

Intellectual Discourse

Volume 31

Number 2

2023



International Islamic University Malaysia
<https://journals.iium.edu.my/intdiscourse/index.php/id>

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Intellectual Discourse is a highly respected, academic refereed journal of the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM). It is published twice a year by the IIUM Press, IIUM, and contains reflections, articles, research notes and review articles representing the disciplines, methods and viewpoints of the Muslim world.

Intellectual Discourse is abstracted in *SCOPUS*, *ProQuest*, *International Political Science Abstracts*, *Peace Research Abstracts Journal*, *Muslim World Book Review*, *Bibliography of Asian Studies*, *Index Islamicus*, *Religious and Theological Abstracts*, *ATLA Religion Database*, *MyCite*, *ISC* and *EBSCO*.

ISSN 0128-4878 (Print); ISSN 2289-5639 (Online)

<https://journals.iium.edu.my/intdiscourse/index.php/id>

Email: intdiscourse@iium.edu.my; intdiscourse@yahoo.com

Published by:

IIUM Press, International Islamic University Malaysia
P.O. Box 10, 50728 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
Phone (+603) 6196-5014, Fax: (+603) 6196-6298
Website: <http://iiumpress.iium.edu.my/bookshop>

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Transliteration Table: Consonants

Arabic	Roman		Arabic	Roman
ب	b		ط	ṭ
ت	t		ظ	ẓ
ث	th		ع	‘
ج	j		غ	gh
ح	ḥ		ف	f
خ	kh		ق	q
د	d		ك	k
ذ	dh		ل	l
ر	r		م	m
ز	z		ن	n
س	s		ه	h
ش	sh		و	w
ص	ṣ		ء	’
ض	ḍ		ي	y

Transliteration Table: Vowels and Diphthongs

Arabic	Roman		Arabic	Roman
اَ	a		اَ، اِيَّ	an
اُ	u		اُو	un
اِ	i		اِي	in
اَ، اِ، اِيَّ	ā		اَو	aw
اُو	ū		اَي	ay
اِي	ī		اُو	uww, ū (in final position)
			اَي	iyy, ī (in final position)

Source: ROTAS Transliteration Kit: <http://rotas.iium.edu.my>

The Main Tendencies of Discourse Representation of Immigrant Workers in Malaysia: A Critical Discourse Analysis in The Star and Malaysiakini Online News Portals

Noorfarida Filzah Bt Mohd Sobri Paridaluddin*
Ainul Azmin Bt Mohd Zamin**

Abstract Being one of the most industrialised nations in Southeast Asia, Malaysia has been receiving many immigrant workers from neighbouring countries to provide labor for the economic expansion. The government was heavily criticised following its announcement on the intake of 1.5 million Bangladeshi workers into the country. The local media have profoundly reported on the issues of immigrant workers in Malaysia. This study focuses on the main tendencies of discourse representation of immigrant workers in Malaysia, specifically in The Star and Malaysiakini online news portals. A total of 20 news articles, 10 from each news portal concerning the issues of migrant workers from year 2016 to early 2017 are analysed according to Fairclough's (1995) Discourse Representation in Media Discourse framework. Each phrase undergoes five level parameter analysis to investigate the language and the strategies employed. This research is to identify the main tendencies of discourse representation of immigrant workers in Malaysia in The Star Online and Malaysiakini. As a whole, both online news portals maintained the ideational meaning of the primary discourse in their news reports.

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Keywords: Labor Immigrants, Critical Discourse Analysis, Fairclough's Discourse Representation in Media Discourse, The Star Online, Malaysiakini

Abstrak: Sebagai salah sebuah negara yang membangun di Asia Tenggara, Malaysia telah menerima ramai pendatang asing dari negara-negara jiran bagi memenuhi keperluan buruh yang meningkat selaras dengan perkembangan ekonomi. Namun, kerajaan Malaysia telah dikritik hebat berikutan pengumuman pengambilan 1.5 juta pekerja asing ke dalam negara. Media di Malaysia juga banyak melaporkan tentang isu-isu berkaitan pekerja asing. Kajian ini berfokuskan kepada kecenderungan utama wacana perwakilan pekerja asing di Malaysia terutama dalam dua portal berita dalam talian iaitu The Star and Malaysiakini. Sebanyak 20 artikel berita - 10 dari setiap portal yang melaporkan isu-isu berkenaan dari tahun 2016 hingga 2017 telah dianalisis berdasarkan kerangka kajian Perwakilan Wacana Media oleh Fairclough (1995). Setiap klausa telah dianalisa mengikut lima aras parameter bagi menyiasat penggunaan bahasa dan strategi dalam portal-portal tersebut. Secara menyeluruh, kedua-dua portal mengekalkan makna berdasarkan wacana utama dalam portal-portal berita berkenaan.

Kata kunci: Buruh Imigran, Analisis Wacana Kritikal, Perwakilan Wacana Media oleh Fairclough, The Star Online, Malaysiakini

Introduction

Recent studies have brought attention to a range of immigrant-related concerns involving both documented and undocumented migrant workers, refugees and asylum seekers. As of 2022, Malaysia hosted approximately 2.2 million officially registered migrant workers (IOM, 2023). The United Nations (UN) (2023) further estimates that the number of undocumented or irregular migrants could be anywhere from 1.2 to 3.5 million, positioning Malaysia as one of the leading countries in Southeast Asia for receiving migrants. The influx of migrants in Malaysia particularly from Indonesia, Bangladesh, Nepal, and Myanmar are for industries like plantation, agriculture, construction, hospitality and security and domestic services. This requires an effective immigration system to ensure a balanced and maximum economic development.

