LEADERSHIP SPECTRUM CONSTRUED IN INAUGURAL SPEECHES BY MALAYSIAN AND FRENCH PRIME MINISTERS

*1Dinie Asyraf Salehan, 2Mohammad Fadzeli Jaafar & 3Suziana Mat Saad

1 Pusat Bahasa, Universiti Pertahanan Nasional Malaysia,
   57000 Kem Sungai Besi, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.
2,3 Pusat Kajian Bahasa & Linguistik, Fakulti Sains Sosial dan Kemanusiaan,
   Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 43600 Bangi, Selangor, Malaysia.
   *Corresponding author: dinieasyraf@upnm.edu.my

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ABSTRACT

Background and Purpose: Language is a form of discourse utilised in various situations, including leadership. Across borders, inaugural speech represents a common form of discourse delivered by leaders as an introductory address to their audiences. The theme of leadership is central to inaugural speeches and it is influenced by or/and influencing social aspects. This study aims to analyse leadership spectrum, namely attributes and agendas, as construed in discourse from the linguistic and social aspects.

Methodology: This study compares inaugural speeches by the Ninth Prime Minister of Malaysia, Ismail Sabri Yaakob and the Twenty-Fifth French Prime Minister, Elisabeth Borne through the application of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) by Fairclough (2010).

Findings: In total, the leaders utilised 21 clauses which can be interpreted for their attributes and agendas. The discourses by both leaders reveal five attributes and six agendas. Some of the attributes are shared between the leaders, with differences exist in other attributes and agendas. Further explanation links those attributes and agendas to social aspects in Malaysia and France.
Contributions: This study contributes to a new domain in Malaysia-France comparative research and the study of inaugural speeches. In which case, it examines opaque leadership spectrum in discourses by Malaysian and French leaders through the lens of critical discourse analysis (CDA).

Keywords: Critical discourse analysis, inaugural speech, leadership spectrum, Malaysia, France.


1.0 INTRODUCTION

As a primary medium of human communication, language is functional (Aman, 2011). Therefore, language operates to achieve certain goals in social situations including leaders who use language in the form of discourse to fulfil various objectives. Fairclough (2010) demonstrated that discourse with power, such as speeches by leaders, can be characterised as being promotional when there is an absence of debates or dialogues. Hence, as a type of promotional discourse, inaugural speech is utilised by leaders to avoid dissent and resistance from the audience. In doing so, the direction through which the discourse is intended would be in their favour especially in publicizing themselves and presenting their proposals for the benefits of their subjects.

Inaugural speech is the first speech made by individuals after being appointed to important positions (Olajoke, 2015). This speech is targeted to the whole mass, encompassing both supporters and opponents. It is a worldwide practice, Malaysia and France included - two distinct countries with unique linguistic and cultural characteristics. It holds importance as a means for leaders to share their wide range of leadership aspects or leadership spectrum comprising ideology, leadership style, vision, future planning and self-promotion (Amir, 2022; Bani-Khaled & Azzam 2021; Chen, 2018; Sharma & Jain, 2013). The leadership spectrum constructed by social conditions like life experiences and external pressure (Western, 2012) is often internalised and normalised within discourses that it becomes hidden and reaches neutrality.

Malaysia and France are characterised by different cultures and languages; yet, these countries share certain social aspects related to power, namely the administrative practice of having a prime minister as the head of government. Prime ministers, like other political actors and leaders, resort to many ways to interact with people both locally and internationally.
Inaugural speech is one of the methods. As mentioned before, speeches may contain leadership spectrum and an analysis of speeches by leaders from two dissimilar countries such as Malaysia and France could exhibit similarities and differences either in linguistic or social aspects.

As for messages in discourse, underlying messages are often concealed within the production of discourse. For example, history has witnessed the portrayal of communism in a positive light against democracy through implicit manners in discourse as an effort to promote the ideology (Wodak & Meyer, 2009). The example shows that by implication, discourse is used to create an image that is in favour with the direction set by the speakers, which may include attributes of leaders and agendas set by them. Linguistic scholars who monitored this language phenomenon have then introduced Critical Discourse Analysis (henceforth known as CDA) as a tool or framework to bring forward the real message in discourses, including explanation of leadership which may begin from description and interpretation of forms of texts (Fairclough, 2010). Thus, this study is conducted with the objective to analyse leadership spectrum, namely attributes and agendas in inaugural speech of Malaysian and French prime ministers. The analysis involves description of linguistic elements that act as cues in text, interpretation of leadership spectrum lying behind the cues, and explanation of social contexts linked to the leadership spectrum it represents.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 CDA on Inaugural Speech

Inaugural speech, also known as ucapan sulung in Malay and discours d’investiture in French, is a type of discourse delivered by a leader for the first time after being appointed to an important position. Since inaugural speech is an opportunity for leaders to utilise language in addressing issues, researchers have conducted studies investigating the language use and its linkage to social aspects within the sphere of critical discourse analysis (CDA). Notable CDA studies on inaugural speeches were conducted on discourses by leaders from the United States (Amir, 2022; Pramadya & Rahmanhadi, 2021; Hassan, 2018; Sameer, 2017; Biria & Mohammadi, 2012), Nigeria (Olusola, 2020; Nnamdi-Eruchalu, 2017; Balarabe, 2018), Ethiopia (Nigatu & Admassu, 2023), Algeria (Kouider, 2020), Ghana (Kpeglo & Giddi, 2022), the Philippines (Costales, 2021) and Iraq (Oda et al., 2021). These studies carried out analyses by describing, interpreting and/or explaining the discourses following the dimensions of CDA by Fairclough (2010). The description process has identified linguistic elements incorporated in speech texts such as pronouns, negative and positive imageries, modalities, metaphors, idioms, word repetitions, personifications, tenses and transitivities. The interpretation of the
use of these linguistic elements has revealed leadership spectrum such as the portrayal of self and others, demands, ambitions and plans. The explanation process further links the spectrum with social aspects, including real social situations, ideologies, persuasion and power.

