behind that deliberate choice of language. The same phenomena in media power as well as the construction of identity and reality are observed over and over again.

Thirdly, most CDA studies appear to be deductive in nature. The researchers have their hypotheses identified before embarking on their studies since the social phenomena or discrimination has already existed in the society.

Finally, Fairclough's framework seems to be a popular framework deployed for analysis. This is not a surprising observation since Fairclough's framework is comprehensive in encompassing a variety of texts, the inter-relations of texts, the discursive practices of the media as well as the social structures that influence the phenomena studied (*cf. Section 2.2*). The framework brings about the awareness that readers ought to be more critical of what they read and implicate how the marginalised subjects should be defended, protected or at least better treated.

2.4   CRITIQUES OF CDA

Like any new theory or findings, CDA cannot escape criticisms. It is interesting to note the exchanges between the proponents and opponents of CDA.

One of the strongest criticisms come from Widdowson (1995 & 2002) in a book review of Fairclough's book 'Discourse and Social Change' (Fairclough, 1992a). Widdowson (1995:510) claims that the book is ambitious and audacious which conveniently defines 'discourse' which are two distinct traditions of enquiry (i.e. sociological and linguistic), into 'a single coherent scheme.' He criticises the first definition that views discourse as social construct pays little attention to the features of actual texts. The second definition perceives discourse as a use of language, but when busy with linguistic features it fails

to explore their social significance. In short, Widdowson purports CDA as a theoretical hybrid which is essentially sociological or socio-political rather than linguistic.

CDA starts by identifying a social problem, takes the perspective of those who suffer most, and critically analyses those in power, those who are responsible or have the means and opportunity to solve such issues (van Dijk, 1998). CDA should be responding to 'social inequality' and the abuse of power and thus demands a 'politically involved research' with an 'emancipatory requirement' (van Dijk, 2001a:353). Thus, CDA justitifies itself as both linguistic and socio-political.

Widdowson (1995:513) also discerns CDA as 'interpretative rather than analytical, descriptive rather than theoretical' with 'partial demonstration' of dialectic interplay of social structure and social practice in language use. It is also viewed as committed to a cause, gives priority to relevance and designed to carry conviction.

Fowler (1991:4) claims that media are a 'partial view' of reality, 'skewed' and 'judged'. During the production of events, there is a complex and artificial set of criteria for selection (ibid). Fairclough (1995b:4) reckons that the authority determines which information to foreground or background, produce ideology by interpellating social subjects through 'particular choice of language'. Fairclough (2001:43) further pinpoints the relations of the 'mediated' sort between the media houses and the social subjects can be hidden. CDA indeed needs to be interpretative and theoretical as they demonstrate the way texts can be used to exemplify how communal relations and realities can be

constructed, how they can be made relevant to an understanding of social life. CDA can indicate that the distribution of power in a society is asymmetrical (Fairclough, 2001) and hence, CDA should be given the potential to highlight discrimination as it is indeed a powerful medium to accentuate and caution acts of inequality (Khan & Hare, 2006).

Widdowson further adds that a text analysis should be 'exhaustive', 'arbitrary' and 'non-selective' and should take into account anything that is encoded in a text (de Beugrande, 2001). A research should not be looking at something specific (e.g. power or ideology) as such pre-determined agenda might offend the aesthetic limitality of the text. Fairclough & Wodak (1997:275) maintain that 'discourse does ideological work', hence, there is a necessity to develop awareness of the purpose of realising such hegemonic discourse. This is supported by O'Connor (2003) who advocates CDA as an 'activist sociolinguistics'. Van Dijk (2001b) also adds that CDA should take an explicit position in order for us to understand, expose and ultimately resist social inequality.

While the above generally view that CDA as inherently bad scholarship, van Dijk (2001b) recognises that CDA is biased but he is proud of it. CDA recognises the strategic nature of such accusations as part of the complex mechanisms of domination, namely as an attempt to marginalise and problematise disagreement. In fact, CDA is a combined scholarly work and social responsibility; it is a rigorous scholarship. Its multidisciplinary theories must account for the complexities of the relationships between discourse structures and social structures. In CDA, theory formation,

description, problem formulation and applications are closely intertwined and mutually inspiring. It is not only elegant and sophisticated but relevant (van Dijk, 2001b).

