

CLASSROOM DISCOURSE OF MALAY LANGUAGE LESSON: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS *

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Abstract

Research on the teaching and learning process of the Malay language in the classroom usually focuses on the method, content, strategy and teaching aids. Moving away from this norm, this research article examines the process from the discourse analysis perspective called pedagogic discourse analysis, with an adaptation of Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis Framework (1992; 1995). The discussion is based on several hours of teaching-learning case study conducted in a secondary school classroom, which emphasizes integrated curriculum in an attempt to understand the unseen social processes, i.e. teacher dominance in discourse. The research findings indicate that teacher dominance is concealed in turn-taking system, types of questions posed by the teacher, discourse control and the overall structure of the discourse, which have their implications on the implementation of the National Education Philosophy. Contrary to the emphasis on student centredness and thinking skills as laid out by the Integrated Curriculum for Secondary School, it is found that the nature of the learning process in the classroom hardly focused on students' thinking skills. This article argues that students should be given the opportunity to exercise their critical and creative potentials.

Keywords: Discourse Analysis, Pedagogic Discourse, Integrated Curriculum, Teacher Dominance, Social Process

Abstrak

Penyelidikan tentang proses pengajaran dan pembelajaran Bahasa Melayu dalam bilik darjah selalunya berfokus pada metod, isi, strategi dan alat bantu pengajaran. Berbeza dengan fenomena ini, makalah ini melihat proses tersebut dari perspektif analisis wacana pedagogi, khususnya kerangka teori analisis wacana kritis Fairclough (1992; 1995). Perbincangan berdasarkan beberapa jam kajian kes pengajaran-pembelajaran di bilik darjah sekolah menengah yang mengamalkan kurikulum bersepadu, bertujuan untuk memahami proses sosial yang terselindung, iaitu dominasi guru dalam wacana. Dapatan kajian menunjukkan dominasi guru terselindung dalam sistem giliran tutur, jenis soalan yang ditanya oleh guru, kawalan wacana dan keseluruhan struktur wacana. Jenis wacana bilik darjah begini mempunyai implikasi kepada pelaksanaan falsafah pendidikan nasional, yang menekankan aspek potensi pelajar. Hakikatnya, proses pembelajaran yang

berlaku dalam bilik darjah jarang memberi penekanan kepada kemahiran berfikir pelajar. Ini bertentangan dengan matlamat pengajaran dan pembelajaran Bahasa Melayu dalam kurikulum bersepadu untuk sekolah menengah yang berpusat pada pelajar dan menerapkan kemahiran berfikir dalam kurikulum. Dalam hal ini, pelajar patut diberi peluang untuk mempraktik potensi kritis dan kreatif mereka.

Kata Kunci: Analisis Wacana, Wacana Pedagogi, Kurikulum Bersepadu, Proses Sosial, Dominasi Guru

INTRODUCTION

Classroom discourse refers to the type of language use (*parole* or performance) that is found in classroom situations. This student-teacher discourse is also referred to as pedagogic discourse, and it is different in form and function from language used in other situations due to the distinct social roles of students, teachers and the activities they are engaged in (Richards et. al. 1992, 52). Analysis of classroom discourse is useful when examining the effectiveness of teaching methods and the types of student-teacher interaction (Richards et. al. 1992, 111). According to Chouliaraki (1998, 10), textual features or pedagogic discourse contribute towards an understanding of the relationship between pedagogy and its practice. An analysis of classroom discourse produced by Sinclair & Coulthard (1975) in Britain gains prominence as the Birmingham model; it was named after the university where both linguists were attached. Their research attempts to examine the structure of classroom discourse (McCarthy 1991, 6 & 12).¹

Classroom discourse seems to offer autonomy and opportunity to teaching and learning interaction between student-teacher and student-student; on a superficial level it appears pedagogically to be a social process that is *par excellence*. Such classroom discourse makes possible situations in which learning becomes more fun, student participation is active and teaching-learning activities are effective. Moreover, such situations also allow teachers to fine-tune their speech according to students' progress. Chouliaraki (1998) asserts that fine-tuning is essential in learning since it improves students' understanding.

However, classroom discourse is usually analysed and understood in a transparent context, namely as the collective space where an individual interacts,

discussing knowledge in a specific subject or matters that are “out there” (Chouliaraki 1998, 7), similar to the works of Sinclair & Coulthard (1975). The social process and practice taking place in classroom discourse seldom become the focus of analysis. Hence, contrary to this phenomenon we posit that in the context of this study two social practices, namely power and control, are embedded in or hidden within a classroom discourse based upon an integrative curriculum. Many speakers, especially teachers, are unaware of this notion. In other words, teachers by virtue of their teaching status dominate classroom discourse. This issue reflects Chouliaraki’s view (1998, 7) that emphasises the school as a substitute for or rather medium for social power reproductions, namely class, gender and race. In the context of this study, the three identified concepts also implicate social status. As such, classroom discourse basically lacks the ability to achieve the pedagogic aims of an integrative curriculum. This is due to classroom discourse having primarily interactive functions that marginalise knowledge inputs or thinking abilities. Besides, in such classroom discourse the priority is on teacher teaching that allows collectively minimal student involvement as compared to their intellectual needs. This kind of discourse is not beneficial to students and having this awareness can initiate improvements.