These studies have enabled researchers to operate a critical analysis to reveal the linguistic devices underlying the language of inaugural speeches which are pertinent to the interpretation and explications of leadership spectrum and social aspects. Such approach could be of relevance in exploring new avenues especially when comparing speeches from countries not previously explored.

2.2 Malay-French Comparative Studies

Comparative study has been conducted to determine whether there are universalities or varieties between languages (Haspelmath, 2010). For instance, several studies have been conducted with the objective of comparing the contexts in Malaysia and France. One such study is a comparative study of the national language of Malaysia and France: Malay and French, respectively. For instance, studies by Choi (1991), Omar and Hassan (2021) and Hassan and Mohamad (2014) have compared the linguistic aspects in Malay and French, namely word order, verbal system and support verbs. In analysing Malay-French translations, Aziz et al. (2021) along with Aziz (2014), identified the lexical semantics of cultural identity. Haroon (2022) as well as Zainol and Haroon (2019) touched on fidelity issues in indirect translation, while Malik et al. (2019) explored issues in translating conjugation. Metaphors in Malay and French have also been the focus of studies conducted by Saad et al. (2018), and Salehan et al. (2018).

These studies analyse the elements in each language to reveal any similarities and differences, contributing to a bridge between these two languages. Moreover, these studies show the possibility for Malay-French comparative study to be extended further, such as studies on CDA, as this domain delves into language use in the form of discourse and its functions in society.

2.3 Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as an approach in this study focuses on analysing language use in real life and real time situations. If pure linguistics stresses on studying language based on intuitive data, CDA is a branch of applied linguistics that looks into language in reality. CDA is a continuation and development of discourse analysis but with a critical approach to
investigate hidden or solid matters in language, such as ideology and power strength (Aman, 2010).

The foundation of CDA comes from the school of Marxism which criticised the relation of power and new capitalism. However, this criticism is lacking in the framework of systematic language analysis to investigate the link between power and new capitalism, especially on the issues of ideology and hegemony. These two aspects are adeptly hidden in discourse, making them difficult to be detected by the audience. With the absence of language-based analysis to dissect power and matters pertaining to it, Karl Marx acknowledges the close relationship between language and idea:

“Language does not transform ideas, so that the peculiarity of ideas is dissolved and their social character runs alongside them as a separate entity, like prices alongside commodities. Ideas do not exist separately from language.” (Marx, in Fairclough, 2010).

Thus, Karl Marx has indirectly set the base for language investigation to respond to the question of link between language and social life, especially when it involves ideas (van Dijk, 2006). As ideas are connected to mental processes in thinking and proposing measures, including leadership, the discourse on leadership can be identified and explained through critical analysis.

The development of CDA during the early 1990s has inspired scholars including Fairclough (1995, 2010) to propose CDA frameworks in fields such as law, history, commerce and politics to dig out social issues through the exercise of power (Amoussou & Allagbe, 2018). Fairclough (1995, 2010) brought forward a three-dimensional framework that ties together text, discourse practice and social practice. By using this framework, discourse analysis with a critical approach necessitates researchers to describe, interpret and explain discourses.

Reverting to the lives of people, the social norms of any community involving leadership would require the appointment of individuals as leaders. Leaders act based on the granted power, and this provides them with the ability to influence minds and control society through language (Ghazali, 2004). Language is then used by these leaders in the form of discourse to present power through leadership. In such discursive realm, CDA serves to display matters pertaining to power that are delivered through an indirect manner (Aman, 2004). Even though CDA provides critics with a platform to address social deviance, CDA remains a fitting framework for analysing leadership spectrum as discourses may still contain positive elements despite not being fully transparent (Fairclough, 2010). CDA remains a fitting framework for
analysing leadership spectrum in discourses, including this research which attempts to show attributes and agendas of leaders that is delivered obliquely.

Overall, the review of past studies and the approach of CDA has shown several insights. First, inaugural speeches are rich with various language aspects and social issues which attract audience during leaders’ first appearances. Yet, these studies have not made comparison of speeches from linguistically and culturally distant countries such as Malaysia and France to be at the forefront. Second, the review has also shown that comparative studies between Malay and French have gained traction, particularly in studying linguistic features, translation and metaphors. Despite the trend, comparative studies employing critical discourse analysis remains relatively underexplored. Third, CDA presents itself as a useful approach to discovering the real messages behind the linguistic elements present in discourses which include leadership spectrum that is often invisible from the public eye.

Hence, the review of these previous studies has revealed a research gap: comparative studies of inaugural speeches by leaders in Malaysia and France which employ CDA as an approach are seldom in picture. It is widely known that Malaysia and France are significantly different in language, culture and social life of their leaders and citizens. As language functions to reflect the experiences and human relationships (Halliday, 2014), individuals, including leaders, tend to capitalise social aspects in producing discourse, subsequently reshaping the society. This is a global phenomenon but little exploration has been made to study whether leaders from countries like Malaysia and France showcase similarities or differences in their discourses. As the language phenomenon remains an intriguing topic to be explored, and to fill the existing research gap, it is imperative to conduct a comparative study on speeches of leaders through the lens of CDA between leaders in Malaysia and France with the aim to analyse the text and the leadership spectrum within the discourse.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

This study is conducted based on the inaugural speeches by the Ninth Prime Minister of Malaysia, Ismail Sabri Yaakob and the Twenty-Fifth Prime Minister of France, Elisabeth Borne. Ismail Sabri Yaakob (ISY) was appointed by the Yang di-Pertuan Agong of Malaysia as the successor to Muhyiddin Yassin (MY), the Eighth Prime Minister of Malaysia. Elisabeth Borne (EB) was appointed by the French President, replacing the Twenty-Fourth Prime Minister of France, Jean Castex (JC).

