POWER AND SOLIDARITY IN POSITIVE FACEBOOK POSTINGS AMIDST COVID-19 IN MALAYSIA

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ABSTRACT

Background and Purpose: Coronavirus has posed an unfamiliar threat to the world. Despite such circumstances, Malaysians continue to stay optimistic by keeping abreast with updates and mostly by seeking refuge in hopeful and consoling messages shared by fellow citizens. This study identified Facebook postings with positive messages, posted by Malaysians during the Movement Control Order (MCO) implemented by the Malaysian government as a form of prosocial behaviour.

Methodology: Through an analytic framework consisting of Positive Discourse Analysis and Critical Discourse Analysis, 15 Facebook postings related to COVID-19 were selected and identified as positive discourse, which were coded and categorised using a thematic analysis. Further analysis was also conducted on the linguistic features identified in the narratives of the postings showing the construction of positive discourse in the Facebook postings.

Findings: The findings demonstrate an extensive utilisation of expressions of solidarity primarily through collective pronouns like "we" and "us", which suggest solidarity and empowerment among Malaysians in dealing with COVID-19. Further analysis reveals the forms and contextual functions of

the linguistic strategies as carrying pragmatic devices (e.g. speech acts and figurative language), which contributes to the power enactment in the Facebook postings in creating an overall positive reaction.

Contributions: This critical discourse study does not only promote positive discourse for its own sake, but also serves as a pragmatic approach to materialise utilitarian goals. It is therefore hoped to contribute not only to linguistics, but also social, psychological as well as arts and humanities studies through further examinations of the pivotal roles that communication and language play, especially in rising against dire situations.

Keywords: COVID-19, Critical Discourse Analysis, media discourse, Positive Discourse Analysis, power and solidarity.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Coronavirus (COVID-19) hit worldwide immobilising the international community with its high citations of paralysed situations. When hope is the only source for survival, Malaysia champions over its hardworking and tenacious frontliners ("applaud handling of Covid-19", 2020). Mainstream television stations provide daily announcements to inform progress reports of the pandemic. While the health sector plays active roles in curbing the outbreak, equal contribution can be seen at many levels. At the level of state governance, its threat as a fast spreading virus has forced the Malaysian government to take the inevitable measures to deal with the horrendous situation. As such, Movement Control Order (MCO) is continuously reinforced as an effort to flatten the curve of pandemic cases and ensure national health recovery where advice on observing social distancing, staying at home and washing hands properly and frequently is encouraged.

At the same time, contributions from the laymen are also observable where the rest of the nation seeks solace through hope and optimism shared particularly on social media platforms. At present, using social media platforms to convey impactful messages has been a globally well-received trend (Eghdam, Hamidi, Bartfai, & Koch, 2018). To date, social media are numerous in its form and purpose. While some aim to convey messages (e.g. Twitter, Facebook, Linkedin), others provide entertainment and share memories (e.g. Tiktok, Instagram, Snapchat). Even though there are clear benefits of using social media as a form of

communication (with its purpose ranging from creating awareness on civic duties, political campaigns and health care), there are also some negative impacts caused by disheartening postings on social media which include those categorised under Facebook depression, cyberbullying and suicide risk (Farhud, 2016). It is because of such negative messages, which can overpower the good ones that there should be more positive messages shared. This will not only help to create a balance between the two, but also ensures that good prevails via well-designed goals and actions. Negative behavioural tendencies such as cyberbullying and suicidal thoughts are observable even during MCO (Arumugam, 2020), which may be caused by the negative messages disseminated through the social media. Therefore, continuous authoritative reminders were given out to control such behaviour as a counter strategy to help alleviate the challenges faced in relation to limited emotional outlets. Daily instant short messages which are given out to telecommunication users include reminders to hinder traumatising experiences during the pandemic phase.

The unprecedented circumstances have triggered many Malaysians to act according to what they think their fellow Malaysians need, including efforts to proliferate a dominant positive message. Going through the MCO has led them to realise a growing need to contribute towards expressing gratitude, pride and hope. Therefore, they take it to the social media, sharing their portion of patriotic duties from complimenting the government's effort and the frontliners' excellent work thus far to creative displays of cooking skills and comedic acts in trying to uplift each other's spirit. Phrases and hashtags such as 'stay home', 'stay safe' and '*kita jaga kita*' ('we take care of each other') are constantly shared and disseminated by most Malaysians including the Prime Minister himself. These are among the positive messages that can help to ingrain the sense of togetherness and patriotism towards collaborative efforts in fighting the pandemic as a nation.

Even though positive messages are not new strategies that are utilised to express voices of hope of the oppressed and to create a better future, research studies on these positive discourses are still lacking. Most published articles on COVID-19 so far are focusing on either clinical reports (e.g. Delang & Neyts, 2020; Pasquel & Umpierrez, 2020), or management guidelines (e.g. Alon, 2020; Grint, 2020), even mental treatment (e.g. Grubic, Badovinac, & Johri, 2020; Walton, Murray, & Christian, 2020) concerning the pandemic. Therefore, this study attempts to signal a dire need for more empirical research involving positive discourse and strategies leading towards empowerment of the people to be carried out especially on analysing texts available on the social media and its significant role in propagating messages of goodness.

This study aimed to answer the following research question:

How is positive discourse constructed in the Facebook postings selected? Partaking this aim would align the significance of this study to Bartlett's (2009) approach to positive discourse as part of an effort to understand the Malaysian society, especially one that concerns pandemic circumstances and state of emergency with regards to communicating correct and helpful information on the virus in ensuring good healthcare and well-being.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Positive Discourse Analysis and Critical Discourse Analysis

Positive Discourse Analysis (PDA) was introduced by Martin and Rose (2003) in an effort to highlight the positive sides of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), which have not been given the deserving attention. Being under the umbrella of CDA, the main premise of PDA evolves around looking at what works and to celebrate success rather than to scrutinise and deconstruct the hegemonic struggles to no end. It aspires to highlight the goodness of the community, sharing similar notions on solidarity and empowerment. Therefore, adopting PDA as a branch of CDA is moving towards analysing progressive, and not oppressive discourse (Hughes, 2018).

PDA, however, has been heavily criticised as being redundant to CDA, which is claimed to have both positive and negative sides of discourse already accounted for (Su, 2016; Stibbe, 2017). Martin (2004), however, argues that CDA tends to present problems as its central reality, perhaps trying to create a sense of urgency that fair solutions must be found in combating the world full of discriminatory discourse. Establishing the need for PDA in a wider context of current movements of social research, he argues that since too much attention is given to examining oppressive discourse, "when we come to design better futures we simply don't have enough information to move forward" (Martin, 2004, p. 184). While calls towards more solution-oriented approaches to critical discourse studies are often being made, PDA is yet to gain its rightful place as a complement to CDA even though it clearly comes out in this field as to champion this effort further in finding a remedy to the oppressive circumstances as deconstructed by many CDA advocates. PDA complements current CDA studies by highlighting mainly the discourses that we like rather than the ones we do not like (Macgilchrist, 2007).

