

Settings in The 2019 Teenagers' Historical Novels Competition "Wira Demokrasi" by Nor Azida Ishak

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Abstract

Historical novels are getting less popular these days due to its content of story on historical events. To which it does not interests a lot of readers. Most of the historical novel readers are mainly adults in their 30s up to the elderlies in the late 50s to 70s. Therefore, our youngsters are not that interested in reading historical novels as compared to other kinds of novels like romance, comedy and many others. For such reason, authors tend to change their perspective and started to write about historical novels for teenagers. The content and elaboration of the novel should be able to attract the interest of the youngsters in reading the historical novels. Thus, the objective of this study is to identify settings in the 2019 teenagers' historical novels competition "Wira Demokrasi" by Nor Azida Ishak. The samples of the study consisted of the "Wira Demokrasi" teenagers' historical novel itself. The "Wira Demokrasi" teenagers' historical novel were chosen from the 2019 teenagers' historical novels competition and won the consolation price out of the 8 novels who competed in the competition. This study is a quantitative study whereby the number of settings that took place in the novel in each chapter were taken into account. The different settings used in each chapter of the novel were further elaborated into 3 different situations which are the place, time and society which were involved in each setting. The settings used in the novel were captured and analysed by using Discourse Analysis Theory by Normaliza Abd Rahim (2019; 2021). The result of the study showed that setting plays an important role in elaborating the detail of the storyline. It helps to identify the actual surrounding and environment that the character of the story had to go through or face during certain situation. It also helps the reader to understand more in depth of what is happening in the storyline which mainly focused on the place, time and society involved. It is hoped that further studies will focus on other important aspects that needs further elaboration in the teenagers' historical novel.

Keyword: Setting, Teenagers, Historical Novels, Discourse Analysis

Introduction

A novel must be intended to be a historical novel to be a 'true' representation of the genre makes the role of the author central. To differentiate texts set in the 'recent past' of which 'the reader is more likely to have personal experience' and texts which are 'historical' is interesting, therefore, the reader is the focus. Looking through the position of the reader shows possibility of contemporary novels becoming historical over time, when the text authored is no longer relevant (Stocker, 2017).

The simplest way of recognizing a historical novel, of course, is by the lapse of time between its narrated events and its composition (Moseley, 2019). A historical novel can also be deemed historical, a novel must have been written at least fifty years after the events described or have been written by someone who was not alive at the time of those events, who therefore approaches them only by research. Referring to Hamnett (2006), the historical novel thrives on the tension between fact and imagination. It is at its best when the balance is consistently sustained and the division seamless. In another definition, historical novel genre is not just a hybrid one, it is multifarious.

Literature Review

A study by Harrisson (2020) mentioned that fictions are stories that we tell about ourselves, about other people, about the world we live in and the world of the past. Fictions can also be elaborated as liberating and provocative. Historical fictions are all around us like in films, television programmers and of course in novels as well. It is presumed what makes a fiction 'historical' in the genre of historical novels often focus on the idea that a certain amount of time must have passed between the events and the writing of the novel, whether that's 40-60 years (Fleishman, 1971), 50 years ago (The Historical Novel of Society, 2020). The main idea is that some set amount of time that shifts a work from being 'contemporary' or about the 'recent past' to being 'historical' appears deeply engrained (Harrisson, 2020).

According to a study by Moseley (2019), the neo-Victorian novel, which has been incisively defined and analysed recently, if not a subset of the neo-historical, has a lot in common with it and indeed Lincoln in the Bardo, with its 1862 setting, its concern with the supernatural and its problematizing of the Victorian consensus, could be treated as a neo-Victorian novel, despite its American setting. It is more like the United States experienced a Victorian age, without Queen Victoria. Hence, setting plays an important role to make a historical novel looks more legit and authentic to the readers.

A study by Rousselot (2020) on shell shock and the legacy of the Victorian past in the present which shows the author Pat Barker's writing in *Another World* representing the WWI in the present situation. The author approached the topic from a completely different perspective whereby the author uses Victorian storyline to address the concerns on 'shell shock', attitudes towards WWI veterans and problems surrounding remembering past violence and the author were able to present the first world war through the means of references to nineteenth-century culture. It shows that different setting was used in the storyline approach in order to represent past in the present in a different way. According to Rousselot (2020), the twofold nature of shell shock, as a condition that speaks literally and figuratively of the presence of the past in the present, is useful where that relationship with the Victorian past is concerned. Ganteau (2013) mentioned that if the novel comes as close as possible to an imitation of the

symptoms of trauma, it is arguably that shell shock in particular acts as a metaphor for the condition experienced by the characters, a condition which manifests itself figuratively through their constant return to the nineteenth century, and literally through the possible hallucinations that they experienced as a result.

