

## Linguistic Recognition of Grammatical Terms in Online Hard News Reports: A view from Transitivity analysis

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### ABSTRACT

The language of newspapers depicts the ideology of news institutions. The online alternative Malaysian newspaper, 'Malaysiakini', and mainstream online newspaper 'The New Straits Times (NST)' had shown different stances through grammatical terms during 100 days of Pakatan Harapan (PH), which leads to uncovering the news institutions' ideology by observing their past performances and current representation. Norman Fairclough's (1995) Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) was employed on hard news reports, which were analyzed with the Halliday Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) tool. 'Pakatan Harapan (PH)' as a political party was found as main 'doer' in '100 days' performance after winning election 2018 in both newspapers through their linguistic stances, which were collected from 5 (3,334 words) news reports from 'Malaysiakini' and 3 (2,478 words) from 'NST' based on social actor's performances on 17th and 18th August 2018. 'Malaysiakini' had maintained its neutral stance, while 'The New Straits Times' had shifted its stance towards PH in their ruling government.

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### 1. Introduction

Pakatan Harapan (PH) led by Dr. Mahathir Mohamad defeated Barisan Nasional (BN) in 14 General Election (GE14) 2018. PH has governed the country since 1957. In the leadership of former Prime Minister Najib Razak, BN's downfall marked the end of the longest-ruling coalition in a continuous span of Malaysian political history (Parameswaran, 2018). GE14 results have become historic. The BN coalition had faced declining support over the past years under the rule of Najib Razak (Parameswaran, 2018). It was observed in the 2008 elections that BN lost two-thirds majorities, and again in the 2013 elections lost the popular vote. The GE14 results showed that Pakatan Harapan (PH) coalition was able to surpass 112 of the total 222 seats required in parliament by clinching 121 seats. It gave a very effective simple majority, while BN had won only 79 seats (Parameswaran, 2018).

Pakatan Harapan (PH) was founded on 22 September 2015. The reason behind its establishment is the conflict between the Democratic Action Party (DAP) and the Malaysian Islamic Party (PAS) on the implementation issue of 'Sharia Law'. PAS split from Pakatan Rakyat and resulted in the new formation of a coalition named 'Pakatan Harapan', which consisted of People's Justice Party (PKR), Democratic Action Party (DAP), Malaysian Indigenous Party (Bersatu), and National Trust Party (AMANAH). At that time, Dr. Mahathir was head of the party of Malaysian United Indigenous Party (BERSATU) joined the coalition Pakatan Harapan on March 14, 2017. After winning GE14, Dr. Mahathir had become the Chairman of PH and led as Prime Minister, and Wan Azizah Wan Ismail was appointed as President of the party with the mutual ideology of social democracy, social liberalism, progressivism, and reformism.

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The influences and control of the ruling political party in Malaysia were always prominent. Media platforms are always considered a vital source of information dissemination. The media in Malaysia is largely controlled by several acts like The Printing and Publication Act 1984, The Official Secrets Act, and the Sedition Act, and the Internal Security Act, which restricts the media to be independent and transparent. The ruling coalition uses its power to directly or indirectly control all the mainstream media, so media reporting in Malaysia is not fair or impartial (Ho et al., 2003). The media in Malaysia by itself also applies self-censorship apart from the government's censorship acts. Generally, journalists feel hesitant to cover sensitive issues on political stories, which would offend those in power (Ho et al., 2003). To cater to all ethnic communities newspapers are being published in different languages i.e. English, Malay, Chinese, and Tamil.

The decline in newspapers' readership had been experienced in 1998-2000 in Malaysia, and that gap had been filled up by the emergence of online newspapers (Ho et al., 2003). That was the span when the first online newspaper emerged with the name 'Malaysiakini'. 'The New Straits Times' saw 34% drop in readership, while two Bahasa dailies i.e. Berita Harian faced 30% and Utusan Malaysia faced 27%, 'The Star' 6.3% while leading Chinese 1.7% drop in readership from 1990 through 2000 (Ho et al., 2003). The online web portal emerged as an effective broadcast channel in that declining phase of newspapers. To cater to the economic crises and a common belief that the 'Information Society' is both imminent and inevitable and there is no option for developing nations to hold the new technological era or they will perish (Postill, 2014). In 1996 Malaysian Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC) was launched in the country for economic reasons. Still, it continues to grow despite the political, economic, and legal constraints (Ho et al., 2003). In this regard, the comparison of alternative and mainstream newspapers would represent a clear ideological inclination towards a particular political party or social actor.

