

COMMUNICATIVE PATTERNS AND POLITENESS STRATEGIES IN  
'SMS YOUR VIEWS' COLUMN IN A LOCAL ENGLISH DAILY

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## ABSTRACT

This study investigates the linguistics forms, communicative features and language use in 'SMS Your Views' column of The Star daily. A collection of 1030 text messages sent by the readers of The Star daily retrieved from the daily's online portal. Three frameworks were used in this study. The frameworks are by Ling(2005), Thurlow(2003) and Brown and Levinson(1987). Ling's framework is used to investigate the linguistics forms of the text messages. Thurlow's communication theme and orientation framework is used to identify the communicative pattern of the messages. Brown and Levinson's Politeness theory is used to examine the politeness strategy in the messages. Investigation on linguistics forms identified that the use of abbreviations in these messages is not new or incomprehensible. The messages were also identified containing complex message structure, minimal violation of capitalization usage, rare punctuation usage and the use of Malay acronyms as the most preferred code-switching pattern. The communicative pattern in the messages was identified with only seven communication thematic content. In sequence of order, they are Informational Practical, Informational Relational, Social Arrangement, Practical Arrangement, Friendship Maintenance, Phatic and Chain Messages. The communication orientation identified is more high intimacy high relational orientation. Lastly, investigation of language use in terms of politeness strategy identified that the use of positive politeness strategy is prominent. This is followed by bald on record strategy, negative politeness strategy and off record strategy. This study reflects on Malaysian diversity in embracing technology into their daily life. It reflects the capability, creativity, and hospitality of local texters in indulging themselves openly by texting to a publicly accessible social media.

## ABSTRAK

Kajian ini mengkaji ciri-ciri linguistik, corak komunikasi dan penggunaan strategi kesopanan bahasa dalam ruangan 'SMS Your Views' yang diterbitkan di akhbar tempatan, The Star, setiap hari. 1030 Sistem Pesanan Ringkas (SMS) yang dihantar oleh pembaca The Star diperolehi dari portal atas talian akhbar itu. Tiga rangka kerja yang digunakan dalam kajian ini ialah Ling (2005), Thurlow (2003) dan Brown dan Levinson (1987). Rangka kerja Ling digunakan untuk mengkaji ciri-ciri linguistik pada teks pesanan tersebut. Tema komunikasi dan orientasi komunikasi Thurlow digunakan untuk mengenal pasti pola komunikasi. Teori Kesopanan oleh Brown dan Levinson digunakan untuk memeriksa strategi kesantunan. Siasatan ciri-ciri linguistik mendapati bahawa penggunaan singkatan dalam mesej ini bukanlah sesuatu yang baru atau yang tidak difahami. Mesej juga dikenal pasti mengandungi struktur mesej kompleks, kesalahan minimum penggunaan huruf besar, penggunaan tanda baca yang unik dan penggunaan akronim Bahasa Melayu sebagai penukaran kod yang paling disukai. Tema komunikasi dalam mesej tersebut didapati mempunyai hanya tujuh tema seperti yang disenaraikan oleh Thurlow (2003). Penggabungan tema-tema ini memperlihatkan orientasi komunikasi iaitu ke arah keintiman hubungan. Akhir sekali, kajian penggunaan bahasa dari segi strategi kesopanan mendapati bahawa penggunaan strategi kesantunan positif adalah paling tinggi. Kajian ini mencerminkan kepelbagaian masyarakat Malaysia dalam memeluk teknologi ke dalam kehidupan harian mereka. Kajian ini mencerminkan keupayaan, kreativiti, dan keramahan rakyat tempatan dalam menghantar sistem pesanan ringkas kepada media sosial bercetak yang terbuka untuk tatapan awam menghasilkan satu evolusi yang mengagumkan antara teknologi dan bahasa.

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## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

Short Message Service (SMS) refers to briefly typed messages sent using mobile phones. Text messages are not only simple messages but also can be heartfelt, expressive, chatty messages that sustain friendship and convey complex emotions (Tagg, 2012). SMS actually started as message service to inform customers on particular issues pertaining to operational problems. It has now evolved into a fertile source of investigation for languages and linguistics, embracing technology into interpersonal communication.

SMS allows users to be mobile and to take their communities with them. They are not tied to a certain geographic location. It involves communication between one to one individual. The interlocutors can be known to each other but at the same time, it can also involve communication from a messaging service. In this context, messaging service refers to automated system that deals with product purchasing, participating in television contest, or recruiting voters. The latest technological immersion is the use of short message service with interactive television system. This informal nature of texting allows a variety of lexical and grammatical creativity. Elizondo (2011) says that constrain in mobile technology that only allows limited space or characters usage leads to massive use of abbreviations in SMS- purportedly said as ruining the linguistic structure.

In the beginning, SMS language arouses fear and fascination. Much criticism was thrown regarding SMS language. It is described as a form of youth language



consisting predominantly non-standard language forms. SMS language is characterized as heavily abbreviated, symbolically rich and occasionally undecipherable sentences. Stereotypical linguistic features of text messaging are lack of capitalization, running together of words, massive use of abbreviation and non-standard spelling (Farina&Lyddy, 2011).

It took a while for language scholars to admit that the language of SMS though deviant is distinct in its own way. It is a naturally occurring language characterized by structural simplifications. Sotilo (2012) and Otemuyiwa( 2012), further adds that SMS do not conform to lexical or grammatical rules but it is usually recognized as coherent. Despair in language structure, does not restrict implicit communicative intention. In fact it is successfully recovered and interpreted by the receivers due to the nature of their common background sharing. Text-messaging features are proven intelligible to convey the intended message and to be perceive coherently by its receiver. (Thurlow, 2003; Crystal, 2008; Turner, 2009). Short Message Service is a brief nature of communication confined to restrictions posed by mobile phone keypad. This results a distinctive conversation pattern and language use known as textese, textspeak or textisms , a type of written computer mediated communication.

Thurlow and Poff (2011) listed three distinctive features of SMS:

- comparatively short length
- relative concentration of non standard typographic markers
- predominantly small talk content and solitary orientation

Rafi (2012), sums up that SMS is structurally simple, fragmented, concrete, and conditional on situation dependent reference. Both description given by Thurlow, Poff and Rafi,

gave a clear description on the nature of SMS in terms of definition, history, mechanical, and structural features, linguistics forms, communicative intent, and discourse pattern. This statement generalizes the linguistics forms of SMS language. This study is taken to identify whether the similar pattern will emerge or a different feature will be identified.

Politeness in SMS has attracted and still attracts scholars worldwide due to the popularity of SMS as the most preferred mode of communication nowadays. Politeness refers to face saving and facing threatening strategy employed through language use. Messages sent share the similar traits of interactional pattern such as disagreements, criticisms, and request for information or help, giving directives or even a simple request for clarification. These are many instances of Face Threatening Act employed through politeness linguistics in computer mediated discourse.

SMS communication though uses the written medium, but is still intended to give the impact of actual face-to-face conversation. Locher (2010) rationalizes three reasons why politeness needs to be investigated in this mode of communication. First of all, politeness study will further our understanding in what constitutes politeness or impoliteness in a particular practice and the factors that might play a role in assessing it. Secondly, the aspect of interpersonal negotiation in online interaction can be examined to identify identity construction and the negotiation of face. Finally, the restrictions imposed by the medium or technology, will be an area of interest to ascertain in what ways this mode of communication is different compared to face to face interaction.

## 1.2 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

In this study, sociolinguistics branch of language use is explored in terms of politeness strategy in SMS. According to Morand & Ocker (2002), sociolinguistics is concerned with not only how language varies as a function of social roles and variables but also how specific linguistic elements function to convey relational meaning. In parallel with this, in politeness theory by Brown and Levinson (1978), plausibility of face preservation is associated with linguistic form and literal meaning in particular contexts for particular communicative purposes

Communication through SMS is mainly meant for interpersonal communication. However technology has brought SMS up to another level with the latest media convergence culture. At present, apart from using SMS for interpersonal communication, it is also used to interact with automated system. Thus, SMS can be sent and viewed on television screen or read in specific columns published in newspapers. The messages are mostly interpersonal, but at the same time, it can also be directed to the general audience. Thus, linguistics form and communicative features are adhered using suitable politeness strategy to establish an identity and to build a rapport with the intended interlocutor or the public in general.

Media convergence in Malaysia has seen a drastic change over recent years. In Malaysia, the statistics released by the Multimedia and communication pocketbook shows that 22,507 millions messages were sent in 2012. This figure shows SMS usage in Malaysia is the third highest in comparison with ASEAN countries and at the fifth ranking when compared with its top ten biggest trading partners such as United States of America, Japan, United Kingdom and so on. With technological advancements and the popularity of SMS, local tabloids are being more interactive with their readers. Columns

are dedicated for readers to be interactive with the tabloids by sending their views using SMS. Some local Chinese, English, and Malay dailies, though not all, had introduced this media convergence in order to embrace the technology to bring the readers closer to them.

The response from the readers is overwhelming. It is now a trend in some local dailies to publish SMS sent by the readers in columns specially designated for them. The present study is taken to look into the linguistics forms, communicative features, and politeness strategy in SMSes sent to a column known as 'SMS Your Views' of a local English daily.

In order to keep up with the trend of voicing one's concern over matters through SMS, a local English daily, has introduced a column entitled '*SMS Your Views*' in its publication which give readers the opportunity to sent their comments concerning any issues by using the Short Message Service.

Started in 2006, *The Star* editorial board announced this new column with the notion of embracing technology to bring readers closer to the daily. This phenomenon of media convergence attracted readers in short spin of time. In 2007, the column 'SMS your Views' was an added feature of this daily. At present, the column appears regularly with an average of ten messages published on a daily basis.

There are certain restrictions posited in order to have the messages sent to this column. A sender needs to include his/her name in the message. Pseudonym is allowed. Number of words for each message is restricted to 140 characters. Senders are required to type STAR NW or BZ or SP before their messages. The messages are to be sent to a

specific contact number provided in the advertisement. The service is free of charge but normal mobile operators' network chargers are applied. There are no restrictions on number of messages wished to be sent by the readers.

### **1.3 STATEMENT OF PROBLEM**

This study is taken to investigate the linguistic form, communicative pattern and politeness strategy in short message service. There are many studies that have been conducted in line with the scope of investigation of this study.

There are a few researches conducted regarding the linguistics forms of text messaging by Thurlow(2003), Ling(2005), Bieswanger(2006), Segerstad (2005), Heidari and Alibabe(2013), Otemuyiwa(2013), Elizondo(2011), Rousan,Aziz and Chrisopher (2012). Research on communicative pattern in short message service was conducted by Sotilo(2012), Rousan,Aziz,Christopher(2014), Thelwall (2009), Bernicot,Legrier,Goumi and Erboul (2012) and Shafie and Nayan(2013). Finally, researches on politeness in Short message service was conducted by Najeeb, Maros and Mohd.Nor (2012), Pariera(2013), Chiyad(2013) and Li (2013).

The researchers mentioned above studied short message service in a specific context which is personal exchange and involves two ways communication. Text messages studied were obtained from personal exchanges meant for private viewing. The contributors of these messages are interlocutors whom are known to each other. The respective intended addressee can only view these messages. This study differs in terms of the corpus used for data analysis.

The corpus for this present study is a collection of text messages sent by readers to a local English daily. Although some of the messages specify its intended addressee, the public can read these messages. The messages sent to this column are open for public viewing. The messages are not of personal exchanges. They contain views, opinions, statements, request, wishes and other elements of one way communication. The messages do not initiate any discussion or require any replies. Thus, this study differs compared to the study mentioned above in terms of its corpus, communication intent and context.

It is hoped that this study will provide a fruitful insight on short messaging service in a different community, context and communication intent.

#### **1.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

This study looks at a new form of computer-mediated communication. Even though the messages sent to this column utilize the Short Message Service, they can be composed, edited, and reread. This feature is similar to e-mail communication. However, it does not require any means of response. The column functions similar with Public Broadcast Forum online such as Twitter and YouTube. However, the messages do not initiate any discussion. In addition, the topic of discussion covers a diversity of topics ranging from current affairs to social affairs encountered personally by the message sender. The column does not restrict itself to single topic discussion in the message publication.

The findings of this research could be used as reference in any future studies investigating short message service that contains one way communication. It is hoped

this research will give useful insights regarding short message service in different context to language scholars. Language researches will have access to a bountiful resource that can be used as reference for their future studies.

## **1.5 OBJECTIVE**

The following are the major intents of this study using the corpus of messages taken from 'SMS Your Views' column of *The Star* online daily

- 1.5.1** To identify the linguistics forms in terms of message length, abbreviation usage and code switching practice.
- 1.5.2** To investigate communicative features in terms of themes and communication orientations of the messages.
- 1.5.3** To identify politeness strategies employed in this column.

## **1.6 RESEARCH QUESTION**

Three research questions are prepared to guide in investigating the objectives set for this study. Below are the three research questions prepared in accordance with this study's objectives.

- 1.6.1** What are the communicative patterns of the messages in 'SMS Your Views' column of *The Star* daily in relation to linguistics form and communicative features?
- 1.6.2** What are the politeness strategies employed by the texters in 'SMS Your Views' column of *The Star* daily?

**1.6.3** What is the relationship of communicative patterns with politeness strategies in the ‘*SMS Your Views*’ column of *The Star* daily?

## **1.7 LIMITATIONS**

The data for this study is obtained from a selected English daily. Therefore, the data is limited to a single source of collection. Secondly, data is retrieved for a duration of one year only. The corpus consists messages that were published from January, 2013 until December ,2013. The messages were retrieved from the daily’s online portal. A search engine mechanism was used to retrieve the messages from the archive. Only messages that could be retrieved from the archive were used in this study.

## **1.8 DEFINITION OF TERM**

There are three main terms widely used and discussed in this study. The terms are politeness, linguistics form, and communicative features.

### **1.8.1 POLITENESS**

The Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary defines ‘politeness’ as a noun that is derived from the verb polite. It means to have or show good manners. For the context of this study, politeness refers to strategies in interaction in order to show good manners to soften face threats.

### **1.8.2 LINGUISTICS FORMS**

Linguistics form is defined as meaningful unit of speech (morpheme, word or sentence). For the context of this study linguistic forms is termed as standard typographic form and non standard orthographic form.



### **1.8.3 COMMUNICATIVE FEATURES**

Communicative is an adjective. It is defined as willing, eager or able to talk or impart information. In this study communicative is best defined as conveyance or exchange of information. Feature is defined as prominent, conspicuous part or characteristic. Based on this, to suit the context of this study, communicative features can be defined as characteristics of information exchange.

## **1.9 CONCLUSION**

Overall, this chapter looked into SMS from various aspects related to this study. The problem statement, significant of the study, objective, research questions and definitions of terms were deliberately explained. The following chapters of this dissertation are Literature Review, Methodology, Findings and Discussions and lastly, Conclusion. In the following chapter, literature review regarding researches conducted in connection with linguistics forms, communicative features and politeness strategy in SMS will be explored.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

In this chapter related studies and researches conducted previously in relation to this study is presented. The literature review is written in sub chapters in accordance to the research question

Even though SMS is not computer based it is categorized as one of the many varieties of computer mediated discourse because it is technologically mediated and text based. SMS shares many similarities with other types of computer-mediated communication. Herring (2004) described SMS as email sent over mobile phone. This is supported by Farina and Lyddy (2011) whom describes SMS as asynchronous form of communication, such as e-mail, that can be sent and responded quickly. It also reflects near synchronous communication due to its dialogic exchange when it is necessary to give immediate response. It is either used in semi asynchronous form to convey short packets of information or in synchronous form to have rapid fire conversation. (Elindo,2011) Segestad (2005) further added that SMS is termed as mono modal because it solely utilizes its only channel of communication, writing as means of expression. The asynchronicity enables messages to be composed, edited before sending. Furthermore, the messages do not require immediate response.

Text messaging allows a package of communication that is cheap, easy, and fast. Thus, it has taken the world like storm overriding the use of internet as means of communication. Even though text messaging is technically and practically restricted, it allows an unobtrusive and inexpensive means of communication using a small and

mobile equipment (Thurlow;2011). Mainly used for personal communication, texting technology now allows interaction between automated systems that is open for public viewing.

Thurlow(2003), in his breakthrough research of text messaging investigated the conventional linguistics and the communicative practices in this digital communication. Using a corpus of 159 mobile text messages, the linguistics forms of the messages in terms of length, main typographical and linguistic content, and thematic priority or primary function were analyzed. Similar studies analyzing these dimensions are Ling(2003), Segerstad (2005), Ling and Baron (2007), Shafie,Osman, and Darus (2011), Bernicot, J., Volckaert-Legrier, O., Goumi, A. & Bert-Erboul, A. & (2012). Heidari and Alibabae(2013). Their findings reveals that abbreviated linguistics form used in these messages are not new nor incomprehensible (Thurlow,Poff :2011). Message length is also identified with similar trait of not being maximally used to the restricted requirement. With exception, some of these researches also give useful insights on code-switching practice that occurs in text messaging such as by Shafie et.al (2012), Balakrishnan.V(2009) and Heidari and Alibabe (2013).

## **2.2 BRIEF HISTORY OF SHORT MESSAGE SERVICE (SMS)**

Short Message Service was first available in 1992 and was used by Groupe Speciale Mobile network. It was a 'Merry Christmas' message sent by Neil Papworth in United Kingdom. ( Deumart & Masinyana, 2008: as cited by Rousan et.al.:2011). The message was sent using ASCII American Standard Code for Information Interchange). ACSII refers to English characters represented by numbers. Each English letter is assigned a number from 0 to 127. For an example, the letter 'm' if needed to be displayed in uppercase form in the message, the ACSII code is 77. (Langer, 2008). Messages were limited to 160 characters using ACSII text. In 1995, SMS was commercially launched.

(Bemicot.J, Volckaert Lagner, O. Goumi. and Bert.Eboul,A, 2012). The popularity of mobile phone is so intense that the verb 'text' was added in Oxford English Dictionary in 2004:

***text (v)***

*trans Telecom To send ( a text message) to a person, mobile phone, etc. : to send a text message to. Also intr. to communicate by sending text message Cf.*

In the initial stage, phones were utilized with the letters on the number keys. Alphabets were represented on the keys 2 through 9. To type a specific letter, the number where the alphabet is, need to be tapped twice or thrice. For example, to type the small letter 'k'. This letter is represented in the keypad number '5'. Therefore, we need to tap the number key once and number '5' will appear on the screen. The key needs to be tapped three times in order to display the small letter 'k'.

Later, as a means of improvement, predictive text, also known as T9 was created. It allows users to hit the key of any words they want only once and a list of words will appear for them to choose. These words are stored in the data banks. Usually most frequented words will be on top of the list followed by other suggestive words. Unfamiliar words can be typed manually ignoring the list given. This feature is launched to overcome the laborious typing mechanism of the early text messaging.

As technology improves, so does the typing mechanism. A QWERTY key pad, a miniature version of computer keyboard is introduced. This a common feature of the latest mobile phones sold in the market. Technology is improvised every second to make life simpler for human. In relation to mobile phone, technology has enabled

multiple usage of this tiny, mobile equipment. However, the language of SMS did not change. This is what Thurlow and Poff (2011) meant in defining SMS as the interplay between what a technology itself allows and what the communicators bring to the technology. They also depicted that mechanical feature might contribute communicative constraint or opportunity, nevertheless, user and the context of use definitely does influence the invariably.

Eventually SMS rises to be the most popular interpersonal communication. This is much due to the fact that the equipment which is the mobile phone, is small and eponymously mobile and in addition it offers an obtrusive and relatively inexpensive means of communication.(Thurlow and Poff, 2011). According to Sotilo (2012), Opencode Mobile Network Systems estimates, a total of reaching ten million messages, are sent worldwide in a month. Thus, SMS became global communication preference compared to other social networking system.

Lenhart et.al, as cited by Tuner K.H. (2009), describes SMS as written communication embraced through fast-paced thumb choreography on cell phones. It is also referred as the ability to send and receive text messages on cellular telephones.(Bieswanger,2006). Farina and Lyddy(2011) put it as transmission of text between mobile phones. Their opinion augurs with Thurlow's finding in his breakthrough research of young people's text messaging (2003). He describes this media culture as global communication that shows a good example of how human's need for social intercourse, bend, and co-opts technology to suit its own needs. The purpose of the communication is regardless of any commercial or military ambition for the technology.

Otemuyiwa (2012) says SMS text increases the interconnectedness and interdependence of the world. He further adds that SMS text messaging maintains and cements relationship. SMS provides an opportunity for intimate personal contact whilst at the same time offering detachment necessary to manage self presentation and involvement. Bemicot.et.al (2012) depicts SMS as readily accessible technology that enables asynchronous remote communication between individuals. Rafi (2011), describes SMS as pursuing simple sentence structures for communication emphasizing on written sounds and compressions.

### **2.3 RELATED STUDIES IN ANALYZING LINGUISTICS FORMS**

In this study, the first focus of the research question looks at the linguistics features of the messages in terms of message length, use of abbreviation, capitalization, and punctuation. This investigation uses Ling's theoretical framework (2005) which involved investigation on sociolinguistics of SMS. He used 882 SMS taken from 442 random samples of Norwegian texters of different social background. Important aspects of Ling's investigation that are adapted in this study are word length, message length, message complexity, use of abbreviations and rural dialects, capitalization and punctuation

Word length is investigated by counting the number of words in each message. In the study conducted by Ling, the messages consist an average of five to seven words only (a figure that is less than that is allowed by the mobile default system). Message length examines number of sentences in a message. Ling categorizes two types of message length. The first category is simple message. Messages that are identified with single sentence, a thought, a clause or a phrase are grouped in this

category. The second category is referred as complex messages. This category consists of messages with more than one sentence. Only a quarter of the corpus consists complex messages. An example of complex message quoted by Ling to denote complex thoughts contains four sentences compromising salutation, situation description, and attempt verification and information request. This finding again shows that senders of SMS do not make use of the standard restrictions imposed on the length of the text messages. (160 characters, including space).

The abbreviations usage in this corpus was investigated to identify its occurrence in each message. Ling investigates abbreviations usage by identifying any use of acronyms, pruned spellings, and emoticons in the messages. The research finding shows the use of abbreviations in the corpus is only six percent. The use of Norwegian dialects 'Bokmal' and 'Nyorsk' are also noticed in these messages. Detailed findings or explanation were not given on what is meant by rural dialects. The only information given by Ling(2003) regarding the use of these dialects in the text messages was the issue of T9 system of spelling assistance that is only available for the urban dialect, 'Bokmal', and not for 'Nyorsk' the rural dialects.

Ling investigated the use of capitalization by grouping them into three broad categories. The first category consists messages without any use capitalization. The second category groups messages with first letter capitalization. Ling explained that this could also be the result of default function of the SMS. Finally, the third category compromises messages with complex capitalization. Some of the examples given for complex capitalization are capital letters in names, proper nouns and beginning of secondary sentences. Ling's finding reveals 80% of the messages do not use any form of capitalization, followed by first letter capitalization and complex capitalization. Ling

also investigated the use of punctuations in the messages. He concluded his findings on punctuation in these messages as use of punctuation and non use of punctuation. Ling's study on Norwegian SMS identified that young adults and women are avid users of punctuation because their messages consists more usage of any forms of punctuation.

Heidari and Alibabe(2013) used the same mechanism in analyzing a corpus of SMS of Iranian users. In addition to Ling, they looked further in abbreviation and dialect usage. Heidari and Alibabe, gave a detailed analysis of abbreviation by categorizing types of abbreviations used. The table below gives a comprehensive overview of their categorization.

**Table 2.1** – Types of abbreviations ( Alibabe, Heidare:2013)

<b>Features</b>	<b>Examples</b>
Initialization	SMS, PM
Truncation ( short representation of words )	uni, gd, ok
Alphanumeric Homophones ( Combination of letters and numbers)	Gr8, 10Q,
Logographic emotion	☹☺☺
Punctuation	Full stop (.) Comma (,) Question Mark (?) Exclamation Mark(!)

Their research on use of punctuation resulted with similar finding with Ling. Female users tend to use complex punctuation in their messages such as comma, exclamation mark and question mark compared to the males counterpart. Their analysis on message complexity is similar to Ling (2003). Their finding suggests that only 35%



of the corpus consists complex messages. They further explain women texters produce more complex messages because they are very expressive with their feelings and tend to have more than one topic in their single message. In their study, Alibabe and Heidari also noted that 70% of the users mix English and Persian in these messages. Apparently, it was just a mere mention of frequency of switching without any in depth details on types of switching. An interesting finding raised in this research is Persian women use more Penglish (A mixture of Persian and English Language) in their message compared to men. They also tend to abbreviate the English words more compared than Persian words. Examples of abbreviated English words given in the corpus are 'u' for the word 'you' and 'c' for the word 'see'.

Rousan, Aziz and Christopher(2011) conducted similar study by investigating a corpus of 1612 real text messages from 160 Jordanian university students in Malaysia. Contrary to Ling, their findings show that punctuation usage occurs almost 55% in the corpus. They have also added in detail that the use of question mark is most frequent and exclamation mark is the least used in the corpus. Similar to Heidari and Alibabe (2013), their study also revealed abbreviations are mostly for English words. In addition, they have categorized the abbreviations as letter and number homophones and phonetic spelling.

Balakrishnan (2009), on the other hand, unlike Ling, used questionnaires to identify the sociolinguistics of young Malaysians text messaging. Her findings are based on the questionnaire without any data from the actual messages. She discovered the linguistics form of the messages sent by Malaysian youth based on a set of questionnaire. The questionnaire consists questions related to the background usage of text messaging, length of message, use of abbreviations, slang, and emoticons. One

hundred and ten respondents of multi ethnicity were randomly selected across Perak and Melaka state for the interview. The respondents are youth aged between 17 to 25 years old of equal numbers of males and females.

Her finding shows 49.1% of the respondent make use of the maximum character limit posited in SMS usage. Respondents make use of the maximum character limit to avoid being charged twice. Longer messages are broken into two separate messages; therefore the charges will be for two messages. Respondent also claim that use of abbreviations, slang and emoticons is always preferred. The use of abbreviations is to stretch the maximum usage of the character limited, while the use of slang is associated with Malaysian culture and the use of emoticons is said to be more expressive in creating a language more cryptic and unique for themselves.

Senders' claim of using longer messages and more abbreviations is based on their perception of usage. Balakrishnan concluded her research by saying, Malaysian youth usage of SMS is similar with youths from other parts of the world. Although her method is different from Ling in how the data is obtained, it could be assumed that the questionnaire used only provide the surface information regarding short message usage. Interestingly, in her questionnaire, she has added a question on the preference of using slang words popular in local context such as 'lah', 'mah', 'ler'. She attributed that the use of slang words by the respondents is due to Malaysian culture whereby the practice of using Manglish is common among the multi racial community in Malaysia.

The studies mentioned above investigated linguistics form of SMS in local and foreign context. Nevertheless, the result of the studies mentioned above revealed similar

findings regarding the characteristics of SMS linguistics forms with each other. This provided a useful guideline for this study to investigate the linguistics form

#### **2.4. RELATED STUDIES IN COMMUNICATIVE FEATURES IN TEXT MESSAGES.**

The second part of this study dwells into the theme and communication orientation of the messages. Thurlow (2003) in his breakthrough research on sociolinguistics of young people's text messaging, identified nine categories of thematic content or primary function of the text messages. The categories are Informational-Practical, Informational-Relational, Practical Arrangement, Social Arrangement, Phatic, Friendship Maintenance, Romantic, Sexual, And Chain Messages.

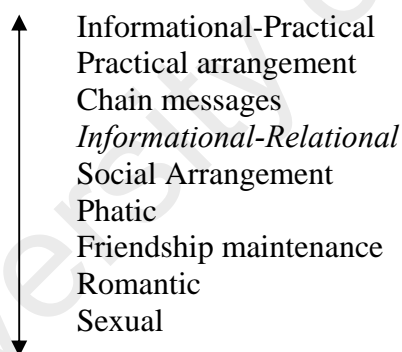
The first thematic content is about messages that contain exchange of practical details. It also renders messages that ask for straightforward request for information. The second thematic content is informational-relational which addresses more solitary information exchanges. It also refers to messages that request for personal favors. The third category is practical arrangement that is also termed as implicitly recreational. The messages in this category involve indirect planning or suggestion on certain matters. The fourth category is social arrangement category that is also known as explicitly recreational. This category refers to messages that has direct suggestions or plans.

The fifth thematic content category is phatic. Phatic is defined as being non-specific and brief. Messages with humour and cynical tone are grouped into this

category. The sixth thematic content, Friendship maintenance, refers to messages of apology, support, thanks and other social expressions. Some of these messages are composed to stay in touch with friends. Nevertheless there are also some that instigate conflict. Romantic and Sexual thematic content is the seventh and eighth categories of the thematic content. These are messages that are explicit in expressing one's love and sexual desire. The last thematic content categorization is chain message. This refers to complex messages that have sentences with rhyming words usage or sentence pattern.

Thurlow concluded, based on the messages thematic content categorization, the communication orientation can be described as transactional or interactional. The figure below shows communication orientation in relation to thematic content.

**Low intimacy, high transactional orientation**



**High intimacy, high relational orientation**

**Figure 2.1** – Communication Orientation (Thurlow,2003)

Thurlow's investigation revealed that primary content of text messages are explicitly relational in orientation. The messages range from making social arrangements, phatic communion, friendship maintenance to romantic, flirtatious and openly sexual exchanges.

Thurlow has also listed sub categories under the theme of friendship maintenance. The sub topics are asking for apology, saying thanks and support, keeping in touch with friends, resolving or instigating a conflict. He further supported his finding by relating that in order to facilitate relational maintenance, social intercourse and complement face-to-face interaction, text messaging is heavily relied upon.

Humour, on the other hand, was clearly intent in the text messages studied by Thurlow, as to maintain an atmosphere of intimacy and perpetual social contact. Chain messages of consisting sentiments and saucy jokes are used for social bonding by inserting elements of humour and taboo breaking issues. Thurlow also identified explicit sexual tone is obvious in this corpus as subject matter or interactional goal. Finally, hyper-coordination, where subject matter of the messages is hidden assuming the receiver to understand the intent of the message. Thurlow wraps up this as done primarily in the service of social intercourse.

