ONLINE NEWS REPORT HEADLINES OF EDUCATION MALAYSIA GLOBAL SERVICES

Yuen Chee Keong
Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia

Sidra Naim
Universiti Tenaga Nasional

Noor Darliza Mohamad Zamri
Sultan Idris Shah Polytechnic

Abstract

This research aims to reveal the representations of the Education Malaysia Global Services (EMGS) policy change on the new visa application procedure announced in 2013 and to unravel the ways in which ideology and context shape the discourse surrounding EMGS through an analysis of news report headlines. Using Critical Discourse Analysis on the themes and lexical choices of headlines from the period of February 2013 to April 2014, the general characteristics of the news reports headlines disclose that there are ideological differences at play and these ideologies are reflected differently according to the sources of the headlines. In Malaysian media, the reporting on EMGS has been framed according to the political stance of newspapers: in a positive supportive way by the government linked media; The NST, BERNAMA and The Star, and in a negative way in the alternative, or non-government linked media; Malaysiakini and Borneo Post. In the global media (UK, US, Singapore, Brunei) newspapers (The Straits Times, Investor News, Asia One, The Sunday Times) also highlight a negative view on the policy change. These reporting styles show differences in situational context and ideology that shaped the discourse of the headlines, contributing significantly to the portrayal of EMGS, especially to potential students from all around the world in

particular ways.

LAPORAN TAJUK UTAMA BERITA ATAS TALIAN EDUCATION MALAYSIA GLOBAL SERVICES

Abstrak

Dengan menggunakan Analisis Kritikal Wacana, kajian ini bertujuan untuk melihat representasi perubahan dasar visa EMGS dalam laporan berita tajuk utama dari sumber-sumber yang berbeza di seluruh dunia. Kajian ini bertujuan untuk mendedahkan representasi daripada perubahan dasar EMGS dan berusaha untuk membongkar bagaimana ideologi dan konteks membentuk wacana sekitar EMGS. Fokus artikel itu adalah prosedur permohonan visa baru yang diumumkan pada 2013 dan bagaimana wacana media itu menyediakan maklumat yang tersendiri mengenai strategi wacana bagaimana media mewakili EMGS. Ciri-ciri umum tajuk laporan berita mendedahkan bahawa terdapat perbezaan ideologi dan ideologi ini dilihat berbeza menurut sumber-sumber daripada tajuk-tajuk utama. Dalam media Malaysia, laporan pada EMGS telah dirangka mengikut pendirian politik akhbar: dengan cara yang positif oleh media pro- kerajaan, The NST, BERNAMA dan The Star, dan dengan cara yang lebih negative oleh atau media bukan pro-kerajaan, Malaysiakini, Malay Mail, Borneo Post dan lain-lain. Dalam media global, surat khabar barat juga mengetengahkan pandangan negatif ke atas perubahan polisi. Gaya laporan menunjukkan perbezaan dalam konteks situasi dan ideologi yang berbentuk wacana berita utama, menyumbang dengan ketara kepada pemaparan EMGS terutamanya kepada bakal pelajar-pelajar dari seluruh dunia dalam cara-cara tertentu.

Kata kunci: *Analisis wacana kritis, laporan berita atas talian, tajuk utama berita, khidmat pendidikan, pelajar antarabangsa*

INTRODUCTION

The new Education Malaysia Global Services (EMGS) was established 1

February 2013. It is an agency, incorporated as a company limited by guarantee, operating under the purview of the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) with the aim of leading Malaysia's development to become a leading global hub for education and training by 2020. The objective of EMGS is to increase applications to Malaysian Universities by foreign students to 200,000 by 2020 (educationmalaysia.gov.my, 2013). The new system involves a swifter, standardised visa processing procedure, following fee payment and registration, for all international students.

In the past, international students' applications went through several agencies to obtain visa approval, which caused delays to the application, hence with the latest policy, it is compulsory for students who are interested in furthering their study in Malaysia to register with EMGS. According to the EMGS chief executive officer Yazid Hamid, in his statement to Bernama.com dated 20 March 2013:

it has always been a back-to-back arrangement between the IHEs and the approving agencies. This has resulted many times in last-minute approvals that have caused us to lose 15 to 20 per cent of international students, which has had an impact on the IHEs' revenue and affected Malaysia's image as an education destination. EMGS' role in the quick approval of visas will mitigate this issue.

EMGS vowed to speed up the process and make sure the completed foreign student visa applications are processed within 14 working days from the date the completed applications are received with a standard processing fee. Another benefit from EMGS is that the processes and procedures would allow Malaysia to have all relevant information to monitor foreign students in Malaysia as there have been past news reports of foreign students abusing their visa by coming into the country under false pretences (Hamid, 2013).

Through the compulsory medical insurance coverage implemented by EMGS foreign students will be protected, as EMGS has negotiated medical and insurance packages from international insurance companies based in Malaysia on behalf of the students, with the intention to provide students with premium insurance cover at reasonable prices. This is to ensure the students will receive proper healthcare during their study in Malaysia and not be a burden on Malaysian public healthcare.

EMGS' main target group is students who have just graduated from high school to start their tertiary education in Malaysia (educationmalaysia.gov.my, 2013), and these younger generation students normally use the new media; online newspapers, to gain access to the latest news. According to Garrison (2001, cited in Salman et al., 2011), almost 90% of readers have been actively using online technologies to search for articles and news since 1999.

