CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

The conduct of interaction entirely in conformity with the Cooperative Principle while being efficient, would be socially disruptive. Naturally, occurring conversation has to be dealt with precisely and concisely because data collection and analysis is complex and is not easy and straight- forward. This chapter provides an overview on the research design employed to which procedures of data collection, the transcription of the Internet Chat room conversations as well as the methods of data analysis are described.

This study uses the framework provided by Grice's Cooperative Principle in their conversation to account for the way participants communicate in Internet Chat Room conversations. Grice proposed the Cooperative Principle and a set of conversational maxims which define the default assumptions underlying interpretations of the participant intentions, that convey specific meaning and the strategies involved in conveying such message.

3.1 The Research Design

The researcher's main purpose was to identify the types of maxims conformed and violated, the conversational implicature that surfaced from the adhering and flouting of the maxims, the implied meaning they convey in Internet Chat Room conversation. The researcher first embarked on a general data collection that consisted of retrieving as many Internet Chat Room

conversations as possible. These Internet Chat Room conversations were conducted to determine the appropriate sample to be used for this study.

It was only after this stage that the researcher proceeded to identify the adhering of the maxims as well as flouting of the maxims. The interpretations of the implied meanings were conducted by the researcher. Since this study aims to investigate the conveying of implied messages through Internet Chat Room conversations to describe pragmatic and the effects these implied meanings have on the users, hence there was a need to study the responses from the extracts taken from the Internet Chat room conversations.   The processes involved in this research design are further described below.

3.2 Data Collection

The data for this study was taken from eight Internet Chat Rooms particularly "Mamak Chat Room", (Malaysia and Singapore) the "Alamak Chat Room", (Malaysia, Singapore and Little India) "YM Chat Room", "IM Chat Room" "My Space Chat".   The data were all in English language, with a few of them containing elements of mother-tongue influence such as Chinese, Malay and Indian accents and the use of fillers such as "lah". All the data chosen initially had elements of adhering and flouting of Grice's maxims. The Chat rooms are Internet web sites that allow multiple Internet users to engage in what has been termed "synchronous CMC", a form of typed communication that occurs now or in real-time, as opposed to asynchronous CMC that occurs in postponed time (Jacobsen, 1996). Data gathered through CMC may be interesting and insightful but – if participants are virtual. Thus, the information transmitted will be of no

credence.   However, it is possible to defend data in a field where anonymity and pseudonymity are the norm and where Internet Chat Room users may exploit the virtuality of the medium to experiment with the presentation of self.

Boshier (1990:76) claims that "electronic networking opens possibilities for deception because many of the cues that normally circumscribe roles and which foster or inhibit participation are not present. Users of CMC can change the way they express their personalities, can switch genders, or change their age, or become fantasy characters in virtual worlds. As consistency in identity has strong associations with authenticity these possibilities have clear implications for data. Undoubtedly, online environment can offer access to accounts of unfamiliar contexts. The text that appears on computer screens provided all available information about the communication. It has also carries the social situation".

The data presented here represents the synchronous computer –mediated interaction. The conversation that occurs in Internet Chat Rooms consists of different people entering and leaving the room throughout the day. Other Internet Chat room providers have their own chat systems that are accessible only to their subscribers but one can find non-subscriber chat rooms very easily. Perhaps the largest free chat systems can be found on the sites of major web-based corporations such as yahoo and through the services of Internet Relay Chat.

In addition, there are a host of small and large non-profit web sites that provide rooms that are available to anyone. Internet Chat Rooms themselves "involve the production of writing via computer such that synchronous textual dialogue takes place among distant interlocutors". This

type of communication has labelled "interactive written discourse" (Allen and Guy, 1974:47). According to Allen and Guy, (1974:47) each utterance is displayed in the 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 multidimensional text.

Thus, there is heavy reliance on the input that emerged during the conversations. With experience, Internet Chat Room users become able to follow multiple streams of conversation. The reason for choosing Internet Chat Room for this study is because it offers a wide spectrum of interlocutors. Therefore, every person has the potential to be both recipient and broad distributor of information simultaneously and is accessible to members of the other chat rooms who may want to participate in the conversation. This has a profound effect on quality of the data collected because the language in this chat room conversation is naturally authentic source of data. In Internet Chat Rooms, users can engage in mostly anonymous, free, unregulated conversation about any topic they choose during the conversation that promises to provide interlocutors with opportunities to explore the topic of conversation.. Thus, it leads to decrease inhibition on the part of Internet Chat Room users.

