

**COUNTERING XENOPHOBIC NARRATIVES  
TOWARDS THE ROHINGYA REFUGEES AMID THE  
COVID-19 PANDEMIC: A CRITICAL DISCOURSE  
ANALYSIS**

**BY**

**AINA FARISHA BINTI AZHAR**

**A dissertation submitted in fulfilment of the requirement for  
the degree of Master of Human Sciences in English  
Language Studies**

**Abd. Hamid Abu Sulayman Kulliyah of Islamic Revealed  
Knowledge and Human Sciences  
International Islamic University Malaysia**

**FEBRUARY 2022**

## ABSTRACT

The worsening case of xenophobic online narratives has tarnished the image of Malaysians as a helpful society towards one of the most persecuted groups, the Rohingya refugees, during the pandemic. The issue of online narratives started after events related to the Rohingya refugees surfaced during the implementation of the Movement Control Order (MCO). The discourse of xenophobia towards refugees, as well as their portrayals in media has long been discussed in the research; however, the discourse of counter xenophobia was little being discussed in the Critical Discourse Studies (CDS). This research will analyse articles from the local op-ed pages to study Rohingya refugees' representation and the construction and negotiation of the discourse of xenophobia against Rohingya refugees under the Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA).



## خلاصة البحث

لقد شوهت الحالة المتفاقمة للروايات المعادية للأجانب على الإنترنت صورة الماليزيين كمجتمع مفيد تجاه واحدة من أكثر المجموعات اضطهادًا، وهي لاجئي الروهينجا أثناء الوباء. بدأت قضية السرد على الإنترنت بعد ظهور الأحداث المتعلقة باللاجئين من الروهينغا أثناء تنفيذ أمر مراقبة الحركة. (MCO) لطالما نوقش خطاب كره الأجانب تجاه اللاجئين وكذلك تصويرهم في وسائل الإعلام في البحث، ومع ذلك، لم تتم مناقشة خطاب مكافحة كراهية الأجانب كثيرًا في دراسات الخطاب النقدي. (CDS) سيحلل هذا البحث مقالات من صفحات الافتتاح المحلية لدراسة تمثيلات اللاجئين الروهينجا وكذلك البناء والتفاوض بشأن خطاب كراهية الأجانب ضد لاجئي الروهينجا في ظل

## APPROVAL PAGE

I certify that I have supervised and read this study and that in my opinion, it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Master of Human Science (English Language Studies).

.....  
Siti Nurnadilla Mohammad Jamil  
Supervisor

.....  
Nora Mohd. Nasir  
Co-Supervisor

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Master of Human Science (English Language Studies).

.....  
Adlina Hj. Ariffin  
Examiner

This dissertation was submitted to the Department of English Language and Literature and is accepted as a fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Human Science (English Language Studies).

.....  
Tanja Jonid  
Head, Department of English  
Language and Literature

This dissertation was submitted to the Abd. Hamid Abu Sulayman Kulliyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences and is accepted as a fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Human Science (English Language Studies).

.....  
Shukran Abdul Rahman  
Dean, Abd. Hamid Abu  
Sulayman Kulliyah of Islamic  
Revealed Knowledge and Human  
Sciences

## DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted as a whole for any other degrees at IIUM or other institutions.

