

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the empirical portion of this study is discussed. Discussions will delve into the findings resulting from the analysis of the transcribed conversations of the women friends. The main findings will be those of fulfillment and non-fulfillment of the Gricean maxims in the talk of Malaysian women friends. Findings will be divided into relevant sections, each comprising of detailed qualitative analysis pertaining to the section headings. These findings are supported by illustrated examples taken from my data. Quantitative discussion will be included to justify and support the qualitative aspect of the study.

Example Guide: The first column in the extracts displays examples by number [e.g. (1), (2) etc]. The column immediately following it indicates the conversation in which the example is taken from [e.g. 1F, 2CH etc].

4.2. The Fulfillment of Maxims

In chapter 2, it has been clarified that the fulfillment of Grice's conversational maxims are signified when the interlocutors in a conversation abide by the CP and maxims postulated by Grice in his 1975 'Logic and Conversation' essay. The maxims (quantity, quality, relevance and manner) when fulfilled, generates no implicatures. In other words, the hearers are able to directly interpret the utterances (by the speakers) without involving any guesswork. The intended meaning is clear and there is no underlying meaning in the utterance.

Note: The first three sets of transcribed data are included in the appendices section as Appendix 2, Appendix 3 and Appendix 4. For access to the remaining sets, please contact Dr. Thilagavathi Shanmuganathan (Email: thilasha@um.edu.my).

In the first example below, a case of the fulfillment of conversational maxims is shown:

- (1) **1F** 338 S : My school masuk.
339 L : Cool!
340 F : When?
341 S : **Last Saturday** (
342 F : Who won?
343 S : **Hmm, USJ 4**

Here the interlocutors S, L and F are talking about an event in which S's school had taken part in. The utterances in turns 341 and 343, demonstrates cases where Grice's maxims are fully adhered to. Both the utterances are direct answers to questions in turn 340 and 342 respectively. In both cases, S has fulfilled all four maxims by giving sufficient information (quantity), stating the truth (quality), answer is relevant to question asked and given clearly (relevance and manner).

- (2) **4SL** 102 Y : I'm not quite sure [whether they drank.
103 T : How's the service?
104 Y : **Service is good.** ((laughter))

- (3) **6JA** 223 J : She's married now. Yeah.
224 D : To?
225 J : **An Iban guy.**
226 S : Really?
227 J : **Serious::**

Further examples of typical maxim fulfillments are shown in (2) and (3). The hearers comprehend the questions asked, and provided answers which hold just the right amount of information, is truthful, relevant and clear. In (2) T's question is answered directly 'Service is good.' In (3), although D's question contains just a word 'To' (meaning 'married to whom?'), J understands and in turn replies adequately – "An Iban guy". J's answer in turn 227 to S's "Really?" is also an observance of the maxims ("Serious::" basically mean 'Yes, that is correct').

4.2.1 Discourse Features in the Fulfillment of Maxims

From the analysis across the sets of conversations, similar patterns of fulfillment were found. The women participants employed certain discourse features which Coates (1996) discovered and wrote about in the book 'Women Talk' that were used regularly by women especially in their discourse with friends. The discourse features that were found to have been used in the fulfillment of maxim were those of repetition, simultaneous and overlapping speech, laughter, minimal responses and hedging.

4.2.1.1 Repetition

A feature which is noted frequently in the talk of women friends is repetition. It is said to hold a multitude of functions and "bonds participants to the discourse and to each other" (Tannen; 1989: 61). To put it simply, repetition occurs when one or more speakers "explicitly say the same thing in one form or another" (Coates; 1996: 220).

(4) 3ST 165 J : = what, what's the good thing about him?
166 N : **He's caring people**, that's why[
167 Y : Ah:] I think[the only thing
168 N : **He takes care of people.**]

The above example illustrates repetition by the same speaker N, in answer to J's question. Coates (1996: 205) believes "the speaker expands her point by repeating her original words and adding to them". The repeat of 'care' and 'people' reaffirms N's stand about the person in question and both utterance are precise, clear and heartfelt, thereby fulfilling the maxims.

- (5) 2CH 309 Y : Ah, no. Dessicated coconut?
 310 P : You're on your own if you're taking it.
 311 C : Yeah, why ah?
 312 Y : **I don't take coconut.**+
 313 P : **We don't do coconut.**
 314 C : Oh yeah ah. Okay. Oh!

In (5), C is debating on the choice of a dessert with desiccated coconut and P declared that she (C) would have to eat it by herself if she were to order it. In response to C's question in turn 311, a variation of the same reply can be found in Y and P's utterances. The words 'don't' and 'take coconut' and 'do coconut' are repeated. The only difference is that while Y uses 'I', P uses an inclusive 'We' – meaning Y and P. The repetitive replies nevertheless are clear responses to C's query and suggest fulfillment in the conversational maxims. This is reaffirmed by C's reply in turn 314 "Oh yeah ah. Okay! Oh!" pointing to an understanding of her friends' explanation.

- (6) 4SL 457 T : How about the place?
 458 S : The place is **nice**.
 459 Y : **Nice**.
 460 K : **Beautiful**.
 461 S : **Very beautiful**. No traffic lights.

In the above example, repetitions of the words 'nice' and 'beautiful' show emphasis that the women are united in their response. Their responses (all fulfilling the maxims) are similar to that of each other's and reflect on the affection for the place in which they are conversing about. This supports Coates' (1996: 203) opinion that "When we respond to what each other say, we say something that matches or mirrors what our friend said".

4.2.1.2 Simultaneous and Overlapping Speech

Evidence of simultaneous and overlapping speech is found throughout the talk of women friends in this research.

