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Discourse Analysis of Dr. Mahathir's Business Speech

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1 Introduction

The most important requirement for the prosperity of a country in the 21st century world is its economic development, particularly its foreign business policies. As a part of their foreign business policies, political leaders in both developing and developed countries try to form fruitful business relationships with the other developing and developed countries by relying on their discourse powers to justify their business ideologies and propositions. Leaders' discourse capabilities convey their ideologies to their audiences and persuade them to accept business propositions. Hence, the success of a business summit depends highly on applied business discourse and effective communication strategies.

Setting appropriate foreign business policies and objectives within a country is definitely an ongoing and complex challenge for its politicians since many factors must be taken into consideration including the competitive power of domestic businesses against international rivals as well as the economic status of a country before inviting foreign businesses and investors. Foreign business policies and objectives as part of the political ideologies of a country are based on the social, cultural, and historical context of that country. Therefore, these policies reflect business ideologies from a much broader point of view than just a company's immediate business desire. Although the role of political leaders' business discourse in the tasks of identifying the dominant business ideologies in a country and identifying the successful

business communication strategies of skilled political leaders is vital, the research on political leaders' business discourse is scarce.

While a political leader's speech can be treated as political discourse, the nature of this speech can vary. In this sense, a political speech can obviously fall under the category of business discourse if its content is related to business and economy. As discussed in Section 2.2 of this article, in this sense, a political business speech deals with economic and business issues at a broader level such as economic issues or foreign economic policies of the country. However in the research literature, this feature of political discourse has been given little attention which leaves a major gap in the literature regarding political business speeches. Analysis of political business speeches can broaden our insights into both global business communication strategies — at a noticeably high level of communication such as international business summits — and also the strategies used to convey ideologies to the audience. Thus the significance of a political business speech lies in its combination of business and political discourse at a quite elevated level of communication that can play a remarkable role in the future of a country.

Furthermore, a second gap in the literature appears to be the lack of adequate research in a multicultural context; for example, an Asia-Europe business summit attended by an audience from different Asian and European nations. Analyzing business speeches delivered at this and other similar multicultural contexts provides a good platform for recognizing and analyzing

communication strategies used by the orator to connect with different audiences in a multicultural context while concurrently trying to support specific ideologies. This speech is political in nature, so it can help identify business communication strategies employed in a political speech which will contribute to global business communication strategies research.

This study was motivated to bridge the gaps in the literature on international political business discourse by studying one of Dr. Mahathir's (Dr. Mahathir bin Mohamad) business speeches delivered at an international business summit in the year 2000. Dr. Mahathir served as the Prime Minister of Malaysia from 1981 until 2003. Prior to taking the post of prime minister, he was the Minister of Trade and Industry; therefore we may assume that most of his economic policies and ideas were either continued from or based on his previously formed policies and ideas.

Dr. Mahathir is probably most known for his leading role in transforming Malaysia's traditional economy into a modern industrial economy. Two of his major economic policies were *Buy British Last* and *Look East Policy* established in the early 1980s as an open effort to turn away from the West and especially from British domination in business in an effort to develop the economy in Southeast Asian countries. Although this dispute was later resolved by Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, as can be concluded from an analysis of one of Dr. Mahathir's speeches in a 2000 business summit, it seems that his ideas

and policies had remained mainly unchanged 20 years after that incident.

The speech studied here is Dr. Mahathir's 2000 address at the Euro-Asia international business summit on the topic of Asian and European countries' business relationships. Although this speech is just two decades old, it is important because of both its historical and social context. First, the historical context is the year 2000 when Malaysia had just passed through the economic challenges of the 1990s, and Dr. Mahathir had just started laying the foundation for new economic growth. Hence, the year 2000 can be considered as a turning point in Malaysia's history between the economic challenges of the past and the anticipated achievements of the future. In other words, this speech expresses Malaysia's foreign business policy guidelines in the new millennium. The progress of Malaysia's business after the year 2000, especially in Southeast Asia under Dr. Mahathir's leadership, was the additional motivation behind identifying his foreign business ideologies and his business communication strategies. Second, this speech was selected for study due to its multicultural context as this speech was delivered to both an Asian and European audience. Therefore, this speech reveals specifically how Dr. Mahathir conveyed his ideologies of "avoiding European domination in the market" and "encouraging unity and solidarity among Asian countries" while persuading business relationships between Europe and Asia at the same time.

2 Literature Review

2.1 ideology and Power

Power is one of the central concepts in critical discourse analysis (CDA) considered as a systematic constitutive element of society (Foucault, 1975), and text is considered to be a manifestation of social action determined by social structure: CDA here analyzes the language of those in power in a society or community. As the study of power in CDA is justified by Wodak and Meyer (2009) "Power does not necessarily drive from language but language can be used to challenge power, subvert it, or alter the distribution of power in the short and the long term …." (p. 10). The traditional notion of power is different from this modern notion. While in the past, power was achieved by forcing people to accept an ideology, Ghazali (2004) defines modern power as the ability to influence and control people not by force but by mind management. This mind management then occurs through the use of discourse to influence, convince, and persuade people. In this sense, power (mind management) controls social beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors of people of a certain society.

