

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

This study analysed how *Cleo*, a globally circulated female magazine, constructed career women. Based on the data from twelve *Cleo*'s articles collected, ranging between August 2007 and August 2008, several categories were established (see below) in relation to the magazine's strategy in constructing career women in Malaysia. Although the categories were distinguished exclusively, certain aspects explained in each category may overlap and may be emphasized repeatedly.

This chapter discussed three main categories that focused upon what this study would like to investigate; which is about career women and how *Cleo* had constructed them. The categories are as follows:

1. Identifying the Roles/Identity/Behaviour/Action of Career Women in Malaysia
2. Labeling the Roles/Identity/Behaviour/Action of Career Women in Malaysia
3. Rules that Circumscribe Career Women

Each category is provided with sub-categories in order to produce thorough linguistic and social analysis of what they tend to investigate pertaining to career women in Malaysia according to *Cleo*.

4.2 Analysis of the data

This section discussed the data according to its ‘appropriate’ categories and each category was accompanied by sub-categories.

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

The first category of this section discussed – how *Cleo* constructed career women in Malaysia, i.e., how it identified their roles, identity, behaviours and actions. This category precisely looked at the contents of the data. It unveiled the knowledge that contained in the data which had embedded in its choices of vocabulary and grammatical features (i.e., linguistics features).

This data in this section were illustrated in stages. First of all, it aimed to look at the linguistic features contained in the data such as choice of words, phrases, and strings of sentences which occupied the use of modality, transitivity, textual coherence and cohesion as well as nonverbal message components (Mautner, 2008). They were either subsequently or simultaneously discussed from a CDA perspective, i.e., Fairclough’s three-dimensional framework of discourse (1995, 2001).

In this category, the data was analysed according to Experiential category; the first category of Fairclough’s three-dimensional framework of discourse analysis (1995, 2001), i.e., the subject position of career women, their roles, identity, behaviour and action at their working institutions.

How the Experiential category was realized can be shown through the linguistic analysis (i.e., analysis of vocabulary) of the data. In terms of vocabulary, many words occurred in

multiple occasions (occurred more than twice in the data), which may be identified as a ‘chosen’ way of describing women adopted by the magazine (see below for the categories of the words).

Categories of words:

- a. Nouns – passion, dream, rewards, talents, satisfaction, success, independence, promotions, recognitions.

Examples from texts:

- “Here are some ways to test for the presence of passion, according to Tom Siciliano...” (Thread 1)
 - “There is another dream job for you in another company, in a position that is somewhere in the middle of the pyramid instead of the top.” (Thread 1)
 - “She was certain...it was a start of an illustrious career...full of recognition and rewards” (Thread 3)
 - “I expected a warm, relaxed atmosphere in which everyone was able to develop their talents.” (Thread 5)
 - “They heap on praises and recognition...” (Thread 5)
 - “Useful marks scored...to gain promotions, raises or favour...” (Thread 7)
- b. Verbs – enjoy, learn, plan, succeed, lead
 - “She would lead it with integrity, tenacity and humour.” (Thread 1)
 - “If you had a day off, you would enjoy engaging in it.” (Thread 1)
 - “Once you’re able to commit...you’re there to succeed...” (Thread 8)
 - “Plan the assignment.” (Thread 9)
 - “What really matters is that you learn from this mistake...” (Thread 9)

- “If you learn to view two completely opposing thoughts...”(Thread 12)
- c. Adjectives – passionate, nice, comfortable, productive, successful, disciplined, organized, motivated, determined, competence
- “In a successful career search at any age, the key is to identify what you want...” (Thread 1)
- “How can you tell if you’re passionate about something?” (Thread 1)
- “In order to be successful...you need to be very disciplined, organized and motivated.” (Thread 2)
- “It is unwise to rely purely on your competence to promote your career...” (Thread 4)
- “No matter how comfortable, warm and secure your workplace seems...” (Thread 5)
- “I love the independence.” (Thread 2)

At this point, the gist of these ‘chosen’ vocabularies used by the authors suggested positive images of career women of what they were expected to be by the text producers. The examples above showed that the articles are intertextualised within the discourse of management and corporate culture, which focus highly on ‘conquering, managing or neutralising differences’ and how the women are ‘empowered’ to exceed their usual performance (Bargiela-Chiappini, 2009). Although Child (1992) argued that it was not easy for women employees to remain positive throughout their career and not be overcome by any kind of problems and struggles (internal or external), the authors of the articles seemed to persevere with the idea that career women should possess all the suggested positive traits.

The lexical items chosen by the text producers led to answering the first Research Question of this study in investigating the subject position(s) of career women constructed by the magazine. The vocabularies selected above showed how the magazine constructed a sense of creating a subject position of career women who were detached from any other social positions and how the position as a career woman was identified as the highest priority for the women to embrace and conform. From the context of how the lexical items (above) were structured in sentences, it suggested that career women were expected to be ‘strong’ and ‘aggressive’ in building their career and personality at work. Therefore, at this point, the data had shown that the subject position of the women being career women was highly recommended by the magazine, regardless a few accounts had shown the reality of career women’s images did not coincide with what the authors had presented.

In terms of the modalities, it was found that the text producers were very much interested to impose the idea of obligation and compliance towards career women. There were eleven articles out of twelve containing the idea of instructions, guidelines and advice that the women were expected to conform. Thus, the authors had chosen several modalities such as *should*, *must*, *have to*, *need to*, *should never* and *must never* to perform the tasks. This could reflect the idea propagated in management discourse; being of constantly demonstrating leadership and ‘redistribute radical social and economic power’ (Thrift, 2003). Below are examples from the data:

- Must – e.g.: You must make a representation by writing a letter to the Director... (Thread 11)
- Have to – e.g.: I have to cater other people’s taste... (Thread 1)
- Should – ...the result should look like... (Thread 9)

Nevertheless, besides being assertive and certain with what the women should do/act, I spotted the authors preferred to voice out their suggestions and guidelines by using modalities that sounded less restrictive and assertive such as *would not*, *will*, *may* and *might* (Palmer, 1995). This may also suggest that the authors were not very certain with their arguments and very much related to ‘women’s language’ as Lakoff puts it – meant to express uncertainty, excessive politeness and lack of confidence (Talbot, 2010). Here are several examples from the data (see below).

- a. You may think you’re tired of the whole industry you’re in...you only need to have a break and relocate... (Thread 2).
- b. This adjustment may involve ebbs and flows, feelings of detachment... coupled with great relief and joy (Thread 2).

As stated before, the authors seemed persistent with their suggestions and recommendations of what career women should do and should not do. This was because, besides modalities, I also discovered that the authors had given their instructions and advice in imperatives. This could suggest the idea of obligation and compliance rather than to ‘soften’ the mood with the usage of modals such as *might*, *would*, *may* and *maybe*. Below are some examples from the data:

- a. Avoid putting anyone on hold because “an important call just came in.” (Thread 3)
- b. Separate who you are from what you do and cultivate a life outside work. (Thread 5)
- c. Set your own boundaries and decide how much closeness...you want as part of your professional life. (Thread 5)
- d. Plan the assignment. (Thread 9)
- e. Make your thoughts visible. (Thread 12)

The data also described career women as a group of people who possess strong characteristics – as people who are passionate with what they do and highly ambitious. This has been identified through the use of adjectives such as: *perfect, successful, ambitious, passionate, dynamic, enthusiastic* and *confident* – to show what kind of career women they were trying to represent in the magazine by positioning them through the discourse of management. By ‘neglecting’ other subject position(s) in the texts, the data seemed to suggest only one subject position of the women, i.e., being career women – who apparently not tied to any social roles and career and work seemed to be their main focus in life. The strategy taken by the authors to ‘detach’ other subject positions from the women and simultaneously ‘enwrapping’ them with strong characteristics may suggest a reproduction of the woman’s subject position being a career woman, who is confined in the modern and globalised management discourse. This trend may lead to a reproduction of a family life and other subject positions such as being mothers and wives.

Each article led the readers with guidelines of *dos* and *don’ts*, as well as provided tips for the women to observe. The articles contained information on various topics (as shown in table 3.2 in Chapter 3) and some were aided with interviews with other women, who were the experts of a particular field. The presence of other ‘expert’ voices in the data seemed to strengthen the authors’ credibility in presenting their arguments to the readers. It can also be considered as another way of positioning the women’s subject position at work who seemed to lack confidence and certainty and hence, in need of others for reference suggested by the magazine. Examples from the data can be seen below:

a. In Thread 1, the author quoted Dr Jan Cannon, who is a career counselor provided guidance and rules towards career women: “You must assess your interests, your values, your skills, your temperament, and your life circumstances.”

b. Thread 4, the author cited the following from Charles Guy Moore (Head of a country’s National Institute of Career Planning): “It is unwise to rely purely on your competence to promote your career interests”.

The usage of words ‘must’ in the first example and ‘unwise’ in the latter, showed that the authors had positioned the career women as a group of people who were lacked of knowledge and indecisive to determine what they wanted to do and therefore, they were supplied with guidelines that they cannot afford to ignore.

