

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter will provide an overview of the Internet Chat Room language found in Internet Chat Room within the domain of pragmatics since pragmatics is the study of language use (Levinson, 1983) Among the first few studies done to evaluate the merits of using Computer Mediate Communication (CMC) to enhance the language learning process was done by Batson and Peyton, (1980). Since the early 1980's, many studies have attempted to analyse the merits of developing language through the use of computer mediated communication (CMC). The researcher also intends to explore the various aspects of indirectness in conversational discourse among the internet users by examining Grice's theory of conversational maxim and cooperative principle. Indirectness is shown in a form of implicature. This section presents also Grice's maxims and demonstrates commonality of purpose and the special role of maxims such as the adherence to and implicature of the four conversational maxims.

2.1 Computer Mediated Communication

Batson and Peyton, (1980) claimed that CMC could promote language learning among normal elementary school children. They discovered that Robin a proficient English speaker, helped Pam a less fluent speaker to expand her language ability by building on what Robin typed on the network. According to Batson and Peyton, (1980) the study contains more elements of CMC because the samples were more independent. Therefore, they were able to communicate with

each other although their language levels differed tremendously. They became active in language learning as they interacted with each other. Apart from that, the learning process also became more self-paced and sample-centered. The researchers also discovered that samples can access any interactive web sites and use them to compose essays or perform role plays. These studies eventually led other researchers to explore networking as a potential tool in language learning. Peyton, (1991) and Warschauer, (1996) both claimed that CMC has revolutionized the notions of writing and speaking as it is a faster way of communication and also it can be both formal and informal interaction with a teacher.

Allwood (1978:30) termed communication as a type of action and co-operation. Action here should be perceived as intentionally directed at certain goals in conversation. The receiver reacts to these communicative acts by understanding or failing to understand, emotionally or cognitively by taking stands and forming attitude towards what he hears and by reacting behaviorally. Schriffrin (1981) specially identifies the “exchange structures, ideational structures” performed by these markers. Hymes (1964) perceived language as an integral part of social activity. Austin (1962) viewed communication as a series of communicative acts or speech acts which are used systematically to accomplish particular purposes. According to Allen and Guy, (1974:47) each utterance is displayed in a chronological order in which it is entered into the chat system by the composer, meaning that disparate strands of conversation are juxtaposed, forming sequences that intertwine to form a multi dimensional text.

Chatting according to Herring, (1993:3-7) “resembles written language with respect to vocabulary use, but stimulates spoken conversation due to its rapidity, informality, use of

personal pronouns and freer grammatical structure”. Participants interact without the benefit of extra-linguistic and para-linguistic cues as to the personality, or mood of their interlocutors. Since there is no physical proximity between participants owing to the absence of face –to-face interlocutors in the Internet Chat Room, the communication between the interlocutors is of utmost importance (Herring, 1993).

Grice (1977) noted that certain conversational maxim enable the speaker to nominate and maintain a topic of conversation. Communication acts “as an occurrence of behaviour connected with a parcel of communicative intention” (Allwood, 1978:10). The focus is on “intentional” and communicative acts are said to be multi-intentional. The intentional perspective of communicative acts is compatible with many different intentions. According to Hopper, (1991:217) anonymous computer mediated communication (CMC) encourages an “emphasis on merit over status” because fellow chatters have little to judge an individual by except his or her statement. (also Kollock and Smith, 1996: 109).

Hopper, (1991:217) claims that “by providing for speech split off from visual presence” anonymous computer mediated communication encourages an “emphasis on merit over status” because fellow chatters have little to judge an individual by except his or her status” The works of Kollock and Smith, (1996) support this claim.

Therefore, “the most important criterion by which we judge each other in CMC is by one’s mind rather than appearance, race, and accent, ” (Ma, 1996:176). “This anonymity supplied by lack

of common social cues is most significant in that it promotes egalitarian on line behaviour” (Ma, 1996:176). The relative statuses, power bases, group affiliations, and other societal membership categories are integral to the way individuals interact with one another in daily face-to-face (FTF) conversation. Schegloff (1991:47) says “all significance in CMC interaction, leaving one’s ideas and arguments as his or her sole representatives to the community”. Because there is little chance of face to face (FTF) meeting among online discussants, CMC also fosters direct and self-disclosed behaviours (Ma, 1996:184).

Individuals realize that they can speak their minds with impunity because there is very little chance of anyone ever linking the interactors with their statements. While this can lead to confusion, “a speaker can behave and speak in ways that he desires but unable to in Face-to-face (FTF) interactions because that would put his professional status at stake” (Ma, 1996: 94).

According to Meyrowitz, (1985:117), “participants are free to construct their own personal and group perceptions of the situation in which they speak rather than accepting some imposed version of the relative ontological status of the attributes of the situation”. The freedom of expression generated by anonymity and the broadening of people’s communicative horizons engendered by the transcendence of geography are important in and of themselves, but they also lead to a more important development in the nature of human social life.

In Internet Chat Room many may hear us and be influenced by our comments but no one can attribute our statements to us as we exist while offline. Internet Chatters may therefore speak more openly and bluntly than they would in face-to-face discourse.

