

Pertanika Journal of  
**SOCIAL SCIENCES  
& HUMANITIES**

JSSH

**VOL. 24 (S) FEB. 2016**

*A special issue devoted to*  
**Language Evolution and Revolution: The Past, Present and Future**

Guest Editor  
**Tan Kim Hua**



A scientific journal published by Universiti Putra Malaysia Press

## *Journal of Social Sciences & Humanities*

### About the Journal

#### Overview

Pertanika Journal of Social Sciences & Humanities (JSSH) is the official journal of Universiti Putra Malaysia published by UPM Press. It is an open-access online scientific journal which is free of charge. It publishes the scientific outputs. It neither accepts nor commissions third party content.

Recognized internationally as the leading peer-reviewed interdisciplinary journal devoted to the publication of original papers, it serves as a forum for practical approaches to improving quality in issues pertaining to social and behavioural sciences as well as the humanities.

JSSH is a **quarterly** (*March, June, September and December*) periodical that considers for publication original articles as per its scope. The journal publishes in **English** and it is open to authors around the world regardless of the nationality.

The Journal is available world-wide.

#### Aims and scope

Pertanika Journal of Social Sciences & Humanities aims to develop as a pioneer journal for the social sciences with a focus on emerging issues pertaining to the social and behavioural sciences as well as the humanities.

Areas relevant to the scope of the journal include Social Sciences—Accounting, anthropology, Archaeology and history, Architecture and habitat, Consumer and family economics, Economics, Education, Finance, Geography, Law, Management studies, Media and communication studies, Political sciences and public policy, Population studies, Psychology, Sociology, Technology management, Tourism; Humanities—Arts and culture, Dance, Historical and civilisation studies, Language and Linguistics, Literature, Music, Philosophy, Religious studies, Sports.

#### History

Pertanika was founded in 1978. A decision was made in 1992 to streamline Pertanika into three journals as Journal of Tropical Agricultural Science, Journal of Science & Technology, and **Journal of Social Sciences & Humanities** to meet the need for specialised journals in areas of study aligned with the interdisciplinary strengths of the university.

After almost 25 years, as an interdisciplinary Journal of Social Sciences & Humanities, the revamped journal focuses on research in social and behavioural sciences as well as the humanities, particularly in the Asia Pacific region.

#### Goal of *Pertanika*

Our goal is to bring the highest quality research to the widest possible audience.

#### Quality

We aim for excellence, sustained by a responsible and professional approach to journal publishing. Submissions are guaranteed to receive a decision within 14 weeks. The elapsed time from submission to publication for the articles averages 5-6 months.

#### Abstracting and indexing of *Pertanika*

Pertanika is almost 40 years old; this accumulated knowledge has resulted in Pertanika JSSH being abstracted and indexed in SCOPUS (Elsevier), Thomson (ISI) Web of Knowledge [BIOSIS & CAB Abstracts], EBSCO & EBSCOhost, DOAJ, Cabell's Directories, Google Scholar, MyAIS, ISC & Rubriq (Journal Guide).

### Future vision

We are continuously improving access to our journal archives, content, and research services. We have the drive to realise exciting new horizons that will benefit not only the academic community, but society itself.

### Citing journal articles

The abbreviation for *Pertanika* Journal of Social Sciences & Humanities is *Pertanika J. Soc. Sci. Hum.*

### Publication policy

*Pertanika* policy prohibits an author from submitting the same manuscript for concurrent consideration by two or more publications. It prohibits as well publication of any manuscript that has already been published either in whole or substantial part elsewhere. It also does not permit publication of manuscript that has been published in full in Proceedings.

### Code of Ethics

The *Pertanika* Journals and Universiti Putra Malaysia takes seriously the responsibility of all of its journal publications to reflect the highest in publication ethics. Thus all journals and journal editors are expected to abide by the Journal's codes of ethics. Refer to *Pertanika's* **Code of Ethics** for full details, or visit the Journal's web link at [http://www.pertanika.upm.edu.my/code\\_of\\_ethics.php](http://www.pertanika.upm.edu.my/code_of_ethics.php)

### International Standard Serial Number (ISSN)

An ISSN is an 8-digit code used to identify periodicals such as journals of all kinds and on all media—print and electronic. All *Pertanika* journals have ISSN as well as an e-ISSN.

Journal of Social Sciences & Humanities: ISSN 0128-7702 (*Print*); ISSN 2231-8534 (*Online*).

### Lag time

A decision on acceptance or rejection of a manuscript is reached in 3 to 4 months (average 14 weeks). The elapsed time from submission to publication for the articles averages 5-6 months.

### Authorship

Authors are not permitted to add or remove any names from the authorship provided at the time of initial submission without the consent of the Journal's Chief Executive Editor.

### Manuscript preparation

Refer to *Pertanika's* **INSTRUCTIONS TO AUTHORS** at the back of this journal.

Most scientific papers are prepared according to a format called IMRAD. The term represents the first letters of the words **I**ntroduction, **M**aterials and **M**ethods, **R**esults, **A**nd, **D**iscussion. IMRAD is simply a more 'defined' version of the "IBC" [Introduction, Body, Conclusion] format used for all academic writing. IMRAD indicates a pattern or format rather than a complete list of headings or components of research papers; the missing parts of a paper are: *Title, Authors, Keywords, Abstract, Conclusions, and References*. Additionally, some papers include Acknowledgments and Appendices.

The *Introduction* explains the scope and objective of the study in the light of current knowledge on the subject; the *Materials and Methods* describes how the study was conducted; the *Results* section reports what was found in the study; and the *Discussion* section explains meaning and significance of the results and provides suggestions for future directions of research. The manuscript must be prepared according to the Journal's **INSTRUCTIONS TO AUTHORS**.

### Editorial process

Authors are notified with an acknowledgement containing a *Manuscript ID* on receipt of a manuscript, and upon the editorial decision regarding publication.

Pertanika follows a **double-blind peer-review** process. Manuscripts deemed suitable for publication are usually sent to reviewers. Authors are encouraged to suggest names of at least three potential reviewers at the time of submission of their manuscript to Pertanika, but the editors will make the final choice. The editors are not, however, bound by these suggestions.

Notification of the editorial decision is usually provided within ten to fourteen weeks from the receipt of manuscript. Publication of solicited manuscripts is not guaranteed. In most cases, manuscripts are accepted conditionally, pending an author's revision of the material.

As articles are double-blind reviewed, material that might identify authorship of the paper should be placed only on page 2 as described in the first-4 page format in Pertanika's **INSTRUCTIONS TO AUTHORS** given at the back of this journal.

### **The Journal's peer-review**

In the peer-review process, three referees independently evaluate the scientific quality of the submitted manuscripts.

Peer reviewers are experts chosen by journal editors to provide written assessment of the **strengths** and **weaknesses** of written research, with the aim of improving the reporting of research and identifying the most appropriate and highest quality material for the journal.

### **Operating and review process**

What happens to a manuscript once it is submitted to *Pertanika*? Typically, there are seven steps to the editorial review process:

1. The Journal's chief executive editor and the editorial board examine the paper to determine whether it is appropriate for the journal and should be reviewed. If not appropriate, the manuscript is rejected outright and the author is informed.
2. The chief executive editor sends the article-identifying information having been removed, to three reviewers. Typically, one of these is from the Journal's editorial board. Others are specialists in the subject matter represented by the article. The chief executive editor asks them to complete the review in three weeks.

Comments to authors are about the appropriateness and adequacy of the theoretical or conceptual framework, literature review, method, results and discussion, and conclusions. Reviewers often include suggestions for strengthening of the manuscript. Comments to the editor are in the nature of the significance of the work and its potential contribution to the literature.

3. The chief executive editor, in consultation with the editor-in-chief, examines the reviews and decides whether to reject the manuscript, invite the author(s) to revise and resubmit the manuscript, or seek additional reviews. Final acceptance or rejection rests with the Editor-in-Chief, who reserves the right to refuse any material for publication. In rare instances, the manuscript is accepted with almost no revision. Almost without exception, reviewers' comments (to the author) are forwarded to the author. If a revision is indicated, the editor provides guidelines for attending to the reviewers' suggestions and perhaps additional advice about revising the manuscript.
4. The authors decide whether and how to address the reviewers' comments and criticisms and the editor's concerns. The authors return a revised version of the paper to the chief executive editor along with specific information describing how they have answered the concerns of the reviewers and the editor, usually in a tabular form. The author(s) may also submit a rebuttal if there is a need especially when the author disagrees with certain comments provided by reviewer(s).

5. The chief executive editor sends the revised paper out for re-review. Typically, at least one of the original reviewers will be asked to examine the article.
6. When the reviewers have completed their work, the chief executive editor in consultation with the editorial board and the editor-in-chief examine their comments and decide whether the paper is ready to be published, needs another round of revisions, or should be rejected.
7. If the decision is to accept, an acceptance letter is sent to all the author(s), the paper is sent to the Press. The article should appear in print in approximately three months.

The Publisher ensures that the paper adheres to the correct style (in-text citations, the reference list, and tables are typical areas of concern, clarity, and grammar). The authors are asked to respond to any minor queries by the Publisher. Following these corrections, page proofs are mailed to the corresponding authors for their final approval. At this point, **only essential changes are accepted**. Finally, the article appears in the pages of the Journal and is posted on-line.



## EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

**Mohd. Shahwahid Hj. Othman**  
*Economics, Natural Resource & Environmental Economics, Economics Valuation*

## CHIEF EXECUTIVE EDITOR

**Nayan Deep S. Kanwal**  
*Environmental Issues – Landscape Plant Modelling Applications*

## UNIVERSITY PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE

**Mohd Azmi Mohd Lila, Chair**

## EDITORIAL STAFF

### Journal Officers:

**Kwan Lee Yin, ScholarOne**  
**Kanagamalar Silvarajoo, ScholarOne**  
**Lim Ee Leen, ScholarOne**

### Editorial Assistants:

**Siti Juridah Mat Arip**  
**Zulinaardawati Kamarudin**

### COPY EDITORS

**Doreen Dillah**  
**Crescentia Morais**

### PRODUCTION STAFF

#### Pre-press Officers:

**Nik Khairul Azizi Nik Ibrahim**  
**Kanagamalar Silvarajoo**

#### Layout & Typeset:

**Sarwani Padzil**  
**Noor Sholihah Mohd Daud**

### WEBMASTER

**Mohd Nazri Othman**

### PUBLICITY & PRESS RELEASE

**Magdalene Pokar (ResearchSEA)**

### EDITORIAL OFFICE

#### JOURNAL DIVISION

Office of the Deputy Vice Chancellor (R&I)  
1<sup>st</sup> Floor, IDEA Tower II  
UPM-MTDC Technology Centre  
Universiti Putra Malaysia  
43400 Serdang, Selangor Malaysia.  
Gen Enq.: +603 8947 1622 | 1619 | 1616  
E-mail: [executive\\_editor.pertanika@upm.my](mailto:executive_editor.pertanika@upm.my)  
URL: [www.journals-ij.upm.edu.my](http://www.journals-ij.upm.edu.my)

### PUBLISHER

**Kamariah Mohd Saidin**  
UPM Press  
Universiti Putra Malaysia  
43400 UPM, Serdang, Selangor, Malaysia.  
Tel: +603 8946 8855, 8946 8854  
Fax: +603 8941 6172  
E-mail: [penerbit@upm.edu.my](mailto:penerbit@upm.edu.my)  
URL: <http://penerbit.upm.edu.my>



## EDITORIAL BOARD

### 2015-2017

**Abdul Mansur M. Masih**  
*Economics, Econometrics, Finance, King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals, Saudi Arabia.*

**Alan Maley**  
*English Language Studies, Teaching of English Language and Literature, Leeds Metropolitan University, UK.*

**Ali Reza Kaldi**  
*Medical Sociology, Sociology of Development Ageing, Gerontology, University of Social Welfare and Rehabilitation, Tehran, Iran.*

**Aminah Ahmad**  
*Sociology, Gender and Development, Universiti Putra Malaysia, Malaysia.*

**Bee-Hoon Tan**  
*English Language Studies and Applied Linguistics, with Special Research Interest in e-learning and Learning Support, Universiti Putra Malaysia, Malaysia.*

**Brian Tomlinson**  
*English Language Studies, The Evaluation, Adaptation and Development, Leeds Metropolitan University, UK.*

**Deanna L. Sharpe**  
*Economics, Consumer and Family Economics, Personal Finance, The University of Missouri, Columbia, USA.*

**Dessy Irawati**  
*International Business Management, Strategic Management, Economic Geography, Globalization and Development Studies, Industrial Dynamics and Knowledge Transfer, Radboud University, the Netherlands and EduPRIME the consulting, the Netherlands.*

**Elias @ Ilias Salleh**  
*Architectural Science, Sustainable Tropical Design, Thermal Comfort, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Malaysia.*

**Gong-Soog Hong**  
*Economics, Consumer and Family Sciences, The Ohio State University, USA.*

**Jacqueline Pugh-Kitingan**  
*Music, Ethnomusicology, Borneo and Papua New Guinea Studies, Universiti Malaysia Sabah, Malaysia.*

**James R. Stock**  
*Management Studies, Marketing, Logistics and Supply Chain Management, Quantitative Method, University of South Florida, USA.*

**Jayakaran Mukundan**  
*English Language Studies, Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL), English Language Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia, Malaysia.*

**Jayum A. Jawan**  
*Sociology, Politics and Government, Civilization Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia, Malaysia.*

**Jonathan Newton**  
*Classroom-based Second Language Acquisition, Language Teaching Methodology, the Interface of Culture and Language in Language Teaching and Learning, and Language/Communication Training and Material Design for the Multicultural Workplace, Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand.*

**Marcus Bion GRIFFIN**  
*Human Ecology, Anthropology, Tropical Agriculture, Fisheries, Cultural Learning Solutions, USA.*

**Mary Susan Philip**  
*English Language Theatre in Malaysia and Singapore; Postcolonial Theatre, University of Malaya, Malaysia.*

**Muzafar Shah Habibullah**  
*Economics, Monetary Economics, Banking, Macroeconomics, Universiti Putra Malaysia, Malaysia.*

**Patricia Matusky**  
*Music, Ethnomusicology, Malay and Indonesian language, Literature and Culture, Grand Valley State University, USA.*

**Rohany Nasir**  
*Psychology-Career counseling, Counseling for Adolescents and Adults, Marriage and Family counseling, Counseling Industry and Organization, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Malaysia.*

**Samsinar Md.Sidin**  
*Management Studies, Marketing, Consumer Behaviour, Universiti Putra Malaysia, Malaysia.*

**Shameem Rafik-Galea**  
*English Language Studies, Linguistics, Applied Linguistics, Language and Communication, Universiti Putra Malaysia, Malaysia.*

**Shamsher Mohamad Ramadili Mohd**  
*Finance, Corporate Governance, The Global University of Islamic Finance (INCEIF) Malaysia.*

**Stephen J. Hall**  
*English Language Studies, Linguistics, Teacher Educator, TESOL, Sunway University College, Malaysia.*

**Stephen J. Thoma**  
*Psychology, Educational Psychology, The University of Alabama, USA.*

**Swee-Heng Chan**  
*English Language Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia, Malaysia.*

**Turiman Suandi**  
*Psychology, Youth Development and Volunteerism, Universiti Putra Malaysia, Malaysia.*

**Victor T. King**  
*Anthropology / Southeast Asian Studies White Rose East Asia Centre, University of Leeds, UK.*

## INTERNATIONAL ADVISORY BOARD

### 2013-2016

**Barbara Wejnert**  
*Political Sociologist: Gender Studies, Macro Political and Social Changes, University at Buffalo, SUNY, USA.*

**Carolyn Graham**  
*Music, Jazz Chants, Harvard University, USA.*

**David Nunan**  
*Vice-President: Academic, Anaheim University, California, English Language Studies, Linguist, TESOL, University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong.*

**Faith Trent AM FACE**  
*Education: Curriculum development, Flinders University, Adelaide, Australia.*

**Gary N. Mclean**  
*Executive Director, International Human Resource Development Programs, EAHR, Human Resource Development for National, Community and Social Development, International Human Resource Development, Organizational Development, Texas A&M University, USA.*

**Graham Thurgood**  
*English Language Studies, General Linguistics, Discourse and Syntax, California State University, Chico., USA.*

**Handoyo Puji Widodo**  
*English Language Studies, ESP, Language Curriculum-Materials Design and Development, and Language Methodology, Politeknik Negeri Jember, East Java-Indonesia.*

**John R. Schermerhorn Jr.**  
*Management Studies, Management and Organizational Behaviour, International Business, Ohio University, USA.*

**Kent Matthews**  
*Economics, Banking and Finance, Modelling and Forecasting the Macro Economy, Cardiff Business School, UK.*

**Lehman B. Fletcher**  
*Economics, Agricultural Development, Policy Analysis and Planning, Iowa State University, USA.*

**Mark P. Orbe**  
*Communication, Interpersonal Communication, Communication and Diversity, Intercultural Communication, Western Michigan University, USA.*

**Mohamed ARIFF**  
*Economics, Finance, Capital Market, Islamic Finance, Fiscal Policy, Bond University, Australia.*

**Pal Ahluwalia**  
*Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation), African Studies, Social and Cultural Theory, Post-colonial Theory, Division of Education, Arts & Social Sciences, University of Portsmouth, United Kingdom.*

**Phillip Jones**  
*Architectural Science, Sustainability in the Built Environment, Welsh School of Architecture, Cardiff University, UK.*

**Rance P. L. Lee**  
*Sociology, The Chinese University of Hong Kong.*

**Royal D. Colle**  
*Communication, Cornell University, USA.*

**Shonda Buchanan**  
*Interim Chair, American Literature, Hampton University, USA.*

**Vijay K. Bhatia**  
*Education: Genre Analysis and Professional Communication, City University of Hong Kong*

## ABSTRACTING/INDEXING

Pertanika is now over 35 years old; this accumulated knowledge has resulted the journals being indexed in SCOPUS (Elsevier), Thomson (ISI) Web of Knowledge [BIOSIS & CAB Abstracts], EBSCO, DOAJ, Google Scholar, AGRICOLA, ISC, Citefactor, Rubriq and MyAIS.

The publisher of Pertanika will not be responsible for the statements made by the authors in any articles published in the journal. Under no circumstances will the publisher of this publication be liable for any loss or damage caused by your reliance on the advice, opinion or information obtained either explicitly or implied through the contents of this publication.

All rights of reproduction are reserved in respect of all papers, articles, illustrations, etc., published in Pertanika. Pertanika provides free access to the full text of research articles for anyone, web-wide. It does not charge either its authors or author-institution for refereeing/publishing outgoing articles or user-institution for accessing incoming articles.

No material published in Pertanika may be reproduced or stored on microfilm or in electronic, optical or magnetic form without the written authorization of the Publisher.

Copyright © 2016-17 Universiti Putra Malaysia Press. All Rights Reserved.



Pertanika Journal of  
**SOCIAL SCIENCES  
& HUMANITIES**

*A special issue devoted to*  
Language Evolution and Revolution: The Past, Present and Future

**Vol. 24 (S) Feb. 2016**  
(Special Edition)

Guest Editor  
**Tan Kim Hua**

Guest Editorial Board Members  
**Fazal Mohamed Mohamed Sultan, Pramela Krish and Zalina Mohd Lazim**

A scientific journal published by Universiti Putra Malaysia Press



## Preface

The School of Language Studies and Linguistics (SoLLs), UKM held its 10<sup>th</sup> Biennial Conference at the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, UKM, Bangi, from 29 to 30 September, 2015. This two-day conference included more than 100 innovative sessions, a distinguished keynote address, interesting plenaries, workshops and parallel sessions and featured industry-linked and plenary panel speakers. This timely conference, aimed mainly at knowledge sharing, provided ample opportunity for networking among hundreds of academics and professionals as well as addressed pressing issues that have impacted society and the community.

This Special Issue of *Pertanika Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities (JSSH)* features papers presented, virtually or otherwise, at the conference. The papers address the conference theme, "Language Evolution and Revolution: The Past, Present and Future", a fitting tribute to the evolution of languages and the revitalisation of Language Studies. The papers have undergone a rigorous editorial process as stipulated by *Pertanika*, a leading and well-respected international journal.

The papers published cover the vibrant areas of Applied Linguistics, Linguistics, Corpus Linguistics, Literary and Cultural Studies, Language and Literature Studies, Translation, Eye-Tracking and Language and Technology.

I am deeply grateful to the many conference sponsors. This publication would not have been possible without the generous contribution of Ekovest Berhad. Closer to home is the strong support of the Editorial Board, the Chair of the School of Language Studies and Linguistics 2015, the Honourable Dean and Deputy Dean of Research and Innovation of the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities 2015 and publication funds contributed by Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia.

I would like to register my special appreciation to Dr Nayan Kanwal, the Chief Executive Editor, and his dedicated *Pertanika* team at the Journal Division, UPM, for rendering us their generous guidance and commitment in bringing this edition to print.

I hope to continue the good work and legacy of research-based publications initiated by our many esteemed colleagues, some who have left us and some who have remained, all inspiring pillars of strength.

### Guest Editor

Tan Kim Hua (*Assoc. Prof. Dr.*)

February 2016



**Pertanika Journal of Social Sciences & Humanities**  
**Vol. 24 (S) Feb. 2016**

**Contents**

<b>Language Evolution and Revolution: The Past, Present and Future</b>	
The Interrelation between the Perception and Production of English Monophthongs by Speakers of Iraqi Arabic <i>Ammar, A. Al Abdely and Yap Ngee Thai</i>	1
The Role of Cognitive Context in the Interpretation of Riddles: A Relevance Theory Perspective <i>Juma'a Qadir Hussein and Imran Ho Abdullah</i>	11
Translating Australian Urban Gastronomic Experiences for Malay Tourists <i>Sulaiman, M. Z.</i>	21
Initiating a Peer Support Centre for English Language Presentations: Issues and Challenges <i>Pramela, K., Noraza, A. Z., Nurjanah, M. J., Kemboja, I. and Nadzrah, A. B.</i>	37
Challenges in Teaching Interlanguage Pragmatics at Private EFL Institutes in Iran <i>Tan, K. H. and Farashaiyan, A.</i>	45
Discovering the Variances in Language and Culture: A Comparison of Chinese and English Language Advertisements <i>T'ng Cheah Kiu Choon and Lee Siew Chin</i>	55
Politeness Strategies by Thai EFL Tertiary Learners in an Online Forum <i>Suhaila Etae, Pramela Krish and Supyan Hussin</i>	67
The Kensi Noun Phrase <i>Mohamed Sultan, F. M., Jalaluddin, N. H., Ahmad, Z. and Radzi, H.</i>	81
Pablo Neruda as the Place-maker: An Ecocritical Enquiry of 'Place' in Neruda's Selected Poems <i>Khosravi, G. D., Vengadasamy, R. and Raihanah, M. M.</i>	95
Mirroring Vulnerability: Fear and Shame in <i>The Judge</i> <i>Dasmesh Kaur, J. S. and Raihanah, M. M.</i>	109
Alienation and Intersectionality in Adrienne Kennedy's <i>Funnyhouse of a Negro</i> <i>Latifa Ismaeel Jabboury, Ruzy Suliza Hashim and Anita Harris Satkunanathan</i>	119

Revenge, Female Agency and Masculinity in Lisa Klein's <i>Lady Macbeth's Daughter</i> <i>Alicia Philip, Zalina Mohd Lazim and Anita Harris Satkunanathan</i>	133
Preposition-Related Collocation use among British and Malaysian Learners: A Corpus Analysis <i>Ang, L. H. and Tan, K. H.</i>	145
Effects of Social Networking on Malaysian Secondary School Students: Attitudes, Behaviours and Awareness of Risks <i>Siew Ming Thang, Noorizah Mohd. Noor, Adzuhaidah M. Taha, Lay Shi Ng and Noor Baizura Abdul Aziz</i>	157
Analysis of Interaction and Institutional Power Relations in MH370 Press Conferences <i>Marlyna Maros and Sharifah Nadia Syed Nasharudin</i>	169
Functions of Code-Switching: A Case Study of a Mixed Malay-Chinese Family in the Home Domain <i>Siti Hamin Stapa and Nurul Nadiah Begum Sahabudin Khan</i>	181

## **The Interrelation between the Perception and Production of English Monophthongs by Speakers of Iraqi Arabic**

**Ammar, A. Al Abdely and Yap Ngee Thai\***

*Department of English Language, Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication,  
Universiti Putra Malaysia, 43400 UPM Serdang, Selangor, Malaysia.*

### **ABSTRACT**

The assumption that performance in second language (L2) speech perception and speech production is aligned has received much debate in L2 research. Theoretical models such as the Motor Theory (MT) and Speech Learning Model (SLM) have described the relation between these two processes based on the assumption that speech is perceived with reference to how it is produced and speech production is in turn influenced by how well speech contrast is perceptible to the second-language learner. The present study aims to investigate this relation with regard to Iraqi learners' perception and production of English vowels, focussing on the role of L1 interference and English proficiency level in shaping this relation. The results of the present study showed that accurate perception may not necessarily be a prerequisite for accurate production especially for EFL learners at the elementary level. Perception and production score means were significantly different, revealing an asymmetrical relation between the two processes. The results showed that speech production of L2 learners at the elementary level exceeded their ability in speech perception. However, for the other three proficiency levels, perception and production seemed to develop in synchrony. The level of difficulty encountered in the perception and production tasks could be attributed to L1 interference, since the vowels that were better produced than perceived are all found in the L1 vowel system, while the only vowel that was better perceived is not in the L1 vowel system.

*Keywords:* Speech perception, speech production, English vowels, Iraqi EFL learners, second language acquisition, pronunciation

### **ARTICLE INFO**

*Article history:*

Received: 21 September 2015

Accepted: 15 January 2016

*E-mail addresses:*

lujain\_ammam@yahoo.com (Ammar, A. Al Abdely),

ntyap@upm.edu.my (Yap Ngee Thai)

\* Corresponding author

### **INTRODUCTION**

The study of second language (L2) speech involves the examination of speech

perception and speech production. The relationship between these two speech processes in L2s has been investigated but results have been inconsistent; the perception-production relationship is described as direct in some studies and indirect in others. Both theoretical assumptions (Flege, 1995; Liberman, Cooper, Shankweiler, & Studdert-Kennedy, 1967; Liberman & Mattingly, 1985) and empirical studies (e.g. Flege, Bohn & Jang, 1997; Flege, Mackay, & Meador, 1999; Baker & Trofimovich, 2006) have supported a close link between the two processes. However, the nature of the relationship is still under debate. Numerous studies that investigated bilinguals have reported a close link between the perception and the production of phonemic contrasts; however, this link might be weakened by factors such as L1 interference, proficiency level, age of learning and length of residence. Yet, to the best of the researchers' knowledge, this relation has not been explored in terms of Iraqi learners' perception and production of English vowels. Hence, the influence of the L1 vowel system and L2 proficiency in shaping this relation will be explored in this paper. The vowel space occupied by vowels in standard British English or Received Pronunciation (RP) is different from that occupied by Iraqi Arabic (IA) although the same phonemic symbols may be used to describe these vowels in the two systems. RP has 12 monophthongs while IA has only nine. Three RP English monophthongs, namely /æ/, /ʌ/ and /ə/, are not found in IA.

On the relationship between speech perception and speech production among L2

learners, Fox, Jacewicz, Eckman, Iverson, and Lee (2009) present four logical accounts. The first account describes L2 learners who can neither perceive nor produce an L2 contrast, while the second account describes L2 learners who successfully learn to perceive and produce L2 contrasts. There are abundant examples of L2 learners who fit these two accounts. The other two accounts are not that straightforward, and therefore necessitate consideration. Flege's (1995) Speech Learning Model (SLM) is based on the notion of "equivalence classification", in which an L2 learner sets up categories for L2 phonemes on the basis of the learner's perception of the segments in question. Results from a number of studies support the claim that accurate perception is a prerequisite for accurate production. L2 learners need to successfully perceive the L2 target contrasts before they can successfully produce them. The fourth logical possibility, elaborated by Fox et al. (2009), is that L2 learners' production of certain contrasts might exceed their ability to perceive these contrasts. This final account seems to challenge some observations in first language acquisition where children's perceptual ability is known to precede production (Smith, 1973; 2010). It is likely that this is where processes involved in first language acquisition differ substantially from second language acquisition processes. Baker and Trofimovich (2006) also offer three hypotheses about the relation between speech perception and speech production. The first assumes that perception is at least one of the essential components of accurate production. This entails a perception-first

relation where perception abilities often precede production abilities. The second hypothesis assumes that both perception abilities and production abilities develop in synchrony. Consequently, the development of these two processes are aligned. The third hypothesis assumes a production-first relation in which accurate production precedes accurate perception. According to Bialystok and Miller (1999) and Flege et al. (1999), both cited in Baker and Trofimovich (2006), the perception-production relation is particularly difficult to define in adult L2 acquisition because adult L2 acquisition is variable along several dimensions. Among these dimensions are L1 interference, which is expected to make certain vowels more or less difficult to perceive and/or produce, and L2 proficiency level, which is expected to improve speech perception and speech production skills.

## MATERIAL AND METHODS

### *Stimuli*

The list of words used in the present study included 48 words that presented the 12 English monophthongs four times each. This list was adapted from Nikolova (2010) and Almbark (2012), who both investigated vowel perception and production by Saudi and Syrian Arab learners of English, respectively. These words were piloted with 10 Iraqi learners of English who had done both tasks to make sure that the words were suitable in terms of familiarity. Since this study was interested in segmental

perception and production, all words used were monosyllabic except for the words that include the schwa that were presented in disyllabic words. The words were recorded by a native speaker who is a tutor of English in the English Language Centre at a university in the UK and who was familiar with the variety of English commonly referred to as Received Pronunciation (RP).

### *Participants*

Participants in this study were 85 Iraqi EFL learners who spoke Baghdadi Arabic. They were all males, ranging from 22 to 42 years old. The mean age of the participants was 32 years old. They were staying in Malaysia at the time of the study as they were either undergraduate or postgraduate students majoring in different fields including the English language. A demographic questionnaire was used to choose participants based on the limitations and purpose of the study. Learners who had stayed for a considerable period of time in an English-speaking country and those who had had learnt a third language extensively in addition to English and Arabic were excluded. The Oxford quick placement text (UCLES, 2001) was utilised to group the participants into four groups following the Common European Framework of Reference for languages where scores were used to place learners as basic users (Groups A1 and A2), independent users (Groups B1 and B2) and proficient users (Groups C1 and C2) (Council of Europe, 2001).

### *Procedures*

After the demographic questionnaire and the quick placement test were analysed, 85 participants were selected to participate in the perception and production tasks. The systematic random technique was employed to select 25 participants only for groups A2 and B1 from among many learners who fell in these groups. Studies which used the same stimuli in their perception and production experiments have been criticised of being influenced by the learning effect. On the other hand, having the same stimuli is essential for a fair and accurate investigation of the perception-production relationship. To avoid possible learning effects, researchers of the present study used the same words for both tasks, but half of the participants started with the perception task while the other half started with the production task.

**Vowel identification task.** The perception task conducted in this study was a vowel identification task designed using Psychopy, created by Peirce (2007). The task was intended to examine learners' abilities to perceive English monophthongs as they hear them in 48 words pronounced by a native speaker of RP English. Each of the English monophthongs appeared in four different words presented randomly with four options given as possible answers for each word. Participants had to listen to the words, and then select one of the four options displayed on the computer screen to match the word they heard. Five practice trials were provided to familiarise the participants with the task before they

started the actual trials. The suitable level of loudness was also adjusted during the practice phase. The experiment block began with instructions followed by the presentation of the words. Each trial began with the presentation of a word and the participants were required to select the best option that matched the word presented. Online feedback was not provided. Once the response for each trial was registered, the next word was presented. Results from the perception task were automatically extracted by Psychopy and stored in an Excel file. On average, each participant spent about five minutes on the perception task.

**Vowel production task.** The production task was intended to examine learners' production of the 12 English monophthongs. The task was also designed using Psychopy. Words were displayed on the computer screen one at a time and participants were required to pronounce these words aloud while Psychopy captured the word pronounced automatically and saved it in Waveform Audio File (WAV) format. The experiment began with an instruction window followed by the presentation of the words that were read by the participants. The words were randomly ordered and displayed on the screen with four-second intervals between them. On average, each participant spent about three and a half minutes on the production task.

### *Data Analysis*

The results for the perception task were scored automatically by Psychopy.

However, for the production task, three independent raters were used to score the words produced. One of the raters was a British national who is an English native speaker and also an English teacher. He speaks RP English as he attended public schools in the UK. The second rater was a highly proficient Iraqi EFL teacher trained in phonetics and the third was one of the researchers of this study. Reliability among the three judges was very high with the Cronbach's Alpha at .80. However, when differences were found in the scoring of the three raters, the majority score was taken for the final analysis. Two analyses were conducted with the perception and production scores: a between-group subject analysis and a within-group item analysis. The independent t-test and paired-sample t-tests were conducted using SPSS.

**RESULTS**

*Descriptive and Statistical Analysis*

Generally, as expected, learners at the higher proficiency levels performed better than the learners from the lower proficiency levels for both perception and production tasks as shown in Table 1. What was surprising was that learners from all groups had higher mean scores in the production task [A2: 62.5%; B1: 76.75%; B2: 81.94% and C1: 82.19%] compared to the perception mean scores [A2: 54.66%; B1: 70.75%; B2: 78.12% and C1: 81.06%]. However, the paired sample t-test conducted found a significant difference between the overall perception and production mean scores only for group A2, the group with the lowest level of proficiency in English. Learners in this group performed better in the speech production task.

Table 1  
*Mean Scores of Speech Perception and Speech Production Tasks*

Group	No	Perception		Production		
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
A2	25	26.24	5.380	30.00	4.992	.005*
B1	25	33.96	5.256	36.84	5.669	.086
B2	24	37.50	4.969	39.33	4.806	.287
C1	11	38.91	3.360	39.45	2.979	.663
Overall	85	33.33	6.956	35.87	6.279	.001*

\* p < 0.05

An item analysis was also conducted across all groups to compare performance in the two tasks. A series of 12 paired sample t-tests were conducted to identify any significant differences in the mean scores of the perception and production of each vowel. These tests indicated significant

differences in the perception and production means of the vowels /ɪ/, /æ/, /ʊ/, /ɔ/, /ɑ:/ and /o:/ with p values below 0.05. The results showed that the production scores were significantly higher than the perception scores with the exception of /æ/ where the reverse was observed as shown in Table

2. The results of the comparison suggest possible L1 effect as the vowels that were better produced than perceived were all found in the L1 vowel system, while the only vowel that was better perceived is not in the L1 vowel system. A more detailed explanation of these effects are presented in the discussion.

Table 2  
Results of Paired-Sample t-test

Vowel	Perception (MEAN)	Production (Mean)	p
/l/	2.40	3.14	.000**
/æ/	2.88	2.46	.007**
/ʌ/	2.39	2.51	.487
/ʊ/	2.79	3.16	.008**
/ɔ/	1.21	2.01	.000**
/ɑ:/	3.14	3.53	.000**
/ɛ/	2.88	3.11	.164
/i:/	3.11	3.47	1.000
/e:/	2.94	2.85	.563
/o:/	2.54	2.69	.280
/u:/	2.94	3.36	.002**
/ə/	3.74	3.69	.608

\*\* p < 0.05

## DISCUSSION

### *Production-Perception Relation and English Proficiency Level*

It can be concluded that at the earlier stage of learning, Iraqi learners are better producers than perceivers, as the production scores were significantly higher than the perception scores. This seems to be uncommon, as theories of speech perception and production such as SLM and several previous studies such as Smith (2010), Nikolova (2010) and Baker and Trofimovich (2006) all

assumed that the ability to perceive is a prerequisite for the ability to produce specific speech sounds. The results of the present study however could be in line with the Motor Theory of perception (Liberman *et al.*, 1967; Liberman & Mattingly, 1985), which assumes that speech is perceived with reference to how it is produced. A production-first argument as supported by the data in the present study is also found in several studies such as Catford and Pisoni (1970) and Weiss (1992), cited in Ho (2009). Baker and Trofimovich (2006) also state that production may precede perception at a particular stage in L2 learning when some internal elements underlying production might be developed at a later stage into perceptual ability. It is worth noting that error count differences between the higher three groups also considerably decreased in accordance to advances in proficiency level. The conclusion offered in the present study can also be accounted for by Fox *et al.* (2009), who refer to a logical possibility that is documented in studies such as Sheldon and Strange (1982), where L2 learners' production might exceed their ability to perceive.

### *L1 Influence on Vowel Perception and Production*

Five vowels were statistically better produced than perceived, while /æ/, a vowel not found in the inventory of IA, was the only vowel which was statistically better perceived. Ho (2009) argues that its salient acoustic features make it easier to perceive while the motor patterns for producing this new vowel accurately will take time

and practice to develop. A bi-directional relation between /æ/ and /ʌ/ that caused them to be most frequently misproduced for one another was also noticed in this study. This refers to the inability of learners to distinctively produce these open vowels, where IA has two open vowels only, while RP English has four.

On the other hand, five vowels were significantly better produced by learners. These are the four back vowels /ɔ/, /ʊ/, /u:/ and /ɑ:/, and the front vowel /i/. All these vowels are found in IA in almost similar positions in the vowel spaces of the two languages. Learners might have the necessary practice to produce these vowels as they are found in their L1; however, their perception still lags behind due to the learners' inability to distinguish these vowels from adjacent vowels in the vowel space of the L2. Fabra and Romero (2012) further argue that in foreign language speech learning contexts, learners lack exposure to the target language in a naturalistic setting; therefore, they argued that it would be unlikely for the perceptual abilities of EFL learners to improve much. Their experience of different instantiations of the same phonemic category would be limited to instances found in the classroom and possibly limited to what their teachers and peers produced. Hence, the vowel space of the phonemic category, if the category already exists, could be limited by their experience with the language in natural contexts.

The acoustic features of these vowels differ between the two languages; hence,

their ability to discriminate these vowels could be more difficult than their production which, in our study, could be rated as correct even if it is not perfectly produced. However, in the perception task they had to deal with distractions from the three other possible options for each word.

#### *Task Difficulty*

The two tasks used in the perception and production studies were definitely different in terms of difficulty. According to, Jia, Strange, Wu, Collado, and Guan (2006), learners found the discrimination task quite difficult, in the sense that it required a high level of auditory attention. In contrast, the production task was cognitively less demanding, so they could do it with comparative ease. Moreover, learners from the low proficient group (A2) might have been confused by the four options given simultaneously to them as they may not have known all the words presented in the option, and this could have increased the level of difficulty of the perception task for this group whereas in the production task, participants had only one word to focus on in each trial.

Spelling could also have been another influencing factor. The inconsistency between spelling and pronunciation in English is usually confusing to Arab learners because there is a close correspondence between orthography and pronunciation in Arabic. Learners have to consider four words with a rather similar spelling. This could be more challenging for learners with a lower proficiency level in English

who possibly have a smaller repertoire of English vocabulary and who may have had fewer encounters with the options presented in the task.

## CONCLUSION

The assumption postulated by theories such as SLM, PAM and DRT that inaccurate perception should result in inaccurate production is not well supported in this study, especially among learners who are most likely at an early stage of L2 acquisition. The results showed that speech perception and production were significantly different from one another, indicating an asymmetrical relationship between them, where speech production can be better developed than speech perception (Fox et al., 2009).

More specifically, possibly due to L1 interference, some vowels were either positively or negatively influenced. When the vowel positions of English vowels were shared with vowels in IA, as in /ɔ/, /ʊ/, /u:/, /a:/, and /I/, the participants seemed to perform better in the production task compared to the perception task. However, the reverse was found with /æ/ as this vowel stands out as distinctively different from other vowels, reducing its confusability with other options given in the perception task.

However, because the results obtained could have been influenced by the design adopted for the perception task, the study should be replicated with other speech perception designs. For example, the same-different discrimination task, which reduces the effect of word familiarity, would be

a likely option. Furthermore, this study was exploratory in nature as no specific hypotheses were made about specific vowel pairs in English that could represent the same vowel in IA. Subsequent studies could focus on an instrumental analysis of the vowels in Iraqi Arabic and compare them with those in RP and the English vowel produced by Iraqi EFL learners to test this relation again with the various proficiency groups.

Nevertheless, the results of this study provides for some recommendations for pedagogical applications. This study suggests that vowel perception might lag behind at an early stage of L2 learning; therefore, teachers dealing with this group of learners should devote more time towards developing their perceptual ability. Teaching and learning strategies that can help students guard against misperception should be adopted in class. Special attention could be drawn to frequently confused words to help students pay attention to the vowel pairs and words that may be confusing for Iraqi EFL learners. With students at the intermediate and advanced levels, however, both perception and production tasks can be taught side by side as they seem to develop in synchrony. Vowels with salient acoustic features can be easier to perceive and attention should be directed to those with less salient features. Perception training should focus on vowels that are also found in IA, while production training should focus on those that are not found in the IA vowel inventory, as they have been identified as more difficult to produce than those that are found in the vowel inventory of IA.

## REFERENCES

- Almbark, R. (2012). *The perception and production of SSBE vowels by Syrian Arabic learners: The foreign language model*. (Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, University of York).
- Baker, W., & Trofimovich, P. (2006). Perceptual paths to accurate production of L2 vowels: The role of individual differences. *IRAL–International Review of Applied Linguistics in Language Teaching*, 44(3), 231-250.
- Council of Europe. (2001). *Common European framework of reference for languages: Learning, teaching, assessment*. Retrieved from [http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/Source/Framework\\_EN.pdf](http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/Source/Framework_EN.pdf).
- Fabra, L. R., & Romero, J. (2012). Native Catalan learners' perception and production of English vowels. *Journal of Phonetics*, 40(3), 491-508.
- Flege, J. E. (1995). Second language speech learning: Theory, findings, and problems. In S. Winifred (Ed.), *Speech perception and linguistic experience: Issues in cross-language research* (pp. 233-277). Baltimore: York Press.
- Flege, J. E., Bohn, O. S., & Jang, S. (1997). Effects of experience on non-native speakers' production and perception of English vowels. *Journal of Phonetics*, 25(4), 437-470.
- Flege, J. E., MacKay, I. R. A., & Meador, D. (1999). Native Italian speakers' production and perception of English vowels. *Journal of the Acoustical Society of America*, 106(5), 2973-2987.
- Fox, R. A., Jacewicz, E., Eckman, F. R., Iverson, G. K., & Lee, S. (2009). Perception versus production in Korean L2 acquisition of English sibilant fricatives. *Current issues in unity and diversity of languages (CD-ROM version)*, 2661-2680. Retrieved from <https://pantherfile.uwm.edu/iverson/www/cil18.pdf>.
- Ho, Y. K. (2009). *The perception and production of American English front vowels by EFL learners in Taiwan: The influence of first language and proficiency levels*. (Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, University of Kansas).
- Jia, G., Strange, W., Wu, Y., Collado, J., & Guan, Q. (2006). Perception and production of English vowels by Mandarin speakers: Age-related differences vary with amount of L2 exposure. *Journal of the Acoustical Society of America*, 119(2), 1118-1130.
- Liberman, A. M., & Mattingly, I. G. (1985). The motor theory of speech perception revised. *Cognition*, 21(1), 1-36.
- Liberman, A. M., Cooper, F. S., Shankweiler, D. P., & Studdert-Kennedy, M. (1967). Perception of the speech code. *Psychological Review*, 74(6), 431-461.
- Nikolova, A. (2010). *L1 interference in the perception and production of English vowels by Arabic speakers*. (Unpublished PhD Thesis, Alliant International University).
- Peirce, J. (2007). Psychopy-psychophysics software in Python. *Journal of Neuroscience Methods*, 162(1), 8-13.
- Sheldon, A., & Strange, W. (1982). The acquisition of /r/ and /l/ by Japanese learners of English: Evidence that speech production can precede speech perception. *Applied Psycholinguistics*, 3(03), 243-261.
- Smith, N. (1973). *The acquisition of phonology: A case study*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Smith, N. (2010). *Acquiring phonology: A cross-generational case-study*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- UCLES (2001). *Quick placement test: Version 2*. Oxford University Press and University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate.



## **The Role of Cognitive Context in the Interpretation of Riddles: A Relevance Theory Perspective**

**Juma'a Qadir Hussein\* and Imran Ho Abdullah**

*School of Language Studies and Linguistics, Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities,  
Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia., 43000 Bangi, Selangor, Malaysia*

### **ABSTRACT**

This paper addresses the role of cognitive context in the interpretation of riddles within the framework of Relevance Theory. Relevance Theory, proposed by Sperber and Wilson (1986/1995), implicates assumptions suitable for the interpretation of how cognitive context is created in the act of riddling. It is argued that this theory shows how and why the riddlee resorts to the cognitive context to give appropriate resolution to the riddle. In this regard, the cognitive context proposed by Relevance Theory is more powerful than the co-text or the context of situation in giving appropriate interpretation to the riddle. The riddles under analysis are confined to one type of riddle, the metaphorical riddle, selected from Pepicello and Green's 1984 'The Language of Riddles'. The cognitive context here does not refer to the co-text or the context of situation but to the set of assumptions and beliefs in the mind of the riddlee about the world available to him in the process of riddle interpretation. The context determines the interpretation of an utterance while the lack of contextual information will lead to communication failure or misinterpretation. This relates to the fact that the cognitive context is affected differently by different individuals due to various factors ranging from one's cognitive ability to one's social and cultural experiences. Hence, riddle interpretation, according to Relevance Theory, is an inferential process where cognitive context determines the interpretation of the riddle.

*Keywords:* Relevance Theory, cognitive context, riddle, optimal relevance, co-text

### **ARTICLE INFO**

*Article history:*

Received: 21 September 2015

Accepted: 15 January 2016

*E-mail addresses:*

[jumaqadir@yahoo.com](mailto:jumaqadir@yahoo.com) (Juma'a Qadir Hussein),

[imranho@ukm.edu.my](mailto:imranho@ukm.edu.my) (Imran Ho Abdullah)

\* Corresponding author

### **INTRODUCTION**

Context has long been investigated from different perspectives in different language-related fields as having a main role in language understanding in the act of verbal communication (Dascal, 1989; Bevir, 2000;

Stern, 2000; Schmid, 2002; Van Dijk, 2008, 2009; Gee, 2014; Hu, 2014; Wardhaugh & Fuller, 2015). There is a general consensus that communicating and generating meaning are determined by the context in which an utterance occurs. However, the traditional view of context is constrained to refer only to the role of the context of situation and culture in determining the meaning of an utterance. That is, it ignores the cognitive ability of language users and their active control over context; hence, the dynamic process of communication is over-looked (Hu, 2014).

This state of affair extended to research on riddles and how they are interpreted or processed. As a form of communication, many studies (Ben-Amos, 1976; Green & Pepicello, 1979, 1984; Pepicello, 1980; Pepicello & Green, 1984; Hoew, 1989; Dienhart, 1998) have been conducted to show the importance of context in the interpretation of riddles. Studies on riddles and how they are understood have focussed on and noted that linguistic, cultural and social contexts are useful elements in interpreting riddles. Despite the importance of context in interpreting riddles, the role of cognitive context has not been explored systematically or only a few studies have been conducted on it.

To the best of the researchers' knowledge, there is only a paper by Solesa-Grijak (2011) that shows the role of cognitive context in interpreting riddles. The paper investigated the relationship between language and cognitive development, presenting the influence of metalinguistic awareness and cognition on solving riddles.

Solesa-Grijak concluded that there is parallel development between language and cognition. Other studies (Haring, 1974; Evans, 1976; Maranda, 1976; Glazier & Glazier, 1976; Green & Pepicello, 1984) focussed on the relation between cognition and the structural aspects of riddles to show that there is an intrinsic relationship between them.

Although previous research into the role of context has indicated that cultural, social, cognitive and linguistic factors can significantly influence the understanding of riddles, none of the studies provides any descriptive evidence of the actual role of cognitive context in the interpretation of riddles. The increasing interest in language comprehension and humour has highlighted the need for investigating a theory suitable to explain how riddles are understood. With the emergence of pragmatics as a theory of language use, there has been a growing body of literature on the role of context in utterance understanding; hence, there now exists a new perspective of the nature of context (Ruiz Moneva, 1999; Anderson, 2000; Adolphs, 2008; Maillat, 2013; Börjesson, 2014).

In this respect, among the many potential flow theories that seek to explain utterances is the cognitive context proposed by Relevance Theory (henceforth RT). RT is a cognitive pragmatic theory proposed by Sperber and Wilson (1986/1995). It appeared to reconceptualise context to be most appreciative of the possible effect of cognitive context upon the interpretation of riddles.

In the present paper, we investigate the role of cognitive context in the interpretation of riddles within the framework of RT. This study is concerned with how people understand riddles through investigating the role of cognitive context in the interpretation of riddles.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### *Relevance Theory and Context*

Sperber and Wilson (1986/1995) argue that what people say is relevant in any given context. In this sense, the conversational implicature is understood simply when hearers select the relevant features of context, and recognise whatever speakers say as relevant to the conversation. When hearers/readers make sense of a text they interpret utterances by drawing on their own background knowledge of the world. The purpose of communication, then, is not to “duplicate thoughts” but to “enlarge mutual cognitive environments” (Sperber & Wilson, 1995:193, cited in Cutting, 2005:43). An individual’s cognitive environment is “a set of assumptions available to him” (ibid.:140). That is, context, according to RT, is “the set of premises used in interpreting an utterance” (Sperber & Wilson, 1986/1995:p.15).

Accordingly, the speaker formulates his/her utterance so as to make it easy for the hearer to recover the intended interpretation (ibid.). This idea is well stated by Kearns (2000) in the following situation: Some of Tom’s friends invited him to come with them to see an afternoon showing of a new film. One of the group, Jenny, says:

1. The movie ends at 3.50.

This utterance implicates the following assumptions available to Tom:

- a. He has a lecture at 4.00.
- b. It takes him 10 minutes to walk from the cinema to the lecture room.

Tom immediately infers that he can go to watch the film till the end and be back on time for the lecture. As a result, the utterance’s implications in (1) interact with Tom’s current assumptions. In particular, the new information interacts with the old information or assumptions, leading to new inference, the decision to watch the film.

Clearly then, RT can account for the way the hearer understands an utterance implicature in terms of cognitive information processing. The emphasis here is not so much on the external context in which an utterance occurs as on the internal context. The internal context refers to the hearer’s assumptions, beliefs and hypotheses stored in his mind in a form of mental representations or propositions (ibid.).

In RT, therefore, the notion of context is a central one. The meaning of an utterance depends, not only on its semantic context, but also crucially on the contextual information with which it is inferentially combined (Gutt, 1998). This means that context, as Vidal (1996) stated, is “the set of assumptions that a hearer uses in the interpretation of a particular utterance” (p.637); that is, the hearer selects the context that yields the optimally relevant interpretation from cognitive environment.

In this regard, Sperber and Wilson (1990) state that an individual’s cognitive environment can be modified by the addition

of a single piece of new information. Human information depends on the balance between processing effort and cognitive effect. The former is one relevant to the attention of memory and of reasoning, while the latter includes such things as adding new beliefs and canceling old ones, strengthening or weakening old information already held.

Relevance, in this sense, Kearns (2000) stated, is the property of utterances from the hearer's point of view used for understanding and for further inferences. As for the role of the speaker as a deliberate communicator, Kearns (ibid.) adds that implicature arises when the speaker makes an utterance highly relevant for the hearer to draw inferences. In normal successful communication, all utterances are relevant, as both the speaker and the hearer mutually recognise. If an utterance is relevant for the hearer, then the hearer will perform the required processing to achieve the anticipated cognitive effects, including the drawing of inferences.

Therefore, the above example (1) implicates the idea that Tom can see the film and be back in time for his lecture. The moderately low processing effort is justified by the cognitive effect. As Jenny, the speaker, is familiar with Tom's background assumptions, she can confidently anticipate that Tom will perform the required cognitive processing and that the utterance will be highly relevant to Tom. These assumptions are the distance from the cinema to the lecture hall and Tom's four o'clock lecture. In this respect, to achieve successful communication is to have the communicator's informative intention

recognised by the audience (Sperber & Wilson, 1986/1995).

## METHODOLOGY

The present study was a corpus-based qualitative analysis of riddles from a Relevance Theory perspective. The study adopted inferential analysis of riddles from the RT perspective to determine how they are understood within the framework of RT. Riddle processing requires extra cognitive effort as riddles are held to be based on ambiguity and the riddlee is misguided by some unnecessary additional information (Pepicello & Green, 1984). Ambiguity, according to Pepicello and Green, is of two types: linguistic ambiguity and metaphorical ambiguity. As past studies, mentioned above, paid more attention to linguistic ambiguity, metaphorical ambiguity was the main concern of this study. Therefore, the study was confined to one type of riddles, the metaphorical riddle. To this end, five metaphorical riddles were used from Pepicello and Green's 1984 'The Language of Riddles'.

### *Analysis of Riddles from a Relevance Theory Perspective*

Riddles as a form of communication involve a coded and encoded message transmitted by the riddler and decoded by the riddlee as "a licensed artful communication" (Pepicello & Green, 1984). The message sent represents the riddler's intended meaning and the riddlee is required to grasp this message.

In the act of riddling, the riddler uses metaphor as a strategy in riddling to confuse

the riddlee as metaphor refers to different things according to different situations (Pepicello & Green, 1984). This will create ambiguity and the riddle will be subjected to multiple interpretations. This ambiguity is argued to be analysed and resolved within the framework of RT. RT suggests that every utterance creates in the addressee expectations or relevance. The riddlee will depend upon the related contextual information available to him to solve the ambiguity. That is, in disambiguation, “the first interpretation consistent with the principle of relevance is the only interpretation consistent with the principle of relevance” (Wilson, 1994). The riddlee, in this sense, will search for the appropriate context assumption that will produce sufficient contextual effect with least effort.

The analysis of metaphor, thus, will highlight the relation of the different meanings invoked from the metaphor with the cultural forms of expressions. This will enhance ambiguity “resulting from cultural tropes that produce in riddling context surprising additional semantic structures for existing words or phrases” (Pepicello & Green, 1984, p.92). Accordingly, the riddler conveys a communicative meaning by using metaphors. That is, the concept the riddler intends to communicate is broader than the words he has chosen literally to communicate. In this vein, processing metaphorical riddles requires additional cognitive process or effort. The riddlee will construct different assumptions in terms of different contexts and search for the optimal one; that is, a set of background

knowledge is activated (Yus, 2003). In this regard, it is important for the riddlee in solving a riddle with regard to metaphor to be pragmatically competent with the situational and sociolinguistic competencies of language.

Based on the above explanation, riddle processing entails the interaction of old and new information. This interaction causes the riddlee to make new inferences to reach the riddler’s intention, the riddle interpretation. This cognitive process of interaction can be illustrated in three steps:

1. Retrieving old assumptions from the cognitive environment which represents the semantic context
2. Making inferences from old assumptions that leads the riddlee to the relevant cognitive context
3. Making new inferences when old assumptions interact with new assumptions to reach the optimal relevant context, hence riddle interpretation or resolution

To see how RT works in accounting for the way meaning is derived or the way riddles are interpreted and processed, let us consider the following examples quoted in Pepicello and Green (1984).

*Riddle 1: What has a tongue and cannot talk? A shoe.*

The riddle image here, that something “has a tongue and cannot talk,” causes metaphorical ambiguity resulting in adding surprising semantic meaning to the word “tongue”; hence, pragmatic meaning is

achieved. This riddle image contradicts the old information stored in the cognitive environment of the riddlee that tongue is usually used for talking. As a result, the riddlee will exert extra cognitive effort in the process of interpreting the riddle to produce contextual implications. Therefore, in the first step, the following assumptions might be available for the riddlee from which an optimum potential relevant context is available as a resolution to the riddle unless a riddle implicates multiple contextual effects:

- a. The tongue is an organ in the mouth of humans and animals and is used for talking in humans.
  - b. Something has a tongue but cannot talk.
  - c. Something cannot talk, yet has a tongue.
- Therefore, in applying the second step, it is reasoned that the thing meant by the riddler:
- d. Must not be a human being or animal either
  - e. Must be an inanimate thing

The third step of the riddlee's cognitive process is to search for a cognitive context in his cognitive environment for an inanimate thing that fits the above assumptions. In this step, the riddlee makes the main assumption that what the riddler means is a tongue-like thing that has an identical tongue role for the thing meant. One of the things, mostly relevant, that might be retrieved from the riddlee's cognitive environment is the shoe. The tongue is conceived to resemble a specific part of a shoe with the tongue-like function for this thing. Therefore, it has been

used metaphorically by way of metaphorical extension to refer to the shoe part. Thus, the riddlee reaches his optimal relevance, solving the riddle.

*Riddle 2: What has teeth but cannot eat?  
A saw.*

In this riddle there is something that "has teeth but cannot eat." The word "teeth" causes metaphorical ambiguity as semantic meaning is added to it; that is, a pragmatic meaning is achieved. The word "teeth" in the cognitive environment of the riddlee means something used for eating and cutting in humans and animals. In the first step, the riddlee will exert extra cognitive effort in interpreting the riddle to produce contextual implications. The following assumptions might be available for the riddlee in searching for an optimally potential relevant cognitive context:

- a. Teeth are solid bones in the mouth of humans and animals used for cutting, biting and chewing and for articulating human speech sounds.
  - b. Something has teeth but cannot eat.
  - c. Something cannot eat, yet it has teeth.
- Therefore, the thing meant by the riddler, in the second step:
- d. Must not be a human being or an animal
  - e. Must be an inanimate thing

In the third step, the riddlee will search for a suitable cognitive context in his cognitive environment that fits the ambiguity that something "has teeth but cannot eat;" that is, the main assumption made by the riddlee is

that the thing meant is associated with teeth as far as the tooth function is concerned. One of the cognitive contexts available to the riddlee's cognitive environment is the "saw". The saw is a serrated blade tool used for cutting wood, metal and other materials. The serrated part of the saw is called "teeth". Therefore, "teeth" is used metaphorically to refer to the saw, and thus, the riddle is solved.

