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THE FUNCTIONS OF COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES: AN ANALYSIS OF CHINESE EFL LEARNERS' TRANSACTIONAL PRACTICE

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ABSTRACT

Since speaking is one of the most difficult skills for Chinese EFL learners to manage, mastering the skills to communicate effectively in a L2 context has attracted the attention of many researchers. There were number of studies conducted on communicative strategies, however less attention was given in analysing EFL learners on transactional practice on communicative strategies. Therefore, this study aims to analyse upper-intermediate Chinese EFL learners' communication strategies in a transactional context so as to investigate the appropriate functions of communication strategies, utilising the qualitative method (Jackson, 2011 & Creswell, 2014). Data was collected from a pair of Chinese master students in one the higher learning institutions through audio-recording, pair discussion and stimulated recall interview. It was found that the participants appeared to be lack of sufficient knowledge about communication strategies prior to the study. The findings also reveal there was an improvement in the participants' communication strategies; conveying meaning, ensure language accuracy (self-repair and others repair), and to keep conversation going. Since oral communication is the mostly commonly used means of communication, 'to convey meaning' is the most effective and quickest method of sending and receiving messages.

Keywords: communication strategy; functions; pair discussion; oral communication; recall; interview.

INTRODUCTION

For most English language learners, the primary reason for learning English is to communicate effectively, and consequently improve their chances in further education and employment. There are two main types of communication: verbal and non-verbal (Ross & Arthur, 2002), with oral communication being the most effective communicator. Numerous studies have been undertaken to improve communication effectiveness among English learners. Cohen, Weaver and Li (1998) and Dornyei (1995) believe that communication strategies can strengthen learners' communicative competence through frequent practice. Thus, from early 1970s, researchers, like Selinker (1972) first put forward the concept "strategies of second-language communication" (p. 229) for the purpose of dealing with speaking errors caused by language learners' inter-language in L2 context. Therefore, when interlocutors try to use a target language to convey their meaning, there exist a gap between L1 and L2, and one method to overcome this weakness is by employing communication strategies. Similarly, Canale and Swain (1980) coined the term 'communication competence' to define language learners' strategies in choosing appropriate utterances grammatically and socially. One of the definitions of Communication strategies accepted widely is attributed to

Faerch and Kasper (1983). "Communication strategies are possibly deliberate approaches for ever coming issues an individual considers to be an obstacle in arriving at a precise target" (Faerch and Kasper, 1983, p. 36). Tarone (1980, p. 420) and Dornyei and Scott, (1997, p. 179). have also stated that communication strategies work as meaning negotiation mechanisms, "communication strategies relate to a mutual attempt of interlocutors to agree on a meaning in situations where requisite meaning structures do not seem to be shared and general problem-solving mechanisms in L2 communication, "every potentially intentional attempt to cope with any language related problems of which the speaker is aware during the course of communication".

Evidently, different researchers may view the same phenomenon in a different perspective as this is the nature of research work (Otha, 2005). Previous studies focused mainly on identifying and classifying communication strategies. Subsequent researches however have broadened the range of communication strategies into a specific context that investigated communication strategies employed by Chinese EFL learners, such as Chen (1990) and Huang and Naerssen (1987). Moreover, Teng's (2012) study successfully combined communication strategies with pedagogical perspective in the EFL classroom context. Nevertheless, a gap has been found in the functions of different communication strategies employed by Chinese EFL learners. Hence, this study aims to investigate further the possible communication strategies employed by Chinese EFL learners in a transactional practice as well as the functions of communication strategies employed by Chinese EFL learners in a transactional practice.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Communication strategies' functions have not been given sufficient emphasis or attention among language researchers for the past forty years until Ellis (2008) elicited one function of communication strategies to improve learners' lexical defect. However, adequate knowledge of the functions of communication strategies can provide ample insight into learners' ability regarding overcome their communicative deficiencies in L2 oral communication. This was a suggestion stated by Tarone (1979) implying that communication strategies can be split into two aspects which are; learning strategies, "an attempt to develop linguistic and sociolinguistic competence in the target language", and production strategies, "an attempt to use one's linguistic system efficiently and clearly, with a minimum of effort". There are three types of speech: interactions, transactions and performances (2008). Interaction speech focuses on interlocutors' social needs while transaction speech looks for information provided by the interlocutors. Likewise, Brown & Yule (1983) defined interactional and transactional as the two main functions in oral communication. In an interactional discourse, interlocutors attempt to follow a line of speech to create social relationship while transactional discourse obtains messages. This interactional perspective would permit for the addition of various repair mechanisms, which Tarone considered as communication strategies if their purpose was "to clarify intended meaning rather than simply correct linguistic form" (1980, p. 424). There are a number of research approaches to communication strategies, for instance, House (2003) and Kasper & Kellerman (1997) considered two main strategies: psycholinguistic and interactional. Nevertheless, their strategies were viewed negatively for excluding the other interlocutors' performances in the oral communication. Tarone's (1980) approach, on the other hand, focused on 'both areas of interaction': "Link to a reciprocal effort of two speakers to concur on a definition in instances where required

denotation frameworks do not appear to be shared" (p. 420). Overall, nearly every approach of communication strategies is more inclined to transactional function rather than interactional in L2 oral communication (Aston, 1993) resulting in few academic papers available for research purposes. Since scant research has been done on functional approaches to communication strategies, this study focuses on the functions of communication strategies conducted by Chinese EFL learners in a transactional practice.

METHODOLOGY

A qualitative method (Jackson, 2012 & Creswell, 2014) was utilized in this study. Communication strategies are seen as a 'tool' to fix the 'interruptions' in the process of transactional practice. As a consequence of the participants having had little knowledge about communication strategies before commencement of the study, the results appear more authentic and reliable. One of the limitations of this pilot study was small sample size and the application of Opportunism (Holliday, 2007) Strategy became necessary in selecting the participants because of time constraints and difficulty in collecting data from Chinese learners abroad.

Participants

In order to avoid unnecessary problems caused by interlocutors' inadequate English proficiency, five master's students who are both majored in English were selected from the University of Malaya. These Chinese international students needed to achieve at least band 6 in IELTS (International English Language Testing System) in order pursue their master's degree in the UM.

There were aged 23-30 and respectively with the former males achieving band 6.5 while the latter females attained band 7 in IELTS. While the male students were in their second semester, and the female students still in their first semester. They expressed their interest and consented to be part of the study, after the author provided them with a comprehensive explanation regarding the study.

Instruments

Pair discussion and stimulated recall interviews were both employed as the main instruments in data collection (see Table 1) as greater reliability can be attached to the latter because of the one-to-one nature of examining the participants' perspectives based on their performances.

Data obtained was based on topics selected by the interlocutors themselves based on their interests and since it was going to be a transactional practice focused on conveying message (Jack, 2008), the social context is secondary to this study. Data was obtained through audio-recording their pair discussion and also recall interviews. In a stimulated recall interview, researchers recorded participants' responses to questions about their recently completed tasks by playing back the tape and interrupting it when the participants wished to comment or provide additional data. In general, the researchers required them to describe problems and difficulties they encountered in the oral communication process and how they addressed them. Lam (2006) applied this method in her study and considered that the recall interview 'effective' as it went beyond just a cursory examination into an in-depth study of the oral communication process.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The difficulties encountered by the participants' during oral communication were transcribed by the researcher. In order to access the communication strategies of participants, the researcher employed the inventory of strategic language (Dornyei, Zoltan, Scott, Mary & 2007). Table 2 shows Communication strategies used by the participants.

Table 2

Communication strategies used by the participants

Strategy	Description	Example
1 Clarification request	Requesting for more explanation, clarification or repetition to solve a comprehension problems.	<i>What do you mean by...? What?</i>
2 Confirmation request	Asking the speaker to confirm whether the heard or understood utterance is correct or not	Using 'question repeat' or questions like 'You mean...?'
3 Interpretive summary	Paraphrasing the interlocutor's message to check if they understood it correctly or not	<i>Yan: so, after graduation, they got married and then had a baby a year after...</i>
4 Expressing non-understanding	Expressing that the interlocutor does not understand properly what was going on in the communication	<i>I didn't get that.</i>
5 Requesting help	Requesting assistance from other partners when they are faced with a deficiency in self-expression	<i>How to say that...</i>
6 Repairing	Repairing self or other errors in oral performance	<i>At that time, he is about ... She is about 27 years old...</i>
7 Use of fillers	Using gambits words and phrases to fill pauses and to gain time in order to keep the conversation open	<i>You know, see, ok, well, um</i>

Source: *Communicative Strategies (Dornyei & Scott's inventory, 1997)*

As for ascertaining the functions of Communication strategies that participants used in this study, Ohta's (2005) methods of 'turn' analysis was employed in the recall interview with questions focused on the following three turns in their conversation:

“(1) the initial turn which contains the utterance creating the problem in communication; (2) the turn containing the signal of strategy usage; (3) the turn containing the response to overcome the problem” (p.388)

Language is basically sounds or utterances that convey meaning. It is a means or tool for communicating thoughts or messages from one person to another. Various types of conversations are used in different ways for different purposes such as conversation between individuals and groups, sending message to a large group (audience), instructing, and conveying of knowledge (teaching). Without verbal communication that convey precise meaning that is understood by the receiver (listener) civilization as we know it and advances in science, technology, commerce and education could not have been achieved. Therefore, the application of communication in strategic ways is vital to convey the intended message and avoid miscommunication. The use of communication strategy is explained further in selected extracts 1 through 7.

To convey meanings

The clarification request strategy is used when users want to get more information and explanation about an ambiguous utterance as shown in extract 1 below:

Extract 1:

David: Let's choose some aspects of marriage.

Anne: What?

David: I want to talk about responsibilities in the marriage.

(* David and Anne are nicknames of the two participants)

In the above example, Anne seeks further clarification from the interlocutor regarding the topic for discussion. In the initial turn (*some aspects of marriage*), the listener's reply indicates lack of comprehension of the utterance, and thus can be regarded as problematic utterance in oral communication. In the third turn, therefore, David explains his intention and is more specific about the topic to be discussed. In their recall interview, Anne explained why she raised the question: Sophie *: So why did you raise the question? Anne: Because I didn't fully understand his suggestion. I wanted to know more (information) about it. (* Sophie is the nickname of the researcher). The findings from extract 1 echoes with Tarone's (1980) statement that phrases are considered Communication strategies once their intention was "to clarify intended meaning" as was the case in Anne's speech act of asking a question. Furthermore, the interpretative summary strategy was occasionally employed to facilitate interlocutor's understanding as shown in extract 2 below:

Extract 2:

David: I would like to take an example of a friend of mine.

Anne: Yes?

David: When graduation, when (she) graduated in 2006, she, she married quickly, and a year after, 2007, baby's coming...

Anne: oh, really, you mean that after graduation, she got married and then she got a baby a year after, right?

David: yeah!

Extract 2 indicates that this strategy is employed to ascertain that listeners grasped the correct meanings. Also this strategy facilitates transfer of meaning in L2 communication. Occasionally, the requesting help strategy can assist users convey their meanings successfully so as to ensure messages given and received are clearly understood by both interlocutors.

Extract 3:

Anne: At that time, I mean when they get older enough, and they get financially, um, **how to say that? Oh, they got enough money...**

Extract 3 indicates, Anne is attempting to describe a situation. However, because of inadequate vocabulary, she struggles to find the appropriate words, and expressions to convey her message. Ultimately, she directs a question seeking help to complete her utterance. In this example, she partly answers the question herself. Sometimes, confirmation request is used where users will repeat words, phrases or ask questions to confirm meaning. Extract 4 below is a sample of confirmation request. The data in Extract 3 rings with Tarone's (1979) study that speakers make use of production strategies, attempts at using one's current linguistic system as efficiently as possible as Anne demonstrates in explaining her idea through lexical items and phrases that she understands.

Extract 4:

David: she thinks it's enough, because she has finished the **core responsibility**.

Anne: so **you mean that** for your friend, the mean responsibility is to give birth to baby, and raise the baby...

In David's first turn (*core responsibility*), Anne is rather unsure of the meaning of his statement. As a result, Anne attempts to clarify and assure herself the meaning of 'core responsibility' in this instance.

To ensure language accuracy

Repairing strategy is often used by interlocutors to make the utterance accurate when transferring meanings. However, there is a difference between repaired by speakers themselves and repaired by other interlocutors, as shown in extract 5 below:

Extract 5:

David: My friend found a job, at that time, he is about...

Anne: She is about...

David: twenty-seven years old.

Extract 5, one participant initiates the conversation while the other repairs errors in the communication. There is also an element of self-repairing going on (twenty-seven years old). However, these repair strategies are more focused on language accuracy rather than conveying meaning.

To keep conversation going

The use of fillers to avoid long pauses and keep momentum in conversations, speeches, announcements and other oral events is a common strategy adopted by interlocutors. Fillers come about when speakers need time to figure out correct grammar, recall words or subject matter, and the common utterances used as fillers are *well; see; you know; and I mean...* Extract 6 below is an example of a filler:

Extract 6:

Anne: you see... when two lovers are in a relationship...

There are multiple examples similar to the one described above in oral communication in extract 6. Nevertheless, when there are instances in a conversation where meaning is not grasped fully by one or both interlocutors, this is expressed by the party concerned immediately to avoid confusion as the example below shows:

Extract 7:

David: it sounds discriminative? for the women's rights.

Anne: dis.. discri ? What do you mean? I didn't get it.

David: For woman, they have a lot more restrictions than men...

In extract 7, because of the word 'discriminative' is mispronounced, Anne appears to have not understood and appears confused and indicates so to David, who then provides a clear explanation of his earlier statement, so as to keep the conversation on course.

IMPLICATION OF THE STUDY

As the participants, whom comprise of Chinese EFL learners, have successfully improved in both their understanding as well as proficiency in using communication strategies, this study may aid in teaching communication strategies in language, particularly English, as a foreign language. The participants partook in this study being informed and given a chance to reflect on their own proficiency in communication strategies, allowing them to improve as well as continue their conversations with ease. Therefore, EFL learners may benefit well from the outcome of this study as it shows that the participants have shared meaning of lexical items and overcome issues of expressing ideas as interlocutors through interacting with each other and the interviewer.

CONCLUSION

For Chinese EFL learners, one of the deficiencies in learning English is speaking effectively. Although there could be many factors which may be causing the deficiencies, the lack of communication strategies could be a very important one. This study provides a brief but important insight about issues regarding Chinese upper-intermediate EFL learners' Communication strategies usage and their problems when conducting an oral communication. It may provide teachers some pedagogical input on teaching spoken English. The study also indicates that learning English by practicing oral communication could lead to effective communication by students. A suggestion for further studies is to create and include a larger pool of data through mixing together weaker EFL learners with more proficient EFL learners within a conversation, then creating another conversation with all weak EFL learners and all more proficient EFL learners in separate conversations. Through this method, the improvement and usage of communication strategies will be even more apparent in the data.

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AN INTERTEXTUAL ANALYSIS OF SEX-TRAFFICKING VICTIMS' REPRESENTATION IN MALAYSIAN NEWS MEDIA

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ABSTRACT

The objective of this study was to conduct an intertextual analysis of sex-trafficking victims' representation in Malaysian news media. More specifically, the study applies critical discourse analysis as a tool to explore the different social actors' voices and analyse how they are woven together textually or recontextualised to reproduce the underlying power and ideologies of the media on this social group. This study is based on media texts and the data is obtained from mainstream English-language newspapers, The Star and New Straits Times. Grounded in CDA, the selected articles are examined using Reisigl and Wodak's (2009) discourse-historical approach and van Leeuwen's (1996, 2008) socio-semantic categories of social actors to investigate how discursive strategies and other features of texts are employed intertextually to construct particular meaning about victims of sex trafficking. The analysis of newspaper excerpts have led to the representation of sex-trafficking victims as threats, sex offenders, and foreign invaders. Additionally, findings from the intertextual analysis reveal that certain voices have been given more emphasis by the news media while some voices are markedly silenced in order to privilege others.

Keywords: sex trafficking, intertextuality, critical discourse analysis, discourse-historical approach, socio-semantic categories of social actors

INTRODUCTION

Trafficking of people for sexual exploitation is a serious issue and a violation of human rights, and the increase of slavery in the past decades has raised major concerns among policymakers and legislators around the globe. Although the number of sex-trafficking cases in Malaysia is comparatively smaller than in bordering countries, the impact on victims and the country's state defence is inconceivable. Exact statistics concerning the crime are difficult to obtain largely because of its surreptitious nature and few trafficked victims being willing to step forward to report their cases. As a result of its complexity, sex trafficking continues to profusely operate underground resulting in more and more women being forced into sexual slavery.

Interchangeable use of the terms sex trafficking and prostitution has significant concern for victims of trafficking. When a woman is recognised as a trafficked victim, more resources will be available for helping her, but when the victim is labelled a prostitute, she loses access to justice and is therefore subject to discrimination and criminalisation. This may lead to victim blaming, assigning them derogatory labels and classifying them as criminals. At present, Malaysia does not have any specific law that addresses sex trafficking or that recognizes trafficked men or women as victims despite the Malaysian Constitution prohibiting sexual slavery. The international human trafficking law is used as the primary

guiding framework by most countries across the world. Because of its inclusive doctrines and guidelines, the Malaysian government has implemented most of the guidelines delineated in the international law in their Anti-Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants Act 2007 (ATIPSOM). Therefore, this law is referred to as the main guiding policy for all legislative offences related to sex trafficking.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Although modern-day slavery has gained intense publicity over the years, the Malaysian community understands little about the lives of the thousands of innocent women deceived into this hidden trade. As an essential platform for the construction of ideology, the Malaysian government uses the media to inform the public about sex trafficking since the media is able to reach a large audience. Pang (2006, p. 72) noted that the Malaysian media follows the “development journalism” model (Taylor & Kent, 1999, p. 138), a system where the media openly practice pro-government policy to help build the nation. The Malaysian government controls all information circulated by the media through its media laws and concentrated media ownership (Wok & Mohamed, 2017, p. 46). Any disparaging news or political discussions that are critical of the Malaysian government are restricted by media laws, for example, the Printing Presses and Publications Act (1948), Official Secrets Act (1972), Broadcasting Act (1987), and Internal Security Act (1960). With different media laws that impede the public’s freedom of speech, there are possibilities of only one-sided news being presented to readers because the Malaysian newspapers are politicised and overshadowed by “dominant” parties. When the reported story is biased, readers are likely to formulate their own interpretation according to what is written because readers are unaware of the reality that the content of the news had been manipulated. Although just small segments of sex-trafficking occurrences are depicted in the Malaysian media, the media’s capability to influence readers’ beliefs and policies is indisputable. Boots and Heide (2006, p. 435) have argued that “the public draws conclusions from cases about which they become familiar [and] legislators, similar to their constituents, often formulate policy on what they know about a phenomenon, particularly when it is one that inflames passion”. This is likely to be particularly true with regard to sex-trafficking news.