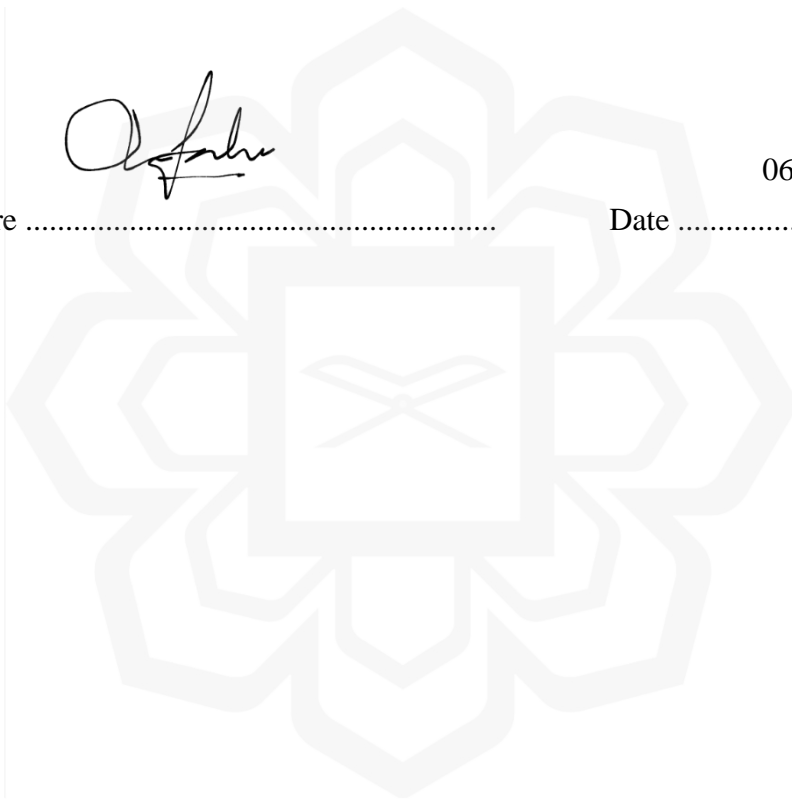
Aina Farisha Binti Azhar



06/09/2021

Signature .....

Date .....



**INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY MALAYSIA**

**DECLARATION OF COPYRIGHT AND AFFIRMATION OF  
FAIR USE OF UNPUBLISHED RESEARCH**

**COUNTERING XENOPHOBIC NARRATIVES TOWARDS THE  
ROHINGYA REFUGEES AMID THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC: A  
CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS**

I declare that the copyright holders of this dissertation are jointly owned by the student and IIUM.

Copyright © 2021 Aina Farisha Binti Azhar and International Islamic University Malaysia. All rights reserved.

No part of this unpublished research may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise without prior written permission of the copyright holder except as provided below

1. Any material contained in or derived from this unpublished research may be used by others in their writing with due acknowledgement.
2. IIUM or its library will have the right to make and transmit copies (print or electronic) for institutional and academic purposes.
3. The IIUM library will have the right to make, store in a retrieved system and supply copies of this unpublished research if requested by other universities and research libraries.

By signing this form, I acknowledged that I have read and understand the IIUM Intellectual Property Right and Commercialization policy.

Affirmed by Aina Farisha Binti Azhar



Signature

06/09/2021

.....

Date

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

All praise is due to Allah SWT, the Almighty, who has been with me throughout my programme. His Mercies and Blessings have eased this challenging journey of completing this thesis. Alhamdulillah.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor, Dr Siti Nurnadilla Mohamad Jamil for her great patience, dedication and guidance throughout this journey. Her honest feedback has encouraged me to become better as both a researcher and a person. Her encouragement and support had given me the strength to continue moving forward when I felt demotivated to complete this thesis. Without her support, this thesis would not be realised. I am most indebted to her.

I also would like to thank my friends who have always been there for me especially through the hard times that I had to endure during the pandemic. Thank you very much for your support, advice and companionship. To two of my closest friends, Ahmad Fahmi and Nurul Hanisah, thank you so much for your support. The time we spent together would always be cherished. I pray to Allah for your happiness and success in life.

To my parents, Azhar bin Salleh and Fauziyah binti Nasir, as well as my siblings, Amira Farhana, Alyssa Fasiha, and Adam Farish. Thank you for your continuous support.

