CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

This study reported an analysis of career articles featured in twelve issues of *Cleo*, Malaysia edition. The analysis focused on the construction of career women in Malaysia produced by the authors of the articles in the magazine published in a section titled *Career Coach*. The articles were analysed by using Fairclough's three-dimensional framework of discourse analysis (1995, 2001) within the paradigm of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). CDA was chosen as the framework for analysis because of its emphasis upon language as a form of social practice (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 2000). Using CDA, this study attempted to go beyond an investigation of linguistically produced texts to interpret the discursive practices produced and constituted by the text as well as investigating and explaining the socio-cultural effects of these texts.

5.2 Summary of Findings

I have discussed three main categories analysing the data according to Fairclough's three-dimensional approach (1995, 2001). It comprised of three different categories namely; Textual, Interpretation and Explanation.

The 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) by looking at what were the

Experiential, Relational and Expressive values found in these three different level of analysis (textual, interpretation and explanation).

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, processing analysis and social analysis. The first category of analysis (which answers research question 1), i.e., Identifying the Roles/Identity/Behaviour/Action of Career Women in Malaysia looked at how *Cleo* constructed career women through how it identified their roles, identity and behaviours and actions. This category came up with its two sub-categories, i.e., firstly, what was considered legitimate/non-legitimate and secondly what was considered normative/non-normative in the roles/identity/behaviour/action of career women.

In this category, the data was analysed according to textual category; the first category of Fairclough's three-dimensional framework of discourse analysis (1995, 2001) that included the subject matter, i.e., the career women, their roles, identity, behaviour and actions at their working institutions. This category aimed to answer the first Research Question of this study, i.e., What are the linguistic means through which *Cleo* constructs the subject position(s) of a career woman. This category looked at the use of lexical items such as nouns, verbs, adjectives, modalities, modes of sentence, antonymy, synonymy and repetitions. The analysis also touched on the subjects of presuppositions and relied on backgrounded information to come up with the findings of the data. The findings showed that the authors constructed career women to fit the requirement and demand of the market (working industry) nowadays which is very high and indeed very challenging and competitive. Therefore, career women were given several subject positions by the authors, to fit in the current management discourse, ideally. Firstly, the magazine constructed

career women outside of other social roles in a family life such as being a mother or wife. Secondly, they were also constructed outside of Malaysia's collective norms and values and finally, they were constructed solely as career-women living in a career-oriented culture as required by the contemporary discourse of management.

As for sub-categories (legitimate/illegitimate and normative/non-normative answer the sub-questions for research question 1), the analysis showed what were the personalities, attitude, actions and skills considered legitimate/illegitimate and normative/non-normative identified by the magazine. Thus, in order for the women to be considered as 'ideal' career women, they were required to conform to the 'legitimate' and 'normative' set of values and criteria set by the authors, who were guided by the contemporary discourse of management.

The second category, i.e., Labeling the Roles/Identity/Behaviour/Action of Career Women in Malaysia, also contained two sub-categories, namely; what was considered legitimate/non-legitimate and secondly what was considered normative/non-normative in the roles/identity/behaviour/action of career women. 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) in a few aspects, 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. This category also answered the first Research Question of this study as it still investigated the subject position(s) of career women, according to the relationships presented in the data. To realise that, this category looked at the nature of language used, i.e., formal versus informal, the use of pronouns, euphemisms and modes of sentences (declarative, grammatical question and imperative).

This category also relied on the subjects of interpellation according to the pronouns used as well as looking at the backgrounded information. This category unveiled that the authors of the texts were in favour of formality at work and encouraged the women to uphold formality in any kind of relationship they had at work which included with their superior, colleagues, clients and sub-ordinates. However, the authors also could not deny the fact that some relationships at work may develop into informal ones when the people tended to spend a lot of time together. The data also unveiled the way the authors deliver their messages to the readers. The language used was informal, for instance, first person pronouns, which intended to connect with the readers and to create an ambiance of solidarity with them, were used. The data showed that the authors did not discuss about career women outside of working hours and what kind of relationships that they had. The idea of having family and social network did not seem to gain any attention from the authors as the issue was not presented in the texts.

