BETWEEN US AND THEM: EXAMINING THE INDIGENOUS PEOPLE OF MALAYSIA AS REPRESENTED IN THE MAINSTREAM NEWS MEDIA

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ABSTRACT

Examining the linguistic representation of a minority group using computer-assisted method is the heart of this study. In particular, we are interested in investigating how the indigenous people of Malaysia or Orang Asli are being represented by the news media in Malaysia as we believe that mass media play a huge role in curating the image of a group and affecting perception of readers about that group. It affects how they are perceived by the mainstream community. Using corpus-assisted critical discourse analysis, a 700,000-word corpus was examined focusing on grammatical words. Through the analysis, we found that the Orang Asli are consistently being framed as a helpless group who are frequently in need of assistance. Often, they are positioned as passive recipients of things from more dominant groups like volunteers and governments. These consistent negative and helpless images of the Orang Asli, we believe will be detrimental to the overall perception of society towards them which may later affect their social standing in the Malaysian community. We believe that stories about orang Asli need to be curated in a more positive manner thus, promoting them as active members of the society who can contribute to the development of the nation.

INTRODUCTION

The indigenous people of Malaysia are known as Orang Asli, and their population are mostly widespread in the states in Peninsular Malaysia. The word Orang Asli means "original people" or "first people" (Sharifah et al., 2011). Despite being acknowledged as one of the earliest people inhabiting Malaysia, most of the Orang Asli communities are academically and economically behind against the other races in Malaysia thus, making them a dependent community (e.g. Doris et al., 2012; Jamal & Ganapathy, 2021; Tuan Pah Rokiah et al., 2017). To address these issues, the ruling government and non-governmental organisations have provided relevant assistance. Different mechanisms to support the development and progress of the Orang Asli communities have also been put forth (Cai, 2020; Huencho, 2020). As a result, to

date, we have Orang Asli who are in the professional line of work. For instance, in the education sector, medical and even as politicians. Despite the leaps and bounds of progress exhibited by the Orang Asli communities, one issue that remains relatively the same is the representation of the Orang Asli in the mainstream media (Jamal & Ganasan, 2021). In this paper, we argue that the representation of the Orang Asli in the mainstream media is stereotypical and rather bias. This portrayal, as shown in studies undertaken in this context, we believe creates gaps between the Orang Asli community and majority of Malaysian.

BACKGROUND

Patterns of bias or misrepresentation are found in studies conducted in Malaysia where negativity appears to be the pulling factor of newsworthiness for stories about the Orang Asli (Mustafa, 1994), and their portrayal are depicted in a stereotypical way (Jamal & Manan, 2016). Often they are portrayed as "victim or beneficiary" (Alagappar, 2010, p. 12). Apart from that, allocation of news space provided for Orang Asli story is relatively very low. In 2008, in the New Straits Times newspaper, on average there were only seven news stories per month. And many times the news stories were the media-hype type, in which they were 'deliberate and sustained effort of the mass media to exaggerate a particular subject in order to get audience or to make them behave in certain ways' (Mobolaji & Ojebuyi, 2020, p.272). In this case, the news stories mainly focused on corporate social responsibility event (CSR) held by companies or government bodies (Alagappar, 2010). News stories focusing on or highlighting significant issues revolving around the Orang Asli communities were limited. Often their voices were not heard. These misrepresentations and underrepresentations of the Orang Asli affect perceptions of the public about the identity of Orang Asli in Malaysia. Despite the acknowledgement of their rich culture and heritage, and their achievements, Malaysian newspapers seem to focus more on their plight and negative stories (Habibah et al., 2020). In a publication by Marlina Jamal and Bita Naghmeh-Abbaspour (2020), they found contradicting opinions from interviews with the Orang Asli and newspaper journalists about the representation of Orang Asli in newspapers. According to the Orang Asli, they are often discriminated by the media, but this was denied by newspaper journalists saying that such portrayals are only present in selected newspapers.

While many of the studies mentioned above focus on the contents or the messages of the news stories, the current study aims to examine the language patterns and linguistic resources in news stories that contribute to such representation. Specifically, the current study aims to answer the following research question:

How are Orang Asli communities framed through linguistic resources within the mainstream news media in Malaysia?

