# ANALYZING THE POLITICAL IDEOLOGIES OF TUN MAHATHIR IN TWO ERAS: A CORPUS-BASED ANALYSIS OF LEXICAL CHOICES

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**Article Info:**

**Abstract:**

The ideology behind Tun Mahathir's way of thinking always been the subject of interest for many. This research will investigate the political ideology of Tun Mahathir based on his lexical choices and words frequency in his speeches during two different Prime Minister eras and will compare the two corpora lexical choices, words frequency and political ideology that exist within.A total of 151 texts were compiled which consisted of 79 texts from the first era (2001-2003) and 72 texts from the second era (2018-2020). The comparative analysis of the two corpora were conducted through two stages, its word frequencies especially nouns to help determining lexical choices and Critical Discourse Analysis in revealing Tun Mahathir's political ideologies. The result shows some differences in word frequencies and lexical choices in both eras in which reflected Tun Mahathir's political ideology in the two eras. The word 'negara', a noun, has the highest frequency for both eras and yet words that were "economy" related has the highest frequency during the first era whereas society related was the highest during the second era. The changes in Tun Mahathir political party during the two eras may be a contributors to the changes of the lexical choices and slight changes of political ideology that occur. The changes in political landscapes and social problems in Malaysia contributes to the factor as well. Investigating Tun Mahathir's lexical choices in different speeches can help to investigate deeper into Tun Mahathir"s political ideology.

## Introduction

Tun Mahathir served as both the fourth Prime Minister of Malaysia (1981-2003) and the seventh Prime Minister (2018-2020), making him the first person in the world to hold the position twice in Malaysia (Khoo Boo Teik, 2021). What's distinctive about his leadership is that he belonged to different political affiliations during each tenure. During his initial term (1981-2003), he was aligned with Barisan Nasional (BN), the ruling coalition at the time. However, prior to assuming office for the seventh time, he switched allegiance to the opposition group Pakatan Harapan (PH), which contested against BN and subsequently won the 15th General Election in 2018, leading PH to become the ruling party that year. This dual leadership under different political banners exemplifies the unique trajectory of Tun Mahathir's political career. Tun Mahathir also has always been known for his great manipulation in politics (Abdul Rashid, 2018) ranging from his resignation from UMNO to pressure Abdullah Badawi to making a bid with Anwar Ibrahim to unseat Najib whom he had helped previously to be the Prime Minister after Abdullah Badawi by rejoining UMNO. This shows that Tun Mahathir has a unique and complicated way of thinking, that deserves to be investigated further.

In his role as Prime Minister, speech serves as a vital medium through which leaders communicate with the populace, conveying various messages such as information, appreciation, and instructions. Speech, as a form of text, undergoes interpretation by the audience, either through reading or listening. Text, as defined by Halliday and Hasan (1976), encompasses any cohesive passage, whether spoken or written. Furthermore, the term 'semantics' extends beyond word meanings to encompass the entire linguistic system and vocabulary of a language, as emphasized by Hazilah Mat Lazim and Idris Aman (2018) and Halliday (1985).

Hence, a study was conducted to critically examine discourse analysis and, most significantly, to correlate it with the role of language within a social context rather than in a strictly one-dimensional manner. Specifically, this study aims to scrutinize Tun Mahathir's speeches in order to delve into the prevailing ideology, assessing his lexical choices across both periods based on the frequency of occurrence. Addressing the scarcity of critical discourse analysis studies in Malaysia is crucial to generating solutions for prevailing social issues within the country. By analyzing the texts of Tun Mahathir's speeches, various issues can be identified and utilized as references for addressing diverse social problems. As a Prime Minister, Tun Mahathir espouses his own ideology aimed at steering the nation towards development and realizing his envisioned future. Ideology, though not explicitly articulated, permeates his discourse and warrants careful examination for comprehension. Understanding ideology necessitates probing its implicit meanings; as Ahdi Riyono et al. (2018) posit, ideology constitutes the political beliefs held by a collective. It encompasses their perspectives on the world, expressions of values towards societal groups, and cultivation of interests in pertinent issues. Therefore, the analysis of Tun Mahathir's speeches demands a critical approach, considering political, social, and other contextual factors at play.