The final category, i.e., Rules that Circumscribe Career Women, aimed at answering the second Research Question: What are the linguistic means through which *Cleo* constructs career women's negotiations with the workplace values which include problems and struggles faced by the women at work. This category reported how the text producer(s) evaluated what was being discussed in the text (Fairclough, 2001, p. 92). Particularly in this category, I related it to the rules and restrictions outlined by the authors. This category analysed the data according to the social analysis (explanation) in Fairclough's three-dimensional framework of discourse analysis (1995, 2001) that had included modalities and text producer's evaluation regarding the *dos* and *don'ts* for career women.

According to the analysis in this category, the text producers appeared to 'empower' the women to perform as good as their male counterpart. There were also times whereby they were

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required to suppress the natural traits of their 'femininity', which may suggest that men were still holding a prime status in the current working industry that the women were encouraged to copy. These were a few examples of *dos* and *don'ts* presented in the texts. Overall, it showed that the authors highly supported the notion of women having a career and to earn a living on their own, as being commonly suggested in the contemporary discourse of management (Collins, 2000).

5.3 Implications of the study

There are a few implications of this study; firstly, this study had examined the discursive construction of subject position(s) of career women by *Cleo*. In other words, the analysis showed that *Cleo* had linguistically constructed career women solely as career women, merely confined at their working institutions. It may show the current trend where women nowadays were highly encouraged to join the working force and also, other social roles may appear less significant to the authors.

It also showed that the women were constructed beyond the commonly collective norms in Malaysia, which may reflect the rise of 'Western' values accustomed by the society in this country. By conducting this study, I also discovered the contested notion of capitalist mode of production, often opposed to the norms, and its existence in certain countries such as Malaysia. Therefore, the authors had to empower career women with 'masculine' traits in order to meet the standard of capitalism in the working industry, which also influenced by the contemporary discourse of management. Therefore, it may be surmised that the authors were guided by this discourse to reproduce the current notion of career women in Malaysia.

Subsequently, this study delineated the discursive construction of women who were consistently negotiating with the workplace values such as being competitive, being co-operative

working in a team and being able to tackle problems and survive struggles at the workplace. The findings may indicate the behaviour and attitude of career women in Malaysia in general and how the women who surrounded them cope with it.

Finally, I managed to identify a few issues involving women's career in Malaysia, which were disseminated by *Cleo*, and particularly, through its career articles. It showed what were the expected skills, attitude and personalities of organizations towards their female employees. It also unveiled the construction of ideal woman who must be well-accepted by the colleagues at her workplace as well as the whole organization.

5.4 Limitation of the study

This study has its own scope and limitations in presenting its data to the readers. First of all, only twelve articles were selected (from twelve different issues of *Cleo*; which covered twelve months, starting from August 2007 till August 2008) to present the data of this study. Therefore, the scope of the finding was rather limited to represent the construction of career women in Malaysia according to a women's magazine point-of-view.

Secondly, all twelve articles were selected from the same magazine specifically; *Cleo* which may not precisely present the idea of the construction of career women as other magazines did not come into account. Therefore, this study cannot and will not generalize the construction of career women in Malaysia in a women's magazine.

5.5 Recommendation for further study

This study has a few recommendations: firstly, it would be very interesting to find out what kind of construction of career women depicted by other women's magazines in Malaysia, besides *Cleo*; such as *Female, Marie Claire* or *Elle*.

Secondly, this study would like to recommend a further study using a different CDA framework besides Fairclough's three-dimensional framework of discourse analysis (1995, 2001). Perhaps, further research could embark on a study using CDA frameworks propounded by Wodak or van Djik.

5.6 Summary

I managed to discover the construction of career women in Malaysia as per written and published in *Cleo* which included their roles, behaviour, actions and personality.

It unveiled the idea of how a women's magazine constructed career women although the nature of a women's magazine generally focused on woman's health, beauty and fashion (Coulthard, 1996). The construction of career women as voiced out by *Cleo* could lead to a betterment of job performance and improvement of women's actions and personality at the workplace in the future.