*Riddle 3: What has a mouth but does not eat? A river.*

In this riddle, something "has a mouth but does not eat" is a metaphorical ambiguity caused by the extended meaning of the word "mouth". The old information stored in the cognitive environment of the riddlee is that the mouth is usually used for eating in humans and animals and speaking in humans. The riddler must refer to something else that has a mouth that is not used for eating. In the first step, the riddlee will expand extra cognitive effort in the process of interpreting the riddle. The potential assumptions available for the riddlee might be the following:

- a. The mouth is in the face of humans and animals and is used for eating by both as well as for speaking in humans.
- b. Something has a mouth but cannot eat.
- c. Something cannot eat, yet it has mouth.

In the second step, then, the riddlee will conclude that the thing referred to:

- d. Must not be a human being or an animal
- e. Must be an inanimate thing

In the third step, the riddlee will search for a cognitive context in his cognitive environment for an inanimate thing that fits the above assumptions. The main assumption in this stage is that what the riddler means is something that has a mouth-like thing that has an identical mouth role for the thing meant. Therefore, he will search for something that has a mouth from which something springs. The available relevant cognitive context retrieved from the riddlee's cognitive environment would be the river. The river is envisaged to have a part called the "mouth", which has a mouth-like function from which water flows into another stream. Therefore, "mouth" is used metaphorically to refer to the river part. Thus, the riddlee reached his optimal relevance; hence, the riddle is solved.

*Riddle 4: What is this that has got a heart in its head? A lettuce.*

The riddle image that something "has a heart in its head" causes metaphorical ambiguity for the riddlee. This riddle image contradicts the old information stored in the cognitive environment of the riddlee that the heart is usually in the chest of humans and animals and provides blood to the body. In the first step, the riddlee will exert extra cognitive effort to produce contextual implications. The following assumptions might be available for the riddlee, from which an optimally relevant cognitive context will be reached as resolution to the riddle.

- a. The heart is a human and animal body part in the chest used for providing blood to the body.

- b. Something has a heart but it is in its head.
- c. Something has a heart but it is not in its chest.

In the second step, the riddlee concludes that the thing meant by the riddler:

- d. Must not be a human being or an animal
- e. Must be an inanimate thing

In the third step, the riddlee will search for a relevant cognitive context in his cognitive environment for an inanimate thing that fits the riddle image. The riddlee will make the main assumption that what the riddler means is something that has a heart that is in its head. One of the possible relevant things, in the riddlee's cognitive environment is the "lettuce". The lettuce is a plant that belongs to the daisy family. It is described as having a heart, from which leaves grow, in its head. Therefore, it is metaphorically extended to refer to the source from which the leaves grow. In this way, the riddlee reaches his optimal relevance; hence, the riddle is solved.

*Riddle 5: What has an eye but cannot see?  
A needle.*

The word "eye" in this riddle image that something "has an eye but cannot see" causes metaphorical ambiguity; hence, new usage of the word is created. Old information stored in the cognitive environment of the riddlee is that the eye is an organ in the head of humans and animals through which they see. As a result, extra cognitive effort is exerted by the riddlee to produce contextual implications. This is the first step

in the following assumptions that might be available for the riddlee to move to the second stage to search for optimal relevance as a resolution to the riddle:

- a. The eye is an organ through which humans and animals can see.
- b. Something has eyes but cannot see.
- c. Something cannot see, yet it has eyes.
- d. Something has only one eye.

The second step implicates that the thing meant by the riddler:

- d. Must not be a human being or an animal
- e. Must be an inanimate thing

Then, in the third stage, the riddlee searches for a relevant cognitive context in his cognitive environment for an inanimate thing that fits the above assumptions. The riddlee makes the main assumption that what the riddler means is something that resembles an eye in appearance or shape but which has a different function. One of the potential things or cognitive contexts available to the riddlee's cognitive environment is the needle. The needle is a slim piece of metal with a top at one end and a hole called the eye to hold thread at the other. Therefore, it is used metaphorically to refer to the needle part that holds thread, and this solves the riddle.

## CONCLUSION

Within the framework of RT, riddling, as a form of communication, is cognitive-context dependent. Cognitive context, according to RT, is the set of background knowledge and assumptions available to

the communicators, the riddler/riddlee, in the act of riddling. These assumptions can contribute to the interpretation of riddles. This definition implicates that the riddlee chooses appropriate contextual information from his encyclopedic knowledge to reach the right interpretation of the riddle. This means that the mutual cognitive environments of the riddler and the riddlee represent a prerequisite for an appropriate resolution to the riddle; hence, there is successful communication. That is, when cognitive context operates well, the riddlee is able to reach optimal relevance; hence, interpretation of the riddle is achieved, and the riddlee will understand the riddle through searching for the optimal relevance from the cognitive contexts available. The riddler's role here is to constrain the contextual assumptions to cause the riddlee to choose the relevant one.

In this sense, riddle interpretation, according to RT, is an inferential process where cognitive context determines the interpretation of the riddle. Thus, cognitive context plays an important role in the interpretation of riddles, and the lack of contextual information will lead to communication failure or misinterpretation. The more the riddlee is pragmatically competent, the easier the interpretation of the riddle is. This relates to the fact that cognitive context is affected differently by different individuals due to various factors ranging from cognitive ability to social and cultural experiences.

## REFERENCES

- Adolphs, S. (2008). *Corpus and context: Investigating pragmatic functions in spoken discourse* (Vol. 30). Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing.
- Andersen, G. (2000). The role of the pragmatic marker like in utterance interpretation. In G. Andersen & T. Fretheim (Eds.), *Pragmatics and beyond new series* (pp. 17-38). Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Ben-Amos, D. (1976). Solutions to riddles. *Journal of American Folklore*, 89(352), 249-254.
- Bevir, M. (2000). The role of contexts in understanding and explanation. *Human Studies*, 23(4), 395-411.
- Börjesson, K. (2014). *The semantics-pragmatics controversy* (Vol. 14). Germany: Walter de Gruyter.
- Cutting, J. (2005). *Pragmatics and discourse: A resource book for students*. London and New York, NY: Routledge.
- Dascal, M. (1989). On the roles of context and literal meaning in understanding. *Cognitive Science*, 13(2), 253-257.
- Dienhart, J. M. (1998). A linguistic look at riddles. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 31(1), 95-125.
- Escandell-Vidal, V. (1996). Towards a cognitive approach to politeness. *Language Sciences*, 18(3), 629-650.
- Evans, D. (1976). Riddling and the structure of context. *Journal of American Folklore*, 89(352), 166-188.
- Gee, J. P. (2014). *How to do discourse analysis: A toolkit* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). London and New York, NY: Routledge.
- Glazier, J., & Glazier, P. G. (1976). Ambiguity and exchange: The double dimension of Mbeere riddles. *Journal of American Folklore*, 89(352), 189-238.

- Green, T. A., & Pepicello, W. J. (1979). The folk riddle: A redefinition of terms. *Western Folklore*, 38(1), 3-20.
- Green, T. A., & Pepicello, W. J. (1984). The riddle process. *Journal of American Folklore*, 97(384), 189-203.
- Gutt, E. A. (1998). Pragmatic aspects of translation: Some relevance-theory observations. In L. Hickey (Ed.), *The pragmatics of translation* (pp. 41-53). Great Britain: Cromwell Press Ltd.
- Hu, X. (2014). Dynamic context and verbal communication. *Linguistics and Literature Studies*, 2(3), 101-107.
- Howe, N. (1989). Rewriting initialisms: Folk derivations and linguistic riddles. *Journal of American Folklore*, 102(404), 171-182.
- Haring, L. (1974). On knowing the answer. *Journal of American Folklore*, 87(345), 197-207.
- Kearns, K. (2000). *Semantics: Modern linguistics*. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Maillat, D. (2013). Constraining context selection: On the pragmatic inevitability of manipulation. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 59, 190-199.
- Maranda, E. K. (1976). Riddles and riddling: An introduction. *Journal of American Folklore*, 89(352), 127-137.
- Pepicello, W. J. (1980). Linguistic strategies in riddling. *Western Folklore*, 39(1), 1-16.
- Pepicello, W. J., & Green, T. A. (1984). *Language of riddles: New perspectives*. The Ohio State University Press.
- Ruiz Moneva, M. Á. (1999). Implications of the relevance approach to the context for the interpretation of ironic utterances. *Pragmalinguistica*, (7), 211-230.
- Schmid, H. J. (2002). An outline of the role of context in comprehension. *Anglistentag 2002 Bayreuth. Proceedings. Trier: WVT*, 435-445.
- Solesa-Grijak, D. (2011). Cognition and metalinguistic awareness as sine quibus non for solving verbal problems. *Studia Psychologica*, 53(1), 41-52.
- Sperber, D., & Wilson, D. (1990). Rhetoric and relevance. In D. Wellbery, & J. Bender (Eds.), *The ends of rhetoric: History, theory, practice* (pp. 140-56). California: Stanford University Press.
- Sperber, D., & Wilson, D. (1995). *Relevance: Communication and cognition*. Oxford: Blackwell Publisher.
- Stern, J. J. (2000). *Metaphor in context*. Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Van Dijk, T. A. (2008). *Discourse and context. A sociocognitive approach*. United Kingdom, U.K.: Cambridge University Press.
- Van Dijk, T. A. (2009). Critical discourse studies: A sociocognitive approach. *Methods of critical discourse analysis*, 2(1), 62-86.
- Wardhaugh, R., & Fuller, J. M. (2014). *An introduction to sociolinguistics*. United Kingdom, U.K.: John Wiley & Sons.
- Wilson, D. (1994). Relevance and understanding. In G. Brown, K. Malmkjar, A. Pollitt & J. Williams (Eds.), *Language and Understanding* (pp 35-58). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Yus, F. (2003). Humor and the search for relevance. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 35(9), 1295-1331.



## **Translating Australian Urban Gastronomic Experiences for Malay Tourists**

**Sulaiman, M. Z.**

*School of Language Studies and Linguistics, Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities,  
Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 43600 UKM Bangi, Selangor, Malaysia*

### **ABSTRACT**

Whether to satisfy one's hunger or just to indulge, gastronomy has always been a crucial part of the tourist experience. Given the importance of food in tourism, tourism promotional materials often promote destinations by highlighting appealing gastronomic experiences. Nevertheless, differences in terms of gastronomic preferences from one culture to another could possibly pose a challenge in cross-cultural tourism promotion and advertising, particularly in the case of translation. Bearing in mind that translated tourism promotional materials have at times been the subject of criticism among translation researchers, this paper attempts to investigate a multilingual Australian tourism website to explore the challenges involved in translating gastronomic experiences from English into Malay. Using the functional approach to translation, the paper analyses the English version of the website (source text) to see how gastronomy is used as a tool of persuasion to persuade Anglo readers and how it is translated into Malay. The Malay translation of the website (target text) is analysed to see whether it is coherent and consistent with the cultural situation in which it functions and whether it is suitable to perform its intended function of persuasion. The analyses revealed that the Malay translation, in general, did not take into consideration the fact that most of the themes and elements used to promote Australian cities gastronomically to the Anglo audience are not appealing to the Malay audience. This has resulted in the Malay translation being functionally inadequate. Based on the findings derived from the source text and target text analyses, potential strategies for the production of functionally adequate translations are proposed.

#### **ARTICLE INFO**

*Article history:*

Received: 21 September 2015

Accepted: 15 January 2016

*E-mail address:*

[zain@ukm.edu.my](mailto:zain@ukm.edu.my) (Sulaiman, M. Z.)

*Keywords:* English-Malay translation, functional translation, gastronomy translation, promotional translation, tourism translation, Australian tourism, Malay tourists

## INTRODUCTION

Food is a fundamental part of the tourist experience and providing the right gastronomic experience to tourists has always been indispensable in the tourism industry. An important criterion of a successful tourist city is to have, among other facilities, a wide array of restaurants (Law, 1993, p. 121). The importance of restaurants and food and beverage (F&B) outlets in tourism arises from the fact that tourists tend to prefer eating out (Shenoy, 2005, p. 1), whether to simply keep the body going by consuming what is termed as 'body food' or as an enjoyable experience and a leisure activity by consuming what is termed as 'soul food'. 'Body food' is often simple and taken quickly and is relatively cheap, while 'soul food' is more sophisticated, takes up more time and costs more (Law, 1993, pp. 121-122). The demand for the second type of food within the context of tourism has witnessed the rise of what is termed in the tourism industry as gastronomy, culinary or food tourism<sup>1</sup> and the emergence of tourist cities labelled as 'cities of gastronomy'<sup>2</sup>. Given the important

<sup>1</sup> Gastronomy or culinary tourism refers to tourism that is motivated by an interest in food or drink. The motivation for gastronomy tourists is to experience and taste food and drink that can provide a lasting memory (Karim & Chua, 2010, p. 64).

\* An example of an official recognition of this label is that conferred by UNESCO. Currently, cities that have been appointed as 'Cities of Gastronomy'<sup>2</sup> under UNESCO are: Chengdu, Florianopolis, Gaziantep, Jeonju, Östersund, Popayán, Shunde, Tsuruoka and Zahlé <http://en.unesco.org/creative-cities> (accessed 2015, December 12).

role of food in travel and tourism, tourism promotional materials often showcase gastronomic experiences to promote tourist destinations.

Nevertheless, it must be acknowledged that different societies have different gastronomic needs and preferences due to their different values, worldviews and cultural background. What might be appealing to one culture might not be appealing, or might even be repellent, to another culture. Therefore, in order to promote gastronomic experiences, it has always been the task of the copywriter of tourism promotional materials to consider the cultural context as well as the audience profile, needs and expectations so as to insure maximum impact in culturally different settings (Sumberg, 2004, pp. 329-353; Woodward-Smith & Eynullaeva, 2009, pp. 121-136).

While the various cross-cultural aspects of tourism promotion have always been given due attention in a monolingual context,<sup>3</sup> the same cannot be said about tourism promotion in a multilingual context, that is, in the case of translated tourism promotional materials. Translated tourism promotional materials have frequently been criticised in Translation Studies (Kelly, 1998, pp. 33-36; Snell-Hornby, 1999, p. 95; Hickey, 2004, p. 77; Sumberg, 2004, pp. 329-350; Federici, 2007, p. 111; Pierini, 2007, p. 90; Pinazo, 2007, p. 320; Sulaiman, 2014a, p. 507). The main criticism of the

<sup>3</sup> Tourism promotion in a monolingual context means that no translation activity is involved and that tourism promotional materials are produced by copywriters monolingually.

scholars is that these translations are not adequate from the point of view of the function that they should fulfil. It is argued that these translations fail to preserve the functionality of the source text, that is, ‘to persuade, lure, woo and seduce’ (Dann, 1996, p. 2) potential tourists. Although a number of studies have been conducted to analyse translated tourism promotional materials, these focussed on the promotion of tourism in general with the exception of works such as Sulaiman’s, which focussed on the translation of tourist icons (2014b) and adventure tourism (2013). This paper focusses on yet another aspect of tourism, namely the gastronomic aspect, which, based on the literature, has not been explored in Translation Studies.

This paper examines an Australian multilingual tourism promotional website and investigates how urban gastronomic experiences are represented to lure Anglo readers and how these experiences are translated into Malay to potentially woo Malay tourists. The aim of the paper is ultimately to investigate whether the translations are functionally adequate and to explore the translational challenges and potential strategies and solutions.

## **CORPUS AND METHODOLOGY**

The corpus selected for this study is Tourism Australia’s flagship website [www.australia.com](http://www.australia.com).<sup>4</sup> Tourism Australia is the Australian federal government agency responsible for promoting Australia as a tourist destination to the world. The 360-page website has

<sup>4</sup> Retrieved 2011, March 28.

translations in 17 languages, with the English version being the primary platform (Tourism Australia, 2013). This study focusses on both the English version of the website (hereafter termed ST), which is targetted at Anglophone audiences, and its Malay version (hereafter termed TT), which is targetted at potential Malay tourists. For the purpose of this paper, representative excerpts from the analysed corpus have been selected for discussion and illustration.

Using the functional approach to translation, a profound translation-orientated text analysis (Nord, 1991) was carried out on the ST to identify features that are relevant to the translation process. The textual analysis incorporates an extra-textual analysis of the purpose and cultural context of the text. I investigated how gastronomic experiences were represented and how culturally-designed gastronomic themes and perspectives were used to lure the English reader. The ST analysis is followed by a target text analysis which examines the Malay version of the website (TT) in terms of its functionality in the target-cultural situation. The TT was examined to see whether it was coherent with the cultural situation in which it was functioning and whether it was suitable to perform its intended function. In this regard, the way the culturally-designed themes and perspectives of the ST were translated into Malay was examined. Based on the findings derived from the ST and TT analyses, I propose potential strategies for the production of functionally adequate translations i.e. translations that are able to create the intended effects on the reader.

## SOURCE TEXT ANALYSIS

Like many international tourist cities, Australian cities are a focal point for gastronomic experiences and much effort is made to highlight the ability of urban Australia to provide quality gastronomic experiences for tourists who seek body food, soul food or both while visiting Australia. Australian cityscapes are represented as places that offer various types of food and places to eat in order to accommodate tourists of different needs and wants. The multiple gastronomic experiences offered range from fine dining at upmarket restaurants to takeaway outlets, from exotic oriental cuisine to Italian culinary experiences, from elegant cafes to backstreet coffee shops, and from swanky bars to historic pubs. An obvious feature of the language used to promote Australian cities gastronomically is the use of what is termed as 'gastrolingo': the register of food and drink (Dann, 1996, pp. 235-238).

The importance of gastronomic experiences in the promotion of Australian cities is reflected in the number of references made to F&B throughout the website. The gastronomic aspect of Australian cities is represented in the ST using the term 'restaurants' as a generic term to stress the role of gastronomy as an important component in the construction of Australian cityscapes. The generic notion of F&B is also expanded profoundly throughout the website through the use of *gastrolingo* to include and reflect various specific gastronomic themes. These themes can be summarised into six categories: soul food, body food, alcoholic

beverages, cultural cuisine, fresh produce and culinary art. The 'soul food' category includes examples such as 'swanky bars', 'gourmet buffet breakfast', 'stylish cafe', 'exotic food', 'upmarket dinners' and 'upmarket bars, hotels and restaurants'. The 'body food' category includes examples such as 'a takeaway plate of...' and 'In the back streets you'll find cafes for quick eats'. It is interesting to note that the soul food-body food variation is marked in the ST through the use of specific rhetorical devices such as the keyword (Dann, 1996, p. 174) and contrasting techniques (Dann, 1996, p. 45). These techniques play a key role in defining and ascribing the values of these two opposite categories. In order to illustrate the value of these categories, keywords such as 'swanky', 'gourmet', 'stylish' and 'upmarket' are used to imply luxury, classiness and sophistication for the soul-food category, while keywords such as 'casual', 'takeaway' and 'quick' are used to imply simplicity and affordability for the body-food category. Furthermore, these two categories are often contrasted with one another to imply gastronomy diversity. For example, upmarket dinners are contrasted with casual food style, and upmarket bars and restaurants are contrasted with back street cafes (e.g. 'Dining options range from relaxed pub lunches to upmarket dinners...').

In addition to the soul-food category which emphasises pleasurable experiences, wine, which is construed in many societies, particularly the West, as romantic, poetic, symbolic and status-laden, is introduced

to the culinary scene. Wine is presented either as a way to add value to the soul-food experience (e.g. ‘a glass of champagne and gourmet breakfast’) or as a pleasurable experience in its own right (e.g. ‘Or head in the other direction, stopping for wine tasting in the Swan River vineyards’). The image and appeal of the gastronomic scene is also enhanced through the notion of gastronomic authenticity (Scarpato & Daniele, 2003, p. 299) by inviting tourists to experience Australia’s very own authentic sparkling wines. The same notion is also employed to promote the city of Hobart by inviting tourists to ‘taste a pint of Tasmanian beer in a Tasmanian historic pub’. Such a notion of gastronomic authenticity is equivalent to the quest for authenticity in tourism (MacCannell, 1976). The two coincide when the former entices people to travel to places of gastronomy origin in order to ‘discover and experience the real gustatory sensations for themselves’ (Dann, 1996, p. 237). Indirect reference to alcohol is also conveyed in the ST through words that are primarily associated with alcoholic beverages such as ‘bars’, ‘pubs’ and ‘imbibe’.

The next important theme, cultural cuisines, reflects the diverse flavours and tastes that exist within the culinary scene of urban Australia. For example, the ST invites tourists to ‘check out the Italian, Thai, Greek and French eateries.’ What is also interesting in the ST is the fact that it invites tourists to experience Australian urban marketplace by shopping for fresh and raw farm produce in an attempt to highlight Australia’s heritage

of agricultural richness and diversity (e.g. “Load up on organic fruit and vegetables, premium meat and poultry, locally fished and farmed seafood, gourmet cheeses and bakery products”). Another interesting component of the urban gastronomic experience that does not involve eating or drinking is culinary art: the art of preparing and cooking food. Tourists are invited to witness cookery demonstrations and to participate in cooking classes (e.g. “Watch guest chefs give cooking demonstrations, sign up for a cooking class”). It is clear that the gastronomic themes employed attempt to cover a wide range of gastronomic interests in order to portray the image of Australian cities in a gastronomically attractive manner. Based on the features of the gastronomic discourse used in the ST analysed, it is evident that the discourse is addressed to a particular audience who appreciates the destination image created.

### TARGET TEXT ANALYSIS

While the gastronomic experiences promoted in the ST may well appeal to many tourists, particularly those from Anglophone societies, the same cannot be said with regard to the TT audience: Malay tourists. Most of the gastronomic themes are flawed in the eyes of Malay tourists. The main reason for this is the religious dimension, which differentiates many of the Malay values from the values of other cultures. Being Muslims, Malays are very particular about their food. In fact, Malays in general, regardless of their level of religiosity are very concerned

when it comes to what they consume. For them, the issue of food is centred on the Islamic concept of '*halal*' (permissible according to Islamic law). Halal food refers to F&B that can be lawfully consumed when certain conditions are met. Foods that are unlawful to Muslims and are avoided by Malays include pork, pork-derived foods and products from carnivorous animals. An important distinguishing feature of the *halal* label is that animals that can be consumed by Muslims (e.g. cattle, sheep, poultry), with the exception of seafood, must be slaughtered in the manner prescribed by Islam. The consumption of alcoholic beverages and food containing any alcoholic content is also prohibited in Islam and thus avoided by Malays. In addition, pork and alcoholic beverages are considered *najis* or impure. The consumption of alcohol by Malays in particular is viewed by Malay society as an immoral and disgraceful act. The importance of the *halal* status among Malays and many other Muslims is reflected in the fact that even when they are informed that they are being served *halal* food, they are still concerned about the genuineness of the halal status (Battour et al., 2010, p. 5), particularly if the food outlet is managed by non-Muslims. Although Muslims may consume vegetarian food, seafood and non-meat-based food prepared in non-Muslim eateries, many are still concerned about whether the utensils have been contaminated by non-permissible food such as pork. For Malays, explicit assurance of *halal* status is necessary if the food outlet is managed by non-Muslims. However, if the food outlet

is managed by Muslims and this is also reflected in the commercial name of the establishment, then explicit assurance of *halal* status is no longer necessary.

In the context of tourism, many studies have confirmed that the availability of halal food or 'Islamic gastronomy' (Widyo, 2005, p. 4) is an important factor among Muslims in general and Malays in particular in choosing their tourist destinations (Mohsin, 2005, p. 724; Battour et al., 2010).<sup>5</sup> Thus, there is no doubt that one of the many concerns faced by Malay tourists travelling to non-Muslim countries is the availability of *halal* food and restaurants. Nevertheless, in the case of Australia, this should not pose a major problem as *halal* food is widely available at main tourist destinations across Australia (Rasid Rahman, 2008). The only problem lies in whether enough effort is made to make Malay tourists aware of the availability of *halal* food at these destinations.

The TT in general does not take into consideration that most of the themes and elements used to promote Australian cities gastronomically to the ST audience do not appeal to the TT audience. Western gastronomic appeal is reproduced in the TT with very limited cultural adaptations taking place. The overall gastronomic discourse of the TT invites Malay readers to dine at restaurants that are obviously non-*halal* to them. None of the gastrolingo elements in the TT imply that the food prepared by

<sup>5</sup> This phenomenon has resulted in the rapid growth of 'Islamic tourism' or 'halal hospitality' (Battour et al., 2010, p. 1).

the F&B outlets is *halal* except in the case of seafood eateries and cafes at which it is generally assumed that food permitted by Islam may be available.<sup>6</sup> To aggravate matters, Malay tourists are invited directly to consume alcoholic beverages such as champagne, wine, Australian sparkling and beer. Example 1 below is an example.

The TT also invites Malay tourists indirectly to consume these beverages by suggesting places that are primarily associated with alcoholic beverages, namely, ‘pubs’, ‘bars’, ‘beer gardens’ and ‘cocktail lounges’ (e.g. “check out the upmarket bars”). It is obvious that using a ST-orientated approach, in which Western gastronomic

Example 1

ST	TT	Back Translation
Afterwards you can reflect on the experience with <b>a glass of champagne</b> and gourmet buffet breakfast.	Selepas itu anda boleh mengenangkan kembali pengalaman dengan segelas <b>champagne</b> dan sarapan pagi buffet gourmet.	After that you may reminisce about the experience with <b>a glass of champagne</b> and gourmet buffet breakfast.

Source: www.australia.com/my/things\_to\_do/cities.aspx (emphasis mine)

appeal is retained and reproduced to attract Malay tourists, is counterproductive. It defeats the main purpose of creating an ideal tourist destination in the mind of Malay readers and may, in the most extreme case, result in their opting for other destinations that cater for their needs and expectation. This approach also creates the impression that the text is not addressed directly to them, that the text was not originally meant for them but for a different audience. In this case they consider themselves what House (2010, p. 245) describes as “eavesdroppers” who “eavesdrop” on a communication taking place between an addressor and another addressee (the Anglophone tourist in our case). This translation approach, which is classified by House as “overt translation”, is suitable in situations where

the purpose of the translation is not to create a translation as if it were a “second original” but rather to provide the new addressees (the eavesdroppers) with access to the ST. In our case, this is clearly not the purpose of the translation of Tourism Australia’s website. Adopting this approach will weaken the persuasive function of the TT as it will give the TT audience the impression that they are not ‘special’ and that they are merely a ‘second class’ audience. It also goes against an important advertising strategy, namely ego-targeting (Dann, 1996, p. 185), the function of which is to make readers feel as if they are being singled out by the text.

Cultural adaptations which could be construed as an attempt to adapt to the target culture are very limited in the TT. An example of such an adaptation is in Example 2.

In Example 2, the more specific “imbibe” (connotes the drinking of alcohol)

<sup>6</sup> Cafes are acceptable to Malays as they are known to sell F&B that does not require halal certification such as coffee and non-meat products.

## Example 2

ST	TT	Back Translation
[...] Salamanca Place is now Hobart's top tourist spot, with lots of <b>places to dine and imbibe</b> .	[...] Salamanca Place kini merupakan pusat pelancongan utama di Hobart, yang mempunyai banyak <b>tempat untuk makan dan minum</b> .	[...] Salamanca Place is now a main tourist centre in Hobart, which has many <b>places to eat and drink</b> .

Source: [www.australia.com/my/things\\_to\\_do/cities.aspx](http://www.australia.com/my/things_to_do/cities.aspx) (emphasis mine)

is transformed to the more generic term “*minum*” (to drink). This strategy, which is called “chunking up”<sup>7</sup> by Katan (2004, pp. 199-201), is used to move up above the frame of the individual and different cultures to more generic, culture inclusive frames. Although this translation strategy is a useful one, it is more likely that the decision to use it was not intentional as it does not affect any cultural adaptation at the discourse level. In fact, in the next few sentences of the same paragraph, the notion of experiencing authentic Tasmanian beer in an authentic Tasmanian bar is reproduced without any cultural adaptation in the TT. The most logical reason to explain why the strategy was used is to overcome the problem of non-equivalence (Baker, 1992, p. 26). Since in the Malay language there are no single words that have similar connotations as ‘imbibe’, chunking up one level seems like a good or rather convenient solution.

Regardless of the inappropriateness of the gastronomic discourse in this particular corpus, it must be admitted that the importance of the notion of *halal* for Malay tourists is acknowledged elsewhere

<sup>7</sup> Also termed generalisation or translation by a more general word (superordinate) (Baker, 1992, p. 26; Katan, 2004, p. 173).

by Tourism Australia. One of Tourism Australia's key aims in its ‘Only in OZ Holidays’ campaign launched in Malaysia in 2010 was to “build and reinforce the ‘*halal*’ values to potential Malay prospects which Australia has to offer” (Tourism Australia, 2010). Part of the effort to court Malay tourists from Malaysia was indeed the launching of the Malay version of Tourism Australia's consumer website (ETN staff writer, 2010). Besides the website, a guide titled “A Muslim Traveller's Guide: Australia” (KasehDia Halal Guides, 2010) was also published by a Malaysian company (KasehDia Sdn. Bhd.) with the collaboration of Tourism Australia. The guide, which serves as a reference for Muslim travellers, particularly Malays planning a holiday to Australia, includes, among others, reviews of *halal* restaurants in Australian cities. The guide is available on the homepage of the Malay version of Tourism Australia's website. In other words, the Malay website and the guide are among the key promotional materials used to lure Malay tourists from Malaysia to spend their holiday in Australia. However, these two materials seem to contradict one another. While the Guide emphasises gastronomic themes that appeal to Malay tourists, the Malay translation of the website does almost the opposite.

From the above, it can be concluded that the lack of attention on this very important aspect in the Malay version of the website is not a result of Tourism Australia's lack of understanding of Malay tourist needs and preferences but is rather caused by other factors related to the entire process of translation itself. Rendering the gastronomic appeal functional for a Malay audience would definitely require shifts at the macro level. However, as admitted by Pym (2011, p. 418), such shifts are rarely found in the translation and localisation of websites. He attributes this phenomenon to the fact that these shifts require too much effort of the translator. This is in tune with the 'law of interference' (Toury, 1995, pp. 274-279), which predicts that translators will adapt the small units and leave the big ones unchanged. The fact that 'imbibe' was rendered simply as 'minum' (drinking) in the previous example, hence omitting any explicit or implicit references to alcoholic beverages, reflects this point, assuming that this 'cultural adaptation' was implemented intentionally on the part of the translator. This is because taking 'imbibe' one level higher to 'drinking' does not require much effort nor does it constitute much interference.

Failure to execute the macro-level shift could also be caused by translators who lack the necessary training, or who are reluctant to challenge the primacy of the source text or ask the commissioners of the translation assignments (clients) for permission to make the necessary changes (Sumberg, 2004, pp. 344-347). It could also be due to the

conditions under which the translators are expected to work. Whatever the causes, the reality is that the Malay translation fails to carry out its function of creating the image of attractive Australian cityscapes for the Malay reader. Furthermore, the translation also fails to demonstrate Australia's ability to cater for the needs of Malay tourists. Perhaps this is one of the reasons behind what South Australia Tourism Commission (SATC) described as a key challenge in attracting Malay tourists in its Industry Forum Operator Handbook:

*[The] emerging Malay middle class segment has the propensity to travel but lacks understanding of Australia's capability in catering for their needs.*

(SATC, 2010, p. 54)

But the question is: How are Malays supposed to understand Australia's ability to cater for their needs, if the promotional materials used to attract them do not reassure them of this?

The discussion above is directly related to the first four categories of gastronomic themes used in the ST: soul food, body food, cultural cuisines and alcoholic beverages. The fifth category, that is, fresh produce, was also translated without any changes at the macro level. This is despite the presence of 'meat and poultry' which, if they are to be promoted to Malay tourists, must be meats that are *halal* and described as such. The last category, namely culinary art, is the only category that does not require any changes

at the macro-level as it does not necessarily involve food consumption (i.e. eating or drinking). Hence the reproduction of this gastronomy theme without any changes in the Malay version is quite acceptable. It must also be acknowledged that this category is indeed one that would appeal to some Malay tourists.

### **FUNCTIONALLY ADEQUATE TRANSLATION**

The translator as a ‘bi-cultural expert’ (Vermeer, 1994, pp. 13-14) has the responsibility of advising the client on the necessity of executing macro shifts and effecting cultural adaptations. In the case of promoting Australian cities to Malay tourists within the gastronomic appeal framework, it should be noted that there are two main types of gastronomic element in TPMs: gastronomic elements that are promoted as objects of ‘tourist gaze’ (Urry & Larsen, 2011), and gastronomic elements that are promoted for the purpose of food consumption. Gastronomic elements promoted as objects of tourist gaze do not pose much problem and can be reproduced literally whilst maintaining the intended effects. On the other hand, gastronomic elements that are promoted to satisfy tourists’ hunger for body food or tourists’ desire for soul food will usually require some forms of cultural adaptation to render the gastronomic appeal functional. While texts referring to F&B and F&B outlets that are acceptable to Malays such as seafood

and cafes may be retained, texts containing ambiguous<sup>8</sup> and non-acceptable F&B and F&B outlets (e.g. Italian, Thai, Greek and French eateries, pubs, bars) as well as prohibited beverages (e.g. champagne, wine, beer) must undergo cultural adaptation. This can be achieved by a number of strategies such as:

- substituting a Malay gastronomic appeal for Western gastronomic appeal;
- changing the function of gastronomic element from being an object of oral consumption to being an object of visual consumption (tourist gaze);
- substituting the gastronomic appeal with non-gastronomic appeal; and
- omitting the gastronomic appeal all together.

The degree of change and adaptation implemented by this functional approach must rely on a process of negotiation between the translator and the client who has the final say with regard to the strategies to be adopted.

Substituting a Malay gastronomic appeal for Western gastronomic appeal is very practical and is likely to be successful as Australian cities do not lack eateries that can attract Malay tourists. The Muslim traveller’s guide to Australia (KasehDia Halal Guides, 2010), which is published

<sup>8</sup> Ambiguous F&B and F&B outlets are those whose halal status is unknown to the reader.

by a Malaysian company (KasehDia Sdn. Bhd.)<sup>9</sup> with the collaboration of Tourism Australia, could be used as a key point of reference or even integrated in the Malay version of Tourism Australia’s website. This strategy will not only solve the contradicting promotional approach that exists between the guide and the Malay website, but will serve as an added-value feature of the Malay website. For example, in certain instances, the generic term ‘restaurant’ could be translated into Malay using the ‘chunking down’ method (Katan, 2004, pp. 201-202), that is, moving from general (restaurant) to specific (*halal* restaurant) in order to render

the TT functional and appealing to the target audience (Example 3).

The lateral chunking method can also be used, that is, moving from one type of eatery or food which does not appeal to Malay tourists to another type of food or eatery which does appeal to Malay tourists. For example, in one of the previous examples, the idea of having Tasmanian beer in a historic pub could be replaced by the idea of local fresh seafood, considering the fact that *halal* food outlets are rather limited in Tasmania and that fresh seafood is one of Tasmania’s gastronomic attractions. The notion of authenticity implied in the ST

Example 3

ST	Functionally Adequate Translation	Back Translation
[...] Each of our cities is unique, but each offers a relaxed outdoor lifestyle, melting pot of cultures and a whirlwind of theatre, <b>restaurants</b> [...] and shopping strips [...]	[...] Setiap bandar kami mempunyai keunikan tersendiri dan menawarkan suasana hidup yang tenang, syurga membeli-belah, <b>pelbagai pilihan restoran termasuk restoran halal</b> [...]	[...] Each of our cities is unique, and offers a relaxed atmosphere of life, shopping paradise, <b>a wide range of restaurants including halal restaurants</b> [...]

Source: www.austrlia.com (emphasis mine)

<sup>9</sup> The International Halal Food Guide Series by KasehDia Sdn. Bhd. was launched in 2003, and includes reviews of halal restaurants in Kuala Lumpur, Singapore, Australia, Dubai, Canada, New Zealand and London. It was touted as “the world’s best series of halal food restaurant guides” by The Asian Wall Street Journal. The Australian issue was awarded the ‘Best Guides in the World’ winner at the prestigious Gourmand World. What is interesting is that the creator of the series was inspired to come up with such a series while she was in Australia in 2001 as a tourist. During her visit, she found it difficult to find halal restaurants and discovered that there was no literature nor guide available on halal restaurants in Australia (Rosniza Mohd Taha, 2011)

could also be somewhat preserved by using the notion of “local fresh seafood” in the Malay translation (Example 4).

Furthermore, the function of the gastronomic elements can be shifted from fulfilling oral consumption purposes to being objects of visual consumption (tourist gaze). In Example 5 for example, “with lots of places to dine and imbibe” indirectly suggests places for the tourist to eat and drink. These places can be translated as a mere feature of the destination’s landscape for gazing purposes without suggesting

## Example 4

ST	Functionally Adequate Translation	Back Translation
Drink coffee under the sun umbrellas <b>or taste a pint of Tasmanian beer in a historic pub</b> [...]	[...] <b>atau menikmati hidangan makanan laut tempatan yang segar di restoran-restoran yang banyak terdapat di sini</b> [...]	[...] <b>or enjoy local fresh seafood at one of the many restaurants available here</b> [...]

Source: www.australia.com (emphasis mine)

## Example 5

ST	Functionally Adequate Translation	Back Translation
[...] Salamanca Place is now Hobart's top tourist spot, <b>with lots of places to dine and imbibe</b> . The Georgian warehouses house have been reinvented as galleries, theatres, <b>cafes, bars and restaurants</b> [...]	[...] Salamanca Place kini merupakan pusat pelancongan utama di Hobart, <b>yang dipenuhi bazar membeli belah, pelbagai restoran dan kafe, galeri seni dan teater</b> [...]	[...] the square of Salamanca Place is now a main tourist centre in Hobart, <b>filled with shopping bazaars, various restaurants and cafes, art galleries and theatres</b> [...]

Source: www.australia.com (emphasis mine)

them as places to eat and drink. In order to implement this strategy in the translation, the first sentence of the ST is merged with the visual consumption elements (galleries, theatres, cafes, bars and restaurants) of the second sentence.

Along similar lines, 'wine tasting' in Example 6 is changed to 'visiting beautiful vineyards'.

The gastronomic appeal can also be replaced by a different appeal. This

strategy can be described as omission with compensation. For example, in Example 7, the "champagne and buffet breakfast" experience can be omitted and replaced with the "inflation and deflation of the balloon" experience which, although not mentioned in the ST, is highlighted in the Muslim guide. Another viable option would be to omit the gastronomy appeal altogether without any compensation.

## Example 6

Source Text (ST)	Functionally Adequate Translation	Back Translation
[...] Or head in the other direction, stopping for wine tasting in the Swan River vineyards or Devonshire tea in historic Guildford.	[...] Anda juga boleh menghala ke hulu sungai dan <b>melawat ladang-ladang anggur yang indah</b> atau menikmati teh Devonshire di pekan Guildford yang bersejarah.	[...] You can also head upriver and <b>visit beautiful vineyards</b> or enjoy Devonshire tea in the historic town of Guildford

Source: www.australia.com (emphasis mine)

## Example 7

Source Text	Functionally Adequate Translation	Back Translation
Float over Canberra in a hot air balloon Get an aerial view of Canberra's national attractions on a sunrise hot air balloon flight [...] There's a lovely sense of tranquillity up here in the clouds as you watch the city awaken. <b>Afterwards you can reflect on the experience with a glass of champagne and gourmet buffet breakfast.</b>	[...] Anda juga boleh mengambil bahagian dalam proses pengembangan dan penguncupan belon.	[...] You can also participate in the process of inflating and deflating the balloon.

Source: www.australia.com (emphasis mine)

## CONCLUSION

In order to preserve the functionality of translated tourism promotional materials, that is, to persuade, lure, woo and seduce, it is imperative that these materials address their audiences in terms of their culturally predicated needs, preferences and motivations. This paper has demonstrated the importance of promoting tourism across languages and cultures using the right gastronomic appeal. In the case of Malay culture, the conceptualisation of appealing gastronomy is founded on the religious dimension of Malay society. Nevertheless, such differences in gastronomic preferences often require the execution of macro-level translational shifts in the form of cultural adaptations. Such content changes in the gastronomic 'menu' require a process of negotiation between the translator and commissioner. What is even more important is that it requires extensive background knowledge on the destination being promoted, including other gastronomic options available. This

additional background knowledge, which goes far beyond the information provided by the source text, allows the translator to come up with appropriate translation strategies. In the context of the earlier examples of functionally adequate translations, the translator will not be able to propose that "restaurants" be translated as "halal restaurants", "Tasmanian beer" as "local fresh seafood," and having "a glass of champagne and gourmet buffet breakfast" as "participating in the process of inflating and deflating the balloon" unless he or she has the necessary knowledge to support and validate the new information proposed in the translation.

## REFERENCES

- Australia.com (2011). *Explore Australia in 360°*. Retrieved from www.australia.com
- Baker, M. (1992). *In other words: A coursebook on translation*. London: Routledge.
- Battour, M., Ismail, M. N., & Battor, M. (2010). The impact of destination attributes on Muslim tourists' choice. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, 13(6), 527-540. doi: 10.1002/jtr.824.

- Dann, G. (1996). *The language of tourism. A sociolinguistic perspective*. Wallingford: CAB International.
- ETN staff writer. (2010, March 9). *Tourism Australia partners with Malaysia Airlines to launch only in Oz holidays campaign*. Retrieved from <http://www.eturbonews.com/14811/tourism-australia-partners-malaysia-airlines-launch-only-oz-holi>
- Federici, E. (2007). What to do and not to do when translating tourist brochures. In O. Palusci & C. De Stasio (Eds.), *The languages of tourism: Turismo e mediazione* (pp. 99-112). Milano: Unicopli.
- Hickey, L. (2004). Perlocutionary pursuits: Persuading of/that/to. In M. P. N. Errasti, R. L. Sanz & S. M. Ornat (Eds.), *Pragmatics at work: The translation of tourist literature* (pp. 57-79). Bern: Peter Lang.
- House, J. (2010). Overt and covert translation. In Y. Gambier (Ed.), *Handbook of translation studies* (pp. 245-246). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Karim, M. S. A., & Chua, B. L. (2010). Malaysia as a culinary tourism destination: International tourists' perspective. *Journal of Tourism, Hospitality & Culinary Arts*, 1(3), 63-78.
- KasehDia Halal Guides. (2010). *A Muslim Traveller's guide: Australia*. Kuala Lumpur: KasehDia.
- Katan, D. (2004). Translating cultures. *An introduction for translators, interpreters and mediators* (2nd ed.). Manchester: St. Jerome.
- Kelly, D. (1998). The translation of texts from the tourist sector: Textual conventions, cultural distance and other constraints. *Trans: Revista de traductología*, 2, 33-42.
- Law, C. M. (1993). *Urban tourism: Attracting visitors to large cities*. London: Mansell.
- MacCannell, D. (1976). *The tourist: A new theory of the leisure class* (2nd ed.). New York: Schocken Books.
- Mohsin, A. (2005). Tourist attitudes and destination marketing: The case of Australia's Northern Territory and Malaysia. *Tourism Management*, 26(5), 723-732.
- Nord, C. (1991). *Text analysis in translation: Theory, methodology, and didactic application of a model for translation-oriented text analysis*. Amsterdam: Rodopi.
- Pierini, P. (2007 July). Quality in Web translation: An investigation into UK and Italian tourism web sites. *The Journal of Specialised Translation*, 8, 85-103.
- Pinazo, E. P. (2007). *The language of tourism/leisure: The translation in English and Spanish of documents related to leisure activities*. Paper presented at the Maastricht Session of the 4th International Maastricht - Lodz Duo Colloquium on "Translation and Meaning", Zuyd University, Maastricht, The Netherlands.
- Pym, A. (2011). Website localization. In K. Malmjaer & K. Windle (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of translation studies* (pp. 410-426). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Rasid, R. (2008). *Sydney Kota Pelancongan*. Retrieved from <http://mazlan66.wordpress.com/2008/02/28/sydney-kota-pelancongan/>
- Rosniza, M. T. (2011, July 14). Kerjaya: Peluang kerjaya luas dalam bidang komunikasi. *Berita Harian Online*. Retrieved from [http://www.bharian.com.my/bharian/articles/Kerjaya\\_Peluangkerjayaluasdalambidangkomunikasi/Article/index](http://www.bharian.com.my/bharian/articles/Kerjaya_Peluangkerjayaluasdalambidangkomunikasi/Article/index)

- SATC. (2010). *SATC Industry forum operator handbook*. Retrieved from <http://www.tourism.sa.gov.au/industryinfo/Documents/International/International%20Forum%202010/singapore-malaysia-45-55.pdf>
- Scarpato, R., & Daniele, R. (2003). New global cuisine: Tourism, authenticity and sense of place in postmodern gastronomy. In C. M. Hall, L. Sharples, R. Mitchell & N. Macionis (Eds.), *Food tourism around the world: Development, management, and markets* (pp. 296-313). Oxford: Elsevier.
- Shenoy, S. S. (2005). *Food tourism and the culinary tourist*. (Doctoral dissertation, Clemson University).
- Snell-Hornby, M. (1999). The ultimate confort: Word, text and the translation of tourist brochures. In G. Anderman & M. Rogers (Eds.), *Word, text, translation: Liber amicorum for Peter Newmark* (pp. 95–105). Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- Sulaiman, M. Z. (2013). *Translating adventure tourism discourse: A cross-cultural journey into experiencescapes*. Paper presented at the 14th International Conference on Translation, Penang, Malaysia.
- Sulaiman, M. Z. (2014a). Translating the Style of tourism promotional discourse: A cross-cultural journey into stylescapes. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, (118), 503-510.
- Sulaiman, M. Z. (2014b). Translating Urban tourist icons across cultures: An English-Malay perspective. *GEMA Online®Journal of Language Studies*, 14(3), 159-173.
- Sumberg, C. (2004). Brand leadership at stake: Selling France to British tourists. *The Translator*, 10(2), 329-353.
- Tourism Australia. (2010). *Malaysia: Market update (2009 December/2010 January)*. Retrieved from [www.tourism.australia.com/marketupdates](http://www.tourism.australia.com/marketupdates)
- Tourism Australia. (2013). *Australia presents a new face to the world*. Retrieved from [http://www.tourism.australia.com/en-au/news/6609\\_6756.aspx](http://www.tourism.australia.com/en-au/news/6609_6756.aspx)
- Toury, G. (1995). *Descriptive Translation studies and beyond*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Urry, J., & Larsen, J. (2011). *The tourist gaze 3.0*. London: SAGE.
- Vermeer, H. (1994). Translation today: Old and new problems. In M. Snell-Hornby, F. Pochhacker & K. Kaindl (Eds.), *Translation studies: An interdisciplinary* (pp. 3-16). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Widyo, R. (2005). *Gastronomy in Islam: A case study of international Muslim students in Adelaide, South Australia*. (Master of Gastronomy thesis, The University of Adelaide).
- Woodward-Smith, E., & Eynullaeva, E. (2009). A Cross-cultural study of the translation and adaptation of advertisements for beauty products. *Perspectives: Studies in Translatology*, 17(2), 121–136.



## **Initiating a Peer Support Centre for English Language Presentations: Issues and Challenges**

**Pramela, K. \*, Noraza, A. Z., Nurjanah, M. J., Kemboja, I. and Nadzrah, A. B.**

*School of Language Studies and Linguistics, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 43600 Bangi, Selangor, Malaysia*

### **ABSTRACT**

This paper reports on an action research to initiate a peer support centre at the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities for enhancement of English Language presentation skills. The aim of the support centre is to create a platform for limited users of the English Language to receive additional coaching from more competent peers and senior students to carry out simple presentations and discussions in English. A group of 30 low-proficient students participated in this research with the help of 10 senior students as peer support. Peer support is well-known as a cooperative learning strategy that provides peer interaction. It also helps in the development of language. The role of peer support is to boost the mastery of English among low-proficiency students via planned activities. The peer support group received constant coaching and feedback from the team of researchers to sustain their efforts to support the students. This paper ends with the issues and challenges that were faced throughout the study in initiating a peer support centre.

*Keywords:* English Language, presentation skills, peer support centre, peer support group, limited users of English, interaction

### **INTRODUCTION**

The stiff global competition and challenges in today's workplace have led to a

rising concern and urgency to question ourselves as to whether current Malaysian undergraduates are work-ready and have the extra edge to survive and succeed at the workplace. Research indicates that there is a gap between the skills requirement for entry level employment and the skills of entry-level job applicants (Isarji et al., 2008; Indra Devi, Zaini, & Pramela, 2012). Most jobs today require not only the right knowledge

#### **ARTICLE INFO**

*Article history:*

Received: 21 September 2015

Accepted: 15 January 2016

*E-mail addresses:*

pramela@ukm.edu.my (Pramela, K.),

noraza@ukm.edu.my (Noraza),

nurjanah.mjaafar@gmail.com (A. Z., Nurjanah),

oja@ukm.edu.my (M. J., Kemboja, I.),

nadz@ukm.edu.my (Nadzrah, A. B.)

\* Corresponding author

but also the much needed soft skills – fluency in language, interpersonal communication, wisdom and maturity. Employers frequently lament that poor English competency has hampered graduates’ ability to communicate effectively at the workplace (Ainol et al., 2011). They find it a challenge to hire young graduates with these qualities and more so graduates with the ability to communicate fairly well in English. With globalisation, the need for effective presentation skills has increased and the English Language is the language chosen for a wide range of purposes for various people from different nationalities (Živković, 2014).

A study conducted by Isarji et al. (2008) revealed that 54% of undergraduate students from six universities in Malaysia were limited users of English, of which 77% were limited users of spoken English and 58% of written English. At the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM), a large number of undergraduate students fulfil the requirements set by the respective schools in the faculty. However, it is alarming that many of these students have only managed to obtain Band 1 or 2 in the Malaysian University English Test (MUET). MUET is a widely used benchmark in Malaysian public universities to determine students’ proficiency in English. Students who fall into Band 1 are extremely limited users of the language and are categorised as being hardly able to function in the language. Band 2 students are described as limited users of the language who lack fluency and have limited ability to function in the language.

At the tertiary level, English language classes do cater for enhancement of communication skills where topics include greetings, asking for directions, suggesting, giving opinion and other functions that enable students to role-play in simulated situations. Such practice is useful to provide students with a platform to communicate confidently. At this level too, the links between the university/college and the workplace become clearer and the need to enhance students’ presentational skills becomes more apparent and urgent. As mentioned earlier, these skills are useful for students at the university when they leave the university and enter the workforce.

Students at the tertiary level work on presentations. Prior to the presentations, the students will review and evaluate work by their peers and this is particularly beneficial for the promotion of the autonomous learner. Students may learn from each other by correcting each other in terms of errors and by solving technical problems as they work together. Collaborative learning occurs as they express themselves freely among their peers. Students need skills to prepare, organise and deliver oral presentations; this is also an effective way to make students aware of communication skills. Thus, students learn the elements of positive attitudes from their learning experience. By undergoing the learning experience, students become insightful, improving their higher-order thinking skills as preparing and making successful presentations require high quality of thought (Carroll, 2006).

Although a lot of effort has been put into these English courses, the undergraduates do not have much exposure to practise presentation skills in English as the medium of instruction is in Bahasa Malaysia (Malay Language). There is neither room nor avenue for these students to practise written or oral presentations in the English language. This is because introducing presentations in English for other core courses taught in Bahasa Malaysia is not possible at this time. However, gradual efforts have been made by some lecturers.

It is a fact that the ability to present ideas in front of an audience is a skill much needed by graduates of today. According to Huang, Eslami and Hu (2010), when graduates are unable to convey their message adequately, they may feel uncomfortable as they are using a second language and thus, they may develop language learning anxiety. Krashen (1985) points out that anxiety has an impact on learners' affective filter. This leads to a mental block that impedes learners' full use of comprehensive input. In addition, they are often found to be intimidated and feel threatened when they are required to present in English. To overcome this anxiety, social support and understanding from teachers and peers is needed as they are an important component for making students feel more comfortable, although it may not be possible to entirely eliminate anxiety altogether (Horwitz, 2008).

Huang et al. (2010) too add that peer support is essential to language learners as they may receive support from their classmates not only in the form of friendship

but also in ways that facilitate learning. In addition, many peer-assisted studies have been conducted with native English-speaking students and the results seem to support the positive impact of peer tutoring (Gersten et al., 2007).

This highlights the importance of peer tutoring. Peer tutoring has been used since the eighteenth century in the United Kingdom but in Malaysia its application is limited (Chai & Lin, 2013). Malaysian students very seldom choose to engage, question or interact actively with their peers. Although there are numerous benefits in this approach, students in Malaysia prefer a teacher-centred approach; hence, they develop behaviour that is unsuited to the demands of employment today.

In short, studies integrating peer support groups as a learning tool among a range of learning contexts have shown positive results for both the tutors/mentors and the tutees/mentees. The tutors have to understand the content taught thoroughly or master the needed skills extremely well before sharing with tutees. The experience of the tutors can also benefit the tutees greatly as the barriers that exist may be reduced compared to the anxiety they may feel with the teachers/instructors. Learning then becomes easier, free from anxiety and more autonomous as both learners and teachers become involved in the cognitive processes for their own development.

While peer support is well-known as a cooperative learning strategy that provides peer interaction, at the same time it also helps in the development of language.

Besides this, it also enables students to express themselves with greater confidence when they work in small groups. This has indeed been the impetus and primary motivation to undertake this research project.

On the other hand, Surina and Kamaruzaman (2009) have explained that the classroom context alone cannot meet students' needs as far as learning a language is concerned. They have urged that teachers should consider exploiting the application of mobile phones in improving their teaching. In fact learning often requires social interaction and creating a social learning space need not be physical and/or virtual but should transcend both and facilitate both formal and informal student-centred collaborative learning (Oldenburg, 1991) cited in Williamson & Nodder, 2002). Ehsan Soleimania et al. (2014) maintain that the positive perception of the role of Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL) is in enhancing learners' English through providing them with the opportunity to access various useful materials to carry out different activities in English, and the need or desire to communicate and interact with their friends and lecturers using English cannot be denied.

This returns to the social-constructivist view of learning (Vygotsky, 1962; 1978) that states that students need the stimulus of interaction with each other and in social groups to construct their learning. Consequently, their contact with each other outside the classroom is often where they learn the most. The importance of this type

of learning is increasingly being recognised due to the rapid advancement of technology.

## **THE STUDY**

The aim of initiating the Student Support Centre at the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities (SSC@FSSK) is to facilitate and promote student support for improving self-confidence in language skills. To achieve this, a peer support group was trained to coach the target group of limited users of the English Language to make presentations and hold discussions in English. Planned activities were carried out weekly with the target group to prepare them for competitions organised by the research team.

## **METHODOLOGY**

A total of 30 first-year students who were limited users of English with a MUET Band 1 or 2 who were enrolled at the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, UKM were selected to participate in this study for a semester. They were from various programmes at the faculty, which offers 12 programmes. The selection of students was based on purposive sampling. These students (mentees) were divided into groups of three members each with a student who was a proficient user of the language who had obtained a MUET Band 4 or 5 as mentor.

The 10 mentors in Year 2 were chosen based on their proficiency in English and their confidence level in presentations. They were given training on their role as peer

support by the team of researchers. Several activities were planned as intervention by the peer support and the research team. These included presentations/activities and social interactions to be carried out by the mentors with the target group. Activities also included language games and vocabulary tasks, singing and reviews of movies. In addition, mobile technology was used to connect students with their mentors and lecturers using the WhatsApp application for more interaction.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

Since this study was an action research, issues that surfaced throughout the study had to be investigated at different stages of the study. The most important players in this study were the students – the mentees. Recruiting the mentees was quite an easy task at the beginning of this study. During the first few weeks of the semester, the students were very keen as they expressed the desire to improve their English language skills. They were very excited that senior students who were proficient and approachable were going to coach them. However, five weeks into the semester, the numbers had dwindled and this became a challenge as achieving the main aim of the study depended on the mentees, and thus efforts were needed by the research team to sustain their involvement. The peer support (mentors) was on constant touch with the mentees via social media and mobile phone and created a WhatsApp group to keep the students engaged. The lecturers were also members of this group help to monitor and respond to the mentees and mentors.

Assessment was another issue raised by the students. Students preferred a grade for their participation and since no grade was given for involvement they were not happy to continue. These students were also burdened with many other assignments and residential college activities.

Another issue that interfered with their participation was the need to communicate in English through digital media. These digital natives were not comfortable with using digital media/tools to communicate. They were shy or reluctant to respond to messages and share their ideas on WhatsApp. After a few face-to-face sessions with the mentees, they confessed that the reason for not responding to the texts in the WhatsApp group was because the messages had to be in English. They were apprehensive about writing in English as it might reflect their weakness in using English. The students' low proficiency in English was seen as an obstacle as they could not express themselves well although they wanted to participate in conversations. The other reason given was that they preferred not to have lecturers in the WhatsApp group. As a result, the lecturers (research team) were removed from the WhatsApp Group.

Due to this shortcoming, a new plan was executed where new students with similar English proficiency (Band I and 2) were recruited as mentees. More activities were conducted to keep the social interaction going with the peer support or mentors. They included a language camp that was organised for secondary schoolchildren. The rationale for inviting the schoolchildren was to expose the mentees to a new learning

environment where social interaction could be enhanced between them and the schoolchildren. As mentioned earlier, social learning space can be physical or virtual and it plays an important role in learning.