### *1.1 Role of language in political news*

In this regard, language acts as a medium within the communication process and for which design is a way and approach in making understand the communication of the social world in a verbal and written form (Aakhus, 2007). Nowadays, one cannot imagine politics without the media. It is an effective tool for the dissemination of information. The news media has become an institution of politics and politics have become mediatized by the involvement of media (Schudson, 2002). Media is considered a source of culture in the political world and key political 'kingmakers' validate or nullify various positions as media discourses (Leong, 2015). The written text emerged as an important tool in politics. Fairclough (1995) stated that texts are considered as spaces of social life, which comprises two processes socially that occur i.e. cognition process which represents the world, and social interaction. Halliday (1999) explained the language's 'context' as a notion that is useful for language investigation. The three approaches towards language i.e. political economy, social organizations' performances, and cultural traditions recognize that language is a form of culture (Schudson, 2002).

To use the power, it is seen that media platforms and their employees make policies often by opting for public opinion, particularly putting their interest, favor towards politicians and act as an interest group in society by lobbying. The wider impact of media as a tool for projection is how they are representing the social world with cultural values and relationships socially (Fairclough, 1995). Habermas (2006) stated that political communication by media involvement facilitates the deliberative legitimized process in civil society. Media acts as a 'political actor' in society, who are purposely doing actions (Page, 1996). Both politics and media in today's society have become dependable to each other and with the advancement of technology, it has taken a faster pace and much more dependable (Bagdikian, 2007). Languages are constructed by the involvement of practices of speech, writing, and beliefs (ideologies) (Joseph, 2006). Politics identifies and shapes it with interpretations and truth-value lying with the people in deciding the utterances' meaning (Joseph, 2006).

The newspapers have a very effective role, especially regarding politics. Hard news, which is the main interest of people and first-hand information, attracts readers to the current happenings of the political world. Journalists depict the reality 'as it is' leaving aside their values, misconceptions, and opinions in objective reporting for the real acceptance of the audience (Allan, 2010). 'hard news is a

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difficult concept and subject to individuals' understandings and explains it as the notion of fairness, truth, facticity, and balance (Sabao, & Visser, 2015).

The article is seeking the process of representation in news discourses. The news discourses in cultural politics have brought justification of distribution of power among the society. It is attempted to explore to what extent the news discourses were able in depoliticizing their meanings, beliefs, and values with inequalities. In the case of online newspapers, which have drawn significant attention in recent years as with textual news they facilitate readers with visuals also (Lim, 2010). Online newspapers have initiated convenience to readers in round-the-clock exposure of updated news (Papathanassopoulos, et al., 2013). To bridge the literature gap on PH performance in 100 days, the two streams of Malaysian newspapers are analyzed under the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) framework. The different stances of newspapers are analyzed through analytical tools. For that purpose 'Malaysiakini' as an alternative and 'The New Straits Times' as a mainstream online news portal's hard news of 17th and 18th August 2018 were selected based on 100 days completion of Pakatan Harapan's (PH) performance. The study focuses only on the linguistic recognition of grammatical terms in online hard news in selected mentioned dates of both newspapers.

For examining the linguistic representation of Malaysian online alternative and mainstream online newspapers, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) of Norman Fairclough (1995) was employed under the Systemic Functional Linguistic (SFL) analytical tool of Halliday & Matthiessen (2014). For that, hard news on the 100 days' completion of the PH government was selected. The social semiotic approach of van Leeuwen (2005) was framed to select news reports based on social actors.

The first alternative online newspaper 'Malaysiakini' was founded on November 20<sup>th</sup>, 1999. 'Malaysiakini' gained its reputation as an unbiased Malaysian news reporting with having to claim exclusives and scoops as most of the stories were not carried by mainstream media (Ho et al., 2003). The real importance came at the time of 'Reformasi era 1998' in which demonstrations and views were freely portrayed while struggling against the sacking of then Deputy Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim on the charges of corruption and mishandling of authority by the then Prime Minister Dr. Mahathir; secondly, it was seen by its portrayal of Bersih rally for demanding free and fair elections in November 2007 and thirdly portrayal of Hindu Rights Action Force (Hindraf) rally on November 25<sup>th</sup>, 2007 was published in which protesters' mishandling by government employees was reported (Postill, 2014). The initial three rallies' portrayal paved the way for Malaysiakini to establish its reputation as being an alternative online newspaper.

In Malaysia 'The New Straits Times' (NST) is the oldest newspaper. It was founded in 1845 and re-established in 1974. On facing the drop of readership to 34%, it came online to cater to its falling readership as quoted (Ho et al., 2003). Media Prima company is the owner of NST Press (Malaysia) Berhad, which is the largest publisher. It is the owner of three national newspapers i.e. The New Straits Times, Harian Metro, and Berita Harian. Being a government-run company it is bound to portray a positive image of the ruling government with limited exposure to the opposition. The ruling political parties in Malaysia have shares of major media bodies and they are operated through the investment arm (Sankar, 2013).

