3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter sees a detailed account of the process involved in the carrying out of this research – the methodology. First, the collection of data is explained in detail. This includes the stages in finalizing the selection of the corpus. Then, a more detailed explanation of the analytical framework first proposed by Kathpalia (1992), which forms the basis for this research, is given. Next, the various stages involved in the analysis of data are laid out. Finally, the chapter closes with a brief account of the pilot study on two sample advertisements of holiday destinations.

3.2 Corpus – Data Collection

The corpus consists of advertisements of hospitality and tourism taken from the Malaysia Airline System (MAS) in-flight magazines, Going Places. The decision was made as the researcher traveled almost every month, thus could obtain the monthly issues on this particular airline. As for the months that the researcher did not travel, she sought the help of a MAS stewardess and a MAS counter officer. The corpus was collected throughout the year 2001, and a total number of twelve issues were collected. As stated earlier, prior observation revealed that either the same advertisements repeatedly appear over the years or the same places are advertised in different words and layouts. In addition, one calendar year may be considered representative of the whole year's special events, festivities and holidays. Thus, it is felt that the time frame for collecting the data is reasonably sufficient.
There are basically two types of advertisements for hospitality and tourism in the magazine: those advertised by the state government tourism board and those advertised by hotels and resorts. In comparison, the hotels and resorts advertisements apparently have an extra communicative purpose, that is, to promote their hotels and resorts. In fact, promoting their hotels and resorts is their main aim. If there is any mention at all of the places of interest in the state, it serves as an “aid” to influence the target market to make the intended decision. The researcher felt that this would make a good corpus to compare their move-structure. It is hoped that this comparison would be able to illustrate the flexibility of the move-structure in advertisements of hospitality and tourism. Grouping all the advertisements together under the broad topic hospitality and tourism would mean over-generalising the move-structure in these advertisements.

Next, the researcher separated hotels and resorts into two different categories because of their layout and content. After all these decisions had been finalized, the researcher adopted a modified random approach in selecting the corpus. Random sampling was carried out because the hotels and resorts advertisements in the twelve issues of *Going Places* collected for this research are plentiful and their structures and communicative purposes are basically similar. In view of this, there are no constraints in selecting the samples for analysis purposes.

However, this random sampling had to be modified because the hotels and resorts categories need to have advertorials as well. Advertorials, or advertisements that come in editorial structure, are found in the states category. Because the total number of states advertisements in the twelve
issues of *Going Places* is only six, two of which are advertorials, all the six advertisements were selected. Therefore, in order to ensure that the other two categories have this same variable, the researcher identified one hotel advertorial and two resort advertorials. In other words, to maintain a modified random approach, apart from advertisements, advertorials were also selected for the other two categories to minimize variable differences among the three categories.

20 out of 166 advertisements were selected and considered for research. As stated earlier, there are only six different states advertisements and all of them were selected. Therefore, to ensure an equal representation among the three categories, an equal number of samples had to be selected. For easier computation of the overall data, the researcher has increased the figure to twenty, thus selecting seven sample advertisements each for the hotels and resorts categories. The researcher feels that the size of the corpus for this study is representative of the whole population of the advertisements because it has gone through appropriate stages of selection, from a particular type of sub-genre with considerations of its communicative purpose as explained by Bhatia (1993: 21), to the length of time in collecting it, that is, over a duration of a year.

### 3.3 The Analytical Framework

There are two frameworks that are quite relevant to the present research. One is Bhatia’s (1993), which is for promotional literature, and the other is Kathpalia’s (1992) for advertisements. However, the researcher feels that Kathpalia’s framework is more relevant as it is for advertisements. Bhatia’s
framework is more relevant for letters, as his two illustrations, that is, sales promotion and job application letters, project.

As stated earlier in Chapter 2, Kathpalia’s framework consists of nine moves:

1. Headlines
2. Targeting the market
3. Justifying the product or service
4. Appraising the product or service
5. Establishing credentials
6. Endorsements/Testimonials
7. Offering incentives
8. Using pressure tactics
9. Urging Action

1. Headlines

This is the most important move in print advertisements as it holds the responsibility of attracting the target market’s attention and therefore it is usually in relatively bigger print. Most headlines are brief to achieve better impact, but where headlines are quite long, they could either be split up and spread across the page (as in the SABAH advertisements), or part of it becomes a subheading and appear in smaller print but bigger than the body copy. According to Kathpalia (1992), headlines can be realized through any of the other eight moves in her framework. There could even be a combination of moves in the headlines. There are also headlines which do not contain information about the product or service advertised but are written in such a way to provoke curiosity, driving the audience to read on. These are called Curiosity Headlines. She identifies headlines as a central move with a frequency of occurrence of 98%. This is confirmed by Howe (1995) who records an average of 97%, Choo (1999) who notes that headline ranges
second in the frequency of occurrence and Teh (1999) who notes 100% occurrence.