The inaugural speech by ISY was delivered on 22 August 2021, lasting for 15 minutes and 40 seconds, while EB took 4 minutes and 36 seconds to deliver her inaugural speech on 16
May 2022. The transcriptions of the speeches by ISY and EB were downloaded from https://www.pmo.gov.my and https://www.gouvernement.fr respectively. These speeches were selected for this study as these were the leaders’ first discourse after being appointed to the Prime Minister’s post. The analysis was carried out to the whole speeches without leaving any parts of it. It is worth noting that ISY and EB were not appointed as Prime Ministers through a general election; rather, their appointments were made during the turmoil caused by the COVID-19 pandemic that had led to political and economic crises.

The speeches by both leaders were translated into English to assist readers, especially the non-native Malay and French speakers, in understanding the original text. The translation was verified by a language expert for its language aspect and further examined by political experts for its political features. Both inaugural speeches then underwent the process of detailed reading of entire discourse as performed by Waikar (2018).

This study employs Fairclough’s (2010) CDA framework by following the dimensions of discourse analysis: description, interpretation and explanation. Relevant clauses containing components that could contribute to the interpretation of leadership spectrum - attributes and agendas - were extracted from excerpts and selected as data. Irrelevant clauses such as statements of facts and statistics were excluded since no reflection of attributes and agendas could be interpreted. This exclusion method mirrored Ashraf et al. (2022) and Rosidi and Jamil (2023) so that only relevant contents were to be chosen and analysed in order to meet the purpose of research. To properly quote the source of the relevant clauses, an excerpt representing a sentence from the inaugural speech which contains relevant clauses was numbered with the location guide that indicates the paragraph and the line from which the excerpt is located. For example, a quote from the third line to the fifth line of the sixth paragraph from ISY’s speech would be written as [I.P6:L3-L5] with (I) representing ISY, (E) representing EB, (P) representing paragraph and (L) representing line. The quote would be followed by its English translation. An example of the quotation method is shown below:

[I.P6:L3-L5]. Marilah kita, dengan fikiran terbuka dan dada yang menerima, mencungkil persamaan dengan tidak lagi menggali perbezaan (Translation: Let us, with an open mind and heart, accept and discover similarities by not finding differences anymore.)

Then, relevant clauses from the excerpt were emboldened and relabelled before conducting transitivity analysis. For instance, the clause ‘marilah kita, dengan fikiran terbuka dan dada yang menerima, mencungkil persamaan’ taken from the example above would be relabelled as
C1, and the next relevant clause from the same or another excerpt would be relabelled as C2 and so forth.

These clauses then underwent transitivity analysis to perform descriptions of components such as Processes (e.g. Mental Process, Verbal Process), Participants (e.g. Actor, Sayer) and Circumstances in the clauses. This analysis would provide description for text analysis thus facilitate the interpretation of meaning. Transitivity analysis originating from the works of Halliday (2014) aligns with the practice of text analysis in Fairclough’s CDA which falls under the analysis of forms of texts (Fairclough, 2010).

As mentioned previously, leadership spectrum for the context of this study comprises attributes and agendas. Sharma and Jain (2013) and Olusola (2020) have linked attributes to traits or characteristics of a person, whilst agenda, according to Harrison and Waller (2018), is an idea that correlates with a positive future in pursuit. Thus, the clauses described in the transitivity analysis would then undergo the process of interpretation and explanation. During this phase, the clauses would be interpreted either as attributes or agendas of the leaders, followed by explanation of social aspects factoring the invocation of attributes and agendas in the speeches. Lastly, the results from the data analysis were compared to demonstrate similarities and differences in the leadership spectrum in the discourses of both Prime Ministers.

Thus, the presentation of data is as follows:

i) Presentation of excerpts from the discourse of one leader
ii) Emboldening and relabelling of relevant clauses from the excerpts
iii) Description of components in relevant clauses through transitivity analysis
iv) Interpretation of attributes or agendas based on the identified components
v) Explanation of social aspects connected to the interpreted attributes and agendas
vi) A repeat of steps (i) to (v) for the speeches of another leader
vii) Presentation of similarities and differences in terms of leadership spectrum displayed by both leaders.

4.0 ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSIONS
The analysis will now look into the way clauses are deployed in both inaugural speeches. The description of clauses was conducted through transitivity analysis, followed by the interpretation of attributes or agenda from the described clauses. Following that, the underlying social factors, either in global or local situations associated to the leadership spectrum portrayed by the clauses in the speeches are explained.
4.1 Leadership Spectrum of Malaysian Ninth Prime Minister, Ismail Sabri Yaakob

4.1.1 Attributes

The inaugural speech by ISY has revealed three attributes based on the components identified through transitivity analysis: responsible, sympathetic and appreciative. The analyses for these attributes are as follows.

*Responsible*

[I.P36:L1-L2] Tegasnya, bersama dengan kerajaan ini saya akan menyediakan pasukan *pentadbiran* yang akan berkhidmat membantu negara (Translation: Together with this government, firmly, I will prepare an administration team that will serve in helping the country)

In the excerpt [I.P36:L1-L2] above, clause C1 ‘*saya akan menyediakan pasukan pentadbiran*’ is identified. Here, ISY, as ‘*saya*’, is the Actor for the Material Process ‘*menyediakan*’ while the Goal is ‘*pasukan pentadbiran*’.

