

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the methodology used to carry out this study. This study is qualitative in nature as it investigates the values, culture, attitude, behaviours, norms and lifestyle of the target group of people in the study and it has no intention to gain any statistical or numerical figures from them. This study uses the framework of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), specifically, Fairclough (1995, 2001).

3.2 Research Design

Career articles from a women's magazine, namely, *Cleo* (Malaysia edition) were collected to represent the data of this study. The articles were selected from August 2007 until August 2008 (the moment the I started to embark on this study) to represent the construction of career women in Malaysia. There are 12 articles altogether and the themes discussed in each article may vary.

3.3 Data Gathering Process

This study selected a career-related article featured in a section labeled as 'Career Coach' in *Cleo*, Malaysia edition. The section is published monthly and there are several in-house editors who are in charge of writing it. *Cleo* is published in Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and Singapore besides Malaysia. It contains issues about beauty, fashion, latest products

in stores, Q&A sections on life, sex, relationships, health and fitness advice as well as career articles. *Cleo* was rated as Malaysia's best-selling, English-language women's title within three years since it was launched in 1995 (<http://www.acp.com.au/Cleo-malaysia.htm>). According to Malaysia's *Cleo*'s official website, the magazine managed to attract the highest number of readers in Malaysia, particularly from early to late 20s. The possibility is that the magazine targets on average income group women who have just started their career and about to build it up to a higher level. Each career article contained in *Cleo* is normally two to five pages, which includes images associated with the theme or topic of the article.

3.4 Methods of Data Analysis

This study uses CDA as an approach, particularly Fairclough's three-dimensional framework (contains the three categories which were discussed before in Chapter Two) to analyse the texts as well as the context. The framework was first introduced by Fairclough in 1995. The analysis interpreted the data (lexical items in the articles) in three different levels of analysis, i.e., text analysis (description), processing analysis (interpretation) and finally social analysis (explanation). Each phase in this three dimensional analysis can be divided into three categories (Experiential, Relational and Expressive). Instead of providing a three-layer analysis of each dimension, I provided a simultaneous analysis of the dimensions. This means that, I reported the Experiential values in description, interpretation and explanation for instance. In other words, instead of the dimensions, the layers of Experiential, Relational and Expressive categories became the guiding tools for analysis. This approach was developed in line with Fairclough's analytical framework outlined in his book, *Language and Power* (2001). The analytical method was explained in table 3.3.

Referring to the three categories, the first one is known as Experiential, followed by Relational and the last one is Expressive. The Experiential category submits to content of the texts which to show how ‘the text’s producer experience of the natural or social world’ (Fairclough, 1995). It means to say that Experiential category should cover the items such as vocabulary chosen by the texts and other linguistics features (modes of sentences and phrases and style of writing) that come directly from the texts and the knowledge it provides to the readers. Relational category extends the coverage of Experiential to another level, i.e., the relationships the text may enact in the discourse which include the social relationships between participants within the texts. Finally, the Expressive category is considered the widest sense of the values as it relates to the reality of the text production (the text producer’s evaluation of the text) and that includes the subjects and their social identities (Fairclough, 2001). The method can be summarised in the following table:

Table 3.1 Formal features of Experiential, Relational and Expressive categories (adapted from Fairclough, 2001)

Dimensions of meaning	Values of features	Structural effects
Contents	Experiential	Knowledge/beliefs
Relations	Relational	Social relations
Subjects	Expressive	Social identities

3.4.1 Discourse Analytical Tools

This study categorises the articles based on themes and issues discussed in each of the articles. This categorisation was done at a superficial level, i.e., without going much into the in-depth analysis of its contents. I found that all career articles in *Cleo* had the same format which normally starts with a question such as “Flexible work hours and deadlines make working from home seem super attractive, but do you have what it takes to be your own boss?” (Thread 2, September 2007) which may incite interest of the readers as they are interpellated (making them feel they are the subjects of the ideology) with the idea and theme of the article (Dolar, 1993). As stated before, although each article may have different themes, but all of them nonetheless addressed career women as a group of people who are in need of assistance in the journey of their career. This may suggest the objective of the career article featured in the magazine in constructing subject positions for career women. The themes of each article are as follows (listed in a table):