Therefore, this study scrutinizes the lexical choices evident in Tun Mahathir's speeches across both periods of his tenure. These lexical selections offer insights into the ideological framework present in Tun Mahathir's mindset as the Prime Minister of Malaysia. Lexicon, based on the fourth council's dictionary, comprises the vocabulary of a language, serving as a tool to discern Tun Mahathir's political beliefs and leadership perceptions in Malaysia, unveiling the political strategies and solutions to social issues embedded within his thoughts. Furthermore, this study investigates the ideological distinctions between the two eras. During Tun Mahathir's initial term, he was affiliated with Barisan Nasional, whereas in his second term (2018 until the conclusion of February 2020), he belonged to Pakatan Harapan. The analysis of lexical selection revolves around the frequency of usage in Tun Mahathir's speeches. It commences by examining and cataloging the lexical elements frequently employed by Tun Mahathir in his speeches from 2002-2003, denoted as the first era of his administration, and in his speeches from 2018-2019, encompassing his tenure as the seventh Prime Minister of Malaysia, designated as the second era of Tun Mahathir's premiership.

## Literature Review

### Critical Discourse Analysis

Numerous scholars and linguists in the field of language and social sciences have expressed interest in investigating discourse. The term "discourse" encompasses various forms of language use within society, as articulated by Van Dijk (1997) and Fairclough (1993). While interpretations may differ, discourse essentially involves the exchange of linguistic expressions between speakers and listeners, or writers and readers.

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) was introduced by Roger Fowler, Gunther Kress, Bob Hodge, and Tony Trew in 1979. It was subsequently refined and expanded by Norman Fairclough (1989), Ruth Wodak (1989), and Van Dijk (1993). Van Dijk (2001) defines CDA as a research approach in discourse analysis that primarily explores how written and spoken language contribute to the enactment, perpetuation, and resistance of social power dynamics, abuse, dominance, and inequality within the social and political context. Through this critical inquiry, discourse analysts take a proactive stance aimed at understanding, exposing, and ultimately challenging social injustices. Wodak (2010) characterizes CDA as an interdisciplinary research program that addresses various issues, employing diverse approaches, theoretical models, research methodologies, and objectives. However, what unites these approaches is a shared focus on examining the symbolic aspects of power, injustice, and socio-political, economic, or cultural transformations within society. It can be likened to conducting a thorough examination, akin to an autopsy, on discourse, whether spoken or written.

According to Thompson (1988), CDA has evolved into an approach intended to deepen our understanding of social structures, power dynamics, gender, identity, and the activation, maintenance, confirmation, legitimation, and challenges of ideologies within discourse. Rashidi and Souzandehfar (2010) concur that CDA represents the most suitable approach for uncovering the underlying ideology within discourse.

### Lexical and Ideology

Ahdi Riyono et al (2018) conducted a lexical comparison study on two translations: the novel "Ronggeng Dukuh Paruh" and its English translation titled "The Dancer." This research delves

into the ideology of the translator by analyzing the lexical choices in the translation and comparing them with the original text. Hatim et al (1997) assert that translation reflects the ideological stance of the translator, a view further supported by Schaffner (2002), who argues that translation is inherently influenced by the translator's ideology, which permeates the grammatical and lexical aspects of the text. This study employs critical discourse analysis to scrutinize the lexical comparisons made by the translators.