We believe through examination of discernible linguistic categories, more detailed explanation of how and the means in which the representation of Orang Asli is depicted as such in the newspaper can be presented as empirical evidence to support arguments about misrepresentation or misleading portrayals of the Orang Asli in the media. In the next section, we will elaborate on the methodology we used in this study.

METHODOLOGY

In this study, we adopted a mixed method approach, where corpus linguistic (CL) approach and critical discourse analysis (CDA) approach were combined and used as the main tool of analysis. The CL thrives in the quantitative field by exploring a large number of data while the

CDA is a qualitative approach that is effective in dissecting ideological insinuations that might be implied through linguistic resources. The amalgamation of these approaches gave birth to a hybrid approach known as corpus-assisted critical discourse analysis, which is used in this present study. Part of the process of examining the texts was assisted by a corpus linguistic computer software, known as WordSmith (Version 6.0).

Corpus-Assisted Critical Discourse Analysis
The strength of corpus linguistic analysis approach lies in its quantitative approach on massive amount of data by utilising statistical measures to yield empirically substantiated results. The critical discourse analysis, on the other hand, provides an in-depth qualitative analysis that not only probes the context of the word but also moves beyond the sentence structure by taking into account text production and social context surrounding the text. Historically, many studies have highlighted drawbacks and provided criticisms of these approaches when used exclusively on their own (cf. Baker et al., 2008; Cheng, 2013; Orpin, 2005; Stubbs, 1997). However, the use of the approaches combined together complement each other well and has gained popularity and momentum among the advocates of each approach.

The approach is known as corpus assisted (critical) discourse analysis. It is the integration of the two different approaches, corpus linguistics (CL) and critical discourse analysis (CDA) (Baker et al., 2008; Baker & Levon, 2015). Based on reviews of 121 studies that adopted the incorporation of CL with CDA, Nartey and Mwinlaaru (2019) conclude that this is "a robust methodology" that helps to answer questions related to social issues (p. 203). In this present study, using the combined corpus-assisted critical discourse analysis approach, the issue examined is the representation of a minority group by the mainstream news media.

By using corpus-assisted critical discourse analysis and examining the news about Orang Asli in news stories, we sought to retrieve the understudied aspects, and to place them in an engaging discourse that builds social identities, social positions, and relations. As Brookes (1995, p.464) argues, "the longer a discourse remains common sense, the more likely it is that the knowledge, beliefs, social relationships, and social identities, it has produced will become entrenched." Like Brookes, our analysis investigated the ways in which newspapers chose details by selecting some and suppressing the other news. And by using the combined lenses, we were able to describe varying language patterns which highlighted underemphasized issues and the ideological constructions that 'control' the telling of news.

The Data
The newspaper selected for data collection for this study was based on the number of circulations of the publication. As Lewter (2016) explains, newspaper circulation refers to the number of daily/weekly newspaper sold to the public. Thus, based on its high number of circulations, (116, 719, Online report of Malaysia's Audit Bureau of Circulations, 2018), *The Star* newspaper was chosen as our data source.

For the current study, data were collected from *The Star* newspapers from 2003 until 2019 (16 years' worth of data), with a total of more than 1700 news items and amounting to more than 700,000 words. For analysis, we examined relevant data from headlines and lead paragraphs, and not the whole body of the articles. These two parts (headlines and lead paragraphs) of the news stories are considered the nucleus of the news item where the most important information is encapsulated (Feez, Iedema & White, 2010). Thus, they were our focus.

What we presented in our paper is evidence based on 16-years-worth of data, which shows consistent patterns in stereotypical representation. While it is true that we only focused on one newspaper for our study, we presented a replicable methodology that can be quantified and compared with research of similar nature.