Thurlow used a compilation of SMS sent by young texters to study. Therefore, the explanation and conclusion given were related with SMS produced by the younger generation. The proposed themes and communication orientation have been used widely to investigate the communicative features in text based. Among others the researchers are Thelwall(2011) who investigated the thematic content of messages sent to MySpace Comments, Bernicot, J., Volckaert-Legrier,, O.,Goumi.A. and Bert-Erboul,A.(2012) and also Sotilo(2012) whom investigated thematic content in SMS, and Shafie,Nayan(2013) who used the same theory to investigate the communication orientation in Facebook wall comments. Studies conducted by the above mentioned researchers investigated compilation of messages from texters of different sociolinguistics background.

Thelwall(2011) studied public message exchanges that is called comments or wall postings in social network site called MySpace Comments. These messages are world visible and can be related directly and permanently to the member of the particular social site. The sociolinguistics background of the participant is unavailable except for their post ID. Therefore, this study differs from Thurlow's study in terms of participant's sociolinguistics background. The findings of this study indicate that a high percentage of the messages are relational in orientation. In his findings, Thelwall identified 78% of the messages posted in MySpace Comment comes under general friendship maintenance. The diversity of the discussion topics ranges from love, expressing feelings, thanking, congratulating, and humour. This is further supported with the fact of the social network itself. The network is mainly meant for close encounters among its members who are either real life friends, family members or network friends. Therefore, most of the comments fall under general friendship maintenance category.

Thelwall explained that expressing love messages are not categorized as Romantic, due to the nature of the messages that is predominantly expressing friendship. Interestingly, the finding also reported that there no explicit comments on sex. The members probably avoid sexy remarks because they are aware of the audience and there is no room for intimacy privacy.

Similar to Thelwall, Shafie and Nayan(2013) identified Informational relational orientation as the main communicative intent in their corpus. Using data from a popular social website in Malaysia, facebook, they analyzed 5000 messages consisting posts and wall comments contributed by students from a local public university. The

communication orientation of each message is coded according to Thurlow's communication thematic categories. Akin to Thelwall, they concluded their finding by refuting that messages are mostly under friendship maintenance orientation due to the fact that social website is used for either maintaining existing relationship or creating new relationship.

Bernicot, J., Volckaert-Legrier, O., Goumi, A. & Bert-Erboul, A. (2012), attain their findings by analyzing a corpus of 864 messages written by 91 participants in real world situations. Together with this, they also used questionnaire to obtain some information regarding the sociolinguistics background of their participants and their experience in using SMS. Unlike Thurlow, Bernicot et.al investigated a corpus of SMS that is produced by adolescent. Their second intent of this research is to identify the function of the messages. In order to investigate this, they used Thurlow's classification of communication intent to code the messages into two-communication orientation. The classifications are Informative Transactional and Relational. Their findings reveal that relational orientation is greater than informational transactional by 12.93%. Their finding is consistent with Thurlow (2003) that reports the primary function of text messaging communication is relational functional. A common theme identified in these researches is general friendship maintenance. Their study clearly supports the notion that regardless age the main communicative function of SMS is relational.

Sotillo (2012) investigated the communication intent in a corpus of 1217 sent and received messages. These messages were donated by six individuals of different age, gender and profession. In this study 640 messages were coded as ambiguous due to the fact that its content do not augur solely into any of the thematic content. However, the data analysis revealed similar findings with Thurlow's (2003).

The continuum of the communicative function is from relational personal to decidedly transactional informational. The messages that fall into the former category are request, scheduling and planning, friendship, intimacy, and social network maintenance. On the other hand, the latter are messages categorized under information sharing code.

Sotillo's study differs in terms of participants and the coding form. The communicative intent identified in this corpus of messages augurs with Thurlow's sociolinguistics of young people text messaging. An interesting fact that is revealed in this study is, the margin difference between transactional and relational orientation is only six percent. This indicates that although primary communication function of SMS is relational the margin differs in different data corpus.

From the discussion above, it can be concluded that informational relational orientation is the main communicative function of text messaging. Thurlow's notion of communication theme and orientation in text messages were studied using similar or different corpus. Ultimately, these studies point out that communication orientation of SMS is interactional or relational. In this study, the corpus consist SMS regarding one's concern or views on certain topics of interest intended for public viewing and not for personal interaction. The objective of this column is not to create new relationship or maintain existing relationship.

## **2.5 LANGUAGE USE – POLITENESS STRATEGIES**

Built on the Face Theory Concept(Goffman:1967), politeness is regarded as face being associated with social emotions of being embarrassed or humiliated that can be lost, maintained or enhanced. Goffman describes politeness as a pattern of verbal



or non verbal acts expressed by taking into consideration the situation and evaluation of the participation in a conversation. Though the act can be verbal, it can also be conveyed through tone and inflections. In addition, it is possible to have multiple acts working within a single utterance.

A person is described as a social actor that needs to support another person's 'performance' or 'face' to ensure they do not lose their face. Failure to do so will cause embarrassments to others, eventually having an out of face experience or losing face. Face is the positive social value reflecting one's identity and self-esteem that a person effectively claim for himself. Building on this concept, Brown and Levinson define face as public self image that every member wants to claim for himself.

They further rectified that it is a person's obligation to avoid unfriendliness in an ongoing conversation. Speakers attempt to preserve their self-image and at the same time, they try not to damage other's image. Speakers assess their speech for any speech threats they are about to make. This is done in order to avoid or soften next point of conversation by choosing an appropriate linguistics strategy. Consequently they posited that speakers, as individuals, have two inter-related of face desire; positive and negative. The former refers to individuals that need to be felt appreciated and approved by others. This desire to support or enhance the addressee's positive face is rooted in involvement, connection, and proximity with others. Negative face desire is committed to avoid transgression on the addressee's freedom and to respect their personal space. This is realized by giving others opinion, independence and freedom from imposition. Thus, Brown and Levinson (1978) identified four main strategies of

politeness used when interlocutors apply to address other's face. The four strategies are :-

- a. Bald on record
- b. Positive politeness – expression of solidarity
- c. Negative politeness- expression of restrain
- d. Off-record- avoidance of unequivocal impositions

The use of each strategy is tied to the social determinants; power, social distance and ranking of the impositions. Apparently, crucial importance should be given when looking at the relationship between the speaker and addressee and the potential offensiveness of the message content. The table below will give a clear picture of the politeness strategies mentioned.

**Table 2.2** Brown and Levinson's Politeness Strategy

<b>POLITENESS STRATEGY</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>
Bald On Record	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. A strategy that shocks or embarrasses the addressee.</li> <li>ii. Does nothing to minimize threats to the hearer's face.</li> <li>iii. Mostly used when the speaker has a close relationship with the hearer.</li> <li>iv. Used in the circumstance of communication urgency, channel noise, or imperatives for actions directly.</li> <li>v. Speak the truth, be sincere, relevant, be perspicuous, avoid ambiguity and obscurity</li> </ol>
Positive Politeness	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Ensure the hearer is comfortable</li> <li>ii. Recognizes hearer's face to be respected</li> <li>iii. Confirms the relationship is friendly and express group's reciprocity</li> </ol>

Table 2.2 Continuation

Negative Politeness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Desire to remain autonomous</li> <li>ii. Use distancing style</li> <li>iii. Being reluctant</li> <li>iv. apologizing for the impingements</li> <li>v. Use passive voice</li> </ul>
Off Record	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Indirect</li> <li>ii. Invite conversational implicative</li> <li>iii. Take some pressure off</li> <li>iv. Try to avoid direct Face Threatening Act</li> </ul>

Brown and Levinson further elaborated strategies employed by speakers in each politeness category to minimize Face Threatening Act (FTA) to a rational assessment of the face risk to the participants.

Bald on record is regarded as a strategy that complies with Grice's Maxim of conversation. Thus, a speaker utilizes all the maxims to ensure achieving maximally efficient communication. In line with the maxim of quality, conversational principles employed by speakers will be non-spurious. This is also described as speaking the truth or being sincere. Maxims of quantity is adhered when speakers do not say less than required or more than is required. Being relevant is the conversational principal utilised under maxims of relevance. Finally, a conversational principle that adheres maxim of manner is by being perspicuous. Here a speaker avoids ambiguity and obscurity in a conversation.

Two strategies described by Brown and Levinson under bald on record politeness are non-minimization of face threat and face threat act orienting bald on record usage. The former refers to strategies used in urgency or emergency, getting attention, making direct demand, interaction is task oriented, being rude by making jokes or teasing without offending, and in giving sympathetic advice or warning. The latter are in pre-emptive invitations of welcoming or post greetings, farewells and offers.

The table below offers examples of each tactics under the bald on record strategy as given by Brown and Levinson.

**Table 2.3** Examples Of Bald On Record Strategy

<b>Tactics</b>	<b>Examples</b>
Non-Minimization of Face Threat	<i>Help!</i> <i>Listen, I've got an idea</i> <i>Give money</i> <i>Excuse/Pardon/Forgive me</i> <i>Come home right now</i> <i>Lend me a hand here</i> <i>In future, you must add soda after the whisky</i> <i>Your wig is askew; let me fix it for you</i> <i>Don't be sad</i> <i>Yes, you may go</i> <i>Take care of yourself</i>
FTA-oriented bald-on-record usage	<i>Come in</i> <i>have some more cake</i> <i>Don't let me keep you</i>

Positive politeness is an act of compensation directed to the addressee's positive face. Addressee's recurring desire of his wants should be thought of as desirable. Thus a speaker compensates by partially communicating his or her own needs in parallel with the addressee's wants. The sphere in committing positive politeness strategy is not restricted but widened; thus act of compensation is to the expression of similarity

between egos and alter's wants. The linguistics device used in these tactics has extreme element of exaggeration to enhance positive face, show sincerity, and bring relationship of the inmates closer.

Brown and Levison categorized the techniques of positive politeness into three major dimensions. The first dimension is described as of claiming common ground techniques. Claiming common ground is explained as the act of the speaker to claim common ground with the hearer indicating that they share the specific wants, goals and values. The second dimension is on conveying that Speaker and Hearer are cooperators and the last dimension is on fulfilling hearer's wants. The second dimension refers to sharing of same goals in the same domain cooperatively involved by the hearer and speaker. The last dimension refers to direct act of compensation by the speaker to the hearer, fulfilling hearer's wants with respect.

In the first mechanism, claiming common ground is made using three ways. The first way is by conveying that some wants (goals or desired object) of hearer is admirable or interesting to the speaker. Thus a speaker will use strategies such as noticing, attending to hearer's wants, needs and goods, exaggerating interest, approval or sympathy with hearer and intensifies interest with hearer. Second way is by claiming in-group membership with hearer for the context of this study, texter). Here in-group identity markers such as address forms, language or dialect, jargon or slang and ellipsis are used. Finally the third way is claiming common ground in point of view, opinions, attitudes, knowledge and empathy. Thus, a speaker will use techniques of seeking agreement, avoiding disagreement, presupposing, raising or asserting common ground and joke.

The second mechanism dwells on how the speaker and hearer cooperatively share the same goals in specific domains. Again, three ways are used to convey this strategy. The first way is by indicating that the speaker knows hearer's wants and takes them into account. The technique used in this way is by asserting or presupposing speaker's knowledge and sharing concern for hearer's wants. The second way is claiming reflexivity by putting hearer's wants of something instead of speaker's wants and vice versa. This strategy is conducted by making offer or promise, being optimistic, include speaker and hearer in the ongoing activity and give or ask for reason. The third way is by claiming reciprocity that is carried out by assuming or asserting reciprocity.

Finally the last mechanism is on fulfilling hearer's wants. Only one technique is used in this strategy. A speaker in order to satisfy the hearer's wants will give gifts to the hearer. Gifts here refers of goods, sympathy, understanding and cooperation. The table below includes some examples given by Brown Levinson to indicate each techniques mentioned above.

Negative politeness refers to series of compensation act addressing negative face by wanting to have freedom of unhindered action and unimpeded attention. Negative politeness is specific and focused, functions to minimize particular imposition, and emphasizes hearer's relative power. Its linguistics realizations forms are useful in general social distancing by putting a social brake on the course of interaction. Five major dimensions of this strategy are being direct, not presuming or assuming, do not coerce hearer, communicating speaker's wants by not impinging on hearer and redressing other wants of hearer derivative from negative face.

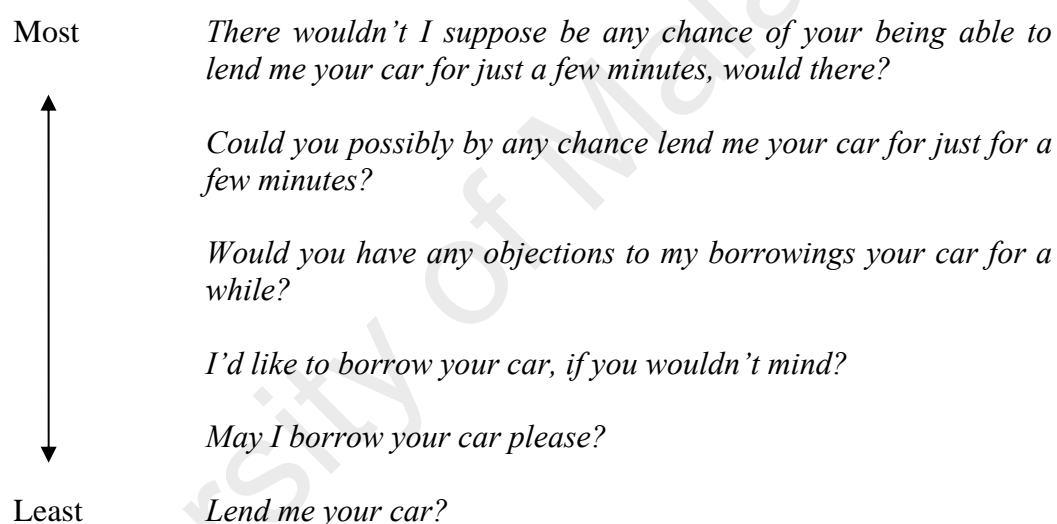
In the first dimension of negative politeness, only one strategy is used that is being conventionally indirect. Speaker will use usual unambiguous phrases and sentences that are different from their literal meaning. Thus the speaker will be able to overcome two tensions of this situation; the utterance to be on record and the speaker's indication of his desire to be off record. Indirect speech act is the universal form of this usage. A simple act of requesting can be literal and do not imply any ambiguous meaning. Nevertheless, depending on the wants and desire of the speaker, it can indirectly be a question, act of enquiry or order. Thus the speaker is being on record for using a sentence or phrase that seems to be usual in any normal conversation but off record in conveying his actual intent. The table below illustrates the discussion above.

**Table 2.4-** Indirect Speech Act (Brown, Levinson,1978)

CONDITION	DESCRIPTION	EXAMPLES
Propositional content condition	Hearer will do the action	<i>Will you shut the door?</i> <i>Are you shutting the door?</i> <i>Won't you shut the door?</i> <i>Aren't you shutting the door?</i>
Preparatory condition	i. Hearer is able to do the action  ii. Any objects requested exist  iii. The action desired has not already been done	<i>Can you shut the door?</i> <i>Are you able to shut the door?</i>  <i>Is there any salt?</i> <i>Did you shut the door?</i>  <i>Didn't you shut the door?</i>
Sincerity condition	i. Speaker wants Hearer to do the action	<i>I want you to shut the door.</i>

The degree of politeness in the expression of indirect speech act varies according to the speaker's assessment of social dimensions Power, Rank, and Distance. More efforts on face preserving act in order to satisfy hearer's face wants will result in higher degree of negative politeness strategy. Priority goes for strategic choice that gives preference to mostly satisfied end or wants to which they stand as means.

Thus, negative politeness of being indirect can range from most polite to least polite.



**Figure 2.2** Degree of politeness in the expression of indirect speech

Except for the tactic of being direct, all other negative politeness strategy are governed by the specification to redress the hearer's negative face. This is done by keeping a ritual distance from the hearer. In this strategy, a speaker carefully avoids any presumptions or assumptions of FTA desired or believed by the hearer. Thus, speaker will use to question or hedge such assumptions strategy.



Hedge is defined as a particle, word or phrase that modifies degree of membership of a predicate or noun phrases in a set that is it says of the membership that is partial or true only in certain respect or it is more true and complete than perhaps might be expected. Some examples given are as below.

- i. *A swing is **sort** of a toy*
- ii. *John is a **true** friend*
- iii. *I'm **pretty** sure I've read the book before*
- iv. *You're **quite** right*

Four types of hedges put under negative politeness are hedges on illocutionary force, hedges on Grice's Maxim, hedges addressed directly to politeness strategy, and finally hedges encoded in prosodic and kinesics usage.

Hedges on illocutionary of force is a performative hedges to satisfy speaker's wants such as '*I wonder*', '*will you*' and '*don't you*'. Hedges on Grice's Maxim are based on four dimensions of Quality, Quantity, Manner, and Relevance. Hedges on maxim of quality are that of speaker is not taking full responsibility for the truth of his utterance such as '*I think*', '*I believe*', '*I assume*'. On maxim of Quantity, speaker gives notice that is not as much or not as precise information is provide as might be expected. Examples of hedges used are '*roughly*', '*more or less*', '*approximately*'. Hedges on Maxim of Relevance are those giving reasons why speaker made the claim. A good example for this is '*John's home, since his car's outside*'. Hedges on Maxim of Manner are done when there is a change of topic which is done off record because of sensitivity. One of the examples is '*if the door is locked, I have the key.*' Hedges on politeness strategy refer to violation of face wants. Finally, hedges encoded in prosodic and

kinesics usage refer to non-verbal actions followed in each utterance such as raising eyebrows, shrugging of shoulders, pausing, or hesitating.

## **2.6 RELATED STUDIES ON POLITENESS STRATEGY IN COMPUTER MEDIATED COMMUNICATION**

Najeeb, Maros and Mohd.Nor (2012) in their investigation of politeness in e-mails of Arab students in Malaysia identified three main strategies mainly employed in these mails. Among others, their finding reveals that positive politeness tops the list with almost half of the mails having this feature followed by negative politeness and Bald on Record. Their findings also identified that no indirect strategy were used in these mails. However, they revealed over politeness occurrence in the e-mails. This is to show extra respect or to be extra polite. This is constructed by writing longer e-mails. Tendency to ask about the supervisor's well-being is noted in these mails. The purpose of the writing is mentioned much later in the mail. Consequently, as claimed by the researchers, this leads to impoliteness as the supervisor had to spend longer time looking for the purpose of the mail. The over politeness attitude of Arab students is associated with the Arab culture itself. It is said that the Arabs will normally exchange information of their whereabouts and well-being before engaging into the primary objective of their meeting.

Similar to study above, positive politeness is the common strategy used in e-mails. Chyiad(2013), has identified that politeness strategy in personal e-mails is less formal and direct. Choosing direct over indirect speech is said to be coercive thus creating an atmosphere of impoliteness. A corpus of personal e-mails was studied by looking at the addressee's phrase and content. In this study, it is noted that most of the

mails lack greetings and signing off. Upon examining the body of the e-mails, positive politeness strategy encompassing claiming common ground tactics is found to be mostly used. Among others, the most used tactics listed in sequence of occurrence are use of ellipsis or omission, use of colloquial or slang, noticing hearer's admirable qualities and being optimistic. These tactics comprise 69% out of the 79% of the positive politeness strategy. Only 31% of the mails use negative politeness strategy. Chiyad concluded the finding by generalizing that e-mail senders and receivers are known to each other and show a great sense of solidarity. Use of greetings or signing off is seen as a way of doing deference thus distancing the addressee as having a status. Communicators having the common purpose of interaction refrain from doing so to be more casual and friendly in their relationship. In-group solidarity is shown with the use of ellipsis, slang, colloquial, and matters or issues of interest known among the interlocutors.

Pariera(2013), on the other hand, identified a unique set of politeness strategy in e-mails which discusses taboo topics. There is high level of negative politeness amongst interlocutors of close intimacy especially the use of avoidance-based strategy. Nevertheless, the use of positive politeness is still retained. The study is conducted to test the notion given by Brown and Levinson that politeness strategy depends on the level of intimacy between the participants and the seriousness of the situation.

Using Discourse Completion Test (DCT), a series of e-mails were collected from 29 university students of different age and culture. Two variables used in this study are risk and distance. Distance refers to friends or strangers and risk refers to different level of seriousness in taboos. Participants were prompted to write brief e-mails based on a series of four pictures shown to them. They are asked to imagine that

another participant of the study reads their e-mails. Their e-mail should be directed to a close friend and a stranger of the same age and native language.

Upon investigation, Pariera found that negative politeness, bald on record and off record strategy occurred the most with associates of close intimacy compared to strangers. Although most the emails consist avoidance based strategy, positive politeness is still retained. Unfortunately, Pariera did not elaborate further avoidance based strategy. Unlike Chiyad (2013), Pariera concluded that the negative politeness is mostly used among close knitted relationship compared to strangers. Surprisingly, it is also noted that harsh statements or bald on record strategy are used on strangers. These findings contradict with each other as the generalization made differ to Brown and Levinson's notion of FTA.

Inline with the present study, in terms of corpus, was a research on politeness in SMS conducted by Faiz and Suhaila(2013). They conducted a similar study as Chiyad(2013), investigating the use of greetings to identify the politeness strategy. From their corpus and examples given to support each of their finding, Faiz and Suhaila, collected series of messages sent by students without any replies. Their corpus consist messages that resembles one-way communication which is similar to the present study. Their corpus consist 50 text messages sent by undergraduate students of a private university to their lecturer. The focus of their study was to indentify whether students employ appropriate politeness strategy in terms of greetings to acknowledge the power, rank and distance between them and their lecturer.

In their finding, high percentage of the messages shows the use of reference or informal salutations such as 'Miss', 'Ms', and 'Hello 'to start off their

message. Thirty six percent of the messages contain formal greetings or proper introduction of the sender. Surprisingly six percent of the messages is identified as having no use of any greetings. Twelve percent points out that students have the tendency of being polite by introducing themselves but without proper greetings. Apparently, students are unaware of the social distance and power between them and their lecturer. Using in-group markers more appropriate to their close encounters, their greeting strategy fails to lessen the face-threatening act between them and their lecturer. Though the use of reference is preferred, this is categorized as impolite. Use of proper greetings in addressing a hearer higher in status in terms of power and rank, is a norm, expected to be executed in this situation. Faiz and Suhaila conclude, failure to use proper politeness strategy in these messages reflects students' unawareness of difference in social distance, power, and face in the academic setting.

The discussed studies above have investigated politeness in asynchronous mode of communication. They provided great insights that can be used as guidelines to identify the politeness strategy in this study.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter describes the methodology used in the study. In this chapter, there are six sections. The first section discusses the theoretical framework used, followed by research design, data description, data collection procedure, coding system, data analysis, and the final section is the summary.

#### **3.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

There are three major theoretical frameworks used in this study. The frameworks are by Ling(2005), Thurlow(2003) and Brown and Levinson(1978). Ling's framework is used to investigate the linguistics forms of the text messages. Thurlow's communication theme and orientation framework is used to identify the communicative pattern of the messages. Brown and Levinson's Politeness theory is used to examine the politeness strategy in the messages.

#### **3.3 ANALYZING LINGUISTICS FORMS IN TEXT MESSAGING (LING,2005)**

Ling in his study on Norwegian Sociolinguistics of Text Messaging, identified four important findings which are relevant to this study. The data for Ling's study contains eight hundred and eighty two SMS messages gathered from a random sample of 2003 Norwegians. The findings are of abbreviation usage, dialect occurrence,

punctuation and capitalization used and message complexity. Ling identified that only six percent of the corpus consists abbreviation usage. He also identified the occurrence of local Norwegian rural dialect, *Nyorsk*. Eighty-two percent of the messages were identified as having no capitalization usage at all and most messages that were composed by young Norwegian users consist extreme use of punctuation.

### **3.3.1 ABBREVIATION USAGE**

Ling described abbreviations as acronyms and pruned spelling found in a corpus. Ling studied the occurrence of abbreviations according to gender and age. However, in this study, abbreviations usage is analyzed in general without relating to gender or age. In order to look at the abbreviation usage in detail, messages were grouped following Ling's method. The categorization are as below:

- i. Number of messages without abbreviation usage
- ii. Number of messages with abbreviation usage

In this study, a detailed analysis is conducted to identify types of abbreviations found in the corpus. These abbreviations are categorized based on Farina and Lyddy's text language categorization (2011). The text language categorization is listed in the table below.

**Table 3.1:** Farina and Lyddy(2011)

<b>TEXT LANGUAGE CATEGORIZATION</b>	<b>EXAMPLES</b>
Number homophones	2/to. 4/for, 8/at
Letter homophones	c/see, b/be, d/the
Shortenings( words with missing end letters)	sun/Sunday, feb/February
Contractions (words with omitted middle letters especially vowels)	txt/text, hmwrk/homework
Clippings (words with letter omission in any parts)	don't/do not, goin/going, wil/will, hav/have
Acronyms (Formal shortenings)	North Atlantic Treaty Organization/NATO, Radio detection and ranging/radar
Intialisms (Informal shortenings)	OMG/oh my God, bf/boyfriend, ttly/talk to you later
Typographic symbols	6x/six times, Xs/times
Non-Conventional Spelling	sum/some, skool/school, thanx/thanks
Accent stylization	wanna/want to, gnna/going to, dat/that

### 3.3.2 CAPITALIZATION AND PUNCTUATION

Ling categorized capitalization into three groups. The first is non-usage of capitalization, second is use of first sentence capitalization or also said as formal capitalization, and third is complex use of capitalization. Ling describes complex capitalization as the use of capital letters in names, proper nouns and at the beginning of secondary sentences. For the punctuation use, two categories using Ling's description were used in the data analysis. The first category consist messages with punctuation usage and the second category refers to messages that are without punctuation usage. In this study, this categorizations are used to identify the



capitalization and punctuation usage in general. The findings are different compared to Ling who related his findings to the age and gender of the participant.

**Table 3.2 :** Capitalization and Punctuation Categories (Ling,2005)

<b>CATEGORY</b>	<b>EXAMPLE</b>
Non usage of capitalization	<i>Penangites are so used to carrying their recycle bags to supermarkets. <b>why</b> rest of Malaysia can't do it.</i>
First sentence capitalization/ Formal Capitalization	<i><b>Majlis Daerah Manjung</b> shld improve the landscape of <b>Tmn Desa Manjung Point</b>. <b>This</b> housing area has been totally neglected</i>
Complex capitalization	<i>To Malaysian forces in Sabah. <b>THANK YOU FOR EVERYTHING.</b></i>
With Punctuation	<i>Parking woes! Police, summon inconsiderate drivers parking along Dataran Bandar Utama outside of central park. Some even park close to traffic lights causing traffic chaos.</i>
Without Punctuation	<i>Illegal money lenders first time offenders in s'pore are fined S\$300,000 jailed up to 4yrs and receive 6 strokes of the rotan</i>

### 3.3.3 MESSAGE COMPLEXITY

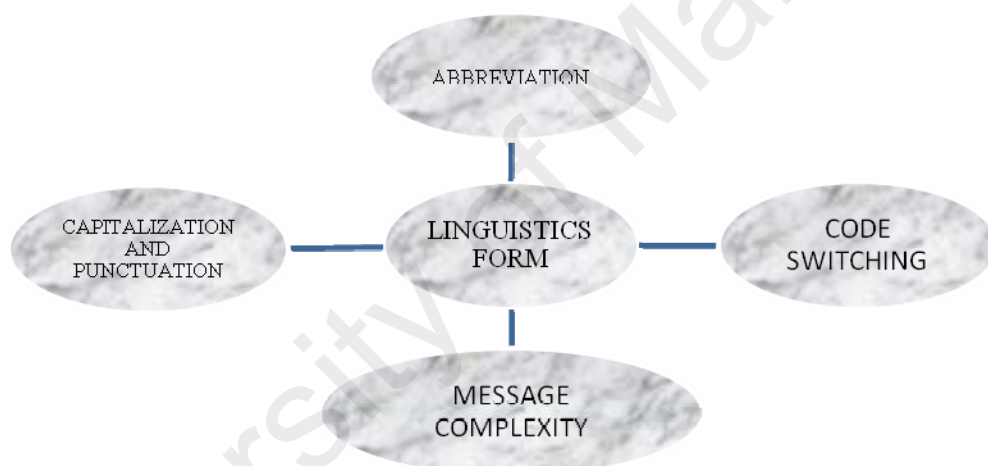
Ling investigated message complexity by identifying number of thoughts and sentences in messages. Messages with complex thoughts are messages with more than a thought. These methods are used to identify the message complexity in this study by investigating number of thoughts and number of sentences in each message.

### 3.3.4 CODE SWITCHING PRACTICE

Ling identified instances of local dialect usage in the text messages. In this study, data is also set to identify the occurrence of other languages apart from English in the corpus. Occurrence of other languages apart from English is defined as code

switching. Malaysia is a multi ethnicity and multilingual country. Tendency to code switch does occur and have been reported in many other studies such as by Rousan, Aziz and Christopher (2011), and Balakrishnan (2009). In this study, code switching will be discussed in detail to identify its pattern and frequency of occurrence.

Ling's method of investigation used in this study gave focus and the method to analyze these specific linguistics form identification which are of abbreviation occurrence, capitalization and punctuation usage, and code switching pattern.



**Figure 3.1:** Ling's Theoretical Framework (2005)

### **3.4 ANALYZING COMMUNICATION THEME AND ORIENTATION (THURLOW,2003)**

Thurlow(2003) investigated the communicative features of text messaging in terms of content theme and communication orientation. He investigated communicative function of mobile telephone text messaging in a corpus of 544 participants' actual text messaging. His method of analyzing communication theme and orientation is solely used to identify the communication pattern that takes place in this study's corpus that is based on actual short message service sent by readers to a news daily.

