

## Chapter Four

### Data Analysis

#### 4.0 Introduction

This chapter reports the analysis of data based on discourse-historical approach (Wodak, 2001; 2009), within Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). Textual analysis has been divided into sections for the analysis of contents, strategies and linguistic means of realization. The micro analysis of linguistic means has been incorporated in the macro analysis of the text to show the connection between discrete uses of language and the strategies that the individual authors used to establish the contents.

The data (i.e., opinion editorials) has been collected from *Sin Chew Daily* published between June to August 2009 on the issue of teaching of mathematics and science in English. To give an overview, the majority of the editorials focused on the importance of mother tongue (i.e., mandarin), not the national language (i.e., Bahasa Malaysia). A number of articles, on the other hand, emphasized that the changing of educational policy actually was an instrument of some politicians who wanted to gain supports from the greater vote bank to sustain hegemony.

Issues about sacrificing ethnic Chinese culture at the cost of national culture due to the implementation of new policy have also been discussed. Pedagogical issues, i.e., allocation of time for teaching English and other subjects are discussed while worries about mastering the mother tongue occupied the content of the editorials as well. Finally, a few opinion pieces hinted at the possibility of Malays slanting the mother tongue in the name of national dignity.

The data shows that all the authors of the editorials in the Chinese press supported the use of English as the medium of instruction in secondary level but not in the primary level. They believed that at the primary level to master the contents of mathematics and sciences is more necessary than to master them in English. With

maturity the learners would be able to address the language issue better at the secondary level as they study in second language, i.e., English. The reason of using English in the secondary school is that after a few years of English-study in the primary school, as a subject, most of the students are expected to have the ability to use English to learn contents of other subjects, i.e., mathematics and science. In addition, the use of English at the secondary might help the students as they further their study in higher education; hence, there are utilitarian reasons behind such usage.

#### **4.1 Textual Analysis**

This section provides a structural analysis of the texts of the opinion editorials using the three-stratum analysis of Wodak (i.e., describe the content, strategies, and linguistic means and forms of realization).

[Text 1: LRY-10-06-2009]

##### **Content**

This text has two contents, which are:

1. The education minister has not noticed the main problems, i.e. the confusion in the direction of teaching, as students continue securing low achievement. However, teaching in English continues and heavily focused on.
2. As students cannot follow the lesson they do not concentrate in the class which ultimately affects the discipline in the classroom.

##### **Description**

First of all, the author says that every year the government does some exploratory work, but the result of the work made the students became ‘white rats’. Actually the main problems in the society are less considered by the government such

as: the failure of the education policy which results in a lot of students are not interested in studying anymore, and engage themselves in elopement, and criminal activities. The mental state of the students is not an insignificant issue. The editorial described that if all students get A in the exams, but violate the law and commit crime, they cannot contribute towards the wellbeing of the society and country. The Malaysian education system let the parents, and schools just focus on the grade. There are all the negative effects of the educational policy, running in the opposite direction of the ideal goals of education. Here the author finds flaws in the education policy and produces his criticism (i.e., students should not be treated as guinea pigs; learners should not be blamed as they lack attention in the classroom and give rise to disciplinary problems). The author's aim was to establish the point that an ideal educational policy is not only about imparting knowledge but also instilling moral values in their students.

### **Strategies**

1. Strategy of dissimulation, as the author does not agree with the current policy
2. Strategy of justification, as the author provides reasons why the current policy should be discarded; also, justifying students' interest as they lose interest in the classroom is an effect of the 'failure' of the policy, and not a 'problem' of the learners in the first place.

### **Linguistic Realization**

In this text the author uses a number of modal verbs, rhetorical items of metaphor, and classical Chinese proverb to strategize and describe the contents.

The Modal verbs used are

要-yao (need to; must): The aim of the minister is students **must** improve their English.

应该是-ying gai shi (should be): The state education **should be** focused on “Holistic Education”.

应该是-ying gai shi ( should be): The school education **should be** a happy thing.

要-yao (need to): Education is not politics, (we) don't need to fight for power, and Education **needs** to return to Education.

### Metaphor

目前的教育问题一箩筐:( mu qian de jiao yu wen ti yi luo kuang) bucketful of problems

There are a bucketful of problems (问题一箩筐) in educational issues in recent educational policy.

国家的未来就犹如“堆起来的蛋”，随时都会破碎：（guo jia de wei lai jiu you ru “dui qi lai de dan” ,sui shi dou hui po sui）

The future of the country is like a **pile of eggs** (堆起来的蛋), it can be broken in any time.

### Classical Chinese proverb

如老鼠拉龟，无从下手（lao shu la gui, wu cong xia shou）The rat wants to pull the tortoise but doesn't know where to start from.

Government is really seriously looking at the issue of reformation of the educational policy, but they are not sure where to start from.

学而时习之，不亦悦乎：（xue er shi xi zhi, bu yi yue hu）Great pleasure is derived from learning and constantly reviewing what has been learned.

Learning and applying what you learn all the time, isn't that fun?

危言耸听 (wei yan song ting) -exaggerate things just to scare people.

Mahathir Mohamad said, abolishing PPSMI will make Malaysians become idiot, is also something said to make people surprised or shocked on purpose .

### **[Text 2: XS-10-06-09]**

This text has two contents, which are:

1. The focus on the ex-PM Mahathir Mohamad's declaration of the use of English to teach mathematics and sciences makes learners smarter.
2. The majority of students do not have good command of English; therefore, their study of mathematics and sciences is negatively influenced.

### **Description**

The author in this opinion piece has cited statements made by the ex-PM Mahathir Mohamad earlier while he served as the PM of the country, and compared it with the PM's present statements. A point is made that Mahathir is still trying to protect the decision he made previously. To intensify the possible negative effect of what the change of policy be resulted in, Mahathir Mohamad thinks that all the Malays and people of other ethnic groups in Malaysia will become 'idiot' (愚笨-yu ben). However, if taken Mahathir's point, there is no specific evidence or study on the other hand, showing that the use of English as the medium of instruction could make people clever. The author claims that the main problem is the students lack the ability to use English to understand the subject; hence, how to enhance students' proficiency in the language is much more significant concern. . Besides, the author considered that Mahathir's position focused more at urban students and neglected the rural students.

### **Strategies**

1. Strategy of dissimulation as the author does not agree with the current policy and the position taken by Mahathir.
2. Strategy of justification as the author provides reasons to argue against Mahathir Mohamad's view of English could make people clever.

### **Linguistic Realization**

In this text the author uses a number of modal verbs, rhetorical item of metaphors, and classical Chinese proverbs to strategize and describe the contents.

The Modal verb used is

将要-jiang yao (will): If government changes the educational policy all the Malays and people of other ethnic groups in Malaysia **will** become idiot.

Metaphor

两头不到岸: (liang tou bu dao an) fall at two sides

The editor described that English as the medium of instruction will be a problem for the rural students, which seems that the students cannot master at two sides. It means that the students cannot master English, as well as understand mathematics and science.

Proverb

一意孤行: (yi yi gu xing) Insist on doing things in one's own way.

Even the educational policy has been argued against by some citizens but Dr. Mahathir still insists on his decision.

一厢情愿: (yi xiang qing yuan) following one's wishes.

Using English to teach the students is Mahathir Mohamad's own wishes.

### [Text 3: CBQ- 10-6-2009]

This text has two contents, which are:

1. Even though Mahathir Mohamad has retired he still has the power over the government.
2. The instance of other countries' successes in technology and other aspects shows that the English is not the only way to make people clever.