The growth of new media or digital media as the main source of news has been highlighted by Mahmud (2009) where the issue of censorship and news controlled by the government; direct or indirectly, have turned readers to use the Internet for their "unbiased" sources of information, news and views. The

negative news or coverage from the online media can jeopardize EMGS' role of leading Malaysia's development to become a global hub for education and training by 2020.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In recent news, press coverage of the issue of EMGS has emerged in many newspaper headlines in Malaysia. These can influence the reader on the advantages or disadvantages of EMGS towards curbing the issue of international students' visa applications and subconsciously will influence readers' decisions about where to further their education. Headlines in editorials are important in the news discourse. This is because headlines and leads are the summary of the news reports and the abstract of the main event of the story, as well as promoting some of the details (van Dijk, 1988). Headlines are considered to be an opening section to the relevant main text and have been ascribed different functions.

Most headlines do present readers with this particular function of indicating the topic and summarizing the main content of the news text with the intention of helping the reader grasp the meaning of the text. However, some newspaper headlines present their readers with fairly complex riddles, which neither summarize nor present the detail of the news reports (Lindemann, 1990, cited in Bonyadi & Samuel, 2013).

Baicchi (2003, cited in Metilla, 2013) stated that headlines possess a "privilege position" which is reflected by "distinct layout and typography" and therefore present what the newspapers regard as important information the readers need to know. Headlines that consist of "complex riddles" will lead to inaccurate and misleading information being disseminated to the readers. These ambiguities are created intentionally to mislead readers with inaccurate or ambiguous information (Brône & Coulson, 2010, cited in White, 2011). Readers now have direct and fast access to news with online media, as the Internet is the ideal medium for hyperlocal and international news (Yap, 2009). In an age of technology and hectic lifestyles, the readers may not have time and opportunity to read the whole text and rely solely on the headlines for information.

If readers see mostly negative images of EMGS in the newspapers it could be argued that the media is misleading the readers with regard to the policy change. Students would start perceiving the EMGS policy change as another form of red tape, adding to the many frustrations of studying in Malaysia. Malaysia's educational sector growth and plan could also be jeopardized as these headlines have the potential to affect international undergraduate and postgraduate students. Hence, it is crucial to analyze newspaper reports published by Malaysian based agencies and newspaper reports from the international media on this issue.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The research uses a CDA methodology to analyse international and local

newspaper articles to ascertain whether the reporters have placed the EMGS policy change in a positive or negative light.

The aim is to answer the following questions:

1. What inferences can be drawn about the new EMGS system from the choice of topics in newspaper headlines?
2. What inferences can be drawn about the new EMGS system from the choice of words used in newspaper headlines?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Critical Discourse Analysis and Media

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is a method of analysing public communications with the objective to improve society by identifying social issues. Huckin (1997) summarized the goal of CDA as follows:

[T]he primary activity of critical discourse analysis is the close analysis of written or oral texts that are deemed to be politically or culturally influential to a given society. But the text-analytic activity cannot be done in isolation; rather, the analyst must always take into account the larger context in which the text is located (para. 7).

The prime concern of the analysts is to identify when the communication or discussion amounts to an abuse of power. This is known as dominance and can be subtle, appearing to be quite normal until exposed. The discussions and debates developed recently in the media have highlighted its power to influence readers' opinions through a technique known as framing. The media has the power to decide which stories to publish or cover and to present their own interpretation of the news to their readers (Saran, Yee, Bolte & Ramiah, 2012). Readers are now actually reading the information portrayed and selected by the media as the news "is being chosen, by cameramen or directors, of course with the intention that we should see what is most exciting" (Williams, 1986, cited in Mahfouz, 2013). This proven text analytic activity cannot be carried out in isolation; rather, the analyst must always take into account the larger context in which the text is located. The media can politically and culturally influence a society through news framing.

Media influence was proven by Van Dijk (1993c) who identified two methods used that demonstrate unequal news reporting. The first method involves portrayal of the dominant group in a favourable light; the second method is to portray all other groups in a negative light. This effectively creates a situation of "them and us", whereby "us" receive positive reporting and on the contrary "them" receive a negative press. This will also occur in a situation where a group with no power are represented as posing a threat to the dominant group (van Dijk, 1993c). The control that the dominant group holds over the media debate enables them to manipulate it, omitting opinions or information from other groups that are detrimental, or only including points of view and information

which is supportive. This influence enables the dominant party to be portrayed in a positive light and makes it difficult for this to be challenged because the opposition has been ignored or misrepresented.

The impact of digital and mobile alternatives in receiving news has contributed to the emergence of digital media (Loechner, 2009). Readers nowadays can get direct access to the latest news just from searching keywords from the browser and get news from all over the world (Harper, 2010). Unlike conventional media, newspapers, corporations and even governments have the power to give out information and readers could just simply read and maybe believe it.

However, readers nowadays have their own freedom to find or read news from the Internet, which they perceive as a fresh point of view and perspective from what they see and believe in the conventional newspapers that are controlled by certain powers (Rosenstiel, 2005, cited in Salman et al., 2011). However, it is still hard to control where the information comes from and with most of "conventional" media opting to provide an online digital newspaper, the dominant group still have the power to control the issue or news.

With the emergence of digital media, the time factor and the access for receiving the news can have a big impact on the issues. It provides greater interactivity and public participation among readers especially with easier access to reading from a tablet or smart phone (Banerjee, 2008). The expansion of the new media has been so rapid and extensive that even in Malaysia, the then-Home Minister Syed Hamid Albar agreed the Internet news media should not be considered as an "alternative media" anymore because of the popularity among the readers of reading news (Straits Times, October 22, 2008).