The researcher logged on to the Mamak Chat Rooms (Malaysia and Singapore) and Alamak Chat Rooms (Malaysia, Singapore and Little India) on 20th June 2005 and IM Chat, YM Chat and My Space Chat on 3rd September 2008. For the purpose of analysis, the researcher selected eight samples from primary data and these were classified as Chat 1 to 8. Each sample has interactive written discourse commonly called chatting but officially designated "real time interaction" which resembles written language. When logging into the Internet Chat Room, the researcher is

on exactly the same epistemological grounds as the other Internet Chat Room users. The researcher is looking at the screen, just as the other users. All chatters have exactly the same information, and all receive it simultaneously. In the next section the researcher will describe the tools of analysis which the researcher adapts from Gricean framework.

3.3   The Samples

In this study, the researcher logged on into the Internet. The sample consists of Internet Chat Room Users. The users in the conversation range from two to four or more users: giving rise to multi-party talk or exchanges. The exchanges are between the Internet Chat Room users. The Internet Chat Room users have the ability to initiate and continue the topic of conversations because they appear to have a sound knowledge of Internet or chat room fairly well.

To gather the data the researcher merely entered a chat room and downloaded the existing data. What the researcher noticed in the Internet Chat Room was, the other Internet Chat Room users did not try to communicate with the researcher probably because the users were generally very busy or perhaps the researcher did not make her presence felt. Below is a brief explanation of each of the extract used in this study to examine implicatures.

3.4   The Chat

Chat 1: Mamak Chat (Malaysia) Announcements- Make Friends

The chat is about [SwEEty] and [CuTiE]. [SwEEty] starts by just greeting and is asking whether [CuTiE] is willing to chat with her. [CuTiE starts by throwing questions to [SwEEty]. Please refer to Appendix Chat 1: Mamak Chat for the transcription of the extract in detail.

Chat 2: Mamak Chat (Malaysia) Announcement- Account Manager

This chat is about [ChipMoRe] and [redDevil]. [ChipMoRe] is anxious to know the kind of bike [redDevil is having. [ChipMoRe] starts throwing [redDevil] one question after another, to which he replies all in quite a straight forward manner. Please refer to Appendix Chat 2: Mamak Chat (Malaysia) for the transcription in detail.

Chat 3: Alamak Chat (Cinema) – Announcement Account Manager

Chat 3 despicts a conversation between [Sexy Jessie] and [Silkstockings]. [Silkstockings] is asking [Sexy Jessie]'s opinion on her voice. Perhaps [Sexy Jessie] has heard [Silkstockings]'s voice otherwise she would not have asked her opinion. However, [Sexy Jessie] tries to impress [Silkstockings] by telling [Sexy Jessie] that her voice is sultry like Sheila Majid. Please refer to Appendix Chat 3: Alamak Chat (Cinema) for the detailed transcription.

Chat 4: Alamak Chat (Singapore) Announcements- Account Manager

In chat 4 we see [min] and [boi-boi] having a conversation. The participants in this extract want to meet each other and fix an appointment. In order that they recognize each other, they give a detailed description of themselves. Please refer to Appendix Chat 4: Alamak Chat (Singapore) for detailed of transcription.

Chat 5: Alamak Chat (SG) Little India

The extract is about [shes] asking [darling] when her birthday is. However, [darling] tries hard to avoid answering [shes] question by merely stating the month of her birthday. Thus, making [shes] asking more questions as she feels that [darling] does

not answer her question. Please refer to Appendix Chat 5, Alamak Chat (SG) Little India.

Chat 6: IM Chat (Instant Message)

This extract is about a friendly conversations between [d-devil] and [loser-not].
[d-devil] and [loser-not] agreed to go to OU. (One- Utama shopping complex)   Please refer to Appendix Chat 6: IM Chat (Instant Message) for detailed transcription.

Chat 7: YM Chat (Yahoo Chat)

In chat 7, [divya] relates her intentions of going to the cinema to to watch Bollywood movie to [eva]. Please refer to Appendix Chat 7, YM chat (Yahoo Chat).

Chat 8: My Space Chat

In chat 8, is a conversation between [dude] and [sham]. [dude] tells [sham] that he does not know how to make a profile background. So [sham] suggests that [dude] checks it on Google. [dude] explains that his friend's profile background is very nice. [sham] tells [dude] that he prefers a retro style of background.   Refer to Appendix 8: My Space Chat.

Chat 9: My Facebook Chat

In Chat 9, is a conversation, where [nick] and [merlin]. This is rather a dramatic conversation, where [nick] assumes [merlin] an old folk. Please refer to Appendix, Chat 9, for detailed of the hat.

