Discourse Analysis of the Representation of Migrant Workers in the *Star Online Newspaper*

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ABSTRACT

This paper is a critical discourse analysis of the representation of migrant workers in one of the widely distributed Malaysian newspapers in English namely, The Star Online.The Malaysian Government has invited both legal and illegal foreign workers under the 6P amnesty and legalization program to register themselves under the "biometric identification system" to have legal documents. This program took place in June 2011. In line with this historical event, this paper aims to examine how migrant workers are represented in the local media after this event. The main objectives of this research are: (1) to examine the ways in which the migrant workers are attributed in the online news article, and (2) to uncover the argumentation strategies employed to justify and legitimize that representation. This study will benefit from Wodak's Discourse-Historical Approach and Van Leeuwen's Socio-Semiotic Network. The study reveals that migrant workers are represented negatively in the Malaysian newspapers. They are seen as competitors to the locals in terms of job opportunities and as a threat to social security.

Keywords: Critical Discourse Analysis, Discourse-Historical Approach, Socio- Semiotic Network, migrant workers, and argumentation strategies.

1. INTRODUCTION

In principle, the goal of journalism is to spread information to people about events, opinions and current issues. Its function is highly idealized as a wide-open marketplace of ideas where opposite views meet. (Talbot, 2007) Yet in reality, it can hardly produce a neutral stance to events and characters. It promotes and circulates the ideologies of the powerful agents in the society who have the means to access to media agencies. On the other hand, journalism prejudices the other marginalized groups who have no access to media to serve the goals of the powerful elites through the use of language tools and persuasive arguments to maintain and legitimate the power of elites and to control the public opinion. (Van Dijk, 2001; Wodak, 1989)

One of the silent groups in the Malaysian media is the migrant workers. The migrant workers are those who legally or illegally migrated to Malaysia from economically less developed Southeast countries like Indonesia, Philippine, Bangladesh, Vietnamese and Nepalese

to obtain a chance of employment. They occupy the segment of low salary jobs like: agriculture, home maid service, factory workers, and security services. (Kok, 2011) According to the statistics of 2012 presented in the *Star* newspaper, the estimated number of registered migrant workers in Malaysia is 1.8 million where an estimation of 700,000 is in the manufacturing sector. The reason of the huge number of migrant workers in the country as stated by the International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Seri Mustapa Mohamed that many companies do not attract local workers because of the low wages. *(*The *Star* May 16, 2012 (M'sia aims to reduce low-skilled foreign workers). According to Lim Kit Siang online (2011), the Statistics of Labour Force in Malaysia in June 2011 from the Ministry of Labour shows that there is 1.9 million legal foreign workers in Malaysia. Based on this statistics, there are four foreign workers for every 10 Malaysian workers (Lim Kit Siang online)

Due to the economic growth in the last 15 years in Malaysia, the country has become one of the biggest countries in terms of migrant workers employment which is considered the third wave of foreign labour in Malaysia preceded by two earlier waves in1970-1985 and 1986-1998. (Kanapathy, 2006)

Due to the country's economical attraction and the huge number of migrant workers in the country who have come legally or illegally the government found the 6P legalization program to register all the foreign workers in Malaysia. In the 6P program that took place in July 2011, in which the government invited both legal and illegal foreign workers to come forward and register themselves under the "biometric identification system", the programme included "(registration), (legalisation), (amnesty), (supervision), (enforcement) and (deportation)." (The Choice newsdesk, 24 December 2011, <u>Registration of Foreign Workers Nears Deadline</u>**)**

An amnesty was offered to all foreign workers who registered under the system. In addition, they were given the choice of returning to their home countries or staying on in Malaysia.

The 6P registration allowed the illegal foreign workers to return to their jobs holding legal documents. However, the government did not intend to return all of them to their jobs. The government determined the number of workers needed to help Malaysia's economy, and granted them temporary work permits. The rest would be sent home. After the deadline of 6P programme had ended, heavy penalty was imposed towards the employers who failed to register their illegal foreign workers. As a result, more than 3.1 million foreign workers had been registered. (Anis, 2011; '6P' programme shifting to legalisation phase" 2011)

As much as the presence of migrant workers was a part of the economical growth in Malaysia, they are perceived as a social threat. (Kanapathy, 2006). The migrant workers whether they are legal or illegal are portrayed in the media in association with crime, diseases and job snatching, drug, and terrorist links. (Widyawati, 2006) Media is one of the sources of stereotyping and negative discourse.

