

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter reports the analysis and findings of the data necessary to answer the research questions on the discursive and linguistic options of the present research subjects in constructing their identities in the discourse of their life stories. The subjects (four young Malay homosexual males) were found to be employing several rhetorical devices and linguistic items to narrate their life stories and their hopes for the future; and concurrently construct their identities. The discursive contexts were narrative discourses gathered through semi-structured interviews in which the subjects were asked some identical questions about their lives as homosexuals living in Malaysia. However, since the interview was semi-structured and carried out in a conversational mode, some of the questions and conversations emerged spontaneously. Through these narratives, the ways in which these individuals positioned themselves against the dominant ideologies were displayed, and the struggles they experienced were demystified.

4.1 Background Description of Research Subjects

Prior to reading the analysis of this data, it is essential to share some background information about the subjects.

Participant 1

Participant 1 is a twenty-one-year-old Malay male. He was raised in a semi-urban area in Negeri Sembilan. His father is a police officer and his mother a housewife. He has three brothers. He is a university student, but at the time of the research, he was taking some time off from studying to work as a customer service representative with a telecommunication company in Kuala Lumpur. His highest qualification at the time was a certificate. He has been homosexual for more than five years and has had sexual relationships with more than five homosexual partners. He was, at the time of this research, having a serious relationship with a homosexual partner.

Participant 2

Participant 2 is a nineteen-year-old Malay male studying in one of the universities in Selangor. He was born and raised, along with his two brothers, in an urban area in Perak. His highest academic qualification at the time of this interview was Sijil Tinggi Pelajaran Malaysia (STPM). He has known that he is homosexual for more than five years. He has had sexual relationships with several homosexual partners. At the time of the research, he was not in a committed relationship with a homosexual partner.

Participant 3

Participant 3 is a nineteen-year-old Malay male studying in one of the colleges in the Klang Valley. He was born and raised in a semi-urban area in Kedah. His father is no longer alive and his mother is a businesswoman. His highest qualification was Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM). He has been homosexual for about two years. He has had a

sexual relationship with two partners, but was not involved in a serious relationship with a homosexual partner at the time this research was carried out.

Participant 4

Participant 4 is a nineteen-year-old Malay male studying in one of the colleges in Kuala Lumpur. He was born and brought up in an urban area in Perak. He has six other siblings. His father is a pensioner (previous profession was not provided) and his mother is a teacher. His highest academic achievement at the time was SPM. He has been homosexual for more than 5 years. Thus far he has had three homosexual partners and was in a serious relationship with one of them at the time of this research.

It is important to note here that all the participants, except Participant 3, exhibited some femaleness in their mannerism, such as the way they walked, moved and talked. All of the participants considered themselves homosexual as they were attracted to and had had sexual relationship with male partners.

4.2 Data Analysis

The data was analyzed under the subheadings of the content of studies specified in the data analysis procedure listed in Table 3.1 in Chapter 3, page 65. As specified by Wodak and Reisigl (2009), the Discourse-Historical approach is three-dimensional whereby the discourse is examined through its contents or topics; the discursive strategies of the participants; and the linguistic means and linguistic realizations employed by the participants, in this case, in constructing their identities through their life stories. The

contents or topics that were focused in the analysis were the construction of identity of these research participants. The analysis examined how they constructed ‘self’ and ‘other’, and how they constructed ‘self’ as a Malay and Muslim.

4.2.1 Discursive Construction of ‘Self’ and ‘Other’

Through the process of social comparison proposed within the Social Identity Theory (Hogg and Abrams, 1988), a self evaluates and makes judgments on the in-group and the out-group forming the ‘self’ and the ‘other’. In this present study, the ‘self’ and ‘other’ are homosexuals and heterosexuals respectively. Generally, the process of social comparison results in the self selecting specific positive symbols when judging itself and marking the ‘other’ with negative symbols to enhance its self-esteem. On the other hand, it is also important to remember that through the sociological approach (Stryker, 1980) as well as the CDA approach (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997), self and identity are seen as having a dialectical relationship with society where it is shaped by its members and cyclically the self is influenced by the shared language and meanings of the groups, organizations, networks, and institutions that make up that society when reflecting upon oneself. As discussed earlier in Section 1.0 of Chapter 1, narrative practices allow participants to take up multiple positioning towards the characters, objects and facts in their stories. The positioning that the narrative participants take does not only bring the meanings that are set by sociohistory but can also incorporate the meanings that the participants themselves create. As such, it will be interesting to find out whether these participants’ discursive practices in their narrative discourses will sustain or reject the mainstream ideology, power relation, and status-quo of the ‘self’ and ‘other’.

In the present context and location, the heterosexuals make up the majority and the homosexuals the minority, making the heterosexuality the more dominant ideology. As has been pointed out earlier in this research, the dominant ideology sees homosexuality as a behavior that is against the norms of many cultures and religions. Even though based on the Social Identity Theory that a 'self' normally judges itself positively and 'other' negatively, this phenomenon is not very markedly present in the participants' data. Through content definition of 'self' and 'other' produced by these participants, it can be seen that they did not regard themselves as all positive, but rather the data shows that they were very much influenced by the dominant ideologies when reflecting upon themselves in their stories. As a result, the 'other' was not painted as all negative in their narrations of their life experiences. The narratives of the participants of this study have managed to reveal how these individuals construct self and other through several strategies – accommodation, assimilation, rationalization, exaggeration/mitigation and rejection. In this study, interestingly, the strategy of rejection used by these individuals is directed to the 'self' rather than to the 'other'. All of these stated strategies were realized through various forms of linguistic and rhetorical devices used by the participants in their narrations.

Wodak et al (1999) and Reisigl and Wodak (2009) suggest that when analyzing a specific discourse, an analyst can pay special attention to several aspects, as has been discussed in Chapter 3. In order to explore the research participants' discursive construction of 'self' and 'other', the contents that are examined by the researcher are based on the first two aspects proposed by these critical discourse analysts (Wodak and Reisigl, 2009: 93), which are:

1. How are persons, objects, phenomena/events, processes and actions named and referred to linguistically?
2. What characteristics, qualities or features are attributed to social actors, objects, phenomena/events and processes?

Based on these two aspects, the researcher is going to focus on how the research participants define the in-group and homosexuality and the out-group and heterosexuality; how they assess themselves and others; and how they perceive the norms.

4.2.1.1 Content definition of groups

Under this sub-topic, the analysis of the data will focus on how the research participants define and label the in-group or the 'self' and the out-group or the 'other' in their stories. All of the participants in their narrative data, except Participant 2, reproduced the 'hegemonic identity' (Kiesling, 2006) of the heterosexuals or the 'other' by the typical stereotyping of heterosexuality and homosexuality. This can be seen in the following discussion.

Discursive strategies employed

None of the research participants rejected or denied the mainstream sexual and gender ideology that homosexuality opposes the cultural norms. In fact, in their narrative discourses about their lives, these participants expressed their acceptance and accommodating of this ideology and thus, maintained the ideology. The subsistence of the Penal Code in Malaysian law is not only evidence that heterosexuality is the dominant

sexual ideology, but this law also makes heterosexuality supposedly ‘compulsory’. As in many other places throughout the world, “desire for lesbians and gay men and bisexual desire for both men and women are often seen to be abnormal, unnatural or deviant” (Blunt and Wills, 2000: 128).

Linguistic means and forms of realization

All the participants, except Participant 2, reproduced the ‘hegemonic identity’ or stereotyping of heterosexuals by referring to them as the ‘normal’ people. This ‘normal’ reference to the ‘other’ by these individuals shows that these narrators rely on shared cultural knowledge and as such they are accommodating and accepting the ideology that heterosexuality is normal, and reproducing the homosexuality identity as not being normal or abnormal. This reference can be found in the following excerpts:

Excerpt 1

T1	P1	:	Hostel life... okay, first of all, when I was in the first form, I was quite normal , I didn’t really show my personality. But then, when my family moved to Johor, so I did transfer from MRSM Langkawi to MRSM Muazam Shah.
T2	I1	:	Muazam Shah is where?
T3	P1	:	Pahang.
T4	I1	:	So you moved from Langakawi to Pahang and that’s when you realized (you were gay)?
T5	P1	:	Yes, that’s when.

Excerpt 1 was produced by Participant 1. In this excerpt we can see that Participant 1 used the word ‘normal’ to index the ‘other’ and as such index the ‘self’ as not normal. When asked about his past life, P1 described himself as quite normal when he was in Form One (Excerpt 1, Turn 1), i.e. before he realized that he was homosexual. This indicates that when he turned homosexual, he no longer felt that he was normal. The word ‘normal’

carries a meaning of conforming to standard, thus suggesting that since he is not normal, he is different and has strayed from the standard characteristics of what a member of the society should be. The term ‘normal’ can also mean natural. Therefore, the words ‘not normal’ mean not conforming to the standard or not natural. The labeling of ‘normal’ to the heterosexuals was repeated in the following excerpt taken from Participant 1’s narrative.

Excerpt 2

T1	I1	:	Oh, you’re gonna have a life partner?
T2	P1	:	But for sure that that one is ganjil [odd]. When we’re young for sure that we can have, but let’s say that we are in the 40 or 50, that one is impossible we can have a life partner, a gay partner.
T3	I1	:	You cannot have a life partner by then?
T4	P1	:	No.
T5	I1	:	Why?
T6	P1	:	Because most of the gays, they start to back to the normal , back to the normal mental when they are 40 or 50.
T7	I1	:	Right now can you be normal?
T8	P1	:	I can be but I don’t want to be. For sure it has to take a lot of time, a lot of effort.
T9	I1	:	Oh, really.
T10	P1	:	It takes a lot of effort, it has to come from inside.
T11	I1	:	So normally you say gay people, when they reach 40 or 50, they’ll be normal ?
T12	P1	:	Ya.
T13	I1	:	Why do you say that?
T14	P1	:	Based on the experience, I see people around me. When they are 40 or 50, they start have a family. On the outside still they are a little bit lembut [soft], but I think they change from the inside. That’s the time that they can have girls as their life partner.

The perception that homosexuality is not normal is further reinforced by Participant 1 when he continued to say that being gay is ‘odd’ when a person turns forty or fifty (Excerpt 2, Turn 1) and that (by that age) homosexuals normally would change back to ‘normal’ (Excerpt 2, Turn 5). The word ‘odd’ used by Participant 1 in Excerpt 2, Turn 1 implies that being homosexual at this age differs in nature from what is usual and

expected. His statements in this turn express his opinion that it is ‘acceptable’ or ‘permissible’ that a young person acts in a ‘not normal’ way, i.e. being homosexual but as he gets older and more mature, it is not proper or acceptable that he still acts in the same way. From both Excerpts 1 and 2, it can be seen that Participant 1 does not reject the mainstream ideology; in fact he was agreeing with it and maintaining the status quo in the society in relation to heterosexuality and homosexuality.

The following dialogues in Excerpt 3 are taken from the discourse data produced by Participant 3.