Last but not least, I would like to thank myself for always be strong throughout completing this thesis during the pandemic. It has been challenging to complete the thesis while we are not allowed to go out and socialise. Thank you for consistently trying to find the motivation and strength to continue this journey.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract .....	ii
Abstract in Arabic .....	iii
Approval Page.....	iv
Declaration .....	v
Copyright Page.....	vi
Acknowledgements.....	vii
Table of Contents .....	viii
List of Tables .....	x
List of Figures .....	xi
List of Charts.....	xii
List of Images .....	xiii
<b>CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Background of the Study .....	1
1.2 Statement of the Problem.....	3
1.3 Significance of the Study.....	7
1.4 Research Objectives.....	8
1.5 Research Questions.....	8
1.6 Chapter Summary .....	8
<b>CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEWS.....</b>	<b>9</b>
2.1 Analysis of Op-Ed Pages .....	9
2.2 Representation of Refugees in Media.....	11
2.3 Backgrounds of the Rohingya Refugees in Malaysia.....	14
2.4 Discourse of Xenophobia .....	16
2.5 Chapter Summary .....	20
<b>CHAPTER THREE: METHODS AND PROCEDURES .....</b>	<b>21</b>
3.1 Data Collection .....	22
3.1.1 Selection of the Newspapers .....	22
3.1.1.1 Malay Mail Online.....	24
3.1.1.2 The Star Online.....	24
3.1.1.3 Free Malaysia Today .....	24
3.1.1.4 New Straits Times .....	25
3.1.1.5 Malaysiakini .....	25
3.2 Data Analytical Procedure.....	26
3.2.1 DHA Discursive Strategies .....	27
3.2.2 Nomination and Predication Strategies & Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL).....	28
3.2.3 DHA Argumentation Strategy .....	31
3.3 Chapter Summary .....	33
3.4 Summary of Research Design .....	33



<b>CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS .....</b>	<b>36</b>
4.1 Chapter Overview .....	36
4.2 Negotiation of Representation of Malaysians as Helpful and Kind Society .....	39
4.3 Normalisation of De-Xenophobic Online Narratives Among the Local Community .....	48
4.4 Providing Necessary Aids for the Refugees .....	53
4.5 De-Burdening the Rohingya Refugees through the Economic Activities.....	59
4.6 Prioritisation of the Local Community’s Welfare during the Pandemic .....	66
4.7 Chapter Summary .....	72
 <b>CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION .....</b>	 <b>73</b>
5.1 Thesis Overview .....	73
5.1.1 Research Question 1.....	73
5.1.2 Research Question 2.....	74
5.2 Limitation of the Research.....	74
5.3 Recommendations for Future Studies.....	75
 <b>REFERENCES.....</b>	 <b>77</b>
 <b>APPENDICES .....</b>	 <b>87</b>
Appendix A: Malay Mail Online .....	87
Appendix B: Free Malaysia Today .....	88
Appendix C: Malaysiakini .....	89
Appendix D: New Straits Times .....	90
Appendix E: The Star Online.....	91

