CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.0 Introduction

This chapter will review the literature in the area of CMC with respect to language concerns and construct theoretical framework with sample studies for the data analysis in Chapter Four. Unfortunately, there is little literature analyzing language issues among numerous CMC and Internet articles which cover the problems of social, psychological, cultural, behavioral, and interpersonal phenomena in the online (virtual) communities. In a deeper sense, however, this study reflects the fact that Internet as a technological innovation brings about a change influencing the human communication, and in turn generates a new trend of language development in the cyberspace time.

Elizabeth M. Reid (1991) in her master thesis "Electropolis: Communication and Community on Internet Relay Chat" and Frank S. Palmisano III (1999) in his article "Is Internet Intimacy?" respectively formulate:

> "IRC is essentially a playground. Within its domain people are free to experiment with different forms of communication and self-representation. From that communication playground, 'IRC habituees have evolved rules, rituals, and communication styles that qualify them as a real culture according to criteria defined by prominent social scientists."
>
> Reid, E. (1991)

> "Philosophers such as Kierkegaard argued that man is irretrievably isolated, while the French iconoclast Jean-Paul Sartre declared that man sees his fellow human beings as intruders upon the background of his world. If anything has had the power to subvert this opinion and the

> myriads of literature along the same line, it would have to be the rapid growth in popularity of the Internet with its project to force the global community into intimate quarters. This effort follows from the assumption that a pervasive dialogue which invites the global community into close proximity will help advance social harmony and can bring about positive changes for all involved."
>
> Frank S. Palmisano III (1999)

From their formulation, we could learn that IRC as one of the CMC forms on the Internet has become another means of human communicative community, where people gather together, exchanging their ideas, establishing 'rules, rituals, and communication styles that qualify them as a real culture', due to technological advances in the late 20th century. This also will lead an increasing number of people to join in 'the global community' for the 'social harmony' and produce everything beneficial to the human development as communication, publication, and business in the future.

Underpinned by their viewpoints, an attempt to analyze language in such an environment is supposed to have found theoretical grounds for the thesis argumentation. The following discussions will provide more details to shed light on the matter.

2.1 CMC as Online Communities

People are living in various communities and Internet is such a community created by the late 20th century's computer technology. It is human nature to communicate with each other. As William Whyte says: "What attracts people most, in sum, is other people" (Whyte 1988). Although technology and the Internet are the enablers of this

new community, it is people that are the key factors to maintain the community. Online or virtual communities exist in different kinds of formats, including Email-list forums, Chat-systems such as IRC, MUDs and MOOs, Bulletin board systems - BBS, Usenet news-groups, and Webblogs Websites (Yi Zhang, 2002). All above systems in the form of communication are called CMC groups by their nature, thus, such communities are also known as group-CMC on the Internet. They do not only appear on the net with collections of exchanged messages, more importantly, they are social phenomena whatsoever.

2.2 Internet as Social Phenomena

Internet is a technological phenomenon at its initial stage of invention, however, for the time being, the technology is "not assumed as a determinant of online life, but a prerequisite for the occurrence of the virtual community social phenomena" (Fletcher, 1995). Virtual environments offer a unique space for the creation and recreation of group cultures, showing all the meaning and valorization processes involved in the socio-psychological interaction. The main objective is not to focus on the community members' intra-conscious life, but on the inter-conscious 'space' of the communities. We see the virtual community as a whole socio-psychological phenomenon created by the interaction of its members, who belong and make their own inter-subjective dimension. The principal notion of culture assumed is that of Geertz, who defines it as

PERPUSTAKAAN UNIVERSITI MALAYA

"webs of significance he (man) himself has spun" (quoted by Van Maanem, 1990). This shared symbolic and meaning delineation also explains our notion of group identity.