2.2 The Cooperative Principle

The study of language in context calls for understanding of cooperation between the speaker and the listener. Grice (1975) claims that conversation is not just a succession of disconnected remarks but a naturally accepted direction between the speaker and the listener. This naturally accepted direction shows mutual cooperative effort. In this cooperative effort, speakers will have to appeal to the interlocutors' understanding and acknowledgement a mutually accepted direction in getting a message conveyed. This mutually accepted direction between interactors of a conversation can be termed cooperation in a conversation, just as Wardhaugh (1985) states "conversation is a social activity.....therefore a cooperative endeavour" (p35)

According to Grice's cooperative principle (CP), to act co-operatively in conversation, one should make one's conversational contribution such as required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange to which one is engaged (Grice, 1975:26) proposes that the Cooperative Principle can be explicated in terms of cooperative human-human dialogue as discussed. Although Grice's maxim has been conceived with a different purpose in mind, they can be seen as serving the same objective, that is to prevent interlocutor-initiated clarification in communication. From this viewpoint, the researcher has developed Grice's work to account for co-operativity among the chat room users. Another point of potential interest is that Grice's cooperative principle provides an opportunity to test whether the theory works in the domain of chat room interaction as compared to face to face communication.

Grice (1975) developed the idea that cooperativity underlies conversational behaviour by identifying three specific characteristics:

- 1). The participants have some common immediate goal.
- 2). The contributions of the participants are mutually dependent.
- 3). There is some sort of understanding that, other things being equal, the transactions should continue in appropriate style unless both parties are agreeable that it should terminate. (Grice1989:29)

In 1975, Grice published a seminal article entitled “The Co-operative Principle” that created quite a stir on the linguistic scene and generated a large number of linguistic publications that built on Grice’s postulates. The basic assumption is that any discourse, whether written or spoken, is a joint effort. Both the speaker and the addressee have to follow certain pragmatic, syntactic, and semantic rules in order to communicate effectively. They have to adhere to Grice’s Co-operative Principle that consists of several maxims that appear very simple, straightforward, and common-sensical at first sight.

What took the researcher by surprise is that you can actually observe these principles at work when analyzing the language used by Internet Chat Room users. If a speaker violates one or more of these fundamental maxims communication breaks down.

In the next paragraph, the researcher will introduce a few of Grice's maxims. Grice's maxims, which define the conditions for efficient spoken communication, can provide Internet Chat Room users a way of understanding successful and unsuccessful communication.

According to Grice, (1975:45-63) "conversational maxim plays an important role in our personal interactions". In conversation, we usually understand what others are saying, even when people do not express intentions in a straightforward manner. Grice provides theory which explains how we can correctly interpret what others are implying by universal conventions in human interaction which are called cooperative principles.

These principles explain how hearers are able to interpret speakers' intention. Grice, (1975) calls such principles conversational maxims. In short, "these maxims specify what participants have to do in order to converse in a maximally efficient, rational, cooperative way: they should speak sincerely, relevantly, clearly, while providing sufficient information."

According to Grice, (1975:41-580) "the success of a conversation depends upon the various speakers' approach to the interaction. The way in which people try to make conversations work is sometimes called the cooperative principle. We can understand it partly by noting those people who are exceptions to the rule, and are not capable of making the conversation work. We may also, sometimes, find it useful deliberately to infringe or disregard it – as when we receive an unwelcome call from a telephone salesperson, or where we are being interviewed by a police officer". Grice, (1975: 48) proposes that "interactors maintain cooperative principle in order to shape their utterances". The principle can be explained by four underlying rules or maxims.

Crystal, (2001) calls them conversational maxims. The maxims are also known as Grice's or Gricean maxims. They are the maxims of quality, quantity, relevance, and manner. Grice does not of course prescribe the use of such maxims. Nor does he suggest that we use them artificially to construct conversations. But they are useful for analyzing and interpreting conversation, and may reveal purposes of which we were not previously aware.

Grice (1975) gives quality and manner as supermaxims. Assuming that the cooperative principle is at work in most conversations, we can see how hearers will try to find meaning in utterances that seem meaningless or irrelevant.

Participants in a conversation, therefore expect each other to make their contributions to that conversation truthful, relevant, clear and sufficiently informative. If the literal meaning of something that is said fails to meet these expectations, the listener search for another possible meaning for that utterance in that particular context and if they find one they assume that the meaning to be the message the speaker intended to convey.

In this study, the researcher will look at Grice's co-operative principles in chat room conversation. However, the researcher feels that the four maxims may be subsumed under the notion of relevance, which seems to account for all conversational moves which can in any sense be seen to be related to Grice's co-operative principles.

2.3 The four conversational maxims:

2.3.1 The Maxim of Quantity

- i. Make your contribution as informative as is required for the current purpose of the exchange.
- ii. Do not make your contribution more informative than is required.

The Maxim of Quantity requires the speaker to give the right amount of information when speaking. The speaker should not be too brief by providing too little information or give more information than is required in particular situation. The maxim of quantity means that a participant has to include all the information that the addressee requires to understand. If the participant leaves out a crucial piece of information, the addressee will not understand what the speaker is trying to say. The maxim of quantity according to Grice (1975:45) “Be informative” and “Be Brief” are in a natural state of tension with each other. Maximum informativeness automatically includes a certain amount of repetition and redundancy. Maximum brevity entails leaving out information that some addressees may find unimportant (Grice, 1975) For example, if the speaker rambles on without anything new or informative the addressee will lose interest in the topic discussed thus, he or she will stop paying attention quickly.

