CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.0   Introduction

This chapter intends to introduce the concept of using Internet as a medium of communication and conversational analysis of Grice's Cooperative Principles in chat room conversations. As such, the introduction will encompass background of the Internet, Computer Mediated Communication (CMC), and it also discusses any issues related to the research questions. In order to explore the relationship between the text and the context of the situation in Internet Chat Room conversations, the researcher intends to introduce the link between the World Wide Web (WWW) and Internet Relay Chat (IRC). This is because the researcher feels that, by doing so it will serve as a reference in this study to see how the interactor interprets these implied meanings. . The Internet has commanded great attention as a global network and as a communicative medium.

The latest trend of communication leads to the language development in the Internet thus, providing the opportunity for users to conduct communication in cyberspace. The driving force behind the recent growth in the users and uses has probably been the recognition by interactors of the power of World Wide Web to reach other interactors. The Internet allows people to engage in multi-party conversations online, either synchronously meaning it happens in real time or asynchronously in postponed or delayed time. The distinction between asynchronous and synchronous situations is not absolute. Some authors have noted the asynchronous quality [of] synchronous chat room conversations.

If someone is offline in asynchronous chat group, messages can be left in that person's buffer to be read later. Or again, it is possible to save the text of a real-time chat so that it can be browsed later. In a synchronous chat, electronic interactions are taking place in real time. The Internet is an electronic, global and interactive medium, and each of these properties has consequences for the kind of language found there.

Nevertheless, some researchers do not specify Internet language as either written or spoken. Thus, the researcher will explain the link between the World Wide Web (WWW), Internet Relay Chat (IRC) and Grice's Cooperative Principles in relation to the research question.

1.1 The Internet

Internet is a worldwide computer network that arose from ARPANET, an American Military Network. It developed in the 1960s in the USA as an experimental network that quickly grew to include personal users. The explosive growth of networks and services, accompanied by an astounding increase in the population of Internet users, provide huge potentials for users. The Internet is an electronic, global, and interactive medium, and each of these properties has consequences for the kind of language used.

This electronic communicative medium, presents us with a channel that facilitates and at times constraints our ability to communicate in ways that are fundamentally different from those found in other situations such as face to face interaction. The core of the Internet, and the thing that

makes it work, is a software of "protocols" or rules that enables all of the computers on the Internet to communicate with each other. It is these protocols that enable us to access Web pages via our Web browsers, to download files, and to send and receive email. The Internet is driving the growth of revolutionary communicative paradigm.

The emergence of the Internet as a worldwide communicative medium provides an opportunity for users to conduct communication in cyberspace. Internet chat was often perceived as "a waste of time, equivalent of being a teenager on the telephone," Marriot (1998: 1). The unique characteristic of the Internet makes it attractive as a communicative medium for socialization as its ability to facilitate global interactions. According to Kiesler,(1992: 124) "the Internet enables people to freely create working relationships and groups to communicate across physical, temporal, social and organizational boundaries."

According to Dry,(1992: 13) "Internet is the metaphor of a protocol". In human terms, a protocol is a way some interaction must be carried out. Likewise, a computer protocol specifies the way that two machines must interact. However, Internet protocols not only tell the machines how to transfer data, they also ensure that the pieces of data they sent are well-formed. Protocols are the lingua franca of the Internet: they specify both the grammar of the language and the pragmatics of the interaction. Protocols became the core of Internet operations because of the physical limitations of the earliest nets. When the first incarnation of the Internet, the ARPANET, was put in place, there were no completely reliable networks".