Ideology, regardless of its connotations, as the other central concept in CDA can be generally defined as "a coherent and relatively stable set of beliefs or values" (Wodak & Meyer, 2009, p. 8). Ideologies not only have general social functions but also more specific functions, and one way to classify ideologies is based on those specific functions (Van Dijk, 2006). For instance, ideologies with specific functions in the field of politics

are called *political ideologies,* or ideologies with specific functions in the field of business or economy are called *business* or *economic ideologies*. In this sense, foreign business policies of a country are classified under political as well as business ideologies since they require political decisions made by authorities about the nature of business relations with other countries. Ideologies are generally expressed, understood, challenged, and even produced through discourse which serves as the vehicle to carry ideologies. Thus, it is through the analysis of the discourse behind an ideology that we can understand that specific ideology. In fact, discourses make ideologies observable in the sense that only in discourse can ideologies be explicitly expressed and formulated (Van Dijk, 2006). Logically, ideologies can be investigated largely through discourse; the specific discourses used to convey, express, understand, or challenge political or business ideologies are respectively called *political discourse* or *business discourse.*

2.2 Political Business Speech

While discourse in general – and here political and business discourse in particular – can be of different modes and types with different purposes and objectives, the focus of this study is on speech. Political speech is defined by Dedaić (2006) as a "relatively autonomous discourse produced orally by a politician in front of an audience, the purpose of which is primarily persuasion rather than information or entertainment" (p. 700). Political speeches are one of the most effective types of political discourses not only because of the direct interaction they provide

between the speaker and the audience but also because of their wide audience due to their full broadcasting on national television (Bull, 2003), which justifies the large number of studies on political speeches over decades from different aspects (Atkinson, 1984; Ghazali, 2004; Biria & Mohammadi, 2012). Business speech, on the other hand, has been defined by Dhooge (2014) as a speech delivered in the fields of business, economy, or commerce. However, Dhooge argues that the objective of a business or commercial speech can be as narrow and specific as proposing an economic transaction or as broad as government economic interests.

While the literature seems to be replete with studies on political discourse (De Fina, 1995; Hahn, 2003; Biria & Mohammadi, 2012) as well as business discourse (Knights & McCabe, 2000; Alvesson & Willmott, 2002; Planken, 2005; Dieltjens & Heynderickx, 2014), it seems that studies on political business discourse, let alone political business speech, are a missing feature in the literature. As the literature review shows, a large body of research on political speech exists; yet the research is about topics other than business or economy such as election debates (Kuo, 2002), call-to-arm speeches (Oddo, 2011), or presidential inaugural speeches (Biria & Mohammadi, 2012). Likewise, a glance at the literature on business discourse reveals that (a) none of the studies are on speeches, and (b) none of the studies are in the broad sense of business (Dhooge, 2014) but in a more specific and narrow sense of business such as business negotiations with customers (Planken, 2005), mission statements and training materials delivered to the staff (Knights

&McCabe, 2000), or internal organizational documents (Dieltjens & Heynderickx, 2014).

Among various approaches offered in the literature for studying discourse, Fairclough's (1995) Dialectical-Relational Approach (DRA) was selected as a classical framework for discourse analysis as it forms the base from which many other approaches have been manifested and formed (Dedaić, 2006; Wodak & Reisigl, 2009; Charteris-Black, 2004). The clarity and detailed nature of the analytical framework offered by Fairclough creates a good platform for analyzing discourse at different levels. Considering the significant role of pronouns in forming our cognition and conveying our ideologies, the focus of the study is on pronouns — one of the widely studied linguistic features in both political and business discourse. As the literature reveals, especially *you* and *we* pronouns seem to be the most significant among the other pronouns in carrying the ideologies such as involvement with the audience or the creation of a sense of solidarity with the audience.

2.3 Pronouns Use

Although previously, pronouns have been considered as textual elements of merely grammatical values, currently they are widely studied as elements which reflect pragmatic, ideological, and social values such as solidarity, power relations, status, image-making, as well as self-positioning and self-presentation, as a research interest movement which can be traced back to a few decades ago (Brown and Gilman, 1960; De Fina, 1965; Shelby and Reinsch, 1995). In referring to pragmatic

values, the definition of pragmatics by Crystal (1991, p. 271) is intended: "The study of language from the point of view of the users, especially of the choices they make, the constraints they encounter in using language in social interaction, and the effects their use of language has on the other participants in an act of communication...." By ideological and social values, we employ Fairclough's (1995) approach that considers pronouns as having certain values encoded in various aspects of language. By *self-positioning* and *presentation*, we refer to the notion of image-building to include oneself in and/or exclude oneself from special groups, positions, ideologies, or activities.

Perhaps among the considerable research on pronouns, Brown and Gilman's (1960) pioneering work shows that the speaker-hearer relationship is one of the influential elements in the use of pronouns. In other words, pronouns can shape power relationships and the solidarity of a relationship. Brown and Gilman maintain that inclusive *we* used in combination with positive words reflects that the speaker wishes to pursue solidarity with the audience. De Fina (1995) also argues that frequent use of *we* shows that the speaker is trying to establish a sense of group unity: the speaker is not speaking as an individual but as a representative of a group or organization. Likewise, Shelby and Reinsch (1995) argue on the way the use of pronoun *you* in business writing connects the author's information to the reader's wants. Because the *you* pronoun reflects the degree of involvement with the reader, using positive words associated with this pronoun creates a persuasive language, while using negative words

can create an opposite effect such as face-threatening effects.