According to Grice, (1975:52) “speakers value more highly the maxim of quantity than other maxims. Violating it amounts to some moral offence. Violating the other maxims is at most inconsiderable or rude”. Grice, (1975:46) describes that “these maxims drive their explanatory power from what happens when behaviour appear not to conform to them. A speaker may be unable to conform to all the maxims at once. If two are in conflict, she or he may have to

sacrifice one to the other. It may be impossible in some situation, such as to say as much as necessary without adequate evidence”. For example.

Example 1:

[ChipMoRe] u hav super bike? [redDevil] yes,,Italian bike. Aprillia
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We see in example 1 that the reply provided or given by [redDevil] is brief and clearly answers the question. Therefore, [redDevil] is conforming to the maxim of quantity.

2.3.2 The Maxim of Quality

Try to make your contribution one which is true.

- i. Do not say what you believe to be untrue.
- ii. Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence.

The Maxim of Quality is concerned with giving the correct and truthful information as shown in example 2 below.

Example 2:

[ChipMoRe] How much ah..

[redDevil] RM 40,000

Here, [redDevil] is conforming to the Maxim of Quality by giving truthful answer.

2.3.3 The Maxim of Manner

Be perspicuous

- i. Avoid obscurity.
- ii. Avoid ambiguity.
- iii. Be brief.
- iv. Be orderly

This maxim requires the speaker to describe things in the order in which it occurs and ambiguity should be avoided. In the maxim of manner, a participant who adheres to the maxim of manner will be brief, orderly and clear in his or her contribution to the conversational exchange. The data in this study shows there are instances when the participants in the Internet Chat room conversation uphold the cooperative principle and the maxims. In Internet Chat Room conversation, truthfulness is just as important as other maxims. In Linguistic terms the maxim of truthfulness refers to the importance of only making statements that are believed to be true.

The reason is that if someone gets caught making false statements they lose their credibility, which is one of the most important social assets a person can have. Obviously, in real life this maxim is often violated in order to deceive the addressee. In less serious contexts, it can be violated in an obvious manner when the speaker tells jokes or teases the addressee. The demand for politeness simply means that we should treat other people as we would like to be treated verbally or otherwise. Deliberate flouting of conversational maxims or expectation for example, will be account for the reading of sarcasm. Brown and Levinson, (1987) For example:

Example 3:

[redDevil] umi wat u like 2 do?

[ChipsMore] watch tv. U wat?

[redDevil] oh..riding superbike..

The sentence denotes that the utterance is in order according to how it occurred and [Sexy Jessie] is therefore, adhering to the maxim of manner.

2.3.4 The Maxim of Relation

Be relevant.

Based on the Maxim of relation, the speaker is required to be relevant when speaking in order to adhere to the maxim of relation. The maxim of relevance is an extremely an important principle in conversations. In the context of Grice's cooperative principle,

the demand for relevance simply means that the speaker or writer should only include information in his or her communication that is relevant to the discourse topic. It is interesting to observe that the perception of what is irrelevant diverges among people and relevance applies to all aspect of communication.

Sperber and Wilson,(1995:193) propose relevance theory and says that “conversational implicature is understood by hearers simply by selecting the relevant features of context, and recognizing whatever speakers say as relevant to the conversation”. According to Sperber and Wilson, (1995:193) “the degree of relevance is governed by contextual effects: adding new information, strengthening or contradicting an existing assumption or weakening old information”. Therefore, the more contextual effects, the greater the relevance of a particular fact.

Trask, (1999:58) “the hearer interprets what is said by finding an accessible context that produces the maximum amount of new information with the minimum amount effort”. However, the researcher feels that all of these may be subsumed under the notion of relevance which in any sense be seen to be related to any contribution in an interaction. For example:

Example 4:

[SwEEty] oh... u don want to make ur decision.

[CuTiE] Well mum is better

Here, [CuTiE] answer is relevant as she believes that her mum makes better decision.

In short, these maxims state specifically what speakers have to do in order to converse in a maximally efficient, rational, cooperatively, when speaking, one has to be sincere, relevant and clear while providing sufficient information. (Levinson, 1983:102)

2.4 The Adherence of the Maxims

The cooperative principle states that one's conversational, or otherwise, contribution should be "such as required" Grice, (1975:45). Derived from this general principle are the maxims of Quantity, Quality, Relevance and Manner. Grice (1975) claims that adherence to principles, such as cooperative principle and the maxims is rational in the sense that anyone who cares about achieving the goals that are central to the dialogue must be expected to have an interest in conducting the talk exchanges in accordance with those principles. Grice's Cooperative Principle is a general principle which says that, to act cooperatively in conversation, one should make one's conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which one is engaged Grice, (1975:2).

Utterances adhering to the cooperative conversations generally adhere to the Cooperative Principle and conform to the conversational maxims. Meaning is generally conveyed in a straight-forward manner and is clear and precise. Whether a speaker means exactly what he says, something else as well as, or something else instead, clearly it is never part of the meaning of a sentence that on a particular occasion of use it is being used to communicate anything at all.

According to Grice (1975:45), “understanding utterances is not simply a matter of knowing the meanings of the words uttered and the way in which they are combined but it is the basis of all forms of communication”.

2.5 Flouting and Violating the Maxims

Deliberately, flouting of conversational conventions, or expectations, for example, will account for breeding of irony or sarcasm, or some interpersonal positioning move which may imply social distance, or a power relationship with respect to the interlocutor(s) (see Brown and Levinson, 1987, Hodge and Kress (1988 and Fairclough, 1992: 123).