For some time, both the international media and the educational Establishment have had an equivocal attitude towards foreign universities. This has affected the portrayal of Malaysian Universities in the international press. Students' perceptions of media opinion will affect their decisions about education, in particular their choice of university. It is therefore important for us to consider how the EMGS policy change has been represented. The media has the power to feed the readers their own interpretation of the news and to decide which news to publish or how it is covered (Saran, Yee, Bolte & Ramiah, 2012).

Van Dijk investigated racism in the press, using a polarization model to identify divisions of language, which enabled racist language and specific subjects to be recognized. This method could be used in the present study to identify similar language in newspaper reports covering the EMGS changes. Both Huckin (1997) and Van Dijk (1991, a, b) use similar frameworks for their analysis. In the present study, the researchers will use a critical discourse analysis (CDA) to examine the language used in international newspaper headlines and articles and ascertain how this reveals the media's attitudes to the EMGS change, whether explicit or implied.

The Need for a Discourse Analysis of Headlines

Headlines and leads in news reports are considered as "the summary" of the news. Unfortunately, the ambiguity created by the editor or journalist misleads readers with inaccurate or ambiguous information (White, 2011). The need for a discourse analysis of headlines is crucial to identify reasons and factors contributing to this ambiguity and misuse of power by the media (Lamb, 2013).

Headlines in editorials, which are an opening section to the relevant main text, have been ascribed different functions. Bell (1991) as discussed in Bonyadi and Samuel (2013) has made a distinction between headlines functioning as the abstract of the main event of the story and headlines promoting one of the details of the story. Even with one story or theme, the slant and framing of news agencies could be highly variable due to the discourse participants' diverging worldviews and interests (MacRitchie & Seedat, 2008). A headline has the ability "to limit or enable the construction of a topic in a certain way" by the use of the words in the headline (MacRitchie & Seedat, 2008, p.339, cited in Metila, 2013) which display the information the news agencies regard as significant. News stories are considered to be significant according to their impact, such as the scale and effect of the event, involvement of significant people and places, human interest values (curiosity pull) and relevance to the readers (Morrison, 2006, cited in MacRitchie & Seedat, 2008).

This presence, combined with selected linguistic cues, allows the media to easily influence readers' interpretation and partial constructions of 'reality' in the headlines may also be created by a deliberate choice of information to present a narrow or one-sided view. This power to censor or filter information demonstrates the power of news agencies to preserve or abolish the hegemony of social groups (Shie, 2013).

News Framing

Frames create a conceptual context that facilitates the apprehension, classification, and understanding of messages in accordance with individuals' ideas previously associated with the frames adopted. In journalism and this study, the most suitable definition of framing is from Entman (1993, cited in Shie, 2013), who stated that

To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described. (p. 52)

Readers' understanding, or how they remember the issues or news, can be influenced by news framing where the words, fracture, paradigm, and vision of journalists or editors can be identified in several places in the communication process. Reese (2001, cited in Romelyn, 2013) highlighted that the information or news can be influenced by the communicator, the text, the receiver and the culture itself during the communication process (Entman, 1993, cited in Youssefi, Kanani & Shojaei 2013).

According to Fairhurst and Sarr, (1996, cited in Khosravinik, 2010), individuals

depend on the ideas and combination of words, images and thoughts influenced by the frames to make sense of their understanding of the issue or information. Messages are undeniably attached to the frames chosen to describe them and become the main idea around the specific issues emphasized by the media, individuals, or organizations – to delineate other people's reality, highlighting one interpretation while de-emphasizing a less favoured one.

The technique of framing is frequently used by reporters to place an interpretation on the facts of a story that may highlight or obscure particular elements with the result that there is inequality in the reporting of the event or issue. The media has control over the context in which the story is viewed by adapting their point of view and reporting style. Furthermore, editing undertaken before publication may further affect the accuracy of reporting and limitations may be placed on news agencies. Using such methods the media can create a false impression of reality which will influence public opinion.

Given the news orientation of this study, Entman's (1993) definition is employed because it lends itself to the analysis of textual messages, especially in the news, and it connects news frames to causal interpretations, value judgments, and policy recommendations related to news coverage.

METHODOLOGY

Data

Nowadays, the most accessible form of news is found on the internet. Potential students would key-in a few terms in order to decide where to study and the pros and cons of certain countries and their education systems. For the purpose of this study it was decided to look into headlines which are available freely in the internet and accessible to all.

In smaller specialized corpora, such as this one, the representativeness is actually relatively straightforward in principle. Often it simply means the inclusion of all the relevant texts in their authentic form. The conception of representativeness applied in corpus studies, as discussed by Kucera (2002), has three major aspects, namely, size, proportionality and authenticity, and in the view of the builders of the corpus it cannot be reduced to any one or two of them. Hence, these three aspects were taken into consideration during the compilation of this specialized corpus.

As for the size of the corpus, it was decided to only include the headlines. As discussed in the previous sections, this is due to the high impact of headlines on the reader compared to other sections of the news reports. A list of key search terms was drawn up, suitable for Internet search engine Google; the terms included EMGS, EMGS policy change and Malaysian visa application. The Internet search brought up a number of online newspaper websites and various unrelated blog items. The latter were excluded as it would be difficult to establish their provenance. After the completion of the corpus compilation, the

corpus consisted of 43 different headlines. As shown in Figure 1, 79% (n=33) are sourced from Malaysia and 21% (n=9) from international sources.
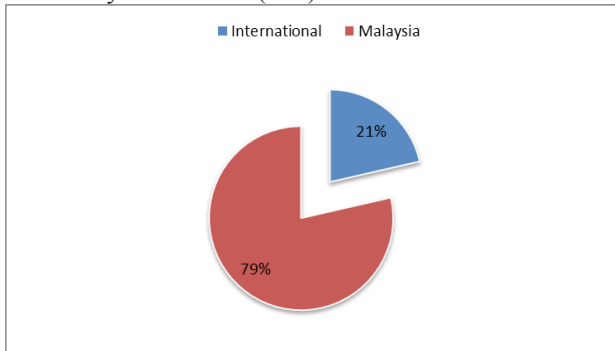

Figure 1: Distribution of Source of Headlines

The headlines covered the period of February 2013 (the month of the launch of the EMGS system) until April 2014. This period of one year builds a corpus which is balanced with headlines from the period of the announcement of the policy change and headlines representing the issues and views on the policy change throughout the year. The corpus is also balanced as it compiled headlines from different international and local sources, such as the United Kingdom, the United States, Singapore, Sri Lanka and Malaysia.