According to Dry (1992: 16-17), "What lay between the machine and the machine you wished to communicate with was unpredictable mixture of cables, phone lines and satellite relay stations". It was never certain whether all of the bits in between the machines were going all out. Connectivity, then, could not be based upon one invariant path but alternate paths might lead to different types of machines. Thus, it was necessary to transfer data in a way that was only minimally dependent on the nature of the machines involved. The solution was provided by the combination of the Internet Protocol (IP), and the Rouler. The IP is simply a set of instructions which tells a machine (1) what form the data it transfers, (2) how to open a connection with another machine, (3) how to transfer data, and (4) how to close the connection. All data, IP says, must be sent in a "packets." A packet is a chunk of data surrounded by an "envelope." This is accompanying information that tells the forwarding machine the unique address of the machine the packet is being sent to. For the benefit of human beings, each Internet machine has not only a unique IP number, but also a unique name."

One reason the Internet has been able to grow so fast has to do with Internet addressing and the way it works. No router needs to know the address of every machine on the Internet, because the Internet is hierarchically organized into networks and sub-network. The simplicity of the way Internet works makes it very flexible. Almost all interactions between machines are based upon the protocols outlined above However, some Internet operation require two additional pieces of software, one residing on the target machine and one residing on the home machine. These are called, respectively, the server and the client. As more and more personal machines become part of the Internet, more individuals get access to Internet to retrieve information and to communicate globally.

"What makes Internet so interesting, as a form of communication, is the way it relies on characteristics belonging to both sides of speech/writing divide. The phenomenal growth of Internet or chat room communication has captured great attention among popular scholars and they have been quick to envision sweeping changes in the social order as a result of the democratic and anarchic possibilities inherent in widespread use of a networked medium which allows anyone with access to speak out more or less anonymously, and which is not as yet subject to any centralized authority or control. The popular media contribute to the clamor by focusing on sensational aspects of life in "cyberspace".

Mann (1992:42-46).

The Internet is a vast source of information, a virtual library which can be accessed at a click of a mouse to retrieve information. Today however, the Internet is a Web of different computer networks that use fixed rules to send and receive information. According to Singlal (1997: 98), a "confederation of thousands of computers from various sectors of society and the military". The next section explains the link between the World Wide Web (WWW), Internet Relay Chat (IRC) and Computer Mediated Conversation (CMC)

1.2 Computer - Mediated Communication (CMC)

Computer–Mediated communication (CMC) is communication that takes place between human beings via instrumentality of computers. Computer Mediated Communication (CMC) is a task-based human communication facilitated by the presence of computer networks and electronic media. It provides synchronous or asynchronously textual dialogues between unknown interlocutors. Textual dialogues can also be in the form of one-to-many or many-to-many. In other words, CMC simply contains exchanges between two people in different rooms sitting in

front of computer screens that each display a window slit into two parts. Asynchronous CMC, refers to an interchange of messages between two or more users simultaneously logged on at different computer terminals. Asynchronous CMC, the feature of most email messaging systems, allows users to type extended messages which are electronically transmitted to recipients who can read, and reply at their leisure. According to Dern, (1996:13-15) "CMC is convenient as less expensive than establishing wide area networks. CMC has emerged as an important communication modality that is increasingly permeating everyday life". When computer networks were first designed in the 1990's, their primarily goal was to facilitate the transfer of information protocols between computers. No one, least of all their inventors, imagined that such networks would come to be used predominantly for human-to-human social interaction (Rheingold and Licklider, 1998).

Interestingly, Computer Mediated Communication (CMC) is typed, like writing, but exchanges are often rapid and informal hence more like conversation. Today, CMC is a hybrid register that resembles both speech and writing. Veselino and Dry (1998). According to Garnsey and Garton (1992), CMC offers a solution to the constraints posed by time and space on geographically dispersed organisations seeking to communicate with each other. Thus, computer networks have changed the traditional view of communication environments. Internet communication generally "may create new social environment that reshape behaviour in ways that go beyond the specific products delivered" Meyrowitz, (1998**:**15). By altering the nature and limits of social situations, electronic media do far more simply expedite and enhance public access to "events and behaviour". They actually create for us "new events and new behaviour (Meyrowitz**,** 1998:43).