[I.P36:L3-L5] Saya berikrar menghasilkan yang terbaik demi membuktikan kepercayaan rakyat kepada pasukan saya tidak dipersiakan (Translation: I vow to do my best so to prove that the people’s trust in my team will not be in vain)

As for excerpt [I.P36:L3-L5], ISY uses clause C2 ‘*saya berikrar menghasilkan yang terbaik*’. In C2, ISY, is again represented by ‘*saya*’ which functions as the Sayer for the Verbal Process ‘*berikrar menghasilkan*’, with the Circumstance being ‘*yang terbaik*’.

Based on the description above, both clauses C1 and C2 can be interpreted as ISY’s attributes as a responsible leader. In these clauses, ISY demonstrates responsibility by obligating himself to perform actions deemed necessary for Malaysia as portrayed by the identified Processes ‘*menyediakan*’ and ‘*berikrar menghasilkan*’. The processes in both clauses leave an impression that ISY is ready to helm the country as a Prime Minister. Interestingly, ISY also uses ‘*kepercayaan rakyat*’ which is contradictory to the fact that his appointment was made by the Yang di-Pertuan Agong and not democratically elected per se. This has created a situation where the people would be in need of a responsible leader, and through the measures outlined in both C1 and C2, ISY indirectly shows that he can be trusted to lead Malaysia. Hence, the attribute of responsibility is discovered here in the speech.
Sympathetic

[I.P8:L1-L2] *Saya menginsafi kepayahan, kesengsaraan, dan keperitan hidup yang mencengkam kita semua* (Translation: I comprehend the difficulty, misery, and life hardship that grips us all)

Here, in [I.P8:L1-L2], ISY employs clause C3, ‘*saya menginsafi kepayahan, kesengsaraan dan keperitan hidup*’. In this clause, ISY or ‘*saya*’, takes on the role of a Senser in the Mental Process ‘*menginsafi*’, with the Phenomenon being ‘*kepayahan, kesengsaraan dan keperitan hidup*’.

[I.P9:L1-L5] *Saya memahami keringat dan nilai sesuap nasi, kerana saya lahir dan membesar dalam keluarga anak petani yang susah* (Translation: I know the struggle and the value of a mouthful of rice, because I was born and raised in a family of poor farmers)

The excerpt [I.P9:L1-L5] contains clause C4: ‘*saya memahami keringat dan nilai sesuap nasi*’. In C4, ISY who represents himself as ‘*saya*’, becomes the Senser while ‘*memahami*’ is identified as Mental Process and the Phenomenon being ‘*keringat dan nilai sesuap nasi*’.

The description of transitivity in C3 and C4 can be interpreted as the attributes of sympathy portrayed by ISY for the hardships of Malaysian citizens. This is particularly evident when ISY emphasises the Processes of ‘*menginsafi*’ and ‘*memahami*’ in direction association with the phenomenon of hardships. ISY also evokes personal social aspect through the clause ‘*kerana saya lahir dan membesar dalam keluarga anak petani yang susah*’, indicating his background that contributes to the sympathetic attribute. ISY chooses to deliver these clauses in the speech to address the reality of Malaysians from all walks of life. Many have been severely affected by the health and economic crises such as losing jobs, and some have sought assistance through several efforts rolled out by both the government and citizens. Thus, ISY displays himself as a sympathetic leader and puts himself in a position to resolve the challenges faced by the people, as shown in the attribute of responsibility.
Appreciative

[I.P2:L1-L2] Saya turut merakamkan setinggi-tinggi penghargaan dan ucapan terima kasih kepada Yang Berhormat Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin, mantan Perdana Menteri Malaysia yang telah berusaha sepenuh tenaga dalam menghadapi kemelut yang melanda negara (Translation: I am also expressing my utmost appreciation and gratitude to Yang Berhormat Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin, the former Prime Minister of Malaysia who has put all his efforts against the crisis hitting the country)

The excerpt [I.P2:L1-L2] has a relevant clause C5: ‘Saya turut merakamkan setinggi-tinggi penghargaan dan ucapan terima kasih kepada Yang Berhormat Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin, mantan Perdana Menteri Malaysia’. Here, ISY becomes the Sayer through the use of ‘saya’ for the Verbal Process ‘merakamkan’. The Verbiage is ‘setinggi-tinggi penghargaan dan ucapan terima kasih’ while the Receiver is ‘Yang Berhormat Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin, mantan Perdana Menteri Malaysia’.

The description for clause C5 highlights ISY’s demonstration of appreciation to MY for his premiership which is evident in the identified Verbiage ‘setinggi-tinggi penghargaan dan ucapan terima kasih’. Meanwhile, the identified Receiver in the analysis demonstrates that ISY is thanking his predecessor for his hard work. Thus, C5 can be interpreted as a portrayal for the attribute of an appreciative leader. As shown by Kpeglo and Giddi (2022), some leaders may opt to condemn other leaders including predecessors who hold dissimilar views or belong to other political group which opposes the party of the leader. Here, ISY chooses to express gratitude to the previous leader from a different political party, potentially garnering the support from MY’s followers as the result of ISY being an appreciative leader.

4.1.2 Agenda

The analysis towards inaugural speech by ISY has shown three agendas: unity, economic and health revival, and youth inclusivity. The following are the analyses which contribute to the interpretation of the agendas.