### **Description**

The editorial emphasizes the importance of mother tongue and describes the notion that the nation is affected by Mahathir Mohamad even though he has retired. The educational policy has been argued by major ethnic groups (i.e., Malay, Chinese and Indian) since it has been implemented in 2003, however it has been in the agenda for discussion for almost 7 years since 2002. Mahathir Moahamd's response to the new policy in 2009 was: "if they change the educational policy, all the Malays and people of other ethnic groups in Malaysia will become idiots", seem a directive to the leaders. However, the author provides different set of arguments as compared to Mahathir. He cites examples of other Asian countries and their success stories, for instance of Japan and China, and individuals like Qian Xue Sen and Hua Luo Geng who was educated in their mother tongue and became science wizards. Also cited are the technological development of China, Japan and Korea in Asia and German and France the countries which do not use English as native language like the United States. The excellence and wisdom achieved by these people are not less than the people in the US. Finally the author concludes that Mahathir's position that if English is cancelled as the medium of instruction people will become idiots is due to two reasons, firstly they seriously lack confidence in themselves and, secondly, they think small (自我矮化-zì wǒ āi huà) of themselves.

## Strategies

1. Strategy of dissimulation as the author does not agree with the current policy
2. Strategy of justification as the author provides reasons why the English is not the core of the source to make country strength.

## Linguistic Realization

In this text the author uses a number of modal verbs, rhetorical item of metaphor, and classical Chinese proverb to strategize and describe the contents.

The Modal verbs used are

将-jiang(will): All the Malays and people of other ethnic groups in Malaysia **will** become idiots, if government changes the educational policy.

或许-huo xu (maybe): **Maybe** Mahathir Mohamad loves the people as he loves his children, or **maybe** Mahathir thought the people cannot achieve his wishes as he desired.

Metaphor

(沼泽里的白老鼠-zhao ze li de bai lao shu)

Here the editor likens the majority of children as a white rat, almost drowned in the swamp.

Proverb

棒喝之效:(Bang he zhi xiao): Even the simple words uttered by Mahathir Mohamad could raise a wake-up call, which government officers cannot afford to neglect.

恨铁不成钢: (hen tie bu cheng gang) : Set a higher demand to the people.

充耳不闻:(chong er bu wen): To hear but not pay attention.



Strong vocabularies

强制: qiang zhi –enforce

Enforce used here to imply that Mahathir's regime carried out his desired educational policy as he wanted.

暗讽: Innuendo

The word innuendo is to imply Mahathir Mohamad's dissatisfaction about the new educational policy.

The emphasis on working together **for the first time** is strong in the sentence: "It is *the first time* that three different ethnic groups are engaged in a discussion together (3大民族有史以来第一次对教育课题达到共识-san da ming zu you shi yi lai di yi ci dui jiao yu ke ti da dao gong shi) that is, to modify the dissent of the education policy made by Mahathir Mohamad before.

**[Text 4: LMH-11-06-2009]**

### **Content**

This text has two contents, which are:

1. The author describes the educational sites in Malaysia between 1960s and 1970s
2. Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Education Muhyiddin contend whether English should be the subject that must be passed at SPM.

### **Description**

The author discusses the issue of whether English should be the subject that must be passed in SPM. There is no doubt that everyone knows the importance of English. However the instability of the educational policy in Malaysia becomes a fodder for arguments in establishing hegemony in the higher level of the unity. And in order to defend national language, this issue has been used by some officers to peruse their own

interests. The author writes: “The government officers shouted to safeguard national education policy, in private, they send their children abroad, or ask English teachers to teach their children at home”.

Regarding to the issue of “whether English has to be passed in SPM or not”, which has been declared by Deputy Prime Minister Muhyiddin this has been explained by the author posing his personal view that according to the ability of Malay students’ English level, editor believes it will create another problem for the students and the editor believes that learning a language, the process, personal interest, course content and person’s qualification are much more important.

### **Strategy**

Strategy of dissimilation as the author does not agree with Mahathir Mohamad’s notion of “English is the power”.

### **Linguistic Realization**

In this text the author uses a number of modal verbs, and classical Chinese proverb to strategize and describe the contents.

The Modal verbs used are

应该-ying gai (should be), 必须-bi xu( must)

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Education Muhyiddin asked that whether English **should be** the subject that **must** be passed in SPM.

Proverb

大彻大悟: (da che da wu) realization/awareness of some phenomena

Context of use: Before Mahathir Mohamad retired he realized that the importance of English language and suddenly made a decision to use English teach mathematic and sciences, in order to make up next generation's level of English.

**[Text 5: WJX-13-06-2009]**

This text has two contents, which are:

1. The editorial describes the Former Prime Minister of Singapore Lee Kuan Yew's perspectives on Singapore educational policy.
2. The Deputy Minister of education in Malaysia, Wei Jia xiang, persists on the importance of mother tongue education besides emphasizing the importance of English, due to its status as an international language.

**Description**

The editor started his text with Lee Kuan Yew's meeting, to notify their relationships between the leaders of the two countries. Later in the editorial the author focused on the issues which have been discussed with Lee Kuan Yew, particularly. Editor rejected the ex-PM's view of "be proficient in one language which is much more important than knowing several languages but not good at them"; because of the national conditions of Malaysia and Singapore it is impossible to concentrate on one or two languages.

The Deputy Prime Minister Muhyiddin insists that current educational policy was successful since its implementation in 2003; Muhyiddin said that "few years ago the Grammar-translation method of English is used in the professional level which nowadays has become communicative English." However, the editor strongly believed that the consequences of mother-tongue and the Chinese language will become

increasingly more important, however we need to attach importance to English, because it is an international language.

### **Strategy**

1. Strategy of dissimulation as the author does not agree with the current policy.
2. Strategy of justification as the author provides reasons why “Singapore prime-minister Lee Kuan Yew’s suggestion of monolingual education is not suitable for Malaysia.

### **Linguistic Realization**

In this text the author uses a number of modal verbs and classical Chinese proverb to strategize and describe the contents

The Modal verbs used are

无法-wu fa (cannot) : Lee Kuan Yew said that learning many languages **cannot** make people proficient in using them.

必须-bi xu (must) :The Malaysian **must** recognize that learning English is the best choice now.

必须-bi xu (must) :The Chinese society **must** insist on the importance of mother-tongue education.

将-jiang (will): The Chinese language **will** become increasingly more important.

### **Proverb**

Through conversation with Lee KuanYew, the author of the editorial felt that Lee Kuan wanted to demonstrate his desire to maintain the good relationship with Malaysia exemplified by his use of proverbs:

如数家珍(ru shu jia zheng):Very familiar with all the situation.

回溯成年往事(hui su cheng nian wang shi) bring back memories.

娓娓道来(wei wei dao lai) dwell on, knows everything.

When the author of the editorial describes the relationship between Mahathir and Lee Kuan Yew, he used:

争锋相对: (zheng feng xiang dui) tit for tat/measure for measure

Mahathir Mohamad and Lee KuanYew, are two leaders representing two countries who are arguing many issues. It is very difficult for them to have a common view in most of the issues.

#### **[Text 6: LMH-16-06-2009]**

#### **Content**

This text has two contents, which are:

1. Apart from the political issues in Malaysia, hot issue is the level of English of the Malays.
2. The opinion editorial gives some examples to prove the higher role of mother-tongue education.

#### **Description**

The first paragraph of the editorial pointed out the main issue of this article, which is the argumentation of whether the English language should be the medium of instruction or not. The editor discussed the importance of the English language, moreover to remind us the mother-tongue also cannot be forgotten. Editor quoted from a speech of Guo He Nian, a successful business man in Singapore to support his idea of mother-tongue's important. "Strength of a Chinese stems from his mastery of the mother tongue". The argument is, no matter how good we are in the English language it

is our second or third language, we would never perform it like Clinton or Margaret Thatcher. Another reference made is, the use of language in business: Chinese entrepreneurs doing business notify the power of Chinese language. These businessmen are knowledgeable, however, the way they use English in doing business is relatively superficial”. Furthermore if we look at the successful entrepreneurs in Hong Kong, they were all educated by mother-tongue.