Reid (1991) points out that IRC is a global cultural phenomenon, with high potential for citizen-to-citizen communication across national and ideological boundaries: It is not uncommon for IRC channels to contain no two people from the same country. With the encouragement of intimacy between users and the tendency for conventional social mores to be ignored on IRC, it becomes possible for people to investigate the differences between their cultures. No matter on how superficial a level that might be, the encouragement of what can only be called friendship between people of disparate cultural backgrounds helps to destroy any sense of intolerance that each may have for the other's culture and to foster a sense of cross-cultural community.

Murphy, K. L. and Collins, M. P. (1997) hold that "IRC can involve large international groups of people, many of whom may be strangers". Real-time electronic chat is commonly used for recreation and social interaction. On IRC, both topic and tone of discussion is policed only by the participants, with the result that a shared culture has gradually developed that defines communication norms and conventions somewhat differently from what they are in the face-to-face conversations. This is a typical characteristic of virtual community where the participants create their own conventions and such a practice, more or less, will influence the general norms of human language in the future. According to the statistics of Google Engine Search

(2004), there are over 25,200 various chatrooms with hundreds of million people on the Internet for different purposes. It is an unavoidable social phenomenon.

2.3 IRC Interpersonal Relationship

People who form meaningful relationships online gain the same benefits as face-to-face relationships, are of interest to the current research. Suler (1997a) provided thought as to why people explore the potential for online communication, in conjunction with their daily face-to-face relationships. The pragmatics of face-to-face communication is less conscious, since body language and facial expressions often communicate messages without the need for spoken dialogue (Watzlawick et al, 1967). Suler explains that online text driven environments, such as Internet Relay Chat (IRC), requires communication between at least two people through text in synchronous conversation. This text might convey emotion, mood and sometimes depict the context or environment in which the persons are speaking from or about. Therefore the pragmatics of online communication is possibly more involved than that of face-to-face communication, which may offer those seeking relationships online a more consciously demanding way of communicating.

Suler (1997a) reviews various online synchronous conversations in text-driven chat environments and notes two aspects of communication. The first aspect is with those who use these environments implementing a particular language format, which incorporate symbols to compensate for the lack of some important face-to-face elements.

Symbols are used to represent a tone of voice, a facial expression, and other elements that promote a level of social closeness with their conversational partners. An example of how this is done is by way of using a non-standard practice of speech brackets in text conversation that contain messages of expression or action, e.g. [He says sarcastically, raising his eyebrows], indicating that words outside of the brackets have the tone of sarcasm. This text-language style is no different to ordinary English prose, in that punctuation, spelling and other keyboard symbols are used to stimulate the reader's imagination about how a person might actually speak to them in a face-to-face context.

The second noticeable factor of this conversation medium is that without the distracting sights and sounds of the FTF environment, people actively attend when reading the text-screen. Some Internet users find the use of anonymity to be liberating (Schnarch, 1997; Rheingold, 2004). Using nickname is a popular practice in the chatrooms. Disclosure of a person's real personal problems or true personality to a stranger, who cannot see or hear them, nor know anything about their everyday life, family, friends, or past behavior or thought processes, provides a safe opportunity to receive feedback. It is possible that a person may receive positive reinforcement in conversations with anonymous Internet users, thus promoting a level of trust and respect between the users. In this regard, the identity of IRC participants such as age, gender, social status, and belief is not so sensitive compared to those in the physical conversations. Suler concluded that synchronous text-based conversation is perhaps a

perhaps a more rewarding form of communication than FTF.

2.4 CMC Language Analysis

Wilson A (1992), Crystal D (2001), Peters P, et al. (2002) examine the notable linguistic features of CMC and noted that the proportion of these features exhibited by a CMC text can vary enormously according to criteria such as text-type and the personal characteristics of the individual writer (including age, identity, etc.). These features are typical in IRC context.

1) Orthography

- informal ("phonetic") spelling

  wat *you mean ?* (What you mean?)