Table 3.2 Themes of the Selected Articles in *Cleo*

Issue	Title	Theme	Identification
August, 2007	So, you've found your Dream Job. NOW WHAT?	Looking for better and more things to do with the career once the women have landed their dream jobs.	Thread 1
September, 2007	WANT TO BE YOUR own boss?	Empowering women to start their own business; how and when?	Thread 2
October, 2007	Poisonous colleagues	Getting to know negative people at work and how it can affect others' job performance.	Thread 3
November, 2007	10 BUSINESS etiquette offences	10 business etiquette offences are listed out for the women not to commit, and how to avoid them.	Thread 4
January, 2008	FAMILY, INC.	Discussing about having a family-sense relationship at work – positive and negative impacts of it.	Thread 5
February, 2008	WSI: Work Scene Investigation	Unveiling the variety of personalities of career women according to their working stations/ cubicles / rooms.	Thread 6

March, 2008	Corporate lingo dictionary	A list of vocabulary that the magazine thinks all career women should know at work.	Thread 7
April, 2008	Taking the tension out of changing jobs	Explaining to career women how to make themselves comfortable at their new workplace and fit well with the new job.	Thread 8
May, 2008	HOW TO DO A PERFECT JOB... EVERY TIME	Listing out the right things to do (steps-by-steps order) in order to produce a 'perfect' output every time at work.	Thread 9
June, 2008	Occupational hazard!	Listing out four major mistakes done at work which can lead to success later in life.	Thread 10
July, 2008	Are you about TO BE fired?	Unveiling the cues at work when women are about to be terminated.	Thread 11
August, 2008	Creativity @ work	Revealing nine ways for career women to stimulate their creativity.	Thread 12

To sum up the theme, there are four major themes discussed in *Cleo* career articles throughout August 2007 to August 2008.

1. *Dos and Don'ts*

- The articles outlined things that career women should or should not do at work – things that could enhance their performance at work or things that could put their career at risk. The articles that occupied this kind of theme were identified as guiding assistance for career women to cope with their work, environment and workplace.
 - Thread 4 : “10 BUSINESS etiquette offences”
 - Thread 7: “Corporate lingo dictionary”
 - Thread 9: “HOW TO DO A PERFECT JOB... EVERY TIME”
 - Thread 10: “Occupational hazard!”
 - Thread 11: “Are you about TO BE fired?”
 - Thread 12: “Creativity @ work”

2. *Providing information/ knowledge/ guidelines*

- The articles focused on giving professional advice to career women either to accelerate their performance or to avoid a number of particular actions at work. The articles seemed to show that the text producers were exposing career women to the real world by relating the topic to the real events and experiences of the people who were being interviewed.
 - Thread 3: “Poisonous colleagues”
 - Thread 6: “WSI: Work Scene Investigation”
 - Thread 8: “Taking the tension out of changing jobs”

- Thread 9: “HOW TO DO A PERFECT JOB... EVERY TIME”
- Thread 10: “Occupational hazard!”
- Thread 11: “Are you about TO BE fired?”
- Thread 12: “Creativity @ work”

3. Right / Ideal things to do according to Cleo

- This study reveals that the authors were trying to re-produce the right and ideal things for career women in Malaysia to do in order to be acknowledged as ideal career women according to their own terms. They seemed to have intention to re-shape career women in many aspects such as:
 - What are the right personality traits for career women to have in order to be the ideal career women according to the magazine?
 - What are the right roles as career women either at work or elsewhere?
 - What is/are the right language(s) for these career women to use?
 - What are the right behaviours for career women to have and what are the right actions for them to take if something happens?