All the above further fortify the notion that CDA is interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary or transdiciplinary (Fairclough, 1995a & 2001; Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999; van Dijk, 2001a). CDA researchers should collaborate with other disciplines, theories, and methods, to develop critical analysis as a theory and method in relation to a particular area of research. Critics of CDA have indeed made CDA more popular instead and contributed towards a more concretised, critical, analytical, holisitic, trans and multidisciplinary discourse analysis. Thus, this theoretical framework is felt to be suitable for the analysis of data on disability, as it allows a transdisciplinary analysis of linguistics and the epistemology of social constructionism (*cf. Sections 1.7 & 2.5*).

2.5   CONSTRUCTIONS OF DISABILITY

The questions of the definition of a 'person with a disability' and how a person with disability perceives himself is multifaceted and complex. These definitions of disability vary according to historical, cultural and social location and the nature of the environment (Fawcett, 2000). Disability policy scholars describe many different **individual** models (e.g. the moral, medical, rehabilitation, psychological, charity & disability models) and a **social** model (Fawcett, 2000; Oliver, 1983 & 1996; Shakespeare & Watson, 1997; Shakespeare, 1996). Only the individual models related to the social model (i.e. moral, medical & disability) will be briefly mentioned here but

the social model itself will be dealt with at length as it would be more relevant to the present study.

2.5.1 Individual Models: Moral, Medical & Disability

In the *moral model*, some cultures regard disability as the result of sins and often associate it with feelings of guilt and shame on the family, even if such feelings are not overtly based on religious doctrine (Kaplan, 2000). Fawcett (2000:15) asserts that disabled children have been regarded by some western societies as 'changelings' and taken as evidence of the mother's involvement in sorcery or witchcraft. Although this model is historically the oldest, Kaplan (2000) further claims that this model may not be prevalent today. This is perhaps only true to a certain extent. In the case of rural areas in Malaysia for example, where there is a lack of disability awareness, many rural folks still seek the help of '*bomoh'* or witch man (Baskaran, 2004). Disability has been traditionally associated with witchery, evil forces, curse and ill-will befalling the affected families. It may not be a religious doctrine but even in the urban areas of Malaysia families tend to hide, even confine, their disabled family members in their homes and expect them to be crippled for life and not be seen by other people (Chong, 2005). This is parallel with Shakespeare's claim (1996:105-106) where there is a 'parental burden of guilt and shame', families have hidden away the disabled family member, keeping them out of school and excluding them from any chance of having a meaningful role in society. For the individual with a disability and their family members, this model is particularly burdensome. Even in less extreme circumstances, this model has resulted in general social ostracism and self-hatred (Kaplan, 2000).

Thus, it appears that a moral model has in a way led to a social inequality against the disabled.

The *medical model* regards disability as a defect or sickness which must be cured through medical intervention (Fawcett, 2000). This model came about as modern medicine began to develop in the 19th Century, along with the enhanced role of physicians in society (Kaplan, 2000). Thus, until recently, most disability policy issues have been regarded as health issues, and physicians have been regarded as the primary authorities in this policy area. Pfeiffer (1998) purports that the problem is defined as a dominating attitude by professionals and other support service providers. One can see the influence of the medical model in disability public policy today, most notably in the Social Security systems in the United States and United Kingdom, in which disability is defined as the inability to work (Kaplan, 2000). Many disabilities and chronic medical conditions will never be cured. Persons with disabilities are quite capable of participating in society, and the practices of confinement and institutionalisation that accompany the sick role are simply not acceptable.

The *disability model* regards disability as a normal aspect of life, not as a deviance and rejects the notion that persons with disabilities are in some inherent way 'defective'. Most people will experience some form of disability, either permanent or temporary, over the course of their lives. The question centers on 'normality' (Wendell, 1996:46). What, it is asked, is the normal way to be mobile over a distance of a mile? Is it to walk, drive one's own car, take a taxicab, ride a bicycle, use a wheelchair, roller skate, or a

skateboard, or some other means? In this model, we can see the emergence of resistance towards the definition of 'normality'. Pfeiffer (1998) has mentioned that paralysed limbs may not particularly limit a person's mobility as much as attitudinal and physical barriers. For example, to realise that the door was an accessibility problem, the lack of signs that could be read from a distance have forced people with mobility impairments to expend a lot of energy unnecessarily (Wendell, 1996). Given this reality, if disability were more commonly recognised and expected in the way that we design our environment or systems, it would not seem so abnormal.

