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Semantic Prosody Of [*pendidikan* / education] From Khaled Nordin's Perspective: An Analysis Of Speech Texts Based On Corpus Linguistic Methodology

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Abstract

Education generally is a planned initiative related to the teaching and learning process to produce learners who are active in developing their potential to meet their own needs and society's. Synergistic process conducted ultimately aims to produce a positive output acceleration of human capital that has religious and spiritual strength, self-control, personality, intelligence, good characters and competent, dedicated to the challenges and needs of the 21st century. Armed with such commitment, Higher Education Minister, Datuk Seri Mohamed Khaled Nordin in his speeches often reveals the diversity of education issues in Malaysia particularly in relation to education at the tertiary level. Therefore, this study will describe the information that can be tapped from the use of [education] lexis in his speech texts through the analysis of semantic prosody based on corpus linguistics. A total of 20 speeches are selected at random from a collection of his speeches from 2009 to 2012 to be analyzed. Semantic prosody analysis results show most often Khaled Nordin highlights four (4) text information related to the main theme *education* namely strengthening the quality of higher education and its academicians, strengthening research and innovation development besides quality student development, and human capital employability. This situation would highlight the evidence that lexis in a language would be able to reveal text information that could be used to understand lexical meanings and values and could also enlighten the leadership identity of its users. The situation is thus able to prove that there are explicit and implicit links between the reality of the language usage and the social reality of its users.

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1. Introduction

Language is an indication of a culture. Language could also symbolize thoughts and reflect the identity of the speakers. Language too determines the formation of the mind based on the forms and groups in it (Asmah 1993). Consequently, the relationships between language, thought, culture and identity are able to reflect the identity, style and leadership approaches of an individual. Leadership quality is an innate ability but sometimes could also be formed. Interpreting one's leadership quality by scrutinizing one's language use would reveal the identity of that particular individual leadership nature. In this study, leadership is defined as the identity, characteristic and style of a leader in leading an organization from the language point of view. Without a leader, it is difficult for an organization to determine its direction in achieving the organizational goals (Wan Faridah, Noor Azmi, & Ishak, 2002). A responsible leader is the leader who seeks to bring glory to the organization or group that he leads. In an effort to lead the organization, an important thing that needs to be highlighted by the leader is language. This is because the language used by the leader symbolizes the identity of the leader himself, from how he explains his thoughts, gives directions, asks something, and makes decisions to name a few. Therefore, according to Thain (1993), the language used by the leader to his subordinates must be clear and comprehensible and must also be free from obscurity and ambiguity.

Facing this challenge, this study aims to uncover the leadership identity of the key figure in the development of tertiary education in Malaysia, Datuk Seri Mohamed Khaled Nordin (hereinafter referred to as Khaled Nordin), as the Minister of Higher Education (1 April 2008 - 19 April 2013) in maneuvering the national higher education leadership through his 20 speech texts. From the aspect of the survey data, studies which analyzed leaders' speeches were once produced by Dunmire (2009), Lun Lu & Ahrens (2008), Idris (2006), Cheng (2006), Kamila (2004), and Rohaidah (2012). Based on several available identity studies, many studies have been produced from the perspective of socio-cultural identity, sociolinguistic sub discipline, and politics through a variety of approaches. From the linguistic perspective, although there are language studies looking at someone's identity from the critical discourse analysis approach, as was done by Rohaidah (2012), such study that utilizes semantic prosody method has not been produced so far. Thus, this study will scrutinize the issues of identity, particularly in relation to leadership identity from the perspective of semantic prosody, based on the use of [*pendidikan* / education] which is repeatedly used in Khaled Nordin's speech texts.

Why [*pendidikan* / education]? *Pendidikan* or education generally is a planned initiative related to the teaching and learning process to produce learners that are active in developing their potentials, to meet the needs of themselves and society's. Synergistic process conducted ultimately aims to produce positive output acceleration of human capital that has religious and spiritual strength, self-control, personality, intelligence, good characters and competent, dedicated to the challenges and needs of the 21st century. In the context of education at the tertiary level, the production of first class and superior human capital (highly skilled and knowledgeable) is the main agenda which has been mobilized by the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE). Armed with such commitment, Mohamed Khaled Nordin in his speeches often reveals the diversity of education issues in Malaysia, particularly in relation to education at the tertiary level. By leveraging corpus linguistic methodology, text information extracts related to [*pendidikan* / education] which looks complicated to be analyzed scientifically, can be argued empirically, and its findings can be held accountable.