- speed-writing (esp. with mobile phones): combination of informal spelling with letter omission

  m *fine* ***thx*** (I'm fine, thanks)

- absence of capitalization (even with pronoun *I* and proper names)

  oh thats cool ***i'm*** *from* ***melbourne*** (a place in Australia), ***cheetah*** (a name)

2) Vocabulary

- informal

  ok ***wat u wanna tok ab..*** *can we* ***tok*** *in msn* (what you want to talk about)

- use of interjections

  oops *my finger went dislexic*

- use of "in"-terms and abbreviations (BTW, ROTFL, ACK)

  gtg brb (got to go, be right back)

3) Grammar

- "telegraphic" language

  will have exam, but be free until 29 March.

- "chaining" (multiple coordination/subordination in sequence)

4) Discourse and Text

- use of interaction features (e.g. questions)

  Bill, you sound english, ***is that right?***

- "stream of consciousness" writing

  tot a few days ago... tiger went supper??no... or i see wrong person???/

5) Paralinguistics and Graphics

- spaced letters

  u dun have bf? dats ur ***G O O D L U C K****... men=trouble*

- multiple letters

  nothinggggg

- alternative markers for emphasis

  LOL

- capitalization ("shouting")

  NONOOOOOOOOOO *in bad mood*

- little or "excessive" punctuation

  did I do anything wrong?????

- emoticons and smileys

  but now i have to go :((sad)

(The samples are cited from the data corpus in the appendices)

The features of CMC are described as follows: 1) CMC demonstrates a mix of features drawn from prototypically spoken and prototypically written media (including sub-types of these, e.g. telegraphic language); 2) text-type has an important role in determining the nature of the language used in CMC. Overall, however, the trend is towards a more informal, 'spoken' style of writing. This is especially obvious at the paralinguistic/graphic level, where additional means have been developed to represent effects that are possible in FTF interaction but not in writing; 3) the constraints of real-time interaction seem to be responsible for many of the features of CMC language.

These seem then to have diffused into asynchronous text-types; 4) socially, there seems to be some trend towards group solidarity amongst users of CMC. Several language choices appear aimed at reducing social distance and emphasizing group membership. Furthermore, these features provide the radical evidence for online text-based language analysis.

Influenced by Christopher C. Werry's study (1996) on "Internet Relay Chat" (IRC), Jon Stevenson (2004) did his research on "The Language of Internet Chat Rooms". His aim is to asses the extent to which the language of IRC can be viewed as an '*Antilanguage*' as defined by Halliday or simply a 'speech community' that employs different language varieties for purely practical reasons.

Werry (1996) recognizes the presence of 'relexicalization' by the fact that the IRC "participants tend to play with language, to produce hybrid, heteroglossic forms". While Stevenson (2004) continues to analyze the '*overlexicalization*' of certain terms such as 'lol' (laughing out loud), 'lmao' (laughing my arse off), 'rotflol' (rolling on the floor laughing out loud), and examined the exclusive effect that such intense abbreviation can have on 'newbies': how is a novice supposed to know that 'omg' means 'oh my god' and 'gtg' means 'got to go'? Through his study on certain paralinguistic phenomena in IRC language, he asserts that "the ability of chatters to 'graphically express emotions and simulate speech-phonology' certainly gives the potential for gesturally and linguistically created social-tension to exist; there is also clearly a lot of scope for the

development of a 'prestige language variety'". This could be determined 'grammatically, through syntax, ellipses, punctuation' etc, lexically through 'relexicalization' and through phrasal 'covert norms'.

Stevenson (2004) concludes that of overwhelming importance to IRC participants are their personal identity and the consolidation of their online status. The primary purpose of most language use on IRC is to attract the attention of other 'lurkers'. Chatters are therefore constantly striving to entertain. This creates a situation whereby new IRC users ('Newbies') will tend to overuse the conventions to which they are becoming accustomed in order to try to accommodate to their audience (regular IRC users). In fact, IRC may actually catalyze this effect, as participants are more conscious of the way in which they construct their utterances online than in real-life. In this potentially infinite universe of language variety, it would be naïve to suggest that antilanguage didn't exist at all.