While it is not possible to ensure the veracity of media coverage at all times, the fact that newspaper reporting is often inclined toward horrendous and sensational crime stories (Ericson, 1995; Jewkes, 2004) is fundamental to this research. Given the ability of media texts to shape public debate on sex trafficking, a critical investigation of texts is necessary to unpack deeply embedded ideologies that are often taken to be part of the collective psyche of a community. Research about sex trafficking has been carried out extensively at the global level (Doezema, 2010; Hughes, 2000; Jyrkinen, 2009; Malarek, 2011; Weitzer, 2007; Zimmerman et.al, 2006). Most of the studies have examined the root causes of the crime, legal frameworks and vulnerability of the victims. Within the Malaysian context, literature on sex trafficking is remarkably absent. Nur Ibtisam (2014) and Othman (2006) for instance, have conducted research about human trafficking in the country while Leng, Khan, and Rahim (2014) investigated the danger of using Information Communication Technology (ICT) as a tool in the trafficking of women for sexual exploitation however thorough CDA research examining the representation of sex-trafficking victims in the media particularly from a linguistic perspective is lacking. Such investigation is important as it helps to reveal

particular views about the social actors in the Malaysian media texts. A critical analysis of media texts can also indicate whether the Malaysian media constructs the dominant social actors (in-groups) and sex-trafficking individuals (out-groups) either favourably or unfavourably and tease out the media's hidden ideologies.

CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

As a problem-oriented interdisciplinary research, CDA employs a variety of approaches, theoretical models and research methods (Fairclough, Mulderrig & Wodak, 2011) unlike some forms of discourse-based studies. In keeping with its interdisciplinary or eclectic nature, in this study, Reisigl and Wodak's (2009) discourse-historical approach (DHA) is used in combination with van Leeuwen's (1996, 2008) socio-semantic categories of social actors to address "social discrimination" (Meyer, 2001, p. 15) problems that exist among the marginalised sex-trafficking individuals.

Both van Leeuwen's socio-semantic model of representing social actors and Wodak's referential and predication strategies originating within the DHA, complement each other perfectly in analysing the way social actors are represented in texts hence these frameworks aptly fit into this research. The referential strategies are intended to answer Wodak and Reisigl's (2003, p. 385) question: "How are social actors labelled and referred linguistically?" while the predication strategies answer the question: "Which traits, characteristics, qualities and features are attributed to them?". DHA also takes into account the elements of intertextuality in discourse (Reisigl & Wodak, 2009). In this study, intertextuality is analysed to examine the different social actors' voices in texts. Texts do not exist in isolation but in relation to previous and predicted discourses. The practice of referencing and using the resources provided by earlier writers is an essential aspect of intertextuality. Reisigl and Wodak (2009, p. 90) stated that when the decontextualised text (taking an element from one context) is discretely included in another text (recontextualisation), the inserted element can acquire new meanings. Bazerman (2004, p. 94) indicated that examining intertextuality is important because "intertextuality is not just a matter of which other texts you refer to, but how you use them, what you use them for, and ultimately how you position yourself as a writer to them to make your own statement".

METHODOLOGY

Data used in this study were obtained as part of a larger project on the discursive representations of sex workers in Malaysia from selected online mainstream Malaysian English-language newspapers (The Star and New Straits Times) which include a corpus of news reports gathered within a timeframe of six and a half years (2010–mid-2016). Both are leading English-language newspapers in the country and have a huge online readership and are considered an important source of information for most Malaysian readers. For the purpose of this study, only selected news excerpts about sex-trafficking victims were chosen for the purpose of demonstrating intertextual analysis. The articles cover issues about foreign women who have been trafficked (e.g., coercion, abduction, fraud) for sexual purposes. Although the small sample size according to van Leeuwen (2009, p. 146) may "not provide enough evidence for reconstructing a discourse, [but they] can of course be used for methodological demonstration" to demonstrate how linguistic tools can be employed to analyse texts from a critical perspective as performed in this study.

Method of analysis

The selected news reports were initially studied for common themes that surfaced across the data. The themes were clustered and the very salient themes were selected for analysis. Social actors who represent the in-group (e.g. enforcement officers, political figures) and out-group (sex offenders) in each newspaper excerpt were examined to identify how DHA's referential and predication strategies were used and how certain voices were inserted (intertextuality) to invoke some discourses and disregard others to achieve intended goals. The linguistic devices used within the referential strategy include pronouns and derogatory nouns associated with social actors. On the other hand, the predicational strategies "aim at labelling social actors either positively or negatively, deprecatorily or appreciatively" (Wodak & Reisigl, 2003, p. 386) realized generally through adjectives and adjectival phrases. According to Wodak and Reisigl, "some of the referential strategies can be considered to be specific forms of predicational strategies, because the pure referential identification very often already involves a denotatively or connotatively depreciatory or appreciative labelling of the social actors" (2003, p. 386).

Additionally, intertextual analysis is performed to find out how the recontextualised voices and authorial accounts are intertwined in texts to present a particular viewpoint through the use of quotation, explicit reference (Swales, 1990). Intertextual analysis enables readers to identify the inclusion and exclusion of certain voices directly or indirectly and why certain voices are more significant than others. The selected newspaper excerpts were analysed to find out how the dominant and powerful actors' voices were inserted in the texts to represent the sex-trafficking victims. The views and opinions of the influential social actors not only show their status quo in society but also the ideological positioning of the mainstream media.

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

In this section, selected excerpts from The Star and New Straits Times are discussed based on three salient themes that emerged across the data: victims as threats, sex offenders, and foreign invaders.

Victims as threats

Media reporting about sex-trafficking victims generally presents them as a social threat to the country as a result of an increased number of social issues. The narrative extracted from The Star, July 12, 2011 indicates that the impact that these women have on society is undesirable. The news article (Extract A) shows the intertextual relations between two unidentified agents' voices, the news writer's account and the recontextualised ascribed voice of the group spokesman whose identity is unspecified. The agents' voices are mostly indicated in direct discourse, suggesting the presence of some level of recontextualisation. The authorial account in Sentence 1 reports that the problem with prostitution in the country is on the rise (ever increasing) and the government needs to investigate this issue on a serious note. Meanwhile, the attributed voice of the group spokesman explains that the illegal underground trade leaves a profound effect on society. This can be seen in Sentence 2 where the women were blamed and constructed in a negative light as being responsible for the "domino effect" and "economic effect", a representation that gives them an unfavourable slant.

Extract A

(1) More than 50 women gathered at a closed-door meeting on Sunday night to appeal to the government to seriously look into the issue of prostitution, which they claimed was “ever increasing”. (2) “The domino effect it [prostitution] has on the society is huge – the health risk, the family well being and economic effect it has on the society,” said a group spokesman who requested anonymity, for fear of harassment from gangsters allegedly involved in bringing in some of the foreign women for flesh trade here. (3) “We appeal to the government and leaders in Sarawak to take this matter seriously and not to close one eye to it and hope that everything is fine.” (4) “From flesh trade they can afford to buy condominium units and apartments in China. (5) See how much money they took from us? (6) Not to mention the health risks they could give to a client and his family,”

Source: Address prostitution issue immediately, pleads group of concerned women, The Star, 12 July, 2011

The attributed voice of the group spokesman in Sentence 2 creates a solid message to the readership indicating that those involved in prostitution are a threat to the nation in terms of health risks, family well being, and economics. The direct quotation in Sentence 3 shows the seriousness of the issue where the group spokesman has pleaded to the Sarawak government and leaders to take immediate action to address the problem in the state. The recontextualised voice of the unknown speaker (group spokesman) in Sentences 2–6 create a deep impact as the direct quotes or actual words employed in the news article could change the way society views the women in sex work because it is through the media that readers obtain information that they believe to be truthful. Interestingly, when the focus of the news shifts toward the “client” in Sentence 6, the actor is represented in the passive voice as the recipient of the health risks.

Here, the media activates the women in sex work as perpetrators for their illicit actions. As a result, they are subject to legal penalties while the consumer of the service is portrayed as the innocent recipient of the action rather than as a villain. This dichotomy is particularly important in the representation of trafficked victims as it reveals the attitudes and ideologies of the text producers. Being a Muslim nation where prostitution is viewed illegal, prostituted women are negatively constructed and contribute to the bad reputation of the country (Nasir et al., 2010). Women involved in sex work are criminalised for prostitution, without acknowledging that these women could be victims of sex trafficking. When law considers victims of sex trafficking as being the same as prostitutes, genuine victims are at a disadvantage because they will be deprived of the resources and provisions they deserve.

In Extract B, the journalist’s voice is intertextually textured with the voice of Malacca City Councillor, Datuk K. Basil. The media gives authority to the voice of prominent social actors whose narratives are indicated in direct quote as can be seen in Sentences 2, 4, and 6. The direct quotations are taken as a source of evidence to blame the women for being responsible for smearing the image of the city as a popular tourist destination. This can be seen through wording such as “is taking place right in the heart of the city” (Sentence 3), “This is disgraceful for Malacca. We have to shoo away the prostitutes” (Sentence 6).

Extract B

(1) MALACCA: Let Jalan Hang Tuah be known as a popular tourism stretch, not as a hooker street, an angry Datuk K. Basil said. (2) “Prostitution has been around for sometime in the

back alleys of the street, but no measures were taken to stop it,” the city councillor told *The Star* after raising a storm during the Malacca Historic City Council meeting here yesterday. (3) He had raised a motion to wipe out the vice trade that “is taking place right in the heart of the city”, saying there were complaints about the authorities' inaction. (4) “Jalan Hang Tuah without the prostitutes would probably be the best New Year gift for the locals,” said Basil. (5) He said a thriving prostitute hub could smear the city's image as a popular tourist destination. (6) “This is disgraceful for Malacca. We have to shoo away the prostitutes,” he said adding that the back alley was close to a community hall where wedding receptions and concerts take place.

Source: Clear street of prostitutes, The Star, 22 December, 2011

Direct quotations put readers in touch with what people in the news actually said (Hall & Aimone, 2008) and therefore can be the key to a successful story. However, quotations can be ideologically laden. This is because, by framing the actual information obtained from the group spokesman, the issue is expected to garner support from the people, ministers, and government agencies and thus provide a strong reason for immediate action on this issue. Investigation of the referential strategy shows that the media had included statements from the city councillor which impersonalises foreign women through the use of derogatory labelling in his statements, for example, “hooker” (Sentence 1) and “prostitutes” (Sentence 6). These pejorative terms not only present them in an unfavourable light but reinforce the construction of “otherness”.

Additionally, pronouns (e.g. we, they, and us) employed in the news articles (Extracts A and B) to represent the out-group (sex offenders) and the in-group (Malaysians) are collectivised as a communal human agency rather than as individual groups. This collectivised human agency distinguishes between the prostitutes and the Malaysians in which all prostitutes are associated with social problems while Malaysians are portrayed as the dominant majority who hold power in maintaining the safety of the country. In other words, the pronoun employed in this news text functions to legitimise the construction of the positive-Self (the Malaysians) and de-legitimising the negative-Other (sex offenders).

Victims as sex offenders

The media's attention about sexual offences committed by foreign women generally elicits anxiety among the public. Newspaper readers are made to believe that sex offenders who are thriving in the country are mainly women who come from neighbouring countries. Their involvement in prostitution is portrayed explicitly by emphasising their nationality and numbers as can be seen in Extracts C and D.

Extract C

(1) BUTTERWORTH: The state Immigration Department detained 44 guest relation officers at a karaoke centre during an Ops Sayang raid late Wednesday night in Seberang Jaya, near here. (2) The 16 Chinese and 28 Vietnamese nationals were caught while entertaining their clients in the centre during the 11.45pm raid. (3) None of the women, who were in their early 20s and 30s, managed to escape with Immigration officers sealing off all four exits of the centre. (4) State Immigration Department deputy director Abdul Rahman Hassan said the raid was conducted following a tip-off.

Source: 44 foreign GROs held, New Straits Times, March 9, 2012

Extract D

(1) State CID chief Assistant Commissioner Hamdan Majid, said 11 men, aged from 21 to 45, were detained for further investigation. (2) A total of 102 women, all foreigners, aged between 21 and 45, were detained for alleged prostitution. (3) "In the first raid, 28 women from China and four from Vietnam were detained. (4) In the second raid, 52 women from China, six from Vietnam and one from the Philippines were detained. (5) In the final raid, 11 women from China were detained," he said.

Source: 102 foreigners caught at world's oldest trade, New Straits Times, 10 March, 2012

The narrative extracts from New Straits Times centres on the issue that many foreign women were detained for sex work related from the perspective of people in authoritative positions for example, State Immigration Department Deputy Director Abdul Rahman Hassan (Extract C) and State CID Chief Assistant Commissioner Hamdan Majid (Extract D). The media highlights the authorial statements gained from voices that are deemed important to emphasise the gravity of the issue and as a strategy to divert public attention toward the illicit actions committed by foreign women. The attributed voices of the enforcement officers in direct quotations, according to Teo (2000, p. 18), becomes "a gate-keeping device that admits only those in positions of power and influence while shutting out the opinions and perspectives of those deemed by society to be powerless". The officers' high ranking positions also communicate the message that they have the power to execute actions to sustain the good name of the country that can be seen through verbs such as "arrested", "remanded", and "detained". However, in doing so, the media develops a moral panic among the public primarily due to the media's overt depiction of the women as sex offenders. Victims of sex trafficking are also aggregated in the media and represented as a, homogeneous group in terms of statistics.

As illustrated in Extract D, foreign women detained for sex work are portrayed via definite quantifiers as indicated in Sentences 3 and 4. van Dijk (2000) stated that the frequent use of numbers can signify the degree of the danger, and this is particularly evident with regard to sex-trafficking victims. As a result of this kind of media coverage, the general public conceptualises what it believes to be the prototype of "evil people": Women from foreign countries who participate in the underground sex work are problematic. Studies by Abid, Manan, and Amir (2013) further confirm that associating certain groups with numbers can present them as threat. Observation of the news articles further indicate that victims are mostly passivated and their voices are silenced throughout news reports. The media chooses to give access to the voices of selective individuals who hold special roles in society, therefore signifying the media's hidden agenda. Meanwhile the media takes on the role of an active actor that functions as an informant, keeping readers posted on credible statistics.

Victims as foreign invaders

Within the referential strategy, foreign women in sex work have mostly been classified through generic references by using adjectival phrases (e.g. foreign prostitutes and foreign women) in Extract E. The genericisation of the foreign women is intended to "symbolically remove them from the readers' world of immediate experience" (van Leeuwen, 2008, p. 36), perceived as distant "others" which ultimately reinforces the division of "Us" and "Other". This kind of classification may create discomfort within the community as readers are exposed to negative portrayals of the women and given the idea that the illicit crime is

largely committed by foreigners. The constant representation of women as criminals from foreign countries further promotes the negative discourse about non nationals: Foreign women are associated with the increase of social problems, a phenomenon that threatens the Malaysian community. Sex-trafficking victims therefore no longer fall within the category of co citizen-victim of an illicit activity, but their role is activated as an outsider who is responsible for causing disharmony in the country.

Extract E

(1) KUALA LUMPUR: Foreign prostitutes and migrant workers who claimed to be victims of human trafficking are just trying to avoid prosecution and get a free pass home, said MCA Public Service and Complaints Department chief Datuk Seri Michael Chong. (2) “They claimed to have been lured into vice or into working here but when I looked at their passports, some have overstayed for as long as two years. (3) “If these cases were real, they would have escaped earlier,” he said in an interview. (4) However, Chong said there were also genuine cases of human trafficking. (5) “I have handled cases in which foreign women forced into prostitution were actually brought to me by their customers who took pity on them,” he said.

Source: Doubts over human trafficking claims, The Star, 4 July, 2014

In Extract E, only one type of reporting was used throughout the article: direct quotations mainly from the voices of MCA Public Service and Complaints Department Chief Datuk Seri Michael Chong. The article reports that foreign women involved in sex work attempt to escape penalty by claiming to be victims of trafficking. However, the statement by Michael Chong, (Sentence 3) “If these cases were real, they would have escaped earlier,” seems to be convincing because he believes the foreign women have entered the country deliberately to operate as sex workers. Because there are no other voices in the report, either from the enforcement officers or from the affected individuals, the entire article is attributed to the perspectives of one social actor. By giving access to the dominant voice of Michael Chong whose statement is taken as a source of information, the news becomes more trustworthy.

Similarly, in Extract F, the State Immigration Enforcement Unit Deputy Chief Masri Abdul in an authorial voice asserts that foreign women abuse their tourist visas to work as guest relation officers in Malaysia. In this example, the accessed voice of the enforcement officer is nominated in the form of honorification, in that his existence in the news report is presented along with his official rank in the government office. Nomination, according to van Leeuwen (1996, p. 41), “is typically realized by proper nouns which can be formal (surname only), with or without honorifics), semiformal (given name and surname), or informal (given name only)”. So, the presence of an influential social actor in the news report is essential as the media uses the statements obtained from elite actors to convince its readers to believe the information as if it comes from a reliable source. Significantly, victims’ and perpetrators’ voices are suppressed. The absence of these actors’ voices is imperative as it highlights the media’s ideological underpinning that is, the media gives more priority to official voices but excludes voices that are deemed unimportant.

Extract F

JOHOR BARU: The Johor Immigration Department arrested 70 foreign women at an entertainment outlet in Stulang Laut on Wednesday. In the operation at 10.30pm, code-

named Op Sepadu, the women who had entered the country on tourist visas were detained for violating their social visit passes by working as guest relation officers. Aged between 22 and 35, the women, mostly wearing low-cut dresses and revealing body-hugging blouses, were caught while busy entertaining their guests. State Immigration enforcement unit deputy chief Masri Abdul said the raid followed complaints by members of the public about the presence of foreign women in large numbers.

Source: 70 foreign women detained in raid, New Straits Times, 6 September, 2013

As can be seen in the above news extract, the officer's voice (Masri Abdul), markedly crucial, is intertextually textured in the article together with the voice of the media. The media can advance its voice along with the voices of important social actors to create impact but, in doing so, legitimate sex-trafficking victims become subjects of marginalisation because the media is more interested in highlighting the immigration status of the victims rather than viewing them as a human rights issue. The State Immigration Enforcement Unit is activated as agent with regard to the women's arrests. Further, in this news excerpt, the women were attributed (predication strategy) mainly for their provocative appearance and actions, "wearing low-cut dresses and revealing body-hugging blouses... busy entertaining their guests". This kind of news reporting is not an exception in the mainstream newspapers as the government is always portrayed as the good Self while foreign women in sex work as the bad Other.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Analysis of the English-language newspapers displayed a certain form of news coverage on sex trafficking that is likely to influence readers' perceptions toward women in sex work. Generally, the Malaysian press has framed the sex-trafficking discourse as a problem associated with foreigners who make up the majority of women trafficked for sexual exploitation. Foreign women in sex work tend to be viewed through the lens of immigration and prostitution which positions them as criminals often, in inferior position with regard to the Malaysian authorities. As a result, sex-trafficking victims become subjects of marginalisation because the media is more engrossed in emphasising the women's immigration status rather than viewing it as an issue of human rights violation.