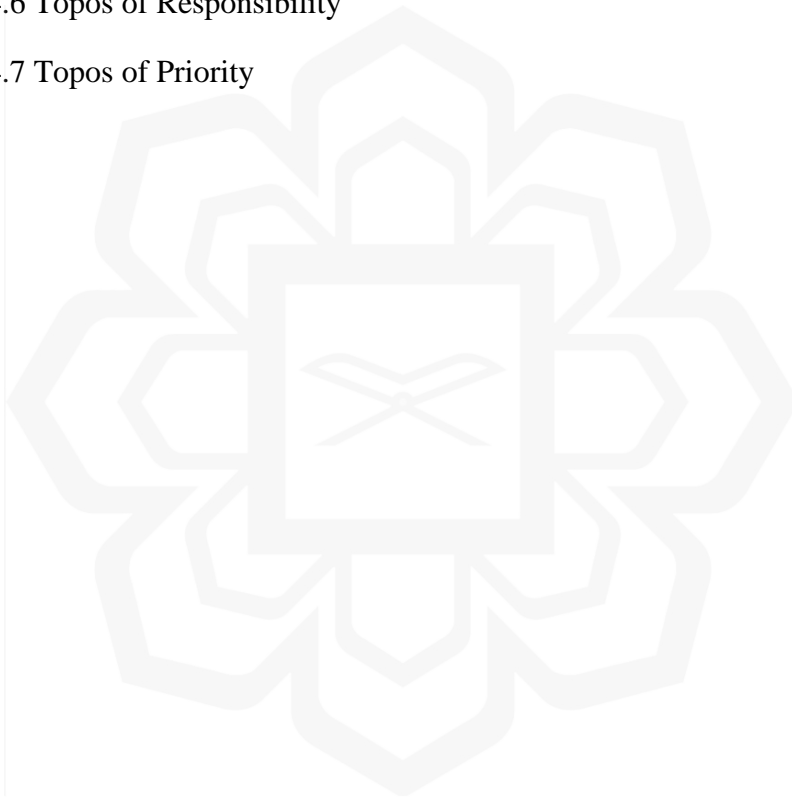
## LIST OF TABLES

Table 3.1 DHA Steps	21
Table 3.2 Discursive Strategies under the DHA	28
Table 3.3 List of Topoi	32
Table 4.1 SFL Processes	38



## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 4.1 Topos of History	43
Figure 4.2 Topos of History	46
Figure 4.3 Topos of Responsibility	52
Figure 4.4 Topos of Humanitarianism	58
Figure 4.5 Topos of Usefulness/Advantages	63
Figure 4.6 Topos of Responsibility	64
Figure 4.7 Topos of Priority	71



## LIST OF CHARTS

Chart 3.1 Survey Result	22
Chart 3.2 Survey Result	23
Chart 4.1 Distribution of the Key Findings according to the Op-ed Articles	36



## LIST OF IMAGES

Image 1.1 Tweet Reaction from a Non-Malaysian	4
Image 1.2 Online Comments from Malaysians	5
Image 1.3 Tweet Reactions from Malaysians	6
Image 2.1 Samples of Newspaper Headlines	12



# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **INTRODUCTION**

This introductory chapter initiates this research by discussing its background in Section 1.1 before exploring the problem, i.e., the xenophobic online narratives towards the Rohingya refugees in Section 1.2.

### **1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY**

The context of this research is closely related to the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak in Malaysia and the implementation of the Movement Control Order (henceforth, MCO, or 'Perintah Kawalan Pergerakan (PKP) in Bahasa Malaysia) from 18 March 2020 and later and Enhanced Movement Control Order (EMCO, or 'Perintah Kawalan Pergerakan Diperketatkan' (PKPD) in Bahasa Malaysia) to contain the drastic spread of the virus (Lim, 2020; New Straits Times, 2020). During these periods, all Malaysian residents were asked to stay at home, employees were asked to work from home (Bedi, 2020b; Kwan, 2020; Mazwin, 2020; D. Tan, 2020), and several people lost their jobs thus lost their source of income during the pandemic (Ching, 2020). Students were also asked to attend online classes during the MCO period (Iman, 2020; I. Lim, 2020a; Solhi, 2020). Despite being effective in containing the virus among the Malaysian residents, such measures taken by the Malaysian government have significantly affected their lives, both psychologically and economically.

The socio-economic impact of the implementation is very much related to the financial readiness among the local community, should the MCO be extended for another month. This is specifically evident among the M40 and B40 communities who work in different economic sectors, for instance, aviation (FMT Reporters, 2020b; I.

Lim, 2020b; Sheikh Yahya, 2020; Yusof, 2020) and tourism (Bernama, 2020a; Foo et al., 2020; Karim et al., 2020). A study which was conducted from 10 March to 2 April 2020 by the Department of Statistics Malaysia (2020), in the urban area of the country, on the citizens' employment status shows that 42.6% of the respondents worked from home during the MCO, 21.6% worked outside the labour force, 20.3% worked as required on full salary, 8.4% were absent on full salary, 3.0% were absent on reduced salary, 2.5% worked as required on a reduced salary, and 1.5% were retrenched. These findings are related to a survey by Lim (2020), which shows that if the MCO is extended, an estimated total of 299.5% of the local community was found as not financially ready. The details of the percentages of respondents who were not ready were as follows; (1) Self-employed: 81.9%, (2) Employer: 71.3%, (3) Private employee: 65.1%, (4) Multinational company employee: 36.2%, and (5) Government-linked company employee: 45.0%.