The Malaysian government started to regulate the movement of migrants in the country in 1991 due to its heavy dependence on the immigrants for labour. To encourage the locals to participate in the labour

force, the government froze the recruitment of international labourers in April 1993, but lifted two months later (Yusuf, Ismail & Pathmanathan, 2012). The increase of social problems caused by the immigrants in Malaysia triggered discomfort among the locals, hence, the effort to deport thousands of migrants to their country (Avila, 2015). But with the unwillingness of the locals to work as labourers, the government is left with no option but to grant immigrant permits.

Immigrants mainly from neighbouring countries like Indonesia, Vietnam, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Nepal, and the Philippines have contributed to the Malaysian economic development by working in industries such as construction, agriculture, and manufacturing. The labour force participation rate in Malaysia was only 67.5 percent when the population was indicated to be 31 million (Muhamad Badri, 2015). This shows that the nation is desperate to take immigrant workers in various industries to sustain the economic development.

Many studies have been done to investigate the relationship between rural and urban migration, along with the causes and effects of the movement (Dokubo, Sennuga, Omolayo & Bankole (2023); Harris & Todaro (1970); Huang, Hou, Sun, Dou, Liu & Zhang (2017). However, not many studies have analysed the pattern of remittances from international migrations. Chin (2017) proposed that migration is triggered especially when the pull factor is high. The pull factors are mainly depending upon the socioeconomic status and the labour market of the host country (Spitzer et al., 2023). Iskandar et al. (2017) stated that despite Malaysia's high dependency on foreign workers especially in 3D (Dirty, Dangerous, Difficult) industries, it still attracts an inflow of migrants to the country due to the average monthly wage. The National Wages and Productivity Commission (2022) reported that Malaysia was ranked among ASEAN top payers at \$334 monthly followed by Indonesia at \$299, Thailand at \$277, Vietnam at \$199, Cambodia at only \$194 monthly.

The main factors in influencing the movements of migrants outside the country are firstly, the increase in poverty experienced by developing and underdeveloped countries that has led to the movement of immigrants to search for job opportunities (Mohd Radzi, 2006). Secondly, immigration happens when people are confronted with issues of demarcation like economic discrepancies. The last factor is

inconsistencies in population size, the movement of citizens between regions, and the issue of urbanisation.

The two elements that influence migration activities are the economic status of the emigrating country and the performance of the destination country (Idris & Rahmah, 2014). In the 1970s, many Asian citizens went to the Middle Eastern countries to fill in the labour force since the economy was starting to evolve due to oil value (Kar & Rusmawati, 2015). Japan, Korea and Taiwan became the ideal destinations for migrants when these countries were beginning to develop economically. Pasadilla (2011) mentioned that Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand are among the three ASEAN countries which were receiving many immigrants as these countries were embracing industrialisation.

Intra-ASEAN migration has become a common phenomenon caused by geographical positions, wages disparities between countries and the state of borders (Tuccio, 2017). Indonesia and the Philippines become the highest labour exporters due to the encouragement given by their government because of the local labour (Kar & Rusmawati, 2015). Malaysia is second after Saudi as the most preferred host country for Indonesian migrant workers (Fariasturi & Mohd Khairul, 2012). Indonesians make up 23% of the migrant workers in Malaysia because of its proximity and similarity in religion, language, and culture. The Muslim nation, warm welcome and economic stability also contributed to the choice made by migrants who found Malaysia appealing for employment opportunity (Zehadul, Nurazzura and Md. Shahidul, 2014).

However, issues pertaining to migrants are continuously discussed in news media. It is considered to be a significant news to publish issues on migrant in terms of human resources; policies for immigrants to enter the country, the implications of immigrants for the nation's security, crimes associated with migrant workers, their wages, their entitlement to health policies and the mistreatments that they received. Paul (2023) from Malaysiakini discussed the pressing need for policy revision to overcome the exploitation of migrant workers. Junaid (2023) from The Star Online stressed on the effort to oversee and coordinate migrant workers by 'One Channel System' in promoting a reciprocal relationship of reliance between Malaysia and Indonesia. From these reports, it can be acknowledged that some of these issues were framed and reported in different ways towards the masses.

Nuurrianti, Siti Aeisha and Sabariah (2022) investigated how the International Convention for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (ICERD) was represented in The Star Online, Malay Mail, Malaysiakini and Free Malaysia Today and discovered that all English online news portals tended to portray ICERD in an unfavourable manner. The media in Malaysia, both traditional and online, provide different insights when discussing the issues of immigrants in Malaysia. Information provided may also vary due to the different stances of these media organisations. Due to this, the proliferation of diverse online media platforms has reshaped the way news about these immigrants is disseminated.

However, there is a lack of comprehensive research that investigates how these various online media platforms transmit news regarding labor immigrants in Malaysia, and the subsequent impacts it may have on public perception, policy discourse, and the integration of these immigrant communities. Thus, this research aims to investigate the tendencies in the written discourse of online portals practised by two popular online news portals - The Star Online and Malaysiakini.

This research is significant to better inform the public on issues involving foreign worker minimum salaries, their welfare, immigration concerns, and how they are framed and represented in different news platforms. Moreover, this study is expected to chart a new path of research in linguistic studies.

Online News Media in Malaysia: The Star Online and Malaysiakini

The Star Online

The Star is the first English tabloid in Malaysia. First known as The Star Publications (M) Berhad (SPMB), the publishing company was first established in 1971 (Selvanayagam, 1999) and now has rebranded and changed its name to Star Media Group Berhad. The company's biggest shareholder belongs to the political coalition party, MCA and has one of the highest circulations nationwide (Fong & Kit, 2016). SPMB made history in June 1995 when the Star Publications marked its name as the first Malaysian newspaper, which was also ranked third in Asia to launch its web edition of news. The Star remains one of the most popular choices of the Malaysian people (Statista, 2023). Currently, The Star Online today has successfully gotten the attention of many readers

locally and worldwide. The recent data by Statista (2023), noted that The Star Online was ranked the fifth highest at 25% online readership by Malaysians surpassing Malaysia Today, Bernama.com and even CNN.com.