Unity

[I.P6:L3-L5]. Marilah kita, dengan fikiran terbuka dan dada yang menerima, mencungkil persamaan dengan tidak lagi menggali perbezaan (Translation: Let us, with an open mind and heart, accept and discover similarities by not finding differences anymore)
In [I.P6:L3-L5], ISY expresses clause C6 ‘marilah kita, dengan fikiran terbuka dan dada yang menerima, mencungkil persamaan’. Firstly, ISY uses the imperative ‘mari’. Then, in the description of transitivity, ‘kita’ serves as the Actor for the Material Process ‘mencungkil’ with the Circumstance being ‘dengan fikiran terbuka dan dada yang menerima’, and the Goal being ‘persamaan’.

[I.P6:L5-L6] Kita perlu bersepakat untuk menyelamatkan keluarga kita, iaitu Keluarga Malaysia (Translation: We must join forces to save our family, our Keluarga Malaysia)

Here, the relevant clause C7 from the excerpt [I.P6:L5-L6] is ‘kita perlu bersepakat untuk menyelamatkan keluarga kita’, with ‘kita’ being the Actor once again, ‘perlu bersepakat untuk menyelamatkan’ the Material Process and ‘keluarga kita’ the Goal.

As for the interpretation, C6 and C7 are interpreted as an agenda for unity especially through the Goals ‘persamaan’ and ‘keluarga kita’. The explanation for unity in the discourse by ISY can be traced from a long series of power transfers in the federal government involving several political alliances that triggered disintegration among Malaysians. The inaugural speech of ISY as the new Prime Minister brought forward the agenda for unity to amend the social crack caused by the aforementioned power crisis. Moreover, the agenda for unity is branded as ‘Keluarga Malaysia’ by ISY, as exemplified in [I.P6:L5-L6]. Throughout the speech, ‘Keluarga Malaysia’ is repeated ten times alongside the word ‘keluarga’ or ‘family’, which also represents Malaysians, with a frequency of seven times. This aligns with the method of message repetitions which are employed to influence an audience’s perception towards accepting a political message (Ernst et al., 2017). In the Malaysian context, unity has undergone ceaseless promotions. This has led ISY, as the new Prime Minister, to continue promoting unity and making it his own agenda, especially with the branding of ‘Keluarga Malaysia’.

Economic and health revival

[I.P11: L1-L2] Saya akan memastikan setiap intervensi dan usaha pihak kerajaan untuk menurunkan kes COVID-19 dilakukan secara lebih komprehensif (Translation: I will ensure that each intervention and initiative by the government to reduce the COVID-19 cases is carried out more comprehensively)

ISY in the excerpt [I.P11: L1-L2] above employs clause C8 ‘saya akan memastikan setiap intervensi dan usaha pihak kerajaan untuk menurunkan kes COVID-19 dilakukan secara
lebih komprehensif’. In C8, ISY uses the pronoun ‘saya’ which functions as the Actor, ‘akan memastikan’ which functions as the Material Process and ‘setiap intervensi dan usaha pihak kerajaan untuk menurunkan kes COVID-19’ which functions as the Goal.

In the excerpt [I.P27:L1-L4] Kita akan terus bekerja bersama rakyat untuk membangunkan strategi baharu ekonomi bagi melaksanakan beberapa perubahan mendasar. Seluruhnya bertujuan memperkukuh asas ekonomi negara. (Translation: We will continue to work together with the citizens to develop new economic strategy to perform some fundamental changes. All of these efforts are aimed at strengthening the foundation of the nation’s economy)

In the excerpt [I.P27:L1-L4], the identified relevant clause is labelled as C9, which is ‘Kita akan terus bekerja bersama rakyat untuk membangunkan strategi baharu ekonomi’. In C9, ‘kita’ is the Actor, ‘akan terus bekerja’ is the Material Process, ‘bersama rakyat’ is the Accompaniment and ‘untuk membangunkan strategi baharu ekonomi’ is the Goal.

Based on the description of C8 and C9, these clauses can be interpreted as an agenda for economic and health revival in Malaysia which are clearly marked by the Goals ‘menurunkan kes COVID-19’ and ‘membangunkan strategi baharu ekonomi’. As a nation hit by the COVID-19 pandemic, the economy and healthcare sectors have adversely affected the lives of Malaysians, and ISY must address these tribulations as a newly minted leader. Words signifying Process such as ‘menurunkan’ and ‘membangunkan’ reflect his determination to achieve the agenda for reviving the people’s economic and health wellbeing.

Youth inclusivity

[I.P29:L2-L3] Untuk itu, saya pastikan suara anak muda didengari dan diberikan tumpuan dalam kerajaan ini. (Translation: For that, I will make sure that the voices of youth are heard and given due emphasis in this government)

In the example from [I.P29:L1-L3] above, clause C10 ‘saya pastikan suara anak muda didengari dan diberikan tumpuan’ is evident in the speech. ‘Saya’, or ISY in the context of the speech, is described as the Actor, while ‘pastikan’ is the Material Process and ‘suara anak muda didengari dan diberikan tumpuan’ is the Goal.

The interpretation of the agenda for youth inclusivity is derived from the description of Goal in C10 which is ‘suara anak muda didengari dan diberikan tumpuan.’ To explain the
social practice surrounding this agenda, the youth has been declared as the most active group by age in the digital world (Suruhanjaya Komunikasi dan Multimedia Malaysia, 2020). They are efficient and fast spreaders of information, acting as a pressure group in certain social issues due to their refreshing ideas. Realising the impact of the youth, ISY as a leader must consider their opinions in shaping the future of the nation and envisioning the agenda for youth inclusivity.

4.2 Leadership Spectrum of French Twenty-Fifth Prime Minister, Elisabeth Borne

4.2.1 Attributes

EB has demonstrated three attributes in her inaugural speech: responsible, appreciative, and loyalty. The analyses leading to these attributes are shown below.

