CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0   Introduction

This research examines language used in spoken discourse from a pragmatic perspective. The pragmatic domain is used to explore the spoken discourse because pragmatics seeks to analyze the relation between language and the outside world and not within the language itself.

Pragmatics also studies the effect of utterances in a particular situation. The study of spoken language will include the interpretation of utterance. An utterance can be defined as a unit of communication. An utterance often communicates a given piece of information i.e a request, a question, a threat or other messages. The focus in this would be the relationship between the speaker and the utterance.

2.1   History and Definition of Pragmatics

Research on pragmatics dates back to ancient Greece and Rome where the term 'pragmaticus' (Latin) and 'pragmaticos' (Greek) mean 'practical'. According to Allwood (1978), the term 'pragmatic' is derived etymologically from the Greek root 'pragma' meaning action or activity. Pragmatics finally was to be the full bodied study of language which covers both context dependent aspects of language structure and principle of language use and understanding which has nothing to do with linguistic structure.

Pragmatics examines how a speaker conveys his meaning when he speaks. According to Leech(1986),

> "Pragmatics studies how people comprehend and produce utterances in verbal interactions in an authentic speech situation. It distinguishes two intents in each utterance or verbal communication. One is the informative intent or the sentence meaning and the other communicative intent or speaker meaning."
>
> Leech (1986:6)

It studies how people comprehend and produce a communicative act or speech act in a concrete speech situation which is usually a conversation. It analyzes two intents or meanings in each utterance or communicative act. One being the meaning derived from the sentence and the other is meaning implied by the speaker. The field of pragmatics is concerned with language use and language function. It is not the structure of the language that is the primary concern but rather the principles of performance.

Katz (1977) defines pragmatics as,

> "...Pragmatic theories, in contrast, do nothing to explicate the structure of linguistic constructions or grammatical properties and relation. They explicate the reasoning of the speaker and the hearer in working out the connection in a context of a sentence taken with a proposition. In this respect, pragmatic theory is part of performance."
>
> Katz (1977:19)

In other words, in the study of pragmatics the stress or focus is not in the linguistic properties of a sentence or grammar but rather, on how participants in a conversation make out what is said in a conversation. The concern is with accounting language in terms of how it is realized or perceived in speech.

Allwood (1996) highlights Katz(1977) view by reiterating that the study of pragmatics involves the conception of linguistic communication as a species of action and interaction between a sender and a receiver. The sender may send the message in a verbal or non verbal manner. The receiver on the other hand responds to this communicative act either by understanding or failing to understand and respond accordingly.

Levinson defines pragmatics as the study of language use,

> "...the study of the relations between language use and context that are basic to an account of language understanding. The study of ability of language users to pair sentences with the contexts in which they would be appropriate."
>
> Levinson (1983:5)

Levinson(1983) describes how language users cleverly use language in a particular situation to convey meaning so as to be understood. It is meaning in interaction since it involves the different contributions of both speaker and hearer as well as that of utterance and content in the production of meaning.

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Searle (1979) points out that in listening to another person, we must understand not only the sounds, words and structure of the utterances but also the kind of utterances being spoken. In the field of pragmatics the language user seems to be the center of attention. The user's point of view is looked at as a common orienting feature for both linguists and philosophers dealing with pragmatics. From the perspective of the user, as Crystal (1992) proposes, it is the choice a language user makes, the constraints he encounters in a social interaction and how the choices affect other participants in an act of communication.

2.2   The Semantics – Pragmatics Distinction

Semantics is the study of meaning in both the spoken and written forms. The sounds that we produce are meant to communicate ideas and for communication to take place, whereby the listener must receive the speaker's meaning.

The following example shows how semantics enters into our understanding of a sentence.

1.   *Shakti exchanged a sweater for a blazer.*

We can generally interpret the above sentence to mean Shakti bought her sweater

from the store and probably returned it for a blazer instead (in exchange). Exchanging here seems to have an activity that involves two people, each giving something to the other.

The study of semantics involves the study of truth conditions of sentences and the relationships between sentences. Truth conditions are simply the circumstances that make something true. In the above example, 'Shakti exchanged a sweater for a blazer', Shakti firstly has to be the person actually carrying out the exchange. Secondly, there must be a sweater to give, to get back the blazer. If a frock is given instead, the sentence is false.

Our understanding of this sentence requires:

    (a) an understanding of the overt meaning of each word in the sentence.

    (b) an understanding of the syntax of the sentence.

    (c) an understanding of the truth conditions of the sentence.

