

Chapter Five

Conclusion

5.0 Introduction

This chapter concludes the research by providing summary of the research, limitation of the study and suggestion for future research. The stance taken by the researcher in this study is: Critical Discourse Analysis provides opportunities to consider the relationship between discourse and society, between text and context and between language and power (Fairclough, 2001; Luke, 1995, 1996). Also that the society is affected deeply by the change of political environment, because the different rulers for different or special political purposes or in order to consolidate the long-term of dominant will adopt different political and educational policies, in the visible or invisible process (Lin Weill, 2005). Finally, as the changes occur at the political landscape the mass media plays its role to inform, to educate and to make or at least influence people's opinion (Fairclough, 2001).

In Malaysia, the medium of instruction debate, since 2002 is one of the *hottest* issues. Reports on the issue have been published by all types of mass media sources, for instance: TV, Radio, and Newspaper. Ethnic based newspapers, e.g., Chinese, and Tamil press also took active interest in covering this issue.

5.1 Summary of the findings

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 decision on the reversal of the policy on medium of instruction was made in July 2009 and the researcher wanted to capture the issue at its height. Hence, the data were collected between June and August 2009. 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, found, was the mother tongue education at the primary school level using English to teach mathematics and sciences at the secondary level. The positions have been supported by making reference to the authenticity of the Chinese culture and unique identity. Contrarily, for the secondary level, the reference was global influence, technology and science-based knowledge being mostly transferred in English; hence, it is necessary to sustain teaching English at the secondary level. However, the opinion editorials were not utterly negative about the consequences of the use of English, even though they supported the use mother tongue education at the primary school level they suggested that the student's level of English should be enhanced from the primary level.

The contents of the editorials includes among others, the concerns by the editorials like the educational policy implemented is not suited to Malaysia as a multiracial country. There were also concerns that Chinese schools had shortage of the teacher, difference time schedule between National schools and Chinese schools and English curriculum.

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. The linguistic devices used by the editors reflect the author's 'intention' to establish a Chinese environment as they referred to famous historical stories in order to indicate the seriousness of the issue. Besides, the use of modal verbs (i.e. must (必须), have to (须), can (可以), might (应该)), demands

the readers that they pay an attention; albeit modals play different roles, e.g., to hedge or to intensify. In the data modals have often increased the gravity of the situation in relation to the authenticity of the Chinese culture and its unique identity. Also to note that since the marketing of a new idea or product idea has to be presented in the most persuasive way in order to attract and influence peoples' perceptions, beliefs and even behavior (Fairclough, 2001), editorials are written in a way that they are produce such effects. Hence, opinion pieces can be read as a unique genre that combines community specific needs in persuasive terms.

On another note, the use of decisive tongue used by government in a multiracial nation may often satisfy the citizens' requirement. However, an implicit strategy in directing readers' perception by the use of certain positive or negative expressions in the articles may reveal an optimistic or pessimistic preoccupation of the writers with the issue. In Malaysia, the state and media maintains a complex relation as the media, especially Chinese media is often split on the issue of sustaining 'good' relation with the state/ government. There are issues on culture and identity on which the community may not compromise, hence, the media although linked to the government directly or indirectly (Nain, 2002) may take different position favoring the community. The views by the writers might be to inspire and influence the readers' views in the direction hold sublime by the state or the community. Hence, it may be obvious that the language of the media exerts certain power. However, power does not necessarily derive from the language itself, it is rather manifested the way the language is used to challenge power, and to subvert it (Wodak & Meyer, 2009: 10).

5.2 Limitations of the study

This study uses *Sin Chew Daily*, as its only source of data. The analysis focuses on Malaysian Chinese community's perception of the new educational policy. The

duration of collection of data may also have consequences on the findings, as the data collected was for three months, i.e., June to August 2009, when the debate was at its height. The policy revert was announced in July 2009.

5.3 Recommendations for further studies

For further studies, the research can cover other ethnic-language newspapers (e.g., *Utusan Malaysia* and *Tamil Nesan*). Studies can also be conducted on other print newspapers owned by opposition in the country (e.g., *Harakah* and the *Rocket*). Future researchers can look at other genres in the newspaper (e.g., news reports, and letters to the editor) besides opinion editorials and editorials.

5.4 Conclusion

Most communities are aware of the importance of their languages and culture-specific identities. When the core values of their culture are threatened they may engage in warfare to legitimize their demands. Media is such a space that community-specific demands are established there. The fears by the community might be: if they follow others' language and cultural practices, they will lose their own culture and language. The education policy adopted by the Malaysian government specified the use English to teach mathematics and sciences in 2003 with the rationale that English is the international language and there is a need to keep pace with the world; but what is the rationale for changing it to *Bahasa Malaysia* in 2009? Which identity or ideology has been retained by the reversal? As the issue is contentious so the media continues its ideological warfare in order to legitimize individual claims.