Martin (2004) also laments that this alternative view, though very much needed, can be labelled as being naive to critical response. Therefore, he also emphasises that staying true to the bigger purpose should be the primary concern here, which is to try to strike a balance between CDA and PDA. Looking at discourses of solidarity, Agustin (2012) asserts that PDA allows him to emphasise on the positive impacts the civil society can contribute towards creating social change, and this is exactly what this study wants to aspire to achieve.

2.2 CDA and PDA: The Analytic Framework

In this paper, the main tenets of CDA, as laid down by Fairclough (1995) with his concept of hidden power (see section 2.3), are used in cooperation with PDA as a complementing view to examining positive discourse as part of CDA. Therefore, crucial tenets of CDA by Fairclough and Wodak (1997) are also utilised here in emphasising social issues as its main focus, while power relations are regarded as discursive processes. Discourse is also looked at as involving sociocultural phenomena, ideological work and historical perspectives, whilst aspiring to demonstrate a mediated link between text and society. This study also follows Bartlett's (2009) PDA approach based on the followings: (1) ideologies are seen as to be developed for the purpose of unification of communities, (2) texts should be analysed for ideas, relationships and course of actions to be efficacious in being materialised for specific groups, (3) linguistic analysis of discourses of opposing views and ideologies shall be used to impart areas of similarities and common grounds shared for a more promising result, and (4) in the event of overlapping beliefs and practices of these different groups, this shared framework enables the promotion of language practices that serve collaborative and positive purposes.

Therefore, in the case of this particular study, this analytic framework offers an alternative approach and a different angle towards examining texts, looking at efforts in establishing solidarity and empowerment in the society.

2.3 Power and CDA: Ideational, Interpesonal and Textual Metafunctions

With a CDA perspective that seeks to understand the connection between the discursive standpoint of discourse and social events, and how discourse is formed by ideologies and power, Fairclough (1989) asserts his concepts of power as carrying a form of 'hidden power' (a subtler form of power), 'power in discourse' and 'power behind discourse'. Power in discourse relates to discourse as a place where power relations are created, while power behind discourse is concerned with the orders of discourse, where societal orders reside, which are themselves moulded and governed by power relations. Halliday (1978, 1994) describes

discourse analysis as concerning the semiotic system, language code and lexico-grammatical analysis of the texts examined. Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) dictates three types of metafunctions: ideational, interpersonal and textual, which are utilised here by following Bartlett's (2009) PDA approach in analysing how language and powers emerge, particularly looking at how they are constructed in the Facebook postings and the metafunctions (grammatical categories and their functions in contexts).

Bartlett (2009) focuses on these three metafunctions as prescribed by Halliday (1994). Ideational metafunctions are concerned with the semantic system and representations of reality consisting of how we talk about the actors, things and events. This is generally materialised by the mention of grammatical categories that mostly relate to nouns, verbs, adjectives and at the clausal level. Meanwhile, the interpersonal metafunctions involve looking at the clausal level in relation to mood (mainly speech function, modality and tone) and of social relations and roles (how we address other people and relate to each other) which can suggest power distance. Textual metafunctions have something to do with thematic structure: message, identity and relations of texts. They look at how we tend to relate ideas to each other and based on what we know and have previously experienced. The focus here will be on the use of linguistic devices and how they are used to refer to certain people, things as well as to ideas that are found to be abstract and remote.

2.4 Power and Solidarity through Collective Empowerment and Prosocial Behavior

Ideas on the nature of power contradict between two commonly discussed theorists. While Weber (1922) insists that power functions to maintain hierarchical order, yielding for its permanent nature, Foucault (1982) describes power as an experience of struggle. To Foucault (1982), the person needs to undergo a continuous assessment of recognizing himself and others recognizing him. As such, the definition of power shows fluidity in its conceptualization; moving from a state of permanence to one that is contestable, allowing those with greater effort to maintain power.

Meanwhile the Latin-rooted word "solidarity" initially functioned in economic situations where debts are jointly shared and later used in reference of political support (Laitinen & Pessi, 2015). Its concept was later developed to suggest communal ability to connect in order to achieve harmony where the "we-thinking" is created (Rorty, as cited in Laitinen & Pessi, 2015). Lindenberg (1998) explains that this togetherness aims at producing and using some good that eventually makes the participants feel good. Interestingly, Salmela (2015) traces the beginning of solidarity as created through the strength of "collective

emotions" (p. 2), which Collins (2004) labels as emotional energy. This form of energy, according to Collins (2004), is permanent, leading to solidarity. Along the way, solidarity is also coined with the term altruism, which signals similarity in ideas. What ought to be seen as interesting is the development of typologies within the concept, including national and religious solidarity.

National solidarity in this study is mostly concerned with common grounds and a sense of responsibilities shared by diverse groups of people as a nation, especially in their aspirations to move forward as a community to create a better world in a collective and positive manner. Thomas, Cary, Smith, Spears, and McGarty (2018) find social media as carrying a significant role in shaping and promoting national solidarity particularly through what is labelled as 'group consciousness'. This idea of group consciousness was coined by Duncan (2012), referring to the shared feeling of unity and mutual interests by recognising group identifications and collective effort in redressing hegemonic struggles and relationships. The earliest efforts at defining the concept of religious solidarity can be traced to Redekop (1967) who provides a working definition on solidarity where he specifically approached it from the religious function, rationalising that it is capable of integrating the social aspect in a society where "ultimate values and ends in common" are common aspects of unity (p. 149). Later, Bulbulia and Mahoney (2008) refine the scope 'religion' as those associating it to "beliefs and practices respecting gods" (p. 295). Religion is seen as powerful in its influence on society that Rickman (2019) associates its role in shaping violent behaviour that are seen in extremist and fundamentalist groups, which echoed past observations on the power of religion to construct societal behaviour. Durkheim (1912), for example, names religion as the most fundamental social institution as human minds can only "meet and commune only if they come outside themselves" through movement that achieves homogeneity (p. 232). The many waves of minds can come to form unity if they express themselves via a collective representative of belief (Bellah, 2005).

As such, religious solidarity if used well, enables a positive trajectory of lifestyles, cascading many meaningful impacts. This is because mankind is generally "prosocial species" (Barclay & van Vugt, 2015) where they strive at doing good to others, for others. They hold onto the belief of intentionally benefiting others voluntarily (e.g. Batson & Powell, 2003; Eisenberg, Fabes, & Spinrad, 2007). Of course, this also spurs an association with altruism – a type of "helping act" without an expectation of good returns (Bar-Tal & Raviv, 2013) while another defined it as a form of devotion (Zahn-Waxler & Radke-Yarrow, 2013). It is this

attitude that further assumed to have motivated Malaysians in general to share and create awareness about the outbreak.