Simultaneous speech occurs when more than one speaker speaks at the same time and this is marked as (+) in the transcribed data of this study. When this happens, it is as though the women are so attuned to each other that they are able to synchronize what they say. In this study, most cases of simultaneous utterances are repetitions of more or less the same ideas and are short as depicted in the previously mentioned example (5) above as well as examples (7) and (8) below.

(7) **3ST** 521 S : Free coca cola?
522 F : **Dun wan't.** +
523 N : **Ah don't want.**
524 J : **Ah no thanks.**

(8) **6JA** 519 D : Know, maybe she's trying to have er better
life? You know when the kids have grown
up?
520 S : **YEAH+** () second holiday
521 J : **Yeah**
522 D : Yeah: second honeymoon

Turns 522, 523 and 524 in (7) are repetitions but these utterances occur simultaneously – with all three women speaking approximately at the same time. Here, their answers are united (declining the offer of a free coca cola) and are in fulfillment with Grice's maxims. In (8) S and J's response to D's view was a simultaneous 'Yeah' indicating support and complete understanding. D acknowledges their answer in the next turn.

- (9) 7AL 791 AL : Who's Jay?
 792 WY : **The Jay from** + (laughs) the, the other slut
 man. ((*giggles*))
 793 C : **Oh! Yes!**
 794 WY : Yeah, yeah, yeah.

In (9), AL was confused over who Jay was. WY starts to explain and at the same moment C realized who Jay was and acknowledged WY's explanation (Oh! Yes!). WY adhered to the maxims by supplying information to AL's query and C's fulfillment occurred in the form of acknowledgement and understanding to WY's explanation.

Speech overlaps are regular features in women's conversations. While overlaps may be deemed as disorderly, evidence has found that it does not create disharmony among the interlocutors. Instead, they act as signals of cooperation and joint effort in the conversational floor (Davies, 2003; Coates, 1996). The overlaps in utterances are indicated by brackets [] in this study.

In the extract below, the interlocutors were talking about the status of a mutual friend's marriage. In turn 641, F cuts off S's utterance by inserting a question and S smoothly answers the query without pausing by saying 'then they are trying again...' In 644, F answered L's question before L could complete it and turn 645, L's 'Oh: okay' indicated that she understood and hence, this shows that F has fulfilled the maxims successfully.

- (10) 1F 640 S : She's, she was separated for awhile[
 641 F : **Now?**
 642 S : = And then they are trying again dunnolah
 how
 643 L : How do you **[know?**
 644 F : **Jesslah]**
 645 L : Oh: okay

Example (11) below is yet another instance where overlaps occur. It can be noted that the overlaps do not contribute to any breakdown in communication and in turn 31, Y's response to N's question is a show of fulfillment. This is proof that the conversationalists are so in sync with each other that they can complete each other's utterances coherently and effortlessly as shown in turn 31 and 32, whereby Y's utterance is somewhat completed by S.

- (11) 3ST 28 J : Yeah. You're like your mother [
 29 N : **Is he cute?**
 30 J : = **old already.**]
 31 Y : He's so cute but [
 32 S : **It's just that**] he doesn't like people
 like us.

Thus, overlapping speech is not "seen as competitive" or as a "way of grabbing a turn" (Coates; 1996: 128). As the evidence from the data suggests, these women completely understand each other and these overlaps are their way of co-contributing to the conversations.

4.2.1.3 Laughter

While laughter may not be necessarily categorized as a verbal component in conversations, it is however a sound which is vocalized. Different meanings can be interpreted from the way a laugh sounds – a laugh can occur when one finds something funny or when one is embarrassed etc. In this study, laughter is a recurring feature in all of the seven conversations. This section of the study looks at laughter involving circumstances of the fulfillment of maxims.

(12) 1F 25 F : Ooh, roasted punkin soup
 26 S : Wow
 27 L : Huh? Punkin?
 ((laughter))
 28 F : PUMPKIN]
 29 S : (laughs) Punkin
 30 F : I said PUMPKin all right?

In the extract (12) above, a word mispronounced caused laughter among the women friends. In turn 27, L's seemingly innocent question is followed by laughter. Here, the maxims are fulfilled by way of laughter. F understands the cause of the laughter and laughs along and then goes on to correct her mistake in turn 28. This cause S to laugh again and F defends herself in turn 30 by stressing on the word 'PUMPKin'.

(13) 4SL 414 T : I only know about games eh. (laughs)
 415 S : Toh forever downloading
 ((laughter))
 416 T : Downloading games only.

S's statement in turn 415 is accompanied by laughter. This laughter signals unanimous agreement with S's statement. This example showcases laughter as fulfillment to the maxims of quantity, quality, relevance and manner. Being close friends, these women have the ability to demonstrate their support and attentiveness through laughter.

4.2.1.4 Minimal Responses

Minimal responses have been described as verbal and non-verbal cues that indicate a person's co-participation in conversations (Reid; 1995: 494). Minimal responses reflect its name – these are utterances which are minimal and brief in nature. They are usually made in response to another speaker's utterance. Response types (from the study) which falls into this category are 'Yeah', 'No', 'Uh huh', 'Hmm', 'Ah' and 'Okay'.

- (14) 4SL 768 Y : = yeah so we well we don't have significant others I guess and I guess her mentality is like, like well we have well why should we have one specific day to celebrate the ones we love? Shouldn't everyday be Valentine's day?
- 769 K : **Yeah.**
- 770 T : **Yeah.**
- 771 K : I agree with you.
- 772 Y : **Hmm.**
- 773 S : Yeah, true also. No, but you know what I heard on was it Light FM?
- 774 Y : **Uh huh.**

In (14), within the space of seven turns, four minimal responses ('Yeah', 'Hmm' and 'Uh huh') have been noted. These minimal responses are generated in reply to the questions asked by Y and S in turns 768 and 773. Here, the four maxims are fulfilled in short and brief utterances.