Other linguistic features in the data were synonymy and antonymy, which have been utilized vastly. Most of them were repetitive in the data and some were used under the same context and article. Synonymy was used either to emphasize particular similar ideas or concepts and antonymy on the other hand, to show a contrast between particular ideas or concepts (Fairclough 2003). In this study, it appears that the use of antonymy (examples are provided in the next page) was to avoid biasness towards what she wanted to convey, and thus, the author can be seen as being objective by not taking stand in any of the sides. It was found that most of the lexical items chosen were to identify and describe the subject in terms of their personality, temperament, attitude and actions. These items also signified how the authors constructed career women by assigning them roles and ‘ideal’ sets of behaviour and actions. Below are several examples from the texts and how they appeared in contexts:

Synonymy:

- *Disciplined, organised* (Thread 2)
- ...working from home you need to be very *disciplined, organized*...
- *Toxic, poisonous* (Thread 3)
- But if you're not careful, *toxic* colleagues can turn you into a cynical drone...
- The *poisonous* colleagues exchange reptilian smiles...
- *Dread, depression* (Thread 8)
- Still, you never expected to experience such panic and *depression*.
- Why the job switch is *stressful*?

Antonymy:

- *Muddle* and *accomplish* (Thread 1)
- Most people *muddle* along throughout their lives making careers...
- ...is true of many young achievers today who *accomplish* their career objectives early...
- *Successful* and *failures* (Thread 1)
- ...a rising star that leads phenomenally *successful* projects...
- ...you can protect yourself from the vicious venom of the *failures* around you is...
- *Extrovert* and *introvert* (Thread 6)
- *Extroverts* are very high-energy people who enjoy being with people.
- *Introverts* 'fade' into background. They are lone-rangers in problem-solving...

Such trend may show that in expressing ideas and arguments, the authors tried to incorporate balance (by using antonymy) between the positive and negative notions of a

situation. It may also represent the reality of the working people as well as its environment, which may have its particular strengths and weaknesses, as well as incorporating the idea of 'balance' of working environment and its practitioners. Synonymy such as 'success' and 'accomplishment' were found prominent in the data and that seemed to signify that the authors of *Cleo* are guided by management discourse in the production of the texts. They appeared to 'empower' women, which is considered as a common trend in the discourse of management (Thrift, 2002).

The data also unearthed another subject position of career women in Malaysia, who were constructed beyond the collective norms of the country, e.g., economic liberalism, liberal democracy and individual human rights (Haynes, 2008). The data had many times brought forward an 'alien' culture to Malaysian readers by unveiling the women's lifestyles and cultures that can be considered 'different' from the values that Malaysia had retained for many. In Thread 2, the author encouraged the women to 'liberate' themselves by developing their own career line without attaching themselves to any organization, i.e., own their own business. The example given in the text was nude painting, which by far was not supported by Malaysian culture and values since our paintings were mostly portraits, local landscapes, *batik* paintings, human figures and abstracts (Mahamood, 2007). However, the 'situation' of nude painting was made 'normal' by the author by producing it in a magazine published in Malaysia, such as *Cleo*. It showed that the magazine seemed to spark the idea of 'individual rights' of the women and encourage them to do whatever they wanted to do regardless of the values they should hold on to. However, it was noted that the author was well-informed of the country's values by acknowledging the fact that 'nudes' were hardly sell in Malaysian market due to cultures' restrictions (please refer to the excerpt below).

“I have to cater to people’s tastes as well as my own...And even though I also painted collages and nudes, those styles won’t sell at the markets, where people don’t want to be challenged too much.” (Thread 2)

A ‘different’ lifestyle of career women was also promoted in the data by disclosing a life of a young career woman who lived together with her fiancé. Although the notion of such Western ‘modernity’ was considered ‘unfamiliar’ to Malaysian society, which had long attached to patrimonial/patriarchal and religious traditions (Kahn, 1997), the content was well-propagated in the magazine as part of Malaysian cultures and values. The magazine, hence, had placed career women in a ‘liberated’ subject position which had promoted individualistic human rights (Haynes, 2008). Excerpt can be seen below:

“I like solitude of working in the little alcove off the loungeroom in the flat I share with my fiancé...I get up around 7.30am, have breakfast with my fiancé, then potter around.” (Thread 2)

At this juncture, it is necessary to see the ideology that *Cleo* tried to ‘impose’ in constructing career women in Malaysia. The subject position(s) given by the magazine were found to be highly emphasizing on the notions of ‘empowering’ and ‘liberating’ career women. An example to support this idea is: “I love the independence...and I can make my own decisions without having to answer to anybody.” (Thread 2). Also, this may show that *Cleo* supported the notion that ‘ideal’ career women had to be constructed out of their ‘feminine’ traits by assigning ‘male’ attributes such as *competitive*, *dynamic*, *discipline* and *self-confident* (Adam, 2008) although in most societies it was believed that they were ‘emotional beings’ and appeared incompetent at their job with those traits (McGarry, 1995). However, *Cleo* believed that the

subject position of an ‘ideal’ career woman can only be achieved if they managed to ‘liberate’ and ‘empower’ themselves , which has been described by Collins as ‘one of the central motifs in management discourse’ (2000).

It was also found that, *Cleo* substantially promoted a career-oriented culture among career women which can be related to the rise of capitalism in Malaysian society and economy (Kahn, 1997). This can be considered as another subject position constructed by the magazine for career women in Malaysia. The authors emphasized several times in the texts that women should earn for living and having a career meant upholding self-worthiness and independence. As stated in Thread 1, “Is it (career) simply a means of financial support or just a statement about who you are and what your particular talents are?” This statement showed that *Cleo* believed that a woman can be highly valued when she had a career and supported her own life. The idea of being ‘independent’ was vastly propagated in the data as it believed by the authors signifying self-worthiness and dignity.

In another example in Thread 2, the authors indicated the importance of career as a source of financial support in the current Malaysian economic system (which was believed to be continuously progressing and challenging (Bert, 2003)):

“Good financial management skills are crucial to ensure you not only have enough to live on, but can pay your taxes and survive the lean times. You need a motivated and organized personality coupled with a product or service that is in demand.”

The situation here showed that the text producer(s) positioned career women in a situation where ‘money’ was highly significant for everyone to survive. Thus, they were required to know how to earn it in the midst of a challenging economic system, which reflected the fad of

contemporary management discourse (Collins, 2000). Thus, I argue that positioning women in such situations could re-produce the notion of ‘ideal’ career women in Malaysia who may ‘step out’ from their stereotyped traits, and who are recognized as ‘emotional beings’ and have lower self-esteem (Weiten, Lloyd, Dunn & Hammer, 2008).

However, although the idea of being ‘independent’ was highly disseminated in the texts, it was prominent to see that the magazine informing career women the things considered right and ideal for them to follow, and to keep on adhering. In other words, the women can be considered dependent on others to guide them of what to do and not to do. On the other hand, this also suggested that the magazine had identified career women according to their own terms (which could be guided by contemporary management discourse) by assigning roles to them. Such identification were realised by the usage of nouns and verbs such as:

- Nouns – goal: ...She needed a goal in her career... (Thread 2), success: Success – if measured by achievement of something you’ve always wanted (Thread 1), integrity: She would lead it with integrity...(Thread 1), energy: ...toxic employees, someone who poisons the positive energy around her (Thread 3) and responsibility: ...valued workers are invariably given steadily more work and responsibility.... (Thread 11).
- Verbs – accomplish: ...many young achievers today who accomplish their career objectives...(Thread 1), shoot: ...she has got something to shoot for...(Thread 1), organized: in order to be successful...you need to be very disciplined, organized and motivated...(Thread 2), change: She would change the world of mass marketing and become a legend... (Thread 3), and plan: Plan well and you can avoid many so-called “unforeseen”... (Thread 9)

These words may signify that the magazine was trying to motivate and encourage career women to divorce themselves from stereotypical traits associated with women and be more dynamic in their performance at work by giving them a new role and to act with it, i.e., empowering them. Hence, it had shown that the magazine would acknowledge career women as being ‘ideal’ and successful once they had fulfilled the criteria that they had set for them.

In order to visualize this notion of *Cleo*’s construction of career women in Malaysia, the excerpt below, for instance, may show that the magazine had identified a role for women.

The success of any job, big or small, depends in large part of quality of the planning that went into it. Plan well and you can avoid many so-called “unforeseen circumstances” that we typically use as excuses when we fail to meet our deadlines...
(Thread 9).

The excerpt showed that the authors seemed to re-construct the notion of ‘ideal’ career women, i.e., by acting according to their guidelines such as, having a well-structured plan in order to nail success, i.e., to produce ‘perfect’ job. Also, the above excerpt showed that the magazine had identified career women nowadays as those who frequently made mistakes and commonly careless with their jobs and hence, ongoing guidance was believed necessary. However, the authors seemed to acknowledge that ‘mistakes’ were somehow inevitable (the use of lexical items “we typically”). Nevertheless, I believe that the authors were trying to go against the ‘typical’ trend by identifying ‘mistake’ as a key to one’s career failure.