**Responsible**

*Pour les nombreux combats que nous avons menés ensemble, précisément au service des Français* [E.P1:L3-L4] (Translation: For the numerous combats that we have fought together, precisely in service to the French citizens)

In [E.P1:L3-L4], EB uses C11 ‘*les nombreux combats que nous avons menés ensemble*’. The description of transitivity in C11 is as follows: ‘*nous*’ represents EB and JC as the Actors ‘*avons menés*’ is the Material Process, and ‘*les nombreux combats*’ is the Goal.

*Alors, vous pouvez compter sur moi pour poursuivre dans cette voie face aux nombreux défis* [E.P8:L1-L2] (Translation: Thus, you can count on me to pursue this path in facing numerous challenges)

Here, in the excerpt [E.P8:L1-L2], the relevant clause is ‘*moi pour poursuivre dans cette voie face aux nombreux défis*.’ Here in the clause relabelled as C12, ‘*moi*’ is the Actor, ‘*pour poursuivre*’ is the Material Process, ‘*dans cette voie*’ is the Goal, and ‘*face aux nombreux défis*’ is the Circumstance.

C11 and C12 arrive at the interpretation of the attribute of responsibility with the transitivity analyses pointing out ‘*avons menés*’ and ‘*pour poursuivre*’ as Processes in C11 and C12 respectively. It could be explained that the duty to serve French citizens is a responsibility of a French Prime Minister. Here, EB is informing the audience about the way JC, the previous Prime Minister, with EB herself as a minister, shouldered responsibilities in
leading the country. As EB inherits the premiership post, it is therefore assumed that the French should regard the new Prime Minister as another responsible leader that the country can believe in. This belief is enforced by ‘vous pouvez compter sur moi’ before C12 in [E.P8:L1-L2]. The clause through which EB expresses her confidence to succeed the job from JC also demonstrates her readiness to assume the role as a responsible leader for France.

**Loyalty**

[E.P6:L1] *Alors, nous avons évidemment des différences* (Translation: So, we evidently have differences)

In the excerpt [E.P6:L1] above, EB is seen to employ C13 ‘nous avons évidemment des différences’. Here, Relational Process takes place and is signified by ‘avons’. The pronoun ‘nous’, which represents EB and JC, is the Carrier in C13. Meanwhile, the Attribute in C13 is ‘des différences’.

*Et puis, même si nous venons de familles politiques différentes* [E.P7:L1] (Translation: And then, even if we came from different political families)

On the other hand, in [E.P7:L1], EB utters clause C14 ‘même si nous venons de familles politiques différentes’. Again, Relational Process is identified in this clause by the use of ‘venons’. The pronoun ‘nous’, which again represents EB and JC, functions as the Carrier for C14. The Attribute in C14 is ‘de familles politiques différentes’.

Hence, the cues ‘des différences’ in both C13 and C14 can be interpreted as EB’s attribute of loyalty. To elucidate, EB gained her early political experience from *Territoires de Progres* (TDP), a left socialist political party (Gatinois & Faye, 2022) while JC was serving the right-wing politics. It is deemed necessary for EB to explain her loyalty to her political principles, given the possibility of taking a different course of actions compared to JC. Moreover, the expression of loyalty serves as a way to appease supporters who hold a similar political view with EB. As the Prime Minister, actions in accordance with left political principles would most probably be her choice for implementation.
Appreciative

[E.P5:L2-L3] Moi, je voudrais dire à quel point j’ai apprécié de travailler à tes côtés pendant ces 22 mois (Translation: Me, I would like to express how much I appreciated working by your side during these 22 months)

In [E.P5:L2-L3], EB employs clause C15 ‘j’ai apprécié de travailler à tes côtés’ and to describe this clause, EB as ‘je’ here is the Senser, ‘apprécié’ is the Mental Process while ‘de travailler à tes côtés’ is the Phenomenon.

The attribute of being appreciative can be interpreted from C15 since there is a clear use of ‘j’ai apprécié’ as well as use of expression ‘merci’ in places like [E.P1:L1] and [E.P1:L3] in the speech. As a speaker, EB is showing her appreciative side to JC, her predecessor in the Prime Minister’s post, for all the past works. This approach of appreciating the predecessor is also shown in the study of Kpeglo and Giddi (2022) and can be explained as an effort to ensure a smooth transition from one leader to another, as well as to win the support of the public and JC’s supporters. For a leader, this attribute is the better option than condemning past leaders. Therefore, in the case of EB, the approach is especially necessary given her appointment to the post was not established through a democratic election but rather by the President’s appointment. For this reason, EB chooses to be appreciative rather than risking opposition against her appointment.

4.2.2 Agenda

Besides the attributes, analyses of the inaugural speech by EB have also exposed three agendas: political maturity, matriarchy and economic revival.

Political maturity

[E.P6:L1-L3] Alors, nous avons évidemment des différences, mais je pense que nous avons aussi beaucoup de choses en commun (Translation: We evidently have differences, but I think we also have a lot of things in common)

In [E.P6:L1-L3], the relevant clause which contributed to the agenda of political maturity is the clause labelled C16: ‘je pense que nous avons aussi beaucoup de choses en commun’. Here in C16, ‘je’ represents EB and functions as Senser, ‘pense’ is the Mental Process while the Phenomenon in C16 is ‘que nous avons aussi beaucoup de choses en commun’.
[E.P7 : L1-L2] Et puis, même si nous venons de familles politiques différentes, je pense que nous sommes également attachés à l'intérêt général (Translation: And then, even if we came from different political families, I think that we are attached equivalently to the general interest)

The clause labelled C17 is particularly relevant in [E.P7:L1-L2]. In C17, EB expresses ‘je pense que nous sommes également attachés à l'intérêt général’. The transitivity analysis reveals the Senser to be ‘je’ which represents EB, the Mental Process to be ‘pense’ and the Phenomenon to be ‘que nous sommes également attachés à l'intérêt général’.