“We human beings are odd compared with our nearest animal relatives. Unlike them, we can say what we want, when we want. All normal humans can produce and understand any number of new words and sentences. Humans are the multiple options of language often without thinking. But blindly, they sometimes fall into its traps. They are like spiders who exploit their webs, but themselves get caught in the sticky strands”

Aitchison, (1988:68).

According to Jamaliah (2002:35) In the Malay culture, it can be socially unacceptable to always say exactly what is in one's mind unless one knows the hearer very well. Indirectness is an important aspect in Malay culture to abstain from crisis (Jamaliah, 2002).

In a series of lectures at Harvard University in 1967, the English language philosopher (Grice, 1975) outlined an approach to what he termed conversational implicature – how hearers manage to work out complete messages when speakers mean more than they say. An example of what Grice meant by conversational implicature is the utterance: “Have you got any cash with you?” Where the speaker really wants the hearer to understand the meaning: “Can you lend me some money? I don't have much with me.” The conversational implicature is a message that is not found in the plain sense of the sentence. The speaker implies it. The hearer is able to infer this message in the utterance, by appealing to the rules governing successful conversational interaction. Grice (1975) proposed that implicatures second the maxim and the co-operative principle.

The researcher feels that the success of a conversation depends upon the various speakers' approach to the interaction. The way in which people try to make conversations work is sometimes called the cooperative principle. Grice (1975) proposes that in FTF conversation, speakers and hearers share cooperative principle unlike in chat room conversations. Speakers shape their utterances to be understood by hearers. Grice does not of course prescribe the use of such maxims. Nor does he suggest that we use them artificially to construct conversations. But they are useful for speaker and listener in FTF conversations.

Very often, we communicate particular non-literal meanings by appearing to “violate” or “flout” these maxims. In everyday conversation, we adapt our conversation to different situations. Among friends we take liberties or say things that would seem discourteous among strangers. And we avoid over-formality with friends. In both situations we try to avoid making hearer embarrassed or uncomfortable. In the course of introducing his theory of conversational maxims, Grice adopted a notion of what is said with which to contrast what a speaker implicates in uttering a sentence. He imposed the syntactic correlation constraints.

According to Grice (1975:87) “what is said must correspond to the “elements of [the sentence], their order, and their syntactic character” Grice, (1989:87). So if any element of the content of an utterance, of what the speaker intends to convey, does not correspond to any element of the sentence being uttered, it is not part of what is said. When speakers appear not to follow the maxims but expect hearers to appreciate the meaning implied, we say that they are flouting the maxims. Just as with indirect speech act, the speaker implies a function different from the literal meaning of form: when flouting, a maxim, the speaker assumes that the hearer knows that their words should not be taken at face value and that he or she can infer the implicit meaning.

2.6 Ways of Flouting the Maxims

There are many ways people communicate and convey their message and there are many occasions where people do not observe the maxims. According to Grice (1975), the ways people

fail to observe a maxim include flouting, violating, infringing, opting out and suspending a maxim.

Flouting of a maxim: A blatant failure to observe a maxim at the level of what is said with deliberate intention of generating an implicature.

Violating a maxim: An unostentatious non-observance of a maxim with an intention to mislead the hearer..

Infringing a maxim: An unintentional failure to observe a maxim that stems from imperfect linguistic performance rather than from any desire to generate a conversational implicature.

Opting out of a maxim: An unwillingness to cooperate in the way a maxim requires due to ethical reasons and withdraws from an interaction.

Suspending a maxim: An unnecessary observance of the maximum due to certain events which there is no expectancy the in the part of any participant that they will be fulfilled.

The most important is the flouting of a maxim because it generates an implicature. Here, the speaker blatantly fails to observe a maxim, not with any intention of deceiving or misleading, but because the speaker wishes to prompt the hearer to look for a meaning which is different from, or in addition to; the expressed meaning. When a maxim is flouted, the violation of cooperative principle (CP) and only superficial, is only temporary so much so that hearer assumes that while the speaker is flouting one maxim, he or she is still fulfilling the other conversational maxims.

Grice 's main interest lies in situations where the speaker blatantly fails to observe a maxim without the intention of deceiving or misleading but rather to prompt the hearer to look for the additional meaning. (Thomas, 1995:65) This additional meaning is termed “conversational implicature” and the process by which it is generated is “flouting a maxim”.

Other forms of non-observance of maxims according to Grice, (1989:41-48) he says, “two other ways to fail to fulfil a maxim: to infringe it and to opt. A speaker infringing a maxim or opting out of a maxim is not implying something different from the words or being intentionally misleading”. Grice, (1989:56) “a speaker infringing a maxim fails to observe a maxim because of their imperfect linguistic performance. This can happen if the speaker has an imperfect command of the language”. A speaker opting out of a maxim indicates an unwillingness to cooperate although they do not want to appear uncooperative, they cannot reply in the way expected due to legal reasons for example, a police officer refusing to release the name of an accident victim until the relatives have been informed (Thomas 1995:1975-1975). Thus, when a maxim is flouted, an implicature is created. The current study is based on the views that Internet

Chat Room users use the floutings to create implicatures. The following section will describe the different kinds of flouting.

