

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter elaborates the procedures of the conducted research. As stated in the first chapter, the respondents selected were from the Pre-university Program of BAR and LAW of the Matriculation Centre of the International Islamic University in Petaling Jaya. The data gathered will be analysed and discussed below.

3.1 Subjects

A total of 200 students from the BAR and LAW were selected to participate in this survey, a 100 of the respondents were from the intermediate and another 100 respondents were from the high level of proficiency of the English Proficiency classes, Level 3 (L3) and Level 4 (L4) respectively. The distribution for the sample is as illustrated in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1 Distribution of Samples

NO. OF GROUP	LEVEL	TEACHER	BAR	LAW	TOTAL
1	LEVEL 3 (L3) BAR	TEACHER 1	25	25	50
2	LEVEL 4 (L4) BAR	TEACHER 2	25	25	50
3	LEVEL 3 (L3) LAW	TEACHER 3	25	25	50
4	LEVEL 4 (L4) LAW	TEACHER 4	25	25	50
	TOTAL	4	100	100	200

3.1.1 Criteria of Selection for Samples

The target population of the university students was chosen according to their educational and social backgrounds. A majority of the BAR and LAW students were from the religious and secular schools respectively. They are intermediate and advanced learners of English.

The students of intermediate and advanced levels are chosen because they are more proficient in the English language and were able to help gather the required quantitative data.

setting and the social distance between the participants and their relative status between each person, followed by an incomplete dialogue.

In this study, based on the original DCT, which was formed in a dialogue, the DCT was adapted and presented in situations. The final product of the DCT was transformed from a dialogue to a situation-based format. (See Appendix A).

Respondents were asked to complete the situations, thereby providing the objective of the speech act (Blum-Kulka et. al., 1988). In terms of content, the setting depicted by the situations reflected every day occurrences of the types expected to be familiar to speakers in Western culture. Hence in this study, some of the situations were adapted to conform within the context of Islamic beliefs.

For the purpose of this study, an adaptation of the DCT from the research project (Cross Cultural Speech Act Research Project), conducted by Blum-Kulka and Olshtain, (1984) was utilised. However, a moderate cultural and stylistics modification was undertaken to the Discourse Completion Test (DCT) used but the main features of the social context presented by each item remained unaltered. For instance, the names used in the present DCT were altered to Malaysian designates for the appropriateness of the Malaysian culture.

Example 1: Situation 1

Larry, **John**'s roommate, had a party the night before and left the kitchen in a mess. Tonight, **John** is having some friends for dinner and he has to start cooking soon. Imagine you are **John**. What do you say to get **Larry** to clean the kitchen?

The name Larry was changed to Amin, while John was changed to Zaini as indicated in the following.

Situation 1 : Revised

Amin, Zaini's roommate, had a few friends over for discussion the night before and left the kitchen in a mess. Tonight, **Zaini** is having some friends for dinner and he has to start cooking soon. Imagine you are **Zaini**. What do you say to get **Amin** to clean the kitchen?

Apart from names, the location of the situations were also changed, such as in Situation 10, the location of the situation was to be in a pub. As it is highly unlikely for a Muslim student to go to a pub, the situation was changed to a more popular gathering spot among Malaysian teenagers such as McDonald's (see Example 2). Students would be more familiar to this fast food restaurant.

Example 2: Situation 10

After a hard day studying, Dominic decides to go over to the **pub** to drink a few beers with his younger brother, Gavin. They walk in and sit down at a table. The bar is crowded with people who want to get drinks and Dominic feels too tired to queue for theirs, so he wants his brother to get the beers. Imagine you are Dominic. What do you say to Gavin to get him to bring you a beer?

Apart from changing the names of the characters, the location of the situation which is the pub was also replaced by McDonalds as indicated in the following.

Situation 10 : Revised

After a hard day studying, Nasrul decides to go over to the **McDonald's** with his younger brother, Aiman. They walk in and sit down at a table. The restaurant was crowded with people who want to get drinks and Nasrul feels tired to queue for theirs, so he wants his brother to get the drinks. Imagine you are Nasrul. What would you say to Aiman to get him to bring you a drink.

The newly adapted version of the DCT was then prepared for a pilot test to be carried out to a total of 20 students, selected students from the BAR and LAW program.

3.3 Pilot Test

Prior to the research, a pilot study was conducted with a group of students consisting of five respondents from lower and higher proficiency levels of students from the BAR and LAW programs. The adapted DCT was used and the results demonstrated acceptance, in terms of the scenario adapted. The respondents reacted positively towards the situations presented. And as such it proves to be reliable in eliciting the desired results of the study.

In addition, it was discovered that there were a few instances whereby some respondents left the DCT unanswered. The choice of leaving the question unanswered by the respondents is termed as an opt out strategy. This was then taken into consideration as one of the variables which was later added to the existing variables to be analysed for the purpose of this study.