### 3.4.1 ANALYZING COMMUNICATION THEMES

Thurlow proposed nine broad categories of content theme to identify the communicative orientation of text messaging. The themes are listed below with example of messages.

a) Informational-Practical

*Put money in ur account*

b) Informational-Relational

*I'm not feeling well,. Can you get the lecture notes for me please*

c) Practical Arrangement

*Where shall i meet you tonite?what time?see u soon love me*

d) Social Arrangement

*WE DOIN LUNCH THIS WK*

e) Phatic

*Yo man what de goss*

f) Friendship maintenance

*Happy Birthday, i hope you are having a good one, see you in a few days, Love*

*Duncan*

g) Romantic

*Each time ur name appear on my phone i smile like this*

h) Sexual

*Your wish is my command! I promise to be a better hostage next time. Sweet dreams princess.*

i) Chain Messages

*I believe friends are like quiet angels who lift our feet when our wings forget how to fly! send to 4 friends and sent back and see what happens in 4 days.*

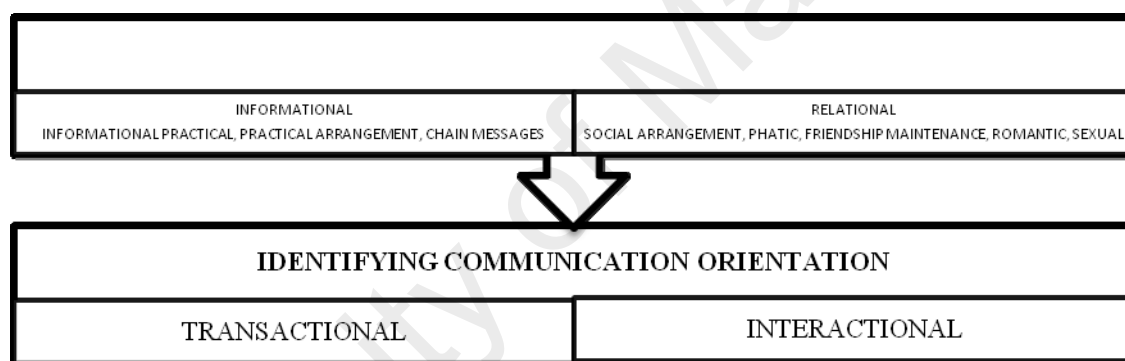
### **3.4.2 ANALYZING COMMUNICATION ORIENTATION**

In line with standard Content Analytic procedures, Thurlow, categorized the thematic priority or the primary function of text messages to identify the communication orientation in the corpus. In order to identify the communication orientation, Thurlow divided the findings into two domains. The first domain, is termed as 'transactional', contains messages with the thematic content of Informational practical, practical arrangement and chain messages. The second domain, termed as interactional, contains messages with the interactional orientation of social arrangement, phatic, friendship maintenance, romantic and sexual thematic content. Thurlow studied 554 of actual text messages provided by his first year degree students. The finding from his study showed that the communication orientation of his corpus is being relational.

Thurlow's theoretical framework in identifying and categorizing the thematic content and communication orientation is used in this study. Nevertheless, as it was

mentioned above, Thurlow's data looks at private social message exchanges sent by selected individuals whereas the present study looks into messages intended for public viewing.

In this study the similar mechanism of analysis is used to identify the communicative pattern of the corpus. Firstly, content analysis is conducted to determine the communication theme of each message. The messages are then grouped into the communication orientation categories. The final findings for each analysis are presented in figure form. The figure below shows the flow chart for the data analysis of thematic content and communication orientation applied in this study.



**Figure 3.2 : Thurlow's Theoretical Framework(2003)**

### **3.5 ANALYZING POLITENESS STRATEGY (BROWN AND LEVINSON,1978)**

The third theoretical framework used in this study is Brown and Levinson's Politeness Strategy. In this theory, Brown and Levinson proposed four major politeness strategies based on face theory by Goffman(1967). The strategies are listed below with examples taken from Li(2013).

a) Bald-on- Record

*I want some beer*

b) Positive Politeness

*Is it okay for me to have a beer*

c) Negative Politeness

*I don't want to bother you but, would it possible for me to have a beer*

d) Off-Record

*It's so hot, it makes you really thirsty!*

The present study fully utilized the Brown and Levinson's mechanism of analysis in order to identify the politeness strategy in this mode of computer mediated communication. The content of each message is analyzed to identify its politeness strategy based on the examples provided by Brown and Levinson that suits the context of this study. The categorization is then tabulated in figure form to identify the most used to the least used politeness strategy.

The three frameworks mentioned above, provided comprehensive analysis of the data for this study. Therefore, by adopting and adapting the mechanism of analysis mentioned in each theory, the result of each finding provided useful insight to understand each phenomenon of investigation of this study.

### **3.6 RESEARCH DESIGN**

Qualitative research design was employed in this study. The central investigation of this study is language use. Language use in this study is investigated in terms of linguistics forms, code switching practice, communicative features, and politeness strategy. Qualitative research design enabled the data to be analyzed using text analysis for themes and description.

Qualitative research design explores the shared culture of a group of people (Cresswell:2012). Culture is everything having to do with human behavior and belief, including language, interactions, and communication style. Central to this, ethnographic design utilized in this study provided a greater understanding of the data collection, analysis and interpretation. Thus, the shared culture in this study refers to linguistics form (language), Communication theme and orientation (interaction) and Politeness strategy (Communication style).

Text analysis and content analysis were used in this study to locate the specific theme to determine meaning or objective of communication that takes place in parallel with research intent. Inferences were made based on these method of data analysis.

### **3.7 DATA DESCRIPTION**

#### **3.7.1 THE INSTRUMENT**

The instrument collected in this study is a corpus of text messages sent by readers of local English daily. This is retrieved from the daily's online portal which is available and accessible for public. 'SMS Your Views' is introduced in 2007, a year

after the daily started publishing e-mails from readers. This column is introduced with the notion of allowing more interactive environment with the readers. Economically cheaper, technically user friendly, and apparently the most preferred mode of virtual communication with unlimited and unrestricted accessibility, Short Message System, is used by the readers to send their views pertaining any matters.



Figure 3.3: The Online Portal of the Daily

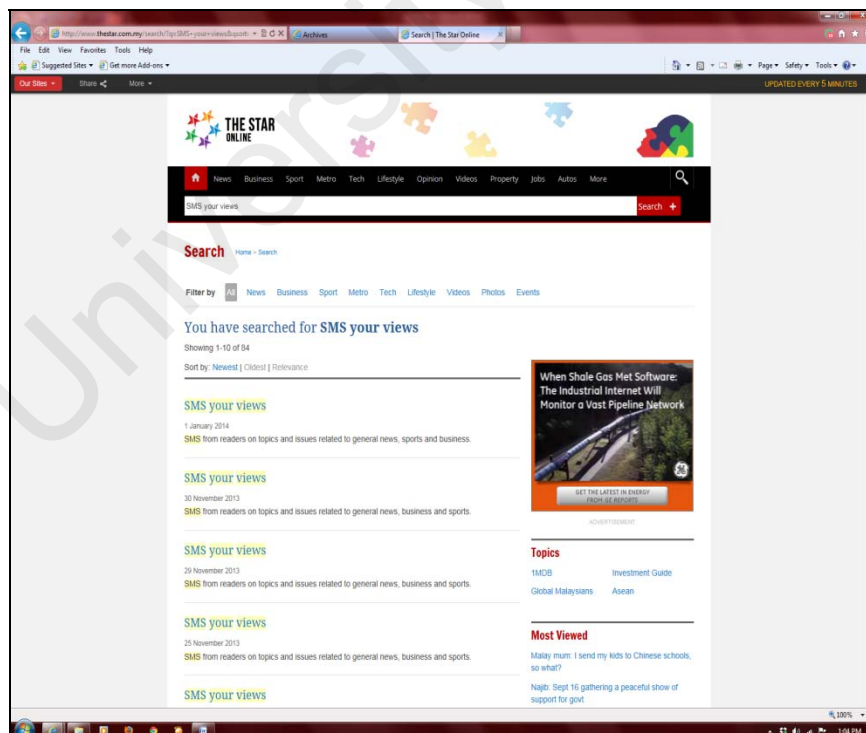


Figure 3.4: Message Retrieval Online



The messages sent by the daily's readers are published in a special column entitled 'SMS Your Views' in the daily. The entire section is named 'VIEWS'. It compromises e-mails and text messages sent by the readers of the daily. The page is at full length of its e-mail publication, taking up almost eighty-percent of the entire page coverage. Lengthy e-mails with an eye-catching picture: focus of the day's mail, is the centre of attraction of this page. A view of the section as how it appears in the daily is shown in the figure below.

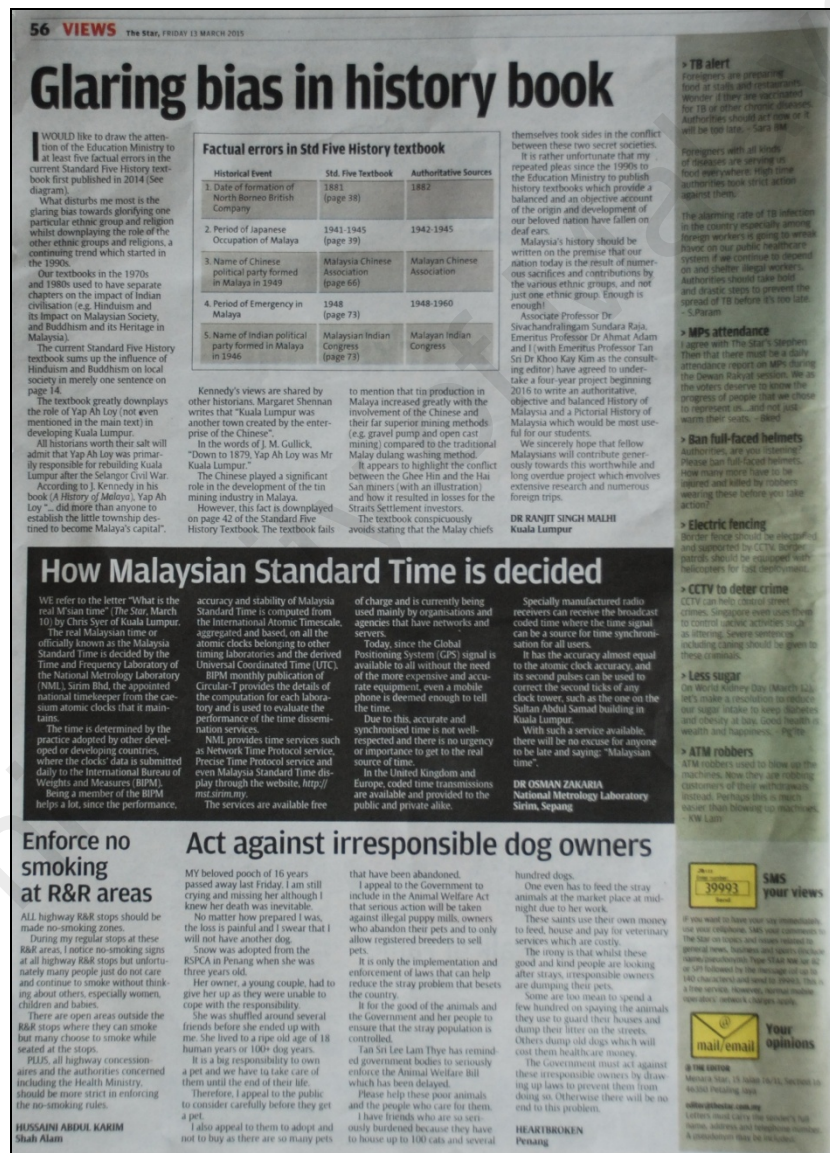


Figure 3.5: The 'Views' Section Of The Daily

At the right hand side of this section, 'SMS Your Views' column is positioned. Its title appears only at the bottom of the column. Catchy captions are given for the messages.

Sometimes, within a single caption, few messages are included. The font type, size and colour for this column is the same with the e-mail's column with an exception: the column is in mud green colour. Below is a picture of the column.



**Figure 3.6:** SMS Your Views' Column

Certain requirements are positioned at the bottom of the column. A closer look of the requirements is shown in the picture below.





**SMS your views**

123  
Enter number:  
**39993**  
Send

IF you want to have your say immediately, use your cellphone. SMS your comments to The Star on topics and issues related to general news, business and sports (include name/pseudonym): Type STAR NW )or BZ or SP) followed by the message (of up to 140 characters) and send to 39993. This is a free service. However, normal mobile operators' network charges apply.

**Your opinions**

@  
mail/email

**@ THE EDITOR**  
Menara Star, 15 Jalan 16/11, Section 16  
46350 Petaling Jaya  
**editor@thestar.com.my**  
Letters must carry the sender's full name, address and telephone number. A pseudonym may be included.

**Figure 3.7 :** Requirements to send message to 'SMS Your Views' Column

Requirements are imposed on the readers in order to have their SMS to be published in the column. Readers are advised to restrict their text to a maximum of 140 characters. Their views can cover a diverse of discussion ranging from general news, business, and sports. An important requirement posited in this column is the inclusion of name or

pseudonyms in the messages sent. Nevertheless, some of the messages are without pseudonyms or names. The examples below show three types of messages; with name, with pseudonyms and without both.

a. Message with name of sender

Friday May 17

➤ ***Helmet idea***

*MY1 Motorbike no must b printed on d helmets 2 make it hard 2 change 2 false number plates for snatch thieves. – Remy Jafar*

b. Message with pseudonyms use

March 27, 2013

➤ ***No parking***

*MC24 Please help us to find parking space around Mahsa University. Always get summonses. Too many cars n not enough parking lots. – tg. m.m.*

c. Message without sender's name or pseudonyms

Monday September 30,

➤ ***Fake beggars***

*SP9 Many foreigners (men/women) are asking for donations and even begging at traffic lights. It seems they are from well organised syndicate*

SMS senders are also required to follow a series of steps in order to send their messages. First, the word STAR is typed. This is followed by typing NW or BZ or SP. Though no description given for the code, it can be assumed that NW stands for News, BZ stands for Business and SP is for Sports based on the content of the messages. The next step is to type the message. Once the message is composed, it needs to be sent to the number 39993 as advertised in the column. Although the message publication is a free service, normal mobile operator network costs are applicable.

Messages published in this column are views expressed by the readers regarding any issue that range from news highlight to issues of individual interest revolving around their neighborhood. The thematic content of these messages will be discussed in length in the following chapter. Below are some examples of messages taken from the corpus.

*Friday February 1, 2013*

➤ **Inconsiderate drivers**

*F1 Many drivers not only don't use signals but also don't give way 2 others who show signals 2 shift lane. V need action fr d govt.*

*Saturday February 16, 2013*

➤ **Explosive matter**

*F82. Selfish neighbours firing crackers until wee hours of the morning. Very inconsiderate. - Irene, Klang*

*F83 Firecrackers is part of tradition. A few days of sleepless nights won't kill us. Cheer up n have fun. - I Malaysia*

*F84 To the ppl asking for firecracker ban, tell me honestly: hv u not played wt I when u were young or anytime in yr life? It's not like it's being let off fr 24 hrs n 7days.*

*Friday August 30*

➤ **Movie debate**

*AG2 Tanda Putera is only a movie. Why the hoohah! Penangites like me, aged 60plus have seen live bloody gang fights n lived thru May 13. Let the movie be screened.*

*AG3 Banning Tanda Putera will only add to curiosity of ordinary Malaysians, who will rush to other cinemas to find out what it is about. – Lee Hui Seng*

This column is published daily. The number of messages published ranges from the least of nine messages to the most of eleven messages in a day. There does not seem

to be any systematic arrangement for the message publication. Even the length is unpredictable. The longest message has sixty-three words in it and the shortest message has only four words in it. Below are examples of messages that have sixty-three words and four words.

a. Message with 63 words

*March 27, 2013*

➤ **Najib is the man**

**AR30** *We all know that Najib is the man who can lead the country n lead it well. Do not let him beg for our votes. Malaysia expects everyone to do his duty. TQ very much PM 4 all ur help n care. Pls take over Damansara Damai n transform it into a hot spot. Without BN here, we are so invisible. – TQ. MEI*

b. Message with four words

*Monday, Jan 7 2013*

➤ **So cruel to throw babies**

**JY58** *Throwing babies is cruel*

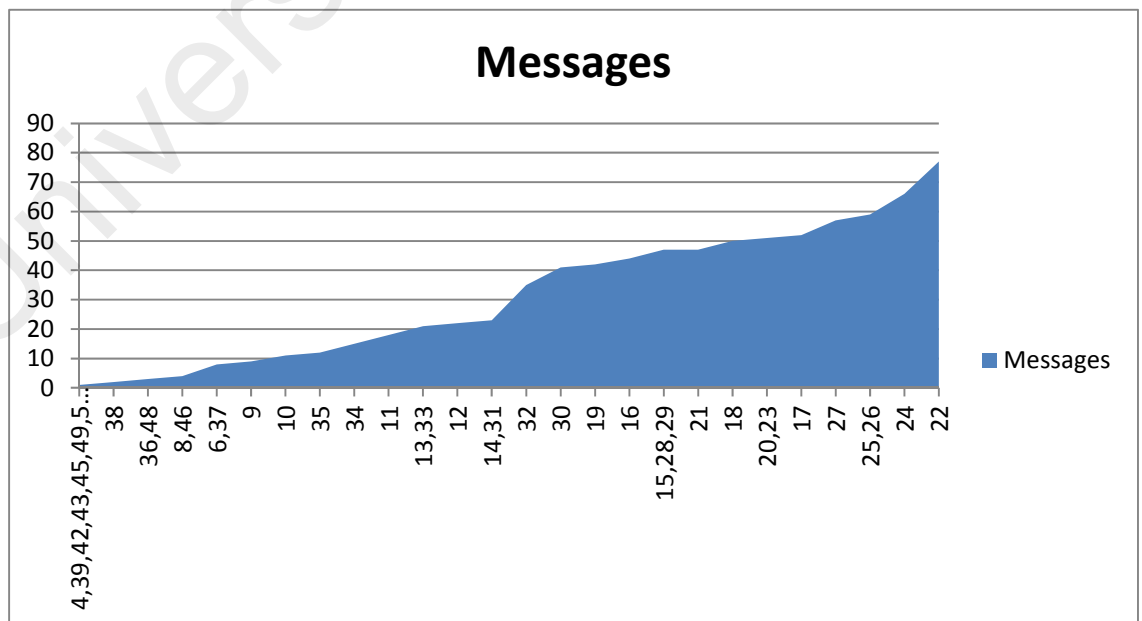


Figure 3.8: Word count of the messages and it's frequency of occurrence

The figure above shows the number of words in the messages together with its frequency of occurrence. As could be seen in the figure, most messages consist more than twenty words per message. According to Thurlow and Poff(2011), in general the average words in a text message is fourteen words but the data in this study showed that the average words is twenty six words per message. Apparently, texters tendency to send longer text messages is obvious in this corpus.

The messages do not require any reply or initiate any discussion. There were no messages that were published in relation to another message. All the messages appear only once in the corpus and each message is of different content even though the topic of discussion is the same. Therefore, to sum up, this corpus provides a rich source of data to investigate language use in terms of linguistic form, communicative features, and politeness strategy.

### **3.8 DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE**

Even though the messages are published on the daily but the data for this study is retrieved online. In order to find the pattern of each area of investigation, messages were collected for one year, from the month of January 2013 until December 2013. A total of one thousand and thirty messages were collected.

The local daily provides an online portal published for free for readers. The portal is equipped with a search engine. This enables a search into the portal's archive back to 2006. By using the search engine, messages needed for this study were retrieved. The messages were retrieved on monthly basis. For each month in 2013, the search engine is redirected to retrieve messages published on that month. The result of

the search appeared with the messages and the date of publication for the particular month.

For each month, the number of messages retrieved is not fixed. There are months when, the messages can be retrieved on daily basis. At the same time, there are certain months only messages published on certain days can be retrieved. The number of messages retrieved on monthly basis are shown in the table below.

**Table 3.3:** Messages retrieved according to month

Month	Messages
January 2013	254
February 2013	188
March 2013	251
April 2013	42
May 2013	22
June 2013	11
July 2013	60
August 2013	65
September 2013	67
October 2013	13
November 2013	57
December 2013	Unable to retrieve

The retrieved messages were copied and pasted manually using the Microsoft Word Document processor. Messages were copied and pasted in different files for



different months. The day and date of publication of the messages are also copied for the purpose of reference. The messages retrieved were arranged in sequence according to its date of publication for each month. Coding in the form of alphabet is issued to refer to the month and number refers to the number of the retrieved messages were used. No alterations were made to the messages except for filing and publication purpose, the font type and size is changed according to publication standard requirement for dissertation submission.

Messages were copied without any alteration to retain its originality. Language errors in terms of punctuation, spelling, capitalization were retained to provide a valid data for the scope of investigation.

### **3.9 CODING SYSTEM USED**

Coding system is used to label the messages retrieved, to identify the thematic content, and to group the politeness strategy investigations. The coding system used in this study contains usage of alphabets, numbers and also a mixture of both. Below are the list of coding used for this study.

#### **3.9.1 Coding System in Data collection**

For the data collection, combination of alphabet and numbers were used to label the messages retrieved. Alphabets were used to denote month and number denotes the message amount. The numbering of the messages was not done continuously: new numbering list is used for different month. Below is the coding system used for labeling the months.

JY	January
FB	February
MC	March
AP	April
MY	May
JN	June
JL	July
AG	August
SP	September
OC	October
NV	November

A message coded as JN11 means the message is retrieved in the month of June and is positioned as the eleventh message for that particular month.

### **3.9.2 Coding System for Thematic Content**

Thematic content analysis is conducted by coding the messages with the combination of letter 'T' and number 1,2,3,4,5,6,9. 'T' represents theme and the numbers represent each thematic content. The list below shows the coding system used.

- T1 Informational Practical
- T2 Informational Relational
- T3 Practical Arrangement
- T4 Social Arrangement
- T5 Phatic
- T6 Friendship Maintenance

T7	Sexual
T8	Romance
T9	Chain Message

### 3.9.3 Coding System for Politeness Strategy

Coding system used for this analysis was only alphabets. The alphabets were formed to denote each politeness strategy. The list of the coding system for the politeness strategy is shown below.

<b>PP</b>	Positive Politeness
<b>NP</b>	Negative Politeness
<b>OR</b>	Off Record
<b>BR</b>	Bald on Record

### 3.10 DATA ANALYSIS

In order to investigate the first intent of this research, data is analyzed according to Ling's Sociolinguistics analysis of text messaging.(2003). The sequence of analysis as listed below is conducted in order to investigate the linguistics forms of the messages:

- i. Identify abbreviation usage in each message
- ii. Identify capitalization and punctuation usage in each message
- iii. Identify other linguistics forms ( parallel with Ling's findings of dialect usage in her corpus of Norwegian text messages)

### 3.10.1 LINGUISTICS FORM ANALYSIS

#### a. Abbreviations usage

Abbreviations usage in each message is counted manually using content analysis methodology and numbered at the end of each message. Using text messaging linguistics form categorization from Farina and Lyddy(2011), the abbreviation forms are identified and categorized. The table below shows the categorization of the abbreviation forms.

**Table 3.4:** Type of Abbreviations

Type of abbreviation	Example
Shortenings	yr(your), Pls, hr(hour), wt(with)
Contractions	M'sia, S'pore,
Letter homophones	u, c, d, r, b
Number homophones	2, 4, gr8
Symbols	/, @, &
Acronyms	PM, UMMC, EC
Initialisms	ASAP, RIP, MYOB
Non conventional spelling	dat, wud, shud
Accent stylization	b'coz,
Others	-

The examples below show how the abbreviations were categorized using Ling's method of analysis.

i. Messages with single abbreviations

- JY16 *Stop blaming each other **4** Setiawangsa wall collapse? In future, stop building houses on hill slopes. – R.E. J. Naidu (**Numbers**)*
- JY37 *It is truly a heartless monster who **wud** throw baby in a rubbish bag. How many times must we read this type of news? (Accent Stylization)*
- JY42 *Sympathise with **Bkt** Setiawangsa house owners but why set a precedent by using taxpayers money to pay them?(**Shortenings**)*
- JY56 *Have witnessed several accidents involving big lorries on the fast lane of the expressway. Lorries are not even supposed to travel on the fast lane. What is happening **JPJ**, Police highway patrol unit? (**Acronyms**)*
- JY73 *Don't disrupt peace & stability by having another Perhimpunan Rakyat. Do it via ballot box. (**Symbols**)*
- MY21 *Those who spread hate messages online are stumbling blocks to national and racial unity and cause unnecessary splits and divisions in society. Stop it **asap**! – LeeHuiSeng (**Initialism**)*

ii. Messages with multiple abbreviations

- AG67 *R u shy 2 b a M'sian? – Remy Jafar.*
- FB28 *All MPs contesting in d GE. rakyat voted 'u' in bcoz v trust n believe tat "u" r d 1. So 4 d luv of God pls dun go party hopping immediately after GE*

iii. Messages without any abbreviations

- JY75 *For those housemen who complain about working long hours, you can always quit. This might not be your line..Many housemen need to correct their attitude towards work and put their patients first before wanting more time off.*
- MC53 *Shocked and sad that some 97,200 long-tailed macaques were 'killed' by the Wildlife and National Parks Department (Perhilitan) last year*

AP21      *Government is not providing sufficient information on the Program Ijazah Luar Negara (PILN) scholarships to bursary holders, making application to universities a pain.*

The abbreviations usage identified in the messages were then tabulated. The figures in form of numbers and percentage were used to compare the number of messages with abbreviations and without.

### **b. Capitalization and Punctuation Usage**

Ling(2005), posited that capitalization and punctuation usage and error are acceptable as linguistics features of text messaging. Nevertheless investigation was still conducted to identify whether it is prevalent and widely used in text messages. Having the same notion as Ling, investigation into the use of capitalization was conducted in this study. Thus, messages were analyzed to identify the varieties of capitalization and punctuation usage.

Figures, in the form of numbers and percentage, used for each analysis to highlight type of capitalization and punctuation. Comprehensive explanation of the identified capitalization and punctuation usage will be discussed in the following chapter. The examples below show the capitalization and punctuation usage were identified.

MC193      *Illegal money lenders first time offenders in s'pore are fined S\$300,000 jailed up to 4yrs and receive 6 strokes of the rotan.*  
( No Capitalization for proper noun)

JN9      *Justice 4 wmen! Indian gov u owe it 2 ur female citizens. D poor rape victim. Her rapists r so inhuman! Send dem 2 **HELL!***  
(Capitalization of entire word / use of multiple punctuation form)

FY25      *Motorcyclists why is it so difficult to ensure yr tail lights are working? It doesn't cost a bomb and its yr own life, **dont** you care? Gosh!*  
(Contractions without apostrophe / Punctuation use-exclamation mark)

**c.                      Message complexity**

In order to identify message complexity, messages were first analyzed to identify the thoughts it contains. These messages can be constructed using a single sentence or more. Message length is identified by investigating the number of sentences in a message. Messages are then grouped accordingly. Thoughts are grouped into two categories that are single thoughts and multiple thoughts. In identifying the length, messages were grouped according to number of sentences contained in a single message. A detailed explanation is given in the following chapter.

**d.                      Code Switching**

Ling identified local dialect insertion in his corpus. However, it was a mere mention of this insertion without any detailed explanation. In this study, the use of local languages is investigated in terms of code switching practice. Unlike Ling's corpus that consist a single language variation, this corpus consists of three main languages used in Malaysia

Each code-switching pattern was identified and grouped. The frequency of occurrence for each pattern is shown in numeric figure and percentage form.

**Table 3.5:** Code-Switching Types and Frequency of occurrence

SWITCHING	EXAMPLE	FREQUENCY
Malay acronyms known in the local context	MBSA,PKAP,TNB,SPAD,PBS,BN,MB,KTM,P LUS,OKU,BRIM	126 messages
Noun insertion	The <i>Rakyat</i> should work with the police and MACC to battle crime and corruption	58 messages
Phrasal Insertion	Malaysian drivers are one of the worst in the world. Never stop for Zebra Crossing...Malu Malaysia...!!!	14 messages
Sentence Switching	Selamat Hari Merdeka! When we celebrate, lets not forget our first/greatest PM n Bapa Kemerdekaan Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra Al-Haj who made it all possible.	3 messages
Chinese and Tamil language insertion	Ah long, towkays, tang long Thaipusam. Ponggal	15 messages

Apart from this, influential factors that contribute to this phenomenon is discussed at length to provide a rationale explanation. The tendency to abbreviate these languages is also investigated and will be explained in the following section.

### 3.10.2 COMMUNICATIVE FEATURES

To address the second research question, which is to identify the communicative features of the messages, Thurlow's text messaging theme and communication orientations(2003) is used.

To analyze the communicative features, the content of messages were analyzed and grouped into nine broad categories of communication theme proposed by Thurlow ( Practical, Relational, Practical arrangement, Social arrangement, phatic, friendship maintenance, romantic, sexual and chain messages.) The frequency of each of the theme's occurrence was tabulated in the form of percentage to identify the



communication orientation ( transactional or interactional) of the messages. The table below provides the thematic content and examples for each thematic content.

**Table 3.6:** Thematic Content Analysis

THEMATIC CONTENT	MESSAGE
Informational Practical (Practical details)	JY36 <i>New retirement age will hit all sectors of employment, not only graduates</i>
Informational Relational (personal )	FB133 <i>I don't have an income. I depend on my husband's RM1,000 pension. I don't have any money for myself. I applied for BR1M 2.0 but was rejected</i>
Practical Arrangement (Suggestions/plan)	MC247 <i>Strict enforcement and heavy penalties might work against illegal advertisers with stickers that have their phone numbers</i>
Social Arrangement (Personal plan)	JL5 <i>Bcos d way d ALVIVI court case went, d ppl focus is now on selective prosecution and fairness instead. We may all be angry with d couple BUT we tend to put aside our emotions</i>
Phatic (non specific and brief)	JY80 <i>No water for nine days in Cheras! Who will help old people carry water to upper floors?</i>
Friendship maintenance (apologies/support/thanks)	NV50 <i>"You can run but you can't hide." Syabas to IGP Tan Sri Khalid and team for the arrest of the rogue security guard. – Murali Sundareson</i>
Chain Messages	JL23 <i>Destroy racism!!!! Be like a Panda, He is Black, He is White, He is Asian, He is Chubby, &amp; He is Cute</i>

### 3.10.3 POLITENESS STRATEGY

To answer the last research question, Brown and Levinson's Politeness Strategy (1987) is used. Again, content analysis is conducted to categorize the messages into the politeness strategy proposed in the theory. Microsoft Excel Programme was used to identify the frequency of occurrence. The categorized messages were grouped together. The detailed analysis on each strategy is discussed in the following chapter. Below are some examples of messages categorized based on the politeness strategy classifications.