To expound the above idea, this article begins by explaining the concept of classroom discourse in the contexts of an integrative curriculum, primarily in the teaching and learning of Malay language (Bahasa Melayu). Examples of as well as discussions on analysis findings follow the explanations on the theoretical concept applied to the understanding and clarification of the issue at hand, namely the critical discourse analysis² as proposed by Fairclough.

CONCEPT OF CLASSROOM DISCOURSE IN INTEGRATIVE CURRICULUM CONTEXT

The integrative curriculum of the Malaysian education system (in both primary and secondary levels)³ is implemented to improve the quality of education by putting emphasis on holistic and integrative individual potentials. It is the objective of this curriculum that students’ intellectual, spiritual, emotional and physical potentials are developed so as to produce well-balanced individuals who can, not only adapt themselves in, but also contribute towards a harmonious and

prosperous society and country (see Shahril@Charil & Habib 1999, 83). To achieve this philosophical objective, planning for Malay language education in the contexts of this integrative curriculum, is motivated by the following needs: improving of language skills for effective communication; improving as well as expanding of the proficiency and practice of Malay language as the country's official language; developing and enhancing of intellectual as well as rational, critical and creative thinking; procuring of knowledge and developing as well as applying these skills in daily lives; possessing self-confidence that can contribute towards self and society (see Shahril@Charil & Habib 1999; Mok 1996). In view of contemporary developments and challenges, for instance the current surge of information, rapid progress of science and technology as well as the effects of globalisation, the Malaysian Education Ministry has been hard pressed to review the Malay language subject within the Integrative Curriculum for Primary Schools (KBSR) and Integrative Curriculum for Secondary Schools (KBSM). As a result of revisions, adaptations are made to the aims of the syllabus, namely to produce individuals who are literate in Information and Communicative Technology, capable of exploring new knowledge and possessing the ability to communicate effectively in multiple socio-cultural conditions (Zahirah 2001, 12).

In this context, the concept of classroom discourse in the integrative curriculum Malay language subject deals with discourse that emphasises student-centred teaching and learning or in other words, students play active roles in a variety of activities. This means teachers are encouraged to plan numerous activities and teaching aids suitable for student ability and interest (Shahril@Charil & Habib 1999, 72-73).

While executing a Malay language lesson, a crucial component for teacher to give emphasis to is thinking skills; this is in addition to the incorporation of the skills of other core subject's literary elements, reading and also the concept of Malay language across disciplines. To achieve high level thinking skills, teaching and learning activities need to stimulate students into thinking and discussing logically, rationally and objectively (Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia 1992, 6). In short, the form of classroom discourse to be utilised so as to achieve the above objectives is one that is student-centred or one in which each student takes part actively in the teaching and learning. In such a context, a teacher becomes a

facilitator, counsellor, manager, planner, guide, evaluator and helps to mould students' personality. Teachers need to plan their teaching and learning materials carefully in order to provide students with opportunities to enhance their analytical and logical skills, besides the abilities to reason, summarise and produce sound and effective ideas for speech and writing. Teachers need to be aware that students are not empty vessels; they instead possess abilities and talents that await discovery and perceptive nurturing by their teachers (Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia 1992, 17-19).

To achieve these objectives, Zahirah (2001, 9) lists three language skills listed in the Malay language syllabus which teachers can utilise to direct their teaching and learning activities towards improving students' proficiency in critical and creative thinking skills. The skills are namely:

- a. discussing critically and analytically on the comprehensive meanings of the various materials as well as solve problems
- b. reading, evaluating and reviewing critically and analytically facts, ideas as well as human, social and cultural values in various prose and poetry
- c. producing reviews and criticisms of prose and poetry

Hence, classroom discourse practice in the integrative curriculum context needs to be heterogeneous or, in other words, be varied in nature.

CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS AS THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK TO EXAMINE CLASSROOM DISCOURSE

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) provides the theoretical framework for this study. In this theory, analysis of discourse is not merely transparent;⁴ it is instead a perceptive and committed approach that includes examining the web of social processes implicated in the discourse. According to Fairclough & Wodak (1997, 258), "CDA sees itself not as dispassionate and objective social science, but as engaged and committed". In other words, the theory considers discourse as a social process. Language, or discourse, which is inclusive of its own as well as representational nature, is an aspect of social process (Chouliaraki 2000, 297).

Accepting discourse as a social practice means having to reveal the covert nature of social process embedded in discourse. Discourse is not merely a

linguistic category or communicative medium; it is mediation between social structure and process cultural practice (Fairclough & Wodak 1997). As a social process, discourse is linked intricately to the socio-cultural context from which it operates. It is neither produced, nor can it function in a vacuum. It is instead contextual discourse, one that is embedded within social and institutional systems of ideology.

Social practice refers to actual acts of human activity, utterances or writing. Social practice includes economical, political, cultural and ideological orientations (Fairclough 1992, 66). Nonetheless, many speakers are unaware of such practices and analysts may have problems identifying them (Hodge & Kress 1993, 210). This theory proposes that a close and systematic analysis of discourse can reveal the nature of social practice in discourse. Critical discourse analysis examines the social practices of individuals or institutions that involve concerns such as the use and abuse of power, hegemony, ideological operations, social change as well as conflict, domination, race and leadership (see Wodak 1996; van Dijk 1991; Idris 2001; Fairclough 1992).