DISCUSSION AND FINDING

Employing keyword analysis, a total of 372 keywords were generated and grouped into 6 main categories. The categories were authority, activity, resources, verb or adverb, pronouns, and grammatical bin. Three of the categories; authority, activity and resources; were labelled according to their semantic meaning. The authority category refers to keywords like *government, Batin;* the activity category with related keyword like *logging*, and the resources category with keywords like *land* and *forest*. The other three categories were directly formed based on their syntactical or grammatical function. They were the i) verb/adverb, ii) pronouns and iii) grammatical bins categories. For this paper, we focus on the verb/adverb and pronoun categories. We decided not to include the grammatical bin category as the keywords are a collection of grammatical words from different parts of speech (e.g. *here, near, were, an*).

Within the verb/adverb and pronoun categories, 10 keywords were identified. Half of these keywords belonged to the positive keywords category which means they appeared frequently in the news corpus of Orang Asli when compared to a certain norm, in this case the general news (Scott, 2015). The other half of the keywords were negative keywords which means their occurrences in the news corpus about Orang Asli are relatively low when compared to the norm. Since the terms negative and positive keywords here do not refer to the concept of semantic prosody (negative and positive connotation), in the following sections, we will instead use the term over-represented and under-represented. For example, the word *help* is unusually frequent or over-represented in the news corpus about Orang Asli when compared to its occurrences in a general news corpus, thus *help* is a positive keyword. All the keywords are presented in their respective categories as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Keywords in Verb/Adverb and Pronoun Categories

Category	Positive Keywords (over-represented) - Top 100	Negative Keywords (under-represented)
Verb and Adverb	*help* (rank: 67, freq. 109) *allegedly* (rank: 100, freq. 32)	*demand* (rank: 338, freq. 4) *announced* (rank: 320, freq. 5)
Pronouns	*their* (rank: 14, freq. 460) *them* (rank: 52, freq. 112)	*us* (rank: 370, freq. 9) *its* (rank: 369, freq. 88) *it* (rank: 344, freq. 104) *you* (rank: 327, freq. 7)

Table 1 shows the ranks and frequencies of all the keywords. While some frequencies of over-represented keywords seem very low (e.g. *allegedly* with 32 frequencies), it is the positioning of these keywords that made an impact. When positioned either in the headlines or lead paragraphs, these keywords have more influence as attention grabber rather than those words that appear in the body of the article. For example, frequent occurrences of words such as *help* could leave a lasting priming of meaning which consequently construct the perceived identity of Orang Asli in the hearts and mind of the readers i.e. Orang Asli communities need 'help'.

Verb/adverb category

In the verb/adverb category, further investigation using collocation function reveals interesting findings in terms of the context of the positive keyword *help* (rank: 67, freq. 109). Looking at the keyword *help*, three collocates were found to be significant, namely *build*, *medical* and *students*. Significant here refers to the significant mutual information value (MI value) i.e. the statistical measure in collocational analysis is more than the cut-off point of 3.0 (Hunston, 2002). The words *medical* and *students* appear as the first word on the left-hand side of the node word *help* (*medical help*, *students help*), while the word *build* appear as the first word on the right-hand side (*help build*) as shown in Table 2 below. The table depicts the language patterns surrounding the keyword *help*.

TABLE 2. Pattern Around the Word *Help*

N	L5	L4	L3	L2	L1	Centre	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5
1	00	AM	00	AM	TO	HELP	ORANG	ASLI	ASLI	THE	ORANG
2	AM	00	AM	GOVERNMENT	WILL		THE	ORANG	ORANG	ASLI	ASLI
3	ORANG	ASLI	THE	00	AND		TO	THE	FOR	OF	FOR
4	12	12	IN	IN	AM		FOR	THEIR	IN	ORANG	THE
5	TO	THE	OF	ASLI	MEDICAL		THEM	TO	THE	IN	ARE
6	THE	IN	ORANG	STILL	STUDENTS		RESOLVE	UP	TO	FOR	OF
7	JUL	GROUP	WE	PROGRAMME	WOULD		BUILD	IN	QUALITY	AN	TWO
8	PLANTATION	TO	TO	VOLUNTEERS	OF		REBUILD	APR	HOMES	WITH	THEIR
9	2015	WITH	STEPS	WANT	CAN		SOLVE	BUILD	FROM	KUALA	LUMPUR
10	2007	INDIGENOUS	STATE	GOVT	BASIC		RAISE		NUMBER	COMMUN	AND
11	ASLI	OF	PEOPLE	EFFORT	NEED		IMPROVE		KIDS		00
12	HAVE	ORANG	AN	NEEDED	MORE		CLEAN				IN
13	FOR		12	MINDEF			BOOST				LIFE
14			ASLI				ON				ISSUES
15			JUST				KELANTAN				
16			FEDERAL				IN				