Malaysiakini

Steven Gan and Premesh Chandran took the initiative to pioneer an independent news portal of quality Malaysiakini in 1999 (Rajaratnam, 2009). Carrington (2015) quoted:

“First, it has increased demand for reliable and independent news, along with support for human rights, open government, and free expression; second, it has built a viable business model that enables it to employ about 40 reporters, publish in four languages, and expand into video products and business news.” (p. 1)

In 2019, Malaysiakini mentioned that they have successfully reported over 500,000 stories in the past 20 years since its establishment. Malaysiakini provides three other versions written in Bahasa, Chinese and Tamil other than the English version. Operating under the slogan “News and views that matter,” Malaysiakini aims to build a community that acknowledges the importance of independent journalism while also providing trustworthy, newsworthy, and reliable news and information (Carrington, 2015).

The public gains information from Malaysiakini that is not being disclosed in the mainstream media. The public thus, prefer an alternative media to look for neutrality in the news establishment (Rajaratnam, 2009) alongside its easy accessibility online as compared to offline news (Omar, Ismail & Ng, 2018). Malaysiakini has the highest online readers by 48% among Malaysians (Statista,2023). Ultimately, this proves that the public turns to independent journalism, or the alternative media in helping them voice out their opinions and views. Rosyidah (2015) mentioned that the alternative media allows for ‘democratisation’; voices of the suppressed in the mainstream media are finally getting the attention they deserve.

Fairclough’s Discourse Representation in Media Discourse

Discourse is language use conceived as social practice. Fairclough (1992) described discourse representation as relationships between

texts, which is also known as intertextuality, where devices such as quotations of reporting clauses are marked in the discourse. Discourse representation is often associated with social practices where ideologies are embedded and need to be analysed for their social implications. Fairclough (1992) he said that media discourse, also known as primary discourse, employs indirect discourse (ID) in which it modifies and alters the original speech or direct discourse (DD) of the speaker. The author's intention will eventually decide on the discourse used in the media and whether or not it reflects the DD with the actual wordings. Therefore, the analysis of media discourse is crucial to examining to what extent ID is demarcated from DD. This study will employ the discourse representation framework by Fairclough (1995).

This theoretical model is chosen due to its nature of investigating language, the strategies employed, the media ideological intentions and the implications they serve. The discourse representation in media discourse will give a descriptive and thorough analysis on the discursive practice and the ideologies they represent. Figure 1 is a brief representation of the framework:

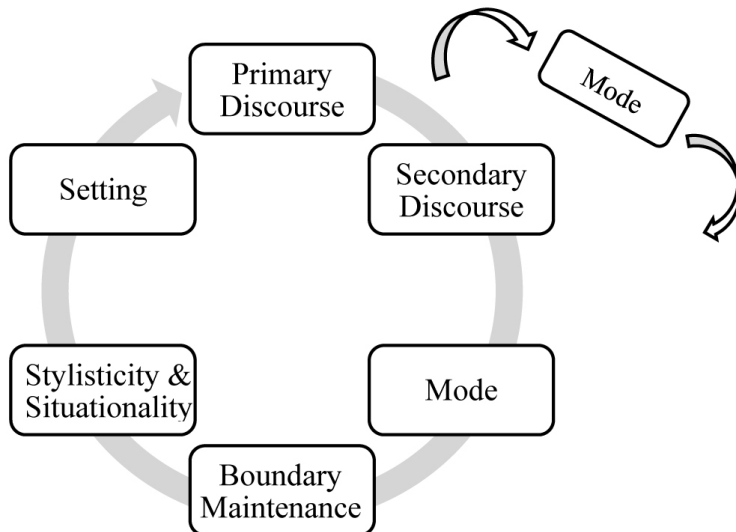


Figure 1: Summary of Fairclough's (1995) Discourse Representation in Media Discourse

Fairclough (1995) drew his framework of discourse representation in media discourse into five parameters: mode, boundary maintenance, stylisticity, situationality and setting. Mode operates, by distinguishing two ‘voices’: Direct Discourse (DD) as the discourse of the person of interest and Indirect Discourse (ID) as the discourse used by media practitioners in their newspapers. There are, however, situations such as news importance, interest and intensity that do not require secondary discourse to be represented differently. Boundary maintenance on the other hand, explains the degree of differentiation and fusion between these two types of discourses in media representation (Fairclough, 1995).

Stylisticity assesses how discourse representation is made “non-ideational, interpersonal” (Fairclough, 1995, p. 60), while situationality considers how secondary discourse is represented based on its conditions and situations. Lastly, setting particularly stands as a crucial element to identify how the audience decode and elicit their thoughts on the already influenced, structured secondary discourse within certain conditions (Fairclough, 1995). Fairclough (1995) introduced the term unsignalled or free indirect discourse (Rafatbakhsh & Jafari, 2015) which is a thin representation between primary and secondary discourse. In this research, ‘unsignalled’ is identified as ‘UNSIG’; an indicator that text producers did not utilise quotation marks within the primary discourse in representing an actual secondary discourse.

Fairclough (1995) specified two tendencies of discourse representation: the minimal segregation between primary and secondary discourse and the focus on words used to illustrate the ideational meaning that is being represented. These tendencies depend on how media practitioners provide a discourse platform to accommodate the public’s understanding of what is represented. In other words, journalists need to speak on behalf of the audience.

Overall, Fairclough’s framework on discourse representation in media discourse evaluates the tendencies of discourse representation, which will also reflect the organisations’ stance on certain issues. By using this framework, the researchers will also be able to investigate the implicit ideologies that are being perpetuated according to certain discursive strategies represented. Conclusively, the purpose of this study is to investigate the tendencies in the representation of written

discourse in the online portals. The study aims to analyse the tendencies of discourse representation of The Star and Malaysiakini online portals.