Pronouns are of different types, although the focus of many discourse studies has been on personal pronouns, particularly *we* and *you* because they convey more meaning than simply pointing to a referent. Richards et al. (1992, p. 271) define personal pronouns as "the set of pronouns which represent the grammatical category of PERSON, including (a) the person or persons actually speaking or writing (first person); (b)the person or persons being addressed (second person); or (c) someone or something other than the speaker/writer or the listener/reader (third person)". Thus the features "speaker, addressee, and others" are present in the definition of personal pronouns. For instance, *I* is (+speaker), *you* (+addressee), inclusive *we* (+speaker, +addressee), exclusive *we* (+speaker, +others, -addressee), and so on. By analyzing 3,700 cases of we-forms in a corpus of internal business communications documents, Dieltjens and Heynderickx (2014) discuss the wide usage of the *we* pronoun (as one of the dominant pronouns in business writing) as well as the complexity of this pronoun. They manage to identify different possible combinations of senders, receivers, and third party in *we* pronouns (e.g. *we* including "senders, receivers, and third party" (+S+R+O); *we* including "senders and receivers but excluding third party" (+S+R-O); and other combinations).Moreover, they manage to identify various functions of *we* (e.g. accentuating solidarity in phrases like "we all" or "we together" as opposed to weakening we-form such as "some of us").

- Likewise, in political discourse, the *we* pronoun seems to be probably the most common and popular pronoun. Urban (1986) analyzed the use of the first person pronouns in a number of speeches of Casper Weinberger (former United States Defense Secretary). He identifies six forms of the pronoun *we* used by Weinberger to persuade his audience to accept the U.S government's position on the global danger of nuclear weapons acquisition by other counties: (1) the president and I *we*, (2) the Department of Defense *we*, (3) the Regan Administration *we*, (4) the U.S government *we*, (5) the United States *we*, and (6) the U.S and Soviet Union *we*. Inigo-Mora (2004) also in her study on the strategic use of the first person plural pronoun *we* in five Question Time sessions of the House of Commons in the British Parliament identifies four distinctive types of *we*.

Considering the identified roles of pronouns in business discourse (*you* as the indicator of other-orientedness, inclusive *we* as the indicator of cooperativeness, exclusive *we* as the indicator of professional distance, and *I* as the indicator of self-orientedness), Planken (2005) studied the use of pronouns as a part of rapport management strategy in business negotiations across 18 professional and 10 novice negotiators. She argues that use of direct references of *I* and singular *you* by novice negotiators in certain face-

threatening contexts resulted in more subjective and conflicting discourse. In contrast, professional negotiators tended to avoid this issue by using exclusive (institutional) *we* pronouns in similar contexts not only to reinforce their face as representatives of an autonomously operating company but also to emphasize distance from the unpleasant and conflicting contexts.

In the same fashion, Knights and McCabe (2000) state that the inclusive use of pronouns *we* and *all of us* in mission statements and training materials is an effort to construct a unitary image of organization or to create solidarity between and among the employers and the employees. Similarly, Alvesson and Willmott (2002) discuss the use of *we* as an effort to create a sense of belonging and membership among the staff.

In addition to business discourse, recognition of various aspects of pronouns has resulted in special attention to their roles, especially in political discourse that is at the collision points of ideological challenges and power relations. Personal pronouns have been the subject of many studies on political leaders' discourse because of pronouns' role in showing power relations and ideologies. Studies on political discourse have generally revealed that politicians select pronouns for political and personal purposes. Hahn (2003) shows how politicians use pronouns as part of their persuasive tools which, as discussed earlier, is one of the main goals behind political discourse. Accordingly, Biria and Mohammadi (2012) identified wide use of inclusive *we* in George Bush's and Obama's inaugural speeches to imply and support

solidarity and unity between the government and the people. In another study, Ghazali (2004) studied Dr. Mahathir's speeches at the UMNO General Assembly from 1982-1996. She details the use of different strategies by Dr. Mahathir in his discourse for various purposes, one of which was using pronoun *we* in presupposing shared values with the audience.

Politicians can also manipulate pronouns in image-making to provide a positive image of themselves and a negative image of their opponents. One way of doing this controlling is the use of personal pronouns. For instance, they can use personal pronouns to refer to themselves while talking about positive images or to refer to their opponents while using negative images (Bolivar, 1999; Hahn, 2003; Biria & Mohammadi, 2012). Bolivar (1999) analyzed the use of pronouns in the interviews of two Venezuelan politicians from opposing parties noticing that both politicians used first-person pronouns (I/we) differently in different circumstances and for different reasons. For instance, they used *we* when they tended to distant themselves from responsibilities of their future actions and they used *I* to produce a good effect and a good image of themselves during the campaign.

The second-person pronoun *you* as opposed to the first-person *we* has also been the focus of some studies. It has been found that the main purposes of (we/you) polarization in political discourse are to attack opponents as well as to address a special audience. For instance, Kuo (2002) compared two Taipei mayoral debates to explore the usage of the second-person singular pronoun *ni* (*you*)

by three Taiwanese politicians. The study showed that not only the frequency of *ni* in the second debate increased, but also its functions changed. While in the first debate, more than 60 percent of *ni* were used to address the audience/voters to establish solidarity with them, in the second debate more than 80 percent of *ni* were used to address opponents directly to challenge them or attack their images.

Oddo (2011) in a study on four presidential call-to-arms speeches delivered by two U.S. presidents, Franklin D. Roosevelt and George W. Bush, identifies some key legitimation strategies used by them to legitimate war, one of which is *us/them* pronominal polarization. As Oddo notices, in both presidents' speeches, positive or neutral lexical features such as "defend, fight, confront, and protect" are assigned to the violence from U.S. side (us) while negative words such as "attack, kill, invade, dominate, and murder" are assigned to the opponent's side of violence (them) to justify and moralize the U.S. war (violence) against the enemy. In other words, these speeches try to conclude that "It is a war for all things good, and against all things evil – it is a war that ought to be waged" (Oddo, 2011, p. 296).