According to Meyrowitz (1998), the computer-mediated register has unique features of its own, and it is not homogenous, but like any communicative skills, manifests itself in different styles and genres, some determined by available technologies (e.g real-time "chat" modes, as opposed to asynchronous e-mail) others by human factors such as communicative purpose and group membership. Another characteristic of the medium is that users interact without the benefit of extra-linguistic cues as to the gender, identity, personality, or mood of their users. CMC is acknowledged as a communication tool because of its potential to bring people together, for better or worse, also has practical consequences both for individuals and the social order. Next, the researcher will explain Internet Chat Room (IRC).

1.3   Internet Chat Room

"Chat Rooms are Internet web sites that allow multiple users to engage in what has been termed "synchronous CMC" a form of typed communication that occurs in real-time, as opposed asynchronous e-mail" (Jacobsen, 1997). Although, the Internet is commonly defined as a giant network which interconnects innumerable smaller groups of linked computer networks. This is supported by Rena, (1996) who describes that a more precise explanation of its nature comes from the Federal Networking Council (FNC)**:**

"The FNC recognizes the Internet as a global unique address space based on the Internet Protocol (IP) or its subsequent extensions or follow-ons, (II) is able to support communications using the transmission   control protocols; and (III) provides, uses of make accessible, either public or privately, high level services layered on the communications and related infrastructure".

Leiner (1997:26).

To use a chat room, one first connects to the Internet via dial-up (modem) or network connection. Once connected, there are many websites that offer chat room services.

Allen and Guy (1974), point that chat rooms themselves involve the production of writing via computer such as synchronous textual dialogue take place among spatially distant interlocutors. They further claim that this type of communication has been labelled "interactive written discourse". Interactive written discourse commonly called chatting but officially designated "real-time customer interaction" by corporations that use it (Marriot, 1997:36) – resembles written language "with respect to vocabulary use," but stimulates spoken conversation due to its rapidity, informality, use of "personal pronouns", (Herring, 1996:3-7) and free grammatical structure.

Another attribute of chat that can be unnerving to the novice is the fact that rooms can appear as the random juxtaposition of statements that can apply to anyone in the chat room and with the experience, chat rooms users become able to follow multiple streams of conversation (Lindlof and Shatzer, 1998). In the next section, the Internet Relay Chat is discussed.

1.4   Internet Relay Chat

Internet Relay Chat is a particular form of interactive written discourse. There are multitudes of forms of interactive written discourse. This form of interactive written discourse consists of what are often called "chat" systems. These are social spaces made available on bulletin boards, servers and on sites across much of the Internet in which people converse and interact (Crystal, 2001).

Crystal (2001), points that chat systems have become the locus of all manner of social interaction, from café style conversation to political discussions among the members. Most chat communication is currently recreational in character. One of the largest chat systems, and that which constitutes the focus of the present study, is called IRC. On IRC, hundreds of thousands of people from all over the world, speaking variety of different languages, gather to discuss all manner of topics.

People congregate in areas called "channels". These channels are essentially small-scale electronic communities that individuals can join and participate in. IRC afford each user a large array of commands with which they can perform a number of communicative actions, some of which have close analogues in face-to-face conversation. There are many different types of

communication in IRC. These include one to one communication, one to many and others. One to one communication refers to communication between one user to another user. The researcher is looking at one to one communication.   According to (Beh 2000: 16), he points out that the main goal of IRC is "to provide a forum which allows easy and efficient conferencing". One to all is a type of communication where a single message can travel over the network in order to reach all servers and users.

In Malaysia Internet has been widely used especially among students. (Rashid Mohd. Din,1999). Internet began in 1990 when Malaysian Institute of Microelectronic System (Mimos Berhad) launched joint Advanced Integrated Networking (JARING) as the main Internet Service Provider (ISP) currently, JARING & TMNET are two ISPs in Malaysia. With the installation of a satellite link between Malaysia and the USA in 1992, JARING was connected to the Internet. Henceforth, providing Malaysian with accessibility to the Internet in more than 140 countries. TMNET, launched by Telekom Malaysia in July 1996 but began operations in November 1996 to compliment JARING. Since December 1997, TMNET has 51% of the subscribers' market while JARING took 49%. (The New Straits Times, 1996). The availability of free browser software in addition to ease of navigation is one of the main reasons why the Internet has become such a popular medium of communication all over the world.