- (15) 5HL 226 K : I think] I know:
- 227 A : = she finds someone else. Apa?
- 228 K : = her. Is it her?
- 229 A : **Bukan.**
[No]
- 230 K : **Ah okay.**

- (16) 6JA 185 S : It's] like your contract with the government kan?
- 186 J : Is it?
- 187 S : You kena tak? [Did you get it?]
- 188 J : **Tak.** [No]

Again in examples (15) and (16), the presence of minimal responses is evident. Both examples show that the interlocutors are comfortable enough with each other to just respond in the briefest of answers and in doing that, achieving fulfillment in the conversational maxims. The answers in (15) 'Bukan' and 'Tak' in (16) both of which are Malay words for 'no' contain adequate information, is truthful, relevant and clear. K's short response in (15), turn 230 signals understanding to the minimal response

preceding it. This further strengthens Reid's (1995: 494) belief that minimal responses are an indication of "participation or, at most agreement" and "must be made in response to another speaker".

4.2.1.5 Hedging

Findings in this study also revealed the use of hedging devices in the talk of women friends. Hale (2004: 105) deems hedges as "any word or phrase that attenuates the force of the utterance by reducing the level of certainty..." and permit interlocutors to "avoid taking responsibility for the reliability of their answers and at the same time not be accused of lying". Example of hedges found in the conversations are 'I think', 'Probably', 'I guess' and 'Maybe'. These hedges were used by the speakers as a "signal that they are not fully adhering to a maxim" (Locastro, 2006: 144). This is a hint, a warning to the hearer to pay attention to the utterance following the hedge.

(17) 3SL 1229 N : **I think** Daniel has scandal with her.

Take example (17) for instance, the utterance "**I think** Daniel has a scandal with her" shows that the speaker felt that Daniel has had a scandal with a girl but isn't quite sure, thus, the addition of 'I think' warns the hearer that N cannot commit fully to what she is saying.

(18) 1F 683 F : She got married right to that guy?
684 S : Ah ya **kut** (.) She was saying like, uh, you were uh like I am like you now and you were like me or something like that because at that time I was like going out with Macy[

(19) 5HL 575 V : John Travolta dengan Kelly Preston?
 576 A : Yes::, yes.
 577 V : I mean wow. John Tra[volta
 578 T : **I heard] right** that, apparently,
 Kelly, Kelly is the second wife. The first
 wife died of cancer.

(20) 7AL 34 WY : Oh okay. (..) But you've met them before
 dinner right?
 35 C : I dunno, **maybe** not
 36 WY : [Uh..kay
 37 C : No, **I don't think** so.

The above examples (18), (19) and (20) exhibit cases in point where hedges are utilized by the speakers in the conversations. Turn 684 in (18) is an example where the Malay language has blended into the utterance. S indicated her uncertainty by using a hedge in Malay. The hedge '*kut*' is a Malay term synonymous with 'I think'.

The hedges '*kut*', 'I heard' and 'maybe not' and 'I don't think so' in the examples signals to the hearers that the speakers are not a 100% certain of their expressed proposition. Hedging devices are then a strategy for speakers to 'fulfill' the maxim of quality and the hearers, being forewarned by the hedges cannot fault the speakers for 'flouting' or 'violating' the maxim. As far as the speaker is concerned, she has cooperated and adhered to the CP by giving sufficient warning in the guise of hedge to alert the hearers of the information given following the hedge.

4.2.2 Quantitative Data: Maxim Fulfillment

The findings in this study have further reinforced Coates' (1996) observations that women do employ a variety of discourse features in their friendly talk. Minimal responses, hedges and repetitions as discussed in the sections above are frequently used

and from the examples given have shown that these features relate to Grice's maxims in cases of fulfillment. Table 4.1 shows the number and frequency of occurrences of these afore mentioned discourse features. Laughter, simultaneous and overlapping speech have not been documented in the number of times they occur as they are difficult to measure in terms of frequency.

Table 4.1: Frequency of discourse features in the fulfillment of maxims

Conversation	Minimal Responses		Hedges		Repetition	
	No. of occurrences	Percentage	No. of occurrences	Percentage	No. of occurrences	Percentage
1F	50	5%	17	1.7%	8	0.8%
2CH	43	5.4%	14	1.8%	8	1%
3ST	74	5.1%	33	2.2%	16	1.1%
4SL	147	12.1%	36	3.0%	17	1.4%
5HL	86	10.1%	20	2.3%	7	0.8%
6JA	89	10.3%	18	2.0%	2	0.2%
7AL	251	16.2%	58	3.8%	22	1.4%

Note: Calculation of percentages – $\frac{\text{Frequency of (feature)}}{\text{Total of turns in conversations}} \times 100\%$

Quantitative findings suggest that minimal responses are used most frequently by the participants in all seven conversations. For example, in 1F minimal responses occurred at least 50 times which takes up about 5% of the conversation. Percentages displayed in Table 4.1 indicate that minimal responses (5%-16.2%) take precedence over the other discourse features employed by the women. Findings elicited from the conversations have suggested that the participants across the seven sets of conversations seem to favor the use of “Yeah” as a minimal response of choice. This is followed by “Uh huh”. Other minimal response examples utilized by the women are “Okay”, “K”, “No”, “Right”, “Ah”, “Hmm” and in Malay “*Tak*” and “*Bukan*”. The minimal responses qualify as fulfilling Grice's maxims as shown in the examples discussed in the qualitative section. The findings then verifies Reid's (1995: 494) and Coates' (1996: 143) notice of minimal

responses used as a reply to another speaker, an indication of agreement to what is said and at the same time represent women's continued presence in the conversational floor.