In short, when power is viewed as a contestable entity, it has the capacity to be shaped according to its possessor in order to maintain power for the sake of certain goals. In this case, power is used to obtain types of solidarity and altruism.

2.5 Facebook in Society and a Means of Coping

Unlike the older and more traditional media (i.e. newspaper and television), Soffer (2013) argues that the Internet as a new form of media plays a functional social role and has the ability to raise national sense of belonging. It has the ability to create what Billig (1995) described as the banal nationalism where nationalism as a collective spirit does not have to appear dull through long and dry speeches. Instead, its purpose is served through day-to-day discourse, similar to Facebook, as an agent for promoting "identification with a cross-national community" (Soffer, 2013, p. 48). Because man in general creates a sense of belonging through communities, they "imagine" such association as one that is described by Anderson's concept of imagined community. Bouvier (2012) explains that Facebook users tend to create different categories of identities, including national identity.

Studies on how people deal with difficulties and struggles have been around for more than 50 years (Lazarus, 2001). Van Ingen, Utz, and Toepoel (2015) contend that even though studies on effectiveness of different coping strategies in dealing with hardships have expanded over the years, studies that examine the internet as providing an outlet as a coping mechanism have been scarce. Available studies mainly define online coping as associated with elevating self-esteem and optimism (e.g. Van Ingen et al., 2015) while others trace the rise of awareness on the role of social media as a coping mechanism (e.g. Rains & Young, 2009; Damian & Van Ingen, 2014; Frison & Eggermont, 2015).

Acknowledging that the most basic form of human interaction, namely face-to-face, is found to be very limited during partial lockdowns, Facebook has been identified as one of the most influential online mediums of communication, which has helped connect and inspire communities with diverse groups of people (Harris, 2020). In these trying times, Facebook, with over 2.5 billion human subscribers, is therefore deemed as being successful in bringing people together, and thus making human interaction even stronger than before. This study aims to examine this issue further particularly through a discourse analysis.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Data Collection

This qualitative study was conducted by examining 15 entries with positive messages posted on Facebook during the MCO (which started on the 16th of March 2020 and was later extended with a Conditional MCO, starting 4 May until 9th of June 2020) due to the pandemic. Data adequacy has been an age-old issue, but employing purposive sampling is regarded as appropriate for the current study, primarily due to the tendencies of high frequency of linguistic features under examination to appear in situated texts such as Facebook postings (e.g. pronouns). After the potential postings were identified, an extraction method was then applied manually where the whole original postings were copied and pasted in Word document and then in Google doc for ease of and simultaneous analysis between researchers. This was determined to be a practical method following some studies which applied the manual extraction as the extraction method, which is done by copying and pasting data into workable forms (Franz, Marsh, Chen, & Teo, 2019).

3.1.1 Selection criteria

The parameters set for the selections of Facebook postings are based on Flowerdew's (2004) justifications for a small corpus, which are as follows:

1. Purposeful goals/objectives - to identify positive discourse and look at how it is constructed, identify the linguistic devices adopted, examine their forms and functions, examine how power emerges in positive postings
2. Contextual factors - dealing with a pandemic, health care and awareness, Facebook postings from Facebook pages/groups/timelines, the authors, Malaysians
3. Genre/category - ideological, political, sociocultural
4. Groups/categories of discourse - social media, narrative, descriptive, interactional
5. Topic/issue - COVID-19, health and well-being, social responsibility, patriotism

Other criteria for selections are for the postings to:

1. be posted by a Malaysian during the MCO,
2. contain a clear positive message related to COVID-19,
3. be commented (minimum 10 comments), liked or shared by a minimum of 50 people,
4. be written in either English or Bahasa Malaysia and addresses directly (or indirectly) to Malaysians, and
5. be extracted (from the whole original postings) from selected public Facebook pages, Facebook groups or Facebook timelines (particularly popular postings that have been shared multiple times or well-mentioned/commented about), and based on the positive content, discourse strategies and stylistic devices.

Following criterion number (2) above, the positive postings were determined by foreseeing their acceptable level of receiving sarcasm. Therefore, all 15 Facebook postings have been meticulously chosen as to not having contained the followings: explicit negative purposes, tones and messages, strong sarcasms, ill-judgements of the topic discussed and ill-intentions towards any party. All potential postings have gone through a 'negative filtration' process and then decided upon by the researchers after conscientiously weighing the overall positive message. After these characteristics have been precluded by the filtration process, the postings, then considered as positive discourse, were scrutinised for coding and categorisation process in order to eventually achieve a higher level of analysis: theme identification. The basis for the decision made lies on the tenets of CDA and PDA approach as previously spelled out (see section 2.2) as well as to suit the research aim. Therefore, with this crucial step, the probable reactions that the postings have projected on Malaysians have been prudently accounted for and these have also been determined by observing the minimum number of 'likes' and 'comments' of the postings (Kwok & Yu, 2013). Since there has been a lack of information on the specified minimum number of likes or shares for a Facebook posting to be considered viral, we decided that 50 likes or shares is a good minimum number for this study.

Viral or popular Facebook postings are defined here as postings that have gained great attention from the public and have been frequently liked, commented and shared on Facebook (or other online or social media platforms) due to the positive content and form of the message they carry. We followed Alhabash and McAlister's (2015) concepts of virality that are governed by three crucial components: viral reach (the number of unique individuals who are able to see a particular post from someone's Facebook page through what is published by one

of their Facebook friends), affective evaluation (ability to recognise affective values in a certain post) and message deliberation (through reasoned engagement on social or political issue).

3.1.2 Sampling method and data selection process

The data collection process started three weeks after MCO, with the first posting identified being posted on 7 April 2020 while the extraction of data stopped on the 2 May 2020 (the final posting), which is a day after the Conditional Movement Control Order (CMCO) was announced to be imposed by the government after claiming to have flattened the curve of COVID-19 cases. A purposive sampling method was done by typing keywords and flipping through numerous Facebook postings from Facebook groups and pages, and some postings with great potential were found. The keywords typed on Google are: 'COVID-19', 'positive message', 'Facebook', and 'Malaysia', which generated about 6,930,000 results (0.65 seconds). However, with the attention being put only on the most relevant ones by the initial filtration process based on the parameters and criteria being set for this study, and after going through the first five pages of the results, only two distinctive Facebook-related results were identified. The others that are ruled out are mostly headlines or articles of Newspapers, Websites, blogs, Twitter, or Instagram.