The frequency of certain terms can shape perceptions and associations with a particular topic. For example, in Al-Jazeera English coverage of the Gulf conflict, the term 'blockade' appeared frequently, comprising 11% of the discourse, leading readers to develop a negative view of the conflict (Kharbach, 2020). Similarly, Li and Shuzhen (2015) observed contrasting perspectives on the Sichuan earthquake between American and Chinese media. American outlets highlighted negative aspects such as perceived limitations on freedom and technological backwardness, while Chinese media focused on positive elements. This divergence was reflected in the lexical choices, with each media emphasizing different aspects of the event. By analyzing the frequency of specific terms, Li and Shuzhen were able to discern the underlying ideological differences between the two media outlets. This underscores the significance of lexical frequency in understanding ideology.

**Methodology**

*Qualitative*
This study adopts a combined approach of corpus research and critical discourse analysis, representing a qualitative methodology. According to Muhammad Zakwan and Azhar Jaluddin (2017), corpus linguistics offers a unique perspective by collecting extensive everyday language data stored digitally in a corpus. The data under scrutiny are digitized for analysis using AntConc software. Hishamudin Isam and Masetoh Abd Mutalib (2019) highlight three key aspects of the linguistic approach: analysis of large data collections, systematic text samples ensuring validity (face-validity) as language representations, and ease of accessibility, generation, and credible recognition of study results. Computer-assisted analysis minimizes errors compared to human-dependent analysis, making corpus studies more suitable for extensive datasets.

This study focuses solely on the top 20 lexical items with the highest frequency in Tun Mahathir's speeches across both eras. The selected lexicon excludes auxiliary words, adjectives, and verbs, solely comprising nouns as nouns offer abstract characterizations of individuals (Fiedler et al., 1989). Each lexical item will be categorized into appropriate thematic fields, including economy, education, society, religion, and politics, based on the contextual usage within the speeches.

Subsequently, this research will undertake a comparative analysis of the frequency of lexical items and lexical categories across both periods. The aim is to discern the lexical choices prevalent during Tun Mahathir's tenure as Prime Minister. The selection of lexical items is based on their recurrence in speeches, offering insights into Tun Mahathir's overarching ideology throughout his leadership and potentially revealing any ideological shifts between the two eras.

To elucidate ideology, critical discourse analysis is employed. As per Fairclough (2010), discourse encompasses language and other semiotic modes, such as body language, which are regarded as social phenomena linked to various aspects including social dynamics, daily practices, educational backgrounds, beliefs, morals, and cognition. Critical discourse analysis serves to scrutinize Tun Mahathir's political cognition, aiming to unearth the ideology underpinning his political thought, commonly referred to as Mahathirism, as articulated by Omar and Pandian (2006). Therefore, critical discourse analysis is utilized to unravel Tun Mahathir's ideological framework.

### *Time of Study*

This research utilizes speeches delivered by Tun Mahathir, who served as both the fourth Prime Minister (from 1981 to 2003) and the seventh Prime Minister (from 2018 to 2020) of Malaysia, making him the only individual globally to hold the position twice. Numerous speeches have been delivered by Tun Mahathir during his tenures. However, for this study, speeches from the fourth Prime Minister's term, specifically from 2001 to 2003, and from the seventh Prime Minister's term, spanning from 2018 to 2020, were selected. A total of 79 speeches from the fourth Prime Minister and 72 speeches from the seventh Prime Minister were analyzed, all of which were in the Malaysian language and accessible through the pmo.gov.my website. To ensure consistency, only speeches from 2001 to 2003 from the fourth Prime Minister's era were included, avoiding potential data disparities between the two periods of Tun Mahathir's premiership.

### *Sources of Data*

The corpus data was sourced from the Chief Executive Speech Archive Collection portal website (https://www.pmo.gov.my/ucapan/), comprising a total of 151 texts. This dataset includes 79 texts from the years 2001 to 2003 and 72 texts from the years 2018 to 2020. The corpus research method was employed to scrutinize the analyzed data, while critical discourse analysis was utilized to explore the ideology inferred from the obtained data.