## 1.2 *Malaysian 2018 election political scenario and role of online newspapers*

The news reports are inevitably under the influence of ideology, culture, and social stratum, through which news is unable to be reported neutrally. Therefore, it is a necessary factor here for us to focus on the recent studies supporting the research. By looking at the five years (2015-2019) research it is observed that the internet is linked with the democratization processes of news production and distribution (Heer, 2019), which has been observed in Malaysian political history also. However, the comparative linguistics study of alternative and online newspapers on government's performance in 100 days is not investigated. To fill this gap of linguistics features' comparison, the research is conducted on election 2018. It is to bridge the gap of study and open up a new way for further studies in opting the same framework.

Regarding the election 2018 in Malaysia, Nadzri (2018) stated that BN's trend of credibility was seen declining in elections 2008 and 2013. Ufen (2019) was of the view that PH's success was due to a well-established coalition. There was a sea change in election 2018 (Izzuddin, 2019), where it was the end of UMNO and BN (Moniruzzaman & Farzana, 2018). In politics, print media is always considered

a vital tool of dissemination of information in Malaysia. It is believed that online newspapers have increased the productivity and market pressure, but in Malaysian political history the emergence of online newspapers emerged by a loophole in government's policies and alternative newspaper 'Malaysiakini' emerged as the first struggle toward free print journalism (Leong, 2015). Johannsdottor (2018) quoted that online newspapers of traditional newspapers are not shaped by the internet but are shaped by their institutional norms. To find out the influence of government control, linguistics analysis helps to determine the differences of the same news in two different newspapers. Online newspapers are observed creating a lot of interactivity among users. For the need of information, the interactivity with online newspapers is motivated and then user-user interactivity is driven by the social interaction need (Ksiazek et al., 2016).

In research of Author (Noor, 2015) on graduate employability issues in Malaysia on hard news, has been found different stances in the mainstream, alternative newspapers, and government documents. Different stances were based on individual institutions' ideologies. By looking from the text interpretation, the ideology of newspapers is also disclosed by the actors, who are directly or indirectly the sources in shaping the role. There is a power relation, which influences text as ideologies are closely associated with language as using language is a common form of social behavior and we mostly rely on common-sense assumptions (Fairclough, 1989). Sriwimom and Zilli (2017) found that female stereotyping is possible in media text analysis by conducting a CDA. In another similar research by Ramanathan and Hoon (2015) found that CDA is the most suitable approach to discover ideologies or disclosing the social identities of social actors. In the study of Abbotts and Givens (2015), it is stated that Anglophones media sources in Malaysia are pro-government, while; Chinese and independent sources are impartial. Asad et al. 's (2019) study shows that mainstream online newspapers in Pakistan and Malaysia serve as pro-government by switching their inclination in an existing political context in respective countries for their political private interests, while; alternative online newspapers maintain their neutral representation of social actors. In another study by Asad et al. (2019b) stated that 'Malaysiakini' maintains its reputation with unbiased coverage, while; 'The New Straits Times' observed shifted its stance towards PH. Santhanaban (2019) stated that 'NST' played as an appraiser and informant role for BN in the election 2018; while 'Malaysiakini's' coverage was regarded as based on facts and truth. The comparison of two streams of newspapers gives an interesting combination to discover the ideologies of newspapers in the first 100 days of PH in government by applying SFL. According to Santosa (2009) that SFL provides a bigger portion in the amalgamation process of concepts of genres. Further, he elaborated that the journalists' attitude is found embodied in the evaluative attitudinal lexis that can be explained directly by the journalist or other actor in the text (Santosa, 2017).

## 2. Methods

News reports were selected based on social actors in which 'Dr. Mahathir', 'Najib Razak, Pakatan Harapan (PH) and Barisan Nasional (BN) were taken as social actors. The total number of news reports on '100 days performance of PH' under specified dates are 17th and 18th August 2018. The news reports in 'Malaysiakini' were five - 5 (3,334 words), while; from 'The New Straits Times', 3 (2,478 words) news reports were selected. The total number of words in 8 news reports was 5,812. On 17th August 2018, PH completed its 100 days' governance, and being as the latest news of the day and the next day as a follow up of PH 100 day's performance gives a fair idea of coverage in comparing stances of both online newspapers.