The purpose of this study is to investigate how the media manipulates people's perception of migrant workers whether they are legal or illegal in Malaysia. This study aims to examine the ways in which the migrant workers are attributed in the online news article, and to uncover the argumentation strategies employed to justify and legitimize their representation.

Previous Studies

There is only one attempt to analyse media representation of foreign workers in Malaysia from a linguist point of view. It's a study by Widyawati (2006). She had examined how migrant workers are presented negatively in two Malaysian newspapers. In her study, she provided a detailed analysis of the representation of immigrant workers in the Malaysian newspapers. She examined *Utusan Malaysia, Metro Daily and The Star* newspapers. She addressed the question of culture attempting to find out whether the illegal immigrants from neighbouring countries who share the same culture like (Indonesia) are depicted in a differently in comparison to illegal migrant workers coming from countries that do not share the same culture like (Philippines, Vietnam and Nipal). The study shows that all the illegal migrant workers are presented badly in the Malaysian newspapers whether they have similar culture or not. Furthermore, the representation of Indonesian illegal immigrants is the worst. Male immigrant workers are described in association with crime. Therefore, Cultural similarities between the citizens and foreign workers did not help in viewing them in better terms as Widyawati (2006) suggested.

But, there are other attempts to analyse the perception towards migrant workers in the Malaysian media from a journalistic point of view. For example, Chin (1997) analyzed the way the Filipina and the Indonesian female servants are viewed as economic soldiers, criminal-prostitutes and pariah. They are seen as slave girls of the current century. According to Chin (1997), there is a public silence over the abuse of the female servants from Indonesia and the Philippines. She added that labour legislations neither protect the rights nor the benefits of these workers. She reports that in the 1970s the number of Indonesian female workers was a few hundred according to newspaper statistics. Then the number increased to 70,000 by 1994 according to the Indonesian and Philippines labour attaché in Kuala Lumpur's interview. This increase of demand for foreign female domestic workers fuelled by a stable economic growth expands the middle class. On the other hand, this increase of demands offers greater job opportunities and heightening job expectations of foreign workers.

Yet the image of Indonesian and Philippines female workers in the *News Straits Times* and the *Malaysian Mail* is the house thieves and prostitutes on the one hand and, the victim of horrific stories of physical and sexual abuse by their employers. She further suggest that these walls of silence surrounding the issue of the absence of right of those foreign workers are constructed based on certain ideologies transmitted and maintained in the Malaysian society. In other words, Chin suggests that the silence over these crimes in the rights of foreign workers is not arbitrary. This lay a bigger responsibility on the shoulders of non-government organizations (NGOs) to voice out the rights of these workers.

Chin (1997) concluded that the state and non-state actors who are responsible of regulating immigrant employment are helping in maintaining the silence over the abuse to

migrant workers. In addition, the approximation of culture between the Malaysian employers and the Indonesian maids does not prevent the employers from perceiving the foreign maids as threat to the national security. In addition, the presence of foreign female maids or babysitters is considered as status symbol for middle-class families in Malaysia. Therefore, the number of foreign maids is not expected to decrease therefore maintaining the silence over their rights. The agencies that bring these maids to the country are also responsible for maintain the image of these workers as commodities to be sold.

The issue of immigrants is entwined with the theme of citizenship and the rights of citizens as Kaur (2007) suggested. The economic and political instability in Malaysia's neighbouring countries resulted in an irregular movement on the borders of Malaysia. This resulted in the presence of legal and illegal workers also skilled and un-skilled workers in Malaysia coming from various Southeast countries. Yet Malaysia always considers the presence of immigrants as a threat to the domestic security which has an impact on its commitment to refugees and immigrants. Malaysia is one of the Southeast countries that do not have a legislation granting asylum or refugee status that corresponds with the United Nation's 1951 convention relating to the status of refugees. It neither has a system of protection to refugees and immigrants.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Data Collection

This research intends to analyse the representation of migrant workers in the Malaysian newspapers especially in the *Star* online news reports produced in English. For this purpose, the researcher has chosen the most recent articles about this topic. The selection was made from 2012-2013 articles. 67 news articles were selected from 2012 (January-December) and 36 news articles from (Jaunuary- April) 2013. The selection was based on relevance to the topic. The total number of articles is 103.

