

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 An Overview of the Tourism Industry in Malaysia**

Tourism has become an extremely important industry in Malaysia. With the campaign “Cuti-cuti Malaysia”, the government has made all possible efforts to encourage people to visit places of interest in Malaysia. The results are encouraging.

Selangor, for example, reported a success in its Visit Selangor Year which attracted 4.542 million tourists from January to October in 2000 compared to only 2 million in 1999. They organized roadshows, discussed with travel agents and advertised to promote tourism in the state. Meanwhile, Sabah increased tourist arrivals in the state by 59.3 per cent. Perak owed its increase in foreign tourist arrivals in the state in the same year (2000) to its very successful tourism promotion: ‘ “... it was a very successful campaign in two areas – tourist arrivals and awareness of Perak destinations,” Mazidah [State Tourism chairperson] says.’ (the New Straits Times, January 24, 2001:5).

In the 2002 Budget, funds for tourism doubled from RM 200 million to RM 400 million while the exemption of income tax for foreign and local tourism acts was extended for another 5 years. Various steps were taken to attract tourists, among them having carnivals and festivities (The Star, January 23, 2001) and offering Multiple Entry Visa for a period of 1 year (the New Straits Times, January 24, 2001). Kedah took one step further by planning to set up a task force headed by the Menteri Besar himself to attract more tourists to the state, especially to Langkawi. In fact, Langkawi was made a tourism

city in March 2002 although it had not really complied to the standard requirements of such a status. This task force's job is to make plans to increase the number of tourists to Langkawi in order to "justify this status" (the New Straits Times, January 24, 2001).

In a nutshell, tourism is seen as one of the most important sources of income that generates the growth of the economy of our country.

## **1.2 Background of the Study**

The increasing importance of tourism to boost the economy of the country has called for a need to conduct research in this field. The findings of the research would markedly contribute to the tourism industry.

Malaysia is not the only country placing emphasis on tourism. All over the world, tourism is seen as one of the main sectors of economy. In view of this, tourism marketing is now given attention. Literature on tourism marketing is now available, though not much. Past literature on marketing was on general business marketing and was not specific to tourism marketing (Morgan, 1996). The availability of literature on tourism marketing is timely because of the growing interest in the travel and tourism industries and the increase in the number of tourists worldwide. This literature would be a good source of reference for those in tourism marketing.

In tourism marketing, just like the usual business marketing, the four important principles are *Price*, *Product*, *Place* and *Promotion* (also known as the 4Ps). Among them, *Promotion* can be considered as the center of all activities. *Promotion* could take many different forms. An indispensable tool used in promoting tourism is advertisement. Advertisement is considered a

tool of mass communication because it can reach a huge target audience. Kotler et. al (1999) define advertisement as “any paid form of nonpersonal presentation and promotion of ideas, goods, or services by an identified sponsor” (p.489). “Nonpersonal” refers to “without personal contact or feedback”. This means advertising is a one-way communication where the advertiser conveys his message without getting any direct response from his audience. As such, he has to make sure he does so effectively so that his audience decipher his message the way he wants them to. To achieve this aim, he has to carefully select the right words, and in print advertising in particular, use appropriate, effective pictures and images. The basic principles of an effective message (in this research, advertisements) are getting the target audience’s *Attention*, holding their *Interest*, arousing their *Desire* to possess the advertised product and obtaining some kind of *Action*, which is ultimately, purchasing the product (Attention, Interest, Desire and Action are better known in business as the AIDA model).

This research attempts to study the techniques advertisers use to appeal to the target audience and it is done on a linguistic plane to help a better understanding of the moves. Kathpalia’s (1992) framework, which has been suggested for promotional texts, is used as a basis to investigate the move-structure in local advertisements of hospitality and tourism. The strategies, or sub-moves, used to achieve the objectives of these advertisements are also studied. In other words, this research adopts the genre analysis approach to study advertisements of hospitality and tourism, selected from the Malaysia Airline System’s (MAS) in-flight magazine, *Going Places*. The selection of the sample advertisements is done based on a modified random approach.