Several language games and activities were planned for this event to involve mentees in interaction with the schoolchildren. The camp included group performances on stage where the mentees had to take part in group work with the schoolchildren. The aim was to encourage a fun environment to motivate the learners and to reduce anxiety. Synergy was established with the university and the school as a community partner. This provided a natural environment for communication and for a different method of learning. This camp enabled learning beyond the classroom and students experienced learning without dependence on teachers and textbooks.

## CONCLUSION

This study revealed that in order to initiate an effective support centre, two aspects need to be tackled. One is to motivate and sustain mentees in their involvement in activities. There is a need to strengthen the bond between mentors and mentees. The mentees were weak in the English Language whereas the mentors were proficient. Thus, the mentees faced anxiety in having to communicate with their mentors because they lacked confidence, were afraid to make errors and felt that a gap existed between them and their seniors. Bridging such a gap is the first step towards effective learning. Secondly, for instrumental motivation

there is a need to award credit hours or other benefits to encourage mentees to be more involved in peer-support activities. The administration of the university has to encourage students by acknowledging efforts to join such projects. There should also be effort from the mentors to encourage the mentees to voice out any dissatisfaction or solution to problems to allow them to be part of the decision-making process. On the whole, the effort taken by the 10 mentors as peer support was commendable as they were committed and willing at all times to keep the mentees on track. If the challenges and issues can be overcome, a peer support centre will become a reality in the near future.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This research was supported by Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (PTS2014-019).

## REFERENCES

- Ainol, M. Z., Isarji, S., Mohamad Sahari, N., & Tunku Badariah. (2011). *English competency for entry level employment: A market research on industrial needs: Final report*. Cyberjaya: Prestariang Systems Sdn. Bhd.
- Carroll, C. (2006). Enhancing reflective learning through role-plays: The use of an effective sales presentation evaluation form in student role-plays. *Marketing Education Review*, 16(1), 9-13.
- Chai, M. S., & Lin, S. F. (2013). Perceptions of ESL student tutors on challenges faced in peer tutoring. *Education Journal*, 2(4), 127-131.
- Ehsan Soleimania, Kemboja Ismail, & Rosniah Mustaffa. (2014). The acceptance of mobile assisted language learning (MALL) among post graduate ESL students in UKM. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 118, 457-462.

- Gersten, R., Baker, S. K., Shanahan, T., Linan-Thompson, S., Collins, P., & Scarcella, R. (2007). *Effective literacy and English Language instruction for English Learners in the elementary grades: A practice guide (NCEE 2007-4011)*. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education.
- Horwitz, E. K. (2008). *Becoming a language teacher: A practical guide to second language learning and teaching*. Boston: Pearson/Allyn and Bacon.
- Huang, S., Eslami, Z., & Hu, R. J. S. (2010 March). The relationship between teacher and peer support and English language learners' anxiety. *English Language Teaching*, 3(1), 32-40.
- Indra Devi, S., Zaini, A., & Pramela, K. (2012). *Employer engagement in an ESP-based course: Undergraduates' perceptions*. Presented at 4<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Social Sciences & Humanities (ICOSH), Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Bangi, Malaysia.
- Isarji Sarudin, Ainol Madziah Zubairi, Mohamad Sahari Nordin, & Mohd Azmi Omar. (2008). The English Language proficiency of Malaysian public university students. In M. Y. A. Bakar, N. E. Mokhtar, R. Jani, A. M. Zubairi, N. Othman, & A. Gan (Eds.), *Enhancing the quality of higher education through research: Shaping future policy* (pp. 40-65). Kuala Lumpur: Ministry of Higher Education.
- Krashen, S. (1985). *The input hypothesis: Issues and implications*. New York: Longman.
- Surina, N., & Kamaruzaman, J. (2009). A study of subject-verb agreement: From novice writers to expert writers. *International Education Studies*, 2(3), 190-194.
- Vygotsky, L. (1962). *Thought and language*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Vygotsky, L. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Williamson, A., & Nodder, C. (2002). Extending the learning space: Dialogue and reflection in the virtual coffee shop. *Computers and Society*, 32(3), 1.
- Živković, S. (2014 August). The importance of oral presentations for university students. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, 5(19), 468-475. [Online] ISSN 2039-2117.



## **Challenges in Teaching Interlanguage Pragmatics at Private EFL Institutes in Iran**

**Tan, K. H.\* and Farashaiyan, A.**

*School of Language Studies and Linguistics, Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities,  
Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 43600 Bangi, Selangor, Malaysia*

### **ABSTRACT**

This study explored the challenges faced by instructors in integrating pragmatics instruction in their language classes. The participants of the study comprised 20 EFL Iranian instructors. Semi-structured interviews were used as the instrument for data collection and the data were analysed qualitatively using thematic analysis. Some pertinent and important challenges emerged from the data. Learners' lack of cultural literacy, lack of instructional media facilities, instructors' low implicit and explicit pragmatics knowledge and insufficient time in implementing the language syllabus were some. Other factors included the high volume of textbooks and lack of materials or input in teacher's guidebooks, which contributes to lack or ignorance of interlanguage pragmatics instruction among instructors. The implication of the findings is that it is necessary to include pragmatics information in instructor's guides, thereby enabling the teaching and dissemination of explicit information in relation to pragmatics issues in the language classroom. Instructors should be given sufficient input in guides and relevant materials to facilitate the teaching of this significant construct so that learners can acquire intercultural communicative competence and due emphasis can be given to pragmatics in teacher training courses.

*Keywords:* Challenges, instructors, interlanguage pragmatics, private EFL institutes, pragmatics knowledge, cultural literacy

### **ARTICLE INFO**

*Article history:*

Received: 21 September 2015

Accepted: 15 January 2016

*E-mail addresses:*

[kimmy@ukm.edu.my](mailto:kimmy@ukm.edu.my) (Tan, K. H.),

[atieh\\_farashaiyan@yahoo.com](mailto:atieh_farashaiyan@yahoo.com) (Farashaiyan, A.)

\* Corresponding author

### **INTRODUCTION**

With globalisation, people are bound to communicate with each other more than before. Individuals have more opportunities and commitment to interact with other community members due to educational, business, immigration and other motives.

Scholte (2005, p. 13) viewed globalisation as “the spread of transplanetary connections between people.” In other words, globalisation involves unprecedented growth in transworld contacts, where the porosity of geographical borders increasingly allows global citizens to “physically, legally, culturally, and psychologically connect with each other.” Thus, a view of globalisation, as claimed by McKay and Bokhorst-Heng (2008), stresses the important role of mass communication among individuals. It is therefore essential to have a shared channel for communication due to the shortened space and distance between people, societies and nations. As such, the English Language has become the shared channel *lingua franca* for communication.

As Sharifian (2013) stated, the advancement of more abstruse connection between English Language and globalisation has been witnessed within the last two decades, which has further promoted English Language as an international language that can connect people from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. As such, English Language has gained dominant status in global communication. Pennycook (2010) suggested that speakers of English as a Foreign Language (EFL learners) would be the fastest rising group, contributing to the radical propagation of English. This matter indicates the increasing significance and use of English in EFL countries such as China, Japan, Iran, Korea and Taiwan to name a few. Furthermore, due to the increasing use of English Language universally and its role in world communication mostly among

non-native speakers as the dominant users of English Language, growing understanding of the mentioned facts has highlighted the position of English in EFL countries to a greater degree.

However, there often exist more difficulties among non-native speakers, especially EFL learners in intercultural communication than communication among speakers who share identical cultural orientation. The reason is that each speaker has a different interpretation of the other’s speech and they may understand the other’s statements based on their own cultural expectations, values and conventions (Seward, 2013). The wide variation of cultural conventions of interlocutors can easily result in misunderstanding and even total communication breakdown (Al-Zubeiry, 2013).

Intercultural misunderstanding is one of the difficulties that non-native speakers, especially EFL learners, face in the act of communication and Iranian EFL learners often encounter such problem (Rashidi & Ramezani, 2013). It is claimed that the most important cause of intercultural misunderstanding is pertinent to pragmatics failure in using the appropriate speech (Farahian, 2012). Hamouda (2014) believed that pragmatics failure emerges as an unintentional offensive action and not a deliberate mistake due to cultural diversity of individuals and their lack of knowledge in pragmatics rules and norms to realise speech acts in other cultures.

It is therefore pertinent that EFL learners’ pragmatics knowledge, as the core

construct of communicative competence, be developed in order to avoid intercultural misunderstandings and pragmatics failure, resulting in more effective and successful intercultural communication (Nguyen, 2011; Rafieyan et al., 2014). Eslami-Rasekh (2011) also supported this idea and declared that learners' L2 pragmatics competence should be well developed in communicating appropriately in the target language. It is claimed that the most important factor contributing to pragmatics development, especially in EFL contexts, is instruction. Therefore, researchers have focussed on the need of instruction on L2 pragmatics domain in EFL classrooms in order to assist learners in developing their pragmatics competence (Farrokhi & Atashian, 2012; Rashidi & Ramezani, 2013; Rafieyan et al., 2014). In addition, Bardovi-Harlig (2001) believed that most of the L2 pragmatics features are not acquired without instruction, or they may be learned more slowly. Thus, raising learners' awareness by means of instruction is the first step in expanding learners' pragmatics competence (Bulut, 2009).

However, as pragmatics behaviours and norms differ extensively across different social and cultural contexts, teaching L2 pragmatics is a highly demanding and challenging task for EFL instructors (Eslami-Rasekh & Eslami-Rasekh, 2008; Simin et al., 2014). Interlanguage pragmatics as a branch of SLA research and a subfield of pragmatics is defined as "the study of L2 or FL learners' use and acquisition of L2 pragmatics knowledge and ability (Kasper, 1996, p. 145; Rose & Kasper, 2001, p. 3). According

to Kasper and Rose (2001), pragmatics ability is recognised as the speaker's ability to utilise language in appropriate ways based on the communicative situation. This ability includes the learner's knowledge of existing linguistic resources (pragmalinguistic characteristics) and the sociopragmatic norms governing the appropriate use of the available resources or tools in communicative contexts. Although SLA practitioners have recently called for the inclusion of L2 pragmatics in EFL classroom instruction, instructors have not shown eagerness and enthusiasm to incorporate it in their classroom practices (Simin et al., 2014).

This paper seeks to discuss findings in relation to the challenges or difficulties faced by instructors in teaching L2 pragmatics. A number of studies (Eslami-Rasekh & Mardani, 2010; Dastjerdi & Rezvani, 2011; Salemi et al., 2012; Barekat & Mehri, 2013); however, have investigated the effects of pragmatics instruction on learners' performance. What is less researched is what the instructors' difficulties are in carrying out interlanguage pragmatics instruction in EFL settings. In an attempt to fill this gap, this paper addresses the issue of instructors' challenges in teaching L2 pragmatics in the Iranian EFL context.

## METHODS

This exploratory study employed a qualitative design to gain an understanding of underlying reasons, opinions and motivation behind a situation. It also provides insights into the problem or helps to develop ideas

or hypotheses for potential quantitative research (Dörnyei, 2007).

Twenty Iranian EFL instructors voluntarily took part in an in-depth structured interview and the data collected were validated and their reliability recorded. Basit (2010) mentioned that an interview is a subjective process both for the interviewee and the interviewer. While eliminating bias in interviews is not totally feasible, it can be minimised by employing some methods. For the purpose of the present study, the techniques that were used to enhance the validity of the interview data were peer debriefing (Ary et al., 2010) and reliability concerns by inter-rater agreement (Ary et al., 2010).

Twenty instructors from five private EFL institutes took part in a one-on-one interview voluntarily. During the interview, the instructors were asked to describe the difficulties they faced in incorporating pragmatics in teaching. They were asked to talk about the reasons while trying to execute pragmatics instruction in retrospect. All the interviews were carried out in the Persian language in order to minimise misunderstanding and misinterpretation of questions as the area of pragmatics is relatively new to them. Each interview took approximately 30-60 minutes. All the interviews were tape-recorded.

### **DATA ANALYSIS**

After transcribing the instructors' interviews, a thematic analysis was conducted based on the analytical procedures in Braun and Clarke (2006).

In so doing, all the interviews, including instructors' interviews were transcribed and the transcripts were read and re-read many times to identify the required data. In the next phase the data identified was then put into meaningful groups or codes. In phase three, the codes were analysed and combined to form categories. Phase four involved reviewing and refining the categories identified to develop a satisfactory thematic map to use for the study. In the following phase, the categories were defined and further refined to ensure each identified category was able to capture and analyse the data. The final phase enabled a detailed analysis to be worked out including examples from the data itself.

### **FINDINGS**

The findings pointed towards the four important factors elicited from the instructors. They are: learners' lack of cultural literacy; lack of facilities such as films and movies; instructors' implicit pragmatics knowledge; and lack of time. In addition to these main factors, lack of pictures and illustrations, the large volume of textbooks, age of learners, lack of emphasis in teacher's guidebooks, lack of materials or input, lack of sufficient vocabulary and expressions and the existence of taboo elements were among other factors identified as contributing to lack of awareness of interlanguage pragmatics instruction among instructors.

### *Learners' Lack of Cultural Literacy*

Learners' lack of cultural literacy was found to be the most dominant factor for lack of interlanguage pragmatics instruction reported by the instructors. They referred to it as insufficient knowledge of the cultural background of learners. This problem was highlighted by some of the instructors. For example, Ms S mentioned that learners' lack of cultural background could cause conceptual misunderstanding:

*I think learners' lack of cultural background is an obstacle in teaching pragmatics. Most of the learners do not have information about cultural differences between their own language and culture and other cultures and this makes a lot of problems. This matter makes learners not to understand the concepts in English due to this lack or shortage.*

Another instructor, Ms H, elaborated: "one of the difficulties in teaching pragmatics is surely culture. It means that learners do not have enough cultural information due to cultural differences."

Ms N, who took part in the interview, had a similar idea. She stated:

*The learners do not know the culture behind the phrases or words that I'm saying because they are not familiar with other cultures. As they don't know culture, they don't know the appropriate language and behaviour behind using language functions.*

### *Lack of Media Facilities*

The second important factor suggested by most of the instructors was the lack of facilities, especially films and movies. Most of the instructors pointed out that institutions do not provide teachers with facilities such as films and videos. The data revealed some interesting observations in this respect.

*As pragmatics is taught mostly implicitly, it is better to make use of films to expose learners to functions or speech acts in a variety of situations. For example, they can learn how to use speech acts such as recommendation or apology and which phrases or expressions to use based on the situation.*

*I like to use video or films but they are not available. We do not have enough access to these resources as they are very helpful in teaching pragmatics but the institute does not provide these complementary resources in addition to the textbooks.*

*Lack of facilities such as films is a factor that contributes to the lack of pragmatics teaching. It is better to accompany each taught lesson, especially cultural points, by showing films besides what learners read in the book. I think films can transfer the materials much better and the feedback could be really much better.*

*Lack of films is an obstacle to present learners with real context or real-life situations. Unfortunately, there is no time and facility to show the movie and it is not also obligatory. As learners do not watch movies, they are not exposed to pragmatics that much. They just learn what is included in their textbooks.*

The two factors discussed earlier were the two foremost challenges that instructors faced in teaching pragmatics in Iranian EFL institutes.

#### *Instructors' Implicit Pragmatic Knowledge*

The third important factor that a number of instructors referred to was instructors' lack of implicit pragmatics knowledge. They explained that the pragmatics dimension of target language was a somewhat new concept to them and they had not paid much attention to this aspect of language use. Six of the interviewees emphasised that this lack of knowledge had prevented them from implementing and paying sufficient attention to pragmatics features in their practices. To them, it was sufficient to teach the language skills of reading, listening, speaking and the sub-skills of grammar and vocabulary in the EFL classroom.

For example, Ms R, one of the instructors who participated in the interview, argued: *"As instructors have been trained to focus on the language skills, they do not have enough knowledge and also necessary skills*

*to pay attention to this aspect. As such, it is ignored by them."*

Ms S, another participant of the interview, had a similar opinion but a different reason. She stated the fact that instructors did not have pragmatics knowledge for two main reasons.

*In fact, we as language instructors, do not have enough pragmatic knowledge or maybe what we know is a whole picture of it for two reasons: first, there is no information or emphasis regarding the pragmatics issues in the teachers' manuals as the basis of the teaching and secondly, instructors are not trained in teacher's training courses to pay attention to this aspect and explicitly teach learners the pragmatics features.*

The instructors' lack of pragmatics knowledge was the third important factor that contributed to the lack of interlanguage pragmatics instruction in the institutions. This finding is in line with Bella (2012), who found that teachers mostly practised grammar in their classroom practices in the ESL context. In addition, Al Falasi (2007) found the same results and reported that teachers in EFL settings emphasised grammatical or linguistic aspects of the L2 and did not pay attention to the pragmatics and sociocultural features of the target language.

*Lack of Time*

In addition, lack of time was also noted by five of the instructors as having an impact on the non-inclusion of pragmatics instruction in the language classroom. They expressed that since the contents of the textbook, which include mostly grammatical items, were too wide and demanding to be covered by them in a mere semester, they tended to leave out pragmatics and not consider teaching the nuances of it.

*Large Volume of Class Textbooks*

The extensive contents of the textbook was another factor that four instructors put forward as one of the challenges faced. The syllabus dictated that textbook coverage was mandatory. The instructors stated that the huge volume of the class textbooks did not allow them to include pragmatics instruction. They only had sufficient time to cover the materials they were supposed to teach. In this regard, Ms R stated: *“The high volume of the textbook does not let us as instructors pay more attention to the pragmatics dimension of the language. We have to just cover the book.”* This finding is consistent with that of Vellenga (2008), who found that the sheer volume of subject material to be taught was a reason for the lack of the use of pragmatics instruction to ESL upper-intermediate English language learners.

*Lack of Adequate Instructional Materials in Pragmatics*

Out of the 20 instructors who were interviewed, four stated that they did

not have access to enough materials or input to teach interlanguage pragmatics. This shortage could be attributed to the textbooks, which are the major and the only source of input in foreign language contexts. They present pragmatic information either in conversational models or by giving a list of expressions without any adequate contextual and meta-pragmatics information about their use. This finding is in line with Eslami-Rasekh (2005), who asserted that the difficulties teachers encountered in teaching pragmatics were lack of sufficient materials and training in the ESL context. Table 1 shows the factors mentioned by the instructors and their frequency.

**CONCLUSION**

It appears that L2 pragmatics features should be highlighted by policy makers, curriculum developers and material writers. Curriculum developers would be better convinced of the significance of incorporating the pragmatics dimension of language ability in EFL materials. Since the prerequisite for pragmatics instruction is the availability and provision of especially fitting and suitably prepared materials, material writers/developers can embrace a “speech act pedagogical model” in planning, developing or writing instructional materials.

Factors such as learners’ lack of cultural literacy, lack of facilities such as films and movies, instructors’ implicit pragmatics knowledge, lack of time, lack of pictures, illustrations, the bulkiness of textbooks, age of learners, lack of emphasis in teacher’s guidebook, lack of materials or input, lack

Table. 1  
*Instructors' Perceptions of Factors Influencing Their Non-Inclusion of Pragmatics Instruction*

Factors	N/20
Learners' lack of cultural literacy	10
Lack of facilities such as films, computer programmes, pictures & illustrations	9
Instructors' implicit pragmatics knowledge	6
Lack of time	5
The huge volume of textbooks	4
Lack of adequate materials or input	4
Others	
Age of learners	1
Lack of emphasis in teacher's guidebook	1
Transfer from L1 & literal translation; existence of taboo elements	1

*Note.* Superscripts denote significant differences as follows: \*\* $p < 0.01$ . Statistically significant difference in mean

of sufficient vocabulary and expressions and the existence of taboo matters were identified from the data. These setbacks could be overcome by the concerted effort of all education quarters in the country.

This study, however, had a number of limitations. The first limitation was the selection of EFL instructors. The participants were from one province in Iran. So, they may not represent all Iranian EFL instructors. The second limitation was the fact that although all the participants were Iranian EFL instructors, they were not homogeneous in course major, age, educational background and teaching experience, which may have influenced the results of the current study. Finally, the data were collected only through interviews due to institutional constraints and policies.

The present study made an attempt to explore the challenges faced by instructors during the integration of pragmatics instruction in their language classes at private EFL institutes. Future research can

investigate other contexts such as higher education institutions as these problems affect education at all levels.

## REFERENCES

- Al-Falasi, H. (2007). Just say "thank you": A study of compliment responses. *The Linguistic Journal*, 2(1), 28-42.
- Al-Zubeiry, H. Y. (2013). Intercultural miscommunication in the production of communicative patterns by Arab EFL learners. *International Journal of English Linguistics*, 3(5), 69-77.
- Ary, D., Jacobs, L., Razavieh, A., & Sorensen, C. (2010). *Introduction to research in education* (7<sup>th</sup> ed.). Canada: Thomson Wadsworth.
- Bardovi-Harlig, K. (2001). Evaluating the empirical evidence: Grounds for instruction in pragmatics? In K. R. Rose, & G. Kasper (Eds.). *Pragmatics in language teaching* (pp. 13-32). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Barekat, B., & Mehri, M. (2013). Investigating the effect of metalinguistic feedback in L2 pragmatic instruction. *International Journal of Linguistics*, 5(2), 197-208.

- Bella, S. (2012). Pragmatic awareness in a second language setting: The case of L2 learners of Greek. *Multilingual*, 31(1), 1-33.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, U. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77-101.
- Bulut, D. (2009). Pragmatic awareness of a foreign language in a gender-segregated society. *Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi*, 26(1), 123-139.
- Dastjerdi, H., & Farshid, M. (2011). The role of input enhancement in teaching compliments. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 2(2), 460-466.
- Dörnyei, Z. (2007). *Research methods in applied linguistics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Eslami-Rasekh, Z. (2005). Raising the pragmatic awareness of language learners: *ELT Journal*, 59(3), 199-208.
- Eslami-Rasekh, Z. (2011). In their own voices: Reflections of native and nonnative English speaking TESOL graduate students on on-line pragmatic instruction to EFL Learners. *Electronic Journal for Teaching English as a Second or Foreign Language*, 15(2), 1-21.
- Eslami-Rasekh, A., & Mardani, M. (2010). Investigating the effects of teaching apology speech act, with a focus on intensifying strategies on pragmatic development of EFL learners: *The Iranian context. The International Journal of Language Society and Culture*, 30, 96-103.
- Eslami-Rasekh, Z., & Eslami-Rasekh, A. (2008). Enhancing the pragmatic competence of non-native English-speaking teacher candidates in an EFL context. In E. A. Soler, & A. Martinez-Flor (Eds.), *Investigating pragmatics in foreign language learning, teaching and testing* (pp. 178-197). Bristol: Multilingual Matters.
- Farahian, M., Rezaee, M., & Gholami, A. (2012). Does direct instruction develop pragmatic competence? Teaching refusals to EFL Learners of English. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 3(4), 814-821.
- Farrokhi, F., & Atashian, S. (2012). The role of refusal instruction in pragmatic development. *World Journal of Education*, 2(4), 1-17.
- Hamouda, A. (2014). The effect of explicit instruction on developing Saudi EFL learners' pragmatic competence in refusal formulas. *Research Journal of English Language and Literature*, 2(1), 138-160.
- Kasper, G. (1996). Developmental issues in interlanguage pragmatics. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 18, 149-169.
- Kasper, G., & Rose, K. R. (2001). *Pragmatics in language teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Mckay, S. L., & Bokhorst-Heng, W. D. (2008). *International English in its sociolinguistic contexts*. New York: Routledge.
- Nguyen, M. T. T. (2011). Learning to communicate in a globalized world: To what extent do school textbooks facilitate the development of intercultural pragmatic competence? *RELC Journal*, 42(1), 17-30.
- Pennycook, A. (2010). The future of Englishes: One, many or none? In A. Krikpatrick (Ed.), *Routledge Handbook of World Englishes* (edu.) (pp. 673-687). London: Routledge Pergamon.
- Rafieyan, V., Sharafi-Nejad, M., & Siew-Eng, L. (2014). Effect of pragmatic instruction on sustainable development of pragmatic awareness. *Journal of Studies in Education*, 4(1), 206-218.

- Rashidi, N., & Ramezani, S. (2013). On the impact of the role-play technique on the development of FL learners' pragmatic competence before and after formal instruction. *International Symposium on Challenges (ISLC)* (pp. 183-196). Izmir, Turkey: Ege University.
- Salemi, A., Rabiee, M., & Ketabi, S. (2012). The effects of explicit/implicit instruction and feedback on the development of Persian EFL learners' pragmatic competence in suggestion structures. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 3(1), 188-199.
- Scholte, A. (2005). *Globalization. A critical introduction*. New York: Palgrave.
- Seward, T. (2013). *Meaning in interaction: An introduction to pragmatics (Learning about language)*. New York: Routledge.
- Sharifian, F. (2013). Globalization and developing metacultural competence in learning English as an international language. *Multilingual Education*, 3(7), 1-11.
- Simin, S., Eslami-Rasekh, Z., Eslami-Rasekh, A., & Ketabi, S. (2014). The effect of explicit teaching of apologies on Persian EFL learners' performance: When E-communication helps. *International Journal of Research Studies in Language Learning*, 3(4), 71-84.
- Vellenga, H. (2008). Learning pragmatics from ESL and EFL textbooks: How likely? *Teaching English as a Second or Foreign Language*, 8(2), 1-13.



## **Discovering the Variances in Language and Culture: A Comparison of Chinese and English Language Advertisements**

**T'ng Cheah Kiu Choon\* and Lee Siew Chin**

*School of Languages and Linguistics, Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities,  
Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 43600 Bangi, Selangor, Malaysia*

### **ABSTRACT**

Language and images used in advertisements, other than the dissemination of information, are more likely to reveal the cultural identity embedded in the advertisements. It is believed that the Chinese Language emphasises rhythmic use while the English Language is more likely to be more simple and direct. An added factor is the presence of Chinese culture, which tends towards collectivism and the allusion of the concept of auspiciousness, as opposed to the Western emphasis on individualism. As a result, advertising language in Chinese advertisements tends towards retaining the language's oriental traditional values, while the anglicised version of the same advertisement often highlights personal accomplishments. This study examined two sets (a total of four advertisements) of the same advertisements published in both Chinese and English Language newspapers, magazines or 'business information' booklets in Malaysia; where the same pictures and backgrounds are retained. The findings indicate that the Chinese version tends to convey extra information and that these advertisements tend to embed more values that are traditional and cultural in comparison to their English counterparts.

*Keywords:* Advertising discourse, cultural identity, cultural representation, language and culture, social representation, image symbolism

### **ARTICLE INFO**

*Article history:*

Received: 21 September 2015

Accepted: 15 January 2016

*E-mail addresses:*

[alfred@ukm.edu.my](mailto:alfred@ukm.edu.my) (T'ng Cheah Kiu Choon),

[leesiew@ukm.edu.my](mailto:leesiew@ukm.edu.my) (Lee Siew Chin)

\* Corresponding author

### **INTRODUCTION**

Language (including text) is a national medium for the expression of emotion, this is beyond doubt. Cao (1992: 130) argues that each nation has its own unique understanding and expression of the world in addition to its own philosophical ideas. In other words, language is equivalent to

the ideological characterisation of a nation. Businesses promoting their products use language to convey information to their customers. Consumers or customers often learn through advertising language to get what they need. As a result, commercial activities focus on the most 'attractive' the language in order to persuade or move consumers to buy, using language to inform and attract customers. In addition, "products bought and sold hinges on the promotion of ideals, images and lifestyles in discourse – linguistic, visual or otherwise" (Aiello & Thurlow, 2006: 149). Therefore, these activities are steeped in values that form the socio-cultural backbone of each community, and the language that mediates the activities of tend to embed these cultural values.

Language is the core content of advertising, and social and cultural influences control and confine the advertising language and its expression. In other words, advertising language involves social-cultural values. This infers that the language used in advertising will not only convey information about the product, but also a certain degree of culture or cultural values, philosophy or philosophical concepts to the users (Chen & Ding, 2006). The activities involved in advertising are, therefore, symbolic and thus ideological, both representing and reproducing systems of belief and power (Fairclough, 1999; Van Leeuwen, 2002).

Thus Wang and Zhang (2002: 5) have debated: "In terms of thinking, behavior characteristics and aspects of life, what are the differences between advertisements

using Chinese language and those using English advertisements?" In advertising products to a Chinese readership, for example, their explanation is the relation between the Chinese Language and its ancient civilisation. However, in multi-ethnic countries such as Malaysia and Singapore, where pluralism in language as a policy is being practised, people find it easier to understand expressions in which different languages and language sense are used, compared to in regions that are monolingual (Zhou, 2009). This is because advertisements use visual artifacts that materialise, organise, communicate, store and pass on knowledge (Yin, 2009). In doing so, they are objectified within the Malaysian social group and thus, enable mutual and shared "readings" (Raab, 2008).

People who travel to Malaysia will certainly find a lot of public information given in four languages, namely, Malay (the national language), English (Malaysia's second official language), Chinese (mother tongue of the second largest ethnic group in Malaysia, that is, the Chinese community) and Tamil (the common language of the Indian community of Malaysia). This is specifically found in commercial advertising materials (leaflets, television broadcast or newspapers). The media are prepared to use different languages in advertising the same product to cater for Malaysia's multi-ethnic readership. As Chinese Malaysians basically understand Chinese and/or English, many print media produce "one advertisement in two languages." They even go to the extent of using a single publicity concept

to suit the different religious backgrounds that make up the ethnic Chinese group. Hence, this paper looks at the discourse or the language that is actively functioning within the social context, where the ethnic Chinese figures in its society, and its culture is prevalent. Therefore, in terms of exploring advertisements targetted largely at Chinese readers, both the text and non-linguistic elements form the context of the study.

### LITERATURE REVIEW

Language can be seen as a representation of social action and interaction: people interacting together in real social situations (Fairclough, 1995). Fairclough looked into ways in which language deals with ideology. As Fairclough put it, it is “language as social practice determined by social structures” (2001: 14). In terms of social practice Fairclough gave three features:

*Firstly, that language is a part of society, and not somehow external to it. Secondly, that language is a social process. And thirdly, that language is a socially conditioned process, conditioned that is by other (non-linguistic) parts of society.* (pp. 18-19)

Cook (2001) delineated the parameters of an advertisement as being made up of:

- the substance – the physical material which carries or relays the text;
- the paralinguage – meaningful behaviour that accompanies language such as non-verbals (in speech) and

choice of typeface and letter sizes (in writing);

- the situation – the properties and relations of objects and people in the vicinity of the text, as perceived by the participants;
- the co-text – text which precedes or follows;
- intertext – associated text(s) that affect(s) their interpretation;
- participants – addressers, addressees and receivers; and
- function – what the text is intended to do.

An advertisement is thus a construction of multiple and alternative voices. Both Goddard (2002) and Cook (2001) agreed that often the very core of communication in an advertisement comes from images alone, particularly images that are more metaphorical (Durand, 1987; Kaplan, 1992) than literal in nature. Visuals in advertisements serve to create, maintain, transmit and defend particular forms of practice, and the particular forms of knowledge – particularly cultural norms and beliefs that underpin them (Meyer et al., 2013). In advertisements, images have become an elementary mode for the construction, maintenance and transformation of meaning (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001; Raab, 2008).

Language too can be seen as an act of construction (Hall, 1980). Hence, meaning is achieved through associative relations, using systems of connotations or semiotics. Social meaning is constructed through the

signs and sign systems that are known to man to define himself, his reality and the world around him. Culture provides the signs and mechanisms to accomplish this. For instance, colour codes have been regulated in certain domains, like traffic signs (Wu, 2000). Similarly colours as signifiers have their role and relevance in constructing social reality, as in Chinese society, which highly regards red as an auspicious colour.

In cultural studies, according to Stuart Hall (1973) media messages are decoded or interpreted in different ways depending on an individual's cultural background, economic standing, and personal experiences. Hall postulates that media audiences decode messages based on their own social contexts. For example, since advertisements tend to have multiple layers of meaning, the audience decodes or extracts the meaning of a message into terms that they are able to understand. In other words, decoding is about understanding what someone already knows based on the information given throughout the message being received.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The approach to the study was qualitative and subjective because the interpretation of the data draws from the writers' cultural knowledge. Although subjectivity may tend towards biasness, many researchers have suggested the use of subjectivity and drawing on one's inner experience in order to better understand the subject of a study (Rennie, 1994; Schneider, 1999). Patton (1990) also pointed out that taking a

neutral stance tends to keep the researchers at a distance from the subject. Hence, the advertisements in this study were purposely selected based on the writers' knowledge of the Chinese culture.

Two pairs of advertisements of a same product in print advertisements in both the English and Chinese Language (making it a total of four ads) were selected. These advertisements were selected from newspapers or magazines, or 'business information' booklets. The selection was based on the assumption that since the advertisements were meant for a particular target readership, they therefore were constructed using the shared cultural beliefs and practices of that readership. The advertisements were selected with the intention of illustrating how the elements of culture are embedded and how in the process of producing an advertisement meant to refer to either Chinese cultural beliefs and practices using the English Language, certain innate cultural elements tended to be lost because of the lack of those elements in the English Language. The number selected for the study, although small, was sufficient for the purpose of this study to allow for a rich description and comparison of the variances in drawing out Chinese cultural values.

In order to compare the differences in discourse between the Chinese and English Language versions, the paired advertisements selected carried the same semiotic images and background. In these advertisements, the same ideological concept was used; in terms of staging of

the message – the layout, format, graphics, colours – the only difference was the written language. One basic assumption was that advertisements were first drafted in English, then translated into Chinese. Differences in terms of cultural content and meanings are identified by looking at the language choice in both versions of the advertisements.

In this study two types of domains were selected for the study: housing and food. The rationale for this choice lay in the way the Chinese cultural aspects were depicted through both the texts and the semiotic activities. In analysing the language of the advertisements, this paper adopted an eclectic mix of several analytical frameworks in the study of the selected advertisements. Firstly, by adopting semiotic analysis, the study looked at the non-linguistic activities that provide meaning to the advertisements. To add to the richness of this study, the study also focussed on the act of active interpretation – how meaning is generated in the process of interpretation i.e. what existing knowledge readers bring to the advertisement and what inferences they make from it (Chen & Feng, 2008). The inferences involve drawing on the readers' own existing knowledge rather than on what is explicit in the advertisement. This indirectly means that the advertisements also rely on psychological appeal in terms of how readers interpret the advertisements based on their socio-cultural background, what innate beliefs and knowledge they bring to their interpretation. One interesting fact about Malaysian readers is that the cultural mores of the Chinese ethnic group

may also be shared by other ethnic groups due to the multi-ethnicity of the readership – especially the readership for the English language advertisements.

## ANALYSIS

### *Culture as a Psychological Appeal*

Psychological appeal created by advertisements relies on visual and linguistic elements to influence the readers' subconscious mind and emotions. It does this by implying that doing what is suggested (in the case of advertising, buying the product or service) will satisfy a subconscious desire.

The Chinese Language versions of the advertisements tend to stress or embed traditional values intrinsic to the Chinese culture to elicit collective feelings directed to the product advertised. These external and internal factors are bound to have an effect on the language choice in advertising in Chinese. In fact, any advertising language reflecting the social and cultural values makes it easily understandable and acceptable for people, which will eventually promote the products advertised. Therefore, print advertisements that appeared in the Malaysian Chinese community inevitably reflected various aspects of Chinese social and cultural characteristics as psychological appeal.

The Chinese emphasises collectivism: to them, gift giving is an essential part of politeness towards others. Their beliefs also extend to colours and numbers – red is considered a colour of celebration and is considered lucky or fortunate where else

white, gray and black are 'funeral colours'. In contrast, Western culture tends to emphasise individualism, independence and self-reliance in terms of seeking worldly happiness as a life goal. It also emphasises the individual's right to personal freedom. Hence, the English Language version of the advertisements often focusses on individual accomplishment. This is one of the major differences between advertisements that are produced for an English-speaking versus a Chinese-speaking reader.

Often, the majority of advertising agencies in Malaysia conceive and produce an English Language version of the advertisement, then have it 'translated' into a Chinese version. Print advertisements have layout considerations; for example, the forum area provides space for creativity. With this concern, the English version predominates; the location of images, the text size and layout are pre-determined. The images, text size and the layout are not changed in the Chinese version. Only the linguistic sense is changed using Chinese words. In terms of the physical space of the advert, Chinese characters are dense in meaning and can express emotions within a limited area with ease because each Chinese word is a character with one sound. In other words, it is foreseeable that the same amount of space can allow for more Chinese words. This feature is reflected in the summary of the classification analysed in the table below. It should be noted that the 'classification' is an attempt to facilitate the analysis of data compilation. As a result,

there are two major aspects in the difference between the English Language version and the Chinese one: one is that the Chinese text is richer with information; the other is that the advertisement as a whole is culturally more dense than the message depicted in the English version (see Table 1).

#### *Density of Information*

The Chinese version of the advertisements tends to be more dense in its information than the English version, using more modifiers and descriptive phrases or idiomatic terms. Table 1 shows the comparison of two advertisements. Words or sentences in the Chinese version marked in italics are the differences compared to the English version. The last column with the (+) symbol indicates additions in the Chinese version, while the (-) symbol represents exclusion from the Chinese version.

In the two Cirrus advertisements (see Figure 1), the English version (1a) uses the words "Live without borders" and the sub-heading reads, "Here the view is different, and the space liberating, no matter how you look at it." Here, the focus tends to be on the individual and his sense of individuality, which translates into his sense of freedom – spatial, physical and mental. By contrast, the Chinese version (1b) uses the following words:

优质 生活无极限

*(Yōu zhī shēnghuó wú jìxiàn)*

*(Living) with excellent quality) Live without borders*

Table. 1  
*Comparison of Information between the Two Versions in Advertisements*

No.	Advertisement Type and Brand	English Version Source: The Star	Chinese Version Source: Sin Chew Daily	*Addition/Exclusion
1	Housing Cirrus房屋发展商 Cirrus fang wu fa zhan shang  Cirrus Housing Developer	Live without borders  Here the view is different, and the space liberating, no matter how you look at it	优质 生活无极限 Yōu zhì shēnghuó wú jíxiàn (Living) with excellent quality Live without borders  超然景致 广阔舒适空间 Chāorán jǐngzhì guǎngkuò shūshì kōngjiān Superb view and the space liberating 悠然自得 任意悠游 Yōuránzìdé rènyì yōuyóu you can live freely and comfortably Do according to your heart's content	(+)优质 excellent quality  (+)优质 excellent quality (+)超然景致 super view (+)悠然自得 you can live freely and comfortably (+)任意悠游 Do according to your heart's content (-) no matter how you look at it
2	Food – (Groundnuts) 手标花生 Shou biao hua sheng	May every step bring you abundance of wealth, good health and a taste of success	步步高陞 财运到 Bùbù gāoshēng Cáiyùn dào Go higher and higher with each step, Good luck / wealth / success will arrive  今年一定胜往年 Jīnnián yīdìng shèng wǎngnián This year will definitely surpass the previous year	(+)步步高陞 (idiom) to climb step by step; to rise steadily; on the up and up  (+)今年一定胜往年 (poetic couplet) This year will definitely surpass the previous year

Note. The English version is used as the yardstick to indicate meanings that are added or excluded

超然景致 广阔舒适空间

*(Chāorán jǐngzhì guǎngkuò shūshì kōngjiān)*

*(with) superb view and the space liberating*

悠然自得 任意悠游

*(Yōuránzìdé rènyì yōuyóu)*

*(where) you can live freely and comfortably (Doing according to your heart's content).*

In brief, the Chinese version states “a quality of life without limits,” which is equivalent in meaning to the English version, “Live without borders.” However, the sub-theme of the English text reads, “Here the view is different, and the space liberating, no matter how you look at it,” which differs from the “superb view, living leisurely and comfortable space.” This is what is meant if the text is translated directly from the Chinese version. The Chinese version also has additional information that translates as “you can live freely and comfortably (Doing according to your heart’s content).” The emphasis in the Chinese version attaches the element of *quality of life*, which is intrinsic to Chinese beliefs, thinking and attitudes regarding spatial and physical setting and environment i.e. that the place of living should be comfortable, with ample space for relaxing. All of this is equated with living well and in luxury. Quality here also includes that which can be seen with the eyes – a beautiful view.

### Cultural Values

The Chinese understanding of the world is encapsulated in the philosophical concept of neatness and symmetry. Various disciplines including architecture and art reflect this characteristic of being “neatly symmetrical objective characteristics.” The Chinese Language, including that used in the advertising front, as a mediator for culture, of course, also exhibits this feature (Chang, 1995; Yang, 1999). Chinese advertising frequently applies couplets or the four-word format, standing out as a neat and symmetrical paradigm (Wang & Meng, 2000) such as “quality first, credit first”, a very neat symmetry, in line with the Chinese habit of expression and appreciation. In addition, many Chinese advertising texts have a neat and well-proportioned structure (Zhang, 1993) in a catchy advertising verse as illustrated in an advertisement for groundnuts (see Figure 2).



Figure 1: The Cirrus advertisement. 1a: English version 1b: Chinese version. (Source: The Star, 2009 September) (Source: Sin Chew Daily, 2009 September)



Figure 2: Advertisement for groundnuts. 2a English version 2b Chinese version. (Source: The Star, 2010 January) (Source: Sin Chew Daily, 2010 January)

The advertisement, timed for the Chinese New Year, is worded to retain the symmetrical rhetoric peculiar to Chinese culture. The advertisement intended to persuade readers to buy groundnuts is phrased in a seven-word couplet, which starts with an idiomatic saying (see Figure 2b):

步步高陞财运到;

*(Bùbù gāoshēng Cáiyùn dào)*

“Wealth rises higher and higher,”

今年一定胜往年

*(Jīnnián yīdìng shèng wǎngnián)*

“this year will definitely surpass previous year”

Semiotically using tiger-paw prints to represent the year of the tiger in the Chinese zodiac calendar, in the Chinese version it is creatively placed on an onward and upward movement across the advertisement frame to give the symbolical meaning of “climbing higher and higher.” The words 步步高陞财运到 are also made up of a four-word idiom 步步高陞 (*Bùbù gāoshēng*), meaning “Go higher and higher with each step;” and the phrase 财运到 (*Cáiyùn dào*), which translates as “*Good luck / wealth / success will arrive (in the future).*” The second part of the couplet, 今年一定胜往年 (*Jīnnián yīdìng shèng wǎngnián*), which has the meaning, “This year will definitely surpass the previous year,” is not mentioned in the English version.

The English version is limited to English orthographic conventions. It is

written horizontally therefore, the paw print has to move horizontally upwards to portray a sense of rising. The English sense of the advertisement, “May every step bring you an abundance of wealth, good health and the taste of success,” and the horizontal movement of the paw prints can only convey a ‘step by step’ movement (see 2a) compared to the semiotic sense of soaring ‘higher and higher’ depicted by the Chinese version that is aided by the Chinese orthographic convention, is written in a vertical manner, thus giving a sense of vertical upward movement (see 2b). Chinese culture is embedded within every Chinese character whereas the English lexis has limitations. However, to increase the number of words in the English version would spoil the conciseness necessary for an advertisement slogan. Hence, the essence of the Chinese culture is either enhanced (as in 2b) or limited (as in 2a) by a language’s orthographic conventions.

In the semiotic sense, to the Chinese people, red is a traditional colour that represents happiness, beauty, success and good fortune. Red signifies good luck, celebration, happiness, joy, vitality, long life ([http://www.nationsonline.org/oneworld/Chinese\\_Customs/colours.htm](http://www.nationsonline.org/oneworld/Chinese_Customs/colours.htm)). Therefore, to produce an advertisement meant for a festive occasion, the colour red would be present in any aspect, either as the background colour seen in the groundnut advertisement (Figure 2), or in the colour of the product (the packaging of the groundnuts) to express auspiciousness. In addition, the colour used for the tiger’s

paw print is gold and the text is yellow, both of which culturally signify good luck. According to experts in Chinese culture, the use of yellow as a colour is symbolic, indicating prestige and heroism. Gold represents completeness and wealth ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Color\\_in\\_Chinese\\_culture](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Color_in_Chinese_culture)). Both versions of the advertisement apply the use of these two colours. Thus, in the semiotic sense, colour application, whether as background, or in the print, has implications in a cultural sense.

## CONCLUSION

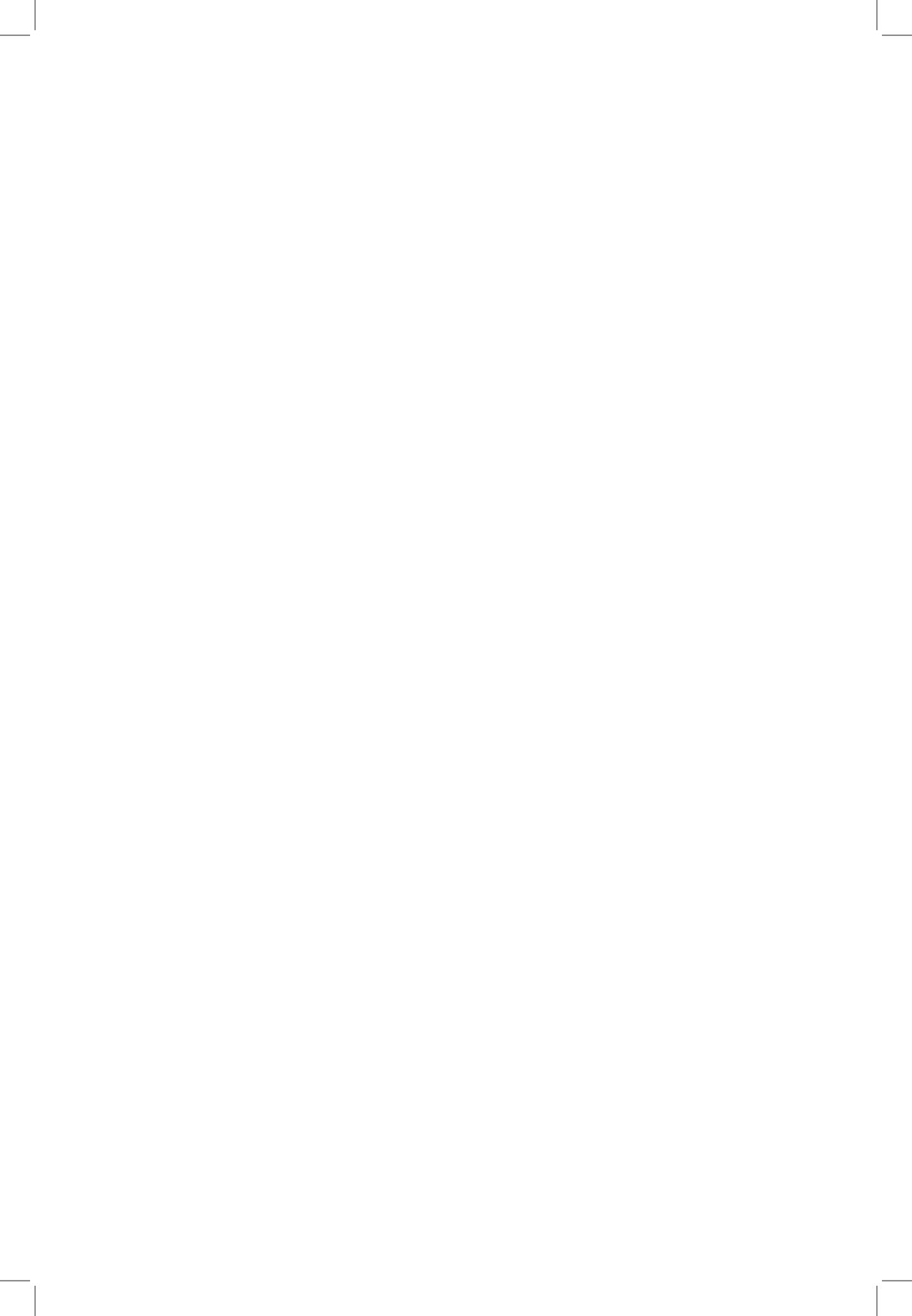
The influence of culture in Chinese and English advertising language is multifaceted. Malaysian and Western advertising concepts also reflect different aspects of the various features of Chinese and Western cultures. The results of the analysis show how Chinese and Western culture permeate the language used in advertisements. In order to persuade, it has to be accepted by the reader; hence, the emphasis is on the known cultural mores, beliefs and needs to prompt the reader to buy the products advertised. The results of this study also show that the use of culturally dense language with its accompanying images has a different focus on different target buyers; readers of the English version would refer to values modified with a fusion of westernised thinking while readers of the Chinese version would wholly apply the Chinese sense of the words and their underlying

meanings into their interpretation of the advertisement.

## REFERENCES

- Aiello, G., & Thurlow, C. (2006). Symbolic capitals: Visual discourse and intercultural exchange in the European capital of culture scheme. *Language and Intercultural Communication*, 6(2), 148-162.
- Cao, Z. Y. (1992). *Guanggao yuyan yishu*. Changsha: Hunan Shida Chubanshe.
- Chang, J. Y. (1995). *Hanyu cihui yu wenhua*: Beijing: Beijing Daxue Chubanshe.
- Chen, H., & Feng, W. N. (2008). *Xinbian guanggao yuyan jiaochen*. Beijing: Hangkong Hangtian Daxue Chubanshe.
- Chen, P., & Ding, J. (2006). *Guanggao wen'an xiezu*. Beijing: Shijie Zhishi Chubanshe.
- Cook, G. (2001). *The discourse of advertising*. London: Routledge.
- Durand, J. (1987). Rhetorical figures in the advertising image. In J. Umiker-Sebeok (Ed.), *Marketing and semiotics: New directions in the study of signs for sale* (pp. 295-318). New York: Mouton.
- Fairclough, N. (1995). *Critical discourse analysis: The critical study of language*. Singapore: Longman.
- Fairclough, N. (1999). Global capitalism and critical awareness of language. *Language Awareness*, 8(2), 71-83.
- Fairclough, N. (2001). *Language and power*. Harlow: Longman.
- Goddard, A. (2002). *The language of advertising*. London: Routledge.
- Hall, S. (1973/1980). Encoding, decoding. In S. Hall (Ed.), *Culture, media, language: Working papers in cultural studies, 1972-1979* (pp. 128-138). London: Routledge.
- Hall, S. (1992) Introduction. In S. Hall, & B. Gieben (Eds.), *Formations of modernity* (pp. 276-331). Cambridge: Polity Press.

- Kaplan, S. J. (1992). A conceptual analysis of form and content in visual metaphors. *Communications*, 13(3), 197-209.
- Kress, G., & Van Leeuwen, T. (2001). *Multimodal discourse: The modes and media of contemporary communication* (p. 2). London: Arnold.
- Leech, G. N. (1996). *The language in advertising*. London: Longman.
- Meyer, R., Llerer, M., Jancsary, D., & Van Leeuwen, T. (2013). The visual dimension in organizing, organization, and organization research core ideas, current developments, and promising avenues. *The Academy of Management Annals*, 7(1), 487-553. Retrieved from <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/19416520.2013.781867>
- Myers, G. (1994). *Words in ads*. London: Green Gate Publishing Services.
- Patton, M. (1990). *Qualitative evaluation and research methods*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Raab, J. (2008). Visuelle Wissenssoziologie. Theoretische Konzeption und Materiale Analysen. *Konstanz: UVK*.
- Rennie, D. L. (1994). Clients' deference in psychotherapy. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 41(4), 427-437.
- Schneider, K. J. (1999). Multiple-case depth research: Bringing experience-near closer. *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 55(12), 1531-1540.
- Torben, V. (1992). *The language of advertising*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.
- Van Leeuwen, T. (2002). Genre and field in critical discourse analysis. In M. Toolan (Ed.), *Critical discourse analysis: Critical concepts in linguistics*, (pp. 166-199). London: Routledge.
- Wang, T., & Zhang, L. P. (2002). *Huawen guanggao yu dianping*. Guangzhou: Guangdong Renmin Chubanshe.
- Wang, X. P., & Meng, Z. M. (2000). *Shuzili de Zhongguo wenhua*. Beijing: Tuanjie Chubanshe.
- Wu, D. P. (2000). *Secai yu zhongguo ren de shenghuo*. Beijing: Tuanjie Chubanshe.
- Yang, D. F. (1999). *Hanyu yu wenhua jiaoji*. Beijing: Beijing Daxue Chubanshe.
- Yin, F. G. (2009). *Guanggaoxue gailun*. Beijing: Dianzi Gongye Chubanshe.
- Zhang, D. (1993). *Guanggao miaozhao xiaoyu daquan*. Nanning: Guangxi Minzu Chubanshe.
- Zhou, Q. H. (2009). *Biandong zhong de yuyan*. Singapore: Lingzi Chuanmei Siren Youxian Gongsi.





## **Politeness Strategies by Thai EFL Tertiary Learners in an Online Forum**

**Suhaila Etae\*, Pramela Krish and Supyan Hussin**

*School of Language Studies and Linguistics, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 43600 Bangi, Selangor, Malaysia*

### **ABSTRACT**

Politeness is influenced by cultural perspectives across cultures. Studies of politeness strategies in intercultural communication have often highlighted cultural speech acts in conversation discourse in various situations. This study investigates cultural politeness between Thai students and an expatriate lecturer and its features of Thai and Western speech acts in an online forum, a learning platform which has recently been introduced in Thai EFL university context. Due to variation in the cultural politeness of interlocutors, Thai students' politeness strategies are possibly misinterpreted in another culture, or they may fail to communicate illocutionary force in intercultural communication. The participants were 146 Thai EFL undergraduate students and an American lecturer, who was teaching an English and American cultural background course. The online entries were theoretically analysed and the findings were supported with data from focus-group interviews. The results show that the student participants were most likely to use Positive politeness, followed by Bald-On-Record politeness, Negative politeness and Off-Record politeness strategy when posting online entries to the lecturer. For features of Thai-Western politeness and speech acts, the respect phenomenon affected the language use of politeness strategies in posing intercultural difficulties. The analysis contributes to the overview of Thai and Western features of cultural politeness in a Thai online EFL setting.

*Keywords:* Politeness strategies, intercultural communication, speech acts, Thai EFL learners, online forum

### **ARTICLE INFO**

*Article history:*

Received: 21 September 2015

Accepted: 15 January 2016

*E-mail addresses:*

haila2002@gmail.com (Suhaila Etae),

pramela@ukm.edu.my (Pramela Krish),

supyan@ukm.edu.my (Supyan Hussin)

\* Corresponding author

### **INTRODUCTION**

At tertiary level, university programmes have to be modified to include ability to communicate in multicultural encounters in order to achieve communicative competence. Hence, Thai students are required to be highly skilled in intercultural

communication (Commission on Higher Education, 2008). The education plan of Thailand has been revised periodically to keep up with the rapid changes in technology (Wongsothorn et al., 2003; Darasawang, 2007). At tertiary level, e-learning utilisation is employed in various manners. Blended learning or a combination of e-learning and face-to-face classroom meeting are widely applied because some institutions possibly have problems with bandwidth and students are not proficient to access the system. However, language instructors in universities have been urged to take part in online platform as a medium to enhance students' learning experience and to harness this platform for students in learning English. Students are expected to interact competently with Thai instructors and English native teachers. Most courses offered by English language departments are taught in English, but compulsory courses of the faculty as well as other courses in university are taught in Thai.

Large numbers of native speakers of English are hired as contract teachers, and are mostly assigned to teaching culture, literature, listening and speaking courses in order to provide real communicative situations for students to practise English language skills. In terms of instructional materials, the contract teachers are also involved with Thai teachers to design learning materials for the students to promote self-study.

It is generally noted that for eight universities in southern Thailand, there are at least one or two expatriate teachers

to facilitate students' learning experience in the Department of Western Languages. These teachers agree that cultural classroom awareness should be primarily considered when entering the Thai educational system as it affects the use of English politeness norms to lack or overuse politeness features taken place in technological tool in the online forum. From the above description, it is obvious that English language teaching at the tertiary level in Thailand not only focuses on English-speaking cultural exposure but also encourages educators to gradually utilise online forums as platforms for effective teaching and learning.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Politeness is significantly related to word selection to fit the right situations (Holmes, 2001; Cutting, 2002). Within the context of politeness, using the word "please" for an inappropriate situation, Holmes (2001, p. 267) suggested,

*Being polite is a complicated business in any language. It is difficult to learn because it involves understanding not just the language, but also the social and cultural values of the community. We often do not appreciate just how complicated it is, because we tend to think of politeness simply as a matter of saying please and thank you in the right places.*

This is to say showing politeness not only focuses on word choices; social and cultural concerns are also important. Additionally,

Cutting (2002, p. 44) supported the concept of politeness in pragmatic perspective. She viewed politeness as “the choices that are made in language use, the linguistic expressions that give people space and show a friendly attitude to them. This anecdote shows how important it is to be seen to show a friendly attitude, if one wants to save face and be appreciated in return.” Her definition of politeness is concerned with careful word selection to please others and to be treated well by others.

A study of speech acts of requests in e-mail communication by Etaa (2007) compared the ways of making requests in face-to-face interactions with a superior in an academic discourse with making requests digitally via e-mail. The findings revealed that although electronic communication provides a venue for informal use, Thai student participants highly used polite forms that were influenced by Thai cultural and social constructions. Openings and closings were commonly utilised in the student e-mail communication. Indirect politeness strategies composed of Negative politeness and Off-Record politeness were preferred by the Thai student participants.

Considering politeness studies in the Malaysian context, it is noted that direct request strategies used by grandparents were applicable among three generations; the grandfather and grandmother, the daughter and three sons, the daughter and a son. Kuang (2008) explained that Positive politeness is a preferred strategy used by them because most of them were children, and direct requests were easily

understandable. She noted that these speech acts of politeness were analysed based on Malaysian Chinese politeness culture, power distance in parent-child interaction and concepts of Chinese beliefs, which were all of crucial importance in interpretation.