 The researcher does not presume that the brief explanation of the background of the Malaysians. Internet has convinced the reader nevertheless, the researcher feels that it is important enough in social discourse for effective communication to be studied by the researcher seeking to clarify the research question in this study.   As the researcher is not really an experienced user therefore

it is difficult to spend hours chatting. As a result, it is sometimes hard to understand the language use as it is important to interpret correctly and the researcher gets the help of her children. It is the researcher's intention to expand her current understanding of Internet Chat conversations in order to answer the research questions. To be able to clarify how hearers interpret implicature of an utterance. Grice introduced the Co-operative Principles. Through the Co-operative Principle, Grice suggested that both speaker and hearer cooperate and that is why they communicate efficiently (Thomas, 1995) The next section will focus on the statement of the research problem.

1.5   Statement of Research Problem

According to Grice's Co-operative Principle (CP), to act cooperatively in conversation, one should make one's "conversational contribution such as required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose of direction of the talk exchange in which one is engaged". (Grice,1975).   (Grice, 1975:1975:41-48) proposes that "the cooperative principle can be explicated in terms of maxims of cooperative human-human chat room conversations". Grice's work on cooperation in these principles provide empirical test of how Grice's maxims of co-operations in chat room conversations work. Although Grice's maxims have been conceived with a different purpose in mind, they can be seen as serving the same objective, that is, to prevent users initiated clarification of the conversation.

In real life, people often talk without really observing the cooperative principles proposed by Grice. However, there are certain conditions where people observe these principles. For example, in classrooms or during conference, members of the floor are somewhat forced to observe these principles, where they only talk or respond when asked to.

Nevertheless, in a unique situation such as in a chat room, users tend to chat without waiting for their turns. Thus, resulting in overlapping exchanges although the messages sent via a computer are complete and unidirectional. When the user send a message to someone, he or she types it a keystroke at a time, but it does not arrive on that person's screen a keystroke at a time. The message does not leave our computer until we 'send' it, and that means the whole message is transmitted at once, and arrives on the recipient's screen at once.

Therefore, the problem here is how do Internet chat room users continue their conversation when everybody is talking at the same time? There must be ways on how these users subconsciously apply the Grice's Cooperative Principles in their conversation. Language plays a protocol role particularly in Internet Chat Room communication because it depends on visual contents to get the message across.

Thus my study attempts to reveal how Grice's Cooperative Principles work in chat room conversation. From this viewpoint the researcher developed a conversational analysis of Grice's Cooperative Principles in Chat Room conversations to see how far the users observed or violated the Grice's Cooperative Principles. Thus providing the opportunity to test how Grice's theory works in Chat Room Conversations among the users. Grice claims that adherence to principles,

such as CP (Cooperative Principles) and the maxims, is rational in the sense that anyone who cares about achieving the goals that are central to conversation must be expected to have an interest in conducting or initiating the principles (Grice, 1975).

1.6   Purpose Of The Study

This study serves or focuses on research objectives listed: Firstly, to investigate how Grice's Cooperative Principles work in chat room conversations. The researcher looks into Grice's Cooperative Principle to see to what extent the users of Internet Chat Room adhere or flout the cooperative principle and the four conversational maxims. This study also seeks to investigate how implicature is communicated during the interactions between Internet Chat Room users.

1.7   Research Questions

Based on the objectives, the researcher hopes to answer the following research questions:

    i.   How do Internet Chat users apply Grice's Co-operative Principles in their conversation?

    ii.   Do Internet Chats display the four maxims of Grice's Cooperative Principle, and if they do how are they displayed?

    iii.   Do Internet Chat users flout the maxims of Grice's Cooperative Principle and if they do how are they flouted and why?