The identified potential ones are the Facebook page of Kementerian Kesihatan Malaysia (Ministry of Health Malaysia) with 2,998,479 followers and Noor Hisham Abdullah (Malaysian Director-General of Health) with 624,097 followers. The Facebook page of Noor Hisham Abdullah and one of his postings (32K likes, 1.1K comments, 4.7K shares) was then selected due to its clear representation of the other page, and that it has more positive messages and written pieces that fit the criteria of this study than merely reporting or presenting information on COVID-19 found in the Ministry of Health Facebook page. Different combinations of keywords were then used to reach at more potential data by taking out 'positive message': 'COVID-19', 'Malaysia', and 'Facebook', which generated about 562,000,000 results (0.62 seconds) and other than the previous two Facebook pages identified, this led to two more possible ones, which is a Facebook group, Caremongering Malaysia - Community response to COVID19 (11,062 followers), which led to Abu Bakar's posting (87 likes, 12 comments, 4 shares), which is particularly chosen for the evocative content and writing style, and another Facebook group, *Rayuan Pengamal Perubatan* (The Appeal of Health Practitioners with 63,261 followers), which led to Ai Ling's (1K likes, 163 comments, 39 shares) Facebook posting.

A similar keyword search ('COVID-19', 'Malaysia', 'positive message'), but now through Facebook, generated nine results, which led to Imelda Balchin's page and posting (460,388 followers, 6.2K likes, 165 comments, 1.9K shares). Another Facebook keyword search ('COVID-19', 'Malaysia', 'popular') also led to 19 popular results, and another similar keyword search containing the keyword 'viral' was then initiated, generating another 11 results, and some of them that were identified as containing positive messages were located within the 30 Facebook postings (or Timelines), groups or pages generated (which resembles a snow-ball effect). This selection of 21 and which then was dropped down to 15 Facebook postings was decided after going through the familiarisation and filtration process of a total of 597 potential positive postings, which were briefly analysed for general characteristics of positive discourse. The background information about the 15 Facebook postings selected are as illustrated in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Background information on positive Facebook postings on COVID-19

Set	Categories	Name of pages/groups	Facebook Account Users and Post titles	No. of followers/likes/ comments/ shares
1	Facebook Page	Noor Hisham Abdullah (frontliner)	Abdullah (2 May 2020) "Untitled"	12,351 followers; 858 likes; 137 comments; 724 shares
		Imelda Balchin (frontliner)	Balchin (19 April 2020) "Untitled"	460,388 followers; 6.2K likes; 165 comments; 1.9K shares
		Beto Kusyairi	Kusyairi (12 April 2020) "Untitled"	101,288 followers; 935 likes; 44 comments; 62 shares
		Nur Fedtri Yahya	Yahya (11 April 2020) "*Inilah rezeki di pusat kuarantin*"	348,686 followers; 10K likes; 782 comments; 2K shares

2	Facebook Group	Caremongering Malaysia - Community response to COVID19 (frontliner)	Abu Bakar (25 April 2020) "Of Kuih Raya and Misfortune"	87 likes; 12 comments; 4 shares
		Rayuan Pengamal Perubatan (frontliner)	Ai Ling (23 March 2020) "Untitled"	1K likes; 163 comments; 39 shares
3	Facebook Timeline		Fathi (15 April) "UPSR	404 followers; 4.4K likes; 534 comments; 3.9K shares
			Farisham (13 April 2020) "Untitled"	36,788 followers; 1.2K likes; 146 comments; 625 shares
			Azam (11 April 2020) "Untitled"	5,085 followers; 4.6K likes; 123 comments; 3K shares
			Wong (11 April 2020) "Untitled"	149,863 followers; 12K likes; 432 comments; 5.8K shares
			Shidan TF (8 April 2020) "*Orang Malaysia HEBAT*"	675 followers; 492 likes; 24 comments; 389 shares
			Ananthan (10 April 2020) "Untitled"	17K likes; 2.3K comments; 11K shares

Ahmed (8 April 2020) "*BERTUAHNYA RAKYAT MALAYSIA*"	1,329 followers; 20K likes; 6.2K comments; 10K shares
Hashim (7 April 2020) "*Warkah buat Rakyat Malaysia*"	12,351 followers; 858 likes; 137 comments; 724 shares
Abadi (7 April 2020) "*Mereka Anugerah Allah*"	42,825 followers; 3.3K likes; 123 comments; 642 shares

Apart from being able to meet the criteria and parameters set earlier for this study, these 15 Facebook postings were also particularly chosen to enable us to showcase the constructions of positive discourse, as well as power, based on both linguistic forms and functions, including their stylistic devices and pragmatic features utilised.

The purposive sampling method through keyword search has therefore enabled us to reach public Facebook pages, groups or timelines that contain relevant positive postings related to COVID-19. See Figure 1 below:

Keyword search 1 (Google) : 'COVID-19', 'positive message', 'Facebook', 'Malaysia'					
Abdullah					

Keyword search 2 (Google) : 'COVID-19', 'Facebook', 'Malaysia'					
Abu Bakar			Ai Ling		

Keyword search 3 (Facebook) : 'COVID-19', 'Malaysia', 'positive message'					
Balchin					

Keyword search 4 (Facebook) : 'COVID-19', 'Malaysia' , 'popular'					
Ananthan	Azam	Abadi	Yahya	Farisham	Hashim

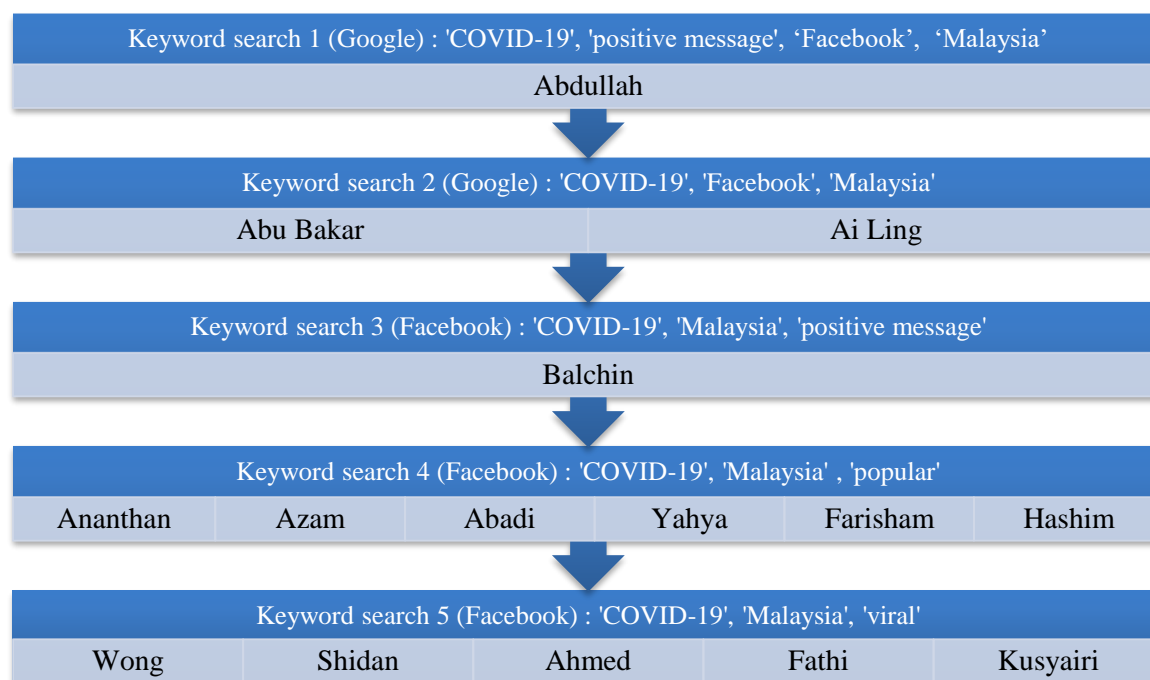| Keyword search 5 (Facebook) : 'COVID-19', 'Malaysia', 'viral'					
Wong	Shidan	Ahmed	Fathi	Kusyairi	