2.2 Research Design

In order to analyse the linguistic tools with their ideological goals, this research uses critical discourse analysis. CDA can be defined as a social research that relates text and discourse to social processes and social change to provide a deeper and more detailed analysis of texts and discourses by relating them. Its purpose is to systematically analyse the relationships of power and control, dominance, and discrimination as manifested in language (Wodak, 2007). There are basic principles governing CDA studies. First, CDA emphasizes that discursive practices reflect domination strategies of power elites. Second, Ideologies are constructed and disseminated through discourse. Third, Societies and individuals are constructed and contextualized through discursive practices executed using a variety of channels including the media. Forth, CDA also sympathizes with the oppressed and aims to evolve socio-political, socioeconomic and societal

practices by demystifying discourse manipulation and dissemination of ideologies through text and talk. (Kilic, 2011)

The research will benefit from the argumentation strategies in Discourse Historical Approach (Wodak, 2001) and the taxonomy of the representation of Social Actors' from Socio-Semiotic Network (Van Leewuen, 1996).

2.2.1 Discourse Historical Approach

The discourse-historical approach tries to incorporate much available knowledge about the historical sources and the background of the social and political fields in which discursive "events" or practice are embedded. In addition, it analyzes the historical dimension of discursive actions by investigating the ways in which particular genres of discourse are subject to diachronic change. Lastly, it aims to integrate social theories to be able to explain text. According to Wodak (2002), one of the main discursive strategies is referred to as "Meta strategy of Us vs. them": this strategy highlights the positive self representation and the negative other representation that take place discursively. These discursive strategies go in the flowing stages: first, labeling social actors into positive or negative atributes ; then, generalizing this positive or negative attributes, then, elaborating arguments to justify these negative or positive atributes. (Reisigl and Wodak, 2001)

Wodak (2001) has identified the following strateiges ot postive "self" respesentation and "negative" other reprsentation:

Strategies	Objectives	Devices	Examples
Reference nomination	Construction of in-group and out-groups	Membership categorization metaphors and metonymies synecdoche	Ethnification: Malaysians vs immigrants/ Indonesians ..
Predication	Labelling social actors positively/ negatively	Stereotypical, evaluative attributes of negative/ positive traits implicit and explicit predicates	Criminal/ uneducated/ low skilled
Argumentation strategies	Justification of positive/negative attributes	Topoi, Fallacies	Topos of number: percentages Topos of danger: threat to national security Topos of abuse of system:
Perspectivation framing or discourse representation	Expressing involvement positioning speaker's point of view	Reporting, description, narration or quotation of events and utterances	
Intensification	Modifying the	Intesfying or mitigating the	

or mitigation	epistemic status of a proposition	illocutionary forces of (discriminatory) utterances	

Table 1:

Argumentation Strategies:

The main purpose of argumentations is to resolve different opinions. Although there are general structural rules that govern every argument, yet there are some distinctive persuasive strategies and other strategies that are used to manipulate the argument. (Valk, 2003) The Discourse Historical Approach pioneered by Ruth Wodak had dedicated a section on argumentation strategies analysis.

Topoi or *loci* is a concept originally adopted from the classical argumentation theory of Aristotle. The literal meaning of the word is "places" or "seat of arguments". (Valk, 2003: 318) According to DHA Discourse Historical Approach, they are the obligatory parts of argumentation that connect the arguments to the conclusion. They are content-related warrants or conclusion rules". (Zagar, 2010:5) therefore, they justify the transition from the arguments to the conclusion. There are many types of topoi as shown in the following table:

1. Usefulness , advantage	9. finances
2. Uselessness, disadvantage	10. Reality
3. Definition, name-interpretation	11. Numbers
4. Danger and threat	12. Law and right
5. Humanitarianism	13. History
6. Justice	14. Culture
7. Responsibility	15. Abuse.
8. Burdening, weighting	

Table 1: List of Topoi (Zagar, 2010:6)

