CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

5.0 INTRODUCTION

The current study uncovers the experiential meaning in the area of national unity, identity and nation building in the interaction between the leader of the country and the citizenry which is realised through the lexico-grammatical resources in the genre of weblogs or blogs. The data was analysed based on the System of Transitivity, a component of the SFL theory advocated by Halliday (1985, 1994) and which he rewrote with Matthiessen (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004), Thompson (1996, 2004), Bloor and Bloor (Bloor & Bloor, 2004), Eggins (1994, 2004) and Martin et. al (Martin, et al., 1997; Martin & Rose, 2003). In line with this, Section 5.1 summarises the main findings in sub-sections 5.1.1, 5.1.2 and 5.1.3 which answer the three research questions. Section 5.2 presents the implications of the study followed by Section 5.3 which suggest directions for future research. Section 5.4 concludes the chapter.

5.1 SUMMARY OF THE MAIN FINDINGS

The main findings in the current study answers the Research Questions set out in Section 1.3. The three research questions will be answered in the sub-sections below.

5.1.1 SUMMARY OF THE MAIN FINDINGS RELATED TO RESEARCH QUESTION 1

Research Question 1 is as stated below:

What are the process types, participants and circumstantial elements found in the themes identified in the Prime Minister's Address and in the Comments?

All process types, participants and circumstantial elements are found in both the Address and the Comments in varying percentages (refer to Table 4.2, Table 4.10, Table 4.26). The high frequency of the material process in the Address (n=49, 74.24%) and the Comments (n=56, 38.10%) indicates that the PM and the CWs are action oriented. The relational processes (Address n=10, 15.15%; Comments n=23, 15.67% for relational identifying and n=22, 14.97% for relational attributive) are also a dominant feature in both sets of data and the mental process (n=28, 19.05%) in the Comments. Therefore, the participants associated with the material process also record a high percentage in the Address (n=81, 72.32%) and Comments (n=81, 32.93%). The participants associated with the relational attributive process records the second highest percentage in the Comments (n=43, 17.48%) followed by the participants of the mental process (n=51, 20.73%). This is followed by the participants of the relational identifying process in both the Address (n=20, 17.86%) and Comments (n=46, 18.70%) respectively. The Temporal Circumstance (n=10, 30.30%) and the Cause and Contingency Circumstance (n=13, 15.66%) dominated the Address and Comments respectively.

The study conducted by Young and Nguyen (2002) on teacher talk and textbooks concurs with the findings of the current study. The material process was predominant in the teacher talk, similar to the Address in the current study which was originally a spoken text. The mental process was dominant in the textbook. Although the Comments' dominant feature was the material process, the mental process had the next highest percentage.

The current study also concurs with studies carried out by Coffin (2003) on students' letters of complaint. The blog is basically a letter without the formalities used in letter writing. It also agrees with findings in the studies by Patpong (2008) and Sim (2008) based on talisman advertisements and news reports. As the Address is originally a speech the dominance of the material and relational processes concurs with the study by Sinar (2002) on lecture discourse.

5.1.2 SUMMARY OF THE MAIN FINDINGS RELATED TO RESEARCH QUESTION 2

Research Question 2 is as stated below:

How are the process types, participants and circumstantial elements similar or different in relation to the themes identified in the Prime Minister's Address and in the Comments?

The use of processes, participants and circumstances shows similarities and differences in the Address and Comments. The similarities are in the use of the material process, relational identifying and the behavioural process and the participants associated with these processes. Although there are similarities in these process types, participants and circumstances, the different themes they are used in reveal a different focus in the Address and Comments.

The material process is prominent in all the themes in the Address. In the Comments, the material process has the highest percentage in the themes *National Unity & Identity*, *Threats to Malaysia* and *Government Policies*. This implies that the CWs view these areas to the main concerns of the nation and want concrete action to be taken.

The high percentage of the mental process in the Comments compared to the Address is a significant difference in the data. The mental process is predominant in the themes *Gratefulness & Hope for the Future*, *Malaysia in the Past* and *Malaysia in the Present* in the Comments. This implies that the CWs are prone to using their thoughts and feelings because they reflect on the past and present. The Address uses the mental process only thrice indicating the PM does not have to rely on his thoughts and emotions as he has the power and authority to implement actions and policies.