Semantics on one hand seeks to identify the range of possible meaning for every utterance. On the other hand, pragmatics tries to make sense of the speaker's utterance of a sentence which may be pertinent in the process of interpretation of meaning. In other words, pragmatics is concerned with whatever information is relevant, over and above the linguistic properties of a sentence, to understand the utterances. If the hearer is able to recognize what the speaker is trying to convey, then communication has taken place.

This view is also echoed by Allwood (1976),

> "Central to the pragmatic perspective is the conception of linguistic communication as a series of action and interaction between a sender and receiver. The sender performs communicative acts of various types, verbal and non-verbal. The receiver reacts to these communicative acts by understanding or failing to understand.......... By taking stands and forming attitudes towards what he hears and by reacting behaviourally.
>
> (Allwood 1976)

A conversation encompasses an interaction between a sender and receiver. When participants engage in a conversation, the speaker may communicate either verbally or non-verbally and it is up to the hearer to react according to his understanding .

The exchange below illustrates the role of pragmatics in communication for better and meaningful understanding.

A: *So, can you please come over here again?*

B: *Well, I have to go to Singapore today, ma'am.*

A: *Hmmm...how about this Wednesday?*

Pragmatic features and other factual and contextual circumstances have to be drawn upon in this exchange in order for it to make sense. The exchange cannot be accounted for merely by semantics or syntax. Thus, mere dependence on semantics solely may not be enough to convey the additional deeper or real meaning of a sentence. Pragmatic knowledge has to be employed to understand the explicit and the implicit meaning of a speaker.

Pragmatic information concerns facts relevant to making sense of a speaker's utterance of a sentence or other expression. The hearer seeks to identify the speaker's intention in making the utterance. Because the intention is communicative, the hearer's task of identifying it is driven partly by the assumption that the speaker intends him to do this.

The speaker succeeds in communicating if the hearer identifies his intention in this way, for communicative intentions are intention where "fulfillment consists in their recognition" (Bach and Harnis,1979).Leech (1983:6) is able to capture the distinction between pragmatics and semantics as seen below,

> "Pragmatics is the study of meaning in relation to speech situation,dealing with "utterance meaning" rather than sentence meaningwhich is the domain of semantics."
>
> Leech (1983:6)

In short, Pragmatics is the study of relations between signs and interpreters while semantics is the study of relations between signs and objects.

2.3   Utterance As Speech Acts

> "Communication is successful not when hearers recognize the linguistic meaning of the utterance but when they infer the speaker's 'meaning' from it."
>
> (Sperber and Wilson 1986:23)

Speech acts are bits of speech produced as part of social interaction. An utterance may be defined as a unit of communication. An utterance thus communicates a given piece of information, a request, a question, a warning, a threat or some other messages. Utterances are called locutionary acts because they have specific effects on both the speaker and hearer.

Austin(1962) distinguishes three basic types of acts:

(a).   the locutionary act (the act of 'saying something')

(b)   the speaker-based illocutionary act ('the performance of an act in saying something')

(c)   the hearer-based perlocutionary act (such as laughing, complaining or departing)

Austin (1962), considered the act of referring as part of the locutionary act. Different speakers using different utterances and locutionary acts can mean the same thing.In the locutionary act, Austin (1962), alerted us to the fact that a speaker does something in uttering (U) to Hearer in context (C), e.g. states a fact or an opinion (e.g. Mathematics can be difficult), confirms or denies something (e.g. It's not true that Ali is in Paris), makes a prediction (e.g. It'll rain this evening), a promise (e.g. I'll be there in ten minutes), a request (e.g. Pass me the pepper, please), offers invitation (e.g. Can you come over next Sunday?), swears an oath (e.g. I swear allegiance to the King).

An utterance has or may have more than one illocutionary forces; but many utterances have only one message to convey, and this particular illocutionary force is the illocutionary point. See the example below:

- *I'll make the drink.*

The person who utters it and the context of utterance will determine the reference. One illocutionary force is that of a statement about a future act. The above utterance may be used with a second illocutionary force which is to make a promise. If this is the recognized intention of the speaker, then that promise is the illocutionary point of the utterance.The illocutionary point of the utterance below would be to have the Hearer recognize that the Speaker is offering a bet; the acceptance or refusal of the challenge is the Perlocutionary effect of the utterance.