3 Methodology

This study is basically a critical discourse analysis of one of Dr. Mahathir's speeches delivered in the year 2000. The speech under analysis contains 1,984 words and was delivered at Euro-Asia Business Summit on May 30, 2000, in Kuala Lumpur. Drawing upon Fairclough's 1995 three-level Dialectical-relational Approach (DRA), the analysis

of the speech is composed of three levels: Description, Interpretation, and Explanation.

The Description level includes identifying speech main topics, tones, pronouns, and vocabulary choice by a close reading (content analysis) of the text. Speech topics in this study refer to the main topics and subjects discussed in the speech. Speech topics are identified by keywords and topical analysis of each paragraph in the speech. Speech tones in this study refer to the way a topic is introduced, the orator's attitude about a topic. For instance, Dr. Mahathir might use a *persuasive tone* to encourage the audience into accepting a business proposition a *critical tone* to show his dissatisfaction with the past history of business relations with the West, or a *concerned tone* regarding the economic challenges of the future. Identifying speech tones is based on the vocabulary choice and pronoun use. For instance, using positive adjectives, reassuring modals, or inclusive pronouns can create a persuasive tone of speech, while using negative adjectives, doubtful modals, or exclusive pronouns can create a critical or concerned tone. Once speech topics, tones, vocabulary choice, and pronoun use were identified, an outline of the speech was provided to demonstrate the topics in the text as well as to determine Dr. Mahathir's viewpoints regarding the identified topics.

Interpretation level includes interpreting the purpose of the genre based on the context and the audience. The studied genre in this study is a business speech delivered at a business summit. The speech historical context in this study is the year 2000 when Dr. Mahathir was trying to

strengthen his business relations with the Asian and European countries. The speech social context is a multicultural business conference attended by Asian and Western heads of governments or their delegates. At this level, the use of pronouns and vocabulary were interpreted regarding the speech context and the audience.

Explanation level, as the final level of analysis, includes extracting the ideologies and power relations behind the speech and the social and political effects of the text based on the political/social/historical contexts. Explanation is concerned with the effects of the texts or their outcomes such as struggles between the ideologies and powers as well as ideological stances and power relations the speech was seemingly aimed to establish.

It should be noted that taking a *critical view* does not mean the authors aimed to find faults or evaluate the ideological stances in the studied text or to support or criticize Dr. Mahathir's business and economic policies in any way. On the other hand, the aim of this study is to contribute to the literature on business discourse in general and especially business discourse delivered at a high-level business summit attended by heads of the governments from different Asian and European countries.

4 Findings and Discussion

This section presents the findings of the study based on the levels of analysis mentioned in the methodology. The Description level is discussed including the outline of the speech and pronoun use. Then, Interpretation and Explanation levels are presented including the interpretation of vocabulary choice and pronoun use based on the related historical events and the addressed audience as well as the explanation of ideological stances and power relations behind the text.

4.1 Description Level

4.1.1 Outline

The outline of the speech follows:

1. Reminder of the past

2. Introduction of new trends in business

3. Introduction of threats to the introduced new trends

4. An example of No. 3

       i. The cause of No. 4

       ii. Consequences of No. 4

       iii. A solution to No. 4

5. Encouragement for a relationship between Europe and Asia

6. A business offer

7. Summary and finish

Each of the identified topics (and their respective tones) will be discussed according to the outline.

1. *Reminder of the past*: The speech starts with the bitter history of Euro-Asia relationships: "colonization of Asians by Europeans."The tone of the speech is rather critical and negative at the beginning as seen in the words *colonization* and *dominated,* reminders of the unpleasant past relations between European and Asian countries.

2. *Introduction of new trends in business*: The apparent negative tone at the beginning of the speech soon fades away as Dr. Mahathir talks about new trends in the relationships between European and Asian countries. At this stage, the tone of the speech shifts to promise of a new future in Euro-Asia relationships. The words *a new feature, successfully, reshaping, Information Age, sophistication, interdependence, globalized world* are used as positive words to promise the movement from the unpleasant past to the pleasant future.

3. *Introduction of threats to the introduced new trends*: Then Dr. Mahathir introduces threats in the way of this new future, and the promising tone of the speech changes into a warning and worried tone. The words *ignore, human feelings, culture, breakdowns in relations, bitterness, fail* are mentioned as a warning/worry about threats against the desirable pleasant future relations.

4. *An example of threats*: He then refers to Southeast Asia's financial crisis in the 1990s as an example of these threats as follows.