2. Corpus Linguistic Methodology, Semantic Prosody And Text Information

Corpus linguistic methodology is a linguistic analytical method that uses data from language materials collected in a resource called corpus or corpora (language bank). These materials are derived from the use of the language in a variety of genres, modes, and oral and written materials which can be considered to describe the actual phenomenal use of the language by the language users (Gries, 2009). This method is said to be based on

empirical evidence because of three important aspects namely data collection extraction, systematic text sample validity (face-validity) as a representation of the language, and the fact that it can be easily reached and generated. It is also recognizable and produces credible research findings (Kennedy 1998). Through the expertise and sophistication of information technology (IT), large linguistic data are able to be generated more quickly, and the data management is also safer, more secured and assured (in terms of methods to acquire and analyze data) (Nor Hashimah Jalaluddin & Ahmad Harith Syah, 2009). Linguistic experts like Harris and Hill who were influenced by the flow of scientific positivism and behaviourism saw corpus as a source of main linguistic data for certain language phenomena (Leech 1997). They define corpus as a large naturally occurring language data which is necessary and sufficient for language study and research. Corpus linguistic methodology has produced a number of approaches that can be used to examine the linguistic aspects more transparently. An example of an approach often used in the corpus linguistic methodology is the semantic prosody approach (Stubbs 1995, 1996; Partington 1998; Channell, 2000; Schmitt & Carter 2004).

Basically, Sinclair (1996) explains the semantic prosody approach as a process to see the expressions of certain lexis which are assessed based on its existence (collaborated, adjacent, or collocated) with other lexis. Besides, Louw (1993, 2008), Hunston (2002) and Stewart (2010) put forward the concept of *consistent aura*, a concept which allows lexical assessment to be done through semantic prosodic analysis. Critical judgments that could be discovered from the concept of *consistent aura* is the assessment of the text information that could be highlighted as a result of the analysis of syntactical behaviour or sentence patterns and this assessment can only be made by examining examples of lexis that collocate with other lexis in a huge number (Zethsen, 2006). Some examples of text information to be acquired is as positive or negative evaluation of the use of certain lexis and the formation of one's identity based on the frequent use of the lexis. In fact, this situation shows that each lexis that we use could be identified based on how it collaborates and collocates with other lexis (Nygaard, Herold, & Namy, 2008).

3. Datuk Seri Mohamed Khaled Nordin

Mohamed Khaled Nordin was born in Muar, Johor on 30 November 1958. He received his early education at Ledang Primary School, Tangkak and attended the secondary school at Muar High School before continuing his studies at Sultan Abu Bakar College, Johor Bahru. He then went to the University of Malaya and received his Bachelor of Laws in 1982. Khaled joined the Legal Department of the National Petroleum (PETRONAS) before being appointed as a political secretary to the Minister of the Federal Territory (1983-1986) and the Minister of Social Welfare (1986-1987), Dato 'Shahrir Abdul Samad, respectively. His career as a Member of Parliament (MP) started in 1990 when he won Johor Bahru parliamentary seat for three consecutive terms before switching to Pasir Gudang as a result of a new redrawing of constituencies. Khaled's roles and contributions were needed in the government with his appointment as the Deputy Minister of Public Works in December 1999. Immediately after the 2004 general election, he was appointed as the Minister of Entrepreneur and Cooperative Development. From 1 April 2008, he was entrusted to lead the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) until 19 April 2013. While leading MOHE, he was required to discuss issues related to education at the tertiary level in every speech delivered (Khaled Nordin, 2010).

4. Data And Method Of Analysis

A total of 20 Khaled Nordin speeches, a collection of his speeches from 2009 to 2012, were randomly selected for analyses. Each text was saved in the form of plain text before being analyzed using *antconc* (a free word-registered software program that can be downloaded from Google) (Anthony, 2004). This analysis was important to obtain some information such as word lists, concordance lines (sentences and paragraphs), left and right collocations and word frequencies. This information is considered crucial in a corpus linguistic research method (Wetzel, 2009) to allow the lexis used in any data to be analyzed with precision and detail.