#### a. Positive Politeness

*SP17 In the spirit of 1 Msia, we hope Govt gives replacement holidays for Deepavali that falls on a Saturday*

#### b. Negative Politeness

*MC113 All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy. Isn't this applicable to housemen as well? Born from KBKK Education System*

#### c. Bald on Record

*JN11 The Wira was one of the most reliable of Proton cars. Bring it back at a lower cost*

#### d. Off Record

*OC3 Sometimes I have to double-park but I always leave my handphone number in d car where it can be seen. It helps*

Brown and Levinson's theory of politeness strategy has been studied in various mode of communication. As it was mentioned in the theoretical framework section of this chapter, previous researchers looked at different aspects of the data content to identify the politeness strategy. This study differs because the content of the texts is examined as a whole to identify the politeness strategy employed.

### **3.11 SUMMARY**

This study is a fully qualitative research. Numeric figures only were used to show frequency of occurrence to identify the prominent pattern that emerges from the analysis. The methodology used provided ample results in line with the research questions and objectives of this study.

University of Malaya

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **DATA FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

In this chapter, the findings are presented in sequence based on the research questions of this study. This is followed by relevant discussion based on the objective of this study. Three objectives of this study are to identify the linguistics forms, the communicative features and the politeness strategy used in text messages sent to a local daily column named 'SMS Your Views'. The sections in this chapter are organized in accordance to the specified objectives mentioned above.

#### **4.1 LINGUISTICS FORM**

In order to identify the linguistics forms which are found in these text messages, the messages are analysed using Ling's framework based on his research on text messaging(2005). Linguistics form that are analyzed are abbreviations usage, message complexity, capitalization and punctuation pattern and code-switching practice.

##### **4.1.1 ABBREVIATIONS USAGE**

Abbreviations usage is analyzed to identify types of abbreviations and the pattern of occurrence. Ling(2005) did not list types of abbreviations found in his corpus nevertheless, mentioned that abbreviations in text messages refers to variety of acronyms ,pruned spellings and emoticons. Data is analyzed to show type of abbreviations used in the text messages. The analysis of the type of abbreviations is based on Farina and Lyddy's text language categorization (2011). Examples given for each category identified are taken from the corpus itself. Abbreviations identified are listed in the table below.

**Table 4.1:** Abbreviation categorization

<b>Abbreviations Category</b>	<b>Examples from the corpus</b>
Number homophones	1,2,4,
Letter homophones	n, b, d, r, v, y, s, u, c, q
Shortenings ( Words with missing end letters)	fr(from), min(minimum), vege(vegetable), max(maximum), mil(million), esp (especially), pic(picture), info(information), med(medical), cig(cigarette), prac(parctice), Uni(university), Min(Ministry), Prof.(Professor), Maths(Mathematics), gov(government), app(application),
Contractions (Words with omitted middle letters especially vowels)	pls/pse/ plse(please), Shd/shld(should), yrs(years), nw(now), wt(what), hrs(hours). mth(month), rd(road), mrng(morning), Gvnt/Govt(Government), fm/frm(from), bk(book), wld(would), cld(could), yr(your), abt(about), ctry(country), hw(how), btwn(between), nmbr(number), nt(not), bck(back), nd(need), whr(where), nw(now), wt(what), btr(better),fr(for)
Clippings (words letter omission in any parts)	wil(will), kno(know), B' worth, Wkends, reviewd, m'cycle, encourag'd, act'n, indepndent, mins, wtout, dept, docs, tchers, accountble, supervisg,
Acronyms (Formal shortenings)	RTD, CNY, EPF, PHD,WSA,NKVE, MOE, US, MMUC, FELDA, SEA,MACC, NGO,LRT, MP, GE, KLCC,CCTV, AES, CIDB, KIV, ETP, KLIA,MAS, MRT, SME,JMB, FAM, NSE,PSD, OCPD,GTP, MAF,
Initialisms (informal shortenings)	asap, rip, myob, tqvm, tq
Typographic symbols	6x(six times), Xs(times)
Non-Conventional Spellings	wen, , dis, wat, de, sumtin, supsed, pix, tat, luv, lernt, wile, tots, gud, , exposd, schul, cos, hiways, b'low, hve, fenc'g, guard'g, thru, lite,
Accent Stylization	dat, dun, dunno, wif, dey, dem, der, bcoz, enuf, shud, cud, thro', pix, ur

**Table 4.1** ( continuation)

Hybrid (Combination for more than one of the categories mentioned above)	1M'sia, t8, m/cyclist, act'n, b4, 2b, wtout, 3rd, 2nd, 2words(towards), some 1, gr8, 4evr
--	---

The abbreviations used in these messages do not differ compared to what was given by Thurlow(2003), Ling(2005), Heidari and Alibabe(2013), Chiyad(2008), Otemuyiwa(2012) and Kadir, Maros and Hamid (2012).

Shafie, Osman and Darus(2011) identified the similar pattern in their study of text messages produced by college students in Malaysia. In their study, they have identified that texters prefer to use contractions to abbreviate in English compared to other languages. They also refuted that texters have their own preferred spelling style that in return contributes to many variants of the same word. The tendency to use multi abbreviation style to replace a word is also found. The term 'multi abbreviation' is used to refer to different spellings used to spell a word. Below are certain words that occur frequently with different abbreviated form in the messages analyzed in this study.

- i. Government – Gov, Gvnt, govt
- ii. Please – Pls, plse, plz,
- iii. Should – shud, shld, shd
- iv. from – fr, frm, fm

Whatever style that is preferred by texters, the abbreviations reflect creativity, playfulness and friendliness. This was said by Kasesniemi & Rautiainen (2002), and Crystal(2001) as quoted by Thurlow (2003). The abbreviations are also comprehensible, thus does not create confusion or blurring in the meaning. Thurlow and Poff(2011)

reckons this as texters are aware the need to be intelligible. Crystal (2011), described abbreviations are pre dated ever since English came in written form, thus reckoning this as natural intuitive response to technological problem. He claimed that texters simply transferred and then embellished what they have encountered in other setting. Therefore, the abbreviations form identified in this study tells the similar understanding of being creative, playful, friendly and comprehensible.

Apart from this, it is also noticed that the use of symbols was quite prevalent. Three symbols widely used to abbreviate certain words are listed in the table below.

**Table 4.2:** Types of symbol and the frequency of occurrence

SYMBOL	OCCURRENCE	EXAMPLE
& - to replace the conjunction 'and'	127 times	JY2 <i>Major causes of landslides are design &amp; construction errors, lack of maintenance &amp; understanding of geology. – LeeHuiSeng</i>
@ - to replace the preposition 'at'	13 times	FB136 <i>Street lighting has not been working for so long along The Carnival Water Park @CintaSayang and Eastern Bypass along the new hospital and LHDN at Sg Petani.</i>
/ - to replace the conjunction 'or'	57 times	MC12 <i>The govt is correct in offering incentives/promotions to personnel killed or injured in action.</i>

'\$' symbol is also found in the corpus but its frequency of occurrence is minimal, only one message is identified with its usage in the entire corpus. The message is shown below.

JY41 *Insurance shld cover Bkt Setiawangsa homeowners who can afford d million \$ homes, not from our taxpayers \$. – B.B*

A closer investigation of the '\$' symbol in this message denotes two meanings in the two occasion of occurrence in the message above. The first '\$' sign refers to 'dollar' and the second occurrence gives the meaning 'money'. Therefore, this symbol is quite unique due to the nature of the context it is used. Used in a single message, written in one sentence, it differs in terms of its meaning.

Chyiad(2008) categorized symbols usage as emoticons.. Pathan(2012), who only highlighted the use of '@', termed it as logogram. He described this is as unique pattern of text messaging due to the process of compounding logograms with contracted works to create a new compound word. The examples given by Pathan that highlighted the use of '@' are given below.

- i.       @*school* (at school)
- ii.       @*work* (at work).
- iii.

Cvjetkovic (2010) referred symbols used to replace words as logotypes created using ASCII characters. Abbreviation using ASCII characters includes asterisk, emoticons, and addressivity marker. Although the definition given for this abbreviation usage is different, purpose of use remains the same that is to replace words. The findings on the use of symbols in this study is similar to the findings of the studies mentioned above that is to replace certain words

The symbols '&' and '/' are used to replace the word '*and*' and '*or*' but the symbol '@' is used for a variety of replacements for the word 'at'. It is used as preposition, state or condition, indicating amount, degree or rate and finally the symbol '@' to indicate location or position as in time. Below are the examples of messages that highlights the variety of the '@' usage.



i. preposition of place,

*MC183 Homeless living under bridge @ McD's Old Town  
PJ. MBPJ pls act.*

ii. state or condition

*FB15 Pls don't legalise firecrackers. We get heart attack when  
ppl play with firecrackers in the middle of the nite when  
we are asleep. We are not young & we jump @ d  
slightest sound.*

iii. To indicate amount, degree or rate

*FB81 What had become of our culture of being polite, friendly,  
etc? Just look @ d uncouth language/lies used on social  
media*

iv. To indicate location or position as in time

*MC151 MBPJ, pls switch off lights in Tmn Aman only @ 7am  
and not earlier as its still too dark 4 early walkers.*

The pattern of usage produced by the texters in this corpus had indirectly resulted into a language creativity that compounds logograms with contracted words. This usage indirectly provided evidence that English, being the second language in Malaysia, is used with great mastery and creativity.

The abbreviation categorization given in table 4.1 is listed together with its examples taken from the corpus. The examples given above are abbreviated forms in English. Abbreviated forms in Malay language is also identified in the corpus. The abbreviations in Malay language fall into acronym and contractions category. The table below shows abbreviations usage in Malay identified in the corpus. The abbreviated forms are listed in general. Detailed explanation on this abbreviated form will be discussed in the code switching pattern section

**Table 4.3:** Abbreviations identified in Malay Language

Type of abbreviation	Reference
1. Acronyms	Local town councils <i>MBSA, MPKj, MBPJ, MPK, MPPP, DBKL, MPM, MPPJ, MBSJ, MPSJ, MPK</i>
	Places <i>USJ, Pj, KL, JB, TTDI, KL</i>
	Local Authorities <i>SPA, Syabas, SPAD, Puspel, JPA, TNB, JPJ, FELDA, JKR, TELEKOM, JBA, PIKAP, JPN,</i>
	One Malaysia Programmes <i>KDRIM, BRIM, PRIMA,</i>
	Highways <i>Kesas, SILK, PLUS, LEBUH AMJ, LDP, SPRINT,</i>
	Task force <i>RELA, PDRM, LTAT,</i>
	People <i>Datuk LCW, KJ</i>
	Others <i>MyKad, RTM, OKU, LHDN, KWSP, PTK, PPUM, BN, Sukma, PATI, SPM, LKW University, SMKBB, SMJK, KTMB/KTM</i>
2. Contractions	<i>Tmn, Sg, Bkt, Jln, Hosp., Bdr, Tg.</i>
3. Hybrid	<i>N9(Negeri Sembilan, hangat<sup>2</sup>(hangat-hangat), GE13( thirteenth General Election),</i>

Abbreviations in Malay language identified in this study are mainly formal acronyms. These acronyms are well known in the local context. The translated equivalence is available in English but the Malay acronyms are more preferred. According to David (2008) this is a variety of English resulted in an interaction of two

co-existing languages. Bilingual speakers (in certain cases multilingual speakers) facilitate their interaction in selecting words which are culturally associated with certain concepts and situations. A deliberate discussion regarding this usage is presented in the section discussing the code switching pattern that occurs in the data analysis.

The analysis also showed the use of emoticons is nowhere to be found in the corpus. Emoticon comes from word combination of emotion and icon. (Amaghlobeli;2012). It is also known as smiley. It is used to provide electric communication with emotional and human touch. It is the representation of facial expressions using a combination of punctuation mark, letters or other characters. At present, using the latest technology affordance, typographic are automatically converted into graphics that are more expressive and quite often animated and represent images in Gif format. Unfortunately, not a single use of emoticons is identified in this corpus.

Tossel(2012) in a longitudinal study of emoticons using public data of smart phone message exchanges, identified only four percent of emoticons occurrence in the corpus. Barkhuus(2005) was cited in Tossel's study to explain the use of emoticons as a type of communication that is done through SMS.. Barkhuus conditions that type of communications that is done via SMS does not appear to require as much socio-emotional context as other means of mediated communication; perhaps due to its simplicity and reliability. Lyddy(2013) in her study of text messages produced by university students, reported the same finding. In this study, the findings shows that use of emoticons is low compared to other features of text language. Thus, we can conclude for the same reason provided by Barkhuus, the use emoticons in the text messages of this study is not necessary due to the nature of its communication; to be simple and precise.

Three hundred seventeen messages from this corpus were identified without any abbreviation usage. This is followed by two hundred and forty five messages with single insertion of abbreviation. A total of three hundred and thirty five messages were identified with minor abbreviations usage. The rest of the corpus, one hundred thirty three messages in total, consist multiple abbreviation usage.

The examples given below are messages identified according to the abbreviation usage categorization.

*a) Messages without abbreviation*

*JY37 For those housemen who complain about working long hours, you can always quit. This might not be your line..Many housemen need to correct their attitude towards work and put their patients first before wanting more time off.*

*MC52 Shocked and sad that some 97,200 long-tailed macaques were 'killed' by the Wildlife and National Parks Department (Perhilitan) last year*

*AP21 Government is not providing sufficient information on the Program Ijazah Luar Negara (PILN) scholarships to bursary holders, making application to universities a pain.*

A closer analysis of message MC52 and AP21 revealed that texters explained the acronyms referred as the subject of discussion in that particular message. Message MC52 gave the equivalence translation of the word '*Perhilitan*', a Malay acronym in English. Message AP21, on the other hand, gave the description of the acronym '*PILN*' in Malay. Both messages avoided direct use of the acronyms by being more transparent in providing the actual representation of the acronyms. As mentioned by Thurlow (2003), text message language prioritize economic of space, but these messages provided evidence that in this corpus, there are texters who go at great length to be understood ignoring the law of maxim.

b) Messages with single abbreviation

- JY16 Stop blaming each other **4** Setiawangsa wall collapse? In future, stop building houses on hill slopes. – R.E. J. Naidu
- JY37 It is truly a heartless monster who **wud** throw baby in a rubbish bag. How many times must we read this type of news?
- JY42 Sympathise with **Bkt** Setiawangsa house owners but why set a precedent by using taxpayers money to pay them?
- JY56 Have witnessed several accidents involving big lorries on the fast lane of the expressway. Lorries are not even supposed to travel on the fast lane. What is happening **JPJ**, Police highway patrol unit? (acronyms)
- JY73 Don't disrupt peace & stability by having another Perhimpunan Rakyat. Do it via ballot box. (symbols)
- JN21 Those who spread hate messages online are stumbling blocks to national and racial unity and cause unnecessary splits and divisions in society. Stop it **asap**! – LeeHuiSeng (Initialism)

c) Messages with multiple abbreviations

- JY33 R u shy 2 b a M'sian? – Remy Jafar.
- FB32 All MPs contesting in d GE. rakyat voted 'u' in bcoz v trust n believe tat "u" r d 1. So 4 d luv of God pls dun go party hopping immediately after GE

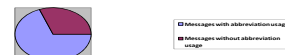


Figure 4.1 Abbreviation Usage

Figure 4.1 above shows the percentage of abbreviation usage identified in this study. Sixty nine percent of the messages consists abbreviation usage with at least a single insertion in it. In detail, forty seven percent of the abbreviated messages consist two to three abbreviations. This is followed by thirty four percent of single abbreviation and nineteen percent of more than five abbreviations. In general, the analysis shows that two third of the corpus consist at least single insertion of abbreviations and only one third consists no abbreviations at all.

Balakrishnan(2009), based on the interview conducted in her study, revealed that the respondents claimed that they like to use abbreviations in their message. Elizondo (2009), in fact concluded his finding on abbreviation usage between college students and older adults is the same that is both group prefer abbreviations in their messages even if single insertion. Thurlow and Poff(2011) puts this as typographic practices that offer more correct and more authentic representation of speech. Thus, this establishes an informal register that not only help to do small talks but also the solitary bonding that texters desire to maximize. The use of abbreviations in SMS is described as language of texters that is invariably appropriate to the context of interaction. The finding on abbreviation usage in this study relates the similar practice as found in the studies mentioned above that is, the use of abbreviation is preferred as typographic practice, invariably appropriate even as single insertion to offer correct, authentic speech representation that allows solitary bonding.

A closer analysis of the data above reveals that abbreviations occurrence is only nine percent in the corpus. This figure is in line with Ling's finding (2005). Apparently, although the messages in this corpus are longer compared to normal message exchanges, the abbreviation usage occurrence is still minimal. Interestingly, the corpus

were identified with messages without any abbreviation usage. Interestingly, character limitation is not violated without the use of abbreviations.

The analysis on abbreviation usage identified the use of shortening is frequent and favored by texters especially for English words. In contrast, Malay acronyms are more often used. Use of symbols is quite prevalent in this corpus taking different role of usage for different context. Finally yet importantly, the data analysis showed that texters who sent messages to this daily prefer the use of abbreviations in their message even with a single insertion of it.

#### **4.1.2 MESSAGE COMPLEXITY**

In this section, finding on message complexity is presented. Ling described message complexity as complexity of the message structure. Sentence complexity is defined as the number of separate clauses, sentences or separate thoughts . Ling categorized the messages into two groups: simple messages and complex messages. The former refers to messages that are short, direct and the latter refers to messages of complex thoughts. The examples given below are messages that portray the first category: simple message.

*JY22 There is brightness at the end of the tunnel in every faith*

*JY47 Can enforcement pls look at the traffic situation at the bus stop opposite  
Carrefour Subang Jaya?*

*JY58 Throwing babies is cruel*

The messages above denote a single thought using a single sentence. In the data analysis, it is also found certain messages written in a single sentence consist more

than a thought. These messages were formed with the use of conjunction, connecting clause or thoughts, resulting in the construction of compound sentences. Thus, though the message has a single sentence it is still categorized under complex message categorization because of the identification of more than one thoughts.. Below are some examples taken from the corpus that denotes this finding.

*NV12 The authorities should publish a table of usage n corresponding cost of electricity n water 2 give d public an idea so that they can plan their consumption accordingly*

*SP13 Government must build more fully-equipped general hospitals for specialists to rent to perform surgeries so that the overall medical costs will not be increased*

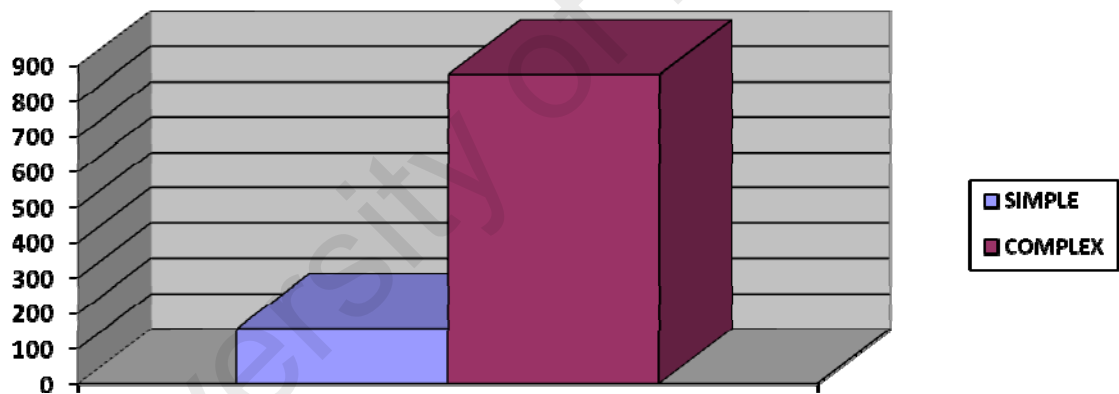
*AG23 Kudos to 'anguished mother' from Mersing, a neighbour should do all within his/her power to stop child abuse next door*

A total of two hundred and ninety-six messages were identified with single sentence construction. A deeper breakdown of this finding identified only one hundred sixty four messages are with single thought, whereas, the rest are of complex thoughts. The breakdown of message categorization according to number of sentences is showed in the table below.



**Table 4.4** Number of messages according to sentences

SENTENCE	MESSAGES
1 SENTENCE	296
2 SENTENCES	474
3 SENTENCES	195
4 SENTENCES	55
5 SENTENCES	6
6 SENTENCES	3
7 SENTENCES	1
TOTAL	1030



**Figure 4.2** - Message complexity

The data analysis highlighted that, there are more complex messages compared to simple messages. A likely explanation for this is that the messages sent are not of personal exchanges. Texters express their views on many issues that matters to public concern. Therefore, their messages contain complex thoughts consisting two or more thoughts. The thoughts are of explanation, description, or elaboration of the issue being raised. Any suggestions or views or questions raised are supported with other statements

to ensure the rationalization of a subject matter. Below are two examples of messages taken from the data analysis that show simple and complex thoughts respectively.

*JY58 Throwing babies is cruel*

*JY17 Malaysia can build smart tunnels & bridges & yet slope retainer walls can collapse*

The first message, JY58 is being very direct with one subject matter: the action of throwing babies is cruel. The second message, which also consist a single sentence, has two thoughts with the use of conjunction in symbol form of '&'. The first part of the sentence compliments the infrastructure development in Malaysia. The second part of the sentence condemns the malfunction of the development.

From table 4.4 above, it can be concluded texters have their say mostly in two sentences as this recorded the highest number of occurrence. This is followed by three sentences in a message. The data analysis in this study also identified longer messages that consist more than three sentences in a message. Below are some messages taken from the corpus that denotes each category mentioned.

i. Message with two sentences

*NV57 Please KDN and Immigration check peddlers of trinkets, carpet sellers, icecream men. Visas misused.*

ii. Message with three sentences

*NV34 Age of a car is not the issue. Most dangerous are the 'nuts' behind the steering wheel. Many cars above 12 years still in good condition*

iii. Message with four sentences

NV54      *It's not only the futsal courts. Let's also take a look at the playgrounds in housing schemes. Many are so neglected and in deplorable state. Local authorities should take note*

iv. Message with five sentences

MY15      *GE is over. Accept n move on. B united n work hand in hand 4 our beautiful country. Make M'sia 'blink' on d world map. Let other countries be envious of ours.*

v. Message with six sentences

AG30      *STOP d politicking. Rakyat tired of it. Non-stop politicking since a few yrs bk. PRU is over. Get down to ruling d ctry n states. Spend time on d many issues confronting d ppl*

vi. Message with seven sentences

MC30      *We all know that Najib is the man who can lead the country n lead it well. Do not let him beg for our votes. Malaysia expects everyone to do his duty. TQ very much PM 4 all ur help n care. Pls take over Damansara Damai n transform it into a hot spot. Without BN here, we are so invisible. – TQ*

The complex messages in this corpus were written with coherence and cohesion. The sentences were well linked with each other as can be seen from the examples given above. Creative use of conjunctions such as 'yet', 'for', 'but', 'and', 'because', 'so', 'as' 'that' and 'to' to link the similar or contrasting ideas, to show cause and effect and to give examples are noticeable in the messages. Below are some examples that use the conjunctions.

AG44      *Better JPN n Immigration merge to b a suruhanjaya under parliment, so v can control issuing ic n birth cert. Suruhanjaya can work btr without politics involved.*

- AG48      *Penang govt shud make homestay at d Tg Tokong village available 2 foreign tourists 2 enable them 2 experience our rich Malay culture n hospitality*
- SP6        *The warnings & threats were not just against the police **but** challenging the entire country*
- SP13      *Government must build more fully-equipped general hospitals **for** specialists to rent **to** perform surgeries **so** that the overall medical costs will not be increased*
- SP46      *Many drivers are hogging the roads **because** they are busy playing Candy Crush **while** they are stuck in a jam*

The data analysis on message complexity of this corpus identified a few interesting findings. First, the complex messages outnumbered the simple messages with a difference of fifty-two percent. Secondly, the complex messages were identified not only on messages with multiple sentences but also with single sentence. Finally, the use of conjunctions in the messages reflects texters' good command of English language produce coherent and cohesive messages.

#### 4.1.3 CAPITALIZATION AND PUNCTUATION

This section looks into the data analysis for the use of capitalization and punctuation. The use of capitalization pattern in the messages is similar to Ling's findings(2005). In the study, conducted by Ling(2005), messages with multiple sentences are automatically capitalize. Ling rationalized this that perhaps due to the default setting of the mobile system. The pattern of identification of capitalization usage in this study is similar to Ling. Messages with more than one sentence are capitalized. Nevertheless, there were also other instances of capitalization usage in certain messages identified in this study. This usage will be discussed further elaborately in the sections below.

#### 4.1.3.1 CAPITALIZATION

Ong'onda(2010) described capitalization,as in standard form, capitalization is used at the first word of every sentence, direct quotation, proper nouns and names of persons and initials that stand for names. Thurlow and Brown (2003) described the use of capitalization as a form of paralinguistic restitutions in text messages. According to them, the brevity of speed and maxim results in lack of capitalization usage in text messaging. This, according to him and supported by many (Lyddy;2011, Bieswanger:2008, Ling:2005, Shafie,Osman and Darus:2011), is a feature of text messaging language. Its usage varies in a different context.

The data analysis for this study showed three types of capitalization usage. The first category is identified as formal capitalization. It is used either to start a new sentence, formal acronyms or proper noun usage (Ling,2005). Below are some messages identified with the use of formal capitalization.

MC36      *People smoke freely at M/Valley LG fd court despite No Smoking sign*  
( Capitalization for Proper Noun Usage)

NV48      *A natural disaster has wreaked havoc in Philippines recently with many thousands reported dead, injured, traumatised and homeless. Time for M'sians to help these victims.*  
  
(Capitalization for Proper Noun Usage and to start a new sentence)

FB142      *Reading "Did Indonesian maid snap?" by Dr K. H. Sng, was heart- melting. It shows we still have human beings among us*  
  
(Capitalization for Proper Noun Usage, to start a new sentence and formal acronyms)

The second category identified based on Ling's categorization of capitalization use is no capitalization usage. There are some messages identified with the use of

formal acronyms but not capitalized. There are also instances of proper nouns that are not capitalized. There are even messages that do not capitalize a new sentence in a message. Below are some messages that denote these features.

- FB167 At Kuching EPF office, full withdrawal takes exactly eight minutes, that's what i call efficient! Thank u Ms Zahara  
( Proper noun 'I' not capitalized)*
- FB117 Psy is a true professional. He came. He performed well n went back with no other obligations. long live music  
(New sentence not capitalized)*
- JY53 New Year is here but why is there no water in pandan jaya? Been more than a week. How to live?  
( Proper noun 'Panda Jaya' not capitalized)*
- JY133 Was helped by a young malay lady to take out my car in ttdi wet market when it was blocked. Restored my faith in multiracial M'sia. Tq  
( Proper noun 'ttdi' not capitalized)*

Omission of capitalization is accepted as the trait of texting language. It is not adhered since the need to be understood in a message does not rely on capitalization. Due to the present default setting of telephony technology, the capitalization after each sentence is automatically done. Thus, in this corpus only fifty-two messages were identified with the second and third capitalization categories. The second capitalization usage described as paralinguistic restitution by Thurlow and Poff (2011) denotes the texters creativity. In this corpus where the text messages are meant to express the readers' views, it is not surprising to identify this type of paralinguistic restitution showing the texters feeling towards an issue.

The third category of abbreviation usage identified in this study is the use of capitalizations as paralinguistic restitutions. This refers to word capitalization in any

part of the sentence or message that can be written in small letters. Below are the examples of some of the messages

- JY9 Justice 4 wmen! Indian gov u owe it 2 ur female citizens. D poor rape victim. Her rapists r so inhuman! Send dem 2 **HELL**!*
- JY233 Th reason why M'sians **R** stil obsessed with plastic bags is that they feel too embarrassed 2 carry their purchases exposed. Ths must change.*
- FB118 Last year BRIM 1.0, my niece a single mother got RM500. Now BRIM 2.0 gave her only RM250. Can someone pls tell us **Why**?*
- JL30 At the Parliament MPs shud **ONLY** talk or debate on Matters Or Issues that will beneficial to their constituents who **Voted** Hon MPs to the Parliament. **PANTIES** issue dont.*
- AG29 Leaders need to know dat it is **NOT** d titles behind their names that earn respect. For most ppl, they don't care. It is what they do that makes a positive difference in others*
- AG31 **STOP** d politicking. Rakyat tired of it. Non-stop politicking since a few yrs bk. PRU is over. Get down to ruling d ctry n states. Spend time on d many issues confronting d ppl.*

Capitalization in these messages are used to stress the use of certain words. For an example, in message JY9, the word 'HELL' is capitalized to denote that the texter is angry over the issue. Messages JY233, FY118 and JY29 used the capitalization form to show the seriousness of the matter. Messages AG30 and AG32 used capitalization to stress the importance of the issue. Capitalization is used for various reasons in a variety of context. This type of capitalization usage is known as as paralinguistic restitutions (Thurlow ,2003).

#### 4.1.3.2 PUNCTUATION

An important trait of text messaging is punctuation. It is said to be minimalist in most computer mediated structures (Chiad:2008). Chiad further elaborates that the use of punctuation in text messages is an act committed by texters to

compensate the prosody and paralanguage of speech. Thus, texters tend to show their emotions by using non standard punctuation marks that moves away from normal rules of writing. In certain cases, punctuation marks are repeated to exaggerate texters emotional involvement. There are also tendency to use multiple punctuation marks to add more contextual force or emphasis. This explains the absurd use of punctuation in text messages.

The data analysis in this section identified few patterns of punctuation usage. The first pattern of punctuation usage identified is the use of full stop is used throughout the corpus. This is similar to what is found by Baron and Ling(2007) as mentioned by Lyddy(2011). The second pattern of punctuatuation usage identified in this analysis is also similar to what is found by Chiyad(2008) that is the use of punctuation marks to emphasize a matter or to show emotions. Obviously, the frequency of occurrence of this pattern is quite high - a total of ninety two messages were identified with the use of exclamation marks.