Critical discourse analysis and its practitioners can contribute towards enriching or transforming discourse practice patterns and unhealthy or negative social processes that have been identified. For instance, when the identified and analysed patterns and features of pedagogic discourse reflect dialectic association with undeveloped or ineffective education⁵ process, analysts are in fact bringing this finding to the attention of society, specifically those implicated in education. As such, those concerned can conduct improvements or adjustments to the discourse, while policy makers may, for example, adapt teacher training curriculum. Clearly, critical discourse analysis is a form of social practice too (see Fairclough & Wodak 1997, 279).

This next section discusses the theoretical underpinnings of Norman Fairclough's critical discourse analysis; his systemic approach to and method in analysis are reasons for its application in this study. Fairclough's descriptions of textual features and definitions of the processes in discourse practice are more comprehensive than other scholars⁶, making his the leading theory in the analysis of social processes in discourse.

Fairclough (1992, 63-64; 1995a, 131-132; Fairclough & Wodak 1997, 258) deems it important to accept discourse as a social process because (a) discourse reflects an action, in which the way a man acts or reacts towards the world, and especially each other, may be a form of representation, (b) there is a dialectic relationship between discourse and social structure, in which social structure determines and creates social process. On the one hand, discourse is not only produced by social structures (for instance, class and social relationships in society or institution), it also produces them; on the other hand, discourse also contributes to shape, just as it is also shaped by dimensions within social structures (such as social relationship and identity). In short, when analysing discourse, social factors that are embedded within it as well as determine their own production need to be taken into account; the analysis should not merely concentrate on studying structural or behavioural linguistics, as is the norm in pragmatics.

Discourse simultaneously constructs (i) social identity of a subject, namely social position, and character type; (ii) social relationship between people; and (iii) knowledge systems and beliefs, in various degrees of importance depending on situations. The description, interpretation and explanation of discourse as a social process also require language theories that emphasise on the multi-purpose nature of language. The three simultaneous constructs mentioned are intricately linked to four language functions, namely identity, relationship, ideational and textual. Identity functions are related the ways social identities are constructed by discourse. Relationship functions refer to the manner in which social relationships between participants is negotiated. Ideational functions concern the ways texts reflect not only the world but also its processes, entities and connections. Textual functions, on the other hand, refer to linguistic information and social situations that are outside of the text (Fairclough 1992, 65).⁷

The underlying principles in Fairclough's critical discourses analysis theory are its **descriptive**, **interpretative** and **explanative** approaches towards discourse; they are not just based upon linguistics but links are also simultaneously made to relevant social thinking orientations (Fairclough 1992). Based upon these principles, Fairclough produces a three-dimensional approach to discourse analysis: namely text analysis, discourse practice analysis and social

process analysis. He claims his theoretical analysis include three comprehensive ways to read the complex social conditions embedded in discourse, which primarily requires interdisciplinary, or at the very least, transdisciplinary skills (Fairclough 1997).

Textual analysis is a process whereby the forms and meanings of textual discourse are described. Textual form and meaning are interconnected to ideational, interpersonal and textual discourse functions. Textual features that are explicated include textual, clausal grammar and lexical structures. In relation to the objectives and nature of the discourse analysed in this study, explanations are focused on textual structures. In terms of dialogue discourse, textual structure analysis involves a description of interaction control, namely who controls the interaction, turn-taking and structure of change in discourse. A reading of these aspects can provide insights into the knowledge system, beliefs, values or perceptions regarding social relationships and identities that are embedded in discourse (Fairclough 1992, 75-78, 234-237; 1995a, 133-134).

Discourse practice analysis, on the other hand, aims at interpreting the processes of discourse production at the micro level. The interpretation may examine discourse production – on whether it has been conventional or creative, producers of the discourse, the distribution and use of discourse as well as the presence of elements such as interdiscursivity of genre and intertextuality (Fairclough 1992, 65, 134).

Meanwhile, social process analysis is concerned with revealing the social issues and practices that are embedded in discourse through its dialectic relationship with the nature of texts and discourse practices, as previously discussed. In short, such analysis aims at revealing the reasons why an addresser produces a particular discourse (Fairclough 1992, 226, 228).⁸

DISCOURSE DATA

The discourse used as samples in this article is part of the data collected through case and preliminary studies on 10 classroom discourses (or 10 texts) on the Malay Language subject in a secondary school in Selangor Darul Ehsan.⁹ Discourse was collected through direct audio recording while the teacher was

teaching in the classroom. Recordings were transcribed into texts. To simplify the analysis, each utterance is given a number according to clauses. On the whole, the discourse implicates 5 graduate teachers (1 male and 4 female) with at least 5 years of teaching experience. The students involved were the KBSM Forms One and Two students, male and female, in the 13-14 age category.¹⁰

INTEGRATIVE CURRICULUM FOR THE MALAY LANGUAGE SUBJECT CLASSROOM DISCOURSE AND TEACHER DOMINATION

The social practice embedded in classroom discourse, which the speakers may not be aware of (and that include many of us), that is the concern here is teacher domination. Teacher domination, as used in the context of this study, refers to the more prominent teacher role and action in a classroom teaching and learning process than those of the main targets or subjects – i.e. the students. Such pedagogical practice can be illustrated by its dialectical relationship with several textual elements and relevant classroom discourse practices. The following are qualitative illustrations on the ways teacher domination take place in teacher-student discourse. Discussions begin with textual analysis, followed by those on discourse practice.