In this study, the text information was discussed and examined by evaluating the use of lexis underlying the sentences. The construction of the categories for the detected text information was determined based on cognitive principles (Taylor 1995). This means the formation of the categories built for each lexical classification was conceptualized motivationally and not arbitrarily. Two factors were emphasized in the determination of the categories according to cognitive principles namely:

- i. similar features in terms of usage or similarities in terms of shapes, sizes, and materials, and
- ii. attributes or properties of an object such as examining the function or purpose the lexis being used, from whom and to whom the lexis is directed to, and the similarities in meanings through the presence of and collocation with other lexis.

5. Analysis And Discussion

Semantic prosodic analysis results show that most often Khaled Nordin highlights four (4) text information related to the major theme *education* based on the frequency of [*pendidikan* / education] used in his speeches. The four (4) text information are, empowering the quality of higher education, idealizing the academic staff, intensifying the development of research and innovation, and quality student development and human capital employability.

5.1 Strengthening the quality of higher education

As the Minister of Higher Education, there is a need for him to strengthen the quality of our higher education to the best level. Various efforts have certainly been planned to ensure all activities are carried out to meet those expectations. Excerpts from his speech texts reveal that [*pendidikan* / education] used often collocates with other lexis that could prove the existence of activities to enhance the quality of tertiary education in Malaysia. The findings could be proven through the following ten (10) sentences:

1. (t2.36.02) *Disebabkan faktor ini, kita perlu meningkatkan usahasama dan pengkongsian bijak di antara institusi ***pendidikan***, dan industri.* (Due to these factors, we need to enhance the cooperation and smart partnership between ***education*** institutions and industries).
2. (t1.51.01) *Dasar kerajaan menambah akses dan mendemokraskan ***pendidikan*** serta strategi pengantarabangsaan khususnya pengambilan pelajar luar memperlihatkan bagaimana peranan ipts menjadi semakin relevan.* (Government policy in increasing access and democratization of ***education*** and internationalization of strategy particularly the recruitment of foreign students shows how the role of private higher institutions is becoming increasingly relevant).
3. (t6.05.06) *Sehubungan ini, pihak-pihak yang terlibat dalam sektor ***pendidikan*** tinggi diharap akan memberi sokongan sepenuhnya terhadap tindakan-tindakan yang akan diambil oleh kpt ke atas institusi-institusi yang bermasalah demi untuk memastikan agar imej dan jenama ***pendidikan*** tinggi negara yang telah kita bina selama ini tidak tercemar.* (In this regard, the parties involved in the higher ***education*** sector hopefully will give their full supports to the actions taken by MOHE towards troublesome institutions in order to ensure that the image and brand of the national higher ***education*** we have built over the years are not tarnished).
4. (t3.16.02) *Untuk memenuhi keperluan baharu ini, saya berpendapat semua ipta memberi perhatian kepada konsep ***pendidikan*** liberal dan multi-disiplin (liberal and multi-discipline education) dalam semua program ***pendidikan*** pra-dan pasca-siswazah.* (To meet this new requirement, I think all public higher institutions should pay attention to the concept of liberal and multi-disciplinary ***education*** in all the pre-and post-graduate ***education*** programs).
5. (t20.08.02) *perkembangan dan trend semasa menuntut penyediaan landasan ***pendidikan*** tinggi yang luas dan terbuka.* (current developments and trends demand the provision of a wide and open higher ***education***).
6. (t6.04.02) *rundingan-rundingan di peringkat antarabangsa yang disertai oleh malaysia pada masa kini dan akan datang sentiasa melibatkan sektor ***pendidikan*** di mana ***pendidikan*** telah dianggap sebagai satu komponen "trade in services".* (Negotiations at the international level joined by Malaysia at present and future always involves ***education*** where ***education*** has been regarded as a "trade in services" component).