For decades, the Malaysian press has been under the control of governments, and therefore the media is required to support the government's policies in all matters including the problem of sex trafficking. Because the media has the power to decide what to include or to exclude and whom to use as sources (Fong & Ishak, 2010; Gamson & Modigliani, 1989) the Malaysian press is inclined to show their support through their writings by depicting the government's positive actions in tackling sex trafficking in the country. The media's sourcing practice indicates the media's bias in that there is a clear absence of victims' voices. In contrast, the media gives priority to the voices of elite social actors whose voices are intertextually textured with authorial accounts to present the government in a positive light but at the same time reinforces the negative image of the victims. The findings obtained from this study are similar to previous research by Don and Lee (2014) who examined the voices of political elites in news reports to represent refugees negatively. Teo's (2000) study on Vietnamese immigrants in Australia also yielded similar results in which the social actors have been depicted unconstructively in the Australian news reports.

The finding confirms that almost all news reports about sex trafficking and sex work have incorporated the voices of influential social actors such as those in high and respected positions in society such as a deputy superintendent, assistant commissioner, State Immigration Department deputy director, city councillor and Public Service and Complaints Department chief. The social actors are also nominated with honorification (e.g., Datuk Seri Michael Chong, Datuk K. Basil). The media uses these actors in its reports to prove the reliability of the news source so that readers are more convinced of the way the issue is presented. The prominent voices are included along with other voices through direct and indirect reporting in most cases because the journalists want their views to be merged with the government views.

Political actors with a voice dominate the media as they are given opportunities to put forward their aims and to address certain issues. These actors have crucial interest in gaining media attention for their own purpose and therefore use the media as a platform to strategically inform the public about various issues by incorporating their voices in news reports. Moreover, for readers who do not have access to other news source will tend to believe the information given by the elite actors as genuine news. As noted by Tresch (2009, p. 8), “having a voice in the media is a key political strategy to gain legitimacy and power in the political process.” Findings from intertextual analysis of news extracts on the whole show how media writers adeptly use certain voices and contextualise them to represent sex-trafficking victims in an unfavourable way.

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THE 'MEANING MAKING' OF PROBLEM-BASED LEARNING(PBL): THE LEARNERS' PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

The relationship between feeling and understanding is vital to learning, as what we feel about it concerns what we learn. Thus, understanding how learners' make meaning of a learning experience is crucial. It needs to be uncovered specifically to assist language practitioners facilitate learning. This article discusses learners' 'meaning making' of their Problem-Based Learning (PBL) experiences in a Business English Course (BEC). In this qualitative study, a phenomenographic research methodology was employed. The research participants were eight first year undergraduates from a Malaysian public university. The data was collected through interviews and observations. The interviews were recorded, transcribed and coded into categories using thematic analysis. The observation notes acted as triangulation as well as additional data in the interpretation phase. The findings demonstrated the unique experiences of the research participants in experiencing PBL for the first time and the 'meaning making' of what PBL is for them as learners. The learners' PBL experience was considered essential for practitioners to establish a link between what they perceive and the actual experiences from the learners in order to aid the practitioners in developing a conducive learning environment.

Keywords: Problem-Based Learning (PBL), Meaning making of PBL

INTRODUCTION

Problem-based learning (PBL) is a pedagogical strategy which employs contextualized real world situations. In this learning environment, learners are engaged in a collaborative process which starts with a problem or case that is assigned to them. The learners work collaboratively to research and reflect the information obtained before arriving at a group consensus in solving the case or problem. In other words, learners undergo a very complex and challenging learning experience contrary to the traditional classroom environment.

This paper focuses on the meaning making of Business English learners who experience Problem-Based Learning in their course. The term meaning-making has been used in constructivist educational psychology to refer to the personal epistemology that persons create to help them make sense of the influences, relationships and sources of knowledge in their world (Kegan, 1982). Thus, understanding the learners' experiences in this learning environment is very crucial and deemed necessary for practitioners to adapt and adopt teaching and learning activities to meet the needs of the learners and classroom.

LITERATURE REVIEW

As a term, meaning making in learning appears to be a way to capture the active elements of learning as well as the uniqueness of each learner's prior experience and knowledge. According to Vygotsky (1978), meaning has two components – meaning proper and personal sense. Meaning proper means repeatable, and “public” denotations of a word, gesture, action or event (Bakhtin, 1987). Most researchers focus their studies on this aspect when they are doing research on education. This approach to meaning inspires researchers to look into whether the learners have obtained the right concept of the content or learning and whether the meaning can be shared or testable. However, this is only one of the aspects of meaning making as defined by Vygotsky (1978).

Activity theorists, believe that a more primary aspect of meaning making is the second aspect which is the ‘personal sense’. As explicated by Shawn (2014):

The construct of personal sense attempts to capture the very personal, biographical, embodied, situated connotations of words, gestures, actions and events. This is the realm of what those things mean for us as part of our personal narratives about ourselves, our experiences, sense of place or even sense of ourselves. It is about how they resonate (or not) with our values, beliefs, judgments and knowledge. As learning researchers, we often discount or ignore this hugely important aspect of meaning making.

He further added that these are the aspects of experiences where the researchers will have to work on to get insights from the learners. In light of that, this study explored and sieved understanding of learners' PBL learning experience which is expected to assist language practitioners in conducting effective and affective teaching. Effective teaching (Abrami et al., 1997), takes place when students experience successful learning while affective teaching (Hesten, 1995 cited in Cooper et al., 2000) occurs when the practitioners manage to empathize with the students' experience and use it to further enhance the learning.

Having discussed the meaning making in learning and its contribution to educational practices, another area of relevance for this paper is PBL in English Language learning. This is because the meaning making of the PBL experience was filtered from a group of Learners in a Business English Course. The area of research on PBL in English language teaching and learning is the most significant in relation to the current research. Although the lines of research presented here dwelled on English Language Proficiency, English for Occupational Purposes (EOP) and English for Specific Purposes (ESP), they can be categorized as similar, as the aim of each course is to assist learners in improving their language skills for different reasons. Furthermore, Mohd Salleh (2008, May) claimed that PBL has proven to be effective for use in the mastery of the English language among learners because he found that the approach or philosophy that underlies PBL is ‘experiential’ with greater emphasis on group dynamics, independent investigation of real world problems and high analytical thinking skills that require greater usage of communication skills. Sim (2006) studied the use of PBL in English for Occupation Purposes (EOP) classroom by determining whether the use of PBL benefited the EOP respondents' language skills and whether there were any significant improvements in their language skills. The findings signified that the respondents had a positive impression of PBL, their oral and written language skills had improved significantly and their generic skills had also improved. Another study similar to the field of investigation in the current research was conducted by Anthony (2010, April) on English for Specific

Purposes (ESP). The research reported on students' collaborative interaction based on the PBL approach in an undergraduate course of ESP at a higher learning institution in Malaysia. The analysis demonstrated that second language learning as a process is an aspect of learning that is often overlooked in Malaysian classrooms to meet the need of the examination-oriented education system. It was rather interesting to note that all the studies discussed above either used quantitative, qualitative or mixed method design. However, none of the studies above have gathered data through developmental phenomenographical approach (a branch of qualitative research paradigm) which aims to dissect meaning from a phenomenon.

Therefore, the current study is significant because of its focus on participants' meaning making of their PBL journey with emphasis on personal sense (Vygotsky, 1978) through the use of phenomenographical research paradigm. This study is also relevant to the field of English Language as the experiences are a recollection of events that were shared throughout the PBL process. In other words, the meaning making process is an enriching one because the PBL learning starts with a problem and continues until they arrive at the end product/s (presentations/artefacts). To achieve the aim, this paper seeks to answer the following research question- how do ESL learners make meaning of their learning experiences in a Problem-Based Learning (PBL) Business English Course (BEC)?

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study adopted a phenomenographic research paradigm. Using this paradigm, the researcher studied the experiences of the learners from the lens of the participants by sieving the meanings they make from their experiences. This process of sieving meaning is authentic because the learners' experiences are interpreted from their perspective through phenomenographic interviews and not through the researcher's perspective (Mohd Ali & Simkin, Nov. 2011). The process of sieving meaning involves eliciting experiences related to personal sense (Vygotsky, 1978). To be more specific, developmental phenomenography is employed in this study to determine how people experience some aspect of their world, and 'then to enable them or others to change the way their world operates' (Bowden, 2000, p. 3). In other words, developmental phenomenography takes the understandings further in terms of using them to improve or develop the phenomenon in future. In this case, the researcher would use the understanding obtained through this research to make improvements in the teaching and learning activities in PBL.

Research Participants

A purposive sampling method (Patton, 2002; Lincoln & Guba, 1985) which refers to the purposeful selection of a given sample, was employed in this study. The research participants were the first-year undergraduates in a Malaysian public university. Eight learners, 4 males and 4 females, were grouped into two teams from the same tutorial group of their Business English course. They were chosen as the research participants based on their demographic differences: gender, personalities and level of classroom participation. Demographic variations in the participants are important for this study to meet the aim of a phenomenographic research which that is to understand the different ways a phenomenon are experienced.

Data Collection and Analysis Procedures

Data were collected through interviews and observations. The researcher was present in the classroom as participant observer, acting as the facilitator as well as a critical friend throughout the research. Conversational interviews were carried out with the learners after they have experienced each PBL task. The researcher's observation notes were written throughout the research journey. These observation notes were very useful and retained as close references in writing the interpretation. The notes were written in four different aspects: Theoretical Notes (TN), Methodological Notes (MN) and Observational Notes (ON) and content analysis was done to conclude the themes. The interviews were recorded, transcribed and coded for categories using thematic analysis. The observation notes acted as triangulation as well as additional data in the interpretation phase.

This research was carried out in a Business English Course in which three PBL tasks were embedded in the existing course content. The three PBL tasks were adopted and adapted from the course workbook to ensure the coherence of the units with the tasks. The tasks were then adapted to meet the requirements of a PBL model (Savin-Baden, 2000). The selection and adaptation of the tasks were done from low difficulty to increasing difficulty in terms of the requirement to look for information and the length of processes involved. PBL 1 was conducted with a lot of scaffolding from the practitioner as the learners were not familiar with PBL processes. PBL 2 and PBL 3 reflected more of the actual PBL running. All the three PBL tasks were carried out for a duration of 8 weeks.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

This section presents the meaning learners have associated with their PBL experience in BEC. The quotations were drawn from two separate interviews, which focused on personal sense of the PBL experience throughout the study. The similarities in their responses and stories emerged from the earlier interview data; while the later interview provided a form of validation of their experience of PBL in BEC. However, there is an added value in these final stories compared to the earlier ones because the former stories were expressed with hesitation, less reflection and with the help of prompts, while the latter were more reflective and expressive as they were related to their personal sense. The learners' significant stories have been grouped into main themes (as in the sub-heading) and followed by the explanations and relevant quotations to give readers a better understanding of the learners' meaning making of their experiences.

Meaningful Use of Language

The learners explained that PBL is an experience of the meaningful use of English Language. They found that it was a way of learning the language while solving problems; using language for a purpose. Moreover, it was also a new and useful method that assisted them in practising the language. It was the nature of the PBL cases that encouraged the use of the language because the learners subconsciously used the language in solving the cases/problem.

A good way to learn English while solving problem (L129) TISUMPBLiRP1

A new and good method of learning English (L4-5; L16-17) TISUMPBLiRP1

A helpful method to learn English (L9-12) TISUMPBLiRP2

More than solving problem; learn to use the language (L121-123) TISUMPBLiRP4

It was rather a positive experience for the learners because they knew that at the end of the learning process they have to achieve something; in this case solve or manage the problem/case given to them. However, there were also learners who experienced PBL as meaningful language use but at the same time prompted anxiety thinking about the score for their presentations (end product).

I am worried about my assignment marks but I enjoy the discussion and searching information (L124-123) TISUMPBLiRP4

I use English to say my idea but I am not sure what marks I will get for my presentation (L28-29) TISUMPBLiRP2

They did enjoy the process, even though they struggled to talk and discuss in English but managed to come up with good solutions for the case/problem that was assigned to them.

Iwe came up with wonderful solution ...tried our best to talk in English although we did mix with Malay a bit; But best la (L126-129; 131-132) TISUMPBLiRP6

Many Benefits and Difficulties in One Experience

Learners associated PBL in BEC experience as a series of benefits and difficulties gained in one type of learning. These were the advantages highlighted by the learners:

Many gains in one PBL task (60-63) TISUMPBLiRP8

*Solutions come together with reasons and justifications (L231-234) TISUMPBLiRP1
A brainstorming process, which is applicable in studies and other matters (L17-18) TISUMPBLiRP7*

*Help students to locate a problem and guide to solve it (L4-6) TISUMPBLiRP7
An approach that generates mature and effective thinking (L5-7) TISUMPBLiRP7*

Broaden thinking and learning outside classroom context (L7-12; L23-24) TISUMPBLiRP1

About finding solution (L7) TISUMPBLiRP6

The benefits range from generic skills acquisition to the general view about PBL as a way to find solutions. As the learners were able to highlight the benefits they gained, it also meant that learners who engaged in PBL can also become motivated to participate in the learning. PBL practitioners can take advantage of the learners' increased motivation to further implement PBL with an added challenge if necessary.

However, there were learners who found it difficult to use English language for discussion purposes because of their low language proficiency, which led to difficulties in understanding each other. This seems to be one of the major issues in PBL implementation in the language classroom because the low proficiency learners tried to use minimal English language in the group discussion.

I didn't understand much of what my friend said (L40-41) TISUMPBLiRP5

*It was not easy to speak and understand each other (L12-13) TISUMPBLiRP6
I Didn't talk much coz my English is bad (L27) TISUMPBLiRP6*

Fun Learning

PBL was experienced as a fun learning experience. There were many reasons why learners felt a sense of fun in the learning process. Learners felt relaxed because they were given a block of time to complete the PBL case/problem. As they proceed through their work, the sense of fun was experienced. They interpreted the learning process as a game, and interesting educational activity occurring outside the classroom, supporting the notion of fun felt by the learners.

Relax and fun because given a block of time (L95-96) TISUMPBLiRP1 A type of game (L138-139) TISUMPBLiRP8

Interesting method of learning (L34) TISUMPBLiRP1

An interesting learning method; learning in fun context (L6-7) TISUMPBLiRP8

Because get to go out while learning (L31-32) TISUMPBLiRP1

Series of activities (L54-60) TISUMPBLiRP4

They also found the element of challenge as fun. They highlighted that meeting real people in the task completion was interesting and challenging. The task was also considered difficult and challenging, having both negative and positive aspects. They felt interested but also challenged due to the opportunity of meeting people in interviews.

Interesting and challenging because meeting real people (L80-82) TISUMPBLiRP1

The task is difficult and challenging (L8-10) TISUMP3i3RP6.

The task is interesting but challenging because we will be meeting 'real people' to interview and can improve communication skills (L83-86; L97) TISUMP3i1RP6

The idea of challenging-fun expressed by the learners can be further explicated as a threshold concept to understand the lived experience of learning in PBL environment. A threshold concept has been defined as:

a portal, opening up a new and previously inaccessible way of thinking about something. It represents a transformed way of understanding, or interpreting, or viewing something... (Meyer and Land, 2003 p.1).

Barret (2005) had unfolded the concept of 'hard-fun' from PBL participants in his study. Similar interpretations can be deduced from 'challenging-fun' as described by the participants in the current study. In understanding the threshold concept, it can be illustrated that 'challenging-fun' could open up a new perspective for further implications of teaching and learning. Threshold concepts are considered to be transformative, probably irreversible, integrative and troublesome (Meyer & Land, 2003). The transformative aspect took place when the concept of challenging-fun transformed the researcher's understanding of this learning. Even though the researcher has been involved in PBL for a few years, it has never occurred to the researcher or the experiences from the students that PBL learning can be challenging-fun until the current research unfolded such a unique illustration. The researcher was convinced that it is 'irreversible' (ibid, 2003) in the sense that this insight affects both the way the researcher/teacher thinks about PBL and the way to implement it. The concept of challenging-fun is integrative in that it is integrated in the analysis of how eight learners

talked about their learning. Learning in PBL is about the fun of laughter, creativity and playfulness and the challenges of difficulties, demanding activity levels and transformation.

Fun without challenge is merely playfulness. Challenge without fun is hard work. Learning in PBL demands both the fun of playing with ideas and the challenges of refining and reworking them. Both complementary parts are needed for learning. It is definitely troublesome. Some people have difficulty with considering notions of fun in learning as academically rigorous, and, practically and professionally irrelevant. It is also troublesome in a sense that it is counter intuitive by juxtaposing the words 'challenge' and 'fun' together to form a concept.

According to Csikszentmihalyi (1975) cited in Sedighian (June, 1997), '... creating an intrinsically motivating activity is to keep the ratio between a person's capabilities and encountered challenge within a range which results in neither boredom nor lack of fun nor worry and anxiety. When the challenge is greater than one's capabilities, one experiences worry and frustration; when one's skill is greater than the challenge, one experiences boredom' (p. 49). In the current research, the challenge level in PBL learning was rather motivating, perhaps because the difficulty level of the task and the learners' capabilities were just right. This is in line with Krashen's Input theory of I+1. According to this hypothesis, the learner improves and progresses along the 'natural order' when he/she receives 'input' that is one step beyond their current stage of competence. For example, if a learner is at a stage 'i', then acquisition takes place when he/she is exposed to 'Comprehensible Input' that belongs to level 'i + 1'. In relation to PBL, Krashen's theory can be used as a base in crafting the 'problem', which is at a level of I+1

Learning Starts with a Problem

Learners illustrated that PBL is a process of learning that starts off with a problem.

The assignment starts with a problem (L57-58) TISUMPBLiRP2 A technique of learning/solving problem (L5-7) TISUMPBLiRP2 Use problem to learn (L180) TISUMPBLiRP6

Solving problem due to pressure (L291-293) TISUMPBLiRP7 Assist in solving problem (L259-261) TISUMPBLiRP5

Help students to locate a problem and guide to solve it (L4-6) TISUMPBLiRP6

When learning starts with a case/problem, the reason for the learning, which is solving the problem, is established at the onset of the learning. Just like when the learners are given a jigsaw puzzle, they will have a mind-set that it has got to be sorted out. The same situation applies to a PBL task because the learners see a reason/need to complete the task. Thus, it is important to craft a suitable and motivating problem to retain the learners' motivation and interest to solve the problem.

Discovery and an Active Learning Experience

PBL in BEC was perceived as a discovery and an active learning experience. The learners discovered their ability and potential through the learning processes. It was also a discovery in learning through sustained seeking and discipline to arrive at a viable solution, which was considered as the impact of the learning. This authentic learning experience, which was discovery in nature, was interpreted as a new learning experience.

*Avenue for self-discovery of one's ability through the process (L53; L54-56)
TISUMPBLiRP3*

*Discovery of learning through self-seeking and discipline
(L211-212) TISUMPBLiRP1*

*An impact in the learning (L155-156) TISUMPBLiRP5 A new experience (L58)
TISUMPBLiRP6*

Active learning is experienced when there are two ways of communication in the learning – between staff and learners and between learners and other learners. Learners also call it student-centred learning because there are more active roles for the learners in this type of learning. The interactive nature of the learning context encourages the generation and exchanges of ideas through activities.