Al-Shboul et al. (2012) investigated whether Jordanian EFL postgraduate students used refusal strategies in a way similar to Malay ESL postgraduate students using the Discourse Completion Test (DCT). They found that the Jordanian EFL postgraduate students and the Malay ESL postgraduate students had almost the same strategies and frequency in performing refusals. The most preferred strategies among the Jordanians and the Malays were excuse, reasoning, explanation and expressing statement of regret. In addition, they noted that the Jordanian participants hardly showed ‘gratitude’ to the person who held equal and lower status in refusing invitations while the Malay participants expressed more ‘gratitude’ to an inferior interlocutor in performing refusals.

Politeness has also been studied in terms of discourse patterns and speech levels in the Japanese context. Moriizumi (2010) examined the relationships (rational closeness and social status) among situational features, face concerns and requesting strategies using the situation model predicting face concerns and linguistic strategies. It was noted that rational closeness influenced four face concerns: self-autonomy, self-approval, other-autonomy and other-approval, but there was no direct relation to language

use. Social status had a negative impact on the other-autonomy face (the Positive face), direct and plain forms of requests. The other-autonomy face request had no influence on the request expressions. The self-approval face request presented the use of indirect requests while the other-approval face request related to the direct and plain forms of requesting. This implies that there is a strong cultural context in Japanese face theories.

In interpreting the politeness strategies in Taiwanese context, Yin et al. (2011) provided important insights into the Chinese culture of Taiwanese in performing politeness strategies in physician-patient communication in order to help in the improvement of the quality of medical treatment as patients are believed to be key informants in providing symptomatic details for the physician in determining medical treatment procedure. This study presented that the politeness strategies mostly used in clinical treatment were Bald-On-Record politeness followed by Positive politeness, Negative politeness and Off-Record politeness. This perspective of Taiwanese politeness strategies implies that in the Chinese culture of the Taiwanese context, power distance in parent-child interaction and concepts of Chinese beliefs were of crucial importance in interpretation.

Language use, intercultural communication and politeness are primary concerns in English teaching in Asian contexts. Studies have shown that the understanding of diverse cultural behaviours in a particular cultural and educational

setting have been emphasised in order to perceive students' interaction locally (Adamson, 2005; Baker, 2008). These two studies revealed significant insights into the interface between Thai and Western cultures, particularly their communicative practices and their perceptions of each other. The findings stress the difficulties in mediation between Thai and Western politeness found in the Thai context that can lead to cultural misunderstanding. Thus, it is important to consider intercultural transformation locally and globally, which is the requirement for foreigners before participating in Thai culture.

Intercultural relations involves "discourse communication between or among individuals" i.e. people from different cultural backgrounds that possibly leads cultural difficulties shaped by their inborn culture (Scollon & Scollon, 1995, p. 125). Kramsch (1998, p. 81) related a concept of intercultural or cross-cultural relations with the 'culture shock' people possibly encounter in communication because another culture might not be familiar to them as they are from a different cultural group. She also supported intercultural deals with people from different "social or ethnic origin, age, occupation, or sexual preference." These cultural variations posit distinctive views of the world to a particular cultural group because its social constructions are different. In relation to this, intercultural communication is generally understood as "communication between people whose cultural perceptions and symbol systems are distinct enough to alter the communication

event” (Samovar & Porter, 2004; p.15). This eventually distorts communication if the message and the hearer are from cultures that are unfamiliar to one another.

## THE STUDY

This qualitative case study explored a real-life situation in a particular context and relations between the situation and its context of the target members (Yin, 2009). It investigated the types of politeness strategies employed by Thai students with an English native-speaker lecturer in an online forum. It also studied the cultural features and speech acts of Thai-Western politeness in the online forum.

The ‘Thai-Western’ politeness in this study refers to the situation of Thai students engaged in the dimension of English-speaking cultures. The most difficult part for Thai students is the strong influence of Thai cultural norms in controlling their way of thinking in an academic discourse community, using shared terms and a common knowledge base. Being exposed to two cultural dimensions affects the English writing skills of Thai students as they have contradicted linguistic notions of politeness.

Brown and Levinson’s (1987) framework for politeness deals with the concepts of ‘face’, proposing that ‘face’ comprises two components, positive and negative face. Positive face relates with the desire of the speaker’s existence to be noted and responded to in communication whereas negative face allows the speaker the right to communicate his or her real want. Brown and Levinson’s model for politeness was

found appropriate for this study because of its universality, detailed description of linguistic strategies and the focus of the actor’s intention. Brown and Levinson’s (1987) four strategies of politeness were subsequently to analyse particular linguistic features in utterances. This framework, therefore, is able to claim universality for the concept of ‘face’ in any culture with different degrees of face threatening acts (FTAs). In addition, Brown and Levinson’s politeness strategies are completely applicable to fit possible politeness expressions that are categorised into various politeness sub-strategies. Furthermore, Brown and Levinson’s framework, emphasising the speaker’s situational context, unlike Leech’s (1983) politeness model, focuses on the hearer’s conditions of communication.

In order to investigate the features of Thai-Western politeness, Hofstede’s (1980) cultural constructs were additionally applied. Hofstede’s theory was primarily used because his five cultural constructs are easily applied to understand the speech acts and politeness of both Thai and Western cultures. The politeness usage of Thai and Western communities connects to people’s behavioural patterns that influence societies. His cultural constructs were utilised in this study to differentiate between cross-cultural groups. In addition, Hofstede’s (1980) theory is suitable for capturing the features of two contrasting cultural groups, where East meets West in the speech acts of politeness in the online forum. His theory may examine national cultures as it concerns the five cultural constructs

explaining national cultural differences and their national consequences. In addition, using Hofstede’s cultural constructs in the Thai online forum would help to provide an overview of Thai and Western cultural features of politeness in the online platform.

their opinions, thoughts, viewpoints and opinions on the topics posted online by the lecturer. The online forum, which was titled “Culture Class”, was created to support English language learning for the English and American Cultural Background course.

**METHODOLOGY**

*Participants*

The participants for this study comprised 146 EFL undergraduate students. These Year Two and Three students majored in English at a public university in southern Thailand. The participants were of Thai ethnicity with different religious backgrounds. They enrolled in the English and American Cultural Background course, which ran for 16 weeks or a semester. A component of the course included participation in an online forum. The students shared opinions related to the course activities in the forum that were set up by the English native lecturer. The participants are encouraged to express

*Data Collection and Analysis*

Research data comprised 146 online entries and four focus group interviews with the students and eight classroom observation sessions. The English native-speaker lecturer used the online forum with all four groups of the students. This tool functioned as a platform to communicate issues and topics related to the content of the course (Table 1) that was posted in the online forum. The posts consisted of four questions for the four different groups.

Topic 1 was posted to 23 students of group A. Topic 2 was posted to 41 students of group B, topic 3 to 44 students of group C and topic 4 to 38 students of group D.

Table. 1  
*Topics Posted in the Online Forum*

Group	Topic	Number of students
A	If you won a prize to travel abroad for three months with unlimited expenses, would you go to the United States or to Great Britain? What would you want to see and do there?	23
B	There are many universities and colleges in the USA and in Great Britain. If you were offered unlimited scholarship to study in either place, where would you go and why?	41
C	Fast food is something that has come from Western culture. It is especially popular in America. What is your experience with fast food in Thailand? Do you enjoy eating it? How often do you eat it and what do you like to eat?	44
D	I would like to know about your experience with listening to spoken accents. Do you find it easier to understand the typical American accent? What is your experience with learning spoken English?	38

The lecturer also had face-to-face sessions with the students and explained the details of the online task and the marks allocated for the tasks.

Focus-group interviews with the student participants were arranged one week after the course was complete (week 17) in order to confirm the participants' reasons of how and why they preferred a particular strategy when interacting with the English native-speaker lecturer. Two groups of five and six students each volunteered to participate in the interviews. Fifteen interview questions were designed based on the analysis of the online postings and related literature by the researcher.

The class observations were conducted eight times throughout the semester for each group. The researcher obtained permission to gain access to the classrooms as a non-participant observer. After the researcher finished the fieldwork at a research site, all the field notes that involved interpretations of the situations (Creswell, 2008) were transcribed into written text. Themes that emerged from the data were used to answer the research questions.

## FINDINGS

Table 2 shows the types of politeness strategies used by the 146 Thai EFL tertiary students with the English native-speaker lecturer.

The most frequently used politeness strategies were Positive politeness (63.1%), followed by Bald-On-Record politeness (16.4%), Negative politeness (13%) and Off-Record politeness (7.6%). The data

from the online entries revealed that the most significant strategy used by Thai students was Positive politeness. There were three sub-strategies found in the participants' online entries out of the eight politeness sub-strategies listed by Brown and Levinson (1987). They were: "Avoid disagreement" (P1), "Use in-group identity markers" (P2) and "Presuppose, raise and assert common ground" (P3). Each sub-strategy had minor categorisations.

"Avoid disagreement" (P1) contained "Hedging opinions" (P1.1) and "Pseudo agreement" (P1.2). "Use of in-group identity markers" (P2) included "Contraction and ellipsis" (P2.1) and "Use of in-group language or dialect" (P2.2). The sub-strategy of "Presuppose, raise and assert common ground" (P3) conveyed place switching (P3.1).

The most preferred sub-strategy of Positive politeness was P1, "Avoid disagreement", where the students used "Hedging opinions" (P1.1) 45.9% and "Pseudo agreement" (P1.2) 6.2%. The students chose phrases like "think", "really + adjective", "to be interested in", "in my opinion", "I kind of like" and "personally" to express hedges according to Brown and Levinson's politeness features. "Pseudo agreement" (P1.2) was employed by using "so", "the reason why I choose", "that's why" and "then" in their online postings. "Use of in-group identity markers" (P2) was the second sub-strategy of Positive politeness that was used by the student participants. It consisted of "Contraction and ellipsis" (P2.1) 5.5% and "Use of in-

Table. 2  
*Politeness Strategies and Sub-Strategies of Politeness Used by Thai Students in an Online Forum Adapted from Brown and Levinson's (1987) Theory*

No.	Politeness strategies	% Politeness usage
1	B	16.4
2	Ps	
	P1 Avoid disagreement	
	P1.1 Hedging opinions	45.9
	P1.2 Pseudo agreement	6.2
	P2 Use in-group identity markers	
	P2.1 Contraction and ellipsis	5.5
	P2.2 Use of in-group language or dialect	4.1
	P3 Presuppose / raise / assert common ground	
	P3.1 Place switch	1.4
	Total	63.1
3	N	
	N1 Be conventionally indirect	
	N1.1 Degrees of politeness in the expression of indirect speech acts	4.8
	N1.2 Politeness and the universality of indirect speech acts	2
	N2 Question, hedge	
	N2.1 Prosodic and kinesic hedges	2.7
	N2.2 Hedges addressed to Grice's Maxims	1.4
	N3 Apologise	
	N3.1 Admit the impingement	1.4
	N3.2 Beg forgiveness	0.7
	Total	13
4.	O	
	O1 Use contradiction	6.2
	O2 Give association clues	0.7
	O3 Be incomplete, use ellipsis	0.7
	Total	7.6

Key: P = Positive politeness    B = Bald-On-Record politeness    N = Negative politeness    O = Off-Record politeness.

group language or dialect" (P2.2) 4.1 %. The participants shared opinions using short forms such as "I'm", "I'll" and "I don't" as contractions. "Ellipsis" was presented in the participants' online entries as "the United States of America of course", "I'm sure the USA" and "USA, Howard University".

For "Use of in-group language or dialect" (P2.2), the participants interacted with the lecturer using different varieties such as "gonna ≠ would like to", "first ≠ gonna" and "wanna ≠ would like to". The next sub-strategy of Positive politeness was P3, which was "Presuppose, raise and assert

common ground”. “Place switch” (P3.1) using “here” was also found in the online postings.

Bald-On-Record politeness (B) ranked second out of the four politeness strategies. The participants selected B strategy in sharing opinions with the English native-speaker lecturer (16.4%). The students’ communication was neutral, with no particular politeness features. The messages were short, complete and clear.

Negative politeness (N) was the third ranked politeness strategy, which are “Conventionally indirect” (N1), “Degree of politeness in the expression of indirect speech acts” (N1.1) and “Politeness and the universality of indirect speech acts” (N1.2). The participants utilised “Degrees of politeness in the expression of indirect speech acts” (N 1.1) using “would like to” (4.8%), followed by “Politeness and the universality of indirect speech acts” (N1.2), repeatedly stating “want to” in the messages (2%). The second Negative politeness strategy was “Question and hedges, prosodic and kinesic hedges” (N2.2) and “Hedges addressed to Grice’s Maxims” (N2.2). The participants expressed verbal hedges such as “haha”, “umm”, “hahaha”, “ah haaaa”, “errrr” as “Prosodic and kinesic hedges” (2.7%). “Hedges addressed to Grice’s Maxims” was applied using “I think” and “I thought” in the participants’ online entries (1.4%). The third Negative politeness strategy was “Apologize” (N3). There were “Admit the impingement” (N3.1) and “Beg forgiveness” (N3.2). The participants used “Admit the impingement”

by saying that “My English grammar not strong sorry kub” and “well but I will try and improve for getting better” (1.4%). The final particle “kub” means “sir”, which is used in Thai language to show politeness in communication and to signify distance between the speaker and the reader. However, “Beg forgiveness” was presented as “sorry for my mistake” to minimise the students’ social status (0.7%).

Off-Record politeness (O) ranked as the last politeness strategy that the participants chose. It consisted of “Use contradiction” (O1), “Give association clues” (O2) and “Be incomplete, and use ellipsis” (O3). The most preferred strategy among the Off-Record strategies was “Use contradiction” (6.2%) such as “however, ...but...”, “I know..., but...” and “there are..., but...”. “Give association clues” (O2) and “Be incomplete, and use ellipsis” (O3) were secondary sub-strategies that were selected by the participants. They related the topic of discussion to giving related clues as “all of my story is my reply” (0.7%). Some participants showed incompleteness of communication, using “I love it.” at the end of the message (0.7%).

## DISCUSSION

The features of politeness strategies in the participants’ online entries were based on Brown and Levinson’s (1987) theory.

### *Positive Politeness*

The results of the present study revealed that the most used strategy of Positive politeness was hedging opinions. This

strategy was largely drawn with respect and with consideration for the hearer's face in Thai context. Two reasons were given by the participants in the interview for why they utilised this strategy. Firstly, they realised that respect was the most important rule in performing politeness acts in any situation with elders; hence, the students used the most face-saving strategy, which is Positive politeness, in their interactions with the lecturer (Goffman, 1967). Seniority of the lecturer over the students affected word choices and the degree of politeness that shaped the language use of the speaker. Formality of word choice, greetings, titles addressed and final particles in utterances was a way to show politeness for the lecturer in the online entries. The formality between the lecturer and the students was counted as a sort of politeness representation to show respect to the lecturer. Thus, Thai cultural norms on politeness knowledge influenced the students' decision to select a politeness strategy.

The observation data also revealed that the participants responded with hesitation in their replies to the lecturer, reflecting quietly for a few minutes, then looking at each other, and finally discussing with students nearby. It is possible that the students may have been too conscious of the fact that their classroom participation was being monitored by the lecturer. The students performed the face-saving strategy of keeping silent, nodding and trying to speak up in response to the lecturer's questions. Goffman (1967) referred to situations where the speaker tries to avoid face threat by leaving or taking

action not to encounter with the hearer in order to save face. The student participants agreed and understood the lecturer's words to save the lecturer's face in order to show that they had accomplished intercultural communication with the lecturer.

#### *Bald-On-Record Politeness*

The Bald-On-Record politeness strategy of Thai student participants showed two outstanding features of Brown and Levinson's (1987) Bald-On-Record strategy i.e. non-minimisation of face threat and power difference between the speaker and the hearer.

The findings presented that the utterances of participants' online entries were authentic, contextual, relevant and clear in response to the question. In this situation, the participants wanted to do the FTA with maximum efficiency more than their desire (want) to save the lecturer's face. They may have been more concerned with engaging in efficient communication with the right target reader, who was the English native speaker. The interview data strengthened the idea that the participants chose the most appropriate politeness strategy for interacting with the native speaker, which was to express meaning in the Western conversational style i.e. to be direct, simple and flexible. It can be inferred that the participants were conscious of their selection of politeness strategy with the target reader from a different cultural milieu. In addition, power difference between the speaker and the readers was seen in the titles of address that were used by the student

participants. The power difference seen in the use of the Bald-On-Record strategy implied the superior power of the lecturer. It played a crucial role in determining how the Thai students responded to their lecturer. In relation to this, the participants used their full name and student code to maintain formality in Thai greetings to save the lecturer's face. A degree of personal space between the interlocutors was clear in the utterances.

#### *Negative Politeness*

The strategy of degree of politeness in the expression of indirect speech acts was widely utilised by the participants. They emphasised the importance of the lecturer's space through distancing styles as indirect utterances to share opinions with the lecturer. The participants may have inferred that the distance between the interlocutors implied deference through politeness, and Negative politeness was used by the Thai students mostly through word choices that indicated distance in order to emphasise the space of the superior in communication. This was confirmed by the interview data as the participants agreed to use only formal writing when speaking with and writing to the lecturer because the degree of space could differentiate between superior and inferior classes in communication. Moreover, some students additionally mentioned that they would ask for allowance and opinions from the lecturer about the degree of word choice before making a decision to use it with the lecturer. This was done to make sure that

the words selected were acceptable to the lecturer. The participants added that degree of word choice to use with the lecturer and friends can imply degree of politeness in writing in the online forum. Hence, some participants prepared a preliminary draft of the online entries, which they sent to the lecturer in order to receive his approval, and then revised the drafts and made corrections to possible grammatical mistakes and word selection. The participants were clearly worried about encroaching into the lecturer's personal space. They tried to present greater distance between themselves and the lecturer through the degree of word choice.

#### *Off-Record Politeness*

Using contradiction was the most used strategy among the students when it came to Off-Record politeness. This strategy also relates to indirect communication, which is the common conversational style of Thais influenced by cultural norms. This trait of local culture particularly leads to communication traits. In Thai communication, direct and straight-out utterances are not broadly acceptable in interaction, and are sometimes considered rude, especially when speaking with elders. This Off-Record strategy was used by the students in this study to decrease face threat by giving face consideration to their lecturer by using indirectness to soften their utterances.

The interview data also made it clear that the English native-speaker lecturer found difficulty in interpreting the Thai

students' communication with him. He said that it was difficult to grasp the real intention of the students as the students usually used indirect communication in interaction, even in requests, questions, comments, apologies and demands. This situation possibly led to incomplete functional speech utterances of the interlocutors (Searle, 1969; Van Dijk, 1977).

However, the indirectness of the Off-Record strategy was not mostly used with the lecturer in the online entries because the participants were concerned with two considerations. These considerations were also referred to by Goody (1978) in considering FTA conditions. As the participants were assigned to share opinions in the online forum with the lecturer, the online postings, therefore, were written to communicate the content of FTA; the participants then became aware of the personal space of the lecturer, who held a higher social position. The want to maintain the lecturer's face in communication was higher than the want to communicate the content. The face needs of the lecturer in Thai context affected the participants in that they did not interact as they wanted to, but according to the task requirement.

## CONCLUSION

Interestingly, the cultural value of the respect phenomenon of the Thai students was predominantly displayed in every degree of the politeness strategies they used. The value of respect ranked from the most polite to the least polite strategy (Positive,

Bald, On-Record, Negative and Off-Record politeness strategies).

Respect was clearly shown through the use of indirectness and ambiguity to in order to maintain the personal space of the lecturer as one who held a higher position.

This study provided several useful guidelines for future research. First, this study explored politeness strategies by Thai student participants in interactions with an English native-speaker lecturer in an intercultural context and a Thai online environment. Future research is recommended to study different patterns in online interaction between local students and native-speaker lecturers.

Second, this study was conducted on politeness strategies of EFL students in intercultural communication with an English native-speaker lecturer; hence, there was no comparison between politeness strategies of the students with Thai lecturers teaching English. This would provide a Thai cultural overview of Thai EFL students' politeness strategies used with Thai lecturers. It would be interesting to conduct a study to compare the politeness strategies of Thai students with English native-speaker instructors and Thai lecturers.

This study of intercultural politeness strategies contributes to the understanding of how speech acts of politeness strategies in Thai EFL learning are performed in an intercultural online context. In this study it was obvious that the use of Thai cultural norms and the reluctance of politeness representation highly affected classroom

interaction as lesson evaluation and comprehension checks were difficult to manage in enabling mutual understanding between the expatriate lecturer and the Thai students. This study raised awareness of intercultural cultural classroom behaviours in Thai EFL communication in an online context.

## REFERENCES

- Adamson, J. (2005). Teacher development in EFL: What is to be learned beyond methodology in Asian contexts? *Asian EFL Journal*, 7(4), 1-7.
- Al-shboul, Y., Maros, M., & Yasin, M. S. M. (2012). An intercultural study of refusal strategies in English between Jordanian EFL and Malay ESL postgraduate students. *3L: The Southeast Asian Journal of English Language Studies*, 18(3), 29-39.
- Baker, W. (2008). A critical examination of ELT in Thailand: The role of cultural awareness. *Regional Language Centre Journal*, 39(1), 131-146.
- Brown, P., & Levinson, S. (1987). *Politeness: Some universals in language usage*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Commission on Higher Education. (2008, October). *Executive Report Framework of the Second 15-year Long Range Plan on Higher Education of Thailand*. Retrieved from <http://www.mua.go.th/users/bpp/developplan/index.htm>
- Creswell, J. W. (2008). *Education research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research* (3rd ed.). New Jersey: Pearson Education.
- Cutting, J. (2002). *Pragmatics and discourse: A resource book for students*. New York: Routledge.
- Darasawang, P. (2007). English language teaching and education in Thailand: A decade of change. In D. Prescott (Ed.), *English in Southeast Asia: Varieties, literacies and literatures* (pp. 187-204). Newcastle, England: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- Etae, S. (2007). *Intercultural literacy: Thai university students' e-mail communication in an EFL academic literacy event*. (Unpublished Master's thesis). University Kebangsaan Malaysia, Selangor.
- Goffman, E. (1967). *Interaction ritual: Essays on face to face behavior*. Garden City: New York.
- Goody, E. N. (1978). *Questions and politeness: Strategies in social interaction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hofstede, G. (1980). *Culture's consequences: International differences in work-related values*. Newbury Park: Sage.
- Holmes, J. (2001). *An introduction to sociolinguistics* (2nd ed.) London: Longman.
- Kramsch, C. (1998). *Language and culture*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Kuang, C. H. (2008). Strategies of politeness used by grandparents in intergenerational talks. In M. K. David, & K. K. Cheng (Eds.), *Politeness in Malaysian family talk* (pp. 120-147). Kuala Lumpur: Aslita Sdn. Bhd.
- Leech, G. (1983). *Principles of pragmatics*. London: Longman.
- Moriizumi, S. (2010). Face concerns and requests in Japan: Exploring the effects of relational closeness and social status. *Journal of Intercultural Communication Research*, 38(3), 149-174. Retrieved from <http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/hhth20>
- Samovar, L. A., & Porter, R. E. (2004). *Communication between cultures* (5th ed.). Toronto: Nelson.
- Scollon, R., & Scollon, W. (1995). *Intercultural communication: A discourse approach*. Cambridge: Blackwell Publisher Ltd.
- Searle, J. R. (1969). *Speech acts: An essay in the philosophy of language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Van Dijk, T. A. (1977). *Text and context explorations in the semantics and pragmatics of discourse*. London: Longman.

- Wongsothorn, A., Hiranburana, K., & Chinnawongs, S. (2003). *English language teaching in Thailand today*. In W. K. Ho, & R. Y. L. Wong (Eds), *English Language Teaching In East Asia Today: Changing policies and practices* (p. 441-453). Singapore: International Publishing.
- Yin, C. P., Hsu, C. W., Kuo, F. Y., & Huang, Y. T. (2011). A study of politeness strategies adopted in pediatric clinics in Taiwan. *Health communication*, 27(6), 533-545.
- Yin, R. K. (2009). *Case study research design and methods* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). California: Sage Publications Ltd.



## The Kensiu Noun Phrase

**Mohamed Sultan, F. M.\*, Jalaluddin, N. H., Ahmad, Z. and Radzi, H.**

*School of Language Studies and Linguistics, Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities,  
Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 43600 Bangi, Selangor, Malaysia*

### ABSTRACT

Austroasiatic languages in Malaysia are considered as moribund languages because these languages are experiencing extinction. With regard to this issue, this writing focusses on one of the moribund languages in Peninsular Malaysia, namely the Kensiu Language, which currently is in an alarming state of disuse. The fact that the language is heading towards extinction led to this study as an effort to prevent this unique language from dying off. This language is spoken by the Kensiu people of Baling, Kedah. For the purpose of this paper, the researchers placed emphasis on the discussion of the noun phrase (NP) of the Kensiu Language. The analysis of the noun phrase of the Kensiu Language in this working paper comprises two aspects, namely, the descriptive and syntactic aspects. For the former aspect, the analysis describes the noun phrase of the Kensiu Language and all sequences that form a noun phrase. Based on the descriptive analysis, the researchers outline arguments on the X' syntactic structure of Kensiu's noun phrase using the X-bar theory. The analysis reveal that in the NP of the Kensiu Language, the complements and adjuncts are always on the right-hand side of the NP.

*Keywords:* Auatroasiatics, Kensiu, X-bar, moribund, Peninsular Malaysia, Baling

### INTRODUCTION

Indigenous languages in Malaysia are divided into Austronesia and Austroasiatic

languages (Fazal Mohamed Mohamed Sultan, 2011; Fazal Mohamed Mohamed Sultan & Mohd Romzi Ramli, 2015). The Austroasiatic family is further divided into several different languages. One of the languages spoken in the peninsula is composed of languages from the Mon-Khmer family. According to Benjamin and Chou (2003), there are only about 65,000 people in Peninsular Malaysia who still

#### ARTICLE INFO

##### *Article history:*

Received: 21 September 2015

Accepted: 15 January 2016

##### *E-mail addresses:*

fazal@ukm.my (Mohamed Sultan, F.M.),

shima@ukm.my (Jalaluddin, N. H.),

zaharani@ukm.my (Ahmad, Z.),

naslin@ukm.my (Radzi, H.)

\* Corresponding author

speak languages from the Mon-Khmer family. In general, there are 18 languages comprising the Mon-Khmer family in Peninsular Malaysia (Burenhult, 2002). However, this paper only focusses on one of the Austroasiatic language families in Peninsular Malaysia, namely, the Kensiu Language, which currently is an endangered language (Fazal Mohamed Mohamed Sultan, 2011). The total number of native speakers of the language is less than 200 people (Jabatan Hal Ehwal Orang Asli, 2015). This paper focusses on the discussion of the noun phrase (NP) in the Kensiu Language. The analysis of the NP of the Kensiu Language is divided into two aspects, namely, the descriptive and the syntactic aspects of the language. The descriptive analysis provided in this paper describes the noun phrase of the Kensiu Language while the syntactic analysis utilised the X-Bar theory (Chomsky, 2000) to explicate the syntactic phrase of the Kensiu noun phrase (NP) structure.

#### *Kensiu Noun Phrase*

For too long now, the verb phrase has been the dominant focus of attention of any syntactic analysis. This analysis chose to focus on the NP instead and all the lexical and functional words that form it. The establishment of the NP involves all the words that follow and precede the head noun of the NP of the Kensiu Language. Consequently, data analysis of the NP involved both the descriptive and syntactic analysis using the X-Bar theory.

A field study involving five informants aged between 50 and 70 years was conducted as a means of obtaining relevant data.

#### *Words that Precede a Noun in Kensiu*

This section discusses the parts of speech that precede a noun in the Kensiu Language. In the discussion, an argument arose: In the Kensiu Language, a noun can be preceded by two types of words that are known as numerals or quantifiers and classifiers. The initial discussion highlights the identification of nouns and the types of words that precede them. The researcher found that masculine words of the Kensiu Language cannot be pluralised with certain adjustments. Alternatively, it uses the quantifier *jenuh*, which means ‘many’ to pluralise a noun. Therefore, all the masculine words are pluralised by the presence of this quantifier as in given in (1 a-b). In fact, such a quantifier always precedes a noun in the Kensiu Language:

- (1) a. *jenuh hihuk*  
a lot of woods
- b. *jenuh betiu*  
a lot of water

The NP in the Kensiu language can also be preceded by classifiers. The Kensiu Language uses only one type of classifier and no differences or agreement occurs in this language, as shown in (2):

- (2) a. *biya kebek naka*  
two class jackfruits
- b. *biya kebek lembu*  
two class cows

The presence of classifiers is not mandatory and can be optional, instead. The optional nature is described below:

- (3) a. biya (kebek) naka  
two (*class*) jackfruits
- b. biya (kebek) lembu  
two (*class*) cows

(1) to (3) reveal that the presence of classifiers and numerals/quantifiers is based on a fixed order. Classifiers always precede a noun and numerals/quantifiers precede the classifiers in the NP of the Kensiu Language. Therefore, the order of the NP of the Kensiu Language can be arranged as given in (4):

- (4) numerals/quantifiers - classifiers – noun

The order of the NP as shown above forms a sequence that alludes to three points that deserve careful attention. The first point is that the numerals/quantifiers and classifiers form a strict order where the numerals/quantifiers precede the classifiers and the classifiers precede the noun head as described in (4). The second point is that the classifiers cannot exist without the numerals/quantifiers but, on the other hand, numerals/quantifiers may be present without classifiers in an NP. This shows that the presence of classifiers is optional. The third point is that an agreement is absent in any encounter between a head noun with classifiers, which can precede the noun. Furthermore, classifiers in the Kensiu Language are not productive. There is only one type of classifier, which is known as kebek.

*Words that Follow a Noun in the NP of the Kensiu Language*

In the Kensiu Language, a noun is not necessarily preceded by a group of words. The head noun in this language also consists of a group of words that follow the noun to form an NP. Nouns may be followed by a possessive marker and determiner. The possessive marker in this language can be represented by pronouns.

The use of pronouns in this language is not productive. Unlike the English Language, Kensiu as a language does not contain a large number of personal pronouns. The pronouns in this language are listed in (5) as follows:

- (5)

Pronouns	Pronouns in Kensiu Language
I	yek
He	tak (lelaki)
She	yak (perempuan)
We	yam
You	bok

This language does not use specific words for the pronouns I and you as is the case in the English Language. Even so, the pronouns for male and female are distinguished. This indicates that the Kensiu Language marks gender differences in third-person pronouns as described in (6):

- (6) a. tak Nasir  
He[+man] Nasir  
He is Nasir.

- b. yak Aminah  
She[+woman] Aminah  
She is Aminah.

Words that form the NP in the Kensiu Language do not necessarily precede the head noun but there are also words that follow it such as the possessive pronouns in phrase (7) and (8):

- (7) heyak yak  
hut I  
'My hut'

- (8) cas yak  
hand I  
'My hand'

In addition to this order, this language also contains determiners. This language has only one determiner, which is *on*. This determiner usually follows the noun as portrayed in (9):

- (9) a. awe on  
bamboo the  
'The bamboo'  
b. menek on  
human the  
'The human/people'

The discussion in (7), (8) and (9) above illustrates a meaningful sequence in which there are two groups of words that follow the noun; they are the determiner and the possessive marker. However, this language does not allow the concurrent presence of both NPs:

- (10)\*a. yak yek on  
She I the  
\*b. yak on yek

The example given in (10b), nonetheless, illustrates that the determiner and the possessive marker complement each other in the Kensiu Language.

In general, the NP in the Kensiu Language may consist of numerals/quantifiers, classifiers, nouns, possessive markers and determiners. All four parts of speech have a fixed/obligatory order in the Kensiu Language. The sequence that these four parts of speech should follow is the following order:

- (11) numeral/quantifier - classifier -  
noun - possessive / determiner

## SYNTACTIC ANALYSIS OF THE NOUN PHRASE

### *X-Bar Theory*

A mechanism that is assumed to be a structural representation of a sentence is the phrase structure rule (FSR) called the X-Bar theory. This theory follows a principle known as the Projection Principle, which ensures that every word in a sentence is correctly projected at every level of syntax:

- (12) Projection Principle (Chomsky, 1981)

Representation at every level of syntax is projected from the lexicon based on subcategorisation of each lexical item.

This principle is based on conditions rather than a formula in order to produce a structural representation of a lexical item. This principle has two conditions; first, the representation of each lexical item must be guided by subcategorisation of each lexical item, and second, a representation

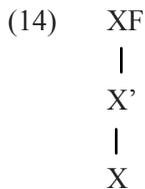
by subcategorisation that is represented by the X-Bar theory must be scrutinised at every level of syntax (L-Structure and Logical Form).

The projection principle only becomes a regulation that is followed for representation of each lexical item in the structure of a sentence but this principle does not state the way to delegate each lexical item in the tree diagram. This role is covered by a different principle, namely, the X-Bar Principle. This principle is also concerned with the conditions and not the rules to represent each item in the lexical representation of a sentence. This principle was introduced by Chomsky (1970) and was later modified by Jackendoff (1977) and subsequently by Stowell (1981). This formula has three conditions, namely:

(13)

- a. The existence of every phrase must be endocentric.
- b. The presence of three levels of FX, X and X
- c. Head position (X) is one level below the X-Bar (X ‘) organised directly by the phrase node (FX)

The conclusion of the discussion of the three conditions in (13) is illustrated in (14):



However, the X-Bar theory has a position known as the adjunct and it forms a rule called adjunct rules:

(15)    a.  $X' \longrightarrow X'; ZF$

In (14) and rule (15) can be encapsulated to form a phrase structure rule for a phrase, namely:

(16)    a.  $XF \longrightarrow Spec; X'$

          b.  $X' \longrightarrow X'; ZF$

          c.  $X' \longrightarrow X; YF$

In this section, three conditions essential to the X-Bar theory is discussed. As a result of this discussion, frameworks (16a) to (16c) were designed and they can be used as a basis for the representation of a sentence.

**ANALYSIS OF NP IN KENSIU**

Discussions in the early part of the section claimed that the NP of the Kensiu Language can be divided into two parts; a NP that consists of words that follow and words that precede the head noun. The analysis in the next section argues that numerals/quantifiers and classifiers can precede the head noun in the Kensiu language. The numerals may consist of words like *biya*, ‘two’, and *nai*, ‘one’, or the quantifier *jenuh*, ‘many’. There is only one classifier known so far, which is *kebek*. Words such as the possessive *yak*, ‘I’, and the determiner ‘on’, ‘the’, may follow the head noun in the Kensiu Language.

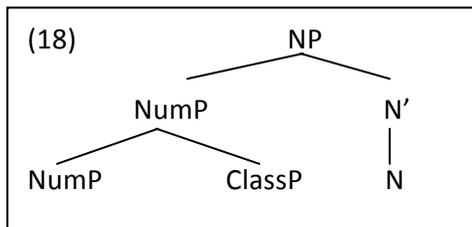
Therefore, the syntactic analysis of the NP in Kensiu would involve all the elements that precede and follow the head noun of the NP.

*Elements that Precede an NP*

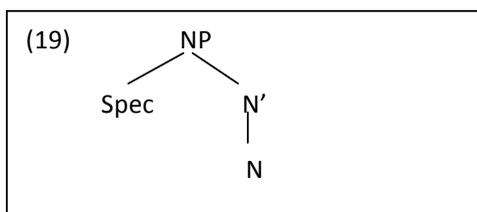
In the preliminary discussion, we were aware that the elements that precede the head noun are the numerals/quantifiers and classifiers in which an NP has three significant points. The first point is that the numerals/quantifiers and classifiers follow a stringent word order. Secondly, the presence of classifiers requires numeral/quantifier words to exist concurrently. Lastly, the semantic features of the head noun do not determine the presence of classifiers that precede the head noun of the NP. This eventually leads to the notion that no agreement exists between the head noun and classifiers. The first point that involves a strict word order for numerals/quantifiers, classifiers and head noun can be arranged as shown in (17):

- (17) numeral / quantifier - classifier  
- head noun

In Example (17), guided by the X-Bar theory regarding conditions for the presence of quantifiers and classifiers before the head noun, the researchers suggested an NP structure as shown in (18):

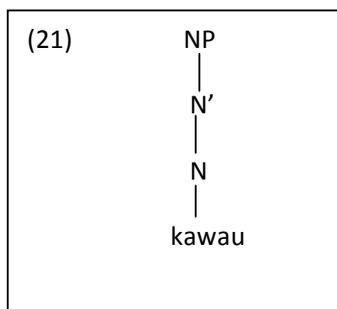


Next, the study discusses the validity of the presence of each constituent in structure (18) in order to conform to the structure of X-Bar theory. According to the theory of the X-Bar, every phrase must be endocentric. In other words, every phrase must have a head and be in the position of a specifier. An NP structure that meets the requirements of the X-Bar theory is illustrated in Example (19):



Example (19) reflects the endocentric nature of the NP because the phrase consists of a head, which is a noun known as a head noun. Therefore, the noun (20) *kawau* may be illustrated as in diagram (21):

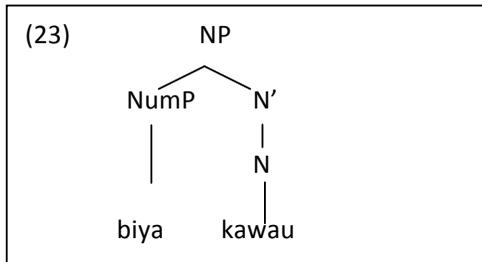
- (20) *kawau*  
bird



Next, the head noun in diagram (21) can also be followed by another noun. This noun is positioned at the specifier position following the X-Bar theory. The NP *biya kawau* ‘two birds’ consists of two words,

which are known as the numeral *biya* and a head noun, *kawau*. The quantifier *biya* in (22) is assigned to a specifier position and is represented by numeral phrase (NumP) to establish a structure as described in (23):

- (22) *biya kawau*  
 many birds



The NP structure in (23) is in line with the explanation by Chomsky (1986) and Abney (1987), who proposed that a head noun can mark a theta. As a head noun, the constituent has a theta role, which has to be marked on the argument. Therefore, the head can ‘theta mark’ its argument. The researchers suggest that the theta is to be marked on the specifier position, which is occupied by the NumP. This proposal has similarities with the theta marking of a verb on its external arguments, which occupies the Specifier INFLP or the Specifier VP in the hypothesis Subject-Verb-Phrase hypothesis (VP Subject Hypothesis) in a sentence. Consequently, the NumP position is considered as an external argument and complies with the requirements of the head noun. This discussion has reflected the first point of the word order of the numeral and

the head noun as well as the presence of each constituent in the NP in the Kensiu Language. The presence of classifiers is discussed in the following section.

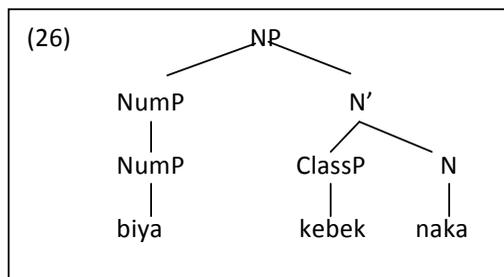
This section further discusses the presence of two classifiers in the NP. The presence of these classifiers has to meet all the three points that have been discussed above, that not all classifiers are obligatory and they do not depend on the semantic features of the noun as in (3a-b) and are repeated as (24a-b):

- (24) a. *biya kebek naka*  
 two class jackfruit  
 b. *biya kebek lembu*  
 two class cows

That being said, the presence of classifiers requires numerals as reflected in the differences between (25a) and (25b):

- (25) \*a. *kebek naka*  
 \*b. *kebek lembu*

There are two observations worth noting here: 1) the presence of classifiers requires numerals/quantifiers; 2) the absence of agreement between classifiers and the head nouns.



The researcher suggests that based on structure (19) and the assertion on structure (23) above, the NP in (24a) may be described as (26). Efficacy of the syntactic structure of (26) may be debated in accordance with the three points described above.

NumP in (26) is known as an adjoined structure. The presence of an adjoined structure does not violate the X-Bar theory and the Principle Structure Preservation (Chomsky, 1986) because its presence does not destroy any of the structures that were determined by the X-Bar theory. In contrast, the structure only faces an additional structure (Heagemann, 1994). The claim by the researchers of this study has its own implications. The researcher intends to claim that the NP structure in the Kensiu Language partakes of this structure. However, not all phrases have the adjunct structure. Such a structure is not universal but is specific to a particular language only.

However, the adjunct structure is acceptable if the structure such as in (26) can explain the second and third points as discussed about the presence of classifiers and numerals/quantifiers in the Kensiu Language. The second point claims that the presence of classifiers is not obligatory and does not depend on the type of head noun. The writer believes that this is caused by the absence of the semantic features [ $\pm$  animate,  $\pm$  human] on a noun such as those that exist in the Malay Language, which determines the type of classifier that may be present with the noun (Fazal Mohamed Mohamed Sultan, 2008). Therefore, the brackets used in structure (27) are to reflect the situation

due to the third point, which refers to the lack of agreement between numerals/quantifiers and classifiers.

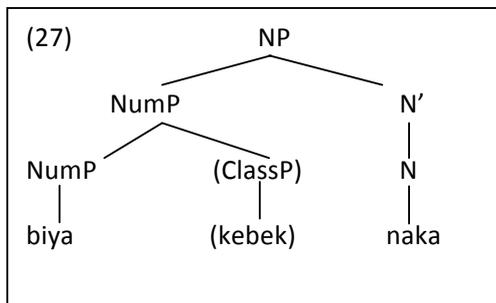


Diagram (27) supports the point that two classifiers require the presence of numerals/quantifiers. Furthermore, this structure could explain the ungrammaticality of phrase as seen in (25a) and (25b). This, obviously, is due to the presence of a classifier that forms the adjunct structure. Therefore, if numerals/quantifiers do not appear in phrase (25a) and (25b), the adjunct structure would not be formed and the classifiers would not have a position to present in the syntactic structure of the NP. This would cause the phrase to be marked as ungrammatical. Conversely, the absence of the classifiers would cause the NumP to project a structure without adjunct position as shown in (23) without any problem. The brackets support the third point, which is that there is no agreement that requires the presence of classifiers.

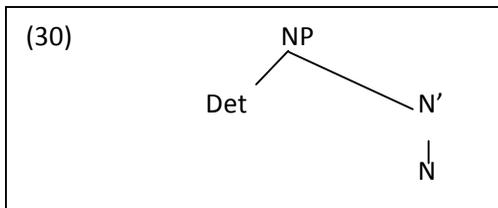
*Element that Follows an NP*

The discussion in section 4.2 explains that there are two elements that follow the head noun of the NP in the Kensiu Language. This element consists of a determiner, on, such as shown in phrase (28) and a possessive

marker like *yak* as shown in the phrase (29):

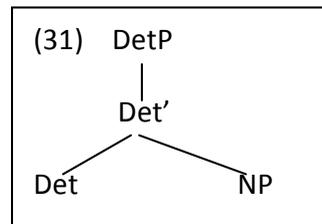
- (28)   awe    on  
         bamboo the
- (29)   awe   yak  
         house my

Both of the phrases follow a fixed order similar to other elements that precede the noun in the Kensiu Language as shown in (28) and (29). Conventionally, the noun phrase is considered the result of the maximum projection of a noun (N) (Jackendoff, 1977), as illustrated in (30):



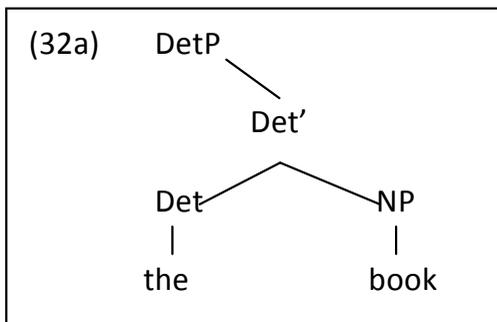
Recent developments in theory in the 20th century such as expressed in the structure in (30) have been widely debated. Development of the theory of the X-Bar (Chomsky, 1986) and head movement (Baker, 1988) has enabled the current changes to the structure of the NP in (30). Fukui and Speas (1986), Abney (1987) and Horrocks and Stavrou (1987) argued in detail that the NP in a clause must be preceded by a functional element. Horrocks and Stavrou (1987) gave a label to this functional head i.e. ‘Art’ while Abney (1987) also provided a label, ‘Det’, and suggested that the noun phrase was the maximum projection of ‘Det’, which is the basic position for an

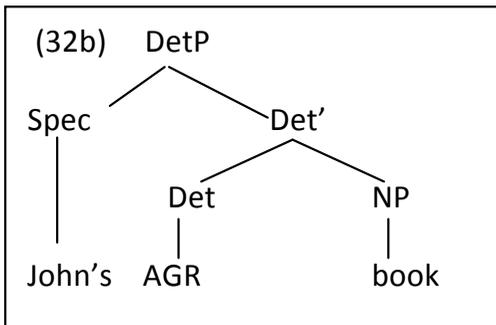
article. Abney’s allegations are based on a symmetrical relation between the NP and the projection clause. A clause is a VP, which is dominated by a functional projection known as INFLP. Abney believes that the NP can also be seen as a projection of N dominated by the functional projection as shown in (31):



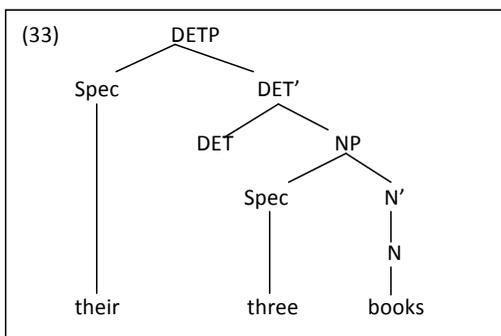
The proposal to introduce a functional category in the NP has been well received in a variety of studies (Ritter, 1991; Ouhalla, 1991). Most studies involve the romance languages. Therefore, this paper also applies the hypothesis DP (determiner phrase) in the analysis of the NP in Kensiu.

Abney proposed that the determiner and AGR exist under Det in a noun phrase. This situation is very clear in English, for instance, in the determiner being used in (32a) and the possessive marker in (32b):



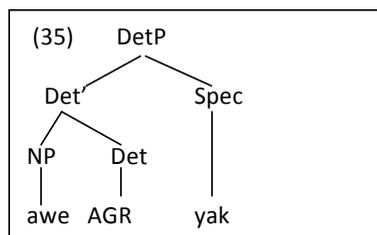
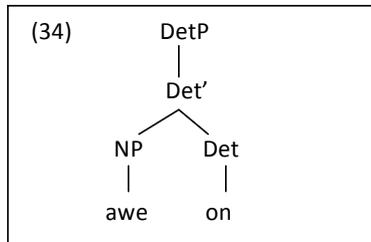


Abney also devised a more open structure to complete the sequence involving the presence of numerals and classifiers in phrases such as “their three books”. He suggested two position specs for possession and one for the numeral phrase. The numerals and classifiers are known as the numeral phrase. He also suggested for the quantifiers to hold the position of [Specs FN] i.e. the possessive marker, numeral phrase and the quantifiers are considered explanatory phrases to the head noun as shown in example (33):



If structure (33) is applied to the possessive marker and the determiner in

phrases (28) and (29), the structure would be as follows:



Structure (35) shows the existence of AGR in structure DetP of the Kensiu Language. AGR existence can be proved by different possessive markers according to their characteristics as shown in (5). This proves that the presence of AGR is important in invalidating the presence of the [+ total] feature at its least. At the same time, AGR also has the feature [+ possessive]. The presence of *on*, the determiner, triggers the non-existence of the feature [+ number, + owner], which does not allow for the presence of a possessive. Owing to this, phrase (36) is marked as ungrammatical:

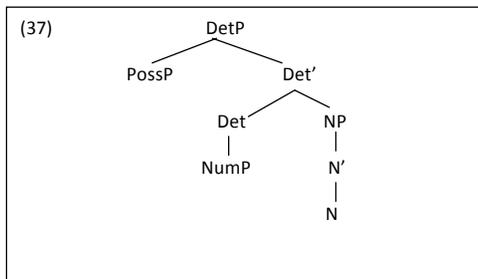
- (36) \*a. hiyak yak on  
          hut my the
- \*b. hiyak on yak

The structure above shows that the presence of a possessive marker and determiner follows a certain order. In fact, its position is different in the English Language. However, the structure of the X-Bar does not preclude the differences being shown in the theory of the X-Bar.

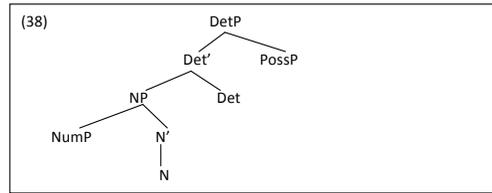
*NP in the Kensiu Language as DetP*

The syntactic analysis of the NP of the Kensiu Language revealed that there is a fixed order of NP in the Kensiu Language. The order of the NP shows that the head noun may be preceded by numerals and classifiers. Furthermore, the head noun can also be followed by a determiner or possessive marker.

Abney (1987) suggested that the NP represents the DetP. Therefore, the DetP, which was proposed by Abney (1987), is applicable in order to prepare the overall analysis of the NP of the Kensiu language as portrayed in structure (37):

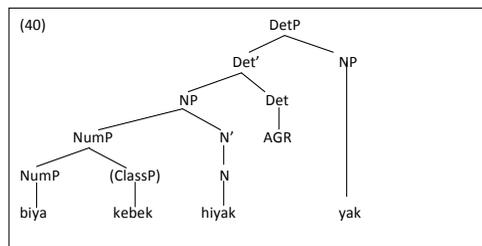


Due to different sequences, the researcher proposed a slight change in (37) in order to produce structure (38):

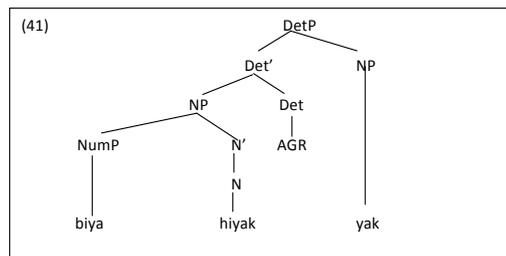


Structure (38) can be applied to phrase (39) to produce a structure of the NP in (40):

(39) biya kebek hiyak yak  
 two class hut my  
 ‘My two huts.’



The whole structure of the Kensiu NP is described in (40). The bracket on the ClassP indicates that the phrase is optional. If ClassP is present, then the adjunct structure would exist but if the ClassP is absent, then the adjunct structure would not exist, as in (41):



## CONCLUSION

This article explicated all the elements that precede and follow an NP in the Kensiu Language. Elements that preceded the NP in the Kensiu Language are the numerals/quantifiers and classifiers. Analyses of these two elements are based on three points: 1) the firm order of the numerals/quantifiers and classifiers that make up the NP; 2) the nature of non-compulsory existence of classifiers; and 3) the presence of numerals/quantifiers is necessary in order to allow for the presence of classifiers. All of these are reflected in the structure of the proposed NP by suggesting the adjunction structure of ClassP in order to accommodate the classifiers accurately. This structure is able to explain every fact that is connected to the presence of numerals/quantifiers and classifiers. Further analysis of the elements that follow the noun has been discussed according to the DetP structure introduced by Abney (1987). This analysis has enabled the DetP structure to be utilised to describe all the elements that precede and follow the head noun of the Kensiu Language.

## REFERENCES

- Abney, S. (1987). *The English noun phrase in its sentential aspect*. (Doctoral dissertation, Massachusetts Institute of Technology). Retrieved from [http://www.ai.mit.edu/projects/dm/theses/abney\\_87-pdf](http://www.ai.mit.edu/projects/dm/theses/abney_87-pdf)
- Baker, M. C. (1988). *Incorporation: A theory of grammatical function changing*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Benjamin, G., & Chou, C. (2003). *Tribal communities in the Malay World: Historical, cultural and social perspectives*. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies; Amsterdam and Leiden: International Institute for Asian Studies.
- Burenhult, N. (2002). *A grammar of Jahai*. (Doctoral dissertation). Sweden: Lund University Publication.
- Chomsky, N. (1970). Remarks on Nominalization. In R. A. Jacobs, & P. S. Rosenbaum (Eds.), *Readings in English transformational grammar* (pp. 184-221). Boston: Ginn Press.
- Chomsky, N. (1981). *Lectures on government and binding: The Pisa lectures*. Holland: Foris Publications.
- Chomsky, N. (1986). *Knowledge of language. Its nature, origin, and use*. New York: Praeger.
- Chomsky, N. (2000). Minimalist inquiries: The framework. In R. Martin, D. Michaels, & J. Uriagereka (Eds.), *Step by step: Essays on minimalist syntax in honor of Howard Lasnik* (pp. 89-155). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Fukui, N., & Speas, M. (1986). Specifiers and projection. In F. Naoki, T. Rappaport, & E. Sagey (Eds.), *MIT working papers in linguistics 8*. (pp. 128-172). MIT: Department of Linguistics.
- Haegeman, L. (1994). *Introduction to government and binding theory* (2nd ed.). Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.
- Hebrew. In S. Rothstein (Ed.), *Syntax and semantics, 26* (pp. 37-62). New York: Academic Press.
- Horrocks, G., & Stavrou, M. (1987). Bounding theory and Greek syntax: Evidence for wh-movement in NP. *Journal of Linguistics*, 23(01), 79-108.
- Jabatan Hal Ehwal Orang Asli. (2015). Retrieved from <http://www.jheoa.gov.my>
- Jackendoff, R. (1977). X syntax: A study of phrase structure. *Linguistic Inquiry Monographs Cambridge, Mass.*, (2), 1-249.
- Ouhalla, J. (1991). *Functional categories and parametric variation*. London: Routledge.

- Ritter, E. (1991). Two functional categories in noun phrases: Evidence from modern
- Stowell, T. (1981). *Origins of phrase structure*. (Doctoral dissertation, Massachusetts Institute of Technology). Retrieved from [http://www.ai.mit.edu/projects/dm.theses/Stowell 81.pdf](http://www.ai.mit.edu/projects/dm.theses/Stowell%2081.pdf)
- Sultan, F. M. M. (2008). Struktur sintaksis frasa nama bahasa Melayu. *Jurnal Bahasa*, 8(2), 204-219.
- Sultan, F. M. M. (2011). The syntactic structure of a noun phrase: Austroasiatic vs. Austronesia. *Pertanika Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities*, 19(1), 263-271.
- Sultan, F. M. M., & Ramli, M. R. (2015). Kata ganti nama dalam bahasa Mendriq. *GEMA Online® Journal of Language Studies*, 15(3), 67-82.



## **Pablo Neruda as the Place-maker: An Ecocritical Enquiry of ‘Place’ in Neruda’s Selected Poems**

**Khosravi, G. D., Vengadasamy, R.\* and Raihanah, M. M.**

*School of Language Studies and Linguistics, Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities,  
Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 43600 Bangi, Selangor, Malaysia*

### **ABSTRACT**

Throughout the more than 50 years of Pablo Neruda’s poetic career, natural places were a fundamental component of his poetry. Neruda was a major 20th century Latin American and Nobel Prize winning poet who was famous as a political poet. This paper examines the concept of ‘place’ in Neruda’s selected poems to reveal his experiences and emotions connected to specific places. ‘Place’ is an essential component of ecopoetry. In this paper, we utilise the conceptual framework of ecopoetry, which is a sub-theory of ecocriticism. Ecopoetry is a genre of poetry that explores how human beings are connected to their habitat or home, how ‘home’ is defined and built, and how a sense of ‘place’ is invoked. In this paper, we scrutinise the relationship between man and place (nature) with an emphasis on ecological awareness. Therefore, the paper will illustrate how the environment is closely associated with the concept of place. Based on the evidence presented, we propose that Neruda was very much an eco-poet and a ‘place maker’. Through his poetry, he establishes his poetic goal to achieve ‘topophilia’ or love of places by illustrating that the knowledge of spiritual belonging is the result of the knowledge of one’s physical roots.

*Keywords:* Pablo Neruda, ecopoetry, eco-criticism, place, place maker, identity, belonging, topophilia

### **INTRODUCTION**

Pablo Neruda’s birth name was Ricardo Eliecer Naftali Reyes Basoalto. He was

born in the geographical centre of Chile, Parrel in 1904 and spent his childhood in the beautiful landscape and forests of Temuco in the south of Chile. Neruda adopted the pseudonym, Pablo Neruda, from the Czech author Jan Neruda partly because he wanted to keep his written works hidden from his father who was opposed to his writing. His family moved to Temuco when he was a

#### **ARTICLE INFO**

##### *Article history:*

Received: 21 September 2015

Accepted: 15 January 2016

##### *E-mail addresses:*

gdkhosravi2@gmail.com (Khosravi, G. D.),

raviev@ukm.edu.my (Vengadasamy, R.),

raihanah.mydin@gmail.com (Raihanah, M. M.)

\* Corresponding author

child. It was a tremendously lush region of Southern Chile, surrounded by lakes, rivers, waterfalls, mountains and rich vegetation. Wilson (2008) states that Neruda came out of that lush landscape where silence roams and went singing around the world. He also remarks that in the wild west of his country, Neruda first opened his eyes to the rain, the land, the poetry and life.

According to Gleaves (1980), Neruda's love for Chile and his indebtedness to his native land was apparent in one of Neruda's speeches in 1962 in which he stated that his biggest and longest book was the book called Chile. One of Neruda's critics, Yannielli (1997, p.4), once remarked that Neruda yearned to return to the immense forests of Chile in the south "where he could get back in touch with the earth." A similar idea is expressed by Gleaves (1980, p.6), who related Neruda's devotion to Chile, "Chile for Neruda served as spiritual anchor and place of his solace of his soul: the only country that Neruda indeed understood intellectually and emotionally." In this vein, Peden (1983), echoing Neruda, states that the poet cannot be separated from his land and birthplace but by force. He states that, "Even in these circumstances, his roots must stretch across the ocean deeps, his seed follows the fight against the wind, again to become flesh in his homeland and has two sacred obligations: to leave and to return" (Peden, 1983, p.331). However, Neruda's political life separated him from Chile.