Sentence 1 to 3, for example, shows that [*pendidikan* / education] often collocates (whether on the left or right) with verbs that can be described as efforts or steps to strengthen the quality of higher education in Malaysia. Although each sentence does not specifically state the efforts and methods related to quality, our

embodiment certainly leads us to the understanding that efforts to get better is to strengthen (being superb, superior, powerful, famous, dominant, *Kamus Dewan*, p 1189) the quality of something being done. For example, the use of [*meningkatkan* / increase] (sentence 1), [*menambah* / enhance] and [*mendemokraskan* / democratization] (sentence 2), and [*memastikan* / ensure] (sentence 3), are examples of verbs that could support the concept of empowering the quality (in this case, the quality of education).

Sentence 4 to 6 describes the qualities that should be strengthened in the education sector. As they involve quality, the kind of lexis collocated with [education] lexis to explain the meaning of quality is lexis from the adjective category. For instance, [*liberal* / liberal] and [*multi-disiplin* / multi-disciplinary] (sentence 4), [*luas* / wide] and [*terbuka* / open] (sentence 5), and ["trade in services"] (sentence 6), are examples of quality-related lexis which would be strengthened in the education sector. Linguistic evidence presented clearly shows that Khaled Nordin tries to nail listeners with the understanding that the agenda to strengthen the quality of higher education is one of his main agendas as the Minister of Higher Education, through [education] lexis which is repeatedly used in his speeches.

5.2 Enhancing the academic staff

One of the efforts to strengthen the quality of higher education is to focus on enhancing the academic staff. In school, the teacher is the backbone for the success of a student, in institutions of higher education, the backbone of course refers to the lecturer. Therefore, to ensure students' success, the main step is to enhance the quality of academic staff. This makes the goal to produce quality graduates achievable.

Continuous efforts by the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) to deal with this matter are implicitly stated every time Khaled Nordin talks about education, based on the use of [*pendidikan* / education] itself. The evidence can be seen clearly in the three (3) examples below:

7. (t5.12.03) Kita mesti **menambah lebih banyak peluang** ***pendidikan*** **ijazah tinggi** kepada **setiap pensyarah dan tenaga pekerja**. (We must **create more opportunities for postgraduate** ***education*** **to all lecturers and workforce**).
8. (t3.58.03) Dalam hal ini, kolej komuniti akan **menyediakan tenaga kerja** serta memberi ***pendidikan*** dan latihan **mengikut keperluan industri** di koridor-koridor ekonomi tersebut untuk memastikan kejayaan program transformasi ekonomi ke arah menjadi negara maju berpendapatan tinggi dicapai menjelang tahun 2020. (In this case, community colleges will **prepare the workforce** and give *** education*** and training **according to the needs of the industry** in the economic corridors to ensure the success of economic transformation towards becoming a high-income developed nation by 2020 is achieved).
9. (T20.09.01) Dalam hubungan ini, Kementerian Pengajian Tinggi dan semua agensi serta institusi di bawahnya termasuk UKM, harus memikul tanggungjawab melebarkan peluang dan menggarap konsep pendemokrasian ***pendidikan*** tinggi, **menggilap potensi sumber manusia (tenaga akademik) di negara ini dengan penuh kesedaran, dan pendekatan strategik yang terbaik dan berkesan**. (With this, the Ministry of Higher Education and its sub-agencies including UKM, have to bear the responsibility to expand and work on the concept of democratization of higher ***education***, **to fully refine the human resource potential (academic staff) in this country, and the best and practical strategic approaches**).

Sentence 7 to 9 implicitly display the evidence that the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) does try to academically enhance the academic staff of the institutions of higher education. Sentence 7, for instance, displays *menambah lebih banyak peluang* (an effort to provide more opportunities) for lecturers and non-academic staff to further their studies. Efforts to academically improve the academic staff are also implicitly evidenced in several messages *menyediakan tenaga kerja ... mengikut keperluan industri* (providing manpower ... according to industrial needs) (sentence 8), and *menggilap potensi sumber manusia (tenaga akademik) di negara ini dengan penuh kesedaran* (carefully polishing the human resource potential (academic staff) in the country (sentence 9). Collocations between [*pendidikan* / education] with other lexis as shown in sentence 7 to 9 above could verify another leadership identity of Khaled Nordin in manoeuvring the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE), namely in an effort to enhance the academic staff.