CLASSROOM DISCOURSE TEXTUAL ANALYSIS

The focus of this classroom discourse textual analysis is on features of teacher-student interaction. Generally, interactive control in discourse is concerned with ensuring that interaction takes place effectively at specific levels of organisation, for example, systems of smooth distribution in turn-taking, topic selection and exchange as well as question-answering (Fairclough 1992, 139). In the analysis of classroom discourse, findings reveal specific interactive structures dominated by teachers. Such teacher practice is reflected in the following textual features, namely (a) domination in turn-taking, (b) topic control, (c) closed-questions usage, (d) modelled-answer extraction, and (e) teacher interruption of student-answers.

(a) Domination in Turn-Taking

Domination in turn-taking means the system is not necessarily based upon the equal rights and obligation of all speakers in discourse. This dominating phenomenon in turn-taking is normally found in institutions that involve the professional, the ‘insider’, or ‘gatekeeper’ interacting with the ‘public’, ‘client’, ‘outsider’ or student (Fairclough 1992, 153).

Domination in turn-taking is obvious in the classroom discourse analysed. It happened when most interactions were initiated by the teacher, either through extraction, instruction or information by way of questions, statements or requests. A teacher-initiated utterance received response from the student, and was followed by an acceptance or acknowledgement by the teacher. In other words, the teacher-student interaction was organised according to the teacher-initiated ‘move’ (using Sinclair & Coulthard’s concepts), followed by student response/reaction and teacher acceptance. Thus, the interactive movement of this classroom discourse can be structured into 3 parts, Teacher initial-move – Student response – Teacher acceptance (explicit or implicit), or alternatively T-S-T. This structure is reflected in example (1).

(1)

-
- T (teacher) : [061] O.K.berapakah jumlah pekerja pada tahun 1985?
(O.K. What is the total number of workers in 1985?)
- S (student) : [062] (Buzzing-tak jelas)
(Buzzing – unclear)
- T : [063] O.K. 5 juta 6 ratus orang,manakala tahun 1990,1990,aa6
(O.K. 5 million 6 hundred people, meanwhile in 1990, 1990, aa 6)
- S : [064] juta 500 ribu
(million 500 thousand.)
-
- T : [065] Jadi, adakah berkurang atau meningkat?
(So, is there an increase or decrease?)
- S : [066] Meningkat
(Increase.)
- T : [067] Meningkat
(Increase.)
-
- T : [068] Sebanyak
(How much.)
- S : [069] Sembilan ratus ribu
(Nine hundred thousand.)
- T : [070] O.K. Sembilan ratus ribu
(O.K. Nine hundred thousand.)
- : [071] Enam dengan lima di situ.
(Six and five there.)

- S : [072] (tak jelas)
(*unclear*)
- T : [073] O.K. Bagus ya. Aa macam itu
(*O.K. good, yes, aa just like that.*)
-
- T : [074] Tapi itu masih isi tersurat atau tersirat?
(*But is that an explicit or implicit content ?*)
- S : [075] Tersurat
(*Explicit.*)
- T : [076] Masih isi tersurat lagi, OK
(*It is still an explicit detail, O.K.*)
-
- T : [077] Aa. Jadi, jadi senang tak nak buat isi tersurat?
(*Aa, so, so is it easy to make an explicit detail?*)
- S : [078] Senang
(*Easy.*)
- T : [079] Aa senang kan, semua ada di situ.
(*Aa, easy is it not, all the details are there.*)
-
- (Text 4, Discussion on Occupational Sectors in Malaysia)

The example (1) has five exchanges (each marked with dotted lines). Move in each exchange is initiated by the teacher, followed by response from the student and then acknowledgement/comment from the teacher. For example, in the first exchange, teacher began move by asking a question in [061], and this was followed by student's move [062] as response to teacher's question, even though in the form of buzzing. In [063], teacher made acknowledgement move by re-emphasising the answer given by the student in the previous move. A similar pattern was repeated in other exchanges. In exchange three, teacher began move by extracting answer from student with a request (068], and not by questioning.

Such interaction structure leads to teacher control of the basic organisation of interaction by opening as well as closing every move and accepting student response/answer. This reflects the existence of control or domination in turn-taking, whereby the student seldom has or even has no chance at all of getting a turn to speak unless given by the teacher through the given questions or requests. Though in one aspect, this turn-taking system is one method of controlling the flow of discourse, but in another, is unfortunately reflects teacher domination in discourse.

(b) Topic Control

Topic control means the main participant – in this case, the teacher – usually controls topics in discourse, interaction or move. In other words, the main participant makes change to a new topic.