According to Abd Rahim (2019), discourse analysis includes the analysis of utterances, interactions, texts and written text analysed for the purpose of finding implicit and explicit meanings. It also helps the process of analysing messages from the writer to the reader. Therefore, it is important for the reader to understand what is being delivered by the writer. Language spoken and written contains meaning and understood by listeners or readers (Abd Rahim, 2014). A study by Omar (1986) mentioned that discourse is the whole language of the speaker or author, the language system and external elements of the language system that contribute to making the speech or writing as meaningful in communicating. There are a whole lot of meaning of discourse, but as a whole, discourse involves meaningful spoken, interaction, written and text. Sign and body language are also added in the discourse language among others as it has helped many special needs and others to communicate as well.

According to Coulhard (1977), there are three approaches to discourse analysis theory and one of the approaches is context. The context in analysis is where circumstances that form the setting for an event, statement, idea, and in terms of which it can be fully understood. This approach by Coulhard (1977) is also important in linguistic and language structure of an analysis as it is suitable for written and textual discourse. Another study by Stubbs (1983) mentioned that discourse analysis is to study larger linguistic units, for instance, conversational exchanges or written texts.

Based on the research problems mentioned by previous studies as stated above, the objective of this study is to identify settings in the 2019 teenagers' historical novels competition "Wira Demokrasi" by Nor Azida Ishak.

Methodology

This study used quantitative method in order to analyse the data. Qualitative data as in the settings that took place in the novel in the first five chapters were taken into account. The limitation of the study is limited to the first five chapters of the novel because that is the peak time and pre historical event of the whole novel storyline. The different settings used in the first five chapters of the novel were further elaborated into 3 different situations which are the place, time and society which were involved in each setting. The settings used in the novel were captured and analysed by using Discourse Analysis Theory by Abd Rahim (2019; 2021).

As for the procedure of the study, the data were identified in the first five chapters in the novel which focuses on the setting of the storyline. This study will be using Discourse Analysis Theory by Abd Rahim (2019; 2021) to analyse the data.

Table 1

Discourse Analysis Theory (DAT)

Discourse Analysis Theory (Abd Rahim, 2019; 2021)		
Content	Context	Assumption
1. Theme	1. Grammar 2. Setting 3. Emotion	1. Opinion 2. Reference 3. Question

The above table 2 showed details of DAT. According to Abd Rahim (2019; 2021), the first element of DAT is the content and it consists of a theme which helps in the analysis of the data that could be captured from materials like books, texts, or even utterances. As for the context that is the circumstances that form the setting for an event, statement or idea, and in terms of which it can be fully understood consists of three sub-elements; grammar, setting and emotion. The first sub-element is the grammar which is the whole system and structure of a language or of languages in general, focusses on the syntactical and morphological constituent of the words, phrases and sentences used. Secondly, the setting that is analysed following the information about the location, time and people involved in it. Thirdly, the emotion is analysed when reactions and feelings are shown as the reflection towards a situation. Lastly is the assumption. The assumption was emphasised with three sub-elements; opinion, references and question. Opinion is deliberated from all sources that surrounds the discourse, which is the text, utterances and interaction. As for reference, it can be seen as the opportunity that the speaker or write could have in recalling and bringing in any ideas referring to the matter that is being discussed. Lastly is the question. It can be seen as necessary because according to the theorist, it is the nature of the speaker or writer to ask questions for clarification and confirmation on certain things.

The materials of the study consisted of the “Wira Demokrasi” teenagers’ historical novel itself. The “Wira Demokrasi” teenagers’ historical novel were chosen from the 2019 teenagers’ historical novels competition and won the consolation prize out of the 8 novels who competed in the competition.

The method used in this study was capturing all the data from the novel itself. The main data needed in the study is finding the place, time and society that were involved in capturing each setting presented in the novel storyline.

Results and Discussion*Chapter 1 to Chapter 5*

Table 2

Setting for Chapter 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5

Chapter	Place	Time	Society
Chapter 1	Tun Dr Ismail's House, Johor	10 May 1969, Saturday	Tun Dr Ismail
	Ships Port, Tanah Melayu	26 July 1946	Sellers and visitors at the deport
Chapter 2	In Suleiman's car, on the way home from the Ships Port, Johor	26 July 1946	Tun Dr Ismail and Suleiman, his brother
	Istana Besar, Johor	2 February 1946	State Government Mufti Sultan of Johor
	Masjid Abu Bakar, Johor	2 February 1946	The people of Johor
	Kuala Lumpur	March 1946	Malay Union participants
	Tun Dr Ismail's Family House, Tawakkal House, Johor	26 July 1946	Tun Dr Ismail, Suleiman and his father.
Chapter 3	Tun Dr Ismail's Clinic, Klinik Tawakkal, Johor	7 years after returning home from Australia, 1953	Tun Dr Ismail Robert Kuok
	Near the beach, Johor	One evening	Tun Dr Ismail Sardon Haji Jubir, UMNO Members of Highest Council
Chapter 4	Bushes in the jungle, opposite the Kuala Kubu Baru road	Before afternoon	Siew Mah Chow Yoon Thin Yong 36 platoon members
Chapter 5	Tun Dr Ismail's house, Johor Bahru	Morning of 8 months after 29 September 1953	Tun Dr Ismail
	Tun Dr Ismail's house, Johor Bahru	Same day at 12 noon	Tun Dr Ismail Tunku Abdul Rahman
	English Advisor's house, Johor Bahru	Same day at 4pm	Tun Dr Ismail Tunku Abdul Rahman Sir Michael Hogan Colonel H. S. Lee