5.3 Strengthening research and innovation development

Another effort towards enhancing the quality of higher education is to strengthen its research and innovation. Research is an attempt to explore new findings through credible methodologies so that the results obtained could be held accountable. On the other hand, innovation is an effort towards excellent changes as a result of the research carried out. Both research and innovation are the foundation of a university and academicians should strengthen the research in their university's niche areas so that the innovations produced are capable of impacting the local community.

To achieve the goal, Khaled Nordin often highlights the efforts of the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) in motivating and empowering the development of research and innovation. Besides explicitly communicating the idea, the goal to strengthen research and innovation is often implicitly communicated every time he deals with education based on the use of [pendidikan / education]. Proof of this statement is evident in the three (3) examples below:

10. (t19.12.01) Bagi menyokong dan memajukan k-ekonomi yang menjadi teras kepada ekonomi inovasi dan penyelidikan, **pembelajaran sepanjang hayat (psh)** akan diarusperanakan kepada masyarakat untuk mendapat ***pendidikan*** formal atau tidak formal. (To support and develop the k-economy which is integral to the economy of innovation and research, **lifelong learning** will be mainstreamed to the community so that they could obtain the formal or informal ***education***).
11. (T20.08.01) Terkini, sektor pengajian tinggi negara menggalas tanggungjawab yang besar dan berat dalam **menyediakan prasarana** untuk mengembangkan ekonomi berasaskan penyelidikan dan inovasi bagi penyediaan landasan ***pendidikan*** tinggi yang luas dan terbuka. (At present, the higher education sector shoulders large and heavy responsibilities in **providing infrastructures** to develop research and innovation-based economy for the provision of a wide and open higher ***education***).
12. (t11.08.02) Kita boleh **menjadikan** ***pendidikan*** tinggi sebagai **komoditi negara** yang akan menyumbangkan kepada ekonomi dan kewangan berasaskan pembangunan penyelidikan dan inovasi. (We can **make** higher ***education*** as a **national commodity** that will contribute to the economic and financial developments based on research and innovation).

The examples above illustrate that Khaled Nordin, as the Minister of Higher Education, displays his leadership identity by highlighting the importance of research and innovation through the disclosure of [pendidikan / education] in his speeches. Such a theme shows the efforts, strategies and methods that have been and will be conducted by MOHE, such as *pembelajaran sepanjang hayat* (lifelong learning) (sentence 10), *menyediakan prasarana* (providing infrastructures) (sentence 11), and *menjadikan pendidikan ... sebagai komoditi negara* (making education ... as a national commodity). The success of strengthening research and innovation developments motivates Khaled Nordin to once again highlight his leadership identity by idealizing the 4th theme namely quality student development and human capital employability.

5.4 Quality student development and human capital employability

Quality student development and human capital employability are the positive impacts of the ongoing efforts by the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) in enhancing the quality of higher education through the process of enhancing the academic staff (2nd theme) and strengthening the development of research and innovation (3rd theme). The effort to accelerate the positive output namely quality students is one of the core efforts undertaken by the Ministry of Higher Education, hoping to produce human capital who would be in demand in the market.

In most of his speeches, Khaled Nordin frequently shows his leadership identity by highlighting the efforts undertaken by MOHE in generating quality students. In addition, he often talks about the methods and effects of the development of quality students through the use of [pendidikan / education] lexis. The ten sentences below are the evidence:

13. (t9.15.03) Justeru itu, keusahawanan dan ***pendidikan*** adalah dua perkara yang perlu kita gabungkan untuk membolehkan kita **melahirkan modal insan yang tepat** dalam usaha membangunkan masyarakat zaman mendatang. (Therefore, entrepreneurship and