2.2.2 Socio-Semiotic Network

This framework deals with the media that reflect the attitude towards immigrants in Australia. It provides a useful framework to analyze all newspaper articles that deal with immigrants, refugees, marginalized groups and the silenced groups in the society who are represented in the media by the powerful agents in the way that serve their benefits leaving no room for the marginalized groups to represent themselves. It simply emphasizes on social power and how it is depicted in the text. It draws a connection between sociological and linguistic or semiotic concepts and methods. The forms of representation of social action have changed from the past to the present. Social action, according to Max Weber (1977) in Van Leeuwen (2008), is no longer oriented towards meaning and beliefs but rather towards strategies. Therefore, there are no boundaries between disciplines and specialization, rather everyone is free to merge disciplines as long as it will bring benefits. Thus, any text should be studied in a representational way that would explain who are the participants, what is the social action, what are the ideologies embodied in the text. Discourse analysis is involved not only in describing events but

also to refer to its background information making use of "background knowledge" and "activity sequence" (Van Leeuwen, 2008: p.4)

In every text, certain criteria should be considered to critically understand the text: (1) who are the participants. Van Leeuwen (2008) benefits from Halliday's functional grammar in analyzing participation of social action. (2) what is the action being described and in what sequence, (3) in what "performance mode" the action was performed; (4) the eligibility of participants, referring to the influence of the participants on the action that enables them to be part of it; (5) "representation style" that refers to how the participants are presented in the text referring to the conventional representations; (6) "time" that refers to the frequency of occurrence of the action or whether it is related to a specific or unspecific point in time; (7) "location" refers to the locations associated with certain social actions like school or home etc; (8) eligibility of conditions of the location; (9) the tools and resources used in making the social practice; and (10) the eligibility of resources. Therefore, every social practice involves linguistic and non-linguistic actions. (Van Leeuween, 2008: p.12)

In this approach, the analysis of the texts is categorized into two main categories: representing social actors, and representing social action. (Van Leeuwen, 2008) Some of the categories of Van Leeuwen Socio-Semantic network that may prove useful in this research are: inclusion and exclusion; supression and backgrounding ; and. The selection of these features will be based on the availability in the selected texts.

1. ***Inclusion and Exclusion***: refers to the representing the social action either with reference or without reference to the social actors depending on the ideologies aimed in the text. It refers to the way social actors are represented in the text. In the process of coding a social practice into the text, some of the social actors and participates in the social practice are mentioned with various degrees visibility. In some texts the social actors are not mentioned or indicated in the text what is referred to as *exclusion of social actors* which makes it difficult for readers to infer who is responsible of the social practice. For example, *"In Japan, similar concerns are being expressed about a mere trickle of Third World immigrants*" (Our Race Odyssey in Van Leeuwen, 2008:27) the text tells us that concerns are being expressed, but it does not tell us who expresses those concerns. While on the other hand, Social actors are clearly mentioned playing the role of (agent) who is the participant responsible of the social practice or as (patient or goal) which is the recipient of that practice or the participant that undergoes the practice. "*Children seek out aspects of commercial television as a consolidation and confirmation of their everyday live...*"s. verses "*television affects children's sex-role attitude...*" (Van Leeuwen, 2008) the former portrays children as the agent of social practice by seeking out aspects of commercial television while in the later, the children are portrayed as the recipient of the effect of television. (Van Leeuwen, 2008)
Inclusion and exclusion could be implicit or explicit, partial or full. Sometimes inclusion and exclusion is innocent when the participant is known to the readers by default so mentioning the participant would be a form of redundancy. While in other cases, inclusion and exclusion are ideological choices. In certain context, the agent for instance is deleted from the text for a purpose. This requires extra linguistic analysis by gathering information about the context,

text producer and the sociological circumstances in which this text is produced (Van Leeuwen, 2008). Inclusion and exclusion will be explained in the following sections.

   *Exclusion***:** there are two ways of excluding social actors: partial and full. The full exclusion of social actors is called *suppression* and the partial exclusion of social actors is called *backgrounding*.

- *Supression:* in the case of supression, the social actors are excluded and not mentioned anywhere in the text. So the text includes only the action without it's actor. As in Race Oddessey text analyzed by Van Leeuwen (2008), *"This Concern, the report noted, was reflected in sureys which showed that the level of support for stopping iimigration altogether at a post-war high."* In this example we can not infer who did the survery, which company or institution. This is because the social actor is deleted. This exclusion makes it difficult for the readiers to check the authenticity of the surveys in the text.
- *backgrounding* : it refers to the partial represntation of social actor where the actor isn't mentioned in relation to the given action but is mentioned elsewhere in the text that makes it easy to the reader to infer who they are. In other words, the social actors are deemphasized for a particular purpose.