Maxim fulfillment by hedging is also documented in the findings. Quantitatively, the statistical data in Table 4.1 shows that the frequency of hedge takes up about 1.7% (1F) to 3.8% (7AL) of the conversations. The most commonly used hedging phrase to fulfill the maxim of quality is 'I think'. This is used by the women as a hint to the hearers that the speakers "lack confidence in the truth of the proposition" (Coates; 1996: 154). This is further substantiated by the participants regarding the use of the hedges in the conversations in an interview. Other patterns of hedges employed in the conversations are 'Probably', 'If I'm not mistaken', 'Maybe'. A finding that could add to the literature of hedging is the Malay ('*kut*'). 'Kut' can be used as a hedge and the women in the study managed to incorporate this smoothly into their conversations.

Following the figures displayed in Table 4.1, quantitative data showed that the frequency in which the women used repetition in the conversations is low compared to that of minimal responses and hedging. The percentage of repetition use recorded constitutes a percentage of between 0.4%-1.4% of the conversations. Nevertheless, the trend suggests that repetitions are used as a means for the participants to "reinforce" (Jamaliah Mohd. Ali, 2000: 116) what the other is saying thereby contributing to agreement and support for one another.

4.3 The Non-Fulfillment of Maxims

Although it is usually the case for participants in a talk exchange to heed to the Cooperative Principle; there are circumstances whereby the CP and conversational maxims are not adhered to. Grice himself stated that, "A participant in a talk exchange

may fail to fulfill a maxim in various ways” (1975: 49). This was also observed by researchers such as Attardo (1993) and Brumark (2006) as discussed in Chapter 2.

In the course of my research, findings attest that there are many instances where the interlocutors do not fulfill Grice’s maxims. These are viewed at from the point of flouting where the speaker(s) may quietly violate a maxim (i.e. lying) or by violating which is done out rightly and as such, both the speaker and hearer are aware that a violation has occurred (i.e. sarcastic remarks etc). The non-fulfillment of maxims can occur in circumstances where only one maxim has not been observed or in cases whereby more than one if not all the maxims are not observed.

(21) 1F 6 F : A:ww, my feet hur:ts like hell.
7 L : **What we gonna eat?**

The above is an example of the non-fulfillment of the maxim of relevance by way of violation. F was lamenting over her feet which was in pain. L, instead of sympathizing with F ignores her lament and sharply and blatantly diverts the conversation towards another topic. This is a direct flouting of the maxim of relevance as it indicates non-relevance of L’s utterance to that of F’s.

(22) 3ST 266 F : Why? Can you give us a reason?
267 S : Can YOU give me a reason why you
wanted me to like him?
268 F : You ah? I think he’s [kind of
269 Y : He’s kind], gentleman,
maybe.
270 N : Handsome?
271 J : Ah.
272 Y : **Horses?**
((laughter))
273 J : Yeah. Horses.
274 S : **Ma, ma?**
275 N : **Ma, ma!**
276 Y : **Ma, Ma::!**
277 F : **Ma.**
278 S : I don’t know, I just, I don’t like him.

Another example of maxim non-fulfillment is shown in example (22) above. The conversation in progress is about a guy one of the participants is interested in. The topic proceeds until in turn 272 where Y, for no reason at all switches topic to that of horses. Again, the relevance of the conversation appears to be broken as with the manner maxim as the conversation seemed to have no order or direction at this point. Even so, this does not break the rhythm of the conversation as the other women joined in the charade, picking up the joke and saying ‘*Ma*’ which in Mandarin means horses. Perhaps this could be the result of the Mandarin class they were taking. Then, in turn 278, the topic which was left off in turn 272 resumes as if the ‘interruption’ did not occur.

- (23) 3ST 96 F : Sham::il kan?
 97 S : **Shamil? Who’s Shamil? I don’t know any Shamil here.**
 98 J : Ah [the
 99 N : Sha, Shamil?
 100 J : = what ah]
 101 S : **Who I don’t know. Okay, change the topic.**

In (23), earlier in the same conversation as shown in (22), the friends were goading S into talking about a boy. In turn 97, S flouts the maxim of quality by pretending not to know who they were talking about. At the same time, the maxims on quantity (evading the issue with a question), relevance and manner (answering a question with a question) have been violated. Thus, in the above case, all manner of maxims were not observed. S’s refusal to divulge any information is demonstrated again in turn 101 where she deflects the queries by saying “...Okay change the topic”.

- (24) 4SL 1026 S : Yeah. But we actually really have to go. Eh whatlah I think the steamboat should be on lah at least. Huh?
 1027 Y : Yeah.
 1028 T : **Let’s go for a steamboat one day.**

The participants were earlier in discussion about going for steamboat that night. Before going their separate ways, S brought the matter up again as seen in extract (24). Turn 1028 showed T not committing to a definite answer. Instead of confirming a specific day, she has remained vague saying ‘one day’ instead of a more definite ‘afterwards’ or ‘tonight’. The maxims of quantity (insufficient information) and manner (ambiguous answer) have not been fulfilled.

4.3.1 Indirectness and Implicature

The corpus of data analyzed displayed evidence of a connection between indirectness and implicature. When indirect utterances are given, evidence suggests that there is usually a violation of at least a maxim. Hearers are then to assume that the locution of the utterance differs from that of its illocutionary force; what is said is not what is implied (Finegan; 2004: 303).

The example below demonstrates how indirectness is deciphered in conversations among friends.

- (25) 2CH 166 Y : So, she’s got bugs bunny teeth. Cut her lips. Ahh, bleeding, from the nose bleeding. () on the floor. Chaos all over the place.() Chaos over the place. Like some crazy woman on the part of the road know – no wonder nobody help me. I look like some crazy woman. (laughs)
- 167 P : Her driver didn’t do anything?
- 168 Y : **She um, quite far already.**
- 169 P : Oh.