Neruda started his political career in 1927 when he worked as a member of the diplomatic services and served as Chilean

consul in Java and Rangoon, as well as in Spain's capital from 1927 to 1945. Even during his political career, he composed poetry ceaselessly. Although he expatriated several times and spent an important part of his life in exile like many other Latin American authors, memories of the Chilean landscape and places never left him. He returned to Chile in 1952. He was conferred the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1971, and on September 23, 1973, he died of cancer. He was identified by Gabriel Garcia Marquez as the greatest Latin American poet of the 20th century.

His literary life began at age 13 when he was a contributor of some articles to the daily newspaper, 'La Manana', and also the literary journal, 'Selva Austral' in 1920, under the pen name of Pablo Neruda. Throughout Neruda's literary career, many scholars and critics attached to him labels like social poet, political poet, surrealist, love poet and erotic poet of the 20th century. However, in his *Memoirs*, Neruda (1977, p.293) stated that, "Some critics believe that I am a surrealist poet, for others, I am a realist, and still others do not believe I am a poet. They are all to some extent correct and partly incorrect." These facets of his poetry have been examined and varied methodologies, theories and ideologies have been utilised. Scholars have also approached Neruda's poetry from various critical perspectives: symbolic, socio-political, biographical, Marxist and thematic textual perspectives. As an example, Dawes (2006) stated that Neruda was at first affected by surrealism, but later showed impatience

with its irrationalities. He considers Neruda a Marxist writer because of his great affinity with the dialectical approach in *Third Residence* (1933) and *Spain in Our Heart* (1937). Another scholar, Johnson (2015), investigated Neruda's *Canto General* from a political perspective to reveal that his images are the result of a dominant cultural ideology to which the writer subscribed. Feinstein (cited in Johnson, 2015, p.232) states that Neruda's poetry "started to change from being hermetic, neo-romantic and pessimistic, into more direct, simple and accessible verse."

From a biographical perspective, McInnis (1997) argues that Pablo Neruda's extensive poetry corpus may be regarded as an enormous diary in which he recorded his reaction to the emotions, events and things which overwhelmed him every day. The best example of this is *Memorial de Isla Negra* which, according to Olney (1972), requires the autobiographer to find the many selves or voices of Pablo Neruda. Hart (2004, p.256), in an overview of Neruda's works, states that, "Critics, of course, routinely split Neruda's work into two halves: on the one hand, there is the pre-political poetry (1924-37) and on the other, the committed poetry (1937-73)." However, other critics like Brooks (2012) considers Neruda's works as being in the best traditions of Modernism. In addition, another scholar, Karmakar, reexamines Neruda's poems in a detailed analysis to show the poet's outlook, thought and poetic vision to the world of literature. He remarks that "the critics have called Neruda a self-indulgent writer, but he was a

poet who had deep feelings for his country, readers, and surroundings and he always expressed them passionately" (Karmakar, 2015: pp. 1-2). Likewise Duran and Safir (1982) introduced Neruda as an eminent poet who continuously travelled and wrote while exuding energy. They believed that this energy of both poetry and poet came from the stone, forests, land, rain and places of the south of Chile. They state that Neruda, through his poetry, takes life through a subtle and refined process of discovery and awareness.

Consequently, few poets seem to have such a variety of voices and selves as Neruda does in his works. Each collection of Neruda's poetry depicted a new self or persona. Based on an investigation of a large and growing overview of his literary works, Nolan (1994) pictured the persona of Neruda as: the lost child of *Twilight* (1923); the neo romantic of *Twenty Love Poems and a Song of Despair* (1924); the anguished existentialist of *Residence on the Earth* (1925-1931); the war witness of *Third Residence*; the epic and political voice of the American in *Canto General* (1950); the simple-objects poet in *Elemental Odes* (1954); the strange private man in *Estravagaria* (1958); the autobiographical poet in *Memorial de Isla Negra* (1964); and the metaphysician and naturalist in his late work, *Stones of the Sky* (1969). Based on Nolan's work, it is apparent that scholars seemed to have ignored or overlooked Neruda's ecological and emotional attachment to specific locations of his country and national sites of his continent

that portray him as a 'place maker'. Pablo Neruda can be considered one of a few authors who are integrally bound to place in their works. Most of his poems represent multiple elements of place and 'whereness' while introducing his birthplace, his career, ideology and even place of death. Many of his poems also reflect his strong devotion to Chilean places that can be considered as discursive evidence to identify Neruda as a poet of 'where' or a 'place maker'. A similar idea stated by Carrasco Pirard is that "Neruda is never a poet in some abstract senses, he is a poet of a particular [determinado] 'where' (cited in Handley, 2007, p.159). In view of the arguments presented, this paper scrutinises Neruda's selected poems to reveal his experiences, affinity with particular sites and sense of place that represent him as a poet who creates 'place' in the readers' minds i.e. he comes across as a 'place maker'. In examining the concept of 'place maker,' understanding the concept of place would be an indispensable guide.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### *Ecocriticism*

Ecocriticism, the broad theoretical approach that frames this study, takes into account the whole Earth as its 'oikos,' which means dwelling place, home and house. It sensitises the readers' mind to the ecological and environmental aspects of a place. Many intellectuals and scholars have maintained that place is a multi-layered concept that is impacted by a diversity of social, political, historical and ideological forces. In the same

vein, *place* theorist Buell (1995, p.267) argues that environmental literature creates places in a particular method "not only by naming objects but by dramatizing in the process how they matter." A similar idea is expressed by Ball (2006, p.233) in his article *Literary Criticism for Places*, which investigates specific methods of place in literary criticism to establish recent place-based ecocriticism. He argues:

*Place-based literary ecocritics aim to inspire or suggest the importance of a sense of place and emphasize the ecological as well as social aspects of place (especially environmental history and human relationship with the environment)—all through a reflexive narrative scholarship comprised of reading literary texts and reflecting autobiographically on themselves as inhabiting the place in question.*

The above statements correspond considerably to Glotfelty and Fromm (1996), stating that ecocriticism is dedicated particularly to the study of the environment and literature, which aspire to create place as a central issue of critical concern. Place-based ecocritics sustain not only the significance of sense of place but also the consciousness of the human-nature relationship. They assert that when scholars contemplate place, they should consider biological, geographical and living physical location as well as subjective experiences of the human beings. Generally speaking, ecocriticism claims that all

humans are interconnected with the natural world surrounding them, thus studying the environment is a kind of examination of how we are interrelated to and affected by the world around us.

#### *Concept of Place in Ecocriticism*

Ecocriticism as a literary term became an exploratory trail for poems rooted in place. The concept of 'place' can be traced back to Aristotle (384-322 BCE) and to Plato (428-348 BCE). Aristotle believed "everything exists within a place" and stated that "place takes precedence before all other things as nothing can exist without place," while Plato "saw place in terms of experience" (both cited in Johnson, 2015, p.7). This shows that understanding the concept of 'place' has been an important subject from early times. In modern times, the significance of 'place' dates back to the 1970s when the influential geographer, Tuan, in his important work, *Place and Space*, argued that a place is born and comes into existence when human beings give name and meaning to a piece of the wider and undifferentiated space. He believed that place demonstrates more than its physical constituents. It may connote another meaning; for example, Stedman (2002) states that sense of place may be considered as a set of symbolic meanings for a particular site. More importantly, Cresswell (2004, p.12) remarks that "place is how we make the world meaningful and the way we experience the world."

#### *Ecopoets and Place Makers*

Ecopoets are often place makers, trying to take their listeners to exotic and abstract spaces. Ecopoets propose an image of the universe that evaluates the interaction between two longings that attempt to address the problem of modern divorce between the human and the natural world. Bryson (2005, p.9) believes that ecopoets make this connection for two reasons: (1) "to create place, awareness and focus on knowing the natural world around us" and (2) "to value space, identifying that extent to which the very world is eventually unknowable." In brief, Bryson asserts that contemporary ecopoets support these two objectives, to know the world and to identify its extreme unknowability. We recognise our present surrounding as place and so, as home. The ecopoets' goal is to create a new feeling that Tuan calls 'topophilia', which means "the affective bond between people and place." 'Topo' is the Greek word for 'place' (Tuan 1974:4, as cited in Christou, 2006, p.35). Therefore, considering the cultural geographer Tuan's work along with other ecocritical thinkers from various disciplines, we come to clarify the understanding of the concepts of *space* and *place* and how they relate to modern ecopoetry.

As the current article endeavours to expand the notion of *place* through the lens of ecopoetry, it is noteworthy to take a look at the etymological root of the term 'ecopoet'. Both 'eco' and 'poet' are from Greek roots and mean, respectively,

'dwelling house or home' and 'place composer' or one who is place making or making place in poetry (Bryson, 2005:6). Almost all ecopoets are really place makers who repeatedly encourage us to create and value place, and their writings concurrently force readers to appreciate and even have reverence for place. Neruda is a poet who must be considered a place maker because he encourages his readers to see the "precious wholeness" of nature around them as a place, where an existing geography as well as a history of the place can help in the identification of the 'who'.

#### *Place and Identity*

Within the ecopoetic framework, identity is a significant concept for understanding 'place'. In fact, within every person is the mixing of emotion, imagination, experience, memory, and present situation that can be so various that she/he can see a particular place in several completely different ways. Actually, for every person, a place can have many different identities. In this regard Entrikin emphasises that:

*place serves as an important component of our sense of identity as subjects. The subject's concern for this sense of identity may be no different in kind from that of the geographer, in that the geographer's aim of accurately representing places can also be tied to concerns for social action and cultural identity* (cited in Christou, 2006, p.43).

Considering Entrikin's idea and the definition of place, this paper shows that people become aware of how a sense of place can be influential on their own sense of being. There are places that tell their story, where the evidence of the past relates to their history. Tuan (1997) expressed the opinion that these places can enliven the spirit and make us feel emotionally empowered. When a specific environment becomes meaningful, when a large number of human connections are connected to that place and temporal significance and subjective value create a memorial or emotional connection to the particular location, then such a place becomes one of the key elements in the theory of ecocriticism. By examining Neruda's poetry through the lens of ecocriticism, this article identifies him as a poet of 'where' or as a 'place maker'. This relates well to Wendell Berry's famous statement that "if you know where you are, you know who you are" (cited in Dreese, 2002, p.1).

#### **ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION**

Sometimes places leave a significant mark in human lives. These places can obtain meaning through important experiences (loss, trauma, alienation) and also through the experience of moving and changing. Places associated with such experiences can be meaningful irrespective of whether they are positive or negative. Neruda's poetry is rooted deeply in his native land. For instance, the poem entitled *Birth* echoes Neruda's emotional connection to his local birthplace, Parral:

[...]  
And that's where I'm from, that  
Parral of the trembling earth,  
A land laden with grapes  
Which came to life  
Out of my dead mother (*Isla Negra: 'Birth'*)

Here, Neruda's emphasis on the specific place, Parral, implies that his experience turned into his poetic voice, which represents him as an ecopoet. Parral is a place in the south of Chile, an area which Neruda in his *Memoirs* (1997) compares to the American Wild West. It is also known by the names 'Araucania' and 'La Frontera'. Like Snyder's *Turtle Island* and Thoreau's *Walden* for their authors, Parral was constantly in his dreams.

According to Teitelboim, his experience of Asian culture taught Neruda lessons about human belonging to the landscape (cited in Handley, 2007, p.142). Neruda's poetry is activated by the phenomenological moment at which place and nature impacted upon the consciousness of the human. For instance, in his memoirs, Neruda (1977, p.177) says, "in this town, (Parral) my poetry was born between the hill and the river, it took its voice from the rain, and like the timber, it steeped itself in the forests." Neruda once said that even though he had opportunities to live in another place in any part of the world, he had decided to return to his birthplace. It is the physical environment of Neruda's birthplace that made him return to stay and not to depart again. Also in his *Memoirs* (p.167), Neruda describes his birthplace:

"I come from the other end of the republic. I was born in a green country with huge, thickly wooded forests. I had a childhood filled with rain and snow."

The south of Chile is a local place where Neruda can recollect his sensual solidarity with the world. As Wallace Stegner argues,

[A] place is not a place until people have been born in it, have grown up in it, lived in it, known it, died in it—have both experienced and shaped it as individuals, families, . . . communities . . . until things that have happened in it are remembered in history, ballads, yarns, legends, or monuments (cited in Handley, 2007, p.48).

In another poem, *Patagonias*, Neruda connects his existence and his name to the place where his roots have spread. He introduces this site, *Patagonias*, in this way:

[...]  
*Here*, summits in shadow,  
blizzards,  
And extending pride  
That makes  
The lonely places  
Shine;  
*Here*, by some appointment my roots,  
Or only driven by the wind,  
I must have been born.  
[...]  
And now I might discover  
My own name, my wild astonishment,  
The volcanic statue of my existence  
(*Isla Negra A Note Book: 'Patagonias'*)

Neruda's poetry often provides a situation which readers can use to establish the relationship between the self and the place. The situation usually reflects knowledge of the place and the direct experience of it. In the above lines, the stanza illustrates Neruda's quest for his roots. He utilises the word "Here" to show his affinity with Patagonia. His strong attachment to the local place is also manifested in the following lines:

My own *Patagonias*  
belong to the harsh contradictions  
Of some huge star  
That fall, defeating me,  
And I am no more than a hurt root  
Of that slow landscape (*Patagonia*)

Here, Neruda echoes the recurrent theme of intimacy with place, which manifests into belonging to nature. In this regard, Weil states that "the need to have roots is perhaps the most important need of the human soul" (cited in Johnson, 2015, p.21). This is seen in Neruda's poems, where he reveals his identity through the search for his roots:

I come to look for my roots,  
The ones that discovered  
the mineral food of the forest. (*Isla Negra: 'The Night Train'*)

Neruda's poetry appears to clarify that the knowledge of spiritual belonging is the result of the knowledge of one's physical roots. Gleaves (1980, p.6) clarifies this idea: "Chile for Neruda served as a spiritual anchor and the place of his solace of his

soul." Neruda's poems always attempt to reflect his commitment and devotion to his native land.

Neruda's writings often involve the persona reminiscing about Chile's landscape. To Neruda, memory plays a significant part in creating a sense of 'place'. In the poem, *Territories*, he remarks that:

Wherever I was, I remember the  
landscape  
as if it still had a hold over me.  
[ ... ]  
But, seacoast or snow, rock or river,  
my essences made tip more of  
mountains,  
the teeth of geography,  
footprint still visible in the undergrowth  
(*Isla Negra: 'Territories'*)

The opening stanza starts with the poet's remembrance of the landscape that filled up all of his existence. The affiliation with local places, rivers, rocks and mountain provides an emotional connection with the place for the persona. Such poetry is similar to that of the canonical ecopoet, Harjo, who is also a place maker relating her memory. Bryson (2002, p.181) states that "the processes of going back and place-making are intertwined; in order to recover the sense of place we must remember and return to what we have known in the past." Another example in which Neruda establishes emotional ties to a particular place is illustrated in the following stanza:

The earth springs up as if alive  
in me, I close my eyes, therefore I am.

I close my eyes and a cloud opens,  
 a door opens to a whiff of perfume,  
 a river enters, singing, with its stones,  
 dampness of places seeps into me,  
 [...]

and the sea enters through my buried  
 eyes. (*Isla Negra: 'Territories'*)

Neruda emphasises the importance of recognising a connection to the place. The persona feels the spirit of his homeland when he says, "dampness of place seeps into me." This profound connection to his native land and local places is not only reflected in his other poems like *Goodbye to Paris*, *Santiago Song*, *The City* and *Spring in City* but also in the pristine marine landscape as well. Throughout Neruda's poetic career, from when he was in exile to when he lived in the Orient, and to his home in Isla Negra, maritime places were recurrent themes. Neruda remarks that "my poetry and my life have advanced like an American river, a torrent of Chilean water born in the hidden heart of the southern mountain, endlessly steering the flow of its currents toward the sea" (Memoirs 1997, p.167).

Much of Neruda's experiences and emotional attachment to local sites is reflected in his *Isla Negra* poetry collection. Isla Negra happens to be a small village on the Pacific coastline south of Valparaiso. "A house on the sand", it is regarded as the centre of Neruda's world, and the place where he penned some of his wonderful marine poetry. Isla Negra was a magical place for Neruda, as Walden was for Thoreau. Upon his return from exile, he decided to

live beside the sea and said, "Now I am returning to Chile, to my oceanic country, and my ship is approaching the coasts of Africa" (Memoirs, p.217). Isla Negra is where his poetry germinated and took root. Apart from the land, the sea also played a key role in Neruda's reflection on his roots. Neruda's connection to the maritime place is exemplified in the following lines:

I come back, and still the sea  
 Keeps sending me strange foam.

It does not get used to the way I see.

The sand does not recognize me.  
 (*Extravagaria: 'Strangers on the Shore'*)

Neruda confesses in the poem *Strangers on the Shore* that for the ocean to pay attention to his presence on the shore, he has to "learn / to swim within his dreams," in this case the sea should "come / to visit him in his sleep." Perhaps in this way, the great resounding of water and wind "will know who I am and why I return, / will accept me into their school" (*Extravagaria: Strangers on the Shore*).

[...]

By now we feel we are friends,  
 We come back with open arms,  
 and here the sea, dancing away,  
 not bothering with us (*Extravagaria: 'Strangers on the Shore'*).

Neruda's rootedness in place, particularly in a local and regional place such as Isla Negra is also reflected in his poetry that conveys 'topophilia'. The lines in the stanza above represent his sensuous connection to the sea as his friend. Curry

(2013, p.35) explains this when he says that the character of a place is reflected in its sensuous qualities that can be felt when a place becomes real. This happens when a lived experience is experienced again. Many of Neruda's poems were born on these "Antarctic shores"; *Memorial de Isla Negra* and 'Canto General' are great examples. The first is a kind of autobiographical verse that explores Neruda's strong link to and roots and formative experiences in this maritime place. Neruda's passion for oceanic places and his unending longing for the coastal landscape of Chile, even when he was in exile, is echoed in the following poem:

In faraway regions I bathed  
Your foamy feet, your scattered shore,  
With furious exiled tears.  
[...]  
O, Chilean sea, O, water  
Soaring and encircling like a raging  
wildfire,  
O, earthquake of salt and lions!  
Sea of Valparaiso, wave  
Of lonely nocturnal light,  
Window of the ocean  
From which my country's  
Statues looks out  
Gazing with eyes still blind. (*Canto  
General: 'Chile's Seas'*)

He illustrates not only the importance of present local places in his poetry, but also old historical places that are part of his identity. Place plays a significant function in reminding people of their past, origin and identity. This article extends the sense of place in the historical construction evident

in Neruda's poetry. For example, his poem, *The Height of Machu Picchu*, was written to demonstrate past historical identity and its connection to the present and the future of the South American continent. Morgado (2011, p.44) clarifies this idea:

To intellectuals, Machu Picchu exemplified the achievements and developments of the history of pre-Columbian cultures, allowing them to question what America's present would have been like had the development of these cultures not been abruptly interrupted in the 1500s by the Spanish conquest and the colonial period that followed.

*Machu Picchu* is a coherent narrative of the past that connects to the present and will guide the future of the American continent. Neruda revitalises the myth-like history of the Inca ruins to show us his roots and his identity. He invokes the motif of the ruins in the framework of rethinking the cultural heritage of twentieth-century Latin America and its literary tradition. *The Heights of Machu Picchu* comprises 12 sections and is composed in free verse. It explores the historical construction and identity of the ancient civilisation of the Incas. Through the Inca city of *Machu Picchu* and its wilderness, Neruda takes his readers to meet the historical identity of his origin.

*Machu Picchu* is a poem Neruda most admired. The ancient Inca city of Machu Picchu was built around 1400 AD and abandoned after the Spanish conquest. Neruda reviews the historical events and the

lost paradise of his ancestors to invoke the sense of place in his reader's mind. Neruda makes his descent into the ruins, the old historical place, and ultimately ascends to the heights to find the historical civilisation of his ancestors. In the same vein, Johnson, (2015, p.235) states that *The Heights of Machu Picchu* "describes the poetic persona's pilgrimage to the Inca city of Machu Picchu. It is a journey both upwards and inwards where the poetic persona finds his identity as a person belonging to the American continent." Neruda's visit as pilgrim reveals his experiences and attachment to his native land; as Milligan states, attachment to place has been described as "the emotional link formed by an individual to a physical site that has been given meaning through interaction" (cited in Harmon et al., 2006).

From the air to the air, like an empty net,  
I went on through streets and thin air,  
arriving and  
leaving behind,  
[...]  
I bent my head into the deepest waves,  
dropped down through sulfurous calm  
and went back, as if blind, to the jasmine  
of the exhausted human spring. (*The Heights of Machu Picchu: 'I'*)

Neruda binds history to nature and relates the story of the buried stone city of the Incas, in the mountains of the Andes. Like a historical archeologist, the (poet) persona searches in the depth of the ruins to find the culture, history, identity and spiritual origin of the people of this continent. As

he 'walks' through the ruins in Machu Picchu, he reveals a reflective nostalgia that reminds him of the colonial history of the Spanish conquerors. *Machu Picchu* is a symbolic poem that relates the history of the indigenous people's death, their resurrection and their native roots.

The poet is the witness of history and wants to engage readers in creating a historical awakening. Machu Picchu is a place of greatness, and this idea is reflected in the following lines:

Then on the ladder of the earth I climbed  
through the lost jungle's tortured thicket  
up to you, Machu Picchu  
High city of laddered stones (*The Heights of Machu Picchu: VI*)

Here the poet creates a place for the readers when he encounters Machu Picchu. Neruda also demonstrates his affiliation with the past natural history of this site and often utilises the adverb of place "here" to refer to Machu Picchu to depict the significance of flora and fauna and the fertility of this place through his experiences.

This was the dwelling, this is the place:  
here the broad grains of maize rose up  
and fell again like red hail  
Here gold thread came off the vicuña  
to clothe lovers, tombs, and mothers,  
(*Canto General: Machu Picchu: VIII*)

Neruda takes his motif and themes of landscape and celebration of the earth and land and creates a place for his readers. The poetry and landscape are intertwined and dialectic. Neruda's poetry speaks via

the land and the land speaks via poetry, as Jeffers asserts: “poetry does not create the significance of place, like the poetry of Stevens or William Carlos Williams; instead for Jeffers, place creates the significance of poetry” (cited in Bryson, 2002: p.40).

In the above *Canto*, Neruda is approaching Machu Picchu, ascending to a place where he finds Incan history. With historical vision, he provokes a type of connectivity to this place. The poet’s soul is unified not only with the American continent, but the history of its past as well. This union is echoed in the poet’s strophic divisions, which correspond with distinct steps of symbolic communion that gives the poet a continental mission. In his descending journey, he wanted to become their voice, and retold their sufferings. The Incan ruins are a site to which Neruda feels strong historical and emotional ties. He joins the Incan ruins to the present history of Latin Americans because he knows, like all cities, Machu Picchu was constructed on human suffering and echoes the history of the social class of the Incan people. This place relates the story of the affliction of the people who built Machu Picchu and died. The poetic persona addresses the ruins to let his readers see the circumstances under which the Indians constructed this place and died. It is here that the poet invokes the readers to realise intuitively the way ancient places epitomise meaning, memory and significance. The influential geographer, Tuan (1997), clarifies this idea that people look back at old places for different reasons,

but acquiring a sense of identity and of self is something that is shared by all. He remarks that the passionate feeling for conservation arises out of the necessity for tangible objects that can maintain a sense of identity. A similar idea is expressed by Snyder, who states, “knowing who you are and where you are, are intimately linked” (cited in Dreese, 2002: p.1).

## CONCLUSION

This paper has attempted to analyse Pablo Neruda’s poetry through an ecopoetic lens to depict how his poetry is highly attached to the concept of place, which is one of the key elements in ecocriticism. In his poems, Neruda makes a great effort to relate the readers’ minds to the environment and the place in which they live so that they appreciate and value the places. The depictions of the various forms of ‘place’ distinctively reflect Neruda’s ideology and attitude towards nature and geographical and historical spaces. By portraying the places in different forms, he endeavours to establish an ecological awareness while also conveying a sense of belonging in readers’ minds. Neruda’s poetry successfully illustrates the historical heritage, identity and destiny of the Latin American people. As an ecopoet and a place maker, he attempts to take his readers into tangible and exotic lands to explore natural spaces as home. He therefore accomplishes his poetic goal of establishing ‘topophilia’ i.e. intimate relationship between the readers and places by illustrating that the knowledge

of spiritual belonging is the result of the knowledge of one's physical roots.

## REFERENCES

- Ball, L. E. (2006). Literary criticism for places. *Project Muse Scholarly Journal Online*, 14(1-2), 232-251.
- Brooks, M. (2012). Primitive originals: Pablo Neruda in Elizabeth Bishop's invitation to Miss Marianna Moore. *Ka Mate Ka Ora: New Zealand Journal of Poetry and Poetics*, 11, 111-120.
- Bryson, J. S. (2002). *Ecopoetry: A critical introduction*. Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press.
- Bryson, J. S. (2005). *The west side of any mountain, place, space and ecopoetry*. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press.
- Buell, L. (1995). *The environmental imagination: Thoreau, nature writing, and the formation of American culture*. Cambridge: The Belknap of Harvard UP.
- Christou, A. (2006). *Narratives of place, culture and identity*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.
- Cresswell, T. (2004). *Place: A short introduction*. Malden: Blackwell Publishing.
- Curry, P. (2013). Radical metaphor: Or why place, nature and narrative are each other but aren't themselves. *Earthlines*, 6, 35-38.
- Dawes, G. (2006). *Verses against the darkness: Pablo Neruda's poetry and politics*. Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell UP.
- Dreese, D. N. (2002). *Ecocriticism: Creating self and place in environmental*. New York: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc.
- Duran, M., & Safir, M. (1981). *Earth tones: The poetry of Pablo Neruda*. Bloomington: Indiana UP.
- Gleaves, R. (1980). Neruda and Lorca: A meeting of poetic minds. *Research Studies*, 48(3), 142-151.
- Glotfelty, C., & H. Fromm. (Eds.). (1996). *The ecocriticism reader: Landmarks in literary ecology*. Athens: University of Georgia Press.
- Handley, G. B. (2007). *New World Poetics*. Athens and London: The University of Georgia Press.
- Harmon, L. K., Zinn, H. C., & Gleason, M. (2006). Place identity, place dependence, and place-based affect: Examining their relationship to participation in educational and interpretive programs at Isle Royale National Park. In D. Harmon (Ed.), *People, places and parks: Proceedings of the 2005 George Wright Society Conference on Parks, Protected Areas and Cultural Sites* (pp. 149-156). Hancock, Michigan: The George Wright Society.
- Hart, S. (2004). Pablo Neruda and Vedadismo. *Hispanic Research Journal Iberian and Latin American Studies*, 5(3), 255-264.
- Johnson, P. (2015). Constructing images, translation and ideology: Pablo Neruda's canto general during the McCarthy years in the US. *Humanities & Social Sciences*, 2(8), 229-243.
- Karmakar, G. (2015). Poetic Vision of Pablo Neruda. *European Journal of English Language and Literature Studies*, 3(1), 1-6.
- McInnis, J. B. (1997). Pablo Neruda: Inventing el mar de cada día. *Latin American Studies Association*, 19, 1-19.
- Morgado, P. (2011). Stone upon stone: From Pablo Neruda's house in Isla Negra to the heights of Machu Picchu. *Traditional Dwellings and Settlements Review*, 22(2), 33-48.
- Neruda, P. (1976). *Memoirs. 1974. Trans. Hardie St. Martin*. New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux.
- Neruda, P. (1979). *Isla Negra: A notebook*. (A. Reid, Trans.). New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux.
- Neruda, P. (1980). *Canto General: The way to Macchu Picchu*. (J. Felstiner, Trans.). Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Neruda, P. (2001). *Extravagaria*. (A. Reid, Trans.). New York: Farrar, Straus.
- Nolan, J. (1994). *Poet-Chief: The Native American poetics of Walt Whitman and Pablo Neruda*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press.
- Olney, J. (1972). *Metaphors of self: The meaning of autobiography*. Princeton: Princeton UP.

- Peden, S. M. (1983). *Pablo Neruda: Passion and impressions*. New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux.
- Stedman, R. C. (2002). Towards a psychology of place: Predicting behavior from place based cognition, attitude, and identity. *Environmental Behavior*; 34(5), 561-581.
- Tuan, Y. F. (1977). *Space and place: The perspective of experience*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Wilson, J. (2008). *A companion to Pablo Neruda*. UK: Tamesis, Woodbridge.
- Yannielli, L. (1997). Earth, people and poetry: The forests of Pablo Neruda. *Trumpeter*; 14(1), 1-5.

## **Mirroring Vulnerability: Fear and Shame in *The Judge***

**Dasmesh Kaur, J. S.\* and Raihanah, M. M.**

*School of Language Studies and Linguistics, Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities,  
Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 43600 Bangi, Selangor, Malaysia.*

### **ABSTRACT**

This paper examines the estranged father-son relationship in the 2014 American drama film *The Judge* and explores how the protagonist, Judge Palmer, and his son, Hank, negotiate between their remorse at failing to form filial attachment and their continued defiance towards reconciliation. Both characters appear to mirror one another's emotional disconnection as each isolates himself in a cocoon of invisibility and lack of interaction. This mirroring gesture is a motif that recurs throughout the film, making evident the internal and external conflicts of the narrative. The finding of the study indicates that the judge's fear and shame i.e. his inner conflict, is rooted in the numbing of his emotions towards his second son. The finding also indicates that only by accepting the aspect of fear and shame does the protagonist learn to admit both his past failure and his current estrangement from his son. This recognition of his fear and shame, as the investigation illustrates, leads to a recognition of his vulnerability. The construct of vulnerability used in this discussion can be defined as the empowering awareness of one's fragility in the face of conflict. Judge Palmer's acknowledgement of his fear and shame allowed him to understand and recognise the conflict he faced with his son, Hank. The implication of this reading is that when each man embraces his fear and shame through a sense of awareness of his past failures, the filial conflict between them begins to be resolved and the estrangement between the father and son appears to mend.

*Keywords:* Fear, shame, vulnerability, numbing, mirroring, *The Judge*

### **ARTICLE INFO**

*Article history:*

Received: 21 September 2015

Accepted: 15 January 2016

*E-mail addresses:*

dasmesh\_sidhu@hotmail.com (Dasmesh Kaur, J. S.),

raihanah.mydin@gmail.com (Raihanah, M. M.)

\* Corresponding author

### **INTRODUCTION**

This paper examines the estranged father-son relationship in the 2014 American drama film, *The Judge*, and explores how the protagonist, Judge Palmer, and his middle son, Hank, negotiate between their

remorse at failed filial attachment and their continued defiance towards reconciliation. Both characters appear to mirror one another's emotional disconnection as each isolates himself in a cocoon of invisibility and lack of interaction. This mirroring gesture is a motif that recurs throughout the film, allowing the internal and external conflicts of the narrative to be evident. Using the twin conflicts of fear and shame taken from the lens of vulnerability, this study problematises the position held by both characters that perpetuate their estrangement.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The father-and-son relationship is paramount to the development of a son's character, which included his emotional and psychological make-up (Vogt & Sirridge, 1991). In a healthy father-son relationship, as the latter grows up, the former takes on the role of a model patriarch. However, any barrier in their relationship caused either by emotional or psychological disengagement can disrupt the dynamics in the relationship. The film, *The Judge*, attempts to address the problematic of a dysfunctional father-son relationship due to a shared failure in their past. This failure, as we will discuss later, creates an unwanted effect on the father-son relationship. Instead of a father who is a filial role model, the patriarch in this film is acknowledged by the son purely for his professional role as a judge in a court of law.

As stated by Raven Clabough (2014:np), the film focusses on the "complicated relationship of a father and son," which

forms both the internal and the external conflict of the narration. Clabough expands that the "father/son dynamic" between Judge Palmer and his son Hank Palmer is rooted in each not being able to relate to the other. Clabough (2014:np), in another article also discusses the impact of a strong or weak father-son relationship within the latter's own family: "It is often so vital for a son to respect his father and to feel respected in order for him to be a good husband and father in his own family." A healthy father-son relationship generates a virtuous cycle that manifests in the latter's own future family.

Besides that, Denny Wayman (2014) in his article discusses the motif of the father-son relationship in popular films as a source of identity formation. As Wayman (2014) states, "The troubled father-son relationship has been a staple in literature and film. It portrays the universal struggle that all sons experience to some extent to gain their father's approval while at the same time finding their own distinct masculine identity." The popularity of the theme of estrangement between the father and son indicates its currency among movie-goers today. In addition, Wayman (2014:np) also states that the switching of roles between the filial and the professional, as seen in *The Judge*, further complicates the relationship between the main characters: "A harsh and opinionated man, Joseph has three sons who all call him 'Judge'. It is this absorption of his profession into his identity that creates the troubled relationship with all three of his sons."

Current reviews make it apparent that the film is recognised mainly for the central conflict between Judge Palmer and his son. Yet, what drives the wedge between them? The gap filled by the current discussion is in the aspect of estrangement and its effects on the development of the characters in the film. In order to facilitate the discussion, two important constructs in identity development and interpersonal conflicts, namely fear and shame, will be utilised. To what extent is fear and shame the root of the internal and external conflict in the film?

## METHOD

The methodology of this paper incorporates the two important constructs of fear and shame, which together create the twin conflicts of the film. Fear is seen as a “biologically basic emotion” that can be found in humans as well as in animals (Adolphs, 2013, p.81). The emotion of fear is triggered when an individual feels that he/she is in danger. In an earlier study on fear, Mark Schaller, Justin H. Park and Annette Mueller (2003, p.637) identify one of the fundamental functions of this emotion:

*A fearful reaction to dangerous things is one of the most fundamental of human experiences. The emotional experience of fear almost certainly has deep evolutionary roots and still serves the useful function of compelling individuals to vigilantly avoid those things.*

In a more recent study, Brown (In Brown & Winfrey, 2013) defined fear as “a

powerful and complex emotion” that pushes an individual into a cocoon of darkness, making him/her appear psychologically and emotionally weak and alone. In the film, Judge Joseph Palmer’s fear is rooted in his middle son’s reckless behaviour as an adolescent. Hank’s unruly behaviour, which began at the age of 13, escalated at the age of 17 when he got into a car accident, inflicting long-term injury on his brother and thus permanently destroying the latter’s chances of being a major-league baseball player. Judge Palmer presided over his own son’s case and took the difficult decision of sending his son to a juvenile detention centre as punishment. As a parent, his fear for his son’s future, given the latter’s reckless behaviour left him with little choice but to take this drastic measure to curb the latter’s potentially destructive tendencies. However, the repercussion of that act creates a strong sense of guilt in the Palmer as a result of what he sees as his failure as a father, and put a permanent wedge in their relationship.

Shame, according to scholars of vulnerability studies, inflicts a physical sensation akin to pain. As Brown elaborates, “The importance of social acceptance and connection is reinforced by our brain chemistry, and the pain that results from social rejection and disconnection is a real pain” (Brown, 2012, p.71). In the film, the issue of shame, albeit significant, is dealt with the same level of emphasis that illustrates the disregard people generally have for it. It is this disregard that inadvertently creates the chasm between the two characters. Only by approaching shame with a sense of resilience can we transcend the experience

and use it to mature in our emotional and psychological temperament. According to Brown (2012, p.61), "Shame resilience is key to embracing our vulnerability." This paper focuses on the theme of shame as a central conflict in the story and investigates the extent this theme is problematised in this popular film.

## DISCUSSION

One such example of "social rejection and disconnection" (Brown, 2012, p.61) that leads to shame is estrangement between family members. In the film, the guilt and shame that Judge Palmer experiences as a result of putting his son in a juvenile detention centre causes him to be emotionally disengaged from Hank throughout his adulthood. As he says in a later scene, Hank reminds him of a delinquent he despised. Thus the father's disassociation from his son is mirrored by the son's disconnection from the family until the death of his mother. The film opens with Hank getting a voice message from his family informing him of his mother's passing. Hank travels back to his home town after being away for over two decades to meet his family and to bury his mother. Now a successful defence lawyer, Hank enters the family home on an equal footing with his father, a judge. As members of the legal fraternity, they uphold the law and create space for the accused to be proven innocent or guilty. Yet, the past transgressions by both characters in inflicting emotional pain on one another remain silenced. The shame

that continues to colour their reception of each other is not spoken of, thus creating for a strong theme of estrangement at the beginning of their encounter.

Estrangement from family causes an individual to feel emotionally and psychologically unrooted, disengaged and isolated. The "emotional cutoff" (Bowen, 1976, p.84), which dictates "the way people handle their unresolved emotional attachment to their parents," is clearly visible in Hank's attitude towards his father when he first returns to Indiana. Likewise, the judge's first reaction when meeting his son after the long separation also indicates a distinct emotional cutoff. Both characters appear to mirror one another's emotional disconnection as each isolates himself in a cocoon of invisibility and lack of self-expression. Akin to Lacan's mirror stage development of a person's ego (Martin, 2006, p.151), the mirroring as used in this discussion signals how each character sub-consciously reflects the attitude of the other. The father's emotional detachment towards Hank is mirrored by the son's equal disassociation from forging strong interpersonal relationship with the father. This mirroring of one another is a motif that recurs throughout the film. The emotional detachment is relevant to the discussion of fear and shame; shame is seen as "the fear of disconnection" (Brown, 2012, p.68). For the rest of his short stay at home, Hank and the judge encounter numerous episodes where they are forced to forge connections as two adults and face up to their fear and shame of the past.

Shame, seen as an aspect that makes us feel vulnerable, is a form of “feelings” (Wheeler 1997, p.223) that has the capacity to demoralise an individual by framing him as unworthy, flawed and a failure. In the film, the judge develops a negative perception about his inability to have been emotionally available for his son when the latter was a troubled adolescent. Moreover, the judge, dictated by social conformity and the pressures of upholding the rule of law, remains aloof and detached from his son for the latter’s misdemeanours, even as an adult. As Brown (2012, p.92) explains, in men, shame is manifested in many ways and one such way is to perceive it as a sign of weakness: “Shame happens when people think you’re soft. It’s degrading and shamming to be seen as anything but tough. ... Basically, shame is weakness.” In the film, the judge sets out to appear formidable by exercising the rule of law on his middle son when he is convicted of a crime. Albeit only doing his job, the guilt he feels as a result develops into shame. Unable to express his feelings, the judge experiences the classic encounter most men have with shame: “stop feeling, start earning, put everyone in their place and climb their way to the top or die trying” (Brown, 2012, p.107). When shame becomes the accepted reality of the judge’s established self, he is consumed by the yoke of being the perfect judge. Judge Palmer begins to yield to the liminality of the space within which he lives and begins to rely on his professional image as his only form of identification. The illustration can be seen when they first meet

after a long hiatus and his son addresses him as “Judge,” and not ‘dad’ or father. The title thus signals a detachment from personal relations for a public one. Yet, is the father solely responsible for his uncompromising nature towards his son?

Hank’s strong rebellious nature forces the judge to use the authoritative method of parenting. Both characters unknowingly reflect a ‘mirror’ projection of their sense of individuation for each other as each is equally adamant and intent on dominating the other. Simultaneously, the image of Judge Palmer as an authoritative and respectable figure of the law is mirrored by his son’s equally shrewd ability to defend the guilty. This ability is put to the test when Hank takes up the case that will make him face up to his own fear and shame. According to Brown (2012), shame is the negative and darker manifestation of the recesses of the mind that seeks to subjugate and deter the progress of life. Hank’s shame is that despite being a successful lawyer, his success is not recognised by his family. Decades after graduating with a degree in law, Hank informs his father, the judge, that he had in fact successfully graduated as the best in his class. His family had not been privy to the information as they were not then a part of his life. He is still the juvenile who broke the law and destroyed his elder brother’s chances of a baseball career. The guilt and shame continue to haunt Hank for much of his adult life. The emotional detachment, subsequently, leaves Hank perpetually vulnerable in all his interpersonal long-term relationships.

Yet, surprisingly, his relationship with his daughter appears healthy.

As the narrative advances, the estranged and corrosive relationship between the judge and Hank becomes evident. However, as fate would have it, the judge meets with an accident that causes the death of a man he had previously put in prison. The judge is ironically to stand trial for first-degree murder and his defence attorney is unable to defend him well. At this juncture of the narrative, the judge breaks free from the emotional 'armour' that he had built against his son and accepts his son's service as an attorney. The judge had created the emotional 'armour' by numbing his feelings towards his son, thus creating a disconnection between him and his son. Numbing our feeling is seen as a disturbing act as it freezes our feelings and emotions to "experience love, joy, belonging, creativity and empathy" (Brown, 2012, p.137). Albeit convenient, the disconnection that was seen previously in the relationship between Judge Palmer and his son, Hank, appears to be temporarily resolved through a mutual act of 'responding' to the other without judgement. The process of responding as coined by Brown (2012, p.201) can be understood as "the heart of the feedback process." Yet, the unconventional way in which the resolution between the Judge and Hank is achieved speaks to the schism in their relationship. In the scene, Hank offers the judge a piece of paper as a contract between client and attorney.

The paper is symbolic of a temporary reconciliation that Hank appears to offer by

taking up his father's case. Hank offers his services through an agreement that provides his legal services pro bono. His father responds to the offer favourably and this begins a new chapter in their relationship where the son now is the father's defence attorney. Again, the unconventional manner in which their relationship is rekindled signals the continued rupture in the father-son dynamics.

The judge's actions inadvertently indicate his fear. Only by recognising his fear of being accused of first-degree murder is the judge able to engage his son's legal assistance. Fear in this case is a strong catalyst to transit from an estranged relationship to temporary reconciliation. Yet, the shame of his son's past actions continues to cripple the judge when it comes to forming emotional attachment. His indifference towards Hank, even in the face of a potential first-degree murder conviction, is uncompromising. In the current circumstance of their defendant-attorney relationship, the issue of shame begins to unravel. How long can shame be the barrier that separates filial relationship?

The sense of vulnerability is further expanded in this film when Hank accidentally finds out that his father is dying of cancer. Death creates a finality that allows for fear and shame to transcend. In a scene when the judge is ill following a chemotherapy session, Hank comes into the bathroom and helps his father without any sense of remorse or hatred. The judge is at his weakest and most vulnerable moment, as he defecates uncontrollably all over the bathroom floor.

As a highly respected and revered member of society, seeing himself in this manner would surely cause the judge shame. Yet, his inability to physically function without support finally allows him to resolve his sense of shame and he subsequently gives in to Hank's assistance. It would seem that the vulnerability demonstrated by the judge in his hour of need is mirrored again by his son's susceptibility to act with compassion and kindness towards someone weaker. Is physical weakness the answer to overcoming fear and shame? Is Judge Palmer able to embrace his emotional and psychological vulnerability only after becoming physically helpless? The notion of shame resilience, described by Brown (2012, p.98), is evident in this scene: "Shame resilience, ... is about finding a middle path, an option that allows us to stay engaged and to find the emotional courage we need to respond in a way that aligns with our values." It would appear that with a weakened physical body, the Judge is able to step out of his fear and shame and allow his son to see him as he truly is, vulnerable and in need of assistance. Likewise, Hank too is able to transcend 'emotional detachment' and develop 'emotional courage' to respond to his father, not as a judge, rather as a fellow human in need of assistance.

However, that connection is put to the test later when Hank questions the judge on the stand during his trial. Knowing that the judge has been receiving treatment for cancer for many months, Hank uses the information to show that his father was suffering from memory lapse due to the after

effect of chemotherapy and as such cannot be accused of intentionally inflicting harm on another. This action by Hank angers the judge, who has kept the illness a secret from everyone. Hank's fear for his father is mirrored by the judge's fear of being found out. If he is found to be incompetent, the cases that he presided over since being diagnosed with cancer could be reviewed and his reputation as a judge would be forever tarnished.

Seen from the lens of vulnerability, the judge's susceptibility is in his need to do the right thing and to own up to his mistakes. The construct of vulnerability used in this context can be defined as the empowering awareness of one's fragility in the face of conflict (Brown, 2012). As such, when questioned by the prosecution, he admits to wanting to kill the man, but is not able to remember actually committing the act. Hank's vulnerability, on the other hand, is rooted in his current emotional attachment to his father. Like his brothers, Hank does not want his father to be sent to prison and as such is willing to create reasonable doubt to get the judge acquitted. The mirroring of one another's vulnerability rooted in each one's values and choices creates for an engaging climax to the film.

The resolution of this film extends the theme of vulnerability by showing how each character continues to mirror one another's need to accept the other for who he is. Upon his father's compassionate release from prison seven months after being sentenced for second-degree murder, Hank takes his father on a fishing trip. In mirroring his son's

attempts to reconcile, while in the boat, the judge offers his acknowledgement of Hank's ability as a defence attorney. As he says to Hank, if he had to choose a lawyer to be on his team, he would choose Hank. The gesture is a final attempt by the judge to mend the filial estrangement the only way he knows. In embracing his son for who he is and what he has become, that is, a great defence attorney, the father appears to reconcile his differences with his son and accepts him for the man he has become.

## CONCLUSION

The implication of the current reading of the film *The Judge* is that in embracing his vulnerability through a sense of awareness of his past fear and shame, the central character is able to break the mental and psychological barrier that cripples him as a father. Both Judge Palmer and his son, Hank, embrace their fear and shame of the past by voicing out their personal afflictions and damaging experiences that have thus far caused them both to be fragmented and embittered as adults. Although both are successful in their respective professions, as father and son, their dysfunctional filial relationship points to their inability to embrace the fear and shame they suffer as a result of past mistakes. Only upon accepting that he is vulnerable and in need of his son's legal help is the judge able to embrace his shame of filial failure. Likewise, only by acknowledging his vulnerability towards emotional attachment is Hank able to transcend his detachment from his father and embrace his insecurities as a man. The

interdependency and mutual understanding between the father and son pave the way for reconciliation. However, it would appear that the trigger for acceptance of vulnerability is the eminent death of the judge. Perhaps current popular films are still discovering possible ways to overcome estrangement in filial relationship, and vulnerability continues to reflect our need to appear formidable despite our mortality. The film does indicate that like all human encounters, filial estrangement is not easily resolved and in the end, each adult needs to develop his own sense of resilience and not simply mirror the reaction of others.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The discussion in this paper is part of ongoing research into the theme of vulnerability in popular culture. We thank Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia for the grant (GUP-2014-024) that made this research possible.

## REFERENCES

- Adolphs, R. (2013). The biology of fear. *Current Biology*, 23(2), R79-R93.
- Bowen, M. (1976). Theory in the practice of psychotherapy. In P. J. Guerin (Ed.), *Family therapy* (pp. 2-90). New York: Gardner.
- Brown, B. (2012). *Daring greatly: How the Courage to be vulnerable transforms the way we live, love, parent and lead*. United States of America: Penguin Group.
- Brown, B., & Winfrey, O. (2013, March 15). *What is fear? Define fear, say 'we're all afraid'*. [Video file]. Retrieved from [www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/03/15/what-is-fear-dr-brene-brown-and-oprah\\_n\\_2876633.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/03/15/what-is-fear-dr-brene-brown-and-oprah_n_2876633.html)

- Clabough, R. (2014, October 10). The judge: A modern prodigal son story. *The New American*. Retrieved from www.thenewamerican.com
- Downey, S. (Producer), Gambino, D. (Producer), & Dobkin, D. (Producers & Director). (2014). *The judge*. [Motion picture]. USA: Village Roadshow Pictures, Team Downey, Big Kid Pictures and Warner Bros. Pictures.
- Fusch, T. (2003). The phenomenology of shame, guilt and the body in body dysmorphic disorder and depression. *Journal of Phenomenological Psychology*, 33(2), 1-21.
- Martin, B. D. (2006). Mimetic moments: Adorno and ecofeminism. In R. Heberle (Ed.), *Feminist interpretation in Theodor Adorno* (pp. 141-172). Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, University Park.
- Sagarin, B. J., Cialdini, R. B., Rice, W. E., & Serna, S. B. (2002). Dispelling the illusion of invulnerability: The motivations and mechanisms of resistance to persuasion. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 83(3), 526-541.
- Schaller, M., Park, J. H., & Mueller, A. (2003 May). Fear of the dark: Interactive effects of beliefs about danger and ambient darkness on ethnic stereotypes. *Personality Social Psychology Bulletin: The Society for Personality and Social Psychology*, 29(5), 637-649.
- Shaw, C. T. (2004 Summer-Fall). Two warring ideals: Double consciousness, dialogue, and African American patriotism post 9/11. *Journal of African American Studies*, 8(1&2), 20-37.
- Vogt, G. M., & Sirridge, S. T. (1991). *Like father, like son/ Healing the father-son wound in men's lives*. United States, U.S.: Springer.
- Wayman, D. (2014, October 22). *The judge: 3 stars-Thought-provoking* [Online Column]. Retrieved from www.cinemainfocus.com.
- Wheeler, G. (1997). Self and shame: A Gestalt approach. *The Analytic Press: Gestalt Review*, 1(3), 221-244.



## **Alienation and Intersectionality in Adrienne Kennedy's *Funnyhouse of a Negro***

**Latifa Ismaeel Jabboury<sup>1</sup>, Ruzy Suliza Hashim<sup>2\*</sup> and Anita Harris  
Satkunanathan<sup>2</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>*Department of English Language and Literature, College of Arts The University of Mustansiriyah,  
Baghdad, Iraq*

<sup>2</sup>*School of Language Studies and Linguistics, FSSK, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 43600 Bangi, Selangor,  
Malaysia*

### **ABSTRACT**

Adrienne Kennedy, in her oeuvre, has addressed the intersecting complications of gender and race. Most of her plays have examined and explored the ways in which these categories are constructed in American society. Through her focus on the experience of African American female characters, Kennedy's theatrical work has illuminated the ways in which African American women are doubly oppressed. From this perspective, Sarah of the *Funnyhouse of a Negro* presents one of the most significant issues discussed by contemporary African American literature, which is the intersectionality of oppression. *Funnyhouse* was written in 1964, and the theory of intersectionality was established in 1989. Therefore, investigating the play through the lens of intersectionality reflects that *Funnyhouse* had advanced the time in which it had been written. The present paper aims to illustrate alienation through the lens of intersectionality to examine oppression and suffering experienced by Sarah. To accomplish this aim, the paper will focus on three dimensions presented in the play: race, gender issues and hybridity. Approaching these intersectional dimensions in the play helps to provide a full image of the alienation that Sarah was facing and suffering from the perspective of intersectionality..

*Keywords:* Alienation, intersectionality, black feminism, oppression, *Funnyhouse*

### **ARTICLE INFO**

*Article history:*

Received: 21 September 2015

Accepted: 15 January 2016

*E-mail addresses:*

latifa\_gammach@yahoo.com (Latifa Ismaeel Jabboury),

ruzy@ukm.edu.my (Ruzy Suliza Hashim),

aharris@ukm.edu.my Anita Harris Satkunanathan)

\* Corresponding author

### **INTRODUCTION**

Adrienne Kennedy was one of the most prominent African American playwrights to emerge in American theatre of the 1960s. Kennedy's literary career blossomed during the turbulent era of the Civil Rights

Movement, and her early plays actually overturned the traditions of the African American stage (Barnett, 2005). Educated in the traditions of classical theatre in combination with her study of English and American literature, Kennedy has enriched American theatre with her distinctive and provocative plays, namely, *Funnyhouse of a Negro (Funnyhouse)* (1964), *The Owl Answers* (1965), *A Movie Star Has to Star in Black and White* (1976), *She Talks to Beethoven* (1989) and *The Ohio State Murders* (1992). Kennedy's plays represent a unique response to the traumatic racial strife in American history and reflects the struggle of African Americans, which led to the Civil Rights Movement. Although Kennedy's contemporaries discussed the racial turmoil of the period in a more direct manner, Kennedy presented the racial issues in a surrealistic and experimental way.

Kennedy has been awarded prizes in theatre and literature, such as the OBIE-Award, which she won three times (Sollors, 2001:viii). Kennedy's plays have had a great impact on African American theatre since the first presentation of her masterpiece *Funnyhouse* in (1964). Her literary work reflects an autobiographical inspiration that comes from personal experience of racial conflict in America. Her most significant plays display the tragic condition of her characters. Sollors (2001) notes that Kennedy's plays are surrealistic dreams "characterized by fragmentation, ritualistic repetition and variation, and radical experimentation with character and plot" (p. vii). Kennedy's plays actually

encourage reading and rereading as they confront profound psychological and social issues. Her plays have been praised by critics such as Claudia Barnett (2005) and Jenny Spencer (2012) for possessing unsurpassed dramatic technique and presenting fragmental identities and for the manner in which she conveys her thoughts on racial strife and gender disparity. With power and passion in her work, Kennedy contributed to the transformation of the American theatre in the 20th century with a wealth of plays whose significance will continue to inspire coming generations in the field of drama.

We find that in a play with such depth and which has such a conflicted character as Sarah, it is important to examine the motivations of the character as well as the playwright in her presentation of Sarah's mental illness in relation to her suffering. As such, we interrogate *Funnyhouse* through an examination of the connection between alienation and intersectionality within the aforementioned play. Alienation is a condition that affects disenfranchised individuals and is one of the factors that led to the Civil Rights Movement. Although much has been written about Kennedy's memorable play, not much has been done in relation to the intersectional aspect of the split self in *Funnyhouse*. Most studies concentrated on surrealism and expressionism and studying the 'mind'. Amber West (2012) was one of the researchers who tackled *Funnyhouse* through the lens of intersectionality and paved the way for this study to evolve

and expand on her discussion. We look at intersectionality specifically in relation to alienation and extend upon West's discourse to examine the ways in which the intersecting axes of marginalisation (race, gender and hybridity) contribute to the alienation of self that is experienced by the protagonist of *Funnyhouse* Sarah.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

### *Background of Corpus*

Kennedy's *Funnyhouse* is one of the best plays introduced off Broadway. The first time it was produced for the stage in New York City in 1964, the play won the OBIE award. Deborah Thompson (1997, p.14) writes that in *Funnyhouse*, "the distinction between 'black' and 'white' 'identities' is already unhinged before the play ever begins, "primarily because Kennedy is writing not just from the point of 'ethnically mixed heritages' but from points of breakdown of racial classification." This acknowledgment of "mixed ancestry" creates what Thompson (1997, p.14) calls a "breakdown of racial classifications," which has problematised readings of this play by other scholars. *Funnyhouse*'s protagonist is the student, Sarah, who grapples in her mind with her conflicted racial identity. Elin Diamond (1992) observes that Sarah has a divided psyche and is apparently searching for identity through a presentation of multiple selves: Negro-Sarah, Queen Victoria, the Duchess of Hapsburg, hunchbacked Jesus and Patrice Lumumba. Diamond (1992, p.134) suggests that these selves are "various Cultural Icons" of Sarah. We read

in these selves a schism that reflects the alienation experienced by Sarah because of her hybrid cultural heritage and her paranoia caused by her issues of identity. These issues connect to what Diamond calls Sarah's lack of an "ontological secure space" (p. 134). Sarah has clearly invented these selves to form the "superimposed on the rhythms of her monologues" (p. 134). It is a comfort which allows Sarah to explore her multiple selves, caused by her bi-racial heritage.

Although many scholars believe that Kennedy wished to escape her black identity through Sarah's character in *Funnyhouse*, West (2012) sees Kennedy as a social critic who should be acknowledged as such. In her article concerning both Kennedy and Notzake Shange, West asserts that Kennedy is a pioneer theorist of black feminism because of her effective ways in representing black women's experiences of constitutional intersectionality. West also avers that Kennedy produces a vandal revision of Sarah's "tragic ... figure in order to depict the complex and distinct manner in which black women experience intersecting forms of oppression" (p. 140). West concludes that Sarah was severely hurt by her experience of personal and political discrimination, and she was trying to find a way to resist racism. West then finds that "political intersectionality" (p. 149) occurred to Kennedy as an individual, and the marginalisation of her views had a wider "political consequences for black women as a whole" (p. 149).

Claudia Barnett (1994) suggests that Sarah was pushed by her ontological

birth and identity; she was snared by psychological and mental constraints, which were imposed on her by birth (p. 35). Barnett points out that Sarah was inspecting her identity as an African American woman. Barnett also notices that in *Funnyhouse* Kennedy was investigating the power of history and the ways in which this history has an impact on Sarah's divided psyche. The argument about the problematics of identity has also been discussed by Paul Carter Harrison (1997), who points out that Sarah grapples with "the crisis of black identity by projecting [herself] in a hostile universe in a guise that valorizes European role models" (p. 572).

*Funnyhouse* reflects the conflict between blackness and whiteness. In her research into the character of Sarah in *Funnyhouse*, Barnsley Brown (2001) discusses the nature of the struggle between the binaries of black and white, which are depicted not only in this play, but also in Kennedy's early plays. Brown agrees with Amiri Baraka that at a time when most African American writers hankered to depict "black heroes, not black victims" (p. 282), Kennedy invented a protagonist who entirely refuses her blackness and tries to embrace whiteness in a deathly manner. Owen Dodson (1977) observes that the conflict in Sarah's mind clarifies the strife of African Americans against oppression.