4.2.1.1 Legitimate / Non-legitimate

This category served to explain the descriptions contained in *Cleo* of what kind of action, roles, behaviour and actions that were considered as legitimate or non-legitimate for career women to do and possess. As explained earlier on, the data seemed to show that *Cleo* had developed a definition of what it entailed to be a ‘real’ career woman – what they believed to be right and ideal for career women to conform and what subject position(s) *Cleo* had constructed for them. The data suggested that the magazine had its own terms by outlining what were the main things career women should do and should have in order to be ideal and well-accepted by the society. It can also be said that, it was a kind of predication of career women constructed by *Cleo*.

From the data, it appeared that the authors tried to predicate career women according to their experience and knowledge, i.e., intertextualised with the contemporary discourse of management. Although it may not represent the real construction of career women out there, it may represent the legitimate belief and knowledge owned by the magazine’s members’ resources. Based from what this chapter had explained earlier on, it seemed to suggest that their constructive strategy was based on what the magazine expected of career women rather than what really existed in them in terms of their skills, performance, attitude and personality.

It was found that out of twelve articles, eleven were considered as providing information towards career women, i.e., guiding them with tips and advice. Therefore, it may indicate that the magazine had a very high interest in providing knowledge towards career women for them to appear skillful in any kind of field. This also included the information to improve their jobs performance, shaping ‘ideal’ personalities and what were the necessary and unnecessary

actions/behaviours at work. Therefore, I argue that the authors tried to legitimise the idea of being ‘all-time perfect’ at work (working skills, added with soft-skills) as main criterion or quality for career women to possess in order for them to fit in the idea of being ‘ideal’.

In contrast to the reality, such situation of being ‘perfect’ may not exist, especially not for women who believed to have many limitations (Nuss, Denti & Viry, 1989). This was because many studies have shown that women could not go as far as men or being as determined as men because they had many other priorities to focus on besides career, such as taking care of the family, i.e., care-giving (Adam, 2008). As a result, women at work tended not to achieve the ‘perfect’ notion as targeted by *Cleo*. Therefore, the failure of being perfect in their job performance, as well as the way they brought themselves at work, i.e., attitude and personality can be considered as illegitimate.

It was also found that family life was merely backgrounded in the data and had never been discussed in details of its significance and impacts. By doing so, I argue that the magazine tried to legitimise the fact that in order for the women to be successful in their career, they had to ‘deny’ other matters such as family life. However, transparent information saying that it was considered unhealthy for the women to revolve around their family lives, nonetheless unavailable in the data. But, the ‘silence’ of it may suggest that the magazine was trying to ‘deny’ the existence of family in the lives of career women. Thus, I believe that the magazine had constructed another subject position for career women, who were ‘detached’ from any family relationship. This trend may suggest a reconstruction of career women in Malaysia in this era, confined in the modern management discourse and how career is considered as ‘family’ and it has to come first.

It was found that out of twelve collected articles, there was only one article (Thread 5) talked about family relationship. Nonetheless, the relationship described in the data did not position the women as a member to a family, and hence, the use of the word ‘family’ was strictly metaphorical. I believe that it was an example of how lexical items/terms from one domain (in this case, i.e., family domain) were transported to another domain, i.e., corporate culture. This finding showed how family relationship was backgrounded in the data. The data also allowed the roles of ‘parents’ at work who were the seniors/leaders that the women tended to look up to. I believe that the authors tried to create a simulation of family at the workplace by having a few people (colleagues, superiors or underlings) acting out the attributes of family members such as mother and father in giving advice and guidance towards career women. Thus, the notion of having a family was somehow considered ‘agreeable’ by the authors.

In thread 5, entitled ‘Family, Inc.’ – the title itself presented an idea that the magazine was trying to be realistic in presenting their views and voices about the reality of having a family life as an inseparable component in a human being. Although they seemed to show that having a family life may affect women’s performance negatively (by not relating them to it), I believe that the authors were trying to establish and sustain the good values a family can bring, by creating such space and ambience of simulating a family life at work. However, the absence of family roles in the data and how they were constructed out of their family life, may suggest that the authors hardly legitimize the notion of having a family in women’s lives, which echoes current management discourse which seems to emphasize that work over family (Powell, 2010).

4.2.1.2 Normative / Non-normative

For this sub-category, the data was analysed according to what were considered normative or non-normative things for career women to do/possess/act/behave at their workplaces – a part of identifying their roles/identity/behaviour as being discussed in *Cleo*.

Firstly, in terms of social roles, the magazine identified career women as colleagues to another career woman. According to the data, it showed that the role of any career woman as colleague can be highly important in an organization as it related to the sense of co-operation and teamwork between them. As a result, it contributed a great impact in their job performance. The data (Threads 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 10 and 11) showed that their roles as colleagues were magnified as it could lead and influence their attitude, behaviour and personality. This trend was considered ‘normal’ to happen at their workplaces. Excerpts can be seen below:

- ...her enthusiasm corrupted beyond repair by poisonous colleagues... (Thread 3)
- Whilst they could not teach her...they did enlighten her about such piffling matters as corporate politics... (Thread 3)
- Reba described her colleagues – mostly recovering addicts... (Thread 5)
- Some (bosses) truly appreciate and are genuinely concerned about the people who work for them. (Thread 5)

Other subject positions in family, operating in the domains of home and family seemed to be very much backgrounded in the data, as they were superficially discussed. Therefore, for the women to adhere to those subject positions can be considered as non-normative act by *Cleo*. Excerpts from the data can be seen below showing how the domains of home and family and the roles attached to it discussed in the data:

- ...a good idea to make a success of working from home. (Thread 2)
- (At home), I start work (painting) at 11am. If I'm waiting for a painting to dry I'll go and do a bit of housework... (Thread 2)
- Some managers set up work environment in an autocratic, mother-knows-best position. (Thread 5)
- 'Mum' (bosses) decides what and much her 'children' (employees) need to do... (Thread 5)

I also found that there was a consistent occurrence in identifying that career women can be very *envious*, *ambitious*, *poisonous* and *competitive* (can be seen in Threads 1 and 3). There were three out of twelve articles that had identified types of colleagues career women can be (Threads 3, 5 and 6). This information unveiled the nature of colleagues any career women would meet at their workplaces. Therefore, such traits in any career woman can be considered as normal to happen among career women at workplaces. Examples are as follows:

- She was barely 25 years old...and already she could taste all the promotions, recognition and satisfaction... (Thread 1)
- Sarah had outgrown her industry (while her friends are still not)... (Thread 1)
- If you're not careful, toxic colleagues can quickly turn you into a cynical, unsatisfied work drone...just like them. (Thread 3)
- "This dysfunctional behaviour contaminates employees...which seriously affect the bottom line." (Thread 3)
- The poisonous colleagues exchange reptilian smiles confidentially... (Thread 3)

The magazine outlined how an 'ideal' career woman should be – by assigning 'male' attributes such as being aggressive, assertive, dominant and rational (Cleveland, Stockdale &

Murphy, 2000), in the sense of empowering them to fit in the contemporary management discourse. The authors tried to assigning new traits to career women in Malaysia by transforming them who were in contrast with the reality of women's realm such as being affectionate, dreamy and sentimental (Cleveland, Stockdale & Murphy, 2000). Adam (2008) mentioned in his study that men were more 'natural' to be competitive compared to women and preferred to dominate in any circumstance. Thus, it may not be normative for the women to 'appear' like men but *Cleo* seemed to normalise such trend to be part of career women. The normative views done by many studies did not support the way the magazine identified career women. In *Cleo*, it appeared to be normal for the women to play the role as competitive and task-oriented type of colleagues at their workplaces (Threads 1, 2, 6, 7, 9 and 12) compared to more acceptable traits of career women being interpersonal and relationship-oriented (Adam, 2008). The authors seemed to believe that women should be equally competitive and competent as men and thus, the magazine normalised equality between men and women, which has been put forward by contemporary management discourse as 'neutralising differences' (Bargiela-Chiappini, 2009). Below are a few excerpts from the data to portray this situation of women being 'strong' as well as imbued with 'strong' traits:

- "I discovered that the publishing business is too narrow for someone with my abilities and interests," says Sarah. (Thread 1)
- Sarah's new dream job as CEO of a one-woman show has all the parts of her old job which she loved most... (Thread 1)
- Being your own boss can give you greater flexibility and autonomy. (Thread 2)
- With your job plan in your hand,...you should have a pretty good idea of what you need for your assignment... (Thread 9)

In terms of what types of normative social roles assigned to the women, I found that the magazine identified only one social role for career women – solely being a career woman. The authors disregarded information that women should attach themselves to other social roles such as being wives or mothers. Apparently, this trend showed that the magazine constructed career women outside their family lives, although the data showed that the women had established social network and social relationships, i.e., “If I want to take the afternoon off, go for a coffee with a *girlfriend* and see a film..” (Thread 2) and in Thread 5 – “The people I work with are my closest *friends*”. Therefore, since the issues of career women in Malaysia carrying other social roles such as mothers or wives were left unspoken in the data, it may be considered normative for them not to subscribe themselves to other social roles to fit in the notion of being ‘ideal’ career women by *Cleo*.

