CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine the language conventions (emoticon and typographic features), code-switching patterns and opening and closing phases of the Malaysian IRC conversation. Findings from the questionnaire was analysed to substantiate the findings from the IRC extracts on the language conventions and code-switching patterns during chat. The findings of the study are reported under the following headings:

i. findings from questionnaire
ii. emoticon features
iii. typographic features
iv. code-switching patterns
v. patterns of the openings and closings of the conversations

4.2 Findings from Questionnaire

Findings from the questionnaire were used to substantiate the findings on:

i. language conventions
ii. code-switching patterns

Therefore, this section tabulates the types of users across the five faculties and their understanding on emoticon and typographic features featured in the questionnaire and the language used by the undergraduates during chats.

4.2.1 Types of Users

From the questionnaire, the researcher derived at the categorization of users based on the number of hours and years the undergraduates participated in IRC. The undergraduates who chatted less than 3-4 hours per day and less than 3-4 years are categorized as newbies. The undergraduates who chatted more than 3-4 hours per day and over 3-4 years are categorized as experienced users. Table 3 shows the total number of newbies and experienced users from the five faculties in University of Malaya.

Table 3: Types of Users

Faculties/ Users	**Newbies**	**Experienced**
Business	15	3
Engineering	7	2
Language and linguistic	4	8
Science	8	6
Computer Science	8	4
Total	**42**	**17**

4.2.2 Users Understanding of Emoticon Features

This section looks at the correlation between the types of users and their understanding of emoticon features. The results are illustrated in Table 4 and Figure 5 and Figure 6.

Table 4: Users Understanding of Emoticon Features

Types of Users	Understand		Do not Understand	
Newbies	11	27.3%	31	72.7%
Experienced	8	48.6%	9	51.4%

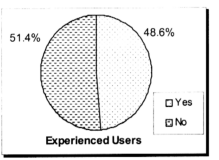

Figure 5: Experienced Users' Understanding of Emoticons

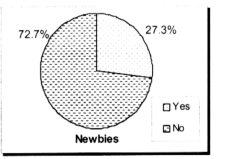

Figure 6: Newbies' Understanding of Emoticons

Findings from the questionnaire reveal that 51.4% of the experienced users were still unable to understand the emoticons and 48.6% were able to understand. Only a small percentage of the newbies understood the emoticons (27.3%) as compared to those who did not understand (72.7%).

4.2.3 Users Understanding of Typographic Features

This section investigates the correlation between the types of users and their understanding of typographic features. The results are illustrated in Table 5 and Figure 7 and Figure 8.

Table 5: Users Understanding of Typographic Features

Types of Users	Understand		Do not Understand	
Newbies	13	31.8%	29	68.2%
Experienced	11	64.9%	6	35.1%

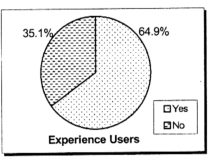

Figure 7: Experienced Users' Understanding of Typographies

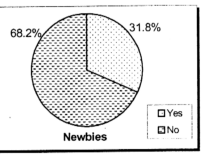

Figure 8:Newbies' Understanding of Typographies

The findings reveal that experienced users (64.9%) and newbies (31.8%) were able to understand the typographic features (Figure 7 and Figure 8). They agreed that the typographic features are necessary in IRC because the features not only saves time in both typing and reading the messages, but also makes interaction livelier. On the other hand, 35.1% of the experienced users who did not understand the typographic features commented that there is no standardized form that they can refer to for the meanings.

This can be categorized as one of the types of noises as listed by Gundykunst and Kim's (1997): different coding system to translate the messages.

4.2.4 Code-Switching Patterns

The questionnaire also surveyed the language used during chats among undergraduates from different ethnic groups in the University of Malaya as shown in Table 6 and Figure 9.

Table 6: Language Used among Undergraduates from Different Ethnic Groups in University of Malaya

LANGUAGE / ETHNIC	BAHASA MELAYU		ENGLISH		CHINESE		TOTAL	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	N	%
Malay	18	54	16	46	-	-	34	100
Chinese	2	17	8	66	2	17	12	100
Indian	1	8	10	92	-	-	11	100
Others	2	50	2	50	-	-	4	100

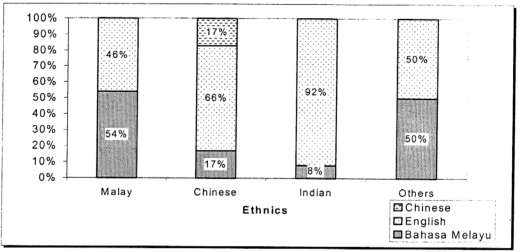

Figure 9: Language Used in IRC by Students from Different Ethnic Groups in University of Malaya

The language use ratings showed that undergraduates used Bahasa Melayu, English, and Chinese languages to interact in the IRC. But the common language amongst the different ethnic groups was English.

Students who belong to the *others* category used Bahasa Melayu and English equally while the Indian undergraduates showed a very high usage of English (92%) as compared to Bahasa Melayu (8%). The Malay undergraduates commonly use two languages: Bahasa Melayu (54%) and English (46%). The Chinese undergraduates used three languages but showed a preference for English (66%), followed by Bahasa Melayu (17%) and Chinese language (17%).

The findings from the users understanding on language conventions and language used during chats are used to substantiate the findings in the three sections: emoticon features, typographic features and code-switching patterns.