### **Strategies**

1. Strategy of dissimilation as the author does not agree with the current policy.
2. Strategy of justification as the author provides examples why the mother tongue education is important.

### **Linguistic Realization**

In this text the author uses a number of modal verbs, and metaphor to strategize and describe the contents.

The Modal verbs used are

无法-wu fa (cannot) :We **cannot** speak English like Clinton or Margaret Thatcher.

可能-ke neng (might):I am afraid we **might** forget our mother-tongue because the influence of English language.

Metaphor

(美国印第安人战士-mei guo yin di an ren zhan shi) American Indian warriors

The editor described the Chinese language as like of Chinese entrepreneurs doing business like American Indian warriors, tightening their ears against the earth to track

distant enemies. They are knowledgeable; unlike they use English in doing business, relatively superficial.

**[Text 7: HSM-17-06-2009]**

**Content**

This text has two contents, which are:

1. The government needs to use the “middle-of-road” policy to address the issue of Chinese language education; government cannot restrict development of Chinese language because of the status of Chinese language in the world.
2. The authorities must improve schools’ English curriculum and train adequate English language teachers in order to improve the efficiency of learning English.

**Description**

Firstly, the editor quoted the “doctrine of the balance” of Confucius, to imply how a successful political system should be. It means a system based on adopting the middle path. Regarding to the issue of Chinese language, by the influence of internationalization, the government needs to make a right decision to match Malaysian’s national condition. In addition, the editor was not refusing the important of English in Malaysia. He responded Muhiyiddin’s question that whether English must pass SPM through giving some suggestions like authorities must try first to improve the school English curriculum and to train adequate English language teachers in order to improve the efficiency of learning English. He also believed that the policy of prioritizing mother tongue, and reducing English to a secondary role would be more acceptable by people.

Finally, the editor stated his position that students should be educated in mother-tongue in primary and secondary schools until they go to college.

## Strategy

Strategy of dissimulation as the author does not agree with the current policy.

## Linguistic Realization

In this text the author uses a number of modal verbs, and metaphors to strategize and describe the contents.

The modal verbs used are

必须-bi xu (must) : Muhyddin suggested that students **must** pass English in order to get their diploma.

必须-bi xu (must): Authorities **must** improve the schools' English curriculum, and train adequate English language teachers in order to improve the efficiency in learning English.

会-hui (will) : Without a good plan, there **will** be more than ten million of students fail to get diplomas.

Metaphor

中庸之道(zhong yong zhi da) :Doctrine of the balance

The editor likened the educational policy and political realization with Confucius's "doctrine of the balance" which implies that before you want to make a decision you have to look at the surrounding environment.

[Text 8: YBN-17-06-2009]

**Content**

This text has two contents, which are:



1. English is not the magic wand that may transform Malaysian students to become cleverer and smarter.
2. The Chinese primary school students like being educated in their mother tongue.

### **Description**

In the first paragraph, the editorial reviewed Malaysian educational policy within last few years, and how the students, and teachers have suffered due to the changes in the educational policy.

The author of the opinion piece focused the discussion on students' perceptions on the consequences of not using mother-tongue at the beginning of their study of mathematics and sciences. The students prefer mother tongue teaching, mostly because while they are translating the text, they will make further mistakes at the level of concept; it is difficult for them to improve their English and master in mathematics and sciences simultaneously. The similar reason has been mentioned and discussed in other editorials, that is, neither had they doubted the importance of English, nor did they believe that English is a magic wand.

There is no question that there might be some more chances available to the ones proficient in English compared to the people who are not well-versed in English but English does not mean everything. And being "good in English does not mean a good human being" stated Shen Yun Cong. In addition the editor refers to a Taiwan financial editorial to argue Mahathir Mohamad and Lee Kuan Yew's view of *English as a power*.

In the final discussion, editor described that it is unreasonable if Malaysian government wants to use English to teach mathematic and sciences only because that English is the international language.

## Strategies

1. Strategy of dissimilation as the author does not agree with the Mahathir Mohamad's statements.
2. Strategy of justification as the author provides reasons why English is not so important.

## Linguistic Realization

In this text the author uses a number of modal verbs, and metaphor to strategize and describe the contents.

The modal verb used is

要-yao (need to): Students **need to** translate English to mother tongue.

Metaphor

魔法棒:(mo fa bang) magic wand

English is like Harry potter's magic wand.

走马灯:(zou ma deng) never stopped

The status of a language to be of utmost importance or even becoming a lingua franca has never stopped, for instance at different historical points different languages, e.g., Latin, Spanish, and French secured status.

六脉神剑: (liu mai shen jian) powerful sword. Mahathir Mohamad likened English as a power sword.

[Text 9: CHJ-19-06-2009]

**Content**

This text has two contents, which are:

1. The decision to limit SPM to 10 subjects' will affect Chinese or Tamil language study and will be reflected in the SPM test.
2. The Malaysian educational policy forced children to learn within the system of constraint, it is difficult for them to learn anything when there is no exam provided.

### **Description**

The editorial stated that some of the parents are dissatisfied with the decision of SPM limit to 10 tests, the limitation of scholarship decided students to choose easy subjects to the exam; therefore, it would affect the mother tongue's learning.

The educational policy has forced students to learn within constraint; besides it is considered, hardly encouraging to learn something when there is no exam provided. At the same time, the education system prevents students' learning through examination. The revised education policy has been manipulated by politicians while decision makers have not received relevant professional training. Finally, the author of the editorial gave some suggestions to the government that it needs to find some professional ideas and suggestions to revise the educational policy, otherwise there won't be any significant differences, and more students will be affected.

### **Strategies**

1. Strategy of dissimulation as the author does not agree with the SPM limit to 10 subjects.
2. Strategy of justification as the author justifies the inadequacy of current education policy.

### **Linguistic Realization**

In this text the author uses a number of modal verbs, and classical Chinese proverb to strategize and describe the contents.

The Modal verbs used are

会-hui (will) : Chinese or Tamil language study **will** be directly affected by the SPM test.

将-jiang (will): No matter whether you accept it or not, you **will** follow the decision regarding SPM subject limit [i.e., limit to 10 subjects] as you have followed the decision regarding the teaching of mathematics and sciences in English.

Proverb

想象力比实践更重要:( xiang xiang li bi shi jian geng zhong yao) The editorial quoted Einstein's saying: "imagination is more important than knowledge", to state the constraints within Malaysia education system.

**[Text 10 LMH- 29-06-2009]**

### **Content**

This text has two contents, which are:

1. The Chinese school schedule that has been used is not suitable for the students.
2. The Chinese students in primary schools need to learn mandarin, national language and English which have already brought them bitter experiences.

### **Description**

In this editorial the issues that have been discussed are Chinese school-schedule, education system and the burden of studying many subjects by the students. The editorial focused more on the *unreasonable* school-schedule which has been

implemented in the Chinese primary schools. The schedule has not only made the students but also the teachers suffer. The aspiration as a Chinese under the existing system force the students just focus on study. Besides, according to some educator's experience they found some texts repeated under different subjects. Meanwhile the editorial underscores that Chinese students in primary schools need to learn Mandarin, BM and English, and tutorial after the school. But now they will burden more by using English to teach mathematics and sciences, therefore the editorial suggested schools need to revise the curriculum; also, ministry of education should give priority to the need of students and teachers. Such as need to give some private time to the students; the real impact on students' performance is their teachers' quality and the parents' supervision, as well as children's learning attitudes.

### **Strategy**

Strategy of dissimulation, as the author does not agree with the current policy.