The usage of modals ‘must do’ and ‘must have’ (contained the idea of obligation and certainty) provided transparent idea for this study to exert the notion that the magazine tried to ‘authorize’ the women. Furthermore, the usage of modals may also mean to convince career women that they were required to oblige in order to be part of the ‘ideal’ career women who were considered as successful in their career. Below are several examples from the texts:

- Office politics and the gender divide are real issues that everyone must learn... (Thread 3)
- ...you must still identify yourself by name... (Thread 4)

It was also found that the magazine tried not to normalize the trend of ‘having problems’ among career women in terms of their actions, behaviours, roles and personality. The magazine adopted a number of negative indicators of verbs (*contaminate* and *plunge*), nouns (*drone*, *lethargy*, and *solitude*), adjectives (*manipulative*, *poisonous*, and *dysfunctional*) and

nominalization (*dreading* and *misunderstanding*) to relate with the problems and struggles the women were facing. There were some cases found in the data that the magazine referred to psychotherapists in getting their insights for these career women which could indicate two possible situations; whether the women were really facing problems or the women did not meet the benchmark of being 'ideal' set by *Cleo*. Although the magazine presented the 'fractured' images of career women, the authors always aided the problems and struggles with solutions. Therefore, it showed that the idea of 'facing problems' at work was not normalised by *Cleo*. Below are some examples how the lexical items appeared in contexts:

- Most people *muddle* along throughout their lives making careers out of work they don't like. (Thread 1)
- ...if you're not careful, *toxic* colleagues can quickly change you into...unsatisfied work *drone*... (Thread 3)
- "This *dysfunctional* behaviour (criticizing or judging co-workers) *contaminates* employees,..." Dr Cherie (a life coach) said. (Thread 3)
- ...some might be tempted to say that the motives of *poisonous* colleagues are good... (Thread 3)
- *Disagreeable* individuals...cunningly *manipulative* and is more likely to compete... (Thread 6)

In terms of job performance, it was found that *Cleo* tried to normalise 'unskilled women' at work. Thread 9 revealed ten important steps for women to do in order to achieve perfect job every time and that had included how to plan and manage their jobs. By analysing it under the light of presupposition, I argue that the magazine normalised the idea that career women in Malaysia were a group of people who were highly in need of help and direction with their career

journey. It may also signify that career women were lacked of knowledge and experience that they tended to rely on others for reference. It was found that they frequently had to struggle with related challenges at work such as the job scope, working environment, superiors, colleagues and sub-ordinates which led them to commit mistakes – resulted in low-quality of job performance.

Finally, the magazine also normalised the trend of being ‘perfect’ among career women in order to enjoy a perfect working environment as it believed it can provide gratification and comfort (Threads 1, 2, 5 and 9). Thus, as a conclusion of this category, it appeared that the magazine constructed career women according to what they (the text producers and their institution) wanted them to be in terms of how they act, behave, talk and kinds of beliefs they were expected to have.

This part shall end the analysis of the first category which discussed the identification of career women’s subject position(s), roles, actions and behaviour at work. I would like to reiterate that the data at this point was analysed according to textual category; the first category in Fairclough’s three-dimensional framework of discourse analysis that had looked at its linguistics features related to its content and knowledge. The interpretation and explanation parts should be found in the subsequent two categories.

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

This category reported how the data labeled career women in Malaysia in terms of their roles/identity/behaviour/action. This category identified as ‘labeling’ because it was believed to construct and reaffirm power relationships ‘through enacting collaborative processes’, i.e., texts, text producers and readers. ‘Labeling’ also influenced expectations and behaviours of what a researcher aimed to study in the data (Putnam & Fairhurst, 2001). Thus, this category analysed the data according to the second category of Fairclough’s three-dimensional framework of discourse analysis (1995, 2001) which particularly discussed about relations (interpretation), i.e., the enacted relationships in the texts between the text and the readers, the text and text producer(s) and finally between the actors in the text.

Similar to the previous category, this category had also broken down the analysis into two sub-categories of what were considered legitimate/non-legitimate and normative/non-normative outlined by the text producers. However, regardless the categories were being broken down into clear-cut sections, I unfortunately could not avoid that some information may be overlapped or stated repeatedly in one section or another.

First of all, this study had done linguistic analysis which could unearth the types and the nature of relationships that existed in the data, and how it contributed to the women’s subject position(s). In terms of layout and frames, this magazine had chosen to be informal in the production of the articles. *Cleo* had selected many types of bright colours to make the articles appear glossy, fun and livelier – to relate to the nature of a woman as an individual who loved to indulge with beautiful and enjoyable things (Coulthard, 1996). The first page of each article was usually added with images of young women (only 2 threads, i.e., Thread 5 and 11 were using

images of men) pertinent to the topic of a particular article – to indicate the exact target readers the magazine is targeting, i.e., young career women.

According to the choice of images (images of women acting accordingly to the themes of the articles), layouts of the articles (colourful and attached with several advertisements on women's beauty products side by side) and the pronouns (first and second degree of pronouns) used, it seemed to show that every article presented in the magazine had the specific target readers to direct the messages, i.e., women. Layouts of Thread 2 (Title: Want to be your own boss?), for instance, placed an image of a woman smiling happily at a restaurant enjoying her milkshake and in between of the article, the magazine selected a contact lens advertisement, which I believe to fulfill the criteria of a women's magazine.

In terms of how the articles were written and presented, I believe that *Cleo* seemed to stand as a counselor to guide and advise the women of what they should do and what they should not do in their career to show how the magazine constructed the subject position of career women who were considered 'unskilled' and 'dependent'. This is because, all of the articles were basically about guidelines of what and how to perform at work. In addition, *Cleo* also provided solutions to a few relevant dilemmas throughout the analysed year (August 2007 – August 2008) that had been troubling the women of their uncertainty and doubt of what and how to do things in their career.

In general, the language used in the data was rather colloquial and informal to signify 'closeness' between the authors and the target readers. Several times found that the magazine adopted word choices that were considered as slang and they were possibly used in informal verbal conversations. Words such as *suck*, *spunk* and *bitch* (Thread 3) were among the words

which could be considered as informal vocabulary and commonly used in verbal and informal contexts with people who we were very much accustomed to. It may suggest that by having these kinds of words in the data, the women may feel ‘related’ to the texts, i.e., creating solidarity between the participants (Gramley & Pätzgold, 2003).

It was mentioned before in the previous category that *Cleo* seemed to make assertive accounts in delivering guidelines towards career women. By having them presented in imperative mode, *Cleo* appeared to be instructive towards the women – which may resemble to patriarchal way, which showed the exertion of dominance and power (Hakim, 2000). However, although the magazine tried to establish ‘solidarity’ with the readers by using appropriate pronouns and images, I believe that *Cleo* also tried to be assertive with the messages they wanted to convey – indicating ‘roughness’ presented in contemporary management discourse (Collins, 2000). Thus, the messages can be considered as ‘obligations’ rather than ‘suggestions’. Here are two examples from the text – using imperative mode to indicate commands:

1. Set your own boundaries (Thread 5).
2. Re-create your personal environment (Thread 8).

The data shows an excessive use of personal pronouns in the texts and the most prominent were the first and second pronouns. I believe that it was to create solidarity between the text and the readers and for them to feel connection towards what they were reading. A second pronoun such as ‘you’ had significantly been used in the texts to create a sense of ‘interpellation’ which worked as a strategy to address people individually although the context in saying it (the messages the authors tried to convey) was broad and general (Dolar, 2004). Below are some examples from the data:

1. ...the only way *you* can protect yourself from vicious venom of the failures around *you* is to avoid them (Thread 3).
2. When *you* make a business phone call, always identify *yourself*... (Thread 4).
3. “*You* could say that they taught *me* the facts of life,” smile Clarice. “But there are some things *I* wish *I* didn’t learn about so early in *my* career” (Thread 3).
4. “*I* expected a warm, relaxed atmosphere in which everyone was able to develop their talents,” Mei Ling says (Thread 5).

Also, this study found that even the title of the articles were constructed to create a sense of interpellation by using second person pronoun and putting it into a question form for the readers to act (to continue reading the whole article) towards it. For instance in Thread 1, with the title “So, you’ve found your dream job. Now what?” may interpellate the readers believing that the article was written for them due to the connection it established through the usage of ‘you’. As a result, this factor might add more interest for the women to keep on prescribing the ideas from *Cleo* that could bring closer connection that it had with the readers.