As with all corpus compilation, care was taken to ensure the data was kept as authentic as possible. No changes were made to the headlines compiled, neither linguistically or format wise. Three major aspects, size, proportion, and authenticity were taken care of, in order to ensure the representativeness of this specialized corpus.

Analysis

Van Dijk's framework for structural analysis has been used to examine the samples taken for this study. There are two dimensions to this framework: "production processes" and "reception processes". Van Dijk explained that "production processes" are the methods used by journalists and institutions to create news and the social and economic practices which are specifically related to the creation of the media reports. "Reception processes", the other dimension of analysis, takes into consideration the understanding, memorization and recall of the news content. Van Dijk's research (1988, 1991, 1993) sought to show that there was a relationship between the three levels of news production: structure, production and comprehension and the social context in which they exist. Analysis at microstructure and macrostructure levels takes place, in order to identify these relationships.

The *microstructure* analysis focuses on the meaning of language in the reports, the use of persuasive and suggestive expressions and other elements used to reinforce the factual authenticity of the report, including quotations, direct and

indirect reporting, which are used to portray the power and ideology behind the report.

Macrostructure analysis is key to analysis of news reports as it relates to the overall concept of the theory or ideology represented and the subjects and themes covered in the news stories. The headlines and leading paragraphs contain themes and topics that can generally be categorised as positive, negative or neutral in relation to the issue being reported.

Van Dijk (1988) considered that the headlines and leading paragraphs contained the best indication of how the journalists viewed and interpreted the news event. He stated that the headlines "define the overall coherence or semantic unity of discourse, and also what information readers memorize best from a news report" (p.248). Van Dijk considers that unless the readers have their own, pre-existing opinion about a subject, they will be influenced by and accept the subjective portrayal of the news event in the media (1988, p.248). Therefore, in this study detailed analysis will be made of headlines, at both *microstructure* and *macrostructure* level and the result will be considered, in detail, in the Findings and Discussion section.

FINDINGS

The study examined the headlines of forty-three online news articles published between February 2013 and April 2014. The websites were based in a number of international countries, including The United States, Great Britain, Singapore, Brunei and Sri Lanka; the range of newspapers considered included the New York Times, The Sunday Times and The Pie News. Headlines deserve particular consideration as they affect the readers' decision to read the following article. Headlines set the tone for the news article, but frequently fail to use the usual rules of sentence construction.

The material considered covered a range of subjects, from education to financial and health care issues, but the common factor in all was the EMGS policy change. Often, education is the main topic of the articles, either as a group or as individuals, but it is also frequently a secondary topic, or even a casual mention, in those articles. Subsequent issues arising from the change, such as the financial and health care implications are also covered. Each newspaper displayed a different approach to the change, dependent upon its location. The following section considers how the language used in the articles portrays the attitudes of the media.

Macro Structure: Headline Topics

As mentioned above, headlines and leads foreground topics for news stories, thus it is appropriate to look at the topics presented in the headlines of news stories concerning the EMGS policy change. A central topic presented in headlines was the idea of policy change of EMGS in Malaysia. The headlines were categorized according to their register into four categories: positive change, neutral change,

partial cause and explicit framing.

The need for visa policy change is viewed as an efficient new policy as indicated in the following positive change headlines as seen in Table 1:

Table 1: Headlines covering the policy change as a positive change.

Source	Location	Date	Headline
Bernama	Malaysia	17-Mar-13	Putting Malaysian Education On The World Map
Focus Malaysia	Malaysia	18-Mar-13	EMGS set up with good intentions
The Star	Malaysia	31-Mar-13	Championing Malaysian education overseas
The New Straits Times	Malaysia	26-May-13	Call to control abuse of social visit visas
The Star	Malaysia	28-Aug-13	Speedier visa for foreign students
The Star	Malaysia	16-Sep-13	Education Malaysia Global Services denies allegations that it restricts competition
The Star	Malaysia	17-Sep-13	Muhyiddin: New student visa fees reasonable
The New Straits Times	Malaysia	15-Nov-13	Enhanced process for foreign student visa applications, says EMGS
The Star	Malaysia	14-Dec-13	New profiling process for international students
The Star	Malaysia	15-Dec-13	Foreign students with passport problems can contact me directly, says Kamalanathan
The Star	Malaysia	17-Dec-13	Student visa woes not our fault, says Immigration dept
The Star	Malaysia	4-Feb-14	D-minus on student affairs
The Star	Malaysia	18-Feb-14	IPTS feedback to improve student visa processing
The Star	Malaysia	30-Mar-14	Monitoring activities of foreign students

It was interesting to note that only three headlines were found to show this change in a neutral manner as shown in Table 2:

Table 2: Headlines covering the policy change as neutral change.