Excerpt 3

T1	P3	:	<p>Sebelum ni, okay, sebelum saya dalam bidang gay ni, perwatakan saya lain sikit. Sebelum saya discover I am gay, saya benci dengan golongan yang lembut atau pun orang panggil golongan maknyah.</p> <p>[Before this, okay, before I am gay, my personality was slightly different. Before I discovered I am gay, I hated people who were feminine or people who were called transsexuals.]</p>
T2	I2	:	<p>Pondan lah.</p> <p>[Transsexuals]</p>
T3	P3	:	<p>Pondan, yes. Dan saya juga macam lelaki normal biasa tak ada pakai pakaian ketat. Tapi lepas saya discover saya ni gay, sedikit demi sedikit, perubahan tu tak mendadak tetapi sedikit demi sedikit lah, macam first first tu maybe dari segi penampilan saya lebih suka kepada barangan yang berjenama, baju baju yang macam agak ketat.</p> <p>[Transsexuals, yes. And I was like other normal guys (heterosexuals) normally would not wear tight clothing but after I discovered that I was gay, little but little, like firstly maybe from my appearance aspect, I preferred branded goods, shirts which are rather tight]</p>

Participant 3, like Participant 1, also referred to homosexuals as ‘not normal’ by indexing heterosexuals as ‘normal’. In Excerpt 3, Turn 1, Participant 3 stated that before he was gay (when he was normal) he hated those people who were feminine; and transsexuals. Like any other ‘normal’ guy (heterosexual) he did not wear tight clothing, but when he turned gay this changed (In Excerpt 3, Turn 3). The same labeling of the out-group as normal was repeated by Participant 3 in the following excerpt.

Excerpt 4

T1	P3	:	Saya dengan family okay. And saya rasa orientation saya sebagai seorang gay tidak perlu diketahui oleh family. Maksud saya saya coverlah depan family. [Family and I are okay. And I feel that my orientation as a gay need not be known by family. I mean I hide it from my family]
T2	I2	:	Kira tak exposelah benda-benda tu. [It means you don't expose all those things]
T3	P3	:	Ha tak expose. Benda-benda macam ni saya rasa tak patut diketahui oleh family members yang terdekat. [Ha, do not expose. Things like this I feel should not be known by close family members]
T4	I2	:	Kira masa dekat rumah awak act normal ja lah? [At home, you act normal?]
T5	P3	:	Yes I act like a normal guy. Macam biasalah [Like normal].

In Excerpt 4, Turn 5, Participant 3 expressed that he had to act like a ‘normal’ guy (heterosexual) at home so that his family members would not find out that he was gay.

Participant 4 also used the same word, i.e. ‘not normal’ to index homosexuals. This can be seen in the following two excerpts taken from his narrative discourse.

Excerpt 5

P4: Paling pahit, paling pahit, macam saya pernah kantoï CD dengan mak saya tapi bukan CD gay, CD blue. Saya letak CD tu dalam almari, lepas tu saya terlupa yang saya nak sorok. Saya letak atas baju. Biasanya saya akan letak di celah-celah baju, so saya letak atas baju. Jadi macam dah lah letak atas baju, on that day pulak, mak saya lipat kain dan letak baju saya dalam almari saya. Then saya dah buka almari saya, CD blue tu ada dekat celah tepi baju saya, bukan dekat atas baju. That means mak saya dah tahu saya tengok CD blue jadi jadi saya tidak kantoï, saya gay. Saya just, maybe saya just kantoï, maybe saya **normal** person, emak saya ingat saya **normal** person sebab... saya macam okaylah, emak saya ingat saya **normal** person.

[P4: The most bitter, the most bitter, like I had been caught with a CD by my mother but it wasn't a gay CD, it was a 'blue' CD. I put the CD in the closet, after that I forgot to hide it. I put it on the clothes. Normally I would put it in between the clothes, so I put it on the clothes. So I had already put it on the clothes, on that day, my mother folded the clothes and put it in my closet. Then I opened my closet, the blue CD was beside my clothes, not on the clothes. That means my mother already knew I watched a 'blue' CD, therefore I wasn't caught being gay. I just, maybe I was caught maybe I was a normal person, my mother thought I was a normal person because... like I was okay, my mother taught I was a normal person.]

In Excerpt 5, Participant 4 narrated his most bitter experience as being when his mother found a 'blue' (pornographic) compact disk (CD) in his closet. He was so relieved that the CD was not a homosexual CD and that his mother still thought that he was normal (not homosexual). When he said "Saya just, maybe saya just kantoï, maybe saya normal person, emak saya ingat saya normal person sebab... saya macam okaylah, emak saya ingat saya normal person" [I just, maybe I was caught maybe I was a normal person, my mother thought I was a normal person because... like I was okay, my mother thought I was a normal person], he was interpreting his mother's perception that being homosexual is not acceptable. He was telling the interviewer that he felt relieved that his mother thought that he was normal, that he was okay and there was nothing wrong with him. Here Participant 4 does not reject his mother's ideology about homosexuals. In fact, since he

was hiding his homosexual lifestyle from his mother, he was condoning, or in other words, accommodating the mainstream ideology. This fact was strengthened by Participant 4 in the following excerpt extracted from his narrative.

Excerpt 6

P4: Hah...hah... yes sebagai seorang gay. Saya rasa saya akan, sebelum saya truly mengaku saya seorang gay pun saya telah fikirilah. Saya nak jadi gay sampai bila. So memang kita ada target kita sendiri. Macam I, I limitkan diri I jadi gay sampai umur 25 atau 26 tahun saja, lepas umur tu I will treat myself as a straight person. Yalah nanti kita mesti fikir jugalah, tak akan sampai umur 31 kita tak kahwin lagi kan. Mana anak cucu cicit kita, kita kena fikir benda tu. Sebelum saya mengaku saya ni gay pun saya dah fikir itu semua. So saya dah tahu saya nak jadi gay ni pun untuk bergembira saja, nak rasa lust dia tu macam mana sebab dah daripada kecil kita rasa kita ni gay tapi kita tak tahu, kita tak ada influence tapi bila kita dah besar, dah jumpa ramai orang, kita dah... environment kita dah tahu, kita nak rasa gay tu macam mana. Bila kita dah merasai pengalaman gay tu macam mana, kehidupan kita jelas bila kita dah puas, kita akan balik pada **normal**.

[P4: Hah... hah... yes, as a gay. I feel I will, even before I admitted that I was gay, I have thought about until when I want to be gay. So of course we have our own target. Like me, I'm limiting myself to be gay until I'm 25 or 26 years old only. After that age I will treat myself as a straight person. Of course we must think, not until we are at the age of 31, we are still not married. Where will our children, grandchildren and great grandchildren be, I have to think of all these. Before I admitted I was gay, I have thought about all these. So I already knew I want to become gay only for fun, to taste its lust because from small we felt that we were gay but we didn't know, we haven't got the influence but when we have grown up, we have met many people, we already know the environment, we wanted to feel how gay was. After we have felt the experience of being gay, our life is clear, when we are satisfied; we will go back to being normal.]

In the above excerpt, Participant 4 expressed that that he was only going to be homosexual temporarily and that he would go back to being 'normal' (heterosexual) after he experienced the homosexual life (Excerpt 6). Again he indexed homosexuality as being not normal and heterosexuality as being normal.

Another significant word or term that is found among the data collected is the reference 'scandal' used by Participant 3 to refer to homosexual lover or partner. This can be seen in the following excerpt taken from his data.

Excerpt 7

P3: Tapi istilah gay dia tak ada istilah 'couple' atau istilah 'bercinta'. Kita orang lebih suka kalau kekasih atau orang yang kita suka tu kita panggil **scandal**.

[But gay terminology does not have the term 'couple' or the term 'in love'. We prefer our lover or the person that we like to be called '**scandal**'.]

In this excerpt, Participant 3 used the pronoun 'we' in his sentence, "**We** prefer our lover or the person that we like to be called 'scandal'", to denote that homosexuals prefer to call their lover 'scandal'. The use of the plural pronoun 'we' in this sentence indicates the inclusion of Participant 3 himself and also other homosexuals. The use of the metaphor 'scandal' to refer to a homosexual lover by the homosexuals themselves implies the unacceptability or inappropriateness of the relationship and a sense of condemnation in their perception of their own relationship and lovers. The word 'scandal' carries the meaning of disgraceful, discreditable, shameful, and damaging to the reputation. By using such a reference, these participants were not rejecting the mainstream ideology that homosexuality is a deviant of the accepted norms; in fact they were reproducing and maintaining the status-quo of homosexuals in the society, i.e. homosexuality is not accepted or approved of by the society.

4.2.1.2 Assessment of “Self” and “Other”

In exploring the discursive construction of identities, another aspect to look into is the way the social actors ascribe characteristics, qualities or features to themselves (homosexuals), to the other social actors (heterosexuals), objects/phenomena/events and processes/actions in the discourse context. In this present study, it is noticed that all four research participants have a mixture assessment of themselves and ‘others’. In their discourse data, they did not depict themselves or homosexuality as completely positive and the ‘other’ or heterosexuality as all negative.

Discursive strategies employed

In assessing themselves and ‘others’, all four participants used the discursive strategies of rationalization, exaggeration, rejection and assimilation. Even though, as has been pointed out through the social comparison process in the Social Identity Theory (Tajfel and Turner, 1986), the self will evaluate itself as positive to enhance its self esteem, and it has the autonomy to do so in its discourse, these participants seemed to be very much influenced by the culture in which they have been born and raised. Though on one hand, the participants expressed that they were very happy being homosexuals, on the other hand, they felt a sense of inadequacy in their lives. Perhaps this feeling of inadequacy is the reason why they considered rejecting homosexuality and assimilating heterosexuality.

Linguistic means and forms of realization

The participants have used several linguistic devices in realizing the discursive construction of their identities through the strategies discussed above. Among the linguistic devices that will be highlighted are metaphors, hyperboles, metonymies and modalities, along with some other lexical units with semantic components such as adjectives, adverbs, etc.

The existence of the penal code makes homosexuality illegal in Malaysian society. In addition, according to Islamic law, marriage is between men and women, and a marriage between the same sexes is completely prohibited. As such, Malays and Muslims are aware that there will never be an accepted, lawful, honored, secure and permanent relationship between homosexual partners as what is present in a legal marriage between men and women. This awareness can and may be the reason for the lack of confidence on the part of the participants themselves in homosexual relationships. The following excerpts will exhibit the way the participants feel about homosexual relationships.

Excerpt 8

T1	I1	:	How do you perceive your future, how do you think about your future? What do you want your life to be in the future?
T2	P1	:	Hmm... I just wanna have my own career; I want to build my own empire. Okay, let's say that I have everything; <u>I can get my guy as I have...</u>
T3	I1	:	Oh, if you have everything, you can get your guy?
T4	P1	:	Ya.
T5	I1	:	Why do you say that?
T6	P1	:	Okay, let's say, you know, some people they like somebody ada [has] ... <u>let's say I have a lot of money or I have everything everybody will take a look at me.</u> It's like hmm, hmm, ...
T7	I1	:	You feel like if you have money, then only people will like you?

T8	P1	:	Not like.
T9	I1	:	How is it?
T10	P1	:	I'll be outstanding
T11	I1	:	You'll be outstanding, then only you can have a life partner?
T12	P1	:	Not I can have a life partner, <u>it will be easier</u> . Let's say Situation A, I only have a limited life or career compared to Situation B, I have my own empire, I have a lot of money. Let's say for Situation A, let's say I have one guy, the guy played behind me, I don't have other people to move around. In Situation B, I have my own empire, let's say I support one guy, let's say I support for one guy, anything happened to him, so I can move to the other guy. Let's say I don't want to move to the other guy, I can use the money to cheer me up.

Excerpt 8 is taken from Participant 1's discourse data. In this excerpt, Participant 1 was envisioning his future and it can be seen that he did not have very much confidence in homosexual relationships. He expressed that he would like to have a career and build his own empire. Then he continued by saying, "Okay, let's say that I have everything, I **can** get my guy as I have..." Here, his use of the modal 'can' shows that he believes that only when he is financially secure will he be able to have his 'guy', a (male) life partner. He went on to say in Turn 6 of the same excerpt, "... let's say I have a lot of money, or I have everything, everybody **will** take a look at me."