### *Data Analysis*

Data undergoes analysis in AntConc to form a word frequency list → Top 20 nouns with highest word frequency was selected and → The chosen lexicals were further analyzed by categorising each accordingly using concordance
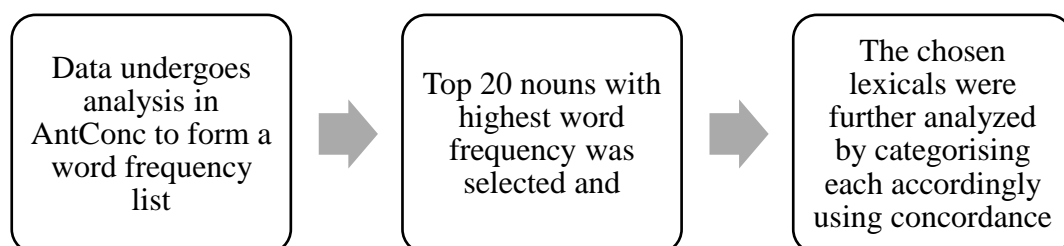
**Figure 1: Flow Chart of Data Analysis**

This study employs AntConc software as its primary tool. AntConc, developed by Laurence Anthony of Waseda University, Japan, is accessible at http://www.laurenceanthony.net/software/antconc/. This software facilitates text analysis for researchers dealing with extensive lexical datasets, simplifying the study and analysis of textual data by allowing users to input their desired files and text data directly into the software.

For this research, AntConc was utilized to analyze all 151 texts of Tun Mahathir's speeches. Prior to inputting speech text data into AntConc, all speech texts were converted to .txt format. The primary features of AntConc utilized in this study are 'word counts' and 'concordance'. Word counts are employed to identify lexical items with the highest frequency in Tun Mahathir's speeches. This feature generates a lexical list ranked by frequency, with the most frequent lexical items appearing at the top. Subsequently, lexical items matching predefined criteria are selected and subjected to concordance analysis. The concordance feature enables the identification of contextual nuances associated with selected lexical items, aiding in their categorization into appropriate thematic fields. The analysis of speech text was conducted using AntConc software.

This section aims to illustrate the lexical frequency present in Tun Mahathir's speeches and identify lexical contexts to facilitate categorization. Lexical frequency dictates lexical selection, allowing for the identification of Tun Mahathir's preferences and differences in lexical choices across the two eras.

Critical discourse analysis serves to unravel the ideological underpinnings of Tun Mahathir's political thought. As per Azimah (2013), language serves as a tool for individuals and groups to achieve their objectives. Ideology, as defined by Ahdi Riyono et al. (2018), reflects the political beliefs of a collective. Azimah (2013) notes that the term "critical" in critical discourse analysis refers to individuals leveraging power to attain goals. Tun Mahathir, as a Prime Minister wielding significant influence, frequently employs language in his speeches to achieve objectives, underscoring the necessity of understanding his ideological stance. Consequently, this study employs critical discourse analysis to identify Tun Mahathir's ideology and discern any ideological variances resulting from differing lexical choices.

Once the lexical categories are identified, each category will be substantiated by examining the prevailing situations in those respective years using newspaper articles and online portals. This process aims to analyze the underlying ideology in Tun Mahathir's discourse. Critical discourse analysis involves the researcher's interpretation of Tun Mahathir's discourse, as outlined by Fairclough (2010), which encompasses studying discourse patterns using a corpus, such as collocative patterns. In this study, lexical frequency is utilized to discern patterns in lexical selection evident in Tun Mahathir's speeches.

Each lexical category will shed light on the prevailing political ideologies embedded in Tun Mahathir's discourse. As per Azimah (2013), critical discourse analysis lacks a fixed research framework and relies on the researcher's interpretation. Therefore, this study will analyze each lexical category, providing interpretations based on Tun Mahathir's discourse and the socio-political context of the time. Subsequently, the lexical choices in both eras will be compared to identify any ideological differences, thereby elucidating any shifts in Tun Mahathir's political thinking following his change of political affiliation.