2.7. Flouting the Maxim of Quantity

The speaker who flouts the maxim of quantity seems to give too little or too much information. There are many ways the speakers flout the maxim of quantity. Firstly, they may quite simply say something that obviously does not represent what they think. Speakers may flout the maxim by exaggeration. cc Banter on the contrary, expresses a negative implicature. It sounds like a mild aggression. For example:

Example 1:

[SwEEty] wat would u like 2 do after stadying?

[CuTiE] well.. I wait 4 my mum and dad.

Here, [CuTiE] is clearly flouting the maxim of quantity because she is not providing sufficient information about what she wants to do after completing her studies. She merely states that she waits for her mum and dad. She is seen here as a dependent person as she waits for her parents to make the decision for her.

2.7.1 Flouting the Maxim of quality

A speaker flouts the maxims of quality when he/she says something that is untrue or does not have adequate evidence for what is said. There are times when speakers intentionally flout the maxim of quality to create an implicature which bring the effect of humour to their conversations. For example:

Example 2:

[Sexy Jessie] u have a sultry voice
[Silkstockings] sultry
[Sexy Jesie] Sheila Majid lah...
[silkstockings] so..so can make album ha..

Here, [Sexy Jessie] does not tell [Silkstockings] the truth about her voice.but instead [Sexy Jessie] flouts the maxim of quality and says that [Siklstockings] voice is sultry and sounded like Sheila Majid.

2.7.2 Flouting the Maxim of Relation

If the speakers flout the maxim of relation, they expect that the hearers will be able to imagine what the utterance did not say, and make the connections between their utterance and the preceding one. Those who flout the maxim of manner, appearing to be obscure, are often trying to exclude a third party as shown in example 3 below.

Example 3:

[Shes] hey...wait, so wat u think of me?

[darling] his best friend is a wonderful person.

In the above example we notice that [darling] tries to ignore the question and gives an irrelevant answer to [Shes]'s question. [darling] flouts the maxim of relation by saying something irrelevant to the question asked. This is because in reality we do not compliment ourselves as we prefer to convey our opinions indirectly in order to be polite.

2.7.3 Flouting the Maxim of Manner

A speaker flouts the maxim of manner when the utterance is ambiguous or obscure. An unclear utterance to the point that the message is indecipherable to the hearer is also considered as flouting the maxim of manner. In the maxim of manner, a participant who adheres to the maxim

of manner will be brief, orderly and clear in his or her contribution to the conversational exchange. The data for this study shows there are instances when the participants in the Internet Chat Room conversation uphold the cooperative principle and the maxims.

In Internet Chat Room conversation, truthfulness is just as important as other maxims. In linguistic terms the maxim of truthfulness refers to the importance of only making statements that are believe to be true. For example:

Example 4:

[deluxe] watch movie I am Legend?

[Loser Not] wat I am Legend?

[deluxe] alah..dat movie mah...will smith angkat the car one.

[Loser Not] oh.. dat one ...no lah

[deluxe] Aiseymen...U never watch the movie ..ha..ha..

[deluxe] flouts the maxim of manner because he is being ambiguous by using words like Aiseymen , alah, and mah. [deluxe]'s statement would not be understood by a non –Malaysian or non-Singaporean as it has the influence of the Malay language

2.8 Support for Grice's theory

Obviously, in Computer Mediated Conversation (CMC) meaning will denote that there is no interaction in progress, and so, in order to “co-operate in this mode, interactors may need to be a little contentious. The point might be that the medium and the deliberate flouting of such cooperative principles while maintaining a superficial textual similar to conversational patterning, is necessarily part of the mode of text creation.

Though the Cooperative Principle was developed to account for reasoning in conversation, it applies directly to similar reasoning about literary texts (Short, 1989, 1996) advertisements (Pateman, 1983) and even non-verbal texts such as illustrations in advertisements (Forceville, 1996, followed by Sperber and Wilson). The important point here is that Grice based the whole sense of what a conversation is on the way participant in conversation attribute to each other the intention to communicate. This is applied in this study.

But it has been adapted for the analysis of writing, either by focusing on texts such as letters for which the writer and reader are in an identifiable relation to each other (Chery, 1988; Myers, 1991a), or in academic texts. (Myers, 1989, 1992, and Hinkel, 1997:23) defined relations as “any feature of the text, such as the hedge reconstruct the sorts of reasoning that might lead a purely strategic Model Person to choose this feature for this act”. Levinson (1983) stated that the concept of conversation implicature introduced by Grice is an outstanding feature in Pragmatics, as it explain a linguistic phenomenon. He adds that conversation implicature clearly explains how more is communicated from just what is said or what goes beyond the surface meaning of words. The work of Goffman (1967) supports this study.

MacConnel – Ginet (1988) states the relevance of Gricean theory as,

“...a major insight of the Gricean perspective is that we can still manage to mean more than what we literally say.”

(1988:202)

According to Nystrand (1986, 1989), an approach to interaction in writing that, while it resembles Grice's Co-operative Principle, arises from other controversies and leads in somewhat different directions. He criticizes both cognitive approaches to writing that focus only on the purposes and strategies of writers as encoded in autonomous texts (Olson, 1977; Flower and Hayes 1981), and he calls Idealist approaches that locate meaning in the Reader's interpretation of entirely flexible text Fish (1980). For Nystrand, the researcher sees writing as interactive only when we recognize that both Writer and Reader approach the text with “mutual co-awareness” of the other. (Nystrand1986:500) presents this as a Reciprocity Principle applicable to all social acts.