Figure 1: The selection process of the 15 Facebook postings

This study aimed for a quality small-scale and tightly focused study due to the factors of practicality of generating a more rigorous linguistic and discursive approaches to qualitative data. Therefore, after the initial analysis was done to the 597 potential positive postings that were gathered from Facebook groups, Facebook pages and Facebook accounts, only 21 Facebook postings were finally selected, which were then scrutinised over its content and structure. Six were then excluded after further familiarisation and filtration processes due to being either too long-winded and without specific focus, containing strong sarcasms, or not meeting the minimum number of likes or comments status, or were suddenly found to be deleted from their Facebook accounts, groups or pages. Therefore, a total of 15 Facebook postings (nine written in Malay; six in English) were finally selected, which were then ready for data processing and further analysis.

3.1.3 Ethical considerations

While Facebook promotes expression of thoughts to be shared with the public, it reinforces a policy that controls the extent of usage over its postings, in order to curb possible infringement or violation of another's right, particularly the right to intellectual property (Facebook statements of right and responsibilities) as their Community Standard. This, however, does not apply in the case of this study since the selected writers publicise their postings. We particularly ensured that only existing postings were extracted without any kind of intervention to the data

and that these postings remain public even during the writing of the study. According to Franz et al. (2019), the access to existing Facebook pages and groups are open to the public for data collection and therefore, no consent seeking is required. They further reiterated that the advantage of using Facebook data that is set for public viewing is that it offers a great deal of data to researchers without needing an informed consent.

3.1.4 Thematic analysis

Each document made up the analytical corpus that provided the basis for analysis. In the second stage, the documents were then reviewed as part of the process of "content assessment" (Rossolatos, 2014, p. 56). Since there are four identified popular topics of the positive postings, they were then grouped according to the general characteristics or the identified categories of positive discourse (see Table 3). The general characteristics (see Table 3) allowed the researchers to identify possible linguistic devices and pragmatic features that are found within the topics/issues discussed in the postings, in order to answer the research question.

The coding process is theoretically driven and it is done in heading towards answering the research question. Lines that provide evidence for each characteristic were then highlighted. In some of the entries, the researchers might find intriguing comments and/or observations to each highlight. Finally, after highlighting important lines in association with the characteristics of each group, the researchers then applied codes and possible categories, which also happened interchangeably. The data was then read and reviewed multiple times in order to identify recurring patterns and characteristics. This final process also led to further critical (linguistic) analysis in identifying the linguistic strategies that are adopted in the construction of positive discourse and to examine how power surfaces through these strategic choices.

These Facebook postings are explored inductively where its content led to coding and theme development towards answering the research question through the use of Braun and Clarke's (2006) six phases of Thematic Analysis (TA). Table 2 explains the steps as follows:

Table 2: Braun and Clarke's (2006) six phases of Thematic analysis

Steps	Phases
1	Familiarization
2	Developing initials
3	Searching for themes
4	Thematic review
5	Thematic definition
6	Write-up

Before engaging in Braun and Clarke's (2006) TA, the researchers stored, organised and analysed the collected data, which was selected meticulously via a double-screening process in order to avoid biases. In their proposition for the process of familiarising with the postings, Braun and Clarke (2006) suggest for texts to be well read and notes are taken down in order to form understanding about the textual content. In the case of analysing the postings, lines were highlighted. The second step allows the researchers to experience familiarisation with the content of these postings before problematising the writer's intent. A simultaneous process also took place during the phase of familiarisation where Braun and Clarke (2006) propose a process of developing initial coding where the first phase might suggest relevant data that helps shape certain thematic patterns. The development of initial coding is crucial because it will not only be "applied to the entire dataset" but also provide sound support to claim for reliability (Braun & Clarke, 2014, p. 96), which leads to the third phase – searching for themes. We cross-checked with each other in our observation of themes, evaluating over possible themes where by using Google Docs, we were able to identify common characteristics of the postings. This is exactly what Braun and Clarke (2006) suggest during data collation where we re-examined and reconsidered over possible themes, thus establishing the fourth phase. As Braun and Clarke (2006) specify the need to improve the logical aspect of the thematic selection with a level of filtration for sensibility where themes are either split, combined or omitted, we also observed deletion of vaguely described characteristics or those that tend to overlap with one another.

Finally, the fifth phase requires further filtration to be carried out in order to prove each theme where themes and their scopes are scrutinised for suitability. Finally, a draft was written where a synergy between specific lines (as provided in phase 1), analytic narrative (as provided in phase 3 and 4) and contextualizing the analysis was formulated in order to build an argument (in phase 5).

3.1.5 The analysis of the narratives

Other than thematic analysis, the present study also seeks to analyse the discourse of nationalism and solidarity found on this virtual space which is a host for different types of texts including personal stories. Therefore, as part of Bartlett's PDA approach, we sought to also examine how the positive discourse is reflected in narratives in order to provide another angle of analysis, which is discussed discursively and interpretatively. Thus, the aim of conducting analysis of the narratives is to see how participants construct collective self-presentation through narrating their experience during the pandemic as narratives can reveal psychosocial functions such as maintaining a sense of identity and self-empowerment (Viney & Bousfield, 1991). The discursive approach on the narratives was conducted after the crucial steps consisting of coding, categorising and identifying themes were carried out. We then went through further evaluation processes that have sought to capture all other components of the narratives and our focus was mainly on the discourse styles drawn upon to express evaluative attitudes of the authors on fighting the pandemic in the selected Facebook postings. The scrutinised data on the narratives was then analysed and reviewed in order to reach satisfactory findings, especially in answering the research question (see section 1.0).