4. Problems / Struggles at work

- The career articles provided information what are the problems or struggles that could happen to career women at work.
 - Thread 3: “Poisonous colleagues”
 - Thread 4: “10 BUSINESS etiquette offences”
 - Thread 5: “FAMILY, INC.”

- Thread 8: “Taking the tension out of changing jobs”
- Thread 10: “Occupational hazard!”

From there, the analysis moved on to looking at the patterns and format of the writing – to see if there is any occurrence of repetitions which may suggest ‘favourite’ words used by the magazine in producing the career articles.

In terms of the articles format, I realized that most articles used instructional discourse which is meant to instruct the readers particularly career women to do certain things and to avoid certain things. There were also a few articles subscribed to the format of listing down the *Dos* and *Don'ts*, which may offer comfort and ease to the readers understanding them.

The articles were found to ‘favour’ the inclusion of real cases which were considered relevant to the topic of the articles and the voices from the experts related to the field. At the initial stage, I looked at what the articles had in common and how they may differ – it guided me to look for the answer in the analysis later on.

From format, I moved on to look for categories which may suit the objective of this study – to investigate the construction of career women in Malaysia discussed in *Cleo*; to seek for how and why. I discovered that the categories were very essential in order for it to achieve the objectives of this study as well as to look for the answers to all Research Questions it had.

Three main categories with several sub-categories were devised to ensure the analysis aligns with the objectives and research questions of this study (see 1.4). The sub-categories were created not only for general understanding but to achieve the saturation of data in more organized and structured method. The three main categories and their sub-categories are as follows:

1. Identifying the Roles/Identity/Behaviour/Action of Career Women in Malaysia.

- 1.1 Legitimate/Non-legitimate

- 1.2 Normative/Non-normative

This first category discussed how *Cleo* identified the legitimate/non-legitimate and normative/non-normative subject position(s) of career women in Malaysia. This category answered the first research question of this study (see 1.4, Research Question 1).

2. Labeling the Roles/Identity/Behaviour/Action of Career Women in Malaysia.

- 2.1 Legitimate/Non-legitimate

- 2.2. Normative/Non-normative

This second category elaborated how *Cleo* labeled the legitimate/non-legitimate and normative/non-normative subject position(s) of career women in Malaysia. This category also answered the first research question of this study (see 1.4, Research Question 1).

3. Rules that Circumscribe Career Women

- 3.1 Mistakes done by career women that have led to problems, struggles and challenges at work

- 3.2 Solutions suggested by *Cleo* towards the problems, struggle and challenges at work.

- 3.3 Reproduction of the career women and identity construction.

This final category unveiled how *Cleo* constructed career women's negotiations with workplace values; to what extent they were being competitive, co-operative and how they tackled problems and struggles at work. This category answered the second question of this study (see 1.4, Research Question 2).

3.4.2 Analysis of Categories

In this section, I provided a table of analysis that was followed in Chapter Four to report the analysis of data. Besides the linguistic categories, intertextual and interdiscursive analyses were employed in the analysis of data. In the following page, Table 3.3 in page 44 shows how the data was analysed according to Fairclough (1995, 2001). The table contains three main categories, i.e., Identifying the career women, Labeling the career women, and Rules that circumscribe the career women.

Table 3.3: Categorisation of data

Categories of data	Dimensions of meaning	Values of features	Structural effects	Vocabulary	Grammar
1. Identifying the career women	Contents (description)	Experiential	Knowledge / Beliefs	Lexical items <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classification scheme • Ideologically contested words (rewording or overwording) • Repetitions • Ideologically significant meaning relations (synonymy, hyponymy and antonymy) 	Grammatical features: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Process and participant predominate • Style of sentences (active or passive, positive or negative)
2. Labeling the career women	Relations (interpretation)	Relational	Social relations	Relational values that words have: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Euphemism • Formality 	Relational values of grammatical features: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modes (declarative, grammatical question, imperative) • Pronouns
3. Rules that circumscribe career women	Subjects (explanation)	Expressive	Social identities	Expressive values that words have: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Metaphors • Modality 	Expressive values of grammatical features: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modality • Intertextuality and interdiscursivity • Presupposition