2. **Targeting the Market**

In the business communication process, Kotler et. al (1999) advise the marketing communicator to identify which of the six buyer readiness states the target audience is at to determine how to put the message across. In other words, the message, in this case the advertisement, is written with a particular target market in mind.

Kathpalia (1992) states that this move is usually the first one realized in the body section and can be realized by directly addressing the target market identified by sex, age, education, degree of specialization, profession, social roles, interests and others. However, Kathpalia’s definition of ‘Targeting the Market’ is restricted. Her definition covers only the explicit mention of the target market, for example, “Good news for mothers!” If this is the case, then according to Kathpalia’s definition, those advertisements without a clear mention of the target market do not have this particular move in their advertisements. The question is: Is it correct to say that advertisements that are without explicit mention of the target market have no target market at all?

Based on the fact that all advertisements target a market or an audience in one way or another, whether it is the general public or a special group of people, and the fact that without the market there is no advertisement, the researcher agrees with Howe (1995), Choo (1999) and Teh (1999) who state that one Unique Selling Point (USP) should be considered in identifying the
target market. USP refers to a specific feature of the advertised product that makes it special as compared to other brands in the market. It is a strategy used by advertisers to convince the market that their product is better than the others although they are of the same category.

Sometimes, the target market is implied. Consider the following example taken from Kathpalia (1992). Kathpalia identifies it as a Headline with the move Endorsement:

*More than 90% of Australian maternity hospitals use Milton*

The word “maternity” here is very important. It implies that this advertisement addresses two particular groups of people: maternity hospitals and also mothers of newborns and toddlers.

Because the studies carried out after Kathpalia’s give a wider scope of definition to Targeting the Market, their findings differ from Kathpalia’s findings which claim that this is only a peripheral move with a frequency of occurrence of only 2%. Howe (1995) and Teh’s (1999) findings reveal that this move has a frequency count of 100% while Choo’s (1999) findings show that it ranges top in the list of frequency of occurrence. The present research will also employ a wider scope of definition to Targeting the Market like the studies done after Kathpalia’s: Howe (1995), Choo (1999) and Teh (1999).

3. **Justifying the Product/Service**

This move, according to Kathpalia, can also introduce the body section. Its function is to influence the potential buyers into believing that the product advertised is specifically for them. There are two strategies for accomplishing this purpose:
(a) Indicating importance of the product/service

This is done by means of reasoning out the need for possessing the product advertised

(b) Establishing a niche

Here, real life problems are presented and the answer to them is the product or service advertised.

All the previous studies except for Choo (1999) indicate that this is not an important move. Choo’s study reflects that this move is the third highest in frequency of occurrence.

4. **Appraising the Product/Service**

Kathpalia (1992) identifies three strategies for realizing this move:

(a) Identifying the product/service

The function of this sub-move is to introduce the product and this could be done by as simple as naming the product

(b) Describing the product/service

A description of the features of the product is given

(c) Indicating the value of the product/service

This is done in two ways: “by a straightforward evaluation or by translating the chief features of the product or service into concrete consumer benefits” (Kathpalia, 1992: pp. 187 – 188).
This move is found to be extremely important or central in all the previous studies, but Choo’s (1999) study reveals that this move only comes sixth in the rank of frequency of occurrence.

5. **Establishing Credentials**

This move promotes the company manufacturing or supplying the product advertised to gain potential buyers’ trust in the product. Howe (1995) states that this is done by announcing the achievements of the company to show its reputation as a manufacturer or as a supplier. Kathpalia (1992) identifies three strategies to establish credentials:

(a) Identification of the company by mentioning the name of the company or manufacturer

(b) Product or service guarantee or warranty, trial offer and after-sales service

(c) Provision of company profile

This move is found to be only peripheral in all the previous studies except for Teh’s (1999) study, which records a 100% frequency of occurrence.

6. **Endorsements/ Testimonials**

The function of this move is to make the advertising message more convincing. This is achieved by making use of a third person to support the idea or statement in the advertisement. Kathpalia (1992) notes four ways of doing this:

(a) by presenting the testimonials of noted authorities
(b) by presenting the official or public citation of achievements and seals of approval
(c) by presenting the testimonies of average consumers
(d) by presenting the testimonies of fictitious consumers

All the previous studies prove that this is not an important move at all and it scored a very low frequency of occurrence. This is surprising because consumers are normally attracted to products that have proven their effectiveness and usefulness. Logically, this move would seem vital in influencing the target market’s beliefs about the products advertised.

7. **Offering Incentives**

This move attempts to tempt the potential buyers into purchasing the product by means of giving discounts, “free” gifts or any other types of incentives. Kathpalia (1992) finds this to be a peripheral move while Howe (1995) finds it to be quite important for both ‘small’ and ‘normal’ car advertisements (55% and 50% frequency of occurrence respectively). However, this move is insignificant in ‘luxury’ car advertisements probably to maintain the “exclusive” image of the cars. This move is the fourth highest in frequency of occurrence in Choo’s (1999) study and is important also in Teh (1999).