1.8   Significance Of The Study

The researcher is of the opinion that this study has its significance to the pragmatics field. Firstly, it helps to explain how Internet Chat Room conversations function or work among the users. For example, there are so many people in chat room and how they manage to continue their talk or conversation in conveying a certain message effectively is of interest. Thus, this study will bring significant value in the form of understanding the language use so that successful communication could then be applied to serve its purpose.

Firstly, this study provides insight on how Grice's Cooperative Principles work in a new language situation, namely, the Internet Chat Room.   In a formal situation such as in the classroom or during lecture or conference the users observe Grice's Cooperative Principles because of the formality of the situation but in Internet Chat Room it is rather like a friendly forum for chatting with the unknown people from various parts of the world.

 Secondly, it helps new users to understand the pragmatics effect of these implied meanings on Internet Chat Room users.

Thirdly, in a broader perspective, the results of this study would emphasize on the needs and importance of implicature not only in Internet Chat Room, but in learning the language as most of the interactors display daily language use and it is rather naturally occurring conversational situations that have the elements of implicature on the Internet Chat Room language.

1.9   Limitations of the Study

This study has a few limitations. This is because the researcher assumes that the Internet Relay Chat (IRC) users are of different background which includes new users. The chat samples are different. Besides that, some chat samples are short but the researcher feels that they contain patches of conversation that are useful for analysis. The data for this study is based on a small corpus of utterances retrieved from Internet Chat Rooms and focuses on the meanings that the speaker intended to convey which may sometimes contribute to understanding an utterance.

The main data for the researcher's study is taken from a small corpus of Internet Chat Room interaction. Again, time is a crucial factor here because logging into the Internet for the existing data is time consuming and the difficulty in accessing data.

Next, internet interaction is very much slower than that found in a speech situation, and disallows some of conversation's most salient properties such as immediate responses and hesitations. For example, interactive exchanges in a variety of   Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC) modes tend to be less linked together: responses are often separated from the turns they are responding to, topic tends to decay quickly and multiple, overlapping

exchanges often share the same channel therefore, a respondent may get drawn into another conversational thread if too much time is spent producing a message. The time delayed is a central factor in many situations. The researcher has identified various limitations encountered. It was rather time consuming logging and retrieving the data for this study. Logging and retrieving are often cited specially as obstacles in on-line conversation because there are too many users at one time.

1.10   Assumptions and Conclusion

The Internet Chat Room will provide an opportunity for users to conduct conversations and will be a popular medium for communicating with others all over the world. The simplest prediction to make is that the number of people with access to the Internet and Chat Room will continue to grow at a rapid pace. This can be seen by the growing number of people using Internet as a medium of interaction.

Within a few years, the Internet has emerged from obscurity to dominate many of our lives. In some areas, Internet has already almost totally replaced more conventional forms of correspondence, and for an increasing number of people, the World Wide Web is the first port of call for most types of information enquiry and the first resort for most types of leisure activity. This has been an extraordinary rapid communication revolution that is apparent in recreational purposes because humourous messages are the most highly appreciated types of messages in Computer Mediated Communication (CMC). "CMC also fosters direct and self-disclosing behaviours" Ma, (1996:184). This means that online discussants can behave and speaks in ways

that they desire. Viewing Computer Mediated Communication (CMC) is considered more socially desirable than face to face interaction. Thus, these help to explain the popularity and the conversational "feel" of Computer Mediated Communication (CMC) as users are able to participate in simultaneous interaction without getting hopelessly lost or confused because there is typed record of words to which they can refer to. To keep track of what is going on of what the user is intended to convey.

This chapter therefore has covered the issues that this study is concerned. In the next chapter, Literature concerning the theoretical basis of this study as well as previous work done in this field will be discussed.