In his study about Kennedy's play, Philip C. Kolin (2005) describes the inner conflict of Sarah's character as a reflection of Kennedy's conflict. He observes that the play contains deep roots of autobiographical

elements. Kennedy asserts that she uses playwriting as a psychological tool which aids in her search for identity, as she confirms by saying:

*I struggled for a long time to write plays – as typified by Funnyhouse – in which the person is in conflict with inner forces, with the conflicting sides to their personality, which I found to be my own particular, greatest conflict.* (qtd. in Kolin, 2005, p. 49)

In an interview between Kolin and Billie Allen (2007), Allen declares that the play reflects the complications of African American racial heritage. When Kolin questioned Allen's motif in returning to *Funnyhouse* as a director "after starring as Sarah in 1964" (p. 166), Allen answered that the play never left her and she was deeply involved with Sarah. She said that as time passed and she grew in experience, as a mature adult, she was able to look at her experiences more honestly. She also declared that she was much more aware of the importance of this play in the life of all African Americans. Allen added that the play had not changed, but after 43 years since its first production, she was "able to look at this play and take this journey with Sarah with truth and understanding" (p. 167). Kolin (2007; p. 165) considers *Funnyhouse* "a challenging work to study, to teach, [and] to perform," for it reflects racial torture, which is the main feature of the 1960s civil rights movement.

*Intersectionality Studies: An Overview*

Intersectionality has developed to the point in which it has become associated with multiple fields of study, but it is a theory of feminist sociological studies that emerged in 1989. Kimberley Williams Crenshaw, after her publication of *Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex*, discovered that there was an urgent need to examine the interaction between race and sex together, rather than to investigate them separately. Sumi Cho along with Crenshaw and McCall (2013) have subsequently deployed the theoretical apparatus of intersectionality to inspect various cultural and biological points of contention such as race, gender, sex, class, ability and identity, which intervene on numerous levels.

Crenshaw (1991) adopted intersectionality in the study of the identity of black women by concentrating on two related issues of the oppression against women i.e. assault and rape. In her study, Crenshaw finds that the hardships experienced by black women are due to the intersecting axes of oppression related to both gender and race. She confirms that this suffering tends not to be explained within the discussion of “either feminism or antiracism” (p. 1244). She adds that for the sake of a better understanding of this suffering, there should be a study of both dimensions together within instructional style. Because of the overlapping identity of being both black and women within the discussions that are formed to answer one or the other, black women are doubly

oppressed. Crenshaw notices that much of the suffering black women face is not listed within the conventional borders of sex or race segregation as these borders are now understood. This suffering leads to and exacerbates the condition of alienation, which is studied in relation to intersectionality in this research.

*Alienation*

There are various definitions for the concept of alienation. According to various fields of study, alienation may reflect negative or positive aspects. However, alienation in this paper concentrates on negative aspects, focussing on issues that affect the individual’s psychological health and cause problems related to depression and anger. Some critical cases of alienation can lead to suicide, as in Sarah’s case in our present study.

In his debate on alienation, Melvin Seeman (1959), in his article, *On the Meaning of Alienation*, discusses five types of alienation, according to “the social-psychological point of view” (p. 784). The types are powerlessness, meaninglessness, normlessness, isolation and self-estrangement. In this study, we concentrate specifically on self-estrangement, as this seems to be the type of alienation suffered by Sarah. This form of alienation controls the individual’s personality completely and shuts out social reality, and is likely to push the alienated individual to mental illness, and may very well result in suicide.

## CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Our conceptual framework connects Crenshaw’s theory of intersectionality to Seeman’s study on alienation. Following this, we will illustrate the interweaving of alienation and intersectionality in Kennedy’s *Funnyhouse*. Through intersectionality, the paper will investigate the overlapping of race, gender and hybridity to demonstrate the ways in which the intersecting of these aspects exacerbate the system of oppression that has inveigled Sarah’s ontological state.

Based on our conceptualisation of the procedure of analysis, we have connected the theories of intersectionality and alienation as shown in Figure 1. Firstly, intersectionality supplies visions of the significance of Kennedy’s work in facing the dominant images of oppression that lead to alienation. Secondly, intersectionality extends our grasp of black women’s sophisticated experience of overlapping forms of subjection.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In her discourse on oppression, Crenshaw (1991) writes that intersectionality may be defined as the “interlocking” of diverse hierarchies in the experiences of black women. Crenshaw adds that, based on race and gender, social hierarchies locate African American woman at the bottom of constructions of subordination. Accordingly, her experiences of race and gender are clearly different from that of a black man or white woman. Being the daughter of a white mother and a black father, Sarah finds herself in a narrow space between whiteness and blackness. Her alienation was a result of the intersectional dimensions of race, gender and hybridity. Olga Barrios (2003) notes that the multiple characters of Sarah in the play provide good evidence of her shattered consciousness, which we think reflects her deep alienation. All the time, she was rejecting the reality of her black ancestry.

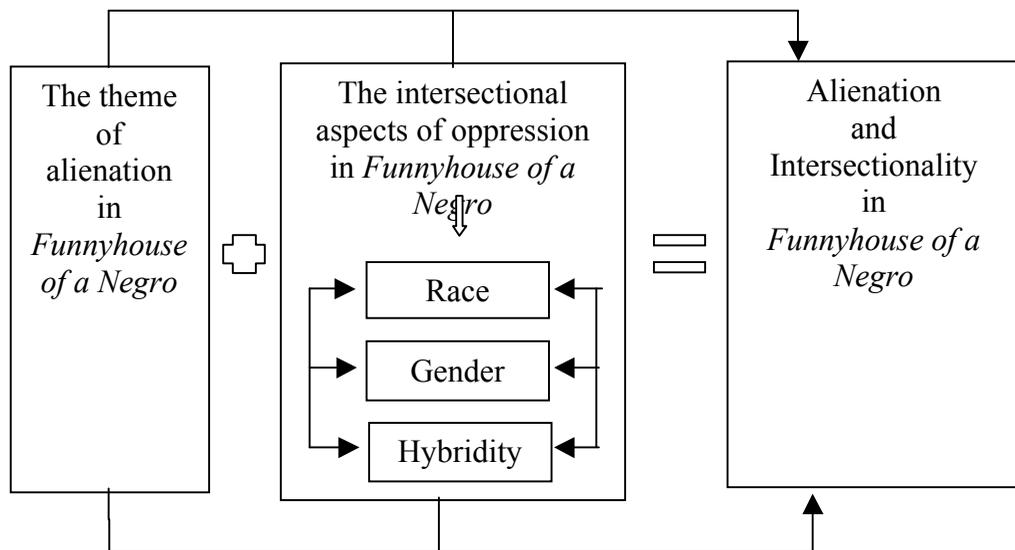


Figure 1: The conceptual framework of this paper.

Actually, Sarah represents the socio-cultural operation of subjectivity.

Crenshaw (1991) analysed the ways in which the suffering of black women is mostly the result of the relationship between race and gender by “focusing on two dimensions of male violence against women – battering and rape” (p. 1243). The repetition of the theme of rape in *Funnyhouse* works in many dimensions; the rape of her mother pushes her mother to madness and leads to her ending up in an asylum. Sarah’s obsession with her mother’s rape induces in Sarah an abject horror at the prospect of facing the same destiny. This fear eventually drives her towards suicidal ideations. The idea of rape recurs in Sarah’s second monologue as she narrates that her father started to drink and subsequently raped her mother. This recurring motif of rape has an impact on the women in the audience who are made to feel not just Sarah’s fear and trauma in relation to rape, but the ways in which this is connected to her visceral aversion to her own blackness.

The opening scene of the play presents Sarah’s mother in a white gown muttering to herself. The second time she appears in the play she speaks her only line, which is an ironic echo of racist speech, “Black man, black man, I never should have let a black man put his hands on me. The wild black beast raped me and now my skull is shining” (Kennedy, 1964, p. 4). These words are a satirical statement on colonial ideology and the racial construction of stereotypes of blackness as connected to savagery and bestiality. In relation to the depiction of

rape, Bell Hooks (1981) finds that there was a specific image about the early times of slavery in the United States, connected to the image of the black man as a bestial and savage being, capable of rape because of his dark passions. The sexual exploitation of black women is more dehumanising than the racial exploitation of her being a servant in domestic households or as a worker in the fields. The female slave was living with that perpetual fear of her sexual vulnerability that any man may victimise and assault her.

In *Funnyhouse*, the theme of hybridity is conveyed through the representation of Sarah’s white mother and black father, which always emerges through Sarah’s monologues to reflect the history of her African father, who represents all African Negroes. The recurring question concerning the knocking sound in the play is discussed by the Duchess with Victoria at the very beginning of the play. Thompson (1997) connects this to the “return of the ebony-black father, who ‘raped’ Sarah’s very light-skinned black mother to produce the brown-skinned Sarah” (p. 15). Thompson connects this to Sarah’s “fear and hatred of the black father and of blackness” (p. 15). This recurring motif of the knocking and Sara’s fear of the dark father underscores the theme of race, the main issue which has captured her mind completely. Jacqueline Allen Trimble (2002) suggests that this African father could never regain his children because they turn to another shape as they become a “Westernized hybrid” (p. 32). Their common blood and history, which bound them once, has been replaced by

much change expressed in songs of sorrow and slavery narratives, “freedom, and even baseball, apple pie and Chevrolet” (p. 32).

In his study concerning the meaning of self-alienation, Seeman (1959) agrees with Fromm (1955) that alienation is an experience in which the individual suffers a sort of displacement and relegation, which changes into self-estrangement. Obviously, the hypothesis here is linked with the idea of the ways in which a person is estranged from human condition. In the *Funnyhouse*, Kennedy deliberately does not give Sarah any physical room. She symbolises Sarah’s room as a space in the centre of the stage, while the other rooms of the house have been given physical space on stage; this suggests that Sarah is a lost soul with no specific location in this universe. Brown (2001) points out that Sarah occupies a “liminal space” (p. 284) in her house, which reflects her experience of being a mixed or multicultural girl who finds herself marginalised in this world. Therefore, we believe that the feeling of self-alienation puts Sarah in such a confused psychic state and pushes her to invent the other versions of herself: Queen Victoria Regina, Jesus, the Duchess of Hapsburg and Patrice Lumumba. This reading of self-alienation may be extended towards Sarah’s interpretation of bi-racial coupling as “rape” and her extreme reactions to blackness, which results in her estrangement from her own self.

Sarah is restricted by the intersectional dimensions of suffering: her sense of guilt towards her father, her refusal of her black identity and her inability to feel a sense

of belonging within the white world. This exacerbates her self-alienation, causing her to be suicidal. In the end, Sarah, like her father, hangs herself. Sarah has alienated herself deliberately to resist her self-consciousness, as she states, “I find it necessary to maintain a stark fortress against recognition of myself” (p.6). What leads Sarah to alienation is her complete separation from history, ancestors and self. She is living between madness and death. Rosemary Curb (1992) suggests that:

*The character of the Negro-Sarah is a consciousness set on three continents at war among themselves. As both rapist and raped, Sarah’s body recapitulates the rape of Africa by white Europeans. In relation to her parents, Sarah is both betrayer and betrayed. Kennedy mocks the hypocrisy of her four historic selves in the penultimate jungle scene by having them appear with nimbuses as “saviours” of Africa, still obsessively narrating the story of the father’s rape of the mother.*  
(p. 151)

Seeman sees that the image of the loss of satisfaction is embodied in “the inability of the individual to find self-rewarding” (p. 790), which is reflected in the loss of identity. The loss of identity of any individual certainly may lead to a sort of alienation. Brown (2001) suggests that *Funnyhouse* stands on four pairs of contrasts: the first discusses blackness versus whiteness; the

second is associated with sanity versus madness; the third is a debate on the real versus the unreal; and the fourth is linked with the discussion of belonging versus unbelonging. According to Seeman and the other theorists mentioned formerly, this last point of unbelonging actually holds the exact meaning of alienation. Kennedy shows that when a woman is a product of various “socio-historical forces” (p. 283), her consciousness comes to be multi-fragmented. Kennedy formulates her character to reflect various attitudes. We see that Sarah cannot escape the physical and psychic space of her place; she is trapped and imprisoned in her alienation. Sarah’s confused identity and fragmented consciousness are aligned with her psychic and physical alienation.

*The rooms are my rooms; a Hapsburg chamber, a chamber in a Victorian castle, the hotel where I killed my father, the jungle. These are the places myself exist in. I know no places. To believe in places is to know hope and to know the emotion of hope is to know beauty. It links us across a horizon and connects us to the world. I find there are no places, only my funnyhouse.*  
(p. 7)

*Funnyhouse* may be better grasped by studying the psychology of a woman through the intersectional perspective of race and gender, as the struggle of Sarah represents the struggle of all African American women against gender and race.

The play then examines the amalgamation of these categories together and their intersectional alliance to create the alienated-self of Sarah. Each one of these categories raises Sarah’s sense of herself as an alien and an outsider. So, in *Funnyhouse* Kennedy employed writing as a weapon against the intersectional dimensions of her alienation.

Seeman adopts Merton’s suggestion that one of the tools through which we realise alienation is the individual “rebellion,” which leads “man outside the enviroing social structure to envisage and seek to bring into being a new, that is to say, a greatly modified, social structure. It presupposes alienation from reigning goals and standards” (qtd. in Seeman, p. 789). Building on this former discussion about alienation and based on our earlier debate of intersectionality, *Funnyhouse* explores the thoughts of the intersectional oppression of Sarah through the external stories told about her and the internal stories she tells through her monologues. The intersectional image of her alienation is obvious through the multiple characters she invents to rebel against oppression. Sarah invents four characters for herself: Queen Victoria, the Duchess of Hapsburg, Patrice Lumumba and Jesus. If we trace the history of these characters we will find that each character represents a special kind of alienation; according to Rida Anis (2006), Queen Victoria, the mother of nine children, excluded herself from society for more than two years and was nervous after the death of her husband, Albert. The Duchess of Hapsburg went crazy after her husband was tricked by Napoleon, who

pushed him to believe a lie that the Mexicans wanted an emperor. Jesus was betrayed by his followers, who left him to face his fate alone. Patrice Lumumba, Prime Minister of the Congo, was excluded by the President after three months of service and was later killed for his political beliefs (pp. 24-25). Sarah is a reflection of all these characters. Debby Thompson (2003) believes that Sarah was searching for an outlet from her fruitless world; her “metempsychosis” of many characters is therefore a self-hatred, which contributes to the disintegration of her inner self.

According to Seeman, self-alienation means “to be something less than one might ideally be if the circumstances in society were otherwise – to be insecure, given to appearances, conformist” (p. 790). Part of the strategy Sarah uses to escape her alienation is to invent the stories about herself and her father. Because she cannot accept the fact of her race, she rejects her father, and in the end she rejects even the idea of her existence. At the beginning of the play we hear knocking on the door of Queen Victoria, one of Sarah’s characters, who clarifies that the source of the knocking is her father, who “comes from the jungle to find [her, and] he never tires of his journey” (p. 3). This knocking may refer to an idea that persists in Sarah’s mind like a constant knocking, and this idea is never stops as she thinks about it all the time; it is the idea of rejecting her race. The reply given by the Duchess asserts the idea of her unconscious rejection of her race, as she says:

*How dare he enter the castle, he who is the darkest? My mother looked like a white woman, hair as straight as any white woman’s. And at least I am yellow, but he is black, the blackest one of them all. I hoped he was dead. Yet he still comes through the jungle to find me. (p. 3)*

This is a clear and effective rejection of Sarah of the race of her father and at the same time there is an implicit reference that her father may desire to enter the world of the coloniser as he desires to enter the castle of Queen Victoria. As she rejects blackness as a sign of her race, Sarah confirms the idea that her mother looked like a white woman. According to the stage direction, the knocking was something real, whether the source is the father or someone else we have no idea as the father does not appear at all; we see him only through the mind of his alienated daughter.

West observes that *Funnyhouse* is difficult to classify for two reasons; the first is that the form of the play is highly experimental and the second is that the play “predated both the black feminist resurgence of the late 1960s and the feminist theatre movement of the 1970s” (p. 147). West writes that the play was excluded by many white critics such as Oppenheimer, who denied the benefit of the experimental avant-garde theatre, which was invented by a black woman dramatist. Moreover, Kennedy and her *Funnyhouse* were described “as neurotic and out of step with the black

nationalist movement of the time” (p. 147). Kennedy connects issues of race, specifically related to blackness with gender issues in order to interrogate systemic oppression within American society. During the 1960s and 1970s such an exploration of the intersections of oppression containing such complexity of form and content was something new and unfamiliar, which is one of the reasons why *Funnyhouse* was overlooked in academic circles until the early 1990s.

Brown (2001) writes that many critics have discussed the ways in which Kennedy’s play does not follow the prevalent ethos of the Black Arts Movement. For instance, Kennedy did not recruit her writings to create a black “triumphant” as what we see in the writings “of her sister playwrights—Childress, Hansberry and Shange” (p. 283). Brown suggests that this aspect of her writing “is neither a marker of her ‘apolitical naivete’, as Herbert Blaw contends (p. 538), nor an indication of her allegiance to white culture” (p. 283). According to Collins (1989), “One key reason that standpoints of oppressed groups are discredited and suppressed by the more powerful is that self-defined standpoints can stimulate oppressed groups to resist their domination” (p. 749). Hence, West suggests that Sarah’s committing suicide at the end of the play is therefore a rejection of both the protagonist and the dramatist for “structural intersectionality.”

The construction of *Funnyhouse* presents the frame of black feminist theatre and shares with the invention of black

female identity in drama. Discussing the play from this perspective explores the many features of feminism and racism. A discussion of black feminism in theatre, as such, should concentrate on dramatic forms that contemplate women’s experience. West remarks that feminist drama rejects conventional oppression not only in form and content, but even in characterisation. In such perspective Kennedy’s *Funnyhouse* represents the key issue of rejecting the traditional, hierarchical construction of the male theatre.

Seeman avers that any comparison with the ideal human “reflects the original interest of Marx in alienation” (p. 790). Seeman is specifically alluding to that side of self-estrangement that is usually described as the loss of the essential meaning of life, a loss which has been described by Marx and others as an intrinsic aspect of modern alienation. In *Funnyhouse*, Sarah has lost this “essential meaning of life,” which pushed her to alienation. Because she cannot accept herself, Sarah refuses her whole life. In her monologue, she repeats the idea of rejecting her origins when she says, “I want to possess no moral value, particularly value as to my being. I want not to be” (p. 5). John Bellamy Foster (2000) confirms that Hegelian construction of alienation connects it to the apprehension of identity. This may shed light on the ways in which Sarah’s attachment to a Eurocentric perspective becomes a part of her strategy to negotiate the complications found at the intersection between identity, oppression and privilege. Her hybridity, her internal trauma over the

reality of the axes of oppression due to her racial identity has, therefore, contributed to alienation so intense that it leads to a schism in her mind.

## CONCLUSION

Through her marginal and alienated world, Kennedy internalised the awareness of the suffering endured by the African Americans. The legacy of imperialism, slavery and the consequences of this upon ontological equilibria lead to the depiction of conflicted characters such as Sarah of *Funnyhouse*. In fact, Sarah is a vehicle via which Kennedy deploys the experience of alienation, and this is related to the intersectional axes of marginalisation represented by race, gender and hybridity. This approach of intersectionality allows us to probe the overlapping systems of oppression that push Sarah to alienation and lead to her tragic fate. When a woman faces an intersectional oppression that disturbs her existence, she should resist and struggle. But being so shattered, confused and weak, Sarah cannot endure the intersectional oppression in which she finds herself, so she chooses to put an end to her suffering by committing suicide.

The frame of intersectionality in *Funnyhouse* explains many of the sophisticated images of alienation. The alienation of the black woman is depicted in the play through the psychological protest of Sarah against the oppression of black women, where she invents the other characters to resist her alienation. Intersectionality,

then, is well suited in the interrogation of alienation in Kennedy's *Funnyhouse* for two reasons. Firstly, it helps in the exploration of the importance of Kennedy's play in facing the prevailing images of oppression that have driven Sarah to alienation. Secondly, intersectionality enhances our perception of Sarah's experience of interlocking shapes of subjection. Through intersectionality, this paper investigates the overlapping of race, gender and hybridity and explores the ways in which these aspects shape the system of oppression that captures Sarah in a complex dilemma of self-alienation.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Work on this article is supported by the following grant for early career researchers: Geran Galakan Penyelidik Muda (Project Code: GGPM-2013-020).

## REFERENCES

- Anis, R. (2006). *Three multiracial American women playwrights of trans-cultural consciousness: Adrienne Kennedy, Velina H. Houston, and Diane Glancy*. Indiana University of Pennsylvania, ProQuest Dissertations Publishing (UMI Number: 3207883). Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com.ezplib.ukm.my/pqdtglobal/docview/uploads/19/11/2014/12:39Am/Material-Design.pdf>.
- Barnett, C. (1996). "This fundamental challenge to identity": Reproduction and representation in the drama of Adrienne Kennedy. *Theatre Journal*, 48(2), 141-155.
- Barnett, C. (2005). An evasion of ontology: Being Adrienne Kennedy. *The Drama Review*, 49(3), 157-186.

- Barrios, O. (2003). From seeking one's voice to uttering the scream: The pioneering journey of African American women playwrights through the 1960s and 1970s. *African American Review*, 37(4), 611-628.
- Brown, E. B. (2001). Passed over: The tragic mulatta and (dis)integration of identity in Adrienne Kennedy's plays. *African American Review*, 35(2), 281-295.
- Cho, S., Crenshaw, K. W., & McCall, L. (2013). Toward a field of intersectionality studies: Theory, applications, and praxis. *Signs*, 38(4), 785-810.
- Collins, P. H. (1989). The social construction of black feminist thought. *Signs*, 14(4), 745-73.
- Crenshaw, K. W. (1989). Demarginalizing the intersection of race and sex: A black feminist critique of antidiscrimination doctrine, feminist theory and antiracist politics. *University of Chicago Legal Forum*, 139-67.
- Crenshaw, K. W. (1991). Mapping the margins: Intersectionality, identity politics, and violence against women of color. *Stanford Law Review*, 43(6), 1241-99.
- Curb, R. (1992). (Hetero) sexual terrors in Kennedy's early plays. In P. K. Bryant-Jackson, & L. M. Overbeck (Eds.), *Intersecting boundaries: The theatre of Adrienne Kennedy* (pp. 142-56). Minnesota: University of Minnesota.
- Diamond, E. (1992). Mimesis in syncopated time: Reading Adrienne Kennedy. In P. K. Bryant-Jackson, & L. M. Overbeck (Eds.), *Intersecting boundaries: The theatre of Adrienne Kennedy* (pp. 131-141). Minnesota: University of Minnesota.
- Dodson, O. (1977). Who has seen the wind? Playwrights and the black experience. *Black American Literature Forum*, 11(3), 108-16.
- Foster, J. B. (2000). *Marx's ecology: Materialism and nature*. New York: New York University Press.
- Harrison, P. C. (1997). The crisis of black theatre identity. *African American Review*, 31(4), 567-78.
- Hooks, B. (1981). *Ain't I a woman: Black women and feminism*. Boston: South End Press.
- Kennedy, A. (1964). *Funnyhouse of a negro*: New York: Samuel French.
- Kolin, P. C. (2005). The fission of Tennessee Williams's plays into Adrienne Kennedy's. *South Atlantic Review*, 70(4), 43-72.
- Kolin, P. C., & Allen, B. (2007). Revisiting funnyhouse: An interview with Billie Allen. *African American Review*, 41(1), 165-75.
- Seeman, M. (1959). On the meaning of alienation. *American Sociological Review*, 24(6), 783-91.
- Sollors, W. (1991). Owls and rats in the American funnyhouse: Adrienne Kennedy's drama. *American Literature*, 63(3), 507-32.
- Sollors, W. (2001). *The Adrienne Kennedy reader*. Minnesota: Minnesota University Press.
- Spencer, J. (2012). Emancipated spectatorship in Adrienne Kennedy's plays. *Modern Drama*, 55(1), 19-29.
- Thompson, D. (1997). Reversing blackface minstrelsy, improvising racial identity: Adrienne Kennedy's funnyhouse of a Negro. *Post Identity*, 1(1), 13-38.
- Thompson, D. (2003). Is race a trope? Anna Deavere Smith and the question of racial performativity. *African American Review*, 37(1), 127-38.
- Trimble, J. A. (2002). *Confounded identities: Race, gender, culture in Adrienne Kennedy in one act*. Alabama: University of Alabama.
- West, A. (2012). Power plays: Two black feminist playwrights (en)counter intersectionality. In R. Dascal (Ed.), *Episodes from a history of undoing: The heritage of female subversiveness* (pp. 137-52). Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.





## **Revenge, Female Agency and Masculinity in Lisa Klein's *Lady Macbeth's Daughter***

**Alicia Philip\*, Zalina Mohd Lazim and Anita Harris Satkunanathan**

*School of Language Studies and Linguistics, Faculty of Social Science and Humanities,  
Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 43600 Bangi, Selangor, Malaysia*

### **ABSTRACT**

*Lady Macbeth's Daughter* by Lisa Klein is a young adult novel that re-visions the storyline of William Shakespeare's *Macbeth*. Klein's text introduces the female voice and perspectives on the power struggle of men wanting to become King of Scotland. She also increases the supernatural elements in her novel, linking nature and the supernatural to the feminine element of life and being. This paper closely analyses and compares two different corpora, the original text and the re-visited text, in analysing Lady Macbeth and her daughter, Albia's, desire for revenge from the female perspective by looking at their agency and their longing for masculinity. Through comparative analysis of both the novel and the play, the researcher finds that Lady Macbeth views a crime such as murder as a reflection of manhood. Therefore, she desires to have this masculine characteristic although she lacks agency in completing the task. Albia does not appear to need this sense of masculinity as she has a strongly rooted sense of her inner strength as a woman, thus she has a stronger sense of agency. She is also able to tap into the feminine supernatural due to her clairvoyant ability. This research will conceptualise female agency as an element that will be utilised in other literary texts with female characters who feel the need for a masculine proxy in order to fulfil their desire for revenge.

*Keywords:* Female agency, *Macbeth*, masculinity, re-vision, revenge

### **ARTICLE INFO**

*Article history:*

Received: 21 September 2015

Accepted: 15 January 2016

*E-mail addresses:*

choy920@yahoo.com (Alicia Philip),

zalina@ukm.edu.my (Zalina Mohd Lazim),

aharris@ukm.edu.my (Anita Harris Satkunanathan)

\* Corresponding author

### **INTRODUCTION**

Re-visionary fiction is a relatively new term used to describe canonical texts that have been 're-visited' or revisited with a different context (Plate, 2008). It is a new and improved genre of fiction that has been re-worked from the original text. The

selected text of this study, *Lady Macbeth's Daughter* by Lisa Klein is classified as re-visionary young adult fiction. This is because the selected text is a re-working of the original play, *Macbeth*, re-written for young adult readers. Both Plate (2008) and Widdowson (2006) describe re-visionary fiction as critical works that transform the readers' understanding through a re-telling of the original stories. Therefore, it is evident that revisionary fiction is a creative act of re-writing past fictional texts, which are made familiar for its intended audience; in this case the audience refers to young adult readers.

Transforming canonical texts such as the play *Macbeth* into young adult re-visionary fiction is a trans-generic process (Hutcheon, 2006). This trans-generic process involves reimagining the literary texts in one medium to another, often from play to print or play to screen (Hutcheon, 2006). It is an attempt to make the original texts meaningful to their new readers.

The term 're-vision' can be described as an innovative tool for the creation of new stories from the past. It is a process of re-writing canonical texts to form a new perspective of the texts to make it suitable for a new generation of readers. A famous revisionist, Rich (1972, p.18) defines re-visioning as "the act of looking back, of seeing with fresh eyes, of entering an old text from a new critical direction." Re-visioning is described as the process of re-telling stories written in the past to alter readers' understanding of the past. Plate (2008) views re-visioning as a tool for

generating stories from the past by tapping into our cultural imaginary to create new literary texts through the perspective of post colonialism, feminism, gender and queer studies.

The popularity and universality of Shakespeare's works has resulted in his works being re-invented through the decades, introducing them to new audiences. His works often undergo an evolving process of re-visioning that results in authors modernising his works and making them relevant to new readers (Bradley, 2010). In the late 20th century and early 21st century, the moral values and virtues embedded in Shakespeare's plays have encouraged authors of young adult fiction to re-write Shakespeare's plays with the focus now on the young adult as the protagonist. These novels are transformed from the original plays to match the young adult reader's interest in the linear narrative form (Isaac, 2000). Revisionary fiction retells the original text through the perspective of young adult characters while maintaining similarity to the original plot. The utilisation of young adult characters enables young adult readers to seek identification with the characters as their circumstance and challenges may be similar to the characters illustrated in the texts (Bushman & Bushman, 1997).

## DISCUSSION

Revenge and masculinity are the basis for the plotline of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*. Although Lady Macbeth may seem to play a small role in Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, Shakespeare has cleverly made Lady

Macbeth the central character to illustrate these themes. Through her actions and ways, readers are able to understand and identify with Lady Macbeth's character and her depiction of revenge and masculinity. Understanding the importance of the character, Lady Macbeth, to the plotline of *Macbeth*, Klein, the author of *Lady Macbeth's Daughter* (2009), made her one of the main characters in the re-visioned text to illustrate the themes of revenge and masculinity. This is because Klein is aware that these themes are central to the plot of the play and that Lady Macbeth plays a significantly important role in illustrating these themes. Through the character Lady Macbeth, the theme of revenge is seen in her familial revenge for Duncan, who had seized her family throne, while the theme of masculinity is illustrated through her need to fulfil her family revenge. Her deep sense of revenge towards Duncan and her need for masculinity to achieve her revenge are the main catalyst for the tragedy of *Macbeth*, and this element is retained in the re-visioned text.

Macherey (1978) mentions that a good reproduction of original texts entails a good understanding and interpretation of the texts. In Klein's re-visioning of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, *Lady Macbeth's Daughter* (2009), it is clear that she has a good understanding of the original text, as she understands the centrality of Lady Macbeth to the plot of the original. This results in her utilising the character Lady Macbeth to portray the themes developed in the original text, and this consequently directs her to make

Grelach the main character in her re-visioned novel.

A clear depiction of the importance of Lady Macbeth's character in Klein's re-visioned text is in her provision of a name for the nameless Lady Macbeth, Grelach. She creates empathy for Lady Macbeth when she allows Grelach to narrate her harsh back story. Grelach was a noble princess whose bloodline is royal. "I am Grelach, granddaughter of Kenneth, who was once Scotland's king..." (Klein, 2009, p. 5). However, Duncan's family seized the throne. "My grandfather the King was slain by his own cousin, Malcom, who became the king and declared that his grandson Duncan would inherit the throne. I never forget how this angered my father" (Klein, 2009, p. 6). Her father vowed revenge. Her father's revenge resulted in Grelach being used as a political pawn in an attempt to rebuild their power base. This suggests Grelach's lack of agency through her inability to stop the people around her from dictating her life. Grelach was made to marry a cruel warrior called Gillam when she was 13, and when Macbeth killed Gillam, he took Gillam's lands and wife as spoils of war.

In a medieval world where seizing and consolidating power through slaying is the norm, her harsh upbringing also filled her full with revenge towards Duncan, who now proudly sits on a throne that she feels does not belong to him. "How dare Duncan – whose grandfather shut my kin out of the succession [...]. The injustice of it brings my blood to the boiling point" (Klein, 2009, p. 62). That Grelach does not

have a lot of agency is reflected in the fact that she unconditionally believes in the rightness of her family's desire for revenge. Due to her immaturity, she was not able to form her own thoughts and opinions on the issue. The researcher opines that Lady Macbeth sees the prophecy by the Wyrd Sisters to her husband as the means for getting her revenge, and this causes her to instigate Macbeth to commit the crime, a crime that never crossed Macbeth's mind as he was a true and loyal knight to King Duncan, a crime that led to his downfall and death. Scholars like Hateley (2006) and Chamberlain (2005) liken Lady Macbeth to a dangerous woman who has the ability to manipulate Macbeth through sweet words to achieve her ambition, signalling that she has significant influence over her husband.

Klein was able to illustrate Lady Macbeth's dominance over Macbeth through her re-visioning by focussing her plot on the theme of revenge and masculinity, which brings greater richness to her re-visioning (Tynan, 1925). This provides a new perspective to her readers on the character of Lady Macbeth, who desires to embrace masculinity as a method for her to achieve her family's revenge over Duncan's throne.

However, although Klein is re-visioning the play *Macbeth* by turning the spotlight on Grelach, putting flesh and emotions to her character and providing motivations, Klein realises that Grelach is still a woman. Klein, therefore, feels the need to imbue her with feminine qualities of softness and gentleness at the beginning of her story.

Besides illustrating Grelach as the weaker gender, Klein has also cleverly foreshadowed Grelach's lack of agency in chapter one, where Grelach is seen to be helpless, unable to stop her daughter from being killed by Macbeth. Their baby daughter was born with a club foot, and Macbeth did not believe that the baby girl was his as the Wyrd Sisters had prophesied that he would have a healthy baby boy. She is devastated when Macbeth decrees that the baby is to be taken away to be killed. "I am sixteen years old and have nothing to live for, now that my baby daughter is dead" (Klein, 2009, p. 5).

Zeigler (2002) informs that it is difficult to re-define cultural structure that is already embedded in a society, in which women are always seen as subordinate to men. Similarly, Levin (1988) mentions that in a patriarchal world, stereotypes are imposed, and one overriding one is that women are always viewed as the gender that possesses less strength than men. Consequently, Klein echoes Shakespeare in the manner of illustrating the character Lady Macbeth by crafting the character Grelach to fit into the 19th century image. Ziegler (2002) notes that gender stereotyping is one of the elements inherited from the 19th century, a period that refined and idealised the notion of womanhood while trying to challenge the boundaries of the stereotype.

Consequently, in re-visioning Lady Macbeth's character, Klein depicts Grelach as having no awareness of her own wants or needs as she continues her father's quest for revenge on Duncan's family. However,

realising she lacks physical strength, she buys into the male discourse, believing she needs to achieve masculinity; thus, she summons the spirit of the underworld, Neoni, to make her more of a man than a woman so that she has no womanly emotions and is able to make her goal a success. "Come to me, you ancient spirits. Come Neoni, who brought everything from her vast empty womb. Thicken my blood that no womanly remorse may flow in my veins" (Klein, 2009, p. 63).

This resonates with Shakespeare's depiction of Lady Macbeth as illustrated in Scene 5 of Act 1 when she desires masculinity, as she associates authority with masculinity. Critics of Shakespeare have interpreted that in this scene, Lady Macbeth attempts to gain masculine authority, which she believes is important for her to achieve her goal:

Lady Macbeth: Come, you spirits  
 That tend on mortal  
 thoughts, unsex me here  
 And fill me from the  
 crown to the toe top-full  
 Of direst cruelty! Make  
 thick my blood,

According to Harding (1969) in his work on Shakespeare's play, Lady Macbeth views manhood as a vital quality that she needs to achieve her ambitions as she believes it provides physical courage and a way of overcoming opposition. Furthermore, the phrase "unsex me here" shows that she does not want to be associated with the stereotypical qualities related to women

such as compassion; she desires to have masculine, warrior-like toughness so that she is able to commit the crime and regain the throne. Tankersley (2014) argues that Shakespeare's Lady Macbeth desires wickedness and brutality as she equates these characteristics with masculinity. Larsen-Klein (1980) suggests that Lady Macbeth wants to be unsexed because she wants to be able to act cruelly, and so, she ignorantly and irrationally identifies with male strength. Therefore, her desire to adopt masculinity is her attempt to prove herself manlier (Tankersley, 2014).

Although readers are made aware of Lady Macbeth's desire for masculine characteristics, Klein depicts Grelach as lacking covert agency to commit the crime. Grelach realises that she needs Macbeth to act as her proxy to fulfil her heart's desire because she knows that only a man has the legitimacy and physical strength to commit the crime that will remove Duncan from the throne. The reader can see this depicted in the re-visioned novel right after Klein's Lady Macbeth summons the ancient spirit of Neoni and then realises that she needs Macbeth as her tool to achieve her desired goal.

"Come thick night and hell smoke,  
 hide the wound this knife will  
 make," I murmur through clenched  
 teeth. My mind swims from the  
 wine. What knife? I have no knife.  
 Must I slay Duncan? I hear my  
 lord's footsteps approaching upon  
 the stairs. No, it must be his deed.  
 (p. 63)

The knife symbolises her agency to complete her ambition for revenge. Unfortunately, her realisation of her physical inability to perform the task, “I have no knife,” suggests that she lacks covert agency to complete the deed because she recognises that she is a woman. Davis (2009) informs that Lady Macbeth lived in an age where gender was filtered through patriarchal lens that depicted women as soft, gentle and full of compassion. This contextualises her fear at performing the task because her actions would transgress the cultural ideology of women of the 19th century (Tankersley, 2014).

Grelach’s choice to embrace her femininity makes her leave the task to Macbeth to complete; “No, it must be his deed,” she decides (Klein, 2009, p. 63). Lady Macbeth realises that for her dreams to be fulfilled, she needs a proxy, a male to be exact, because she believes that masculinity involves physical strength, courage and the ability to commit crimes such as murder. Her husband is her best choice as he is the king’s knight, he has easy access to the King and, as a man, he possesses more strength and ability to commit murder. In addition, Macbeth has also won many battles for Scotland, which makes him a good candidate to help her fulfil her dream. However, to get Macbeth, the king’s loyal knight, to kill the king is not an easy task.

Therefore, she utilises her femininity to cunningly sweet talk and manipulate Macbeth into killing Duncan so that he can be next in line to reign as King as foretold by the Wyrd Sisters; “Think of what the Wyrd

Sister’s promised you, ” she reminds him, “That crown sits on Duncan’s head like a bright confection. It may fall into your lap as easily as Glamis and Cawdor did – if you still wish to be king” (Klein, 2009, p. 59).

Ramsey (1973) notes that Lady Macbeth’s shrewd method of doubting his manliness managed to persuade Macbeth to agree to her wish because his sexuality is called into question if he refuses to abet with her. On the one hand, Harding (1969) argues that Macbeth’s abetting to her plots reflects that Lady Macbeth has managed to gain control over Macbeth. On the other hand, using her husband as proxy implies her determination to achieve her goal. This indicates the depths of her vengeance towards Duncan. The depiction of Grelach by Klein is seen similar to Shakespeare’s, where Macbeth is used as a tool to fulfil Lady Macbeth’s desire of wanting Duncan murdered.

Lady Macbeth: Such I account thy love. Art  
thou afeared  
To be the same in thine own  
act and valour  
As thou art in desire?  
Wouldst thou have that  
Which thou esteem’st the  
ornament of life  
And live a coward in thine  
own esteem,  
Letting ‘I dare not’ wait  
upon ‘I would’  
Like the poor cat ‘i’ the  
adage?

Macbeth: Pr'ythee, peace.  
I dare do all that may  
become a man;  
Who dares do more is none.  
(Shakespeare, trans 2010, 1.7)

Both Klein and Shakespeare depict Lady Macbeth as lacking in covert agency to achieve her goal of killing Duncan and ruling the realm.

Although Macbeth manages to kill Duncan, it remains an unnatural act for him. "Nay, I cannot look upon what I have done" (Klein, 2009, p. 66); thus, he cannot complete the task set, which is to frame the guards, and comes back with the incriminating dagger, dripping blood. Grelach is angry with her husband and thinks he is a coward, acting like a child. She ends up telling him to go to bed, like a mother punishing a child, and realises that she has to finish the job. Grelach has the presence of mind to return to the murder scene to plant the murder weapon by the side of the drugged guards at the scene and frame them for the murder to deflect attention from her husband. However, upon reaching the murder scene, her feminine weakness surfaces momentarily. "The scene outside Duncan's bedroom makes the wine in my stomach rise up into my mouth..." (Klein, 2009, p. 66). She appears to be shocked and frightened at seeing the evidence of the murder that Macbeth has committed. Macbeth had not only killed Duncan, but his guards too. "Not one, but three dreadful deeds have been done here, never to be undone" (Klein, 2009, p. 66). The phrase "dreadful deeds" implies that

she has her feminine qualities intact as she is able to empathise and sympathise with the murdered.

Here, Klein has not painted a similar image of Grelach as Shakespeare has of the original Lady Macbeth. Shakespeare is able to show the hardened emotional state of Lady Macbeth, who is able to return to the murder scene without suffering any pangs of womanly emotions. This is reflected in her response to Macbeth, who seems to be feeling guilty:

Macbeth: This is a sorry sight.  
Lady Macbeth: A foolish thought, to say a  
sorry sight.  
(Shakespeare, trans 2010, 2.2)

However, this is unlike Grelach, who seems to retain her womanly emotions as she is able to sympathise with the murder victims. Therefore, by re-visioning Lady Macbeth's character, Klein tries to illustrate to her readers that Grelach still possesses a womanly nature and feminine characteristics.

In her re-visioning of Grelach, Klein wants to illustrate the fact that Grelach still remains a woman who is in touch with her femininity and humanity. This further suggests that Grelach lacks agency in committing murder although she has the ambition for it. It is her ambition and determination that make Grelach appear stronger as she is able to overcome her shock and horror to complete the deed, which is more than what the husband can do. "It's all I can do to place the daggers near their hand without fainting into the gory mess myself" (Klein, 2009, p. 66).

Klein, through her re-visioning of the character of Lady Macbeth, is able to show readers that although Grelach was able to fulfil her family's revenge on Duncan by embracing her femininity, she is unable to reign as she is a woman. This indicates that although Grelach intends to be superior in a male-dominated world, she instead becomes a pawn to the needs of power in a patriarchal world. Harding (1969) informs that Lady Macbeth fulfils her ambition through her husband's effort, therefore, his opportunity seems to be vastly greater than hers. Thus, Macbeth reigns as King, taking over Duncan's throne but his wife will probably continue to be the real power behind the crown, an active manipulator of Macbeth.

However masculine or manly she wants to be, her feminine side cannot be repressed for long. She does feel regret and remorse over the murder especially with the deaths of the two innocent guards. This is similar to Shakespeare's *Macbeth* as he too portrays Lady Macbeth in agony after the crime has been committed. In the original text, Shakespeare shows Lady Macbeth slowly losing her grasp on reality as, wanting nothing but to be left alone with her inner demons, filled with regret, fear and distress, which result in her sleepwalking, she finally fades away, insignificant in the ending of the play. In Klein's re-visioning, Grelach is able to cope with these feelings as she is not alone, but in the company of another woman. Davis (2009) informs that a woman who remains isolated has no strength, and is thus prevented from making significant

changes. Understanding this element, Klein gives Lady Macbeth a handmaid called Rhuven as her confidante, enabling her to share her feelings with Rhuven.

Rhuven is an important character in Klein's re-visioning of *Macbeth*. Rhuven is one of the Wyrd Sisters and is also instrumental in keeping Grelach's daughter, Albia, alive. Despite the difference in status, they are very close and Rhuven is like an elder sister to Grelach, giving advice and providing solace. The company and comfort of another woman like Rhuven makes Grelach feel safe and secure, and eases her fear and distress. This in return makes her stronger as she gains strength from the comfort of another woman.

The fleshing out of the Wyrd Sisters as healers and seers and Albia's guardians adds a new dimension to the tale. In Shakespeare's play the tale focusses on the male characters and their power plays. Klein's text introduces the female voice and perspective on power play, using Grelach and Albia to show the differing fates of women depending on how much agency they have over their lives. Grelach is all too aware of her lineage and her role as a pawn in the power play. She tries but fails to use her femininity to influence the situation to her advantage as she does not have a clear sense of herself and the amount of agency she has.

It is different with her daughter, Albia. Albia grows up in a loving environment, with female role models who teach her to be strong and independent and to believe in herself. As she reaches puberty, she is

sent to work in Banquo's family. There she comes in contact with men like Banquo, who provides her with a father figure, and Fleance, who teaches her discipline through sword-fighting. She also learns of the cruel king, Macbeth. She incorporates this male knowledge in her inner feminine strength, and her innate leadership qualities come through when her mettle is tested by men like Angus and Macduff.

Albia is unaware of her true lineage and her quest for revenge is fuelled by the fact that she considers Macbeth a cruel king who has blighted the land due to his unnatural act of killing King Duncan. However, when Albia is presented with the opportunity to exact her revenge and kill Macbeth, she falters as she realises that she would have the blood of a king on her hands, perpetuating the vicious cycle of murder and bloodshed initiated by the men. She does not go down the slippery slope her mother took. In addition, when she finds out that she is Macbeth's daughter, she tries to leverage that fact so that the thanes and earls would listen to her before they storm Dunsinane. The fact that they do not take her seriously shows the insidious power of patriarchy and the extent of her agency as a woman.

After Macbeth is killed, Albia appeals to Duncan's son, Malcolm, to stop the fighting and to "restore justice and peace to Scotland" (Klein, 2009, p. 263). She tries to reason with him, but he refuses to be altruistic, focussing on his personal vendetta and agenda. She realises this because, "My mother's grandfather was the great King Kenneth. My father was a king. That makes

me quite a prize. Whoever weds me puts his hands on a great deal of power" (Klein, 2009, p. 272). It is clear that Malcolm only sees her as a mere woman, a chattel to be used as a pawn to strengthen his claim to the throne of Scotland. Even Banquo's son, Fleance, despite the fact that he loves her, also sees her in the same light. Caught up in the tussle for power between her half-brother Luoch, Malcolm and Fleance, she realises that "nothing in this land will ever change ... men still clamour for revenge and power over each other" (Klein, 2009, p. 272). She flees, refusing to become a pawn in the game. However, she has done enough, as with "Macbeth's death, nature is reclaiming Scotland ... [and] slowly the land is freed from tyranny" (Klein, 2009, p. 284).

Klein also strengthens the supernatural element in her re-visioning. In the original play, the supernatural element exists only in the otherworldly trio of the weird sisters and Hecate, the goddess of witchcraft. The sisters pronounce a number of prophecies regarding Macbeth's fate, which turn out to be like a double-edged sword. The rest is smoke and mirrors due to Shakespeare's skilful evocation of fear and unseen menace. In Klein's re-visioning, the supernatural exists side by side with the natural. It is the female characters like Lady Macbeth, Albia and Helwain who can tap into this spirit world and summon a variety of ancient nature spirits like Neoni, Banrigh and Guidlicht to aid them in their endeavours. Albia is tested by the wild boar spirit before Sight is revealed to her, and together with her friend, Caora, she becomes a female avenger

to right the wrongs inflicted by men on the land. Using the trope of the Fisher King, Klein links the fortunes of the country and its people to the king. With a good king, the country prospers; an unworthy king would blight the land and the people would suffer. Macbeth becomes king through murder, and the country begins to suffer as his tyranny reaches new heights. Albia senses this and sees it as her duty to rid the country of this tyrant and heal the land.

In the novel, the Wyrd Sisters do not really have supernatural powers. Helwain, one of the sisters, has knowledge of healing, herbs and potions, and appears to have the Sight, but it eventually emerges that she does not. Instead, she is well-versed in reading human nature and uses that ability to provide people with oracles they want to hear, so that they become self-fulfilling prophecies. It is Albia who has true Sight, which emerges when she reaches puberty. Even as a child she was close to the 'Other' world; she felt things and saw visions, which she understood only in hindsight as an adult, after certain events take place. She thinks she is a servant of the Sight, until she realises that Sight is a feminine aspect of herself. "It was not my visions that drove me to act, but my actions that revealed what those visions meant. ... I could not understand, until time and my deeds unfolded the truth" (Klein, 2009, p. 279). At first she thinks her actions are driven by revenge and an attempt to kill the evil in her that is represented by her parents. Ultimately, she realises that "the fact that I share Macbeth's and Grelach's blood does not force me to repeat their

evil. My deeds are my own. As Macbeth's deeds were his" (Klein, 2009, p. 279). This revelation finally frees her from the shackles of the past and enables her to face her mother, Grelach, and forgive her when they finally meet at Pitdarroch, a place where "where the four worlds meet ... a place of peace and healing" (Klein, 2009, p. 280).

## CONCLUSION

Klein's novel is her attempt at giving "an entirely new perspective on the events of Shakespeare's play" (Klein, 2009, p. 288). Her re-visioning inserts a feminine voice and perspective on the power struggles of men wanting to rule that is lacking in the original play *Macbeth*. She also increases the supernatural elements in her novel, linking nature and the supernatural to the feminine element. Klein makes revenge the main theme of her text, exploring the motivations and the amount of agency of a female character in avenging a wrong.

Klein's re-visioned text incorporates a back story for Grelach and the patriarchal power that impinges on her. Transforming Lady Macbeth's character into a character called Grelach, Klein is able to show that Grelach lacks overt agency as she has limited options as a woman within her society to act as she wants. She thus feels that she has to take on more masculine characteristics before she can commit murder and exact revenge.

Albia does not appear to need this sense of masculinity as she has a strongly rooted sense of her inner strength as a woman, thus, having a stronger sense of agency.

She is also able to tap into the feminine supernatural and gain strength from it. Even though her agency is still constrained by the social conventions of her patriarchal society, she does not play by their rules. Her innate feminine qualities make her an avenger, able to right the wrongs inflicted on the land by men.

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Work on this article was supported by the following fundamental research grant offered by Kementerian Pengajian Tinggi: Fundamental Research Grant (Project Code: FRGS/2/2014/SSI02/UKM/02/2)

### REFERENCES

- Bradley, L. (2010). *Adapting King Lear for the stage*. Surrey: Ashgate Publishing Limited.
- Bushman, J., & Bushman, K. (1997). *Using young adult literature in the classroom*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall.
- Chamberlain, S. (2005). Fantasizing infanticide: Lady Macbeth and the murdering mother in early modern England. *College Literature*, 32(3), 72-91.
- Davis, M. A. (2009). A brief look at feminism in Shakespeare's Macbeth. *Student Pulse*, 1(11), 1. Retrieved from <http://www.studentpulse.com/articles/67/a-brief-look-at-feminism-in-shakespeares-macbeth>.
- Harding, D. W. (1969). Women's fantasy of manhood: A Shakespearian theme. *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 20(3), 245-253.
- Hateley, E. (2006). Lady Macbeth in detective fiction: Criminalising the female reader. *Clues: A Journal of Detection*, 24(4), 31-46.
- Hutcheon, L. (2006). *A theory of adaptation*. New York: Routledge.
- Isaac, M. L. (2000). *Heirs to Shakespeare: Reinventing the bard in young adult literature*. Portsmouth: Boyton/Cook Publisher.
- Klein, L. (2009). *Lady Macbeth's daughter*. New York: Bloomsbury.
- Larsen-Klein, J. (1980). Lady Macbeth: Infirm of purpose. In C. R. S. Lenz, G. Greene, & C. T. Neely (Eds.), *The woman's part: Feminist criticism of Shakespeare* (pp. 240-255). Urbana: University of Illinois Press.
- Levin, R. (1988). Feminist thematics and Shakespearean tragedy. *Modern Language Association*, 103(2), 125-138. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/462429>
- Macherey, P. (1978). *A theory of literary production*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Plate, L. (2008). Remembering the future or whatever happened to re-vision? *Chicago Journal* 33(2), 389-411. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/521054>
- Ramsey, J. (1973). The perversion of manliness in Macbeth. *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, 13(2), 285-300.
- Rich, A. (1972). *On lies, secret, and silence*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company.
- Tankersley, V. P. (2014). *The gender deviance and selfless love of Lady Macbeth*. Academia.edu. Retrieved from [https://www.academia.edu/7973220/The\\_Gender\\_Deviance\\_and\\_Selfless\\_Love\\_of\\_Lady\\_Macbeth](https://www.academia.edu/7973220/The_Gender_Deviance_and_Selfless_Love_of_Lady_Macbeth). What is this? Research report? Blog post? Online forum? (please check and format according to APA 6th Style)
- Tynan, J. L. (1925). The woman in case. *Shakespeare Association Bulletin*, 1(2), 1-6.
- Widdowson, P. (2006). Writing back: Contemporary re-visionary fiction. *Textual Practice* 20(3), 491-507.
- Ziegler, G. (2002). Accommodating the virago: Nineteenth century representation of Lady Macbeth. In C. Desmet, & R. Sawyer (Eds.), *Shakespeare and appropriation* (pp. 119-41). London: Routledge.



## **Preposition-Related Collocation use among British and Malaysian Learners: A Corpus Analysis**

**Ang, L. H.<sup>1\*</sup> and Tan, K. H.<sup>2</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>*School of Humanities, Universiti Sains Malaysia, 11800 USM, Pulau Pinang, Malaysia*

<sup>2</sup>*School of Language Studies and Linguistics, Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 43600 Bangi, Selangor, Malaysia*

### **ABSTRACT**

The study examines and compares the use of preposition-related collocations in the writing of Malaysian learners of English and British native speakers of English. The study seeks to answer two research questions: firstly, it sets out to quantify preposition-related collocation use among the Malaysian learners of English and British native speakers of English by measuring the statistical significance of the relevant collocation use in each group using Mutual Information (MI) and a t-score; and secondly, the study aims to identify types of collocational errors associated with prepositions studied in the current research. The frequency-based approach was adopted in the study to define collocations, with the node-and-collocates analysis employed to identify relevant preposition-related collocations. Two references were used to determine the acceptability or otherwise of the collocations: Google Internet search engine results and the online BNCweb corpus. The data revealed that Malaysian learners of English produce more preposition-related collocations than British native speakers of English do. In terms of collocational errors, a stark contrast in the writing of Malaysian learners of English and that of British native speakers of English is apparent, in which preposition-related collocational errors in the Malaysian learner corpus constitute 1% to 7% for certain prepositions, whereas British native speakers' writing was found to be totally free of collocational errors. .

*Keywords:* Collocational errors, learner corpus, mutual information, node-and-collocates analysis, preposition-related collocations, t-score

### **ARTICLE INFO**

*Article history:*

Received: 21 September 2015

Accepted: 15 January 2016

*E-mail addresses:*

[leng\\_hong@hotmail.com](mailto:leng_hong@hotmail.com) (Ang, L. H.),

[kimmy@ukm.edu.my](mailto:kimmy@ukm.edu.my) (Tan, K. H.)

\* Corresponding author

### **INTRODUCTION**

Collocation is becoming increasingly significant in language acquisition as

it has been ascertained that competent use of collocation is a key factor in determining fluent and natural language use (Pawley & Syder, 1983; Sinclair, 1991; Cowie, 1998; Howarth, 1998; Hill, 2000; Nation, 2001; Tan, 2001; Durrant & Schmitt, 2009). In relation to fluency and naturalness of language use, knowledge of collocation also contributes to a learner's communicative competence as collocation is advantageous for processing (Millar, 2011). Recent research has shown that a dearth of appropriate collocations leads to increased and sustained burden on mental processing, which, in turn, could be a barrier to communication (Millar, 2011). This finding is consistent with usage-based models of language acquisition, which grounds language structure in the actual use of language. In view of the importance of collocation in language use and communication *per se*, it is of central importance to understand the notion of collocations, which has also been referred to as formulaic sequences, prefabricated patterns, chunks, clusters, lexical bundles, recurrent sequences and n-grams (Nattinger & DeCarrico, 1992; Stubbs, 1995; Manning & Schütze, 1999; Howarth, 1998; Scott, 2001; Wray, 2002; Schmitt, 2004).

### *The Notion of Collocation*

Studies on collocation have always been conducted within two distinct traditions, which we can refer to as the frequency-based and the phraseology-based traditions. In the former, frequency and statistical measures are integral to explain various phenomena

and instantiations of collocations. In the phraseology-based tradition, collocation is subject to semantic and syntactic analyses, which are apparently less concerned with statistics.

The frequency-based approach to collocation sees collocation as a form of recurrent word combination, which appears more often than by chance. The term collocation was introduced by Firth (1957), who asserted that collocation is crucial in understanding how meaning is created through use at different levels within language. Firth viewed collocations as recurrent sequences of words, where the sequences range from two words up to 15. He insightfully encapsulated the significant role of collocation in language learning by exclaiming, "You shall know a word by the company it keeps" (1957, p. 179). Following Firth (1957), Halliday (1966) developed the notion of collocation by setting the parameters of collocation that limit the co-occurrence of particular words, which facilitates the prediction of word combinations statistically. Halliday has also introduced the terms node, collocate and span, which are still fundamental in frequency-based research at present.

Sinclair (1966; 1991) expanded on Halliday's concept of probability of recurrent word combinations. According to Sinclair, collocation is the occurrence of two or more words within a short span of each other in a text, where a short span is seen as a distance of relevant lexical items (collocates) of the node word. Co-occurrences of node and collocates are usually studied to decide

if they are frequent or not. The notion of collocation, under the frequency-orientated approach, has been expanded by scholars in the field (for example, Stubbs, 1995), who characterised collocation as the occurrence of word combinations greater than by chance in their context and where word pairs are found together more frequently than the occurrence of their component words. The development of the frequency-based approach in collocation research has contributed towards the extension of the notion of collocation, in which collocation is manifested in *lexical bundle* analysis (Biber et al., 1999). Lexical bundles are defined as “recurrent expressions, regardless of their idiomaticity, and regardless of their structural status” (Biber et al., 1999, p.990). The lexical bundle approach allows the study of similar combinations of n-word bundles, for instance 2-word, 3-word, 4-word bundles etc. Corpus-based analyses of lexical bundles commonly focus on texts in specific registers and genres.

The phraseological approach to collocation considers collocation as a form of word combination, which can be delimited from other types of word combinations i.e. free combinations and idioms (Cowie, 1998). A free combination, such as *read the book*, is the least cohesive of all combinations as their components are free to combine with other items. A collocation, such as *commit suicide*, is more restricted in terms of its sense but less frozen than an idiom. An idiom such as *spick and span* is a truly frozen piece of language that has the least complexity.

Frequencies and statistical significance do not play a pivotal role in the phraseological approach as they do in frequency-based tradition. Scholars (for example, Aisenstadt, 1981; Cowie, 1998; Mel’čuk, 1998) viewed collocations as habitually occurring word combinations that are formed by restricted co-occurrence of elements and varying degree of transparency of meaning. The phraseology-based tradition is heavily influenced by research carried out in Russia since the 1940s. It gained popularity in the West from the 1970s onwards, particularly with regards to collocation restriction (Aisenstadt, 1981). Pioneering work within the phraseological approach to collocation include Aisenstadt (1981), Cowie (1998), Howarth (1998), Mel’čuk (1998) and Nesselhauf (2003; 2005).