The objective of this research is to demonstrate disparities in lexical choices evident in Tun Mahathir's speeches, delineate lexical categories, contrast notable lexical categories, and establish the correlation between linguistic preferences and Tun Mahathir's ideological stance.

## Findings and Discussion

**Table 1: First Era (2001-2003)**

| No. | Lexical | Frequency | Category based on concordance |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | negara | 2797 | Economy |
| 2 | Islam | 1582 | Religion |
| 3 | kerajaan | 1540 | Politics |
| 4 | Malaysia | 1229 | Society |
| 5 | ekonomi | 878 | Economy |
| 6 | Melayu | 745 | Society |
| 7 | rakyat | 669 | Society |
| 8 | kaum | 602 | Society |
| 9 | peratus | 571 | Economy |
| 10 | dunia | 553 | Economy |
| 11 | ringgit | 546 | Economy |
| 12 | pembangunan | 536 | Economy |
| 13 | agama | 495 | Religion |
| 14 | syarikat | 472 | Economy |
| 15 | parti | 470 | Politics |
| 16 | sektor | 466 | Economy |
| 17 | bangsa | 422 | Society |
| 18 | masyarakat | 366 | Society |
| 19 | bidang | 345 | Education |
| 20 | ilmu | 342 | Education |

In total, there are six lexical items categorized under the social lexicon, eight under the economic lexicon, two under the political lexicon, two under the religious lexicon, and two under the education lexicon. The allocation of each lexical item into its respective category is determined through concordance analysis, which elucidates the contextual nuances associated with each lexical item, guided by the researcher's interpretation. Each lexical item carries its own contextual significance, necessitating thorough research to ascertain the appropriate category.

According to Table 1, it can be inferred that from 2001 to 2003, the predominant lexical category in Tun Mahathir's speeches was economy, followed by society, politics, religion, and education. This indicates Tun Mahathir's inclination towards economic themes during his tenure as the fourth Prime Minister. The prevalence of economic-related lexical items underscores his strong emphasis on Malaysia's economic development during this period.

Following the economy, social lexicon emerged as the second most frequently selected category in Tun Mahathir's speeches. This underscores the significance of societal harmony and unity in Tun Mahathir's vision for Malaysia's progress. In a nation, social cohesion is pivotal for fostering development. Furthermore, politics, education, and religion each constituted the third most frequently selected lexical categories. This suggests that Tun

Mahathir views politics, education, and religion with similar importance, influencing his lexical selection across these categories.

**Table 2: Second Era (2018-2020)**

| No. | Lexical | Frequency | Category based on Concordance |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | negara | 1082 | Economy |
| 2 | kerajaan | 601 | Politics |
| 3 | Malaysia | 547 | Society |
| 4 | rakyat | 404 | Society |
| 5 | pembangunan | 190 | Economy |
| 6 | ekonomi | 183 | Economy |
| 7 | pendidikan | 179 | Education |
| 8 | masyarakat | 175 | Society |
| 9 | negeri | 170 | Politics |
| 10 | pihak | 169 | Politics |
| 11 | industri | 155 | Economy |
| 12 | undang | 150 | Society |
| 13 | persekutuan | 123 | Politics |
| 14 | awam | 113 | Society |
| 15 | bandar | 113 | Society |
| 16 | kemakmuran | 111 | Society |
| 17 | raya | 107 | Politics |
| 18 | kaum | 106 | Society |
| 19 | kementerian | 105 | Politics |
| 20 | kerja | 105 | Society |

Analysis of the lexical categories reveals that there are 9 lexical items categorized under the societal lexicon, 6 under the political lexicon, 4 under the economic lexicon, one under the education lexicon, and none under the religious lexicon.