By contrast, the Address and the Comments have almost the same percentage of use in the relational identifying and the behavioural process. Both the PM and CWs use the relational identifying process to identify the challenges faced by the nation and the people involved in bringing about unity as well as those who are threats to the nation. The behavioural process is used to show the success of the nation and the patriotic spirit of the PM and the CWs respectively.

The Verbal Process is used more in the Comments than the Address indicating the CWs speak on their own behalf and for the general public which gives some credence to their claims. This agrees with Sim's findings (2008) in her study on news reports where the verbal process is used for validity and objectivity. In the current study the CWs use the verbal process to lend credence to their claims. However, when the PM speaks, he is the authority and speaks on behalf of the government therefore he does not need to validate his claims.

The current study shows that various processes and the associated participants are used in particular themes to focus on particular aspects of national unity, identity and nation building. This is in accordance with studies conducted by Halliday (1971), Sriniwass (2003) and Tan (2008) where they found different process types were used

in different parts of the text to reveal characteristics of characters, to describe experiments and to realise themes respectively.

5.1.3   SUMMARY OF THE MAIN FINDINGS RELATED TO RESEARCH QUESTION 3

Research Question 3 is as stated below:

What are the implications of the findings in terms of experiential meaning on national unity, identity and nation building in relation to the themes identified in the Prime Minister's Address and the Comments?

The similarities and differences are seen in the use of the various process types, participant elements and circumstantial elements. They reveal what the PM and the CWs want for the nation and their perceptions on the best way to build a nation.

The high percentage of the material process in both the Address and the Comments imply that both the PM and CWs are action oriented. The CWs want action especially when it comes to the themes *National Unity & Identity*, *Threats to Malaysia* and *Government Policies*.

The high percentage of the mental process in the Comments reveal a reliance on their emotions rather than the concrete action mainly in the themes *Malaysia in the Past* and *Malaysia in the Present*. The PM conversely does not reveal his thoughts and feelings as he is speaking on behalf of the government and therefore more concerned about taking concrete measures in creating a united nation.

Although the use of the first person pronoun in the Address shows that the PM identifies himself with the people, Comments indicate that to the CWs, the PM and the government are entities apart from themselves. They view the PM and the government as being ineffective in building a harmonious nation. This leads to a situation where

the citizens and the Government are always confronting one another which affect nation building.

5.2 IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study implies the existence of differing perceptions in governing a nation between the government and the citizens of the country negating the findings of the study conducted by Meraz (2007) which reported that only supporters of the political candidate leave comments in political blogs. This study shows that comments are also written by those who are highly critical of the government. The analysis of the experiential meaning in the data shows the different perceptions of the PM and the CWs in building a successful nation. Hence, this study has shown that it is important for both the government and the citizenry to be aware of the perception of the other party concerned in order to formulate policies that contributes to nation building.

5.3 DIRECTION FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

As the current study is based on the PM's blog in the 1Malaysia website, for future research perhaps a study can be conducted on a number of political blogs within one country or between political blogs of different countries to see whether the study renders similar or different outcomes. Studies can also be conducted in political blogs where the blogger responds to the comments posted and see whether this exchange brings about a compromise of ideas between the government and the citizens of the nation. The data can also be used to analyse the textual and interpersonal metafunction which may render deeper levels of meaning.

5.4 CONCLUSION

To conclude, the current study aimed to show how Halliday's System of Transitivity helps to uncover experiential meaning in the genre of weblogs, specifically in political weblogs. The study of experiential meanings is important in the political arena in order to discern the mind of the citizenry and to implement policies accordingly to steer the citizenry towards nation building. Halliday's System of Transitivity, which is an integral part of SFL, is an effective tool in analysing the underlying meanings in the discourse between the head of a government and the citizenry. The genre of weblogs has opened an avenue of such interactions which is a rich source of data for future research.

It is hoped that the current study on the genre of weblogs will provide insights for future studies in this research area and pave the way for more innovative research in both academic and non-academic settings.