### **Linguistic Realization**

In this text the author uses mostly the modal verb of will to strategize and describe the contents.

The Modal verb used is

会-hui (will): Start from the next year, the minister of education **will** implement new "primary school standard syllabus"; we are afraid, they will add some more subjects within the limited time.

In this editorial, the editorial is using sample sentences, common sense to describe his view.

## **[Text 11: HYL-08-07-2009]**

### **Content**

This text has two contents, which are:

1. The author reports his worries that the final decision announced by the Deputy Prime Minister for the abolition of English to teach mathematics and sciences in primary and secondary schools will encounter many problems.
2. Most of the parents expect to restore the mother-tongue in primary school, however, in secondary schools, to maintain the use of English.

### **Description**

Using English to teach mathematics and sciences has been implemented in 2003. The editor emphasized the public opinion as they prefer to use English in secondary schools; the rationale is: it will be easier to further their study. This issue is raised after the government made a new decision which was to restore mother tongue as the medium of instruction in primary schools and to use national language in secondary schools. Main reasons behind constructing this policy were: the teacher-shortage and students inability to use English to study mathematics and sciences at the primary level; consequently, the move was challenged by the society. Members of the Chinese community, the editorial says, are worried that the Chinese primary school will be replaced one day.

The ministry of education has to consider different social groups before making decision. Using English to teach mathematics and sciences is not one and only path to improve the students' level of English. Much importance has to be given to settle the shortage of English teachers' in secondary schools.

### **Linguistic Realization**

In this text the author uses a number of modal verbs, to strategize and describe the contents.

The Modal verbs used are

将 -jiang (will): Ministry of education **will** restore national language to teach Mathematics and science, this policy will frustrate those students who have English education background.

必须-bi xu (must): If you want to improve English you **must** start from studying the language itself [grammar], not from using English to teach mathematics and sciences.

无法-wu fa (cannot):The government was not prepared enough before the decision was made, this is the reason why it **cannot** yield expected results.

须-xu(need): The secondary schools teacher shortage **needs to** be solved.

### **[Text 12: HYL-09-07-2009]**

#### **Content**

The text has two contents, which are:

1. The mother tongue argument for primary schools.
2. Reversal of the secondary school curriculum to be similar to the one approved in 2003, and parental preference of medium of instruction to be in English.

The editorial describes the author's disappointment regarding the medium of instruction in primary and secondary schools.

#### **Description**

The editor does not expect that the teaching of mathematics and science goes back to the education policy prior to 2003. Major arguments in the past few years have been on the status of the primary schools' medium of instruction which is, preferred to

be in the mother tongue. On the other hand, for the secondary schools, the majority of the arguments were in favor of using English as the medium of instruction.

The author quotes one secondary school student who said that it is even harder to imagine how their younger brothers and sisters will learn to use the *national language*. The author is further surprised that once the decision has been made by the minister of education, the Cabinet minister would accept it even though the decision has received objections from several quarters of the population for many years earlier on. The author further stated, referring to Mahathir Mohamad that the former prime minister said that if you could not implement English in the primary school at least it had to remain in the secondary school.

### **Strategies**

1. The strategy of dissimulation is being used as the author does not agree with the current policy.
2. The strategy of justification is being practiced as the author provides reasons why the current policy should be changed.

### **Linguistic Realization**

In this text the author uses a number of modal verbs, metaphor, and grammatical question to strategize and describe the contents.

The modal verbs used are

要-yao (need ) :The Government **needs** the primary school to return to its original state [return to BM] of education policy.

应该-ying gai( should): Which language **should** be the medium of instruction in Malaysia?



必须-bi xu (must): The Government **must** consider all the effective and relevant as well as pedagogically salient factors before they make a decision.

不能-bu neng (cannot): If English **cannot** be used in primary school, it can at least be used in the secondary school.

Rhetorical question

这下你可开心了- (zhe xia ni ke kai xin le ba ?) Aren't you happy now?

Metaphor

买一送一 (mai yi song yi) Buy one free one.

The editor likened the new policy as buying one item and getting another one for free: If the people want to restore the mother tongue to be used in primary school as they wish, then the government will restore it in the secondary level also.

**[Text 13: LMH- 09-07-2009]**

**Content**

This text has two contents, which are:

1. Starting from 2012, the new educational policy made by the government is just to satisfy the Malay culture and the nationalists who want to insist that all medium of instruction is to be mainly in BM.
2. The treatment between the Chinese primary and national primary school needs to be fairly addressed.

**Description**

The author refers to Mahathir Mohamad who said, "If English cannot be used in the primary school, it can at least be used in the secondary school". To justify the wrong

decision made by Mahathir Mohamad six years ago, now the new decision is made by the government to satisfy the Malays and the nationalists.

The author quotes the result of analysis of the ever-changing mode of education policy in Malaysia, from *Sin Chew Daily* which describes that the students had to go through the medium of Chinese and English to Chinese, then to BM and back to English again. Furthermore, it describes the differences for time spent in English learning in national schools and Chinese primary schools.

### **Strategies**

1. The strategy of dissimulation is the principle here as the author does not agree with the current policy.
2. The strategy of justification is in order here as the author provides reasons for the inequality between different ethnic schools.

### **Linguistic realization**

In this text the author uses a number of modal verbs to strategize and describe the contents.

The modal verbs used are

要-yao(need to): They still **need** to ensure that the medium of instruction for all educational purposes must be mainly BM.

必须-bi xu (must): The students **must** change their attitude to use the national language in the study of mathematic and sciences.

将要-jiang yao(will): The Chinese students **will** face an even more confused future.

Rhetorical questions asked by the editor: Is this learning process normal? Does it meet the ideals of education of the nation? How **can** the children stop crying as they face this difficulty? How can the parents not worry over this issue? And why can't the teachers be sick of the whole messy confusion?

**[Text 14: PX-09-07-09]**

### **Content**

This text states that the new educational policy will be implemented in 2012 for which the parents worry that their children's future will be destroyed by the sudden change in the education policy. In order to improve the students' level of English proficiency, the editorial suggests the following measures:

1. The secondary schools should retain the use of English to teach mathematics and sciences.
2. The government needs to enhance the students' knowledge of English grammar, and also speaking and listening skill in English.
3. The government needs to strengthen the training programs for the English teachers.

### **Description**

The purpose of using English to teach mathematics and sciences in the primary and the secondary schools 6 years ago was to improve the students' level of English proficiency. However, six years later the government decided to restore the mother tongue and national language to be used as the medium of instruction in the primary and the secondary schools over which the issue has been debated and articulated by the author by describing the different reactions made in the society after the government has made the decision. The author analyzed some possible scenarios under the new

education policy and some suggestions have been listed down in order to improve the students' level of English such as the government must retain the use of English to teach in the secondary schools and the urgent need to enhance the students' English grammar, speaking and listening skills and finally strengthen the teachers' level of English proficiency. In the end, the author concludes the text with the strong sentence "the ministry of education must determine and provide an acceptable educational curriculum to enhance the students' level of comprehension in English".

### **Strategies**

1. The strategy of dissimilation is used as the author does not agree with the current policy.
2. The strategy of justification is used as the author provides reasons why the current policy is not suitable in Malaysia.

### **Linguistic Realization**

In this text the author uses a number of modal verbs to strategize and describe the contents.

The modal verbs used are

应该-ying gai (should): Secondary schools **should** retain the use of English to teach mathematics and sciences.

无法-wu fa (cannot): If the students **cannot** grasp a good English foundation in the primary school, then whatever language is used to teach mathematics and sciences, English will still be a major problem to the students.

将 -jiang(will) / 应该 -ying gai (should): The teachers **will** use English to teach mathematics and sciences and they **should** receive professional training in the relevant field.

无法 -wu fa (cannot) : If our teachers **cannot be** proficient in English, how can they teach the students in English?