The use of the modal 'will' in English grammar is used to express a prediction about the future with a great level of certainty or believe on the part of the speaker that the prediction is going to come true (Foley and Hall, 2003). In this particular statement, Participant 1 believes that if he has money and material possessions, then people will take notice of him, and 'it **will** be easier' for him to have a life partner (in Turn 12, Excerpt 8). Again he used the modal 'will' in predicting with a high level of certainty that if he has money, he will not have a problem in finding a life partner. Participant 1's remark in Excerpt 8 implies

that he does not have very much confidence and he believes that someone could not love him for himself and stay with him if he does not have money. In addition, his remark implies that he does not have much confidence in long lasting homosexual relationships as he keeps foreseeing that the relationships will not last. This can be seen in his utterance, “Let’s say for Situation A (he does not have a lot of money), let’s say I have one guy, the guy played behind me, I don’t have other people to move around. In Situation B, I have my own empire, let’s say I support one guy, let’s say I support for one guy, anything happened to him, so I can move to the other guy. Let’s say I don’t want to move to the other guy, I can use the money to cheer me up.” Participant 1 feels that he has to have money to keep a man in his relationship but even then, he still feels that there is no guarantee that the relationship will last. His utterance “... so I can move to other guy” (Turn 12, Excerpt 8) gives the impression that homosexuals can move from one relationship to another rather easily. This may be due to the fact that homosexual couples do not share a legal and committed bond as married partners do.

Participant 1 obviously does not have much confidence in homosexual relationships. There are several occurrences in his narrative that he expressed his lack of faith in homosexual relationships. Apart from his remark, “let’s say I have one guy, the guy played behind me,” in Excerpt 8, Turn 12 to express that homosexual partners will probably be unfaithful, his lack of trust in homosexual relationship can also be seen in the following two excerpts taken from his data.

Excerpt 9

P1: As I mentioned just now previously I said I looked at love as a life sharing, but now I still look at love as life sharing, we share everything that we have. I mean our perception of life or love, everything lah we share but then **don't be too into someone**. I mean **don't put the whole of our heart into somebody**, if the guy played behind you, that's it you feel like it's the end of the world.

Excerpt 10

T1	I1	:	Tell me about your boyfriend right now.
T2	P1	:	For this boyfriend right now, he's a good guy. We met four to five months ago and now we are staying together. We have give and take but I'm more to give lah.
T3	I1	:	Do you love him?
T4	P1	:	I love him so much. But <u>I can't give my whole heart to him.</u>

Again, in the two excerpts above, by using phrases such as “don't be too into someone”, “don't put the whole of our heart into somebody”, and “I can't give my whole heart to him”, Participant 1 expressed that he needs to be prepared and guarded not to get hurt as he does not have much trust that homosexual relationships can last as indicated in his phrase “if the guy played behind you, that's it you feel like it's the end of the world” (in Excerpt 9).

Like Participant 1, Participant 2 also did not have much confidence that homosexual relationships would last. This can be seen in the Excerpts 11 and 12 below taken from his discourse data.

Excerpt 11

P2: Now, no. **I don't trust gay love**, I just don't.

In Excerpt 11, the absence of modal words and hedges in Participant 2’s statements “I don’t trust gay love” implies that he truly believed in what he was saying. In contrast to the use of modality which carries the speaker’s view of subjective proposition, the use of present tense is more factual-oriented (Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman, 1999).

Excerpt 12

T1	I1	:	Why don’t you trust gay love?
T2	P2	:	I don’t know, I just don’t trust that , I don’t think it will last long. Like I said just now, we’re Malaysians I’m trying to change myself. After I’m 30 years old, then I want to change myself of course.

In Excerpt 12, Turn 2, Participant 2 further repudiated homosexual relationships by saying that ‘I don’t know, I just don’t trust that (homosexual relationship), I don’t think it will last long’; and that he is a Malaysian and he is trying to change to heterosexual.

There are a few instances in Participant 3’s narrative that show he does not have much confidence that he can attain happiness by being a homosexual and thus, indirectly rejects the homosexual lifestyle. This can be seen in the following excerpts taken from his discourse data.

Excerpt 13

T1	I2	:	Adakah, adakah, kalau anak, anak, apa... zuriat anda tu, zuriat awak tu seorang gay, apa yang anda akan lakukan kepada dia? [Is, is, if your child, child, what... your offspring, your offspring is gay, what will you do to him?]
T2	P3	:	Terus terang saya cakap kalau anak saya gay, first saya akan sedih. Saya tak tahu nak cakap. Sebab saya tak boleh, maybe saya tak boleh salahkan dia 100%, berkemungkinan genetik saya tu sebagai seorang gay jatuh, ada sikit-sikit dekat dia. Saya rasa gay sebenarnya banyak bergantung kepada diri sendiri lah, kekuatan diri sendiri.

		[Frankly speaking, if my son is gay, first I would be sad. I don't know what to say. Because I can't, maybe I can't blame him 100%, probably my gene as gay is inherited a little by him. I feel being gay actually greatly depends on one's own self, one's own strength.]
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Here in Excerpt 13, Participant 3 was asked what he would do if his own son was homosexual. He answered that he would be sad if his son was homosexual. This answer implies that his own experiences as a homosexual are not very fulfilling; and that he would not want his own son to go through it.

In another part of his narrative, Participant 3 described the gay world as full of fun and enjoyment and that it is easier for a man to have a relationship with a man as they understand each other better. This can be seen in the excerpt below:

Excerpt 14

P3: Yes. Sebab sebenarnya dunia gay ni banyak keseronokannya, banyak banyak macam saya cakap banyak kelebihan daripada kekurangannya. Saya nak cakap sebenarnya lelaki lebih mudah bagi sayalah. Pendapat saya lelaki lebih mudah memahami lelaki daripada lelaki memahami perempuan.
[Yes. Because actually this gay world is full of enjoyment, like I said there are more advantages than disadvantages. I'd like to say that actually man is easier for me. In my opinion it is easier for a man to understand a man than a man to understand a woman.]

Though Participant 3 feels that there are more advantages than disadvantages to being gay; yet, he does not want his own son to become a homosexual. This desire is not based upon the way in which homosexuals are treated in Malay society, but rather his opinion of the homosexual lifestyle itself. This can be seen in his statement in the excerpt below.

Excerpt 15

T1	P3	:	<p>Kehidupan menarik saya sebagai seorang gay. Apa yang menyebabkan saya lebih begitu deep into gay life ya, saya mendapati saya ni mudah mendapat pasangan kekasih yang dari golongan yang agak berada. Saya dapati gay ni sebenarnya banyak dari golongan-golongan yang atasan, maksud saya yang berpendidikan tinggi, educated, pensyarah, doktor, architect, engineer. Saya cakap ni berdasarkan pengalaman saya dan juga kawan-kawan saya di mana kalau macam saya cakaplah kalau buat union ke, memang naik BM. Benda tu yang menyebabkan saya lebih tertarik kepada dunia gay ni.</p> <p>[My interesting life as a gay. What causes me to be so deep into the gay life; I find that it is easy for me to find a lover from among the quite rich class of people. I found that many gays are from the upper class, I mean those who are highly educated, lecturers, doctors, architects, engineers. I am saying this from my experience and also from my friends whereby, like I said, if we make a union, they definitely come in BM (BMW). These things which attract me more to this gay world.]</p>
T2	I2	:	Is it about materialistic?
T3	P3	:	<p>Yes, dunia gay ni memang dunia materialistic, dunia yang penuh kepalsuan, tak ada, I mean like tak ada benda yang betul dalam dunia gay ni. Mmm... apa-apa lagi yang awak nak tahu pasal kehidupan saya?</p> <p>[Yes, this gay world is definitely a materialistic world, a world that is full of phonies, there isn't, I mean there is nothing right in the gay world. Mmm... is there anything else you want to know about my life.]</p>

In Excerpt 15, Turn 1, Participant 3 admitted that he was attracted to being homosexual because he could have rich lovers. Nevertheless, in Turn 3 of this excerpt, his use of hyperboles such as the adverb ‘definitely’ in his phrase “definitely a materialistic world”; the adjective ‘full’ in the phrase “a world full of phonies”; and the indefinite pronoun ‘nothing’ in the phrase “there is nothing right in this gay world” paints a high degree of negativity of the homosexual society in which he is living. In this turn, Participant 3 is rejecting and disapproving the homosexual ideology.

Like Participant 3, Participant 4 also had the same view about his children being homosexual. This can be seen in the following excerpt extracted from Participant 4's narrative discourse.

Excerpt 16

P4: Saya rasa kalau saya dah kahwin nanti, saya tak akan treat anak saya sebagai seorang yang gay atau pun lesbian dan saya akan monitor anak saya supaya tak jadi macam saya. Saya tak nak lah diaorang jadi macam saya sebab saya tahu. Tapi tak boleh kata jugalah, bila mereka dah besar, mereka ada life mereka sendiri kan. Memang diaorang ada life sendiri, tapi saya kena monitor supaya mereka tak terjebak dalam benda-benda ni semua.

[I feel if I have children later, I **will** not treat my children as gay or lesbian and I **will** monitor my children so that they will not become like me. I don't want them to become like me because I know. But I cannot say, when they are big, they have their own life, right. Of course they have their own life, but I **must** monitor so that they will not become trapped in all these things.]

In this excerpt, Participant 4 was explaining to the interviewer about what he will do in the future when and if he has children of his own. His use of the modal 'akan' or in English 'will' in the sentence "Saya rasa kalau saya dah kahwin nanti, saya tak akan treat anak saya sebagai seorang yang gay atau pun lesbian dan saya akan monitor anak saya supaya tak jadi macam saya" [I feel if I have children later, I will not treat my children as gay or lesbian, and I will monitor my children so that they will not become like me], represents his 'kehendak' or in English, 'intention' (Asmah Haji Omar, 1982). The comparable modal verb of 'akan' in English is 'will', which in this case, indicates that he is determined (Foley and Hall, 2003) to do whatever is necessary to prevent his children from becoming homosexual like himself. In his sentence, "Memang diaorang ada life sendiri, tapi saya kena monitor supaya mereka tak terjebak dalam benda-benda ni semua" [Of course they have their own life, but I must monitor so that they are not trapped in all these things], the

use of the Malay modal 'kena' has the same meaning as 'mesti' which is borrowed from the modal verb 'must' in English (Asmah Haji Omar, 2008), shows a strong sense of obligation (Foley and Hall, 2003) or 'tidak boleh tidak' (no matter what) (Asmah Haji Omar, 2008) on Participant 4's part to monitor his children so that they will not become homosexual. Even though Participant 4 described homosexual life as being very comfortable and happy as he expressed in the following excerpt, he does not want his children to become like him.

Excerpt 17

P4: Hehehe...haha... saya rasa macam kelakar lah tapi saya suka soalan tu juga. Bagaimana saya memandang diri saya sebagai seorang gay di Malaysia? Saya pandang diri sebagai seorang manusia yang penuh dengan kebahagiaan, penuh dengan keselesaan, penuh dengan kegembiraan sebagai seorang gay sebab saya rasa hari-hari saya penuh dengan kegembiraan kerana saya selesa dengan diri saya sendiri.

[(Laughs)... I feel like it's funny but I like this question too. How I perceive myself as gay in Malaysia? I perceive myself as a human being who is **full** of bliss, **full** of comfort, **full** of happiness as a gay because my days are **full** of happiness, because I am comfortable with my own self.]