(Nystrand1989:81) for Nystrand, as for Grice, the starting point of analysis is the assumption of a matching of the needs of speaker and hearer that makes communication possible and that results in stability and predictability of interpretation.

2.9 Criticism towards Grice's theory

According to Grice (1975), conversational maxims play an important role in personal interactions. In conversations, we usually understand what others are saying even when people

do not express their intentions in a straightforward manner. Grice provides a theory that explains how we correctly interpret what others are implying by universal conventions in human interactions which are called co-operative principle. In short, these maxims specify what participants have to do in order to converse in a maximally efficient, rational, co-operative way: they should speak sincerely, relevantly and clearly, while providing sufficient information. (Levinson, 1987:102-103)

Similarly, a speaker can flout the maxim of quality by using metaphor, irony, sarcasm and banter. As Leech (1983:44) says “while it is an apparently friendly way of being offensive, the type of verbal behaviour known as “banter” is an offensive way of being friendly”. Thus, in the case of irony, the speaker expresses a positive sentiment and implies a negative one. Sarcasm is a form of irony that is not so friendly. In fact it is usually intended to hurt.

Although the theory of implicature is Grice’s most widely known contribution in language philosophy, there are many views that suggest Grice’s theory have given rise to various problems.

Kempson (1977), Gadzar (1977) and Wilson (1972) have criticized that Grice’s maxims are unclear, unspecific and that implicatures cannot be specifically determined as the maxims are unable to differentiate between the intended and implied meanings of an utterance. This was also supported by Cohen (1971), Saddock (1978) and Keifer (1979). Blakemore (1979) states that “in the absence of answers to these questions it is sometimes difficult to say what constitute a genuine explanation” (Blakemore, 1992:26)

Keeman (1976) and Matsumoto (1984) question the sufficiency or adequacy of Grice's theory as a universal theory of conversation as it neglects language and culture. The former claims that the Malagasy language and the way of speaking do not adhere to Grice's Cooperative Principle as Malagasy speakers do not disclose information easily. This shows that they are unable to fulfil the maxim of quantity. The later agrees that Grice's Maxims "fails to explain the salient characteristics of conversation in Japanese" (Matsumoto, 1989:215).

Another argument that arises is due to the vagueness of the maxims. They often overlap when applied to actual examples of conversational implicatures and often lead to confusion. Palmer (1981) says that it is difficult to put into practice Grice's suggestions, for a description of meaning due to its vagueness.

2.10 Previous studies using Grice's framework

There have been quite a number of researches on Grice's maxims and conversational implicature both internationally and locally. More are looking into conversational implicature both in spoken form as well as in written form. One study that has added the researchers' understanding on Grice's maxims is by Mura (1983)

Mura (1983) looked into the licensing the violation of Grice's maxims of conversation. Mura (1983), states that licensing exists as markers of deviance away from cooperation in a conversation while simultaneously preserving a greater cooperation. The effort of the licensing

is to draw attention to the actual violation and to place it in a context of cooperation. Her study found that the maxim of quality was most frequently violated leading credence to the notion that interactants are sensitive to potential violations of the truth.

Jackson (1981), Basso (1972) and Burt (1992) claim that being familiar with Grice's maxims enable a better understanding of conversational implicature. These studies have proven that Grice's theory can be used to study conversational implicature as it is a valid construct.

Nystrand, (1986:57) "Cooperative Principle, the Reciprocity Principle may seem at first both obvious and wrong: obvious in that we can see there must be some shared standards, and wrong in that we can all think of communications that do not involve "reciprocal needs", such as a deceptive letter, a reader skimming a textbook, or billboard on a highway". But for Nystrand, as for Grice, the statement of a general principle allows the investigation of instances where there is possible trouble, in terms of the reasoning that a strategic writer or reader would make when faced with the apparent trouble. Nystrand, (1986:58) "develops from this axiom a "grammar" of possible elaborations in text, each elaboration responding to a different kind of projected trouble, and indicating a different kind of reciprocal adjustment to the relation of speaker and hearer".

According to the principles developed by Grice, Brown and Levinson, (1975) and Nystrand (1986, 1989), all give discourse analysts a way of reconstructing interaction from specific features of the texts. They take very different approaches, but we should note some of the assumptions they all make: Speaker and hearer are strategic selves, calculating choices of interpretations of choices in line with singular aims, matching the form to given functions to

conversation, or functions to the given maxims. Whether a speaker means exactly what he says, something else as well, or something else instead, clearly it is never part of the meaning of a sentence that on a particular occasion of use it is being used to communicate anything at all. That is something the hearer presumes from the fact that the speaker is uttering a sentence at all. This communicative presumption, as Bach and Harnish (1979:7), call “it comes into play even if what the speaker means does not extend beyond or depart in any way from the meaning of the sentence he utters”. Bach and Harnish (1979:7-10) state “it is never part of what a sentence encodes that it has to be used literally-the hearer must infer (if only by default) that it is being used literally. The utterance does not carry its literalness on its sleeve. It might even contain the word ‘literal’, but even that word can be used non-literally. So in no case what a speaker says determine what he is communicating in saying it”. To that extent it is true, though trivially so, that every utterance is context-sensitive.