From 2018 to 2020, Tun Mahathir demonstrates a preference for lexical items with a societal context. This indicates his focus on community-oriented issues during his tenure as the Seventh Prime Minister, with society being a primary concern reflected in his lexical choices. Political lexicon emerges as the second most frequently chosen category in his speeches, underscoring Tun Mahathir's prioritization of political matters. This suggests that politics holds significant importance for him, influencing his lexical selection as he consistently addresses political issues for the benefit of political parties and the Malaysian government. Subsequently, economic lexicon emerges as the third most frequently chosen category, reaffirming Tun Mahathir's concern for Malaysia's economic situation. Despite the prominence of societal and political concerns, his attention to economic matters remains evident, with lexical items related to the economy being frequently chosen.

Education lexicon comprises only one item, and there are no lexical items related to religion. However, this does not imply that Tun Mahathir disregards religion and education.
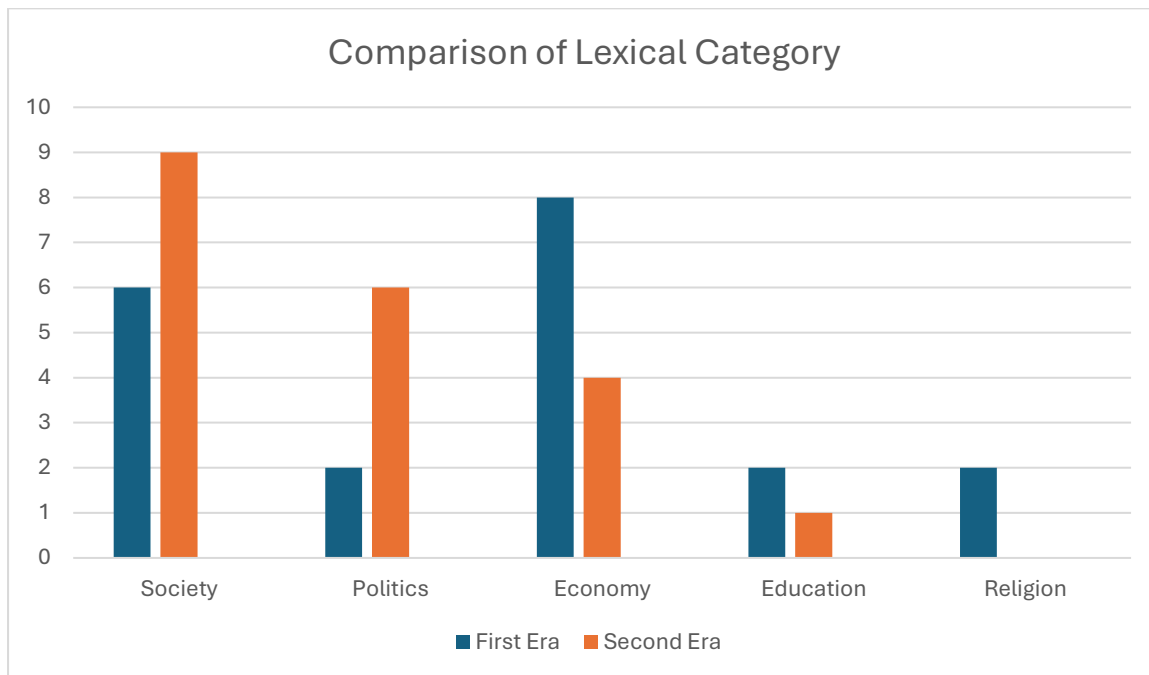
**Figure 2: Comparison of Tun Mahathir's Lexical and Ideological Selection**

Figure 1 illustrates a discrepancy in the selection of lexical categories between the two periods of Tun Mahathir's prime ministership. In the initial era, there is a propensity towards lexical items with an economic context, whereas in the subsequent era, there is a shift towards selecting lexical items associated with society.

This shift can be attributed to various factors, particularly the economic challenges faced during Tun Mahathir's first term as Prime Minister. Malaysia encountered a severe economic crisis, resulting in a substantial deficit, as noted by Abdul Aziz Awang(2020). Additionally, in 1997, Malaysia grappled with a currency crisis stemming from the depreciation of the Malaysian ringgit, as highlighted by Mahathir Mohamad. These crises likely influenced Tun Mahathir's lexical preferences, as economic issues assumed paramount importance during this period.