Active learning; two-way communication (L16-19) TISUMPBLiRP4

Student-centred learning (L110-112) TISUMPBLiRP4

A place to generate and exchange ideas (L126-129; 131-132) TISUMPBLiRP6

Learning through activities (L198-199)

Outside classroom (L201-202) TISUMPBLiRP7

Interactive learning process (L6) TISUMPBLiRP3

IMPLICATIONS TO LANGUAGE TEACHING AND LEARNING

Previous studies have shown that PBL is a worthwhile form of learning to be considered at higher learning institutions (MohdSalleh, 2008; Sim, 2006). Although the current research did not evaluate the effectiveness of PBL to tertiary learners in the Malaysian context, it has certainly brought to the surface the learners' insights concerning the benefits and challenges of such an approach. Most of the learners' insights and illustrations of the PBL experiences were very positive. Thus, adopting PBL in language teaching more widely, would yield more potentially useful insights.

The concept of challenging-fun as illustrated by the learners has shown their personal sense about the experience as well as practical implications at various levels. At the level of the PBL classroom, understanding learning as challenging-fun in PBL not only encourages us as PBL practitioners to be intellectually challenging and academically rigorous with our students, but also to have space for student creativity and room enough for joy. It stimulates us to write problems that are sufficient to challenge students. At a time when there are difficulties with student retention the challenging-fun of learning in PBL may be a way of engaging students in the curriculum. The usefulness of challenging-fun as a concept for exploring the different types of learning and varied learning spaces in higher education is something that could be explored further. Challenging-fun is a threshold concept that gives us a new way of thinking about and doing 'learning' in PBL.

For successful PBL implementation, specifically with low proficiency learners who illustrated their experience as 'many benefits and difficulties in one learning', the administration should start with a proper course structuring, in which the practitioners will have to decide which model of PBL can be implemented. For a start, a hybrid PBL model (model 1- Savin-Baden, 2000) can be introduced in which PBL is implemented with a combination of lectures and tutorials. This would help both the practitioners and the learners.

The practitioners would benefit from trying to cover course content using other modes like lectures and tutorials while some content is covered in PBL classes. The introductory PBL would assist learners to understand and get hands on experience concerning the procedures and steps in PBL. This way, both practitioners and learners will obtain ample time gaining experience and knowledge to perform better in full fledged PBL in upcoming programs. Exclusive PBL classes could be implemented after one semester of exposure of the students to hybrid PBL. This is because an exclusively PBL class would affect practitioners training, timetabling and logistics. Training is a crucial issue in PBL implementation because a lack of PBL knowledge and experience among the practitioners will lead to the failure of PBL lessons. The course administrators should locate potential practitioners and give them professional training in PBL before teaching PBL classes. As for the timetable, the outside classroom hours needed for PBL group discussions should be included to reduce the possibility of learners cutting short the amount of time needed to produce satisfactory outcomes. Having had the extra hours for group discussions, the discussion rooms available should be equipped with Internet facilities because the learners could discuss and search for extra materials via interwebs at the same venue. This is a way to reduce the possibility of not searching for extra materials due to limited resources.

Another important aspect that needs to be looked into is the assessment in PBL (specifically in English Language context) as many learners felt that it was a meaningful language learning experience. However, there were also a number of respondents who felt that they did well during PBL (discussions and searching for materials) and would expect more marks awarded for the process. Therefore, the assessment should focus on the process and product, which would benefit the learners in many ways.

CONCLUSION

As a researcher, it was a worthwhile experience to document accurate and sharable meaning and develop serious ways to embrace the notion of meaning making among the PBL learners. The learners' meaning making of the Business English PBL experience has certainly provided a meaningful and essential insights for language practitioners adopting PBL. The practitioners could benefit by considering the way students perceive (in this study particularly, but also in others) the effect of the main elements of successful PBL on their learning. In this study (and the other studies on PBL referred to in this research) they see it as an opportunity to use their second language meaningfully, expand their repertoire of skills in problem solving, communicate and negotiate difficulties with their peers, enjoy their learning and feel a sense of accomplishment through hard work and shared commitment, experience the thrill of discovering new knowledge, and as an opportunity for taking responsibility of their own learning. If the language practitioners learn to build their teaching around these insights, their programmes would arguably be more effective through the expansion of affective avenues to enhance cognitive and behavioural skills in their learners.

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PYRAMID OF ARGUMENTATION: TOWARDS AN INTEGRATED MODEL FOR TEACHING AND ASSESSING ESL WRITING

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ABSTRACT

In an argumentative piece of writing, an issue is put forth, its pros and cons are considered, and the writer's justification(s) for supporting one of them is presented. Although there are several models of argumentation, what is lacking in the literature is a comprehensive model for assessing English as a Second Language (ESL) writing. This paper presents the Pyramid of Argumentation (PoA) that is an integrated model for assessing writing. As a three-sided pyramid standing on four columns, PoA integrates several recent and ancient theories of argumentation, linguistic competence, and language assessment. While the pyramid focuses on the components of argumentative writing, the columns involve components of language ability and language assessment. The four sides of the pyramid, *logos*, *ethos*, *rhetorical situation*, as well as *style and arrangement* represent adapted version of the Classical Rhetoric as re-introduced by Crowley (1994) and Kinneavy (1971). The side of the pyramid that covers *logos* is replaced by Toulmin's (2003) Model of Argument. The four columns, on which the pyramid is based, include the *language knowledge*, *context of situation*, *world knowledge*, and *strategic knowledge*. They integrate the theory of Communicative Language Ability (Bachman, 1990) with Components of Language Competence (Bachman, 1990). Writing teachers and material developers can use PoA to make sure that they cover all the skills that learners require to develop mature pieces of argumentative writing. Following PoA, self-assessment and peer-review checklists can be developed to scaffold student learning. Similarly, it can help test developers in designing rubrics for evaluating argumentative essays. As a comprehensive model, PoA will help them improve construct validity of their assessment.

Keywords: Argumentative writing, Classical rhetoric, assessing writing, argumentative writing instruction

BACKGROUND

In the past, English as a Second Language (ESL) writing instruction was approached very differently from the way it is today. For ages, it was considered an un-teachable God-given talent possessed by only a few. Therefore, students in writing or composition classes were given some time to write about a topic. Teachers edited (if at all) and scored these compositions impressionistically based on the implicit criteria that they might have developed throughout their teaching experience. During the dominance of Audio-Lingual Method, spoken skills were considered to be superior to written skills. As a result, writing was merely there to reinforce the language structures that the learners had just learned.

Likewise, writing tests involved discrete-point items that focused on students' linguistics competence and structural accuracy rather than their ability to generate ideas and organize them coherently. With the advent of student-centered approaches, ESL writing experienced a drastic change. Writing teachers now were interested in what was literally happening in the writers' mind throughout the 'process' of writing. They would teach idea generation techniques to their students, who now knew that good writing is the result of multiple-drafting, self-assessment, peer-review, revising, and editing. Their writing skill was now assessed continuously through portfolios or reflective journals using self-assessment and peer-review checklists.

The Process Approach revolutionized the way writing was taught, but as time went by, writing instructors particularly in writing for academic purposes in tertiary level settings noticed that students required different skills to be able to create successful academic writing pieces. Different genres of writing had varying organizational structures which learners had to realize before they could write acceptable academic papers. Students would analyze and examine a number of models of the target genre before making an attempt to create their own written works. Such an analysis would teach them how members of their target discourse community wrote. By modeling the writings of those professionals, students would be able to create their own written works. This was how the Genre-based Approach to ESL writing emerged. For proponents of this approach, written language is a social practice and dialogic discourse, in which a writer responds to an active audience (Hyland, 2003). Hence, writing teachers who follow a Genre-based approach basically seek to give a conscious understanding of the target genre to their learners. This has created an interest among ELT researchers and practitioners to develop models which facilitate teaching and assessing different genres of writing.

Argumentative genre stands out among other modes of writing. Most of the current English proficiency testing systems test candidates' writing skill through tasks that prompt argumentative writing. Tests like International English Language Testing System (IELTS) and Tests of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) include argumentative tasks. This may be due to the inclusive nature of argumentative mode in which writers may need to describe, narrate, and/or explain in their attempt to accept or reject a certain position. Another reason could be the importance of students' ability in critically analyzing the advantages and/disadvantages of a position and providing defendable arguments in its support.

In this conceptual paper, I present the Pyramid of Argumentation (PoA), a model which combines theories of argumentation, language ability, and language assessment. The paper presents key concepts related to argumentation and then it explains which theories were adopted or adapted in the development of PoA. The theories of language ability and language assessment adopted in PoA are also described before the new model itself is presented. The paper concludes with the potential benefits and implications of PoA.

Overview of theories of argumentation

Several attempts have been made to describe argumentative discourse since the ancient times. Some of the established theories of argumentation will be discussed in this section, including the classical rhetoric (Kinneavy, 1971), diagrammatic approach (Beardsley, 1950), linked argument (Thomas, 1973), tree-diagram (Scriven, 1976), and Toulmin's model of argument. In this section, I discuss Kinneavy's (1971) theory of classical

rhetoric that was adapted and Toulmin's (1958) model of argument that was adopted as well as the argumentation theories that were not selected in the development of PoA.

Theory of classical rhetoric (Kinneavy, 1971)

In this section, I describe Kinneavy's (1971) theory of classical rhetoric, as one of the argumentation theories adapted in PoA. The section also presents an overview of the key terminology often used in the field of argumentation.

The art of argumentation was very crucial for rhetoricians in ancient Greece. In 1970s, scholars like Kinneavy (1971) revived interest in classical rhetoric by reintroducing the means of argumentation following Greek philosophers such as Aristotle. Kinneavy's (1971) model summarizes the elements of classical rhetoric in which in order to present an effective argument, the arguer, aware of the rhetorical situation, appeals to character, reasons, and emotion, using the proper style and arrangement to persuade the audience (Figure 1).

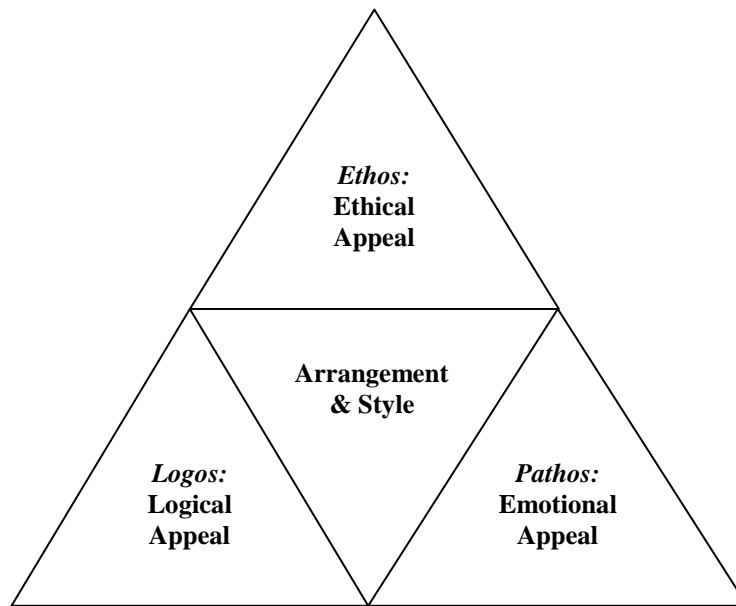


Figure 1. Classical Rhetoric (Based on Kinneavy, 1971)

The figure shows the means of argumentation and the inter-relationship among them. The first and the most important element in an argument is the ethical appeal, or appeal to character. Arguers wish to create a positive and credited impression of themselves in the mind of their audience through good sense, good will, and good morals. An arguer can achieve good sense by demonstrating astuteness and resourcefulness which may take hours, months, or years of hard work. Ill-formed and irrelevant arguments should be avoided since they are deleterious to the arguer's good sense. Arguers' lack of information and inaccurate use of language will lead to their ethical lapse showing that they have not done their homework well (Crowley & Hawhee, 2004). Good morals can be achieved if the arguer is honest and describes things as they really are. Finally, good will can be established by showing the audience that one has good intentions. Therefore, lies, misguiding arguments, and threats must be avoided.

Rhetorical situation (*kairos*) is "the context of a rhetorical act; minimally made up of a rhetor, an issue, and an audience" (Crowley & Hawhee, 2004, p. 437). Occasion, purpose,

and audience are the main elements of a rhetorical situation (Reid, 1993). To create an effective argument it is important to consider the rhetorical situation. What writers write and how they write it are directly influenced by their target occasion, purpose, and readers. What sounds appropriate for a particular rhetorical situation may be totally inappropriate for another.

Arrangement for ancient rhetoricians often consisted of six elements, including “*exordium*, narration, division, proof, refutation and peroration” (Lanham, 1991, p. 171). *Exordium*, or introduction, is a general statement on the topic and is meant to attract the attention of audience. Narration is the thesis statement where one’s position is stated in relation to the topic. Division involves briefly listing the ideas that one intends to include in one’s arguments. Proof, or confirmation, provides support for one’s stance by presenting arguments in support of one’s case. Refutation accounts for the possible counterarguments. It involves anticipating and acknowledging the objections and providing reasons for refuting them. Finally, peroration, or conclusion, involves a recap of the mentioned arguments. In persuasive texts, this is where emotional appeals are made to stir the readers. Of course, arrangement has been considered differently by other scholars. Aristotle, for example, believed that it was comprised of *proemium* (introduction), narration (thesis statement), argument, and epilogue (Crowley, 1994). An important implication of the differences between the two classifications is that an argument may still be effective even without a division and refutation. This means that these two should be regarded as optional elements of arrangement.

Style was defined very broadly by the ancient rhetoricians. Different scholars view style differently. For some style is determined by the (i) subject (more important topics requiring higher style), (ii) diction, (iii) effect on the audience, and (iv) syntax or composition (Lanham, 1991). This broad view suggests that style may influence most dimensions of writing. For Williams (1990), the elements of style include clarity, cohesion, emphasis, coherence, concision, length, elegance, and usage. Ancient rhetoricians regarded correctness, clarity, appropriateness, and ornament as the features of style (Crowley, 1994). Correctness encompasses the use of words that are consistent with the traditional grammar and usage of the language, conventions of spelling and punctuation as well as the offered standard format (Crowley, 1994). Clarity is one of the most important features of English language writing style:

Have something to say, and say it as clearly as you can. That is the only secret of style.
(Matthew Arnold, as cited in Williams, 1990, p. xviii)

When style is clear, the intended meaning is transparently and lucidly transferred to the audience. Contrastive rhetoricians have identified English as a ‘writer-responsible’ language which is different from ‘reader-responsible’ languages such as German or Japanese (Hyland, 2002, p. 39). Writers in writer-responsible languages express their ideas as clearly as possible. In reader-responsible languages, however, the readers are responsible to make sense of the text they are reading. Greek rhetoricians believed that technical, out-dated, as well as new or colloquial words could reduce clarity. However, they also believed that, depending on the rhetorical situation, using technical words could at times convey the meaning more vividly thereby adding to clarity (Crowley, 1994). What makes style appropriate is the author’s sensitivity to occasion, purpose, and audience (Crowley, 1994). For instance, what the style

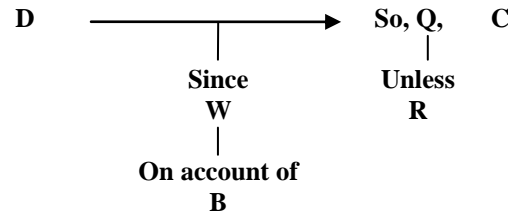
that an audience in a church expects from a priest is a dignified and grand style which will be inappropriate in a personal letter. Finally ornament is unusually extraordinary and impressive use of language (Crowley, 1994). Ancient rhetoricians created ornaments using figurative language. Typical examples of figurative language include metaphors and similes. If figurative language is exploited appropriately, it can add special effects to the argument and can engage the reader.

In addition to the four features mentioned in the preceding paragraphs, in classical rhetorics, styles were often categorized into three levels of grand, middle, or plain (Crowley, 1994). A grand style was often used for lofty issues. Highly ornate word choice, impressing and rich language, as well as use of figures feature this style. On the other hand, a middle style may be more relaxed than a grand style but does not employ ordinary language. Finally, everyday conversational language is used in a plain style. A plain style is concise and explains everything using a language that is clear but may not be impressive.

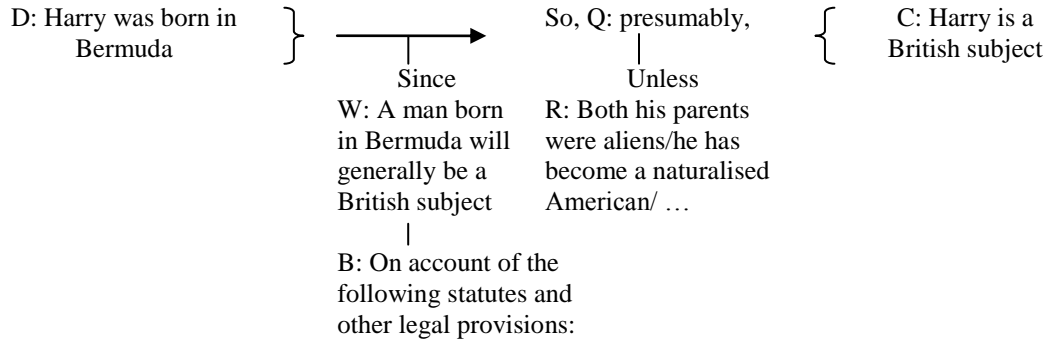
Logical appeal is achieved by reasoning and rational thoughts. It is divided into three elements of example, topic, and enthymeme (Kinneavy, 1971). However, in PoA, these elements have been replaced by Toulmin's model (to be presented in the following section) since it presents a more precise account of logical appeal. Additionally, the component of emotional appeals was also excluded in PoA for reasons that will be explained later in this paper.

Model of Argument (Toulmin, 1958, 2003)

The second argumentation theory that was adopted in the development of PoA was Toulmin's (1958, 2003) model of argument. Based on this model a good argument is composed of six interrelated elements: Claim, Data, Warrant, Qualifier, Backing and Rebuttal. As the thesis being argued, Claim (C) shows the arguer's position (e.g., *Smoking is dangerous*). Data (D) is the evidence supporting the claim (e.g., *Smoking is addictive*). Sometimes in order to help the reader see the link between the claim and data, writers may use a Warrant (W). It functions as a bridge between C and D (e.g., *Anything that is addictive can be dangerous*). When the reader is aware of the relationship between C and D, W is left implicit. A Qualifier (Q) is commonly added to show the strength of C, D or W (e.g., *Smoking is definitely dangerous*).⁷ As another element of a good argument, Backing (B) is used for supporting W (e.g., *Addiction can disable one's thinking*). When writers anticipate that the reader may not accept the warranting principles in an argument, they commonly use another argument (B) to support these principles (Lauer, 2004). Finally, Rebuttal (R) discusses certain situations in which C may fail to hold true (e.g., *Unless used for medical purposes, cigarettes must be avoided*). Toulmin (2003, p. 97) shows the relationship between the elements of an argument as follows:



In order to clarify the elements of an argument, Toulmin (2003, p. 97) provides this example:



In Toulmin’s example, it would be possible to limit the argument to only a C and D as a novice writer would most probably do. However, the argument sounds more effective with a Q (showing a more precise account of the relationship between the D and C), a W (explicitly linking C to D), a B (adding further support to back W), and finally, an R (showing a special condition in which the claim may not be true).

