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Chapter.3

METHODOLOGY

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3.0   Introduction

The aim of this study is to analyse the types of politeness strategies found in economic texts of journal articles and this is followed by comparing politeness strategies used by writers of two selected economic journals, one local and one international. This chapter presents the methodology, the theoretical framework, the selection and analysis of corpus in order to answer the research questions as proposed in chapter one.

3.1 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this study is based on Brown and Levinson's politeness theory as a basis for analyzing the discourse of economic journals. Brown and Levinson (1978) proposed four types of politeness strategies which they claim are manifested in human interaction and they are: "bald-on-record, positive politeness, negative politeness, and off-record-indirect strategy".

The works of Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987) were the first to systemize the politeness theory used by people from different languages. However, their universality of politeness strategies concept later attracted the greatest criticism. Politeness theory is challenged for assuming the universal applicability of the politeness strategies across language (Watts, Ide and Ehlich, 2003). Other researchers (Gu, 1990; Matsumoto, 1989; Mao, 1994; Nwoye 1992) also point out that Brown and Levinson's politeness framework depends on Western culture.

As mentioned by Chang and Holt (1994: 2) that "Western understanding of face work is very much influenced by the idea of impression management, reflecting the dominant individualistic characteristic of Western culture. This can be contrasted with the eastern concepts such as *mien-tze* (face) in Chinese, which places more emphasis on the nature of the relationship". Therefore, Bargiele-Chippiani (2003) suggests "politeness will be better understood if placed within the socio-cultural or specific context". Similarly Spencer-Oatey (2008:20) argues that "politeness is managed through multiple aspects of language use"

The above explanation indicates that Brown and Levinson's politeness theory needs to reconsider different cultural and situational elements. Thus, Adegbija (2000) and Spencer-Oatey (2008:12), support this line of thinking and reports based on their study," the interpretation of politeness can only be made within pragmatic context or through multiple aspects of language use".

The above researchers all seem to call for a more contextualised understanding of politeness. As mentioned by Bargiela-Chippiani (2003), the roots of politeness:

"go deep into the history and moral constitution of a society ad such require more than just attention to verbal and non-verbal manifestation. Its origin and workings are woven into social fabric of interpersonal behaviour and only multidisciplinary research can hope to shed further light on them".

Bargiela-Chippiani (2003:147),

Therefore, in line with Bargiela-Chippiani (2003) arguments above, this study used Brown and Levinson's politeness model as the basis of investigation on the strategies employed by writers of economic journals, alongside 2 (two) other researchers, namely; Myers (1989) who extended theory of politeness into written scientific articles as well

as Mulholland's compilation of persuasive tactics, to identify, analyze and compare the use of politeness strategies in economic journals.

Nevertheless, Myers, in his study "*Politeness in scientific text*" (1989) were linked to what Brown and Levinson proposed in their book "*Politeness: Some universals in language usage*" (1978). Myers (1989) pioneers the application of Brown and Levinsons's (1987) politeness strategies onto written text, and he discovers the existence of politeness in scientific articles. Meanwhile, Mullholland's (1994) one of the best known and systematic books on persuasive tactics used to strengthen the explanation beyond the tactics used by journal writers in economic text. She was the first to initiate the compilation of persuasive tactics in communication. Mulholland (1994) in her book presents a catalogue of the compilation of 300 different most important persuasive tactics used either in speech or writing in communication. Additionally, she was focused on studying the tactics and their persuasive values beyond the tactics used in daily lives.

Thus, an integrated analysis of politeness theory and persuasive tactics seems to provide this present research with some perspectives in explaining the politeness strategies and tactics employ by the writers in economic journals. It seems reasonable to build on this theory, which has been extensively researched by many scholars in the past decades such as Abarca and Moreno (2006), Hsieh (2009), Thayalan (2011) used politeness strategies proposed by Brown and Levinson (1978) alongside other theories to explain the phenomenon of politeness in specific written context.

In view of this argument the study proposed to integrate these past studies and take the analysis to discourse level in order to meet and understand human politeness in written text.

Therefore, In this study, Brown and Levinson's (1978) Politeness theory used as the basis to investigate on the politeness strategies employed by writers of economic journals alongside two others researchers namely Myers (1989) who extended theory of politeness strategies onto written scientific articles as used to explain how to interpret some construction of the politeness strategies and tactics found in the articles and Mulholland's (1994) compilation of persuasive tactics to analyse the language tactics used by journal writers of two economic journals.