4.0 ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 The Constructions of Positive Discourse in Facebook Postings Amidst COVID-19

Based on the selected 15 Facebook postings, there are generally four common topics or issues that are raised by positive postings for public reading within the MCO period with an even distribution of postings within each category (see Table 3). The first common topic of positive Facebook postings is related to religion. While some may view it as didacticism, the more collective Malaysians rely on faith as guides in managing life obstacles. This category is identified through the existing elements which are its embodiment of spiritual uplifting, expression of gratitude, call for remorse, containing Quranic verses or hadith, suggestion or guidance on spiritual practices, personal reflections and hopes. Yahya (11 April 2020), for example, styled his posting in a spiritual presentation to accommodate the more religious seeking community which suits and serves to support the affected emotional needs due to challenges faced as a result of the contagion as he advises the believers, "*Tiada rugi bersifat muhsin, Rendah diri pancarkan Ad din*" (It is not a waste to be benevolent, Humility emits religion).

The second common topic includes those embedded with patriotic messages. Herder (2002) in his *Letters for the Advancement of Humanity*, defines patriotism not as a political

virtue, instead a spiritual attachment to the nation where he associates love of one's country with the preservation of a common culture and the spiritual unity of a people (*volksgeism*). To identify this category, the researchers noted its cultivation for a sense of solidarity, pride and gratitude, its function as counter-narrative against negative postings and its role of comparing national initiatives with other countries. For example, Ananthan (10 April 2020) described the fluidity of an operational and functioning ecosystem "like a well-oiled machine, leaving no stone unturned". He further associated the workability as due to Malaysians' "sense of community and the innate feeling of unity", putting aside distractions such as political feuds, racial differences, etc.

Calling for heroism makes the third common topic observed of Facebook postings with positive messages. Hashim (7 April 2020) in his posting entitled "*Warkah buat Rakyat Malaysia*" (A letter to Malaysians), for example, reminds Malaysians of how their heroic acts will not go unforgotten and unappreciated. Those who perform this so-called heroism are celebrated and complimented. Shidan (8 April 2020) has demonstrated this very well in his posting entitled "*Orang Malaysia HEBAT*!" (Malaysians are great!) which resembles a kind of positive reinforcements or approvals. The heroic acts acknowledged by Shidan range from those performed by the frontliners, the essential service providers and right down to all fellow Malaysians who are fighting the virus by staying home. The findings show that most of the calls for heroic acts are written at the end of postings in the form of a statement, a conclusion, or hashtags. It can be seen in Azam's (11 April 2020) posting, for example, who wrote this at the end, "*Wabak ini akan segera berakhir. Kita mesti menang!*" (This pandemic will be over soon. We will win!), and in Balchin's (29 April 2020) posting, as in "We stay at work for you. You stay at home for us. *Kita jaga kita. Kita mesti menang*". (We take care of each other. We must win)', clearly reminding Malaysians to act accordingly to end the fight against the pandemic. The use of the metaphor of war is apparent here, suggesting that we need to defeat this pandemic together.

Finally, there are postings that highlight the importance of public awareness on new developments related to the pandemic in Malaysia correcting some misconceptions resulting from past negative postings. For instance, a posting by Kusyairy (12 April 2020) preempts negativity in attitude and behaviour. His status as a local celebrity gives him the credibility to raise public awareness. Similarly, Abu Bakar (25 April 2020) strongly expresses her hopes for understanding and empathy towards the misfortunes battled by those who have been hit the hardest by the MCO through her personal narrative and reflection, through a subtle suggestion made in the form of a rhetorical question, "That would be nice, right?".

Analysing entries in Bahasa Malaysia alone revealed that a total of 23 quotes were created to identify embedded messages including gratitude, informing, personal reflection, comparison, hopes, etc. Based on the generated 536 quotes, coding reveals a high frequency of collectivism (mostly through the use of collective pronouns 'we' and 'us', or '*kita*' and '*kami*' in Malay) in the messages, totaling 175 occurrences. This is the highest score as compared to others, thus shows mutual efforts at raising awareness to combat the pandemic. The authors' magnitude of altruistic spirit is seen even beyond the entries where upon engaging for consent, their collective responses are '*semoga bermanfaat*' (hopefully, it is beneficial). Without seeking benefits, these authors exhibit prosocial behavior that gears towards benefiting others in their attempt to give reminders.

Table 3: General observations on positive Facebook postings on Covid19

Set	Common topics/issues	Facebook Account Users and Post titles	General positive characteristics
1	Religion	Abadi (7 April 2020) "Mereka Anugerah Allah"	Spiritually uplifting
			Expressing gratitude
			Remorseful
		Yahya (11 April 2020) "Inilah rezeki di pusat kuarantin"	Containing Quranic verses or hadith
			Suggestion or guidance on spiritual practices
		Wong (11 April 2020) "Untitled"	Personal reflections
			Hopes
		Farisham (13 April 2020) "Untitled"	
2	Patriotism	Shidan TF (8 April 2020) "Orang Malaysia HEBAT"	Cultivating the sense of solidarity, pride and gratitude
		Ahmed (8 April 2020) "BERTUAHNYA RAKYAT MALAYSIA"	Counter narrative against negative postings
			Comparing initiatives with other countries
		Ananthan (10 April 2020) "Untitled"	
		Azam (11 April 2020) "Untitled"	
		Balchin (19 April 2020) "Untitled"	

| 3 | Call for heroism | Hashim (7 April 2020) "Warkah buat Rakyat Malaysia"

Ai Ling (23 March 2020) "Untitled"

Abdullah (2 May 2020) "Untitled" | Withholding difficulties during adversity
Call for collective action in curbing the problem
Call for steadfastness during hard times |
| 4 | Public awareness | Kusyairy (12 April 2020) "Untitled"

Fathi (15 April) "UPSR BATAL"

Abu Bakar (25 April 2020) "Of Kuih Raya and Misfortune" | Correcting misconceptions
Infused with light-hearted humour
Seeking for understandings to reach common grounds |

In identifying the features of positive messages, conducting an analysis over the codes and categories from these postings show interesting findings. The use of thematic analysis reveals overlapping roles that are observed between the topics of postings. Some Facebook posting's authors incorporate dual or even triple roles in their entries -- a practice which enriches the probable impact of the posting. For instance, Azam's (11 April 2020) posting shows an employment of both religious and patriotic messages, which yields a message serving a two-fold function. On one hand, common religious expressions such as "*Subhanallah*", "*Alhamdulillah*" are scattered throughout the posting to indicate the writer's devotion to her Creator which promotes affiliation between Muslims. On the other hand, her posting is also considered as dealing with patriotism due to expressions of shared pride, creating awareness of positive perceptions of the citizens of our neighbouring countries on Malaysia's systematic effort in battling COVID-19.