3.4 Procedure

After the pilot test, the actual research began with the distribution of the Discourse Completion Test (DCT) to the respondents during classroom observations. The respective teachers administered the procedures with instructions to the respondents how to complete the questionnaires and the respondents were allowed to clarify any questions concerning the procedures, or the descriptions of the situations regarding the vocabulary of the pilot test.

It took the advanced level (L4) LAW students approximately 20 minutes to complete the DCT. As for the intermediate level (L3) BAR and LAW and the higher level (L4) of BAR students, it took about 30 minutes for them to complete the DCT.

3.5 Present Study

The situations used for the DCT have been used on numerous occasions by researchers of the Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realisation Project. Some of the situations were taken from Gibbs (1985) and Fraser et al. (1980), while the rest of the situations were taken from Blum-Kulka et al (1989).

These situations were adopted and later adapted to suit the students' environment context i.e. their present situation of being a student as well as an individual within a wider society. The situations were also adapted to match their cultural backgrounds (see Appendix B for original situations). It is hoped that the adoption of the situations will show validation of the study. The situations are as follows:

- S1. A student asks his roommate to clean up the kitchen that the latter had left in a mess.

- S2. A young woman wants to get rid of a man pestering her on the street.
- S3. A student asks another student to lend him some lecture notes.
- S4. A student asks people living on the same street for a ride home.
- S5. An applicant calls for information on a job advertisement in a paper.
- S6. A policeman asks a driver to move her car.
- S7. A student asks a teacher for an extension on a project paper.
- S8. A university lecturer asks a student to give her presentation a week earlier than scheduled.
- S9. A student playing tennis who has just hit the ball over the fence asks some children in the next court to give the ball back to him.
- S10. A student asks his younger brother to get him a drink in a fast food restaurant, which is the McDonalds.
- S11. A driver asks another driver for a change for the parking meter.
- S12. A grandson asks his grandfather to put out the cigarette he has lit in a non-smoking compartment of a train.

Aspects of social distance and social dominance are also included in this study. It is postulated that the social distance and dominance may affect the choice of request strategy. The social distance would describe the stage of familiarity between the participants.

As stated in this study, dominance refers to the power of the speaker over the hearer in a given role relationship. As such, in Situation 8 (S8), the lecturer's interaction with the student is considered to be speaker dominant ($x > y$), where (x) represents the speaker and (y) represents the hearer. However, equal status of $x = y$ would be an interaction between two students, who are familiar with each other and they are not strangers as in S1 (Situation

1) and S3 (Situation 3). Social distance (SD) can be seen as less dominant (-D) in an interaction between members of the nucleus family (S10 and S12) but highly dominant (+D) for strangers (S2, S4, S5, S6, S7, S9 and S11).

Thus, the binary-value variable of social distance is as follows:

- i) high social distance position amongst strangers (+SD)
- ii) low social distance position amongst friends and families (-SD)

Nevertheless, social dominance has been assigned three possible values as indicated in the following:

- i) speaker dominant which is unequal in status ($x > y$)
- ii) hearer dominant which is also unequal in status ($x < y$)
- iii) equal status between speaker and hearer ($x = y$)

The social distance and social dominance variations for each request situation are illustrated in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2 Social Distance and Dominance Variation for Each Request Situation

LABEL	SETTINGS	SOCIAL DISTANCE	SOCIAL DOMINANCE
S1	Kitchen	-SD	$x=y$
S2	Street	+SD	$x=y$
S3	Notes	-SD	$x=y$
S4	Ride	+SD	$x<y$
S5	Information	+SD	$x<y$
S6	Policeman	+SD	$x>y$
S7	Extension	-SD	$x<y$
S8	Lecturer	-SD	$x>y$
S9	Tennis	+SD	$x>y$
S10	McDonalds	-SD	$x>y$
S11	Parking meter	+SD	$x=y$
S12	Train	-SD	$x<y$

The data gathered for this study is analysed according to these variables. Since, there are two situations representing each combination of social variables, the results for each set were clustered into tokens. In each token, the situations are clustered according to social distance (SD) and dominance (x, y) as illustrated in Example 1.

Example 1:

Token 1 : - SD, $x=y$

Situation 1 – Clean kitchen

Situation 3 – Class notes

As presented in Chapter 4, a statistical model is used to ascertain the outcome of each given situation in which the situations are clustered according to their social distance and dominance factors and are referred to in terms of tokens (see Chapter 4, section 4.0).

3.6 Statistical Analysis

The data retrieved by the Discourse Completion Test (DCT) was analysed by using the univariate Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). The interpretation of the data involves the statistical devices featured in the SPSS for Windows program.

The SPSS for Windows was specially designed to analyse data that would be converted into statistical interpretation, or reports of which could be used in gathering results for researchers. The independent variables were groups used as subjects, while the dependent variables were the request strategy types and the situations presented in the DCT.

The ANOVA diagnostic procedure was selected due to the number of groups analysed for the purpose of the research, which used four different types of groups and the number of selected subjects amounted to 200 students (see Table 3.1).