4.3 Emoticon Features

The emoticon features were used in two ways:

i. emoticons after messages

ii. emoticons without any message

4.3.1 Emoticons After Messages

First, emoticons were inserted between words or at the end of a sentence probably to emphasize the participants' feelings. For example:

a. Extract 4, line 24: u make me feel good **:)**

b. Extract 5, line 7: hehe **:P** at least I du hafta do it myself **:P**

This finding seems to suggest that the participants were less confident to create the emoticons without inserting messages and this in turn suggests that the participants are most probably newbies.

4.3.2 Emoticons Without Any Message

Second, emoticons were used without inserting the messages to indicate the participants' feelings. For example:

a. Extract 3, line 30 **:Þ**

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4.3.2 Emoticons Without Any Message

Second, emoticons were used without inserting the messages to indicate the participants' feelings. For example:

a. Extract 3, line 30 **:Þ**

b. Extract 4, line 22: =)

c. Extract 6, line 14: =}

This finding seems to suggest that participants were more confident and comfortable to create the emoticons without inserting any message to express how they felt. This also suggests that participants are most probably experienced users.

4.3.3 Frequency of Emoticon Usage

The findings on the usage of emoticons also showed that the participants did not use many varieties of emoticons. They only appeared in Extracts 3, 4, 5, and 6 (See Appendix A-3, A-4, A-5, and A-6). Moreover, the emoticons that are frequently used in the chat indicate only happy faces. The reason could be that the participants (experienced users and newbies) were not well versed with emoticons or they were not aware of other types of emoticon features as listed in Appendix A.

The findings from the questionnaire also substantiate this finding, where 51.4% of the experienced users were unable to understand the emoticons and 48.6% were able to understand. Only 27.3% of the newbies understood the emoticons and 72.7% of the newbies did not understand the emoticons. The small percentage of the newbies who were aware of the emoticons perhaps support Reid's (1991) suggestions that IRC is a playground where people are able to experiment with various forms of communication and self-expression.

4.4 Typographic Features

The aim of this section is to investigate how the IRC participants have modified the three typographic features (capitalization, spelling and punctuation). The results are illustrated in Table 7 and Figure 10.

Table 7: Typographic Features

TYPOGRAPHIC FEATURES	TOTAL	%
Capitalization	511	73.7
Spelling	124	17.9
Punctuation	58	8.4
Total	**693**	**100**

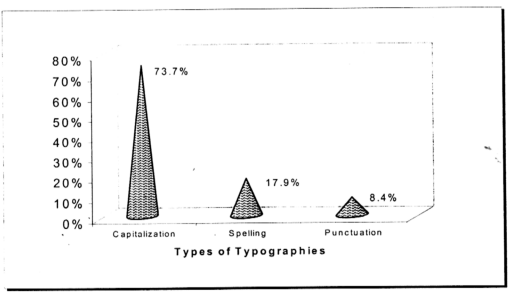

Figure 10: Occurrence of Different Types of Typographies

Figure 10 indicates that capitalization typographies occurred the most (73.7%) and followed by spelling typographies (17.9%). Only a small fraction was from punctuation (8.4%). These findings clearly support Reid's (1991)

statement that IRC users tend to break the rules of standard language and resort to eccentric spellings and non-standard grammar. Moreover, findings from the questionnaire showed that experienced users (64.9%) and newbies (31.8%) were able to decipher the typographic features used during chat.

4.4.1 Missing Capitalization

The researcher categorizes the typography as missing capitalization if the IRC chatters did not follow the following practices:

i. capitalize the first word of a sentence

ii. capitalize the pronoun *I*.

iii. capitalize all proper names

The three types of missing capitalization that occurred commonly in the extracts were:

i. first letter in a sentence. For example:

   a. Extract 1, Line 1: <Jankeer> mun u is best team in the world

   b. Extract 1, Line 6: <DJ_> ah nobody ah…

ii. pronoun *I*. For example:

   a. Extract 1, Line 6: <ChAtWiFmE> cheh i said my age in public b4 mah

iii. nicknames. For example:

   a. Extract 2, Line 16: <jenni^15>

   b. Extract 5, Line 6: <hObBeS27>

Table 8 and Figure 11 present the types and frequency of missing capitalization which occur in each extract.

Table 8: Frequency of Missing Capitalization

Extract/ Types of Missing Capitalization	1	2	3	4	5	6	TOTAL	%
First letter	48	156	44	121	32	43	**444**	**86.9**
Pronoun *I*	1	6	4	28	4	2	**45**	**8.8**
Nicknames	3	3	6	5	1	4	**22**	**4.3**
							511	**100**

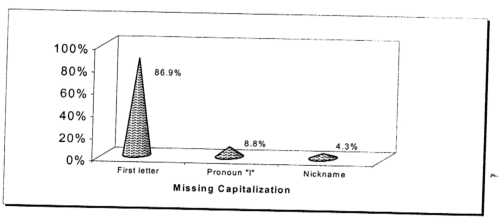

Figure 11: Occurrence of Different Types of Missing Capitalization

It is especially evident from Figure 11 that the majority of first letters in new sentences are uncapitalized (86.9%). A smaller percentage of the pronoun *I* (8.8%) and nicknames (4.3%) are uncapitalized. These features probably reflect that the IRC participants were trying to minimize typing time constraints of pressing the "shift" button to capitalize the letters. This is probably due to participants wanting to respond immediately to other participants chat

because there are more than five chatters and IRC involves many topics at the same time (Aokk:1995 & Siemienuich & Sinclair:1994). Figure 11 shows that the missing capitalization occupied 71% of the typographies.