- *I bet you ten ringgit you can jump over the bridge.*

So a perlocution is the Hearer's behavioural response to the meaning of utterance (U) – not necessarily a physical or verbal response, perhaps merely a mental or emotional response of some kind. Other perlocutions are such thing as; alerting the Hearer by warning him of impending danger, convincing the Hearer by giving supporting facts, and so on.

A speech act is quintessentially pragmatic because it is created when the Speaker makes an utterance (U) to a Hearer in context (C) which must be interpreted as an aspect of social interaction.

The Speech Act (Austin, 1962) gives more weight to rule-defined meaning in conversation as opposed to the underlying meaning of the utterance. Implied meaning is often lost as Speech Act Theory does not provide explanation on how meaning of utterances are derived. This points to the value of the Gricean framework and explains why it is used as the basis of the study.

Grice's (1975) work on conversational implicature is useful in explaining meaning that goes beyond what is said. The Conversational Implicature theory works through the assumption that the participants are following the cooperative principle and its maxims are familiar with the context which is often through experience and can infer meaning through reasoning. According to Grice (1975), conversations are made up of assumptions, "conversational implicatures", which are relevant to pragmatics as they carry the pragmatic explanation for linguistic phenomena.

That is the extent to which the Cooperative Principle is adhered to in the interactions.

The following example shows how underlying meaning can be conveyed:

Sister   : *Thanks for eating the entire doughnut.*

The above statement was made to the brother when the sister opened the refrigerator to discover all the doughnuts missing. The brother obviously is aware that this is not a true expression or show of gratitude as the implied meaning is actually dissatisfaction. The tone of the statement may also reveal anger at his eating of all the doughnuts and leaving nothing for the sister.

Among the reasons why people use implicature is to avoid sounding rude or negative. This is evident especially in the Malaysian community whereby if one is rather 'direct' in her replies, she is deemed either insensitive or rude. Often an indirect reply is employed so as not to seem rude. To quote, Prof. Dr. Jamaliah (2000:82), "…to preserve harmony the truth may not always be expressed openly." In other words, more subtle manner has to be used so as not to cause unnecessary conflict in a conversation.

2.4   Conversation

Since this research attempts to analyse conversations, it is best that conversation is defined. Conversation is discourse mutually constructed and negotiated between speakers. A conversation is usually informal and more often than not is planned. Usually the number of speakers is small and the conversation is within the group.

Cook (1989:51) says that talk may be classed as conversation when:

a. It is not primarily necessitated by a practical task.

b. Any unequal power of participants is partially suspended.

c. The number of participants is small.

d. Turns are quite short.

e. Talk is primarily for the participants not for an outside audience.

Grice (1975) proposed that conversation is governed by the Cooperative Principle and its four maxims. When the Cooperative Principle and its four maxims are not always observed then conversational implicature is evident.

2.5   The Cooperative Principle

During the course of conversation, one engages in conversational implicature via cooperation, on the understanding that this form of cooperative exchange is to our mutual benefit or at least that there is mutually accepted direction to the conversation.

Cooperation is a term often used in linguistic literature to characterize human behaviour in a conversation.

According to Grice (1975), an understanding between participants in an interaction is achieved by following the Co-operative Principle.

> "Make your conversational contribution such as is required at the stage at which it occurs, by the acceptedpurpose or direction of the talk exchange in whichyou are engaged..."
>
> (Grice,1975:46)

Grice (1975) proposed that there is an accepted way of speaking which we regard as standard behaviour. We assume an utterance will generally be true, have the right information, be relevant and be phrased in understandable terms.

In communication, the participants often interpret what is conveyed. Meaning or interpretation is often derived from what is intended to be conveyed and not just from what is said. Within this are several maxims to guide conversations along the most satisfactory lines. Conversations represent'team work' where participants need to observe the four fundamental maxims to make it meaningful and successful.

According to Grice (1975:45-6). Co-operative behaviour in conversation can be described in terms of four conversational maxims.

These maxims are elaborated further by Grundy (2000:76) as follows:

2.5.1   Maxim of Quantity

i) Make your contribution as informative as is required (for the current purposes of the exchange)

ii) Do not make your contribution more informative than required.

This is where one tries to be as informative a possible and gives as much information as is needed and no more. It is deemed unnecessary to give more information than is required.

Example:

"My children are doing alright in school,"
being all the information that the speaker provides,
implies that her children are not doing exceptionally
well in school.

2.5.2 Maxim of Quantity

Try to make your contribution one that is true.

i) Do not say what you believe to be false.

ii) Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence.

This is where one tries to be truthful and does not give information that is false or is not supported by evidence.