3.2 Research Design

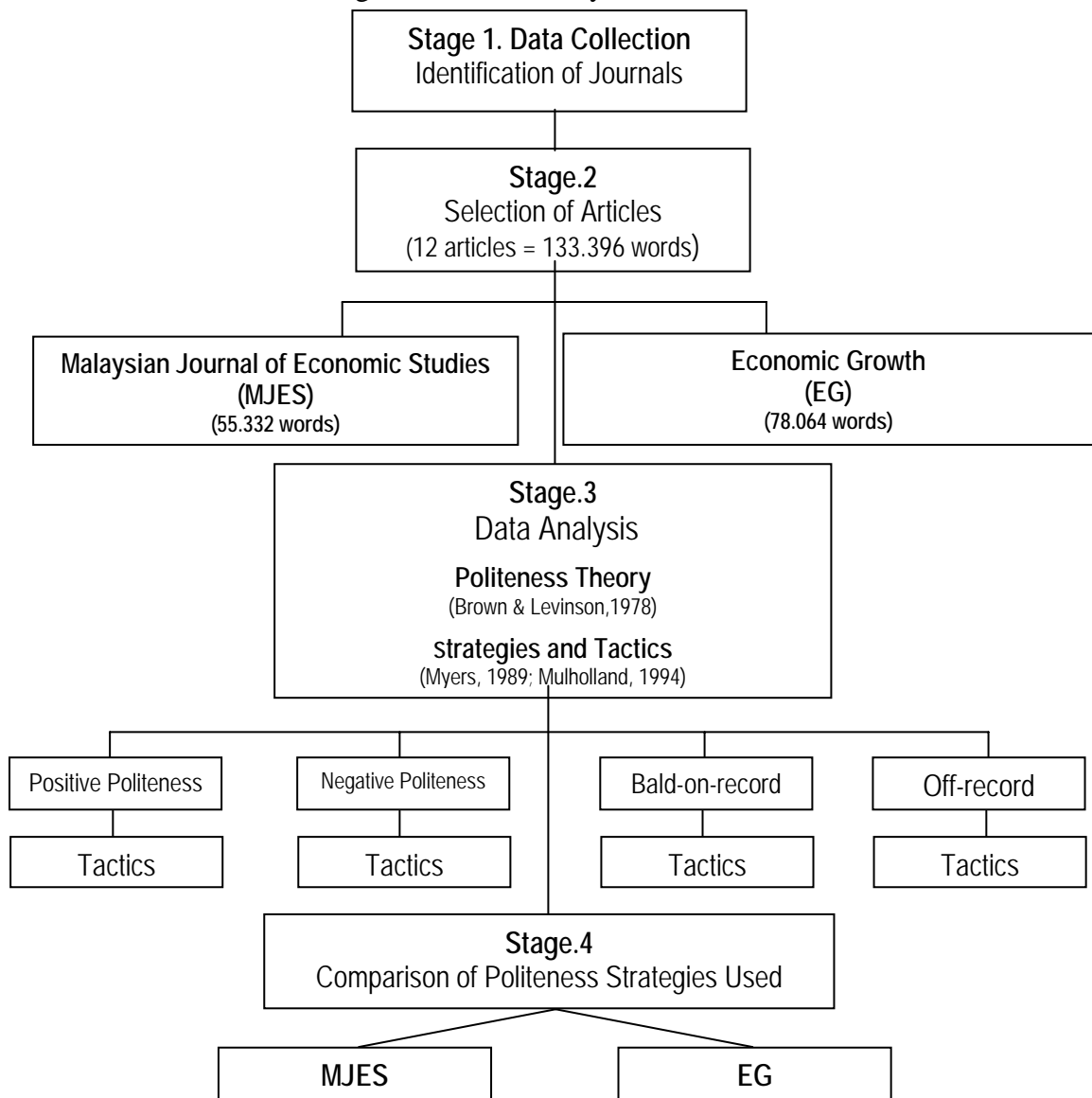Below is the research design used in this study:

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┌─────────────────────────────────┐
│  Stage 1. Data Collection       │
│  Identification of Journals     │
└─────────────────────────────────┘
┌─────────────────────────────────┐
│  Stage.2                        │
│  Selection of Articles          │
│  (12 articles = 133.396 words)  │
└─────────────────────────────────┘

┌──────────────────────────────┐   ┌──────────────────────────────┐
│ Malaysian Journal of Economic│   │  Economic Growth             │
│ Studies (MJES)               │   │  (EG)                        │
│ (55.332 words)               │   │  (78.064 words)              │
└──────────────────────────────┘   └──────────────────────────────┘

┌─────────────────────────────────┐
│  Stage.3                        │
│  Data Analysis                  │
│  Politeness Theory              │
│  (Brown & Levinson,1978)        │
│  strategies and Tactics         │
│  (Myers, 1989; Mulholland, 1994)│
└─────────────────────────────────┘

┌──────────────┐ ┌──────────────┐ ┌──────────────┐ ┌──────────────┐
│ Positive     │ │ Negative     │ │ Bald-on-     │ │ Off-record   │
│ Politeness   │ │ Politeness   │ │ record       │ │              │
└──────────────┘ └──────────────┘ └──────────────┘ └──────────────┘
┌──────────────┐ ┌──────────────┐ ┌──────────────┐ ┌──────────────┐
│   Tactics    │ │   Tactics    │ │   Tactics    │ │   Tactics    │
└──────────────┘ └──────────────┘ └──────────────┘ └──────────────┘