Table 2 above shows how the word *help* construct the representation of Orang Asli in relation to other entities. First, the word *help* is usually followed by the word Orang Asli which appears as the first, second or third word of *help*. Preceding the target word on the left-hand side are mostly entities that actually do the helping which include the *federal* or *state* (L3), government (L2), *volunteers* (L2) and *students* (L1). Words like *need* and *more* function to emphasize their dire need of help. We can also see the types of help that is being given to the Orang Asli which are to *build*, *rebuild*, *solve*, *improve*, and *clean* (R1).

Looking at these patterns, we can suggest that on the one hand, the Orang Asli communities appear to be getting the much-needed help from the other people/institutions in the Malaysian society and how Malaysians are aware and concerned about the needs of the Orang Asli. On the other hand, these findings also suggest that the Orang Asli communities are quite frequently portrayed as the people at the receiving end of things. In other words, Orang Asli communities are usually projected as the recipients or the done to objects in the news stories.

Collocational analysis of the adverb *allegedly* yields three significant collocates namely *killing*, *his* and *who*. As expected, an extremely negative word i.e. *killing*, is one of the most significant collocates which appears on the first position on the right-hand side of the node word. Despite its low frequency, the adverb *allegedly* has very interesting patterns forming around it especially those appearing on the first right hand side position (R1). We examined the word as it appears in the texts through concordance lines in WordSmith and found that out of 32 instances, only 19 refer to Orang Asli as the main subject of *allegedly*. Examples of how the adverb *allegedly* occur in contexts are shown in Table 3.

TABLE 3. Concordance lines for *allegedly*

1	charge SEREMBAN: An orang asli woman who **allegedly assaulted** her brother-in-law with a pie
*2	w. 30 Jun 2015 | 8:29 PM Orang asli girl **allegedly beaten** by teachers after being accused
*3	a school in Kelantan where a student was **allegedly beaten** by three teachers, have been den
4	ang asli man after poison from the darts **allegedly fired** from his blowpipe killed a man in
5	up, kicked and beaten by three teachers, **allegedly for stealing money** from one of the teac
*6	ve a watermelon farm where they had been **allegedly forced to labour** for several days with
7	as been ordered to enter his defence for **allegedly killing** his mother two years ago. 10 De
8	asli is now facing the death penalty for **allegedly killing** another man who he believed had
*9	amad to clarify the "threats" the latter **allegedly made** to the Orang Asli village headmen
10	ajang PETALING JAYA: An orang asli woman **allegedly masterminded** recent robberies in Kajang
11	asli, who were arrested on Saturday **for allegedly obstructing** a team of forest rangers fr
12	K: Police detained 11 orang asli men **for allegedly obstructing** a team of forest rangers fr
13	nes) are expected to be charged soon for **allegedly poaching and killing** a tiger in the Buk
14	ne orang asli are soon to be charged for **allegedly poaching and killing** a tiger in the Buk
15	ested an Orang Asli bomoh in Renggit for **allegedly raping** his 17-year-old patient during a
*16	p 2015 | 6:12 PM Parents of missing kids **allegedly receive** letter threatening expulsion fr
**17	rities against allowing a third party to **allegedly rob them** of their customary native land
*18	in (orang asli village headmen) who were **allegedly threatened** by a senator during a dialog
*19	he case of an Orang Asli student who was **allegedly tied up and kicked** by several teachers

The adverb *allegedly* is also found in two other contexts as presented in Table 3 above. First, the Orang Asli are the victim as shown in concordance line marked with asterisks (lines 2, 3, 6, 16, 18 and 19) when they are either *beaten*, *forced to labour* or *threatened* (*threats* and *threatening letter*). Second, the Orang Asli are identified and presented as the possible perpetrators, they are the ones committing the crime (e.g. *assault* [line 1], *stealing* [line 5], *killing* [lines 7 and 8], *masterminded* [line 10] and *poaching and killing* [lines 13 and 14]). What is clear from the frequent use of the adverb *allegedly* is that news reports concerning Orang Asli commonly focus on crimes committed by or to the Orang Asli.