The clauses were identified per the roles of transitivity analysis (e.g. Actor, Goal, Sayer, Verbiage, etc.). The grammatical analysis is used to analyze the participants in a clause e.g. the 'doer' or 'Actor' is taken in an action clause (with the action verb). Sayer or speaker took in a saying clause (with a reporting verb). Van Leeuwen's (2005, 2008) framework was employed via activation and passivation roles. Social actors' performance was realized through 'circumstantialization' which was presented by prepositional or adverbial phrases in a clause. The actors were analyzed through the activated positions in a clause. Passivation role was analyzed in a beneficiary role where the actor was going through the activity in a receiving end. The context was analyzed through the Critical Discourse Analysis framework in which context is considered the main influential factor on the text representation. The data was pasted on an Excel spreadsheet by allotting different categories of participant role, social

actor in a clause, all six processes (material, verbal, mental, relational, behavioral, and existential) along with the activation and passivation columns. Each role of the social actor against each process, activation, and passivation were calculated and percentages were taken out. In this way, it allows identifying the patterns at the levels of ‘discursive patterns’ with the relation of its context.

### 3. Results and Discussion

This study examines the representation of four social actors about their actions and considers their actions in the category of activation and passivation (Table 1). In selected social actors’ percentage representation, ‘Najib Razak was not included as it was not mentioned in the doer’s role in any news. ‘Dr. Mahathir’, ‘PH’ and ‘BN’ were observed playing most of the roles as selected social actors. In the current study, most occurrences of ‘PH’ were found in the ‘activation’ role. 45 occurrences of ‘PH’ appeared in ‘Malaysiakini’ (55%), ‘Dr.Mahathir’ with 22 occurrences (27%), and ‘BN’ with 15 occurrences (18%). ‘Malaysiakini’ represented ‘PH’ as a main ‘doer’ with the highest percentage showing the whole political party’s performance as a whole. While in the ‘passivation’ role, ‘PH’ was shown with 15 occurrences (75%) in a beneficiary role, ‘Dr. Mahathir’ with 2 occurrences (10%) and then ‘BN’ with 2 occurrences (11%) respectively.

Table 1. Role Allocation of social actors

	Role Allocation	Dr.Mahathir	Pakatan Harapan	Barisan Nasional
Malaysiakini	Activation Total=85	22 (27%)	45(55%)	15 (18%)
	Passivation Total=19	2 (12%)	15 (75%)	2 (13%)
The New Straits Times	Activation Total= 53	7 (13%)	40 (76%)	6 (11%)
	Passivation Total=56	10 (18%)	35 (62%)	11 (20%)

In ‘The New Straits Times’, ‘PH’ was found with most 40 occurrences (76%), ‘Dr.Mahathir’ with 7 occurrences (13%), and ‘BN’ with 6 occurrences (11%) in the ‘activation’ role. In the ‘passivation’ role ‘PH’ again was represented as an ineffective role with 35 occurrences (62%), ‘B N’ with 11 occurrences (20%), and ‘Dr. Mahathir’ with 10 occurrences (18%) respectively. Some of the samples of the highest representations of ‘PH’ as a social actor in the main activation and passivation roles in both newspapers are shown in tables 2-5. The excerpts from Malaysiakini with clausal analysis are explained below.

*Malaysiakini 237* [[“The Harapan government has been confusing the rakyat]] [[by hiding behind the excuse of having to bear a large national debt (and thus could not) fulfill its 100-day promises]

*Malaysiakini 149* [[On the PTPTN loans, the abolition of the blacklist was undertaken]] [[from May 24, to June 8, 2018, and involved 429,945 borrowers]]

Table 2. PH activation in Malaysiakini

(37) The <u>Harapan government</u>	has been <u>confusing</u>	the rakyat	[[by hiding behind the excuse of having to bear a large national debt (and thus could not) fulfill its 100-day promises]]
<b>Actor</b>	<b>Material Process</b>	<b>Participant (Goal)</b>	<b>Circumstance</b>
	Dr. Mahathir in activation role in Material process		
(38) [[On the <u>PTPTN loans</u>	the <u>abolition</u>	of the blacklist	was <u>undertaken</u>
<b>Scope (participant)</b>	<b>Material Process</b>	<b>Goal</b>	<b>Material Process</b>
[[from May 24, to June 8, 2018]]	involved	429,945 borrowers]]	-
<b>Circumstance</b>	<b>Material Process</b>	<b>Recipient (participant)</b>	-
Pakatan Harapan was taken an activation role in the Material process			

Clause 237 explains Dr. Mahathir in the activation role. His actions were analyzed by the verbs such as *'has been confusing'*. The newspaper quoted his statement in quotation marks. A whole excerpt can be taken as a whole in the analysis according to Halliday and Matthiessen (2014). The spoken quoted words are taken as a whole in the 'Verbiage' participant role of an actor. A separate analysis of the clause that is determined by the process, participant, and circumstance can be seen in the analysis in table 2. It could be observed that PH has been represented as an 'actor' and 'doer' in a clause that makes it an activation role. Excerpt 38 explains 'PH' in the material process with participant roles of 'Scope' (on the PTPTN loans), 'Goal' (blacklist), and 'Recipient' (429,945 borrowers). The below excerpts explain the passionate role of the social actor in 'Malaysiakini'.