Method

Data collection

The researcher has collected 20 news articles (10 each selected from The Star Online and Malaysiakini). These online news portals were selected based on the high readership - Malaysiakini at 48% and The Star Online (25%) among online Malaysian users as reported by Statista (2023). In terms of the sampling number, it was decided based upon the inclusion criteria, where the researcher considers the occurrences and relevance of immigrant-related issues portrayed within a one year duration (2016 until 2017) as reported on the news portals. This specific timeline was chosen as research by Muhd Azlan (2018) mentioned that Malaysia has one of the highest intakes of immigrant workers which stood at 49,496 workers, with a gap of around five thousand workers intake in 2018.

The data was collected within two phases simultaneously - data extraction from Malaysiakini and The Star Online and the retrieval of original quotations from speeches or comments made by people of interest who spoke on the issues. In terms of news report, the articles selected were on keyword basis such as 'migrant workers', 'foreign workers', 'PATI' or known as '*pendatang asing tanpa izin*'. Other than that, the researchers went through each report manually by date to ensure that any news regarding foreign workers in Malaysia was collected and to be considered as data. At the same time, the author went to YouTube, a popular video streaming platform online as an instrument to search for the original interviews primarily based on the articles that have been retrieved online. Also, press releases that were made public by any reported party were gathered. These methods were crucial to ensure that primary and secondary discourse could be compared for the analyses. The researchers then carefully selected only the articles that have primary or original quotations to be compared to how they were reported as secondary discourse.

Following that, the researchers scrutinised each issue presented and categorised them according to ten themes: (1) foreign worker intake freeze, (2) levy postponement, (3) levy rates hike, (4) temporary card for illegal foreign workers, (5) employers levy responsibility, (6) MoU

pact between Malaysia and Bangladesh, (7) MOHR on foreign worker freeze, (8) foreign workers intake, (9) foreign workers with temporary permits and (10) respect and attitudes foreign workers.

The following discussions will be explained according to the ten themes summarised above.

Research Design and Discourse Approach

The approach of this research is qualitative with a slight aspect of quantitative. The qualitative approach is based on the methods of analyses which were based on Fairclough's five parameters of discourse representation in media discourse. This method came after data extraction and categorisation. The researcher analysed each article by phrase. Each phrase underwent five stages of thorough analysis; mode, boundary maintenance, stylisticity, situationality, and setting. Firstly, in examining mode, the researcher located the primary discourse, or DD, to determine the tendencies of how ID was being represented according to DD. The researcher then classified these modes of representation, which reflected how the represented discourse was distinguished from the representing discourse. It was then identified whether (a) the primary discourse was subordinated, (b) there was a shift from first and second person pronouns to third person pronouns, (c) shift of deictics was apparent, and (d) there was 'back-shift of tense.' (Fairclough, 1995, p. 55). Next, the researcher examined boundary maintenance, which determined whether the voices of both primary and secondary discourse were similar or different. Here, the researcher investigated the mode of incorporation or dissemination, along with the vocabulary items incorporated in the primary discourse, to see the changes in interpersonal or stylistic meanings from the secondary discourse (Fairclough, 1995). The analysis continued with stylisticity and situationality, in which the former examined the representation of the non-ideational, interpersonal meanings of the secondary discourse while the latter analysed the phrases according to the context and situation of the secondary discourse (Fairclough, 1995). Lastly, the researcher determined the parameter of setting, which inspected how readers interpret and understand the secondary discourse after being positioned in a specific textual context, also known as 'cotext'. Having analysed all phrases according to the five parameters, the researcher then summarised how both online news media represented the issue of immigrant labour. By then, the researcher

was able to determine the tendencies of this media discourse, which resulted in the product of primary discourse.

Results and Discussion

UNSIG

The Main Tendencies of the Discourse Representation of The Star Online and Malaysiakini and the Validity for Media Discourse

The research question inquires on the main tendencies of the discourse representation of both portals and whether they have wider validity for media discourse. To answer this research question, each tendency will be elaborated.

Tendency 1: A low incidence of ambivalence between primary and secondary discourse, involving both ID and UNSIG

The first tendency which is a low incidence of ambivalence between primary and secondary discourse, involving both ID and UNSIG, reflects that the level of demarcation between primary and secondary discourse of both portals are low in general. The reporters, or the “news givers” did not separate the ideational meaning of DD in the ID, which basically reflects the superiority of the primary discourse in shaping the secondary discourse.

These news givers principally took on the role of mediators in perpetuating the main idea of DD into news for the audience. This low demarcation between primary and secondary discourse reflects, as mentioned by Scott (2008), the process or strategy taken by the writers or reporters in making sure that the news constructed should be comprehensible by the assumed readers. This manifestation of transparency as mentioned by Karlsson (2022), proves intricate - while it serves as a significant indicator to reflect the integrity of news reporters, its efficacy is subjected to readers’ evaluation to either be neutral, trusting or sceptical about it. Further elaborated by Hall et al. (1978), the process of news production is deemed one of the most crucial aspects after taking into account the standpoint of the media organisation and the selection of news categories within its constructed principals. By framing ID in a similar context of DD, the reporters ease the readers’ processes of “identification and contextualisation” (Hall et al., 1978, p. 54) where the audience’s background knowledge is met with a familiar

representation of the setting. One of the examples that can help explain this condition is from Malaysiakini under the second category (levy postponement) where the ID wrote, “The cabinet has agreed to postpone a move requiring employers to pay their foreign workers’ levy, to next year” (“Cabinet agrees to postpone new levy ruling to next year, 2017) from DD, “In view of that, the Cabinet decided to defer the levy till 2018.” The ideational meaning of DD was retained in ID with some elaboration on the workers’ levy embedded in the secondary discourse. This elaboration of context was structured by the reporter to ensure that the audience was able to comprehend the setting of the situation.