4.4.2 Spelling Simplification

Spelling simplification refers to the ways spellings are simplified to speed up interactions (Bechar-Israeli: 1997). The IRC chatters simplified the spellings according to pronunciation (20.3%), by using one letter (35.4%), by abbreviating (27.8%), and by truncating (16.5%) as shown in Table 9 and Figure 12.

Table 9: Frequency of Spelling Simplification

Types of Spelling Simplification	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**TOTAL**	**%**
According to Pronunciation	1	5	1	5	3	1	**16**	**20.3**
Using One letter	4	18	3	1	1	1	**28**	**35.4**
Abbreviating a Word	1	6	4	7	4	0	**22**	**27.8**
Truncating a Word	0	6	1	4	1	1	**13**	**16.5**
							79	**100**

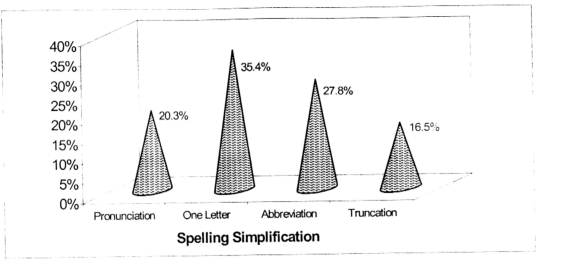

Figure 12: Occurrence of Different Types of Spelling Simplification

4.4.2.1 Spelling According to Pronunciation

It appeared that spellings are simplified according to the participant's pronunciation of the words. It could be presented by:

a. Letter + numeric or numeric + letter(s):

i. b4 (before) (extract 5, line 9)

ii. 1st (first) (extract 2, line 28)

iii. 10q (thank you) (extract 4, line 52)

b. Spelling According to Pronunciation:

i. wat (what) (extract 1, line 10)
(extract 2, line 10, 101)
(extract 3, line 44)

ii. *dun* like *den* too bad lorr (don't like then too bad lorr) (extract 6, line 8)

iii. alo (hello) (extract 2, line 11, 12)

iv. alrite (alright) (extract 4, line 35)

v. seeya (see you) (extract 4, line 75)

vi. yup (yes) (extract 4, line 102)

vii. oso (also) (extract 4, line 115)

viii. dunno (don't know) (extract 5, line 20)

ix. tomolo (tomorrow) (extract 5, line 28)

x. goodnite (goodnight) (extract 4, line 62, 65)

4.4.2.2 Spelling Using One letter

Spellings are simplified into one letter which represented the pronunciation of the word.

i. c (see) (extract 4, line 5)

ii. n (and) (extract 5, line 15)

iii. r (are) (extract 6, line 33)

iv. u (you) (extract 1, line 9, 13, 17, 35)

(extract 2, line 29, 37, 39, 48, 52, 59, 60, 74, 79, 91, 93, 97, 103, 115, 126, 151)

(extract 3, line 15, 17, 27)

v. y (why) (extract 2, line 1, 35)

4.4.2.3 Spelling by Abbreviating A Word

The findings indicate that spellings are also commonly abbreviated (27.8%) as shown below:

i. oic (oh, I see) (extract 1, line 15)

ii. bbm (be back at the moment) (extract 2, line 4)

iii. roflmad (roll on the floor like mad) (extract 2, line 9)

iv. plz (please) (extract 2, line 49)

v. asl (age, sex, location) (extract 2, line 49)

(extract 5, line 1)

vi. yrs (years) (extract 4, line 68)

vii. thn (then) (extract 3, line 10)

viii. ppl (people) (extract 2, line 144)

(extract 4, line 20, 119)

ix. gtg (got to go) (extract 2, line 147)

(extract 5, line 2, 4)

ix. gf (girlfriend) (extract 3, line 23, 28)

x. ur (your) (extract 3, line 23)

(extract 4, line 12, 31, 77)

(extract 5, line 4)

xi. wf (with) (extract 4, line 90)

4.4.2.4 Spelling Through Truncation

Spellings are also simplified through truncation (16.5%). Spellings are truncated at the beginning and ending of words as well as according to the pronunciation.

a. Truncating Initial and End Words

Initial:

i. nyone (anyone) (extract 2, line 59)

ii. bout (about) (extract 6, line 42)

iii. coz (because) (extract 2, line 29, 90, 91)

End:

ii. goin (going) (extract 2, line 52)

(extract 5, line 17)

b. Based on Pronunciation

Below are some examples from the extracts.

i. luv (love) (extract 2, line 82)

(extract 4, line 42)

ii. fren (friend) (extract 3, line 21)

iii. rite (right) (extract 4, line 23)

iv. goodnite (goodnight) (extract 4, line 62, 65)

4.4.3 Spelling Extension

Spelling extension refers to the ways letters are added or extended to make up words and create effect while chatting. The types and frequency of spelling extension used by the IRC participants are illustrated in Table 10 and Figure 13. The two types of spelling extension used by the participants were:

i. eccentric spelling (71.7%)

ii. spelling according to pronunciation (28.3%)