*Malaysiakini 125*      [[The **implementation** of the *High-Speed Rail (MyHSR)* was **deferred**]] [[on May 30, 2018]].  
*Malaysiakini 145*      [[the **leadership** at Felda and Tabung Haji were **revamped** on May 14, 2018]].

Table 3. PH passivation role in Malaysiakini

(125) [[The <b>implementation</b> of the <i>High-Speed Rail (MyHSR)</i> was <b>deferred</b> ]] [[on May 30, 2018]].			
<b>Affected (participant)</b>	<b>Material Process</b>	<b>Circumstance</b>	
MyHSR in passivation role under PH government initiative			
(145) the <b>leadership</b>	at Felda and Tabung Haji	were <b>revamped</b>	on May 14, 2018
<b>Affected (participant)</b>	<b>Goal (participant)</b>	<b>Material Process</b>	<b>Circumstance</b>
Leadership has taken in 'PH' role of passivation under the government's initiative			

Excerpts 125 and 145 explain the role of PH in government. The initiatives of PH were explained by mentioning 'MyHSR' in the affected participant role as its implementation is deferred due to a financial crisis. On the other hand, PH initiative of revamping is highlighted and praised in clause 145 by placing 'leadership' in 'affected' participant role in the case of Felda and Tabung Haji that is placed under 'Goal'. Mentioning dates of revamping highlights the 'circumstance' in a clause that explains the exact details of revamping. Besides, in 'NST' the passive role of 'PH' is analyzed below in table 4.

*NST 168*      At the moment, [[this **policy** only **focuses** on civil servants]].  
*NST 162*      [[To **combat** money politics, a *Political Funding Bill* is being **drafted**]].

Table 4. PH activation role in NST

(168) At the moment      [[this <b>policy</b> only <b>focuses</b> on civil servants]]			
<b>Circumstance</b>	<b>Actor</b>	<b>Material Process</b>	<b>Scope (participant)</b>
PH in activation role			
(162) To <b>combat</b>	money politics	a <i>Political Funding Bill</i>	is being <b>drafted</b>
<b>Goal (participant)</b>	<b>Scope (participant)</b>	<b>Actor (participant)</b>	<b>Material Process &amp; Circumstance</b>
PH in activation role			

Excerpts 168 and 162 explain 'PH' in activation role by 'NST'. 'NST' also represented 'PH' extensively by highlighting its initiatives. Such as the word *'this policy'* places it in the 'Material' process with an 'actor' participant role. The policy was about exchanging and receiving gifts in civil service. Another initiative of 'PH' was mentioned such as *'Political Funding Bill'*. 'PH's initiatives were highlighted to control the flow of money with checks and balances. Table 5 explains 'PH' in the passive role in 'NST'.

*NST 138*      [[We also **succeeded** in **securing a pardon**]] [[for Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim as we had[promised]].  
*NST 140*      The [[**anti-corruption and integrity institutions** have been **strengthened**]].

Table 5. PH passivation role in NST

(138) We	also <u>succeeded</u> in <u>securing</u>	a <u>pardon</u>	for Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim	As	we	had promised.
<b>Actor (participant)</b>	<b>Material Process</b>	<b>Goal</b>	<b>Client &amp; Circumstance</b>	<b>Scope (participant)</b>	<b>Actor (participant)</b>	<b>Material Process</b>
PH in passivation role						
(140) The <u>anti-</u> <u>corruption</u> <u>and</u> <u>integrity</u> <u>institutions</u>	have been	<u>strengthened</u>				
<b>Recipient (participant)</b>	<b>Material Process-Circumstance</b>					
PH in passivation role						

Excerpts 138 and 140 show ‘PH’ in passivation roles. Dr. Mahathir is observed in praising PH’s taken measures in securing a pardon for Anwar Ibrahim and strengthening anti-corruption and integrity institutions. Dr. Mahathir referred to his party by saying ‘we’ and placing the collective efforts under PH. Similar findings are found in the research of Dawari and Moini (2016), they had aimed to investigate the male and female social actors as per their roles and gender identities in English Language textbooks. Male actors were found more successful, active, and autonomous as compared to female social actors by their representation. The dominant role of men in society has given the authority to men to show their power as in present research, PH is presented as a powerful authority as a ruling government. Asad et al. (2019b) findings are supporting the results that represented the influence of the ruling government on mainstream online newspapers that portrayed the government positively by prominent coverage leaving aside the opposition. Another study of Asad et al. (2019c) supporting the findings where Pakistani mainstream newspaper ‘The News’ shifted its inclination in representing Pakistan Tehreek –e- Insaaf (PTI) in existing Pakistani political culture by leaving aside the aggressive enmity of the past and come up with comparison with past government’s performance for their safe political and economic survival.