In the above excerpt, Participant 4 was describing his life as a homosexual as being a very happy one. He repeatedly used the adjective 'full' in his phrase "full of bliss, full of comfort, full of happiness" to describe himself, leaving the impression that if he were a container, the container would be full of these emotions. In addition, he used "my days are full of happiness" to denote that not a single day passes that he is not completely happy. The adjective 'full' here can also be considered as a hyperbole, a way of exaggerating one's view. It was used by Participant 4 to give the impression of the extreme and perfect happiness that he is feeling living life as a homosexual. Nevertheless, his sense of obligation and determination to prevent his children from becoming homosexual, as indicated in his speech in Excerpt 16, presupposes that there is something missing or

unfulfilling or not completely right about homosexual lifestyle. If being homosexual was as wonderful as he claims it to be, why then that he would not want his son to be one. This shows that he has not rejected the mainstream ideology concerning homosexuality.

4.2.1.3 Norm-respect and accommodating the ‘other’

Throughout the participants’ narratives, on the whole, they did not have a negative view of the heterosexuals. They displayed no anger or animosity towards the heterosexuals or how they were being treated by them. Instead their discourse data discloses their understanding; and their attempts to accommodate the others and respect the norm.

Discursive strategies employed

As proposed by the discourse-historical notion of strategy (Wodak et.al., 1999), a social subject has the autonomy to make individual decision, however, this autonomy does not unbind him/her from his/her responsibility as a subject situated in a particular society. All the participants showed their respects for the norms of the society. In many parts of their life stories, they showed they were accommodating and accepting/consenting the norms and not once did they reject or dispute the mainstream sexual ideology.

Linguistic means and forms of realization

When asked about their relationship with their families, with the exception of Participant 1, all the participants said that they had very good relationship with their families and most

of their family members did not know that they were homosexual. As found in Jerome's study (2008), the homosexual characters in the short stories he studied lead two different lives and hid their homosexual selves, the participants of this present study were also living their lives in the same way.

Participant 1 did not let his parents know that he is homosexual until they caught him with his boyfriend. His father has since stopped talking to him, but his mother still calls him once in a while. This can be seen in the following two excerpts extracted from his narrative discourse.

Excerpt 18

P1: Last November, my parents caught me with my boyfriend and so until now, we haven't talked to each other. Almost one year already.

Excerpt 19

T1	I1	:	So now they never talk to you?
T2	P1	:	Only once in a little while, my mom did give me a phone call but not my dad. Never talked to him.
T3	I1	:	Mmm... never talked to him? Who is your father, he's a policeman, right?
T4	P1	:	He's a policeman.
T5	I1	:	Okay.
T6	P1	:	Because I think the most reason that my dad is ashamed of me cos' he's a policeman, <u>for sure</u> he wants his son to be just like him.

In Excerpt 18, Participant 1 was telling the interviewer that his parents had not talked to him for almost a year after learning that he is homosexual. In Excerpt 19, Turn 6, Participant 1 expressed his belief as to the reason that his father had stopped talking to him by saying "Because I think the most reason that my dad is ashamed of me 'cause he's a policeman, for sure he wants his son to be just like him". The use of 'for sure' in this sentence gives the impression that Participant 1 understands his father's reaction to him

being homosexual, and that his father is ashamed of him. The reason that he assumed for his father’s reacting the way he did and the use of the word ‘for sure’ in his utterance implies that he understands that it is natural for a father to want his son to follow in his footsteps. Furthermore, his father is a policeman, and policemen are supposed to be tough and manly, ‘for sure’ (certainly) he would not be able to accept his own son as being a homosexual.

Excerpt 20

T1	P1	:	Hmm, once I mixed with this kind of people, we have like a one group. So all the juniors and seniors with this kind of people, we stay as a group, so whatever happen, we stay as one group. We never mixed with the others.
T2	I1	:	What about the other boys?
T3	P1	:	The other boys that ones are <u>normallah</u> , they like teasing at us.
T4	I1	:	They like to what?
T5	P1	:	Teasing, mengejek. But we never care because we’re as one group.
T6	I1	:	So you said you’re not affected by that?
T7	P1	:	No.

In Excerpt 20, Participant 1 was narrating his experience when he was studying in school. When asked how the other (heterosexual) boys were treating him and his homosexual friends, his answer was “The other boys that ones are *normallah*, they like teasing at us”. His use of the word ‘*normallah*’ with the morpheme ‘lah’ in the Malay language gives the meaning that it is more or less expected that the heterosexual boys will tease the homosexual boys. When asked whether they minded the teasing or whether they were affected by it, his answer was no and they were not affected by it (Excerpt 20, Turn 6-7). The fact that they were not distressed about the others’ teasing and others’ negative perception towards them is parallel to the findings of Noraini Mohd Noor and colleagues’ (2005) study on *softies* in IIUM. Noraini Mohd Noor and colleagues suggested that the

softies did not feel distressed over the others' negative perception might be due to their being in a closed-knit group which gave them some kind of protection and support to one another. Participant 1 in the above excerpt, Turn 1, also expressed that he and his homosexual friends stayed in a group and whatever happened they had each other.

Excerpt 21

T1	I1	:	So how is your relationship with your immediate family, your current family, your parents, your siblings?
T2	P2	:	They don't know me, they don't know that I'm gay. Of course my parents don't know, they will kick me if they know.

Excerpt 21 was taken from Participant 2's data. When asked about his relationship with his family, Participant 2 answered that his family does not know that he is homosexual. He repeated the phrase "they don't know" twice in Turn 2, Excerpt 21 above to stress that his family does not know that he is homosexual. He continued by saying "Of course my parents don't know. They will kick me if they know". The use of the word 'of course' implies that they certainly do not know, otherwise they would have reacted towards him in a negative and hostile way. In the same sentence, he used the metaphor 'kick' to express that his parents' reaction would not be a pleasant one. Participant 2's response to this question also implies that he is not open about his homosexual orientation at home and that he is hiding it from his parents.

Excerpt 22

T1	I1	:	So you think if she knows that you're gay, it's okay with that?
T2	P2	:	Of course it will be hard for her to accept right but she has to understand and <u>I'm not going to be</u> gay forever. First of all I'm a Muslim and I'm in Malaysia.

When asked whether his mother would be okay if she found out that he is homosexual, Participant 2 (in Excerpt 22) answered that it would be hard for her to accept, but he does not intend to be gay forever. The use of the modal verb ‘be going to’ here in the phrase “I’m not going to be gay forever” indicates that he has already made the decision prior to the time of speaking (Yule, 2006) to change because he is a Muslim and he is in Malaysia (Excerpt 22, Turn 2). Here, it can be inferred that Participant 2 shows some respect for the norms for being a Muslim and being in Malaysia, homosexuality is not accepted and as such, he intends to assimilate back into the mainstream ideology of sexuality by returning to the heterosexual lifestyle sometime in the future.

Another instance where Participant 2 showed that he was accommodating others is in the following excerpt taken from his discourse data.

Excerpt 23

T1	P2	:	I hope I can change. I hope I can change. If I can’t, I know I should stop because you know, I can’t be gay forever.
T2	I1	:	Why? Why you feel you can’t...?
T3	P2	:	Because my parents will expect me to marry a girl and I can’t let them down. I just can’t let them down.

In this excerpt, Participant 2 felt that he can’t be homosexual forever because his parents would want him to get married to a girl one day. Here, he used the modal ‘can’t’ to show his (emotional) inability to let his parents down, or in other words, he does not have the heart to disappoint his parents. Here again, he feels that he is obligated to do what is expected of him by others.

Looking back at Excerpt 4 (on page 78), Participant 3 also feels that he needs to hide his homosexual orientation from his family members. When asked about his relationship with

his family, he answered that “Saya dengan family okay. And saya rasa orientation saya sebagai seorang gay tidak perlu diketahui oleh family. Maksud saya saya coverlah depan family” [Family and I are okay. And I feel that my orientation as a gay need not be known by family. I mean I hide it from my family]. Here in this sentence, Participant 3’s use of the modal verb ‘tidak perlu’ or ‘need not’ shows that he feels that there is no necessity (Yule, 2006, Asmah Haji Omar, 2008) to reveal his sexual orientation to his family. He then openly said that he hid it from his family. He continued saying that “Ha tak expose. Benda-benda macam ni saya rasa tak patut diketahui oleh family members yang terdekat” [Ha, do not expose. Things like this, I feel should not be known by close family members]. In this last sentence in this excerpt, he conveyed the same opinion, but this time, he used the modal ‘tidak patut’ [should not] instead of ‘tidak perlu’ [need not]. The Malay modal ‘tidak patut’ can be said to have the same function as the English modal ‘should not’. The modal ‘tidak patut’ here indicates what is not right and appropriate to do (Asmah Haji Omar, 2008). Similar to ‘should not’, it indicates a sense of obligation – what is expected (Yule, 2006) – on the part of Participant 3 to not disclose the fact that he is homosexual to his family. It can be inferred here that Participant 3 respects the norms and does not want to challenge it.

The following excerpt is extracted from Participant 4’s discourse data.

Excerpt 24

P4: Jadi saya lebih selesa di Malaysia walaupun kadang-kadang kita terpaksa sorok yang kita ni gay, kita **terpaksa** hide. Kita **terpaksa** sorok-sorok macam mana kita ni, **terpaksa** cover depan khalayak ramai tapi itu pun sebab kita yang nak. Jadi kita **terpaksa** tentukan hidup kita sendiri. Kita yang nak kita jadi macam tu, kita yang nak kita jadi gay, jadi kita **kena** terimalah, kita **kena** cuba lah kita **kena** mengajar diri kita untuk mengawal emosi kita di khalayak ramai, mengawal cara-cara kita bercakap, cara-cara kita berjalan, aa...

[So I am more comfortable in Malaysia even though sometimes we have to hide that we are gay, we have to hide. We have to hide how we are, have to cover up in public but that is because we want it. So we have to determine our own life. We who want to become like this, we who want to become gay, so we must accept it, we must try, we must teach ourselves to control our emotion in public, control the way we talk, the way we walk, aa...]

Similar to Participant 2 and Participant 3, Participant 4 as shown in the above excerpt, also feels that his homosexual orientation should not be exposed to the public. This can be seen in his speech in the above excerpt. In his sentences, he used the word ‘terpaksa’ (have to) repeatedly. The modal ‘have to’ expresses an obligation that the speaker sees as outside his/her control, such as rules imposed by authority (Foley and Hall, 2003). The function of this modal as an imposed obligation also matches another meaning of the word ‘paksa’ in Malay which means ‘force’. Even though here there is no direct physical imposition by the authority upon Participant 4, it can be inferred that the societal norms which compel him not to openly display his homosexual behaviors at times. Participant 4 also used the word ‘kena’ which shares the same concept as ‘must’ (Asmah Haji Omar, 2008). In his speech in this excerpt, he expressed that since they were the ones who choose to become homosexual, therefore they must accept the fact that the society does not condone homosexuality; and they must control their emotion, the way they talk and the way they walk in public. His response here shows that he rationalizes why the homosexuals should not display their homosexual behaviors in public as they accommodate and do not wish to challenge the norms of the Malaysian society.

4.2.2 Construction of Malay/Muslim

As mentioned in Chapter 2, most discussions on the Malay identity in Malaysia have always been associated with Islamic values. In past research, the findings have always illustrated that these two elements could not be separated. Homosexuality is strongly prohibited in Islam and committing an act of homosexuality is considered a worse crime than adultery. In the data collected, none of the four subjects tried to legitimize their actions and reject the Islamic ideology of sexuality or gender. In fact, they displayed a sense of internal conflict and struggle to assimilate the dominant ideology, if not at present, maybe at some time in the future.

4.2.2.1 The absence of authority coercion

Even though there is a law in Malaysia criminalizing homosexuality, these young participants have not experienced any intimidation from the authorities. The struggles and conflicts they experience from being homosexual, as well as a sense of obligation to assimilate into the heterosexual lifestyle, are derived from deep inside themselves. This is more of a hegemonic process of identity formation as it is not contributed by structures of authority but rather by structures of ideologies.