The use of exclamation marks in these messages denotes a variety of emotions. The messages below show the different usage of the exclamation mark in the text messages of different context.

i. Showing dissatisfaction

*FB74      Very selfish people firing crackers in the middle of the night in residential areas. It is, indeed, very senseless - shame on you!*

ii. Showing anger

*FB122      Malaysian drivers are one of the worst in the world.Never stop for Zebra Crossing...Malu Malaysia..!!!*



iii. Showing excitement/happines

*FB95      Congrats, Dr Chen Wei Seng n Stefen Chow on taking d photography world by storm n making M'sians real proud!*

iv. Seeking Attention

*FB99      Residents in Damansara Jaya blasting crackers past midnite wt impunity. Police help! To those firing firecrackers, you are encouraging unruly behaviour in this country. It's a banned item; you are supporting smuggling*

The use of question marks is also rampant in this corpus. Although it is mainly meant for questioning, Its usage differs based on the context of the messages. Below are sample messages taken with question mark usage. The use of question mark occurs in one hundred and fifty-nine messages.

*AP27      Mail services in Ukay Perdana area is getting worse by the day. Bills n mail never get delivered. What's happening Pos Malaysia?*

*MY9      Why is DBKL not taking action against trailer lorries parked @ Jln 1/37 Tmn Bkt Maluri? Road repairs not cheap u kn*

*NV38      FT Minister says wait for feedback before decision on assessment rates. What? Doesn't he consider all the uproar made by KL residents now enough "feedback"? –*

*NV45      What happened to all the "SOP", lack of enforcement? How can an auxiliary policeman carry a gun when off duty?*

The use of question marks in these messages are at different places. In message AP27, the question mark is used at the end of the statements questioning the authorities concern on the matter being raised. In the MY9 message, question is asked first to the authority concerned before a follow up statement given to rationalize the questioning. NV38 message has two questions marks in it. The first, a show of disbeliefment, and the second the supporting question to add to this disbeliefment. Finally, there are also

messages that contains only questions like in message NV45. The texter undoubtedly questions the authority concerned without giving any room for explanation.

The use of comma in the messages is identified with various usage but it mainly acts as sentence conjunction. Below are some examples taken from the corpus that highlight the use of comma.

i. To list

MC4 *Healthy living is eating food low in sugar, salt n oil, lots of green vegetables, 30 min. exercise daily, 8 hrs sleep n BMI <25*

ii. To separate clause

FB67 *There are still a number of 'unauthorised' parking attendants in Ipoh, trying to seek a fast buck.*

iii. to mark part of sentence

MC50 *S in d words of d song in Annie, Get Your Gun, "Anything u can do, I can do better," women r a force 2 b reckoned with n shud never b taken 4 granted.*

Dash, a punctuation mark that can be used as sentence breaker similar to comma, colon or semi-colon, is also identified in this messages for similar usage purpose.

JY103 *Rally – both, the police n the participants played their parts well n proper. Pls maintain this peace.*

FB77 *Penang hawker food during CNY – watered-down versions, tiny portions served in disposable wares, all at higher costs*

FB112 *To those who worked through Chinese New Year - the nurses, doctors, policemen, firemen and others, thank you.*

MC117 *Joe Tai on "much ado about super scores" - agree with u 200% - my thoughts exactly!*

In the messages above, the use of dash as sentence breakers either to list examples, or to separate clauses, or to relate topic to its subject matter, is clearly shown. The use of hyphen as in compound words or to join prefixes or as word breaker is also found. Below are some examples of hyphen usage identified in the messages.

- MC93 *PLUS should consider a long- term plan to widen NSE stretch from Slim River-Juru to 3 lanes. Revenue from toll collections can finance this*
- MC114 *Why nobody taking responsibility to settle housemen issues once and for all? Does it take one life per year to re-visit housemen issues?*
- MC136 *After 'guerilla' threats in Sabah, stop cession payments. Why shd we finance a pirates-and-bandits chief?*

Semi-colon, colon, and quotation mark were identified in the messages even though with a minimal occurrence – four instances of colon, nine instances of semi colon and twenty instances of quotation marks. Its usage did not differ as in formal writing that is to join two related independent clauses. Below are some sample messages that show the usage of colon and semi-colon.

- FB84 *To the ppl asking for firecracker ban, tell me honestly: hv u not played wt I when u were young or anytime in yr life? It's not like it's being let off fr 24 hrs n 7days*
- FB157 *Trengganu Stadium Collapse: think the original design is faulty. The whole stadium should be demolished and a completely new one rebuilt. Don't be penny wise and pound fool Stadium Mizan re-collapse: Not only contractr responsibl but JKR muz b held accountbl 4 not suprvsng! JKR got away d 1st, it stil hasnt lernt lesson!*
- FB99 *Residents in Damansara Jaya blasting crackers past midnite wt impunity. Police help! To those firing firecrackers, you are encouraging unruly behaviour in this country. It's a banned item; you are supporting smuggling*

*MC103 Datuk K. Rajagopal's comments must be taken as constructive criticism; after all, if the coach cannot criticise his own players, who can.*

*JY242 "Don't create a storm in a tea cup" allow the screening of the movie "Vishwaroopam" There has been many other movies with the similiar story line example "Roja" and "Bomba".*

*MC51 Politicians on both sides, pls keep the promises made 2 d rakyat or you'll be judged again in GE14. As d saying goes, "fool us once..."*

The punctuation identified in this study is not only restricted to the use of full stops and exclamation marks. Using other punctuation marks is also prevalent in the corpus. The use of punctuation mark in this corpus is of various types and usage. Texters' effort in putting their views clearly is done by using these punctuation marks as they are used in formal writing.

#### **4.1.4 CODE SWITCHING**

Androutsopoulos(2010) quoted the definition given by Gumperz(1982) and Heller and Pfaff(1996) that code switching, depending on approach, is a juxtaposition of linguistic codes within a single sentence, or as an alternation of codes that lacks a specific pragmatic function. This language phenomenon, common among bilingual or multilingual has taken the centre stage of research in computer-mediated communication. In this section, the analysis looked into the code switching practice that took place in these messages.

The analysis identified a total of two hundred and fifty four messages with various types of code switching. The types of code switching were categorized based on David(2008). David named the pattern of switching in local news daily as local lexical intrusion due to the process of nativization. In her study on local intrusion

in English news dailies in Malaysia, Pakistan and Singapore, she listed the switches into a few categories. The finding of code switching pattern in this study is based on the categories listed by David.

Based on the categorization listed by David and Kuang (2008), code-switching instances that occurred in this corpus are shown below.

#### i. People (Title and Honoraries)

- FB171 Sultan of S'gor Sultan Sharafuddin is our best Sultan. Whoever comes into power must work closely with d palace 2 make S'gor a better place. Heed Sultan's advice*  
(Sultan is title of State Rulers of Royal Family)
- FB103 Datuk K. Rajagopal's comments must be taken as constructive criticism; after all, if the coach cannot criticise his own players, who can.*
- JY40 We surely agree with Tan Sri Zainuddin Maidin on his remarks about the poorsecurity at KLIA n about Ahmed Kanan's case being a serious matter which must not be taken lightly*  
(Tan Sri is the second most senior federal title given to an individual whereas Datuk is federal title, both bestowed to qualified individuals, by ruler of the country and state)

#### ii. Events

- MC220 Malaysians should mourn for the cops who died in Lahad Datu battle. Stop the jom heboh carnival in Terenganu n have solat hajat*  
(Jom heboh- a carnival annually organized by a local broadcasting channel,TV3)
- JN7 MOE pls cancel Hari Sukan in schools this yr. Students hvng sports n march pass prac in d hazey condition. Health hazard.*  
(Hari Sukan- Sports Day)
- AG34 Make sure car in good condition, and the driver fresh, as we prepare to balik kampung. Don't let our loved ones receive us with tears.*  
(Balik kampung- Going back to hometown especially on festive season)

### iii. Cultural activities

- JY93 *What is the Penang govt up to by not putting **Ponggal n Thaipusam** on tourism calendar.*  
(Ponggal and Thaipusam are Hindu festivals )
- AP20 *Attending political **ceramah** is good but please ensure your cars are parked properly and not a hindrance to other road users.*  
(Ceramah- a talk, speech especially on religious or political matters)
- JN2 *Pls ban smoking in wet market, pasar tani n pasar malam*  
(**Pasar tani** and **Pasar Malam** – local wet markets held in open space area, Pasar Tani usually in the morning and Pasar Malam at night.)

### iv. Places

- NV52 *Need MPKj to look into illegal dumping beside house in Jalan Seri Bangi 1, **Taman** Seri Bangi in Bangi Lama. The dumping ground is an eyesore ( Taman- Housing Area)*
- JY126 *Road in front of TNB in **Jalan** Kepong full of dangerous potholes.*  
(Jalan – Road)
- FB23 *Pls sync traffic lite at junction of Jln Alam Damai with **Persiaran** Alam Damai. Difficult 4 residents 2 go in n out of their own housing estate*  
(Persiaran – Drive)
- FB21 *Long wait at the outpatients' department at **Hosp** Angkatan Tentera Lumut (Hospital – similar with 'Hospital' in English but pronounced differently. In this context it is used as how it is phrased in Malay language.)*
- MC2 *Motorists park along d yellow line at Tmn Kota Laksamana, Melaka corner **kopitiam**. Blocking traffic day n nite. Authorities never take action. Close 1 eye or lazy?( Kopitiam – Chinese coffee shop)*
- MC242 *Smoking shisha should be banned in **mamak** restaurants and cafes*  
(Mamak- People of Indian Muslim origins)

v. **Political Movements**

SP30 *Kudos 2 our PM 4 rewarding our bumiputra brothers! What about the majority of the M'sian Indians who voted 4 BN? (BN – stands for Barisan Nasional, the major political party ruling in Malaysia)*

vi. **Religious**

MC220 *Malaysians should mourn for the cops who died in Lahad Datu battle. Stop the jom heboh carnival in Terengganu n have **solat hajat**. (Solat hajat – special prayer conducted by Muslims)*

vii. **Arts and Film**

AG3 *Banning **Tanda Putera** will only add to curiosity of ordinary Malaysians, who will rush to other cinemas to find out what it is about.*

JY242 *“Don’t create a storm in a tea cup” allow the screening of the movie “**Vishwaroopam**” There has been many other movies with the similiar story line example “**Roja**” and “**Bomba**”.*

viii. **Food**

JY46 *Expensive canteen food. **Nasi lemak** biasa at a school in Cheras sold at RM2 per plate. Pls check. (Nasi lemak- famous Malaysian dish also known as ‘sticky coconut rice’)*

ix. **Quotation**

AG57 *Congrats 2 d police for their action against crime. Hope this is not d case of **hangat2 tahi ayam**. Keep up d good work and make Malaysia a safe place to live (hangat-hangat tahi ayam- A Malay proverb that means only for a short period of time)*

MC109 *Another feather is added 2 PM's cap 4 playing a significant role in d field of Chinese education in M'sia. "Hsieh hsieh nee."- (Hsieh hsieh nee – a Chinese word that means Thank you)*

x. **Conceptualising a local context**

AG40 *It's a big mistake to release the x-EO detainees. Most of them are "taiko" n they are under EO bcoz it's difficult to prosecute them as they hv scapegoats "ma-chai". (taiko- a Chinese word that means big brother or someone in power)*

MC94 *Fifteen years lifespan for vehicles is not a good idea. Don't give in to car 'towkays' (Towkays – Chinese word that means 'boss')*

AG51 *Are **Orang Asli** being forgotten? I pleased to know that Project Light A Home is helping the orang asli in remote areas where there is no supply of electricity n water (Orang Asli – The aboriginal/indigenous people in Malaysia)*

SP30 *Kudos 2 our PM 4 rewarding our **bumiputra** brothers! What about the majority of the M'sian Indians who voted 4 BN? ( bumiputra- The native/indigene Malays in Malaysia)*

Apart from these instances of code switching the use of Malay acronyms are quite apparent in this corpus. The breakdown of these acronyms is shown in the table below.



**Table 4.5:**List Of Malay Acronyms used in the corpus

<b>TYPE OF MALAY ACRONYMS</b>	<b>EXAMPLE</b>	<b>MESSAGES</b>
<i>Local Town Councils,</i>	<i>MBSA,MPKJ,MBPJ,MPJPIKAP,LTAT,DBKL,</i>	<i>126</i>
<i>Task Force,</i>	<i>PDRM,RELA,JPJ, ATM</i>	
<i>Ministry</i>	<i>SPAD, KPKT.JPA,SPN</i>	
<i>Political Parties</i>	<i>BN,</i>	
<i>Government Agencies</i>	<i>TELEKOM, Puspel, Syabas ,TN, Pos M'sia, EC</i>	
<i>Public Examination,</i>	<i>SPM, PBS</i>	
<i>Education Program,</i>	<i>KBKK, PPSMI</i>	
<i>Transportation,</i>	<i>KTM,PLUS, LDP,</i>	
<i>Highways,</i>	<i>Sprint,Kesas, Litrak</i>	
<i>People With Disability,</i>	<i>OKU,</i>	
<i>IMALAYSIA Programmes</i>	<i>BRIM,KDRIM,PRIMA</i>	

Malay acronyms which refers to local authorities has 126 occurrence contributing to the major preferred pattern of switching in this study. This could be due to the fact that these messages are intended for the local community who are aware of the acronyms. Even though there are certain acronyms that have their equivalent English acronyms, the use of Malay acronyms is still preferred. David and Kuang(2008) regards this as a means used by the bilingual or multilingual speakers to facilitate their selection of words which are culturally associated with certain concepts and situations.

The code switching pattern is not only restricted to the local lexical intrusion. The data analysis also provided another pattern of switching. This pattern is listed below together with the messages where it occurs.

i. Noun insertion

SP8      *The **rakyat** should work with the police and the MACC to battle crime and corruption*

The word 'rakyat' is the most frequently used Malay word in this corpus as it was identified in twelve messages. Having its equivalent meaning in English, 'people', the word 'rakyat' is more preferred compared to the English word.

The following examples are messages that were identified with local Malay Language lexical intrusion

NV50      *You can run but you can't hide." **Syabas** to IGP Tan Sri Khalid and team for the arrest of the rogue security guard. (Congratulations)*

MC193      *Illegal money lenders first time offenders in s'pore are fined S\$300,000 jailed up to 4yrs and receive 6 strokes of the **rotan** (Rattan)*

AG46      *Better JPN n Immigration merge to b a **suruhanjaya** under parliment, so v can control issuing ic n birth cert. Suruhanjaya can work btr wthout politics involved. (Commission)*

ii. Phrasal insertion

SP25      *Not everything is **Malaysia Boleh!** To bid for the Olympics is still far away. We haven't reached the international mark in most of the sports. ( Malaysia Can)*

FB122      *Malaysian drivers are one of the worst in the world.Never stop for Zebra Crossing...**Malu Malaysia..!!!**( Shame on you)*

FB152      *Illegal school vans around 4 umpteen yrs. Only come 2 lite, when kids seriously injured. **Tidak apa** parents in due diligence 2 b blame. (Not bothered)*

iii. Sentence Switching

AG9      ***Selamat Hari Merdeka!** When we celebrate, let's not forget our first/greatest PM n **Bapa Kemerdekaan** Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra Al- Haj who made it all possible. (Happy Independence Day, Father of Independence)*

*JY67      **Malaysia Boleh** !Congrats to Nicol David for retaining her WSA World Series Squash Finals title for second time, beating England's Laura Massaro*

Another form that is identified in the data analysis is mother tongue interference. There certain usage of Malay words in the messages which eventually meant to be said in English.

*JY108      Why not JPJ form a special team roaming car parks on foot 2 issue compounds/summons 4 excessive car tinting, instead of doing so at road blocks. I m sure enforcement can be **efektif***

*MC224      Pos M'sia pls send **posman** 4 eye check. Letters put in2 wrong boxes in Rasah Kemayan Redirectd many times n my dvd note fr bursa missng*

*JY166      Lebuh AMJ Melaka **polis** speedtrap stil behind bushes on divider. Why is Bkt Aman traffic chief order not heeded? Disciplinary action pls*

*MC190      Congratulation to our army n **polis** force 4 flying Malaysia flag in kg tanduo, Sabah. 4 victims of war, Malaysia 'll always remember u as heroes.*

The word *efektif*, *polis*, and *posman* are English words borrowed into Malay language. Tendency to use these words using the Malay spelling reflects the sociolinguistics of text messaging in relation to speed and brevity. The Malay spelling is shorter in length and in SMS language where the language is hybrids of speaking and writing, spelling do not matter as the way these words are pronounced is still the same. Otemuyiwa(2014), who identified similar pattern, concluded his finding as mother tongue interference. The same notion can be applied for this study. It affects the pronunciation and the writing of some sounds and in certain cases, some sounds are replaced, deleted or represented depending on the texters' origin.

Code switching in the messages does occur but its frequency of occurrence is relatively low. Mostly using acronyms and abbreviations, the code switching pattern involve lexical or noun intrusion. Similar finding was reported by Khatib(2008) in his investigation of Arabic English code switching in text messages produced by Jordanian University students.

Malaysia, being a multiracial country, encompasses people whom at least masters two languages and can master a maximum of four languages. Therefore, the use of Malay, Chinese and Tamil in text messages is not unusual. Since SMS language is a hybrid of spoken and written language, tendency to code switch do occur. The data analysis conducted in this corpus did reveal this. Texters who code switch in their messages, writes it as how they say it. Nevertheless, only twenty-four percent of the messages consist code switching instances, a figure far minimal compared to the overall messages.

#### **4.2 COMMUNICATIONS THEMES AND ORIENTATION.**

The investigation of communications themes and orientations in this study is conducted based on Thurlow's themes and communications orientations (2003). According to Herring (2001) as cited by Thurlow(2003), technological affordance and constraints results in problematic and conflating communicative and linguistic practice in technologically mediated communication. These technological variables which are also known as medium variables are :-

- i. synchronicity – refers to communication mode of being synchronous  
( instant messaging) or asynchronous (email)
- ii. granularity – the length of the text allowed by or restricted by the technology)

- iii. multimodality – inclusion of graphics, audio and video.

Apart from this, non-linguistics variables also contribute to the communicative and linguistic practice. These variables are such as participants' relationship, expectations, and levels of motivation.

Thurlow further added, language, being multifunctional is always dependent on context for its meaning. Thus, it is impossible to assure the content and communicative intent of a message sent by participants. Nevertheless, Thurlow listed nine broad categories in identifying the primary theme for the content of the messages. The themes are informational practical, informational relational, practical arrangement, social arrangement, phatic, friendship maintenance, romantic, sexual and chain messages. These themes were then grouped according to the communication orientation of doing sociability and information exchange.

#### 4.2.1 COMMUNICATION THEME

Based on the examples given by Thurlow for each category we can identify the description suitable for the themes. The analysis for this study identified only six themes out of nine themes listed by Thurlow. The first theme, informational practical, refers to exchange of practical details or straight forward request for information. The first message below is an example of exchange of practical details whereas the second message is a straightforward request for information.

*AP3 As political parties campaign for votes, one thing they must always bear in mind is peace n harmony for the country. Otherwise, the victory will be meaningless. – Willia 29*

*JY25 Civil servants will receive 1/2 mth bonus dis mth. What about pensioners?*

The second theme, informational relational, according to Thurlow, is more of personal favour request. It also contains messages with more solitary information exchanges.

*JY34 SPAD, when are u going to do ops against errant taxi drivers in Kajang town not using meters. Pakistan n Indon taxi drivers! Also cause jams near Metro n Satay stalls in Kajang.*

*MC224 Pos M'sia pls send posman 4 eye check. Letters put in 2 wrong boxes in Rasah Kemayan Redirectd many times n my dvd note fr bursa missng.*

Practical arrangement, the third theme in this categorization is described as implicitly recreational. The primary intent of these messages is the plan to meet up or to do other household expeditions. It depicts messages that contains suggestions without being directly expressed. Based on this description, to suit the context of this study, examples taken from the corpus are messages that contain suggestions to overcome certain problem without direct quotation of the authority in concern or in charge. Below are examples of messages taken from the corpus of this study.

*FB138 Authorities now say that school van that was involved in accident did not have a permit to ferry passengers. Does having a valid permit avert tragedies? Why wait for accidents?*

*MC69 Protect the tigers and their habitat in the Belum-Temengor Forest Complex in Hulu Perak. Ensure that these tigers and other wildlife have home*

Social arrangement is a theme similar to practical arrangement. The content of the messages contain suggestions that quotes the responsible authorities to take the immediate action to curb the issue being raised. These example of messages denote the theme.

*MC198 Suggest that schools be named after our fallen heroes from ATM and PDRM. This will encourage students to be the best*

*JY29 At the Parliament MPs shud ONLY talk or debate on Matters Or Issues that will be beneficial to their constituents who Voted Hon MPs to the Parliament. PANTIES issue dont*

The fifth theme categorized as phatic. Here the messages are defined as non-specific and brief. Thurlow further added that these messages contain an over ridding jocularly, intensely context-dependent and difficult to be discern by third parties. Nevertheless, these messages clearly highlight the intent of being humorous. Below are some examples of phatic messages taken from the corpus.

*SP39 First we had a 'billionaire philanthropist', now we have a super stud with 'superior genes' who is forced to make love up to 6X a day. What next?*

*JN17 Malaysia can build smart tunnels & bridges & yet slope retainer walls can collapse. – Remy Jafar*

Messages with friendship theme are messages that contain apology, best wishes and support. According to Thurlow, these types of messages indicate how texters rely on text messaging technology to facilitate relational maintenance and social intercourse and also complement face to face interaction.

*FB11 What a wonderful taxi driver! My mother left her purse containing holiday money in it in the taxi. The gentleman returned it the following day when he found it after cleaning up*

*MC10 Salute to our soldiers who is defending our sovereignty in Sabah. Hang in there! Here's a salute to our fallen commandos. My deepest condolence to their families.*

The final theme identified in this corpus is chain message. These messages are called chain messages because of the topic being raised are repeatedly mentioned in long co joining sentences or the message speaks on an issue lengthily. Below are two messages identified chain message in the corpus.

- JY23 *Destroy racism!!!! Be like a Panda, He is Black, He is White, He is Asian, He is Chubby, & He is Cute.*
- MC167 *Putting down 8 canines who are well trained n served the Fire Dept loyally for 10 years with lame excuses is totally unacceptable n downright cruel. It's v sad 2 hear dedicated old n sick dogs @ d Fire n Rescue Dept had been put 2 sleep. Beware, people in this dept will b treated like that when they retire.*

In order to identify the primary content theme of the messages in the corpus coding system is used. Each primary content theme is given a code based on its title. Below is the coding system used.

**Table 4.6:** Coding for Communication Themes

CODE	THEME
T1	Informational Practical
T2	Informational Relational
T3	Practical Arrangement
T4	Social arrangement
T5	Phatic
T6	Friendship Maintenance
T9	Chain Messages

Messages were coded based on the primary content theme. Findings from the data analysis is shown in the table below



**Table 4.7:** Findings for Communication Themes

CODE	COMMUNICATION THEMES	MESSAGES
T1	Informational Practical	335
T2	Informational relational	241
T3	Practical arrangement	136
T4	Social arrangement	156
T5	Phatic	51
T6	Friendship maintenance	107
T9	Chain messages	4

Based on the investigation conducted the corpus does not have any messages to be categorized in the Romantic and Sexual communications themes.

From the table above, informational practical theme messages were mostly identified in the corpus. This is followed by informational relational theme. Social arrangement, practical arrangement and friendship maintenance falls in sequence of fourth, fifth and sixth themes mostly identified in the corpus. The least content theme identified in the corpus is phatic messages followed by chain messages.

Previous studies conducted on identifying the thematic content of text messaging, identified friendship maintenance as the most common theme in text message exchanges. Some of the studies are by Thurlow (2003), Rousan, et.al (2014), Solitilo(2010), and Ling (2005). Their corpus consist text messages retrieved from daily SMS exchanges between selected individuals. The sample of their study differs in terms of age, profession, context, demographical setting, and social status but their message exchange is solely for two-way interactional purpose. In this study, the interactional

pattern is only one way. Messages sent are viewed by public, therefore this explains the identification of informational practical messages as the most preferred content theme.

Further investigation reveals that for the first thematic content, informational practical, messages with straight forward request for information is more compared to exchange of practical details. Bold statements and request are made by directly mentioning the targeted authorities or whomever in concern. Some the examples of these messages are highlighted below.

- AP22     *Government is not providing sufficient information on the Program Ijazah Luar Negara (PILN) scholarships to bursary holders, making application to universities a pain*
- AP24     *There r many motorcyclists using the Federal Highway. JPJ do ur jobs pls. – MCR Motorcycle breakdown leads 2 string of accidents. There are so many complaints in the papers abt motorcyclists not using the motorcycle lane on the highways*
- MY9      *Why is DBKL not taking action against trailer lorries parked @ Jln 1/37 Tmn Bkt Maluri? Road repairs not cheap u know*

As we could see, from the examples given above, messages categorized under the thematic content informational practical contain bold statements and direct quoting for the responsible authority to take the needed action. This can be associated with the nature of the column itself. The column allows readers to express their views on any issues. Therefore, some of the messages were written to vent out anger, demand for answers or immediate action to. Most of the messages categorized in this theme are transparent in voicing out fury or dissatisfaction. In addition the use of punctuation such as exclamation marks and questions marks act as contextualization cues that give rise to the direct tone of claiming, accusing or questioning.

The second category identified under this theme are messages that contain exchange of practical details intended for general audience. The messages act as eye opener for the public to be aware on many issues surrounding them. There was no direct involvement of the texter in this type of messages. Resembling social service messages, these messages contain details or consequences of certain issues, alerting readers with updates necessary for them as an individual or as the public in general.

- FB71 The surge in new voters signifies the people's rising awareness and acceptance of the duty and responsibility as true Malaysia citizens*
- MC4 Healthy living is eating food low in sugar, salt n oil, lots of green vegetables, 30 min. exercise daily, 8 hrs sleep n BMI <25*
- AG49 High doctors fees. Any increase in fees will see more doctors joining the private sector. Docs fees are already too high*

Two sub categories were identified under informational practical theme. The first refers to messages that contain bold request or queries and the second is of practical details exchange. This theme has the highest number of messages identified in the corpus.

The second highest communication theme identified in this corpus is informational relational. The difference between this theme and informational practical is relatively low ( difference of 94 messages). As how the theme implies, the content of the messages were also identified with request for personal favours and more solitary information exchange. Below are some messages that fits personal favour request.

- OC5 E- filed income tax for 2012. Still no reply of tax refund until now. Pls refund urgently.*
- MC45 Can PTPK Loan Dept. Pls. publish your contact no. U're tel. nos. are not reachable. I need u 2 update my loan balance*

MC224      *Pos M'sia pls send posman 4 eye check. Letters put in2 wrong boxes in Rasah Kemayan Redirectd many times n my dvd note fr bursa missng.*

Apparently, personal request messages that occur in this corpus represent everyone in general. The use of first person pronoun is obvious in these messages. However, the request made is not of an individual interest; it involves a bigger group in general. It can represent Malaysian citizen in general, close-knit community, neighborhood, a specific race, a profession, a group of movement or a society in general. Below are some of the messages identified under this category.

MC248      *Please MRT don't drill in the middle of the night. We all need sleep. It's very disturbing.*

JY42      *I recently went to Port Klang and saw many areas in a dilapidated condition. Conditions have not changed there since the 70s. Can someone explain what is going on.*

AG02      *Tanda Putera is only a movie. Why the hoohah! Penangites like me, aged 60plus have seen live bloody gang fights n lived thru May 13. Let the movie be screened*

The first category do not occur much in the corpus as compared to the second sub category ; solitary information exchanges. Messages written under this theme clearly indicates a more polite and humble tone in relating an issue or requesting a favour. Furthermore, the tendency to include oneself in the context even though requesting or representing for everyone in general creates an atmosphere of close intimacy. As we are aware, the messages sent to this column are compilation of text messages sent by readers of a daily unknown to each other. However, messages identified in this theme do not hinder for social intimacy to take place among them and the other readers who are part of the unseen community reading the column.

The third highest theme identified in this corpus, social arrangement, which is also said to be explicitly recreational. Defined as plans or suggestions, messages

categorized under this theme contain messages that directly suggest ways to overcome certain matters or issues. Similar to the first theme, informational practical, the messages in this theme also is written boldly. Indirectly, the texters, whom are also the citizens of this country practiced their rights as the country's civilians voicing out their concern in solving a general problem or issue. The messages given below are example of this theme.

- SP40      Make the boyfriends of women who kill/abandon their babies take equal responsibility for d cruel act. It's only fair as they made d gals pregnant*
- NV11      The Government should consider crediting BRIM payments into the bank accounts of recipients who are senior citizens, medically unfit & disabled*
- NV27      How about Operasi Cantas to catch snatch thieves instead*

Practical arrangement theme, which also known as implicitly recreational falls into the fourth highest category of themes, identified in this corpus. Suggestions given in this category, indirectly indicates the concerned authority to be aware of the issue raised.

- JN40      Everyone has his opinion on collapsed retaining wall but can't pinpoint d cause. Only solution is to stop raping d hills & building houses on them*
- JN126      Traffic lights at Jln Yeap Chor Ee/Buah Pala junction installed some time ago but will help prevent accidents if put into operation soon.*
- JN241      Time to make the no plastic rule in supermarkets on somedays permanent. Only way ppl will change habit is to make them pay*

The examples shown above clearly indicate that the authorities concerned are left to be wondered by the reader. One can only assume to whom these messages are intended to based on the allegations raised. However the ultimate objective of these

messages are none other to ensure responsible parties to take necessary action based on the suggestions given of the issue being raised.

Messages under friendship maintenance communication theme contain statements that dwell with compliments, thanks and support. These messages are meant to facilitate relational maintenance.(Thurlow,2003) A total of one hundred and seven messages were identified in the corpus and it is the fifth theme highly used in the corpus. There were two categories identified in this theme. The first category is messages that explicitly use complimentary words to express senders positive emotions or thoughts. Below are some examples of these messages.