However, Stevenson (2004) admits that it would be impossible for us to abandon the concept of prejudice totally, and he perceives that it must be maintained even in this 'ultra-free' cyberspace. He contradicts his idea here is partly because he does not analyze the IRC language in a perception of development. We could imagine how difficult and complicated if we went back to use old or middle-age English, which is full of fussy words and esoteric grammatical structures. It is the social evolution, esp. technological innovations, that makes human life easy, comfortable, and convenient.

Why we could not accept 'lol' to denote a feeling of happiness to a busy friend who has a mobile phone in hand. Do novel IRC words abuse language?

Susan Herring (1999) in her thesis "Interactional Coherence in CMC" studies the incoherent turn-taking phenomena and points out that "text-only CMC has been claimed to be interactionally incoherent due to limitations imposed by messaging systems on turn-taking and reference, yet its popularity continues to grow". In an attempt to resolve this apparent paradox, her study evaluates the coherence of computer-mediated interaction by surveying research on cross-turn coherence. The results reveal a high degree of disrupted adjacency, overlapping exchanges, and topic decay. Two explanations are proposed to account for the popularity of CMC despite its relative incoherence: the ability of users to adapt to the medium, and the advantages of loosened coherence for heightened interactivity and language play. Dr. Herring believes that two properties of the medium are often cited specifically as obstacles to interaction management:

i) Lack of simultaneous *feedback*, caused by reduced audio-visual cues and the fact that messages cannot overlap;

ii) Disrupted turn *adjacency*, caused by the fact that messages are posted in the order received by the system, without regard for what they are responding to.

In her thesis, Herring (1999) uses the evidence 'comes from descriptive studies of

computer-mediated interaction making use of methods of conversation analysis (CA)' to summarize the incoherent text-based utterances under the headings of *turn-taking* and *sequential coherence*. Such analysis only emphasizes the influenced parameters of language analysis and neglects the influencing parameters as attitudes, values, and beliefs of the participants. Thus, the useful ethnographic method, CA, is trivialized in the study of human language holistically.

Neuage (2003), in his doctoral thesis "Conversational analysis of chatroom talk", uses multi-method - *Semiotic Analysis*, *Speech Act Theory* (SA), *Discourse Analysis* (DA), *Conversational Analysis* (CA); several schools of text analysis theory, including *Reading-response Theory*, and techniques of technology analysis, especially *Computer-Mediated Communication* (CMC) – to analyse language in the IRC situations. His thesis discusses how conversation in the text-based chatroom milieu differs from every day 'casual' conversation in a number of respects. It demonstrates how, despite the differences in 'chat' conducted online from that carried out face-to-face, online chat and 'natural conversation' share some features, and that analytical theories developed for inquiry into conventional speech and print-based text reception, can be used for examining online chat.

His research shows that not only is 'conversation' a misnomer in this context, but also that dialogue in this electronic milieu is different, not only because of the current absence of sight and sound cues, but also as a result of various features caused by

rapidly changing technologies. He proposes that chatroom 'texted-talk' is in fact a new communicative genre with, on the one hand, characteristics in common with casual conversation, writing and other forms of electronic communication, but on the other hand, new and unique features that demand separate classification. He believes that chatroom conversation is becoming a phenomenon which warrants historical study. It is also however showing signs, because of rapidly changing and evolving technologies, of being a short-lived genre.

There are seven case studies in his thesis; each discusses a different chatroom setting with related theories respectively. As this thesis covers a large scope of the study area on CMC issues with mixed theories of linguistics, the structure of the thesis seems to be too loose to concentrate on a specific purpose. This may cause the argument to diffuse without a systematic focus on a certain matter.