Table 10: Frequency of Spelling Extension

Extract/ Types of Spelling Extension	1	2	3	4	5	6	TOTAL	%
Eccentric spelling	1	14	11	6	6	0	**38**	**71.7**
Pronunciation	0	7	0	6	0	2	**15**	**28.3**
							53	**100**

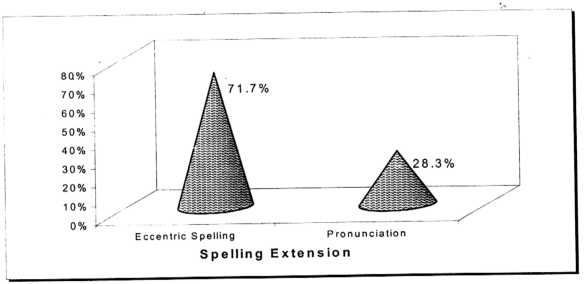

Figure 13: Occurrence of Different Types of Spelling Extension

4.4.3.1 Eccentric Spelling

Eccentric spelling was present mainly to indicate:

i. laughter

ii. surprise

iii. explosion

iv. sleepiness

a. Laughter (to indicate emotions)

i. hehehehe (extract 2, line 2,7,19,86,116,121,132, 136, 152)

(extract 3, line 3, 4, 9,18)

(extract 4, line 24, 69)

(extract 5, line 7)

ii. hahahaha (extract 2, line 24,92,142)

(extract 3, line 11,12,13)

(extract 4, line 26)

(extract 5, line 3,15)

iii. ahahahahakekeke (extract 4, line 111)

iv. ahahah (extract 2, line140)

(extract 3, line 5)

b. Surprise (to indicate emotions)

i. wahhhhh (extract 3, line 6,19)

(extract 5, line 12)

ii. ooooo (extract 1, line 40)

c. Explosion (to indicate sound effect)

i. kabOOOM (extract 2, line 72)

d. Sleepiness (to indicate sound effect)

i. yaaawwwnnn (extract 4, line 73)

The list clearly shows that via extended spellings, the IRC participants were creative in indicating their state of emotions and creating sound effects.

4.4.3.2 Pronunciation

The patterns below reveal that spellings are extended based on spoken colloquial English.

i. wanna (want) (extract 2, line 42, 45, 85)

(extract 4, line 11, 16, 17)

(extract 6, line 27)

ii. nop (no) (extract 2, line 15)

iii. izzit (is it) (extract 2, line 107)

iv. yupp (yes) (extract 4, line 3, 102)

4.4.4 Punctuation

This study looks at three types of punctuation typographies:

i. question marks

ii. apostrophes

iii. exclamation marks

The above punctuation marks are of two types: absent and repeated punctuation marks. Table 11 and Figure 14 illustrate that the question marks (55.6%) are absent and the apostrophes (44.2%) are absent. But, there were instances where 45.2% of the question marks and 54.8% of the exclamation marks are repeated.

Table 11: Frequency of Absent and Repeated Punctuation

TYPES	ABSENT		REPEATED	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Question marks	15	55.6	14	45.2
Apostrophes	12	44.4	0	0
Exclamation marks	0	0	17	54.8
Total	**27**	**100**	**31**	**100**

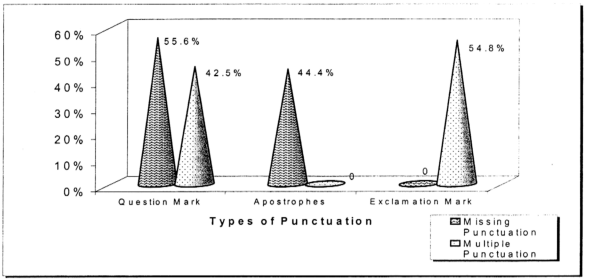

Figure 14: Occurrence of Different Types of Punctuation

4.4.4.1 Absence of Punctuation

The list in this section shows clearer examples of the absence of punctuation marks.

4.4.4.1.1 Absence of Question Marks

The absence of question marks is replaced by ending particle *ah* as shown below. This feature probably suggests that the IRC participants were consciously representing the question marks and not simply omitting them for economy purpose. For example:

i. ah nobody ah (extract 1, line 6)

ii. u old alreadi ah (extract 2, line 37, 39)

Some participants just ignored the question marks without replacing them with the ending particle as exemplified below:

i. wat (extract 1, line 10)

ii. who like m.u (extract 1, line 22)

iii. where u all goin (extract 2, line 52)

iv. any gals from bangsa (extract 2, line 40)

v. wanna chat with me (extract 2, line 45)

4.4.4.1.2 Absence of Apostrophes

Apostrophes were also absent as shown below:

i. dont (don't) (extract 2, line 138, 139)
(extract 4, line 25, 60)

ii. im (I'm) (extract 3, line 10)
(extract 4, line 101)

It appears that participants are creatively using the punctuation marks to represent phonetic features (*ah*) and to save time in typing their messages.

4.4.4.2 Repeated Punctuation

In this study, only the question marks and exclamation marks are repeated continuously at the end of the sentence.