   *Inclusion -*when social actors are visible in respect to the action they are articulated at different positions in respect to the action. Therefore, when analysing a text, it is very important to determain who is the 'agent'/ 'actor' and what is the 'goal' and whether the grammatical role given in the text is congruent to that of the social action. Because, weiters can reallucate participants in the text where some participants are given the role of 'agnet' the participent responnsible of producing the action or they are given the role of recipient of the action at the other end. This manipluation of positions is meant to serve a particular purose by giving more emphasis to one participant rather than the other (Van Leeuwen, 2008)there are two types of inclusion: *activation and passivation*.

   - **Activation & Passivation:**

When the social actor is *activated*, it is given the role of the grammatical (agent) and the doer who is responsible of the social practice in the text. On the other hand, when the participant is described as passivated, it is given the grammatical role of (goal) or 'recipient' of the social practice in the text.

3. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

   The process of analysis will undergo the following procedures: (1) Describing of the theme addressed in the extraction. (2) Identifying vocabulary, and grammatical components to identify social actors. (3) Identifying the argumentation strategies. (4) Explaining the ideologies behind the representation.

   The number of articles selected for the analysis is seven. Extractions will be explained as supporting evidence for the findings as follows:

1. MIGRANT WORKERS REPRESENTED AS COMPETITORS IN JOB OPPORTUNITIES WITH THE LOCALS:

A.": *About 50,000 foreign workers at petrol stations nationwide are expected to have their services terminated this year following the implementation of the minimum wage.*
Deputy Human Resource Minister Datuk Maznah Mazlan said the termination process would however depend on the contract between the workers and their employers. "When wages increase, we find that the employers will promote self-service in line with the rise in labour cost.
"We hope it will also attract the interest of local workers to fill part of the vacancies," she told reporters here on Tuesday."

(The Star Online (January 15, 2013) 50,000 petrol station foreign workers face termination due to minimum wage)

The text (A) adresses an important issue related to the minimum wage policy applied from the Ministry of Humann Resources, Malaysia. This policy permits every worker to earn a salay between RM 800-1000. This policy is applicable to foreign and local workers. The goverment believes that this policy should be applied equally on all workers for the welfare of economy. Yet reporters of this policy believe that the policy will benefit the low skilled workers which would affect the economy negatively. (Minstry of Human Recourse, 2012)

The general theme of the extraction (A) shows that foeign workers are expected to be terminated after applying this policy because the writer of the text expects foreign workers to be under the category of low-skilled workers. Because this is the only link between job termination and the implementation of the policy. Yet the text pomises local workers of more job opportuinites after foreign wokrers are terminated.

The text strats by stating a number of (50,000) foreign workers without referening to the source of information. The writer used a topoi of number to show that they will be many job vacancies. The structure of the sentence *"About 50,000 foreign workers at petrol stations nationwide are expected to have their services terminated"* is a passive voice where the foreign workers fall in the grammatical cateory of goal or recipient of the action of termination leaving the actor of termination abstract. So it is an example of exclusion of agent. According to Van Leeuwen, this falls under the category of passivation of social actors because the context here does not indicate who does the termination to foreign workers.

Then in the last paragraph the Minister pormisses of more job opportunites for locals without making the link between the termnation of foreign workers and the new vacancies so clear. This is done by supressing the foreign workers as a part of the action of having job vacacies. In the last paragraph the pronoun "it" in *"we hope it will attract the intrest of local workers"* is confusing. It might implicitly refer to the act of implimentation of policy or to the act of

terminating foeign workers. Also, the last statement confirms that the termination of foreign workers comes in the advantage of the locals. This according to Discourse Historical Approach is a form of topoi of advantage. That is when a certain action brings benefit to a certain social actor, it legetimize the action itself.

We can predict that the idelogy behind this text is to use the policy to benefit local workers on the expenses of foreign workers. Supporters of this ideology will use it to legitimize the termination of foeign workers for no reason other than benefiting the locals.

