

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This chapter explains the methodological procedures employed in this study. It is divided into three main parts, namely, the data collection procedure, the data analysis, and validity and reliability assurance.

Data Collection Procedure

The data for the purposes of this study were obtained from hotel brochures currently distributed in Thailand; they included only those written in English. All of the chosen hotels were members of the Thai Hotels Association (THA). The corpus consisted of twenty-six hotel brochures gathered between March and May, 2005. The names of the hotels are listed in Appendix A. To collect brochures from hotels throughout the country, request letters were written and mailed to the manager of each hotel asking her/him to send a brochure. In the letter, the purpose for asking for the brochure was stated clearly, and it was emphasized that the requested brochures be easily available to guests (i.e., available at the hotel reception desk, in guestrooms, and/or at travel agencies).

After getting the brochures, they were first divided into two main types, namely, folded brochures and booklets. Then, all the brochures were scanned into the computer and page numbers were assigned. These photocopies of brochures are in Appendix B and the criteria for assigning page numbers to each type of the brochures is in Appendix C. The assignment of page numbers was for the purpose of the analysis of move sequence and position.

Data Analysis

All the brochures collected are used in the process of data analysis which consisted of five main procedures. The first procedure involved a general examination of the brochures in the corpus. In this general examination, the physical appearance of the hotel brochures, the writer and the reader of the brochures, their relationship, and their goals were analyzed.

The second procedures concerned the organization of the text of the hotel brochure. In particular, this part involved the analysis of the move and step patterns of the brochures. The methodology used in identifying the pattern of moves and steps was largely based on the genre-based approach suggested by Swales (1990) and Bhatia (1993). First, the overall move structure of the brochures was determined and tagged manually. The determination of move segmentation was based on the communicative purpose (or the copywriter's intention). Photocopies of brochures with marked moves and steps are shown in Appendix B. Next, the prototypical moves and steps were identified. At this stage, the obligatory and optional moves and steps used to realize the moves were also identified. Then, the percentages of occurrences of the moves on each page of the brochures and the sequence of the moves in the brochures were determined. The analysis of move structure is presented in the form of percentages of occurrence of each move and step in the corpus. Finally, the prominent linguistic features of each move and step were investigated.

The third procedure of the analysis involved the investigation of position of moves in the brochures. This part of analysis was also expressed in the form of percentages of occurrence of each move at different positions on the pages in the brochures. The space taken by each move was also calculated by estimating the proportion of the space on the pages in the studied brochures which was taken by each move. Since move 1 usually appears on the cover page of the brochures and moves 2 and 3 are frequently found in the pages between the cover page and the back page of the brochures while moves 4 and 5 are normally found on the back

page of the brochures, in the analysis of space allocation, the moves were grouped into three categories: move 1; move 2 and 3; and move 4 and 5. The space allocation was also expressed in a percentage form.

The fourth procedure of the analysis was an examination of the pictures in the brochures studied. The pictures in the brochures were investigated in terms of characteristics of the pictures, that is to say, what the pictures depicted. This part of analysis was also expressed in the form of percentages of occurrence of the pictures.

The final procedure of the analysis was concerned particularly with the investigation of the linguistic features of move 2 'Attracting Potential Guests' and move 3 'Presenting the Hotel's Facilities', two of the prototypical moves of the hotel brochures studied. In investigating the linguistic features found in the selected brochures, first a corpus of move 2 and move 3 of the 26 hotel brochures were created in the form of computer readable text and then saved as separate document files. Next, a computerized concordance program named 'Concapp Concordance Browser and Editor' was used to conduct two main types of analysis. The first type was the calculation of frequency of words found in these two prototypical moves by using the 'Unique Words List' function in the 'Statistics menu'. This function is able to analyze the text in terms of the frequency of use of each individual word. The other type was the analysis of predominant linguistic features of the moves. The latter analysis was performed by inputting a desired word in 'Search String' in the 'Concordance Selection' dialog box to identify the surrounding co-text in the corpus. For example, the concordance program can list all occurrences of the modal auxiliary verb 'can'. For the analysis of certain linguistic features including adjectives and imperatives in these moves, the studied features were counted manually and the percentages of occurrences of these features were calculated. Then, the same function (i.e., Search String) was also used to identify the surrounding co-text of imperatives and to extract the nominal collocates of the adjectival pre-modifiers.

Validity and Reliability Assurance

The approach to the analysis of move pattern of the brochures appears to be subjective, and therefore, a process to minimize this problem was essential. The validity of the study was established because the researcher has confidence that the conclusions drawn are warranted from the corpus collected since the whole population was used in this study. Such confidence derived from the research methods that were designed to ensure content validity.

In addition to the validity of the study, the researcher enhanced the reliability of the study in the way that the conclusions were drawn from the representative samples of the five-star hotel brochures on the basis feedback from specialist informants. For the first trial, six brochures in the corpus were first randomly selected. Next, photocopies of the sample brochures on which the moves and steps had been marked and a summary of criteria for the identification of the moves and steps were presented to three native speakers of English, all of whom were ESP specialists in the Department of Foreign Languages, Faculty of Humanities, Kasetsart University. They were then asked for their opinions on the appropriateness of the analysis of the moves and steps in the hotel brochures. The analysis was then refined based on the feedback received in discussion with these specialists.

After refining the analysis of moves and steps, another eight brochures were randomly selected and photocopied for a second trial. Next, photocopies of the sample brochures on which the refined moves and steps had been marked, and a summary of criteria for the identification of the moves and steps were presented to a Thai instructor in the Department of Foreign Languages, Faculty of Humanities, Kasetsart University who had been an ESP graduate student and had been well-trained in genre analysis.