> i) *Cause*: The words *currency traders, their countries* and *governments, the media,* and *the Internet* are mentioned as the cause of the South East Asia's financial crisis of the 1990s. The tone

of the speech is critical. Dr. Mahathir does not imply that the governments or the media were directly involved in this violation. In fact, he believes that online businesses were the main cause of the crisis of the 1990s by selling Malaysian currency at a cheaper price for their own benefits. However, he also mildly criticizes the governments' ignorance and the media's (in the general sense of the word including all types of communication medium) failure to reflect the truth about the nature of Malaysian currency devaluation. Hence, he basically believes that online business provides more opportunities to practice business violations, while the governments' ignorance and the media's failure to reflect the truth (e.g. the fact that Ringgit devaluation was not due to Malaysia's weak financial or economic status but due to some online businesses' greed to earn higher benefits) can pave the ground for these violations. In other words, the main violation was conducted by the online businesses.

ii) *Consequences*: The tone of the speech is quite sorrowful and even emotional as seen in the use of the words *wreaked havoc, miseries, destroy (×2), suffer, victims, beg, misery, misfortune, failure, exploited, remote, alarmist,* which mainly refer to the poor people as the victims of this crisis.

iii) *A solution*: Dr. Mahathir uses the words, *"We want to be efficient, but we **do want** to see the faces and talk to the people we do business with"* as a solution to the threats caused by the advent of online business. The tone of the speech is demanding.

5. *Encouragement for a relationship between Europe and Asia*: The positive words *smart partnership, good profit, good market, increasing prosperity, a big attractive market, a rich market* are used to prepare the background for the offer. The tone of the speech is persuasive.

6. *A business offer*: The words *transfer of technology, reduce the cost, reduce the benefit margin* were frequently used as the offer. The tone of the speech is persuasive.

7. *Summary and finish*: Repeating the words *reshape, partnership, beneficial* is used as a summary; and the words *cooperation, broaden scope* are used to emphasize the objectives of a business summit. The tone of the speech is persuasive and hopeful.

4.1.2 Pronouns Use

Altogether the speech was composed of 1,984 words with a total number of 55 cases of *we*-form pronouns (34 *we*, 8 *us*, and 13 *our*); 29 cases of *they*-form pronouns (20 *they*, and 9 *their*); and 19 cases of *you*-form pronouns (14 *you*, and 5 *your*) altogether making up 103 pronouns or an average of 52 pronouns per 1,000 words. As can be seen, *we*-form pronouns were the most dominant followed respectively by *they*-form and *you*-form pronouns.

A closer look at these pronouns reveals that the pronoun *we* sometimes referred to Southeast Asian countries and sometimes to Southeast Asian countries together with European countries; the pronoun *you* always referred to European countries; and the pronoun *they* either referred to Southeast Asian people or currency traders (Table 1).

Table 1: Pronouns reference and frequency

Pronoun Type	Reference	Number	Percentage
We-form	Southeast Asian countries	16	15.5%
We-form	Southeast Asian countries + European countries	39	37.8%
They-form	Southeast Asian People	18	17.4%
They-form	Currency traders	11	10.6%
You-form	European countries	19	18.4%
Total	All	103	100

Listed here are examples of each pronoun:

We meaning Southeast Asian together with European countries

- We are clearly seeing a new phase in relationship between European and Southeast Asian countries.
- We are going to see even more reshaping of that relationship.

- We talk glibly of this world without borders.
- We have our cultures, our loyalties, our human feelings. When doing business we cannot ignore these factors. If we do, business between the peoples of the two regions will not last very long.

We meaning Southeast Asian countries as opposed to *you* or European countries

- We want to be efficient, but we do want to see the faces and talk to the people we do business with.
- We believe in what we call a smart partnership.
- We are not that good yet at developing our own technology.
- Again we are barefooted and in need of technology.
- Yet, as I said just now, if you enrich us you will directly and indirectly profit from our becoming a good market for your products and services. If by transfer prices you impoverish us, you must use to some extent.
- Perhaps we will be more efficient and goods and services will be cheaper.

They meaning Southeast Asian people as opposed to *you,* the present European countries

- Poor people make poor customers. But when you enrich them, they can turn into good customers.
- So prosper your Southeast Asian partners, and they will prosper you. Beggar them, and you will be that much poorer.

They meaning currency traders who caused the economic challenges of the 1990s as opposed to ***you***, the present European governments' delegates in the summit

- They see no humans involved. They cannot foresee or visualize the miseries they can cause.
- They will have to provide the kind of governments that the market wants.
- Their crime was failure to do the right things for the market to be exploited.
- To destroy hundreds of billion dollars in order to make five or ten billion is acceptable because what you make is commensurate with the amount you invest. The losses suffered by your victims are quite irrelevant.

4.2 Interpretation and Explanation Levels

As can be seen in the outline of the speech, the speech started with the subject of colonization. This is a reminder of the colonization of Malaysia by Britain which was ended in 1957. Although Dr. Mahathir's first concern in establishing a relationship with European countries is colonization, he does not seem really worried about being colonized again as he mentions the colonization days were over. So it seems that his starting his speech with the subject of colonization has different purposes than expressing his worries about being re-colonized. First, Dr. Mahathir wants to remind the European countries of the past events as being unfair. Since this speech was delivered in the year 2000 – right after Malaysia's economic turmoil of the 1990s caused by Western currency traders – he was perhaps worried that a similar

event might be repeated in the future. Second, he assigns the bitter past events to unequal powers in Asia-Europe relationships. Therefore, bringing up the subject of colonization is a subtle way to strongly request an equal voice in the future relationships. Third, by referring to the colonization as a bitter past experience shared by some other Asian countries such as India, he seems to be trying to presuppose a sense of shared values with the Asian audience in order to strengthen their positions in their unequal economic relationship with Europe.

Next, he talks about reshaping the nature of business relations in today's world or respecting each other's cultures and human feelings. In these remarks, he is appealing for equal power in future relationships. Without this respect, he envisions a breakdown in relations and subsequent bitterness in a reference to the "unfair past."