In another research based on social actors, Noor (2015) aimed to expose the social actors related to the issue of graduate employability by applying the CDA and SFL framework. The findings revealed the Malaysian ethos of media and bureaucratic discourse, where the government has always been powerful in the determination of the future of the graduates more than the universities and the industry. The study revealed that Malaysian media culture and the government’s policies on media showed the power relation of the government in handling issues. Foucault’s (1980) theory of power relation (ideology) also supports the findings that power is initiated by people be it episodic or sovereign acts, and it comes from everywhere.

Transitivity analysis showed that the social actors were involved in different roles of a participant. In ‘Malaysiakini’ ‘Dr. Mahathir was presented with 23 occurrences as ‘Sayer’ (82%), 2 occurrences (7%) as an ‘Actor’, ‘Verbiage’ with 2 occurrences (7%), and ‘Phenomena with 1 occurrence (4%). The result showed that ‘BN’ labeled ‘Actor’ with 7 occurrences (41%), ‘Sayer’ with 4 occurrences (24%), ‘Verbiage’ with 5 occurrences (29%), and ‘Goal’ (6%) with 1 occurrence. ‘PH’ was represented with 23 occurrences (43%) as an ‘Actor’ and with 8 occurrences (15%) in a ‘Sayer’ role.

On the other hand, ‘NST’ presented ‘Dr. Mahathir’ the most in ‘Verbiage’ role with 8 occurrences (42%) and as a ‘Sayer’ with 5 occurrences (27%). ‘PH’ in the role of ‘Goal’ is presented highest by ‘NST’ as with 21 occurrences (30%). The newspaper quoted ‘PH’ with 7 occurrences (10%) in the ‘Verbiage’ role and with 7 occurrences (10%) in the ‘Affected’ role. The newspaper evaluated ‘PH’ achievements and highlighted them the most. While ‘BN’ with 4 occurrences (21%) were associated with the ‘Goal’ role. The summary of transitivity processes in which social actors were involved in the current study is presented in tabular form (Table 6 and 7).

Table 6. Transitivity Results in 'Malaysiakini'

Process	Dr.Mahathir	Pakatan Harapan	Barisan Nasional
Material	5 (12%)	70 (75%)	10 (38%)
Mental	0	0	0
Verbal	34 (85%)	20 (22%)	16 (62%)
Relational	1(3%)	3 (3%)	0

Table 7. Transitivity Results in 'The New Straits Times'

Process	Dr.Mahathir	Pakatan Harapan	Barisan Nasional
Material	5 (25%)	46 (68%)	11 (61%)
Mental	1(5%)	7 (10%)	1 (6%)
Verbal	12 (60%)	9 (13%)	2 (11%)
Relational	2 (10%)	6 (9%)	4 (22%)

In 'Malaysiakini', 'Dr. Mahathir' as an 'Actor' falls under the 'Sayer' category that occupies the highest role as 82% was associated with 'Sayer'. The newspaper quoted exactly the source from whom it was associated. From the findings, it was found that 'PH' had played the most activated role by 75% performance falling under the 'Actor' role. On the other hand, NST also placed and quoted 'PH' as the main actor by having a 46% role as a performer. Being in the mainstream media, the performance of 'PH' in 100 days was given more coverage than the previous government (BN). In comparison, BN was found with only 11% in the 'Actor' role. The 'NST' newspaper showed more inclination towards 'PH' by higher representation. In '100 days performance of PH,' it was found that the focus of alternative online newspapers was also on the present ruling party as a 75% role was associated with 'PH' as an 'Actor'. Concerning similar findings, which were found in the study of Kheirabadi and Moghaddam (2012) also showed that Iranian social actors were portrayed as irrational whereas; western actors as peace seekers and logical in international news agencies by their percentages. There was an obvious ideological and political attitude in representing the news stories about US-Iran clashes on nuclear programs and the reader took out the presented representation of news. Similar findings were also found in the study of Ramanathan and Hoon (2015) that newspapers represented the highest group positively in the current environment.

About the findings of both newspapers in the current study, the journalists had used direct quotations that reflected the incontrovertible fact (Bell, 1991). It is strong evidence by direct quoting, which can be retrieved anytime and secondly a journalist and news outlet make themselves disowned from the endorsement of the saying source (Bell, 1991). This makes a journalist control by focusing the story with the combination of information and wordings (Bell, 1991). The words such as, 'Mahathir said', 'he said', 'he vowed', 'the government believes', 'the government has decided', 'the prime minister said', 'Mahathir noted', 'we had promised', etc. were used in 'Malaysiakini' that shows the extensive usage of Dr.Mahathir's representation from PH in quoted statements. On the other side, 'NST' used words such as, 'Dr.Mahathir Mohamad said', 'he said', 'Dr.Mahathir announced', 'we had promised', 'the government has decided', 'the government believes', 'we are willing', etc. The actions were analyzed in transitivity analysis in clauses that were associated with the social actor.

