THE DISCURSIVE CONSTRUCTION OF HUDUD IN MALAYSIAN BLOGS

TANUSHA A/P RATHAKRISHNAN

DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

FACULTY OF LANGUAGES AND LINGUISTICS UNIVERSITY OF MALAYA KUALA LUMPUR

2016
UNIVERSITY OF MALAYA

ORIGINAL LITERARY WORK DECLARATION

Name of Candidate: Tanusha A/P Rathakrishnan (I.C/ Passport No: 841225145646)

Registration/ Matric No: TGB 100008

Name of Degree: Master of English as a Second Language

The Discursive Construction of Hudud in Malaysian Blogs

Field of Study: Critical Discourse Analysis

I do solemnly and sincerely declare that:

(1) I am the sole author/ writer of this Work;

(2) This Work is original;

(3) Any use of any work in which copyright exists was done by way of fair dealing and for permitted purposes and any excerpt or extract from, or reference too reproduction of any copyright work has been disclosed expressly and sufficiently and the title of the Work and its authorship have been acknowledged in this Work;

(4) I do not have any actual knowledge nor do I ought reasonably to know that the making of this work constitutes an infringement of any copyright work;

(5) I hereby assign all and every rights in the copyright to this Work to the University of Malaya (“UM”), who henceforth shall be owner of the copyright in this Work and that any reproduction or use in any form or by any means whatsoever is prohibited without the written consent of UM having been first had and obtained;

(6) I am fully aware that if in the course of making this Work I have infringed any copyright whether intentionally or otherwise, I may be subject to legal action or any other action as may be determined by UM.

Candidate’s Signature

Date:

Subscribed and solemnly declared before,

Witness’s Signature

Date:

Name: Dr. Surinderpal Kaur Channan Singh
Designation: Supervisor
ABSTRACT

This research aims to examine the discursive construction of Hudud in Malaysian blogs in order to analyse how Hudud is represented among Malaysian bloggers; advocates and opponents of Hudud through the adaptation of the Discourse Historical Approach (DHA) (Wodak & Reisigl, 2001). While DHA is often used to represent social actors, this study attempts to adapt this approach in examining how Hudud is constructed by Malaysian bloggers; namely the referential, predicational and the argumentative strategies. This study is timely as the issue of implementing Hudud in Malaysia has brought forward much debate by Malaysians as a whole, although the law is said to be applied only on Muslims. In accordance with this, personal blogs are utilized in the analysis of these bloggers’ representations of Hudud under the ‘us vs. them’ strategies from the point of view of advocates and opponents of Hudud. Hence, this study seeks to investigate how Hudud is defined and viewed from the lens of those who are for and against Hudud; how these bloggers evaluate and attribute Hudud and lastly, the argumentation or topos applied in justifying them. The data used in this study consist of 128 posts from 20 blogs selected within the time frame of 2011 to 2014 comprising of 10 blogs written by Muslims and the other 10 by non-Muslims. Findings reveal that for the advocates of Hudud, there is the tendency of othering or dismissing others in favour of Hudud. Conversely, for those who oppose Hudud, there are notably stereotype labeling given to the law and these labels are at times presented as ‘facts’. Although this study is not without its limitation, it is hoped that this research has shed some light into the differing opinions and standpoints given to Hudud by Malaysian bloggers, which could as well serve as a platform for further researches.
ABSTRAK

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

First and foremost, I would like to praise and give thanks to the Almighty God for His everlasting benediction and guidance throughout the process of completing my dissertation successfully. The passion for the study and patience that He showered upon me during times of confusion and difficulties have helped me tremendously to persevere and be persistent in this study.

I am also very much indebted to my supervisor, Dr. Surinderpal Kaur Channan Singh for her understanding, invaluable guidance, and encouragement in helping me throughout the completion of my dissertation. I would like to dedicate my deep sense of gratitude and reverence to her. Not forgetting, Dr. Ahmad Arifin Bin Sapar for taking the time to verify the Arabic key terms and definitions. I sincerely thank him for his kind favour.