2.5 Summary on Literature Review

From the literature reviewed, we could draw a conclusion that language in CMC situation is becoming a trend widely used by the people with various purposes. However, it is a new field for linguists to study its influence on language development as it is a new product of late 20th century's technology. Although the current research on CMC provides some useful evidence for language study, still there is less time and energy investing in the research of such a phenomenon, compared to this 'exploding' use of online medium. Although the limited literature on CMC, especially, IRC language as

PERPUSTAKAAN UNIVERSITI MALAYA

A511935543

what Susan Herring (1999), Terrell Neuage (2003), and Jon Stevenson (2004) did, is very inspiring, still, there is a big gap in illustrating this language variety, at least, from the respects of language fusion, culture, and races. The research they constructed is too preoccupied in the areas of English native speaking countries. As Internet is a world wide medium with users all over the world, this 'Englishes' medium is being overcharged with a 'diverse' language style, 'no right, no wrong', only for the sake of quick-typing and understanding. There is a great need to further study its nature and impact upon language development in the future.

2.6 Theoretical Framework and Sample Studies

Some theories within pragmatics will be described to establish an interpretation of conversation for the use of this on-line, texted 'chat'. The data of chatroom 'talk' in the appendices at the back will be analyzed in accordance with the general requirements of *Ethnographic Analysis*, *Conversational Analysis*, and *Speech Act Theory* which will work as an organic chain to, logically, connect the data analysis in Chapter Four.

2.6.1 Pragmatics and Its Overlapped Disciplines

Pragmatics is the study of linguistic communication, of actual language use in specific situations. It studies the factors that govern our choice of language in social interaction and the effects of our choice on others (Levinson, 1983; Nofsinger, 1991). Among the areas of linguistic inquiry, several main areas overlap. *Pragmatics* and *Semantics* both take into account such notions as the intentions of the speaker, the

effects of an utterance on listeners, the implications that follow from expressing something in a certain way, and the knowledge, beliefs, and presuppositions about the world upon which speakers and listeners rely when they interact. *Pragmatics* also overlaps with *Stylistics* and *Sociolinguistics*, and *Psycholinguistics*, as well as *Discourse analysis*. These areas are all concerned with the analysis of conversation. However, to be concise, this current dissertation will exclusively analyze chatroom language from pragmatic perspectives.

2.6.2 Ethnographic Analysis

When talking about the ethnographic analysis, one will naturally think of the sociolinguists, Gumperz and Hymes, and their contributions, Ethnography of Communication (1972). In his formula, *Ethnography of SPEAKING*, Hymes offered a radically descriptive orientation for the accumulation of data on the nature of *ways of speaking* within speech communities. However, as a theoretical position, Hymes' project singles out diversity of speech as the hallmark of sociolinguistic enquiry.

> "'Speech community' is a primary concept which postulates the unit of description as a social, rather than a linguistic entity. Rather than start with a 'language', one starts with a social group and then begin to consider the entire organization of linguistic means within it. A speech community is defined tautologically (but radically!) as a community which shares knowledge of rules for the conduct and interpretation of speech."
>
> Hymes (1972)

Chatroom of CMC is also a specific speech community which is introduced in the previous chapters, as Hymes describes, it has its own situation for participants to display

ways of speaking and presents its speech event differentiating to others, e.g. 'oh', 'gtg', 'brb', 'Hiiiiiiiiiiiiii', 'BeBe', 'wb!!!'. These novel text-based chatroom expressions can only be recognized by the people of the same community.

While Gumperz (1977) demonstrates that speakers signal what activity they are engaging in, i.e. the metacommunicative frame they are operating within, by use of paralinguistic and prosodic features of speech – i.e. intonation, pitch, amplitude, and rhythm. Gumperz calls these features, when they are used in signaling interpretive frames, "contextualization cues" (cited from *Verbal Communication*, Jamaliah 2000 : 85). Gumperz's ethnographic and sociolinguistic method, especially, the 'contextualization cues' provide a reliable theory for identifying chatroom utterances with a scientific ground.