Y is in the midst of telling a story of how her colleague had fallen on the curbside of the road. Notice the answer to P’s question in turn 168. Y has delayed the answer with an ‘um’ as if she’s not quite sure if the driver did anything and then proceeds to say ‘quite

far already'. P then has to work out the intended meaning and connecting the pieces together – that Y's colleague, being quite far away from the driver meant that the driver could not do anything to help her. Here, the maxim of manner and quantity is not adhered to. A simple 'No' from Y would have sufficed. However, there appears not to be a halt or awkward pause in the conversation as P's preceding utterance 'Oh' indicates understanding of Y's explanation.

- (26) 4SL 305 Y : We could take one of you know Inuk's
 extras [(laughs)
 306 K : Yeah
 307 T : So many]
 308 Y : She has like five right?
 309 S : **For Christmas you better ask her. She's
 like Santa Claus like that**
 ((laughter))

This extract (26) depicts a session where the interlocutors are talking about Inuk's many 'boyfriends'. Instead of giving a direct 'Yes' or 'No' answer to Y's question in turn 308, S's went to the more indirect route. Her comparison of Inuk and Santa Claus is an insinuation to her friends that yes, Inuk has many boyfriends and that she could well afford to 'give' them to her friends in the way Santa gives out his presents. Here the maxims of quantity, relevance and manner have not been fulfilled. However, the other women understood that an implicature in the form of a metaphor has been generated and they easily worked out the meaning by way of contextual and shared knowledge. This can be seen in the laughter (a signal of understanding) that ensued after S's statement.

- (27) 6JA 101 S : Wanna have some?
 102 J : **Full already.**
 103 D : No, thanks.

In (27), S's order of steak had arrived and she offered her friends a taste (turn 101). J, declared that she is 'full already' (implicature generated), therefore indirectly declining the offer (non-fulfilling the maxim of manner: be direct/ brief). This can be compared to D's direct answer 'No' which contributes to the fulfillment of maxims.

4.3.2 Pragmatic Effects of Non-Fulfillment

The study of Brumark's (2006) non-observance of Gricean maxims in family dinner table talk, puts forth the evidence of what she terms as pragmatic effects that occur due to the non-fulfillment of maxims. Brumark (2006) observed that "the pragmatic effects of more indirect and less transparent non-observations could appear as joking (generally supposed to be humorous), irony (whether humorous or not), or even sarcasm" (2006: 1222).

In this study, findings corroborate with that of Brumark's (2006), that pragmatic effects indeed exist and can be seen in the guise of humor (by way of joking, teasing), sarcasm and irony and through echoic utterances in the seven conversations of Malaysian women friends.

4.3.2.1 Humor

Humor and laughter seemed to be very much a fixture in the conversational floor of women's talk. While laughter has been discussed as a strategy in women's talk that resulted in the fulfillment of maxims, in this section, laughter is scrutinized in terms of non-fulfillment as a result of the pragmatic effects of humor. Humor from the aspect of non-fulfillment is found to most often occur in the context of friendly banter such as

teasing, joking or in witty remarks between the women friends. Says Crawford (1989: 160) as cited in Hay (2000: 714) of women's humor:

“[I]t involves not only creative spontaneity but connectedness and compassion; it invites self-disclosure and reciprocal sharing of perspectives; it is dependent on the immediate social context.”

Certainly, the women in the conversations were able to conjure atmospheres of togetherness and in many instances their teasing and joking are created from the immediate context; either as a result something that have happened or something said and is very much spontaneous in nature.

- (28) 1F 236 F : Don't worry Jon, Jon [()] for what's it worth
you're entitled to whatever.
237 S : Okay (.) ((laughter)) (...) **Look at her face,**
she like comot right ((laughs))
238 F : **Excuse me?** (laughs) **I comot?** ((laughter))
()

In (28), the participants were in the midst of talking about their relationships with men when S suddenly deviates from the topic and diverts her attention to F. Laughter erupts because S's noticed that F's face is as she says 'comot' (Malay word for smudged). This is a result of situational humor and this deviation of topic compromised the maxim of relevance. F in turn 238 echoes S's utterance in the tone of disbelief and more laughter ensues.

- (29) 6JA 333 J : Then she got married to the same guy also er,
then she never find her other choices.
334 D : She go out faster?
335 J : (laughs) **Look at her wrinkle.** ((laughter))
Eh..it's truelah because when we are I think,
that's what I realiselah once you're above 30

Another case of non-fulfillment which is a result of teasing due to situational action (in this case wrinkling of face) can be seen in (29). D's question in turn 334, was left unanswered (thereby violating the maxim of relevance) as a result of J teasing her friend who was making faces 'Look at her wrinkle'. This builds humor and causes laughter.

- (30) 3ST 123 S : I know he's smart.
124 J : **I see dead people.**
((laughter))
125 Y : Yes, you see dead people. **((laughter))**
126 S : I think Shamil he's the kind of dead people
also.
127 F : Dead people?
128 S : I never saw him smile ever.

The example in extract (30) above is a case of a dry joke. The women were in a discussion about a guy (Shamil) whom they were acquainted with. J's utterance 'I see dead people' has no connection to the prior sentence (causing non-adherence to the relevance and manner maxim). However, the utterance injected humor and causes the friends to laugh as 'reading between the lines' they realized that it was a line from the movie 'Sixth Sense'. S (turn 126) then smoothly ties it into the topic by comparing Shamil to dead people and explained why in turn 128. Without shared knowledge and background knowledge, the other participants would have never made a connection to J's utterance and that might have resulted in a halt in the conversation.

The women are talking about guys and zodiac signs.