In the classroom discourse analysed, this textual feature is identified. Topic control takes place when a new topic is proposed as a result of teacher question or statement, teacher disregard for student response/answer and also teacher selection in accepting student response. These phenomena are reflected in example (2).

In (2), which had three exchanges, the teacher determined the topic in every exchange. All three topics were decided through the questions in the teacher's initial moves, namely [164], [168] and [174]. In the first exchange, the topic concerned occupational sector that was on the increase. In the second, it was concerning the reasons for the increase of manufacturing sector and in the third exchange was on the number of factories in Bandar Baru Bangi.

(2)

-
- T : [164] Sektor mana yang nampak sangat meningkat di situ?
(Which sector seems to be on the increase there?)
- S : [165] Perkilangan.
(Manufacturing.)
- T : [166] Sektor per-
(Which sector? Manu-?)
- S : [167] kilangan
(facturing)
-
- T : [168] Kenapa agak nya sector perkilangan makin meningkat?
(Why do you think the manufacturing sector is on the increase?)
- S : [169] Aa..kerna (tak jelas-buzzing)
(Aa.. because (unclear – buzzing)).
- T : [170] Aa, negara kita menuju ke arah negara perindus-
(Aa, our country is becoming indus-
- S : [171] trian
(-trian)
- : [172] (Tak jelas)
(Unclear)
- T : [173] Banyak, contohnya kilang-kilang banyak dibuka,kan?
(Many, for example many factories have been built, right?)
-
- T : [174] Di Bandar Baru Bangi ini saja, ada berapa buah kilang, siapa tahu?
(In Bandar Baru Bangi, how many factories are there, anybody knows?)
- S : [175] 10 kot
(Maybe 10.)

- T : [176] 10!
 (10!)
 S : [177] Lebih
 (More.)
 T : [178] Lebih daripada itu
 (More than that.)

(Text 4)

Teacher disregard for student response can also be detected in (3) below. The student provided response [186] by completing teacher statement [185], but the teacher disregarded the response when the teacher instead gave a set answer followed by a tag question [187]. The student was undeterred and continued giving responses, [188] to [191], i.e. three times, including making repeated interruptions marked by vertical lines in the data) as in [188]. The actions were disregarded by the teacher.¹¹

(3)

-
- T : [183] O.K.Mungkin jalan raya itu jalan raya apa?
 (O.K. maybe it's the road, the road is -)
- S : [184] (tak jelas/buzzing)
 (Unclear/buzzing)
- T : [185] Sempit, jalan raya yang sempit atau yang jalan raya yang tak ada tanda,
 (Narrow, narrow roads or streets without road-signs,)
- S : [186] lampu
 (lights)
- T : [187] Papan tanda tertentu, | ya tak?
 | Tak ada lampu boleh juga!
 (Proper road-signs, | right?)
- S : [188] | (No lights, it's still possible.)
 [189] Gelap cikgu!
 (Darkness, teacher!)
- [190] (buzzing)
 (buzzing)
- [191] Tak ada lampu gelap, cikgu.
 (It's dark without lights, teacher.)
- T : [192] Awak punya takrif kebanyakan,aa kemalangan ini kalau awak tengok
 lapuran dari aa, cawangan trafik polis diraja itu, awak tengok,
 kemalangan ini berlaku di jalan apa?
 (Your understanding of, most, aa, accidents, if you check
 the report from aa, that royal police traffic branch, you see, accidents
 happen on which type of roads?)

(Text 3, Discussion on Road Accidents)

(c) Close-Question Usage

A prominent textual feature identified in this pedagogic discourse is the use of close-question by the teacher. Close-questions are questions that use question-words, such as ‘right/yes-no’, ‘is there’, ‘where to’, ‘who’ or ‘what’, which merely require straight answers or just confirmation. They do not require answers that provide opinions or the type of answers that require thinking. The use of open-questions that begin with question-words such as ‘why’, ‘how’ or explain are limited. The following examples show the use of close-questions in the analysed discourse.

(4)

-
- T : [210] O.K .Selain SPBT apa?
(*O.K. what else besides SPBT?*)
- S : [211] Biasiswa.
(*Scholarship.*)
- T : [212] Biasiswa, betul?
(*Scholarship, right?*)
- S : [213] Betul.
(*Right.*)
- T : [214] Biasiswa untuk orang-orang yang berkeelayakan sahaja
(*Scholarships are only for the deserving.*)
-
- T : [215] Kemudian, rayuan apa, sekarang ni,kamu nak adakan kem atau pun kita
nak bina surau?
(*Then, what kind of appeal, now, you want to have a camp or do
we build a surau?*)
- S : [216] (Buzzing- tak jelas)
(*Buzzing-unclear*)
- T : [217] Betul?
(*Is it correct?*)
- S : [218] Betul.
(*Correct*)
-
- T : [219] Kita perlukan apa?
(*What do we need?*)
- S : [220] Duit
(*Money.*)
- T : [221] Duit derma
(*Money from donation*)
-
- T : [222] Derma kita mesti mohon melalui surat,
(*For donations, we must request through what letters.,*)
- S : [223] rasmi
(*official*)
- T : [224] Surat rayuan, rayuan der,
(*Letter of appeal, appeal for don-*)
- S : [225] ma.
(*-nation*)
- T : [226] ma.
(*-nation*)

(Text 7, Discussion on Letter Writing)

In the discourse analysed, even though open-questions were also utilised, there were instances when the teacher answered the questions himself. The teacher did not provide time for the student to think and offer his or her own opinions.