Sample Study 1

Alamak Chat #SG (Singapore)

368)[fly_away] NoNo: i no FIAK with u b4..DONT MISS OUR FIAK okie?
431)[NoNo] PLAY GAME!!! free eh mai play siao bo
434)[fly_away] hunkie boy: FREE ONE?
441) [NoNo] FREE online rpg game lahz ..
460) [fly_away] hunkie boy: KNN.... play ur head..
471)[NoNo] ang dao u use VULGAR on me again.. i shall ignore u
478)* fly_away THREATEN ME AGAIN...
484)[NoNo] ya ya i ALWAYS bully u.. go ahead

Notice how 'SHOUTING' gets immediate attention – then quickly turns to an insult – as it would in real life. If we just take small letters as normal attitudes in online talk, we may find capital letters an impolite way to the rest of the online participants.

This sample shows that Gumperz's 'conceptualized cues' can be used to verify the paralinguistic phenomena in online text-based situation.

Sample Study 2

Alamak Chat #1 (Australia)

606)[Sketchy_Unit] omg, Shaka!	→	oh my God
607)[MAIYA] *LOL*	→	laugh out loud
745)[sxc_thang] GTG BRB	→	got to go and be right back
792)[ddwizz] wb cherry	→	welcome back
953)[abc] jbr> i am a foreigner btw	→	by the way

These acronyms are often seen as chatroom conventions among the participants no matter who is a regular chatter or a newbie. It is also taken for granted that such a phenomenon is popular and fashionable in an online situation. They are the recognizable norms in the virtual communities.

2.6.3 Conversational Analysis

Conversational analysis is the study of casual conversation. Casual conversation is the turn-taking-talk between individuals. Current Conversational Analysis (CA) is based on the techniques of the American sociological movement of the1970s, most notably from the works of Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson (SSJ), in their work in *ethnomethodology*. The central concern was to determine how individuals experience, make sense of, and report their interactions. In CA, the data thus consists of tape recordings of natural conversation, and their associated transcriptions. These are then systematically analyzed to determine what properties govern the ways in which a

conversation proceeds. The approach emphasizes the need for empirical, inductive work, and in this it is sometimes contrasted with *Discourse Analysis*, which has often been more concerned with formal methods of analysis, such as the nature of the rules governing the structure of texts.

Turn-taking in spoken conversation can be said to follow a normative ideal of precisely alternating turns. The word 'precisely' refers to the timing of the transition from one speaker turn to the next, which is ideally supposed to occur with no (or minimal) gap, and no overlap between speakers.

Sample Study 3

Schegloff's example of turn sequence in FTF situation (from Coulthard, 1977: 72) is as follows:

(412) Natural sequence:

A: Do you have blackberry jam?	Q1
B: Yes.	A1
A: Okay. Can I have half a pint then?	Q2
B: Sure (Turns to get)	A2

Sample Study 3 is a typical case of turn-taking sequence in normal human conversation; when a person asks a question, the other person answers, and the person continues to ask another question, then the second answers the next.

Chatroom, in contrast, exhibits numerous violations of both the 'no gap, no overlap' principle and the principle of orderly turn alternation (Herring, 1999). It is a synchronous and two-way CMC which involves more rapid exchanges of turns, but