2. MIGRANT WORKERS AS A THREAT TO SOCIAL SECURITY

> B. *About <u>100 workers from Nepal</u> were arrested after information was received that they were planning to hold an <u>illegal protest</u> to demand for their wages.*
> *Muar police chief Asst Comm Mohammed Nasir Ramli said that the workers had planned to gather at several spots in the town to protest against their employers.*
> *"We had to stop them before they gathered as <u>they could have started a riot</u>."*
> (The Star Online (March 17, 2013) 100 Nepali workers stopped from holding protest over minimum wage)

The extraction above is informing that the police had arrested a big number of foreign workers suspects after receiving information of expected illegal protest which the police chief expected it to develop into a riot. The text is supported by the number of those foreign workers and a direct quotation of the police chief. The extraction shows a big number of foreign workers arrested. The use of the number of "*100*" is to indicate that such a huge number is enough to make a riot. According to argumentation strategies, this number is used as topoi of number to convince the readers that such a huge number can form a real riot. In addition, the identity of the foreign workers is revealed "*from Nepal*" is used to construct an "in group" of Nepal workers as opposite to 'us' referring to the Malaysians. This is under the nomination strategy. This will influence the readers in giving a negative image about foreign workers from Nepal and will associate them with violence and dangerous actions to social security. Yet the argumentation falls short in giving a complete picture of a threat. This is because the phrase "*after information was received that…*". This passive sentence does not reveal the actor of giving the information which is the base of the whole claim. In other words, putting the sentence in its passive voice helps to supress the identity of the social actor according to Van Leeuwen.

Then, towards the end of the extract, the writer confirms the "in group" of 'us' and the 'out group' of "Nepal workers" by putting it in an active voice '*We had to stop them*'. So the use of the pronouns 'we' and 'them' help to construct a mental image of a line splitting 'us' and 'them'. The social actor 'we' is activated to show power dominance over the other party. In addition, the pronouns 'we' referring to the Malaysians, is given an active role in the sentences. While the migrant workers are given a passive role except when the action is related to violence like in

'*they could have started a riot.*'' (extraction B) while the pronouns 'us' referring to 'Malaysian' is activated to give the Malaysians the role of the saviour from the foreign danger.

Also, the term "*illegal protest*" is used to delegitimize the act of protesting. It stands as an argumentation strategy of "abuse of system'.
The extract shows a link between Nepal workers and a threat to social security because as their protest is expected to lead to a 'riot'.
The ideology here is not to permit foreign workers to protest, demand or call for their rights.

Here is another example of negative representation:

> c." Penang Barisan Nasional leaders have expressed concern over the high number of foreign workers around Komtar.
> "We can see plenty of Bangladeshi and Burmese workers in places like Jalan Gurdwara and in Komtar."
> .. Former Pengkalan Kota assemblyman Lee Hack Teik said,
> "The state government should view the matter seriously as it could result in social and security problems,"

(The Star Online (January 10, 2013) Concern over growing colony of foreign workers)

In the extract (C.), the writer quotes the former Pengkalan Kota assemblyman Lee Hack Teik who expresses concerns over the presence of Bangladeshi and Brumes workers and expecting their presence to cause a social security problem. The focus of analysis will be on the quotation of Barisan National leaders "*We can see plenty of Bangladeshi and Burmese workers in places like Jalan Gurdwara and in Komtar.*"

The pronoun "We" is used to indicate a referential strategy to construct group membership as Malaysian vs. Foreigners were "we" referes to Malaysian. The pronoun is used here to indicate that the whole group of us is 'seeing' and therefore having the same concerns.

Then in the last paragraph "as *it could result in social and security problems,*" 'it' here refers to the presence of foreign workers in *Jalan Gurdwara and in Komtar*. The verb 'could' is used here to express probabilty. Here the link in this statement does not show how could the a mere presence of forign workers in a particular location cause a social and security problem. Since 'it' refers to the presence of foreign workers given an active role while there is no material action specified. Also, the whole quotation stands as an instance of topoi of danger and threat.

The ideology here is linking the presence of foreign workers to the presence of security problem. As Ajis, Keling, Shuib & Mokhtar (**2012**) in their study on the impact of the presence of foreign workers on security issues in Malaysia, they confirm that the number of

foeign workers in Malaysia exceedes the economic requirment. Therefore their presence is a threat to social security. In other words, the ideology in this extract is cofirmed by other –non lingusitc- studies. yet the Star Online article above does not provide any evidence as to why we should have concerns over the prence of foreign workers because, the writer did not indicte whether they are legal or illegal or wether they are working or not. So the fear over their presnce is not explained.