Also found in the data – real cases scenarios related to a particular topic, which the I believe to strengthen *Cleo*’s arguments over the issues presented in the magazine regarding women and their career in order to establish a strong foundation in terms of relationship and connection with the readers. Several case studies used by the magazine to present ‘real’ situation of a woman and her career. For instance in Thread 1, a case study of ‘Jennifer’ was selected to unveil the reality, strengths, and weaknesses of owning a business and manage it by herself. The author of this particular article appeared to take a stand in supporting women to become independent by managing their own businesses (liberating and empowering the women) and in order to strengthen her ‘stand’ which also constructing a woman’s subject position, ‘voices’ from

experts such as career coach and career psychologist were adopted. Here is what Meredith Fuller (a career psychologist) said in the texts, which showed that the women needed to be advised and guided of what to do/decide:

- “Calculate your financial position by adding together all your assets and subtracting all your debts. Then examine your spending habits by going over old bank and credit card statements.”

The vast use of informal lexical items such as colloquial language had resulted in low usage of euphemisms in the texts. I discovered that *Cleo* was very much straightforward in delivering its messages and thus, the use of euphemism was indeed minimised. It was also thought that, although euphemisms were used for politeness and contributed to good manners (Allan & Burrige, 2006), the authors tended not to use it in their messages, possibly to embed the mood of a particular circumstance and for the readers to grasp the feelings of the indicated mood.

As for an example in Thread 3, *Cleo* listed out a few types of negative colleagues that career women commonly found at their workplaces. In order to portray how bad the situation could affect them, the magazine identified these negative colleagues as ‘bitch’ (Thread 3), often ‘suck up’ (Thread 7) and ‘bootlick’ (Thread 7). I argue that, as this kind of theme was brought forward, it could signify that this kind of situation had commonly affected career women out there and needed to be escalated for solution. It was also considered ‘normal’ and could be found in many workplaces to gain favour from the upper management (O’Neill, Bilimoria & Saatcioglu, 2004). Hence, by presenting the issue in the magazine, as well as providing solutions

on how to overcome it, *Cleo* appeared trying to assist the women and not to ‘normalise’ the trend.

4.2.2.1 Legitimate/Non-legitimate

As in the previous category (4.2.1), the analysis of this category has been broken down into sub-categories that analysed the data according to what was considered legitimate or non-legitimate aspects for career women to do/act/behave that were relevant to any kind of relationship existed in the data. Similar to the previous category, the sub-categories were mainly focusing on the analysis of ideology of what the authors of *Cleo* career articles were trying to convey.

First of all, by looking at the data at this point, this analysis focused on the relationships the women had at their workplace, i.e., with the superiors, colleagues, sub-ordinates and clients/customers and to see how these relationships worked. As a colleague, the authors seemed to evaluate career women by presenting the positive and negative sides of them, which I believe very much appropriate with the natural trait of any human being.

In terms of how *Cleo* constructed a subject position as a colleague for the women, adjectives such as ‘enjoyable’ (Thread 2), ‘flexible’ (Thread 2), ‘poisonous’ (Thread 3), ‘cynical’ (Thread 3), ‘envious’ (Thread 3), well-mannered’ (Thread 4), ‘intrusive’ (Thread 6), ‘autocratic’ (Thread 6), ‘appreciative’ (Thread 6), ‘friendly’ (Thread 6), ‘lazy’ (Thread 6), and ‘gregarious’ (Thread 6) were adopted. This may indicate that the magazine evaluated career women as a group of people who could be very much positive and hardly avoided the negative characteristics when they needed to. Therefore, in terms of relationships with their co-workers by relating them

to these adjectives, there were times they could be very pleasant to each other especially when they were already engaged in a long term relationship at work (Thread 5). On top of that, they even tended to treat each other as family members and even enjoyed spending time together outside of their working hours when they had known each other for some time.

However, when it came to receiving new colleagues, the authors identified that some of the women might appear unhelpful and hardly co-operate that had led into bitter relationships at work (refer to Thread 3) due to their 'envious' and 'poisonous' traits. It seemed to show that the authors were against the idea of having negative colleagues at work because they suggested ways for the women to encounter them. Therefore, the magazine appeared to consider it as an illegitimate thing as authors seemed to approve positive attitudes and characteristics at work.

The data did not reveal much about women's relationships with the superiors or bosses, except in Thread 5. The relationships were presented in both manners, i.e., positive and negative that some of the women enjoyed a pleasant working relationship with their bosses and some refused to be so close with them as they thought it was very much 'suffocating' which eventually could turn into a 'dysfunctional' relationship. Although minor accounts were made about informal relationships at work, the data seemed to legitimize their relationship as professional most of the times. This was because there were many times in the data the authors emphasized the idea of job-related matters, i.e., career women should always equip themselves with skills and competency at work in order to reach the level of 'performing' or otherwise, they were assumed as underperforming type of employees. For instance in Thread 4, Thread 7, Thread 9 and Thread 10, all of these articles upheld the importance of being 'professional' by highlighting the 'right' etiquettes at work, the 'right' corporate language to know, the 'right' way to do the 'perfect' job and the 'wrong' acts to practice at work.

Based on the issues presented in the data – Thread 4, Thread 7, Thread 8, Thread 9, Thread 10, Thread 11 and Thread 12 – discussed about skills and knowledge the women should have at work. Particularly in Thread 7, by looking at the word choices of the author presented at the beginning of the list (the list contained a number of specific terms which were considered essential in the corporate world) – “if you’re unprepared to think outside of the box you’re going to have plenty of trouble...” – seemed to show that the list given in the article (Thread 7) was highly important to be part of career women. Therefore, I argue that that it is considered as legitimate for the women to know, understand and apply the knowledge of such terms for daily use in order to uphold the professional relationships they have at work.

Professionalism in handling relationships with clients or customers was also emphasized in the data. The data showed that clients held the keys to success in any organization and the women should not be making ‘mistakes’ while dealing with them. This showed the nature of contemporary management discourse in terms of favouring organisational growth and capital accumulation (Alvesson, Bridgman & Willmott, 2009). Threads 9 and 10 described that bad consequences for employees if the clients were not satisfied with something (see below for the example found in the data supporting this statement):

“Ultimately your clients, especially major ones, are important to your company and unless you improve your working relationship with them, it’s unlikely that you’re going to be valued by your company” (Thread 10).

Therefore, it appeared that professionalism in clientele relationships was very crucial and very much legitimized by the authors for the women to uphold the standard, based on the examples in Thread 4, Thread 7, Thread 9 and Thread 10.

Looking at the relationships the authors tried to establish with the readers, this study viewed it in two aspects. Firstly, in terms of language used, i.e., linguistically (as being explained in the previous section), I found that the authors used colloquial type of language. The authors were also fond of delivering messages in conversational form as their ‘legitimate’ style of writing to create solidarity with the readers since most of the words used were simple to understand. Here is one example from the data (Thread 8):

- “Still, you never expected to experience such panic and depression. Now you can’t help wondering, “Did I make a hideous mistake?””.

I also discovered that there was another side of the authors’ style of writing that tended to create an ‘authoritative voice’, i.e., meant to direct and command. Thus, people, i.e., the readers were expected to comply regardless the feeling of solidarity it incorporated in the texts. By using imperative mode of sentence structure, the messages conveyed seemed to turn into obligations that career women needed to observe. Hence, I believe that in order for the authors to gain readers’ compliance towards their messages, they needed a legitimate way to do it, i.e., authoritative voice which contained in eight articles altogether. Below are two examples from the data:

1. “Visualize your ideal job everyday” (Thread 1).
2. “Write a definitive statement...” (Thread 9).

Such ways of presenting the messages seemed to show that the authors had somehow wanted to create a particular gap in their relationships with the readers which seemed to be very much patriarchal. Hakim (2000) said that the relationship might appear cordial and warm, but the children were obligated to listen to whatever they were told. Thus, the use of ‘authoritative’ voice can be considered as a ‘legitimate’ way in presenting their ‘advice’ to the target readers.

4.2.2.2 Normative/Non-normative

This section reported what were considered normative and non-normative aspects for career women to do/act/ behave that were relevant to any kind of relationship as being discussed in *Cleo's* career articles.

As for the first issue to be discussed in this section, I examined at how the authors had discussed the issue of relationship career women had outside their working hours. In other words, I investigated career women's social lives and how *Cleo* constructed their subject position(s) in terms of their relationships with their family members, colleagues and friends.

In Thread 2, the author brought up the idea that working from home could ensure more quality time in the women's social relationships. Although it did not state to what extent it could satisfy the women, the issue of having another life besides career life seemed to be an essential aspect in a career woman's life. The data had also brought in 'family life' at work (Thread 5) and I believe that the authors seemed to approve the idea of having other relationships besides the ones we had at work. Thus, relationships and their positions in a family can be considered as 'normative' components in women's lives out there.

According to the data (presented in Thread 2 and Thread 5), I believe that the authors seemed to try to promote balance in terms of career women's lives, by backgrounding the domain of social lives in the main domain of work. For instance, Thread 2 showed how women should work from home in order to 'enjoy' family/social relationships better and in Thread 5, the magazine unearthed family-like relationships at work. However, since the data had only discussed about the women's social lives superficially, I argue that the magazine preferred to normalize the trend of the women being career-oriented and how their subject position as a

career woman was highly recommended. This was because, I hardly saw any information in the data that could relate to the women's social relationships in terms of how they juggled their work and managed their social lives well. Although the issue had been a dilemma for many career women out there and they were often considered underperforming for being unable to manage and divide their time appropriately between career and family (Kahu & Morgan, 2007), the authors insisted to remain silent about it.

