

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

5.0 Introduction

To date, an analysis from the linguistic point, of Malaysian cartoons written in English has not been found. Thus, this small discourse research attempted to do this, by trying to unearth the linguistic and non-linguistic tools utilised by Lat in his portrayal of Dr. Mahathir Mohamed (Dr. M) as a public figure and private man, in his compilation “Dr. Who?!”. The bulk of the drawings had previously appeared in the printed media, with most appearing on the editorial page of the New Straits Times (NST).

5.1 Purpose of Study

As stated in Chapter One, the objective of this research is to do a discourse analysis (DA) of selected caricatures found in “Dr. Who?!”. Towards this end, two research questions were formulated, namely 'How does Lat portray Dr. M as a private person and a public persona?' and 'What linguistic and non-linguistic (visual) tools does he use in his portrayal?'. 23 out of the 148 drawings in the compilation were selected based on what known characteristics of Dr. M were shown and the different features used by Lat. Fairclough's 3-Dimensional framework was utilised for the textual analysis and Cook's framework for the visual analysis, with Fairclough's Intertextuality

used as well as there were interplays between text and picture within a drawing and between drawings. Lat was interviewed to verify findings and to gain insights on the caricatures.

5.2 Summary of Findings

This study's objective of doing a DA of selected caricatures in “Dr. Who?!” to reveal the tools Lat used in portraying Dr. M has been achieved, with the linguistic and non-linguistic tools utilised, as well a portrait of Dr. M as a public figure and private man discussed at length in Chapter Four.

The first research question of 'How does Lat portray Dr. M as a private person and a public persona?' was answered when the extracts are seen together. Lat's drawings are based on his observations, but they are also influenced by people's perception of Dr. M, which Lat garnered from interactions with others. Thus, a portrait of Dr. M emerges. The private man is seen as a polite, fashion conscious individual with a supportive wife, who seems to enjoy cooking and carpentry as his hobbies. The public persona perceived is one of a frank, no nonsense, hard-working man who keeps tabs on everything under him. A strong leader open to new ideas and innovations, Dr. M is also portrayed as a competitive and tireless politician, who focuses on the big picture and sets Malaysia firmly on course for a developed nation status while continuing with fundamental policies set previously.

The findings also show that the second research question of 'What linguistic and non-linguistic (visual) tools does he use in his portrayal?' was answered. It can be seen that Lat is adept at both drawing and language. It was found that choice of words and language (English or Malay or code switching) for a given caricature was done, with appropriateness and impact to the reader in mind; with analogies or metaphors taken from diverse but widely known areas, so that the message could be understood at a glimpse. Additionally, various cartoonists' visual tools were employed, such as different illustrations of movement, visual imageries of metaphors and the graphical presentations of text, to put across Lat's message. With these tools, he has presented Dr. M as the latter was perceived to be at that point in time. A Lat caricature, may contain a combination of the linguistic or visual features as he uses what he thinks would best convey the message he wants in the mere seconds that the reader would spend on it. Indeed, his later drawings may contain little or no text, with very compact drawings, but the visuals can be traced to the linguistic, for example, the KL Sentral extract, when it first appeared had no caption (this was added when compilation was done), so solely relied on the visual and Dr. M's utterance to fill the blanks. However, taking both the visual and Dr. M's utterance together, the reader would quickly be able to derive at the simile 'as slow as a snail'.

5.3 Significance of the Study

Cartoons had previously been studied, both locally and abroad. Some foreign DA studies were on printed political cartoons (Jensen, 2008; Greenberg, 2002) and an animated series (Väättäinen, 2002); while local studies found focussed on genderised

talk (Jariah Mohd. Jan, 2004), teaching writing (Zurina Haji Zubir, 2004) and symbols of Malay culture (Norhayati Hood, 2004). However, no DA of Malaysian cartoons written in English has been found to date. This study attempted to fill the gap.

5.4 Limitations of Study

This study, as with all previous researches, is not without limitations. There have been hundreds of Lat's caricatures of Dr. M since the cartoonist started drawing for the NST in the early 1970s, with dates of their initial publication in the NST traceable. However, due to time and space constraints, no dates of the drawings' initial publication were traced and only those caricatures that appear in the compilation "Dr. Who?!" was studied, as a more comprehensive look is beyond the scope of this Masters' research paper.

Discourse analysis of cartoons have previously been done. However, the majority found used Van Dijk instead of Fairclough for their framework of textual analysis, with Van Leeuwen often used for the visual analysis. To date, only studies by Jensen (2008) and Väättäinen (2002) were found to use Fairclough, with the former using Fairclough's 3- Dimensional Framework and the latter, the Intertextuality aspect. Had more analysis of cartoons using Fairclough's framework been available, some comparisons and a more meaningful discussion could have been done.

The compilation has many linguistic features. However, only several could be highlighted in this study, due to the time and space constraint mentioned above.

The interview sessions with Lat were recorded using both tape recorder and MP3 simultaneously, so that they could back up each other. However, due to technical glitches, a small part of the proceedings were not captured – this was despite repeated checking of both instruments prior to the interview sessions to ensure they were in working order! On hindsight, if the interview had been recorded using audiovisuals, instead of audio only, Lat's nuances would have given an added dimension to the feedback given.

Attempts were made to contact the subject, Dr. M for an interview, but unfortunately there was no response. The subject's input would have provided verification of the observations and analysis done. Thus, some verification could only be made from secondary sources.

5.5 Conclusion

This research, through the discourse analysis of the 23 selected caricatures, has shown how Dr. M is portrayed in both his private and public capacity, in Lat's compilation "Dr. Who?!" and the tools (both linguistic and visual) that were used for this purpose. This research sought to fill a gap as no analysis of Malaysian cartoons written in English, from the linguistic point of view, has been found thus far.