CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1   Introduction

The data to be analysed in this study comprise ten speeches by Mahathir Mohamad chosen for their emerging themes of cause, dimension, impact and remedy of the 'war on terror' post September 11 2001. Together, the collection of 10 speeches reflects Mahathir's consistent stance against war and his ideology which is part of his strategy of resistance and challenge to the 'war on terror'. The aim of this study is to analyse the discursive structures including the linguistic features and argumentative moves employed by Mahathir as he defines the 9/11 event, discusses the cause of terrorism and reviews Bush's 'war on terror', while demonstrating throughout how Mahathir constructs himself and ultimately resists Bush's dominant ideology.   The study is conducted using the principles of Critical Discourse Analysis, namely, van Dijk's 'ideological square' (2004), to reveal how the discourse of resistance may also reveal traces of dominance. To meet this objective, the study is both supportive and critical of Mahathir's stand against the powerful elite.

This chapter provides a description of the research design and the procedures involved in analysing the speeches.

3.2   The Research Materials

For the purpose of the analysis, ten speeches given by Mahathir Mohamad were selected for a descriptive analysis of his discourse on the 'war on terror'. These ten speeches were compiled and edited by Hashim Makaruddin for the book entitled *Terrorism and the Real Issues: Selected Speeches of Dr Mahathir Mohamad* (2003).

They were written and delivered during the 1-year period following the September 11, 2001 attack and the on-going 'war on terror' campaign by Bush. The title of the speeches, date and place of delivery as given in the book are as below:-

1) 'The Need to Identify Terrorists and Remove the Causes of Terrorism', a speech delivered at the Conference on Terrorism in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, on November 16, 2001.

2) 'Islam, Terrorism and Malaysia's Response', a speech delivered at the Asia Society Dinner in New York, United States, on February 4, 2002.

3) 'Terrorism is as Globalised as Trade and Investment', a speech delivered at the Asia Society Dinner in New York, United States, on February 4, 2002.

4) 'Islam Condemns Acts of Terror', a speech delivered at the Extraordinary Session of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers on Terrorism in Kuala Lumpur Malaysia, on April 1, 2002.

5) 'Malaysia Has No Tolerance for Terrorists', a speech delivered at the US-Asean Business Council Dinner in Washington, D.C., United States, on May 14, 2002.

6) 'Making the World Safe Again', a speech delivered at the meeting of the U.S. Congress' Malaysia-America Friendship Caucus at Capitol Hill, Washington, D.C, United States, on May 14, 2002.

7) 'The New Threat of Economic Terrorism', a speech delivered at the Langkawi International Dialogue 2002 in Langkawi, Malaysia, on August 1, 2002.

8) 'World in the Midst of 'World War III'', a speech delivered at the Plenary Session on 'Trust and Governance for a New Era', organised by the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, on January 23, 2003.

9) 'Impact of Terrorism on the World', a speech delivered at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, on January 24, 2003.

10) 'No Longer Just a War Against Terrorism', a speech delivered at the XIII Summit Meeting of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, on February 24, 2003.

For the purpose of the analysis (which appears in Chapter 4), the speeches are denoted as Text 1-10 respectively. The use of quotes and excerpts from the speeches are incorporated together with the speech number and page number from the book. An example is illustrated below:

Malaysia is familiar with terrorism and the war against terrorists….**we** defeated them….**we** carried out a campaign to win the hearts and minds of the people so as to ensure that the terrorists lost their civilian support...the government of Malaysia did not just fight them with arms...**We** took remedial action. (Text 1:34)

In doing the analysis, the researcher made the assumption that Mahathir's speeches were delivered at a time when the media, the U.S. and the general public were still recovering from the aftershock of the 9/11 attack on U.S. soil. Mahathir's arguments against military action on Afghanistan and Iraq were therefore something unheard of, if not controversial, for the public at large.

3.3   Research Design

This study has adopted some of the principles of CDA and the concept of 'ideological square' introduced by van Dijk (2004) in his work on ideology and racist speech. It was necessary that this study assumes that Mahathir had full control of his speeches and their content. That is, he wrote the speeches, their contents and arguments and he also gave a title to each of the chosen ten speeches himself. His aim to expose the hidden ideological agenda of the West makes him in essence a CDA analyst himself (Haque and Khan: 2004). Mahathir is also consciously challenging the discourse of Bush and the superpower elites.

In analysing the content of Mahathir's speeches, the textual and discursive points in the speeches that most clearly exhibit the discursive properties and function of the exercise of counter power and resistance in the context of the political and social event of 9/11 formed the focus of the investigation. This follows van Dijk's (1993) explanation of what CDA sets out to investigate: the structures, strategies or salient

properties of text and tries to explain them in term of the social structure. As stated in the previous chapter, from a CDA viewpoint, an analysis should 'integrate all available background information in the analysis and interpretation of the many layers of a spoken or written text' (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997:258)

As CDA does not have a unitary single framework, van Dijk suggests looking at issues 'to combat inequality and injustice' (1993:279). As this study attempts to uncover strategies of counter-power and challenge to dominance in a society, van Dijk suggests that an 'analysis of strategies of resistance and challenge' (1993:250) can be taken up. A linguistic analysis of the structure of the discourse requires, in van Dijk's terms, a look at the 'broad 'structural-functional' sense' (van Dijk, 2001:97) which means looking at 'detailed structures, strategies and functions of text, including grammatical, pragmatic, interactional, stylistic, rhetorical, semiotic and narrative of communicative events' (van Dijk, 2001:97).