In the researcher's view, such critical economic issues prompted Tun Mahathir to prioritize vocabulary related to economics. The recovery from deflation and currency problems underscored the significance of the economy in determining Malaysia's developmental trajectory. Indeed, the economy's pivotal role in national development likely influenced Tun Mahathir's lexical choices during his first term in office. From 2018 to 2020, there is a notable shift in Tun Mahathir's lexical preferences, with a greater inclination towards societal rather than economic themes. According to the researcher, this change could be driven by Tun Mahathir's aim to rebuild trust within the community, particularly after transitioning leadership from Barisan Nasional to Pakatan Harapan (PH). Khairuddin Abu Hassan (2019) highlighted in an Astro Awani article dated 5 October 2019 that Tun Mahathir's involvement with PH led to the downfall of the corrupt BN leadership. To win over the populace, Tun Mahathir likely prioritized lexical items with a social context, essential for fostering community trust and ensuring PH's success in the 2018 election. Despite Tun Mahathir's esteemed status as the Fourth Prime Minister, securing the people's support remains crucial for PH's electoral victory. Therefore, as the Seventh Prime Minister, Tun Mahathir continued to emphasize social lexical

items as a gesture of gratitude to the electorate and acknowledgment of their role in electing him and PH into power.

The researcher finds the change in political lexical selection particularly noteworthy. Unlike his first term, where political lexicon usage was not prominent, Tun Mahathir's second term saw an increased focus on political terminology. This shift, in the researcher's view, is a response to the change in Malaysia's government from BN to PH, reflecting Tun Mahathir's efforts to establish a New Malaysia, as expressed by Khairuddin Abu Hassan (2019). The failures of the previous BN administration prompted Tun Mahathir to switch allegiances to PH, a strategic move indicative of political maneuvering. Given the complexities of political dynamics, Tun Mahathir's increased emphasis on political lexicon in his second term is seen as a means to consolidate his position as a formidable Prime Minister. A strong political stance is deemed essential for a Prime Minister, thus justifying Tun Mahathir's heightened focus on political vocabulary during his second tenure.

However, this does not imply that Tun Mahathir neglected political matters during his initial tenure as Prime Minister. According to the researcher, he still considered politics important, but he placed it on par with religious and educational concerns. Perhaps, in the researcher's view, he prioritized addressing Malaysia's economic challenges during that period. The positive trend observed in Malaysia's GDP in 2001, as reported by Bank Negara, indicates Tun Mahathir's success in revitalizing the country's economy, which had previously faltered.

Additionally, the researcher noted a disparity in the frequency of religious lexical items between the two periods. While such items were prevalent in the first era, they were less prominent in the second era. Why did this occur? The absence of significant religious issues in the first era could be a contributing factor. Nonetheless, the researcher acknowledges that religious conflicts are not uncommon in Malaysia, a pluralistic nation, as highlighted by Azizan Baharudin et al. (2013). Despite a religious issue arising during Tun Mahathir's second term—the Jawi writing controversy—the frequency of religious lexical items from 2018 to 2020 was not as pronounced. Does this suggest Tun Mahathir disregarded religious issues as he did in his first term? The researcher refrains from making definitive assertions but speculates that Tun Mahathir may have prioritized societal plurality, opting for lexical items reflecting societal elements. The researcher suggests that Tun Mahathir may have avoided addressing religious matters to maintain impartiality as Prime Minister and ensure equal treatment of all religious communities in Malaysia, while still recognizing Islam as the nation's official religion.

Regarding education, Tun Mahathir regarded it as crucial in both eras of his administration. As an educated individual, he viewed education as pivotal for Malaysia's progress. Besides the economy, education plays a vital role in national development. Hence, as Prime Minister, Tun Mahathir prioritized education issues. In his second term, Malaysians were inundated with news of the resignation of Dato' Dr. Maszlee, the Education Minister, a highly publicized event. This underscores the significance of education in Malaysia, as noted by Rohaniza Idris and Mohd Iskandar Ibrahim in Berita Harian on January 7, 2020. Tun Mahathir clarified that Dr. Maszlee's resignation was not due to numerous mistakes.