In view of the phraseology-based approach to collocation, it is worth noting that word combinations differ along a continuum, which makes exact delimitation impossible. This identification of collocation based on a semantically restricted sense invites criticism from the proponents of the frequency-based approach to collocation. Hoey (2005; p. 2) commented that collocations are recurrent combinations that are prevalent in language use and are proven to facilitate the “naturalness” of language production. The motivation of the phraseology-based approach to collocation based on restricted and “semantically anomalous” criteria (Hoey, 2005, p. 16) leaves very frequent and prevalent collocations out of the picture and most probably overlook a number of important

collocations that are indeed prevalent and bear functional value in language use.

### *Objectives of the Study*

The study seeks to use a corpus-linguistic method to examine and compare a Malaysian English learner corpus with a British English learner corpus by focussing on the collocation use of prepositions between these two groups of speakers. The primary aim is to examine the extent of preposition-related collocation use by measuring significant differences of preposition-related collocation use between Malaysian learners of English and British native speakers of English. The second aim is to identify possible types of erroneous preposition-related collocation in both the Malaysian and British native corpora. As prepositions are very frequent in corpora, even in smaller ones, it is deemed suitable to compare and measure statistically the collocation use of prepositions in the two small corpora used in the study. Also, the significant role that preposition plays in formulaic sequences made it a good choice for collocational analysis (Hunston & Francis, 2000). Prepositions have also been notoriously known to pose problems for learners, even for those at advanced level. The approach to the study is from the theoretical and methodological standpoint of corpus linguistics (Sinclair, 1991; Biber et al., 1998). This is to say, the collocations defined in the study are a quantitative and frequency-based phenomenon, which will be observed systematically through the corpus-linguistic analysis of electronically-

stored attested texts. This study seeks to use the corpus-linguistic method to seek answers to the following research questions:

1. Are there any significant differences of preposition-related collocation use between Malaysian learners of English and British native speakers of English?
2. What are the types of erroneous preposition-related collocation found in the writing of Malaysian learners of English and British native speakers of English?

### **METHODOLOGY**

The study focussed on the use of preposition-related collocations defined in the frequency-based tradition represented by the influential pioneer in the field (Sinclair, 1991). In the study, collocation is referred to as word combinations of two or more words occurring near each other in a text. The frequency-orientated approach was adopted in the study as the study sought to measure the extent of preposition-related collocation use as well as to identify possible erroneous preposition-related collocations. The study did not intend to investigate collocations in a semantically restricted sense. It was hoped that such a broader definition of collocation would help to gain deeper insight into the extent of high-frequency collocation use among Malaysian learners of English and British native speakers of English.

### *Corpora used in the Study*

The research compared preposition-related collocations found in the writing of

Malaysian learners of English against those found in native texts. The Malaysian learner corpus used for the study was a sub-corpus of the English of Malaysian School Students (henceforth, EMAS). EMAS is an electronic database compiled by seven researchers from University Putra Malaysia. It contains both written data in the form of essays and oral interviews. The present study only examined the written data in the corpus. The sub-corpus of EMAS used for the study was an untagged learner corpus that contains data in the form of student essays written by 206 students. It consists of 64,692 word tokens and 4,242 word types. The selected data are a compilation of 206 picture-based essays written by Form Four students from three states in Peninsular Malaysia.

The comparative native speaker corpus, Louvain Corpus of Native English Essays (henceforth LOCNESS), was compiled at the University of Louvain la Neuve, Belgium. It comprises essays written by British A-Level and university students as well as by American university students. A sub-corpus of LOCNESS was chosen for the study, which comprises 114 British A-Level student essays, with a total number of 60,398 word tokens and 6,531 word types.

#### *Procedure*

*Research Question 1: Are there any significant differences of preposition-related collocation use between Malaysian learners of English and British native speakers of English?*

The node-and-collocates approach, used to identify the collocations concerned,

was entirely dependent upon computer algorithms to answer Research Question 1. *AntConc* (version 3.2.4w) software was used to perform the relevant frequency calculation and statistical measures. There were three concerns as to how to perform the node-and-collocates analysis. The first concern was how we were to judge if the collocates occurred *significantly frequently* within the span of a given node word. The simplest way to identify frequent collocates is to rank them according to raw frequency figures. Nevertheless, raw frequency is commonly dominated by words from closed grammatical classes such as conjunctions, determiners, prepositions and pronouns, resulting in the difficulty to prove if the collocates and node co-occur significantly and frequently. It is therefore important to have statistical measures that are able to indicate the statistically significant results. Two association measures of collocational strength were performed on each corpus (EMAS and LOCNESS): Mutual Information (henceforth, MI) and the t-score. Essentially, MI highlights the strength of the collocational relationship between the node and collocates, while the t-score normally indicates the degree of certainty that can be claimed about a collocational relationship between the node and collocates in a given corpus (Stubbs, 1995; Barnbrook, 1996). In order to obtain greater statistical significant differences of the collocation use between the Malaysian learners of English and British native speakers of English, a minimum collocate frequency level of 10 occurrences was

applied and the threshold score for both the MI and t-score was set at 4.0. It has been suggested that an MI score of 3 or greater, and a t-score of 2 or more could be held to be significant (Hunston & Francis, 2000; Hunston, 2002).

The second question to ask about node-and-collocates analysis concerned span width, in which the default span of two words to the left and to the right of the node word was set. Restricting the analysis to such a short span of text incurs the danger of missing certain relevant collocations that fall out of the span width. This concern is possibly true. Nevertheless, the present study was concerned with preposition-related collocations, in which the objects (collocates) of the prepositions are always very near to the prepositions (node), as the prepositions are responsible to link the objects to other elements in the sentence environment concerned. Instances of the preposition-related collocations in the corpus used for the study were *shouting for help, some flowers by the riverbank, look*

*at the flowers, far away from the girls* etc. It is obvious that the preposition-related collocations in the corpus mostly fell within the span of + 2 words of the node word (preposition).

A final question to be answered with regards to the use of the node-and-collocates approach to collocation is that this approach requires a pre-determined list of node words for analysis. The present study focussed on the 10 most frequently used prepositions in both the Malaysian Learner and British native corpora. As can be seen in Table 1, the same top 10 prepositions were comparable in both corpora, with the omission of into from EMAS and but from LOCNESS. The omissions were deemed necessary as into does not fall into the top 10 preposition ranking in LOCNESS, while but is not included in the top 10 prepositions in EMAS. It should also be noted that collocations which were found erroneous were omitted in the list of collocations as they were not valid quantitative data.

Table. 1  
Rank and Frequency Data for the Top 10 Prepositions in EMAS and LOCNESS

EMAS			LOCNESS		
Rank	Word	Frequency	Rank	Word	Frequency
2	to	2494 (+25.32%)	2	to	1990
8	of	857	3	of	1856 (+116%)
10	for	688 (+11%)	7	in	1054 (+104%)
16	in	516	11	for	620
24	at	511 (+190%)	13	as	564 (+57%)
36	as	359	20	on	378 (+32%)
42	with	263	23	with	307 (+17%)
49	on	286	25	by	306 (+50%)
57	from	216	35	from	218 (+1%)
59	by	204	46	at	176

*Research Question 2: What are the types of erroneous preposition-related collocation found in the writing of Malaysian learners of English and British native speakers of English?*

To answer Research Question 2, two references were used to determine the acceptability of the collocations. The preposition-related collocations identified through the node-and-collocates analysis were checked against the GoogleTM Internet search engine and the online BNCweb to validate their acceptability or otherwise. Collocations were judged acceptable if they were found in identical form in both the GoogleTM Internet search results and the online BNCweb corpus.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

*Research Question 1: Are there any significant differences of preposition-related collocation use between Malaysian learners*

*of English and British native speakers of English?*

The results of the MI analysis are presented in Table 2. This analysis found that there were more preposition-related collocation types in EMAS than there were in LOCNESS in five out of 10 prepositions studied (*for, at, with, from* and *by*). Only three prepositions (*to, of* and *in*) reversed this trend. The remaining two prepositions (*as* and *on*) bore the same number of collocation types in both EMAS and LOCNESS. In terms of the collocate tokens, the majority of prepositions (*to, of, for, at, with, on, from* and *by*) in EMAS outnumber those (*in* and *as*) in LOCNESS.

The results of the t-score analysis were similar to that of the MI, as shown in Table 3. The slight difference is that the preposition-related collocation types in EMAS (*to, for, at, as, with, on, from* and *by*) substantially outnumber those in LOCNESS (*of, in*) in the ratio of 8 to 2.

Table. 2  
*Collocation Types and Tokens Identified by Mutual Information Analysis*

	EMAS		LOCNESS	
	Types	Tokens	Types s	Tokens
to	29	1549 (+134%)	33 (+14%)	661
of	14	676 (+60%)	23 (+64%)	423
for	15 (+67%)	531 (+252%)	9	151
in	7	137	20 (+186%)	323 (+136%)
at	14 (+600%)	355 (+1379%)	2	24
as	8	519	8	865 (+67%)
with	3 (+200%)	49 (+345%)	1	11
on	5	111 (+50%)	5	74
from	6 (+100%)	100 (+186%)	3	35
by	2 (+100%)	59 (+354%)	1	13

Table. 3  
*Collocation Types and Tokens Identified by t-Score Analysis*

	EMAS		LOCNESS	
	Types	Tokens	Types s	Tokens
to	74 (+64%)	5642 (+100%)	45	2827
of	23	1632	34 (+48%)	2579 (+58%)
for	18 (+125%)	1109 (+144%)	8	454
in	7	570	22 (+214%)	1188 (+108%)
at	12 (+1100%)	701 (+874%)	1	72
as	13 (+18%)	753	11	1194 (+59%)
with	6 (+200%)	196 (+48%)	2	132
on	6 (+50%)	277 (+5%)	4	265
from	4 (+300%)	156 (+71%)	1	91
by	4 (+100%)	198 (+41%)	2	140

In summary, the node-and-collocates analysis above illustrates that Malaysian learners of English significantly use more preposition-related collocations than do British native speakers of English. In dealing with preposition-related collocations, it should always be borne in mind that prepositions are abundant in language and preposition-related collocations are highly frequent and common in every English variety as prepositions are important function words in the English Language. The results obtained in the present study, though statistically significant, only prove that Malaysian learners of English (non-native speakers) use more preposition-related collocations, which is very frequent in nature, in their writing when compared to native speakers of English. The results of the study do not explicitly or implicitly offer evidence of overuse of preposition-related collocations by Malaysian learners of English as the study was aimed at measuring the whole picture of preposition-related

collocation use among Malaysian learners of English and British native speakers of English, and it did not intend to partition the collocation types and tokens into groups of overuse and underuse.

*Research Question 2: What are the types of erroneous preposition-related collocation found in the writing of Malaysian learners of English and British native speakers of English?*

It was deemed necessary to establish how many preposition-related collocations are qualitatively unacceptable, which would be excluded as valid quantitative data. Also, learner language has been found to be collocationally error-prone (Nesselhauf, 2005; Siyanova & Schmitt, 2008; Millar, 2011), which made it necessary to identify the possible errors associated with the types of collocation concerned.

The results of identification of collocational errors for the 10 prepositions in EMAS and LOCNESS are shown in

Table 4. A stark contrast between EMAS and LOCNESS is clearly apparent, in which preposition-related collocational errors in EMAS constituted 1% to 7% in each type of preposition, whereas LOCNESS was found to be totally free of collocational errors. Collocational errors in EMAS were found associated mostly with the prepositions *for*, followed by *to*, *at* and *on*. To gain a deeper insight into the types of collocational errors concerning prepositions, a further classification of the preposition-related collocational errors is shown in Table 5.

Altogether, 130 instances were found in EMAS, of which most involved the superfluous use of prepositions (95% of preposition errors), followed by wrong choice of preposition (5% of preposition

errors). The superfluous prepositions in the collocations concerned seemed to be quite systematic as they involved mainly two prepositions: *to* and *for*. The systematised errors could be the evidence of fossilisation in the writing of the Malaysian learner of English. It is worth noting that the prevalence of superfluous prepositions in the collocations indicates that Malaysian learners of English overuse certain prepositions and, at the same time, they are uncertain about the correct use of these prepositions. The finding of this research question is consistent with the results of some previous research (for example, Ang et al., 2011). It might be academically worthwhile to investigate the patterns of erroneous preposition-related collocations

Table. 4  
*Percentage Frequencies of Collocational Errors for 10 Prepositions in EMAS and LOCNESS*

	Examples	EMAS	LOCNESS
to	They love to fishing at the river.	3%	0%
of	-----	0%	0%
for	Let's go for fishing.	7%	0%
in	-----	0%	0%
at	The scene at there was so beautiful.	2%	0%
as	-----	0%	0%
with	-----	0%	0%
on	Ramu invited me to fishing on the river.	1%	0%
from	-----	0%	0%
by	-----	0%	0%

Table. 5  
*Types of Collocational Errors in Preposition-Related Collocations*

Types of preposition error	Occurrences (tokens)
Wrong choice of preposition	6
Superfluous preposition	124
Total	130

in future research to determine if cross-linguistic influence takes place here.

To recapitulate, EMAS was found to contain four types of preposition-related collocational error (*for*, *to*, *at* and *on*). On the other hand, LOCNESS, the British native speakers' corpus, comprised collocationally well-formed preposition-related collocations, rendering it error-free collocationally. The findings of the study present the fact that learner language, at least in the Malaysian L2 context, is riddled with errors, which are overt even in small corpora such as the one used for the current study.

## CONCLUSION

The study employed tools and methods of corpus linguistics to examine prepositional-related collocation use in the writing of Malaysian learners of English and British native speakers of English. Two research questions were set and answered through the node-and-collocates analysis as well as frequency and statistical counts. Firstly, Malaysian learners of English significantly used more preposition-related collocations than British native speakers of English did; and secondly, preposition-related collocational errors were prevalent and overt in the writing of Malaysian learners of English, associated particularly with prepositions such as *for*, *to*, *at* and *on*, while the writing of British native speakers of English was error-free collocationally.

It should be borne in mind that these findings are based on the analysis of small corpora: a sub-corpus of EMAS and a sub-

corpus of LOCNESS. It should also be pointed out that the collocations studied are taken from one word class, the preposition. Generalisations made in the study are subject to confirmation or challenge by future research that may look at larger corpora and examine different sets of collocations.

Lastly, learners should be encouraged to improve their knowledge and use of collocations as the importance of collocations in determining fluency, naturalness and effective communication has been established by research conducted in the field. It is therefore vital for educators to expose learners to real language in use, which is advocated by usage-based models of language. Language teachers may exploit the available resources, such as Internet resources and linguistic tools to guide learners to learn and develop their knowledge of collocations in real-life situations.

## REFERENCES

- Aisenstadt, E. (1981). Restricted collocations in English lexicology and lexicography. *Review of Applied Linguistics*, 53, 53-61.
- Ang, L. H., Rahim, H. A., Hua, T. K., & Salehuddin, K. (2011). Collocations in Malaysian English learners' writing: A corpus-based error analysis. *3L: The Southeast Asian Journal of English Language Studies*, 17(Special Issue), 31-44.
- Anthony, L. (2015). *Antconc (3.4.1w)*. Japan: Waseda University.
- Barnbrook, G. (1996). *Language and computers*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Biber, D., Conrad, S., & Reppen, R. (1998). *Corpus linguistics: Investigating language structure and use*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Biber, D., Johansson, S., Leech, G., Conrad, S., & Finegan, E. (1999) Lexical expressions in speech and writing. In *Longman grammar of spoken and written English* (pp. 988-1036). Harlow, Essex: Longman.
- BNCweb online corpus. (2015, August 25). *BNCweb online corpus*. Retrieved from <http://bncweb.info/>
- Cowie, A. P. (1998). *Phraseology: Theory, analysis, and applications*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Durrant, P., & Schmitt, N. (2009). To what extent do native and non-native writers make use of collocations? *IRAL-International Review of Applied Linguistics in Language Teaching*, 47(2), 157-177.
- Firth, J. R. (1957). *Papers in linguistics 1934-1951*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Google Internet search engine. (2015, August 25). *Google Internet search engine*. Retrieved from <http://www.google.com>
- Halliday, M. A. K. (1966). Lexis as linguistic level. In C. E. Bazell, J. C. Catford, M. A. K. Halliday, & R. H. Robins (Eds.), *In memory of J. R. Firth* (pp. 148-162). London: Longman.
- Hill, J. (2000). Revisiting priorities: From grammatical failure to collocational success. In M. Lewis (Ed.), *Teaching collocations: Further development in the lexical approach* (pp. 47-69). London: Language Teaching Publications.
- Hoey, M. (2005). *Lexical priming: A new theory of words and language*. London: Routledge.
- Howarth, P. (1998). The phraseology of learners' academic writing. In A.P. Cowie (Ed.), *Phraseology: Theory, analysis, and applications* (pp. 161-186). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Hunston, S., & Francis, G. (2000). *Pattern grammar: A corpus-driven approach to the lexical grammar of English*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Hunston, S. (2002). *Corpora in applied linguistics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Manning, C., & Schütze, H. (1999). *Foundations of statistical natural language processing*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Mel'čuk, I. (1998). Collocations and lexical functions. In A. P. Cowie (Ed.), *Phraseology: Theory, analysis, and applications* (pp. 161-186). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Millar, N. (2011). The processing of malformed formulaic language. *Applied Linguistics*, 32(2), 129-148.
- Nation, I. S. P. (2001). *Learning vocabulary in another language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Nattinger, J. R., & DeCarrico, J. S. (1992). *Lexical phrases and language teaching*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Nesselhauf, N. (2003). The use of collocations by advanced learners of English and some implications for teaching. *Applied Linguistics*, 24(2), 223-242.
- Nesselhauf, N. (2005). *Collocations in a learner corpus*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Pawley, A., & Syder, F. H. (1983). Two puzzles for linguistic theory: Nativelike selection and nativelike fluency. In J. C. Richards, & R. W. Schmidt (Eds.), *Language and communication* (pp. 191-226). London: Longman.
- Schmitt, N. (2004). *Formulaic sequences: Acquisition, processing and use*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Scott, M. (2001). Comparing corpora and identifying key words, collocations and frequency distributions through the Wordsmith Tool Suite of computer software. In M. Ghadessy, A. Henry, & R. Roseberry (Eds.), *Small corpus studies and ELT* (pp. 47-67). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Sinclair, J. (1966). Beginning the study of lexis. In C. E. Bazell, J. C. Catford, M. A. K. Halliday, & R. H. Robins (Eds.), *In memory of J. R. Firth* (pp. 410-430). London: Longman.
- Sinclair, J. (1991). *Corpus, concordance, collocation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Siyanova, A., & Schmitt, N. (2008). L2 learner production and processing of collocation: A multi-study perspective. *The Canadian Modern Language Review*, 64(3), 429-458.
- Stubbs, M. (1995). Collocations and semantic profiles. On the cause of the trouble with quantitative studies. *Functions of Language*, 2(1), 23-55.

Ang, L. H. and Tan, K. H.

Tan, K. H. (2001). *Corpora: Characteristics and related studies*. Malaysia: UKM Press.

Wray, A. (2002). *Formulaic language and the lexicon*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

## **Effects of Social Networking on Malaysian Secondary School Students: Attitudes, Behaviours and Awareness of Risks**

**Siew Ming Thang<sup>1\*</sup>, Noorizah Mohd. Noor<sup>1</sup>, Adzuhaidah M. Taha<sup>2</sup>,  
Lay Shi Ng<sup>1</sup> and Noor Baizura Abdul Aziz<sup>1</sup>**

*<sup>1</sup>School of Language Studies and Linguistics, Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities,  
Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 43600 Bangi, Selangor, Malaysia*

*<sup>2</sup>Sekolah Seri Puteri, 63000 Cyberjaya, Selangor, Malaysia*

### **ABSTRACT**

There is a plethora of social networking systems that allow individuals to meet and chat online with each other nowadays. This paper describes a preliminary study that investigates the effects of Social Networking (SN) on a group of Malaysian Secondary school students from an elite school. It explores their attitudes and behaviour towards SN: how it affects their social lives, and to what extent they are aware of the risks involved. A focus group interview was conducted on these students. The students were shown nine scenarios (one at a time) depicting various situations that portrayed the negative consequences of SN such as cyberbullying, texting and online predation. The students were asked to give their opinions regarding each scene as well as opinions regarding social networking in general. The findings revealed that the students generally have a favourable opinion of social networking and are aware of the benefits and the risks involved in using SN sites. On top of that, they are anxious about the negative effects of the SN sites due to their bad experiences but they still use the sites actively and habitually.

*Keywords:* Attitudes, behaviours, cyberbullying, online predation, risks, social networking, texting

### **ARTICLE INFO**

*Article history:*

Received: 21 September 2015

Accepted: 15 January 2016

*E-mail addresses:*

thang@ukm.edu.my (Siew Ming Thang),  
nmn@ukm.edu.my (Noorizah Mohd. Noor),  
lizng@ukm.edu.my (Lay Shi Ng, and),  
zura.aziz\_155@yahoo.com (Noor Baizura Abdul Aziz),  
adzu2006@yahoo.com (Adzuhaidah M. Taha)

\* Corresponding author

### **INTRODUCTION**

Boyd and Ellison, in 2007, defined an SN system as a web-based service that allows individuals to do the following: (i) build public or semi-public profiles in a system, (ii) share a connection, and (iii) view and cross-list their relationship with others in the system. Previously, such social connection was only possible through the Internet but

with the advent of mobile applications, it is now possible to connect to others through mobile phones such as the iPhone and Blackberry or an Android or Windows phone.

SN has become part of the daily life of teenagers today. They represent a pervasive technology that can result in unintended consequences such as threats to privacy and changes in the relationship between the public and private sphere. Boyd and Ellison (2007) listed some of the privacy concerns with regards to online SN, which include inadvertent disclosure of personal information, damaged reputation due to rumours and gossip, unwanted contact and harassment or stalking, surveillance-like structures due to backtracking functions, use of personal data by third parties and hacking and identity theft. These concerns have led to a call for increased understanding of attitudes and behaviours towards 'privacy-affecting systems' (Iachello & Hong, 2007:100). This study investigates Malaysian teenagers' attitudes and behaviours towards SN, and the extent to which they are aware of the risks involved and how they handle these risks. The research questions of the study were as follows:

- (1) What are Malaysian Secondary school students' attitude and behaviours towards SN?
- (2) What role does SN play in their social life?
- (3) To what extent are they aware of the risks involved and how do they handle these risks?

The next section will present the conceptual framework of this study and then describe literature relevant to the study.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### *Conceptual Framework*

The conceptual framework of this paper combines two media theories, the 'Uses and Gratifications' Theory and the Theory of 'Ritualised Media Use.' These two media theories are not tested in this study but are instead used as the analytical background and framework to explain and contextualise the findings.

The Uses and Gratifications theory explores how people use media to fulfil their various needs. The three key dimensions of this theory are (1) the need for diversion and entertainment, (2) the need for (para-social) relationships, and (3) the need for identity construction (Blumler & Katz, 1974; LaRose et al., 2001; Rosengren et al., 1985). The issue of concern examined in this paper is whether SN sites offer sufficient promise of gratification in all three dimensions to override privacy and personal concerns of teenagers.

According to the Theory of Ritualised Media Use, "the media are not just consumed for informational or entertainment purposes, they are also habitually used as part of people's everyday life routines, as diversions and pastimes" (Debatin et al., 2009). The second issue of concern investigated in this study is whether SN is such an important ritual in the life of Malaysian teenagers that they do not pay attention to privacy and personal issues.

### *Risks of SN*

There are a number of risks associated with SN that can have adverse effects on the mental health of young people. The risks explored in this study are described below:

**Cyberbullying.** It is described as intentionally using digital media to communicate false, embarrassing or hostile information about another person (O’Keefe & Clarke-Pearson, 2011). It includes receiving threatening, harassing or humiliating communication from another person. It is the most common online risk among young people and is a peer-to-peer risk.

**Texting/Sexting.** It can also be used to bully or humiliate people. An embarrassing or upsetting video can quickly be transmitted or uploaded to an online video sharing site like YouTube via cell phones. It is found that although in general young people use messaging responsibly there are many instances of misuse, too. This, to a large extent, is due to the fact that senders cannot see the reactions of the receivers of the messages, so the consequences are not immediately felt by them, leading to some of them sending messages that they may regret later. Sexting can be defined as “sending, receiving, or forwarding sexually explicit messages, photographs, or images via cell phone, computer, or other digital devices through cell phones or the Internet” (Berkshire District Attorney, 2010).

**Online sexual solicitation and predation.** It is defined as “the act of encouraging someone to talk about sex, to do something sexual, or to share personal

sexual information even when that person does not want to” (Ybarra et al., 2007). Interestingly, Collins et al. (2011) found that sexual solicitation between same-age youth is more likely to happen than sexual predation and most of these solicitations come from peers who are known offline.

**Exposure to illegal/indecent content and privacy violation.** Most studies show that young people are concerned about their own privacy and to avoid risk, they will engage in privacy protecting behaviours, such as adjusting their profiles to ‘private’ from ‘public’ access, refusing to provide identifying information or giving false information and avoiding certain websites (Youn, 2009). However, Cox (2007) discovered that most youth do not read websites’ privacy policies or may be unaware that their information is at risk of disclosure to third parties like advertisers. They are concerned about talking to people they do not know online but less worried about posting information including photos online to a public profile.

### *The Malaysian Scene*

There are few studies that have explored the risks that come with using SN among Malaysian teenagers, which makes this study very pertinent and crucial. Most of the studies on SN in Malaysia have been undertaken on university students. For example, Norsaremah Salleh et al. (2012) undertook a study using a questionnaire survey on 486 undergraduates from five selected public and private universities in Malaysia. They discovered that the majority

of the students had several SN accounts and they were generally aware of information privacy on SN. Most of the respondents had a Facebook account as well as Twitter and MySpace accounts. They generally spent approximately 1 to 3 hours a day accessing the SN through their own laptop or smart phones. Using correlation analysis, it was further revealed that the students were aware that disclosure of information on the Internet may invite some negative consequences as their personal information may be misused or be made available to unknown individuals or companies. They also realised that their personal information could be used in a manner they may not approve of. These findings were consistent with those reported in existing studies (Dinev & Hart, 2004; Youn, 2009; Banks *et al.*, 2010). No investigation has been undertaken to explore the risks posed in using SN among Malaysian secondary school students. Thus, the findings of this project will be pioneering work.

This project involved conducting focus group interviews and questionnaire surveys on students from four types of secondary school in the Klang Valley and Selangor, Malaysia. The four types of secondary school were an urban school, a sub-urban school, a rural school and lastly, an elite school. The students comprised boys and girls from Secondary Two and Secondary Four. The convenient sampling approach was used. This paper is a preliminary case study that looked into the SN practices of only Form Four female students from an elite school. It offers a glimpse into patterns of

social networking attitudes and behaviours of students from this particular context. An elite school comprises students who are selected based on excellent academic performance in the Ujian Pencapaian Sekolah Rendah (UPSR) (Primary School Achievement Test). Subsequent papers on the other contexts will be written at a later stage.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### *Research Instrument*

The research instruments were developed by the research team. Ideas for the interview scenarios were drawn from various resources derived from other research studies as well as materials on social networking available online. The instruments were as follows:

- a) Background information form (BIF) that elicit students' personal background information and information regarding their use of SN sites such as frequency and duration of use, types of SN site they frequented and the types of SN devices they possessed.
- b) A focus group interview template that comprised three sections:
  - Section A comprised open-ended questions that elicit information regarding students' experiences with SN sites
  - Section B comprised seven scenarios depicting situations involving the negative consequences of using SN apps. The first scenario showed a girl posting a sexy selfie of herself

on her Facebook (Exposure to online predation). The second showed a girl receiving a pop-up message asking for her password while talking to a friend online (Exposure to privacy invasion). The third showed a boy expressing delight because he could enter the account of a person (who was a nuisance to him) illegally to take revenge (Privacy invasion/hacking). The fourth showed a girl in a state of excitement because a boy she had been corresponding with online had asked her out on a date (Exposure to online predation). The fifth showed a girl being very upset because someone had posted pictures of her in a costume she had worn at a friend's birthday party and made fun of her by calling her stupid, silly, ugly etc. (Texting/Sexting). The sixth showed a rabbit (representing an innocent student) finding pornographic materials and violent images in his/her computer (Exposure to indecent contents). The final picture showed a boy who was very upset because materials regarding his being a homosexual were circulating in SN sites when in actuality he was not a homosexual (Cyberbullying). (See Appendix

A for a sample scenario.)

- Section C comprised an open-ended question asking students to describe other negative situations that they or their friends had experienced.

#### *Research Procedure*

The students were randomly chosen and requested to share their experiences using SN sites at a focus group interview session. Prior to the interview, each student had to fill a form that was designed to elicit their personal background information and SN habits. For the focus group interview, the students were required to give their views and reactions towards each scenario. This was followed by a discussion among the students. They were also required to answer and discuss the open-ended questions. The focus group interview took 55 minutes. The interview was conducted in English by one of the researchers and transcribed verbatim by a research assistant.

#### *Data Analysis*

The students' responses to the open-ended questions and each scenario were analysed for patterns and themes in line with the research questions and the conceptual framework.

## **RESULTS**

#### *Background Information of Students*

The information for this was derived from the BIF the students were required to fill. The students in this study were four

Secondary 4 Malay, female students from an elite, residential school in the Klang Valley (labelled as School A). All students in this school were selected for admission based on their excellent results in the Ujian Pencapaian Sekolah Rendah (UPSR) (Primary School Achievement Test). The medium of instruction of all subjects in this school except for English Language is Malay. All four had obtained a minimum of six distinctions in the PT3. All had obtained a clear distinction in English in the PT3 and spoke English at home. They came from upper middle class families and had parents who were either professional or business personnel. They came from various parts of Malaysia, primarily from urban areas. Three of them possessed a smart phone while the other made up for it by having a mobile tablet instead. Only one of them had a data plan. This was not necessary as the school had continuous Wi-Fi access. All four were active users of the Internet as well as SN sites, which included Friendster, Myspace, Twitter, Facebook, Whatsapp, Ask fm, Wechat and Instagram.

#### *Preliminary Findings and Discussion*

The findings revealed that generally, all four students from School A were very aware of the danger and risks involved in using the SN sites and they took steps to eradicate or minimise the danger/risks whenever possible.

They were aware of the danger of online predation and did not upload selfies to the SN sites, and if they felt like sharing

photographs they would only upload group photos. S2 said:

*It's not wrong to post picture but If you like to post things about yourself some people might target you as ... such as ... it might be dangerous. Know your limit to post pictures.*

They protect their own privacy by not responding to messages asking for their IDs and passwords. S3 advised the girl in the scenario not to open the website when she gets the message and to check the status of her antivirus. They were also aware of the danger of meeting friends that they met online no matter how good-looking the person appeared in the photograph given. Only one said she would but she would tell her parents first and if her parents allowed her, she would go with some friends. S3 said:

*As for me I would prefer I don't know how he actually looks like. He might be pretending ... maybe he is 50-year-old man behind the picture or he could be very good-looking 17 years old then he might not like me. He could be dangerous.*

S4 directly refused to meet him:

*When I get invitation, I think I would not meet him because when we meet in Facebook I think that's the only relationship... see face to face maybe if it is a coincidence.*

They are also aware of unethical practices regarding the use of SN sites such as hacking, texting and cyberbullying. All of them condemned the boy who hacked into the website to take revenge. S3 explained it quite maturely:

*For me I think what he is doing really fighting fire with fire, very immature. And he just needs to solve his issues...see him personally or he just let it go and forgive and forget because human do make mistakes... shouldn't hack into some account just because of that.*

They also avoided pornographic websites and websites showing violence. One of them had even installed advertisement blocking programmes such as Adblock to block such materials. In spite of their precautions, three had encountered bad experiences related to the use of SN sites. They were also very angry with regards to the case of Ahmad being bullied online. However, their suggestions on how to help him seemed to be unrealistic and appeared to be drawn from films. For instance, the suggestion by one of them i.e. "pretending to be his girlfriend so that they knew that he was not gay" showed that they had no real experience with such situations.

S3 had experienced being called names by her friends on Twitter, with others joining in and making the situation worse. In the case of S1, a boy had posted a nasty comment to a picture she had uploaded in an SN site after she had tried to defend a

friend. The situation became worse when others joined the conversation, adding more negative remarks although there were some who had supported her stand on her friend. S2 also lost her confidence for a while because someone had backstabbed her; she described herself as having a phobia after the incident. She said:

*Friends are sometimes immature people who are sometimes enemies. Sometimes backstabbers. In front they are angels and at the back they are worst people.*

Although the bad experiences did not deter them from continuing to use the SN sites, they were more wary now and seemed to display maturity and wisdom beyond their age regarding the use of this medium of communication. Regarding Scenario 5, in which a girl was called stupid over a costume she had worn to a party, S4 advised:

*I think as a friend to her I would tell her to just ignore them. They are acting as a child as these things won't happen if they don't post them. So if they post them they really are immature. I would say to my friend to just ignore them and leave them alone and do things that are more important and if she is not into it, leave the social network social life.*

On the positive side, they were aware of the advantages of SN sites. S1 gave the example of Facebook enabling her

grandmother, who was not mobile, to communicate with her uncle and to keep frequent tabs on family members, which made her very happy. S3 said that she had a bigger network of friends because of SN sites.

### *Overall Discussion*

The overall discussion will be undertaken in accordance to the research questions. The two key issues of the conceptual framework of the study will also be taken into consideration. The first issue was whether SN sites offered sufficient promise of gratification in all three dimensions to override privacy and personal concerns of teenagers and the second issue was whether SN was such an important ritual in the life of these students that they did not pay attention to privacy and personal issues.

#### *1) What are the students' attitudes and behaviour towards the SN sites?*

The students from School A were all active users of SN sites. On the whole, they believed that SN enriched their lives and helped them to be in touch with their friends and family members all the time. Despite some stressful and emotional experiences with SN, they were not willing to give up using SN and were prepared to face negative consequences involved in the use of SN, similar to the students in Norsaremah Salleh *et al.*'s study (2012). SN satisfied their needs according to the Gratifications Theory. It offered them diversion and entertainment, enabled them to make online friends and also helped them to learn more

about themselves. Thus, it can be said that they were more exposed, more mature and wiser because of the experience of using SN, which would help them to handle the real world better when they leave school. This is important to these students as they live in residential colleges where life is very sheltered.

#### *(2) What role does it play in their social life?*

As discussed earlier, the students in School A were very aware of the risks involved in using SN and although SN can be described as a ritual in their lives they did take every step to protect themselves against the risks posed by the use of SN as well as to safeguard themselves against personal hurt that can arise from active participation.

#### *(3) To what extent are they aware of the risks involved and how do they handle them?*

Like teenagers in Western countries, the students were aware of most of the risks involved in using SN. They were also aware of the dangers of being hit by viruses and identity theft and other security issues related to the use of SNS. These findings are in line with the findings of previous studies (Lampe *et al.*, 2008; Lipford *et al.*, 2008; Strater & Lipford, 2008, LaRose *et al.*, 2006; Youn, 2009; Norsaremah Salleh *et al.*, 2012). Students in School A also experienced the negative consequences of texting, which had caused them a great deal of anxiety and stress. This made them more cautious about what they write in SN sites, which has educated them on the negative effects of texting as otherwise, they may

not be aware of the negative consequences of some of their own text messages (Lenhart *et al.*, 2010). Thus, the issue of SN being so important that attention to privacy and personal issues is neglected does not arise in the case of these students.

## CONCLUSION

This is just a small case study and the findings cannot be generalised to all Malaysian secondary school students but it does offer a glimpse into the patterns of behaviour of students from a specific context i.e. an elite school in Malaysia. These four students displayed awareness of the benefits and the risks and danger involved in using SN sites. They were wary of SN sites and at times, cynical regarding the negative effects of the SN sites due to their bad experiences but they still used the sites actively as to them, the advantages outweighed the disadvantages. They believed that SN enriched their lives but they also realised that they must use it with care and maturity in order to benefit from them. Thus, it seems that SN has actually contributed to help these girls (who lead very sheltered lives) to develop in maturity and wisdom. Further studies of this project will enable the research team to have a more holistic view of the SN patterns of behaviours of Malaysian secondary school students in Malaysia.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This paper is part of a research project (SK-2015-003) funded by the Malaysian

Communications and Multimedia Commission (MCMC).

## REFERENCES

- Banks, M. S., Onita, C. G., & Meservy, T. O. (2010). Risky behavior in online social media: Protection, motivation and social influence. In *Proceedings of the 16th Americas Conference on Information Systems (AMCIS 2010)* (paper 372). Lima, Peru.
- Berkshire District Attorney. (2010). Sexting. Pittsfield, MA: Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Retrieved from: [www.mass.gov](http://www.mass.gov).
- Blumler, J. G., & Katz, E. (Eds.). (1974). *The uses of mass communication: Current perspectives on gratifications research*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Boyd, D. M., & Ellison, N. B. (2007). Social network sites: Definition, history, and scholarship. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 13(1), 210-230. doi: 10.1111/j.1083-6101.2007.00393.x
- Collin, R. L., Martino, S. C., & Shaw, R. (2011). Influence of new media on adolescent sexual health: Evidence and opportunities. *Working Paper WR-761*. Retrieved from: <http://aspe.hhs.gov/hsp/11/adolescentsexualityactivity/newmedialitrev/index.pdf>
- Cox Communications. (2007, March). *Research Findings: Cox Teen Internet Safety Study Wave II*. Retrieved from [http://www.cox.com/wcm/en/aboutus/datasheet/takecharge/archives/2007-teen-survey.pdf?campcode=takecharge-archive-link\\_2007-survey\\_0511](http://www.cox.com/wcm/en/aboutus/datasheet/takecharge/archives/2007-teen-survey.pdf?campcode=takecharge-archive-link_2007-survey_0511)
- Debatin, J., Lovejoy, P., Scripps, E. W., Horn, A., & Hughes, B. N. (2009). Facebook and online privacy: Attitudes, behaviors, and unintended consequences. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 15(1), 83-108.
- Dinev, T., & Hart, P. (2004). Internet privacy concerns and their antecedents measurements validity and regression model. *Behaviour & Information Technology*, 23(5), 413-422.
- Hinduja, S., & Patchin, J. W. (2010). Bullying, cyberbullying and suicide. *Archives of Suicide Research*, 14(3), 206-221.

- Iachello, G., & Hong, J. (2007). End-user privacy in human-computer interaction. *Foundations and Trends in Human-Computer Interaction*, 1(1), 1-137.
- Lampe, C., Ellison, N. B., & Steinfield, C. (2008). Changes in use and perception of Facebook. In *Proceedings of the ACM conference on computer supported cooperative work (CSCW'08)* (pp. 721-730). New York, U.S.A: ACM New York.
- LaRose, R., Mastro, D., & Eastin, M. S. (2001). Understanding internet usage: A social-cognitive approach to uses and gratifications. *Social Science Computer Review*, 19(4), 395-413.
- LaRose, R., Rifon, N. J., & Enbody, R. (2006). Promoting personal responsibility for Internet safety. *Communication of the ACM*, 51(3), 71-76.
- Lenhart, A., Ling, R., Campbell, S., & Purcell, K. (2010). Teens & mobile phones. *PewResearchCenter Internet, Science & Technology*. Retrieved from: <http://www.pewinternet.org/Report/2010/Teens-and-Mobile-Phones.aspx>
- Lipford, H. R., Besmer, A., & Watson, J. (2008). Understanding privacy settings in Facebook with an audience view. In *Proceedings of the 1st Conference on Usability, Psychology and Security (UPSEC'08)* (paper no.2). Berkeley C.A, U.S.A: USENIX Association.
- O'Keefe, G. S., & Clarke-Pearson, K. (2011). The impact of social media on children, adolescents and families. *Pediatrics*, 127(4), 800-804. Retrieved from: <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/127/4/800.full>
- Rosengren, K. E., Palmgreen, P., & Wenner, L. A. (Eds.). (1985). *Media gratification research: Current perspectives*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Salleh, N., Hussein, R., & Mohamed, N. (2012). An empirical investigation on internet privacy on social network sites among Malaysian youths. *Journal of Information Technology Research (JITR)*, 5(3), 85-97.
- Strater, K., & Lipford, H. R. (2008). Strategies and struggles with privacy in an online SN community. In *Proceedings of the 22nd British HCI Group Annual Conference on People and Computers: Culture, Creativity, Interaction (BCS-HCI '08)* (p. 111-119). Place of Publication: Publisher? – Format according to APA 6th Style
- Ybarra, M. L., Espelage, D. L., & Mitchell, K. J. (2007). The co-occurrence of Internet harassment and unwanted sexual solicitation victimization and perpetration: associations with psychosocial indicators. *Journal of Adolescent Health*. 41(S6), 31-41.
- Youn, S. (2009). Determinants of online privacy concern and its influence on privacy protection behaviour among young adolescents. *The Journal of Consumer Affairs*, 43(3), 389-418.

## APPENDIX A

### Scenario 1



Lily posts a cool/pretty/sexy selfie on her facebook and she watches eagerly to see how many 'likes' the photo gets and how many complimentary comments she receives, such as, "You're so gorgeous" or "Why are you so perfect?" What do you think of Lily's action?



## **Analysis of Interaction and Institutional Power Relations in MH370 Press Conferences**

**Marlyna Maros<sup>1\*</sup> and Sharifah Nadia Syed Nasharudin<sup>2</sup>**

*<sup>1</sup>School of Language Studies and Linguistics, Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 43600 UKM, Bangi, Selangor, Malaysia*

*<sup>2</sup>Language Studies Academy, Universiti Teknologi Mara, 40450 Shah Alam, Selangor, Malaysia*

### **ABSTRACT**

Malaysian Airlines System (MAS) was stricken by crisis on 8 March, 2014 when flight MH370, which was scheduled to land in Beijing the same day, lost contact with Subang Air Traffic Control in Selangor, Malaysia. What happened to the flight remains a mystery till now. The incident necessitated a lot of press conferences as news of the progress of the Search and Rescue mission needed to be delivered. This study investigated how access to the floor during the MH370 press conferences was decided and regulated and how institutional power was portrayed by participants of the press conferences. Thirteen press conference videos were transcribed and analysed using the Conversation Analysis (CA) approach on institutional interaction and power behind discourse, which is part of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). The findings showed that turn-taking was regulated through five mechanisms, namely, pre-allocated turn, turn-allocation techniques, turn-taking cues, overlaps and interruptions. Furthermore, the results also revealed that apart from the role of participants and institutional arrangements, most of the turn-taking mechanisms were used to portray institutional power. The analysis leads to the conclusion that despite the apprehensive situation faced by all involved, turn-taking appeared to have had a central role in shaping institutional interaction and power representation of the MH370 press conferences. Based on the findings, a number of recommendations for authorities involved

and suggestions for future research are provided. This study contributes to the area of discourse analysis, specifically, pertaining to press conferences.

### **ARTICLE INFO**

#### *Article history:*

Received: 21 September 2015

Accepted: 15 January 2016

#### *E-mail addresses:*

marlyna@ukm.edu.my (Marlyna Maros),

sharifahnadia@salam.uitm.edu.my (Sharifah Nadia Syed Nasharudin)

\* Corresponding author

*Keywords:* Conversational Analysis approach, Critical Discourse Analysis, institutional interaction, institutional power, press conference, turn-taking

## INTRODUCTION

Being a very unusual event in aviation history, the case of the missing Malaysia Airlines flight MH370 caught media attention from all over the world. However, a local media channel reported that the press conferences on MH370 incident were seen as “faulty occasions with sketchy information, sometimes contradictory, and spokespersons not answering questions” (Astro Awani, 2014, March 12). As a result, many people, including next-of-kin of the victims, expressed anger, questioning the truth of the information released.

Press conferences are increasingly gaining more attention as they are broadcast all over the world and made instantly available through the Internet. Previous studies done by Esbaugh-Soha (2003) looked at press conferences from the historical perspective while Tunsall (1970) and Larson (2005) elaborated on the information activity in press conferences. Nevertheless, research into the press conference as a platform for the bridging of interaction and power is limited. As claimed by Clayman et al. (2002), Ekstrom (2006) and Bhatia (2006), there is a scarcity of studies on the press conference as a specific arena of interaction. Hence, the MH370 crisis provides timely ground for an investigation. Using a combination of the CA approach focussing on turn taking and the CDA approach on power perspective, this study intended to fill the gap by analysing the press conferences organised by the Malaysian government in the aftermath of the MH370 disappearance. The aim was to determine

how access to the floor was decided and regulated in MH370 press conferences and how this related to the institutional power of the participants involved. The study was guided by the following questions:

- i. How was turn-taking decided and regulated in MH370 press conferences?
- ii. How was institutional power portrayed in MH370 press conferences?

## FRAMEWORK AND CONCEPTS

The study focussed on turn-taking and how it related to power representation of the discourse in press conferences held after MH370 vanished from radar screens. It was guided mainly by concepts pertinent to Conversational Analysis (CA) of institutional interaction and Fairclough’s power-behind-discourse interpretation.

### *Institutionalised Turn-Taking System*

Institutional interaction is a formalised arrangement that distinguishes a specific institution such as a press conference from other institutions such as a news interview. Heritage (1997) examined institutional interaction and suggested that it can be investigated in six places: turn-taking, overall structural organisation, sequence organisation, turn design, lexical choice and epistemological and other forms of asymmetry.

Most special turn-taking systems exploit question-answer exchanges to form the system. Press conferences differ from

ordinary single-party news interviews where participants are fundamentally constrained and a consistent and fixed format is utilised. Bhatia (2006) has suggested a common organisation of press conferences which are (a) the opening phase, during which the host of the conference welcomes the attendants; (b) the individual voice, during which the guests make their statements; (c) the interactional phase, during which the host asks questions and the guests answer; (d) the closing phase, during which the chairperson who has served as host for the conference rounds it off and thanks the attendants. Two-way communication between interviewer (IR) and interviewee (IE) usually occurs in the third phase and in this phase, the order of the talk follows the pattern below:

IR: Question  
 IE: Response  
 IR: Question  
 IE: Response.

This form of turn-taking involves 'turn-type pre-allocation', in which the activities of questioning and answering are pre-allocated to the roles of IR and IE, regardless of the number of IR and IE involved in the conversation. Specialised turn-taking systems strongly structure the framework of the activity, underlying meaning and interpretation that emerge within the conversation. In relation to this study, the researchers looked at how the institutional nature of MH370 press conferences shaped the turn-taking sequence in the interaction.

### *Fairclough's Power Behind Discourse*

The term critical in CDA is often related to studying power relations (Fairclough, 1997). Power is negotiated, manipulated, expressed, rejected and challenged interpersonally through discourse in settings defined by institutional power asymmetry. Institutional power can be understood as power by which an individual is authorised by a public body to take decisions for other individuals involved.

Power behind discourse is the social order that holds the power to force and distribute conventions and enforce action against the actors if it is linguistically invaded. How effectively the discourse is shaped to suit the objectives and outcomes of the power-holders depend on how skilful the power-holders are at managing discourse. There are three aspects of 'power behind discourse': (i) standard language (ii) particular discourse types, which can be considered 'effects of power' (e.g. medical, education, law, religious discourse types) and (iii) access to discourse and the power to execute and impose constraints on access (Fairclough, 1989). The idea of 'power behind discourse' is that the whole social order of discourse is put together and held together as a hidden effect of power.

Language on its own is neutral of power, but CDA believes that people who use language can use it to generate power. MH370 press conferences, similar to other press conferences, demonstrated complicated power competition among the participants. Hidden effects of power

were shown either in the standard language used, the type of discourse governing the interaction or through access to the discourse. This study sought to examine the extent to which power was represented, by whom and for what objectives.

**DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS**

The samples of this study consisted of (13) press conferences held after Malaysia Airlines flight MH370 went missing. The press conferences were broadcast on Malaysian television channels. The duration of each session was between 30 and 45 minutes. The sessions chosen were dated between 8 March 2014 and 28 March 2014 during the Search and Rescue (SAR) phase. All the press conference videos were downloaded from Astroawani.com and Youtube.com. Table 1 below shows the samples used in the analysis:

Table. 1  
*The Selected Press Conference Sessions*

Data	Source	Date
1	Astroawani.com	March 8, 2014
2	Astroawani.com	March 9, 2014
3	Astroawani.com	March 10, 2014
4	Youtube.com	March 11, 2014
5	Youtube.com	March 12, 2014
6	Astroawani.com	March 13, 2014
7	Youtube.com	March 14, 2014
8	Astroawani.com	March 16, 2014
9	Astroawani.com	March 17, 2014
10	Youtube.com	March 19, 2014
11	Youtube.com	March 20, 2014
12	Youtube.com	March 21, 2014
13	Youtube.com	March 22, 2014

*The Transcription Process*

The press conference videos downloaded from the Internet were then transcribed according to Jefferson conventions. The transcripts provided information related to turn-taking such as overlapping and interruption; however, they did not provide precise marks of prosodic cues such as loudness, pause length and the change of pitch contour. The data were coded serially by date.

*Data Analysis*

The framework of the Conversation Analysis of institutional interaction based on the work of Harvey Sacks (1992) was central to this analysis. The focus of this research was to determine how the institutional nature of the press conference affected the organisation of the talk in-interaction. The data were transcribed in close detail, with emphasis on the turn-taking mechanism and the turn-allocation components identified including pre-allocated turns, turn-allocation techniques, turn-taking cues, overlaps and interruptions.

As discourse and power are intimately connected, to answer the second research question, the same transcriptions were analysed using Fairclough’s power-behind-discourse interpretation, which guides the speaker’s status and role, discourse and strategies in interaction. Fairclough’s (2003) framework was used to explore the conversation mechanisms of the discourse in order to examine how power was represented in the interaction. Both the elements of CA

and CDA within an institutional setting were brought together in this study as one approach alone could not have provided answers to the research questions.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### *Turn-Taking Mechanisms in MH370 Press Conferences*

The data revealed that there were six turn-taking mechanisms employed by participants in the MH370 press conferences. They were:

**Pre-Allocated turns.** The MH370 press conferences were governed by the ordinary structure of the turn-taking sequence, which is: request-invitation-question-answer. The institutional turn-taking system according to Atkinson and Drew (1979) is pre-allocated to the roles of interviewer (IR) and interviewee (IE). In this case, IR is the journalist and IE is the spokesperson-in-charge. Participants are fundamentally constrained where IR restrict themselves to questioning and IE restrict themselves to answering questions or responding to them. Each step in the sequence may be represented in various ways.

### *Example: MH370 Press Conference (March 11, 2014)*

J: Tan Sri, I want to clarify one thing	114
S: You are from?	115
J: I'm from Guang Ming Daily Malaysia punya. Tan Sri, I want	116
to clarify one thing, just now you were said that no five persons	117
check-in and boarding. Did they...	118

In the example above, line 114 is the request. Not necessarily having to utter a proper request sentence of speech act, the utterance made by the journalist "*Tan Sri, I want to clarify one thing,*" is understood as a request to take the turn to ask a question. In the next line, the sentence "*You are from?*" is the invitation. Following the sequence is the question and answers by the participants.

**Turn-Allocation techniques.** Turn-allocation techniques are used to decide how turns are allocated and regulated among participants in a press conference. According to Schegloff (2000), the turn-allocation technique is the basic resource in the organisation of turn-taking. It controls turn change among participants as it comprises a set of rules for the allocation of the next speaker's turn. This is done to ensure smooth transition in interaction. Turn-Allocation techniques in MH370 press conferences were divided into two groups: (a) current speaker selects next speaker and (b) self-selection by next speaker.

Firstly, the current-speaker may select the next-speaker by foregrounding him or her. This can be done in a number of ways, including by looking at that person, or by asking that person a question. In addition, gestures and body language signals such as nodding, eye contact, pointing with the hand were also some common techniques used in selecting the next speaker. An example of current speaker selecting next speaker by using a simple verbal utterance is as shown in the excerpt below:

*Example: MH370 Press Conference (March 12, 2014)*

J: Kadir from RTM	268
S: Yang daripada RTM tadi↓	269

In this example, by saying “*Yang daripada RTM tadi,*” the spokesperson was actually selecting the next speaker by giving the turn to the journalist from RTM. The same goes for the example below, where the spokesperson selected the next speaker by saying “*Soalan kedua tadi apa, repeat?*” which clearly gave the journalist who had spoken before the turn to ask the next question.

**Turn-Taking cues.** These are signals that speakers and hearers send to each other in order to indicate their place with regards to sequence in turn. In this study, the non-verbal cues were widely used in signaling the end of the turn. Several gestures, body motion and eye movements were seen especially from the spokesperson to yield the turn to the journalists. Goodwin and Goodwin (1986, p.72), for instance, pointed out that non-vocal behaviour, such as gazing towards an interlocutor, can give detailed information about the organisation of the current activity. In the material studied, the spokesperson always looked at the person he wished to give the next turn to.

In addition, similar to what he mentioned in relation to gestures and their connection to turn-taking, Schegloff (1996) stated that hand gestures can be used, for example, when a current non-speaker wants to indicate that s/he is willing take the next turn. As shown in the excerpt below, hand

gestures were used together with verbal expression in taking the turn:

*Example: MH370 Press Conference (March 11. 2014)*

J: Channel News. Melissa ((raising hand))	277
---	-----

**Overlaps.** The next mechanism that was found used to regulate turn-taking in the MH370 press conferences was overlapping. Threatening the basic principle of one-talk-at-a-time, overlaps occur when participants simultaneously try to take the turn to speak. Overlap is considered to be of two types: either competitive or non-competitive with respect to turn-taking. Competitive overlaps are produced in overlap when the current speaker has not finished his turn but the floor is prematurely taken by another speaker. Non-competitive overlaps, in turn, refer to overlapping talk whose purpose is not to compete for speakership with the current speaker.

**Interruptions.** Interruptions are situations in the sequence of interaction in which the current speaker has started his or her turn as a second person speaking, through an audible overlap or a pause, thus interrupting the previous speaker. Only two interruptions thus defined were apparent in the present data; these are shown (in boldface) in the following examples.

In the excerpt from March 12, 2014 and March 20, 2014, J interrupted S by posing another question without waiting for S to complete his statement: S responded to J’s question but J interrupted and attempted to pose another question.

*Example: MH370 Press Conference (March 12, 2014)*

J: Excuse me, this is NBC News. You are getting increasing criticism now,	100
you searching east you searching west, you don't seem to know	101
what you saying on radar as you taking told now why they placed that.	102
This is confusion now.	103
S: I think that's not true. I don't think so. I think it's far from it.	104
It only confusion if you wanted it to be seen to be confusion.	105
We make it very clear, that we be very [consistent in our .....]	106
J: [Where you need to search?]	107
S: Yes, in this two areas and we have searching this area.	108

*Institutional Power Portrayed in MH370 Press Conferences*

Institutional power is precisely the power by which an individual is mandated by a public body or institution to take decisions for other participants. In relation to the turn-taking mechanisms discussed earlier, power relation may be arranged according to five analytical themes:

**The role of actors and participants.** In press conferences, many actors with different relationships are allowed to participate, thus raising the competition among them. As Bhatia (2006) has mentioned, when many participants take part in an interaction, they usually intend to present a unified image and this is when the more powerful actors control the situation.

There were three main actors in the MH370 press conferences: the host, the spokesperson and the journalists, all portraying different levels of power. From the data, the host or the chairperson had the exclusive role of holding access to turn-taking; hence, the chairperson regulated the access of others to the floor. The chairperson had the power to close the press conference despite the fact that journalists were still trying to take turns for additional questions. For the journalists, when competition for turns occurred, the one with the greater power had the chance to grab the turn. Greater power in this type of press conference means that the journalist either (a) had a good relationship with the spokesperson or (b) was in a position further forward than the others in seating arrangement.

Holding a bigger role in regulating turns is the spokesperson's advantage. In this case, the spokesperson was the minister or the authority involved. Whenever competition for turn arose, the spokesperson was in control and could decide who to allow to speak, when he/she could speak and for how long. For instance, the spokesperson had the power to accept another question even though the host had closed the session.

**Institutional arrangements and pre-allocated turns.** The institutional arrangement of the MH370 conferences was closely related to the power it portrayed in the interaction. The organisation of press conferences (opening, individual session, question and answer, closing) as well as pre-allocated turns in each sequence portrayed

distinctive power between the participants. Two aspects affecting the power represented in the interaction were (a) scheduled time frame, (b) pre-determined cycle of turns and access to question turns.

Institutional power depicted through the pre-determined cycle of turns in the MH370 press conferences clearly indicated that the journalists had less power during the interaction. The question-answer system and the pre-allocated turns limited the journalists' power to talk more than once. The host (seated at the corner of the hall) regulated turn-taking between the journalists who were allowed to ask questions but seldom given the chance to follow up with another question. The transcript below represents such turns:

*Example: MH370 Press Conference (March 12, 2014)*

J: What do you think how low...	218
S: One.	219
J: : And also (.) sorry ↓	220
S: Yep ↑ (DIRECTS GAZE TO ANOTHER J)	221

**Turn-Taking techniques.** The material studied indicated that verbal utterance in giving turns seemed to give stronger control and power than only gestures and body movements such as in the form of a nod or pointing with the hand. Using a combination of both techniques allowed for stronger control, as demonstrated in one MH370 press conference, where the spokesperson said, *“Okay, Siva”* (while nodding and pointing his finger at the

*person*). A possible explanation for this is that the verbal gesture functions better in commanding the attention of all participants (Thornborrow, 2000).

Furthermore, time is also a significant factor in this interaction situation, as it is in many others. A short pause between a politician's answer and the next speaker can be used by non-selected participants to try to take a turn and get in control of the situation. The absence of pauses can be used by the politician who wants to control the action without competition.