Discursive strategies employed

When asked to describe their life or any difficulties they have experienced as homosexuals in Malaysia, the participants did not reproach or criticize the society for mistreating them

or being unjust to them. When describing the heterosexuals' attitude towards them, they mitigated their utterances which produce the depiction that they are not contesting the system or challenging the society. As a matter of fact, when describing their life as homosexuals, some of the participants used exaggeration to express how happy they are – living a homosexual life (in Malaysia).

Linguistic means and forms of realization

The discourses produced in the following excerpts are taken from all four participants' data and they clearly demonstrate the absence of any kind of coercion or force by authority that might have been imposed upon these young homosexuals.

Excerpt 25

P1: No, actually. Because let's say we are ... people in KL they don't mind the way we are. But let's say that I go back to Penang or I go back to Negeri Sembilan, at my hometown, they do really really care about that. They even look at us like senget... macam tu [crooked... like that]. We don't do anything, we just hold hands together. Then, actually for gays, it's not as lucky as the lesbians. Let's say that guys and women, guys only hold hands, people will know that they are gays. Let's say lesbians, a girl holds hands with another girl, people won't know they are lesbians, they might think they are friends only.

... but not in KL, they don't mind. Because we have a lot this kind of people here, right?

The above excerpt illustrates that Participant 1 did not face any difficulties in terms of law enforcement against homosexuals in Malaysia. He used the conditional phrase, "let's say that ..." repeatedly in place of 'if...' to demonstrate that there is the condition of where he is (i.e. his location) that determine people's reaction towards him and his partner for holding hands. Nevertheless, in this particular incident, Participant 1's portrayal of the

public's reaction is not dramatic or appalling. He used the metaphor 'crooked' in describing how people would look at him in Penang and Negeri Sembilan to indicate their disapproval of his and his partner's action of holding hands that insinuated they were homosexual. On the other hand, in Kuala Lumpur, he explained that homosexuality was not an uncommon phenomenon and most people were more tolerant of them.

Excerpt 26

P2: Now I think that there's no trouble for me as a gay. I want to change.

The word 'now' chosen by Participant 2 in the above excerpt is a lexical presupposition that gives an implication of temporal meaning. Here it can be presupposed that Participant 2, at the time of speaking, did not face any difficulties, either emotionally or physically. However, what would happen in the future might/could be different. Still, up to the time of speaking, Participant 2 had not encountered any difficulties being homosexual in Malaysia. In fact, in Excerpt 27 below, Participant 2 described homosexual people as very happy people.

Excerpt 27

P2: The gay guys are more friendly and they talk a lot and straight guys don't talk that much. I can speak to gay guys for **two or three days long** rather than speak with straight guys, it will last **two to three minutes**, like that. And gay, you know, gay has two meanings, right, happy and gay. So gay people are happy, **very** happy. I know when I mix with them we just **laugh and laugh and laugh and laugh**.

In this excerpt, Participant 2 was describing how happy most of the homosexuals seemed to be. He used the adverb 'very' to intensify the happiness they feel. This happiness was made more intensified when he repeated the word 'laugh' four times to describe what happens when he and his homosexual friends or people are together. He also used hyperboles here when he said that he could speak 'for two or three days long' with

homosexual people but ‘with straight guys, it will last two to three minutes’. He exaggerated to show how much fun and at ease he was when he was with other homosexuals. Again, his description of homosexual people in Excerpt 27 suggests that they were happy and not confronted with any ill-treatment or difficulties living in Malaysia.

Participant 3 also did not mention any difficulties living as a homosexual in Malaysia in his narrative. The only incident he narrated a kind of grievance about the way heterosexuals treat homosexuals is shown in the following excerpt.

Excerpt 28

P3: Seperti mana yang awak tahu, Malaysia ni macam negara yang agak primitive and kalau kita tengok sekali pun kalau golongan macam pondan-pondan atau gay boy ni, diaorang tak nampak.

[Like you know, Malaysia is like a country which is **rather** primitive and if you look even one glance, transsexuals and gay boys, **they** don't see.]

In excerpt 28, Participant 3 did not mention any physical threats from anyone, but his utterances implied that he was disappointed that individuals would not be looked up to or given any recognition because they are transsexual or homosexual. Here, he used the metonymy ‘see’ to mean they (the heterosexuals) do not look up to homosexuals and transsexuals or they do not acknowledge them, regardless of their individual merits. He also used the simile in “Malaysia is like a country which is rather primitive” implying that Malaysia is backward and old-fashioned by modern standards for not accepting homosexuals and transsexuals. Participant 3 used the pronoun ‘they’ to refer to the heterosexuals in Malaysia and in such excluded himself and fellow homosexuals from those who are primitive. However, clearly here again, there had not been any coercion

from authorities imposed upon him. Still in this sentence, Participant 3 used the adverb ‘rather’ to mitigate his claim that Malaysia is truly a primitive country.

There are many instances in Participant 4’s data that clearly show that there was no coercion or force of any types that had been imposed upon him as a homosexual. This can be seen in the following discussion.

Excerpt 29

P4: Saya gembira, saya gembira kerana dapat apa yang saya nak, saya jadi apa yang saya nak jadi saya tak payah nak pretend, saya tak payah nak sorok-sorok diri saya macam mana ke, apa yang saya nak saya buat saja, saya tak perlu fikir tentang orang. Perlu fikirkan orang tapi certain-certain benda, certain yang tak perlu. Saya fikir diri sendiri sebab saya rasa kenahagian diri sendiri itu lebih penting daripada fikir kebahagiaan diri orang.

[I’m happy, I’m happy because I get what I want, I become what I want to become without pretending, I don’t have to hide myself, **whatever** I want to do I do, I don’t need to think of other people. Need to think of people but for certain things, certain things I don’t need to. I think of myself because I feel one’s own happiness is more important than thinking about other people’s happiness.]

In Excerpt 29, Participant 4’s utterances imply that he has not been subjected to any kind of intimidation from the authorities for being homosexual. He candidly said that he did not have to pretend or hide the fact that he is a homosexual. He continued saying, “whatever I want to do I do”. His use of the word ‘whatever’ acts as a hyperbole (an exaggeration) in this phrase which gives the impression that he has complete freedom to do anything he wants.

Excerpt 30

P4: Yes, hehe... saya rasa, seperti saya katakan tadi hehehe..., saya sangat bahagia dengan kehidupan saya jadi saya memandang saya rasa di Malaysia saya memandang diri saya gay di Malaysia saya rasa saya sangat bertuah.

[Yes, hehe... I feel, like I said just now, I am very happy with my life, so I perceive, I feel in Malaysia, I see myself as gay in Malaysia, I feel I am very fortunate.]

Excerpt 31

P4: Bertuah as a what, as a seorang yang mempunyai kehidupan gay yang bahagia saya rasa di Malaysia ini. Walaupun Malaysia negara yang tak sangat open macam, macam luar negara, ah... macam negara-negara Islam tapi keislamannya pun hehehe... macam terbatasjadi saya rasa macam bangga pulak saya jadi gay di Malaysia.

[Fortunate as a what, as someone who has a happy gay life, I feel in this Malaysia. **Even though** Malaysia is a country which is not very open like overseas, ah... like other Islamic countries but its Islamic features, hehehe... like limited... so I feel like proud I became gay in Malaysia.]

In Excerpts 30 and 31, Participant 4 was expressing his happiness living a homosexual lifestyle in Malaysia. In fact, he was reflecting upon his life and felt fortunate that he is a homosexual in Malaysia (Excerpt 30). Here, his utterances give the impression that though there is no allowance for Malaysians, much less Malays and Muslims to lead a homosexual life, yet he is still able to. This fact was verified by him in Excerpt 31. He used a discourse marker ‘Even though’ in his sentence “Even though Malaysia is a country which is not very open like overseas, ah... like other Islamic countries but its Islamic features, hehehe... like limited... so I feel like proud I became gay in Malaysia”. His use of this discourse marker is to denote a contrast between two facts – Islam and homosexuality – and yet there is a sense of concession (Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman 1999) that although homosexuality is a crime in Malaysia and a transgression of Islamic edict, he was still able to lead his life as homosexual. In both Excerpts 30 and 31, he

relates that he possesses a sense of achievement that makes him proud and feels fortunate to be homosexual in Kuala Lumpur.

Excerpt 32

P4: Masa I dah kerja lepas form 5, I dah tak sorok yang I ni gay. I start keluar dengan gay gay, which is gay gay yang tak pondan, yang gay straight X. Kan you tahu kan, gay ni ada banyak kan which is bottom, top, straight X, flexi, versatile, right? I dah start keluar dengan top-top semua menambahkan pengetahuan-pengetahuan dan pengalaman-pengalaman I dalam dunia gay ni. So I dah habis semua belajar, I dah habis kerja semua, I pergi sambung belajar dekat kolej. I sambung dekat KL, you tahu lah dekat KL macam mana, kan. KL ni sangat sangat open dengan gay gay macam ni, kan. So I dah di KL I rasa heaven sangat, I dah, I tak... di KL pun orang tak pandang serong pada gay, dulu maybe orang pandang negative tapi sekarang orang dah macam dah boleh terima, bukan boleh terima maksud I boleh... orang dah tak kisah gay tu macam mana lah, kan. Ha pergi lah melantak-lantak tak kacau orang. Bila I dah datang KL ni, bila I dah join dengan gay gay semua, I dah start nak BF, boyfriend semua. Ha... menambahkan recipe-recipe dalam kehidupan I lagi lah.

[When I have worked after Form 5, I started not to hide that I was gay. I started going out with gays who were not transsexuals, the straight X gay. You know, right, that there are many types of gays which are bottom, top, straight X, flexy, versatile, right? I started going out with the tops, all increase my knowledge and experience in this gay world. So after I have finished studying, I have finished working, I went to further my studies in a college. I continued in KL, you know how KL is, right. KL is very very open with gays like this, right. So when I'm in KL, I feel greatly heaven, I have, I do not ... in KL even the people do not give an askew look at gays, before maybe people looked at gays negatively but now people seem like they can accept, not accept, I mean, people do not mind how gays are, right. Ha, go do whatever you want, do not disturb people. After I have come to KL, when I have joined all the gays, I've started wanting a BF, have a boyfriend and all. Ha... add more recipes to my life.]

Like Participant 1, Participant 4 also perceived the people in Kuala Lumpur as being indifferent to homosexuals. In Excerpt 32, Participant 4 used a slightly different metaphor to describe how people look at homosexuals. Participant 1 used 'senget' [crooked] while Participant 4 used 'serong' [askew] to mean disapproving look. Participant 4 also expressed that people in Kuala Lumpur do not look at homosexuals disapprovingly, they

are not bothered. Again, this excerpt also shows that Participant 4 is not subjected to any type of authority compulsion, in fact, after coming to Kuala Lumpur, he feels ‘heaven’ – a metaphor to express how happy he was that people seem not to look at homosexuals negatively. In addition, after he came to Kuala Lumpur, he got the opportunity to mix with other homosexuals and have a boyfriend; and all these associations added more ‘recipes’ to his life. The metaphor ‘recipes’ was used by Participant 4 to illustrate that he was then open to more opportunities to try new things and to choose from larger options which were not available to him before he came to Kuala Lumpur.