According to Bach and Harnish (1979:7-12) “communicative intentions enter in only at the level of what one says does not entail that it is semantically complete. Since saying something does not entail meaning it, what one says does not depend on whether or not one has any communicative intention in saying it. So the speaker’s communicative intention cannot contribute to the determination of what is said”. (Grice, 1989:42) “Communicative intentions enter in only at the level of what the speaker means. Even if the speaker means exactly what he says is just a matter of his communicative intention”. Any proposition that the speaker is communicating that is distinct from what he says is explicitly cancelable (Grice, 1989:44). That is, the speaker can continue his utterance and, without contradicting himself, go on to explicitly

indicate that this proposition was not part of what he meant. This aspect will be explored in this research.

In the Malaysian context, there are a number of studies carried out on Grice's conversational implicature focusing mainly on Malaysian speakers. Some of these studies were carried out in the Malay language. These studies contribute to the researcher's understanding of the various contexts in which Grice's maxims have been explored.

Ariaduray (2001) examined implied meaning from a local chat programme. She focuses on how implied meanings were conveyed by speakers in an informal setting. An attempt was then made to identify the violation of the maxims and to determine the rhetorical strategies that were employed in the violation using the Gricean framework. Her findings revealed that, the maxim of quantity was the most violated maxim and it was done primarily to be polite and to show humility. Her findings suggested that the context, shared background knowledge and the assumption that the participants were conforming to the cooperative principle helped the hearer to infer implied meanings even though there were violation of maxims. She explained that Malaysian speakers preferred to convey their opinions indirectly, politely and diplomatically particularly when discussing conversational issues. This seems to indicate the importance of politeness as a factor conversational implicature. This aspect of face-saving is perhaps due to the influence of the Malaysian culture and customs.

Levinson,(1983) "The results of such an informational; by identifying features associated with the redress of Face Threatening Acts, the analyst can bring out competitive and co-operative

work being done in the text". The applications of Brown and Levinson's model go far beyond the sorts of formulas of etiquette that most people think of as politeness, and far beyond their original application to conversation.

Kulaisingam (2003) conducted her study on teachers who are speakers of the English language. She found that the maxim of quantity was the most violated. Despite these violations there was a smooth flow of conversation. Similarly, Tan (1994) and Yong (1974), she found that indirectness was a significant feature among Malaysians speakers.

Tan (1994) and Yong (1997) conducted studies on Bahasa Melayu that focused on informal conversation among teachers and produced similar findings where the maxims most violated are the maxim of quantity followed by manner. Tan (1994) claimed that not all aspects of Gricean theory are applicable to the local context. She says that cooperation is essential when interacting with the people of the same rank or age. However, she found that there was no literally cooperation when communicating with people of higher authority, for example among teachers and students when faced with confrontation. Both studies agreed that in the Malaysian context, people are usually not direct with their speech in order to be polite thus often violating the maxim of quantity and manner.

2.11 A Researcher's Perspectives

The researcher thinks that there are a number of problems associated with Grice's theory. The researcher feels that Grice's theory is not clear and not practical to the Malaysians cultures

because different communities and cultures have their own ways of observing and expressing maxims for particular situations. Grice does not discuss the possibility that an utterance may have a range of possible interpretations and when the speaker deliberately fails to observe a maxim.

In addition, Grice (1975) freely admits that his characterization of the maxims of Relevance is lacking, and that the cooperative principle (CP) itself is only defined in a very rough terms.

The researcher also feels that the four conversational maxims seem to overlap. Thus, this makes it difficult to distinguish from one another. The maxim of Quantity and Manner for example, co-occur in addition, it is difficult to differentiate between different types of non-observance maxim. For example, distinguish the maxim that is deliberate or intentional from the one that is not.

Grice, (1989:43) argued that “there should be a mechanism for calculating implicature”, but it is not always clear how one is able to produce an account of how it could have arisen. Grice informal approaches for calculating implicature cannot really withstand validity and scrutiny. Grice does not state how the speaker might establish relevance, informative, and relevance in their interaction.

There is one respect in which Grice’s favoured sense of ‘say’ is a bit stipulative. For him saying something entails meaning it. This is why he used the locution ‘making as if to say’ to describe irony, metaphor, etc., since in these cases one does not mean what one appears to be. Here, Grice seems to have conflated saying with stating. It is more natural to describe these as cases of

saying one thing and meaning something else instead. What is meant by a speaker and what is heard and understood by the listener are often different. Speakers do not assume that what is clear to them is necessarily going to be clear to their listener. Each time you speak, your listeners have specific expectations about the kind of language you will use. The kind of language that is appropriate varies from situation to situation. It is therefore crucial to assess each speaking situation and adjust your language accordingly. The misuse of language is more than just a matter of misusing words and meaning because choosing a wrong word can distort your intended message, misguide your receiver, and undermine your credibility. It is difficult to interpret what speaker means. The traditional answer is that we look at what they say. But in 1967, Grice argued that we must view what they say against the ongoing discourse and its “accepted purpose or direction,” Grice describes this in the following quotation:

Our talk exchanges do not normally consist of a succession of disconnected remarks, and would not be rational if they did. They are characteristically, in some degree at least, cooperative efforts; and each participant recognises in them, to some extent, a common purpose or set of purposes, or at least mutually accepted direction.

(Grice, 1975:45)

Grice (1975) argued therefore expect each other or the participants of a conversation to adhere to the Cooperative Principle, which he expressed as an exhortation to speakers. In Grice’s view, people take for granted that actions in discourse are to be interpreted against the “accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange.” Grice’s insight can be pursued in many ways. For

example, to see how relevance is his theory to internet chat room conversation. Grice chose to apply it to explain what sentences are taken to mean on the occasion of their use.