In category one (i.e., identifying the career women), the analysis focused on the descriptions provided by *Cleo* regarding career women's actions, behaviours, identity and roles. Most of the lexical items explained in the description fall in the category of Experiential within the Faircloughian approach. Experiential items are concerned, mostly, with the 'text producer's experience (author/editor/institution) of the natural or social world, which is represented' (Fairclough, 2001), for instance, to (re)produce or (re)construct, the career women in Malaysia. This category looks at a few aspects of the text (related to contents) in terms of the vocabulary used, grammatical and textual structures such as the frame and layout of the texts.

Thus, in this category, the analysis examined the personality, actions, attitude, roles of the career women as well as identity that they carried with them. Under this category, the analysis specifically looked at the 'doings' of the career women that can be identified as legitimate/non-legitimate and normative/non-normative. This category also covered the aspect of topics as well as how the magazine described the career women by looking at the adjectives given to predicate the career women in Malaysia. Overall, this category covered the discussion of how *Cleo* identified the subject position(s) of career women. The analysis of these adjectives can be read in Chapter Four.

Besides the main categories for the data, each category was broken down into sub-categories to have a better clarification on how career women were constructed according to what the sub-categories intended to investigate, i.e., what workplace ideals are versus normative ideals according to the construction in *Cleo*.

The analysis was still at the level of contents which Mautner (2008) addressed as linguistic resources. However, not all elements in the list below can fit into the first category and

could draw out the Experiential values because there are a few of the elements that are considered more ‘appropriate’ to be analysed under the light of Relational and Expressive categories described by Fairclough (2001). The list goes as follows (adapted from Mautner, 2008):

1. Lexis (evaluative meaning, news actor labels; rhetorical use of figures; metaphors).
2. Transitivity (‘who does what to who’; types of verbal processes, for example ‘doing’ versus ‘happening’).
3. Modality (expressing certainty vs. vagueness; ‘high’ vs. ‘low’ commitment to propositions on the part of the speaker as expressed for example through modal verbs and modal adverbials).
4. Source attribution and presence of different ‘voices’ in the text.
5. Textual coherence and cohesion.
6. Argumentative devices establishing rapport between author and reader (for example rhetorical questions; appeals to common sense; discursive construction of ‘we’ groups).
7. Nonverbal message components (for example photographs, charts, page layout, frames, boxed inserts, font size and style).

The second category of the data was analysed according to the second category of Fairclough’s three-dimensional framework of discourse analysis; Relational (interpretation) – guided the analysis to look at the reasons behind their ‘doings’ in terms of personality, attitude, roles, actions and identities. This is the part where the I started to investigate the evaluation done

by the magazine towards career women in terms of the roles/actions/identities/behaviours that are considered as legitimate/non-legitimate and normative/non-normative.

This category examined the social relationship enacted between the actors or participants in the text and what kind of social formality the text unearthed between the participants in a particular setting, which could lead to labeling women's subject position(s). In thread 5 for instance, the article presented the idea of having a family-like relationship at work and although there some people preferred it that way, a number of the employees gave negative feedback towards such ambience at work. Hence, I believe that this kind of situation needs to be analysed to understand how it is being carried out and why some people like/dislike it. Furthermore, it can also unveil the evaluation done by the magazine towards such relationship, as well as the participants who are involved in such situation with such ambience – positive/negative, legitimate/non-legitimate and normative/non-normative.

As for the third category of the study, the data was analysed according to the third category of Fairclough's framework, i.e., Expressive (explanation). This category is about the subjects and social positions of career women either at workplace or in other social settings and events. I also found that it is useful to explore how and why they were constructed in certain ways in *Cleo*. I also found many guidelines, restrictions, and advice given by the authors towards career women that concerned with the types of roles/actions/behaviours/identities of career women in Malaysia and the rules that circumscribe them.