Moving on to the examination of negative key words in this category, we focused our attention to two keywords as they appear in news stories about Orang Asli: *demand* (freq. 4) and *announced* (freq. 5). The word *demand* is unusually infrequent in the context of Orang Asli news as only four instances were found, consequently the number is not suitable for collocational analysis, so we examined the excerpts manually.

Within the Orang Asli news the word *demand* was used in the following contexts. First, the word *demand* is used as a noun to describe the market demand and the rising prices of a certain service (*transport*) and commodity (*agarwood*). The Orang Asli Communities are portrayed in these contexts as the people whose action created the demand (*the standoff*) and whose well-being is under threat (the welfare) because of the demand.

    1. *Demand* (noun) as consumer's desire and insistent request:

    i. *Demand* for transport to forest reserve soars (headline). Several owners of four-wheel-drive vehicles here are making a handsome profit ever since the standoff between the Orang Asli and loggers last week (lead paragraph).

   ii. The rising *demand* for agarwood is fueling the black market and poaching in the Malaysian forests, leaving the karas tree species, the security of our national parks and the welfare of Orang Asli at stake (lead paragraph).

Second, *demand* appears as a verb, in which *demand* indicates will or volition and suggests power. The other two instances of the word *demand* in the corpus, illustrate how the Orang Asli communities are demanding something to be done or the doer of the action as shown below:

    2. *Demand* (verb) as a forceful act of asking for something

    i. More than one hundred orang asli showed up at the state assembly sitting to meet Pahang Mentri Besar Datuk Seri Adnan Yaakob and *demand* that the state government recognise their customary lands (lead paragraph).

   ii. The welfare of some 400 orang asli community in Hulu Kelantan will be taken care off, including their *demand* for their heritage land (tanah adat) to be gazetted as their land if Barisan Nasional is to administer the state (lead paragraph).

In both instances, the issue that leads to their demand is related the customary lands or *tanah adat*, in line with a study by Loh (2011) which found that the media, NST and Malaysian Insider websites, reported the issue of land when discussing the Orang Asli. However, the forceful nature of the act of demanding is more visible in the first example (2.i) which shows how their demand was made explicit and so does the recipient of that demand i.e. state government via the state minister. The second instance in example (2.ii) appears more like a political manifesto. Thus, there is only one instance where the Orang Asli people are shown to be holding power by acting according to their will and wants with the use of the word *demand*. The fact that it is one of the most infrequent words used in the corpus suggest to us how the Orang Asli people are portrayed in relation to verbal expression of power. They are hardly a doer who yields power.

Finally, our analysis of the word *announced* also only focused on manual textual analysis due to its low instances of occurrences. Based on the five instances, we can see that all announcements were made by those other than the Orang Asli. Mostly they were made by ministers (lines 2 to 5), or by the government (line 1) as seen in Table 4.

TABLE 4. Concordance lines for *announced*

N	Concordance
1	em more land along with the titles previously **announced** for them. 30 Aug 2008 | 12:00 AM Orang asli
2	Mentri Besar Datuk Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat has **announced** a new secretariat to handle all matters pert
3	Razak brought cheer to the orang asli when he **announced** an additional allocation of RM30mil for the
4	Mentri Besar Datuk Seri Dr Zambry Abdul Kadir **announced** that a futsal court would be constructed the
5	udget PEKAN: A one-off aid allocation will be **announced** at the next Budget for all orang asli studen

Looking at the words within the verbs and adverbs category, we can see a somewhat polarised types of action which are deemed common when talking about the Orang Asli communities in the news. We know that from the verb *help*, the Orang Asli communities are usually reported as recipient of aid (done to) and with the frequent use of *allegedly*, many news stories are about crimes committed to or by the Orang Asli communities (doer and done to). They become either the accused, the victims or people in need.