To do this, the study has chosen to focus on the themes of 9/11, terrorism and the 'war on terror' as well as Mahathir's construction of himself as he speaks on these three issues.

3.3.1   The Construction of an Alternative Truth

To see how Mahathir constructs an alternative truth, the analysis examined the ways in which he reframes the event of 9/11 and his evaluation of terrorists and terrorism. This involved an analysis at various levels i.e. the semantic level, argumentative moves and the rhetoric level.

The semantic level examined Mahathir's use of implicatures (deducing or inferring implicit information) and polarisations (an example of polarization is made by selecting lexical items that express judgement and opinion). According to van Dijk

(1993), semantic moves play a key role in persuading the minds of listeners of specific events.

At the rhetoric level, this study examined how simile, metaphor, irony, sarcasm or parodies are used. According to van Dijk (1993), specific rhetorical figures such as hyperboles and metaphors affect the formation of opinions by listeners. It is understood here that rhetoric is controlled by 'underlying ideological models, social representations and ideologies' (van Dijk, 1993:277). Thus to emphasise an argument, this study hypothesised that the speaker will use hyperboles and metaphors which are devices for enhancing or exaggerating meanings and ideas.

As stated in Chapter 1, one of the research questions is: How does Mahathir offer an alternative 'truth' to Bush's construction of 'truth'? To answer this question, this researcher chose to focus on how Mahathir evaluates 9/11 and terrorists/terrorism separately. Thus two sub questions were put forth to explore these two issues in more detail:

1) How does Mahathir frame the 9/11 issue?
2) Are there words used that contain positive and negative evaluation of terrorists and terrorism?

The analysis of 1) and 2) are put in subsections which are found in Chapter 4 (see 4.2.1 and 4.2.2).

3.3.2   Discursive Strategies of Resistance and Challenge

For the analysis of the discursive strategies of resistance and challenge employed by Mahathir in his speeches, the study focused on the argumentative

strategies used which are the overall emerging patterns or theme. The most crucial analysis is the polarisation of us-them moves which can appear in the many layers of the discourse Mahathir employed to challenge and resist Bush's 'war on terror' ideology. The argumentative moves are an examination of how comparison, norm expression, evidentiality (using evidence), analogies and examples are used even when Mahathir describes all the political actors involved. This study presupposes that Mahathir's counter-power and argumentative strategies are consciously and explicitly exercised.

The questions used to guide the analysis of the discursive strategies of resistance and challenge are:

1) What arguments and argumentation schemes does Mahathir use to counter Bush's ideology?

2) What are the issues Mahathir raises to address inequality and injustice?

3) How are the social and political actors described or related to the discourse structure?

3.3.3   The Construction of Mahathir as Political Leader

The analysis of Mahathir's construction of himself further examined the lexicalisation and the semantic moves used by Mahathir as he constructs a positive self-presentation of himself. It is a move that is necessary to assert his credibility and authority as a leader of the resistance. For this only content that mentions himself with reference to his political identity, his country and his use of pronouns and modality are selected for analysis. The analysis also attempted to determine whether there are (unconscious) traces of reproduction of dominance in Mahathir's speeches, and whether this is hidden, presupposed or explicit. In addition, examining Mahathir's lexical

choices may reveal 'pragmatic' properties such as intention, mood, emotions, perspective and opinion. These will indirectly signal Mahathir's 'political and moral position' (Van Dijk, 1993:277) and his use of persuasive strategies. It will also reflect Mahathir's and Malaysia's social positioning in relation to resisting the dominant ideology.

The following questions were used to guide the analysis of Mahathir's positive construction of himself:

1) What words (lexical items) does Mahathir use to describe himself in the midst of the 9/11 attack?

2) How does he position himself as an authority to speak against Bush and the political actors involved in the 'war on terrorism' and 9/11?

3) What examples or facts are used to establish his own credibility in the matter hence shaping the mental cognition of the audience?

This section also included an observation of the ways in which Bush' dominant discourse has influenced Mahathir's discourse either through shared knowledge, attitude or ideologies.

3.4   Conclusion

A study of the strategies and argumentative structures in discourse of resistance required examining linguistic choices made by Mahathir and in turn required an observation of how he constructs and asserts his views and ideology. Taking into account van Dijk's view of not merely describing the discourse structures, this study will also explain them in terms of properties of social interaction and especially social

structure (van Dijk, 1998). This requires making critical comments on the effects Mahathir intended as he argues against the 'war on terror' post 9/11. To support the analysis, various references from the political context and past studies on Mahathir (see Chapter 1) were used to make the critical stance more substantial. The conclusion (see Chapter 5) then analysed the speeches from the perspective of CDA, which requires making a critical evaluation of Mahathir's contribution through his speeches to ultimately resist social inequality.