4.4.4.2.1 Repeated Question Marks

Several repeated question marks are used probably to draw attention and to express confusion among the participants.

i. who is m.u??? (extract 1, line 25)

ii. who want to chat with ah niu...??? (extract 1, line 41-46)

iii. who like Sugar Ray here?? (extract 6, line 6)

iv. any gal wanna chat???? (extract 2, line 41)

v. everytime... then ur gf how ler?? (extract 3, line 23)

vi. u said to say something rite?? (extract 4, line 23)

vii. you know my age meh?? (extract 5, line 5)

viii. what... toking about???????? (extract 5, line 12-13)

4.4.4.2.2 Repeated Exclamation Marks

The list below may reveal that the exclamation marks probably are used to show instruction, identity, and surprise.

i. me!!!!!!!!!! (extract 1, line 47, 49) (surprise)

ii. cesty!!! (extract 3, line 42) (surprise)

iii. wahhh... hobbes!!!! (extract 5, line 12-13) (surprise)

iv. wat!! (extract 3, line 44) (surprise)

v. ok me have to logout!!! ...devil:happy kau lui!!(extract 3, line 1)(identity)

vi. bye panda!! (extract 3, line 33) (identity)

vii. bye everybody!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!! (extract 3, line 34) (identity)

viii. hey … goodnite!! (extract 4, line 62) (identity)

ix. u too!!!! (extract 4, line 66) (instruction)

x. dun stay up too late!!! (extract 4, line 67) (instruction)

xi. so that we can understand what u're saying!!(extract 4, line 2)(instruction)

xii. nope.. it's not wrong!!! (extract 4, line 28) (instruction)

A possible explanation for the repeated punctuation is the IRC participants were consciously typing the punctuation marks to indicate their state of emotions and to be emphatic.

4.5 Code-Switching

It is found that the IRC participants in this study code-switched to other languages other than English to chat: Bahasa Melayu and Chinese. This finding is substantiated with the findings from the questionnaire where more than one language is used during chat, but the common language used is English.

Therefore, in the Malaysian context, switching to other languages in the IRC is a normal and natural phenomenon. But, the main language used to chat is English.

4.5.1 Code-switching Patterns

The two common code-switching patterns found in the extracts are

lexical shifts and adding ending particles. Moreover, each of these patterns has their own code-switching purposes.

4.5.1.1 Lexical Shifts

The researcher refers to lexical shifts in cases where a word is replaced by another language. In the following examples, code-switching is commonly carried out in Cantonese and Bahasa Melayu switching:

i. nouns
ii. verbs
iii. adjectives

Examples for each of these are given below.

4.5.1.2 Bahasa Melayu Noun Shift

i. hobbes... u going *mamak*? (hobbes... u going night hawker?) (extract 5, line 17)
ii. not small *longkang* ..... (not small drain .....) (extract 2, line 22)

4.5.1.3 Cantonese Verb Shift

i. every time *kow lui* (every time courting girls) (extract 3, line 23)

4.5.1.4 Bahasa Melayu Verb Shift

i. so *kacau* (so disturb) (extract 2, line 77)

ii. *minta maaf* (sorry) (extract 6, line 15)

4.5.1.5 Cantonese Adjective Shift

i. me very *ham sap* 1.... (me very cheeky one...) (extract 2, line 154)

ii. so *cam* (so pitiful) (extract 2, line 98)

iii. if *yeong sui* don't find me (if ugly, don't find me) (extract 2, line 139)

iv. you very *leng chai* issit? (you very handsome is it?) (extract 2, line 94)

v. *leng lui* always say not *leng lui* one (beautiful girls always say not beautiful one) (extract 3, line 2)

4.5.1.6 Bahasa Melayu Adjective Shift

honkan *bodoh* (honkan stupid) (extract 2, line 117)

The lexical shifts findings reveal that the participants code-switched the adjectives the most by using Cantonese. This is probably due to the participants, most probably Chinese, who feel more comfortable to express their messages in Cantonese.

4.5.2 Ending Particles

The communicative functions of the ending particles are categorized based on the context without considering the intonation and rhythm. The adding of the ending particles was for two communicative purposes:

i. to question

ii. to be more emphatic

4.5.2.1 To Question: Particles *ah, meh, hah,* and, *ler.*

Particles *ah, meh, hah,* and, *ler* were used as a question marker. It was found in some cases that the particles were followed by question marks and some were not accompanied by question marks. Moreover, some particles were accompanied by repeated question marks and periods.

i. how? Jump from Kl Tower *ah*? (extract 2, line 8)

i. u say m.u. is the best *ah*? (extract 1, line 6)

ii. so you like bayern *ah*.... (extract 1, line 17)

iii. u old alreadi *ah*..... (extract 2, line 37, 39)

iv. nyone of u not work *ah* (extract 2, line 59-60)

v. u all gay *ah*... (extract 2, line 103)

vi. when u grow up somemore wanna ask *ah* (extract 4, line 16)

vii. still wanna use mama's money *meh* (still want to use mama's money meh) (extract 4, line 11)

viii. you know my age *meh*??? (extract 5, line 5)

ix. hobbes, you call me *ahh?* (extract 5, line 14)

x. then ur gf how *ler*?? (then your girl friend how ler?) (extract 3, line 23)

xi. unavailable cannot be ur fren *hah*? (unavailable cannot be your friend?) (extract 3, line 21)

xii. still laughing *ah*? (extract 4, line 114)