必须 -bi xu (must): The ministry of education **must** determine comprehensively as we need an acceptable curriculum to enhance the students' level of English.

The text used everyday words in simple tense.

### [Text 15: ZDX-09-07-09]

#### **Content**

This text has a single content, which is,

The new educational policy is unacceptable by both the parents and the students.

#### **Description**

The author found out that the majority of the parents were much in favor of English as the medium of instruction in secondary school. One student was found to be highly frightened to continue his study in the secondary level if they used the national language to teach mathematics and sciences. This implies that the decision made by the government has failed to encourage students to study harder. It was said that one student in Ipoh who *cared* about his future *cried*, when he heard the news that the national language is to be used as the medium of instruction in mathematics and the science subjects. Parents are hoping that at secondary level English can be used to teach mathematics and sciences in order to help student to easily continue with their high school study.

The author in this text compares the medium of instruction in the national schools with the single stream school in order to illustrate that the new medium of instruction policy mainly considers the interest of the Malay students only. The author described that: “there is no difficulty for the national school students over this issue because they are using their mother tongue right from the beginning.” It was suggested that to make an equally broad spectrum of educational fairness with the Chinese and the Tamil school students, the secondary level of education needs to have a preparatory class in the secondary level of education to upgrade them to a better level of comprehension with the courses.

### **Strategies**

1. The strategy of dissimulation is quite obvious here as the author does not agree with the current policy.
2. The strategy of justification is used here as the author provides reason for the unacceptability of the educational policy.

### **Linguistics Realization**

In this text the author uses a number of modal verbs and classical Chinese proverbs to strategize and describe the contents.

The modal verbs used are

要-yao (need to) : Students **need to** grasp the chance that is still available to use English to study mathematics and sciences.

不可以-bu ke yi (cannot): It does not mean we **cannot** use the national language because even the Malays say that the national language is not a suitable language for mathematics and sciences because these two subjects are based on knowledge that

constantly grows through new discoveries and researches and the findings are solely published in English as the global lingua franca. If we are still not that proficient in English, then our knowledge in mathematics and the sciences will stagnate.

### Proverb

否极泰来:(pǐ jí tài lái) after rain comes fair weather.

The context of use of the proverb: The Form 4 students just need to learn to be proficient with the national language for only two years after which they can continue to use English as the medium of instruction. The Chinese proverb “After rain comes fair weather” is aptly used here because after the two years of learning to be proficient in the mother tongue, the students will have the advantage of inheriting the literary fluency of the mother tongue for use later on in life.

### [Text 16: LYS-10-07-09]

#### **Content**

This text has two contents, which are:

1. The educational policy made by the government is not appropriate to the needs of the society.
2. 60% of the citizens wanted the mother tongue to use to teach in primary school, but in the secondary school they would prefer English as the medium of instruction.

#### **Description**

The author is describing the failure of this educational policy in euphemistic terms since it has been implemented by the former Malaysian Prime Minister, Mahathir Mohamad. The object of the educational policy was to enhance the students’ English, but the government had applied the wrong method. The editorial subscribes to the

notion that the education policy was used by certain politicians to gain political support from the elite group, but the research conducted by author shows that 60% of the citizens supported the use of the mother tongue to teach in primary but maintain English to be used in secondary schools. Finally, the author is highly disappointed due to the frequent changes in the education policy as it affects Malaysia's reputation in the field of education from a global perspective.

### **Strategy**

The strategy of dissimilation is quite apparent here as the author does not agree with the educational policy implemented by Mahathir Mohamad 6 years ago.

### **Linguistic Realization**

In this text, the author is using simple sentences and common sense to decry on the government's failure in the educational policy decision making and the lack of consideration of the aspirations of the citizens.

In this text the author uses a number of modal verbs and classical Chinese proverb to strategize and describe the content.

The modal verbs used are

应当-ying dang (should): As the medium of instruction the research had proven that 60% of the citizens accepted that the mother tongue **should** be used in the primary schools but English **should** to be retained as a medium of instruction in the secondary schools.

将-jiang(will): The change of the educational policy **will** enhance again the negative perspectives maintained by the foreign investors (in Malaysia).



## Proverb

一落千丈:(yi luo qian zhang) drop down from very high to low.

The context of use of the proverb: Today the Cabinet made a new decision to overthrow Mahathir Mohamad's educational policy, because the policy did not enhance the students' level of English performance and the standards of mathematics and sciences are soon to be *dropped down* especially in the rural area.

### [Text 17: ZYL-12-07-07]

#### **Content**

This text has a single content, which is:

The government's final decision of the educational policy has not been agreed or fully supported by the society. However, the editor divides it into different categories:

1. Accept use of the mother tongue in primary school and maintain the teaching of English in secondary schools.
2. Maintain English as the medium of instruction.
3. Agree with the government's decision to use mother tongue in the primary schools and national language in secondary schools.

#### **Description**

The author has made a summary of the recent issue on the educational policy that has been discussed in the Malaysian media and within the society at large. The author has distinguished the issue into various categories and also drawn different hierarchies in the social spectrum in relation to the interpretation of the policy.

1. The society in general agreed to recommend the mother tongue to teach mathematics and sciences in the primary schools and they are against the use of

the national language in the secondary schools but retain the teaching of mathematics and sciences in English;

2. The society has totally disagreed to abolish English to teach mathematics and sciences.
3. They are in total disagreement with the government's decision, especially, when the Malay society intends to continue the use of the national language to teach at the university level.

Different points of view given by different classes of the society can be deemed to imply that there exists antagonism in the acceptance of the education policy because the people are guided by their different social and educational needs. In a multi-racial society, the government needs to understand the educational aspiration of the different races in order to arrive at an impartial solution as it is pragmatically unattainable to fulfill the request of every ethnic group, but an attempt should be executed so as to accommodate at least a certain percentage of the aspiration without creating tension in the form of political confrontation.

### **Strategies**

1. The strategy of dissimulation is used here as the author does not agree with the current policy.
2. The strategy of justification is used here as the author provides reasons why the current policy cannot be accepted by the people.

### **Linguistic Realization**

In this text the author uses the modal verbs and classical proverbs to strategize and describe the contexts.

The modal verb used is

要-yao (need to): The government **needs to** be discreet when making a new policy.

Proverb

朝令夕改:(zhao lin xi gai) make frequent changes.

All the people have the same consonance of dissatisfaction on the *frequent changes* of the educational policy.

**[Text 18: YY-12-07-07]**

**Content**

This text has two contents, which are:

1. The people have a large degree of doubt and anxiety on the education policy made by the government.
2. The Malays requested the government to use the mother tongue as the medium of instruction at the university level.

**Description**

From the very beginning, the author describes the new education policy that it would be more problematical than problem solving. Furthermore, parents have different feelings towards the government's education policy and some are happy because the mother tongue will be used to teach in the primary schools whereas some are worried of the use of the national language in the secondary school.

The author believed that the education policy was changed because the government had to cater for the needs of the rural students who had low economic and social background. However, the main problems arising from the implementation of the educational policy are the students' learning attitude, truancy and lackadaisical aptitude

for study. The problem has been intensified further by the poor results of tests scored by the students, the shortage of teaching personnel, frequent changes of textbooks and unsuitable educational system. The author believes that these problems will be there for a long time to come unless a popular and enforceable educational policy can be implemented, suitable textbooks are used and enough teachers are available in the teaching profession. The author's opinion is that if we want to resolve the students learning problem, first of all we need to have pragmatically tested strategies.

### **Strategies**

1. The strategy of dissimulation is used here as the author does not agree with the current policy.
2. Also used is the strategy of justification as the author totally disagreed about the suggestion of using the national language in the university and justified the opposite by referring to the global importance of English around the world.