- ***education*** are the two elements we need to combine to allow us **to produce the right human capital** in the development of a modern society).
14. (t3.14.01) ***pendidikan*** liberal dan multi-disiplin adalah pendekatan pembelajaran untuk **menghasilkan modal insan masa hadapan**. (liberal and multi-disciplinary ***education*** are the learning approaches **to produce future human capital**).
 15. (t20.14.04) dalam hubungan ini, penubuhan pusat pembangunan keusahawanan dan EKS (ukm-cesmed) oleh ukm yang menyahut rangsangan pelan transformasi ekonomi negara boleh dilihat sebagai satu usaha strategik kerana ia memupuk penyediaan modal insan yang inovatif dan berdaya keusahawanan **melalui program ***pendidikan*** dan latihan yang berkualiti**. (In this regard, the establishment of entrepreneurship development centre and SMEs (UKM-cesmed) by UKM in response to the stimulation of the economic transformation plan could be seen as a strategic effort because it adopts the provision of innovative human capital and sustainable entrepreneurship **through ***education*** programs and quality trainings**).
 16. (t3.54.02) Maka di sinilah letaknya kepentingan ***pendidikan*** dan latihan teknikal dan vokasional (technical and vocational education and training, tvet) yang dapat menambah bekalan modal insan berkemahiran **melalui penyediaan ***pendidikan*** berkualiti kepada pelajar** yang mempunyai kecenderungan dalam bidang teknikal dan vokasional sekaligus mentransformasikan malaysia kepada negara maju dan berpendapatan tinggi menjelang tahun 2020. (Therefore, here is where the importance of ***education*** and technical and vocational trainings in increasing the supply of skilled human capital **through the provision of quality ***education*** to students** who have the interest in the technical and vocational fields thus transforming Malaysia into a high-income nation by 2020).
 17. (t19.05.02) dan sebagai satu komoditi, pihak yang membekalkan ***pendidikan*** yang terbaik, mengikut definisi kualiti yang terpakai masa kini, akan **memperoleh pencapaian dan keberhasilan yang tinggi juga lumayan**. (And as a commodity, the best ***education*** provider, according to the definition of quality applicable today, will **obtain high and lucrative performances and outputs**).
 18. (t9.15.03) Justeru itu, keusahawanan dan ***pendidikan*** adalah dua perkara yang perlu kita gabungkan untuk membolehkan kita melahirkan modal insan yang tepat dalam usaha **membangunkan masyarakat zaman mendatang**. (Therefore, entrepreneurship and ***education*** are two elements to be combined to allow us to produce the right human capital **in the development of modern society**).

Sentence 13 to 14 proves that the Ministry of Higher Education is committed to developing quality students. Based on the use of the verbs, these efforts are demonstrated through [*melahirkan / menghasilkan / produce*]. Sentence 15 to 16, on the other hand, describe the methods or strategies of the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) to develop quality students from the use of [*melalui / through*] lexis which is often collocated with [*pendidikan / education*]. Some examples of sentences discussing the effects of developing quality students are *memperoleh pencapaian dan keberhasilan yang tinggi juga lumayan* (obtaining high performances and lucrative outputs) (sentence 17), and *membangunkan masyarakat zaman mendatang* (developing future community) (sentence 18).

The four themes together with the linguistic evidence discussed display text information successfully uncovered through the use of [education] lexis based on semantic prosodic approach through corpus linguistic methodology. The result of this classification can be used as linguistic evidence of Khaled Nordin's leadership identity as the Higher Education minister through the use of [education] lexis which is frequently discussed in his speech texts. This situation could portray and support the evidence that lexis of a language could certainly highlight the text information which could be used to understand the meanings and values of the lexis and could also highlight the leadership identity of its users. The situation is thus able to prove that there are explicit and implicit links between the reality of the language usage and the social reality of the community that uses the language (Crystal, 1987; Wardhaugh 2002 Holmes 2008).

6. Conclusion

To conclude, the findings are capable of proving the existence of a system in the speaker's mind in relation to the lexical usage which is capable of highlighting the lexical meanings and values when collocating with other lexis. This becomes the core in semantic and pragmatic studies, aided by corpus linguistic methodology, namely showing orderly and clear detailed information through systematic and accountable analyses (Lyons, 1981).

This research hopes to open a new chapter in the study of linguistic prosody based on semantic approach to investigate language information and leadership identity. Besides contributing to language and linguistic fields, this study also aims to help researchers from different research fields/disciplines, to 'get acquainted' with the key figure in Malaysia's higher education, Khaled Nordin, the Minister of Higher Education, in an effort to improve our higher education as a distinctive emerging industry.

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