4.5.2.2 To Emphasize: *kan, mah, lah*

i. u *kan* jenker? (extract 1, line 11)

ii. man.united *mah*..... (Manchester United mah) (extract 1, line 28)

iii. ppl laugh until tears drop *lah* (Extract 4, line 119)

iv. then if you die i follow *la (*extract 2, line 25)

v. go america and play *la (*extract 2, line 53)

vi. joke here n there *la (*extract 6, line 15)

vii. when you small ok*lah. (*extract 4, line 15)

viii. its not to say it is wrong *lah (*extract 4, line 30)

ix. all the time *lah (*extract 4, line 79)

x. go and message them then chat *lor (*extract 2, line 89)

xi. a^anne.. tonight I spend some time with u *lor (*extract 3, line 27)

xii. dun like den to bad *lorr* (don't like then too bad lorr) *(*extract 6, line 8)

xiii. thn I said im leng lui *lo* (then I said I'm pretty lo) *(*extract 3, line 10)

xiv. big enough to earn ur own *loh* (big enough to earn your own loh) *(*extract 4, line 12)

In conclusion, the list in the previous page shows that there are two communicative purposes of code-switching the ending particles:

i. to question

ii. to show emphatic

4.6 Openings and Closings Conversation Pattern

The overall investigation on the six extracts found that participants on-line have different patterns from the face-to-face conversation to open and close their conversation and these patterns are discussed in this section.

Figure15 indicates the total percentage of participants who greeted and those who did not greet; while Figure 16 shows the total percentage of participants who ended the conversation by bidding farewell and those who did not.

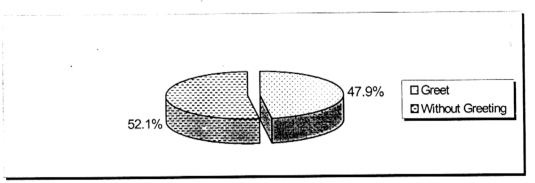

Figure 15: Openings by On-Line Participants

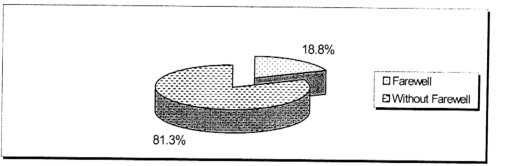

Figure 16: Closings by On-Line Participants

Both Figures strikingly indicate that participants prefer not to greet (52.1%) and bid farewell (81.3%) while (47.9%) greet and (18.8%) bid farewell to other participants. This result is consistent with earlier findings by Jonsson (1998) who suggested that participants are not obligated to greet everybody on a channel personally. Accordingly, one "Hello" or an equivalent was enough. The result of the present study seems to suggest that the subjects in this study have that characteristic and they should not be labelled as rude participants.

4.6.1 Opening Phase

The IRC extracts were examined to see whether the participants had greeted the on-line participants in the opening phase. 47.9% of the IRC participants greeted while 52.1% did not greet in the opening phase of the chat. The participants joined in the conversation in three distinct ways.

i. first, they greeted other participants and received replies. This consisted of adjacency pair mainly being the Summon-Answer pair

ii. second, they greeted other participants but failed to receive replies

iii. third, they did not greet other participants but their presence is identified by the given status of participant

The findings and discussion are elaborated as below:

i. summon patterns
ii. answer patterns
iii. given status of participants

4.6.1.1 Summon Patterns

From the extracts, the summon patterns were realised in four of the following ways as illustrated in Table 12.

i. greeting
ii. overt recognition
iii. self-identification
iv. inviting others to speak

Table 12 shows that the on-line participants preferred not introducing themselves, followed by inviting others to chat, whereas greeting and greeting by overt recognition have the same rating.

Table 12: Summon Patterns in the Opening Phase

Extract/ Features of Summon	1	2	3	4	5	6
Greeting	✓	✓		✓		✓
Greeting by overt recognition	✓	✓		✓		✓
Introducing oneself	✓					
Inviting others to chat	✓	✓				✓

4.6.1.1.1 Greeting

Participants opened the conversation by using greeting lexis devices such as *hi, hello,* and *wei.*

i. Extract 1: Line 16

MooNwalKK: hi there

ii. Extract 1: Line 27

mooNwalKK: wei

iii. Extract 1: Line 38

MonNwalKK: haii

iv. Extract 2: Line 16-17

Red' Yorke: hi

Red' Yorke: hi

v. Extract 2: Line 42-43

Emy: hello.....

Emy: hello

vi. Extract 4: Line 8

Nav|n: hi

vii. Extract 6: Line 1-5

Beauty: hello.....

hello: yes?

hello: anyone here?

Celest|ne: hello hello

Beauty: hi..hello

viii. Extract 6, Line 20-22

rock: hi

rock: everybody

hello: hi

4.6.1.1.2 Overt Recognition

Here, participants greeted another person whom he or she shared interest with in the topic by first initiating lexis *Hi* and then, the participants' nickname. For example, in Extract 1, line 8-9, DJ_ shared interest with Janker in the

v. Extract 2: Line 42-43

Emy: hello.....

Emy: hello

vi. Extract 4: Line 8

Nav|n: hi

vii. Extract 6: Line 1-5

Beauty: hello.....

hello: yes?

hello: anyone here?

Celest|ne: hello hello

Beauty: hi..hello

viii. Extract 6, Line 20-22

rock: hi

rock: everybody

hello: hi

4.6.1.1.2 Overt Recognition

Here, participants greeted another person whom he or she shared interest with in the topic by first initiating lexis *Hi* and then, the participants' nickname. For example, in Extract 1, line 8-9, DJ_ shared interest with Janker in the

Manchester United football topic. DJ_ immediately greeted Janker to mark his presence.