- FB5 I would like to compliment RTM newsreaders. They are getting so much better. –*
- FB17 I support the proposal to rename Putra Stadium in Bukit Jalil as Eddy Choong Stadium in honour of a great Malaysian and a world-class badminton player*
- JN13 Well done. It was a good effort by all who organised n participated in d national Christmas open house. Have a HappyNew Year.*

The second category of messages contains language choice that implicitly denotes the texters' thoughts. The messages are written without any usage of complimenting words. However, the content of these messages can be understood as showing gratitude or appreciation.

- FB49 We welcome Psy 2 M'sia with open arms. His unique song n dance act coupled with his endearing personality will PSYche up M'sians of all races.*
- MC175 To the families of our fallen heroes. Stand up and be proud. Many years from now, u will tell stories of how they hv defended the nation*
- FB187 Sabrina was a wonderful soul. Myza Nordin is a gem of a woman. Gives me faith in humanity*

The above messages were grouped under the second sub category of friendship maintenance theme. In the messages above, expressions are made in a jovial tone allowing a close intimacy involving the texters, readers in general and the addressee of the messages. It is also meant to represent everyone in general. Therefore, messages under this category were also identified with their positive value of bridging the relationship of the virtual community of texters

Apparently, the number of occurrence for messages with friendship maintenance theme in this study is different compared to the findings presented by Thurlow(2003), Thelwall(2009), Sotillo(2010) and Shafie and Nayan(2013). The communication theme, friendship maintenance, appeared to be the most identified theme in their studies. Thurlow and Sotilo studied personal message exchanges, Thelwall studied wall postings of public message exchanges, and Shafie and Nayan studied Facebook postings. All this social network sites are the platform for individuals to be connected and attached to each other in the virtual world. Mostly known to each other in the sites, familiarity allows friendship maintenance.

As was mentioned earlier, the corpus for this study is taken from a local news daily meant for public viewing. Encompassing messages generated from mobile mediated technology, this column is open for public whom are unknown to each other. The only attachment that bonds them is they are the readers of the daily. Their messages also are meant for one way communication to express thoughts or views. Therefore, friendship maintenance is less likely conducted in this column compared to social network sites that requires message exchanges in order to maintain one's relationship with other members. This is the likely explanation for the theme to be the fifth most identified theme in this corpus.

Under the theme Phatic, a total of fifty one messages only were identified in the corpus. The language of phatic messages is interestingly cynical in tone but raise a sharp realization on the matter being addressed.

*FB80      What's the use of cutting the grass and blowing the cuttings into the drains?*

*FB90      Hard to explain to tourist friend why more foreigners are doing business than locals in Chinatown, K.Lumpur.*

*FB132    BRIM toll free 1800222500 with recorded msg "All lines are busy. Try again later' every day from 8am sharp till 6pm*

Examples above clearly indicate the teasing tone as mentioned by Thurlow(2003) with the usage of steady flow of banters, the messages are exceptionally entertaining. Actual daily encounters were described mockingly to address serious issue lying underneath the scenario. Although the content of these messages has overriding jocularity but intimacy and perpetual social contact is maintained.

Lastly, the final communication theme identified in this corpus is chain messages. These messages contain a series of sentences denoting the sole topic of discussion . There were only four messages identified in this corpus and apparently, these messages happen to be some of the longest messages in the corpus. There were only four messages in the corpus that denotes this theme.

*JN64      Road leading to Aman Perdana, Klang used by heavy vehicles bad condition with potholes. Many accidents. Patching does not help if workmanship is bad. Potholes getting bigger every day at Jln Bukit, PJ near shoplots. Parking lines hv disappeared. Exposed manhole on d main road still not fixed*

*MC30      We all know that Najib is the man who can lead the country n lead it well. Do not let him beg for our votes. Malaysia expects everyone to do his duty. TQ very much PM 4 all ur help n care. Pls take over Damansara Damai n transform it into a hot spot. Without BN here, we are so invisible*



The table below shows the breakdown of the communication themes and its categories identified in the data analysis

**Table 4.8:** Breakdown of communication themes and its categories

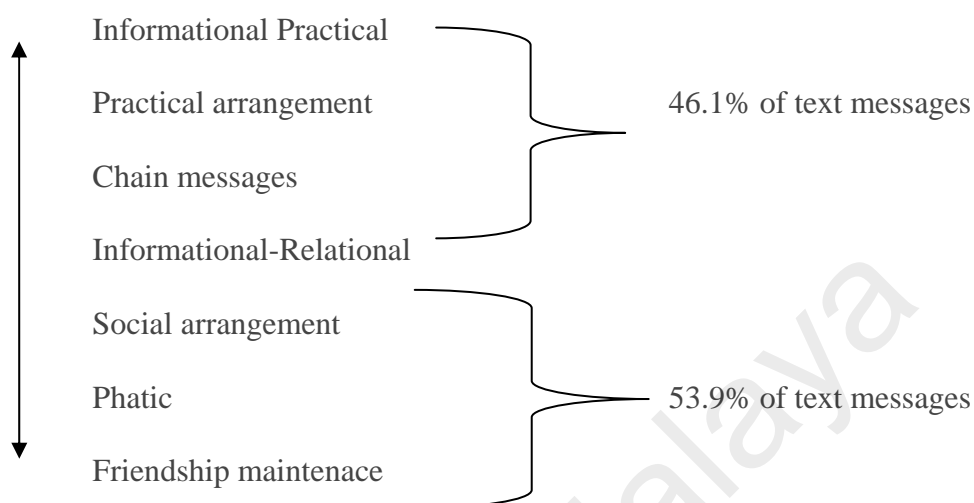
COMMUNICATION THEMES	CATEGORIES IDENTIFIED
Informational Practical	Straight forward request Exchange of practical details
Informational relational	Request for personal favours Solitary information exchanges
Social arrangement	Direct suggestions to the issues raised
Practical arrangement	Suggestions given without implying the concerned authority directly
Friendship maintenance	Explicit use of Complimentary words Without the use of complimentary words denoting gratitude or appreciation tone
Phatic	humorous, cynical and teasing
Chain messages	conversational discourse

#### 4.2.2 COMMUNICATION ORIENTATION

Thurlow(2003) in discussing the communication orientation has listed interactional and transactional orientation. The former refers to doing sociability and the latter is information exchange. Based on these findings of the communication theme of the messages, the communication orientation was identified. Thurlow grouped these thematic categories into relational and informational dimensions. Informational dimension consist informational-practical, practical arrangement and chain messages as their thematic content. Social arrangement, phatic and friendship maintenance themes are categorized as interactional dimension.

The finding for this data analysis is presented in the figure below

**Low intimacy, high transactional orientation**



**High intimacy, high relational orientation.**

**Figure 4.3:** Communication orientation

From the figure above, it can be concluded that the communication orientation based on the data analysis of the messages in this study is informational relational. The difference of relative weighting between informational practical orientation and informational relational orientation is 7.8%. Half of the corpus consists messages with informational relational theme. Taking into consideration the nature of the column which is meant for public viewing and contributed by the public, it is still used as a printed social medium to convey one's personal thoughts and feelings that is meant to bond a close relationship.

Based on the sample messages highlighted for each communication theme, it is clear that they are written in very modest manner without overcrossing the boundary of being too personal or emotional. Even though the messages are oriented towards

informational relational, the content clearly denotes issues that revolves in the society and not on one's personal issue.

A matter of interest identified in the data analysis is the non-occurrence of message exchange. Weighing more towards informational relational communication theme, the messages were identified to have the same issue but never against each other. The readers, as the participants of the column, did not condemn each other in arguing an issue. In fact, the messages that spoke of an issue falls into different thematic content category.

From the finding above, it can be concluded that messages with the thematic content of informational practical are mostly identified in the corpus. On the other hand, this does not influence the communication orientation of the column as the main communication orientation in this corpus is informational relational.

#### **4.3 LANGUAGE USE IN TERMS OF POLITENESS STRATEGY.**

Brown and Levinson, proposed the politeness theory in order to understand politeness phenomena in human interaction. They claim that socioeconomic complexity might isolate a society in terms of social status. However, this does not influence their degree of politeness. Politeness in a broader context is heavily dependent on the situation, individuals and groups. Brown and Levinson is said to be exceptional in pioneering this interesting sociolinguistics aspect because generalization is made by using situated conversational exchange with reference to empirically testable universals of discourse and interaction. Thus, their theory is still applicable in order to study the

degree of politeness even in today's hype of virtually produced discourse and interaction.

Language use in terms of politeness strategy were analyzed and coded according to Brown and Levinsons' Politeness Strategy (1978). The table below shows the findings from the analysis.

**Table 4.9:** Occurrence of Politeness Strategy in the Messages

POLITENESS STRATEGY	CODING SYSTEM USED	OCCURENCE
BALD ON RECORD	BR	283
POSITIVE POLITENESS	PP	384
NEGATIVE POLITENESS	NP	209
OFF RECORD	OR	154

The table above clearly indicates that most of the messages consist of positive politeness strategy, followed by bald on record, negative politeness and off record.

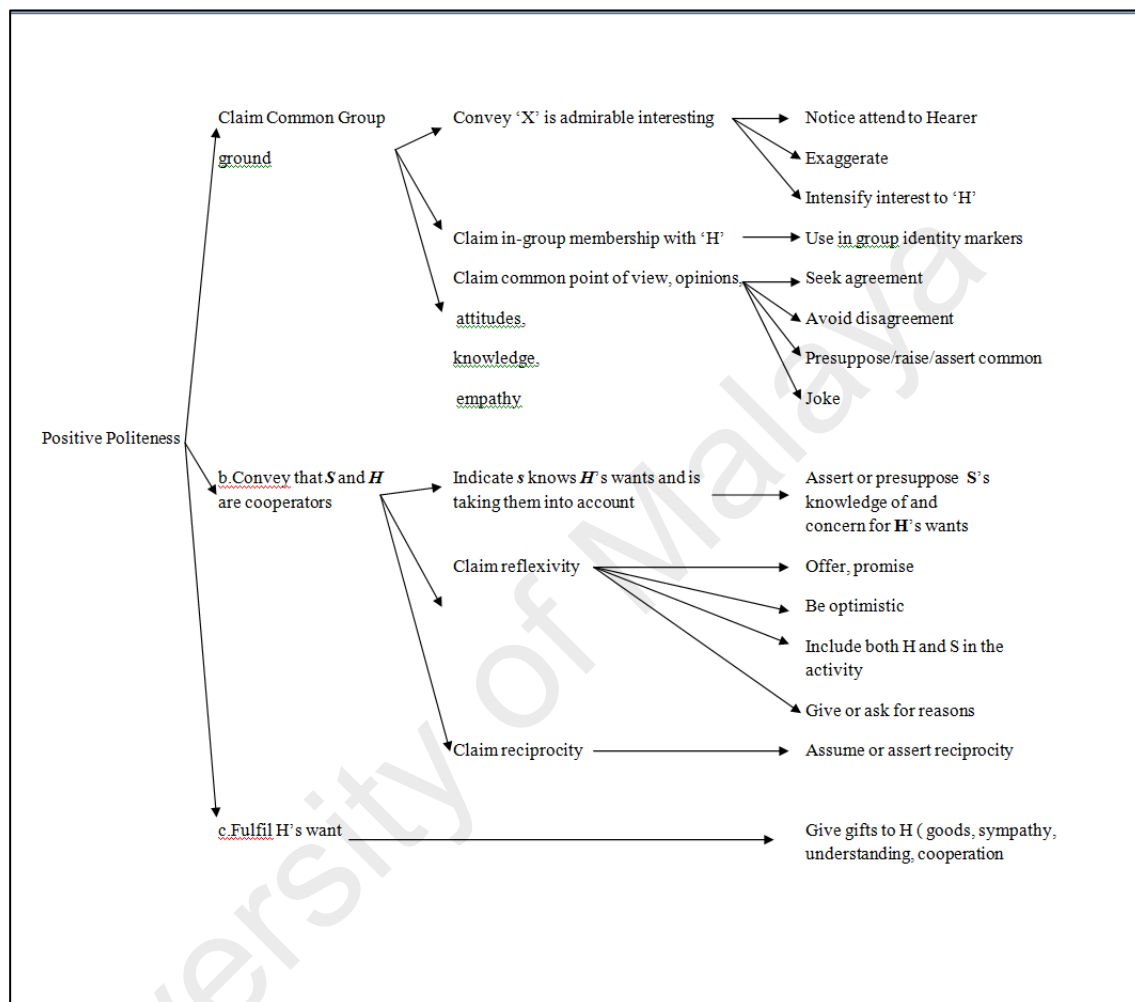
#### **4.3.1 POSITIVE POLITENESS STRATEGY**

Positive politeness strategy is identified in three hundred and eight four messages in this corpus. It appeared to be the most widely used strategy in this corpus compared to other strategies. This finding is in line with Najib,et.al(2012) whom investigated the politeness strategy in Arab students' e-mails, Chiad(2013) who studied politeness tactics in personal e-mails, and Li(2013) who studied politeness strategies in an online interactive learning module.

According to Brown and Levinson, positive politeness is redress directed to the addressee's positive face that is his perennial desire of wants. It also refers to actions, acquisitions, values that is resulting from them should be thought as desirable. In order to do so, redress consists in partially satisfying that desire by communicating that one's own wants ( or some of them) are in some respect similar to the addressee wants. They further added that positive politeness utterances are used as a kind of metaphorical extension of intimacy. Its usage implies common ground or sharing of wants to a limited extent even between strangers who perceive themselves, for the purpose of the interaction, as somehow similar. This explanation reflects a context which is ideal to explain the relationship among interlocutors in this column. The use of positive politeness, according to Brown and Levinson, is not only to redress face threatening act but also a social accelerator. Speaker ( in this context, the texter) by using positive politeness tactics, indicates that she wants to become close to the Hearer( in this context, the intended addressee)

Three main dimensions categorized in positive politeness are claiming common ground, conveying that speaker and hearer are cooperators and fulfilling hearer's wants for some request. The first dimension, claiming common ground, highlights three major techniques of positive politeness strategies. These techniques are by conveying the intended addressee as admirable and interesting, claiming in-group membership with the intended addressee, claiming common point of view, opinions, attitude, knowledge and empathy with the intended addressee. The following section of this data finding will highlight messages that exemplify positive politeness strategies employed to claim common ground.

Figure 4.4 below shows the flow chart of positive politeness strategy based on Brown and Levinson's description. Main strategies involved and techniques employed under each sub strategies will discussed in detail in the following data analysis.



**Figure 4.4:** Chart of Strategies Positive Politeness ( adapted from Brown and Levinson, 1987)

#### 4.3.1.1 CLAIM COMMON GROUND

##### a. Convey 'X' is admirable, interesting

##### 1. Notice, attend to Hearer ( His interests, wants, needs, goods)

In this type of messages, the interlocutors were compassionate in acknowledging the intended addressee's interests, wants, needs or good. Messages produced by these

texters create an atmosphere of closeness even though they are strangers apart, unknown to each other.

*FB87 Kudos to the Bdr Utama police personnel for their presence and rounds during CNY. Residents feel secure & safe. We hope they will continue even after CNY*

*FB129 Singapore linked to KL in just 90 minutes? That's so exciting. But can Alor Setar, too, be linked to Singapore in about 180 minutes? It will be heavenly*

*MC10 Salute to our soldiers who is defending our sovereignty in Sabah. Hang in there! Here's a salute to our fallen commandos. My deepest condolence to their families.*

Complimentary words such as '*kudos*', '*heavenly*' and '*salute*', are used in order to address the intended addressee positively pertaining to show interest and compassion. Hence, the content tone implies a sense of notification and appreciation, which indirectly takes away the pressure to whom the matter is directed. By acknowledging the hearer, the speaker ( in this context, the texter), obviously employs solidarity with the other participants. (in this context, the readers of the daily).

## **2. Exaggerate (interest, interest, approval, sympathy with H)**

The second sub category of positive politeness is described as committed by using exaggerated intonation, stress and other aspects of prosodic, as well as intensifying modifiers. The use of these emphatic or exaggerating words in these messages creates an intensifying impact of its content.

*JN59 Heart wrenching to know newborn babies thrown like rubbish. Please, spare the young one, send baby to baby hatch.*

*JN188 My heart goes 2 teacher n 2 kids who died in Muar car crash. Authority should investigate if lorry was roadworthy*

*AP09 Astro Kasih longest underwater cleanup was a fantastic programme. Congratulations and a big thank u to all the divers. We are proud of u.*

A closer look into these messages reveals that phrases such as *'heart wrenching'*, *'heart goes 2'* *'fantastic programme'* and *'a big thank you'* denote exaggerated intonation and stress, giving an impact to the readers as intensifying modifiers. Thus, these types of language use indirectly immerse the readers and the texters in an emotional manner to be at least sensitive, sympathetic, and concerned.

### 3. Intensify interest to Hearer

In this category, the speaker communicates with the hearer by sharing his wants as to intensify the interest of his own contribution to the context (Brown&Levinson, 1978). A vivid presence is created to make a good story by involving the speaker into the picture. Below are examples of messages that exemplify this.

- |             |   |
|-------------|---|
| <i>AP18</i> | <i>I'm a Christian. Church service is not a whole-day affair. There's enuf time 2 cast vote. Govt not insensitive</i>   |
| <i>JY19</i> | <i>Great job, Star, on exposing th mail delivery scandal. TQ. Shame on U, Pos Malaysia. Now I kno whr my missing letters &amp; magazines are.</i>                             |
| <i>AG51</i> | <i>Are Orang Asli being forgotten? I pleased to know that Project Light A Home is helping the orang asli in remote areas where there is no supply of electricity n water.</i> |

As how this strategy is described by Brown and Levinson, the use of 'I' or the involvement of the speaker (texter) in this context shows the sincerity of the texter. However, in certain messages tendency to use over dramatic expression imposes an element of increasing the interest of the content. These three strategies are used to convey that the intended addressee is admirable and interesting



**b. Claim in-group membership with ‘H’**

**4. Use in-group identity markers**

This is a common strategy identified under positive politeness tactic as reported by Chiyad(2008), Najib,et.al(2012),Izzadie and Illalie(2012) and Li(2013). The use of innumerable ways of in-group identity markers as claimed by these researchers is in line with Brown and Levinson. Speaker can implicitly claim the common ground with the Hearer. Brown and Levinson have listed that the use of in-group markers are address forms, language or dialect, of jargon or slang and of ellipsis.

The use honorific forms to address a singular respecter or distant alters is common in many languages as the usage of singular non-honorific pronoun to a non-familiar alter can claim solidarity. Other address forms are the use of generic names and terms of address. Below are some messages taken from the corpus that denote this category.

**a. Honorific forms**

JN70      *Datuk Nicol David, u have proven that u never give up! Keep up d good job, well done!*

SP30      *Kudos 2 our PM 4 rewarding our bumiputra brothers! What about the majority of the M'sian Indians who voted 4 BN?*

**b. Generic names and terms of address**

JL13      *Dear doctors of Ward 8B, Klang GH on Friday, 19/7, please talk to patients, their families with respect, kindness. Rich or otherwise everyone deserves respect.*

The use of endearments is noted in the analysis (*Dear*). Eventually identified to be used with close acquaintance reflecting intimacy and solidarity (Li:2013, Izzadi&Zilalie:2012), this usage is rather unique in this corpus as we are aware that the

participants are unknown to each other and do not involve in any personal exchanges. However, the use of endearments hints that this group of texters considers the relative power or status of difference between himself and the addressee to be small. Thus, this softens the imperatives by indicating that it isn't a power-backed command.

The second use of in-group markers as mentioned by Brown and Levinson (1978) is the use of code switching. Malaysia is described as a mosaic of ethnic identity for its multi-layered fabrics of people and culture. (Mohd. Don:2012). Tendency to code switch is apparent in every aspect of Malaysian social life especially when it involves technological mediated communication. The context of technology mediated communication does not require a stringent usage of English alone. As a matter of fact, news dailies in Malaysia are identified with code switching practices when it comes to terms better known in the local context (David & Kuang:2008).

Data analysis identified various types of switching ranging from single lexical intrusion to complex sentence switching. Below are some examples taken from the corpus that highlight the usage of code switching in positive politeness strategy.

- AG09      *Selamat Hari Merdeka! When we celebrate, let's not forget our first/greatest PM n **Bapa Kemerdekaan** Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra Al- Haj who made it all possible.*
- AG32      *Make sure car in good condition, and the driver fresh, as we prepare to **balik kampung**. Don't let our loved ones receive us with tears*
- AG44      *Better **JPN** n Immigration merge to b a **suruhanjaya** under parliament, so v can control issuing ic n birth cert. **Suruhanjaya** can work btr w/out politics involved*

Mostly consisting single word switching which involves the use of acronyms referring to locally known authorities or governmental agencies, these messages reflect the in-group solidarity in terms of communication across language.

The third description given under the in-group markers is the use of jargon or slang. Certain terminologies used in this corpus reflect the in-group marker where texters evoke the shared association and attitudes with the addressee. Below are some examples of messages that denote this in-group marker.

- |              |  |
|--------------|--|
| <i>JY49</i>  | <i>On personal data protection ... do schools have d right to demand info of parents' salary, <b>MyKAD</b> no, income tax no, EPF etc?</i>   |
| <i>FB165</i> | Price fixing. What about those coffeeshops/ <b>mamak</b> restaurants where they fix the beverage pricing? Plz check, tqvm  |
| <i>SP58</i>  | <i>It took less than 24 hours to replace the faulty street bulb in front of my house after calling <b>TNB</b>15454. How's that for service? Keep up the good work, <b>TNB</b>.</i> |

The bold words in these messages reflect the jargon or slang familiar in the Malaysian context. Thus, its usage evokes the shared associations and attitudes of the texter, intended addressee and the readers, whom are Malaysian. Therefore, its usage redresses FTA and shows an in-group reliance on the raised matter.

The final description under positive politeness strategy of in-group marker is contraction and ellipsis. According to Brown and Levinson, the use of ellipsis and contraction is based on mutual shared knowledge. Thus, the usage does not hinder any miscommunication. Below is an example that denote the use of contractions and ellipsis.

- AG24 Don't let constant pressure b ur worst enemy, Datuk LCW*

In this message, one will understand that the context for this statement is regarding the badminton tournament participated by a well known Malaysian shuttler. The texter is aware that this text should be understood by anyone who reads it due to the shared knowledge about the context.

- JY5                      *Check other high risk hillslope walls in Damansara Perdana, **Tmn** Templer & Sg Penchala. Use Slope Management System*
- MC209                  *We shld kick out all legal or illegal Filipinos frm nt only Sabah, S'wak, also frm W. M'sia*
- JL06                      *The law is catching up with the publicity crazy **Alvivi**. We must respect each other's religion and culture at all times*

In numerous instances, locally known terms referring to place, location or state are being contracted. Message JY5 and MC209 are examples of contractions usage for a name of place. JL06, on the other hand highlights the usage of contractions referring to the names of a controversial couple. Thus these messages fit the description given by Brown and Levinson on the use of ellipsis and contractions as in-group marker.

**c. Claim common point of views, opinions, attitudes, knowledge, empathy**

Categorized as claiming common point of view, opinions, attitudes, knowledge and empathy, the following strategies of seeking agreement, avoiding disagreement, presupposing or raising or alerting common ground and joking are discussed.

**5. Seek Agreement**

The use of safe topics is done in order to stress one's agreement or to satisfy the readers desire to be right or corroborated into the opinion. This allows relationship maintenance between texter and the readers.

- JL41 We surely agree with Tan Sri Zainuddin Maidin on his remarks about the poor security at KLIA n about Ahmed Kanan's case being a serious matter which must not be taken lightly*
- FB34 Am so excited to see the LRT track almost completed in front of the USJ Digimall. Great speed, now hope work on other stretches are equal to this!*
- FB149 New animal laws great news! 2 enforce, watch the animal cops series on NAT GEO to c hw its done properly without prejudice.*

From the messages above, we could see the texters used safe topics to start off their text followed by request. Texter used reassuring words or phrases showing their interest in general and at the same time ensure that the addressee do not feel exploited when being requested.

Next, the use of repetition noted as a sub strategy under seeking agreement. A technique used to agree on certain matter being raised, it revel in the nuances of approval, surprise, disapproval or simply emphatic. This strategy is committed by repeating part or all the sentences written. Below are examples of messages taken from the corpus resembling repetition in conversation.

- NV04 Selangor state govt servants should also receive pay rise in tandem with politicians. A pay rise as the state's coffers is healthy*
- JY235 With malice towards none n charity for all. Let us strive to help William Yau's parents to move on after their nightmare. Let us not speculate or judge, for who are we to do so.*
- MC29 Please stop all this gender bias. Women want the right to be equal to men then work for it. World is tough for both genders. Please don't be biased*

In the messages above, it could be seen that repetition is used to highlight the issue or opinions raised. It gives an impact of being emphatic (JY235), disapproval (MC29) and approval (NV04). Unlike face to face conversation where the use of

repetition is normally an utterance of a word or short phrases that is the use of repetition in the messages is slightly longer. Nevertheless, its usage fits the description given by Brown and Levinson that is to stress emotional argument of interest and surprise.

## 6. Avoid Disagreement

The desire to agree with the hearer( in this context the addressee) leads the texter to appear to agree to the addressee even though texter has his or her own opinion. Therefore under this strategy of positive politeness texters show their agreement or disagreement to avoid arguments with the addressee by using techniques of token agreement, pseudo agreement, white lies and hedging.

Token agreement refers to the attitude of pretending to agree as to agree or appear to agree to what is happening. With the intention to show agreement, disagreement or soften disagreement, this technique is used to respond to a matter.

*JL38 Agree wit PAGE. PPSMI good. Should continue 4 benefit of all students. Btw Sejarah should b an option n not compulsory 4 SPM.*

*JL42 Good help given to Palestinian, but immigration plse check. airport police plse follow up. Too long a stay*

The second technique employed in the avoiding disagreement strategy is the use of pseudo agreement. Brown and Levinson explain that the use of 'then' as a conclusory marker is an indicator that a conclusion is made based on line of reasoning to agree cooperatively with the addressee. It is used as a fake prior agreement when actually in the conversation both parties had not reached to any agreements. Below is an example that shows the use of pseudo agreement.

*JL01 EO & Preventive laws must be up again. All politicians & lawyers please surf. Facebook: PJ Alert& Crime Awareness then you know what is happening in Malaysia.*

In the message above, it is noted that the texter is yet to reach an agreement with the intended addressee. Nevertheless, the use of ‘*then*’ in the message denotes a strong reasoning to agree with him or her regarding his opinion.

White lies is a technique used in avoiding disagreement strategy to avoid damaging hearer’s positive face. A lie is told in order to pretend to why one cannot comply. Data analysis in this corpus shows that this type of positive politeness strategy is a rare usage. Only one message was identified with the use of white lies.

MY13                      *Time 2 heal M’sia. Whatever happens it shall be d best n acceptance is d 1st step of healing. Dwelling on d past wld only breed ill tots n negativity*

In the message above, the texter told white lies in order to state an opinion. The texter clearly indicates his or her disagreement on current political situation in Malaysia but by using the phrase ‘*time to heal*’ the texter avoids arguments in order to have his say not to be refused point blank.

Hedging opinion is another technique featured under the politeness strategy of avoiding arguments. In order to have one’s say safely vague against certain use of extreme words and intensifying modifiers, hedges such as *sort of*, *kind of*, *like*, *in a way*, are used. Below are some examples on the use of hedges.

AG25                      *All the best to Msian shuttlers 6 at World Badminton Championships starting in Guangzhou today. **Hope** history is made with our 1st World Champion!*

NV31                      *Such a big increase by DBKL is **like** daylight robbery. Have some empathy for the people.*

JY84                      *Convicts shocking escape is like a scene from a Hollywood movie. I hope they will be caught soon*

The examples of messages taken from the corpus denote the use of hedging as a measure to soften the face threatening act and avoid a precise communication of the addressee's attitude.

## 7.      **Presuppose/raise/assert common ground**

In this strategy, speaker presupposes hearer's wants and attitudes, values, familiarity in their relationship and knowledge. Below are some examples of messages that show the use of this strategy

FB176                      *CNY is over & much has been said about unscrupulous people letting off fire crackers in residential areas. Can the authorities please do something*

FB178                      *Organ donation s a life saver n is d most noble n compassionate deed on earth. D **saviour** will surely b rewarded now n the hereafter.*

MC55                      ***Nur Misuari** claims Sabah and Sarawak belong to Suluk nation. Why then not include Brunei and Kalimantan*

In this strategy, presupposing hearer's ( in this context, the texter) knowledge is identified as the most used technique in expressing one's opinion. The use of group codes consisting of language, dialect, jargon, local terminology is found in abundance. In the examples given above, the use of 'CNY', and 'Nur Misuari' are known well in the local context. This is because the texter, the intended addressee, and the readers of the daily share common ground, thus understood what is being conveyed. In message FB178, talks about an organ donation incident where the referent is not explicitly mentioned showing that the texter assume that the reader shares the common gound of knowing who is being talked about. The example of this group codes has been



elaborated in depth in the code switching analysis section and in discussion of in-group marker technique. ( *Refer to findings and discussion on code switching and in-group marker usage*)

## **8. Joke**

Joking is said to be a basic positive politeness strategy to put the hearer at ease ( Brown and Levinson, 1978). It is shared based on mutual background knowledge and values. Jokes can be used as an exploitation of politeness strategies or as an attempt to redefine the face-threatening act. From the data analysis of this study, messages categorized under positive politeness strategy do not have any messages that denote the use of jokes. Therefore, jokes was not favoured as a techniques of positive politeness in this study.

### **4.3.1.2 CONVEY THAT S AND H ARE COOPERATORS**

The second class of positive politeness strategy is based on the notion that the speaker and the hearer are co-operators. Three dimensions of this strategy indicate that speaker knows hearer's wants and takes them into consideration, speaker claim reflexivity and speaker claims reciprocity. In the first dimension, the technique employed is asserting or presupposing speaker's knowledge of and concern for hearer's wants. The second dimension involves strategies that give offers or promises, be optimistic, include speaker and hearer in the context, give or ask for reason. The last dimension looks at the strategy of assuming or asserting reciprocity. Below are the explanations and examples of the three dimensions based on the data analysis conducted for this study.