(5)

-
- T : [172] Saya nampak acara Hari Guru ini, ramai yang terlibat ialah pelajar- pelajar.
(I noticed in this Teachers' Day event, there are many students involved.)
- [173] Betul tak?
(Is that right?)
- S : [174] Betul
(Right.)
- T : [175] Cikgu buat kerja...
(Teachers do some work...(unclear).)
- [176] Cikgu buat dek.
(Teachers made don't know.)
- S : [177] Betul,betul
(Right, right.)
-
- T : [178] Ada point lagi?
(Any more points?)

(Text 1)

In (5), use of close-question is in [173], namely *Is that right?* It was used by the teacher merely to inform the students of an important point that was to be stated in that move early in [172]. Thus, the question *Is that right?* only functions as confirmation request for the student, as clearly seen in the student response [174], i.e. *Right*. Utilisation of such questions merely shows interaction taking place without the application of thinking skills.

By asking close-questions, the teacher does not provide opportunity for students to speak more or express their opinions. This is because the teacher has limited the expected student response/answer to just one or two words. Such situations mean the teacher takes the floor or controls the discourse.

(d) Designed Answer Extraction

In (6), the extraction of student response according to teacher design can be detected in teacher discourse [127] and [131]. In [127], students were only requested to provide as response the last two syllables for the word ‘industry’; in [127] the teacher had already provided as guide for the student the set answer or the intended word. In (7), this feature can be identified in move two, i.e. in [093] and [096].

(6)

.....

T : [125] Negara kita masih negara pertanian, faham?.
(Our country is still an agricultural country, understand?.)

[126] Itu sebab, pertanian lebih tinggi, faham?
(That is reason why agriculture is higher, understand?.)

[127] Barulah sekarang negara kita maju dalam bidang perindustrian.
(Only now, our country is developed in terms of ind-)

S : [128] -trian
(-dustry).

.....

T : [129] Negara kita terkenal dengan apa?
(Our country is famous for?)

S : [130] (tak jelas)
(Unclear)

T : [131] Pengeluar kelapa sawit, dan juga..
(Producer of palm, and also..)

S : [132] getah
(rubber)

T : [133] Getah
(Rubber.)

.....

(Text 4)

(7)

.....

T : [090] Pengeboman apa?
(What was bombed?)

S : [091] WTC
(WTC.)

T : [092] Aa, WTC di New York
(Aa, WTC in New York.)

.....

S : [093] Jadi,aa,mereka ,aa pelancong-pelancong takut untuk menaiki kapal,
(So, aa, they, aa, tourists are afraid to fly on the air,)

S : [094] terbang
(plane,)

T : [095] terbang
(plane).

[096] Takut kapal terbang diram-
(The fear planes will be hij-)

S : [097] -pas.
(-jacked)

.....

T : [098] -pas
 (-jacked)
 [099] Aa, itu sebabnya
 (Aa, *that is why*).

(Text 4)

(e) Teacher Interruption of Student-Answers

Interruption of student's answer is another textual element, which dialectically reflects teacher domination during the teacher's performance of his/her pedagogic duties. In such instances, the teacher interrupted and showed impatience for the student to stop speaking or give response to the question or statement extraction. Interruption came in the form of the teacher's own answer to the question posed. In other words, the teacher did not provide time for the student to complete his turn to speak. Such textual features mean the teacher has denied opportunity for the student to be active and effective in the discourse.

(8)

T : [308] Baik, sebagai penutup, penutup apa nak tulis?
 (*Right, as conclusion, what do you write as conclusion?*)

S : [309] (Buzzing)
 (*Buzzing*)
 [310] Ingatkan pemandu (tak jelas)
 (*Remind drivers (unclear)*)

T : [311] Awak boleh kata sebagai penutup, banyak, O.K. banyak kemalangan jalan raya berlaku di Malaysia pada setiap tahun dan ini memerlukan langkah-langkah apa,
 (*You can say as conclusion, many, O.K. many road accidents happen in Malaysia every year and what kind of measures are required,)*)

S : [312] Langkah-langkah keselamatan
 (*Safety measures.*)

T : [313] Langkah-langkah keselamatan dari semua pihak ya, termasuk pengguna jalan raya itu sendiri dan siapa,
 (*Safety measures from all those concerned, yes, including road users and who,)*)
 [314] Pihak,
 (*which body,*)

S : [315] berkuasa
 (*government.*)

T : [316] Pihak berkuasa atau pihak kerajaan, ya tak.
 (*Governing body or the government, right,*)
 [317] Maksudnya, pengguna jalan raya itu perlu berhati-hati di jalan raya, mematuhi peraturan-peraturan di jalan raya, O.K.
 (*This means road users have to be cautious on the road, follow all the traffic rules, O.K?*)

(Text 3)

(9)

.....

