POLITICAL CAMPAIGN ACTIVITIES IN THE 1990 GENERAL ELECTION

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INTRODUCTION

The general election in October 1990 gave a great opportunity to a group of researchers comprising of students from the school of mass communication, ITM to undertake a study on the political campaign activities. In their studies, they tried to identify the approaches use by all parties involved in the campaign. Important issues in the main agenda in the campaig were detected. Useful data and issues brought up by each speakers were gathered and interviews were also conducted with the audience. From they are able to measure the audience ability to understand the issues discussed.

Areas covered in the study were: Bachok (Kelantan), Arau (Perlis), Shah Alam, Ampang Jaya (Selangor), Jeleb u (Negeri Sembilan, Johor Bahru (Johore), Marang (Terengganu), and Parit Buntar (Perak). These areas were chosen based on the tough competition among the parties involved in the campaign.

Other villages and town visited during the campaign were Alor Lintang, Desa Panjang, Kg. Kubang, Kg. Tanun, Tanjong Pian, Pak Badol, Lembah Keramat, Ampang Jaya, Arau, Bachok, Johor Bahru and Jelebu.

SPEECH AS A TOOL TO DESSIMINATE INFORMATION

Speech is one of the effective method to dessiminate information. In this activity, there is the speaker, message and audience. In speech communication speaker is the source, information dessiminate by speaker in the message and listener is the audience. This is in relation to other models of communication created by Berlo (1960), Schramn (1955), Osgood (1954), Shannon and Weaver (1949), and Laswell (1948).

All of them stress on the main objective of communicative process i.e. sources, message and audience (destination). The models created by them reflect sources as the most important elements needed in the communication process. Crawford (1976) and Syed Salim (1976) believe that technical information flow involve four important

element.. They are, sources, channel, information and audience. They also categorise the information sources into three groups. First, mass media which includes newspaper, radio, TV, magazines, books, pamplets, journals, and other related materials. Second is the interpersonal resource which includes neighbours, friends and development officers. Finally, ourselves (us). So speech can be said as an activity which dessiminate information and it is used specifically by individuals face-to-face process. Individuals who deliver the speech can be regarded as a source between individual and himself. Devito (1980), Emmert (1980), Berlo (1960) believe that sources between individuals must have criteria such as a) fluency, b) positive attitude, c) knowledgable and d) highly respected (status) in the social system community. Bettinghaus (1973) feel that sources between individuals should have a certain degree of high credibility such as good in communication, knowledgable recognition, wide experience and a good personality. The criteria proposed is to ensure the message reach the public perfectly.

During the election campaign, representative from respective parties frequently sponsor the political campaign in order to get support for their parties they are in.

Currently, information are gathered from various sources. Sources of information can be catagorised into two parts - mass media and interpersonal. In the process of public thinking development the two sources had given a big contribution to bring changes in the cognitive aspect; effectivity and public attitude especially the rural people. Rahim (1985) believe that to ensure individual can accept changes, one must choose the right channel to receive perfect and direct information. Rogers and Shoemaker (1971) think that a perfect communication channel (mass media and interpersonal) to the public will contribute to the socio-economic changes of the community.

Rogers (1962), Sufian (1985) stressed on the important role of mass media in developing individual as well as public consciousness to the changes accuring around them. Communication (speech) can be related to the audience need in the issues from mass media. In certain situation, public are still unsure of the information received from the media, this is where speaker should upgrade his/her speech to the audience understanding.

There seem to be a controversy, lately, on the question of mass media's credibility in dissiminating issues or information. This is because the audience feels that there is something fishy going on with regard to how the news is channelled.

This situation enforce the public to look for alternatives to seek information from other sources to make sure the liability of the message or information.

We are in the era of 'informative community'. Everyone in the community is re sponsible and has the right to give and to receive information from any reliable sources.

Reddi (1987), Schiller (1986) said that, the development of present technology revolution has brought total changes in the process of giving information to the public. Nobody is free from handling this highly communication technology. Malaysian citizen have quite different situation in this area especially the rural people. They are still unaware of the importance of mass media as a tool to dessiminate information in their lives.

McAnany (1980) Beltran (1974), Fett (1972), Brown (1970), Felsehausen (1969, found out that rural people are still small in number in using these instrument to seek information. From the finding, we can simplify that a group of people do not realise the importance of mass media in the existence of informative community.

Whatever perception the people has on the role mass media, it is clear that the Malaysian society are open to information provided by active agents. This can be seen in the political campaign activities to upgrade or to develop the comprehension of the public toward important issues. Good understanding can only lead to perfect decision.

SPEAKERS AN INFORMATION AGENT BETWEEN INDIVIDUALS

In the face-to-face communication process, the flow of information is direct. This leads to active interaction between communicator and the listeners. Face-to-face communication may happen between communication in a small or big group. When this happen it is called speech. Snyder et al (1991) stress that information sources between individual is regarded as the ideal information channel in the process of face-to-face information. A lot of research has been done on the role of informative sources between individuals in developing the change of social economy of the public.