This chapter sets out to provide the background of this research. Chapter 2 will review related literature, which includes discussing certain aspects of advertisements and genres and reviewing two different frameworks. Chapter 3 will explain the methodology employed in this research and Kathpalia's (1992) framework in detail as well as report the findings of the pilot study briefly. Chapter 4 will report and discuss the findings of this research and finally, Chapter 5 will draw conclusions from the findings and indicate their implications as well as offer suggestions for further research.

### **1.3 Statement of the Problem**

The 1997 global economic downturn had affected the tourism industry. Even though the world is now seeing some recovery, some kind of force is needed to ensure that the tourism industry regains its momentum. Advertisements, for instance, could play a crucial role to influence potential tourists in deciding their holiday destination. Therefore, advertisements have to be appealing. One means of achieving the desired effect is through language. A 'weak' advertisement could go unnoticed. On the contrary, a well-designed advertisement with catchy phrases and memorable lines could produce the desired effect.

There are just too many places of interest to visit, local and abroad. Naturally, advertisements actively compete with each other to impress potential tourists. Advertisers have to carefully plan their strategies to attract tourists to the holiday destinations. Otherwise, it is a waste of time and money. The basic guideline is most probably the AIDA model, but perhaps there is a more specific guideline for advertisements of holiday destinations, or

hospitality and tourism. This is the concern of this research – to study the pattern or moves in this type of advertisements. There is a need for this kind of study as Malaysia is looking into tourism as a means to strengthen her economy. Furthermore, the researcher's preliminary survey of the advertisements in the MAS in-flight magazine, *Going Places*, revealed that not all State Tourism Boards advertise their states as holiday destinations in the magazine. Also, despite the numerous holiday resorts in Malaysia, only a few advertise in the magazine. This problem has to be addressed if Malaysia intends to promote herself as a holiday destination to Malaysians and foreigners alike.

While conducting the research, the researcher discovered that no linguistic study, specifically genre-based, has been done on advertisements of hospitality and tourism. The researcher feels it is time that such a study is carried out for the benefit of novice advertisers, State Tourism Boards and ESP teachers of English for Advertising.

#### **1.4 Rationale for the Source of Data**

The researcher selected the MAS in-flight magazine, *Going Places*, because it is an appropriate source of data for this research. It not only reaches local potential tourists, but also foreign tourists traveling on MAS. In fact, the medium itself is most appropriate for advertising because in a long journey with limited activities, there is a high probability that passengers would pick up the magazine to read. Even if the passenger has no intention of going on a holiday initially, reading the advertisement might just trigger him to do so. Perhaps the passenger has plans to go holidaying; chances are he would

include the advertised place in his itinerary. This is advertising at the right time, at the right place. With regard to this, Morgan (1996:230) says, "Advertisements will have maximum effect if they appear at the time when the consumer is likely to be making the decision and is therefore in a state of high involvement."

In short, the choice of source for data collection for this research is appropriate because it reaches a wide range of potential tourists, both local and foreign, who can sit back and consider the possibilities of visiting the advertised holiday destinations.

### **1.5 Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to identify the move-structure prevalent in local advertisements of hospitality and tourism. Three categories of hospitality and tourism advertisements are selected for comparison to find out if their move configurations are the same. The results of the study will suggest a framework that can be used as a basic guideline in writing advertising messages for the hospitality and tourism industry. The study also attempts to analyse some linguistic elements in the sample advertisements.

### **1.6 Research Questions**

This study hopes to answer the following research questions:

1. What is the move-structure prevalent in advertisements of hospitality and tourism in Malaysia?
2. Is the move-structure the same for all the three categories of advertisements sampled in this research?