T : [049] Apa tajuk jadual yang diberi?
 (What title is given to the chart?)

S : [050] Kemalangan jalan raya ..(buzzing/tak jelas)
 Road accidents ..(buzzing, unclear).

T : [051] O.K. jadual menunjukkan jumlah
 Kemalangan yang berlaku pada tahun 2000 di Malaysia.
 (O.K. the chart shows the total
number of accidents in 2000 in Malaysia.)

.....

: [052] Ini adalah satu isi, ter
 | (*This is one point,..*)

(Text 3)

Examples of interruption shown in (8) and (9) are marked by vertical lines. In (8), teacher interruption occurred in [311], where the teacher did not acknowledge student's response and instead proceeded to produce an alternative answer. In (9), this feature is identified in [051]; the teacher was too impatient to wait for students to complete their group response¹² and interrupted them by providing the answer.

The textual features discussed above indicate the manifestation of teacher domination in the classroom discourse analysed. The following section examines teacher domination from a discourse practice perspective.

CLASSROOM DISCOURSE PRACTICE

Discourse practice analysis involves a macro-level interpretation of, not only the production of discourse, but also its producers (Fairclough 1992, 65 & 134). Analysis reveals the pedagogic discourse examined in this study has been produced conventionally, in which conventional practice indicates the act of production has centred on the teacher, and not student. A teacher-centred practice reflects, among others, a more dominant teacher-role as compared to student, interrupted-responses and the approach to question-making by teacher.

The following sections discuss the aforementioned practices identified in this study.

(a) *Teacher-answered question / Teaching Answering Own Question*

In this situation, teacher answers own question rather than allowing student to answer. This practice is identified in (10) and (11). In (10), the teacher provided questions in [143] and [144] but proceeded to answer them himself/herself in [145]. Teacher-question in [146] was again self-answered in [147]. In (11), teacher-question in [294] was self-answered in [295]. Student responses in [296] and [297] were repeatedly ignored by the teacher before proceeding to the next move.

(10)

.....

T : [143] Dalam ucapan itu, apa lagi ada?
(What else is there in that speech?)
 [144] Ucapan siapa?
(Whose speech?)
 [145] Ucapan..Kadang-kadang Pengetua.
(Speech...sometimes by the Principal.)
 [146] Kadang-kadang cikgu lain membaca ucapan oleh siapa?
(Sometimes other teachers will read whose speech text?)
 [146] Menteri Pendidikan.
(The Minister of Education.)
 [147] Lagi satu ucapan Pengarah Pendidikan.
(Another speech, the Director of Education.)
 [148] Betul tak?
(Is that right?)
 [149] Ucapan teks yang disediakan, cikgu yang baca.
(The teacher read the speech text that was prepared.)

.....

(Text 1)

(11)

.....

T : [294] Apa lagi?
(What else?)
 [295] Mungkin dia tidak menyalakan lampu. O.K. supaya dapat dilihat oleh kenderaan lain, O.K.
(Maybe he did not turn-on the headlights, O.K. so that he could be seen by on-coming cars, O.K.)

S : [296] Dia tak pakai baju hijau.
(He wasn't wearing the green shirt.)
 [297] Dia tak pakai baju cerah, cikgu.
(He wasn't wearing a light coloured shirt, teacher.)
 [298] (Buzzing).
(Buzzing).

.....

T : [299] Lagi, lagi apa?
(So, anything else?)

.....

(Text 3)

(b) *Limited Student Involvement*

Another feature of a teacher-centred discourse practice is limited student involvement during interaction in classroom discourse production; this phenomenon results in teacher domination. In this study, the limited involvement of student was triggered by the way the teacher conducted the discourse in the classroom, namely by giving little or no chance at all for the student to be active by offering opinions, asking questions or discussing in groups. Instead, student participation was only limited to answering the teacher's questions (many of which were close questions, as previously discussed) or confirming teacher's statement. The T-S-T turn-taking system which benefits the teacher (as discussed previously) is a practice that limits student participation.

(c) *Prominent Teacher Role*

In contrast to the above discussion (b), the discourse analysed in this study reflects prominently the teacher's role and teaching profession. For example, this practice happens when the teacher prefers to offer explanations, descriptions or answers to students rather than allow them to discuss, analyse or summarise in order to seek for their own answers. In other words, the teacher speaks more than the student. Discourse is thus centred on the teacher. This practice can be detected in (12).

(12)

- T : [35] Baik, dekat sini cuba kamu tengok.
(*Right, over here, check and see.*)
[36] Yang pertama, tujuan dia, dia nak cerita fasal kematian sepupu dia.
(*The first, his reason, he wants to inform the death of his cousin.*)
[37] Yang kedua, dia pergi kepada penerangan, bagaimana kejadian itu berlaku.
(*Secondly, he proceeds to the description, how the accident happened.*)
[38] Jadi, kalau kamu tulis surat, yang pertama tujuan kamu tulis surat
(*So, if you write a letter, firstly, you a reason for writing.*)
[39] Yang kedua, kamu pergi kepada isi kedua, apa lagi yang berkaitan dengan yang tadi.
(*Secondly, you proceed to your second point, other issues related to the previous one.*)
[40] Selalunya dalam surat kiriman ke, apa-apa, kita akan letakkan isi, yang pertama isi penting.
(*Usually in letter writing, we put the main point as the first*)
[41] Yang kedua isi yang kurang penting.