In this context (campaign), whether it is an election campaign, civic, or promotion of a new product etc., the stress is more on issues or new information that can be accepted effectively by the audience. The prime objective of any campaign is to influence and to conquer the audience mind and belief.

When speakers can influence the audience, it means they are successfully controlling the audience feeling. When this happen it will be easier for the speaker to influence the audience to support him or join in his camp. A good example of this is the political speech. Assuming that a speaker can convince the audience with facts and points in his speech, there is no doubt they will give their full support and commitment to that particular political party. On the other hand audience will turn away from any form of activities sponsored by the speakers if the audience feel that the message is untrue and illogic.

Dessimination of information can be done in various ways. One is by mass media such as TV, radio, newspaper, etc. The other is face-to-face process which need professionalism in public speaking. Interpersonal sources can function as speakers. This means that the individual sources is the person who deliver his message face-to-face to the audience (Rovers 1973). If we observe the activities done by the agents we can categorised them as the information agents per say. The approach used to render information of facts, in this case, is in the form of speech.

So, speaker's function in this code is very broad. It is not only to deliver facts and information but also to control audience emotion so that every message received must have high impact on the audience.

In every speech activities, the speakers are responsible or have the right to determine the success or otherwise of every and each campaign. Audience will only concentrate on the fact if the information is accompanied by reliable and true fact.

Audience in a rally can be catagorise as:

1.   Audience who prefer to be individuals. This type of audience will accept the message fully and will act accordingly to speaker's need.

2. 'Heterogeneous' audience. They usually have high degree of thinking (thinker) and try to create various dimension to any issues brought up. In another word, they can be influenced by the speaker's fact.

3. Audience who like 'competition'. This kind of audience will try to look for truth. They do not like information which have many perception.

TYPES OF CAMPAIGN

Speech or campaign is a process of giving information through verbal communication by its communicator (source). Basically, audience rally (speech) can be divided into two types:

1. Small Group Speech
2. Large Group Speech

Small group speech is also known as 'micro group situation'. It is usually practice by special individual to a small group of audience in order to upgrade one's understanding in any issues or others. As an example, a project supervisor gives a talk to his workers on responsibilities and effectiveness. This type of situation can give a wide opportunity to the speaker to bring out opinion in the form of comment and suggestion which can be shared together.

On the other hand 'micro group' is a situation where audience do not have proper room to interact actively. This happened because of the environmental process of the message channel is too far and the audience is too large. Some feel that the second type of campaign is based on 'crowd oriented' concept. In this situation, audience can interact among themselves while listening to the message from the speaker. Interaction process among audinece attending any rally can clearly be observed especially when the content of the speech give clear impact to every individual. Otherwise, audience will show passive attitude if the message is less important to them.

The advantage of small group is the wide opportunity for each individual to involve himself in a discussion. Secondly, each individual can reduce his doubt on the message by questioning directly to the speaker.

The advantage of big group rally is that the messasge can be disseminated to many individuals.

Bachok Parliamentary Constituency Background

Bachok constituency is a stronghold of PAS opposition party. Its victory mainly depends on individual factors of the candidates. The situation can be seen from the PAS crisis experience. PAS under the leadership fo the late Dato Asri Hj. Muda underwent a very serious crisis. The incident led to his presidential resignation and hence, formed 'HAMIM'. During the state of transformation, Dato Asri and his followers including Bachok Parliamentary assemblyman (P23) worked very hard looking for supporters especially from the PAS members. Unfortunately not many of the PAS supporters were willingly to migrate with the leader they used to worship be-

fore. Looking at the situation, Dato Asri took a good step by joining BN. This incident automatically brought Bachok assemblyman (MP) (P23) to win under BN where PAS supporters and voters lost confidence on Tn. Hj. Mohd Zain, the MP (P23). He, at one time, tried to defeat the current MB of Kelantan, Tn. Hj. Nik Aziz Nik Mat in the 1986 election.

Tn. Hj. Mohd Zain Abdullah became the MP of Bachok when he was still in PAS and HAMIM until he was defeated by Hj. Buniamin Yaacob in the 1990 general election with a majority of 12,254 vote.

Distribution of Voter	(P23)
Registered Voters	46,256
Malay Voters	98.21%
Chinese Voters	1.34%
Indian Voters	0.01%
Others	0.44%

Result of the Campaign Activities in the Election

The study on the activities had been classified into various aspects. They are:

1. The regularity of speech activities by political leaders.
2. Public attendance
3. Theme

Leaders who give speech regularly

It was found out that local polidtical leaders are the one who frequently give talk compared to district and national leaders. This happened because the national political leader had difficulty to fulfil invitation from other division due to time constrain. Furthermore, they have to concentrate on their areas (See table 1).