Extract 1: Line 8-9

DJ_ (lulu_etsel@bat-47-64.tm.net my) has joined mamak

DJ_: hi there Janker?

DJ_: u say is the best ah? (You say is the best?)

Extract 2: Line 47

aff at: hi emy

Another feature worth noting is that participants also overtly greeted others whom they did not share interest in the topic. They greeted merely to mark their presence. This is also illustrated in:

Extract 1: Line 36

MooNwalKK (blink@j 59.bkr31.jaring.my) has joined mamak.

MooNwalKK: hi doodles

Extract 4: Line 9

Jeff_99: Hello Nav|n

Extract 6: Line 18

Malibu: hello mr-hobbit

Extract 6: Line 25

mr-hobbit: hi rock_

4.6.1.1.3 Inviting Others to Chat

Here, participants explicitly asked others to chat with them. For instance:

Extract 1: Line 41-46

Ah ^Niu: who want to chat with ah niu...?

Extract 2: Line 134

Honkan: who want to chat with me message me.....

Extract 2: Line 41

Daniel 17c: any gal wanna chat?????

Extract 2: Line 45

Emy: wanna chatt with me

Extract 6: Line 24-30

rock: anybody

rock: wanna

rock: chat

rock: with

rock: me

Extract 2: Line 36, 40

Aff at: any girl from bangsar

Aff at: any girl from bangsa

The examples above indicate that the participants who did not greet others began their chat by inviting others to chat with them. They used various strategies to invite others to chat. First, by repeating punctuation (Extract 1 and 2), second, by repeating the message (Extract 2) and third, by breaking the message into many lines (Extract 6) probably to capture attention from other participants.

4.6.1.1.4 Self-Identification

Participants also marked their presence by introducing themselves to other participants.

Extract 1: Line 40

Ah ^Niu: wo shi ah niu..ooo.. (I am Ah Niu)

Results indicate that only one extract used the self-identification strategy to open the chat. This seems to suggest that participants in the IRC do not usually introduce themselves.

4.6.1.2 Answer Patterns

Another striking feature observed is that some summons were successful because they received replies, while others were unsuccessful because they were

not responded to. Therefore, in the IRC, one can choose to respond or not to respond without losing face or being rude, validating Herring and Nix's (1996) claim that in an on-line conversation, many greetings have no responses. For example, Red'Yorke and Emy repeated their summons but failed to receive any answer:

i. Extract 2: Line 16-17

Red' Yorke (kaine@klj-230-181.tm.net.my) has joined mamak

Red' Yorke: hi

Red' Yorke: hi

ii. Extract 2: Line 42-43

Emy (vennie@brk-23-79.tm.net.my) has joined mamak

Emy: hello.....

Emy: hello

On the other hand, there were two situations when a summon received an answer:

i. a participant who summoned overtly by mentioning the nickname. For example,

Extract 1: Line 41-49

Ah^ Niu (yes@brk-78-87.tm.net.my) has joined mamak

Ah^Niu: who want to chat with ah niu...???

Ah^Niu: who want to chat with ah niu…???

Chinese: me!!!!!!!!!

Chinese: me!!!!!!!!!

ii. a participant who invited others to chat. For example,

Extract 1: Line 8, 10

DJ_ (lulu_etsel@bat-47-64.tm.net my) has joined mamak

DJ: hi there Janker?

Jenkar: wat (what?)

4.6.1.3 Given Status of Participant

Figure 15 (page 72) strikingly indicates that 80% of the participants chatted without greetings. They marked their presence with the given status of participant. It had the nicknames of IRC users, whose identities are condensed into a single line which stated their nicknames and the electronic address. An example is given below:

LiLPop (sss@j24.srb8.jaring.my) has joined #mamak

From the findings, the openings fall into the following three patterns:

Extract 1: Line 8 and Line 10

i. Given status of participant } DJ_(lulu_etsel@@bat-47-64.tm.net.my)has joined mamak

Summon → DJ: hi there Janker?

Answer → Jenker: wat (what?)

Extract 2: Line 42-43

ii.	Given status of participant	Emy (vennie@brk-23-79.tm.net.my) has joined mamak
	Summon	Emy: hello..... Emy: hello

Extract 4: Line 2

iii.	Given status of participant	Nav| (sss@j24.srb8.jaring.my) has joined #mamak

All the three patterns have a given status of participants because the server automatically typed it once the participant joined the channel. As a result, each participant was able to chat immediately because her or his presence was marked once s (he) joined the channel even without greeting.

4.6.2 Closing Phase

In this section, first, the closing conversation sequences are investigated based on Sacks Schegloff, and Jefferson's (1974) location sequential framework and second, the summon-answer pair patterns are analysed.

4.6.2.1 Closing Conversation Levels

The findings reveal that participants in IRC may close their conversation using five levels. They are namely: Level 1: topic bounding, Level 2: pre-closing, Level 3: possible pre-closing, Level 4: closing, and Level 5: given status of

participants. Nevertheless, three levels that commonly appeared are pre-closing, closing, and given status of participants. Below is an excerpt of a closing conversation from Extract 2 which have all the five levels.

HonKan: all pll go where? (all people go where?) } **topic bounding**

HonKan: so boring

Honkan: hei... gtg } **pre-closing**

HonKan: bye. See u all gal at night

HonKan: hehehehehehehe

Kn|ght: apa pasai (what happened?) } **possible pre-closing**

HonKan: me very ham sap 1 (me very cheeky one)

HonKan: bye~~ } **closing**

4.6.2.1.1 Topic Bounding Level

The excerpt showed that HonKan bound the topic by stating that he was bored as nobody was left to chat with him:

Honkan: all pll go where? (all people go where?)