Pronouns

For the pronouns, our examination focused on the two over-represented key pronouns (*their* and *them*) and two under-represented key pronouns (*us* and *you*). While *it* and *its* are also under-represented key pronouns, these do not refer to humans. Thus, no further examination was undertaken.

Analysis began by looking at the least frequent occurrences of pronoun, *you* and *us*. Only seven instances were found of the pronoun *you* and they are shown below in Table 5.

TABLE 5. Concordance of pronoun *you*

N	Concordance
1	YOU can take the doctor out of the hospital but **you** can never take the doctor out of the man. 27 De
2	gramme. 19 Nov 2012	12:00 AM Strong roots keep **you** steady INTERNING at the Centre for Orang Asli C
3	rifice weekends to build homes for orang asli DO **YOU** want to build a… no, not a snowman, but a hou
4	Dec 2008	12:00 AM Orang asli get free checkups **YOU** can take the doctor out of the hospital but you
5	oys missing in Fraser's Hill found alive 'I love **you**!' These were the first words uttered by young J
6	ng asli EVERYTHING starts with a small step - if **you** believe it can happen, it will.' 25 Jun 2007	
7	d to teach English to orang asli children 'Thank **You**, Teacher', may sound like a normal phrase in a

Instances in lines 1, 2,3, 4, and 6, do not refer to Orang Asli. Instead, they are used as generic personal pronouns which refer to "people in general" (Cambridge Online Dictionary, 2019). In line 3, the use of *you* calls out to the general public to come and help build homes for the Orang Asli communities. Close scrutiny shows that it is somewhat similar to the use of *you* in lines 1 and 2 where the doctor who helps the Orang Asli communities is portrayed in a positive light: *you can take the doctor out of the hospital but you can never take the doctor out of the man*.

In line 7, *you* is part of *thank you* which in this context expresses gratefulness of the Orang Asli students to those who volunteered to teach them. Only in one instance of *you*, line 5, actually refers to an Orang Asli rescuer who was greeted with *I love you* by the boy whom he found. The consistent pattern that we can see from the instances so far is that many instances or references of the pronoun *you* refer to people other than the Orang Asli. And in such instances these people are very much welcome to help the Orang Asli communities and they are frequently depicted as good and positive. These patterns compliment the previous discussion of findings related to the verb *help*.

All instances of the word *us* in the Orang Asli corpus refer to people. A detailed examination was carried out and presented in Table 6 below. As shown in Table 6, instances where the pronoun *us* referring to the Orang Asli are found only in lines 5 (*include us in Felcra scheme*), 6 (*give us the land as promised*) and 7 (*Kelantan government left us out of land matters*). In all these instances, the word *us* occur as part of direct quotation or reported speech. Again, most of the pronoun *us* referred to people or those other than the Orang Asli.

TABLE 6. Concordance of pronoun *us*

N	Concordance
1	2017 | 7:00 AM 'Authorities tried to intimidate **us**' PETALING JAYA: Two freelance journalists coveri
2	blockade 2016 means different things for all of **us**. Over here in Malaysia, we ask millennials about
3	Thursday, the World Resources Institute reminds **us** that many indigenous communities worldwide are s
4	ia Day. A day in 1963 we hoped would take all of **us** to greater things. That we would build a great n
5	land. 15 Jul 2009 | 12:00 AM Orang asli: Include **us** in Felcra scheme BERA: A group of orang asli fro
6	f 45,000 orang asli. 25 Jun 2009 | 12:00 AM Give **us** the land as promised, say orang asli THE orang a
7	29 Dec 2012 | 12:00 AM Kelantan government left **us** out of land matters, says orang asli department
8	ct 2012 | 12:00 AM Bah Tony most welcome to join **us**, says Perak BN IPOH: Perak Barisan Nasional has

We will now discuss the pronouns *their* and *them*. The over-represented pronouns *their* (freq. 460), and *them* (freq. 107) were examined using concordance and collocate analysis. Based on the concordance analysis, we found 460 instances of exclusive pronoun *their*. Out of those, 428 (93%) were referents to the Orang Asli, while the rest referred to other entities or people liaising with them. Similarly, analysis of the pronoun *them* showed 107 (96%) out of 112 instances referred to the Orang Asli.