Example:

Gives rise to the implicature that the speaker has evidence

2.5.3 Maxim of Relation

i) Be relevant

Here, one tries to be relevant, and say things that are pertinent to the discussion.

Example:

When a student asks when an assignment needs to be handed in, a teacher replies,

a). "Surely not next year".

This gives rise to the implicature that it has to be soon.

2.5.4   Maxim of Manner

Be perspicuous.

i)   Avoid obscurity or expression

ii) Avoid ambiguity

iii) Be brief (avoid unnecessary prolixity)

iv) Be orderly

One is expected to be plain and transparent in their utterances so that they may readily be understood. Utterances that are obscure are often vague and usually not understood by participants in a conversation. Ambiguity in speech often leaves hearers confused thus it should be avoided.

Example: In a phone-in sale, the speaker says,

a) "As one of our esteemed clients, we are giving you this special offer",

This is obscure because it gives rise to the implicature that the listener is already their customer rather than just a Recipient of the telephone call.

> ……...in short theses maxims can be condensed as, be succinct, be sincere, be relevant and be clear. By being brief and orderly, participants in a conversation may follow or understand the real intention of the speaker, as Levinson (1983) states,"…in short, these maxims specify what participantshave to do in order to converse in a maximally,efficient, rational, cooperative way; they should speaksincerely, relevantly and clearly, while providing sufficient information."
> Levinson (1983:102)

Grice (1975) maintains that in ordinary conversations, speakers and hearers share a cooperative principle. Speakers shape their utterances to be understood by hearers

In short, to maintain cohesive and cooperative communication in conversation, the four maxims that support the Co-operative Principle is generally to be observed. The said maxims clearly guide the speakers to communicate in an effective way while maintaining clarity and truth.

However the Co-operative Principle is not always adhered to in a conversation. There are times when speakers say something but mean something else.

To quote Thomas (1996:62),

> "…in setting out his Co-operative Principle, Grice was not suggesting that people are always good and kind or cooperative in any everyday sense of that word. He was simply noting that, on the whole, people observe certain regularities in interaction and his aim was to explain one particular set of regularities – those governing the generation and interpretation of conversational implicature."
>
> Thomas (1996:62)

Thomas (1962:62) reiterates that Grice believed that on the whole speakers do follow a set of rules while speaking. He does not propose that people are always cooperative whilst speaking and there are regularities which will be explained in the example below.

Speaker (B) has hurt herself and is in great pain and shows it:

A: Is it really painful?

B: Oh no, I am enjoying this sweet sensation, really!

On the literal sense it, B's reply is untrue and uncooperative. Often this is the sort of sarcastic reply which we get but have difficulty in interpreting. Grice (1975) proposes that , if A takes it that B, is observing the Co-operative Principle he has answered A's question. The speaker may have said something which is untrue and on the basis that Co-operative Principle is in operation sets in the look out for an implicature. The four maxims help us establish what the implicature might be.

Speakers in a conversation are often aware that utterances cannot always be taken at face value and are able to infer the underlying meaning on the basis of shared background and context. Often various rhetorical devices are used to violate the maxims but often it does not affect the Co-operative Principle.

2.6   Conversational Implicature

In conversation, implicature brings about implied or underlying meaning. It is often employed to convey the intention of speakers. Often, skill in understanding or grasping the implicit meaning in a conversation is required for smoother communication to take place. Crystal, 1992:183, defined implicit meaning as, "....an implicature or suggestion deduced from the form of an utterance."

How the implicit meaning is inferred often depends on the Context of the interaction, background of participants and the shared knowledge. Often implicit meanings may be understood differently by different participants. It will be interesting to note that one's creativity, competency and proficiency in language are often required to understand or grasp implied meanings.

Kempson (1977:71) has outlined five characteristics of conversational implicature:

i) They are dependent on the recognition of the Co-operative Principle and its maxims.

ii) They are not part of the meaning of the lexical items in the sentence since their interpretation depends on a prior understanding of the conventional meaning of the sentence.

iii) The implicature of an utterance will characteristically not be the sole Interpretation of the utterance. There may be well more than one possible assumption which will reinstate the Co-operative Principle in the face of an apparent breakdown.

iv) The working out of an implicature will depend upon assumptions about the world which the speaker and hearer share. They will therefore not in general be predictable independently of the shared assumptions particular to individual speakers and hearers.

v) They are cancelable. That is an interpretation which is not part of the conventional meaning of the utterance may be explicitly denied without contradiction.