To see what speakers mean, Grice argued, we generally go beyond what they actually say. In short, the user's tendency to assume whatever message in cyber communications and to adapt and modify their language to be used as an accepted register in internet chat room interaction. In the next section, the researcher will explain Grice's four conversational maxims in relation to this study.

According to Grice (1975) natural language expressions are used as ordinary kinds of discourse conversation which is governed by principles irrelevant to the use of corresponding operators. Participants in chat room conversations are expected to adhere to Grice's Cooperative Principle which subsumes four other conversational maxims. What is interesting is Grice's ability to explain these maxims. They are the maxims of quantity, quality, relation/relevance and manner. According to Grice (1975) these maxims at a first glance, seem that a participant adheres to the maxims of quantity when he or she makes the contribution as informative as it is required. A participant who adheres to the maxim of quantity should avoid including unnecessary, redundant information in his or her contribution. If the speaker rambles on without saying anything new or informative, the addressee will lose interest in the discourse very quickly and stop paying attention. Grice (1975) published a seminal article entitled "The Cooperative Principle" that created quite a stir on the linguistic scene and generated a large number of linguistic publications that built on Grice's postulates. Grice (1975:49) "the basic is that any discourse, whether

written or spoken, is a joint effort. Both the speaker and the addressee have to follow certain pragmatic, syntactic, and semantic rules in order to communicate effectively.

Grice's cooperative principle consists of several maxims that appear very simple, straight forward, and common-sensical at first sight. What took the researcher by surprise is that the participants actually observe these principles in Internet Chat Room conversation with some degree of flouting. The conduct of internet chat room conversation entirely in conformity with the cooperative principle would be socially descriptive. For example: when a speaker appears to observe the maxims he or she expect the hearer to appreciate the meaning implied.

“Do not make it more difficult to understand than be dictated by question of face or authority. Make clear your communicative intent unless this is against the interest of politeness or maintaining a dignity-driven cultural core value, such as harmony, charity or respect”

(Clyne, 1986)

The applicability of politeness among Internet Chat Room users may not be immediately obvious. In pragmatic terms the maxim of manner refers to the importance of being perpicuous or be clear. The demand for politeness simply means that the interactors should treat other interactors as they would like to be treated.

(Clyne, 1986)

In Internet Chat Room context, the researcher could substitute manner as “Be Polite”. As interactors they should always maintain the attitude towards other interactors. Everything we do

should be guided by genuine affection and kindness. The politeness principle is a series of maxims, which Leech (1987) has proposed as a way of explaining how politeness operates in conversational exchanges.

Lakoff (1973) defines politeness as a form of behaviour that establishes and maintains comity. That is the ability of participants in a social to engage in interaction in an atmosphere of relative harmony. In everyday conversation, we adapt our conversation to different situation.

2.12 Turn-taking in Internet Chat Room conversation

Conversations always require at least two participants. We call the two participants in a conversation “current speaker” and “next speaker”. More importantly these two participants must “take turns” speaking. If they do not take turn it would not be a conversation.

According to Schegloff (1974:35), speaker change occurs; one person stops and another begins right away (no gap). One person talks at a time (no overlap). Two people may talk briefly at the same time (overlap). Transitions with no gap and no overlap are common. Turns may be allocated by current speaker or next speaker. If the current speaker has been selected and will select the next speaker, he or she has the right obligation to speak. Turns are taken when the speaker is moved to speak; urgency status and the ability to command attention from others determines speaking order. The right to continue speaking is granted by others depending on how well the speaker’s idea is being accepted. Responses from others are usually made at the end of each of the speaker’s points, and this is not felt to be an interruption of the speaker.

There is often a considerable timelag between when a message is sent and when it is responded to, especially in asynchronous form of computer-mediated conversation (CMC) such as e-mail. Synchronous CMC involves more rapid exchanges of turns, but delays may be caused by system “lag” and by disrupted turn.

Temporal overlap in display of turns is not an option in one-way CMC, since one-way systems force messages into a strict linear order. On the other hand, overlap of exchanges is rampant in computer-mediated environments. In group interaction, unrelated messages from other participants often intervene between an initiating message and its response, in a likelihood proportional to the number of active participants involved in the interaction. Violation of sequential coherence are the rule rather than the exception in CMC.

Relevance is often weak even in sequences of turns intended to be related. According to Hering (1996:26), found that of all messages in three topically coherent samples, 33% violated the Gricean maxim of local relevance, and many others were only weakly relevant to the turns to which they were ostensibly responding. It appears initially plausible on the basis of these observations by the researcher that some degree of interactional incoherence would result in CMC is inevitable. This is because CMC in current use is text-only and one-way transmission, such incoherence is potentially wide-spread. This evidence comes from descriptive studies of computer-mediated interaction making use of methods of conversation analysis (CA), as well as from research in the computer-supported cooperative work (CSCW) tradition. In the next section, the researcher will give conclusion of chapter two.

2.12 Conclusion

This chapter has explained the Internet Chat room discourse, previous studies conducted in this area, the theoretical basis for this study. The previous studies in the area of conversational implicature has also been explained in this chapter. The next chapter will explain the procedures involved in carrying out this study.