With regards to the discussion about the pronoun *their*, we found that the Orang Asli communities were usually associated with their culture and way of life, resources, law, education and problems. In many instances we found that the resources such as plantations and crops were usually depicted in the news stories as being destroyed or became the focal point of disputes. Such dispute of resources also brings in legality aspects such as lawyers as well as focus on their rights over ancestral lands. Some examples of *their* as it occurs in context are shown in Tables 7 and 8.

TABLE 7. Concordance of *their* * plantation

N	Concordance
1	in Pos Balar claimed they lost their source of income when a firm cleared their 100ha rubber plantation to develop a project called 'Ladang Rakyat'.
2	into part of a forest reserve in Bukit Senggeh, Selandar, to start their own rubber plantation. 6 Aug 2013 | 7:00 AM Task force to look

Close examination of Table 7 shows that the first example of plantation appears in a negative context where the Orang Asli communities at Pos Balar were reported to have lost their source of income as their plantation had been cleared by a third party, again they were the victims. While in the second line, the news stories reported that *Orang Asli is believed to be the culprits who encroached into part of forest reserve in Bukit Senggeh, Selandar, to start their own plantation*. This particular sentence is heavily embedded with negative words such as *culprits* and *encroached*. It is not surprising to see that similar negativity appears in collocates about *crops* as it appears together with words such as *destroyed* and *destruction*, along with *land squabble* and *police reports* as shown in Table 8.

TABLE 8. Concordance of *their crops*

N	Concordance
1	, Kampong Jemeri, Kampong Jemeras and Kampong Petoh were assured that their crops and houses would not be affected in the Government's East Coast
2	asli community in Kampung Tasik Mentiga have lodged two police reports over their crops being destroyed by 70 people following a land squabble. 23 Aug
3	asli of Kampung Pos Bersih in Ulu Slim are crying foul over the destruction of their crops, which they believe was caused by sand dredging activities. 22 Dec

In Table 8, we can see that such destruction of their property, in this case, the crops, might have become a common thing that in line 1, we can see the insecurity felt by the Orang Asli and even threatened by development to the point that they needed to be 'assured'. The news stories also exhibited how Orang Asli were worried about the destruction of their crops caused by

pollution i.e. sand dredging activities. Despite acknowledgements of ownership given by the authorities with regards to their resources such as water, crops and plantation, often the reports highlight negative instances about destruction, pollution or insecurities. Such depictions consequently portray Orang Asli communities as not having control over their properties or their own resources.

As for the analysis for the pronoun *them*, there are only four significant collocates i.e. *supplies*, *given*, *off* and *among*. Each of these collocates yielded a maximum of four instances in the corpus. While limited instances were found, the overall findings somehow depicted a consistent narrative. For example, in the collocate *supplies*, we found consistent appearance of a third party who provided help and gave the Orang Asli some supplies such as back-to school supplies and medical supplies. Similar kind of narrative was evident with the collocate *given*, where we found that Orang Asli communities were given land, chance to voice views and promises e.g. *Orang Asli will be **given land for them** to build homes*; *the Orang Asli of Perak are being **given a chance to voice their views** on projects*. Thus, we conclude that despite the limited instances found, the portrayal was the same – the Orang Asli communities were almost always at the receiving end, in need of help in many aspects.

Looking back at the ideological connotation of pronouns, we can say that *their* and *them* which frequently occurred in the news corpus about Orang Asli are exclusive pronouns i.e. they are markers indicating out-group belonging (Anchimbe, 2016). The out-group is different from the in-group, which in this case the reporter and assumingly the reader. While indexing of out-group through the use of pronoun creates a distance between Orang Asli and the readers of the news stories, such indexing practice was consistently found in other past studies of indigenous people all around the world. For instance, based on analyses of focus group discussions, it was found that the pronoun *us* is almost always used by mostly White Canadian or Australian respondents when referring to non-indigenous people while *them* refers to indigenous people (Clark & Walsh, 2012). Hence, we argue that if such indexing continues to prevail in the news stories about Orang Asli, they will never be considered as one of us. Gaps will continue to exist, and the Orang Asli will remain to be considered as different despite them being acknowledged as "original people" or "first people" (Sharifah et al., 2011).