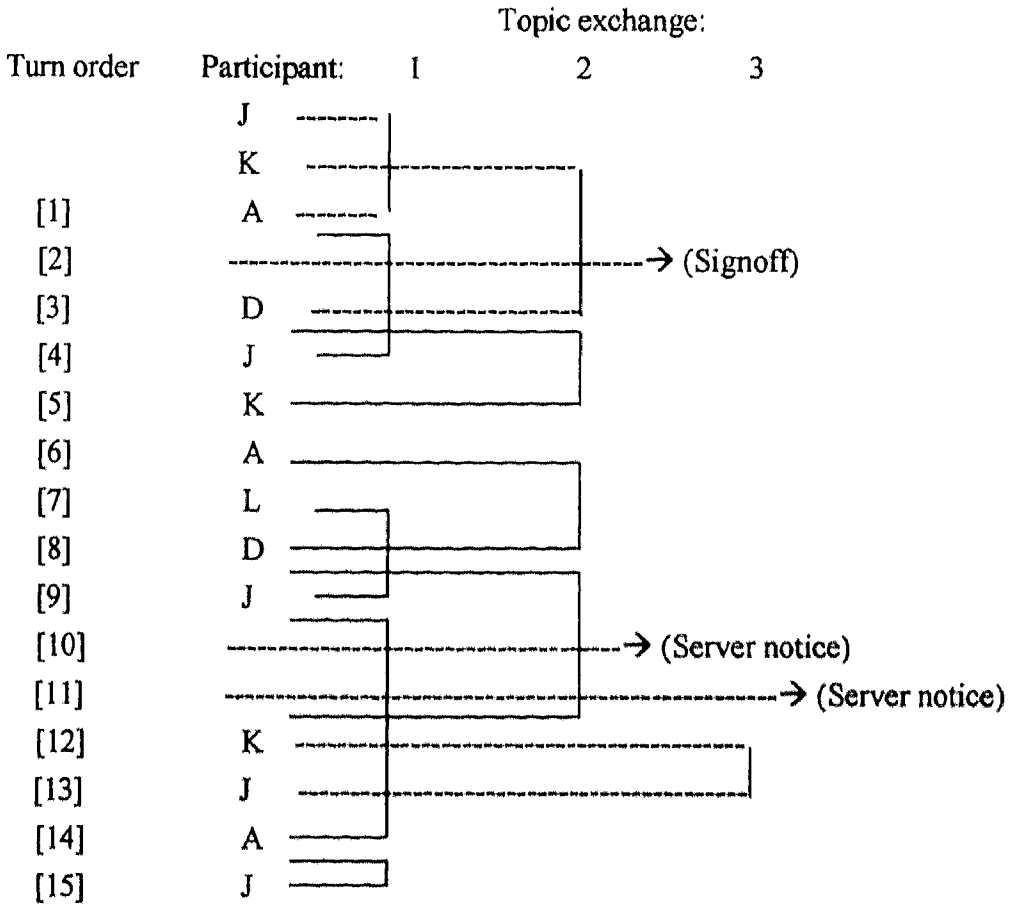
delays are always caused by the time of typing (saying in FTF talk), system lag, and disrupted turn adjacency. Gap, therefore, is a common phenomenon in the procession of chatroom conversation. And overlap is also problematic there. The temporal overlap in display of turns is not an option in a chatroom. This is because the system forces messages into a strict linear order without topic recognition between related chatters.

Herring's (1999) example of chatroom turn-taking sequence is as below:

1. <ashna> hi jatt
2. *** Signoff: puja (EOF From client)
3. <Dave-G> kally i was only joking around
4. <Jatt> ashna: hello?
5. <kally> dave-g it was funny
6. <ashna> how are u jatt
7. <LUCKMAN> ssa all
8. <Dave-G> kally you da woman!
9. <Jatt> ashna: do we know eachother?. i'm ok how are you
10. *** LUCKMAN has left channel #PUNJAB
11. *** LUCKMAN has joined channel #punjab
12. <kally> dave-g good stuff:)
13. <Jatt> kally: so hows school life, life in geneal, love life, family life?
14. <ashna> jatt no we don't know each other, i fine
15. <Jatt> ashna: where r ya from?

Turn-taking sequences as shown in Figure 1 tend to be in a chaotic order (many gaps and overlaps). Compare to FTF situation, does IRC incoherent turn-taking sequence affect the communication between chatters? It is a noticeable case to show difference of turn-taking sequence between normal conversation and chatroom talk. What causes such a phenomenon and how it can be recognized from such confused situation, the schematic and descriptive analysis will do the work.

Figure 1. Turn-taking Sequence in Chatrooms:



In this analysis, *Conversational Analysis* (CA) will be used to check the features of turn-taking in chatroom situation in order to determine the positive or negative effect of the dysfunctional (unconnected) and advantageous (amusing) incoherence upon the mutual understanding of the participants. Another aim here is to check how CA in SSJ's ethnomethodological tradition to capture speech exchange regulated online, and to assess whether this new "technologization" of talk relations alters the regulatory practices established within real-world.