**Overlapping turns.** Overlapping occurs when two participants talk simultaneously. From a power perspective, simultaneous talk can be regarded as power portrayal by the participants. When participants overlap, they are trying to take the turn as much as demonstrating their power over the other.

From the data studied, it can be concluded that when two participants overlapped each other's utterance in the MH370 press conferences, the person either received or lost his turn. This showed a struggle over the desirable territory. The fact that one participant stopped while the other participant continued suggests that the participant who continued had the priority to control the situation. In the MH370 press conferences, when overlap occurred between the spokesperson and the journalist, the spokesperson had complete control and power over the journalist.

**Interruptions.** Interruptions in press conferences were also used to demonstrate power. By interrupting, the participant did not only stop the current speaker from

continuing but also showed his/her power to take the floor.

*Example: MH370 Press Conference (March 12, 2014)*

J: On this perspective plane, did you look on this perspective plane	150
Sir [.....]	151
S: [From this perspective plane I will have to check on the record but as a	152
policy....as a policy, Malaysia Airline ensure that all its fleet	153
complied with the SP and SD issued by the contractor.]	154

The example above shows that the interruption made by the spokesperson was an expression of power representation. The spokesperson, having greater power, was eager to demonstrate his power and hence, interrupted the journalist even before he finished his question.

#### *Conditions and Configurations of Press Conferences*

Press conferences involve more than two participants at a time. To ensure smooth flow of conversation, the MH370 press conferences used consistent conditions, as revealed in our study. The sessions were based on four conditions. Firstly, the journalists who took part in the press conferences were allowed to ask questions and (sometimes) were given the chance to follow up on them. Secondly, the talk in press conferences was organised according to the general principles of turn-taking, where only one participant talked at a time (Sacks, Schegloff, & Jefferson, 1974, p. 699).

Thirdly, there was a time limit for journalists to ask their questions. Upon reaching the limit, journalist was not allowed to pose any more questions. Finally, the MH370 press conferences were an opportunity for the spokesperson to report on progress of the SAR whereas, for the journalists, it was the occasion to ask critical questions. This is in keeping with the general nature of press conferences as being an arena where two institutions meet: politics and journalism, both having missions that conflict with one another, competing, as they claim to do, for representation of the general public.

Besides looking at the conditions, it is also crucial to look at the configuration of the press conferences. As Schegloff (2000) stated, conversations that involve more than two participants create opportunities for many types of simultaneous talk (and interruption) configurations. In the MH370 press conferences, the following configurations were noted:

- a. J1 and S1 talked simultaneously to each other while the others did not interfere. This occurred, for instance, when a politician interrupted the person asking a question with an answer.
- b. J1 and J2 talked simultaneously to S1. This usually occurred when two journalists began to compete to ask questions at the same time and during this time, overlaps and interruptions were obvious.

- c. S1 and S2 talked to J1. This happened sometimes in the MH370 press conferences when two spokespersons had to answer questions that required explanations from different expertise.
- d. J1 talked to S1, who simultaneously talked to S2. This was seen when journalists directed a question to the chairperson, who then turned the floor over to one of his colleagues on the panel who could better answer the question.
- e. J1 talked with S1, who simultaneously talked to J2. This occurred when a journalist directed a question to the spokesperson, while he was already turning the floor over to another journalist.

(J=Journalist, S=Spokesperson)

Based on these configurations, it can be said that the common handling of the MH370 press conferences was complex as it included many competing participants. However, even though the MH370 press conferences were a struggle between the spokesperson and journalists, it was dominated by the spokesperson as he represented the authorities, who had exclusive access to the institution. The spokesperson's power over the institution restricted the journalists from controlling and creating controversy out of the issue.

## CONCLUSION

The present study was carried out, firstly, to shed light on what kind of turn-taking mechanism occurred in the MH370 press conferences and, secondly, to look at how institutional power was depicted in this kind of interaction. The results gained from analysing the interaction suggests that various conversational elements were used in deciding and regulating turn-taking. Furthermore, the results showed that most of the turn-taking mechanisms were used to portray institutional power. It also showed that turn-taking appeared to have a central role in shaping institutional interaction. Therefore, it can be concluded that press conferences are used by politicians as a tool to communicate with the public. Through press conferences, politicians exercise what they want people to believe; this was translated into distrust among the people in relation to the disappearance of MH370. The findings would be of help to a particular authority and organisation on holding an effective press conference with a better understanding of specified discourse structures and turn-taking regulation and thus, both parties (authorities and journalists) can obtain maximum benefit from the press conference. This can minimise misunderstanding of the authorities as well as the issue.

The study can be further explored by expanding the data from only the Search and Rescue phase to include data from the Search and Recovery phase after April 28, 2014 in the analysis. Having more data

may add richness to the existing study. With additional data, new turn-taking mechanisms and power representation methods may be found. Other than that, future researchers can also compare data between the two phases to look at the differences they may reveal.

In conclusion, the findings contributed to understanding the nature of institutional interaction and how power is represented in press conferences. The study also provided some insights into turn-taking mechanisms of a specialised context, which is still a fresh field for future research.

## REFERENCES

- Bhatia, A. (2006). Critical discourse analysis of political press conferences. *Discourse and Society*, 17(2), 173-203.
- Clayman, S., & Heritage, J. (2002). Questioning presidents: Journalistic deference and adversarialness in the press conferences of Eisenhower and Reagan. *Journal of Communication*, 52(4), 749-775.
- Ekström, M. (2006). Interviewing, quoting, and the development of modern news journalism: A study of the Swedish press 1915-1995. In M. Ekström, A. Kroon, & M. Nylund (Eds), *News from the Interview Society* (pp. 21-48). Göteborg: Nordicom.
- Eshbaugh-Soha, M. (2003). Presidential press conferences over time. *American Journal of Political Science*, 47(2), 348-353.
- Fairclough, N. (2003). *Analysing discourse: Textual analysis for social research*. Routledge: London.
- Goodwin, M., & Goodwin, C. (1986). Gesture and co-participation in the activity of searching for a word. *Semiotica*, 62(1-2), 51-76.
- Heritage, J. (1997). Conversation analysis and institutional talk: Analyzing data. In D. Silverman (Ed.), *Qualitative research: Theory, method and practice*, (pp. 161-182). London: Sage Publication Inc.
- Jefferson, G. (1984). Transcription notation. In J. Atkinson, & J. Heritage (Eds.), *Structures of Social Interaction*, (pp. 191-221). New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Maxwell, J. A., & Drew, P. (1979). *Order in court: The organization of verbal interaction in judicial settings*. United States: Humanities Press, Inc.
- Maxwell, J. A., & Heritage, J. (Eds.). (1984). Structures of social action: Studies in conversation analysis. *Sociology*, 19(4), 624-626.
- Sacks, H. (1984). Notes on methodology. In J. M. Atkinson, & J. Heritage (Eds.), *Structures of social action: Studies in conversation analysis* (pp. 21-27). Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.
- Sacks, H., & Jefferson, G. (1992). *Lectures on conversation*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Sacks, H., Schegloff, E. A., & Jefferson, G. (1974). A simplest systematics for the organization of turn-taking for conversation. *Language*, 50, 696-735.
- Schegloff, E. A. (1996). On some gestures' relation to talk. In J. M. Atkinson, & J. Heritage, (Eds.), *Structures of social action: Studies in conversation analysis* (pp. 266-296). Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.
- Schegloff, E. A. (2000). Overlapping talk and the organization of turn-taking for conversation. *Language in Society*, 29(1), 1-63.

- Thurnborrow, J. (2002). *Power talk: Language and interaction in institutional discourse*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Tunsall, J. (1970). *The Westminster lobby correspondents: A sociological study of national political journalism*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

## **Functions of Code-Switching: A Case Study of a Mixed Malay-Chinese Family in the Home Domain**

**Siti Hamin Stapa\* and Nurul Nadiah Begum Sahabudin Khan**

*School of Language Studies and Linguistics, Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities,  
Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 43600 Bangi, Selangor, Malaysia*

### **ABSTRACT**

In the social environment of Malaysia various languages are used in daily communication. It is common for Malaysians of the same linguistic background or Malaysians of different ethnicities, educational background or social strata to pepper their conversation with linguistic interference, interlingual code-mixing and code-switching. Code switching is a phenomenon that occurs in both formal and informal settings. Since the population of Malaysia is ethnically and linguistically heterogeneous, intercultural marriages among Malaysians occurs regardless of ethnic background and religious orientation. Marriage is viewed differently by couples of interracial marriages. The different perspective on marriage may reflect the linguistic choices of couples when they communicate with their spouses in the home. Studies have found that code-switching in interracial marriages in Malaysia occurs in informal settings in the home domain especially in verbal communication regardless of the family's ethnic background, be it Malay, Chinese or Indian. This research focusses on the types and functions of code-switching in a mixed Malay-Chinese family in the home domain. The types of code-switching were analysed using Poplack's (1980) types of code-switching while the functions of code-switching were further analysed using a conceptual framework developed by the researcher that was adapted from Appel and Muysken's (2005) functional model of code-switching and Hoffman's (1991) functions of code-switching. .

*Keywords:* Code-switching, code-mixing, multilingual, linguistics interference, Malay-Chinese family, home domain

### **ARTICLE INFO**

*Article history:*

Received: 21 September 2015

Accepted: 15 January 2016

*E-mail addresses:*

sitihami@ukm.edu.my (Siti Hamin Stapa),

nadiah\_begum@yahoo.com (Nurul Nadiah Begum Sahabudin Khan)

\* Corresponding author

### **INTRODUCTION**

Muysken (2001, p. 7) defined code-switching as "the alternative use by bilinguals of two or

more languages in the same conversation.” The phenomenon of code-switching is the norm in Malaysia; Malaysians code-switch between Bahasa Malaysia (national language) and English (second language) in their daily conversations. It is likely to occur in both formal and informal domains wherever communication takes place. It is manifestly clear that code-switching in multilingual Malaysia has become an entrenched code, and like any other language practice, performs a broad range of functions. This article focusses on the types and functions of code-switching in a mixed Malay-Chinese family in the home domain. The purpose of the study is to examine the code-switching behaviour that occurred in their conversations. The types of code-switching were analysed using Poplack’s (1980) types of code-switching, while the functions of code-switching were further analysed using a conceptual framework developed by the researcher that was adapted from Appel and Muysken’s (2005) functional model of code-switching and Hoffman’s (1991) functions of code-switching.

The formal categorisation of code-switching, according to Poplack (1980; p. 605), defines three types of code-switching: Tag-switching, Inter-sentential switching and Intra-sentential switching. Tag switching refers to the insertion of tags such as in sentences that are completely in the other language. It involves attaching a tag from one language to an utterance entirely in the other language (Hamers & Blanc, 2000; p. 259). Tag-like switches are at the bottom of

the scale. These include interjections, fillers, tags and idiomatic expressions. Tags are isolated words or phrases that are not related syntactically to the rest of the utterance. Examples of tags are “you know”, “I mean” and “right”. The occurrence of a tag does not break any grammatical rule. Inter-sentential code-switching involves switching at sentential boundaries (MacSwan, 1999; p. 1), where one clause or sentence is in one language and the next clause or sentence is in the other. The switched units are larger segments; more knowledge is required to produce this kind of switch. Meanwhile, intra-sentential code-switching takes place within the clause boundary (Hamers & Blanc, 2000, p. 260).

Malaysia is a multi-ethnic, multilingual country with a population of about 28 million people and at least 100 languages and dialects. The population of Malaysia is ethnically and linguistically heterogenous. It is made up of Bumiputra (65.1%), of whom the Malays are the majority, Chinese (26%), Indians (7.7%) and other ethnic groups (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2010 July 2). Most Malaysians are bilingual, as Malay is the national language and the main medium of instruction in state schools, while English is a second language for many Malaysians. David (2003) stated that in Malaysia, code-switching among the Malays, Chinese, Indians and other ethnic and linguistic groups has become the norm. According to Lim (2012), most Malay adolescents are bilingual, and use Malay and English as their main languages. Saravanan (1999) mentioned that English

is always preferred with Chinese parents while Malay families use their community language, which is Malay for worship and interaction with kith and kin.

Since the population of Malaysia is ethnically and linguistically heterogeneous, intercultural marriages among Malaysians occurs regardless of ethnic background and religious orientation. David (2003, p. 218) defined mixed marriages as marriages between spouses of different cultural backgrounds and languages who may have different values, beliefs, customs, traditions or lifestyles. David (2001), Jawakhir (2006), Jariah Mohd Jan (2006) and Kuang (2002) found that code-switching in interracial marriages in Malaysia occurs in informal settings in the home domain especially in verbal communication regardless of the family's ethnic background, be it Malay, Chinese or Indian.

Although code-switching in interracial marriages is a common phenomenon, limited research has been done particularly looking at the code-switching behaviour in interracial marriages between the two major races in Malaysia: the Malays and the Chinese. Hence, this study focussed on the code-switching phenomenon that occurs in verbal interactions in a mixed Malay-Chinese family in the home domain. David (2002) in her studies mentioned that it would be interesting to analyse the types, patterns and functions of code-switching that occur in this type of family.

Mixed marriages have influenced the language choice and patterns of code-switching and to some extent, propagated

shift. Each language carries its own functions in communication. For instance, David and Nambiar (2002) stated that some of the Malayalee Catholics in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, who had contracted mixed marriages communicated more in English. They were more comfortable expressing themselves in English. Meanwhile David's (2003) study on the offspring of Pakistani men and their Kelantanese wives in Machang, Kelantan, Malaysia showed that these families tended to communicate more in Kelantanese Malay. However, the Pakistani men tended to code-switch, using their mother tongue, when expressing dissatisfaction.

#### *Functions of Code-Switching*

Code-switching has been the topic of interest in linguistic research because of its specialty in natural occurrence in the use of languages by bilinguals (Ariffin & Rafik Galea, 2009). The motivations, functions and reasons for code-switching have been studied widely by many researchers from various linguistic perspectives. According to Hoffman (1991), there are 10 functions of code-switching:

1. To talk about a particular topic
2. To quote somebody else
3. To provide emphasis about something (to express solidarity)
4. To make an interjection (by inserting sentence fillers or sentence connectors)
5. To repeat in order to clarify
6. To express group identity

7. To show intention of clarifying speech content for interlocutor
8. To soften or strengthen a request or command
9. To meet a real lexical need or to compensate for lack of an equal translation
10. To exclude others when a comment is intended for an exclusive audience

Based on the functions listed by Hoffman (1991), this study intended to analyse the functions of code-switching behaviour in the conversations of a Malay-Chinese family in the home domain. It was believed that there would be lack of explanations and categories of the functions if the analysis were based on only one functional model as each functional model has certain functions that may be inappropriate for use in analysing the code-switching behaviour in this study. For the purpose of the study, seven functions were selected:

1. Phatic
2. Poetic
3. Issues discussed
4. Quoting somebody else
5. Being emphatic about something
6. Interjection
7. Real lexical need

Appel and Muysken (1987) proposed a functional model for code-switching based on the work of Jakobson (1960) and Halliday (1964). This model suggests that code-switching serves various functions in interactions between individuals. As

suggested by Hoffman (1991), the reasons for bilinguals to code-switch depend on the situation in which bilinguals are prone to code-switch. For instance, a bilingual may code-switch when quoting someone or when needing to provide emphasis in a conversation. It is believed that among all these suggested reasons, the ultimate reason for code-switching is to achieve effective communication between the writer and reader, or the speaker and receiver.

## RESEARCH DESIGN

This study is an ethnographic research study and it is purely qualitative in nature. This type of study involves describing, analysing and interpreting a culture-sharing group's shared patterns of behaviour, beliefs and language that develop over time. According to Stake (1995; cited in Creswell, 2013; p. 465), case study researchers may focus on a programme, event or activity among individuals rather than a group per se. In this study, the 'case' involved an interracial Malay-Chinese family. The number of participants in this study was four: the parents and their two children, a daughter and a son.

The mother was Chinese. English was her first language (L1) and Bahasa Malaysia was her second language (L2). She was educated in an English school and English was the medium of instruction in her family since young. She was also an English teacher in a secondary school in Perlis. However, she was also proficient and fluent in Bahasa Malaysia as she was married to a Malay and has been living in a largely

Malay community for almost 24 years. Meanwhile, the father's first language (L1) was Bahasa Malaysia while English was his second language (L2). However, he was proficient and fluent in English as he went to an English school during his secondary years. He was teaching Mathematics in a secondary school in Perlis at the time. He was 51 years old at the time of this research. Bahasa Malaysia was the son's first language (L1) while English was his second language (L2). As for the daughter, Bahasa Malaysia was her first language (L1) while English was her second language (L2).

The recordings of the conversations took place at the family's home in Arau, Perlis during dinner and leisure hours when all of them were present. The topic of the conversations was not pre-determined and the conversations were naturally-occurring situations. All the participants were informed that their conversations would be recorded. They had given their consent for their conversations to be recorded. However, they were not informed about the purpose of the recordings so as to preserve the authenticity of the conversations in order to avoid circumstances where code-switching occurrences were planned in their conversations.

### **DATA COLLECTION**

As proposed by Creswell (2009) and Miles (2011), the data for this study came from the recordings of the conversations that the researcher collected to help understand the central phenomenon under study. A

few weeks before the data collection, all the family members were informed and verification was given about the context of this study, which required the recording of personal conversations of the family in the home domain so as to maintain researcher etiquette. However, objectives were kept confidential to avoid cases such as self-initiated code-switching in their conversations. Spradley (1990) proposed that observations represent a frequently used form of data collection, where researchers are able to assume different roles in the process. In this study, the researcher adapted her role to the situation. The researcher entered the site and observed the code-switching patterns as a non-participant. All the family members agreed to contribute data for this study. Four audio-recorded conversations of 25 minutes each of the family in the home domain were recorded. The conversations, with a high density of code-switching occurrences or words within and between the sentences, were then transcribed using Jefferson's transcription convention. The data were then analysed based on the types and reasons for code-switching based on the framework.

### **DATA ANALYSIS**

The theory of Matrix Language Frame by Myers-Scotton (1993) was adopted by the researcher in investigating the patterns of code-switching in this study. The reason this model was used was due to its status as the fundamental model of code-switching that juxtaposes the matrix language (ML) and

embedded language (EL). The MLF model suggests that there is a dominant language that provides a morphosyntactic frame for bilingual utterances and this dominant language is the matrix language (ML). The other language that acts as a guest in the utterance is the embedded language (EL).

After analysing the data based on the model, the researcher was able to classify the types of code-switching in the data collection based on Poplack's (1980) patterns of code-switching. These were: 1) Tag-switching: Tag-switching involves attaching a tag from one language to an utterance entirely in the other language (Hamers & Blanc, 2000:259). These include interjections, fillers, tags and idiomatic expressions; 2) Inter-sentential switching, which involves switching at sentential boundaries (MacSwan, 1999), where one clause or sentence is in one language and the next clause or sentence is in another, and; 3) Intra-sentential switching, which takes place within the clause boundary (Hamers & Blanc, 2000:260).

### THE FUNCTIONS OF CODE-SWITCHING

A comprehensive study on motivations, functions and reasons for code-switching has been done by a number of linguists and researchers from different linguistic perspectives. However, Auer (1988) argued that code-switching is used in a creative way and its functions should be boundless without a pre-established set of functional categories. It was found that the four participants in this study code-

switched in their conversations for a few reasons whether it was done consciously or subconsciously. The following discussions and examples explain more about the reasons why the interracial Malay-Chinese family in this study resorted to code-switching. The functions and the examples of code-switching in the family's conversations are as below:

#### *Issues Discussed*

Based on the analysis of the recorded conversations, it was found that the issues that were discussed in the conversations can be a factor that contributed to the reason for code-switching. In this study the family code-switched to the English Language when they were discussing health (diet), adopting a baby and news from a relative. However, Bahasa Malaysia was used when discussing current issues that were happening in the country. The explanations of the code-switching occurrences when talking about a particular topic can be seen as below:

**Diet.** The excerpt of the family's conversations below shows that the family code-switched from Bahasa Malaysia to English when talking about diet. They were more comfortable expressing their opinions regarding diet in the English Language. It can be clearly seen that the mother and the son automatically code-switched to the English Language when they talked about diet. Diet is a loan word in Malay; hence, the whole sentence was switched into English while discussing the topic.

*Conversation 1:*

Mother: Pandai-pandai je eh semua orang.  
Why do I need to diet? Slim already ma.

Translation: All of you are talking nonsense.  
Why do I need to diet? I'm already slim.

Son: Baju lama semua tak muat, right? heh  
heh You better diet. heh heh

Translation: It seems like you can't fit into  
your old clothes, right? heh heh You'd  
better diet. heh heh

Mother: Ada la yang tak muat. You really  
think I should diet?

Translation: I can't fit into some. Do you  
really think that I should go on a diet?

**Adopting a baby.** The excerpt of the family's conversations below shows that the family code-switched from Bahasa Malaysia to English when talking about adopting a baby. They were more comfortable talking about the adoption process in the English language. It can be clearly seen that the father and the daughter automatically code-switched to the English Language when they discussed adopting a baby.

*Conversation 2:*

Father: Kami ingat nak adopt baby la.  
Hampa semua rasa macam mana?

Translation: We're thinking of adopting a  
baby. What do you think?

Daughter: Apa abah cakap tadi? You want  
to adopt a baby?

Translation: What did you say? You want to  
adopt a baby?

**Current issues.** The excerpt of the family's conversations below shows that the family code-switched from English to Bahasa Malaysia when talking about current issues. In this case, they were more comfortable discussing the rising price of goods such as oil and sugar in the English Language. It can be clearly seen that the father, son and mother automatically code-switched to the English Language whenever they were talking about the spiraling price of goods.

*Conversation 4: Line 92*

Father: As long as I'm still breathing, don't  
worry. Eh, do you know, lately semua  
barang naik harga. Minyak pun naik.

Translation: As long as I'm still breathing,  
don't worry. All the prices for goods has  
gone up lately including oil.

Son: Tula, gula pun naik kan?

Translation: The price for sugar has gone  
up too right?

Mother: Teruk betul. Semua naik harga  
barang. Gaji tak naik pun.

Translation: That's horrible. All the prices  
of goods have gone up except for our salary.

**Quoting somebody else.** When the participants quoted somebody, they continued to speak in the same language. This was probably because they wanted to deliver the story vividly and as interestingly as possible by mimicking the tone and style of speech of the original speaker. In addition, they wanted to get the meanings across to the others as clearly as possible by trying to retain the original and exact words used by the speaker whom they were quoting. Hoffman (1991) has suggested that people enjoy quoting famous expressions or sayings of well-known figures. In this study, this was found to be true as the participants code-switched when quoting somebody else and when relaying famous expressions. The explanations and examples of the situations can be seen as below. In the conversation below, the son code-switched to English when he quoted his friend as he wanted to use the language used by his friend. This was probably because he wanted to retain the original and exact words used by his friend in order to deliver the original meaning of his friend, Bella's words.

*Conversation 1:*

Son: No lah. Tak berani. Nanti takut Mira dengan Bella gaduh. Ameer serabut la kalau orang perempuan gaduh-gaduh ni. Malu la kat orang..Tau apa dia cakap? "I really like you, Ameer. I don't know why, tapi I rasa I boleh je nak tunggu you kalau you rasa I ada chance la."

Translation: I dare not. I'm afraid that Bella and Mira will have a fight. I don't like it

when girls start to fight. I'm embarrassed. Do you know what she said? "I really like you, I don't know why but I think I can wait for you if I stand a chance."

Based on the conversation below, the father code-switched to English to quote a common expression, "like cats and dogs", because the saying best suits the meaning that the father wanted to convey to his children as they were always arguing with each other. This expression is a Malay proverb that would lose its meaning if translated into another language. Therefore, it can be said that the father code-switched to English to quote a common expression that best explained the situation of the moment.

The conversation below shows that the father code-switched to Bahasa Malaysia to quote a common expression. This was probably because "perigi cari timba" was the expression that best explained what the father was trying to describe as being the behaviour of modern women. This expression is a Malay proverb that would lose its meaning if it were translated into another language. The expression that the father used meant that modern women seemed willing to initiate a relationship with a man, whereas the reverse used to be true at one time.

*Conversation 2:*

Father: No wonder la. So weird girls nowadays. Perigi cari timba sungguh la hai.

Translation: No wonder. Girls are so weird nowadays (Malay proverb: women willing to initiate a relationship with men)

**Being emphatic about something.**

Based on the recorded conversations, it was found that the participants tended to code-switch when they were being emphatic or showing sympathy for something. They probably code-switched because the code-switched words that they used to express empathy may have a greater impact on the listeners. According to Hoffman (1991), people code-switch, either intentionally or unintentionally, to their first language when they want to be emphatic about something. The explanations and examples of this occurrence can be seen below:

In Example 1, the mother unintentionally switched from Bahasa Malaysia to English when she expressed empathy for her daughter, who was down with fever. She was saying that her daughter was having a fever and suddenly switched to English, her first language, when she started showing sympathy for her daughter's condition as she was more comfortable expressing sympathy for her daughter in her first language, English.

*Example 1:*

Mother: Itula. Mama dah agak dah. Adik ni demam ni. Pity you. Your voice also different already.

Translation: That's why. I knew it. You are having a fever. Pity you. Your voice sounds different.

In Example 2, the father unintentionally switched from his second language, English, to his first language, Bahasa Malaysia when

he was explaining about the previous year's burglary in the neighbourhood. He was speaking in English when he switched to Bahasa Malaysia when he began talking about a neighbour, Limah, whose house had been burgled. He was more comfortable expressing his sympathy for Limah in his native or first language, Bahasa Malaysia.

*Example 2:*

Father: Remember last year's case? But somebody injured last year. Tapi, kesian la kat Limah. Dahla baru keluar hospital, dah kena pulak macam ni.

Translation: Remember last year's case? But somebody got injured last year. I really pity Limah. She had just returned from hospital.

**Interjection.** Interjections or sentence fillers can be described as words that are used to express strong feeling or sudden emotion. Hoffman (1991) suggested that language switching among bilinguals or multilinguals can sometimes mark an interjection or sentence connector. It may happen intentionally or unintentionally. Gumperz (1992; p. 77) considered this function as an "interjection or sentence filler". In this study, this function was seen in the examples below.

The mother used an English expression, "Excuse me!" to express her anger towards her husband's statement of wanting to get married again. Her earlier sentence was in Bahasa Malaysia. She code-switched to English when she interjected her objection.

The interjection expressed her sudden and strong feelings of surprise, anger and annoyance in response to her husband's statement.

*Conversation 1:*

Mother: Apa awak cakap? Excuse me! Nak kahwin?

Translation: What did you say? Excuse me! You want to get married?

In the example below, the daughter used an English word 'Oh, god!' as an expression of surprise. Her earlier sentence was in Bahasa Malaysia. She code-switched to English to register her sudden and strong feelings of surprise and shock because her brother had just found out that their mother had bought her a new handphone, a Samsung Galaxy Note 2, a fact that her mother was supposed to have kept secret from him.

*Conversation 2:*

Daughter: Tapi adik tak bermaksud la. Oh god! Kantoi.

Translation: I really didn't mean to do it. Oh, god! I'm busted.

**Lexical need or no equal translation.**

Based on the analysis of the recorded conversations, it was found that the participants also tended to code-switch to another language because there was no equal translation for the word that would

best describe their thoughts, experiences and feelings. According to Hoffman (1991), this happened because there was no equal translation for the word in another language. Saying it in another language would have sounded very formal and awkward as such words are often slang or colloquial language. For example, the word "pandai-pandai", "poyo" and "pukau" in the examples below are switched in the middle of the sentence as there were no corresponding English words that could replace them.

In the example below, the son code-switched from English to Bahasa Malaysia because the expression "pandai-pandai" was the best word to express wise management of something; in this context, he was referring to time. He code-switched as there was no equal translation for this colloquial term that is often used in informal conversations.

*Conversation 1:*

Son: Don't worry, pandai-pandai la kami manage time.

Translation: Don't worry, we know how to manage time.

In the example below, the mother code-switched from English to Bahasa Malaysia because the expression "pukau-pukau", a colloquial term often used in informal conversations, was the best to refer to black magic. Black magic is commonly associated with Malay culture; thus, the word "pukau" is commonly used in everyday conversation in direct association with Malay culture.

*Conversation 2:*

Mother: This is so scary la I think. Pukau-pukau ni dangerous la.

Translation: This is so scary la I think. This black magic thingy is dangerous la.

**Phatic function.** From the analysis of the recorded conversations, it was found that the participants tended to code-switch to perform the phatic function as well. This is the use of code-switching to show a change in tone and to emphasise parts of a conversation that are important. Muysken (2005) mentioned that this change of tone can indicate whether the content of the conversation is private, hostile, friendly or even formal. For example, “You’re welcome,” is not intended to convey the message that the hearer is welcome; it is a phatic response to being thanked, which in turn is a phatic whose function is to acknowledge the receipt of a benefit. Phatic function proved to be a function of code-switching in the conversations of the family studied. The explanations and examples of phatic function for code-switching can be given below:

In Example 1 below, the mother code-switched from Bahasa Malaysia to English when she reprimanded her children for always fighting. Raising her voice, she code-switched and used the expression, “pissed off” in the middle of the sentence to show that she was really mad at them. The change of tone here indicated that she was serious and angry. This was to emphasise that she

could not tolerate her children’s constant bickering.

*Conversation 1:*

Mother: Eh, sudah-sudah. Awat yang asyik bergaduh Hm:m, ma pissed off dah ni!

Translation: Eh, enough enough. Why do you keep fighting. I’m pissed off already.

In the example below, the daughter code-switched from Bahasa Malaysia to English and raised her tone when she insisted that she would not have her buttock injected by a doctor when she switched from Bahasa Malaysia to English in saying emphatically, “No way.” The change and rise in tone indicated that she was scared and was ready to defend herself.

*Conversation 2:*

Daughter: Cucuk? Bontot? No way! I don’t want. Please.

Translation: Inject? My butt? No way! I don’t want. Please.

**Poetic function.** The analysis of the recorded conversations also showed that the participants code-switched for poetic functions as well. According to Muysken (2005), switching in this case involves words, puns or jokes in different languages for the purpose of amusement and entertainment and also to make fun or jokes in context. The analysis of the conversation between the participants showed that there were several

instances when the family code-switched to perform the poetic function, as seen below:

In Example 1 below, the mother code-switched from Bahasa Malaysia to English. The words “chubby”, “round face” and “really round” were used by the mother to tease her daughter. She switched to English for the purpose of providing amusement as she was teasing her daughter.

*Conversation 1:*

Mother: Comel sungguh! Dia chubby, round face, really round macam adik. Heh.

Translation: The baby is really cute! He is chubby, round face, really round just like you. heh

In the example below, the son code-switched from English to Bahasa Malaysia. The term “sarung nangka” was used by the son to tease his mother, meaning that she would look funny if she wore her old clothes, which would be too tight for her now. He code-switched for the purpose of providing amusement by teasing his mother.

*Conversation 3:*

Son: You better diet. heh heh. Later, you have to throw all your clothes. If not, jadi sarung nangka! heh heh

Translation: You better go on a diet. heh heh Or else you will have to throw away all your clothes. The clothes will then be too tight for you to wear.

## CONCLUSION

The article has highlighted the functions of code-switching, which occurred in a mixed Malay-Chinese family. The findings revealed the functions of code-switching through examples and provided explanations for each one. The functions for code-switching in all four recorded conversations were carefully explored and it was found that the four participants in this study code-switched for several reasons either consciously or subconsciously. In considering the reasons for code-switching in this interracial Malay-Chinese family in their home domain, the data were analysed based on a conceptual framework developed by the researcher. Five functions of code-switching were adapted from Hoffman (1991), namely, issues discussed, quoting somebody else, being emphatic about something, interjection and because of real lexical need. Appel and Musyken (2005) proposed a functional model of code-switching, and two functions were adopted in this study: phatic function and poetic function. The results and data from this study provide new ideas on the functions of code-switching in a mixed Malay-Chinese family in the home domain and at the same time, provide awareness that there are different types of code-switching patterns that occur expectedly and unexpectedly in certain situations in order to perform different functions. The results also help to identify various functions of code-switching such as to express emotions, to provide further elaboration, to provide clarification and to provide emphasis.

This study also created awareness on the language phenomenon of code-switching in interracial families, especially in Malay-Chinese families. This research fills the gap in research into code-switching and also contributes to new findings on code-switching in a mixed Malay-Chinese family in Malaysia.

## REFERENCES

- Appel, R., & Musyken, P. (1987). *Language contact and bilingualism*. London: Edward Arnold.
- Appel, R., & Muysken, P. (2006). *Language contact and bilingualism*. Netherlands: Amsterdam University Press.
- Ariffin, K., & Rafik-Galea, S. (2009). Code-switching as a communication device in conversation. *Language & Society*, 5. Retrieved from <http://www.crisaps.org/newsletter/summer2014>
- Asmah Haji Omar (1991). *The linguistic scenery in Malaysia*. Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka.
- Asmah, Haji Omar (1987). *Malay in its sociocultural context*. Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka.
- Auer, P. (1988). A conversation analytic approach to code-switching and transfer. In M. Heller (Ed.), *Codeswitching: Anthropological and sociolinguistic perspectives* (pp. 187-214). Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Creswell, J. W. (2009). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (3rd ed.). Los Angeles: Sage Publications, Inc.
- David, M. K. (2001). *The Sindhis in Malaysia: A sociolinguistic study*. Michigan: The University of Michigan.
- David, M. K. (2003). The Pakistani community in Machang, Kelantan: Reasons for language shift. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, 161(1), 47-54.
- David, M. K., & Nambiar, M. K. (2002). Exogamous marriages and out-migration: Language shift of the Malayalees in Malaysia. In M. K. David (Ed.), *Methodological issues in language maintenance and language shift studies* (pp. 125-134). Frankfurt: Peter Lang.
- Department of Statistics Malaysia. (2010, July 2). *Department of Statistics Malaysia*. Retrieved from <http://www.statistics.gov.my>
- Gardner-Chloros, P., & Edwards, M. (2004). Assumptions behind grammatical approaches to codeswitching: When the blueprint is a red herring. *Transactions of the Philological Society*, 102(1), 103-129.
- Gumperz, J. J. (1982). *Conversational codeswitching in discourse strategies*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.
- Halliday, M. A. K. (1978). *Language as social semiotic*. London: Edward Arnold.
- Hamers, J. F., & Blanc, M. (2000). *Bilinguality and bilingualism*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
- Hoffmann, C. (1991). *An introduction to bilingualism*. London: Longman
- Jariah Mohd Jan (2006). Let me finish: Language and power interplay in public discussion. *Jurnal Bahasa Jendela Alam*, 3, 378-405.
- Jawakhir Mior Jaafar (2006). Getting Tok to understand: Talk management strategies in conversations troubled by hearing impairment. In M. K. David (Ed.), *Language choices and discourse of Malaysian families* (pp. 119-150). Petaling Jaya, Malaysia: Strategic Information and Research Development Centre.

- Kuang C. H. (2006). Signs of becoming bilingual: A study of a Malaysian child under two. In M. K. David (Ed.), *Language choices and discourse of Malaysian families: Case studies of families in Kuala Lumpur* (pp. 76-100). Petaling Jaya: Strategic Information and Research Development Centre.
- Lim, C. C. (2008). *Language choices of Malaysian youth: a case study*. (Unpublished Master dissertation). University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur.
- MacSwan, J. (1999). *A minimalist approach to intrasentential code switching*. New York: Garland Press.
- Muysken, P. (2000). *Bilingual speech: A typology of code-mixing*. Cambridge: CUP.
- Myers-Scotton, C. (2002). *Contact linguistics: Bilingual encounters and grammatical outcomes*. Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Poplack, S. (1980). Sometimes I'll start a sentence in Spanish y termino en espaniol: Toward a typology of code-switching. *Linguistics*, 18(7-8), 581-618.
- Saravanan, S. (1999, December). *A survey of bilingual language networks* (pp. 1-3). Paper presented at MERA-ERA Joint Conference, Malacca, Malaysia.

**REFEREES FOR THE PERTANIK  
JOURNAL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES**

**VOL. 24(S) FEB. 2016**

*Special Edition*

**Language Evolution and Revolution: The Past, Present and Future**

The Editorial Board of the Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities wishes to thank the following:

**Bromeley Philip**  
*(UiTM, Malaysia)*

**Kuang Ching Hei**  
*(UM, Malaysia)*

**Hashim Musa**  
*(UPM, Malaysia)*

**Mohamad Subakir Mohd Yasin**  
*(UKM, Malaysia)*

**Hazidi Abdul Hamid**  
*(OUM, Malaysia)*

**Shanthini Pillai**  
*(UKM, Malaysia)*

**Intan Safinaz Zainudin**  
*(UKM, Malaysia)*

**Siti Nuraishah Ahmad**  
*(IIUM, Malaysia)*

---

IIUM - International Islamic University Malaysia  
OUM - Open University Malaysia  
UiTM - Universiti Teknologi MARA Malaysia  
UKM - Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia  
UM - Universiti Malaya  
UPM - Universiti Putra Malaysia

---

While every effort has been made to include a complete list of referees for the period stated above, however if any name(s) have been omitted unintentionally or spelt incorrectly, please notify the Chief Executive Editor, *Pertanika* Journals at [nayan@upm.my](mailto:nayan@upm.my).

Any inclusion or exclusion of name(s) on this page does not commit the *Pertanika* Editorial Office, nor the UPM Press or the University to provide any liability for whatsoever reason.



### **INSTRUCTIONS TO AUTHORS** (Manuscript Preparation & Submission Guidelines)

Revised: August 2015

*We aim for excellence, sustained by a responsible and professional approach to journal publishing.  
We value and support our authors in the research community.*

Please read the Pertanika guidelines and follow these instructions carefully. Manuscripts not adhering to the instructions will be returned for revision without review. The Chief Executive Editor reserves the right to return manuscripts that are not prepared in accordance with these guidelines.

## **MANUSCRIPT PREPARATION**

### **Manuscript Types**

*Pertanika* accepts submission of mainly **four** types of manuscripts for peer-review.

#### **1. REGULAR ARTICLE**

Regular articles are full-length original empirical investigations, consisting of introduction, materials and methods, results and discussion, conclusions. Original work must provide references and an explanation on research findings that contain new and significant findings.

*Size:* Generally, these are expected to be between 6 and 12 journal pages (excluding the abstract, references, tables and/or figures), a maximum of 80 references, and an abstract of 100–200 words.

#### **2. REVIEW ARTICLE**

These report critical evaluation of materials about current research that has already been published by organizing, integrating, and evaluating previously published materials. It summarizes the status of knowledge and outline future directions of research within the journal scope. Review articles should aim to provide systemic overviews, evaluations and interpretations of research in a given field. Re-analyses as meta-analysis and systemic reviews are encouraged. The manuscript title must start with "Review Article:".

*Size:* These articles do not have an expected page limit or maximum number of references, should include appropriate figures and/or tables, and an abstract of 100–200 words. Ideally, a review article should be of 7 to 8 printed pages.

#### **3. SHORT COMMUNICATIONS**

They are timely, peer-reviewed and brief. These are suitable for the publication of significant technical advances and may be used to:

- (a) report new developments, significant advances and novel aspects of experimental and theoretical methods and techniques which are relevant for scientific investigations within the journal scope;
- (b) report/discuss on significant matters of policy and perspective related to the science of the journal, including 'personal' commentary;
- (c) disseminate information and data on topical events of significant scientific and/or social interest within the scope of the journal.

The manuscript title must start with "*Brief Communication:*".

*Size:* These are usually between 2 and 4 journal pages and have a maximum of three figures and/or tables, from 8 to 20 references, and an abstract length not exceeding 100 words. Information must be in short but complete form and it is not intended to publish preliminary results or to be a reduced version of Regular or Rapid Papers.

#### 4. OTHERS

Brief reports, case studies, comments, concept papers, Letters to the Editor, and replies on previously published articles may be considered.

**PLEASE NOTE: NO EXCEPTIONS WILL BE MADE FOR PAGE LENGTH.**

#### Language Accuracy

Pertanika **emphasizes** on the linguistic accuracy of every manuscript published. Articles must be in **English** and they must be competently written and argued in clear and concise grammatical English. Contributors are strongly advised to have the manuscript checked by a colleague with ample experience in writing English manuscripts or a competent English language editor.

Author(s) **must provide a certificate** confirming that their manuscripts have been adequately edited. A proof from a recognised editing service should be submitted together with the cover letter at the time of submitting a manuscript to Pertanika. **All editing costs must be borne by the author(s)**. This step, taken by authors before submission, will greatly facilitate reviewing, and thus publication if the content is acceptable.

Linguistically hopeless manuscripts will be rejected straightaway (e.g., when the language is so poor that one cannot be sure of what the authors really mean). This process, taken by authors before submission, will greatly facilitate reviewing, and thus publication if the content is acceptable.

#### MANUSCRIPT FORMAT

The paper should be submitted in one column format with at least 4cm margins and 1.5 line spacing throughout. Authors are advised to use Times New Roman 12-point font and *MS Word* format.

##### 1. Manuscript Structure

Manuscripts in general should be organised in the following order:

##### Page 1: Running title

This page should **only** contain the running title of your paper. The running title is an abbreviated title used as the running head on every page of the manuscript. The running title should not exceed 60 characters, counting letters and spaces.

##### Page 2: Author(s) and Corresponding author information.

This page should contain the **full title** of your paper not exceeding 25 words, with name(s) of all the authors, institutions and corresponding author's name, institution and full address (Street address, telephone number (including extension), hand phone number, and e-mail address) for editorial correspondence. First and corresponding authors must be clearly indicated.

The names of the authors may be abbreviated following the international naming convention. e.g. Salleh, A.B.<sup>1</sup>, Tan, S.G<sup>2\*</sup>., and Sapuan, S.M<sup>3</sup>.

**Authors' addresses.** Multiple authors with different addresses must indicate their respective addresses separately by superscript numbers:

George Swan<sup>1</sup> and Nayan Kanwal<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Biology, Faculty of Science, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina, USA.,

<sup>2</sup>Office of the Deputy Vice Chancellor (R&I), Universiti Putra Malaysia, Serdang, Malaysia.

A **list** of number of **black and white / colour figures and tables** should also be indicated on this page. Figures submitted in color will be printed in colour. See "*5. Figures & Photographs*" for details.

##### Page 3: Abstract

This page should **repeat** the **full title** of your paper with only the **Abstract** (the abstract should be less than 250 words for a Regular Paper and up to 100 words for a Short Communication), and **Keywords**.

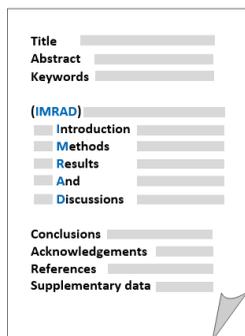
**Keywords:** Not more than eight keywords in alphabetical order must be provided to describe the contents of the manuscript.

#### Page 4: Introduction

This page should begin with the **Introduction** of your article and followed by the rest of your paper.

#### 2. Text

Regular Papers should be prepared with the headings *Introduction, Materials and Methods, Results and Discussion, Conclusions, Acknowledgements, References, and Supplementary data* (if available) in this order.



#### MAKE YOUR ARTICLES AS CONCISE AS POSSIBLE

Most scientific papers are prepared according to a format called IMRAD. The term represents the first letters of the words Introduction, Materials and Methods, Results, And, Discussion. It indicates a pattern or format rather than a complete list of headings or components of research papers; the missing parts of a paper are: Title, Authors, Keywords, Abstract, Conclusions, and References. Additionally, some papers include Acknowledgments and Appendices.

The Introduction explains the scope and objective of the study in the light of current knowledge on the subject; the Materials and Methods describes how the study was conducted; the Results section reports what was found in the study; and the Discussion section explains meaning and significance of the results and provides suggestions for future directions of research. The manuscript must be prepared according to the Journal's instructions to authors.

#### 3. Equations and Formulae

These must be set up clearly and should be typed double spaced. Numbers identifying equations should be in square brackets and placed on the right margin of the text.

#### 4. Tables

All tables should be prepared in a form consistent with recent issues of Pertanika and should be numbered consecutively with Roman numerals. Explanatory material should be given in the table legends and footnotes. Each table should be prepared on a new page, embedded in the manuscript.

*When a manuscript is submitted for publication, tables must also be submitted separately as data - .doc, .rtf, Excel or PowerPoint files- because tables submitted as image data cannot be edited for publication and are usually in low-resolution.*

#### 5. Figures & Photographs

Submit an **original** figure or photograph. Line drawings must be clear, with high black and white contrast. Each figure or photograph should be prepared on a new page, embedded in the manuscript for reviewing to keep the file of the manuscript under 5 MB. These should be numbered consecutively with Roman numerals.

Figures or photographs must also be submitted separately as TIFF, JPEG, or Excel files- because figures or photographs submitted in low-resolution embedded in the manuscript cannot be accepted for publication. For electronic figures, create your figures using applications that are capable of preparing high resolution TIFF files. In general, we require **300 dpi** or higher resolution for **coloured and half-tone artwork**, and **1200 dpi or higher** for **line drawings** are required.

Failure to comply with these specifications will require new figures and delay in publication.

**NOTE:** Illustrations may be produced in colour at no extra cost at the discretion of the Publisher; the author could be charged Malaysian Ringgit 50 for each colour page.

## 6. References

References begin on their own page and are listed in alphabetical order by the first author's last name. Only references cited within the text should be included. All references should be in 12-point font and double-spaced.

**NOTE:** When formatting your references, please follow the **APA reference style** (6th Edition). Ensure that the references are strictly in the journal's prescribed style, failing which your article will **not be accepted for peer-review**. You may refer to the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* for further details (<http://www.apastyle.org/>).

## 7. General Guidelines

**Abbreviations:** Define alphabetically, other than abbreviations that can be used without definition. Words or phrases that are abbreviated in the introduction and following text should be written out in full the first time that they appear in the text, with each abbreviated form in parenthesis. Include the common name or scientific name, or both, of animal and plant materials.

**Acknowledgements:** Individuals and entities that have provided essential support such as research grants and fellowships and other sources of funding should be acknowledged. Contributions that do not involve researching (clerical assistance or personal acknowledgements) should **not** appear in acknowledgements.

**Authors' Affiliation:** The primary affiliation for each author should be the institution where the majority of their work was done. If an author has subsequently moved to another institution, the current address may also be stated in the footer.

**Co-Authors:** The commonly accepted guideline for authorship is that one must have substantially contributed to the development of the paper and share accountability for the results. Researchers should decide who will be an author and what order they will be listed depending upon their order of importance to the study. Other contributions should be cited in the manuscript's Acknowledgements.

**Copyright Permissions:** Authors should seek necessary permissions for quotations, artwork, boxes or tables taken from other publications or from other freely available sources on the Internet before submission to Pertanika. Acknowledgement must be given to the original source in the illustration legend, in a table footnote, or at the end of the quotation.

**Footnotes:** Current addresses of authors if different from heading may be inserted here.

**Page Numbering:** Every page of the manuscript, including the title page, references, tables, etc. should be numbered.

**Spelling:** The journal uses American or British spelling and authors may follow the latest edition of the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary for British spellings.

## SUBMISSION OF MANUSCRIPTS

Owing to the volume of manuscripts we receive, we must insist that all submissions be made electronically using the **online submission system ScholarOne™**, a web-based portal by Thomson Reuters. For more information, go to our web page and [click "Online Submission"](#).

### Submission Checklist

1. **MANUSCRIPT:** Ensure your MS has followed the Pertanika style particularly the first four pages as explained earlier. The article should be written in a good academic style and provide an accurate and succinct description of the contents ensuring that grammar and spelling errors have been corrected before submission. It should also not exceed the suggested length.
2. **COVER LETTER:** All submissions must be accompanied by a cover letter detailing what you are submitting. Papers are accepted for publication in the journal on the understanding that the article is **original** and the content has **not been published** or **submitted for publication elsewhere**. This must be stated in the cover letter. Submission of your manuscript will not be

accepted until a signed cover letter (*original pen-to-paper signature*) has been received. The cover letter must also contain an acknowledgement that all authors have contributed significantly, and that all authors are in agreement with the content of the manuscript. The cover letter of the paper should contain (i) the title; (ii) the full names of the authors; (iii) the addresses of the institutions at which the work was carried out together with (iv) the full postal and email address, plus telephone numbers and emails of all the authors. The current address of any author, if different from that where the work was carried out, should be supplied in a footnote.

3. **COPYRIGHT:** Authors publishing the Journal will be asked to sign a copyright form. In signing the form, it is assumed that authors have obtained permission to use any copyrighted or previously published material. All authors must read and agree to the conditions outlined in the form, and must sign the form or agree that the corresponding author can sign on their behalf. Articles cannot be published until a signed form (*original pen-to-paper signature*) has been received.

Please do **not** submit manuscripts to the editor-in-chief or to any other office directly. Any queries must be directed to the **Chief Executive Editor's** office via email to [nayan@upm.my](mailto:nayan@upm.my).

Visit our Journal's website for more details at <http://www.pertanika.upm.edu.my/home.php>.

### **HARDCOPIES OF THE JOURNALS AND OFF PRINTS**

Under the Journal's open access initiative, authors can choose to download free material (via PDF link) from any of the journal issues from Pertanika's website. Under "**Browse Journals**" you will see a link, "*Current Issues*" or "*Archives*". Here you will get access to all current and back-issues from 1978 onwards.

The **corresponding author** for all articles will receive one complimentary hardcopy of the journal in which his/her articles is published. In addition, 20 off prints of the full text of their article will also be provided. Additional copies of the journals may be purchased by writing to the Chief Executive Editor.



## Why should you publish in

# Pertanika?

### BENEFITS TO AUTHORS

**PROFILE:** Our journals are circulated in large numbers all over Malaysia, and beyond in Southeast Asia. Our circulation covers other overseas countries as well. We ensure that your work reaches the widest possible audience in print and online, through our wide publicity campaigns held frequently, and through our constantly developing electronic initiatives such as Web of Science Author Connect backed by Thomson Reuters.

**QUALITY:** Our journals' reputation for quality is unsurpassed ensuring that the originality, authority and accuracy of your work are fully recognised. Each manuscript submitted to Pertanika undergoes a rigid originality check. Our double-blind peer refereeing procedures are fair and open, and we aim to help authors develop and improve their scientific work. Pertanika is now over 38 years old; this accumulated knowledge has resulted in our journals being indexed in SCOPUS (Elsevier), Thomson (ISI) Web of Science™ Core Collection, Emerging Sources Citation Index (ESCI), Web of Knowledge [BIOSIS & CAB Abstracts], EBSCO, DOAJ, ERA, AGRICOLA, Google Scholar, ISC, TIB, Journal Guide, Citefactor, Cabell's Directories and MyCite.

**AUTHOR SERVICES:** We provide a rapid response service to all our authors, with dedicated support staff for each journal, and a point of contact throughout the refereeing and production processes. Our aim is to ensure that the production process is as smooth as possible, is borne out by the high number of authors who prefer to publish with us.

**CODE OF ETHICS:** Our Journal has adopted a Code of Ethics to ensure that its commitment to integrity is recognized and adhered to by contributors, editors and reviewers. It warns against plagiarism and self-plagiarism, and provides guidelines on authorship, copyright and submission, among others.

**PRESS RELEASES:** Landmark academic papers that are published in Pertanika journals are converted into press-releases as a unique strategy for increasing visibility of the journal as well as to make major findings accessible to non-specialist readers. These press releases are then featured in the university's UK and Australian based research portal, ResearchSEA, for the perusal of journalists all over the world.

**LAG TIME:** The elapsed time from submission to publication for the articles averages 3 to 4 months. A decision on acceptance of a manuscript is reached in 3 to 4 months (average 14 weeks).



Address your submissions to:  
The Chief Executive Editor  
Tel: +603 8947 1622  
[nayan@upm.my](mailto:nayan@upm.my)

Journal's Profile: [www.pertanika.upm.edu.my/](http://www.pertanika.upm.edu.my/)

## Call for Papers 2017-18

now accepting submissions...

*Pertanika* invites you to explore frontiers from all key areas of agriculture, science and technology to social sciences and humanities.

Original research and review articles are invited from scholars, scientists, professors, post-docs, and university students who are seeking publishing opportunities for their research papers through the Journal's three titles; JTAS, JST & JSSH. Preference is given to the work on leading and innovative research approaches.

*Pertanika* is a fast track peer-reviewed and open-access academic journal published by Universiti Putra Malaysia. To date, Pertanika Journals have been indexed by many important databases. Authors may contribute their scientific work by publishing in UPM's hallmark SCOPUS & ISI indexed journals.

Our journals are open access - international journals. Researchers worldwide will have full access to all the articles published online and be able to download them with zero subscription fee.

*Pertanika* uses online article submission, review and tracking system for quality and quick review processing backed by Thomson Reuter's ScholarOne™. Journals provide rapid publication of research articles through this system.

For details on the Guide to Online Submissions, please visit [http://www.pertanika.upm.edu.my/guide\\_online\\_submission.php](http://www.pertanika.upm.edu.my/guide_online_submission.php)

## About the Journal

*Pertanika* is an international multidisciplinary peer-reviewed leading journal in Malaysia which began publication in 1978. The journal publishes in three different areas — Journal of Tropical Agricultural Science (JTAS); Journal of Science and Technology (JST); and Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities (JSSH). All journals are published in English.

**JTAS** is devoted to the publication of original papers that serves as a forum for practical approaches to improving quality in issues pertaining to tropical agricultural research- or related fields of study. It is published four times a year in *February, May, August* and *November*.

**JST** caters for science and engineering research- or related fields of study. It is published twice a year in *January* and *July*.

**JSSH** deals in research or theories in social sciences and humanities research. It aims to develop as a flagship journal with a focus on emerging issues pertaining to the social and behavioural sciences as well as the humanities, particularly in the Asia Pacific region. It is published four times a year in *March, June, September* and *December*.



An Award-winning  
International-Malaysian Journal  
— CREAM AWARD, MoHE  
—Sept 2015



Revenge, Female Agency and Masculinity in Lisa Klein's <i>Lady Macbeth's Daughter</i> <i>Alicia Philip, Zalina Mohd Lazim and Anita Harris Satkunanathan</i>	133
Preposition-Related Collocation use among British and Malaysian Learners: A Corpus Analysis <i>Ang, L. H. and Tan, K. H.</i>	145
Effects of Social Networking on Malaysian Secondary School Students: Attitudes, Behaviours and Awareness of Risks <i>Siew Ming Thang, Noorizah Mohd. Noor, Adzuhaidah M. Taha, Lay Shi Ng and Noor Baizura Abdul Aziz</i>	157
Analysis of Interaction and Institutional Power Relations in MH370 Press Conferences <i>Marlyna Maros and Sharifah Nadia Syed Nasharudin</i>	169
Functions of Code-Switching: A Case Study of a Mixed Malay-Chinese Family in the Home Domain <i>Siti Hamin Stapa and Nurul Nadiyah Begum Sahabudin Khan</i>	181

**Contents**

<b>Language Evolution and Revolution: The Past, Present and Future</b>	
The Interrelation between the Perception and Production of English Monophthongs by Speakers of Iraqi Arabic <i>Ammar, A. Al Abdely and Yap Ngee Thai</i>	1
The Role of Cognitive Context in the Interpretation of Riddles: A Relevance Theory Perspective <i>Juma'a Qadir Hussein and Imran Ho Abdullah</i>	11
Translating Australian Urban Gastronomic Experiences for Malay Tourists <i>Sulaiman, M. Z.</i>	21
Initiating a Peer Support Centre for English Language Presentations: Issues and Challenges <i>Pramela, K., Noraza, A. Z., Nurjanah, M. J., Kemboja, I. and Nadzrah, A. B.</i>	37
Challenges in Teaching Interlanguage Pragmatics at Private EFL Institutes in Iran <i>Tan, K. H. and Farashaiyan, A.</i>	45
Discovering the Variances in Language and Culture: A Comparison of Chinese and English Language Advertisements <i>T'ng Cheah Kiu Choon and Lee Siew Chin</i>	55
Politeness Strategies by Thai EFL Tertiary Learners in an Online Forum <i>Suhaila Etae, Pramela Krish and Supyan Hussin</i>	67
The Kensiu Noun Phrase <i>Mohamed Sultan, F. M., Jalaluddin, N. H., Ahmad, Z. and Radzi, H.</i>	81
Pablo Neruda as the Place-maker: An Ecocritical Enquiry of 'Place' in Neruda's Selected Poems <i>Khosravi, G. D., Vengadasamy, R. and Raihanah, M. M.</i>	95
Mirroring Vulnerability: Fear and Shame in <i>The Judge</i> <i>Dasmesh Kaur, J. S. and Raihanah, M. M.</i>	109
Alienation and Intersectionality in Adrienne Kennedy's <i>Funnyhouse of a Negro</i> <i>Latifa Ismaeel Jabboury, Ruzy Suliza Hashim and Anita Harris Satkunanathan</i>	119



**Pertanika Editorial Office, Journal Division**  
Office of the Deputy Vice Chancellor (R&I)  
1st Floor, IDEA Tower II  
UPM-MTDC Technology Centre  
Universiti Putra Malaysia  
43400 UPM Serdang  
Selangor Darul Ehsan  
Malaysia

<http://www.pertanika.upm.edu.my/>  
E-mail: [executive\\_editor.pertanika@upm.my](mailto:executive_editor.pertanika@upm.my)  
Tel: +603 8947 1622 / 1619

**PENERBIT**  
**UPM**  
UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA  
**P R E S S**

<http://penerbit.upm.edu.my>  
E-mail : [penerbit@upm.edu.my](mailto:penerbit@upm.edu.my)  
Tel : +603 8946 8855 / 8854  
Fax : +603 8941 6172