The tendency of low demarcation between these two voices can be seen from the result where the mode of representation in the category of shifting from first and second person pronouns to third person pronouns appeared to be low in occurrences. The condition, however, was represented in one of the news by Malaysiakini, where the reporter shifted the first-person pronoun to the third-person pronoun as ID. Derived from DD, originated from Hannah Yeoh: “You want to talk about some bad hats? Can I suggest you first start with Putrajaya?” was translated into ID, “Yeoh added that if Malaysians wanted to talk about bad hats, they should first start with Putrajaya,” (“Don’t belittle Bangladeshis over Zahid’s migrant plan”, 2016). It is evident that the reporter shifted the first- and second-person pronouns “I” and “you” to the third-person pronouns “Yeoh” and “Malaysians.” This type of representation was made by the reporters to build rapport with the audience by inserting specific pronouns to enhance the degree of familiarity in their discourse. By shifting the second person pronoun “you” to a more general pronoun, “Malaysians”, the reporter was trying to include the readers in the context of the ID. This finding can be supported by Andersen et al. (2019) in which the term ‘Direct Reader Address’ to build rapport with readers within its journalistic authority. The ideational meaning, however, may experience subtle changes through this type of discourse representation. It was also exemplified in The Star Online, in which the DD said, “*With the 2.2 million Bangladeshi workers and other foreign workers, we have far exceeded what was planned under the 11th Malaysia Plan,*” translated to ID, “Malaysian Employers Federation (MEF) says the number of foreign workers in the country has exceeded what was targeted under the 11th Malaysia Plan” (“MEF: 11th Malaysia Plan target exceeded”, 2016).

The value of solidarity was being put forward with the shifting of the first-person pronoun “we” to “the country” in the secondary discourse. The reporters of both portals principally utilised this type of mode to convey a certain set of ideational meanings by just changing the subject of the discourse. In translating “you” to “Malaysians” in Malaysiakini, the reporter was trying to imply to all citizens that Putrajaya should be a place of attention, while The Star Online utilised the mode to increase the level of intensity of the issue through a bigger lens. This type of mode, however, was not used frequently in both portals, as the reporters did not intend to stray from the ideational meaning embedded in DD.

This tendency of low demarcation between the primary and secondary discourse can also be reflected in the low occurrences of back-shift of tense in both portals. Throughout 2016 and early 2017, the issue of immigrant workers was concentrated upon, and news regarding the intake and freeze of foreign workers, levy imposition, foreign worker passes, and respect for the immigrants was actively presented. Since many of the news were time-sensitive, tense was an important mode of representation. An example from The Star Online that depicts a shift of tense is from issue 10, in which the DD said, “We have received reports saying Bangladeshi workers are involved with rape and others...” and was shifted to ID, “...the policy of bringing in foreign workers in view of the current soft labour market, there were also other social issues to consider,” (The Star Online, February 17, 2016). The shift of the present tense “are” from DD to “were” in ID can be interpreted as an incorporation of the reporter’s standpoint, other than just a simple discursive style. This shift was used to lower the intensity of the issue for the audience. As discussed in the primary discourse, there were major social issues involving immigrant workers in Malaysia, which were downplayed by the shifting of tense in ID. These discursive strategies helped reduce the intensity of the problem as well as present the authorship of the reporter as a news-giver. An example from Malaysiakini however, reflects a different form of shift, which was from a simple present tense “are” in DD to a future perfect progressive tense “will be” in ID. The ID said, “Under the EMC, employers are fully responsible to pay foreign workers’ levy starting 1st January 2017” and was translated to the ID as “Employers will be responsible for paying the levy of their Malaysian foreign workers effective tomorrow, Jan 1, 2017...” (“DPM: Bosses, not workers have to pay foreign worker levy

from Jan 1”, 2016). This shift of tense conversely, did not separate the ideational meaning of the primary discourse in the represented news. It is fair to say that this particular mode is highly dependent on the contextualisation provided by the reporter. This aligns with the findings made by Gorchev (2021) where he mentioned that ultimately, readers’ interpretation relies heavily on how the media commit to the primary or original discourse in their journalistic pieces. The modification in meaning may or may not occur through this shifting, but as demonstrated in Tables 1 and 2, reporters from both portals chose to retain the actual tense used in the primary discourse.

Table 1: Overall Mode of Representation for The Star Online

THE STAR ONLINE												
TOTAL	DD	ID	Modes of Represented and Representing Discourse						Slipping			
100	36	64	Subordination of secondary discourse (that-clause to reporting-clause)		Shift from 1 st and 2 nd person pronouns to 3 rd person pronouns		Shift of deictic		‘Back-shift’ of tense		Direct quote/ quotation marks	
			Present	Absent	Present	Absent	Present	Absent	Present	Absent	Present	Absent
			47	42	21	68	11	78	22	67	7	82
			Shift 3 rd person pronouns to 1 st person pronouns									
			0	91								

Table 2: Overall Mode of Representation for Malaysiakini

MALAYSIAKINI														
TOTAL	DD	ID	Modes of Represented and Representing Discourse						Slipping					
118	31	87	Subordination of secondary discourse (that-clause to reporting-clause)		Shift from 1 st and 2 nd person pronouns to 3 rd person pronouns		Shift of deictic		'Back-shift' of tense		Direct quote/ quotation marks		Shift 3 rd person pronouns to 1 st person pronouns	
			69	45	22	91	16	99	32	81	14	98	1	109

As for the low occurrences of UNSIG in the secondary discourse for both portals, it shows that the reporters practised acknowledging the primary discourse when embedding it in ID in the form of direct quotation or quotation marks. To compare, the incidents of UNSIG were mostly identified in Malaysiakini. For example, in issue two, the ID was quoted as saying, “The policy is to ensure all employers are responsible for their foreign workers, from the point of their hiring until they return to their home countries,” (Malaysiakini, 2017) which derived from DD,

“The EMC is made to ensure that employers are fully responsible for their paid foreign workers from their point of hiring until they return to their home countries.” Note how similar the secondary discourse was structured to the primary discourse, as it was not explicitly marked as DD – without the use of quotation marks or references.