8. **Using Pressure Tactics**

This move aims to speed up the buying decision by imposing constraints on the product advertised. These constraints may come in three forms:
time constraints upon the offer or availability of the product or service advertised

quantity constraints upon the availability of stocks

emotional blackmail on a particular market segment; for example, if they do not purchase the product now, they will miss the best deal in town and later regret it.

This move is found to be unimportant in Kathpalia (1992) and Choo (1999). In Howe (1995), again, only in ‘small’ and ‘normal’ car advertisements is this move important (55%) and in Teh (1999) it is important in Country Homes advertisements but not in Terrace Homes advertisements.

9. **Urging Action**

This move attempts to persuade potential buyers to take action by buying the product or service. This is realized in three ways:

(a) telling them to do so in a direct manner

(b) telling them to so in an indirect manner through suggestions

(c) inviting them to get in touch by giving the company’s contact addresses and numbers

This move is found to be central in all the previous studies. Teh (1999) has included an additional move in her study, which she calls ‘Essential Information’. This move functions to give additional important information like showhouse address, sales launch date, developer’s address and the location map of the properties. Her study concludes that this move is really significant in home advertisements.
3.4 Data Analysis

After grouping the advertisements into three categories – states, hotels and resorts – the researcher began analyzing the data. First, she made an attempt to identify the moves in the samples based on Kathpalia’s framework. The researcher then studied the strategies employed to realize the semantic function in each of the moves; in other words, strategies in conveying the message in each move. These are also referred to as the sub-moves, like, ‘describing activities or place or people’ in the move, ‘Appraising the product or service’. Next, the researcher listed down the moves identified in the individual samples to compare the order in which the moves appear across the samples. Having done this, she then collated the frequency count of the occurrence of the moves to identify central and peripheral moves. The identification of these two major types of moves was based on an adaptation of Howe’s (1995) four-grade system of strength level (Most Strong, Quite Strong, Slightly Strong and Not Strong). The system is as illustrated below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Range of frequency</th>
<th>Importance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Most Strong</td>
<td>75% - 100%</td>
<td>Prominent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quite Strong</td>
<td>50% - 75%</td>
<td>Prominent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slightly Strong</td>
<td>25% - 50%</td>
<td>Not Prominent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Strong</td>
<td>0% - 25%</td>
<td>Not Prominent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The researcher agrees with Choo (1999) that a move with a frequency count of 50% or above could be considered as a central move. This guideline was used in distinguishing between central and peripheral moves in this research.
The researcher finally studied the linguistic realizations in the moves, an important means of appealing to the reader’s emotion. This includes, among others, the kind of language used, direct or figurative, and adjectives.

3.5 The Pilot Study

Having collected some samples and having studied some references on advertisements and genre analysis, the researcher conducted a pilot study on two samples of advertisements: one advertisement and one advertorial, Sabah and Sarawak respectively. The purpose of carrying out this pilot study is to find out the feasibility of using Kathpalia’s framework as a basis for this research. The analysis reveals some interesting findings.

This pilot study reveals that Kathpalia’s framework is applicable for advertisements of holiday destinations, but the number of moves is reduced to only four: Headlines, Targeting the Market, Appraising the Product and Urging Action. Headlines are very important in attracting the target market’s attention. In fact, the two samples in this pilot study reveal that there is a combination of moves in the headlines themselves. Targeting the market is executed implicitly whereby the identification or the Unique Selling Point (USP) of the product plays a role in addressing that special group of people the advertisement is intended for. In fact, the function of the strategy ‘identification of the product’ in the central move ‘Appraising the Product/service’ is two-fold: to appraise the product and to aim at the target market. Next, the two samples in this pilot study present quite a lengthy appraisal of the product, but in different ways. The SABAH advertisement presents Sabah in the form of listing (listing the main attractions of Sabah)
while the SARAWAK advertisement presents Sarawak in an editorial format. Finally, the move Urging Action is a must in advertisements like those of hospitality and tourism. At the very least, potential tourists would need to know any contact numbers or addresses to seek further information on, for example, accommodation, means to get there and food.

In terms of linguistic realizations, both formal language and figurative language are used. Formal language is used to assert the seriousness of the advertiser about the place advertised, but at the same time, he has to also create a relaxed mood. After all, this is an advertisement of a holiday destination and people would like to seek a relaxing holiday to break away from the hustle and bustle of the city and also the heap of work at the office. Therefore, to achieve this desired effect, two methods are employed: using a conversational manner and using figurative language. To add to this, modifiers, or adjectives, are used extensively to give a vivid picture of the place and to appeal to the emotions of the target market, the potential tourists.