In terms of relationships between the co-workers, the career women were found to be positive and negative traits towards their own kind, i.e., some of them appeared to be nice and friendly and some could be very sour and envious (Thread 3, Thread 5 and Thread 6). They had been evaluated by the authors as very cooperative towards their female colleagues particularly to those who they had known for quite some time. The relationship between colleagues had later on developed into a warm friendship that many of them had found to be very close even outside of the working hours.

In Thread 5, the data showed that they tended to rely on each other when they were having problems and spent a few hours together over the weekend or even after working hours. This information could relate to the women's social relationships although it was found to be initiated at the office where they worked together. As for this group of people, the magazine evaluated them as those who enjoyed their career as well as appreciating and having positive feeling towards the people around them, i.e., working together with them. Words such as 'gratifying', 'special', 'warm' and 'supportive' (Thread 5) were among the attributes given by the authors towards career women to convey the idea of how meaningful relationships at work could be when they were developed further after the working hours. Therefore, such relationship with co-workers can be considered as 'normative' to happen at work.

I also found that the authors evaluated some women as negative group of people whereby it led to bitter relationships at work, and this issue was mainly discussed in the data. I discovered that there were three threads (3, 5 and 6) discussed about this issue. These articles had listed down a few things in terms of criteria to recognize this type of people, as well as guidelines of what to do/act when encountering them. It was said that the negative group of people certainly affected others' emotion and concentration with their negative traits and attributes.

Many career women had also been identified as incapable of handling pressure from their co-workers which caused them to retaliate in very undesirable ways such as becoming emotionally unstable, tendering sudden resignation or turning into persons with inferiority complex and became very passive at work. Child (1992) supported this negative side of career women saying that women tended to be uncooperative when it came to their own kind and caused a lot of trouble for jobs that require teamwork and mass discussion. This had led the upper management as well as clients complaining about their attitude and could not develop further cooperation when they had bitter disagreement among themselves, which later on could get more personal than it should be. Thus, such behaviour and actions among the women seemed to be considered 'normative', although the magazine had identified it as 'illegitimate' thing and should not occur at work.

As a conclusion to this category, the authors appeared to construct career women in normative groups of people, doing/acting out normal behaviours, i.e., human beings who were not 'perfect' and often get distracted with stress and pressure. Nevertheless, their subject position as career women were constructed in such a way for them to appear competitive, ambitious and passionate, i.e., promoting 'masculine' attributes (Adam, 2008) in order to fit in the contemporary discourse of management. This can be seen as the magazine intensely encouraged

career women to strive although they might encounter a few problems (minor or major) on their way to get to the top. The data suggested that the authors tried to ignore those problems, particularly when it had initiated from the women's natural traits of their 'femininity'. Although Olsson and Walker (2003) argued that women's perceived stereotypical traits could contribute a negative impact to the organization and their co-workers, the authors incessantly exhorted them to move forward and make improvements. As a result, it can be deduced that the authors had constructed subject position(s) of the women, exclusively being in the realm of 'work' and embracing 'masculine' attributes, and thus, such 'docile' behaviour should be avoided and 'mistakes' and 'problems' at work must also be prevented.

4.2.3 Rules that Circumscribe Career Women

This study decided to come up with this category because there were eleven out of twelve articles which discussed about instructions, guidelines, *dos* and *don'ts*, as well as advice towards career women. The article, labeled as 'Career Coach' by the magazine, should mean to guide and coach the readers, i.e., women throughout their career. This category also contributed to understanding the concept of *Cleo's* construction of career women in Malaysia as it may identify how a 'right' and 'ideal' career woman should be in terms of her roles, identity, behavior and actions, particularly at her workplace.

This category also intended to answer the second Research Question of this study; to know what are the arising problems or struggles faced by career women in Malaysia discussed by *Cleo*. It can be unearthed by looking at the norms or habitual acts done by career women

identified by the authors, which had led to problems and causing career women to struggle in their career.

This category analysed the data according to Fairclough's three-dimensional framework of discourse analysis of explanation category by looking at Expressive values (regarding the subjects of the data) contained in the words choices, i.e., vocabulary and grammatical structure. This category reported how the text producers evaluated what was being discussed in the text (Fairclough, 2001, p. 92). Particularly in this category, I related it to the *dos* and *don'ts* for career women to do and avoid, as being evaluated by the text producers.

In terms of how the analysis was carried out, this main category analysed the data linguistically and similar to the previous two categories (4.2.1 and 4.2.2), the sub-categories were designed to analyse the ideology of the data presented by the authors regarding their evaluation pertaining to the *dos* and *don'ts* for career women.

As being described by Fairclough, 'explanation' category has always been a central concern for those who are interested in persuasive language (Fairclough, 1992, p. 99) and this category analysed Expressive values which reflected in word choices that had included modalities and text producer's evaluation regarding *dos* and *don'ts* for career women.

It was found that out of twelve articles, five of them specifically talked about problems and struggles experienced by career women in Malaysia, which included advice and guidelines either at the end of the article or in between of the writing and this should cover the *dos* and *don'ts* for the women. The data showed that the authors preferred to highlight the challenges at work particularly when it came to dealing with other roles such as colleagues, bosses, subordinates and clients. The challenges presented usually came along with the solutions and

guidelines for career women to refer to and observe. Challenges with the environment such as workplace location and nature of work were found lesser to be said in the data which may show the main ‘focus’ of the authors, i.e., highlighting the women as the central of attention.

However, the guidance given somehow suggested that career women were obligated to obey them rather than looking at it as another option for career women to revise. Linguistically speaking, as being stated and explained in the previous two categories, the imperative mode adopted by the articles indicated the idea of order and command. Below are several examples from the data:

1. Be firm and honest... (Thread 10).
2. Connect the unconnected (Thread 12).
3. Try, try, try again (Thread 12).

Hence, I believe that the guidelines and advice presented in the articles addressed the mistakes that career women habitually do in their daily lives at work which may be considered ‘inappropriate’ by the magazine and simultaneously trying to correct all those ‘mistakes’.

Whilst the authors were found offering their advice and guidelines for the women to upgrade their performance, it may also signify that career women in Malaysia were evaluated as inefficient and had been practicing many ‘inappropriate’ acts at work. For instance, Thread 4 identified a list of common mistakes done by career women at work, which were considered threats at work as it could lead to undesirable consequences such as demotion or termination. The mistakes, which labeled as careless mistakes by the authors were usually overlooked by the

women in terms of its significance. Hence, I believe that in order for the women to avoid the ‘mistakes’, the authors had to ‘voice’ it out by publishing it in the magazine.

In the data, rhetorical devices such as metaphors and idioms were utilized to evaluate career women, as well as the situations they involved in. There were a few occurrences on metaphors which “could help to construct evaluation of the situations being described” (O’Halloran, 2007) in CDA. In Thread 3, when the women were being identified as negative type of colleagues, they were labeled as ‘reptiles’ by the authors – which may connote the meaning of a group of dangerous people to be with and could cloud others’ minds with their ‘venom’ (able to influence others with their negative acts and personalities).

This situation may also signify that career women in Malaysia were evaluated by the authors as a group of people who were becoming more competitive nowadays, due to the current economics system in Malaysia where the markets has experienced economic growth and social well-being (Evers & Gerke, 1997). Furthermore, this kind of situation could also relate to the nature of our working environment nowadays where everyone had to work hard to attain expected achievement while everyone seemed to have almost the same competency and ability, as expected in the current contemporary discourse of management (Collins, 2000). Due to this challenging situation in the capitalist system, the authors chose to explain to the readers how some career women can be considered as threats and ‘harmful’.

In Thread 5, the authors used the position of a ‘mother’ in a boss’s image to portray and to evaluate the female bosses and how the sub-ordinates were treated. The authors seemed to suggest that through the image of a ‘mother’, she decided everything for them because it was believed that the sub-ordinates were lacked of potential and often acted like ‘children’. Thus,

they should do things they were instructed without asking further questions. As being discussed in previous categories, the authors appeared to believe that maternal attributes were significantly related to the women, although the ‘mother’ position was totally excluded in the data. The ‘mother’ position seemed to suggest that it was part of Asian culture for the children feeling obliged to listen to their mothers (in terms of controlling and being authoritarian) and how mothers were considered being in ‘mother-knows-best’ position (Chao, 2008). Thus, the authors may feel that it was important to include the maternal voices in their articles, when it was notably relevant to the women in Malaysia, culturally.