To evaluate, the unsignalled ID that can be identified both in Malaysiakini and The Star Online were mostly information-based, involving facts and figures, and very few were found to be personal. Since UNSIG was not prevalently used in both portals, it can generally be implied that the reporters practised objective reporting in their news.

Tendency 2: Low boundary maintenance, correspondingly high in dissemination but low in incorporation and incorporation-plus-dissemination

The study indicated that most of the secondary discourse in The Star Online and Malaysiakini took over the primary discourse, which was a high case of dissemination. In other words, despite the changes made in vocabularies, sentence structures, and other features, the reporters retained the ideational meaning of DD in ID. The frequency of incorporation was marked as low because the process of translation or paraphrasing did not occur broadly throughout the news represented.

As presented in Tables 3 and 4, the distinction between the number of ID in The Star Online and Malaysiakini can be considered vast, but the tendencies of each category for both portals turned out to be consistent. The reporters of these news agencies tend to modify the original structure of DD, inclusive of their sentence structure, vocabulary, linguistic features and reporting clause, but did not stray from the ideational meaning. This reflects what was mentioned by Fairclough (1995) to be an incident of naturalisation, where the reporters shape the secondary discourse to suit the spectrum of understanding possessed by the assumed audience.

Table 3: Overall Representation of Boundary Maintenance for The Star Online

THE STAR ONLINE						
ID	D/I	Boundary Maintenance			Dissemination: 26	Incorporation: 13
39	1	1	Structure	Present	8	1
				Absent	18	12
		2	Vocabulary	Present	12	1
				Absent	14	12
		3	Linguistic Features	Tense	5	1
				Etc.	2	3
		4	I.M.	Present	26	0
				Absent	0	13
		5	Reporting Clause	Beginning	17	11
				Middle	0	1
				End	6	1
				Absent	3	0
		6	Voice of Representation	1	3	
		7	UNSIG.	6	0	
8	DD(S)	4	0			

Table 4: Overall Representation of Boundary Maintenance for Malaysiakini

MALAYSIAKINI						
ID	D/I	Boundary Maintenance			Dissemination: 51	Incorporation: 11
62	2	1	Structure	Present	22	0
				Absent	29	11
		2	Vocabulary	Present	26	0
				Absent	25	11
		3	Linguistic Features	Tense	12	0
				Etc.	0	0
		4	I.M.	Present	51	1
				Absent	0	10
		5	Reporting Clause	Beginning	35	5
				Middle	2	4
				End	5	0
				Absent	9	2
		6	Voice of Representation		3	5
		7	UNSIG.		10	3
		8	DD(S)		4	1

To exemplify, an excerpt from issue four of *Malaysiakini* experienced changes in vocabularies in which the terms “social visit pass” and “declined” in DD were translated to “Temporary Work Visit Pass” and “gone down” in ID. These terms were moulded to be simpler and more conventional, to heighten solidarity with its target readers through the understanding of the discourse represented. By doing so, the reporters, who have adopted the role of mediators, – were responsible for not only building rapport with the audience, but also sustaining it. It was also in *The Star Online* that the change in vocabulary was apparent. Extracted from issue nine, rather complex terms such as “ascertain” and “actual” in DD were converted to simpler terminologies; “completed” and “real” in ID. Terms or wording that were rather difficult to understand were changed and replaced with simpler ones. Fowler (1991) referred to this type of discursive principle as ‘productive consumption’ (Fowler, 1991, p. 20), which involves writers placing texts or discourse in a context that is associated with meaning familiar to the readers. In other words, alterations in vocabularies or terminologies made by reporters in news production need to be within the system of knowledge possessed by the readers. This aligns with what was mentioned by Djellou (2023) that specially chosen discursive types will be utilised by reporters to increase association with their audience in influencing perceptions. Texts should be made comprehensible and intelligible to maximise message transparency while at the same time maintaining the original meaning of DD.

In terms of the reporting clause, both online portals highlighted their original sources of news within their discourse. This contributed to the low boundary maintenance between DD and ID as the reporters were complying with the news construction system held by their institutions, instead of translating the DD within their “own” voices. Both portals were seen to place the sources mainly at the beginning of the news, – for example, “Dr Ahmad Zahid said the Government had been criticised...” (*The Star Online*, 2016) or “The minister, however, did not elaborate on the implication of the freeze on the MOU...” (Zahid’s worker freeze won’t affect Bangladeshi MOU, says Riot, 2016) and many others. This also shows that news reporters strategically highlighted pertinent sources to attract readers’ attention. By highlighting important individuals or quoting controversial statements in the discourse, the reporters amplified the readability of the news portals.

Since incorporation was identified to be low for both online portals, not many ideational meanings were altered. However, it was noted that changes in structure and vocabularies under incorporation were obvious, and the voice of the reporters was subtly included within the ID. For example, in the second issue of The Star Online, the ID said, "Yesterday, Liow said the EMC gave employers full control of their foreign workers, without the need to go through middlemen," (Kaos Jr, 2017) which derived from DD, "*The Cabinet has been told that the employers will support the EMC if they do not have to deal with the middlemen.*" The process of incorporation here mirrors the authorship of the government in ID, where the Employer Mandatory Commitment (EMC) was presented with power over the employers. DD on the other hand, was emphasizing the rights of the employers over the EMC. The voice of the reporter in this case was subtly induced by changing the structure, wordings and most importantly the main idea of DD. It was however mentioned by Fairclough (1995) that, "*It is not necessary to see these transformations of secondary discourse as always or generally conscious distortion or manipulation; they can perhaps rather be regarded as built into common-sense professional practice,*" (p. 63). Thus, the varied representation of ID between The Star Online and Malaysiakini simply depict the professionalism of the reporters in upholding the principles of their respective news organisations.