Honkan: so boring

4.6.2.1.2 Pre-Closing Level

The excerpt also showed that HonKan indicated the pre-closing level by

stating:

Honkan: hei… gtg (hei… got to go)

HonKan: bye. See u all gal at night

In addition to this, another strategy used in pre-closing level was to indicate the reason for leaving the channel. This is exemplified in Extract 3, where Mozart had done the pre-closing level by giving reason that he had to leave for lunch:

Extract 3: Line 38-39

Mozart: gtg (got to go)

Mozart: lunch

4.6.2.1.3 Possible Pre-Closing Level

Possible pre-closing level appeared after the pre-closing level as the participants could gain their turn and start a new topic before they end the chat. This level also allows the next speaker the choice of either introducing an entirely new topic or passing the turn to the previous participants. This is evident from excerpt in Extract 2 where Kn|ght initiated a turn by asking HonKan a question to as Kn|ght wanted to know the reason HonKan laughed when HonKan bade goodbye. HonKan gained the turn back by offering the reason that *he is very cheeky.* Thus, Kn|ght created an entirely new topic and passed the turn to HonKan to offer a possible pre-closing.

HonKan: hehehehehehehe

Kn|ght: apa pasai (what happened?)

HonKan: me very ham sap 1 (me very cheeky one)

4.6.2.1.4 Closing Level

This level appeared in all on-line closing phase. The excerpt below shows that this level was marked by terminal element *bye*, and *see you*.

Honkan: bye

Honkan: see u all gal at night (see you all girls at night)

Honkan: hehehe

This level also appeared in Extract 4: Line 75-81. ^bluf used terminal element *seeya (see you)* to mark this level.

^bluf: seeya lilpop (see you Lilpop)

Lilpop: bye luff

Lilpop: oopss///

Lilpop: bye bluf

4.6.2.1.5 Given Status of Participant

This level also appeared in all the closing phases of the chat because it appeared automatically on the screen when participants left the conversation. Thus, other participants were aware of who had left even without bidding farewell. An example of this is given below:

***Honkan (andyLeong@klg-41-186.tm.net.my) has left #mamak

In conclusion, the realisation of the five levels does not always appear in a fixed sequence. Some appear more commonly than others and some are optional. In this study, the given status of participants automatically appeared when one left the conversation. The four main patterns that appeared in the closings are:

i. Topic bounding
   Pre-closing
   Closing
   Possible pre-closing
   Given status of participant

ii. Pre-Closing
   Closing
   Given status of participant

iii. Closing
   Given status of participant

iv. Given status of participant

4.6.2.2 Summon-Answer Pair Patterns

Another striking feature observed is the summon and answer pairs as

below.

i. One summon with one participant's answer:

This extract below denotes that after the pre-closing level, Cesty bade farewell to Mozart and Mozart bade farewell to Cesty in return. Therefore, the adjacency pair is one summon followed by one answer.

Extract 3: Line 40-41

Mozart: gtg (got to go)

Mozart: lunch

} Pre-closing level

Summon 1: Cesty: bye mozart

Answer 1: Mozart: bye cesty....friend

Another example is from Extract 1, line 36-37

Summon 1: MooNwalKK: hi doodles

Answer 1: hi moon

ii. One summon with two different participants' answers:

The extract indicates that when Panda-man summoned by bidding farewell to everyone in the channel, Panda-man received answers from TheDevil and Cesty whom he chatted with earlier.

Extract 3: Line 31-35

Summon 1: Panda-man: ok me have to logout!!!.....devil: happy kau lui!! (happy tackling girls)

Panda-man: bye everyone

Answer 1: TheDevil: bye panda!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Answer 2: Cesty: bye panda

iii. One summon with three different participants' answers:

Extract 4 shows an example of one summon receiving three replies. LiLPoP bade goodbye to Lenglui, but LiLPoP received answers from two other participants: Nav|n and ^bluf.

Extract 4: Line 62-74:

Summon 1: LiLPoP: hey lenglui 18... goodnite!!

Answer 1: Lenglui 18: goodnite, lilpop ...sleep tight

LiLPoP: u too!!!

LiLPoP: dun stay up too late!!!

Answer 2: Nav|n: bye lilpop

LiLPoP: bye nav

Nav|n: bye

Answer 3: ^bluf: seeya lilpop

LiLPoP: bye bluff

iv. Summon without any answer:

The extract shows that Devil bade farewell to everyone in the channel, but failed to receive any answer because all the participants whom Devil chatted with had left the channel.

Extract 3: Line 34

* The Devil has to log out.

Summon 1: Devil: bye everybody!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

To sum up this section, the opening and closing patterns indicated that on-line participants had the choice to greet and bid goodbye in their conversation. The given status of participant is a level that appears in both the opening and closing conversations, and the rest of the levels were optional. For this reason, Sacks et al's (1974) argument that all greetings in face-to-face interactions will receive answers is refuted in this study as not all greetings in IRC have a pair of responses. Likewise for the closings conversation patterns, the responses for goodbyes can continue, with any participant responding to any of the moves, and with more than one participant responding to a given move at any time. But, participants had the choice to respond to the goodbyes.