4.2 Power and Solidarity: Constructions of Positive Discourse through Linguistic Strategies

The dataset was scrutinised and analysed through multiple filtration processes to examine the way power relations are structured in positive discourse. Studying the findings from the thematic analysis led to further linguistic analysis yielding more rigorous results on how the positive discourse is constructed and positive messages are communicated. It was found that the authors of the Facebook postings selected have their own authentic and credible writing technique, and they also share some similarities in the linguistic strategies adopted in expressing opinions regarding COVID-19.

The dataset was also meticulously classified according to specific categories and functions of the linguistic strategies, including enactment of power. Among the linguistic devices identified in positive discourse construction are: repetitions (intensifiers) of phrases in emphasising points (strengthening the force), literary expressions (e.g. metaphors and alliterations for covert power expressions) and extensive use of collective pronouns indicating unity or solidarity like *kita* ('we' or 'us') or *kami* ('we'), whilst minimising power gaps. The utilisations of the linguistic devices identified in the positive discourse also suggest that they predominantly carry a pragmatic approach in contextualising appropriate power distance in interactional spheres of dealing with social endeavour towards something good. See Table 4 below:

Table 4: Linguistic strategies utilised in Facebook postings on COVID-19

Set	Linguistic strategies utilised	Number and percentage of occurrences (Based on 536 quotations)	Example of linguistic strategies utilised	Category/Function of linguistic strategies utilised
1	Collective expressions	175 (32.6%)	"We can only win this war if all of us, all Malaysians, collectively come together as part of our social responsibility." (Abdullah, 2 May 2020)	Collective/inclusive (we), objective (us), compound (all), possessive (our) pronouns In-group, togetherness, relationality, unity and solidarity (Minimising power gaps)
2	Personal pronouns	54 (10.1%)	"*Saya benar-benar terasa Allah melindungi dan merahmati bumi Malaysia.*" (I really feel that Allah has protected and blessed Malaysia) (Azam, 11 April 2020)	Personal pronoun (I) Personal (spiritual) reflection based on feelings/experience (Authoritative and credible, but not coercive)
3	Repetitions	48 (9.0%)	"*Dia kurniakan kita..., Dia kurniakan kita…, Dia kurniakan kita...*" (He bestows upon us…) (Abadi, 7 April 2020)	Personal pronoun (He), verb (bestows), objective pronoun (us) Intensifier/booster/

				emphasis, strengthening the force/maximising impacts (Authoritative and credible tone)
4	Soft directives	41 (7.7%)	*"Bayangkan berada di negara lain"* (Imagine you are in a different country) (Yahya, 11 April 2020)	Speech acts, direct directive
				Pragmatic, suggestion, request (Slightly authoritative, minimising power distance)
5	Literary expressions	32 (6.0%)	"NO stone was left unturned." (Ananthan, 10 April 2020)	Idiomatic expression
				Emphasis, dramatic effect, (meaning nothing was left behind) (Covert power expression, authentic and credible)
6	Advice	31 (5.8%)	"If you have no reason to go out please, stay safe and stay at home." (Abdullah, 2 May 2020)	Direct speech acts (with conditional 'if' and direct directives)
				Request, reminder, appeal for future action (Authoritative tone and credible figure)
7	Light sarcasm	26 (4.9%)	"Therefore, I urge the armchair economists at	Irony, repressive humour, sharp remark

			home, the constant naysayers ..." (Ananthan, 10 April 2020)	Pragmatic, light mockery/ridicule (towards propagators of the negatives) (Authoritative and credible tone)
8	Modalities	22 (4.1%)	"We must adapt to these new norms." (Abdullah, 2 May 2020)	Modal auxiliary verb (with collective pronoun) Obligation and necessity, instructing Malaysians to react/behave appropriately (Call for action in solidarity, minimising power distance)
9	Humour	6 (1.1%)	"However dire the circumstances, the innate Malaysian tendency to always expect luxury never fades, does it?" (Ananthan, 10 April 2020)	Repressive and teasing humour, light sarcasm (rhetorical question with a positive tag) Inviting shared opinion (in solidarity), mitigation strategy, hedging tactic, politeness device (Minimising power distance and the overall effect of criticism)

| **10** | Questions | 5 (0.9%) | "That would be nice, right?" (Abu Bakar, 25 April 2020) | Rhetorical, positive tag question (with a hedge) |
| | | | | Reminder, invitation for an agreement in solidarity/ reflection/participation of future happenings/actions (Authoritative and credible tone, but minimising power distance) |

4.3 Power and Relationality: Constructions of Positive Discourse through The Narratives

The 15 postings took the form of stories as a convincing tool towards validating personal accounts, relationality and counter-narratives. We then examined the roles of these three elements further and our analysis has shown how power and identity are embedded in the narratives of the Facebook postings, which led to the constructions of positive discourse.

For instance, Ananthan's story is of a counter-narrative type as it ends with addressing the cynics who were presumably devaluing the procedures taken by the Malaysian government. The idea of the post then is obviously an attempt of redesigning existing texts. Ananthan's story is a good example of initiating the discourse of hope addressed to the Malaysian students who were still in the United Kingdom and who might have fears coming back home. Besides that, it communicates feelings of patriotism and faith in the government whose actions were described with positive judgment throughout the whole text. It is through such discourse that "people make the world a better place and design interventions based on such considerations" (Bartlett, 2009, p. 133). This counter-narrative celebrates the Malaysian government as an organiser at the time of the pandemic -- a position in which power and authority are invested, and on the one hand, the public who are represented as redistributors of power rather than struggling with it as they followed safety instructions and without sensing victimisation on the other. Ananthan narrates the instances where power is productively used on both sides highlighting the unity of goal and solidarity. In his counter-narrative, he also describes his

feelings of pride and gratitude, "I have **always** been, am **always**, and will **always** be a proud citizen of this country that has given me so much", by using anaphora, which clearly emphasises his identity as a very proud Malaysian. Other narratives centred around the theme of support, unity and charity such as Ai Ling's who kept operating her clinic, and Abu Bakar's who helped the old lady. Their personal storied accounts are also purposeful and functional, where relationality is used in creating connections, bridging the power gaps and posing invitations for solidarity or displays of identity. Several discourse styles are drawn upon to communicate these messages of the narratives analysed:

4.3.1 Evaluation

Martin (2002) has employed PDA to examine evaluation in the discourse of reconciliation. Similarly, Agustin (2012) studies solidarity in multicultural discourse. It can be external and internal (embedded within clauses) evaluative comments employed to make the point of the story clear. External evaluation occurs when the authors adds his/her own commentary to clarify certain elements in the story of which it is not a part. Internal evaluation (embedded within clauses) includes: negatives; repetition; evaluative commentary; embedded speech; and comparisons with unrealised events. Instances of both external and internal evaluations are found in the narratives, but the authors are more inclined towards adopting internal evaluation in sharing personal stories and experiences, emphasising their identity and suggesting solidarity as well as giving credibility to their accounts. An example of an evaluative commentary can be found in Ananthan's internal evaluation, "I was very impressed with the number of health officials and the amenities provided for them".