Public Attendance in Each Campaign

The total public attendance in any campaign activities is is being focus by researcher because there is a relation between audience attendance and the issues debated by speakers and a question of credibility of the speaker.

The data shows that 21 (65.6%) campaign activities had less than 500 people, whereas 7 (21.9%) attended by 500-1000 audience and only 4 (12.5%) attended by more than 1000 people.

From the findidng, it shows that the October 1992 General Election open campaign did notreceived support from the voters. It was because the public obtained issues from the mass media and electronic devices. This hurdled them from attending such a campaign. At the same time voters were approached by respective party assistants looking for support. This was done by giving clear and true picture on current issues discussed by the public. Through these various approach by the party assist-

ance voters feel that they do not have to attend any campaign held in their area.

Leaders Theme

Researcher had classified the theme or topic discussed by political leaders in the election campaign. They are:

1. economy
2. government criticm
3. Bribery
4. leadership
5. religion
6. Bad/good of the government and others.

Political leaders too are classified into four catagories namely:

1. local leaders
2. regional leaders;
3. national leader
4. candidate/assemblyman

The study shows that the topic on government is frequently debated by the political leader in any campaign. This issue is raised by the leaders who are for the government. On the other hand the government is being criticised by opposition party in their campaign. Issues such as religion, economy, and leaders dignity and capabilities are the main topic to sway noters to support the speakers.

If we look at different angles, there seem to be similarities between issues discuss in each campaign with the speaking capability. It was found out that local leaders frequently raised the issues on economy, religion, good and bad point on the current government. The most interesting and popular issues discussed by local leaders is on economy (66.7%) compared to national political leader, only (25.0%) (refer Table 3).

Regularity Stage on the Campaign Activities by Political Leaders

To identify the regularities of the campaign activities by political leaders, researcher try to record the number of activities done by classifying the party leader and constituency. It was found out that political leaders at district level have more campaign activities in their areas compared to regional or national political leaders. Time constrain is the reason why less number of national/regional political leaders involved in the activities. The second factor is that many of them are candidates in the electio, so they have to concentrate on their constituency.

The Number of Campaign held by Political Party Leaders

Researcher tried to record the percentage of all the three political party to indicate their success in the campaign. The major party involved were BN, PAS and Semangat 46. All the parties made used of most of their prominent leaders from various stages to campaign in the electin. Table 5 shows that BN use a lot of its energy from National Leaders whereas PAS and Semangat 46 engage more district political leaders in the campaign.

The different tools used between BN, PAS and Semangat 46 can be traced from various angles. One of them is in term of 'power'. Most BN national leaders are holding ministers post in the cabinet. Thus they have direct power to influence the audience to suppordt their party. Hence, BN mostly concentrate on its national leaders to campaign in the election.

Table 1
**Distribution of Speech Regulation by Leaders
in the Election Constituency**

Political Leadership Classification	No of Speech	Percentage
Local leader	15	46.9
District Leader	9	28.1
National Leader	5	15.6
Candidates	3	9.4
Others	0	0
Total	**32**	**100**

Table 2
Percentage of Respondence Attending Election Campaign

Public Attendance in each campaign	No of Cases	Percentage
< - 499	21	65.6
500 - 1000	7	21.9
1000 - >	4	12.5
Total	**32**	**100**

Table 3
Distribution of Issues Brought Up in the Campaign

Political Leaders Catagories	Critic of Government	Issues on Economy	Leadership	Government Advantages	Religious Issues	Others
Political Leaders	50.0	66.7	36.4	35.3	40.0	26.1
Regional Leaders	6.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	6.7	4.3
National Leaders	12.5	25.0	18.2	29.4	13.3	26.1
Candidates	31.2	8.3	45.4	35.3	40.0	43.5
Total	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**

Table 4
Distribution of Time Campaign Activities by Party Leaders

Prominent Leaders	Areas								
	AMPANG	ARAU	BACHOK	JELEBU	J/BAHRU	MARANG	PARIT BUNTAR	SHAH ALAM	TOTAL
Local Political Leaders	40.0	6.7	6.7	13.2	0	13	13.3	6.8	100.00
District Political Leaders	0	0	50.0	0	0	0	0	50.0	100.00
National Political Leaders	37.5	12.5	12.5	0	0	0	25.0	12.5	100.00
Candidates	23.1	15.4	0	0	23.1	7.7	7.7	23.0	100.00

Table 5

Percentage of Political Campaign from each Political Party

Classification of Politician	PARTY			
	BARISAN	PAS	SEMANGAT 46	TOTAL
Local Political Leader	53.3	26.7	20.0	100.0
District Political Leader	0	50.0	50.0	100.0
National Political Leader	75.0	12.5	12.5	100.0
Candidates	52.5	15.4	32.1	100.0
Other Leaders	33.4	33.3	33.3	100.0