3. MIGRANT WORKERS'S NEGATIVE IMPACT ON ECONOMIC GROWTH

D. *"Malaysia aims to slash the number of <u>low-skilled foreign workers</u> in the country by around 10% to 20% over the medium term <u>as it moves towards becoming a high-income economy by 2020</u>."….*

According to International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Seri Mustapa Mohamed, <u>reducing the number of low-skilled foreign workers in the country is high on the agenda, as the huge presence of these workers has long been a major drag on Malaysia's productivity growth.</u>

"<u>We still need to import</u> foreign labour at this juncture," Mustapa said,"

The Star Online (May 16, 2012) M'sia aims to reduce low-skilled foreign workers

The extract (D) is proposing ways to improve economic growth. One of the ways is to cut down the number of foreign workers for being low skilled as their presnce will hinder the economic growth.

In the first paragraph the writer is making a generalization of giving a negative attribute to foreign workers using *'low-skilled'*. This attriubute is used to justify and legitimate the claim of the negative impact of foreign workers on economy. In contrast, the Trade Minister's statement "*We still need to import foreign labour at this juncture"* shows that Malaysia still needs foreign labour. That means, economy still needs foreign labour. The question remain, do the jobs given to freign labour require high skills? And the contrast shows between the urge of the writer to cut down the number of foreign workers using the verb 'slash", while the Ministry declares that Malaysia still needs them ' at this juncture' that is unspecified period of time.

In terms of sentence structure, *"We still need to import foreign labour* at this juncture", the pronoun 'we' is refering to Malaysians. The pronoun 'we' is put as the subject of the sentence and the actor of the action 'import'. Acording Van Leeuwen's theory, the pronoun 'we' is activated. In contrast, "foreign workers' is given a passivate role with regards to the verb

'import'. Therefore, it is treated as the recipient of the action 'import'. Thereofre, foreign workers are treated as a passive group that is being imported. Like the previous examples, the nouns and pronouns that refer to 'us' or Malaysians are given active role in the sentences while migrant workers are given passive role except when the action is related to violence like in *'they could have started a riot."* (extraction B).

Also, In terms of sentence structure in "*Malaysia aims to slash the number of low-skilled foreign workers"*, Malaysia is the agent of the verb 'aims to slash', thereofre activated, and the "foreign workers" is the goal, therefore, passivated. The activation and passivation according to Van Leewen (2008) highlights the power relation between the foerign workers and the host country.

The writer in extraction (D) is making a contrast relation between the welfare of economy to the welfare of migrant workers as a form of 'topoi of disadvantage' because the writer is tring to convey the message that Malaysia needs to eliminate foreign workers to acheive economic grwoth.

4. Negative-Self and Positive Other Representation

According to Wodak's (2002), in every discourse there is a tendency for postive self representation and negative other representation. Therefore, discourse prducers tend to find the dividing line between the 'in-group' and 'out-group' to build their arguments acccordingly. In the context of local and foreign workers, the locals are representing the 'self'group and the foreign workers are representing 'the other' group. But The representation of each of the two groups, the'self' and the 'other', takes various ways. As socail actors, they could be represented using mass nouns, or pronouns or proper nous...etc. (Van Leeuwen, 2008) For example, the goverment figures are seen as part of the group of 'self'. Therefore, if the goverment show a positive attitude toward the locals, it is seen as a positive-self representation and if the goverment figures show a negative attitude towards foreign workers, then it is a negative representation of 'the other'.

In contrast to the proposal above, the data revealed few examples prove a negative self and positive other representations. This is menifested in the speech of The Resourse Minister Datuk Seri Dr S. Subramaniam who was quoted by the Star Online commenting on the status of foreign workers in Malaysia and the map of employment between the local and foreign workers. In his statement, he was blaming the young local workers for changing jobs so frequetly and praising migrant workers for their persistence at their jobs according to extract (F) below:

> (F)"*Employers in Malaysia choose to hire foreign workers because the young local workforce are fickle-minded, said Human Resources Minister Datuk Seri Dr S. Subramaniam…*

The employers find the <u>foreign workers more reliable</u> as they are likely to stay for many years with the company,"
(Subra: Foreign workers preferred for their staying power, May 23, 2012, The Star Online)

As the Resourse Minister Datuk Seri Dr S. Subramaniam represent's the government in that context, local workers and the minister are considered as parts of the same group of 'self'. Therefore, blaming the young local workers for changing jobs by the use of 'fickled-minded' is representing the group of 'self' negatively especially in this direct compaison between the behaviours of the young locals as '*fickle-minded'* and the behaviours of the foreign workers as '*more reliable'*.