### **Linguistic Realization**

In this text the author uses a number of modal verbs and classical Chinese proverbs to strategize and describe the contexts.

The modal verbs used are

还要-hai yao (have to): The poor didactic quality of teacher and the ever changing textbooks have led to the failure of the education programme in Malaysia for about 50 years and we **have to** repeat the same mistakes again.

无法-wu fa (might not): The education policy has been changed by the government because the rural students **might not** be able to understand the mathematics and sciences in English.

不能-bu neng (cannot): Whatever language is used as the medium of instruction, the students still **cannot** achieve a satisfactory score as long as they continue to display poor study attitude coupled with frequent absence from classes.

Proverb

背道而驰: (bei dao er chi) to proceed in opposite directions

The government decision in establishing the education policy is **in the opposite direction** of the expectation of the Chinese society.

The following two proverbs used by the author are to describe the importance of the English language in the contemporary world.

闭门造车:(Bi men zao che) carry out ideas irrespective of external circumstances.

作茧自缚: (zuo jian zi fu) To be trapped inside a shell of our own making.

The context of use of the proverbs: The nationalists have been aspiring to use the national language in the university, but if we do not enhance our students' level of English, it can be considered that we work with closed door and not ever willing to upgrade our quality of performance *irrespective of the prevailing external circumstances* that cry for a pragmatic change in education and social order, thus, breeding *an impending trouble by ourselves* with the result of not being able to resolve the problem later.

For 闭门造车 (bi men zao che), the Malaysian government, especially the Education Ministry, can learn a lot from the story as illustrated here in the Chinese history that “during the Qin dynasty, the Chinese government believed that China was the most powerful country and it did not need to communicate and interact with the outside world, as the government was worried that the Chinese technique and technology would be duplicated by others and therefore they stopped all forms of

connection and interaction with the outsider. Unfortunately, when they were still using swords, the outsiders have begun to use guns and cannons with the subsequent invasion by “The Eight Power Allied Forces”

**[Text 19: YZ-12-07-2009]**

### **Content**

This text has a single content, which is:

For the past six years, Dong Jiao Zong, the Chinese groups together with the Malay and Indian scholars have been requesting the government to restore the use of the mother tongue as the medium of instruction to teach mathematics and sciences in every single stream school at the same time to initiate English class in primary schools.

### **Description**

The author states that the government can maintain the use of English to teach mathematics and sciences in the secondary school. The author explains his view through the reactions of different ethnic groups that have united and protested together to change the education policy. However, the research cited by Mahathir Mohamad in his blog at *chedet.com* showed that 70% of the respondents objected to the use of national language in secondary school because they believed that through the 6 years study at the primary level, the students could have mastered the English language to learn mathematics and sciences in secondary school.

The author concludes that if the above educational scheme starts from standard Five or six, and using bilingual textbooks, any educational problem in secondary schools will be greatly minimized.

### **Strategies**

1. Strategy of perpetuation as the author accepted the Dong Jiao Zong's view.
2. Strategy of dissimilation as the author does not agree with the current policy.

### **Linguistic Realization**

In this text the author uses modal verb “will” and classical Chinese proverb to strategize and describe the context

The modal verb used is

将-jiang (will): If we are not using English to teach mathematics and sciences in secondary school level, our people **will** become “idiot.”

Proverb

背道而驰: (bei dao er chi) to proceed in opposite directions

The Cabinet's new educational policy is the opposite of the objective of studying English as implemented by the previous government.

咬牙切齿:(yao ya qie chi) replies with his grinding teeth/to hate from the heart with grinning teeth.

It was once heard that a question was put to Mahathir Mohamad on the probable outcome of the use of the national language in secondary school, and Mahathir replied vehemently, “our people will become idiot if we are not using English to teach”.

**[Text 20: LRY-13-07-2009]**

### **Content**

This text has two contents, which are:

1. The decision made by the ministry of education was supposed to have a political implication.

2. The use of the national language to teach in secondary school may broaden the gap between the rural and the urban area.

### **Description**

The author's confusion is aroused by the different positions articulated by the Minister of Education, Communication Minister and Minister in the Prime Minister's Department regarding the new education policy. The author states that the decision made by the Ministry of Education has a political motive because UMNO's supporters come from the rural area and it is difficult for them to catch up with the study if English is used as the medium of instruction. But using the national language as the medium of instruction will further broaden the gap between the rural and the urban, the poor and the rich family, because most of the upper-class people will send their children to the international schools or abroad, but students from the middle class family will study using the national language as the medium of instruction in their pre-university classes. The gap will begin to be felt when they enter the university where the level of English is pretty high. The editor suggested that before the government makes a decision, they cannot just think about the vote or political issues only and coolly forget to consider the consequences of the ill-formed decision.

### **Strategies**

1. The strategy of dissimulation is applied here as the author does not agree with the current policy.
2. The strategy of justification is used here as the author provides reasons why the current policy needs to change.

### **Linguistic Realization**



In this text the author uses a number of modal verbs to strategize and describe the context.

The modal verbs used are

应该-ying gai(should): The minister of education **should** refer to relevant studies before making a decision.

可能-ke neng (might): The decision made by the minister of education **might** have political motives.

也许-ye xu (may): Use of the national language to teach **may** broaden the gap between different classes of people.

#### [Text 21: ZJ-14-07-09]

#### **Content**

This text has two contents, which are:

1. The government needs to listen to the view of the people.
2. Prime Minister Najib accepts to listen to the view of the people and most importantly to extend the scope of listening.

#### **Description**

In this opinion editorial the author compares the three prime minister in the country; i.e., Mahathir Mohamad, Abdullah Badawi and Najib Razak. The author is highly pleased with the new Prime Minister Najib's administration, especially in the economic and educational spheres in which the PM had made a significant contribution as he indicated "that we have to listen to the opinion of the people before we can make a decision." The author's focus in this article is primarily to establish which among the three prime ministers listened to the demands of the people.

The author asserted that it was a failure of the former Prime Minister Abdullah Badawi for consistently ignoring this issue and the author expressed his view that “the UMNO’s defeat in 2008 was the reason for ignoring the people’s opinion”. This is a good time for Prime Minister Najib to gain support from the people if he can resolve the challenging issue of education. The author suggested that Prime Minister Najib must not simply listen to the opinion of the people but he also has to know how to use it and he can finally obtain various sane and sober voices if he can extend his listening areas.

### **Strategy**

The author employs the strategy of dissimulation, as he does not agree with the current policy.

### **Linguistic Realization**

In this text the author uses a number of modal verbs, and metaphor to strategize and describe the contexts.

The modal verbs used are

会-hui(will): The Prime Minister expresses his view that in future the government **will** have to listen to the people’s opinion before making any major decision.

或许-huo xu(may): The Prime Minister’s decision **may** please a lot of people.

不可以-bu ke yi(cannot):The Prime Minister **cannot** just declare what he has promised but takes no actions to improve the situation.

Metaphor

门面粉饰:(men mian fen shi) cannot just declare but take no action.

## **[Text 22: DRC-15-07-09]**

### **Content**

The new educational policy will be implemented in 2012 and every stream of school will use the mother tongue to teach mathematics and sciences while the secondary schools will use the national language; the preparatory course classes will use English to teach. The major problem identified is the medium of instruction in teaching mathematics and science in the secondary school.

This text has two contents, which are:

1. Different students have different levels of talent.
2. As the final decider of the educational policy, the policy makers cannot make a decision whimsically.

### **Description**

The author believes that the people's suggestion of using English to teach mathematics and sciences in standard 4 or 5 will still have some problems. He has classified some educational blind spots here.