Source	Location	Date	Headline
The Sunday Times	Sri Lanka	6-May-13	Changes in Student Visa Procedure for Malaysia
The Star	Malaysia	27-Dec-13	Check status of visa applications online, foreign students told
The Star	Malaysia	12-Jan-14	Online system for foreign student passes now live

Not all the visa issues were viewed as positive, or even neutral. Some articles reported the policy change as a negative step and in some cases that it could even be detrimental to students. All the articles with an element of negativity reported the policy change as at least a <u>partial</u> reason for the difficulties of the students.
This is reflected in headlines as shown in Table 3:

Table 3: Headlines covering the policy change as partial cause.

Source	Location	Date	Headline
The Borneo Post	Malaysia	1-Apr-13	Students turned off by Malaysia's education hub
The Mole	Malaysia	17-Jun-13	Foreign students shying away from Malaysia
Star Travel Magazine	UK	26-Jun-13	Delays in Malaysia's new visa processing system
The Pie News	UK	29-Aug-13	Controversial EMGS announces visa "green lane"
The Pie News	UK	31-Aug-13	Malaysia tightens student visa requirements
Free Malaysia Today	Malaysia	6-Sep-13	Foreign students in a dilemma
The Borneo Post	Malaysia	20-Oct-13	Continuous hiccups in education industry could potentially hurt profits further
Yahoo	Malaysia	1-Nov-13	International students 'stuck' in Malaysia
The Malay Mail	Malaysia	19-Nov-13	MMA probes complaints on foreign student check-ups
Asia One	Singapore	15-Dec-13	Visa renewal delays cause misery for foreign students in Malaysia
The Straits Times	Singapore	27-Dec-13	Incoming foreign students face woes in Malaysia
The Edge	Malaysia	24-Jan-14	Visa woes stunting aspiration to be higher education hub
Brunei Times	Brunei	25-Feb-14	Bruneians planning to study in Malaysia need visa
ABN News	Malaysia	20-Mar-14	Govt tightens monitoring of international students
The Borneo Post	Malaysia	21-Mar-14	Govt tightens monitoring of international students
Investor News	US	24-Apr-14	International Student Visa Woes Persist

Some headlines use the framing technique to suggest that the EMGS policy change is responsible for the students' problems. They also suggest that the problems with international visa applications could be resolved if the new system was closed and there was speculation in one article as to whether this would be successful (see Table 4).

Table 4: Headlines covering the policy change as explicit framing.

Source	Location	Date	Headline
FreeMalaysia Today	Malaysia	27-Mar-13	Agents cry foul over EMGS-AXA link-up
The Edge	Malaysia	20-Aug-13	Education Malaysia Global Services (EMGS) should be dismantled
The Malay Mail	Malaysia	20-Aug-13	DAP wants one-stop centre for foreign students to be abolished
Malaysia Kini	Malaysia	20-Aug-13	Abolish EMGS, says DAP MP
The Rocket	Malaysia	21-Aug-13	Govt should dismantle EMGS, more competition for foreign students
The Debating News	Malaysia	18-Sep-13	EMGS Predicament: Recent Changes In Visa Regulations
The Malay Mail	Malaysia	20-Nov-13	Think it through before introducing new EMGS rules
The Malay Mail	Malaysia	20-Jun-13	EMGS admits visa woes
The Malay Mail	Malaysia	1-Jul-13	Ministries to scrutinize EMGS

The analysis covered a range of positive and negative subjects. Of these, 7% (n=3) were neutral and 43% (n=18) were negative on the basis that EMGS was blamed for at least some of the visa application problems; this represented the majority. A further 17% (n=7) considered that EMGS was directly responsible for the international students' problems. By contrast, 33% (n=14) reported that the EMGS change was a positive move.
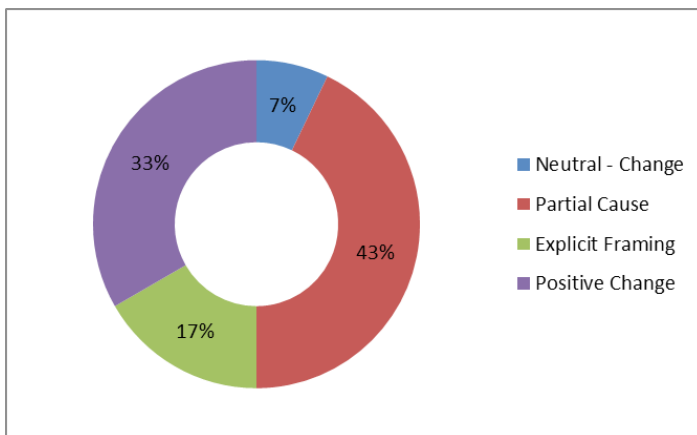

Figure 2: Distribution of Register of Headlines

Microstructure: Headline Lexicon

In this section, a deeper look into the words used to project ideas to readers will be discussed. First, it is important to note that the headlines will be analysed in three groups: International, Local (Pro-Government) and Local (Non-Government Linked).

International headlines

The Internet research brought up three international headlines relating to the Malaysian visa application story. A Sri Lankan website contained a headline which read: *Changes in student Visa Procedure for Malaysia.* "Changes" is a neutral word that can be good or bad, dependent on its context. Thus, we can conclude that Sri Lanka has a neutral stance with regard to the new policy. This may be because it is an Asian country, which is seeking to join ASEAN and has respect for Malaysia, such that it will not criticise the policy change.

The United States reported the following headline: *International Student Visa Woes Persist.* The word "woes" indicates that the policy change is negative and the word "persist" implies that it is a continuing problem. Brunei also published news on the change with the following headline: *Bruneians planning to study in Malaysia need visa.* The word "need" indicates the need to clear any misconceptions that Bruneians might have had regarding the policy change and also reflects that Bruneians were expecting to be exempted from the EMGS policy change.