To summarize the above, Kempson (1977) suggests that the result of an implicature often depends on the world view of the participants. Interpretation of meaning would depend on shared knowledge and shared assumptions of participants. Thus if an utterance strays away from the conventional meaning it can be cancelled out.

2.7   Grice's Theory of Conversational Implicature

This is an attempt at explaining how a listener gets from what is said to what is meant, from the level of expressed meaning to the level of implied meaning. Grice(1975) coined the term 'implicature' to cover any non-conventional meaning that is implied, for example, conveyed indirectly or through hints and understood implicitly without ever being explicitly stated.

For non-conventional meaning where one cannot get stated meaning, one has to depend on the implicature.

Example:

In the middle of their lunch, one girl asks another how she likes the pie that she's eating and the response is:

       B: A pie is a pie.

From a purely logical aspect, the reply has no communicative value as it expresses something which is completely obvious. However, when used in conversation, it communicates more than what is said.

The hearer has to assume that when the speaker utters those words, he is being cooperative and intends to communicate something and this additional meaning is Implicature. By uttering those words, the Speaker expects that the Hearer will be able to work out the meaning intended on the basis of what is already known, that is the implicature intended in this context.

2.7.1   Generalised Conversational Implicature

This arises irrespective of the context in which they occur. No special knowledge is required in the context to calculate the additional meaning.

The example below illustrates the above:

A: Did you invite Sally and Ali?

B: I invited Ali.

Omission of the other name shows a generalized implicature. In the example, the implicature that Sally was not invited, is arrived on the basis that if the speaker had been more informative or more specific then she would have said, *" I invited Ali and Sally".*

2.7.2   Particularized Conversational Implicature

Most of the time, our conversations take place in very specific contexts in which locally recognized inferences are assumed. Such inferences are required to work out the conveyed meaning which results from Particularized Conversational Implicature.

Particularized Implicatures are derived not from the utterances alone but the utterance in context. They vary with the context and arise only in a particular context of utterance. They are not conventional because they give rise to different implicatures in different contexts of use.

Conversational Implicature is a result of a Hearer drawing an inductive inference as to the likeliest meaning in a given context. This study focuses attention on particularized conversational implicatures in the conversation of teachers in a secondary school.

2.8   How Implicature Is Established And Conveyed

Often the listener is the one who identifies or establishes the implicatures. Background knowledge and shared experience often contribute to participants inferring the meaning of utterances.

Implicatures are evident when a speaker violates the maxims proposed by Grice. The flouting of a maxim often gives rise to conversational implicature.

Bethan Davies (2000: 1-26), uses the example below to describe a situation in which a maxim is disobeyed which then generates implicature.

Example:

A: Is there another pint of milk?

B: I'm going to the supermarket in five minutes.

According to Davies (2000), Grice suggests that when we produce, or hear, an utterance we assume that it will generally be true, have the right amount of information, be relevant and in understandable terms. If an utterance does not appear to conform to this model, in Grice's terms, a maxim has been flouted and an implicature generated.

Usually conversational implicatures are seen when the Cooperative Principle and its maxims are not overtly observed. One may be violating or flouting a maxim by giving an indirect meaning. In short, it is not always that conversations would go smoothly. Grice (1975:49) was aware of this and so suggested four classes of maxim violation.

He stated that a speaker could:

(i) violate a maxim 'quietly' and 'unostentatiously' with an intent to mislead.

(ii) opt out of a situation by withdrawing from the interaction when one is unwilling or unable to be cooperative.

(iii)   be faced with a clash of maxims such that the choice of one maxim violates

another: or

(iv)   flout a maxim by blatantly violating it with the intent of strategic or artful

cooperation.

Grice (1975) suggests that implicatures in conversations can be effective if the participants shared the criteria below:

a) Cooperate as intended

b) Consider relevant aspect of the social setting

c) Share background knowledge

d) Recognize the conventional meaning of the chosen topic.

2.9   Critics of Grice's Theory

Among the critics of Grice's Theory include Gadzar (1977) and Kempson (1977). They believe that in an utterance, Grice's maxims are not able to differentiate between the intended meaning in a sentence, the conventional meaning and implicature.

Leech (1983) contends that there have also been objections to Grice's theory on the grounds that it does not stand up to the evidence of real language. He moves on to quote Keenan (1974) who comments that the maxims of the Cooperative Principle are not universal to language because there are linguistic communities to which not all of them apply.