The above table 2 showed the settings that took place in chapter 1 to chapter 5 in the novel "Wira Demokrasi" by Nor Azida Ishak. In chapter 1, setting was placed at Tun Dr Ismail's House in Johor on the 10th May 1969, a Saturday morning but the exact time was not mentioned. The setting shows the start of a new day for Tun Dr Ismail as it was election day and he is one of the candidate to be chosen to represent the state of Johor in the *Tanah Melayu*. While getting ready for the election day, his mind wonders through the past time to when he arrived back home from studying abroad. Another setting took place from his wondering which was at the Ships Port in *Tanah Melayu*. The setting took place on the 26 July 1946 and it was elaborated that Tun Dr Ismail were there with sellers and visitors from everywhere were at the deport. They were selling, buying, discussion, chit chatting in the Malay language but with different accent, intonation and dialect.

When jumping into chapter 2, the setting slightly changes a bit, however it is still in the wondering thoughts of Tun Dr Ismail. While glancing back to the past time, he remembers the hot story told by his brother Suleiman. The story was about his father and friends together with Suleiman who fought for the Malay's right when a proposal on establishing the Malayan Union proposed by the British were accepted and approved by the Sultan of Johor with consulting the Johor state government. Throughout the story of this proposal which was later called the MacMichael Agreement, a lot of things happened between the Johor state ministers and the Johor royal family, especially the sultan. When the Sultan of Johor signed the agreement without consulting the state government, Tun Dr Ismail's father and his friends together with Suleiman opposed to the decision as it will bring a big harm to the Malay's right, sultan's right and position in the future as well as being dictated by a foreigner from another country is just wrong. After all that chaos caused by the Sultan of Johor, the people of Johor understood what happened and decided to side with Tun Dr Ismail and his friends side. From there, they decided to send a proposal to the Sultan of Johor to discuss over why the opposition happened by the state government as well as the people of Johor. The next setting took place at the Istana Besar, Johor on the 2 February 1946 whereby the state government mufti went with a proposal to help explain the wrongful situation with the Sultan of Johor. Luckily the meeting went smoothly and the Sultan of Johor came to a realization of his wrongfulness and decided to fix the problem with the British. On the same date another setting took place at the Masjid Abu Bakar, Johor whereby the people of Johor were waiting for the state government mufti to come back from the Istana Besar with good news. Not long after that a setting took place in Kuala Lumpur on March 1946 whereby 41 Malay Union from all states were gathered lead by Dato' Onn Jaafar. From then only, the Sultan of Johor wrote to the British deciding to withdraw his approval to accept the MacMichael Agreement and it was followed by all other sultan from other states as well. The Malay Union were happy and motivated in opposing the Malayan Union issue on the MacMichael Agreement. At the end of the chapter, Tun Dr Ismail and Suleiman finally arrived at their family house at Tawakkal House, Johor. All those story of events took a few hours of driving from the Ship's Port to his family house.

In chapter 3, the setting continues from the wondering off after Tun Dr Ismail return home from Australia. It was 7 years after he returned the exact time was not mentioned and it was at his very own clinic called Tawakkal Clinic with his good friend Robert Kuok. Robert Kuok is one of his good friend who helped him out with the management of his clinic from day 1. He even helped Tun Dr Ismail on the location of the clinic which was opposite his shop. He even

helped out by making his staff to refer to Tun Dr Ismail's clinic instead of the other ones. He was happy for having such amazing and helpful friend with him to which made his promised to himself to work harder than before in order for him to live peacefully in the future without worrying about money. The setting then suddenly changed to another location in the same chapter. Tun Dr Ismail was near the beach in Johor resting on the side after having a swim in the ocean. It was an evening of unmentioned date and time; he was interrupted by a friend named Sardon Haji Jubir who is UMNO's Member of Highest Council. Sardon has been nagging Tun Dr Ismail on wanting him to join UMNO in order to help fight for our independence from the British together with the other intellectual graduates that are in the Malay Graduate Associate lead by Tun Dr Ismail himself and his brother Suleiman. Sardon mentioned that Tun Dr Ismail is the best candidate to join and lead UMNO, as mentioned by Dato' Onn Jaafar as well. Tun Dr Ismail said that he would only join UMNO and closes his private clinic at once if Dato' Onn Jaafar finally decided to fully fight for the independence of the country. The chapter ended with Dato' Onn Jaafar left UMNO after his position as the *Yang diPertua* term ended and was replaced by a much dedicated person to fight for the Malay independence which is Tunku Abdul Rahman. In chapter 3, it shows that, 2 different setting and occasion took place at a different time with different content and purpose.