In his next points, he criticizes some of the currency traders who wreaked havoc in East Asia and blames their governments for not controlling them. He also blames the media for not reflecting the fact that the financial crisis of the 1997 was due to the currency traders' misrepresentation of the real value of Southeast Asian country's currencies rather than their weak economies. Hence, both online currency businesses and the media were responsible (the former directly, the later indirectly). Thus, the combination of the currency traders' violation of business etiquettes and the failure of the media to clarify this situation cost many Asian nations a lot of misery, misfortune, and loss. Dr Mahathir believed that this was a consequence of remote business [involvement of the

Internet in business] and lack of direct contact between participants. Therefore, he asks for direct contact between countries even though some audience members might consider this way of business as inefficient and outdated. He states that the time for online business in Asian countries has not arrived yet, and they are not ready for this new trend in business.

After expressing his concerns, Dr. Mahathir tries to persuade European countries to invest in Southeast Asian countries by referring to the large number of Southeast Asians that is larger than all Europeans, a good market for Europeans. However, he maintains that in this business, both sides must benefit; a situation that he calls "smart partnership." Thus he asks the European countries to enrich the Southeast Asians to become good customers rather than to impoverish them.

His offer is composed of four parts: (a) introduction, (b) persuasion, (c) warning and disclaimer, and (d) persuasion. He introduces the subject of the offer that is technology. Firstly, it should be noted that *technology*, here, refers to various types of technologies including industrial, manufacturing, electronics, construction, as well as IT technologies. Secondly, being against online businesses does not mean he should avoid IT technologies in business. In other words, he wants online businesses' activities to be supervised and controlled by their governments, while at the same time he believes that owning a developed IT technology is a requirement of the 21st century economies.

Then he refers to the need of developing countries for technology. In this, he makes a difference between Europeans and Asians: those in possession of technology and those in need of technology, the rich and the poor, those who sell shoes and those who need shoes (the strong metaphor *barefooted* is used here for persuasion). Dr. Mahathir maintains: *"In this I.T. age technology is everything. In Southeast Asia foreign technology is still much needed. We are not that good yet at developing our own technology. Again **we are barefooted and in need of shoes**. This presents a vast opportunity and challenges for our European partners. They can either sell or share their technologies with us through FDI, through partnerships and joint ventures."*

He says that the Asian countries cannot afford to buy technologies from the West and asks for reducing the costs. But he does not stop here and continues with a warning and another persuasion. He warns the European countries that if they do not reduce the *transfer cost*, copyright violation may happen. In this sense, *transfer cost* means the cost of transferring/selling/providing technological advances to developing countries. For instance, computer software packages developed in European countries are sold to developing countries at a higher price than their people can afford. Thus, the final price for ordinary people would be too high, which results in people's violation of copyright laws. Of course the government cannot do anything about it as a large number of people are using it as they need it.

He smartly moves from this warning to a disclaimer that even if he wanted to control this copyright violation, it would be impossible. In order to support his disclaimer, he compares the problem to drug trafficking which is impossible to stop completely even by assigning death sentence to it. Finally, he states that if the European countries reduce the transfer prices, the reduction would create more customers and thus higher margin of interest.

As can be inferred from the text, mainly negative words are used to refer to the past experience of Asian countries with European countries; however, positive words are used to refer to the future partnership. However, there is an atmosphere of uncertainty about the positive nature of these future relations which prompts some words of warning (*bitterness* and *fail*) and commitment (*must*, and *we do want*). He mentions three elements as necessary for these relations: respecting the independence of Asian countries, direct contact between countries and people, and respect for social values. Also, some negative words are used to refer to the present situation of Asian countries and people especially the *barefooted* to refer to the poverty of people as well as the need of the Southeast Asian countries for modern technology. The mention of Southeast Asia as a good market is to convince the European countries to reduce their technology costs (emotional persuasion).

In terms of the pronouns use, *we*-form was by far the most frequent and dominant pronoun throughout the speech as expected (Urban, 1986; Inigo-Mora, 2004; Dieltjens & Heynderickx, 2014) with the main purpose of persuading a state of unity and cooperation with the

audience (De Fina, 1995). *We*-form referred either to Southeast Asian countries or Southeast Asian together with European countries. It seems that by applying shared bitter past experiences and shared future expectations to the Southeast Asians *we*, Dr. Mahathir aimed to presuppose shared values among them (Ghazali, 2004) in order to encourage solidarity and to create a united and more powerful Southeast Asia (Brown &Gilman, 1960). On the other hand, inclusive *we* (Southeast Asian + European countries) is assigned to future commitments that need to be made or crises that have to be solved by both sides. Hence, the inclusive *we* here seems to be a way to encourage shared the responsibilities and commitments in maintaining the relationships by both sides. In other words, it seems that inclusive *we* plays the role of distancing Malaysia and the other Asian countries from the responsibilities of relationship breakdowns in the past and future: a role that has been commonly assigned to exclusive *we* (Bolivar, 1999; Planken, 2005).

The use of *you* pronouns is mainly assigned to establishing a desired connection with the audience (Shelby & Reinsch, 1995). As described earlier, *you* in Dr. Mahathir's speech refers to European countries, especially when he talks about a smart partnership between the East and the West. In the smart partnership concept, he explains that the West *you* needs to enrich the Southeast Asia *we* in order to create a better market. Therefore, while inclusive *we* is used to encourage unity with the West by sharing responsibilities and commitments in this relationship in general, *you* is used to specify the role of the West in this relationship.