The excerpt from Berita Harian dated January 7, 2020, indicates that Maszlee's resignation had multiple factors. Tun Mahathir clarified that not all of Maszlee's actions were incorrect, acknowledging some positive contributions. However, due to other undisclosed reasons, Tun

Mahathir believed Maszlee's resignation was necessary, a decision that Maszlee ultimately agreed with. Tun Mahathir also expressed frustration over the unauthorized publication of a letter he had written to Maszlee. This episode underscores the significance of education as a prominent factor influencing Tun Mahathir's lexical selection.

So, are there ideological discrepancies between Tun Mahathir's two administrations? Yes, indeed. There are discernible ideological distinctions between the two periods, as evidenced by Tun Mahathir's lexical preferences.

During his initial tenure, Tun Mahathir was affiliated with the BN political party. According to the analysis results, economic and social lexical items took precedence, followed by education, religion, and politics. From the researcher's perspective and after scrutinizing Tun Mahathir's texts, it became evident that Tun Mahathir was primarily focused on advancing the country in alignment with Vision 2020, a vision he had set forth. During this period, he was driven by the promise of Malaysia's progress outlined in Vision 2020. He concentrated on bolstering Malaysia's economy, which led to notable achievements such as the establishment of Putrajaya. His ideology, as perceived by the researcher, was centered on Malaysia's economic advancement and the welfare of its people. To realize this vision, Mahathir undertook various measures, guided by economic principles and a political ideology that prioritized the nation's economy and populace. This emphasis on economic development was particularly pronounced during his leadership within Barisan Nasional, where he wielded considerable control and influence.

In the second era, according to the researcher's assessment, Tun Mahathir directed more attention towards politics. This shift coincided with his transition to Bersatu, which later merged with PH. The researcher views this party switch as a strategic political maneuver by Tun Mahathir. During this phase, Tun Mahathir placed greater emphasis on cultivating public trust, guided by the notion of creating a New Malaysia and fostering national development. Despite maintaining his aspirations for Vision 2020, the researcher perceives ideological disparities in Tun Mahathir's approach. Each political party harbors distinct ideologies, albeit sharing the overarching goal of Malaysia's global success. As Tun Mahathir adapted to his role within the PH political party, he also adjusted to PH's ideological framework. Examination of texts from 2018 to 2020 revealed a notable increase in the frequency of political lexical items compared to the first era. This indicates a shift in Tun Mahathir's ideological stance, albeit subtle. Although not readily apparent, Tun Mahathir's lexical choices serve as evidence of the ideological evolution occurring within his mindset.

**Conclusion**

In summary, this study managed to show that analyzing lexical selection can offer insights into the underlying ideology of an individual. However, it may not provide a comprehensive understanding of a person's character and beliefs, as ideology is subject to the researcher's interpretation of the gathered data. The study's findings indicate that national-centric lexical items were most frequently used during both of Tun Mahathir's tenures as the fourth and seventh Prime Minister, underscoring his strong emphasis on the nation's interests irrespective of circumstances.

Regarding lexical categories, Tun Mahathir predominantly opted for economic-related terms during his first tenure, whereas in his second term, he leaned towards lexical items with social connotations. This discrepancy suggests a shift in lexical preferences between the two periods. Furthermore, the study highlights ideological disparities in Tun Mahathir's thinking across the two eras, as evidenced by variations in lexical selection. Despite these ideological discrepancies, Tun Mahathir remains a Prime Minister of notable caliber. The researcher hopes this study will aid Malaysian citizens, particularly the younger generation, in understanding their own ideologies and contribute to enhancing the political landscape in Malaysia by fostering good politicians.

**Acknowledegment**

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