- (31) 5HL 755 V : Ahem, ahem, he's from what? He's what
zodiac?
756 T : **Ahem, ahem** (laughs)
757 K : My god, LEO!
758 T : Leo!
759 V : Oh my god! Leo!
((laughter))

In turn 755, in the above extract, V asks her friend what zodiac sign does this person 'he' have. T answers in the next turn by merely clearing her throat 'Ahem, ahem' in a knowing tone. Here, the maxim of quantity (too little information) and manner (ambiguity) have been violated. T was in fact giving her answer in the form of a teasing hint. K (turn 757) manages to capture the implication of the hint. This shows that the women have sufficient knowledge about each other and can interpret hints without it being overtly uttered. T acknowledges by repeating K's utterance. The friends find the situation hilarious and laughter erupts.

In the examples of humor whether by teasing or joking, it can be noticed that these situations are almost always succeeded by laughter. Shared knowledge and understanding of the situation context (or being quick on the uptake) plays a large role in the creation of humor in these conversations. As Hay (2000: 718) believes; "Many instances of humor serve to create solidarity within the group or between particular members of the group". The examples elicited further strengthens Hay's viewpoint that "teasing is not always antagonistic, but rather can function to express solidarity and rapport".

4.3.2.2 Sarcasm/Irony

- (32) 1F 1 F : Let's talk about sex. (#)
 2 L : **Ye:ah, right.**
 3 F : Eh nice, creative ah
 4 L : **Yeap +**
 5 S : **W::ow ! (#)**
 6 F : A:ww my feet hurts like hell.

By merely reading the transcribed extract above, one would think of the locution in turns 2, 4 and 5 as words of agreement to the utterance preceding them. However, these

are in actual fact sarcastic responses disguised in the form of minimal responses. Usually, sarcastic utterances can be distinguished from the difference of tone or pitch and differs from that of utter agreement. By using the response ‘Ye:ah, right’, L is projecting a layered meaning, which is made clear by the process of deciphering the implicature generated (this done through tone of voice as well as shared history with the other participants). F understands that the topic initiated is not well received by her friends and defends her choice in turn 3. Yet again, the defense is shot down by L’s sarcastic ‘Yeap’ and S’s mock show of enthusiasm ‘Wow’. These sarcastic remarks are non-fulfillments as they are obscure in expression (manner) and quality (expression is opposite of the truth). Hence, L and S in uttering the affirmative are really projecting the opposite meaning – that they are not interested in the topic.

A distinction should be pointed here that in the case of minimal responses in Coates’ (1996: 145) viewpoint, they are generally regarded as “maintenance of a collaborative floor” and an indication of solidarity and support for and by the women. Nevertheless, in the case of sarcasm and indirectness Svennevig (1999: 106), states that the minimal form of a response can work as a block to the advancement of a topic or as an initiation of topic closure as portrayed in example (32) above.

In extract (33) below, the women were talking about going somewhere for a short break. S suggested Cameron (a hill resort in Malaysia). This suggestion was vehemently declined by Y and K. The question ‘Again?’ (turn 450 and 451) is an indirect declination and somewhat slightly sarcastic. It implies that perhaps the women have been to Cameron Highlands one too many times. This results in the violation of the maxim of manner (being indirect, unclear) and suggests that Y and K are not excited about the trip, rather it is an attempt to say, ‘No, we don’t want to go’ or ‘We have gone

to many times already'. This implied notion is made clear in D's straightforward 'Don't want' which effectively rejects the suggestion.

(33) 4SL 447 S : No, no, we want to go to East Coast.
448 Y : East Coast.
449 S : (#) Camerons only lah.
450 Y : **Again?**
451 K : **Again?**
452 D : Don't want, don't want, don't want.

(34) 7AL 142 AL : They said 'No, no, no. We, we don't want to take advantage of her'. Blah, blah, blah.
143 WY : **YEAH right.**
144 AL : **Exactly** and they forget all about booking it until, until Saturday, the day before you know and they call MK Taxi, MK Taxi said sor. Ah they tried to arrange but sorry it's full, it's too full.

Example (34) is similar to the justification in example (32), that by saying 'YEAH right' (with a stress in 'yeah') WY disbelieves the story told by AL and this is verified in AL's next utterance 'Exactly', indicating that AL herself agrees with WY's remark.

Grice (1975) perceives sarcasms and ironies as blatant violations of the maxim of quality (do not say what you believe to be false). According to Brumack (2006: 1217), "Whether intended or not, irony often implies criticism and is regularly used, among other things, to indirectly draw people's attention to some lack or error, known to both addressor and addressee".

(35) 1F 95 F : Coffee's bad you know
96 L : **Smoking's bad**
97 F : I don't, I don't smoke.
98 L : **Smoking's BAD.**
99 F : **I do NOT smoke. Do you see me smoke? No?**
100 L : Yea:
101 S : You quit? Wo::h. ()
102 F : I quitted. (laughs)
103 L : Yeah right. (.)

Example (35) demonstrates what Brumark (2006) is trying to say. The participants are in the midst of an ongoing topic about coffee S and L had ordered. F advised them that coffee was not good for health. L's sarcastic retort in turn 96 violates the maxim of relevance. F latched on to the underlying meaning by blatantly violating the maxim of quality ('I don't smoke'). L repeats her utterance from turn 96 but this time stresses on the word 'BAD'. This is where shared knowledge or intimate knowledge of one another comes into play – L knows of S's smoking habit and finds F's advice in turn 95 ironic. Hence, L's answer to F's advice is simply stating that 'Well, you smoke, isn't that bad as well?'. F again denies her smoking habit in turn 99 (failing to fulfill the quality maxim) and judging by L's mock reply of agreement 'Yea::', she knows that F is not stating the truth. A contrast could be seen in the next turn - S's (who is not sure of F's smoking status) query in turn 101. S seems to believe and is impressed by F's quitting (Wo::h). Turn 102, shows F flouting the maxim of quality again (to S) trying to reinstate that her smoking days are over. L's sarcastic 'Yeah right' in the next turn proves that F's is contrary to the truth.