4.2.2.2 Internal struggle

The discussion in the prior section revealed that none of these young homosexuals faced any kind of authority intimidation or domination, yet at some stages in their narratives, there was a sense of struggle and conflict in them to assimilate into the majority society and embrace Islamic values. Though many parts of their discourses reveal that, as homosexuals, they were not observing Islamic values in their lives, nevertheless, many instances in their narratives uncover that deep inside them these values and ideologies still remain and were not completely abandoned. These ideologies and beliefs still have, to a certain extent, an influence in the way they think and act, especially where it concerns their future. This is parallel to Teh’s (2001) findings that the Malay and Muslim transsexual participants of his research did not wish to undergo sex change operation as it is against the Islamic teaching. In addition, many of them returned to wearing man’s clothing when they got older as they wanted to be buried as males when they die so that they would be accepted by God. Teh concluded that though Malay transsexuals had some similar

characteristics as those of transsexuals in other parts of the world, they differed slightly in that they were still influenced by their religion.

Discursive strategies employed

When reflecting upon their religion and its place in their lives, none of the research participants rejected the Islamic view on homosexuality. In fact, all of them in one way or another, demonstrated in their narratives that the religion still affects them to a certain extent. All the participants, except Participant 1, clearly expressed that even though they were happy leading a homosexual life, there was an internal conflict to reject homosexuality and assimilate heterosexuality in order to lead a normal life. Even though Participant 1 did not say outright that he would attempt to become heterosexual, he did not deny or dispute the fact that when homosexuals in Malaysia reach a certain age, they would assimilate the mainstream sexual ideology.

Linguistic means and forms of realization

The linguistics options employed by the participants to disclose their dilemma in leading a homosexual life in Malaysia as Malays and Muslims are shown in the following excerpts taken from their narrative data.

Excerpt 33

T1	I1	:	What about your old age? What do you think about your old age?
T2	P1	:	Old age, I have my own house, alone lah.
T3	I1	:	Alone? You think you're gonna be alone?
T4	P1	:	Ya.
T5	I1	:	Why?
T6	P1	:	I never think of family.
T7	I1	:	What about life partner?
T8	P1	:	Life partner will be, for sure lah?
T9	I1	:	Oh, you're gonna have a life partner?
T10	P1	:	But for sure that that one is ganjil [odd]. When we 're young for sure that we can have, but let's say that we are in the forty or fifty, that one is impossible we can have a life partner, a gay partner.
T11	I1	:	You cannot have a life partner by then?
T12	P1	:	No.
T13	I1	:	Why?
T14	P1	:	Because most of the gays, they start to back to the normal, back to the normal mental when they are forty or fifty.
T15	I1	:	Right now can you be normal?
T16	P1	:	I can but I don't want to be. For sure it has to take a lot of effort.
T17	I1	:	Oh, really.
T18	P1	:	It takes a lot of effort, it has to come from inside.
T19	I1	:	So normally you say gay people, when they reach forty or fifty, they'll be normal?
T20	P1	:	Ya.
T21	I1	:	Why do you say that?
T22	P1	:	Based on the experience, I see people around me. When they are forty or fifty, they start have a family. On the outside still they are a little bit lembut [soft] , but I think they change from the inside . That's the time that they can have girls as their life partners.

In Excerpt 33, when asked whether he would have a male life partner in later life, Participant 1 answered that he definitely (“sure lah”) would like to, but it would be ‘odd’ to have a gay life partner when one is already in his forties or fifties. From the use of the pronoun ‘we’ in his utterance (T10, Excerpt 32), ‘When we’re young for sure that we can have, but let’s say that we are in the forty or fifty, that one is impossible we can have a life

partner, a gay partner”, he communicated his inclusion with the in-group (homosexuals). The in-group members generally possess similar attitudes (Hogg and Abrams, 1988) and this gives the implication that in Participant 1’s view, he and the other members of the in-group (in Malaysia) have the same perception that the homosexual lifestyle is only for young people. The in-group considers it ‘odd’ and ‘impossible’ for people above the age of forty to lead a homosexual lifestyle. In the same utterance, he used the modal ‘can’ to express the meaning of permissibility or acceptability for young people to lead this lifestyle but the use of the adjective ‘impossible’, to stress that the lifestyle is not for older people.

From the same excerpt, Turn 16, when asked at the time of the interview whether Participant 1 can be normal, his answers were “I can, but I don’t want to be. For sure it has to take a lot of effort” and “It takes a lot of effort, it has to come from inside”. In these utterances, Participant 1 again used the modal verb ‘can’ but this time it came with a different meaning. In this case he was referring to his ability to change, but he was not yet ready to do so. He then used the modal ‘has to’ to show that a lot of effort would be necessary if the change was to be achieved. In addition, the effort would have to come from inside. Here he used the metonymy ‘inside’ to refer to the heart. His use of the metonymy ‘inside’ can be linked to the popular saying in the English language, “The heart wants what the heart wants” which conveys the meaning that in order to really change his lifestyle, his heart must have changed first. Participant 1’s utterances in Turn 22 in the same excerpt insinuate that as they get older, homosexuals ‘can’ change, or at least have the ability to change to become heterosexual and have females as their life partners. Though they still do not change the ‘outside’ (a metonymy to refer to the physical

appearance and mannerisms) i.e. ‘lembut’ or ‘soft’ (a metonymy to refer to femininity), they change from the inside (the heart). This scenario gives the implication that when homosexuals get older; they are forced (by ideologies) to assimilate back into the mainstream ideology of sexuality as it is the proper thing to do. To continue being homosexual until one reaches the age of forty to fifty would be considered odd and unacceptable.

Excerpt 34

T1	I1	:	So, you don't want to get married one day? Even, let's say you have a boyfriend that you really love, do you want to marry him?
T2	P1	:	That one, for sure we want, let's say we can have a formal bonding or marriage but I don't think it's the best way.
T3	I1	:	Oh, you don't think so, it's the best way. Okay, so what do you think about religion? Do you have a strong religious background?
T4	P1	:	Tak. Waktu sekolah, ya, ada baca Quran semua. Saya tahu ini berdosa. Sometimes when I think, kalau nak mati nanti, mesti susah kan nak mati. Lepas tu, macam mana nanti, family semua tak rapat, siapa nak tengok mayat, siapa nak baca Yasin, apa semua. [No. During school days, yes, I did read the Quran. I know this is a sin. Sometimes when I think, at the time of dying, must be difficult to die. After that, how is it then, all family members are not close, who is to come and visit the body, who is going to read the Yasin, all that?]

In Excerpt 34, Turn 2, Participant 1 expressed that he would certainly like to get married to the man he loved if it was permissible, as in some countries, however, he did not think that it would be best. It is in the teaching of Islam that marriage is for men and women, and for a man to marry a man is a further transgression of Islamic laws. When he was asked a question about religion, he acknowledged that he was committing a sin by being gay and he anticipated that his dying moments would be difficult. He used the modal ‘must’ in his

utterance, “Sometimes when I think, at the time of dying, must be difficult to die”. According to Melrose (1983 in Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman, 1999), the modal ‘must’ is used for expressing inference. On a similar note, Foley and Hall (2003) fortify that the modal ‘must’ is used to denote something that we believe to be true from a logical deduction. Based on these linguistic functions of the modal ‘must’, it can be interpreted that Participant 1 believes that he has sinned for violating the Islamic laws for being homosexual and therefore, his dying moments would certainly be difficult. In Turn 4, Excerpt 34, he went on to express his worries about who would come and visit him after he died, and who would read the Yasin (a verse from the Quran) for him, which are the normal rituals for Muslims when there is a death. His worries indicate that deep within him, the Islamic teachings are not completely forgotten or discarded; and they still have an effect on him to a certain degree.

There are many instances in Participant 2’s data that show he was experiencing an internal struggle to remain homosexual while at the same time he was emotionally affected by the mainstream ideologies. This can be seen in Excerpts 35 – 39 taken from his narrative data.

Excerpt 35

T1	I1	:	The whole time. What about a relationship, do you have a boyfriend?
T2	P2	:	Used to, that man, when I was in school. Then I don’t have, I don’t know, I don’t trust gay love because you know, we are in Malaysia. We <u>are not going to</u> be gay forever. And then I don’t know, the negative experience is that I’ve a lot of trouble in making friends. You know, we can’t just go around seeking people right, even gay people we see them we saw them, maybe kau [you] straight ke [or] gay, and we don’t know whether they gay or straight. So trouble in making friends.
T3	I1	:	Okay, so about your relationship with your boyfriend, is there any sad experience maybe, maybe the breakup of the relationship.

T4	P2	:	Ya, the breakup. After one year then we were gonna take SPM in a few months then we broke up.
T5	I1	:	Why?
T6	P2	:	I don't know, we want to take SPM, we feel like the thing is sinful, right, we think that you know the exam is around the corner, we feel like we have to stop making sins. Just that.
T7	I1	:	Oh really, because of the exam?
T8	P2	:	Yes, because of the SPM.
T9	I1	:	So you feel that it is sinful that you won't do well in your SPM?
T10	P2	:	Yes.

In Excerpt 35, Turn 2, Participant 2 expressed that homosexuals in Malaysia are not going to be gay forever. His use of the present progressive in “We are not going to be gay forever” was used to indicate future plan of which the decision had already been made before the time of speaking (Yule, 2006). His utterance implies his belief that homosexuals in Malaysia are not going to remain as homosexuals forever.

Excerpt 36

T1	I1	:	Why don't you trust gay love?
T2	P2	:	I don't know, I just don't trust that, I don't think it will last long. Like I said just now, we're Malaysians I'm trying to change myself. After I'm 30 years old, then I want to change myself of course.

The fact that Participant 2 felt the need to change is strengthened in his utterance in Turn 2, Excerpt 36 above in which he used the present progressive tense, ‘am trying’ to indicate that he was already starting an effort to change and in fact, he specified when he would certainly change, i.e. when he turned thirty years old. Participant 2 again used the pronoun ‘we’ to give the impression that all homosexuals in Malaysia have plans to change to heterosexual some time in their life. He stressed that “we’re Malaysians, I’m trying to change myself” (in Turn 2, Excerpt 37) to imply that he was already trying to change at the time of speaking due to the reason that he is a Malaysian and to change back to being

heterosexual is expected of him. As has been discussed in Chapter 2, homosexuality is not accepted in the Malay culture and Islamic teachings, and this ideology seemed to have an impact on Participant 2 internally. This ideology had caused an internal struggle in him that he felt he needed to change. This fact can be clearly seen in Excerpt 37 – 39 below which have been extracted from Participant 2’s narrative.

Excerpt 37

T1	I1	:	You want to change?
T2	P2	:	I hope I can change. I hope I can change. If I can’t , I know I should stop because you know, I can’t be gay forever.
T3	I1	:	Why? Why you feel that you can’t ...?
T4	P2	:	Because my parents will expect me to marry a girl and I can’t let them down. I just can’t let them down.
T5	I1	:	Then if you marry but you don’t feel for the girl, then how?
T6	P2	:	No, just go for it. It’s okay, for my parents, I’ll do anything.
T7	I1	:	Oh really?
T8	P2	:	I don’t know because I think I have to marry a girl and I want kids.

Excerpt 38

T1	P2	:	I think by 30 I’m going to get married, I hope .
T2	I1	:	So you’ll never go back to being gay?
T3	P2	:	No, I’ll try my best not to.