Other argumentation theories

Other models of argument are also available in the related literature, including Beardsley’s (1950) diagrammatic approach, Thomas’s (1973) linked argument, Scriven’s (1976) tree diagram model, and Young, Becker and Pike’s (1970) Rogerian argument, each described briefly here. Focusing on the argumentative relationships, Beardsley’s (1950) diagrammatic approach shows the relationship between the Data (D) and Claim (C) using arrows. Beardsley also differentiates between convergent, divergent, and serial arguments. In a convergent argument, several independent reasons are used for supporting the same claim. In a divergent argument, the same reason is used for supporting several claims. In a serial argument, a statement is used as a claim which also functions as a reason for another claim.

Thomas (1973) added the notion of linked argument to Beardsley’s approach and defined it as “the logical combination of two or more reasons” (Thomas, 1973, p.58). The approaches may be suitable for analyzing the relationships between arguments, but they fail to provide an analysis of argumentative elements as accurately as Toulmin’s model. They have been particularly criticized for their impracticality since they urge the analyst to rewrite the whole data to illustrate the argumentative links, a demanding task in extended arguments (Johnson, 2000).

Scriven (1976) proposes another established model of argument, referred to as tree diagram, in which each statement, which has an argumentative role, is numbered; each number is circled, and each circle is connected to other circles to form a tree diagram. Minus signs are

added next to the circles providing negative support for the argument. Scriven's method provided for the difficult task of writing all the premises and helped indicate the rebuttals.

The theories discussed so far in this section lack the precision in Toulmin's model, which besides showing the relationship between the statements indicates their underlying structures. Toulmin's model is favored for its simplicity which makes it easier for novice teachers and raters to work with it (Yeh, 1998). It could be due to this simplicity that it has been used by ESL writing assessment researchers, such as Connor and Lauer (1988), Nimehchisalem (2010), and Yeh (1998) to develop writing scales.

Rogerian argument is another theory based on the works of Carl Rogers, an American psychologist, who emphasized understanding the adversary's position, by openly listening to them before adopting a fixed point of view (Rogers, 1961). Rogerian rhetoric was introduced to the discipline of composition by Young et al. (1970), who identified the following stages for a rational argument (Brent, 1996):

1. The problem is introduced highlighting that the opponent's view is understood.
2. An illustration of situations in which the opponent's view may be valid is given.
3. The writer's view is presented demonstrating situations in which it is valid.
4. The writer shows how the opponent's view would benefit if elements of the writer's position were adopted. Alternatively, the writer may demonstrate that the two seemingly opposing views complement each other, each supplying what the other lacks.

These four stages may not be fixed in all versions of Rogerian rhetoric, but what is central is that the opposing viewpoint should be stated before presenting one's own position without overt or covert evaluation (Brent, 1996). Rogerian argument provides an invaluable model particularly for argumentative topics which are emotionally charged. However, its shortcoming is that it may not be suitable for writing tasks which prompt one-sided arguments. What is more, Toulmin's model already offers elements like rebuttal, which covers the idea of focusing on the opposing positions in an argument

Theories of language ability and language assessment

So far I have focused on the theories of argumentation which were included or excluded in the development of PoA. The focus of next section will be on the theories of language ability and language assessment which were adopted in PoA.

Theory of Communicative Language Ability (Bachman, 1990)

Bachman's Theory of Communicative Language Ability originates from Canale and Swain's (1980) theory of communicative competence and some empirical research by Bachman and Palmer (1982). The theory consists of four components, including sociolinguistic, discourse, grammatical and strategic competence, accounting for both meaning and form. The notion of sociolinguistic competence; that is, interlocutors' appreciation of sociocultural rules of language was introduced by Canale and Swain (1980). Later, the concept of discourse competence, or the ability to blend sentences meaningfully with each other to form a cohesive text was added by Canale (1983). Grammatical competence differed from discourse

competence; it covered sentence-level structure and encompassed lexicon, morphology and syntax. On the other hand, discourse competence involved the knowledge of intersentential relationships. Last, strategic competence comprised a set of communication strategies which helped interlocutors avoid communication breakdowns originating from their deficient competence (Canale & Swain, 1980).

Bachman's model presented a more detailed account of interlocutors' language ability. The model consists of language competence, strategic competence and psychophysiological mechanisms. Language competence covers components of knowledge utilized by language users as they communicate. Strategic competence is "a set of metacognitive components or strategies" (Bachman & Palmer, 1996, p. 70) that bridge the gaps between the language knowledge, context of situation as well as world knowledge. Psychophysiological mechanisms involve the psychological and neurological processes that take place when the interlocutor actually uses the language. In PoA, psychophysiological mechanisms are excluded since individuals expected to be able to write argumentative texts are supposed to be physically able to write. Figure 2 illustrates the interaction between the components of CLA.

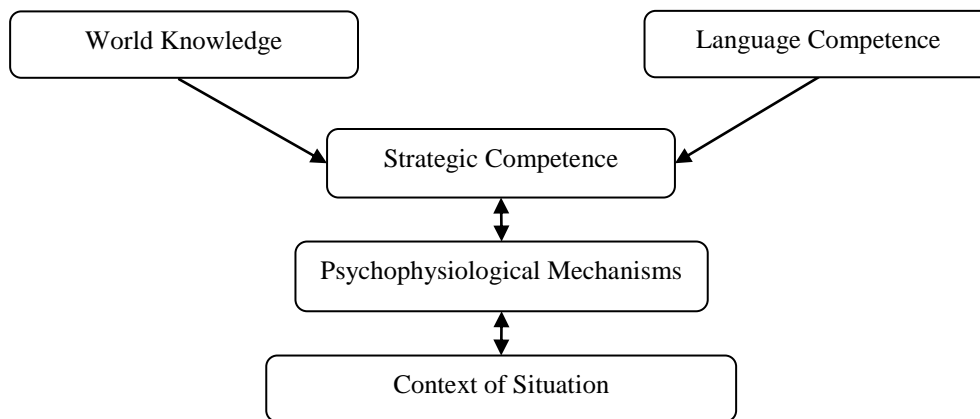


Figure 2. Components of Communicative Language Ability (Bachman, 1990, p. 85)

Bachman's CLA has repeatedly been used for language assessment purposes and can likewise be helpful in developing rating scales to evaluate written works. Students' topical or world knowledge should be considered in order to develop appropriate tasks for them. As a key feature of the model, strategic competence can help ESL learners manage their limited language ability to fulfill the tasks throughout writing courses or during the examination. Strategic knowledge is not merely limited to language use; rather, it can help language users in any cognitive activity. Strategic knowledge helps language users integrate their language and world knowledge in a situationally appropriate manner (Bachman & Palmer, 1996).

Bachman and Palmer (1996, pp. 71-75) mention goal setting, planning, and assessment as the three areas of metacognitive strategy use in which strategic competence can function. First, strategic competence helps language users set goals and decide what they want to do with the language. Writers first identify tasks, select a task, and decide to complete it. Next, writers use their strategic competence for assessing their available language and world knowledge in order to identify the quality of their writing performance. Before they start writing, they predict whether they are able to complete the task. Having

identified their available resources, they determine the most appropriate resource that can help them fulfill the task. As another metacognitive strategy, planning helps writers decide on how to select the suitable concepts from their available world and/or language knowledge resources. It involves designing one or more outlines in response to the task and selecting the best plan to fulfill the task. Thus, strategic knowledge helps writers integrate their available language and world knowledge, which enables them to respond to the task. Bachman's theory sheds light on the process of ESL writing before, while, and after learners write. In addition to this theory, Bachman also presents a more detailed taxonomy of language competence components a slightly modified version of which will be presented in the following section.

Components of Language Competence (Bachman, 1990)

The taxonomy of Components of Language Competence (Figure 3) is an attempt to break down language competence into organizational and pragmatic competencies. Since Bachman (1990) developed this taxonomy for both spoken and written forms of language, slight modifications have been made to make it suitable only for written language. Organizational knowledge accounts for the way in which text or sentences are organized. On the other hand, pragmatic knowledge helps language users connect texts to their communicative goals as well as language use setting features (Bachman & Palmer, 1996). In order to imply or infer meaning, the learner can create a relationship between texts and their intended meanings, with the help of pragmatic competence.

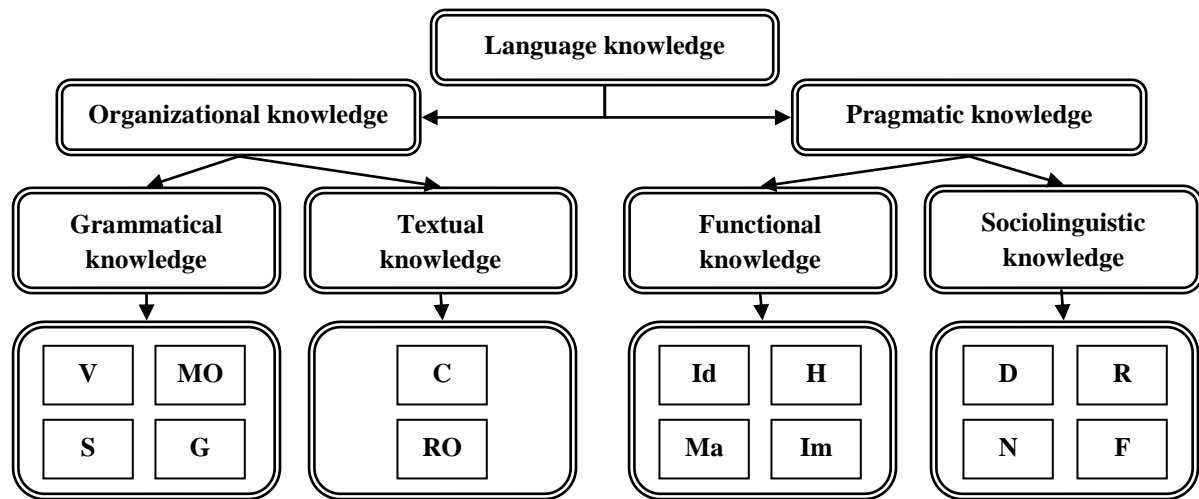


Figure 3. Components of Language Competence (Adapted from Bachman, 1990, p. 83)

Key)

- | | | | |
|---------------|-----------------------------|----------------|------------------|
| V: vocabulary | S: Syntax | Mo: Morphology | G: |
| Graphology | | | |
| C: Cohesion | RO: Rhetorical Organization | Id: Ideational | Ma: Manipulative |
| H: Heuristic | Im: Imaginative | D: Dialect | N: |
| Naturalness | | | |
| R: Register | F: Figures of speech | | |

Grammatical and textual knowledge are the two components of organizational knowledge. Grammatical knowledge helps language users form and understand sentences. Vocabulary, syntax, morphology, and graphology are the subcategories of grammatical knowledge. On the other hand, textual knowledge helps language users to form and understand texts including more than two sentences. The two components of textual knowledge include cohesion, or explicit relationships among sentences, and rhetorical organization, or organizational structure of written texts.

Functional and sociolinguistic knowledge are the two components of pragmatic knowledge. Functional knowledge helps language users in interpreting the intended meaning of texts, in four different ways: (i) ideational function, which enables language users to share ideas and feelings; (ii) manipulative function, enables them to affect the world around; (iii) heuristic function, which enables them to learn and extend their knowledge; and (iv) imaginative function, which is used for aesthetic purposes, enabling them to use language imaginatively for creating a new world. Finally, sociolinguistic knowledge makes language users sensitive to the social context, helping them make appropriate use of language. It supports them in appropriately encoding or decoding dialects, registers, idioms, cultural references, as well as figures of speech.

Pyramid of Argumentation (PoA)

The Pyramid of Argumentation (PoA, Figure 5) was created in the development process of the Analytic Scale of Argumentative Writing (ASAW) (Nimehchisalem, 2010; Nimehchisalem & Mukundan, 2013; Nimehchisalem, Mukundan, & Shameem, 2012; Nimehchisalem & Mukundan, 2011). PoA consists of a three-sided pyramid standing on four columns. The pyramid in PoA presents a modified version of Classical Rhetoric, in which Toulmin's model represents the logical appeal as explained by ancient rhetoricians (Figure 4).

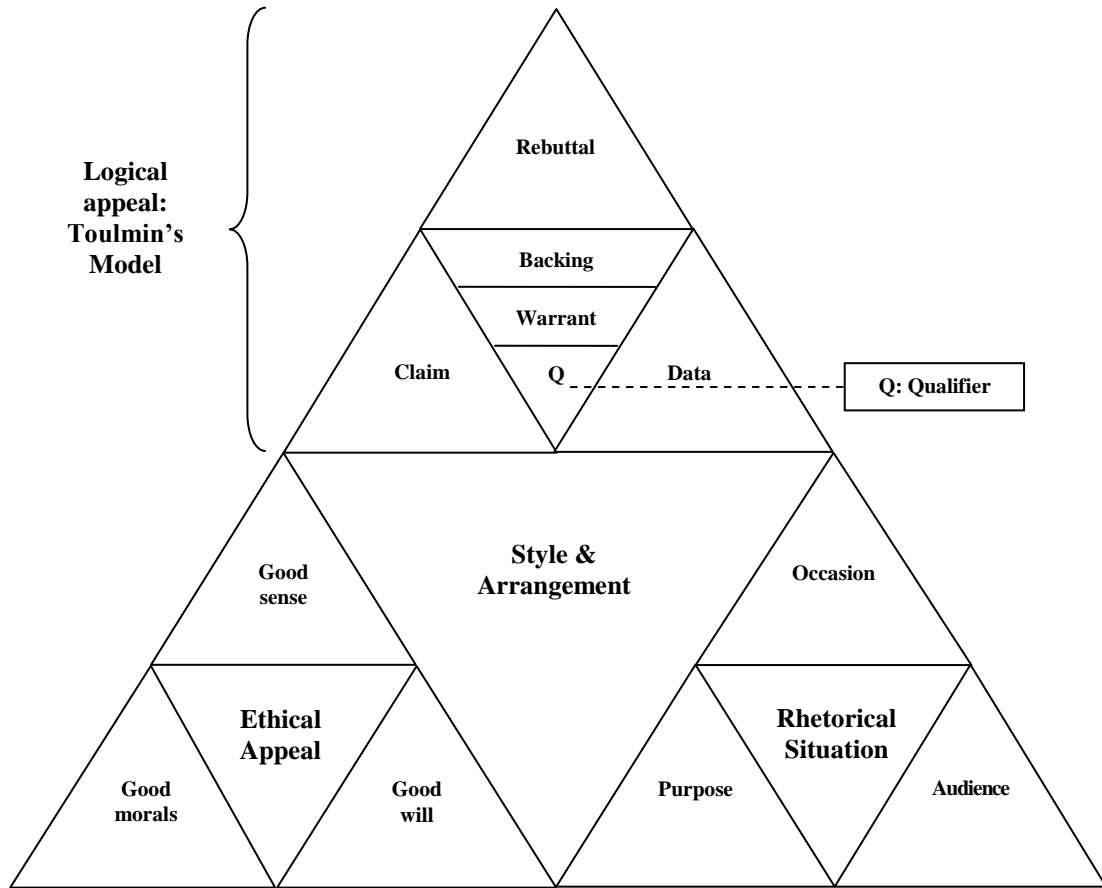


Figure 4. Modified version of Classical Rhetoric

As it can be observed in Figure 4, logical appeal, ethical appeal, rhetorical situation, as well as style and arrangement represent the four sides of the pyramid. Assembling the four major elements of argumentative writing discussed thus far creates a three-sided pyramid. In PoA, the emotional appeal (*pathos*) is replaced by a more important feature rhetorical situation discussed previously. Unlike persuasion, in argumentations rarely do we appeal to emotions. In the related literature, previous researchers (for example, Connor & Lauer, 1988) have separated persuasion from argumentation and the component which differentiates them is emotional appeals. While persuasive texts may make frequent appeals to emotions, argumentative discourse typically makes appeals to logic and character (Glenn, Miller, Webb, & Gray, 2004). In advertisements, as examples of persuasive texts, writers frequently create specific emotions in the audience to stimulate them to buy products. A common example would be creating fear in the audience by telling them the items have almost sold out and if they do not hurry, they will miss a good bargain. By contrast, in an argumentative essay, writers make appeal to logic and provide reasons for taking a position rather than trying to persuade readers by creating certain feelings in them. In this line, Nimehchisalem (2010) reports that in his analysis of 100 argumentative essays, while there were 144 and 112 occurrences of logical and ethical appeals, emotional appeals had a considerably negligible frequency (12), which was only 4% of the total number of appeals made in all the samples.

These findings shed light on the distinction between argumentation and persuasion as related but not synonymous modes of writing.