Aside from using metaphors, the authors were found applying idioms, which were believed to appear pervasive in conveying messages and able to facilitate solidarity between the participants (Cacciari & Tabossi, 1993). For instance, in Thread 3, career women were being identified as ‘wet behind the ears’ which connoted the meaning as being naive, inexperienced and fresh. This may show that the authors identified career women in the context of *Cleo*’s target readers (age range of early twenties to late twenties) as incompetent and very much dependent on others’ advice and coaching, especially from those who were the ‘experts’ of a particular field. In addition, career women were also evaluated as those who were lacked of skills and knowledge and thus, were slanted to commit foolish mistakes while it could be easily prevented. Below are more examples extracted from the data:

- “This adjustment period may involve *ebbs and flows*... (Thread 2)
- They interact with many people...but rarely will you find them having lunch or *shooting the breeze* with co-workers. (Thread 3)
- “...as if I’d *plunged a knife into her heart*.” (Thread 5)
- “...or rather, when – you are asked to *pack your bags*.” (Thread 11)

I also found that it was ironic when the authors labeled the women as ‘high-achievers’ (Thread 9), yet at the same time trying to aid them with as many tips as possible, which may portray their incompetency. In other words, the women seemed to be evaluated as those who needed guidance all the way and hardly being independent. This trend seemed to show that although the authors agreed that the women had the potential to move forward successfully in their career, they always needed ‘mentors’ before them to tell them what to do and what not (Olsson & Walker, 2003). Therefore, by looking at how ‘enthusiastic’ the authors had been coaching the women, I believe that career women was constructed and evaluated according to the current capitalist mode of production where everyone had to compete in the modern discourse of management. Thus, the authors appeared to believe that there was no room for making mistakes as it could lead to degrading an organization’s profit and reputation.

4.2.3.1 Mistakes done by the career women that have led to problems, struggles and challenges at work – mark of identity of career women in Malaysia constructed by *Cleo*.

This section discussed about ‘mistakes’ committed by career women, which had can be considered as mark of identity of how career women were constructed by *Cleo* based on their roles, behaviour and actions done at the workplace. According to the data, it was found that career women in Malaysia tended to commit mistakes in areas such as relationship-related matters, job scope matters and conflicts with their personal desires.

In terms of relationship-related matters, the data showed that the authors gave greater focus on career women in who were in sub-ordinates positions (being in middle management) rather than those in top management. The authors also suggested a number of tips at work in

order to appear formal and professional with their superiors, and thus, the relationships presented in the data were rather formal. For instance, in Thread 4, the author suggested that formality at work must be upheld at all times. Below are two examples in this context:

- Never drop in on a business associate...arriving at someone's office without an appointment is rude.
- It is appropriate to send a business thank-you note whenever a colleague has done you even the smallest favour or extended you hospitality.

Throughout the year of 2007 and 2008, I think that *Cleo* believed career women in Malaysia were going through hard times with their colleagues, self-management as well as with their superiors at work. The data showed that there were a number of career women being interviewed related to a particular problem and struggle that they had to face daily at work. The authors appeared to relate it to other female co-workers and male voices were almost silent in the data, except for some expert opinions regarding a few particular topics. The female co-workers often appeared to be envious and less supportive with their own kind. As a result, they tended to talk behind their colleagues' back, and belittle others' praiseworthy performance. Such personality and attitude had being brought up in the data to relate it to career women at work and had been found to be a problematic issue for other career women to move on in their career (this issue can be found in Thread 3, Thread 5, and Thread 6). Therefore, such identity of career women, carrying such attitude had been evaluated as 'mistake' by the authors and should not occur among the women.

In addition to the previous issue, the data also showed that career women had experienced inferiority complex and as a result, hardly feeling satisfied with their jobs. A few

examples given in the data; Threads 1 and 2 had shown that the authors had suggested ways and steps for career women to be confident enough to face the risks and challenges. It could also be an indication of evaluation done by the authors towards career women, i.e., lacked of confidence and knowledge. The scenario of having non-dynamic career women in organizations was also shown by a study done by O'Neil, Bilimoria and Saatcioglu (2004) that women can simply be influenced by their environment which in the end became a tool that had shaped their career path and determined their career advancement later in the future.

It also could suggest that when the women lacked motivation, enthusiasm and diligence in their career, their existence in an organization can no longer be considered as assets but more as threats. Such circumstance may also suggest that career women were evaluated as a group of people who hardly landed in a very comfortable position such as the top management which was apparently still dominated by men (Holmes, 2006). Therefore, guided by the contemporary management discourse, the authors appeared to be assisting the women to make a right choice in their career and inciting the sense of empowerment in them so that they could nail the right job. Apparently, the authors seemed not to agree with the women's 'natural' traits, i.e., to remain passive and lacked of confidence which considered as 'mistakes' that needed to be corrected. The natural values of women did not seem to get approval from the authors to sustain them in their writing since most of the articles appeared to empower women to be 'more' and 'louder' than what they were in terms of their skills and job performance.

Besides unveiling the problems and struggles faced by career women, the magazine also came up with solution and guidelines for career women to refer to, which usually suggested by the 'experts' of a particular field or industry related to the topic. The study done by O'Neil, Bilimoria and Saatcioglu (2004) found that career women were more in need of guidance in their

career compared to men. This included the guidance of how to choose their career types, navigated it and developed it in terms of its advancement. By applying this theory to how *Cleo* constructed career women, they were evaluated as a group of people who were highly dependent of guidance from people, media or any related institution to assist them with what they wanted to be and what they were capable of. Thus, the nature of them being ‘dependent’ can be identified as ‘mistake’, based on the evaluation made by the authors.

4.2.3.2 Solutions suggested by *Cleo* towards the problems, struggles and challenges at work.

This sub-category reported the solutions suggested by *Cleo* in its career articles towards the ‘mistakes’ done by career women in Malaysia. At this juncture, I found that *Cleo* appeared to evaluate career women in Malaysia as less-skilled group of people as they were found in need of guidance in their job performance in many aspects. The data showed that almost all articles emphasized on experts’ voices for suggestions and opinions. It also included the magazine’s own voice, which was highly influenced by the modern management discourse in providing guidelines for career women to pay attention to in order for them to improve their job performance – via means of coaching them.

I believe that although the provided guidelines acted as career-assistant tools to career women, it may also suggest that they were evaluated as incompetent and did not acquire sufficient knowledge and skills to perform their work. Thus, they needed help and guidance from time to time. Also, the data showed that career women needed guidance in their decisions making at work, as well as how to perform up to the ‘standard’ requested by their organizations. Therefore, the magazine came up with its own solutions to overcome such challenges and how

the authors tried to reshape career women according to current demand of the working industry. This issue can be seen in Threads 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11.

Other priorities in life such as having or starting a new family and carrying other social roles of career women, i.e., mothers and wives remained unspoken in the data although it commonly existed on the reality basis. Meriläinen (2000) in her study argued that many professional career women that she had interviewed, i.e., lawyers were happily labeled themselves as mothers before they can actually categorize themselves as professionals. Nevertheless, it did not work in the way *Cleo* had taken to construct career women in Malaysia. Social roles in a family had not been discussed in the data and hence, I presupposed that the notion of career women attached with other social roles in their lives, i.e., mothers and wives may not appear to be important as much as the career. By doing so, *Cleo* appeared to offer a ‘solution’ to upgrade the women’s job performance at work by not attaching themselves to other social roles.

Earlier on in this chapter (see 4.2.1 and 4.2.2), it was said that the authors tried to construct career women according to the capitalist mode of production and due to this demand, they were required to perform ‘more’ in terms of skills and job performance in order to appear competitive within the terms set out in current management discourse (Collins, 2000). In addition, ‘confrontational’ behaviour¹ was demanded to be part of the women for them to be considered as ‘equal’ with their male counterparts (Holmes, 2006). The authors suggested that they needed to be ‘perfect’, at not only working skills, but also in terms of their personality and attitude. The qualities promoted by the authors seemed to surpass the women’s ‘natural’ traits of

¹ Confrontational behavior needs qualification as often women are expected to be assertive without appearing to be aggressive (Vinnicombe and Singh, 2004).

‘femininity’ as suggested by Cleveland, Stockdale & Murphy (2000), i.e., being ‘passive’ and ‘docile’. Below is a list of vocabulary (adjectives) that could suggest the notion of being ‘ideal’ for career women according to the magazine and how these adjectives acted as buzzwords in the contemporary management discourse that commonly concerned with the nature of ‘empowerment’ (Collin, 2000):

1. ambitious – with the use of string of words such as ‘...she needed to have a goal in her career...’ (Thread 1), ‘...something to shoot for...’ (Thread 1), ‘...greater flexibility and autonomy.’ (Thread 2), ‘I love the autonomy of making all the decisions...’ (Thread 2), ‘She would change the world of mass marketing and become a legend...’ (Thread 3).
2. focused – realized by a sentence such as ‘to have career objectives’ (Thread 1),
3. enthusiastic – the quality existed in the data with the use of a sentence such as ‘She would contribute positively to the organization.’ (Thread 3).
4. disciplined – it was apparent in the data by the use of words and sentences such as ‘You can’t procrastinate (in meeting deadlines)...’ (Thread 2), ,
5. competitive – this quality was realized by inferring from sentences such as ‘Maximizing benefits, minimizing drawbacks’ (Thread 5), and ‘As long as you fail to produce the same results (with the competitor), you are said to be underperforming’ (Thread 7).
6. highly skillful – for this quality, there were many transparent examples all over the data because there were many articles that had used instructional strategy in guiding career women with list of guidelines, i.e., skills and knowledge that they should know and possess such as IT skills, interpersonal skills, problem-solving skills and management skills.