(The second point is one that is less important.)

[42] Lepas itu sampailah kepada isi yang paling kurang penting lagi.

(Then you can have four other points that are of lesser importance.)

[43] Yang last sekali ialah...(gangguan-murid lain masuk).

(The last one is....(disturbance – a student enters).)

[44] Kamu tengok ya, dalam petikan ini semasa dia ceritakan, dia bagi penerangan lanjut.

(You see, in this passage he provides details with descriptions.)

.....
T : [45] Kalau kemalangan, dia akan nyatakan apa benda?

(If it's an accident, what details will he give?)

[46] Aa, Khairuddin, bila kita cerita tentang kemalangan, apa yang kita nyatakan?

(Aa, Khairuddin, when we talk about an accident, what do we include for details?)

S : [47] Kesedihan?

(Sadness?)

T : [48] Ha, kesedihan!

(Ha, sadness!)

(Text 2)

In (12), it is obvious utterances in the discourse are teacher-centred. The teacher played a central role in this move by providing the explanations and not, for instance, asking students to examine the text and seek their own answers. In this scenario, the teacher's role has more prominence.

The above discussions and explanations reflect the features of teacher domination in relation to discourse practice as found in the classroom discourse analysed in this study. Generally, this aspect is also interconnected to textual elements.

CONCLUSION

Based on the aforementioned discussion on textual features and discourse practice of CDA framework, it can be concluded that the classroom discourse analysed in this study is embedded with teacher domination practice. Teacher domination means the teacher controlling not only the discourse but also the students. As a result of this control, the role of the student as the main target of education process seems to be relegated, and instead it is the teacher who plays central role.

Such pedagogic discourse is not reflective of the concerns in the integrative curriculum education system. The teaching of the Malay Language subject in the integrative curriculum demands the incorporation of thinking skills among students. To acquire thinking skills that incorporate logic, rationality,

analytical skills and objectivity, classroom teaching and learning activities have to be geared to encourage students towards those ends. In other words, a pedagogic discourse that is suitably practiced is one that has to be student-centred, and every student needs to be actively and effectively involved in the teaching and learning process. Among the practices that should be utilised are making students offer their opinions, summarise, analyse, reason as well as suggest ideas through speaking and writing. The teacher/educator must be sensitive to students – they are not dense. Students have skills and talents that need to be recognised and polished by their teachers (Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia 1992, 17-19). The discussions on the negative practices found to be embedded in this example of classroom discourse have good intentions and should be regarded as a contribution from the linguistics discipline, especially discourse analysis towards the teaching of Malay language.

Notes

* This is a revised article based on a paper presented at the International Conference on Critical Discourse Analysis, University of Tasmania, Australia, 15th–18th November 2005 and published in refereed proceedings entitled *A Critical Discourse Analysis of the Teaching and Learning of L1 in Malaysia*.

¹ They discovered that the structure of classroom discourse consisted of 5 descending units beginning with lesson, transaction, exchange, move and act. An upper unit is built upon a lower one, for instance a lesson is built upon several transactions, which in turn are the product of several exchanges. The exchange unit is usually marked by an informative, imperative or enquiry where in every element a statement and request or command is made and a question asked, usually by the teacher.

² Critical discourse analysis, popularly abbreviated to CDA.

³ The New Curriculum for Primary Schools was first implemented in 1983 and was revised in 1988 as the Integrative Curriculum for Primary Schools (KBSR). Integrative Curriculum for Secondary Schools (KBSM) was implemented on 1989 (see Mok 1996, 147-8).

⁴ In this context, transparent refers to an examination of the nature of linguistic discourse merely through its textual and/or discursive features without considering other underlying features inherent in discourse, namely practice, process and social issues.

⁵ Education is a social process too.

⁶ There are other discourse analysts who have proposed other theoretical frameworks in critical discourse analysis with different approaches to and methods for analysis, namely van Dijk (1991), Wodak (1996), etc.

⁷ Basically, Fairclough's discourse/language functions share similar features with Halliday's language functions (1985), namely textual, interpersonal and ideational. Fairclough separates interpersonal functions into two - identity and relationship - even though in his writings he usually draws upon Halliday's three language functions.

⁸ For more details refer to Fairclough (1992; 1995a; 1995b; 2000) and Fairclough & Wodak (1997).

⁹ The writers believe this number (10) is adequate for case and preliminary studies since for the purpose of critical discourse analysis specifically, it is the discourse that is of concern. Fairclough (1995a) only analysed three texts on university advertisements in his discussion on 'Marketization of public discourse'.

¹⁰ It has to be stressed here that the elaborations in this study and article are not references to any individual specifically, but they are to be regarded as institutional discourse.

¹¹ For interaction interruption or turn-taking, refer (3).

¹² The group response is produced due to the nature of the teacher's questioning; the teacher opened the question to the whole class instead of identifying individual students to answer. This phenomenon is discussed below. Individuality in pedagogic discourse has its own benefits; Chouliaraki (1998) had addressed this issue.

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