In short, the individual models focus on individual pathologies and classification systems that impairments are problems of individuals. Fawcett (2000:16) further concludes that the individual problems are in 'binary opposite' of the social model. On the other hand, based on the above overview, the researcher here does not see the individual models as merely 'opposites' but they accord with the social model (*cf. Section 2.5.2*). In fact, the social model seems to have its roots in these individual models. The phenomena described in the individual models have resulted in social discrimination. Social discrimination seems to be the most significant problem experienced by the disabled and as the cause of many of the problems that are regarded as intrinsic to the disability under the other models.

2.5.2 Social Model

The present view of disability is skewed towards the social model. While the emphasis of the individual models is on cure on the individuals psychologically, physically and socially adjusting to the impairment, the social model presents a 'structuralist and materially-orientated analysis' as an outcome of the evolution in contemporary society (Fawcett, 2000:21). Barnes (1997) considers the social model as a socio-political approach linked to two traditions – social construction (*cf. Section 1.7*) and the 'social creation' of industrial capitalism (Barnes, 1997:5). Basically, this model focuses on attitudinal and physical constraints.

The history of the social model in the United Kingdom started with the formation of the Disability Alliance and the Union of Physically Impaired Against Segregation (UPIAS) (Fawcett, 2000). The document rejected the representation of the disabled by experts and redefined disability. *Impairment* should be seen as a lacking or having a 'defective limb, organ or mechanism of the body' and *disability* as the 'disadvantage or restriction of activity caused by a contemporary social organisation' which takes no or little account of people who have physical impairments, and thus excludes them from participation in the mainstream of social activities (Oliver, 1996:22). Physical disability is therefore a particular form of 'social oppression' (ibid).

Most people claim they know what disability is or is not (Kaplan, 2000). Their definition of normality rests on a definition of abnormality. If you imagine the disabled at one end of a spectrum and people who are physically and mentally very capable at the other, the distinction appears to be clear. However, there is a tremendous amount of

middle ground in this construct. It is the question of 'what is' and 'who decides' what normality is where the scheme falls apart (Kaplan, 2000). What distinguishes a socially 'invisible impairment' - such as the need for corrective spectacles for an eyesight problem, a corrective hearing aid, or a walker from a 'visible' serious impairment such as need of cornea replacement or a wheelchair? Functionally, there may be little difference. Socially, some impairments create social stigma for the individuals, while others do not (Corbett, 1993).

The everyday interaction for disabled people 'involves an invasion by normal people of the disabled people' (Shakespeare, 1997:223). To be accepted as normal, one has to comply or work towards cultural norms erected by these 'differentiation forces' (Dahaher, Schirato & Webb, 2002:127). Society pursues dividing practices to segregate normal from 'deviant' people. A person is labelled deviant due to human categories constructed by the human sciences and the media shape broad social definitions of what is normal versus deviant (Croteau & Hoynes, 2000). People with impairments are seen by the general population as 'the ultimate non-conformists' and as 'perpetually threatening to the self image of the average, so called 'normal' population' (Shakespeare, 1997:233). When boundaries are breached, and identities seem threatened, the so-called 'normal' people will establish behaviour that is devoted to 're-establishing the fixates, reinforcing categories and power relations' (Shakespeare, 1997:230).

Shakespeare (1996:95) reiterates that disability is the 'outcome of impairment' – a form of 'biological determinism as it focuses on physical difference'. It focuses on whose bodies do not work, look different, act differently or cannot do productive work. The disabled are objectified by reactions of others, reactions which include staring, pity and hostility for the bodily difference (Morris,1993). We can draw parallels between the social stigma attached to the disabled and other sites such as McIntosh's (1968) homosexual role hypotheses, studies on AIDS patients, experiences of gender inequality and black people - how the physique of these social subjects are scrutinised in the same way a disabled body is gazed at. The power of culture to construct disability is revealed when we consider bodily differences - deviations from a society's conception of a 'normal' or acceptable body (Wendell, 1996).

Shakespeare also purports that women and the disabled are objects from the perspective of cultural representations with demeaning images akin to processes of colonisation and imperialism (Shakespeare, 1996) and social creation (Barnes, 1997). Shakespeare (1997) relates how women and the disabled are regarded as 'others' and viewed in need of control and guidance. They have become devalued grouping by default.

The key element here is to perform and conform according to societal expectations. Thus, without it, the disabled are subjected to the various processes of denial and subjection (Shakespeare, 1996). Disability is regarded as shameful and has to be concealed in a vague generality; a disabled should deny that being disabled was acceptable (Corbett, 1996:58). From the point of view of a Foucauldian analysis,

disability would be perceived as a 'process of subjection' (cited in Shakepeare, 1996:98). The social relational model of power developed by Foucault (1980) focuses on how certain forms of representation are constituted where power is employed by individuals in a 'net-like organisation'; power operates in a 'bottom up' manner by individuals via their everyday social relations or 'micropractices' in the discursive contexts (Foucault, 1980:98) (*cf. Section 2.1.2*).