┌─────────────────────────────────────────┐
│  Stage.4                                │
│  Comparison of Politeness Strategies    │
│  Used                                   │
└─────────────────────────────────────────┘

┌──────────────┐              ┌──────────────┐
│   MJES       │              │     EG       │
└──────────────┘              └──────────────┘
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Figure 3.1: Research Design

3.3   Identification of Journals

A quick observation on three randomly chosen university libraries and internet search, indicated that there is wide range of economic journals. These cater specifically for specific fields of economy, such as management, human resources, marketing and so forth.   However, following two interviews conducted with two senior lecturers (one Associate Professor and one head of department) from the Faculty of Economy, University of Malaya, it was suggested to focus on journals published by two economic associations. Two (2) recognized journals by the Faculty of Economic University of Malaya, were finally chosen based on their recommendations. The journals are:

(i) *Malaysian Journal of Economic Studies* (MJES) published by Malaysian Economic Association

(ii) The *Economic Growth* (EG) published by the American Economic Association.

These journals are considered to be reputable and frequently used as references in the economic field.

3.4   Selection of Articles

In selecting the articles from MJES and EG as corpus, systematic sampling technique was employed. The following selection criterion is adhered to:

1. The first volume for each year, from 2004 to 2009 will be selected as the corpus. This study chooses from 2004 until the latest publications in 2009 were this study started.

2. The articles should not less than 4500 words per-article in order to avoid a small size numbers of words to analyze.

3. If these requirements are not met by the first article, the next article from the same journal will be selected, and so forth.

3.5 Corpus

The corpus of the present study consists of 12 articles from two economic journals published during 2004-2009 as seen in table 3.1 below.

Table 3.1: Number of Words in MJES and EG

MJES		EG	
Articles	Number of words	Articles	Number of words
MJES-09/06	14.544	EG-09/06	15.103
MJES-08/05	8.950	EG-08/05	12.636
MJES-07/04	4.964	EG-07/04	9.893
MJES-06/03	23.244	EG-06/03	17.026
MJES-05/02	4.912	EG-05/02	11.054
MJES-04/01	6.773	EG-04/01	12.352
Total Articles : 6	Total of words: 55.332 (41.82%)	Total Articles : 6	Total of words: 78.064 (58.52%)
TOTAL	133.396		

A total of 133.396 of words were used as corpus of this study of which 78.064 (58.52%) of words were from EG and 55.332 (41.82%) words from MJES. The required minimum number of words per article is 4.500 words. Further, in the selection of these articles, this study had to remove the first article of MJES in years of 2009, 2003 and 2005 as the lengths of these articles were less than 4.500 words. The next article in the similar jounal was selected to replace these articles. Finally, a total of twelve (12) articles from six (6) issues each of MJES and EG form the corpus of the present study. A list of the selected articles both from local and international journals used as a corpus is in Appendix A.

3.6   Data Analysis

The underlying theoretical structure applied in this study is based on Brown and Levinson's (1978) *politeness strategies*, and supported by Myers (1989) who expanded the theory onto written context of scientific articles as well as a compilation of the persuasive tactics by Mulholland (1994).

This study combines both qualitative and quantitative approaches in order to triangulate findings to answer the three research questions as proposed in the earlier section. A qualitative analysis of the data was carried out to investigate and identify different types of strategies and tactics found while quantitative analysis was used to gauge the frequency of politeness tactics used in the economic journals.

Based on Brown and Levinson (1987), types of politeness strategies found in the corpus will be categorised as follows: (1) Positive Politeness Strategies; (2) Negative Politeness Strategies; (3) Bald-on-record Strategies; (4) Off-Record Strategies

As proposed this study deals with written text of selected articles from identified economic journals, Therefore, the politeness theory of Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987) expanded by Myers (1989) onto politeness in scientific articles and the compilation of persuasive tactics by Mulholland (1994) form the underlying framework to analyze tactics used to deliver the politeness strategies used by journal writers in the economic journals. These will be analysed and classified into several types of tactics that include the use of passives, nominalizations, hedges, acknowledgements, etc. based on the content itself.

Following this the study will analyse the distribution of tactics of the different politeness strategies in the articles. Finally, the identified politeness strategies and tactics found in the two journals will be compared to find out which tactics are more frequently used in both journals

3.6 Summary

This study focuses on the linguistic strategies employed by authors of two selected economic journals, namely, *Malaysia Journal of Economic Studies* (MJES) published from Malaysian publication and Journal of *Economic Growth* (EG) from international publication. This chapter presented the conceptual framework of this study that incorporates politeness theory (Brown & Levinson, 1978) and that of Myers (1989) in politeness in scientific articles and compilation of persuasive tactics by Mulholland (1994). Both qualitative-quantitative methods will be applied to answer the research questions.