It was also found that most career articles contained in *Cleo* were updating the women with the latest and upcoming technologies, which seemed to be important in career nowadays. Thus, such act can be considered as helping career women to perform better, by providing them information of the latest tool and knowledge at work (as discussed in Threads 6, 7 and 12). It also could be identified as a solution aided by the magazine to assist career women with their working issues.

Nevertheless, I believe that such evaluation may suggest that the current group of career women were not fully informed with all the updates, until they were alarmed or admonished. The authors seemed to believe that the women were not ready to face the real world with their existing knowledge. It was brought in the data by the selection of words – “...but if you’re unprepared...you’re going to have plenty of trouble...” (Thread 7). It suggested that career women required updates from time to time and they had to upgrade themselves progressively with the rapid change of current technology and knowledge (Threads 7 and 12).

The analysis at this point showed that the *Cleo* seemed to evaluate career women as dependant and hardly explored the best in themselves, without being guided. Thus, the magazine appeared as a ‘channel’ to aid the women with the latest knowledge, skills, tool and technology at work.

4.2.3.3 Reproduction of the career women and identity construction

As being discussed by Fairclough, 'reproduction' is related to the investigation of 'change' whereby combining of elements from different discourses had resulted in changing the existing discourse and thus, a 'reproduction' of a discourse could occur (Fairclough, 1992). This study, so far had shown that *Cleo* had reproduced a new breed of career women according to its constructive strategy guided by the current management discourse. It covered almost every aspect of their lives such as roles, behaviour, identity and actions.

As far as this study is concerned, it was considered non-normative for career women not be able to meet 'ideal' requirements in the current working environment which is highly influenced by the contemporary discourse of management. Generally, across the globe, it was believed that career women were always in constraint because of 'distractions' they usually faced (Adam, 2008). The evaluation which also worked as an identity construction for career women did not only refer to their skills at work, but also their perceptions, attitude and personality as a whole – conforming to the 'ideal' construction of career women in Malaysia done by *Cleo*.

There were only very a few of stereotypical traits of women such as being docile, emotionally unstable and caring that had been brought up in the data although the authors did not seem to approve such traits on women. For instance, in Thread 4, it was commonly found that women tended to display a 'cavalier attitude about business telephone calls' which can be related to women's stereotypical traits, i.e., careless, as being discussed by Holmes (2006). The same issue was also discussed in Thread 10 – talking about women's carelessness at work. Thus, in order to avoid the 'mistakes' which became a 'mark' of women's identity, the authors tried to incite 'masculinity' among career women as a mean of empowering and encouraging them to be

active, task-oriented and decisive at work – traits that were typically attributed to men (Adam, 2008).

In terms of empowering career women, *Cleo* appeared to ‘transform’ a ‘typical’ career woman into a ‘leader’. The word being ‘boss’ at work also occurred several times in the data (Thread 1 and Thread 2). This may suggest that the authors believed the women were qualified enough to be bosses at work, to supervise and monitor men at work as well as their own kind. It could also suggest that the magazine predicated career women as those who were able to step forward if they were given the right opportunity to execute a task.

Nevertheless, career women were still acknowledged as being bad at management because there were a few occurrences in the data guiding career women on how to manage their time and stress appropriately at work. This can be seen in Thread 1, Thread 2, Thread 3, Thread 5, Thread 8, and Thread 9. It could suggest another backgrounded information of career women, i.e., usually being confined in their stereotyped ‘feminine’ traits because they were found to be easily distracted at work when they were depressed with their problems (Child, 1992). Although there was no lucid evidence showing a direct comparison between the two genders, I argue that the magazine had empowered career women to be as good as men, or even better than their male counterparts according to the analysis discussed earlier on in this chapter.

Nonetheless, although there were many times career women were encouraged to adapt ‘masculine’ attributes, the data also supported the notion that women were usually emotional and submissive which depicting their ‘natural’ traits (Holmes, 2006). Threads 3, 5, 8, 10 and 11 had shown that many career women were emotionally affected when they were reprimanded for their mistakes which could lead them to lose passion and enthusiasm in their job. As a result, they

easily hopped on to another job because they did not want to feel further embarrassment being in their previous job. I also discovered that the women were easily bothered with others' negative personalities, which also stood as distractions while they tried their best to perform in ensuring the quality of their work. Therefore, I believe that career women were being evaluated as being inconsistent, easily demotivated and very much relationship-oriented by the authors.

This idea was also supported by Child (1992) in her article saying that she had seen many male accountants who had complained about their female colleagues for being highly emotional, broke down tears easily and very poor at handling stresses at work. They were usually seen as those who gradually lost passion with their career once they were covered with pressure and stress especially when they had started having children.

As opposed to the previous study as well as the construction done by *Cleo*, McGarry (1995) argued in her article that career women should not change much about themselves because it was by nature for them to act in very delicate and docile manners. She believes that they (men and women) should distinguish the differences between them because both 'masculine' and 'feminine' attributes do have their own advantages. Furthermore, she thinks that it is not advisable for them to suppress what is 'naturally' given to them as both attributes of men and women could work hand-in-hand by complementing each other. Nonetheless, according to the data, I argue that *Cleo* tried to portray and construct career women out of their 'femininity' by empowering them with 'masculine' attributes and hence, trying to 'resist' them from embracing their 'natural' identity.

Cleo also tried to construct women out of their stereotypical traits in order to meet the standard capitalist mode of production, as expected in the current discourse of management.

According to the data, career women seemed to be empowered with many ‘masculine’ attributes and they were identified as a career woman without family and children to take care of. The authors seemed to promote the notion of ‘career-oriented’ among career women and they were capable of doing anything that men can. Therefore, the women seemed to be encouraged to step out of their natural traits of ‘femininity’ in order to be recognized as ‘ideal’ and ‘real’ career women.

4.3 Conclusion

This chapter discussed three main categories, which had analysed the data according to Fairclough’s three-dimensional framework of discourse analysis (1995, 2001).

These categories of data analysis discussed the interpretation of 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) which are confined in the three categories (Experiential, Relational and Expressive).

The categories and their sub-categories of data analysis were created to simplify the understanding of the interpretation of the data as well as to show how the data can be analysed differently in three levels of analysis, i.e., description (Experiential), processing analysis (Relational) and social analysis (Expressive). Overall, the analysis showed that the authors of career articles in *Cleo* had constructed career women of what they think as ‘ideal’ in the current modern discourse of management.

Apparently after the data was analysed, I could conclude that the requirement and demand of the market (working industry) nowadays is very high in terms of being challenging and competitive. One has to fight to prove that she is ‘something’ and worth to be hired for a certain job. Therefore, the data seemed to show that career women must always get themselves the right set of personalities, attitude and skills in order to be considered as ‘ideal’ and ‘real’ career women who should meet the current requirements and demand of the working industry. Whatever found by the authors, which was considered as a ‘mistake’, it had to be rectified immediately. I discovered that the authors hardly tolerated mistakes and failures done by the women at work. In other words, career women were required to meet ‘perfection’ in all areas in order to submit themselves to the notion of ‘ideal’ career women as constructed by *Cleo*.

The data also showed that career women were given several subject positions by the magazine. Firstly, it was found that career women were constructed beyond Malaysia’s collective values and norms as the data seemed to encourage the women to do whatever they think ‘right’ although it was not ‘approved’ by the societal norms – upheld in the West as hedonistic values (Haynes, 2008). Secondly, the women were also constructed outside the family lives, which led them to hold a subject position solely as a ‘career woman’ which was highly influenced by the modern discourse of management. The data gave full emphasis on career women, which mostly discussed issues at workplace and about workplace practitioners. The data hardly discussed about career women and their roles after the working hours. The idea of having family and social network did not seem to gain any attention from the authors as it was not discussed in the data.

It also showed that the authors had presented the relationship between them and their target readers in a cordial way in order to gain trust and establish a long-term relationship, whilst

the relationships the women should uphold with one another at work had to remain professional at all times. In other words, formality at work was upheld significantly by the text producers although they realized it may develop into more casual effects as time passed by.

Finally, the analysis also discovered that the data had presented the reproduction of career women within current corporate culture and management discourses. . According to the data, they were required to perform as good (or even better) as their male counterpart and there were times they need to ‘suppress’ their ‘femininity’ traits. This trend may suggest that men still hold a prime status in the current working industry that the women were encouraged to copy (Holmes, 2006). It also unveiled the idea that the authors highly supported the notion of having women with career. In other words, the text producers appeared to ‘empower’ women nowadays to earn a living to fit in and considered ‘ideal’ in the modern and globalised discourse of management (Collins, 2000).