While Figure 4 shows the theories of argumentation adapted in PoA (that is, the pyramid), Figure 5 illustrates the whole model:

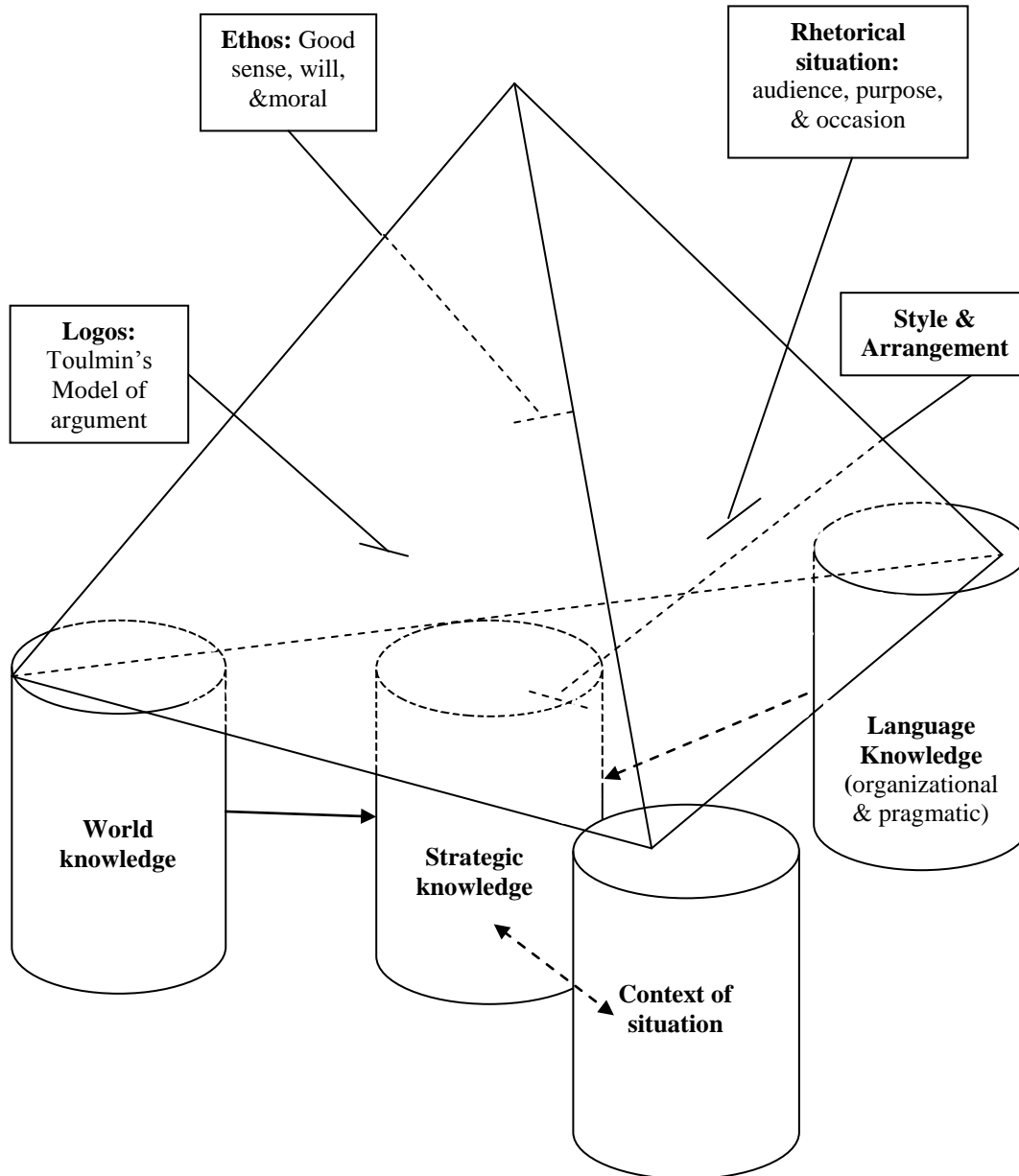


Figure 5. Pyramid of Argumentation (PoA)

As the figure shows, PoA includes Toulmin's elements of argument, ethical appeal, rhetorical situation, style and arrangement together. Toulmin's model has replaced the rational appeal in classical rhetoric. Behind the pyramid, the ethical appeal can be observed

with its three components. Rhetorical situation also comprises another dimension of the pyramid and emphasizes the role of purpose, occasion and audience in an argument. Style and arrangement finally form the base of the framework. They emphasize that in order to be effective arguments need be well-organized and the language used should be accurate, clear, appropriate and ornate. The interaction between the selected components of classical rhetoric and Toulmin's model is represented in the form of a pyramid. The shape of the pyramid will reserve its shape even when any of its sides is or are larger, but it looks more balanced when its sides are of the same size.

Bachman's model comprises four columns that hold up the pyramid of argument. The function of these columns is to expand the dimensions of PoA to the areas of language use. They provide a more accurate picture of what is expected from the students when they write argumentative pieces. Strategic knowledge is located in the middle of language knowledge, world knowledge and context of situation. As the arrows indicate, it helps writers select the most appropriate elements of language competence and world knowledge in order to plan and respond to the selected task in a situationally appropriate way. Writers employ strategic competence to pool and actualize all the resources that they have to fulfill the task. Therefore, it plays a central role in writers' success.

The components of the pyramid and the columns interact with each other. In order to create an effective and logical argument writers need to integrate their related language and topical knowledge in accordance with the context of situation. Similarly, these competencies aid writers to present a correct, clear, appropriate and ornate style. They also help writers organize their works coherently and cohesively. The rhetorical situation in the pyramid of argument overlaps with the context of situation in Bachman's model. However, when they are joined together, they provide a useful model of assessing argumentative writing skill. In this model, individuals' argumentative writing ability, topical knowledge and strategic knowledge are taken into consideration in the actual context of situation.

Closing remarks

This paper presented an integrated model of argumentative writing. The model is expected to be useful for material developers and language teachers who wish to present a comprehensive picture of argumentative skills to their learners. I will conclude by discussing some of the pedagogical implications of PoA.

The model provides a clear picture of argumentative discourse to language learners. To offer an example, the components of 'appeal to character' has direct implications for teaching and assessing ESL writing. Learners should be taught to indicate good sense by inventing relevant arguments, generating coherent and well-organized ideas, showing resourcefulness, and presenting skilful use of language. They should also know that integrity and good morals are crucial. They must be taught to refrain from duplicating others' ideas without citing them. Finally, by accommodating the teacher's demands students can show their good will. They should know that they will be penalized if they fail to make the expected effort.

Self-assessment checklists can be developed based on this model to allow students assess their own argumentative writing. An integrated model such as PoA will help the developer

capture a comprehensive image of argumentative writing as it is informed by both theories of argumentation and theories of language ability and assessment. Indeed, we used PoA in developing a self-assessment checklist for undergraduate students' argumentative writing (Nimehchisalem, Yoong, Jaswant Singh, Siti Zaidah, Norouzi, & Khalid, 2014). The checklist was further refined by Vasu, Nimehchisalem, Fung, and Sabariah, (2018)

Besides its useful implications for ESL writing instruction, the framework is also very helpful for assessing ESL writing. With an increasing emphasis on accountability educational centers are more interested in making their evaluative criteria more explicit. When it comes to assessing writing, rating scales are commonly used by researchers and international testing bodies. Notably, most of these scales are developed qualitatively usually not based on sound theoretical frameworks, and then validated using quantitative methods. Therefore, argumentative scales can be developed based on this model. In fact, a number of argumentative writing scales have been developed by researchers partially based on this model, including Connor and Lauer's (1988) Argumentative Quality Scale using some of the argumentation theories mentioned above; however, these scales are primary trait and they focus only on a certain aspect of argumentative writing. A writing scale that was developed based on PoA is the Analytic Scale of Argumentative Writing (ASAW) (Nimehchisalem, 2010). The scale captures a comprehensive view of argumentative writing skills which boosts its construct validity.

Evidently, the taxonomy of Components of Language Competence in conjunction with the Theory of Communicative Language Ability provides a very useful framework based on which most language learning-teaching curricula have been developed for the past two decades. The framework explicitly shows what language skills students should master in order to be successful writers. Its strength is that it focuses both on form and on meaning. In this way, the teacher can ensure that the language learners will turn out to be accurate language users who will also be aware of the variations that different social contexts may impose on the language. That is, they will know what is appropriate for a certain context may be considered impolite or too formal for another.

To conclude, the related literature will benefit from a model like PoA and similar models which adapt and integrate several related theories. This results in highly comprehensive and practical models that can be used more conveniently and confidently for pedagogical purposes.

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ARCHETYPAL MYTH: GODDESS DURGA AND THE RESILIENT MATRIARCH IN RANI MANICKA'S *THE RICE MOTHER*

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ABSTRACT

Ruthless victimization of women is often depicted in Malaysian fiction. Characterized by biasness and brutalities of a predominantly male-centred culture, this theme has been a central theme by writers coming from varied cultural and ethnic backgrounds that makeup Malaysia. Rani Manicka also incorporates such theme in her debut novel, *The Rice Mother* (2003). However, another theme that becomes prominent in this novel is the theme of resiliency – portrayed mainly through the matriarch figure, Lakshmi. Indeed, Lakshmi's resiliency has interesting affinity with Durga, a principal form of the Hindu goddess, and it is against this mythological archetype that we frame the reading of the novel. Ultimately, an understanding of this mythological archetype will provide a clearer lens with which to look at Manicka's story, and thus, the reader will be able to see how she presents the greater purpose of this archetype: to promote the resiliency of the human spirit.

Keywords: Archetype, The Rice Mother, Rani Manicka, Durga, Hindu mythology

INTRODUCTION

To date, the Malaysian writer Rani Manicka has published four novels: *The Rice Mother* (2003), *Touching Earth* (2005), *The Japanese Lover* (2009) and *Black Jack* (2013). *The Rice Mother* won the Commonwealth Writers' Prize in 2003 for South East Asia and South Pacific region. Inspired by Manicka's Sri Lankan Tamil family history, *The Rice Mother* illustrates the struggle of a woman from Sri Lanka, Lakshmi, who is conned into marrying a man twice her age in a foreign land called Malaya. She soon finds herself struggling to raise a family on her husband's meagre earnings. Lakshmi perseveres and soon becomes a formidable matriarch, determines to secure a better life for her children. Surviving through different phases in the Malaysian history, right from the Japanese occupation during World War II to contemporary times, Lakshmi rises to face every new challenge her family has to face. Indeed, Lakshmi's resiliency is exemplary and inspiring, and a close reading reveals an interesting affinity with Durga (literally translates into "the one who eliminates suffering"), a principal form of the Hindu goddess, and it is against this mythological archetype that we frame the reading of the novel. Ultimately, an understanding of this mythological archetype will provide a clearer lens with which to look at Lakshmi the matriarchal figure in *The Rice Mother*, and thus, the reader will be able to see how Manicka presents the greater purpose of this archetype: to promote the resilience of the human spirit.

ARCHETYPES

The archetypes that we recognize in dreams, myths, literature, religions and folklores today such as the hero, mother, and wise man were originally a theory by Carl Jung in the field of psychology. To Jung, the collective unconscious, or archetypes, is distinct from the personal unconscious because they are not from the memory experienced by any one person (Snowden, 2010, p.42). The collective unconscious is hereditary, comprising archetypes, or universal symbols and motives shared by humanity. The archetypal mother for instance, is shared across cultures. Throughout histories, cultures have elevated exemplary mother figures to personify the moral qualities and values most desired and expected from a mother. In discussing the mother, questions like the qualities that define a mother and whether they are 'good' or 'terrible' mother are automatically asked. These may seem easy to answer. A typical image of the 'good mother' usually includes a female individual who is nurturing, selfless and caring, whereas a 'terrible mother' is the exact opposite of the 'good mother'. Across cultures, the mother archetype comes in many forms and images such as mother, grandmother, stepmother, mother in law, nurse, governess, queens and goddesses. The Greek goddess Gaia for instance, is believed to be the great mother who governs the universe, often depicted as a curved, voluptuous woman, sometimes shown rising directly from the earth, and other times reclining directly upon it. Hathor, in ancient Egypt, is the goddess of the sky, women, fertility, and love. As Le Grice has posited, these "goddesses of myth . . . can be seen as personifications of specific aspects of archetypes" (2016, p. 95). In contemporary times, Mother Teresa, founder of the Order of the Missionaries of Charity, a Roman Catholic congregation of women dedicated to the poor in India and recipient of the 1979 Nobel Prize for Peace, embodies the archetype of the compassionate mother. These three mother figures differ in terms of their stature and roles in the respective societies but they embody the same archetype – the mother.

Major works that applied Jung's theory of archetypes to literature include Maud Bodkin's *Archetypal Patterns in Poetry* (1934), Northrop Frye's *Anatomy of Criticism* (1954), and Joseph Campbell's *Hero with a Thousand Faces* (1949). Because archetypes deal with universal archetypes across genres, periods and languages, they have been criticized for "gross generalization" (Grodin and Kreiswirth, 1994, p. 38), "inadequate challenge to received ideas" (Selden, et al. 1993, p.5) as well as "oversimplification of complex issues" (Stephen, 2000, p.353). However, because archetypes serve as "imprints hardwired into our psyches that influence characters we love in art, literature, great religions of the world and contemporary films" (Mark and Pearson, 2001, p.11), they are still relevant to the modern world as globalisation and integration of different cultures through mass media, on-line social interaction and the gradual dependence of people on these technological advancement show that people can recognise archetypes which serve as the bond of their humanity (Adamski, 2011).

GODDESS DURGA IN HINDU MYTHOLOGY

As one of the oldest religions, Hinduism has a myriad of unique myths. Indeed, mythology is central in Hindu culture in which stories of Gods and Goddesses are passed down in oral and written literature as a means to teach its followers about life. In Hindu mythology, figures such as Shiva and Durga are indispensable: while Shiva is worshipped as the father of the universe, Durga is his other half – the mother of the universe. In Hindu mythology, Durga embodies divine shakti, or else known as the female divine energy, that is used to protect her

devotees from negative vices or evil powers. Durga's existence lies on a great mission – to defeat Mahisasura, the buffalo demon. She assumes the power of male gods, Brahma, Shiva and Vishnu, then rides a lion into battle. Durga slays the buffalo demon by cutting off its head thus destroying its spirit that emerges from the severed neck. It is through this gallant act that Durga establishes order in the universe.

Durga's depiction in Hindu myth usually revolves around these attributes: She wears a red saree and jewellery; rides a lion; possesses three eyes; and has eight to ten arms which hold a trident as well as other weapons such as chakra, sword, club, trident and bow and arrow. These attributes are naturally symbolic in meaning (Kalra, 2012). The colour red symbolizes action and courage in destroying evil and protecting humanity. The jewellery that she wears not only represents eternal beauty but they also serve to assist her in battle. The lion symbolizes Durga's unlimited power, will and determination. As Kalra (2012) posits, "The lion is a symbol of uncontrolled animalistic tendencies (such as anger, arrogance, selfishness, greed, jealousy, desire to harm others etc.) and Her sitting on it reminds us to control these qualities, so that we are not controlled by them" ("What Does Goddess Durga Symbolize?"). The three eyes that she has represent desire, action, and knowledge. Her multi arms indicate that she is capable of handling many tasks and ready to battle evil in order to protect her devotees. The trident she holds is symbolic of the three human qualities– Satwa (inactivity or the ideal state of mind characterized by awareness and purity of thought), Rajas (activity or energy associated with desires, wishes and ambitions) and Tamas (lethargy and stress). Other weapons in the hands of Durga relay the idea that one weapon cannot destroy different kinds of enemies. Depending on the circumstances, different weapons are needed to fight enemies. Likewise, human 'enemies' such as selfishness must be destroyed by detachment, jealousy by lack of desire, and prejudice by self-knowledge.

In *The Devi Mahatmyam* (literally translates into "Glory of the Goddess"), a Hindu religious text composed in Sanskrit circa 400-500 C.E., Durga manifests itself into several avatars which are Kali, Shakti, Gauri, Uma, Parvati, Chandi, Ambika, Lalita, Bhavani, Bhagvati, Java, and Rajeshwari. The ferocious Kali for instance, emerges from Durga's forehead to vanquish evils. Durga's power lies not only in her ruthless skills and prowess to slay Mahisasura but also other vicious demons such as Raktajiba, Dhumralocana, Chanda and Munda. Undefeated, she is also known as the fertility goddess, ruling the vegetable kingdom, as well as curing infectious diseases. In short, the projection of the strong, protective, compassionate, multitasking and resilient side of womanhood is embodied in Durga.

LAKSHMI THE FERTILITY GODDESS

Upon arriving in Malaya, Lakshmi discovers that her husband, Ayah, is highly indebted; leaving the bulk of his meagre wage merely for settling debts. Driven by the adversity, Lakshmi begins to "clear away the weeds, long grasses and nasty brambles" which results in hurting her horribly with back pain and her hands "bleeding" (Manicka, 2003, p.33). The pain she suffers from does not deter her in any way but in fact has motivated her in creating her own farm with vegetables and livestock:

My little plot prospered. I ran my finger down the velvety skin of a new crop okra, was surprised by the redness of my bird's-eye chillies, and grew especially proud of my shiny purple eggplants. And my chicken coop was success even before my belly

filled out the space in front of me. I was happy and satisfied. The debts were taken of, and I had even begun to save a modest amount inside a small tin that I hid in the rice sack (Manicka, 2003, p.36)

Lakshmi is portrayed to be resourceful, particularly in making use of the green landscape surrounding her dwelling during the toughest times, such as during the Japanese occupation in Malaya. The harsh impact of Japanese invasion in *The Rice Mother* is discussed by Mani and Veeraputhran. The occupation has affected people of Malaya tremendously to the extent that “people suffered from food shortage and were forced to live on boiled tapioca”(Mani and Veeraputhran, 2017, p.3). Not only food is scarce but people live in chaos, as a result of a plethora of diseases and rampant looting. Access to medicine was rare. People do not roam the street as they used to, as the Japanese enforce strict rules. In term of economy, unemployment rate is high and international trading comes to halt. This has affected Lakshmi’s family especially when Ayah is brutally beaten by the Japanese army, thus unable to go to work.

Despite this trying condition, Lakshmi proves herself to be unbeatable. The first thing she does when she realises that the British money has become useless, is to order her son, Lakshman, to hide her savings and jewelleries under the coconut tree. Next, she invests in livestock, by trading her precious jewellery with cows and goats. She asks Lakshman to bring the milk from the cows to the coffee shops in the morning and set the yoghurt during the day. She also herds chickens where she puts them into a chicken coop under her house. Lakshmi also sells off her jewellery to buy food so that her family survives. The jewellery that Lakshmi possesses alludes to one of the major attributes of the goddess Durga. Durga’s creation is so beautiful that the trinity Gods (Lord Siva, Brahma and Vishnu) are so pleased to provide her with weapons and jewelleries. As mentioned earlier, Durga is created with the mission to get rid of the evil Mahisasura. Jewellery on the other hand, is presented by the trinity to assist her in the battle. Similarly, Lakshmi utilizes the jewels she has as a means to provide food for the family. The animals which Lakshmi buys from selling the jewellery, along with the garden she cultivates are their source of food during times of adversity. Lakshmi’s garden serves as a ‘collateral’ to protect the family from famine. There is a marked similarity between Lakshmi and Durga. Just like Durga who controls green fertility in order to feed her devotees, Lakshmi too works her best in providing for the family. Lakshmi’s strength does not only involve providing food but healing as well. During the Japanese invasion, Ayah comes home with a terrible condition but Lakshmi shows no fear but finds a remedy to help him recover using herbs and leaves from her garden:

She (Lakshmi) burned bits of old cloth over the stove and used the snuffed-out charred ends to rub over his entire body. Father (Ayah) groaned with reliefs as the carbon soaked into his sores. His swollen face she bathed with the liquid from boiled peanut plant leaves... came back from the market, and on the chopping block outside the kitchen she unwrapped a dark green papaya-leaf package. Inside was a garishly red piece of crocodile meat. Good for healing wounds... she cooked the meat with herbs... every day, for many days, she untied papaya-leaf packages and cooked the bright red meat inside (Manicka, 2003, p.105)

LAKSHMI THE PROTECTIVE AND COMPASSIONATE MOTHER

Although Durga is commonly known as a ferocious goddess whose existence is driven by a war to kill an evil, the defeat of the demon symbolises her role of protecting mankind, doing away with negative elements. Durga is also known as Durgatinashini, which means the one who eliminates misery. She is believed to be the one who removes the suffering of her devotees. Durga not only protects her devotees from the evils but she provides comfort as well. Lakshmi throughout the novel is the one who offers comfort to her family members in tough times. As stated earlier, when her husband is hurt by the Japanese soldiers, Lakshmi is the one who gently attends to his need that “the only person he recognized when he half opened his eyes was her” (Manicka, 2003, p.105). Ayah is illustrated to be dependent on Lakshmi during the trying times that Lakshmi's name is the only name that comes out from his mouth. Though Lakshmi seems to be depicted as having an estranged relationship with Ayah, she tries her best to heal him. Finding remedy is not the only thing she does to help Ayah recover but she also supports him emotionally that one of the children, Anna, starts to believe that her mother, Lakshmi indeed loves her father. Anna remembers the many occasions in which her mother scolds her father severely. She never hears her mother singing to her father before but the opposite happens when Ayah is in pain.