Dr.Mahathir was criticizing the BN government for harping racial and religious politics to raise negativity about PH. He was of the view that each appointment was made in the government in the name of religion and race which is condemned. Malaysiakini quoted Dr. Mahathir on BN criticism e.g. *Malaysiakini 13* [["The laws they formulated were aimed]] [at making them invulnerable and suppressing their adversaries for no reason]]. [The newspapers and media owned by them were used to cover up their misconduct and lies,"]]



Table 8. Dr. Mahathir in Verbiage role of participant

The laws	they	formulated	were aimed	at making	them
<b>Scope (participant)</b>	<b>Actor (participant)</b>	<b>Material Process</b>		<b>Material Process</b>	<b>Goal (participant)</b>
invulnerable and suppressing	their	adversaries for no reason		The newspapers and media	owned
<b>Circumstance</b>	<b>Carrier (participant)</b>	<b>Attribute -Relational Process</b>		<b>Client (participant)</b>	<b>Material Process</b>
by them	were used to cover-up	Their		misconduct and lies	
<b>Scope</b>	<b>Material Process</b>	<b>Client (participant)</b>		<b>Attribute (participant)</b>	
Dr. Mahathir in Verbiage participant role					

He was of the view that laws were made for BN's benefits and favors and owned media were being used for covering their misdeeds (Table 8). The spoken words are taken in the 'Verbiage' category according to Halliday and Matthiessen (2014). Further, he was on the view that the BN administration was compelled to promote their party as reported in Malaysiakini e.g' *Malaysiakini 15* [[Mahathir said his administration found]] [[that all government departments were intimidated by the previous administration and compelled civil servants into promoting BN. Their debt totalled a trillion ringgit, a figure unheard of before.]]

Table 9. Dr. Mahathir in Sayer role

Mahathir	Said	His	administration	found	that all government departments were intimidated by the previous administration and compelled civil servants into promoting BN
<b>Actor</b>	<b>Verbal Process</b>	<b>Carrier &amp; Verbiage</b>	<b>Verbiage</b>	<b>Process</b>	<b>Attribute-Circumstance</b>
Their	debt totalled	a trillion ringgit	a figure	unheard	of before
<b>Recipient</b>	<b>Attribute</b>	<b>Circumstance</b>	<b>Phenomena</b>	<b>Sensor (Mental Process)</b>	<b>Circumstance</b>
Dr. Mahathir in Sayer role					

While explaining the previous government's performance, Dr. Mahathir argued that BN was in denial of their misconduct and accepted millions of money belonging to their party but the money flow was never explained. He further stated that a huge financial burden was applied to the present government by BN that could bankrupt the government. Dr. Mahathir was proud of the great success of PH in Malaysian political history as the first time other than BN any party was able to win the election. This victory was beyond any comparison as it was achieved without any bloodshed or clashes. Dr. Mahathir was found fully determined to improve the policies of gifts exchange, freedom of the press, abolition of abuse of power, corruption, and theft of money. He stated that the PH government would be responsible for respecting citizens; appreciated PH good governance; PH's determination to keep struggling for the integrity of Malaysia; PH established Special Cabinet Committee on Anti-Corruption (JKKMAR); established the Governance; Integrity and Anti-Corruption Centre (GIACC); actions to be taken against those who misuse official funds; Political Funding Bill was being drafted under PH government; appointments would be on merits; guidelines on the declaration of assets applies; PH abolished Goods and Service Tax (GST) and moved to restore Sales and Service Tax (SST); abolition of unreasonable debts on Felda settlers, etc. Dr. Mahathir praised PH official's performance in 100 days and was determined to fulfill all pledges of PH manifesto with the passage of time for the Malaysian citizens as given mandate to them by the people of Malaysia. He stated that to fulfill the mandate, PH needs to have more time than 100 days as huge financial debt was placed on the government by the previous BN government. On the other hand, 'NST' also reported the same speech

of Dr. Mahathir by quoting him mostly. Dr. Mahathir was of the view that PH will never react to criticism as all are human beings and we all are capable of making mistakes. PH showed a combined agreement on the system as Dr. Mahathir stated e.g.

**NST 235** [*The ruling coalition hangs together in part because all of its parties have agreed to uphold this system*]].