- a. Indicate S knows H's wants and is taking them into account.
9. **Assert or presuppose Speaker's knowledge of and concern for Hearer's wants.**

In this technique, the speaker, in order to put the hearer ( in this context, the reader) to co-operate with him or her, asserts or implies knowledge of the hearer's wants and willingness as to ensure it fits the speaker's wants too. Thus, in the context of this study, the use of negative questions, which is given as the cue for this technique usage, is identified. Negative question is referring to the usage of negative tag 'not' in either request, offer or apology. The negative tags used in the sample messages below are highlighted.

- |              |   |
|--------------|---|
| <i>JN121</i> | <i>A TV news portal says Americans owe billions in student loans &amp; half <b>can't</b> afford 2 repay even after working. Hope M'sia won't end up like them.</i>                        |
| <i>FB59</i>  | <i>If we object to smoking cigarettes on the grounds that it is "burning money" and ruining our health, we <b>should not</b> condone the letting of firecrackers for the same reason.</i> |
| <i>JY117</i> | <i>Rally may b peaceful but <b>shld not</b> b encourag'd. It takes just 1 stupid act'n 2 start an incident, rules or no rules.</i>  |

**b. Claim reflexivity**

**10. Offer, promise**

This strategy is used to redress the potential threat of face threatening act, where the speaker will acknowledge and help obtain what the hearer wants by giving offer to give promise. This is done to satisfy the hearer's (texter) positive face wants.

- |             |   |
|-------------|---|
| <i>JL45</i> | <i>As suicide level rises, those with such tendencies can take comfort that there's always help at hand via Samaritans who will lend a ear.</i> |
|-------------|---|

JY184      *Pity William's parents for having 2 undergo mental torture n guilt 4 a regrettable error. Let's not b judgmental n offer dem our compassion n consolation. –*

The messages above denote the strategy of using offer or promise to redress the Face Threatening Act, thus the texter within certain sphere of relevance, may at times give false promises to demonstrate their good intentions.

## 11. Be optimistic

In this strategy, it is assumed that the hearer wants the speaker to have his wants and help to obtain them for the speaker. In this context of study, messages that denote the texters' optimism in showing mutual shared interest is identified.

AG25      *All the best to Msian shuttlers 6 at World Badminton Championships starting in Guangzhou today. Hope history is made with our 1st World Champion!*

SP17      *In the spirit of 1 Msia, we hope Govt gives replacement holidays for Deepavali that falls on a Saturday*

SP42      *Hope the Govt wil raise the allowance 4 d working OKU in Budget 2014. Life is but a bad dream for these ppl*

The use of optimistic expressions is regarded as the most dramatic differences between positive politeness and negative politeness in doing the face threatening act by implying that the cooperation between the texter and the intended addressee can be implied as small things that can taken for granted.

## 12. Include both Speaker and Hearer in the activity

In this strategy cooperative assumptions are made by the inclusive use of the pronoun 'we' form. A cue given to identify this usage is the use of 'let's' which

denotes the meaning of you or me which acts as the 'we' form. Below are examples taken from the corpus that denote the usage.

*JY15 With d eye-opening incident in Puncak Setiawangsa, **let's** hope hillside developers in Pg will also take preventive measures 2 avoid a similar occurrence*

*JY162 Enough of advise to William Yau's parents, **let's** put more effort to find the child.*

*JY187 We should intensify our search for the missing boy. William our prayers are with you. Be safe*

This strategy is widely used in the column. As it was mentioned earlier, the column is open to all the readers of the daily. The readers are the locals of this country. Their opinions or views are made denoting the assumptions of being Malaysian citizens in general. Therefore the use of 'let's' and 'we' are quite prominent in the corpus in line with the implications of its usage as said by Brown and Levinson (19780) that is 'I will do it for our benefit'

### **13. Give or ask for reason**

In this strategy, the hearer is included in the conversation. This is because the speaker can give reasons as to why he wants what he wants. By assuming reflexivity by including hearer into the context creates and involvement of the hearer's wants is in relation with the speaker's wants. With the assumptions of having cooperation, it hints the implications of saying 'I can help you' or 'you can help me'. A cue given by Brown and Levinson is the use of indirect suggestions, which demand rather than give reasons.

*FB08 Why is Vishwaroopam banned despite passing through the censor board? Pls allow the screening wtout any deletion of scenes*

*JY130 Why not JPJ form a special team roaming car parks on foot 2 issue compounds/summons 4 excessive car tinting, instead of doing so at road blocks. I m sure enforcement can be efektif*

*FB158 Why be so sentimental? Better to open KLIA2 later at more realistic date, than to rush to meet May 1 deadline and end up with defects later.*

The use of 'why' in the messages above denotes demanding for reasons and it also assumes that without any good reason the intended addressee should not or cannot cooperate, they will cooperate. This can also be categorized as an act of criticizing.

**c. Claim reciprocity**

**14. Assume or assert reciprocity**

Giving evidence of reciprocal rights or obligations of obtaining is also a claim to show the existence of cooperation between speaker and hearer. The cue given by Brown and Levinson for this strategy is negating debt. Based on this description, data analysis was conducted.

*AP32 Car insurance payments keep rising yearly. Just renewed it and was told that next year it will go up further. Govt please do something **so** as not to burden the rakyat.*

*AG44 Better JPN n Immigration merge to b a suruhanjaya under parliment, **so** v can control issuing ic n birth cert. Suruhanjaya can work btr wthout politics involved*

*AG64 "I will stand up **if** the majority of d crowd stands up". Be patriotic, stand up even if you are d only 1 when the Negaraku is played*

The use of key words 'so' and 'if' points to the reciprocal rights of doing, softens face threatening act in terms of negating the debt.

**4.3.1.3 FULFILL H'S WANTS**

Final dimension of positive politeness strategy is to fulfill hearer's wants for some reasons. Here, Brown and Levinson describes that this is an act that involves speaker deciding to redress hearer's face directly by fulfilling some of the hearer's

wants. Speaker indicates hearer's wants for hearer in some aspect. Only one strategy is employed in this dimension that is to give gifts to hearer.

#### 15. Give gifts to H (goods, sympathy, understanding, cooperation)

A speaker in order to satisfy the hearer's positive face wants and wants them to be fulfilled, does the classic positive politeness action of giving gifts. These wants are the wants to be liked, admired, cared about, understood, listened to and so on.

*MC131 PM's successful implementation of the GTP has proven that "Action speaks louder than words."*

*MC135 Good to give free Internet to the poor. Govt cares for the underprivileged.*

*JY224 We share d pain n sorrow of William's parents on d tragic loss of der beloved son who is now in a safer n happier place with d Lord. RIP dear child.*

The messages above denote the use of giving gifts to hearer in terms of understanding, cooperation, and sympathy.

All the strategies listed under positive politeness have been identified during the analysis. Each technique mentioned under each dimension of the politeness act is exemplified with messages taken from the corpus. The analysis did not show any messages containing the strategy of joking; there is no message that is identified with this technique.

Herianto(2014) in the study of anonymous online discussion identified similar findings regarding the non existence of jokes usage as one of the positive politeness strategy. Herianto reasoned his finding by saying that this is due to intent of the online

participants whom are direct in conveying the information. In addition, the site is also said to be of informational base and not exchanges.

Izzadi and Zilalie(2012) indicated similar finding in their research on positive strategies employed in Persians personal e-mail exchanges. They identified the use of jokes are common among close relationship and not between interactants of high social distances. Thus, the use of jokes is not favourable between unfamiliar participants. The detail above aids to conclude that the use of positive politeness strategy in this column although ranked the most used, does not use jokes as one of its strategy.

The rationale given by Herianto (2014) and Izzadi, Zilalie(2012) can be used to explain the findings obtained regarding the non usage of joking strategy in this study. As mentioned earlier this column does not have any message exchanges among the participants. The messages analyzed for this study did not show any message exchanges among the contributors ( the senders of the messages to this column). Therefore, the findings of positive politeness strategy in relation to non usage of joking strategy in this study is closely related to the intent and relationship of the participants that send messages to this column. Participants ( in this context are the message senders) are very direct in communicating their views. This is due to the distant social relationship between the texters and the intended addressees. Thus, the use of jokes is inappropriate and avoided in this context.

#### **4.3.2 BALD ON RECORD**

The second highest politeness strategy identified in this study is bald on record strategy. There are a total of two hundred and eighty three messages in this corpus that

is identified with various bald on record strategies. Brown and Levinson described this strategy as in line with Grice's Maxim, conversational principles that is applied to ultimately achieve maximum communication effect. The strategy consists of all these elements; truth, sincere, doesn't say less or more of required, relevant, perspicuous, avoids ambiguity and obscurity. They concluded that a speaker will choose bald on record strategy whenever the speaker wants to do the face-threatening act with maximum efficiency more than he wants to satisfy the hearer's face, even to any degree.

The use of bald on record strategy in these messages is relatively high considering the power distant relationship between the texter and the intended addressee. Theoretically, bald on record strategy is more with accomplice of closer relationship but the finding in this study differs (Brown and Levinson, 1978). Participants or texters of the messages are not of close relationship with the intended addressee. Pariera (2006), who did a study on politeness strategy in e-mails discussing taboo topics, regarded this as an evidence of face work being dropped with strangers. It is further debated that anonymity allows participants not to worry about building any rapport or dealing with any repercussions if they offend the addressee.

Herianto (2014) gave the similar conclusion regarding the use of bald on record strategy. Investigating politeness strategies in an anonymous online discussion board, Herianto claims that anonymity allows offending action to take place. Herianto supported the fact by citing several other researcher who had the similar findings such as Nissenbaum (1999), Stein (2003), Chang (2003) and Farall (2012). Their discussion is applicable with the findings in this study. The context of the corpus for this study involves texters whom are unknown to each other and this anonymity allows bald on



record strategy to take place. Demands or requests are directed to the intended addressee using various bald on strategy.

Below are the findings from the data analysis based on the description given by Brown and Levinson regarding bald on record strategy. They have divided the strategy into two main dimensions. The first refers to cases of non-minimization of the face threat and the second are the cases of face threatening act-oriented bald-on-record usage.

#### **4.3.2.1 NON-MINIMIZATION OF THE FACE THREAT.**

Prioritizing the maxim of efficiency, face redress is not necessary as it is mutually understood by the hearer and the speaker. It can be used in situation of emergency or communication urgency as shown in the messages below.

*JY114 Stop double parking at the Sec 17 market. Have some decency, people!*

*JY177 A number of foreign workers go around spitting every where. Health Ministry shud educate them. This is Malaysia!*

*FB25 Motorcyclists why is it so difficult to ensure yr tail lights are working? It doesn't cost a bomb and its yr own life, dont you care? Gosh!*

The use of exclamation mark in these messages denotes a sense of urgency in requesting or requiring the issue raised to be looked into as soon as possible. It also denotes the importance of the issue being raised in delivering a powerful impact of communication efficiency.

The use of metaphorical urgency is also noted in this strategy. It is used to emphasize a rhetorical point. The speaker uses metaphorical urgency to stress the importance of the communication efficiency. Below are messages that were identified with metaphorical urgency.

- JY95            *Stop deviants b4 they do harm*
- JY113           *Housemen, stop complaining about the hard work. Remember, you slogged for this.*
- FB28            *Stop all music in carparks. Don't need them. Can't hear anyone calling for help or other vehicles passing*

In the above messages the word '*stop*' reflects metaphorical urgency. It functions as attention-getters meant to attract readers. It also denotes the attitude of direct demanding.

In audible conversation, channel noise, causes inefficiency of communication. Therefore speakers exert pressure to speak with maximum efficiency. The focus of interaction in such context is still task-oriented. Channel noise occurs in terms of language choice. Speakers exert pressure by doing repetition in a message. This results in paradigmatic form of instructions.. The message below is an example of using repetition to exert pressure.

- FB48   **Why** are cars parked illegally outside shopping malls and drivers get away with it? **Why** is it ok for some of us to pay for parking in the malls and they get "free" parking outside.
- MC08   **Why** was developer allowed to cause hillslope soil erosion at Paya Terubong, Penang? **Why** were stringent environmental guidelines not adhered to?

The redress case can also be committed when the speaker wants, to satisfy the hearer's wants, is small or of minimal interest. This could be because the speaker is powerful, thus, does not fear retaliation or non-cooperation from the hearer. Such redress case is exemplified in the message below.

*FB184 Yes it s very common 2 c heavy vehicles speeding n only using the middle n fast lanes. Esp on h/way KL 2 KLIA. JPJ do ur job. Act now*

*MC57 Parking woes! Police, summon inconsiderate drivers parking along Dataran Bandar Utama outside of central park. Some even park close to traffic lights causing traffic chaos*

Teasing and joking is an acceptable rudeness employed to redress face threatening act. A speaker does teasing and joking to show that he doesn't care about maintaining face. However, the teasing or joking is carried out without risk of offending. The messages below are good example of teasing.

*JL29 At the Parliament MPs shud ONLY talk or debate on Matters Or Issues that will beneficial to their constituents who Voted Hon MPs to the Parliament. PANTIES issue dont*

*SP61 Water company must compensate consumers for water disruption. We pay our water bills and get lousy service*

The third set of redress case is when speaker gives importance to hearer's positive face, Thus, the use of sympathetic advice, warnings, comforting advice, and granting permission may be boldly said on record.

*JY1 Concerted action must b taken 2 ensure dat foreign beggars do not project a negative image of M'sia 2 d world*

*JY132 All "Klinik Kesihatan Ibu & Anak" doing great job. Sad 2 say d Greentown clinic is so old, cramp, stuffy, understaffed etc. Time 2 b upgraded*

*MC123 Keep bad cabbies off roads. They cause harm to public n break our trust. RTD shud take serious action or else neither tourists nor locals will want to take cabs anymore*

The usages of all the mentioned elements are imperatives because the actions are directly targeted towards the hearer's interest. A closer analysis of the messages above shows that texters used elements of direct imperatives but bearing in mind that the intended addressee positive face is given importance.

#### **4.3.2.2 CASES OF FTA-ORIENTED BALD-ON-RECORD USAGE.**

This refers to the use of bald on record strategy where demands override face concerns. It involves mutual orientation. Politeness is not used as an impinge not to the hearer. Bald on record imperatives are used to alleviate hearer's anxieties by pre-emptively inviting hearer to impinge on the speaker's preservice.

*MC163 PLUS, replace steel guardrails with concrete parapet along NSE. They are dangerous during high speed collision*

*MC169 Another General Hospital should be built immediately in the Petaling Jaya district because the population in PJ has increased tremendously!*

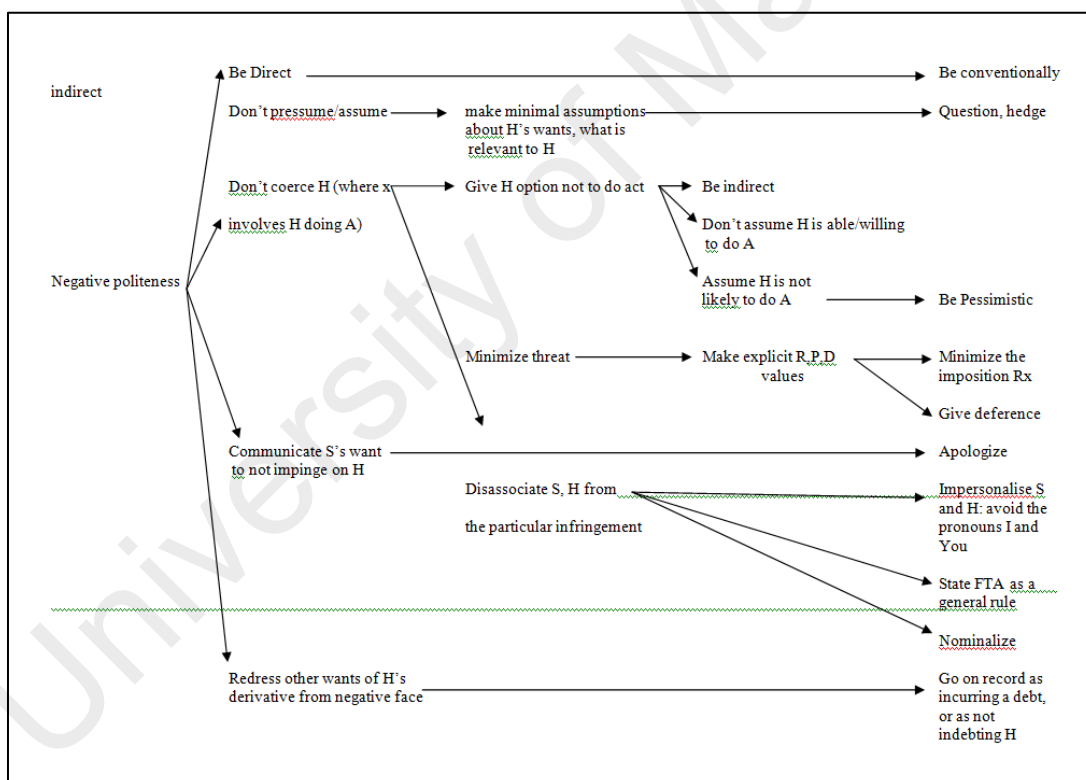
*MC208 Let's not show mercy to the terrorists. We must be firm*

Brown and Levinson rationalize that only in time of urgency that face oriented-bald-on-record usages totally unredressed. Other than that, it might be emphasized with positive politeness hedges or even soften by positive politeness respect term such as 'please'. The use of bald on record strategy does not correlate the time related urgency in this corpus. Urgency in the context of this study stressed the importance of the issue and the outcome required for the matters raised. This differs compared to Brown and

Levinson's notion, nevertheless the usage is still the same. Bald on record imperatives function as attention getters and demand immediate action.

#### 4.3.3 NEGATIVE POLITENESS STRATEGY

Brown and Levinson describes negative politeness as redressive action where the speaker wants to have his freedom of action unhindered and his attention unimpeded. This is done by being specific and focused. There are five dimensions listed under negative politeness strategy. They are being direct, don't presume or assume, don't coerce hearer, communicate speakers' want and redress other wants of hearers' derivatives from negative face.



**Figure 4.5:** Chart of strategies :Negative politeness ( Adapted from Brown and Levinson,1987)

The figure above explains the dimensions involved in negative politeness strategy. There are ten techniques listed in negative politeness strategy. The techniques are discussed according to each dimensions based on the findings of this study.

#### 4.3.3.1 BE DIRECT

##### 1. Be conventionally indirect

This strategy is the only strategy listed in the first dimension of negative politeness; be direct. Be conventionally indirect refers to a strategy that a speaker uses when facing opposing tension of giving the hearer an 'out' by being indirect and at the same time go on record. To solve this, compromised, conventionalized indirectness is used that is to use phrases and sentences that have contextually unambiguous meaning

MC216 *There is a serious shortage of dentists in our govnt dental clinics, yet new dentists r allowed to leave after only 2 /3 yrs of service. What Is Happening?*

MC224 *Pos M'sia pls send posman 4 eye check. Letters put in2 wrong boxes in Rasah Kemayan Redirectd many times n my dvd note fr bursa missng*

Both messages taken from the corpus of this study were identified as using conventionally indirect strategy. The first message indirectly pinpoints a scenario that is taking place in one of the governmental agencies but did not specifically reveal the authority in concern. The second message indicates clearly the authority that needs to take action but the phrase 'eye check' is a conventionalized indirectness referring to error in post delivery.

#### 4.3.3.2 DON'T PRESUME /ASSUME

##### a. Make minimal assumptions about H'wants, what is relevant to H

##### 2. Question, hedge

Placed in the second dimension of negative politeness of don't presume or assume, this strategy is employed to keep distance with hearer. Hedge refers to particles,

words or phrases that modify the degree of membership of a predicate or noun phrase in a set. It denotes whether the membership of a predicate or noun phrase is partial or true only in certain aspects or it is more true and complete than it might be expected. The use of ‘sort’, ‘think’, ‘quite’, ‘pretty’ are some of the instances that show the use of hedges.

*JY162      Are our cities n towns so unsafe that even in broad daylight our kids can disappear? We must wake up to this **unthinkable** reality*

*FB159      Trengganu Stadium Collapse: **think** the original design is faulty. The whole stadium should be demolished and a completely new one rebuilt. Don't be penny wise and pound fool Stadium Mizan re-collapse: Not only contractr responsibl but JKR muz b held accountbl 4 not suprvsng! JKR got away d 1st, it stil hasn't learnt lesson!*

Hedges in negative politeness are hedges on illocutionary force and hedges on Grice's Maxim.

#### **i. Hedges on illocutionary force**

Hedges used in this context refer to adverbs on performative verbs that represent the illocutionary force of the sentence. The use of adverbs are often deleted.

*JY01      Concerted action must b taken 2 ensure dat foreign beggars **do** not project a negative image of M'sia 2 d world*

*JY98      Have **said** a lot of times that Rottweilers are too dangerous to become house dogs. They must be banned.*

*JY18      Let's have a 'maintenance culture' as our New Year resolution. Setiawangsa wall collapse **wouldn't** have occurred if we had taken safety measures*

The use of performative hedges in these messages act as strengtheners or weakeners. Strengtheners refer to emphatic hedges such as ‘really’, ‘exactly’ and

'precisely', whereas, weakeners are used to soften or tentativize what they modify. It is said that no clear literal meaning exists from most of these usage but in one way or another it indicates something to show texter's commitment towards what is being said.

## ii. Hedges on Grice's Maxim

### a. Quality hedges

Here the use of hedges suggests that the speaker is not taking full responsibility of his utterance.

SP09	Many foreigners (men/women) are asking for donations and even begging at traffic lights. It <b>seems</b> they are from well organised syndicates
FB39	The residents in BU3 <b>have been</b> complaining to MBPJ about the congestion caused by kindergartens, especially when intermediate lots are converted into kindergartens with no fire escape
MC28	Retired service dogs put to sleep? That is the unkindest cut as Shakespeare would say. No ingratitude <b>would</b> outdo this one

The bold words in the phrase suggest quality hedges that look into degree of probabilities, doubt about the truth and stress texter's commitment to the text.

### b. Quantity hedges

Here speaker uses expressions that gives not so much and not so precise information as expected.

MC158	The U-turn/slip road at Maarof Interchange in Bangsar should be closed permanently instead of <b>just</b> 4 mths
AG21	No point increasing the number of limo taxis in KLIA if the taxi company is inefficient. Stop the monopoly by competition. Competition <b>will</b> wake them up
JY90	Clarity is of most important in any language esp English that is used in the international arena. Many just can't pick or



*follow the fast n heavy Indian accent in English. English teachers need to be re-assessed? Unheard of those days. **Something** wrong with the selection*

The bold words denote quantity hedges. It plays the part of strengthening the hedge and to soften face-threatening act. These usages evoke the forthcoming request or other requirement necessary based on the content of the message

### c. Relevance hedges

Sensitivity of topic changes in a single conversation is often done off-record. Thus apologizing, the use of 'now' as proximal deictic marker (words or phrases that cannot be understood without contextual information), and reasoning an utterance, are the common relevance hedges.

JY185      ***While** everybody searches for William Yau, there are people trying to repeat his parents' mistake*

FB138      *Authorities **now** say that school van that was involved in accident did not have a permit to ferry passengers. Does having a valid permit avert tragedies? Why wait for accidents*

MC238      *The main airport road to Kota Baru **doesn't** look like a pleasant gateway to our state. Please do away with the parking along the road.*

The bold terms in the message denote relevance hedges that indicates change of topic, deixis and negative question tags that refers to reasoning.

#### 4.3.3.3 DON'T COERCE H ( WHERE X INVOLVES H DOING A)

##### a. Give H option not to do act

The third dimension of negative politeness is to communicate the speaker's wants without impinging the hearer. The strategies involved in this dimensions are be pessimistic, Minimize imposition and give defense.

##### 3. Be pessimistic

Using the technique of expressing doubt, this strategy gives redress to hearer's negative face. This strategy is employed with the usage of the negative (with a tag), the use of subjunctive and the use of remote-possibility marker.

JY46      *Why is it that construction of the extended LRT project is not consistent. It is fast in some areas and very slow in others? Are we really going to meet the 2014 deadline?*

JY51      *Some vege etc @ pasar tani costs more than at main markets or supermarkets. **R pasar tani stalls run by farmers themselves or middlemen?***

JY161      *I'm saddened over the missing 6-year-old boy, **but will d public learn?** I was at Tmn Segar, saw a mother leave her 2 children in her car, with engine still running, to buy something*

In the messages above, the pessimistic strategy is clearly used. The questioning technique expresses doubts on certain matters. To add, Brown and Levinson did mention the use of pessimistic as a negative politeness strategy can possibly function as dare rather than request. The messages above contain bold questions challenging the authority concerned regarding issues raised.

##### b. Minimize Threat

##### 4. Minimize The Imposition.

This strategy looks into the social factor of imposition that influences face threatening act. A way to smooth out the intrinsic seriousness of the imposition is by regarding it as not as important as compared to distant and power. Thus, indirectly the hearer is respected.

*FB77                      Whatever is being done to the LDP it is still one of the most congested expressways. The daily jams at the Damansara toll plaza is **just** unbearable.*

*FB180                    BR1M-2 toll free nmbr 1800 222 500 is impossible to get through. It is always 'all our lines are busy. Pls try again later'. And if you could get thru, it **just** keeps ringing.*

In the above messages the use of 'just' conveys its literal meaning. This delimits the extent of the face threatening act and its conventional implicature. Brown and Levinson rationalized that the need to disambiguate the major determinants of seriousness explains the reason for the usage of polite expressions. These types of expressions can be rude, when it is read for first time. Nevertheless it minimizes a favour asked or a view said.

## **5.        Give deference**

The use of this strategy ultimately imposes that the hearer is superior than the speaker. This is done to ensure that the hearer's relative immunity from imposition is recognized. Here speaker will use two techniques. The first will be by putting himself abase and humble and secondly by raising the hearer's position to be treated as superior satisfying his wants.

*JY35                      Food sold at school canteen is extremely expensive, a piece of fried hotdog 60 sen at Convent BM. Also all junk food. Authorities please        monitor.*

MC05	<i>State government please allocate land 4 recreation parks. U can charge a small fee 4 maintenance. Rakyat need to jog n exercise</i>
MC99	<i>KTMB ticket checkers should practice saying "Thank you" after checking and not ask for ticket in a raised voice. Be polite Mr.</i>

In the above messages, texters as the speakers used deference strategy by being humble and a base. They put the intended addressee of the messages superior than them. Humbleness is portrayed with the use of the word 'please'. Texters used the term 'rakyat' a Malay word that means people as an act to belittle themselves compared to the hearer whom are regarded superior. As in the last message, by calling the postman with the honorific term 'Mr.' it indirectly hints on the hearer's immunity from imposition. Thus the use of deference as a strategy of negative politeness does occur in the data analysis.

#### 4.3.3.4 COMMUNICATE S'S WANT TO NOT IMPINGE ON H

The final dimension of negative politeness is communicating speaker's want by not impinging on the hearer. There are five strategies listed in the dimension. The strategies are apologize, impersonalize speaker and hearer, stating face threatening act as a general rule, nominalize and lastly go on record as incurring a debt or as not indebting the hearer.

## 6. Apologize

Apologizing is conducted to communicate regret or reluctance to do a face threatening act. Four techniques to use this strategy are by admitting the impingement, indicating reluctance, give overwhelming reasons and begging forgiveness. Messages below are examples arranged in sequence based on the techniques mentioned before.

- MC18 *I know the MRT is important to us, but drilling after midnite near former Caltex station in TTDI? Come on, we need to sleep too*
- AG15 *I am not against AES cameras but what about motorcyclists who run traffic lights? It happens all the time, everywhere and whenever there is an operation against these law breakers!*
- AG36 *There is a big shortage of chairs in the waiting area of the Kelana Jaya branch of the Immigration Dept. The old, infirm, parents with toddlers etc. cannot be standing for a long time*

Analysis for this strategy has identified that the use of the last technique, begging forgiveness, is not used. Most of the negative politeness messages used the first technique most, admitting impingement, compared to the other three techniques. A likely explanation for this is the context of the texts. Texters choice of not using apology can be associated with explanation given by Brown and Levinson; A speaker admits impingement by implying that it is not his own wish to impose on the hearer but someone else's.

## 7. Impersonalize Speaker and Hearer

This technique looks into the variety of ways of avoiding 'I' and 'you' usage. This is done by using performatives, imperatives, impersonal verbs, passive and circumstantial voices, indefinites, pluralization of the 'you' and 'I' pronouns, address term to avoid the use of 'you' and 'I' and lastly point of view distancing.

- SP16 *Two out of 10 Malaysians are obese, the highest among Asean countries. Eat to live and not live to eat. There is starvation in some countries*
- NV06 *Make Dec 26 a public holiday. Xmas is a major celebration in Malaysia but given the least recognition. Be fair to all.*
- JY57 *This continue to be a long-drawn complaint. Many pet owners still not picking up the poo of their pets which they take for walks. No one wants to step on poo!*

In the above messages, texters do not impinge on the intended addressee by phrasing the face threatening-agent. Texters who are regarded as speakers, phrase face threatening act as if they were not the speaker. The hearer is also phrased by giving an assumption of as if they are not only them alone or including them too in the conversation. Tendency to impersonalize speaker and hearer is a favoured technique employed in anonymous computer mediated discussion ( Hendrianto,2014)

## 8. State the FTA as a general rule

In this technique of negative politeness strategy, speaker states the face threatening-act as an instance of some general social rules, regulation or obligation, Thus, messages with pronouns avoidance imply that the speaker does not want to impinge hearer. Below are the messages that employs this strategy.

*JY66 Retread tyres should be banned to ensure safety of all road users.*

*JY82 BRIM and smartphone rebates should only be given to those who have fulfilled their duty as registered voters.*

*JY98 Have said a lot of times that Rottweilers are too dangerous to become house dogs. They must be banned.*

## 9. Nominalize

According to Brown and Levinson, degrees of negative politeness run hand in hand with degrees of nouniness. This strategy looks into formality that is associated with the noun end of the continuum. Formality removes an actor from doing or feeling or being something; the actor becomes the attribute of the action. Therefore, face threatening-act becomes less dangerous.