As shown previously in the attribute of loyalty, EB shows differences with JC through [E.P6:L1] and [E.P7:L1]. However, as shown in the analyses for Phenomenon in C16 and C17, EB speaks about ‘choses en commun’ and ‘l'intérêt général’. The Phenomenon which can be described as a discontinuation from telling the audience about the differences might also be interpreted as an agenda of political maturity. As a Prime Minister enduring multiple crises, EB senses the importance of restoring the situation to pre-pandemic stability and normalcy. While remaining loyal to the political alignment, EB then chooses to bring the focus to the matters that she and her predecessor share, setting an example that political differences will not hinder collaboration, especially in critical situations. This leadership approach by EB is expected to resonate among the audience and supporters of both EB and JC. This will further ease the country’s governance by putting aside all political differences from top to bottom in the societal hierarchy, ultimately contributing to political maturity.

Matriarchy

[E.P10:L1-L3] Je suis évidemment très émue ce soir et je ne peux pas m'empêcher d'avoir une pensée pour la première femme qui a occupé ces fonctions, Edith Cresson (Translation: I am clearly very emotional this evening and I cannot get away from having a thought for the first woman who occupied this role, Edith Cresson)

In the excerpt [E.P10:L1-L3], EB makes use of C18 ‘je ne peux pas m'empêcher d'avoir une pensée pour la première femme qui a occupé ces fonctions’. This clause can be described as a clause of Material Process. The Actor for C18 is ‘je’, the Material Process is ‘ne peux pas m'empêcher’ and the Goal is ‘d'avoir une pensée pour la première femme qui a occupé ces fonctions.’
Et peut-être je voudrais dédier cette nomination à toutes les petites filles en leur disant : « allez au bout de vos rêves » et rien ne doit freiner le combat pour la place des femmes dans notre société (Translation: And perhaps I would like to dedicate this appointment to every little girl by saying ‘march forward to achieve your dreams’ and nothing can slow the struggle for women’s place in our society)

Next, in [E.P11:L1-L3], EB delivers C19 ‘Je voudrais dédier cette nomination à toutes les petites filles’ where the Actor is ‘je’. However the process here is Verbal and represented by ‘voudrais dédier’ while ‘cette nomination’ is Verbiage and ‘à toutes les petites filles’ is the Receiver.

After the expression of emotion in her speech, EB seeks to establish the agenda for matriarchy with the phrase ‘la première femme’ (Goal) in C18 and ‘les petites filles’ (Receiver) in C19. It appears that EB acknowledges woman in premiership post and calls for aspiring French girls to continue uplifting the status of women in French society. To put the discourse into the European context, women in France as part of the European Union have been fighting for gender equality, especially women’s empowerment (Juhász & Pap, 2018). Juhász and Pap (2018) however added that despite the efforts, the number of women appointed to high positions remains low and that is visible in France where only one woman has been appointed as the premier of France. After becoming the second woman in French history to hold the position of Prime Minister, EB takes the opportunity to convey her agenda of matriarchy by sparking interest and ambition of French women to assume leadership posts. Thus, the call for women’s empowerment as voiced out by EB is clearly attached to the agenda of matriarchy with the hope that more women will become leaders and partake in the efforts of promoting and upholding the agenda.

**Economic revival**

[Nous avons pu protéger les entreprises. Le taux de chômage est au plus bas depuis 15 ans. (Translation: We were able to protect the businesses. The unemployment rate is at its lowest in 15 years)]

In the excerpt [E.P4:L3-L4], EB showcases the utilisation of clause C20 ‘nous avons pu protéger les entreprises’. In C20, the transitivity analysis describes EB and JC, represented by the pronoun ‘nous’, as the Actor, ‘avons pu protéger’ as the Material Process and ‘les entreprises’ as the Goal.
Nous avons agi pour le pouvoir d'achat, même si tu l'as dit, il nous faudra continuer à agir tout au long des prochains mois. (Translation: We acted for the purchasing power, even if, as you mentioned, we will need to continue to act in the coming months)

As for the excerpt [E.P5:L1-L2], clause C21 ‘Nous avons agi pour le pouvoir d'achat’ is expressed by EB where ‘nous’ is the Actor, ‘avons agi’ is the Material Process and ‘pour le pouvoir d'achat’ is the Goal.

From the description, ‘les entreprises’ from C20 and ‘le pouvoir d'achat’ from C21 are the Goals set by the speaker and are related to commercial activities. Together with the description of Processes ‘avons pu protéger’ and ‘avons agi’ as actions taken by EB and JC, both C20 and C21 are then interpreted as the agenda for economic revival. This agenda could be explained by the arrival of the COVID-19 pandemic that has impacted the French society, including businesses (Guerini et al., 2020). Responding to the effects of the pandemic, EB has shown that the actions taken with her predecessor have yielded positive outcomes for commerce. She also stated that these actions shall be continuous, thus making economic revival a key agenda for her administration.

4.3 Comparison of Leadership Spectrum between ISY and EB

Before comparing the leadership spectrum in the inaugural speeches by ISY and EB, the discussion will touch on the results of the transitivity analyses. ISY and EB have each been identified to use 10 and 11 clauses that depict Processes, Participants and Circumstances. These components are substantial in interpreting the leadership spectrum for each leader.