As for Malaysiakini, an instance of incorporation was noted in issue two where the ID quoted, "Master Builders Association Malaysia (MBAM) had asked the government to shift levy payments back to foreign workers and warned that consumers may end up footing the extra cost borne by contractors in paying workers' levy," (Malaysiakini, 2017) was translated from DD, "*This imposition of levy, by shifting to the employer will cause a cash flow problem to the industry and making our contractors, our industry more expensive and less competitive.*" In this context, the imposition of levy in DD was on the consequences of its shifting to the employers while the ID highlighted the need for the government to shift the levy back to the foreign workers. The reporter basically characterised the news to be different in terms of angle and subjects, which contributed to variations in meaning. By placing the government as a subject of action, the reporter was embedding his or her personal views on the matter.

The case of dissemination-plus-incorporation was minimal, as the reporters used reporting clauses, placed either at the beginning; middle or end of the discourse. There was an instance where the reporter did not include quotation marks in reference to DD, where the ID said, “The cabinet has agreed to postpone a move requiring employers to pay their foreign workers’ levy, to next year,” (“Cabinet agrees to postpone new levy ruling to next year”, 2017) from DD, “In view of that, the Cabinet decided to defer the levy till 2018,” said Transport Minister Liow Tiong Lai. “ The reporter was simply (conveying a statement without referencing Liow Tiong Lai as a source of the information. This type of case however, was only found to be 1% in The Star Online and 2% in Malaysiakini.

Tendency 3: A slight ambivalence in stylisticity, which is low in The Star Online whereas high in Malaysiakini but both high in situationality

Media discourse is usually constructed within the convention of ideational meaning of DD. Statements, announcements and information that are of importance, especially ones concerning the mass, need to be structured according to the ‘public domain’ (Fairclough, 1995, p. 64) and their understood setting. However, The Star Online and Malaysiakini have different stylisticity approaches to addressing the issue of immigrant workers in Malaysia.

The low level of stylisticity in The Star Online shows that the news portal tends to be more conceptual than personal when discussing these issues. Throughout the analysis, the author found that most of the ID in The Star Online expressed the government’s voice and point of view in justifying its decisions on the issue of foreign workers in the country. Most of the secondary discourse was shaped to be less personal, as exemplified in the eighth issue, where the ID said, “Dr Ahmad Zahid said the Government had been criticised following the announcement, however the request to bring in the workers was made by employers and the Government was merely fulfilling the market demand for more foreign workers,” (The Star Online, 2016). The stylisticity of this discourse basically justified the government’s decision to bring in more foreign workers to the country. The reporter shaped the ID to be non- personal with the use of the subject ‘the Government’, instead of the pronoun ‘he’ in reference to Zahid Hamidi. To compare with

Malaysiakini, the stylisticity of the discourse was made more personal, as exemplified in the last issue, - where the ID quoted, “Syed Saddiq said coincidentally his roommate is a Bangladeshi and an Asian Debate Champion,” (Malaysiakini, February 16, 2016). This instance illustrated the attachment of the subject’s personal information and experience to ID. This high level of stylisticity is utilised to assign greater impact to the readers while also creating an impression on certain news items.

The secondary discourse of The Star Online and Malaysiakini went through several discursive processes when conveying their news. The former preferred expressing, followed by revealing and justifying the message, while the latter used urging, expressing, and revealing in the ID. These particular discourse processes were in line with the sentiments induced by adhering to the principles of each news agency. As an organisation affiliated with the government, The Star Online mostly utilised defence, followed by urgency and relevance as embedded sentiments in their news. The reporters took over the role of mediators in representing the government and its aspirations, which at the same time educated the public about the technicalities of the decision-making process. Unlike Malaysiakini, the reporters counterbalanced by promoting sentiments of inadequacy, unfairness of the decision made by the authority in bringing in foreign workers to the country, along the sentiments of request made by the employers’ associations. The news portal also included sentiments of cynicism in their discourse. This practice of check-and-balance, as mentioned by Fairclough (1995), debunks “the myth that the media are a ‘mirror’ to reality” (Fairclough, 1995, p. 64). Malaysiakini, which claimed to represent the voice of the people, provided an interpretation of the presented discourse along wider social dimensions. These greater orientations allowed Malaysiakini to offer readers different perspectives on news, which not only conveyed but also convinced the public that power should not be concentrated in the hands of the authorities.

As for situationality, The Star Online and Malaysiakini appeared to be high in levels, which reflects an elaborative projection of social contexts of ID in both portals. This discursive style enhanced greater readability and viewership while ensuring full-disclosure of information. With ample space provided in online news portals, reporters were able to include a more extensive setting, which increased the credibility of the secondary discourse presented.

Tendency 4: A high degree of setting

A high degree of setting in both portals illustrates that the conventions of discursive techniques and strategies were very apparent in ID. The vast differences in the types of discourse and the rhetorical strategies used between The Star Online and Malaysiakini reflect different ideological beliefs held by the news agencies. These discursive productions are closely related to the principals of these media organisations, whether to enact power over authority or to differ. The Star Online and Malaysiakini have different discursive styles and ways of contextualising the discourse, which depend on the voice of the authority of emphasis. Kress (1983) mentioned that lexical choices have the ability to contextualise a discourse while being governed according to ideological beliefs. This can be seen in the rhetorical strategies practised by the reporters of these media organizations, where The Star Online contextualised more directives, informative comments, and hopes in their discourse while Malaysiakini used predictions, warnings, and fear and regret as dominant discursive voices.