**NST 237** [*“Politicians fear a backlash from Malay voters should their privileges be curtailed.”*]]

Table 10. PH and Dr. Mahathir in Material and Verbiage roles

(235) The ruling coalition	hangs together in part	because all of its parties have agreed to uphold this system.		
<b>Actor (participant)</b>	<b>Material Process</b>	<b>Circumstance</b>		
PH in Material process				
(237) Politicians	fear	a backlash	from Malay voters	should
<b>Sensor (participant)</b>	<b>Mental Process</b>	<b>Phenomena (participant)</b>	<b>Client (participant)</b>	<b>Process</b>
their	privileges be curtailed			
<b>Recipient (participant)</b>	<b>Scope -Circumstance</b>			
Dr. Mahathir in Verbiage participant role				

Excerpt 235 explains the ‘Material’ process where ‘ruling coalition’ is shown performing as an ‘actor’ in a clause. In excerpt 237, ‘politicians’ are in the ‘Sensor’ participant role where they are afraid of backlash from Malay voters on their privileges. It was found that both newspapers reported Dr. Mahathir’s speech in detail and quoted him mostly with exact wordings as said. In both newspapers, Dr. Mahathir was found praising his government’s efforts and determined to fulfill PH’s promises. The criticism of the previous government of BN was found in both newspapers. In the current study, it was found that the achievements and future goals were associated with the source. The inclination towards one political party was prominent by the representation of text as shown in the study as ‘Malaysiakini’ focused on making prominent ‘PH’ as a collective effort in 100 days of its performance with 23 occurrences as main ‘doer’; whereas ‘NST’ also shown ‘PH’ as a collective political party’s performance with 16 occurrences on the same issue.

This shows how much both newspapers were looking for the performance of ‘PH’ after the 2018 elections’ results which took a historical turn by making ‘PH’ win and abolishing the rule of ‘BN’, who was in power since the independence of Malaysia. Both newspapers were focusing on the ‘PH’ political party’s performance much more than an individual ruler’s performance. The findings were similar to Kee et al. (2017) as the ruling government had a more positive and maximum presence in their controlled media groups. Similar findings were found in the study of Chen (2014), where the main existing ‘doer’ was presented at maximum. The study also supports Foucault’s (1980) notion of power in which he was of the view that power is a relation of force. Due to being in a powerful position, importance was given to PH in both newspapers as a prominent ‘doer’.

However, utterance (spoken language) is dependent and constrained within history, social practices, and linguistic structures (Scollon, 1999). The way news was presented leaves an impression on the reader to grasp news and by its representation showing the depth and chain of attached social impressions with it. The findings are supporting the answers to research objectives 1, 2, and 3 by the role and percentages of ‘PH performance in 100 days in different categories (roles). Discourses are considered as social cognitions by knowing socially with the specific ways of social practices (van Leeuwen, 2008). They are and can be used for representing social practices in the text as a resource (van Leeuwen, 2008). On this basis, the social actors are analyzed in the current study.

This is a new concept to use a combination of ‘NST’ (mainstream online media) and ‘Malaysiakini’ (alternative online newspaper) to study ‘PH 100 day’s performance in 2018’. Therefore, in contextual implication, the study highlights the influential factors that affected the text to be presented in the current form. In the practical implication, the study gives a detailed insight into the representation of newspapers and the influence of political power. From the textual and theoretical implications, the study fills the gap where no recent study found on 100 days performance of PH via CDA, Transitivity analysis, and socio-semiotic analysis. The significance of the study lies in the comparison of alternative and mainstream newspapers. The students would be able to apply the same framework in finding the

ideologies of newspapers. Further suggested study can be conducted in keeping the perspective of CDA and SFL with the combination of other mainstream and alternative online newspapers of Malaysia on any particular performance of 'PH' or any other political party of another country on a particular issue to evaluate the newspapers' stances in existing media cultures.

#### 4. Conclusions

To sum up, the study has given a conclusion that 'PH' has received the highest role representation in 'Malaysiakini' and in 'The New Straits Times' under 'Material process'. Both newspapers had emphasized the political parties and associated the actions with political parties a lot instead of a particular ruler. Thus, 'PH' is taken as 'Actor' in both news reports and associates all actions with it. In both newspapers 'Najib Razak' as a social actor was not found in any category.

All previous government's affiliated tasks were associated with 'BN' instead of former Prime Minister Najib Razak. Dr. Mahathir was a head of government then was portrayed and quoted in the verbal process and the participant role of 'Verbiage' and 'Sayer'. Both newspapers had dealt the 100 days completion of 'PH' as 'hard news' and support the reporting with actual source by the representation of inscribed attitudes by rhetorical markers that shows the ideology of newspapers in representing the hard news as objective reporting (Asad et al., 2021). The presentation of news shows the attached social impressions that are effectively figured out through CDA, SFL, and socio-semiotic analysis. Both newspapers had represented 'PH' positively by highlighting their measures taken. They had taken social actors to represent their views directly instead of a journalistic voice.

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