Two further international headlines were found, both on UK-based websites. These read: *Delays in Malaysia's new visa processing system* and *Malaysia tightens student visa requirements.* Feelings of unease and concern will be aroused in readers with the use of the words "delay" and "tightens". Students will fear that studying in Malaysia will be a long, difficult process.

The Pie News published another headline later in the year, consistent with their frame of partial cause: *Controversial EMGS announces visa "green lane".* The word 'controversial' frames EMGS for not being an advantage, but rather that it is debatable whether the change is good or not for foreign students. The fact that the words green lane are double quoted also gives the impression of how 'green' it really is.

Interestingly, our neighbour country, Singapore also reported on the change with the following headlines: *Visa renewal delays cause misery for foreign students in Malaysia* and *Incoming foreign students face woes in Malaysia.* The use of the words "delays, misery, woes" all reflect that the EMGS policy change is not to be looked forward to, and in fact would cause even more problems to foreign students.

The final headline came from a search via the popular internet search engine, Yahoo. Whilst the search appeared on the Malaysian homepage, this may be influenced by the US parent company. On 1 November a featured article carried the headline: *International students 'stuck' in Malaysia.* The emphasis on

"international student" highlights the victims of the problem, coupled with the word "stuck" which is synonymous with "trapped" or "hampered" and reinforces the idea that the victims will have to endure a difficult or disagreeable process.

Malaysian Headlines (Pro-Government)

In contrast to the international media, reporting in the local press was positive. The oldest Malaysian newspaper, the News Straits Times, is generally considered to be pro-government, or even right-wing.

A headline reading: *Enhanced process for foreign student visa applications, says EMGS* was published on November 15. The selection of the positive word "enhanced" infers that the new procedure will be an improvement. The modern world places increasing importance on the enhancement of the physical, with "enhances" an accepted metaphor for corrective surgery; changing the ugly into beautiful. The reporting therefore suggests that EMGS is improving the whole process of visa application.

As an official news agency Bernama tend to support the current Government and is known for right-wing views. Their headline read: *Putting Malaysian Education on the World Map*. The choice of a positive word such as "putting" highlights the view that EMGS is promoting Malaysia's status in the World, perhaps inferring that previously it was not even on the map.

The largest English language tabloid newspaper in Malaysia, in terms of circulation, is The Star, with a daily volume of 290,000 to 300,000 copies. It is considered to be supportive of the Government. The headline: *Championing Malaysian education overseas* was published on 31 March 2013. The word "Championing" indicates that this story is important; the word is synonymous with "promoting" or "upholding", inferring to the readers that EMGS is supporting the position of the country abroad.

Interestingly, The Star continued to publish news on the policy change throughout the one year period, with all of the headlines reflecting that the change is positive. *IPTS feedback to improve student visa processing, New profiling process for international students, Muhyiddin: New student visa fees reasonable, Speedier visa for foreign students* were the headlines that were published and all reflect that the policy change is the latest, improved, reasonable and fast.

Malaysian Headlines (Non-Government Linked)

A minority of anti-government, independent, local newspapers did not report the EMGS policy change in a positive way. One example came from the Borneo Post, the largest English language newspaper on the island, which published the headline: *Continuous hiccups in education industry could potentially hurt profits further,* on 20 October. The use of "hiccups" infers that the EMGS system is annoying and insoluble. "Continuous" develops this further, suggesting that the system is experiencing relentless problems. Finally, there is a subtle inference, with the use of the words "hurt profits" and "further" that the system is causing

losses and will continue to do so.

Another headline published by this newspaper is: *Govt tightens monitoring of international students*. The use of the word "tightens" clearly suggests restriction and being pulled which implicates the change to be confining. Yet another is: *Students turned off by Malaysia's education hub* which uses the words "turned off" to suggest that the change is off putting to the students.

Free Malaysia Today is a popular news website founded in August 2004. It claims to have an audience larger than the New Straits Times, a major Malaysian English language newspaper and alleges the website has received over 100 million hits since its launch. Free Malaysia Today is known for its criticism of both the ruling Barisan Nasional coalition and the opposition. The headline: *Foreign students in a dilemma* was published on 16 September 2013. This headline creates a negative effect, with specific reference to "foreign students" and the fact that the policy change has created a "dilemma" for them.

The Malay Mail was once part of the New Straits Times, but now under the direction of Media Prima Berhad it has adopted a new approach. The newspaper has been in conflict with the Government, to the extent that in November 2005 the Weekend Mail was suspended by the Internal Security Ministry for breaches of press regulation legislation. The Malay Mail published the headline: *Ministries to scrutinise EMGS* inferring that EMGS is responsible for the problems with visa applications. Another headline this newspaper published is: *MMA probes complaints on foreign student check-ups*. The use of the word "probe" suggests an uncomfortable investigation into a deformity in the policy change.

Last but not least, four independent newspapers, The Malay Mail, The Edge and The Rocket and the Malaysia Kini, another independent newspaper, came out with the most provocative headlines of all: *Education Malaysia Global Services (EMGS) should be dismantled, Think it through before introducing new EMGS rules, DAP wants one-stop centre for foreign students to be abolished, Govt should dismantle EMGS, more competition for foreign students* and *Abolish EMGS, says DAP MP*. Not only did they link EMGS to the visa application problems, they also boldly suggested that stopping EMGS would be a good solution to the problems.