The emphasis on authority was mediated through both portals in two ways: subtle or explicit. These were operationalized through careful selection of phrases and texts, as mentioned by Fairclough (1992), which are social and ideological in nature through the processes of production, distribution, and consumption of a discursive practice. Thus, the high degree of setting found in The Star Online and Malaysiakini confirms the plausible tendency to contextualise the discourse on the basis of ideological framing. In the effort of the reporters from both media outlets to maintain most of the ideational meaning between primary and secondary discourse, the reporting discourse was still structured and contextualised according to certain ideological beliefs and socio-political stances, which can be in the form of ascribing authority over the government or endorsing critics of power abuse.

After an elaborative analysis of these tendencies, it can be concluded that The Star Online and Malaysiakini have wider validity for media discourse. Both online news portals did not appear to report 'false' news, and the voices of reporters were not very apparent in both portals. The ID in both The Star Online and Malaysiakini remained in close proximity to DD, even though changes were identified to be more visible in the latter news portal.

Conclusion

The issues pertaining to the immigrant workers in Malaysia portrayed variations in representations in both *The Star Online* and *Malaysiakini*. The critical analysis has proven that reporters or text producers transmitted their ideological standpoints through explicit or sometimes subtle discursive elements. There are also possibilities that readers will not be aware of the elusive ideologies that were embedded within the text.

The tendencies represented show that both online news portals mostly maintained the ideational meaning of the primary discourse in their news reports. This result is expected due to the concentrated supervision of the Malaysian media via licensing of the regulatory authority. The dichotomy between *The Star Online* and *Malaysiakini* in the use of discursive structures and strategies simply mirror the principalship of these media organisations. Despite minor disparities, reporters of both media outlets still account for credibility in reporting truth in their news.

In terms of theoretical implications of this study, it is significant to consider both discursive and ideological perspectives in the analysis of media representation. In understanding how discourse is shaped according to regulations imposed on media outlets, this study calls for attention to the need for awareness among readers to be critical of subtle ideologies embedded in news reports. This discovery that unveils content that is strategically curated and framed which could influence the public's perception underpins the need for media literacy.

Some limitations of this research can be located in the methodological aspect. Firstly, this research focuses only on two online news portals, which are *The Star Online* and *Malaysiakini*. This selection restricts a better variation, which can give a broader analysis of the study. Secondly, in terms of collecting the materials, the researcher encountered several challenges in retrieving news reports, especially from *Malaysiakini*. As a private paid-news agency in Malaysia, some of the news dated 2016 were categorised as archived news, which were not made available for free readership. Since this research studies news reports from 2016 and early 2017, a considerable amount of money was required for a subscription to access the archived news.

Thirdly, with the various reporting categories available in both news agencies, the researcher had to make careful selections when collecting materials. Since the issue of immigrants in Malaysia is considered a rather controversial topic, it has been heavily discussed through many genres, which include editors' opinions, letters and political reviews. In realising this research, however, the researcher was required to only select the generic journalistic reporting to ensure standardisation in news structure across both online portals. The limitation came as the news reporting on the issue was rather limited, which made it time consuming for the researcher to collect the data.

One of the most crucial methods in this research was to locate and evaluate the original sources or the DD mentioned in the news reports. By using YouTube as the main source of the instrument, the researcher found it challenging to trace the exact wordings or phrases in the video recordings of press conferences, interviews, or even statements from press releases. Due to restrictions and privacy constraints, the sources of primary discourse were mostly found to be incomplete and inadequate, where the videos were either edited, censored or came in short clips. This led to the inaccessibility of some of the primary discourse. Among the many constraints, this particular limitation has been shown to be one of the major drawbacks of the study.

Recommendations for Future Studies

Future research is recommended to examine how diverse online news platforms, extending beyond Malaysian-based newspapers, represent and frame the issues of migrant workers in the nation which are still left unabated. With advent sources available in today's media coverage, comparative linguistics studies on journalistic discourse can be better understood through the framework of discourse representation in media discourse by Fairclough (1995). Moreover, a more exhaustive examination is warranted to investigate how alternative media, such as social media platforms and their users contribute to shaping the narrative surrounding immigrant issues, discernible through the application of framing frameworks.

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GUIDELINES FOR AUTHORS

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Book

In-text citations:

Al-Faruqi & al-Faruqi (1986)

Reference:

Al-Faruqi, I. R., & al-Faruqi, L. L. (1986). *The cultural atlas of Islam*. New York: Macmillan Publishing Company.

Chapter in a Book

In-text:

Alias (2009)

Reference:

Alias, A. (2009). Human nature. In N. M. Noor (Ed.), *Human nature from an Islamic perspective: A guide to teaching and learning* (pp.79-117). Kuala Lumpur: IIUM Press.

Journal Article

In-text:

Chapra (2002)

Reference:

Chapra, M. U. (2002). Islam and the international debt problem. *Journal of Islamic Studies*, 10, 214-232.

The Qur'ān

In-text:

(i) direct quotation, write as 30:36

(ii) indirect quotation, write as Qur'ān, 30:36

Reference:

The glorious Qur'ān. Translation and commentary by A. Yusuf Ali (1977). US: American Trust Publications.

Ḥadīth

In-text:

(i) Al-Bukhārī, 88:204 (where 88 is the book number, 204 is the ḥadīth number)

(ii) Ibn Hanbal, vol. 1, p. 1

Reference:

(i) Al-Bukhārī, M. (1981). *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*. Beirut: Dār al-Fikr.

(ii) Ibn Ḥanbal, A. (1982). *Musnad Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal*. Istanbul: Cagri Yayinlari.

The Bible

In-text:

Matthew 12:31-32

Reference:

The new Oxford annotated Bible. (2007). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

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IIUM Press (Marketing Unit)
Research Management Centre
International Islamic University Malaysia
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Phone (+603) 6196-5014, Fax: (+603) 6196-4862
E-mail: intdiscourse@iium.edu.my; intdiscourse@yahoo.com.
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ISSN 0128-4878 (Print)

ISSN 2289-5639 (Online)