This phenomenon could be also linked to subaltern studies. Subaltern is a term for the 'general attribute of subordination in society' in terms of class, caste, age, gender or in any other ways (Guha, 1988:35). It has its origins from South Asian scholars who studied the colonial and postcolonial historiography on marginalised sectors (e.g. impoverished peasants in South Asia and Latin America), focusing on how and by whom history is written, whose voices are represented or erased as well as knowledge production (Guha, 1988 &1997). The archetypal concepts in subaltern studies are power and representations; who has power or does not, who gains or loses power through hegemonic representations (Beverly, 1999). Hence, this can be applied in disability studies, where experiences of people with disabilities particularly in the media construction, demand a de-construction. This can be seen in Kim's (2007) subaltern study on the disabled in the South Korean media. The subalterns seemingly 'cannot speak' as their voices have not been adequately represented in the discursive spaces (Spivak, 1988). The very discussion about the subaltern (or lack of it) in the mass media constitutes knowledge about the subaltern and continues the process of 'othering' of the subaltern (Beverly, 1999). Thus, the same principles could be applied to the disabled

where de-construction should be done to highlight how they, in many ways, could fall into the category of 'subalterns'.

In brief, the traditional interpretation of disability relates to 'passivity, dependency, neediness and pathos' (Corbett, 1996:56). Disability has for so long been equated with personal tragedy, misery, suffering and weakness (Zola, 1993). The social approaches view negative self-identity as a result of the experience of oppressive social relations, focusing attention on possibilities for changing society, empowering disabled people, and promoting a different self-understanding (Shakespeare, 1996 & Kaplan, 2000). Based on the United Nation's and the local Malaysian definitions (*cf. Section 1.1.2*), the prejudice that the disabled are experiencing is also an implication of disabling barriers imposed by environmental or policy interventions vis-a-vis the 'statutory or policy processes' that constructs one with impairment as 'officially disabled' (Shakespeare, 1996:97).

This section has established how disability is a form of social construction. The media are often the main means of communication with the public. Hence, an analysis of the discursive practices, particularly in the news genre, would offer a richer and more complex picture of how disability is conveyed to the mass. CDA is deemed apt as an approach for this purpose.

2.5.3   CDA and Representations of Disability

Corbett (1993) and Shakespeare (1996) have explored the emerging development of discourses on the disabled community that have challenged those of enlightened modernity. In particular, Corbett (1994 & 1996) has questioned the political correctness of special language in the mid-1990's and the ways in which imagery has to be changed as proud labels to displace the legacy of negativity.

Discursive construction is described by Hacking (1986:236) as a 'dynamic nominalism' where there are numerous kinds of human acts and attitudes are articulated together to invent the different categories labeling. Darrow & White (1998) define 'labeling' as follows:

> *'Labeling is a process of creating descriptors to identify persons who differ from the norm. Normal is a broad relative term. Everyone is different in some way from someone else.'*
>
> *Darrow and White (1998:81)*

What images or feelings do labels create? In the medical and rehabilitation models, labels can be helpful in prescribing assistance, cure and intervention methods. However, labels can also become dangerous as they can create stereotyped images based on collective thinking, hearsay, bias, fears, and the inability to separate the person from the disability or behaviors that may occur (Donnellan, 2000). Morris (1993:110) contends that disability movements in Britain object to words like 'suffer', 'condoned', 'confined', 'victim', and to negative images portraying disability, such as the wheelchair as a 'symbol of imprisonment, rather than mobility, movement, freedom and

independence'. These restrictive images and metaphors equate disability with physical restrictions that lead to mockery and tragic display of misery. Labels can have a 'disabling' effect.

Names confer status and identity. Even acronyms or abbreviations attached to names contribute further to this identification. According to Corbett (1996), the use of ESN (educationally sub-normal) in the United Kingdom is a mark of distinction, thus a source of stigma or judgement made by people, within specific cultures at a particular time in history. This power to name others is a backward process (Corbett, 1996). This concept is perhaps similar to the Malaysian term generalisable to all types of disabilities - OKU (Orang Kurang Upaya) which literally means 'the less-abled people' in English. OKU is supposedly coined to liberate the disabled but unfortunately has not eradicated the distinction between the able-bodied and the less abled. In CDA, this continues to separate between the 'us' and 'them' or rather the OKU would still be identified as the inferior 'others'.