Lakshmi's love to her children undeniably has no boundaries. Her first child experience is described to be what she is hoping for all her life, a gift from God. The excitement to have twins is beyond her wishes. She is rather grateful and does whatever it takes to protect them. Other than her first-born, she has other children whom she loves unconditionally. When Mohini, an incredibly gorgeous fair daughter with green eyes, falls sick, Lakshmi applies all remedies available to save her. At first she opts for traditional remedies including herbs and Ayurvedic pills, hoping for a speedy recovery but to no avail. As Mohini's condition gets worse, she takes her to the hospital but her condition remains unchanged. Her neighbour, Mui Tsai advises her to try some Chinese medicine whom her master from Shanghai recommends. Initially Lakshmi is not convinced with the idea but eventually she agrees to it. As Lakshmi wants Mohini to be cured, she decides to give it a shot. Mohini has to swallow a special breed of red-eyed rat which is newly born. To Lakshmi's surprise, Mohini begins to recover. Besides protecting her from illness, Lakshmi does all she could to protect Mohini during the Japanese occupation.

According to Amran and Hashim (2013), “young and pretty women during the war were taken as the Japanese comfort women”(p.5). At that time, regardless of race, no one was spared from becoming a victim to Japanese atrocities. Apart from the usual target – Chinese women – Malay and Indian women were brutally forced to become military prostitutes, or comfort women. As a result, young women were often hidden and dressed like boys by their parents. Anna recalls when her mother, Lakshmi is aware of what is happening to the women hence is determined to protect her daughter, Mohini. She does not want to let Mohini roam free outside the house and therefore has Mohini's hair cut like a boy. She is not willing to take the risk of losing her daughter to the Japanese. Eventually, she hides Mohini under the floor of the house. Unfortunately, just when she thinks it is almost over and wants to turn Mohini into a vegetarian, luck is not on her side. Mohini is taken away by the Japanese. Lakshmi begs the Japanese not to take Mohini but her plea falls on deaf ears.

Lakshmi also fits into Durga's role as discussed by Santiko (1997) when Durga is regarded as a goddess who protects her devotees from “poverty” and “separated from their loved ones” (p.215). Mohini's twin, Lakshman, is severely affected by the atrocious incident.

Later, he leaves for Singapore and keeps in touch with the family only at the beginning of his arrival. Soon, he rarely writes and Lakshmi is not happy at all. Being a protective mother, she even sends a friend's son to investigate Lakshman's whereabouts. To her horror, he has turned into a gambler who plays mah-jong. She remains calm and "settled Lakshman's debt" and even "sent him a return ticket" (Manicka, 2003, p.215). Apart from her children, Lakshmi also protects her daughter-in-law who is chased out the house.

Soon, Ratha was pregnant. She suffered badly from morning sickness. Mother Marie biscuits, marinated ginger, and three maternity dresses. She also offered to supply the down payment on a terrace house in a newly built development outside town, but Ratha was too proud to accept and though Jeyan sent a polite refusal, I saw her once in the night market, wearing one of the maternity dresses that Mother (Lakshmi) had sent (Manicka, 2003, p.266)

Even though not all her daughters-in-law favour her, Lakshmi's children love her dearly. Her daughter Lalita recalls when her sister-in-law, Lakshman's wife, calls Lakshmi a female spider. Lalita is proud of her mother despite the name-calling by her sister-in-law. Lalita feels blessed to have a mother whose lives revolves around nothing but to provide food, shelter, clothes and love to her family. In contrast to what her sister-in-law regards her mother, she deems her to be someone who is beautiful inside out. She even wishes to be like her mother although physically she resembles her father more. The word 'spider' used by Manicka alludes to Durga in terms of her multiple arms. A spider has eight legs, which resembles Durga's physical feature of having many arms. Spider is used as a metaphor to the various things that Lakshmi has done to her family. The multitasking diligence can also be observed in Durga.

LAKSHMI THE FEROCIOUS AND RESILIENT MATRIARCH

In *The Rice Mother*, Lakshmi has shown the other side of her, just like Durga in the battle with Raktabija. Being a particular bookkeeper of the family, Lakshmi remembers well the amount of money she has, and where she keeps it.

I had 39,346 ringgit in the bank, 100 ringgit under the mattress, 50 ringgit in an envelope tied together with mother's letter, and 15 ringgit and perhaps 80 or 90 cents in my purse (Manicka, 2003, p.203)

She realizes that she has lost one ringgit and asks her children if they have taken it. She is supposed to buy a coconut bun but decides not to do so when one ringgit is missing. The children admit that they have not taken it except Jeyan who is not at home. Lakshmi knows that Jeyan must have taken it since he is not at home and probably must not expect his mother to notice that one ringgit is missing. The rage in Lakshmi grows. To portray Lakshmi's anger, Manicka uses the word "monster" to describe the livid Lakshmi. This other side of Lakshmi resembles Kali, the avatar of Durga. The diction "monster" is used repeatedly to depict the wrath which leads her into torturing Jeyan for a lesson. Just like Durga who is known to be ferocious, Kali appears when the anger takes over. Lakshmi too admits that "that was me, beloved mother, but after that the monster took over, said and did the things I could never have said or done" (Manicka, 2003, p.204). Even after Jeyan admits

he has taken the money, Lakshmi is not ready to forgive him, "The monster turned away. The confession was not enough" (Manicka, 2003, p.204). This depiction alludes to Kali, who after drinking a lot of blood, is not able to calm herself. Another resemblance can also be observed when Durga reincarnates into Kali to kill Raktabija. Durga has to turn herself into another avatar in order to accomplish the mission. Similarly, to teach Jeyan a lesson, "the monster" in Lakshmi gets Lakshman to beat up Jeyan. It will not "rest" until Jeyan is punished. Another striking resemblance to Durga's narrative in relation to Kali is the chilli powder which is used by Lakshmi to punish Jeyan. When Raktabija drops his blood, Kali drinks all of it to defeat him. Chilli powder is symbolic in Lakshmi's case as it is used to torment Jeyan. The monster within Lakshmi starts to recede after Jeyan hysterically screams in pain. Lakshman is shocked that the monster in Lakshmi is able to do something so ferocious. Jeyan's constant screaming and begging indicates his defeat which eventually turns Lakshmi into herself again. Though Lakshmi shows a sign of remorse after the incident by reminding herself of her mother's advice to be patient, she admits that the monster within her simply could not be vanished and may reappear anytime. Lakshmi may appear ferocious at times but she does that out of love as she wants the best for her family.

Being married at a young age, her life revolves around her children and husband, "And, there was so much she never had, so much she couldn't be" (Manicka, 2003, p.79). And thereby she channels what she wants to have and be by projecting it to her children. She may not be aware of doing this but Anna, one of her children, points out that "Mother gave up her life for us, and she took that as the right to live through us" (Manicka, 2003, p.79). In order to live up her dream, Lakshmi becomes the decision maker, taking over the responsibility from Ayah. Anna also mentions that her mother, Lakshmi only wants the best for her children so she decides what is best for them. Lakshmi is depicted to be a "quick" and "clever" woman when it comes to making decisions. She may be a homemaker yet her love towards her family makes her become the one who takes control over her household. Ayah seems to be a bit laidback and calmer. His colleagues are promoted and he on the other hand, remains in the same position. He seems to be in his comfort zone and never complains about it. In fact, when he is stuck at the same position with barely enough to support his family, he is willing to help others who are in need. When his friend is having a financial crisis, Ayah is sought after for help. One day, he is at home with his friend. He has signed an agreement as a guarantor and is ready to tell Lakshmi about the repayment term. Lakshmi who is already tired with the same scenario simply takes the form from his husband and "tore the carefully signed slips of paper into tiny pieces and threw them up in the air. My husband's money is for his children. Whatever money we have is for our children" (Manicka, 2003, p.79). She even walks to the kitchen with "beaming smile" (Manicka, 2003, p.79), which shows her pride for protecting her family. Throughout the story, Lakshmi's relationship with her husband, Ayah, is portrayed to be steady but it is vague when it comes to whether they love one another. Without a doubt, Ayah loves Lakshmi unconditionally from the beginning, "so deeply that organs inside my body moved" (Manicka, 2003, p.193). Unfortunately Ayah himself is not sure whether Lakshmi loves him: "Dreaming in the night, I sometimes reached out for her, and even in sleep she moaned and turned away. And I knew again that I loved in vain. She would never come to love me" (Manicka, 2003, p.195).

The children observe that the father, Ayah has always had a soft spot towards their children. The children also notice how Ayah is treated by their mother. Lakshmi at times can be quite harsh not only to her husband but to her children too. She can be cold towards Ayah

at times. However, things change when Ayah falls off from his bicycle and is rushed to the hospital. Initially he is not seriously injured but his legs later become paralysed. At that time, Lakshmi visits Ayah and her routine begins to change. She skips breakfast because she needs to be at the hospital nursing her husband. She takes her asthma pills without having anything which causes her gastritis. She feeds her husband but does not feed herself. Physiotherapy at the hospital does not help much so Ayah decides to discharge himself and stay at home. Ayah's condition gets worse and he dies slowly. He is almost completely paralysed but Lakshmi does not give up. Instead, she feeds him and sits next to him "all day" (Manicka, 2003, p.275). Ayah eventually loses the battle and dies. Lakshmi does not even cry but stands by herself during the funeral and watches the fire destroys the mattress which she and Ayah spent on for years. She stands there to witness the fire burn the mattress in which she conceives all her children on. Eventually, "tears ran down her face" (Manicka, 2003, p.277). She mourns silently and one of her children, Lalita even heard her whisper "I ask the boon that in my next life, I am given the same husband, for it seems I loved him all along"(Manicka, 2003, p.277). Lakshmi is unaware that she loves her husband more than herself when she feeds him but not herself. Her action is significant with the title of the book, *The Rice Mother*, the one who provides food for the family but beyond that, she provides not only food but strength to them. Rice serves as a symbol. Rice is vital for growth, and that is what Lakshmi does to her family, her husband and her children. She provides rice as a necessary element not only for her households' physical growth but mental growth as well; the strength in the family, especially during tough times when she nurses her husband beaten by the Japanese and before he dies.

CONCLUSION

Reading *The Rice Mother* from the lens of mythological archetype reinstates the view that recurring patterns from myths do exist in contemporary fiction. Hindu mythology serves as a useful lens to further understand Lakshmi, the formidable matriarch who undergoes many obstacles but survives as a powerful woman, just like Durga the Goddess. Lakshmi's characteristics as shown in this study are very much similar to Goddess Durga in terms of the struggles she has to endure. As Durga is well known for her power to vanish demons, Lakshmi on the other hand is known for her indefatigable mission to protect her family, vanishing all obstacles that come their way. Though Lakshmi does not have multiple arms like Durga, she manages various things and roles throughout her life. Just like Durga who can be incarnated into other avatars, Lakshmi also has a multidimensional personality. She can be fierce and ferocious, just like Kali (an avatar of Durga). By dissecting the essential traits of Durga and relating these to Lakshmi, and vice-versa, mythological archetypes help us to experience human's will and determination that transcend time. By tapping into the Hindu mythological archetype of Goddess Durga, Manicka foregrounds and promotes the resiliency of the human spirit through powerful characterization of the formidable matriarch Lakshmi. Just like Durga, Lakshmi inspires us to never doubt our inner power to fight and persevere in times of adversity.

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REPAIR INITIATION STRATEGIES IN EVERYDAY INTERACTION BY SPEAKERS OF MALAY LANGUAGE

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ABSTRACT

Everyday interaction is not a faultless process. It is possible for the process to experience troubles in speaking, hearing or understanding that can lead to interactional breakdowns between speakers. One available mechanism for speakers to address and resolve trouble is through other-initiated repair (OIR). Majority of OIR studies to date have used English language as data source. This may not entirely describe similar strategies employ by speakers of other languages when they participate in OIR. The present study aims to examine strategies for speakers of Malay language to initiate repair following troubles in everyday interaction. Three parent-child dyads of Malay language speakers were selected as participants. Their interaction over several homely activities (i.e. family meal time) were recorded and later transcribed following Jefferson Transcription System (2004). Analysis on strategies was quantitatively performed following Philip's (2008) Clarification Request coding scheme. Overall result showed that parents and children employ different types of strategies when they are in position to initiate repair. Children largely depend on the use of open-class word that is known to be a weak repair initiator while parents are consistent with a more specific repair initiator. Result from this study provides novel discovery on how Malay speakers initiate repair in the context of parent-child interaction and it can serve as comparative data for future typological studies.

Key words: Other-initiated repair; strategies; parent-child interaction; Malay language

INTRODUCTION

Troubles in speaking, hearing or understanding during the process of everyday interaction can negatively affect speakers' mutual understanding. Therefore, speakers must find their way out from such situation so interaction can progress to its possible end and be successful. To accomplish this, repair provides speakers with necessary mechanism to deal with troubles during the on-going process of interaction. Repair is not merely a term but rather a social action that guides them with systematic and organised technique in effort to maintain mutual understanding when troubles occurred (Schegloff, Jefferson & Sacks, 1977). There are several types of repair but this paper solely focuses on other-initiated repair (OIR) for its ability to showcase speakers' cooperative behaviour (Dingemanse & Enfield, 2015).

OIR describes situation in interaction when one speaker initiates repair from his/her co-speaker on preceding turn that is treated to contain problem. Following this initiation, repair is given by a speaker, who produced the trouble source. In doing so, speakers need to be equipped with necessary language, cognitive and social skills (Cho & Larke, 2011).

According to Dingemanse and Enfield (2015), OIR connects language, mind and social life. These skills actually help speakers to organise their OIR sequence that can quickly resolve occurring troubles. Specifically, speaker needs to design initiation turn that can inform the co-speaker on what kind of trouble that have caused breakdown between them (Hayashi & Kim, 2015). Thus, speakers are expected to employ various resources available in language when they design the initiation turn (Dingemanse et al., 2015).

Schegloff et al. (1977), in their study on repair in American English, found five formats of design that are common to be used when speakers want to initiate repair. The identified formats are using open-class word such as *ha* or *what*, question words like *when*, partial repeat of problematic speech with question word, repeat of problematic speech and finally, offering candidate understanding through *you mean* format. Svennevig (2008) listed these formats according to their strength in specifying troubles in which open-class word is perceived to be weak due to inability to inform what kind of trouble while offering candidate understanding is recognised to have higher strength.

Following Schegloff et al. (1977), studies on OIR have developed to cover many aspects of investigation such as prosodic element in initiation across several format (Dehe, 2015), initiation by language impaired speaker like autistic children (Wiklund, 2016) or hearing loss individual (Ekberg, Hickson & Grenness, 2017) and the role of non-verbal behaviour such as mutual gaze and hand gesture in repair initiation (Mortensen, 2016). These studies have helped to provide deeper understanding on how speakers during spontaneous interaction design their initiation turn, possible link of initiation format to types of trouble and the role of language in the design of initiation format.

This study is motivated due to high attention of OIR studies on English language as primary spoken data (Kendrick, 2015) and also the unavailability of systematic study that looks into the format of initiation in languages around the world (Dingemanse & Enfield, 2015). Even though studies have generally shown that OIR is organised similarly; first being the trouble turn, followed by initiation turn and then, repair turn. This, however, does not entirely indicate the practice of OIR to be universal.

Despite the similarity in types of repair format, how speakers carry out the initiation or the manner in which initiation is delivered can vary across languages (Sidnell, 2008) and may be tied to particular linguistic system (Dingemanse, Blythe & Dirksmeyer, 2014). According to Hayashi and Kim (2015), the design of initiation turn is controlled by the grammatical aspect of the language. In addition, languages across the world are built in different and unique linguistic features such as in the aspect of syntactic, phonetic and semantic system. This system is indeed found to have a significant role in how OIR is designed (Sidnell, 2008; Svennevig, 2008; Hayashi & Kim, 2015). Similarly, Wierzbicka (1991) confirmed that the ways speakers resolve interactional troubles differ cross-culturally.

Overall, the practice of OIR can be said to be a language-specific interactional action (Dingemanse, Blythe & Dirksmeyer, 2014). Taking this point as departure, the present study looks into how Malay speakers design their OIR turn. Repair to interactional breakdowns in general or more specifically, OIR has not been examined quite extensively and from researchers' own search through available database, study on OIR in Malay language is almost scarce or yet to be available. It is quite significant to look into the aspect of OIR sequence in Malay language for several reasons; first the language is spoken by almost 77 million people around the world and is currently ranked as the 6th language with total number of speakers (Summer Institute of Linguistics, 2017). Secondly, understanding on OIR

sequence in Malay language is impossible to be generated from available literatures because current body of knowledge offers insight into languages that are classified in different language group than Malay language.

As brief overview, Malay is a language that belongs to Austronesian family (Norsimah, Kesumawati, Nor Zakiah & Nor Hashimah, 2007). Structurally, morphological system in Malay is rich with derivational morpheme but inflectional morpheme is not available (Goddard, 2002; Mohd et al., 2016). Morpheme in English can denote changes in its grammatical aspect such as tense (for example present tense *walks* to past tense *walked*) while in Malay, the morpheme can change the syntactic category of the words; for example verb to noun as in “*minum*” (drink) to “*peminum*” (drinker).

In addition to morphology, Malay language also has certain phonological characteristics that are not similar to English for example. Generally, Malay like other languages within the group of Austronesian has a simple phonology (Zuraidah, Yong & Knowles, 2008). For example, stress in English has variety of roles where stress patterns are commonly used to infer meanings to certain words or expressions (Thomson, 1996). On the other hand, stress in Malay has no significant function and usually, stressed syllables are accompanied with stretching of sound or loudness in pitch (Juliah, 1993). In other words, Malay language does not associate itself to the notion of stress despite its speakers can have variety of prosodic changes in speech (Zuraidah et al., 2008).

With this in mind, this study looks into how Malay speakers initiate repair following interactional troubles that occur in the preceding turn during everyday interaction. Specifically, information on strategies that are employed by speakers to initiate repair is discussed. The discussion will draw from the context of parent-child interaction. This allows the study to further develop another objective, which is to compare strategies between parents as adult speakers and children.

Method

This study is conducted within the paradigm of Conversation Analysis (CA). CA is a methodological approach that scientifically examines everyday interaction and has been developed by Harvey Sacks, Emanuel Schegloff and Gail Jefferson in the 1960s (Sidnell, 2016). This approach provides systematic ways for researchers to understand how speakers organise their everyday interaction particularly in several key features such as turn-taking organisation and repair organisation. Thus, this study is strictly guided by CA in its data collection procedure and presentation of results.