While the pronoun *they* is probably not as employed as *we* and *you* according to the literature, it is the second most frequent pronoun after *you. They* as the second most frequent pronoun in the speech refers either to Western currency traders or Southeast Asian people. In this sense, the *you/they* polarization is used to distance European countries *you* from the unethical deeds of their business agents *they.* In other words, *you* referred to the present European audience who do not support and approve of what their currency traders did. This *you/they* polarization then seems to act as a legitimation strategy (Oddo, 2011) to convince the audience to take immediate and serious measures against the currency traders. On the other hand, the *we/they* polarization is made to take Southeast Asian countries *we* responsible for protecting the people, *they.* While, *we/they* polarization seems to be another legitimation strategy to convince the audience to take action against currency traders, it could have been another strategy to presuppose shared values among the Asian countries (Ghazali, 2004) as discussed previously. By creating a sense of sympathy with the people and the need to protect them as the main responsibility of every government, Dr. Mahathir seems to create a sense of belonging among the Southeast Asian countries to become united and to gain a more powerful position in an unbalanced economic world in order to protect their people more effectively. In fact, here Dr. Mahathir acts as the voice of his and the other Southeast Asian poor people (who are not present) and criticizes the currency traders (who are not present either) for what they have done. Then, he asks the present European countries governments *you* −

as the controlling authority of currency traders – to join the Southeast Asian countries *we* – as the representative of the poor Southeast Asian people who have suffered losses caused by the currency traders to join together in a big inclusive *we* to create a constructive global economic competition scene. This transition from one pronoun to another is very smooth and is in fact one of the salient features of this speech.

In sum, this speech reveals various strategies to persuade (a) Southeast Asian countries to unify to gain a more powerful position and voice in an unbalanced economic world; and (b) European countries to cooperate to provide Southeast Asian countries with the latest technologies. In doing so, he used a combination of criticisms, persuasions, warnings, and worries through positive/negative adjectives, pronouns use, modalities, and even metaphor. One of the noticeable features of this speech is the vocabulary choice: the positive and negative words are distributed in the text in a balanced way. Negative words are followed by positive words; future threats are followed by possible solutions; warnings are followed by promises [for example, the bitter history of colonization is followed by a promising future]—all of which change the tone of the speech. Even the warning given in case of copyright violation is immediately followed by a disclaimer that parallels the impossibility of stopping the violation to the impossibility of stopping drug trafficking. Another noticeable feature of this speech, besides the vocabulary choice, is the use of pronouns and the way pronouns were used to create a persuasive tone to develop and indicate ideological stances on the audience's

relationships (Hahn, 2003). For instance, one of the features of pronouns use is smooth and subtle shifts from one pronoun to another such as shifting from *they* (currency traders and Southeast Asian people) to *you* (the currency traders' governments) and *we* (Southeast Asian people's governments) very smoothly; and finally the joining of both Europeans and Asians in the inclusive pronoun *we* to ask for effectively mutual and equal commitment, respect, and power. In its totality, the tone of the speech is strong although uncertain and anxious at the beginning while quite optimistic and persuasive at the end. Finally, considering the significant economic development of Malaysia since the year 2000 and the improvement of Malaysia's business relationships with both European and Asian countries, it can be implied that Dr. Mahathir has been successful in persuading his European and Asian audience to accept his business propositions and has been able to convey his business ideologies effectively to them.

Pronouns, Persuasion, and Ideology

Following the progression of this speech, the pronouns uses in this speech are shown in Figure 1 and can be summarized:

*We***:** Southeast Asians →

- Purpose: through persuasion, encouraging unity and solidarity between Southeast Asian countries
- Ideology: South Asians share the same values, attitudes, history, and economic situation so they should be united.

*We***:** Southeast Asians + Europeans →

- Purpose: encouraging business relationships with the Europeans
- Ideology: Although Southeast Asians and Europeans are different, they still can have friendly and prosperous business relationships.