In terms of the representation of social actors, the local workers mentioned in this article are the young local workers who were represented with expressions that imply the meaning of instability using the adjective '*fickle-minded'* and the verb '*jump'* in '*jump from one company to another'.* The use of the verb '*jump'* also implies the meaning of instability as in the following extract which is the direct quotation of the Minister's speech:

(G) "Employers constantly complain that <u>local youngsters like to jump from one company to another</u> and this affects their business."
(Subra: Foreign workers preferred for their staying power, May 23, 2012, The Star Online)

In terms of the article's information structure, the information in this article is divided into two sections. The first section describes the Minister's statement about foreign workers. While the second part reports the Minster's opinion about the statement made earlier that month (May 2012) by Tenaganita executive director and PKR supreme council member Irene Fernandez in her interview with Jakarta post who stated that Malaysia is not safe for migrant workers. The article reports that the minster did not give weight to her statement saying that '*her remarks would not affect the supply of workers from abroad.".* The selection of these two issues in one article is not coincidental. The ideology of representing the young locals negatively in the first section is used to give the indication that that locals and foreign workers are treated and judged equally. Therefore, the first section is used as an argument to refute the statement of Fernandez. The Star Online in this article is using the criticism of the minster as an evidence for the government equality in judging the local and foreign workers.

5. Migrant workers' voice

Unlike the previous examples where migrant workers' voice is not heard, there were some articles that present the migrant workers' voice as in the following example:

H: *"Tabassam Shenzad, 50, from Lahore, Pakistan, said their passports were also being kept by their employer.*

"Whenever we ask for our permits, the boss always gives excuses.
"I want my work permit so that I can continue working legally here," said Shenzad.
Darshan Singh, 30, from Punjab, India, said he wanted to seek employment elsewhere.
"My family wants me to go home and get married but I can't leave as my passport is with the company's owner," he said."

(36 foreign workers conned The Star online (December 30, 2012)

Extraction (H) in contrast to the previous extractions, is narrating complains of two migrant worker from Pakistan whose passports are held by their employer preventing them from getting legal documents or going back to their home countries. This is one of the common problems migrant go throw. In terms of sentence structure, unlike the previous examples, the migrant workers are given the active role in the use of the personal pronoun '*I*' in "*I want my work permit", 'I can continue working', 'I can't leave'* and in the use of possessive pronoun '*My family*' in '*My family wants me to go home and get married'.* This extract reveals one of the problems foreign workers are blamed for whcih is the illegal presence in the country. The text highlights other actors not been introduced in the pervious examples, "*the employer*" in '*I can't leave as my passport is with the company's owner'* who are responsible of the illegal presence in the country. Employers play a crucial role in the abuse towards foreign workers by holding their document and not registering them legally. So the scene here includes three actors, 'the goverment', 'the migrant worker' and 'the employer'. So the extract is representing the employers negatively although they belong to the group of 'slef'. Therefore, it is no longer the negative 'other' representation. the extract is an attempt to listen to the voice of migrant workers expressing themelves. The ideological aspect behind interviewing and quoting migrant workers speaking about their problems is to highlight the third social actor not being emphasised earlier.

5. CONCLUSION

The data of this research reveals a lot of instances were migrant workers are represented in association with negative impact on the Malaysian society; (1) They are depicted as competitors of local workers; (2) They are depicted as a threat to social security; (3) They are seen as having a negative impact on economy. Although there were few attempts to show the migrant workers' perception and to discuss their difficult conditions, yet these attempts are few. The reason behind the negative representation of migrant worker is that they belong to the group of the 'other'. This confirms with Wodak's 'positive-self representation and negative-other representation. In the data analyzed, there was only two extracts (F) and (G) taken from the same article titled '*Subra: Foreign workers preferred for their staying power',* showed a negative-self representation.

The negative representeation of migrant workers in the *Star* online is supported by authoritative figures quotations like minister's speeches, well-structured arguemnts, stereotyping, and evaluative attributes. These strategies play an important role in spreading negative attitude twords migrant workers, constructing in/ out group identity that emphasizes the 'otherness'. From the data, migrant workers are described in association with crime, economic instability and job compition. Therefore, the 6P legaization program did not influence the representation of migrant workers due to the above reasons.

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