*JY120 Students were given timetable 2 follow by d teacher. Its up 2 parents n students 2 folow it 2 lighten d bag's weight. Leaving textbooks in school desk amounts 2 no reference.*

*JY126 Traffic lights at Jln Yeap Chor Ee/Buah Pala junction installed some time ago but will help prevent accidents if put into operation soon*

*JY159 It must be made compulsory for all schools and kindergartens 2 have zebra crossings at their main entrance to facilitate movement of children.*

Formal messages with negative politeness strategy do occur in abundance in the corpus. The above messages are in line with Brown and Levinson's explanation on formality in negative politeness that is by removing the intended addressee from becoming the attribute to the action.

#### **4.3.3.5 REDRESS OTHER WANTS OF H'S DERIVATIVE FROM NEGATIVE FACE**

The final dimension of negative politeness strategy is redress other wants of hearer. For this dimension, only one technique is listed: Go on record as incurring a debt, or as not indebting hearer.

#### **10. Go on record as incurring debt, or as not indebting Hearer**

In this technique, presumably the speaker and the hearer are socially close, speaker can redress face threatening-act by explicitly claiming his indebtedness to hearer. This can be used in requests, offers and expressing thanks. Below are examples of messages that indicate this usage.

*JY168 Managing low-cost flats. If only you have seen the dirty flats. How are future Malaysian kids going to grow up healthy*

*FB62 PJ residents are in danger if emergencies arise especially during holidays. So many roads r barricaded wth boom gates*

*MC237 Many thanks to the authorities for surfacing the potholed stretch of Jalan Tunku. But why leave the potholes in the mid-section*

In the messages above, texter explicitly expresses requests, offers and thanks the but at the same time indirectly or implicitly demand for more action to be taken practising his or her rights in demanding for better solution in relation to the matter being raised. The texters' action in these messages are parallel with the notion given by Brown and Levinson, that they are socially close to the intended addressee.

This section has discussed in depth the negative politeness strategies used in the corpus. Apparently, the use of the various techniques listed by Brown and Levinson under negative politeness strategy is in line with rationalization given by them. Furthermore, the anonymity of the texters apparently leads to similar findings with other researchers on negative politeness strategy.

#### **4.3.4 OFF RECORD**

This strategy consist only two broad dimensions; the first, inviting conversational implicatures using hints triggered by violation of Gricean Maxim and secondly being vague or ambiguous.

##### **4.3.4.1 INVITE CONVERSATIONAL IMPLICATURE VIA HINTS TRIGGERED BY VIOLATIONS OF MAXIM**

In the first dimension, invite conversational implicature, data analysis was conducted to identify off record strategies that are grouped according to three groups of violation of Gricean Maxim- Relevance, Quantity, and Quality. Brown and Levinsons described, off record strategies, do not attribute one clear communication intention. Indirect use of language is either for general interpretation or it may differ from what it may be said.



Below are examples of messages taken from the corpus to denote each technique of off-record strategies.

**a. Violate relevance Maxim**

**1. Give hints**

This strategy is committed when speaker (texter) explicitly says something that is not relevant in order to invite the hearer (reader or Addressee) to look for the interpretation of the possible relevance. Hints are used in raising the issue as a motive to evoke the desired action to be taken.

*JL36 New retirement age will hit all sectors of employment, not only graduates*

In the message above, the texter is hinting the consequences of the new rule on the retirement age which invites the responsible authority to interpret and indirectly reconsider the consequences of this implementation.

**2. Give association clues**

This strategy is used when mentioning something that is associated with the act required of Hearer (reader or addressee). It is carried out by assuming either precedence of the Speaker and Hearer experience or by mutual knowledge irrespective of their interactional experience.

*JN04 It seems that safety and quality takes the back seat when contractors face time constraints.*

In the message above, the texter assumes that readers are aware which issue is being talked about when commenting on the irresponsible contractors.

### 3. **Presuppose**

Presupposing strategy is stated as an utterance that can almost be wholly relevant in context and yet violate the Relevance Maxim. This utterance could actually meant to be criticism. In the message below, the word ‘*again*’ denotes the critical implicative.

*JY96 Muar town council (MPM), the potted trees along Jalan Abd Rahman r dying. Public funds going to waste yet again.*

#### a. **Violate Quantity Maxim**

Violating quantity of maxim is when an addressee can be invited to make inferences of the speaker. This refers to being indirect by inevitably saying something less than or something different from what is actually intended to be conveyed. Speaker invites the hearer to consider the rationale behind the statement in the conversation.

### 4. **Understate**

This strategy is used when texters say less that is required. Scale predicates such as *tall*, *good*, *nice*, are used in describing the point that actually describe the state of affairs.

*FB136 Street lighting has not been working for so long along The Carnival Water Park @CintaSayang and Eastern Bypass along the new hospital and LHDN at Sg Petani.*

In the message above, the use of ‘*so*’ refers to scalar predicate that is meant to be interpreted that the matter raised has been happening for a lengthy period of time.

## 5. **Overstate**

This strategy is used when a speaker says more than is necessary. Here tendency to exaggerate or choosing a point of scale that is higher than the actual state of affair is committed. In the message below, the texter exaggerates his or her experience on zebra crossing usage to highlight it's use and misuse.

*FB120      Zebra crossings: I was driving in front of LCCT airport after dropping my daughter I stopped at d zebra crossing 2 let pedestrians 2 cross but car behind honked*

## 6. **Use tautologies**

This is a strategy that uses patent and necessary truth. By using this, speaker encourages Hearer to look for an informative interpretation of the non-informative utterances. In the message below, the last phrase '*Close 1 eye or lazy*' refers to tautologies that is used by the texter to invite the readers or addressee to infer criticism, complaint or disapproval.

*MC02      Motorists park along d yellow line at Tmn Kota Laksamana, Melaka corner kopitiam. Blocking traffic day n nite. Authorities never take action. Close 1 eye or lazy?*

## b. **Violate Quality Maxim**

This maxim is violated by speaking the truth and be sincere. Speaker forces hearer to find some implicative that preserve quality assumptions. Here, contradictions, ironies, metaphors and rhetorical questions are used to violate the quality maxim.

## 7. **Use contradictions ( Stating two things that contradicts each other conveying complaint or criticism.)**

*JY17      Malaysia can build smart tunnels & bridges & yet slope retainer walls can collapse.*

8. **Be ironic ( Saying opposite than what is being meant)**

JY06 *Anyone wants 2 learn how 2 waste time conduct meetings for hours repeating d same things? Learn from Malaysian school administrators. They r d best 'time wasters'*

9. **Use metaphors ( literally false, usually on record usage but connotations is off record)**

MC90 *Fountain in Merdeka Square (Royal Selangor Club) has not been functioning. Eyesore 2 bus loads of tourists*

In the message above, the word 'eyesore' is the metaphor that describes the scenario but not in real world interpretation.

10. **Use rhetorical questions**

This strategy is used to ask questions with no intentions of obtaining an answer. Speaker wants hearer to provide the indicated information by asking questions that is hanging in the air which actually implicating excuses or criticisms. The message below is identified with the use of rhetorical question implying criticism.

JY165 *Just because 2013 is Year of Snake, there are people who want to rear snakes as pets. Next year just abandon them?*

**4.3.4.2 BE VAGUE OR AMBIGUOUS**

In the second dimension of being off record, a speaker may be vague or ambiguous rather than inviting the speaker to interpret. This violates the manner maxim.

**a. Violate Manner Maxim**

There are five strategies that violate the manner maxim that give rise to conversational implicatures that can convey FTA as off record. The strategies are as given below.

**11. Be ambiguous**

This ambiguity is used with a purpose, depending on the connotations where a metaphor is used. It refers to ambiguity with the literal meaning of an utterance and any of its possible implicature exploiting ambiguity in the wider sense.

AG35      *Writing on the wall for a long time. Don't wait till 2017 before looking for a solution. Early announcement could be a blessing in disguise.*

In the message above, the phrase '*writing on the wall for a long time*' literally means as a decent mannerism but actually it refers to vandalism and scribbling on the walls. Thus, this denotes ambiguity between literal meaning that can be interpreted as compliment or insult.

**12. Be vague**

Being vague is to be vague of who or what the offence is as the object of the FTA. In the message below, to whom the FTA is addressed is vague as the word '*contractors*' is used as general reference without specifically indicating them.

JN04      *It seems that safety and quality takes the back seat when **contractors** face time constraints*

## 12. Over generalize

The use of proverbs, rule instantiation and general advice, leaves the object of the FTA off record. For an example, the use of '*Brain drain*' in the message below acts as criticism rather explanation for the matter being described in the message.

*JL44 Every year, same old situation arises. Not enough places for medicine & dentistry courses in local universities. They then leave nation. Brain drain.*

## 13. Displace Hearer

This strategy looks at conversation when the speaker be off record as to who the target of the FTA. Below is an example of message that denotes this.

*SP20 Damansara Damai trees are filled with signages from top to bottom. An eyesore. Please save the trees*

## 14. Be incomplete, use ellipsis

This strategy encompasses half undone FTAs. It resembles rhetorical questions, that is leaving the implicature 'hanging in the air'. The message below is an example of being incomplete. It has a question that needs answer. Readers are left in the air to interpret the issue raised whether it is about the stickers or about war on Ah Long.

*SP62 My European friends visited me recently. They asked: Is there a sticker war going on? Ah Long stickers are everywhere*

The use of off record strategies is the least used in this corpus. Although the use of metaphors, proverbs, ellipsis and other elements of ambiguity were identified in the corpus, they were not used widely. Brown and Levinson rationalized that the use of off-record strategies is more common among interlocutors of distant relationship. In fact,

previous studies conducted on politeness strategies in close-knitted computer-mediated communication have proven this fact is true.

Chiyad(2013) identified the use of off record strategies were minimal in personal e-mail exchanges, involving only the use of hints. Najib,et.al(2012) did not identify any off record strategies in their investigation of politeness strategies in e-mails exchanges among Arab students studying in Malaysia. Lastly, Li(2013) who investigated the use of politeness strategy among a group of Chinese students in a Wiki mediated discourse of collaborative writing identified there was nil usage of off record strategy.

In this study, the relationship of the interlocutors is anonymous, thus the use of off-record strategies was identified even though it is the least used strategy compared to positive politeness, negative politeness and bald on record strategies. Heriyanto(2014), who did an investigation of politeness in an anonymous online discussion, identified the use of off record strategies. This is further supported with the reason that distance and anonymity allows interlocutors not to show deference, as they are unknown to each other.

The use of off record strategies in this corpus was identified with all techniques listed by Brown and Levinson. Texters as the interlocutors for the context of this study, used a variety of off record techniques, leaving the intended addressee or the readers of the daily to interpret their views.

#### 4.4 RELATIONSHIP OF COMMUNICATIVE FEATURES IN RELATION TO POLITENESS STRATEGIES.

In this section, language use in terms of politeness strategy is further investigated in relation to the linguistics forms and communication orientation. In this section, the discussion is on the relationship of language use in terms of politeness strategy with the linguistics form and communication orientation.

##### 4.4.1 POLITENESS STRATEGY AND LINGUISTICS FORM

The findings of this investigation are obtained by comparing politeness strategy used with abbreviations usage and code switching practice. Abbreviations usage and code switching practice is chosen because both aspects involve language use compared to word length, message length and punctuation error. The total occurrence of each aspect of investigation is shown in percentage form. The table below shows the result of the findings.

**Table 4.10** – The Relationship between Politeness Strategy and Linguistics  
Forms

<b>POLITENESS STRATEGY</b>	<b>ABBREVIATIONS USAGE</b>	<b>CODE SWITCHING PRACTICE</b>
BALD ON RECORD	40 (14.3%)	74 (26%)
POSITIVE POLITENESS	55 (14.3%)	101 (26%)
NEGATIVE POLITENESS	25 (12%)	50 (24%)
OFF RECORD	13 (8.4%)	29 (18%)

The result of the analysis shows that use of abbreviations is the same in positive politeness and bald on record strategy, followed by negative politeness and off record.



The percentage shows a close range of difference. As it is mentioned earlier, most of the abbreviated forms identified in these messages are acronyms referring to local authorities; therefore, it is widely used in direct request of action. The request can be done either baldly using the bald on record strategy or politely using the positive politeness strategy. On the other hand, even though negative politeness shows lesser degree of abbreviations usage, it is only of a minimal value of difference. The abbreviations in these messages are more to language shortenings. Finally yet importantly, off record strategy has the least abbreviations. Abbreviations in the forms of symbols are mostly used in these messages.

Similar finding and explanation is also applicable for politeness strategy in relation to code switching practice. Bald on record and positive politeness tops the list, followed by negative politeness and off record strategy. Most of the local authorities and government programmes are in Malay acronyms. The direct reference of these acronyms contributes to the code switching practice.

Therefore it can be concluded that, based on the findings obtained from the analysis, language use in terms of politeness strategy do influence the usage of abbreviation and code switching practice.

#### **4.4.2 POLITENESS STRATEGY AND COMMUNICATIONS THEMES.**

To identify the relationship between the language use in terms of politeness strategy and communications orientations, the coded messages were compared to identify any pattern. The table below shows pattern between politeness strategy and communication orientations.

**Table 4.11-** Politeness Strategy and Communications Orientations

POLITENESS STRATEGY	COMMUNICATIONS THEMES						
	T1	T2	T3	T4	T5	T6	T7
BALD ON RECORD	92	64	32	50	35	9	1
POSITIVE POLITENESS	91	76	51	62	20	84	
NEGATIVE POLITENESS	64	42	33	28	31	10	1
OFF RECORD	41	33	10	9	55	5	1

Some of the most common communication themes identified in politeness strategy such as bald on record, positive politeness and negative politeness are informational practical; however, communication orientation in these messages are towards informational relational. This is in relation to the title of the column itself ‘SMS Your Views’ whereby the issues being addressed revolve around personal involvement. The language use in terms of politeness strategy is much to the senders’ choice of expressing.

On the other hand, pathic communication theme is the most used in off record politeness strategy. Language uses in these messages include giving hints, being vague or sarcastic and joking. Below are some examples of the messages.

*JY112 Housemen can’t work long hours, but can work part-time in private clinics w/out rest. Funny, isn’t it?*

*JY111 We had rain,rain,rain. Yet, there is water crisis.*

*JL36 Smone complained abt pricy drink in banana leaf outlet at Rm1.60. I was charged Rm2.80 for cup of teh tarik at SS2 open air food court.*

Therefore, we can conclude language in terms of politeness strategy is influenced by the communication theme and orientations.

This chapter looked into, at length, all the data obtained. It has given a clear picture and answered all the research questions set to be answered in this study.

University of Malaya

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **CONCLUSIONS**

#### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

The objective of this study is to identify the linguistics form, communicative pattern and politeness strategies in messages sent by readers to a column entitled 'SMS Your Views' published on daily basis in a local English daily. One thousand and thirty messages were retrieved from the daily's online portal to be studied in this study. Data was analyzed to answer three important research question related to language use of the messages.

The research questions are:-

- 1) What are the linguistics forms of the messages published in the column?
- 2) What are the communicative features of the messages in the column?
- 3) What are the communication strategies in terms politeness employed in the messages?
- 4)

In this chapter, discussions are divided into four sections to discuss. The first three sections will report on the findings of the data analysis conducted to answer each research question. This is followed by suggestions for future studies and conclusion. Each section will be discussed in accordance to the objective of this study.

## **5.2 DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS BASED ON THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

### **5.2.1 WHAT ARE THE LINGUISTICS FORMS OF THE MESSAGES?**

To answer this question, data was analyzed based on Ling's theory (2005). Linguistics forms in these messages were analyzed in terms of abbreviation usage, message complexity, capitalization and punctuation pattern and code-switching practice.

#### **5.2.1.1 ABBREVIATION USAGE**

Ling is refuted to describe abbreviations in text messages as variety of acronyms, pruned spellings and emoticons. In line with this description, data was analyzed based on abbreviation categorization listed by Farina and Lyddy(2011). The abbreviation categories given by Farina and Lyddy are number homophones, letter homophones, shortenings, contractions, clippings, acronyms, intialisms, typographic symbols, non-conventional spellings, accent stylization and hybrid(a term used for combination of more than one the categories mentioned.)

From the analysis, it is identified that the use of abbreviations in these messages is not new or incomprehensible. It is similar with other studies on abbreviation usage in SMS.( Thurlow:2003, Ling:2005, Heidari and Alibabae:2013, Chiyad:2008, Otemuyiwa:2012, and Kadir et.al:2012) Preferred abbreviation categories are contractions, non-conventional spelling, and shortenings. It is also noted that there a varieties of pruned spellings used denoting a same word. For an example the word 'government' is identified with three different spellings. They are 'gov', 'gvnt', and 'govt'. This finding fits the rationalization given by Crystal(2011) of abbreviation

usage. Crystal claims that texters transfer and embellish what they have encountered in other settings as natural intuitive response to technological problems.

Apart from this, it also noticed from the data analysis that the use of symbols are quite prevalent. Three widely used symbols identified in the corpus are '@', '&' and '/'. Symbols '&' and '/' were used in accordance to their literal meaning as conjunctions in sentences whereas symbol '@' is used differently in different context. It is used syntactically as preposition of place, state or condition, indication of amount, degree or rate, and lastly as an indicator of location or position as in time.

Interestingly, the corpus also highlighted abbreviation preference according to language. The column is identified with Malay language usage apart from English. Texters prefer to abbreviate Malay language in these messages by using acronyms, contractions and hybrids. Acronyms were mostly favored in abbreviating Malay words. Further investigations revealed that acronyms were preferred because it refers to authorities well known in the local context. David(2008) reports this as common practice among bilinguals or multilingual interlocutors. Words that are culturally associated with certain concepts and situations is used in deliberate discussions to facilitate interactions.

Finally, it is also identified in the analysis that there were messages without any abbreviation usage. A total of three hundred and seventeen messages were identified without any abbreviation usage. This figure is relatively low compared to the number of messages analyzed for the purpose of this study. Tendency to abbreviate even a single word is prevalent in the corpus.

Thus, two unique findings identified in this study is the use of symbols and the different preferred abbreviation strategy according to language.

#### **5.2.1.2 CAPITALIZATION AND PUNCTUATION**

In this section data analysis is presented with the use of capitalization and punctuation. Capitalization use in this corpus is similar to previous studies on capitalization in SMS. (Lyydy:2011, Bieswanger:2008, Ling:2005, Shafie, et.al:2011). It is either used to denote an expression of anger or to stress one's intention. (Otherwise, the use of capitalization is violated). In this study, this violation is minimal because only fifty two messages were identified with this occurrence. Otherwise, the messages were written as standard writing discourse.

Analysis on punctuation pattern in this corpus resulted in various findings that reveal the usage of common punctuation and rare punctuations. Common punctuations such as full stop, question marks, and exclamations marks occur quite rampant in the corpus. Their usage is similar with previous studies on punctuation usage in SMS. (Baron and Ling:2007, Chiyad:2008).

Interestingly data analysis of the corpus also identified the use colons, semi colons, dash and quotation marks in the corpus. This usage has not been reported in the studies mentioned above. The occurrence of this punctuation usage is minimal but it is used elaborately in the messages.

### **5.2.1.3 MESSAGE COMPLEXITY**

Based on Ling's description of message complexity, data was analyzed to identify simple and complex messages. Simple messages refers to messages that are short, direct and shorn of all unnecessary grammatical and punctuation niceties. Only one hundred and sixty four messages from the corpus were identified as simple message with a single thought. The rest of the messages were categorized as complex messages because it contains more than one thought.

The second analysis of the message complexity looks into the sentence length in each message. Two sentences records the highest number of occurrence in the corpus followed by three sentences. The most lengthy message that consists the highest number of sentences identified in the corpus is seven sentence in a single message. Complex messages were constructed not only using more than one sentence but also in a single sentence. Conjunctions were used widely in single sentences denoting multiple thoughts.

### **5.2.1.4 CODE SWITCHING**

In the corpus of this study, two hundred and fifty two messages were identified with various type of code switching. Data was analyzed based on David's description of switching pattern termed as local lexical intrusion(2008). The switching pattern was also analyzed at the noun insertional level, phrasal and sentence switching.

Local lexical intrusion and switching pattern identified in this corpus is similar to previous studies conducted on investigating the code switching practice in computer mediated communication. (David:2008, Khatib:2008). All the local intrusion categories



listed by David were identified in the corpus. The switching pattern were also identified in the corpus.

Nevertheless, the use of Malay acronyms known in the local context contributed to be the most switching practice committed in the corpus. Code-switching practice that is in the form of mother tongue interference is also identified in the corpus,. Code switching practice that occurs in this corpus is quite low compared to the total messages. Various switching pattern occurred in the corpus but nevertheless Malay acronym usage is the main attribute of code switching pattern in this corpus.

### **5.2.2 WHAT ARE THE COMMUNICATIVE FEATURES OF THE MESSAGES IN THE COLUMN?**

The second research question of this study is to identify the communicative features of the messages in the column in terms of content theme and communication orientation. In order to obtain findings for communication themes and orientation, data was analyzed based on Thurlow's themes and communication orientation (2003). Messages were first analyzed to identify the content theme of the messages based on nine themes listed by Thurlow. The findings from this analysis is later tabulated in percentage from to identify the communication orienataion of the column based on the description given by Thurlow(2003)

#### **5.2.2.1 CONTENT THEMES**

Data analysis of messages' content theme showed that only seven themes were identified in the corpus. Informational practical theme is the most used theme in the corpus. This is followed by informational relational, social arrangement, practical

arrangement, friendship maintenance, phatic and chain messages. Romantic and Sexual themed messages were not identified in the corpus.

Two interesting findings highlighted in this study are the occurrence of informational practical messages as the highest theme usage identified in the corpus and the use of phatic themed messages. Informational practical messages were identified in three hundred and thirty five messages. Phatic messages were identified in fifty one messages. These themes were not rampant in previous studies conducted on communication theme investigation of other computer mediated discourse by Thelwall(2009), Shafie and Nayan(2013) and Sotilo(2010).

A good explanation to support these findings is by looking into the context of the column itself. The column is not meant for personal exchanges. Texters are concerned on the many general issues and matters surrounding them. Thus, their communication intent contains straightforward request and exchange of practical details. A detailed analysis showed that straight forward request messages were more compared to informational exchanges. The context of the column opens for any SMS that voices concern regarding any issues surrounding the public in general. Thus, the use of straightforward request insisting necessary feedbacks, were either verbally or action, is preferred.

Other content themes were similar with the findings presented by Sotilo(2010), Thelwall(2009) and Thurlow(2003). Nevertheless, their investigation identified friendship maintenance theme as the most frequented theme in their studies. In this corpus, friendship maintenance theme were identified but as the fifth most used theme in the corpus. Likely explanation for this finding is the relationship of the texter and the

intended addressee. Texters are not of close relationship with the intended addressee and their messages do not require any immediate response from the concerned party. Therefore it is not important for them to maintain their relationship with the intended addressee.

Phatic messages identified in this corpus denote indirect communication intent committed in a very cynical manner. Its number of occurrence in this corpus draws attention because it occurs in minimal number in the studies on communication theme. (Thurlow:2003,Thelwall:2009, Shafie and Nayan:2013 and Sotilo:2010). A good explanation for its occurrence in this study is because the texters are unknown to each other. Even the intended addressees of these messages are not of any social ties. Thus, the use phatic messages to indirectly hint on a misconduct or inappropriate act of mannerism, is utilized. Appearing as jokes in literal meaning, in depth it is meant as critics.

#### **5.2.2.2 COMMUNICATION ORIENTATION**

The second part of the analysis is to answer the question of communication orientation. Thurlow's communication orientation theory was used to analyze the messages. Thurlow (2003) categorized communication orientation into two categories: doing sociability and information exchange. For the first category, messages with content theme of informational practical, practical arrangement and chain messages were grouped. For the second category, informational relational, social arrangement, phatic and friendship maintenance were grouped together.

The data analysis showed that the communication orientation in this corpus is more inclined towards high intimacy high relational orientation. The margin difference between transactional orientation and relational orientation is seven point eight percent. This difference is comparatively low. The messages sent to this column do not invite for responses and do not initiate or agitate any discussion. Suitable with its title of expressing views, the messages are sent voicing one's concern regarding many social, political and economical issues surrounding the country. Therefore, although the views were expressed boldly, they are still said in a pleasant atmosphere bonding the gap among the interlocutors whom are strangers apart.

### **5.2.3 WHAT ARE THE COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES IN TERMS OF POLITENESS EMPLOYED IN THE MESSAGES?**

The third research question is to identify the communication strategies in terms of politeness. To investigate the politeness strategies, Brown and Levinson's theory of politeness was used. Brown and Levinson (1978), have listed four strategies of politeness. The strategies are positive politeness, negative politeness, off record strategies and bald on record strategies.

Data analysis identified that positive politeness strategies were employed the most in this corpus. It is identified in three hundred and eighty three messages. The second highest strategy identified from the data analysis is bald on record. Negative politeness strategy takes on the third highly used politeness strategy. Off record strategy is used the least in the corpus.

### **5.2.3.1 POSITIVE POLITENESS STRATEGY**

The use of positive politeness strategy as the highest politeness strategy in this study is similar to the studies conducted by Chiad(2013), Li(2013) and Najib et.al(2013). All the techniques listed under each dimension of politeness strategy were identified except for making jokes technique. Heriyanto (2014) who studied politeness strategy in anonymous online discussion identified similar finding. He regarded the finding as due to the context of the column that requires direct information conveyance. Izzadi and Zilalie (2012) who studied politeness strategies in Persians personal e-mail identified that the use of jokes is regular among interlocutors of close relationship compared to strangers.

Their findings support the finding of this study. Jokes are used as positive politeness strategy in this corpus because of the context of the column and the relationship of the interlocutors. The context requires exchange of information and the interlocutors are unknown to each other.

### **5.2.3.2 BALD ON RECORD STRATEGIES**

Bald on record strategies were identified as the second highest usage in the corpus. Brown and Levinson's theory of politeness depict that the use of bald on record strategies are relatively high among accomplice of close relationship. However, in this study the use of bald on record strategies was prominent among interlocutors whom are of distant relationship. Similar finding were reported by Heriyanto (2014) who also quoted Nissenbaum(1999), Stein(2003), Chang(2003) and Farall(2012) in his discussion. They concluded that anonymity allows offending action to take place. From the data analysis, it is identified that all the techniques listed in each dimensions of bald

on record strategy are used. The use of bald on record strategy functioning as attention getter reflects the urgency of the texters getting their say to be heard. ( in this context, to be read)

#### **5.2.3.3 NEGATIVE POLITENESS STRATEGIES**

Negative politeness strategies were identified as the third most used politeness strategy in the corpus. All the techniques listed under negative politeness strategies were identified in the corpus. Their usage is similar to the finding presented by Li(2013), Chiad(2013), Heriyanto(2014) and Najib et.al(2013). It is mainly used as an redressive action; texters wants to have freedom of action unhindered and attention unimpended by being specific and focused. Almost all the techniques listed in this strategy were identified in the corpus except begging forgiveness. This technique is not used at all in any of the messages in the corpus. Brown and Levinson explains that speakers admit impingement by implying that it is not their own wish to impose on the hearer but someone's else.

#### **5.2.3.4 OFF RECORD STRATEGIES**

Off record strategies were the least used in the corpus. Ambiguity elements such as metaphors, proverbs and ellipsis were identified in the corpus but the usage is not extensive. Brown and Levinson(1978) implied that the use off record strategy is more common among interlocutors of distant relationship. In line with this, the use of off record strategies in this corpus is quite prominent as the interlocutors are unknown to each other. Heriyanto (2014) who studied online discussion threads posted by anonymous participants also reported the same finding. The data analysis also identified that all the techniques mentioned in the two dimensions of off record politeness strategy

were employed in the corpus. This finding supports the fact posited by Brown and Levinson that distance and anonymity allow interlocutors not to show deference as they are unknown to each other.

### **5.3 SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE STUDIES**

This study was taken to identify the communicative pattern of the SMS sent to a local English daily. It investigated at length the linguistics forms, communicative pattern and politeness strategy. The column is a rich source for language researcher to further pursue linguistic research. There are many linguistics prospects that can be researched in this column.

The column reflects the rich cultural diversity of Malaysian English in its content. Code switching practice, mother tongue interference, and local lexical intrusion are found in abundance. Thus, a detailed research regarding these aspects will be advisable. A detailed analysis of politeness strategy focusing on specific area of investigations such as the use of introductions and closure, salutary remarks, greetings, direct or indirect remarks would open up a new field of information. The column is also open for investigation related to communicative theme and orientation. A deeper analysis of each theme such as messages of apology, thanks and support that are categorized under friendship maintenance theme will give greater input regarding the communicative intent of these texters.

This column opens up a new dimension in terms of message retrieval. Unlike researches that need access into private and personal messaging system that is bounded with

restrictions and infringements, this column is open for public view and access. It is sincerely hoped that there will be more research taken making use of the accessibility.

#### **5.4 CONCLUSION**

Text messaging is ever evolving. From personalized texting, it has become a favoured mechanism of interaction in today's techno savvy society. Its popularity leads to technological innovations of predictive text systems and keypad innovations. Thurlow(2003) said academic research in this area 'slides towards obsolescence'. This is because the speed of innovations of these communication technologies is rapid. Furthermore, practical commercialization, consumer charges diminishment, and extended commercial potential of internet mobile-phone interfaces adds the popularity SMS.

Language researcher should explore this communication revolution on the role of new technologies in people from all walks of life. Mobile telecommunication is taking the world like a storm. It is a bountiful harvest to explore and investigate the nature of everyday language used with creative simplification denoting rational usage.

This study reflects on Malaysian diversity in embracing technology into their daily life. The corpus for this study opens a new dimension of language form in terms of linguistics forms, communicative intent, and politeness strategy. It reflects the capability, creativity, and hospitality of local texters whom indulge themselves openly by texting to a publicly accessible social media.



This study has identified a unique set of communication pattern integrating mobile technology and print social media. It clearly shows that texters in Malaysia are of no difference compared to texters from other parts of the world. All the communicative skill identified as text messaging traits are used widely in the corpus. In addition, multilingualism instances were also prominent in this study. Nevertheless, this study has opened up a new dimension on communicative features in relation to politeness strategy. Even though the SMS analyzed in this study is a one-way communication, findings in this study clearly show that there is a relationship between communicative features of texting and politeness strategy; politeness strategy influences the choice of communicative features in texting. Thus, this study should attract more language researcher in focusing their interest on identifying English language usage as a consequence of mobile communication emergence: SMS.

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