The authors significantly showed their judgment of what ideal career women should be and the ideal criteria they should meet in order to be acknowledged as 'ideal' career women. Therefore, as the data was positioned as such, I believe that it would be very much appropriate to

analyse the data according to the third category of Fairclough's framework; Expressive – which covers many aspects of what the third category of this study would like to investigate. Expressive category led me to investigate the judgement made by the magazine towards career women which had included the various subject positions of career women (listed below), how and why they were constructed as such by *Cleo*. All the subject positions below will be discussed extensively in the next chapter (Chapter Four) under this third category of data analysis.

This study investigates the subject position(s) of career women in Malaysia as:

- Career women
- Subordinates
- Bosses/Leaders
- Colleagues
- Friends
- Family member – wife, mother, sister, daughter etc.

Besides looking at the subject positions career women may possess, this category also looks at the modality under the light of Expressive category in Fairclough's three-dimensional framework of discourse analysis which suggested the meaning of possibility, impossibility, obligation, certainty and uncertainty (Palmer, 2001) used in the texts and may extend its relation to other important analytical tools such as presupposition, intertextuality and interdiscursivity.

I found that many things in the data remained unsaid and the existence of these tools had unearthed the silence of the unseen scenario or information. As for example, in Thread 9 – the magazine guided career women of how to meet perfection every time they do their work. This could 'presuppose' the idea that career women in Malaysia is in lack of knowledge and skills and

therefore, they are in need of help and guidance. Presupposition works as a tool to identify the opaque information of the data and known as unconscious truth or the truth which was taken for granted (Keenan, 2000; Stalnaker, 2008). Thus, I used the transparent information in the data and derived other hidden information from it, which was not made available in the texts.

Furthermore, I am also interested in looking for backgrounded information; where a particular subject matter or topic was by the texts without going in-depth about it. One example on backgrounded information is; the data did not transparently explain about family life or its importance in career women's lives. However, the data still managed to bring in the discourse of family at work and discussed it extensively (Thread 5). Therefore, the subject matter about family was being backgrounded in the data. In this case, I believe that *Cleo* constructed career women in Malaysia outside family life and this statement can also act as a presupposition towards what the authors had presented to the target readers.

As for intertextuality and interdiscursivity, these two analytical tools helped this study to incorporate other genre, discourses, idea, texts or voices with the text, which were potentially relevant with the data. According to the data, many other texts or voices came into account because any text producer can never produce a text without referring to or being influenced by other sources in the past events (Worton, 1990) and this is how intertextuality works.

Particularly in this study, I discovered that the text producers selected and adapted a few other sources in a form of texts (journals and articles) to re-produce the construction of career women in Malaysia. Throughout the analysis, there are many times the data brought in past events or ideas into the text production to reproduce the notion of career women such as guiding

the women with their career path as found in Thread 10 and 11 on how to avoid occupational hazards and how to know the cues before termination was done.

Interdiscursivity on the other hand blended with other types of discourses which were put in relation with the current discourse discussed in one discursive practice (Petraglia, 1995). As for instance taken from this study, when career women are being compared to men, or being given ‘masculine’ attributes which suggest that they should work as hard or as competent as men, it shows that the data brought in the discourse of masculinity to relate with the current discourse of career women. There is also an occurrence in the data when the authors collected voices of older career women in giving advice and guidelines to the younger ones which seem to depict the relationship between a mother and a daughter. Therefore, I could say that the data has created both intertextuality and interdiscursivity of the construction of motherhood with career women.

3.5 Closing Remarks

This chapter has shown the methodology used to carry out this study by using Fairclough’s three-dimensional framework to analyse the data in investigating the construction of career women by *Cleo*. Three categories of analysis were created (see) to achieve data saturation and to discover to what extent these career women are expected to meet the requirements of being ‘ideal’ career women by the text producers. The discussions within this chapter serve to facilitate smooth entry into the next two chapters which include the analysis of the data, results and conclusions.