To my dearest husband, parents, parents-in-law, siblings, and friends, I would like to express my gratefulness to them for their moral support, patience, understanding and prayers in times of need. Finally, I heartily dedicate this dissertation to my daughter, Hemaasaisyaa and my pets, Messi and Chloe.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

**TITLE PAGE**

**ORIGINAL LITERARY WORK DECLARATION**

**ABSTRACT** iii

**ABSTRAK** iv

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT** v

**TABLE OF CONTENTS** vi

**LIST OF TABLES** x

**LIST OF FIGURES** xi

**CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION**

1.0 Overview 1

1.1 Background of the Study 1

1.2 Research Problem 2

1.3 Objectives of the Study 4

1.4 Research Questions 4

1.5 Significance of the Problem 5

1.6 Scope and Limitation of Study 7

1.7 Definitions of Key Terms and Important Concepts 8

1.8 Conclusion 10

**CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW**

2.0 Overview 11
2.1 Critical Discourse Analysis: An overview 11
2.2 Hudud: Criminal Law under Islam 12
  2.2.1 Hudud and the Malaysia Legal System 15
2.3 Social Media 18
2.4 Discourse Historical Approach 20
  2.4.1 Positive Self and Negative Other Representation 21
  2.4.2 The Social Media Representation of Hudud and Other Relevant Studies 23
2.5 Conclusion 28

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY
3.0 Overview 29
3.1 Data Description 29
  3.1.1 Data Choice 29
  3.1.2 Data Selection 34
3.2 Theoretical Framework 35
  3.2.1 Discourse 36
  3.2.2 Methods of Analysis 38
  3.2.3 Discursive Strategies 40
  3.2.4 Analytical Categories 42
3.3 Research Ethics 46
3.4 Conclusion 47

CHAPTER FOUR: ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION
4.0 Overview 48
4.1 Malaysian Bloggers’ Representations of Hudud

4.1.1 Referential and Predicational Strategies

4.1.1.1 Representational Strategies Used by Advocates of Hudud

(1) Hudud as a Religious Ideal versus Other System of Beliefs

(2) Hudud as Bringing Transformation

4.1.1.2 Representational Strategies Used by Opponents of Hudud

(1) Hudud as the Hudud of PAS

(2) Hudud as a Constitutional Impossibility

(3) Hudud as Impractical

(4) Hudud as Harmful

(5) Hudud as a Danger

(6) Hudud as Incompatible with the Constitution

(7) Hudud as Failing to Uphold Social Justice

4.1.3 Argumentative Strategies

4.1.3.1 Advocates of Hudud

(1) The Topos of Advantage

(2) The Topos of Comparison

4.1.3.2 Opponents of Hudud

(1) Topos of Democracy

(2) Topos of Justice
(3) Topos of Threat 81
(4) Topos of Humanitarianism 82
(5) Topos of Law 86
(6) Topos of Threat 87
4.2 Overview of the Analysis 90
4.3 Conclusion 91

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION
5.0 Overview 92
5.1 Research Question 1: Referential & Predicational Strategies - Advocates of Hudud 92
5.2 Research Question 2: Referential & Predicational Strategies - Opponents of Hudud 95
5.3 Research Question 3 98
  5.3.1 Argumentative Strategies:
    Advocates of Hudud 98
  5.3.2 Argumentative Strategies:
    Opponents of Hudud 99
5.4 Implications of this Study 102
5.5 Suggestions for Further Research 103
5.6 Concluding Remarks 103

REFERENCES 104

APPENDIX 110
Appendix A: Titles and Date of Blogs’ Articles 110
LIST OF TABLES

Table 1.0: Five constitutive questions by Reisigl and Wodak (2001)
Table 2.0: Descriptions of the Blogs
Table 3.0: Discursive Strategies (Wodak, 2001: 73)
Table 4.0: Examples of Topoi Selected for Discussion (Wodak and Idema, 2004)
Table 5.0: List of Positive References Given to Hudud as a Religious Ideal
Table 6.0: Predicational Terms Given to Hudud as a Religious Ideal
Table 7.0: List of Referential Terms Given to Hudud of PAS
Table 8.0: List of Referential Terms Given to the ‘Actual Hudud’
Table 9.0: Predicational Strategies used to describe Hudud of PAS
Table 10.0: Predicational Strategies used to describe the ‘Actual Hudud’
Table 11.0: List of Referential Terms Given to Hudud
Table 12.0: List of Predicational Terms Given to Hudud
LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1.0: Strategies of Self or Other-Presentation (Wodak, 2001: 46)