CONCLUSION

Analysis of the data extracted from the newspaper exhibited two major categories very much related to the subject of our study i.e. the Orang Asli and how they are represented in the mainstream newspaper. The categories are verb, adverb and pronouns. Within these main categories, they could be divided into two types of keywords which are the positive and negative keywords. These words are placed either in the headlines or the lead paragraphs.

The verbs/adverbs commonly used with the subject of study i.e. the Orang Asli exhibit the need for help. This can be seen through the use of the verb *need* which was found as one of the keywords. It portrays the position of the Orang Asli communities which is at the receiving end or as receivers. This is rather condescending as it is as if the Orang Asli communities are helpless communities that constantly require or need help in all aspects. Another key word, the verb *demand* is strong, in the sense that when it is used, it gives the idea of power. The usual connection made is that the person who demands something has power. However, in the case of the Orang Asli communities, the verb *demand* is found alongside the verb *help*. This dilutes its strength and power. Thus, instead of a strong community that has voiced the demand for their rights, the Orang Asli communities are portrayed as lacking in verbal expression of power as

often depicted in the news media. With regards to the analysis of verbs and adverbs, we can conclude that there is hardly any action or description of action related to the Orang Asli communities that empowers their represented identity in the news media.

Another significant category found in the representation of the Orang Asli communities is the pronoun category. In our analysis, we found that the possessive pronoun *their* holds information as to the kind of possession usually associated with Orang Asli communities. Despite showing possession which includes land, water and plantation, the kind of depiction is often about the Orang Asli communities as not having control over what is understood to be theirs. They often had to face dispute with the authorities, in this case the state or federal government, over land particularly their ancestral land as well as land for their crops. When the pronoun *them* or *their* is used to refer to the Orang Asli communities, a kind of space or distance is created by the writer of the news stories. They are portrayed as the recipient of things and action, in many cases as the 'done to' object of the story – resonating what we found in our analysis of verb/adverb category. They possess no power and are often at the mercy of the authorities. With regards to the pronoun category, we found a consistent pattern of packaging the news stories with negativity. While we acknowledge that negative news value is commonly found in hard news stories (i.e. news stories about tragedies, incident etc.), we would also like to provide an alternative explanation. As mentioned before, *they* and *them* are exclusive pronouns, meaning that they are usually used to index out-group belonging (Anchimbe, 2016). Our finding related to negativity and pronouns is also coherent with the ideological *us* versus *them* rhetoric which is realised when the other or the out-group is negatively represented i.e. negative other representation (van Dijk, 1998). In such case, we can conclude that the Orang Asli communities of Malaysia are consistently portrayed as the 'other' or a group different from the writer or the public/readers.

We argue that some linguistic resources are responsible for the negative and stereotypical portrayals of Orang Asli communities. Our findings can be used as means for replication and comparison for future studies since we have categorised our findings into distinguishable parts of speech (i.e., pronoun, verbs, adverbs). We believe that systematic, diachronic type of data analysis and selection of more newspapers to be considered for analysis should be the aim for future research. Further examination on data extracted from different data sources may shed light on the issues of the Orang Asli communities and how they are represented.

In conclusion, this study contributes to the literature on the urgency to look into explicit representation of the Orang Asli communities in Malaysian media as suggested by very recent research: *"Future studies will need to establish the specific portrayal of the Orang Asli community in Malaysian media, such as conducting a comparative portrayal of the community in different forms of media and inspecting the recent themes reported about the community"* (Jamal, 2020, p. 67). Although the present study did not unfold the comparative depictions of the minority group from different forms of media, the findings certainly have provided strong evidence of the under-representation of the Orang Asli using 'a robust methodology" (Nartey & Mwinlaaru, 2019), corpus assisted (critical) discourse analysis. As the influence of media is impactful and powerful in shaping the paradigm of the readers, the findings gained through this study can be a stepping stone to educate the media writers to be more cautious on the ways communities are represented to avoid any disapproving portrayals.

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