Firstly, the different level of competence of the students. There are 15% to 20% of gifted students who have no problems to pass the examination. But there are also some weak students who have the problems to pass the mathematics and sciences examination even when they are using their mother tongue. Secondly, to establish his point, the author of the editorial refers to Howard Gardner. According to Howard Gardner, an expert in education, learners are divided into eight different types. Teach according to the student's ability. If we force the students to study in a unified position, it does not meet the aspirations of the individual students but it also buries the students' other capacity. Thirdly, we study not only to get knowledge, but the most important part is learning to serve the society and if the study is difficult, then without a doubt many

students will drop out from the schools where it will subsequently become a social problem.

### **Strategy**

Strategy of justification is used as the author provides reasons why the current policy should be discarded.

### **Linguistic realization**

In this text the author uses a number of modal verbs to strategize and describe the context.

The modal verbs used are

应该-ying gai (should): If we look at the educational principle, from primary to secondary school, we **should** use mother tongue to learn.

应-ying(should): Even if you are a talented student, you still **should** use the mother tongue to learn for a start.

可以-ke yi (can): Using the mother tongue as the first language to learn, you **can** delve into a broader, a deeper and more stable base later on.

应该-ying gai (should): Mathematics and science teaching language **should** be returned to the experienced educationist to deal with it professionally.

将-jiang (will): Otherwise, it **will** hurt the educational opportunities of the next generation.

The use of Euphemistic utterance: The author used a euphemistic utterance to ‘remind’ the leaders of the country to think carefully before making a decision. The author has shown the ignorance of the decider that is aptly described as: “the educational policy

makers and politicians, mostly the ‘elite’ group, made the decision only based on their own educational experiences and with little regard to the weaker student’s problems”.

**[Text 23: SJH -16-07-2009]**

### **Content**

This text has a single content, which is:

The level of English proficiency cannot be equated with the technological development because it is a very superficial view.

### **Description**

The editorial mentioned that the recent issue that happened in Malaysia reminded him of an earlier news report from the Netherlands international on-line radio which announced that: the Netherlands Ministry of Culture has to impose a control on the usage of English in the universities in order to protect the local language. The editorial is emphasizing here that the educational policy in Netherlands is an issue of the national education because the Netherlands educational policy has not been penetrated by any political forces and is a main factor to enhance a strong country, and therefore the mastering of English is not the main issue. The fact is Malaysia needs a complete revision of the education policy: in terms of the attitude of the students, and in respect of the sciences.

### **Strategies**

1. The strategy of dissimulation is used here as the author does not agree with the current policy.
2. The strategy of justification is applied here as the author provides reasons why English is not the educational determinant in a country.

## Linguistic Realization

In this text the author uses a number of modal verbs to strategize and elaborate on the context.

The modal verbs used are

可-ke (can): In general the Dutch nation **can** speak English fluently, and **can** quickly translate the English information they needed, thus, they have an educational policy that is at par with the global standard.

能够-neng gou (could): The Japanese, the French and the German languages, there are the top states of science and technology; this confirmed that without English as the medium of instruction policy, the state **could** foster science wizard.

能够-neng gou(could): Without so much of creating a political issue, all these countries have managed to construct a comprehensive educational policy which **could** quickly accommodate the technology flourished in the English speaking countries whilst at the same time they could also be a producer of technology as well.

The use of Negative statements: In a political sphere of activity, the educational and the academic field of influence have been severely politicized by the politicians who *manipulate* the power with the blessing of the authority. A country with this sort of political outlook *will not be able to achieve* the technological progress that is enjoyed by other countries that have an equitably well programmed educational policy that can cater for one and all on a fair and rational basis.

[Text 24: OYEF-21-07-2009]

**Content**

This text has a single content, which is:

Language is not the main element that fosters scientific and technological minds because the establishment of a technologically advanced society, fostering a scientific spirit amongst the citizens is the key to the development.

### **Description**

The author provides explanations about the ‘negligence’ by the government that creates various problems in the educational policy. The author states that language is not one of the top priorities that can foster scientific and technological minds in order to establish an advanced technological society, but we would rather need the scientific spirit to be inculcated into the citizens in a system which is definitely not compatible with dictatorial, totalitarian, racist or religious dominations. The author states that, it is rather unfortunate that Malaysia’s educational policy has some sort of a mixture of a dictatorial, totalitarian, racist and religious inclination and the decision made is prone to subjective intuition rather than on solid and pragmatic entities. If we want to bring the country to be at par with the advanced countries, our politicians must have the political will and determination to be serious in rigorous logical thinking rather than subjective intuition. The author considers that in order to enhance the students’ creative thinking, we have to focus our undivided effort to foster the practice of logical critical thinking which must be free from the religious, racist and dogmatic political interactions. Even though we can speak English fluently but basically we know next to nothing about the English culture and philosophy and all along we have always been led by others to behave and believe that these are the best of the best in the global scenario, but as a matter of fact, we have been following the so called well trodden footpath that has been used by others whereas other nations have been creating professionally laid out footpath fit for all to walk and run without obstruction. The text described that: “just focusing on

the knowledge of scientific technology alone without giving proper attention on the spirit of scientific education, can produce a result that we will ultimately have educated people that are not creative and cannot think independently, but just like *canned students* that have a limited horizon of thought with narrow willpower”.

### **Strategies**

The strategy of dissimilation is used as the guiding principle as the author does not agree with the current biased educational policy.

### **Linguistics Realization**

In this text the author uses a number of modal verbs and metaphor to strategize and describe the context.

The modal verbs used are

要-yao (need to): If you **need** to foster scientific and technical personnel into a multiracial society, language cannot be used as the focal point.

不能-bu neng(cannot): Our educational policy causes the students to have no creative capability and they **cannot** think independently.

Metaphor

罐头大学生: (guan tou da xue sheng) Canned students/Processed students

The editor described the graduate student like “canned students” which means they as processed products cannot create new ideas by themselves.

万灵丹: (wan ling dan) Panacea

The editor noted that people considered scientific knowledge as a panacea.



## Proverb

追根究底:(zhui gen jiu di) return to the root to the issue: In a scientific spirit, the people need to review the root of the issue.

### [Text 25: DRC-23-07-2009]

#### **Content**

This text has two contents, which are

1. The government announces to abolish the educational policy in which case every single primary school will revert to the use of mother tongue whereas the secondary school will return to the use of national language.
2. Generally, it has been agreed by all to use the mother tongue in the primary school, but using the national language in the secondary school has been disputed.

#### **Description**

The editor has explained the *peoples'* stand right from the beginning, that is, “everyone, in general” supported the use of the mother tongue in the primary school and to maintain the use of English to teach mathematics and sciences in the secondary school.

The author provides an analysis of the non-native students' problem in the primary schools. Most of the students think that it will be easy for them to learn mathematics and sciences in the national language but for those non-native speaking students, they will be the ones who will be mostly affected. Likewise, similar problem will occur for the native speakers who will use English to learn mathematics and sciences.

There is political connotation in changing back to the national language in the secondary school level in order to gain support from the Malay people as well as to

defend the dignity and status of the national language. At the end of the text the editor reaffirms the significance of using the mother tongue in the primary school and confirms that: “the change of the medium of instruction to the mother tongue significantly reduces the barriers of study to the students”.

### **Strategies**

1. The strategy of dissimulation is utilized here as the author does not agree with the current policy.
2. The strategy of justification is mobilized here as the author provides reasons of the importance of the mother tongue.

### **Linguistic Realization**

In this text the author uses modal verb, will 将-jiang and metaphor, 拉牛上树 :( la niu shang shu).

The modal verb used is

将-jiang(will): Within 5 years 50,000 Malay students **will** drop out from school because English is used as the medium of instruction.

Metaphor

拉牛上树:(la niu shang shu) pull cow up to a tree

In primary school using English to teach mathematics and sciences is, metaphorically speaking, just like pulling a cow up a tree, which is impracticable.