Participants

Three families (N=3) were selected to participate in the study. The families consist of parents either both father and mother or one of them only together with their children. Specifically, family 1 is constituted of mother and daughter. The Mother is a housewife while her daughter is aged 7 years old at the time of data collection. Family 2 on the other hand includes parents and their 10-year old son. The father works as technician while his mother is a primary school teacher. Lastly, family 3 includes father, mother and their son. The father is a policeman while the mother is a housewife. Their son on the other hand is at primary school age (12 years old).

Table 1 highlights the profiles of participants.

Table 1: Participants' Profile

Participant	Pseudonym	Age (at time of recording)	Number of recording
Family 1	Mother	42 years old	3
	Lisa	7 years old	3
Family 2	Father	44 years old	1
	Mother	44 years old	3
	Aiman	9 years old	3
Family 3	Father	47 years old	5
	Mother	45 years old	5
	Aniq	12 years old	5

Participants for this study are selected through purposive sampling technique, whereby they must meet specific requirements for inclusion. The requirements are Malay as their first language and having children at primary school age. All participants are able to participate in everyday interaction within home compound. All participants reside in the central west of peninsular Malaysia (i.e. Kuala Lumpur and Selangor) where the accent of Malay language is known to many. Clinical examination on the children's psychosocial functioning to determine children's ability to participate in interaction is not conducted. This instead is obtained through parents' report on their children's ability. Other variables such as socioeconomic background, gender and academic achievement of the children are not within the scope of the present study; thus are not subjected to analysis.

Source of Data

The primary data come from a series of recording of everyday interaction between parents and their children that is primarily within their home compound. To ensure natural quality of interactional data, which is key for CA data, no specific tasks or topics of interaction were given in advance. Rather, participants were made free to interact on any issues or participate in any activities of their choice. Total hour of recordings accumulated almost 7 hours (381.4 minutes) of recording. From these recordings, OIR sequence is identified through the presence of repair initiation and as a result, a total of 219 OIR sequences serve as primary data source.

Data Collection Procedure

Participants were first met with researcher to be explained on the nature of study and how its data are going to be collected. Participants were also briefed on their rights and responsibilities should they agree to participate. Agreement to participate is validated through participants' signature on prepared consent letter.

Next is recording of interaction. Specifically, this process includes a series of video recordings of interactions between parents and their children with inclusion of secondary participants such as other siblings. Recordings were made over several homely activities such as family's lunch time and leisure time. Recordings were made through suitable recording tool that records both audio and visual. Once recording completes, transcription of data commenced.

Transcription

This study adopts Jefferson’s Transcription System (2004), which is a widely used transcription system (Hutchby & Wooffitt, 2008). This system of transcription represents various features of talk in written form that include temporal and sequential aspects such as latching, pauses and overlaps and prosodic features such as pitch, sound lengthening, and pace of talk. The system also integrates features such as aspiration and laughing. Finally, nonverbal activities such as change of eye gaze and hand gesture are transcribed as well.

As the data are in Malay, the transcription employs multi-linear transcription (Hepburn & Bolden, 2012). Through this system, the first line represents the original talk in the video, the second line represents morpheme-by-morpheme English gloss of the original that provides translation to the original word and grammatical information in abbreviated way (e.g. NOUN) and the third line represents English gloss within contextual meaning.

The transcription is presented in three columns. The first column indicates the line number for reference on where the talk occurs in data. The second column indicates the speaker through standardised letter (e.g. AMN for Aiman). Finally, the third column contains the orthographic transcription of the data.

Data Coding

OIR is operationally viewed as request made by speaker following troubles in hearing, speaking or understanding. This follows definition provided by Schegloff et al. (1977). The term OIR is consistently used in this study as it follows CA terminology even though it carries similar meaning as other terms like clarification request. OIR is identified in the data from a sequential perspective following next turn procedure. Then, Philip’s Clarification Request (2008) is adopted to code OIR strategies.

Philip’s Clarification Request (2008) lists coding categories for repair initiation strategies made by speakers following breakdowns in interaction. The coding categories are developed by Biji Alice Philip (2008) based on categories reported in previous literatures. It lists seven types of clarification request strategies (or OIR) that are used as coding scheme.

Table 2 lists the coding scheme.

Table 2: Philip’s Clarification Request (2008)

No.	Clarification Requests	Explanation
1.	Non-specific (NS)	Neutral request such as “huh”, “what”. This is similar to Drew (1997)’s open-class repair initiator
2.	Specific request for repetition (SRR)	Request in which a <i>wh</i> - question replaces a part of the original utterance of the speaker.
3.	Specific request for specification (SRS)	Listener indicates what specific additional information is required to fix the breakdown
4.	request for confirmation (CONFR)	Repetitions with rising intonation, reductions or elaboration
5.	Direct request (DR)	Request for the exact definition of a component in a message

- 6. Relevance requests (RR) Request that questions the relevance of what the speaker says
- 7. Cloze requests (CR) Request that gives two choices to choose from

(1 to 6 are derived from Gallagher, 1977; Gallagher, 1981, Brinton & Fujuki, 1989; Yont et al., 2000. Category 7 is from Philip & Hewitt, 2006).

Validity and Reliability

Transcription of audio recording, coding of data and analysis technique are the three main aspects of this study that require validation. Two faculty members who have experience in interactional data were appointed to examine the accuracy of transcription, assigned coding for repair sequence and data analysis. The process involved examination of the transcription while listening to the audio recording, examination of the translation and assessment of the assigned coding for repair sequence. In case of dissimilarity with researcher’s own works, discussion was made until agreement is achieved. The validation of transcriptions however did not include participants themselves for the availability of recordings to cross-check.

Data Analysis

Data were first analysed by researchers through frequency count of OIR strategies. The frequency count provides information on distribution of strategies that can act as evidence for their occurrence. In the next step, each identified strategy was examined and described in relation to its context of occurrence in term of linguistic resources being used.

Results

Results for this study are discussed in two parts; first part aims to highlight the frequency of OIR strategies and compare their distribution between parents and children. Description of the most employed strategies by parents and children by highlighting their context of occurrence is given in the second section that follows.

Distribution of OIR strategies

The first aim of this study is to look at the distribution of OIR strategies between parents and children. Table 3 shows the distribution in its frequency of occurrence.

Table 3: Distribution of Repair Initiation Strategies

No.	OIR Strategies	Parents	Children	Total
1.	Specific request for specification	79	5	84
2.	Request for confirmation	42	6	48
3.	Non-specific/Open-class repair initiator	27	19	46
4.	Direct request	15	3	18
5.	Specific request for repetition	13	5	18
6.	Cloze request	15	0	15
7.	Non-verbal	3	3	6
	Total	194	41	235

Table 3 shows the total number of OIR strategies that are identified in the data set is 235 strategies. From the table, it indicates a clear gap in the frequency of OIR strategies i.e. a total of 194 occurrences for parents compared to only 41 occurrences for children. This shows that parents have to significantly initiate repair from the children that produce more troubles than the children themselves. From the table also, parents are seen to employ OIR strategy's specific request for specification the most as compared to other strategies. Of 194 OIR strategies identified, specific request for specification is seen in 79 repair initiation turns and this is significantly higher than other strategies employed by parents. The second most employed strategy is request for confirmation where the frequency of occurrence is seen in 43 repair initiation turns. This is followed with non-specific/open-class repair initiator strategy (N=27), direct request (N=15), cloze request (N=15) and specific request for repetition (13). In addition, this study has identified the use of non-verbal as repair initiation strategy to be employed by parents in three (N=3) occurrences. The use of non-verbal includes gestures like frowning of eyes or nodding head up.

In contrast, children are recorded to employ the most strategy of non-specific or open-class repair initiator where it is identified in 19 repair initiation turns. The next OIR strategy that is found in children's repair initiation turn is request for confirmation (N=6). Other repair initiation strategies occur at minimal level; specific request for specification (N=5), specific request for repetition (N=5) and direct request (N=3). Similar to parents, the use of non-verbal can be seen in three (N=3) repair initiation turns while cloze request strategy is found to be unavailable in children's speech.

Description of Repair Initiation Strategies

The second aim of this study is to describe the OIR strategies employ by parents and children in terms of their context of occurrence in relation to type of breakdowns. This includes the linguistic resources that they use to construct the turns. Randomly selected extracts from data set are used to accompany the discussion.

The most OIR strategy employ by parents is specific request for specification. Extract 1 shows an example of its occurrence.

Extract 1 Running man (Aiman-mother)

- 1 M ape die running man tu?
what Ø TOA the
what is the running man?
- 2 AMN nak masuk running man
want join TOA
(I) want to join running man
- 3 M ye la yang running <ru:ning> man tu ape die?
yes Ø that TOA the what Ø
yes (but) that running man is what?
- 4 (.)
- 5 rancangan die tu? ((Aiman gazes at TV))
show Ø the
the show?
- 6 AMN belari ((Aiman looks at mother))
running

running

(TOA=term of address)

Extract 1 shows interaction between mother (M) and Aiman or AMN (family 2) that focuses on one television show that seems to be his favourite TV show (Running Man). Mother begins the interaction by asking Aiman what the show is about. However, Aiman's answer "*nak masuk*" (to participate in the show) in line 2 is found to be irrelevant to mother's initial question that seeks different type of information. This (Aiman's line 2) becomes the trouble source where the problem is resulted from inaccurate information. Thus, mother initiates repair (OIR) in line 3 to 5 by being specific on the information she is looking for. When using this strategy, mother placed an emphasis to the key word which is the show's name by repeating the first word twice and ended with specific question word "*ape die*" (what). Mother claims the next turn after a short pause in line 4 by further specifying the kind of information she is looking by making specific reference to the show through phrase "*rancangan die tu*" (the show). The determiner "*tu*" (the) is also used. This particular phrase seems to be continuity from mother's previous turn that ends with question word what. Aiman finally explains about the show in line 6 but rather the response is brief that can create potential trouble in the next turns.

Extract 1 exemplifies specific request for specification strategy that is employed by parents in OIR sequence. This particular strategy is found to be used when there is a trouble concerning information that might be vague or irrelevant to question. The use of this strategy is found to be effective as parents are found to place emphasis on key words surrounding trouble source and accompany their initiation turn with specific question word such as "*ape die*" (what) to obtain the intended response.

The second frequent OIR strategy in parents' speech is request for confirmation. Extract 2 shows the example of this particular strategy.

Extract 2 Aloe Vera drink (Lisa-mother)

1	L	slalunye beli:: ya::ng usually buy which usually (I) buy which
2		ade aloe vera °kat dalam die° has NOUN inside it it has aloe vera inside
3		(0.2)
4	M	o:: yang tu which that o:: that one
5		(.)
6	L	ta[::k= no no

In extract 2, Lisa (L) is telling her mother (M) on drink that she always takes at school. However, she seems to experience difficulty in remembering the exact name of the drink as evident in line 1. Thus, she opts to describe the drink as in this case, the content. Following this, mother seeks confirmation by pointing to one drink that is available during the context of interaction (line 4). This is produced by mother through the use of interjection “o” with sound lengthening to indicate agreement and then, the phrase “*yang tu*” (that one) is specifically used to confirm whether that is the drink Lisa is telling her about.

This particular extract shows an example of request for confirmation strategy employed by mother in trying to resolve the trouble in this particular extract. It is seen here that the OIR strategy is used when the trouble is resulted from information that is not specific or lack of information to give complete understanding to the other speaker.

Another frequent OIR strategy found in data set is the use of open-class repair word. Extract 3 shows an example of its occurrence.

Extract 3 Information from friend (Aniq-mother)

1	M	bile cikgu bagitahu? <i>when teacher inform</i> when (does) teacher inform?
2	AQ	ha:? ((Aniq withdraws mutual gaze))
3		tak kawan bagitahu <i>no friend inform</i> no, friend informs
4	M	ha? ((mother gazes at Aniq))
5	AQ	kawan bagitahu <i>friend inform</i> <i>friend informs</i>
6	M	o ye ke:: o::: kelas amal? <i>really class NOUN</i> o really, class amal?

Extract 3 showcases one example of non-specific strategy or the use of open-class repair word by parents in initiating repair from children. The extract is a continuation from previous context of interaction that discusses Aniq (AQ) recently being placed in lower ranked class. The extract begins when mother (M) asks Aniq on when the news is given by teacher (line 1). However, Aniq corrects the mother’s query in line 3 by informing the news is made known to him by his friend and not his teacher (line 3). Even though there is a presence of open-class repair word “*ha*” with rising intonation in line 2, this particular word seems not to function as repair initiator rather it serves as turn construction unit when Aniq claims that particular turn.

In line 4, it can be seen that mother employs similar word “*ha*” with rising intonation at the end. In addition, mother placed her gaze at Aniq while producing such strategy. This on the other hand functions as repair initiator word where Aniq appropriately repeats his previous utterance and at the same time, establishes mutual gaze with mother. Even though

this type of strategy does not specify the kind of trouble the mother is experiencing, repetition of trouble source seems to work efficiently in this particular context of occurrence. The use of gaze seems to strengthen the open-class repair word by allocating the next turn to speaker that has been initiated.

In the context of children's OIR strategies, non-specific strategy is found to be the most frequent strategy employed by children when they perform repair initiation. The following extract 4 highlights one of the occurring situations.

Extract 4 Class placement (Aniq-father)

1	F	anik dapat nombo berape kelas? <i>TOA get number what class</i> Anik what number did you get in class
2	AQ	ha? ((Aniq establishes mutual gaze with father))
3	F	perikse <i>examination</i> examination
4	M	ala:: tinggal [lam kerete: <i>left in car</i> left in car
5	AQ	[tigel belas <i>thirteen</i> thirteen

Extract 4 shows the employment of open-class repair word “ha?” by Aniq (AQ) when he initiates repair from his father. In this particular extract, father is trying to get be informed from Aniq on what number did he get in his class; the overall academic placement. Father is seen to pose Aniq with a question that is specific to his intended response required from Aniq (line 1). The question word “berape” clearly requires Aniq to provide number. However, Aniq responds with “ha” in interrogative intonation with rising intonation in line 2 to indicate his trouble to the father's preceding question. At the same time, he establishes mutual gaze with his father. Father successfully takes the repair initiation and adds information to his previous turn with word that provides contextual background (“perikse” examination). There is an interruption from mother (M) in line 4 that seems to be talking about something else, but Aniq is able to respond accurately by informing father on his class placement (line 5) with mother's turn being ignored by both.

Even though the use of such strategy does not specify any kind of troubles, the use of open-class word by Aniq in this context seems to suggest problem in inadequacy of information experienced by him. This is evident in the next turn (repair turn) where father adds information to make his query more specific. Father also seems to be successful in locating the type of trouble source by adding information to his previous utterance instead of repeating as how it is usually performed when open-class is employed as evident in children's repair turns.

Other repair initiation strategies occur at minimal level. One example that can be shown is request for confirmation. Extract 5 exemplifies its employment in interaction between Aiman and his mother.

Extract 5 Nilam book (Aiman-mother)

- | | | |
|---|-----|--|
| 1 | M | ade beli tak?
<i>did buy not</i>
did (I) buy (the book)? |
| 2 | AMN | bm dengan bi? ((Aiman gazes at mother))
<i>NOUN and NOUN</i>
Malay and English? |
| 3 | M | ha ade beli tak?
<i>yes did buy not</i>
yes did (I) buy? |
| 4 | AMN | ((Aiman moves his head signalling no)) |

Extract 5 is a continuation from previous turns on mother's confirmation request from her son, Aiman (AMN) on buying one of his school's books (Nilam book). In line 1, mother (M) asks Aiman in a slightly general request where the main point of discussion which is the book is excluded from her utterance. This general approach of asking by mother is understandable given the specific information has been given in preceding turns. However, this becomes the trouble source and invites Aiman to initiate repair. In line 2, Aiman seeks confirmation that makes his repair initiation turn to be framed within request for confirmation strategy where he adds specific information his mother is looking and designs it as interrogative style (rising intonation). He specifies the books that the mother is referring to (Malay and English) and maintains his gaze at mother. In the next turn, mother repairs through the first unit in her utterance that indicates confirmation and continues by repeating her original query; whether the books have been bought. Aiman in line 4 responds through non-verbal behaviour indicating no.

Discussion

This study describes the strategies of OIR in everyday interaction between parents and their children. Specifically, it looks at the distribution of strategies between two groups of speakers (adult and children) and examines the resources to construct the repair initiation turn.

The first finding of this study has shown differences in the distribution of frequency in OIR strategies to be employed by parents and children. With a total of 235 repair initiation turns, 194 turns across several strategies are produced by parents while the remaining 41 turns are produced by children. This first shows that, children's troubles in interaction cause breakdowns to occur more than the parents thus causing parents to initiate repair significantly higher than the children. Given language, cognitive and social competency of children that is lower than parents (Forrester, 2013; Elbers, 2004), this finding seems to generate hypothesis

that breakdowns in interaction between parents and children are likely to be contributed by the latter group of speaker.

In the aspect of strategies employed by speakers, the notable difference in several strategies use in their frequency of occurrence may be due to ability of parents and children to participate in interaction. Parent-child interaction has been described as asymmetrical interaction where both groups differ in their linguistic competency (Forrester, 2013). This may explain why strategies like specific request for specification that is known for being specific in locating trouble source is found to be employed by parents as contrast to children who employ non-specific strategy or open-class repair initiator (Drew, 1997) that is rather a poor repair initiator strategy due to inability locate type of trouble source in the preceding turn.

The use of non-specific strategy or open-class word like “*ha*” that is commonly observed in the data further highlights its pragmatic function in interaction. Garvey (1977) has asserted that the primary function of such words is to indicate and signal breakdowns in preceding turn. This can primarily be identified when gaze is mutual between speaker of trouble source and the one who produces OIR. However, the function of such word may be different when the gaze is not mutual despite having similar format (with rising intonation). This is particularly evident in extract 3 when Aniq claims the next turn with open-class word “*ha*” but the gaze is not placed at his mother. This may direct the function of such word to be a mechanism to construct turn before actual response is given (Hua, Seedhouse, Wei & Cook, 2007).

Even though data for this study is in Malay language, the types of OIR strategies that frequently occur in everyday interaction such as specific request for specification and non-specific (i.e. open-class word) are found to be similar to types of OIR strategies in other languages (Dingemanse et al., 2014). The employment of such strategies is usually accompanied with rising intonation or within interrogative style and additionally, gaze between speakers is mutual. In addition, the use of Malay interjection and particles seem to play a role in repair initiation turns. For example, the interjection “*o*” with lengthening of sound is used to accompany request for confirmation in addition to provide other speaker on the state of understanding.

CONCLUSION

The present study has attempted to look at the strategies in constructing repair initiation turns in everyday interaction between parents and their children. Guided by CA in its methodological approach, this study has shown that not all OIR strategies are employed by both parents and children. However, parents’ OIR strategies are found to be slightly varied than the children’s. In addition, this study has added one new strategy which is non-verbal to the existing Philip’s Clarification Request (2008).

This study is found to be significant because it reports information that is derived from interaction in Malay language that has yet to be studied within the context of OIR. Most studies have consistently reported data originated from English (Kendrick, 2015). Future intended study is recommended to identify role of cultural background in the strategy to initiate repair. In addition, future study can also look at the interconnection with variables

that are disregarded in this study such as gender and socioeconomic background of the speakers.

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