The socio-economic anxieties caused by changes in socio-economic activities such as fear of job loss, or working on reduced salary and in lifestyles such as the prohibition of people to attend mass gatherings and conducting social isolation among themselves created (Dai et al., 2020; Sundarassen et al., 2020; Zakaria, 2020) have unfortunately led to discriminatory behaviour between the local community and the immigrants (Bedi, 2020a; the Straits Time, 2020). These anxieties are exacerbated by the provocation of fear during the pandemic, such as the increase of daily infected cases, the economic effects of the MCO (Siti Nurnadilla Mohamad Jamil, forthcoming), which then resulted in xenophobia reactions against the foreign community, particularly the Rohingya refugees (see, for example, Bernama 2020b; Emmanuel, 2020; Zainul, 2020). This is particularly so when the Rohingya refugee communities are considered as a threat to Us, i.e., the local communities, as they believe that the rights and welfare which

initially belong to the local community might be sacrificed if the refugees are given aid and helped by the government during the pandemic (Siti Nurnadilla Mohamad Jamil, forthcoming). This scepticism towards the refugees during the pandemic, according to Tan (2020) is believed to be from the fear "...of losing what little they already have" (Para. 10). These fears are accumulated especially after several events related to the Rohingya refugees during the implementation of the MCO;

#### (1) The Arrival of Refugee Boats in Langkawi

Between 17 – 23 April and 7 – 12 June 2020 (AFP, 2020a, 2020b), Malaysia has received boats full of Rohingya refugees in Langkawi. Although the country has received refugees, the current wave of Rohingya refugees created concern during the pandemic among the local community. Reports have stated that 269 Rohingya refugees arrived on 17 April 2020 (Bernama, 2020) and 8 June 2020 (Safeek Affendy Razali dan Faris Fuad, 2020).

#### (2) The Spread of Fake News

Between 26 April – 2 May 2020, the social media went outburst when a post regarding the demand for full citizenship for the Rohingya refugees in the country, made by the President of Myanmar Ethnic Rohingya Human Rights Organisation Malaysia (MEHROM) (FMT Reporters, 2020a; Mohanakrishnan, 2020).

Aside from these events, another problem has caused the situation in Malaysia to worsen. The section will discuss the issue and the mean of this research on countering the xenophobic online narratives towards the Rohingya refugees.

## **1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

On 3 July 2020, Al Jazeera, a media company based in Qatar, reported the situation of the undocumented immigrants who were claimed to be heavily mistreated and forced



to hide in a cramped space to avoid the military force. The 25-minutes documentary (Al-Jazeera, 2020) brought audiences to experience life as undocumented immigrants during the pandemic in Malaysia. Malaysians, especially the government, has been perceived as mistreating the immigrants, which caused them to live in hiding, thus avoiding COVID-19 testing due to the fear of being arrested by the authorities, and the local community has also been blamed for mistreating them (see Chapter 4, Section 4.1 for further discussion). Malaysian military was recorded to arrest the undocumented immigrants into an authority's vehicle. Aside from that, the documentary recorded several immigrants meeting each other in hiding to avoid being caught. This has caused impacts such as the misjudgement on the identity of Malaysians, and a hashtag #FreeRayhanKabir was created on Twitter to defend one of the main interviewees in the documentary. Image 1 shows an example from one of the netizens who tweets with the hashtag.



Image 1.1 Tweet Reaction from a Non-Malaysian

A majority, if not all, tweets with the hashtag, claiming that the interviewee, Rahyan Kabir, was telling the truth to the Al-Jazeera reporter on the situation faced by the undocumented immigrants during the pandemic in Malaysia. They demanded the

Malaysian authorities to release him and to report the issue to Al-Jazeera. This situation has put Malaysian society in a bad position, and the company’s documentary on YouTube has closed the comment section to block any comments from the local community.

The online responses shown by the local community from these events have realised the anxieties mentioned earlier. As shown in Image 1.2, the local community implied negative terms such as lazy and stupid to refer to the Rohingya refugees during that particular time. These comments were found under headlines related to the events mentioned in the previous section.



Image 1.2 Online Comments from Malaysians

These events were also discussed by netizens in the online social media. Twitter, one of the prominent online social media platforms in Malaysia (Malaysian Communication and Multimedia Commission, 2020) was used to discuss and share their opinions in regards to these events. Negative perceptions could also be found in the online social media platform (see Image 1.3).