The reason so many people reject the phenomenon of 'labeling' is that they seek to avoid the harsh social reality that is still so strong today. Some of those who benefit from the law have also chosen to do so because they wish to avoid the very social forces that the existing law seeks to redress and eradicate (Shakespeare, 1996). Thus, using the correct words and sending out the correct messages is vital. Being named for a stigma will create biasness that will then change expectations and reactions to the disabled.

This has led to political correctness where there is a battle between those who feel comfortable with certain words versus those who express unease. The voice of enlightened modernity promotes liberalism by making concessions and refining old usage. Struggles with political correctness are both a 'personal fight and a collective battle to create new territories' (Corbett, 1996:46). Yet there is a lack of activists to check on the establishment of language, power and authority which denies differences of perception and intuition (Corbett, 1996). CDA is thus viewed as capable of highlighting the dialectical relationship between the discourse of political correctness and the ideology through this 'power of naming' (Corbett, 1996:47).

The definition of 'special' has been challenged. An analogy has been made between the disabled and women in relation to the connotation of the word 'special'. Corbett (1996:49) questions that if 'special' is 'so positive', why does it not add to the power of women and the disabled? Theweleit (1994), a German philosopher, suggests that it is the supreme confined and self-love of the male ego which makes men position women on pedestals as 'special'. This has rendered women 'nice' but powerless. Generally, women today resist being idealised. They want to be different not better. This is a reflection of the way women and the disabled are socially marginalised. Perhaps, 'special' is not equivalent to desirable if it is accompanied by social or personal weakness. If we portray them as 'special' and by implication 'better', we deny them their humanity. Innocence is retained at the cost of experience, and thus, this image of niceness keeps the women and disabled 'harmless and passive' (Corbett, 1996:56). This interpretation of the label 'special' demands the dissecting of the sentimentality,

arrogance and fear rooted in society's suppression of the disabled people (Corbett, 1996).

In line with the new emerging 'defensive subculture' (Corbett, 1996:55), many with physiological impairments now prefer to be known as 'disabled'. This is asserted by Zola (1993) who purports that the disabled people are not denying pain and discomfort they experience, but rather disability pride is about self-respect and diversity of experiences. The disabled people want to be seen like the rest of human population in being diverse, complex and vulnerable (*cf. Section 1.1.4*). The Deaf in particular wants to be seen as an independent and empowered linguistic minority 'speaking' their own language (*cf. Section 1.1.4*). Disabled activists and artists are often the same individuals who articulate powerful messages demanding access in the very widest sense, to civil liberties and the right to control their own lives.

Crecendo (cited in Corbett, 1996:p.x) a celebrity activist and singer has also condemned charity personalities and how they must 'piss on pity' (Corbett, 1996:p.x). Shakespeare (1997:221) uses the term 'objectify' to refer to the disabled being manipulated as objects of pity and handouts in charitable activities. These recipients of charity are often manipulated to promote sponsors' business promotional activites. Many large corporations appear to tackle social issues on the basis of enlightened self-interest (Carroll, 1979; Wood, 1991). However, as Barnarjee (2006 & 2007) has cautioned, corporations will not engage in any social initiative unless it is profitable to do so. Charity is seen as a social investment to enhance a company's image and attract

investors through their good deeds (Gomez, 2009). The great and the good, particularly media personalities will not easily relinquish their power base. They use a combination of sophistry and crudity in attempts to subvert the inevitable transfer of power (Corbett, 1996). In this sense, 'caring' for disabled people becomes an entrenched influence and a form of paternalism (Corbett, 1996). CDA is then an effective approach to caution this form of paternalism.

In brief, this chapter has illustrated how language as a tool that represents society is capable of grouping its people and assigning different semantic roles to each group. This can lead to discrimination and asymmetrical power relations among the various groups (Fowler, 1985). Identities are formed in the differentiation of the us/them boundary sustained by social powers and can be reinforced by media representation. Media accounts are not simply representations of reality but rather active constitution, ideologically inspired, interest-bound and with transformation of the 'facts' (Fowler, 1991). The media engage in practices that 'define reality' (Croteau & Hoynes 2000:166). If CDA can be a powerful tool in many areas of social studies, thus it is then deemed appropriate and feasible to dissect the representations of the disabled and disability site. With this, the next chapter will proceed with the research methodology employed in studying media representation of the social images of the disabled in a Malaysian setting.