Green (1989) agrees with this by stating that being cooperative in communication works differently in different cultures. People of different cultures often have different ways of communicating with one another. For the purpose of being polite they may withhold information from people whom they are speaking with. Thus they may not conform to the Co-operative Principle, therefore the maxims may not be universal in this respect.

Taylor and Cameron (1987:83) are of the view that Grice's underlying ideas are too often lost. This view is supported by Saddock (1974) who is of the opinion that Grice's maxims are not specific, are unclear, are unable to identify the specific implicatures and accepts any implicatures.

It seems that the Co-operative Principle is not about making the task of the Hearer easy but quite the reverse. It allows the Speaker to make their utterance harder, rather than easier to interpret. As Davies (1997) suggests, we can omit information or present a non-literal utterance, and expect the Hearer to do the extra work necessary to interpret it.

In conclusion, the validity of the maxims cannot be ascertained

2.10   Support for Grice's Theory

Mac Connell-Ginet (1988) indicates the relevance of a Gricean approach,

> '...a major insight of the Gricean perspective is that
> we can still manage to mean more than what we
> literally say.'
>
> (1988:202)

Mc Connel-Ginet's view is that we must get others to co-operate with us if we want to generate understanding. And that we can get to convey more than what we actually say in words.

Levinson (1983) reiterates that communication involves the receiver to react once the sender utters a thought and that, '...communication is achieved just by being recognized. (1983:16). If a Hearer understands or perceives what is said, then communication has taken place.

Scriffin (1984:9) suggests that, '...human beings...draw highly specific inferences about one another's intended meaning.' What he basically means is that conversations are essentially co-operative efforts.

2.11   Studies using the Gricean Framework

Jackson (1981), Basso (1972) and Burt (1992) lay claim that familiarity with Grice would enable for a better understanding of conversational implicature.

Burt (1992) disagreed with the methodology used by American teachers to teach students to recognize and unravel flaws in the logic of the texts that they read and produce. Burt claims that familiarity with Grice allows a student to better recognize and criticize a flawed argument. He argues that a Gricean framework works on the assumption that for communication to work there needs to be a form of co-operation between participants (or a reader and a writer). This then increases his awareness and encourages the development of critical thinking.

Rundquist's (2000:431) in her study used the Gricean framework to examine men's and women's speech. The study focuses on the way in which a group of men and women engaged in informal conversation with their own children and with other adults.

The results suggested the men exploited the Co-operative Principle by flouting the maxims more frequently than the women. Rundquist's analysis provides a logical progression through each of the four conversational maxims.

In Malaysia, a few studies have been carried out on the spoken discourse of the Malaysian ESL speakers. They are by Asmah (1987), Morais (1994), Jamaliah (1998), Tan Mek Leng (1994) and Yong Suat Ping (1997).

Jamaliah (1998) in her study examined the dimension and range of aspects of communication and how they vary in cultures of the Malays, Chinese and Indians. She states that speakers often act according to rules and use them in conversations.

These findings greatly helped the researcher of this study to understand better the scenario and related ideas.

2.12   The Framework for this Study

The Gricean Theory of Conversational Implicature does provide an adequate frame work for the analysis of naturally occurring conversations and is used in this study for the conversations of secondary school teachers.

The focus will be on:

1. Grice's Co-operative Principle.
2. The violations of the conversational maxims.
3. The classes of Maxim violation
4. Language Play in the violation of the Maxims.

2.13   Rationale for using Grice's Theory

The researcher wishes to analyze conversations of teachers in a real setting. The researcher seeks to examine if they conform or flout the maxims of the Co-operative Principle and to what extent they do so. Moreover traditional Speech Act Theory does not provide an adequate framework for the analysis of naturally occurring conversations. Therefore the Gricean framework is employed to analyze the data from the conversation of teachers.

2.14   Malaysian Culture

The participants in this research are Malaysians of Malay, Chinese and Indian origin. They were born and bred in Malaysia and can identify with the different beliefs and values of each culture. This in turn provides a background for understanding each other better.

Morris (1938), quoted by Jamaliah (1996) stated, "... 'language users'...are representatives of their culture". She added that being representatives of their culture, language users share the same rules of interaction and norms of interpretation of utterances.

Generally Malaysians tend to be concerned with preserving 'face' so as to maintain harmony. Often this is done by 'laughing off' an embarrassing situation, delaying answers to 'uncomfortable' questions or even withdrawing from a conversation.

Most importantly it will be note-worthy to add that having similar culture enables them to have an understanding thus making the process of communication smoother.