The overall conclusion drawn from the research is that attitudes towards the visa policy change varied according to the source of the media or newspaper reports and the powers behind them. The analysis identified four main sources: 1) Western international media; 2) Asian international media; 3) local pro-government media and 4) local independent media.
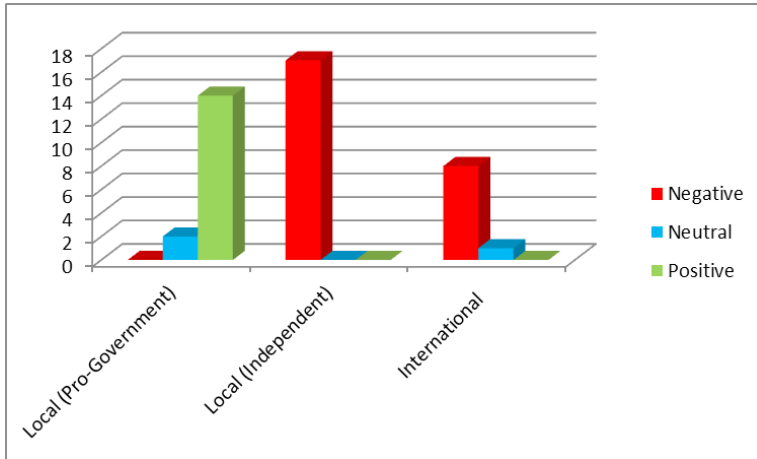
Figure 3: Comparison of Register and Source

The International sources have published headlines from two sources, Asian and Western. The Asian website was the only one reporting the policy change as a neutral topic 11.1% (n=1). A majority, with 88.8% (n=8), of the international sources published headlines that were negative. The Local (Pro-government) sources, namely newspapers with a right wing ideology published headlines which supported the policy change with 87.5% (n= 14). The third group of sources, Local (Independent) showed a clear view against the EMGS visa application policy change with an astonishing 100% (n=17) of the headlines published that were negative.

DISCUSSION

From the data compiled and analysis, it is clear how the power of media can shape the mind of the reader. News framing and the decision on which stories to publish or cover are clearly based on the source of the headlines. These sources bring their own interpretation of the news to their readers (Saran, Yee, Bolte & Ramiah, 2012).

The Sri Lankan reporting of the visa change issue is neutral. This may be because Sri Lanka is an Asian country and sees itself as a friend of Malaysia; it is also hoping to join ASEAN. In contrast, all the reporting in Western international media sources is negative. These countries, such as the UK and US, see themselves as competitors of Malaysia and both would benefit from highlighting the "them" and "us" differences and implicit suggestions that the Western visa application systems are superior. This highlights the abuse of power and dominance through discourse which can be subtle and can appear natural and acceptable until challenged (Mahfouz, 2013).

The local pro-government newspapers generally published headlines that were positive. This follows the division between "us" and "them". However, rather

than portraying "them" in a negative light, the local news reports have inferred that that the changes are positive and will aid international students' applications.

All of the headlines published on websites unconnected to the government portrayed the split between "us" and "them" as a negative issue. This suggested to the readers that the Government was weak and the policy change had not been researched correctly and was of no value. Thus, this negates "them" and shows how journalists determine the context by making choices in the subjects, the point of view from which they describe the issues and the style of their reporting (Romelyn, 2013).

The readers' views about the policy change have not been formed by consideration of the efficiency of the system or statistics. Their opinions are influenced by sources that tell them how to think, in advance, whether the policy change is positive or negative. Readers' understanding of the issues or how they remember, evaluate and act upon a problem can be influenced by frames (Youssefi, Kanani & Shojaei, 2013).

It is also important to note that striking differences were found between the interpretation of content in the articles. For example, the identical quotations appeared in two different reports covering the same subject. Whilst the same statistics were quoted the commentary on them produced diametrically opposed views. This is demonstrated by the use of the positive word "boost" in the local, pro-government report, in contrast to "downturn" in the international, Western report which has a negative connotation.

*KUALA LUMPUR, March 17 (Bernama) -- The government's aspiration of achieving its target of 200,000 international students by 2020 has been given a **boost** through the establishment of a dedicated agency to champion and lead the development and promotion of Malaysia's education and training products and services internationally.*

*UK, June 26 (Study Travel Magazine) - Combined with processing delays, some fear this could lead to a **downturn** in international student enrolments, affecting the Malaysian Higher Education Ministry's ambitious plans to attract 200,000 international students by the year 2020.*

CONCLUSION

It was anticipated that the CDA studies would demonstrate polarization in

the newspaper reporting of the EMGS policy change. This was borne out by the research which showed clear differences in the choice of subjects and the language used to frame the reports. The extent of this depended on the origin of the report, the newspaper concerned and their underlying ideology.

In Malaysia, the reporting on EMGS has been framed according to the political stance of newspapers: in a positive supportive way by the government linked media, such as The NST and The Star, and in a more negative manner in the alternative, or non-government linked media, such as Malaysiakini, Malay Mail, Borneo Post, etc. In the global media, western newspapers also highlight a negative view to the policy change, journalists construct a particular image of EMGS that influences the reader. In this study, the ideological stance of a newspaper has been the most influential for the portrayal of EMGS, which is in line with much other research conducted in the field (Khosravinik, 2010; Bonyadi, 2013; Bolte, 2014).

This paper also confirms research done in Malaysia by Pang (2006), Azlan et al. (2012) and Gill et al. (2012), that there is a strong agenda from government linked media to frame reports in a particular, pro-government way. Had the pro-government media reported with different voices and used fewer strategies of lexical choice, it would have adopted the "audi alteram partem" approach, which is in line with the ethics of proper journalism. However, it was found that other sources, such as the non-government linked newspapers and international news websites also failed to provide balanced reporting, as they only highlighted the negative aspect of EMGS and showed an "us versus them" ideology.