- (36) 2CH 502 P : Sorry huh, my mother don't want all
that. She only wants MP3 player, so she
can listen to her lagu keling!
503 C : **Speak louderlah Sham.** (laughs)
((laughter))

In (36), P is describing what her mother wants and got carried away by talking rather loudly. Her utterance in turn 502 ends with the word '*lagu keling*' which in the Malaysian context is taken to mean Indian (*keling*) songs (*lagu*). However, the word '*keling*' is viewed by many as a derogatory term. So C, in telling P to 'Speak louderlah Sham' basically means the opposite that is indirectly warning P to 'keep her voice down' as they were in public place. The laughter that followed is an indication that the

other women have caught on to the actual meaning of C's statement. This ironical cum sarcastic statement resulted in a flout of the maxim of quality.

4.3.2.3 Echoic Use

Echoic use is a term comprehensively used in Sperber and Wilson's (1986) relevance theory. It is an utterance which "may be interpretively use to (meta) represent another utterance or thought that it resembles in content" (Sperber & Wilson; 2004). Echoic use is shown in extract (37). Y was talking about her colleague who due to an unfortunate incident had a face like a '*hanuman*' (ugly animal face).

- (37) 2CH 140 Y : My colleague Irene [
141 C : Mengenyangkan. Lemak.
142 Y : = the face: **like hanuman**.
143 C : **Why?**
144 P : (laughs)
145 C : **Why like hanuman?**
146 Y : She fell down.

The word 'like *hanuman*' is echoed by C because her question in 143 was unanswered (hence the maxim of relevance and manner unobserved). Taking a guess that perhaps her friend Y either did not understand her question ('Why?') or may not have heard it, C repeats the question, this time by echoing the word used by her friend in turn 142. This resulted in her query being attended to.

In (38) below, the women friends were talking about the tsunami which hit parts of Asia in 2004. The year 2004 is echoed several times as there was some confusion of the year it happened. D and T appear confused and vague about the year (vague and not direct; maxim of manner compromised) and the echoic use of 'thousand and four' and 2004 were employed by S and Y to clarify the matter.

(38) 4SL 25 S : **Two thousand** and
 26 Y : **Two thousand four**
 27 D : Nolah
 28 K : Yeah.
 29 T : When was tsunami?
 30 D : So fast, already [four years?
 31 S : Tsunami **2004**]
 32 Y : Five years
 33 K : Five years
 34 D : Not 2001?
 35 S : No, no, no. **Two thousand and four.**

In (39) below, K professed that she was dumped by a guy. This was followed by horrified and appropriate simultaneous response by A and T. K showed her agreement by uttering ‘Tell me about it’. This is then taken up by an intrigued A – by echoing K’s utterance in the attempt to ‘force’ K to talk about her being dumped. K deflects the issue by pretending to cough (turn 173) and then in turn 176 by giving a non-committal statement instead of directly saying ‘No’. This sees the manner maxim (being vague and not being direct) unfulfilled

(39) 5HL 166 K : Some work, some didn’t even try. He’s
 the one that dumped me.
 167 A : Oh my god.+
 168 T :
 169 K : **Tell me about it.**
 170 V : Yeah. (laughs)
 171 A : Okay. **Tell me about it.**
 ((laughter))
 172 A : **Tell, tell-lah!**
 173 K : ((*coughs*)) Uhh
 174 A : No, I really want you to **tell me about**
it.
 175 T : (laughs) Hah.
 176 K : It’s just a hypothetical statement.

Although similar to that of repetition, echoic use here is to be distinguished from the former as unlike repetition which results in support and reinforcement of agreement;

participants employ echoic use in the event of puzzlement or intrigue and also to clarify matters.

4.3.3 Quantitative Data: Pragmatic Effects of Non-Fulfillment

Table 4.2: Frequency of pragmatic effects in the event of non-fulfillment

Conversation	Humor		Sarcasm/ Irony		Echoic Use	
	No. of occurrences	Percentage	No. of occurrences	Percentage	No. of occurrences	Percentage
1F	36	3.6%	15	1.5%	13	1.3%
2CH	19	2.4%	12	1.5%	10	1.2%
3ST	21	1.4%	20	1.4%	20	1.4%
4SL	20	1.6%	10	0.8%	6	0.5%
5HL	19	2.2%	8	0.9%	3	0.4%
6JA	18	2.0%	7	0.8%	7	0.8%
7AL	21	1.4%	15	0.9%	10	0.6%

Note: Calculation of percentage: $\frac{\text{No. of occurrences of effects}}{\text{Total turns in conversation}} \times 100$

From the table above, it is clear that humor (be it teasing or joking) have the highest frequency of occurrence in the conversations of women friends. This effect constitutes 1.4% - 3.6% of the conversations. As revealed in the qualitative discussion, humor can occur as a result of a situational happening as well as shared knowledge of an event or happening in the women's lives.

In cases where sarcasm and irony is detected, the frequency of use is somewhat similar across the conversations taking up 0.8%-1.5% of the conversations. While patterns of sarcasm and irony differ in different conversations, one similarity that is salient is the favorable use of "Yeah, right" as a sarcastic remark. By appearing to agree, the speaker is actually stating the opposite. This kind of reply generates implicatures which in turn results in the non-fulfillment of maxims.

The use of echoic utterances is minimal compared to that of humor, taking up only between 0.4%-1.3% of the conversations. As the qualitative data has illustrated,

participants in the conversations resort to echoic use when intrigued, in doubt or when there is a need to clarify something which has been said.

4.4 Other Findings: The Malaysian Influence

Although the conversations recorded are in English, the participants are more appropriately described as speaking ‘Manglish’ – a ‘Malaysianized’ version of English and one which is often used in informal everyday discourse of the Malaysians. This is evidence that the influence of the multi-cultural facets and languages (also dialects) of Malaysia has fused into the talk of these women friends.