Image 1.3 Tweet Reactions from Malaysians

Aside from the recorded scenes in Al-Jazeera (2020), the immigrants who participated in the documentary also became the factor of the negative image. Malaysians were described as treating migrant workers as animals and disrespecting them as humans as well as verbally abusing the immigrants. One of the interviewees defended the undocumented immigrants by stating, "...They are not criminals, they are just undocumented" to the reporter. Although he attempted to seek sympathy from the audiences on the sufferings of the undocumented immigrants, he has tarnished the image of the local community.

After the documentary was released, the video has received 2,165,988 views, with 9.7K likes and 364K dislikes. The government has taken the matter seriously and took serious actions towards those involved in making the documentary (Rozanna, 2020). The government has called the video baseless and asked Al Jazeera to take the documentary down from their website (Rozanna & Joseph, 2020; Reuters, 2020). The interviewee was also being forced to return to his home country, and he was blacklisted from coming back to Malaysia (Bernama, 2020; Sinar Harian, 2020). Many Malaysians have taken several initiatives in maintaining the good image of Malaysians towards the refugees, such as supporting events (Tan, 2020) and social posts. One of the ways in doing so is by countering the toxic online narratives during the pandemic.

Based on the responses from both online platforms. The severity of hatred towards the refugees among the local community during the pandemic should be countered. The effort of countering the toxic online narratives among the local community during the MCO was mainly through the media platform such as the online op-ed pages of newspapers. However, the effort was not sufficiently highlighted during the pandemic preventing it from countering the issue. Thus, this research was done to analyse the articles from the op-ed pages to study the local community's counter xenophobic narratives. The following section discusses the importance of this study in the discourse of countering xenophobic online narratives towards the Rohingya refugees during the pandemic.

### **1.3 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

The issue of discrimination towards the Rohingya refugees is a global issue, and the issue of toxic narratives towards persecuted groups such as refugees is not a newly discovered problem (see Chapter 2, Section 2.4 for further discussion). In other words, the discourse of xenophobia itself has continuously being discussed even during the pandemic. However, this research helps benchmark countering xenophobia, specifically xenophobic online narratives during the pandemic in Malaysia.

This research analyses the discourse of countering the xenophobic online narratives towards the Rohingya refugees during the pandemic by examining the local community's op-ed pages and discussing further the alternatives in resolving this issue. Another aspect of the importance of the research is the image of Malaysians after the emerge of the documentary (see the previous section). Conducting this research helps to analyse the representation of Malaysians in the op-ed articles. In short, the discourse of countering xenophobic online narratives should be discussed further. Therefore, this

research has the potential to resolve xenophobic online narratives. The following sections will provide research objectives and research questions before proceeding to the chapter summary.

#### **1.4 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

The aims of this study are twofold:

- 1- To analyse the counter-representation of the Rohingya refugees during the pandemic in Malaysia.
- 2- To analyse how the op-ed writers construct and negotiate the discourse of xenophobia against the Rohingya refugees.

#### **1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

This study addressed the following research questions:

- 1- How are the Rohingya refugees represented in the local op-eds during the pandemic in Malaysia?
- 2- How did the op-ed writers construct and negotiate the discourse of xenophobia against the Rohingya refugees?

#### **1.6 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

This chapter elaborates the background of the research as well as the focused problem.

The issue of the xenophobic online narratives towards the Rohingya refugees during the pandemic in Malaysia should be resolved by analysing the op-ed articles to analyse the representation of the refugees as well as the negotiation and construction of the refugees in the op-ed articles. The next chapter will discuss previous literature related to the research before continuing to the research.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEWS**

This chapter discusses related literature on the research, which will be discussed separately according to sections. Section 2.1 discusses the analysis of op-ed pages as well as their purposes according to previous studies. Then, the discussion continues with the representation of refugees in media in Section 2.2. Section 2.3 discusses the background of the Rohingya refugees in Malaysia to investigate how they were treated before and during the pandemic. Finally, a chapter summary discusses the critical points of this chapter before proceeding to the methods and procedures of this research.