3. 5   The Data

The data presented here represents the synchronous computer –mediated interaction.   The conversation that occurs in Internet Chat Rooms consists of different people entering and leaving the room throughout the day.

In addition, there are a host of small and large non-profit web sites that provide rooms that are available to anyone. Internet Chat Rooms themselves "involve the production of writing via computer such that synchronous textual dialogue takes place among distant interlocutors". This type of communication has labelled "interactive written discourse" (Allen and Guy, 1974:47). According to Allen and Guy, (1974:47) each utterance is displayed in the 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 multidimensional text.

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The researcher logged on to the Mamak Chat Rooms and Alamak Chat Rooms on 20th June 2005, and logged on to IM Chat Room, YM Chat Room, My Space Chat Room, Hot Mail Chat

and Face Book Chat on 20th August 2008.   For the purpose of analysis the researcher selected eight samples from primary data and these were classified as Chat 1 to 10. Each Chat has interactive written discourse commonly called chatting but officially designated "real time interaction" which resembles written language. When logging into the Internet Chat Room, the researcher is on exactly the same epistemological grounds as the other Internet Chat Room users. The researcher is looking at the screen, just as the other users. All chatters have exactly the same information, and all receive it simultaneously. In the next section, the researcher will describe the tools of analysis which the researcher adapts from Gricean framework.

3.6   The Tools of Analysis

In formal group speaking situations, turns are usually taken by everyone present, and no one else speaks until the previous speaker is completely through and a few moments of silence ensues. In Internet Chat Room conversation turn-taking can be said to follow a normative ideal of precisely alternating turns but sometimes exhibit numerous violations of both the "no gap, no overlap" principle and the principle of orderly turn alteration. The word "precisely" refers to the timing of the transition from one speaker turn to the next. "Alternating" refers to the expectation that participants will take turns speaking in an orderly fashion.

In the samples gather, obviously the users are maintaining a systematic way when they want to answer questions asked. For example, the users know when their turns are in order to hold the conversation in an orderly manner or they normally do not participate abruptly but wait for the

signal when to participate. Notice that they only answer the questions when asked. In any conversation turn-taking is an important aspect of communication.

3.7   The Gricean Framework

It is possible for the speakers to derive quite different meanings from what the other speakers intend to convey. Indeed, there is a distinct possibility that their intentions will be subverted by their unintentional flouting or violating of these conversational maxims and, as the researcher believes that it is possible to perceive Grice's Co-operative Principle idealogy of what constitutes good, clear communication in Internet Chat Room conversations. While the messages are conveyed among users of Internet Chat Room, the implied meaning of conversation is reflected by the responses given by the users of Internet Chat Room.

Internet Chat Room conversation can be analysed in terms of Grice's conversational maxims, giving the researcher a way of understanding successful communication. The responses given by the Internet Chat Room users can be explained whether the users violated or adhered to Grice's Co-operative Principle. For ease of reference, the term principle will refer to individual rules in the researcher's analytic study whereas the term maxim will refer to Grice's maxims of Co-operation.   Responses show that there are individual differences in the way the maxims are interpreted.

3.8   The Qualitative Analysis

To ensure that good quality data is collected in keeping with the requirements of validity as well as to check the interpretation of meanings, the researcher compiled data for the analysis of this study through a series of chats taken from interactors of Internet Chat Room.   In attaching meaning to the communications, words and meanings are given equal consideration as the focus is on the intentions of the speaker and how users recognizes these implied meanings and the effects the communications have on users. The researcher was also aware that the interpretation of the may not be the same as what was intended by the listener. Interpretation is based entirely on the inferences of the researcher.

The research mainly used qualitative analyses. This form of analysis is suitable given the nature of the study.

The data collected is analysed qualitatively and the results are used to identify the types of maxims that are adhered to or overtly flouted in the Internet Chat Room conversations, including the meanings they convey and the strategies employed in conveying them. The evidence will also be used to show how Internet Chat Room users recognize implicit meanings in conversations.

In addition, the researcher as an involved person in this study, logging into the Internet Chat Room is also in a position to make inferences based upon what is uttered in the particular context of utterances. Therefore, the interpretation of implied meaning is based on responses of the Internet Chat Room users and the inferences of the researcher herself.

3.9 Conclusion

This chapter has covered the researched design applied in this study, the research instruments used as well as the approach used in analysing the data. The next chapter will present the results of this study and the findings will be discussed.