Excerpt 39

T1	I1	:	So you said you hope you can change, you will try your best.
T2	P2	:	Yes, I will try my best, I hope I can try my best, too. It’s hard to change.
T3	I1	:	It’s hard to change? Why, why do you say it’s hard to change?
T4	P2	:	Because I’ve been gay for like 15 years, eh... twelve, eight years, so it’s hard to change who you are now. When you are like say, how to say huh, it’s just hard to change who you are. In semester 2 I tried to change, I tried my best to change. I don’t contact any of my gay friends, except for my roommate. And then I tried to seduce girls and I have two good friends. When I am with them I don’t feel anything. That’s the comment I think that it’s really hard to change,

		very very hard. You have to cut all your connection between you and your gay world. Then I will lose all of my friends. I don't think I want to lose it now.
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The repeated use of the lexical item 'hope' by Participant 2 in the above excerpts implies his desire and intention to change and yet he was not completely confident that he could. The word 'hope' here acts as a hedging, it mitigates Participant 2's proposition that he would have the ability to change. Hedging devices can be a means to 'soften' or 'temper' the form of the presentation of the proposition of a statement or an utterance (Markannen and Schröder, 1997). Lakoff (1972: 495) describes hedges as "a word or phrase whose job is to make things fuzzier or less fuzzy". According to Heng and Tan (2002: 101), cognition verbs such as 'believe' and 'think' can act as hedges and a user's "choice of cognition verbs appears connected to a stronger stance taken in mitigating the proposition". In Participant 2's case here, his choice of the cognition verb of 'hope' represents his strong desire to change; but on the other hand, this word mitigates his certainty that he will have the ability to change. In Excerpt 39, Turn 2, he uttered "Yes, I will try my best; I hope I can try my best..." Again here he expressed his desire to change, but his choice of the cognition verb of 'hope' mitigates his self-belief that he would be able to do it.

However, despite his lack of confidence that he could change, Participant 2's utterance in Excerpt 37, Turn 2 – "If I can't, I know I should stop because you know, I can't be gay forever", shows the sense of obligation that he feels to stop being homosexual. 'Should' is a modal verb to express an obligation. It is used to talk about what is expected of someone and to generally state what one believes is a good or appropriate idea (Yule, 2006). Here, Participant 2 stated that even if he was not able to change, he was obligated to change

because he believed that, due solely from a sense of obligation from within himself, he was not allowed or permitted to (the modal ‘can’t’) be homosexual forever.

Going back to Excerpt 35 (page 111), in Turn 6, Participant 2 expressed, “I don’t know, we want to take SPM, we feel like the thing is sinful, right, we think that you know the exam is around the corner, we feel like we have to stop making sins”. This utterance shows that he was still very much affected by Islamic ideology. It is the belief of the Muslims that one will not receive the blessings of God if they live in sin. Here in this utterance, Participant 2 used the modal verb ‘have to’ to express that it was a necessity (Yule, 2006) for him to stop making sins (having a relationship with another male) if he were to do well in his SPM examination. This fact was confirmed when the interviewer asked, “So you feel that it is sinful that you won’t do well in your SPM?” and he answered “Yes”.

Participant 3, like Participant 1 and Participant 2, did not reject the mainstream ideology of sexuality and gender. This can be seen in the following two excerpts taken from his interview data.

Excerpt 40

P3: 49. Ramalan saya, saya **berkemungkinan** dah kahwin, dah ada anak, mempunyai kewangan yang kukuh, ada rumah, kereta sendiri.

[49. My prediction, I **probably** have got married, have had children, have stable and solid financial status, have a house, have my own car.]

In Excerpt 40, Participant 3 did not reject the idea that he would be married and have children someday. There are some modal verbs in the English grammar that have equivalent modal verbs in the Malay Language. However, not all modal verbs in the English language are available in the Malay language, such as modals of probability,

which range from a lower degree of certainty to a higher degree of certainty. By using the word ‘berkemungkinan’ (probably) in “Ramalan saya, saya berkemungkinan dah kahwin, dah ada anak, mempunyai kewangan yang kukuh, ada rumah, kereta sendiri” [My prediction, I probably have got married, have had children, have stable and solid financial status, have a house, have my own car], it is hard to interpret the degree of certainty of the possibility that Participant 3 would have gotten married and had children at the age of forty-nine. However, it can be construed that he was considering the possibility of getting married and having children in the future; and leading a life of a heterosexual.

Excerpt 41

P3: Mmm... saya nak cakap pada diri saya sendiri dan juga gay-gay yang berada di luar sana, sebenarnya dunia gay ni memang penuh dengan keseronokan tapi tak kekal lama. Saya rasa kalau dunia gay ni, kalau bagi saya lah, bagi saya lah, mm... kita **patut** berubah.

[Mmm... I would like to say to myself and also gays out there, in actuality the gay world is full of enjoyment but it does not last long. I feel this gay world, to me, to me, mm... we **should** change]

This fact that Participant 3 would change and lead a heterosexual lifestyle was confirmed in his utterance in Excerpt 41. Here, he affirmed that the gay world does not last long, and he was making a suggestion or offering an advise with the use of the modal ‘patut’ (should) that all homosexuals, including himself (the use of the pronoun ‘we’), would be best to change. The use of the word ‘patut’ in his phrase “kita patut berubah”, carries the meaning that it is ‘proper’ or ‘right’ (Asmah Haji Omar, 2008) that they change themselves.

Excerpt 42

T1	I2	:	<p>Okay, kebanyakan orang mempunyai cita-cita hendak berkahwin dan hendak mempunyai anak. Adakah you juga nak berkahwin?</p> <p>[Okay, most people have the ambition to get married and have children. Do you also want to get married?]</p>
T2	P4	:	<p>Yes, yalah, haruslah. I pun rasa juga I nak kahwin macam mana. Tapi kadang-kadang I ketawa sendiri bila fikir pasal kahwin. Boleh ke aku kahwin? Boleh ke aku kahwin, boleh ke aku ada anak? Nak ke aku kahwin, nak ke aku seorang wanita sebab aku rasa aku seorang gay kan. Tapi tapi bila kita fikir-fikir balik, kita kena fikir juga lah masa depan kita tu. Tak akan kita tak nak kahwin, mesti, bila sampai umur kita tiga puluh lima tahun kita tak kahwin, mesti orang akan fikir something dengan perwatakan kita macam mana, mesti orang akan kata kita macam mana. Jadi boleh kita hadkan umur kita, kita limitkan sampai mana, apa kita nak buat lepas tu. Bila dah sampai umur kita kita dah tahu plan kita seterusnya apa, kita go straight to the plan kita, lagi cuba untuk achieve semua benda itu.</p> <p>[Yes, yes, must. I also feel I want to get married. But sometimes I laughed at myself when I think about marriage. Can I get married? Can I get married, can I have children? Do I want to get married; do I want a woman because I feel I'm gay, right? But when we think back, we must think of our future. How will we not want to get married, must, when we reach the age of thirty-five if we are still not married, people will think something is about our personalities, people will talk about us. So we can limit our age, we limit until when, what we want to do next. When we reach certain age, we know what our next plan is, we go straight to our plan, try to achieve all.]</p>
T3	I2	:	<p>So you dah buat plan untuk hidup...?</p> <p>[So you have already made plan for life...?]</p>
T4	P4	:	<p>Ya, I buat plan. So tu I cakap, I maybe nak jadi gay ni sampai umur dua puluh lima/dua puluh enam tahun, selepas tu I akan treat diri I sebagai seorang straight lah. So sebagai seorang straight haruslah I akan mencari seorang isteri dan adakan zuriat-zuriat untuk diri sendiri, untuk meneruskan saya punya keturunan, semua lah. Macam bolehlah fikir-fikirkan tu semua, sangat sangat perlukan. Jangan.... Itulah</p>

		<p>saya kadang-kadang saya hairan bila orang yang gay dah sampai umur 30 lebih, dia tak rasa ke dunia ni bukan dia punya. Memanglah kita tahu gay ni salah, gay ni dosa besar, tapi kita memang macam orang takbur macam tak ada masa nak bertaubat semua. Bukan tak ada masa, tapi kita kena bertaubatlah. Mungkin hidayah tu belum dapat lagi, so bila dah dapat mereka akan bertaubatlah. Seharap-harapnya lah.</p> <p>[Yes, I made plan. So that's what I say, I maybe want to be gay until I'm twenty-five/twenty-six years old, after that I will treat myself as a straight person. So as a straight person I should find a wife and have children and all. Can think about all that, very very necessary. Don't... sometimes I feel surprised when a gay person reaches the age of 30 plus, doesn't he think that this world is not his. Certainly we know that being gay is wrong, being gay is a big sin, and we act like we are arrogant that we don't have time to repent. Not that we don't have time, but we must repent. Probably haven't got the inner call yet, so when they get, they will repent. Hopefully.]</p>
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In Excerpt 42, when asked if he would want to get married in the future, Participant 4 answered, “Yes, yalah, harus”. Here the use of modal ‘harus’ in the Malay language is in the same functional category with ‘mesti’ which is borrowed from the English modal ‘must’ (Asmah Haji Omar, 2008). In Turn 2, Excerpt 42, Participant’s use of this modal gives the impression that he regarded being married not only an obligation but also a necessity (Folley and Hall, 2003). Even though, he questioned himself as to whether he would be able to get married and have a relationship with a woman (as in questions: ‘Can I get married? Can I get married, can I have children? Do I want to get married; do I want a woman because I feel I’m gay, right?’ in Turn 2, excerpt 42), he went on to say that “we must think about our future”. He used the modal ‘mesti’ (must) to express that it is necessary (Foley and Hall, 2003; Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman, 1999) for a man to get married to a woman to lead a better future. In the same turn, he continued saying, “How will we not want to get married, must, when we reach the age of thirty-five if we

are still not married, people will think something about our personalities, people will talk about us". In this sentence, Participant 4 was expressing that he felt obliged to get married at a certain age; otherwise people might think that there was something wrong with his personality. Like the other research participants, Participant 4 also felt that he needed to assimilate the majority ideology of male-female relationship in order to lead a better life in the future and to be accepted by the mainstream society.

There are actually quite a number of instances in Participant 4's interview in which he talked about religion. As an example, in Excerpt 42, Turn 4, he mentioned that being homosexual is wrong and is a sin as decreed by Islam; and that homosexuals including him (the use of pronoun 'we') should not be arrogant and 'must' repent. Again, Participant 4 used the modal 'must' to show that they have a strong obligation to change into heterosexual. Here Participant 4 was accepting the Islamic ideology of sexuality. He repeatedly used the adverb 'very very' before the adjective 'necessary' to stress that homosexuals indeed need to consider returning to the heterosexual life while they still have time to repent as the 'world' is not theirs, and that one day they will have to leave this world. Participant 4 also expressed his hope that homosexuals will be shown the right way by God, and he believes that once they are shown the way, they 'akan' (will) repent. 'Akan' in the Malay language carries the meaning 'waiting to happen' (Asmah Haji Omar, 2008). This meaning of 'akan' can be equated with the modal 'will' in English which is used by a speaker to say that he/she believes something is certain or true (Foley and Hall, 2003). Here it can be concluded that Participant 4's way of thinking was still very much influenced by the Islamic teachings and the ideologies of Islam were still rooted deep inside him.

Another instance in the interview that shows religion still plays a role in Participant 4's life is in the excerpt below.

Excerpt 43

P4: Maybe I'll be a prime minister. Oh my God, hopefully I'll be a prime minister, insyaallah, kita tak tahu kan. Entah-entah jadi imam masjid negara ke, kita tak tahu. Mungkin umur I tiga puluh nanti, Tuhan bagi petunjuk supaya I berubah, I bertaubat dan taubat I diterima, kita tak tahu. Bila taubat I diterima, I dapat hidayah jadi seorang imam, kita tak tahu kan. So kita just mengimpikan sesuatu yang sangat baik, yang sangat baik, sangat sempurna, itu yang penting dalam kehidupan so saya cuma impikan sebuah kehidupan, sebuah masa depan yang sangat cerah, yang sangat baik, yang sangat saya impi-impikan. Jadi untuk saya mendapat semua itu, saya haraplah, saya harap lepas saya dah puas merasai dunia ni, dunia gay ni saya mendapat petunjuk daripada Allah untuk menjadi seorang yang straight.