3. What are the strategies employed to realize the communicative purpose of each move in these advertisements?
4. How do advertisers use linguistic means to appeal to their target market so that they (the target market) make the decision intended by the advertisers?

### **1.7 Significance of the Study**

Commercially, this study would benefit advertisers and also the Tourism Board of all the states in Malaysia. It is hoped that after highlighting the moves, those concerned would be more proactive in advertising specific places of interest in each state. This hopefully would attract more tourists to the states. This study would also benefit the novice in advertising. The move-structure identified in the advertisements of hospitality and tourism could serve as a basic guideline and the advertiser just needs to use his creativity in designing strategies that would best appeal to his target audience.

Academically, this study would benefit the ESP teacher of English for Advertising. Although the scope of advertising is wide (advertisements of property, products and others), this research contributes particularly to advertisements of hospitality and tourism.

### **1.8 Scope of the Study**

This study analyses the move-structure in local advertisements of hospitality and tourism. To regard these advertisements as one big group under the heading hospitality and tourism is to make an over-generalisation because these advertisements fall into different categories based on their specific aims.

Although they have the same basic communicative purpose, that is, to promote, their specific aims are different. For example, advertisements of states promote the states and their people and culture, while advertisements of hotels merely promote the hotels. Given this rationale, this study analyses three categories of hospitality and tourism advertisements – states, hotels and resorts – and compares their move-structure. Although these three categories have their own specific aims, they have one obvious similarity among them, that is, their main aim is to promote a place or a holiday destination. Other categories of hospitality and tourism advertisements are not included in the analysis because, apart from their scarcity in the twelve issues of *Going Places* collected for the research, their main aim is to promote other than a place, for example, events, like *Rainforest World Music Festival* and *Food and Fruits Fiesta*.

Twenty sample advertisements were selected from a total of 166 advertisements in the twelve issues of *Going Places* for the year 2001. These 166 advertisements include advertisements which appeared repeatedly in the twelve issues.

The study also analyses the kind of language used to appeal to the audience, most of whom are potential tourists, both local and foreign.

### **1.9 Limitations of the Study**

This study attempts to identify the move-structure in local advertisements of hospitality and tourism. In the broadest sense of the word, hospitality and tourism include places of interest, holiday resorts, holiday packages and hotels, to name a few. However, this research only covers places of interest

(specifically, states in Malaysia), hotels and holiday resorts because the primary aim of these three categories is to promote a place, or a holiday destination, as mentioned in the previous section. Therefore, they basically have the same communicative purpose and might project similar move-structure. Furthermore, these three selected categories are the most significant in the twelve issues of *Going Places* collected for the analysis. Another reason for deciding only three categories for comparison is to make the analysis more manageable because other categories would pose more variables. Some control is needed to ensure a more focused and valid analysis. The researcher also decided to compare the three categories because to group them together would be to over-generalise the features and communicative purposes of hospitality and tourism advertisements. The results of the comparison will hopefully illustrate the flexibility of the move-structure in advertisements of hospitality and tourism.

Another limitation of the study is the size of the corpus for this research, which is twenty. The reason for this is that only six different advertisements of states were available in *Going Places* throughout the year 2001. All these six advertisements appeared repeatedly in the twelve issues. Thus, for comparison purposes, for the other two categories, it is best to have an equal or almost equal number of advertisements. For easier computation of the overall data, the researcher decided to round up the figure to twenty, thus selecting seven advertisements for the other two categories.

Only twelve monthly issues of *Going Places* were collected for this research. This is because prior observation revealed that the same advertisements repeatedly appear over the years and the same places are

advertised a number of times but in different words and layouts. Furthermore, one calendar year is considered representative of the whole year's special events, festivities and holidays.

The source of the corpus for this study is limited to the MAS in-flight magazine, *Going Places*, from January 2001 to December 2001. The reason for the choice of this magazine is that the researcher felt that it is an appropriate medium to advertise holiday destinations as it reaches both local and foreign potential tourists.