#### **2.1 ANALYSIS OF OP-ED PAGES**

This research determined to use articles from the op-ed pages to analyse the representation of the Rohingya refugees and how the authors construct and negotiate the discourse of xenophobia towards the Rohingya refugees during the pandemic in Malaysia. The ‘opposite from Editorial Page’, also known as Op-ed Pages, was first published by the New York Times on 21 September 1970 to give an academic domain to incite new thoughts and debates on public policies (Coppock et al., 2018). In contrast to editorial, according to Smith (2018), the op-ed pages are usually written by members of the community who are not the employees of the particular newspaper company. Op-ed articles are considered as space for intellectual debate where readers are allowed to view some social actors in a more definite way and others in a more pessimistic way (Elyamany, 2020). As opposed to newspaper reports – one-way communication – op-eds, according to Elyamany (2020), offer a space for dialogue between readers, experts and freelancers. The selection of the articles for the op-eds may be influenced by the

political alignment of the newspaper companies (see Chapter 4, Section 2.2 for further discussion on the political power in media). Aside from that, the articles that wish to be published in any op-ed pages must per the Malaysian Publication Law, under Article 8b Suppression of Publication which stated, “Where any person has been found guilty of any offence by any court in respect of anything published in any publication...” (p. 12). This means that any media articles, including op-ed articles, adhere to the law and avoided exercising any written protest or offending the government. The constriction of the publication is due to the political influences of the government in media to maintain its hegemony over the local community (see Chapter 4, Section 2.2 for further discussion). Despite that, the local community took initiatives to address the issue and counter the xenophobic online narratives towards the Rohingya refugees in the op-ed pages. Therefore, this research focuses on the op-ed pages, including columns and letters to the editors to analyse the discourse of xenophobia towards the Rohingya refugees. As discussed earlier on the purpose of the op-ed pages, this study focuses on the perspective of the local community regarding the representation of refugees as well as the construction and negotiation of the discourse of countering xenophobic online narratives towards the Rohingya refugees by analysing the discussion addressed by the op-ed authors. While op-eds can address issues in many realms, recent research mainly focuses on the political discourse (Ar, 2015; Ha, 2015; Roessner, 2020; Sahlane, 2015; Weizman & Dori-Hacohen, 2017; Siti Nurnadilla Mohammad Jamil, 2018, 2020 and forthcoming). They agreed that the op-ed pages have the potential to shape the mind of a person or a group of people.

Moreover, there are also studies found within the scientific discourse, i.e., to discuss the importance of the op-ed pages for scientists in the contemporary era, done by Parks and Takahashi (2016). The research was done by using op-ed articles was not

mainstream mass media, rather it was taken from an elite newspaper written by university-affiliated natural scientists and social scientists. Scientists were reported to use the op-ed page to inform the public on a certain issue, defending scientific matters and scientists as well as building confidence in scientific procedures. The following section will discuss the representation of refugees in media as well as the political power in media.

## **2.2 REPRESENTATION OF REFUGEES IN MEDIA**

Previous studies on the representation of refugees in media were found to focus on how the media portray the refugees in news reports. Studies were done on the portrayals of refugees in media (Fürsich, 2010; Yasmina Tawil, n.d.) in different countries such as Australia (Cooper et al., 2016), the United States (Ghazal Aswad, 2019), and Bangladesh (Nahar, 2019) as well as the rest of the world (Onay-Cooker, 2019; Serafis et al., 2019; Sunata & Yildiz, 2018). Interestingly, other studies that employed video games (Sou, 2017) to study the representation of refugees, in general, and Rohingya refugees in exhibition photographs (Yeung & Lenette, 2018) were also found in previous literature. This literature concluded that minority groups, especially refugees, have limited power in shaping their identity as a minority group, hence shows the power of media in representing the refugees to the community.

In the Malaysian context, the power of media is influenced by the political hegemony of the government. Saodah Wok and Shafizan Mohamed (2017) explained the power of the Malaysian government in the country's media by arguing that Malaysia controls the mass media through laws to avoid publications that are derogatory and overly critical towards the government, hence limiting freedom of speech and expression among the public. Leong (2015) argued that the Malaysian government has