[Maybe I'll be the prime minister. Oh my God, hopefully I'll be a prime minister, insyaallah, we'll never know, right. **Perhaps** I may become the imam of the National Mosque, we'll never know. **Maybe** when I'm thirty, God will give me guidance to change, I **ll** repent and my repentance **will** be accepted, we'll never know. When my repentance has been accepted, I receive a blessing to become an imam, we'll never know, right. So we just dream of something very good, which is very good, very perfect, that's what is important in life. So I only dream of a life, a future which is very bright, which is very good, which I dream of very much. So to get all that, I hope, I hope after I have tasted this entire world, this gay world I will receive guidance from God to become a straight person.]

In this dialogue, Participant 4 was contemplating his hopes and dreams for the future. He used lexical items such as 'maybe', 'perhaps' and the modal 'will' to show that some of his hopes and dreams would come true. He dreamt of a 'bright' future, something that is 'very good' and 'perfect' which is definitely not the homosexual lifestyle. Here it can be perceived that even though he was happy as a homosexual man, it was not a lifestyle that is good or perfect, or a life that promised a bright future. He talked about repenting, giving up the homosexual lifestyle, and receiving God's blessing and guidance; and hoping (desiring) to become a heterosexual man because he believes that only then can he achieve

the perfect life. His hold on Islam can also be seen in his answer to the question as to whether he had ever thought of living in another country like United States of America or United Kingdom, which are more open to homosexuality. His answer was “no” as in the following excerpt.

Excerpt 44

P4: Aa... rasanya tidak pernah kot, rasa saya bangun saya sebagai rakyat Malaysia walaupun saya gay tu. Memang saya tahu negara-negara luar tu lebih open kan, boleh kahwin sesame jenis, tapi saya rasa kita mesti ingat kita walaupun kita ni gay, kita **mesti** ingat Tuhan, kita **mesti** tahu kita ni Islam, jadi kita **mesti** tahu dunia akan kiamat, kita **mesti** tahu neraka, syurga, pahala dosa semua, kan. Memang kita tahu kita ni gay tapi kita tak akan nak jadi gay selama-lamanya. One day kita akan berubah kan tapi it takes time lah dan masa untuk kita berubah.

[Ah... I feel never, I think, feel I wake up I am a Malaysian citizen even though I am gay. Of course I know that countries abroad are more open, right, **can** marry with the same sex, but I feel we must remember that even though we are gay, we must remember God, we must know that we are Muslims, so we must know the world will come to an end, we must know hell, heaven, virtues and sins and all, right. Of course we know that we are gay but we **will** not want to be gay forever. One day we **will** change, right, but it takes time for us to change.]

In the above dialogue, Participant 4 used the word ‘mesti’ which is the modal ‘must’ repeatedly as in his phrase “...tapi saya rasa kita mesti ingat kita walaupunpun kita ni gay, kita mesti ingat Tuhan, kita mesti tahu kita ni Islam, jadi kita mesti tahu dunia akan kiamat, kita mesti tahu neraka, syurga, pahala dosa semua, kan” [...but I feel we must remember that even though we are gay, we must remember God, we must know that we are Muslims, so we must know the world will come to an end, we must know hell, heaven, virtues and sins and all, right]. The modal must is used to encourage someone to do something that is considered important by the speaker or to emphasize a strong feeling or opinion on an issue (Yule, 2006). Here Participant 4 stressed how necessary that even though they are homosexual, it is important that they remember God, heaven and hell,

virtues and sins; and that they do not go completely astray from the religion like the homosexuals overseas that are permitted (the use of the modal ‘can’ in “can marry with the same sex”) to marry someone of the same gender. The use of the modal ‘will’ in Participant 4’s statement, “Of course we know that we are gay but we will not want to be gay forever. One day we will change, right, but it takes time for us to change”, conveys a sense of promise or commitment (Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman, 1999) that they will change one day.

The discussions in this section imply that all four of these young homosexuals possess a uniformed stance concerning the mainstream ideology of sexuality and the religion of Islam. None of them attempted to legitimize their homosexual lifestyles and there were no instances during their interviews that show they rejected the mainstream ideology of sexuality completely. In fact, many of their statements suggest that there is an internal struggle or conflict within themselves. On one hand they enjoyed and wanted to be homosexual, yet on the other, they knew that it was wrong; and that they needed to change and someday assimilate back into the dominant ideology.

4.3 Major Findings and Conclusion

CDA analyzes discourse at both the micro-level (linguistic means) as well as at the macro-level (the social context in which the discourse is embedded). Therefore, through the critical discourse analysis framework used in this study, the findings of this study emerge as both linguistic and social.

In the aspect of social, the findings of this research do not differ from, but in fact confirm the findings of previous studies that have been done in relation to the identity construction of the Malay youth by Mahmud Hassan Khan (2006), the influence of culture and religion on male transsexual identity in Malaysia by Teh Yik Koon (2001), and the sexual identities of Malay homosexual males in Malaysian short stories by Collin Jerome (2008) as discussed in Chapter 2. The life stories narrated by the four young Malay homosexual males, who are the participants of this research, reveal that their discursive construction of identities is very much influenced by their culture and religion. Similar to the findings of the above three studies, this present study found that these young homosexual males do not reject the mainstream ideologies embraced by the society they grew up and live in. In fact, these participants reproduced and maintained the status quo of the homosexual and heterosexual in the society by stating that homosexuality is not normal and that, in their opinion, all homosexuals in Malaysia will eventually return to the heterosexual lifestyle. In their view, being homosexual is only temporary and that as they grow older; they will need to assimilate back the mainstream sexual ideology. This is what is expected of them by the society. Even though there is no direct coercion from any authority that forces them to accommodate and assimilate the values and ideologies of the majority, their own cultural and religious beliefs that have been cultivated within them throughout their life makes them feel that they need to do so. This is in line to Crotti's (1998: 79) assertion that the values which have been inculcated in us will "establish a tight grip upon us and, by and large, shape our thinking and behavior throughout our lives". These four young Malay homosexual males' narratives reveal that there is a struggle within them between the desire to remain homosexual and their beliefs of what is appropriate and proper.

In constructing their identities, the participants of this research are found to be employing certain discourse strategies. They have used strategies such as accommodation, assimilation, rationalization, exaggeration/mitigation and rejection in representing themselves and describing their lives; while at the same time, revealing their stance or position towards the dominant sexual ideology. These participants did not try to fight or challenge the mainstream sexual ideology, in fact they reproduced the status quo of heterosexuality and homosexuality in the society – the heterosexuality is the dominant ideology whereas homosexuality is not accepted in the society. When describing their lives as homosexuals, they used exaggeration strategy such as using hyperboles to picture it as very wonderful and happy. However, none of them rejected the mainstream sexual ideologies. In fact, there were many instances in their narratives, they accommodated and rationalized the mainstream sexual ideology; they mitigated their assessment of how the heterosexuals treated them, and they expressed their intentions to assimilate the mainstream sexual ideology. The strategy of rejection of the dominant ideologies is almost completely made absent in their narratives. In contrast, the strategy of rejection chosen by some of these participants was used to indicate their disapproval of the homosexual lifestyle itself. Examples of the discourse strategies used by these subject individuals can be seen in Table 4.1 below.

Table 4.1
Participants' Discourse Strategies and their Linguistic Realization

Strategies	Linguistic Realization
Assimilation	<p>Example:</p> <p>Yes, I made plan. So that's what I say, I maybe want to be gay until I'm twenty-five/twenty-six years old, after that I will treat myself as a straight person. So as a straight person I should find a wife and have children and all. Can think about all that, very very necessary. Don't... sometimes I feel surprised when a gay person reaches the age of thirty plus, doesn't he think that this world is not his. Certainly we know that being gay is wrong, being gay is a big sin, and we act like we are arrogant that we don't have time to repent. Not that we don't have time, but we have to repent. Probably haven't got the inner call yet, so when they get, they will repent.</p>
Rationalization	<p>Example:</p> <p>Ah... I feel never, I think, feel I wake up I am a Malaysian citizen even though I am gay. Of course I know that countries abroad are more open, right, can marry with the same sex, but I feel we must remember that even though we are gay, we must remember God, we must know that we are Muslims, so we must know the world will come to an end, we must know hell, heaven, virtues and sins and all, right. Of course we know that we are gay but we will not want to be gay forever. One day we will change, right, but it takes time for us to change.</p>
Accommodation	<p>Example:</p> <p>So I am more comfortable in Malaysia even though sometimes we have to hide that we are gay, we have to hide. We have to hide how we are, have to cover up in public but that is because we want it. So we have to determine our own life. We who want to become like this, we who want to become gay, so we have to accept it, we have to try, we have to teach ourselves to control our emotion in public, control the way we talk, the way we walk, aa...</p>
Rejection	<p>Example:</p> <p>I feel if I have children later, I will not treat my children as gay or lesbian and I will monitor my children so that they will not be like me. I don't want them to become like me because I know. But I cannot say, when they are big, they have their own life, right. Of course they have own life, but I have to monitor so that they will not become trapped in all these things.</p>

Table 4.1, continued

Exaggeration	<p>Example: The gay guys are more friendly and they talk a lot and straight guys don't talk that much. I can speak to gay guys for two or three days long rather than speak with straight guys, it will last two to three minutes, like that. And gay, you know, gay has two meanings, right, happy and gay. So gay people are happy, very happy. I know when I mix with them we just laugh and laugh and laugh and laugh.</p>
Mitigation	<p>Example: Like you know, Malaysia is like a country which is <u>rather</u> primitive and if you look even one glance, transsexuals and gay boys, they don't see.</p>

In terms of linguistic means and forms of realizing their discursive strategies, the participants are found to be employing certain rhetorical devices such as metaphor, metonymy, hyperbole, and specific lexical items to produce group definitions in constructing 'us' and 'them'. They did not select all positive symbols in representing and evaluating themselves, and neither did they select all negative symbols to signify the heterosexuals. For example in representing the 'self' or the homosexuals, the reference of 'scandal' to their homosexual lover or partner given by the homosexuals themselves, gives the connotation of a disgraceful and shameful position to their loved one. The data also includes the use of metonymy to refer to certain objects/conditions such as 'inside' to refer to the heart; 'outside' to refer to the physical appearance and mannerism; and 'soft' to refer to femininity. The participants also used a lot of hyperboles to exaggerate their feelings about certain situations/conditions. For example, the use of hyperboles such as in Participant 2's utterance, "I can speak to gay guys for two or three days long rather than speak with straight guys, it will last two to three minutes". Apart from these rhetorical devices, the most prominent linguistic item used throughout the narratives of these subject individuals is modality. The participants used various modal verbs in positioning

themselves against the mainstream ideologies. For example, the utterance, “If I can’t, I know I should stop because you know, I can’t be gay forever” produced by Participant 2, the modal ‘should’ indicates a sense of obligation on his part to change to heterosexual because he feels that he can’t (the modal ‘cannot’ which means not permitted to) be homosexual forever.

As has been discussed earlier in the writing of this research, the notion of the Malays’ identity has always been associated with their Islamic beliefs. After analyzing the discourse data produced by the participants of this research, it can be concluded that this notion is very true. Even though, these participants are leading homosexual lifestyles, which are prohibited by the Islamic teachings, the way in which they view life, the people around them and themselves are very much reflective of their religious beliefs and values. In the discourse of their life stories – past, present, and future – these research participants have reproduced not only the status quo of heterosexual and homosexual in the society, but also the notion of the Malays’ identity.