2.6.4 Speech Act Theory

Speech Act Theory is a theory of language based on Austin's *How to Do Things with Words* (1962), the major premise of which is that language is as much a mode of action as it is a means of conveying information. Austin argued that many utterances are equivalent to actions. When someone says: "I name this ship" or "I pronounce you man and wife", the utterance creates a new social or psychological reality, i.e. 'saying' equals 'doing'. However, in online chatroom situation, this 'saying' is converted to 'typing', e.g. when a chatter wants to leave the chatroom, (s)he may type 'bye', and actually the action '(s)he is off the line' takes place.

Austin's original classification of speech acts separates acts as informative, performative, and declarative, each seeking to operate within the 'felicity conditions'*, which will produce an appropriate speech acts in response. Such acts can be analysed using a threefold distinction: locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary acts. For example, I might say: "It's hot in here!" (locution); I want some fresh air! (illocution); and the perlocutionary effect might be that someone opens the window. Searle (1975) further classified speech acts into five categories: commissives, expressives, declarations, directives and representatives. Within this theory, speech acts of chatroom language will be examined to test the expressive manner of the participants and to reveal what kinds of strategies they use to convey their meanings and forces underlying words.

* Felicity Conditions

A. (i) There must be a conventional procedure having a conventional effect.
   (ii) Circumstances and persons must be appropriate, as specified in the procedure.

B. The procedure must be executed, (i) correctly, (ii) completely.

C. Often, (i) the persons must have the requisite thoughts, feelings and intentions, as
   specified in the procedure; (ii) if consequent conduct is specified, and the relevant parties must so do.

Austin (1962)

Sample Study 4

Can *Speech Act Theory* describe what the language in a chatroom is doing?

1)< SUNGIRL to guest_56056 > : hehe
4)< SUNGIRL to guest_56056 > : oh
191)**[ACTION]** SUNGIRL pointing to the nose of guest_56056, smiling
128)< SUNGIRL to guest_56056 > : sorry

Is there a speech act in a chatroom?

Speech act in the chatroom, even at this most reduced forms (as the contributions made), produces an "unhappy" response or a "happy" response – to use the terms of Austin (1962) and Searle (1965, 1975). *Speech Acts* involve uttering identifiable words (words imitate sounds) that are perceived as coherent to members in a given speech community (Gudykunst, 1997). However, from the start, we have difficulty with this concept in the chatroom setting. Sample Study 4 shows "speech act" of the written words denoting a "happy" response to the addressee, so that they work as coherence to connect the dysfunctional talk turns in the web context.

Furthermore, five subgroup speech acts will be discussed in great detail for the chatroom language assessment in terms of Searle's extension. The speech act of directives

is cited as an example to illustrate the data analysis in Chapter Four.

Sample Study 5

Alamak Chat # SG (Singapore)

428)[tiger7] pippi mei
437)[pippi] tiger jie *hugs*
440)[tiger7] pippi how r u? havent seen ya for awhile
453)[pippi] tiger jie.. I am fine :) this weekend busy with play game.. how are you??
459)[tiger7] me fine oso lor pippi mei...me having my one week break now...
* Annotation: 'mei' = younger sister; 'jie' = elder sister in Chinese

As usual, when people meet, they tend to exchange greetings generally in all culture. In Sample Study 5 for instance, [tiger7] greets [pipi] "how r u?" to inquire her recent condition; and [pipi] exchanges the same greeting with [tiger7]. Such practice is a kind of life etiquette in daily conversation. However, it is called 'Netiquette' (Stevenson, 2004) in a chatroom situation as it is also a common inquiry on the Internet. From this sample, we could see how directives as basic speech acts determine their position in the chatroom communication, therefore, concluding that speech acts are there in an online situation.