Hence, it is important to note the impact of these headlines on the prospective students who will be searching on the internet regarding visa applications and the recent policy change. Readers must realize their role. This is supported by van Dijk (1993) who states that "media recipients [are] active, and up to a point independent, information users" and they may form interpretations and opinions of news reports different from those the newspaper projected or implied (van Dijk, 1993, p. 242). Readers must learn to recognize sources and be critical readers of texts.

The limitation of the study was the narrow scope of the sample, which only utilized electronic media. It is advisable that researchers interested in the development of this topic view the print media, as well as superstructure schema.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Yuen Chee Keong from the School of Language Studies and Linguistics, Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia specializes in sociolinguistics and ESL/ESP particularly in workplace written communication. His research interest includes corpus investigation, discourse analysis, gender studies, and ESL/ESP teaching and learning in written communication and is currently conducting action research on how low level proficiency students of English learn using food. He has published a series of English school textbooks

and a distance learning module.

Sidra Naim is a lecturer at the College of Foundation and General Studies, Universiti Tenaga Nasional. Currently she is a postgraduate student at the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, National University of Malaysia, where she is particularly interested in conducting various researches in the areas of Discourse Analysis and Computer Assisted Language Learning.

Noor Darliza Mohamad Zamri is a lecturer at the General Studies Department, Sultan Idris Shah Polytechnic in Sabak Bernam. She is also studying as a postgraduate student at the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, National University of Malaysia, where she is researching the areas of Discourse Analysis and Computer Assisted Language Learning.

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Appendix A: Malaysian Headlines

Source	Location	Date	Headline
Bernama	Malaysia	17-Mar-13	Putting Malaysian Education On The World Map
Focus Malaysia	Malaysia	18-Mar-13	EMGS set up with good intentions
Free Malaysia Today	Malaysia	27-Mar-13	Agents cry foul over EMGS-AXA link-up
The Star	Malaysia	31-Mar-13	Championing Malaysian education overseas
The Borneo Post	Malaysia	01-Apr-13	Students turned off by Malaysia's education hub
New Straits Times	Malaysia	26-May-13	Call to control abuse of social visit visas
The Mole	Malaysia	17-Jun-13	Foreign students shying away from Malaysia
The Malay Mail	Malaysia	20-Jun-13	EMGS admits visa woes

The Malay Mail	Malaysia	01-Jul-13	Ministries to scrutinize EMGS
The Edge	Malaysia	20-Aug-13	Education Malaysia Global Services (EMGS) should be dismantled
The Malay Mail	Malaysia	20-Aug-13	DAP wants one-stop centre for foreign students to be abolished
Malaysia Kini	Malaysia	20-Aug-13	Abolish EMGS, says DAP MP
The Rocket	Malaysia	21-Aug-13	Govt should dismantle EMGS, more competition for foreign students
The Star	Malaysia	28-Aug-13	Speedier visa for foreign students
FreeMalaysia Today	Malaysia	06-Sep-13	Foreign students in a dilemma
The Star	Malaysia	16-Sep-13	Education Malaysia Global Services denies allegations that it restricts competition
The Star	Malaysia	17-Sep-13	Muhyiddin: New student visa fees reasonable
The Debating News	Malaysia	18-Sep-13	EMGS Predicament: Recent Changes In Visa Regulations
The Borneo Post	Malaysia	20-Oct-13	Continuous hiccups in education industry could potentially hurt profits further
Yahoo	Malaysia	01-Nov-13	International students 'stuck' in Malaysia
The New Straits Times	Malaysia	15-Nov-13	Enhanced process for foreign student visa applications, says EMGS
The Malay Mail	Malaysia	19-Nov-13	MMA probes complaints on foreign student check-ups
The Malay Mail	Malaysia	20-Nov-13	Think it through before introducing new EMGS rules
The Star	Malaysia	14-Dec-13	New profiling process for international students
The Star	Malaysia	15-Dec-13	Foreign students with passport problems can contact me directly, says Kamalanathan
The Star	Malaysia	17-Dec-13	Student visa woes not our fault, says Immigration dept
The Star	Malaysia	27-Dec-13	Check status of visa applications online, foreign students told
The Star	Malaysia	12-Jan-14	Online system for foreign student passes now live
The Edge	Malaysia	24-Jan-14	Visa woes stunting aspiration to be higher education hub
The Star	Malaysia	04-Feb-14	D-minus on student affairs
The Star	Malaysia	18-Feb-14	IPTS feedback to improve student visa processing

The Borneo Post	Malaysia	21-Mar-14	Govt tightens monitoring of international students
The Star	Malaysia	30-Mar-14	Monitoring activities of foreign students

Appendix B: International Headlines

Source	**Location**	**Date**	**Headline**
The Sunday Times	Sri Lanka	06-May-13	Changes in Student Visa Procedure for Malaysia
StarTravel Magazine	UK	26-Jun-13	Delays in Malaysia's new visa processing system
The Pie News	UK	29-Aug-13	Controversial EMGS announces visa "green lane"
The Pie News	UK	31-Aug-13	Malaysia tightens student visa requirements
Asia One	Singapore	15-Dec-13	Visa renewal delays cause misery for foreign students in Malaysia
The Straits Times	Singapore	27-Dec-13	Incoming foreign students face woes in Malaysia
Brunei Times	Brunei	25-Feb-14	Bruneians planning to study in Malaysia need visa
Investor News	US	24-Apr-14	International Student Visa Woes Persist