In chapter 4, the setting of the storyline totally changed from before. It was set in bushes in the jungle on the opposite Kuala Kubu Baru road around before noon. A lot more character was involved in this setting which includes Siew Mah, the commander of the 11th Pahang guerrilla regiment as well as Chin Peng's most trusted person who is from the Malaya Communist Party, Chow Yoon, Thin Yong and another 36 platoon members were there. The main purpose if to attack the military convoy which was told to Siew Mah that was supposed to pass by that road and steal their weapons for their own keeps as theirs are running low. After waiting for 2 days, the platoon members got fed up and Thin Yong questioned Siew Mah's informer whether it was true or not. Not wanting to go back empty handed and being seen as fools by the village people, Chow Yoon suggested that they should just attack any government convoy that goes through that road today. Then suddenly the next car arrived which was carrying the most powerful person in the Malay land, Sir Henry Gurney, British High Commissioner in the Malay land, with his wife and assistant. Without hesitating and not knowing who was in the car, aiming for the goal, the rest of the platoon started shooting at the car which lead the driver to die immediately. In fear of getting his wife hurt, Sir Henry Gurney bravely surrender and was shot to die by the communists. They then stopped after he dropped dead and ran away. This chapter showed another setting that happened in another state.

Based on chapter 5, the setting of the storyline differs even more. The setting in chapter 5 took place in 2 different places at 3 different timelines within the same day and the people involved were added throughout the day. The first setting happened at Tun Dr Ismail's house in the morning of 8 months after 29 September 1953. Tun Dr Ismail were enjoying himself of the moment being free from any government work which he quit 2 weeks ago. He then decided to move back to Johor Bahru with his wife and 2 kids. Later that same day and still at Tun Dr Ismail house, Tunku Abdul Rahman came to visit and ate lunch cooked by Tun Dr Ismail's wife. They then had dessert and coffee after and discussed over the reason why Tunku Abdul Rahman came over. They were both called to come over by Sir Michael Hogan who is the chairman of the election committee and the general attorney to the English Advisor's

house in Johor Bahru. Later that same day at 4pm, another event took place with a slightly different setting as the place is located elsewhere and not at Tun Dr Ismail's house anymore. The setting took place at the English Advisor's house in Johor Bahru, Tun Dr Ismail arrived with Tunku Abdul Rahman from his house and Sir Michael Hogan and Colonel H. S. Lee arrived there from Kuala Lumpur. They were informed that the new high commissioner Sir Donald MacGillivray wanted to meet up with them on the H. M. S. Alert Warship which will be anchored at in the waters of the naval base in Woodland. Not knowing what will happen to them with the meet up, each one of them were taking guesses on what might or could happen to them due to their actions of quitting the government before. Chapter 5 showed that 3 different event took place in the storyline which consists of different settings for each one of them. Each chapter showed different setting that took place in the storyline. According to Abd Rahim (2019; 2021), setting is the place or type of surroundings where something is positioned or where an event takes place and is analyzed according to all the details related to the time, background, character and atmosphere of an event in the text, writing, spoken and interaction. Setting is divided into three that is, place background, time background and community background.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it can be seen that in the first five chapters of the novel different setting took place. Whereby, different place, time and people were involved in each chapter with different storyline. The setting showed that it played an important role in implying the role of the characters, the event that took place and the issues arises throughout the whole storyline. The different settings were also able to elaborate the different situation that was faced by Tun Dr Ismail throughout his politician career. The different setting involves the past to which what he was wondering off as well as the present time. It also showed different events were happening throughout all those years in the *Tanah Melayu*. According to Abd Rahim (2019; 2021), setting is analysed following the information about the location, time and people involved in it.

This study is in line with a study by Rousselot (2020) whereby different setting can be used in the storyline in order to approach and represent the past in the present in many ways. It also shows that setting plays and important role in representing the novel storyline as it shows where and when the even in the storyline actually happened and who were involved in the storyline during the time of the event.

Research Contribution

This research gives contribution towards all authors or writers who loves to write on historical novels. It shows how important settings are in building up the story especially related to history. In order for the story to become more lively and realistic to compare to the real life situation. Therefore, it is best to have proper settings in any historical novel writing in order to attract the audiences views and interests.

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