To elucidate further on the Processes and Participants, the clauses by ISY consist of six Material Processes (C1, C6, C7, C8, C9, C10), two Verbal Processes (C2, C5) and two Mental Processes (C3, C4). On the other hand, the clauses in EB’s speech comprise five Material Processes (C11, C12, C18, C20, C21), three Mental Processes (C15, C16, C17), two Relational Processes (C13, C14) and one Verbal Process (C19). In the description of Participants, it is shown that ISY chooses pronouns ‘saya’ and ‘kita’ while EB represents herself as ‘je’, ‘moi’ and ‘nous’. The analysis of Processes displayed that ISY and EB mostly focused on Material Process as this process exhibits visible performance such as ‘menyediakan’, ‘mencungkil’, ‘poursuivre’ and ‘protéger’ in C1, C6, C12 and C20 respectively. This finding is in line with the data found by Guo (2022) and Kondowe (2014) where Material Process appeared to be the highest process found in leaders’ discourses. On the other hand, the analysis of Participants has shown both ISY and EB to be active performers who involve themselves in all the processes,
indicated by their exclusive use of first-person pronouns. This would help in creating positive imagery that would be productive in garnering support (Ashraf et al., 2022).

Next, from the description of clauses that has been interpreted, the following figure illustrates the similarities and differences of leadership spectrum in terms of attributes and agendas between ISY and EB:

![Figure 1: Comparison of leadership spectrum in inaugural speeches by ISY and EB](image)

As displayed in Figure 1, a similar pattern is evident where both leaders put forward three agendas and display three attributes in their speeches. The presentation of agendas in discourse shows leaders’ own vision for the country that is conveyed via chance and power as Prime Ministers. Additionally, attributes act as self-representation which may boost the image of the leaders. Both ISY and EB touch on similar attributes of responsibility and appreciation. This is expected as leaders have to shoulder responsibilities for their subjects (Junaidi, 2012) and close ranks by appreciating important individuals once in power (Kpeglo & Giddi, 2022).

Next, the figure also highlights differences between ISY and EB, with the notable observation that the differences outnumber the similarities. For the agendas in discourse, ISY has chosen the agenda for unity, youth inclusivity, and economic and health revival whereas EB focuses on the agenda for matriarchy, political maturity and economic revival. For the attributes, ISY displays the attribute of a sympathetic leader while EB demonstrates the attribute of loyalty. The differences in choosing such leadership spectrum can be explained through the differences in the local culture and current issues surrounding the countries. For example, the attribute of loyalty is not represented in ISY’s discourse given the dynamism of the political situation in Malaysia where political alliances are impermanent and the occurrences of politicians switching their party membership have been affecting the ruling
government. ISY’s party, which is UMNO, practises open-door political cooperation which brings possibility for the party to switch from one alliance to another (Abdullah, 2021) and this is not parallel with the attribute of loyalty. On the other hand, EB does not bring up the agenda for unity mainly because France has a unique way of working across political views, such as the practice of *cohabitation* where the French line of leadership can be formed with a combination of individuals from the political right, centre and left (Elgie & McMenamin, 2011). This is also the reason EB invokes the attribute of loyalty and the agenda for political maturity in her inaugural speech. Thus, the inclusion of attributes and agendas by ISY and EB in their inaugural speeches is done deliberately according to the social situations in Malaysia and France. The delivery of these speeches by leaders in power like ISY and EB may reshape social situations. This is in line with the dialectic relation between language and social aspect as suggested by Fairclough (2010).

5.0 CONCLUSION

This study applies Critical Discourse Analysis by Fairclough (2010) and is carried out with the objective to analyse inaugural speeches delivered by Ismail Sabri Yaakob (ISY) and Elisabeth Borne (EB). Based on the objective, this study attempts to describe linguistic aspects in speech, interpret leadership spectrum from the language use, and explain the social contexts linked to the leadership spectrum in discourse.

Based on the description and interpretation of clauses employed in the speeches, both leaders have been identified to bear attributes and agendas as their leadership spectrum, and these are either shared between or unique to each leader. The social aspects or situations underlying the interpreted attributes and agendas have been successfully explained. The comparison between leadership spectrum of both leaders indicates shared attributes of responsibility and appreciation. Apart from the shared similarities, differences in leadership spectrum are also found in both leaders. ISY has been identified as a carrier for the agenda for unity, youth inclusivity, and economic and health revival, along with the attribute of sympathy. On the other hand, EB has embedded the attribute of loyalty and the agendas for matriarchy, political maturity and economic revival in her speech. Hence, CDA has shown to be an effective approach to analysing veiled leadership spectrum of different leaders from Malaysia and France. It is also through the approach that the comparison of the spectrums is made possible, allowing for contribution to a new domain in the field.

As for limitation of this study, the analysis is only limited to the analysis of inaugural speeches. Therefore, examining other discourses together with the inaugural speeches will
reinforce the support for the analysis of leadership spectrum. This study also reveals implications regarding leadership spectrum in inaugural speeches, viewing them as a means of shaping social practices. Leaders, as figures of authority, project attributes and agendas accompanied by power. The presence of power may influence the audience to accept these attributes as truth and replicate the agenda without much resistance. This will cause social practices to be shaped according to what has been said by the leaders. Besides that, the resemblance and contrast of leadership spectrum can indicate that countries with different cultures such as Malaysia and France may share some aspects despite the prevalent differences. Hence, it is suggested for future research to analyse and compare discourses of individuals from other nations to discover more convergences and divergences. This approach will also contribute to strengthening the foundation of CDA by Fairclough (2010) regarding functions of language in discourse and its relationship with social aspects. Future research may also explore other dimensions of leadership spectrum beyond attributes and agendas, thereby enriching the discussion on a wide range of leadership aspects through language use by leaders.

REFERENCES


