

**A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF PPSMI
IN MALAYSIAN NEWS MEDIA**

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ABSTRACT

This research report seeks to realise and compare the different ideologies that are contained in reports from Malaysian mainstream and alternative media with respect to the issue of teaching science and mathematics in English (otherwise known by the Bahasa Malaysia acronym, PPSMI). More specifically, the study focuses on the discourse that centres around the government's decision to abolish the PPSMI. To do so, the study analyses a corpus of 21 news reports from *The Star* and 13 from *Malaysiakini*. These reports span a period of three months, i.e. from June to August 2009.

The media plays an important role in mediating texts and discourse. Therefore, it is important to realise the ideology behind each media house, as this ideology is disseminated and perpetuated within its news reports. By realising the ideology of the media house, the public can make an educated decision about what they read and evaluate the information they receive. In addition, the issue of PPSMI is critical as education policies affect the next generation, who will be the country's future leaders.

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is the most helpful framework for examining and uncovering the ideology embedded in texts and discourse. Therefore, using Norman Fairclough's (2001) three-dimensional framework, the study will conduct an intertextual and textual analysis.

The intertextual analysis is conducted both qualitatively and quantitatively. The qualitative analysis examines the level of dialogicality in reports from both media houses and how the reporters recontextualise the information in their reports. In addition, it will also study how both media houses frame the various voices in the discourse and investigate how other texts have been woven into the discourse

intertextually. The quantitative analysis determines which voices have been included and excluded from the discourse.

The textual analysis is conducted qualitatively and seeks to investigate how the reporters construct social reality through the representation of social actors and the use of transitivity.

Findings from the qualitative intertextual analysis show that the mainstream media, as represented by *The Star*, endeavours to sustain the government's hegemony by recontextualising and framing the various voices in the discourse. This is in contrast to *Malaysiakini*, which attempts to undermine the government's hegemonic position. The quantitative analysis shows that government voices are the most highly represented in *The Star* compared to other voices, while opposition voices are the least represented. However, *Malaysiakini* offers a more balanced representation of voices in its reports.

The textual analysis finds that both media houses attempt to construct a contrasting social reality through the representation of the various social actors in the discourse and the use of transitivity. *The Star* is supportive of the government's decisions and hegemony, while *Malaysiakini* is more neutral on the issue.

In conclusion, by comparing both media houses' reports on the PPSMI issue over the period of three months, the researcher is able to determine the ideology of both *The Star* and *Malaysiakini*. The ideology of the mainstream media, as represented by *The Star*, is consistent with the dominant ideology of the ruling government, but the ideology of the alternative media, represented by *Malaysiakini*, does not support the government's hegemonic position.

ABSTRAK

Laporan penyelidikan ini ingin mengkaji dan membandingkan ideologi yang tersirat di laporan media arus perdana ('mainstream media') dan media alternatif ('alternative media'). Penumpuan diberi kepada wacana isu memansuhkan Pengajaran dan Pembelajaran Sains dan Matematik dalam Bahasa Inggeris (PPSMI). Sehubungan itu, laporan penyelidikan ini mengkaji sebanyak 21 laporan yang diterbitkan dalam suratkhbar *The Star* dan 13 di dalam *Malaysiakini*. Laporan-laporan ini telah diterbitkan dalam jangkamasa tiga bulan, iaitu bulan Jun hingga Ogos 2009.

Media memainkan peranan yang penting sebagai pengantara dalam teks dan wacana. Sejurus itu, adalah penting untuk mengetahui ideologi yang dipegang oleh syarikat-syarikat media, kerana ideologi ini akan disebarkan melalui berita yang mereka terbitkan. Orang ramai perlu tahu ideologi yang terkandung di dalam laporan berita ini, supaya mereka dapat membuat pilihan yang bijak tentang laporan-laporan yang mereka bacakan dan boleh menilai kandungan laporan-laporan tersebut. Selain itu, isu PPSMI ini adalah kritikal kerana dasar pendidikan akan memberi kesan kepada generasi muda, yang akan menjadi pemimpin masa depan.

Analisis wacana kritis ('critical discourse analysis', atau CDA) adalah kerangka terbaik untuk membongkar ideologi yang tersirat di dalam teks dan wacana. Dengan menggunakan kerangka tiga-dimensi ('three-dimensional framework') Norman Fairclough (2001), kajian intertekstual dan juga tekstual akan dijalankan.

Kajian intertekstual merupakan kajian yang kualitatif dan juga kuantitatif. Kajian kualitatif berkenaan dengan tahap 'dialogicality' yang terpapar di laporan-laporan *The Star* serta *Malaysiakini* dan cara wartawan-wartawan telah meletakkan dalam konteks lain, maklumat yang tertera di dalam laporan tersebut. Penggunaan 'framing' untuk suara-suara dalam wacana ini juga dikaji, berserta dengan

intertekstualiti, iaitu bagaimana wartawan telah melibatkan teks luar di dalam wacana tersebut. Analisis kuantitatif pula berkenaan dengan mana-mana ‘suara’ yang termasuk ataupun tidak termasuk dalam wacana ini.

Analisis tekstual dijalankan secara kualitatif dan mengkaji bagaimana wartawan membinakan realiti sosial melalui perwakilan ‘pelakon sosial’ (‘social actors’) dan penggunaan transitiviti.

Hasil kajian intertekstual kualitatif menunjukkan bahawa media arus perdana, sepertimana diwakili oleh *The Star*, cuba mengekalkan hegemoni kerajaan melalui pengolahan konteks dan ‘framing’ suara-suara di dalam laporannya. Walau bagaimanapun, *Malaysiakini* cuba menjejaskan pendirian hegemoni kerajaan. Analisis kuantitatif menunjukkan bahawa ‘suara’ kerajaan merupakan suara yang diberikan kepentingan tertinggi dalam *The Star*, sementara ‘suara’ daripada pihak pembangkang dinilai terendah. Akan tetapi, *Malaysiakini* mempunyai perwakilan ‘suara’ yang lebih seimbang.

Analisis tekstual menunjukkan bahawa *The Star* dan *Malaysiakini* masing-masing membina realiti sosial yang saling bertentangan melalui perwakilan ‘pelakon sosial’ dalam wacana tersebut dan penggunaan transitiviti. *The Star* menyokong keputusan kerajaan, tetapi *Malaysiakini* lebih neutral.

Kesimpulannya, pengajian ini dapat mengetahui ideologi yang dipegang oleh *The Star* dan *Malaysiakini* setelah mengkaji laporan-laporan yang diterbitkan dalam media tersebut selama tiga bulan. Ideologi media arus perdana, sepertimana diwakili oleh *The Star*, adalah konsisten dengan ideologi dominan kerajaan, tetapi ideologi media alternatif, sepertimana diwakili oleh *Malaysiakini*, tidak menyokong kedudukan hegemoni kerajaan.

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