**[Text 26: DRC-03-08-2009]**

**Content**

This text has a single content, which is:

Chinese primary schools should start “building the base” of readiness where 90% of the students must be ready to use the national language in secondary school, learning as well, problem-solving methods, which involves logical thinking, and so on.

### **Description**

Firstly, the editorial explained the importance of the foundation of knowledge. If students do not have a strong basic knowledge at the primary level, it will be quite difficult for them to go for further study because the lessons that they will have to study will be much more difficult than what they have learnt. Secondly, the editorial suggests that the Chinese primary schools will be playing a very important role, because;

- 1) They need to prepare for the 90% of the students to be ready for the eventual use of the national language in the secondary school.
- 2) Under the new education policy, the Chinese primary school students will have the only chance to learn their mother tongue, thus, their teachers need to give their best to teach the students efficiently.

Lastly, two examples are provided to explain the issue under discussion:

- 1) The information on the consequences of lacking the foundational knowledge.
- 2) The people in US and Europe have very high regards on preschool and elementary school teachers because they believe that early education can decide the success and failure of higher education.

### **Strategies**

1. The strategy of dissimilation is being implemented here as the author does not agree with the current policy.

2. The strategy of justification is being followed here as the author provides reasons why primary level of study is important.

### **Linguistic Realization**

In this text the author uses a number of modal verbs and classical Chinese proverb to strategize and describe the contents.

The modal verbs used are

将-jiang(will): The medium of instruction **will** be one of the most important factors.

理应-li ying(should):The national school **should** have established preparatory classes to strengthen and upgrade the educational work in this area.

将-jiang(will):Approximately about 80% to 90% of the students will have only 6 years to study mathematics and sciences in their mother tongue and it **will** be their only chance to study their mother tongue within the time frame.

要-yao(need to): The Chinese primary school teachers **need to** perform their best to teach the students.

要-yao(need to): We **need to** utilize the available environment resources to change the mindset of the people.

Proverb

万丈高楼从地起，上层建设看地基：（wan zhang gao lou cong di qi,shang ceng jian she kan di ji）lofty towers are built from the ground, the upper levels are still looking at the ground.

[Text 27: ZY-11-08-2009]

## **Content**

This text has two contents, which are:

1. The Parliamentary Cabinet finally made an adjustment in the educational policy to the effect that those students who have been taught in English since the beginning of their school will be allowed to continue until their secondary school.
2. To change the medium of instruction is to amend the educational policy because it is an important decision that can seriously affect the future of the learners and it needs further comprehensive study from all sides.

## **Description**

In this editorial, the author used “strong words” to express his resentment on the government’s education policy which he described as: “to change the context of the education policy requires careful and long term consideration on a number of associated factors which need to be analyzed and to conduct a number of field surveys in order to get the relevant feedback. But the decision was made in 2003 whereby they did not consider all the associated factors involved. The editorial is very resentful of the government’s arbitrary decision on education as it is the stabilizing foundation of the nation and if the education policy is changed halfway, then the students will be the ones affected in the long run. On the other hand, the editor believes that teachers/experts should be more forthcoming with their clarification on the needs among the students and teachers as well. Listening to their experienced and professional views is quite important as quite a lot of facts and factors can be drawn and therefore the editorial described that, “The educational policy needs the experts’ advice and learned argument because the voice from the people and the teachers can produce brilliant ideas with long term benefits.”

## Strategy

The strategy of dissimilation is used here as the author does not agree with the educational policy which is being frequently changed.

## Linguistic Realization

In this text the author uses a number of modal verbs to strategize and describe the content.

The modal verbs used are

要-yao(need to): To change the education policy a lot of relevant factors will **needed to** consider at the same time a number of educational field surveys will be needed to be conducted /administered in order to reflect the results.

将-jiang(will): If the educational policy is changed halfway the students' very future **will** be affected in the long term.

The use of Negative statements: Has the Cabinet executed the relevant educational field survey or has the Cabinet been *misled* by some people? After a few years of experiments with the educational policy, people begin to realize *that there is no intellectually tangible improvement of the educational policy* as the question will be, “which language will be finally used as the medium of instruction?”

[Text 28: DRC-26-08-2009]

## Content

This text has two contents, which are:

1. The evaluation of the new educational plan, which is “English Program-First Step”, has been experimented by the Ministry of Education on 1,000 primary schools around Malaysia using overseas materials;
2. Malaysian main stream schools always regarded English as a second language whereas the Chinese and Tamil schools regarded English as a third language.

### **Description**

The first paragraph of the announcement is from the deputy prime minister who talks about the failure of the education policy made since 2003 and the third paragraph describes the effort made by the government since 2006 known as the “Education blue print” which shows the allocation of major resources into the national primary and secondary schools in order to consolidate the superiority of the national schools.

The author states that the most important task is to establish an English study plan which should be based on the educational context in Malaysia, including its cultural background; this plan will be more effective in the long run as it will enhance the proficiency in English. As a matter of fact, we do not as yet need to follow the education policy from abroad because the Malaysian teachers are more familiar with the Malaysian’s cultural conditions and the students’ language learning disabilities.

### **Strategies**

1. The strategy of dissimulation is being adhered to as the author does not agree with the current policy.
2. The strategy of justification is used as the author provides examples to emphasize the consequences of the usage of English.

## Linguistic Realization

In this text the author uses a number of modal verbs, metaphor and classical Chinese proverb to strategize and describe the content.

The modal verbs used are

应该-ying gai (should): The Government has declared to repeal the educational policy, but still emphasizes on its use for the future when it **should** “consolidate the BM and strengthen the English.

要-yao (need to): Students **need to** be taught according to their learning ability.

要-yao (need ): Teachers **need** strong class management ability.

Proverbs

劳民伤财-lao min shang cai: Waste money and manpower:

After seven years of educational policy experiment, the Government has spent four billion RM but the effect is only 3% which, literally speaking is a waste of money and manpower.

因地制宜，因师生而制宜-yin shi di er zhi yi, yin shi sheng er zhi yi:

We have to take into consideration our actual educational situation and we need to make a very satisfactory decision according to our teachers’ teaching efficiency and students’ learning ability.

汹涌澎湃，势不可挡-xiong yon peng pai ,shi bu ke dang: The power of English is like surfing in the ocean. We cannot resist it.

Metaphor: 白老鼠-bai lao shu -white rats

Students should no longer be treated as white rats.



## 4.2 Conclusion

The chapter summarizes the findings of the study. The present study was carried out to discover how the issue of medium of instruction has been discussed in *Sin Chew Daily*. A total number of 28 opinion editorials published during 01 June to 31 August 2009 were chosen as data. The articles were analyzed qualitatively using the framework of Wodak (2001, 2009), which is a three-stratum framework discussing the content, strategies and linguistic means of realization.

The main argument, in Wodak's terms, *content*, was: the mother tongue education should be kept at the primary school level; while English should be used at the secondary level to teach mathematics and sciences. The data shows that there were strategies of assimilation, negation and perpetuation followed mostly by the authors of the editorials to legitimize their concerns and/ or the contents of the editorials.

In relation to the linguistic means, this study reports only the linguistic means of metaphors, modal verbs and Chinese proverbs used by the authors to establish the strategies and the contents of the opinion. In some opinion pieces, the authors used euphemistic expressions to hedge their position, perhaps to sound, politically correct.

There model verbs used to emphasize the positions taken by the authors were: 要-yao(need to, have to);应该-ying gai(should);将-jiang(will);或许-huo xu(maybe);必须-bi xu(must);无法-wu fa(cannot);可能-ke neng(might);须-xu(have to);可以-ke yi(can);能够-neng gou(could). The next chapter concludes the report.