***They*:** Currency Traders →

- Purpose: blaming (what they did is not acceptable by both Southeast Asian countries and European countries)
- Ideology: Currency traders did not follow moralities and business best practices and should be blamed as they were responsible for the economic turmoil in Southeast Asia in the 1990s. *They* refers to an absent group; hence, Dr. Mahathir believes that none of the audience belongs to this group nor supports their deeds.
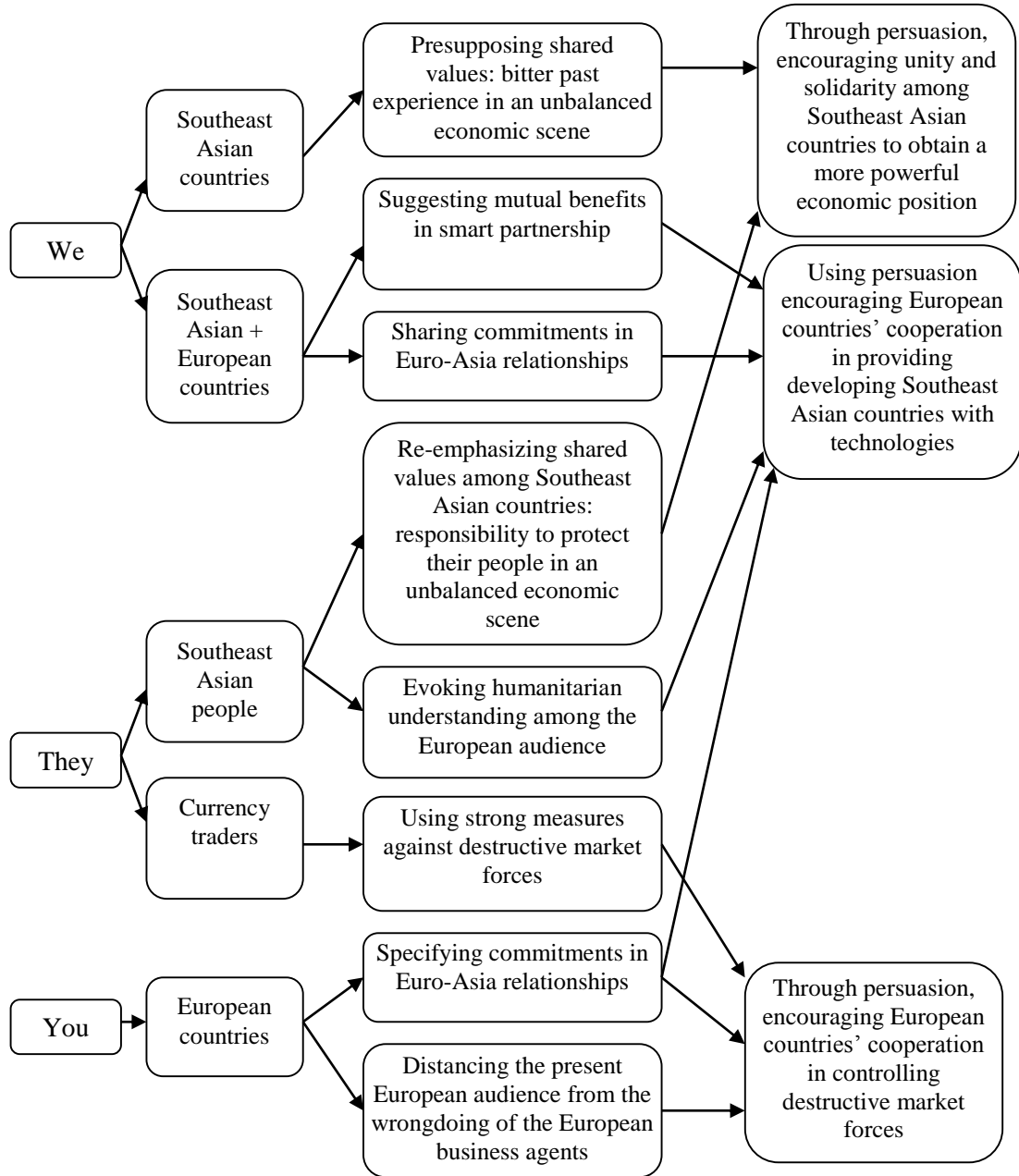
***They*:** Southeast Asian People →

- Purpose: supporting their benefits as they are vulnerable to economic challenges, and any pressure on their governments directly affects them
- Ideology: Poor people are not present as they do not have the privilege to come to this summit and voice their issues although they were the main affected victims of currency traders; hence, they should be supported.

***You*:** Europeans →

- Purpose: addressing the audience for making requests and proposals to provide economic and technological assistance for Southeast Asian countries; to be responsible for currency traders' deeds

- Ideology: assisting developing countries in assisting their poor people, which is a moral deed. Even though you do not support currency traders' deeds, yet they are from the European countries and you should control them.

Figure 1: Pronouns types and purposes

As can be seen in Figure 1, while two different types of *we* (Southeast Asian countries, and Southeast Asian + European countries), two different types of *they* (European currency traders and Southeast Asian people), and one type of *you* (European countries) were identified, they served different roles in achieving the purpose of the speech. Southeast Asian countries *we* was mainly used to encourage unity with the audience using persuasion by presupposing shared values among them. Southeast Asian + European *we* was used to encourage cooperation again through persuasion with the West by suggesting a sense of mutual benefits in a smart partnership. Furthermore, the Southeast Asian + European countries *we* was used to share commitments and responsibilities of keeping relationships between both sides and avoiding relationship breakdowns. Currency traders *they* was used in order to create a sense of urgent measures against unethical market forces to create a constructive and fair global economic competition world. Southeast Asian people *they* was used to evoke humanitarian understanding among the European countries to provide technological aids and to encourage European countries' cooperation in creating a constructive and fair economic competition scene. Moreover, Southeast Asian people *they* was used to re-emphasize the shared values among the Southeast Asian countries. European countries *you* was used to distance them from the currency traders' wrongdoings as well as to specify the European countries' commitments and responsibilities in the economic relationships between the East and the West.

5 Conclusions and Implication of the Study

As the findings of the study suggest, pronoun use was a communication strategy used by Dr. Mahathir in order to encourage through persuasion (a) unity among Southeast Asian countries and (b) cooperation with European countries in order to achieve a more powerful status in an unbalanced economic world. In this regard, three pronouns were used to achieve this purpose: *we* as the most dominant pronoun throughout the speech followed by *they* and *you.*

Two of the salient features of the speech were (a) smooth shifts from one pronoun to another; and (b) distribution of vocabulary choice assigned to the mentioned pronouns. These two features were used concurrently in order to create a well-balanced and persuasive speech as well as to convey the ideologies to different audiences present effectively. Considering the wide range of the audiences and the sensitivity of the addressed topics, the features and patterns identified in the use of pronouns in this speech can be considered as a guideline for speech writers and orators in similar contexts.

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