TEXT AS MIRROR OF SOCIAL PROCESS

An Analysis of the Discourse of the Annual Reports of Public-listed Companies in Malaysia

BY

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1999
Dedicated in love to

Papa
Amma
Mira
Gaitri

Vinayagar, Ambal and Murugan
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Mine has been an extremely blessed life. One reason for this feeling of blessedness is the countless friends I have who have had faith in me and have loved me deeply. Some of you, my friends, have been my teachers and guides. Some of you have been just there for me. Friends, in the best sense of friendship. Wherever you are, here in the Faculty, far away in the UK, or America or even in Italy I thank you. You are the inspiration behind this effort.

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Abstract

The private sector in Malaysia has been designated the role of "primary engine of growth" in the national blueprint for development, Vision 2020. The Annual Report of the public-listed companies in this sector is arguably the most important single document put out by this sector. The purpose of this thesis is to analyse the discourse of this document as a heuristic for discovering the relationship(s) that exist between text and social process in general and these texts and the social processes that its users in particular are implicated in.

This thesis is built upon a number of hypotheses related to texts: (1) that they are communicative artefacts and therefore are capable of providing ethnographic data about their users' activities, ideologies and habits of thought and expression; (2) that persistence and change in the social system are, as Halliday claimed, both mirrored in texts and created by texts; (3) that texts are a particular representation of reality derived from making specific choices from within the paradigmatic system of choices available to users from a multiplicity of interpenetrating semiotic systems (4) that text is an inscription of fleeting social meaning and the dynamics by which this meaning is constructed and (5) that texts are both communal and individual.
The approach to text analysis was the systemic linguistics-based approach used by most critical linguists, specifically that version of it enunciated by Norman Fairclough's work.

The findings of the study supported all the orienting hypotheses regarding texts. They also provided insights into two kinds of social processes: material processes like the grassroots realization, interpretation and manifestation of Vision 2020 and discourse processes e.g. the process(es) involved in the representation of various kinds of reality: the creation of subject positions, social identities, interpersonal relations, attitudinal orientations.
Abstrak

Sektor swasta di Malaysia telah diberikan peranan sebagai "enjin utama perkembangan" dalam pelan induk pembangunan nasional yang dikenali sebagai Wawasan 2020. Laporan Tahunan syarikat-syarikat swasta yang telah disenaraikan jelas satu-satunya dokumen yang paling penting dikeluarkan oleh sektor ini. Objektif tesis ini adalah untuk menganalisa wacana yang terdapat dalam dokumen ini sebagai satu heuristik untuk mengkaji, secara amnya, hubungan yang terdapat antara teks dan proses sosial. Seterusnya, objektif tesis ini adalah untuk mengkaji hubungan di antara teks dengan proses sosial yang khususnya berkaitan dengan penggunanya.

Tesis ini adalah berdasarkan kepada beberapa hipotesis yang berkaitan dengan teks: (1) bahawa teks-teks adalah artifak perhubungan dan oleh itu berupaya mencerminkan menyediakan data etnografik tentang pengguna dan aktiviti mereka; (2) bahawa ketekunan dan perubahan dalam sistem sosial adalah dicerminkan di dalam teks dan direka oleh teks sebagaimana yang telah diperkatakan oleh Halliday; (3) bahawa teks merupakan satu penggambaran khusus bagi realiti yang diperolehi dengan membuat pilihan tertentu daripada satu sistem paradigma pilihan yang terdapat di dalam pelbagai sistem semiotik saling menyilang; (4) bahawa teks merupakan satu inskripsi makna sosial yang sekilas dan daya dinamik di mana makna dibentuk, dan; (5) teks adalah bersifat komunal dan individu.
Pendekatan yang digunakan untuk menganalisis teks adalah berdasarkan kepada 'sistemik linguistik' yang digunakan oleh kebanyakan para linguis yang mempraktikkan Linguistik Kritikal. Khususnya, pendekatan yang digunakan adalah versi yang dikemukakan oleh Norman Fairclough.

Dapatan kajian ini menyokong semua hipotesis yang berkaitan dengan teks. Dapatan kajian juga memberi pemahaman terhadap dua jenis proses sosial: proses material seperti kesedaran masyarakat di peringkat akar umbi, interpretasi dan manifestasi Wawasan 2020; dan proses-proses wacana, contohnya, proses-proses yang terlibat dalam penyampaian pelbagai jenis realiti: pembentukan 'kedudukan subjek', identiti sosial, hubungan antara pengguna, dan perkara-perkara yang berkaitan dengan sikap.
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