The composition of the procedures in Ananthan's narratives is further intensified in the last idiomatic expression "i's were dotted and t's crossed". The adverb "diligently" used represents Ananthan's judgment of the character's reliability of the frontliners in dealing with the situation which emphasises their social esteem. An evaluation of persons, action or events of the story is also considered internal.

4.3.2 Deixis

This is one of the possible ways of pointing expressions of time, space, and human relations making up society. For example, the use of demonstrative pronoun *this* as in:

> *"*I bow down to **this** great nation with utmost humility, thank you for
>
> **this** Malaysia".

<div align="right">(Ananthan, 10 April 2020).</div>

Here, *This* is accompanied with a shift into historical present tense which encodes "shifts between the story world and the interactional world" to indicate involvement or distancing in relation to the interlocutors and/or the narrated events (De Fina, 2003, p. 24), describes and dramatises the experience from the speaker's point of view, and to frame whatever argument might follow regarding the praise and gratitude addressed to the government, in addition to bringing readers back to the present to finalise the point of the story. Another example is in Abdullah's narratives in a form of a reminder, "Come **May 4th**, many of you **will** be heading back to **work**", indicating the nearing distance of approaching time through the specified date and expressing the definite future by modal verb "will", while "work" indicates the sense of space, which can be scattered all over the nation. Abdullah, with his authority and credibility as the representative of the Ministry of Health, is unequivocally carrying both professional and national identity when expressing the near future here of what is to come starting from the 4th of May while implying his expectation and hope that everyone will follow the procedures set by the government.

4.3.3 Speech representation

The data revealed instances where speech is represented to construct the identity of an altruistic self without really mentioning who is supposedly standing for Malaysians. This narrative approach has the effect of foregrounding and backgrounding information in a way that communicates the messages of the post. In the extract below, the old lady's speech is foregrounded because it is important from the narrator's point of view:

> "Apparently her daughter came just in time to bring her some food. And then
>
> she sighed. These cookies. She had to bake them … in the hope something can
>
> be done".

<div align="right">(Abu Bakar, 25 April 2020)</div>

The first sentence indicates that the woman is in need. The verb "sighed" brings to surface the inner state of the woman and represents her thought about "these cookies". Then, her speech is represented without introducing part "she said" which is called free indirect speech

representation to foreground the content and present the report vividly as part of the narrative itself providing explanation for the sigh. The narrative presents an example of people's supporting each other as the visiting team offered to buy the cookies to help the lady which leads to a representation of speech "prayed". Here, the representation of speech has transmitted a message that during the spread of COVID-19, people are struggling to earn their living and the narrative sets an example of Malaysians' sense of support during the crisis which may have sprung from their unity and devotion to God and seeking His reward.

4.3.4 Non-literal expression

Yahya (11 April 2020) resorts to adopt an authentic discourse style with two-lined *Malay pantun* throughout his narrative, which is beautifully adorned with rhyming words at the end of each line and figurative speech. For instance, the author uses a metaphor "*Kami di sini ikan masin*" (We here are salted fish), expressing an incongruency in comparison and highlighting the difference of two realities with collective pronoun "we" and deixis "here" in representing a sense of belonging and place. This is him positioning oneself in the land of origin and an invitation of solidarity to those who stay rooted to their valued principles, and he uses "salted fish", a traditional dish that is associated with a true Malay identity in suggesting undivided loyalty. This line acts as a subtle but persuasive way in reminding Malaysians of their true identity and not to be influenced by western ideas. A simile is used in "*Jadilah seperti rimbunan pohon tin*" (Be like a canopy of tin trees), which is meant as an advice in urging Malaysians to not be selfish, embrace solidarity, contribute and be of benefit to others. This also illustrates how the author positions himself quite authoritatively as a true Malay, who has the responsibility to remind his fellow Malays to reflect and improve their standings when it involves how to react to challenging situations. His art of writing reflects his authentic identity and the rich Malay culture and traditions in pragmatically relaying messages through adoption of politeness devices such as hedges, in his effort to soften the effects in indirectly conveying serious subject matters in his advice. Therefore, this posting can be regarded as an attempt to represent the embodiment of the authentic Malay identity in both its forms and functions.

5.0 CONCLUSION

Unlike the West, Malaysians remain largely as a collective society that pays attention to conforming and standing with each other. The selected Facebook entries reiterate this spirit of collectivism. This study highlights the role of a strong sense of community and solidarity, carrying strong national identity, patriotism and religious values towards coming together as

an in-group entity, which Bartlett (2009) describes as going through the concept of socialisation. What works in Malaysia depends on how the society reacts as a whole and works side by side in accordance to its context, thus leads to empowering the community whilst confronting a struggle. Our findings also suggest individual efforts in positively communicating correct information with mutual goals and hopes that have subsequently acted as a strong buffer against negative discourse. Reflected in the 15 Facebook postings analysed, the discourse styles and linguistic strategies adopted have demonstrated the emergence of subtle power as an effort to make a difference. This critical discourse study does not only promote positive discourse for its own sake, but also serves as a pragmatic approach en route to materialising utilitarian goals. It is therefore hoped to contribute not only to the vicinity of linguistics, but also social, psychological as well as arts and humanities studies through further examinations of the pivotal roles that communication and language play especially in rising against dire situations.

This study seeks to represent voices of hope in its effort to eradicate hopelessness in the world full of struggle and discrimination. While CDA principles help in justifying the social, ideological and political desiderata through critical standpoints, its success predominantly lies in providing the avenue for CDA advocates to unravel the unbefitting rhetorics mainly designed to subtly propagate the pomposities of those with power against the oppressed. This, however, hinders us from moving forward in discovering solutions. Therefore, our view of PDA is as a complement to CDA and to carry the effort further and elevate the dominance of positive discourse against the overwhelming negative ones. It also aims to foreground plain goodness as the desired impacts and positive words as almost a prerequisite for humans to successfully cope with problems. Therefore, we urge researchers to not endlessly linger on deconstructing hegemonic discourse, but to advance towards producing workable solutions. Future research should follow suit in focusing on different elements of positive discourse, championing success stories and exploring possibilities on how PDA can be exploited further. This is solely to empower the society, be it the media and creative industry, political figures, government servants, business owners and especially the laypeople, in gearing them towards emancipation and solidarity.

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