4.4.1 Code-Switching

In chapter 2, some insights have been given of the language situation in Malaysia. Most Malaysians are bilingual; some even trilingual and hence are able to speak more than one language. This ability has led to the phenomenon of code-switching, “...a process of switching from one language to another, either within a single utterance or throughout an entire conversation” (Kuang, 2006: 64).

(40) 1F 362 S : The **pengetua] marah** me know. [()] He said you **nak buat things like this nak ah suka suka you pergi bukak persatuan** Foo Chow sendiri. I was [like

Translation: The principle scolded me know. [()]. He said you want to do things like this on your own whim, you go and open a Foo Chow association yourself. I was [like

363 L : Anyway,] it’s like for school wat. I mean kids should have fun isn’t it? ()

367 S : Uh () wow nice () So we wentlah. But it was so much fun ()

In (40), S was telling her friends about how she had taken her students for a competition in which they were awarded a certificate. However, the principle was not pleased because certain protocols were not followed. L then cuts S off in mid-sentence (turn 363) which compromised the manner maxim of being orderly. Although S, having code-switch within her utterance, L appeared not to be threatened by the switch and was comfortable enough to interrupt her friend. It can be observed as well that S, being cut off in mid-sentence was not flustered and was able to continue the conversation without any awkward pause or silence.

Another example of code-switching is observed in example (41). P's utterance translated would mean 'He's from Penang right?'. The word '*Mari*' is Malay in origin meaning 'come' whereas '*fella*' means 'fellow'. C's minimal response "Ah" indicates the affirmative and simultaneously fulfills the conversational maxims.

(41) 2CH 3 C : I said Indians don't like crabsticks.
 4 P : **Penang mari fella ah?**
 5 C : Ah.
 6 Y : (laughs) Ah.

(42) 7AL 296 AL : = yeah, he yeah was saying that CC?
 297 WY : Ah huh.
 298 C : Who's CC?
 299 WY : Ah okay.
 300 AL : = was ah, was ah on his way towards '**kau-ing**' her, '**kau-ing**' our Ms. C.
 301 WY : Really?
 302 AL : Yeah.
 303 WY : Our Blossom.
 304 AL : Yeah, the body language was '**kau-ing**' her but his mind wasn't too sure whether or not he wants to '**kau**' her or not [
 305 C : Oh.

The extract (42) above, illustrates the code-switching of a word. The word ‘*kau*’ is Cantonese loosely meaning ‘to woo’ or ‘to flirt’. AL was relating an incident where CC was attempting to ‘*kau*’ C. The word is repeated in two different turns. It can be seen that the women in the conversation did not have a problem understanding the word ‘*kau*’. When asked why the word was used, AL stated that it had more impact to the story than if she were to use the word ‘woo’ or ‘flirt’. She further stated that if she had to use an English word to replace it, it would be the word ‘tackle’ as it would be closer in meaning to the word ‘*kau*’. In fact, the word tackle was also used in another conversation.

In (43) below, T has code-switched to Malay ‘try to *mengorat*’. This Malay word is similar to ‘*kau*’ in example (42). V in turn 238 offered the Manglish equivalent to T’s word. T understands and substitutes the word in her story.

- (43) 5HL 235 T : I have a friend who really, this, this, this
friend is a Indian guy who actually goes,
think I told you before. He like, he like[
236 A : Oh.]
237 T : = try to **mengorat** ((laughter))
238 V : **Tackle.**
239 T : **Tackle**, all the, all the girls that are
in chinese societylah. All the chinese
girls I think he already **tackle** before
already. So finally ah he, he managed to
tackle this Indian girl. This Indian girl
also likes him.
240 A : Hmm.

The participants explained (when consulted) that ‘*kau*’, ‘*mengorat*’ and ‘tackle’ are more synonymous in meaning than the actual English words ‘to woo’ and ‘to flirt’. The word ‘tackle’ though it may be an English word is used by the Malaysian women in another sense - ‘To tackle a problem’ means to look into the problem while ‘to tackle a girl’ (in Malaysian English) is basically to flirt or woo her. Upon reflection, the code-

switch of the words ‘*kau*’ and ‘*mengorat*’ and the Manglish use of the word ‘tackle’ substantiates David’s (1992) explanation that speakers, code-switch “to maintain originality of content” and to deliver the desired impact on the audience. The code-switching in examples (42) and (43) did not cause conversational halt as the speakers being able to fathom the code-switches still managed to fulfill the maxims.

4.4.2 Tag Questions

It was found that the women participants employed questioning techniques in their conversations which were somewhat unique and deemed to be a unique pattern of Malaysian English.

4.4.2.1 “....or not?”

Findings indicate a pattern of tag questions used by the Malaysian women in their talk. Usual patterns of question tags are ‘isn’t it?’, ‘hasn’t it?’ etc. One type of tag question that seemed to occur in the conversations is ‘*or not?*’ and according to Jamaliah Mohd. Ali (2000: 27) is very much a feature of Malaysian English.

(44) 1F 72 F : Ah, just water please for me for now. Ice
water. (...) () You guys **want cake or not?**
73 L : I thought your ordered
74 F : You guys **want or not?**
75 L : Yeahlah

(45) 4SL 293 S : Have you **observed or not**] when you,
you hav, have friendslah. Let’s say these
guys right?
294 Y : Uh huh

The above examples (44) and (45) depict cases where the tag questions ‘*or not?*’ are used and how it ties in with the fulfillment and non-fulfillment of maxims. Jamaliah Mohd. Ali (2000: 27) asserts that tag questions are a “common and simple way of inviting affirmation”. In (44), L has violated the maxim of manner as she did not answer directly. F repeats her question ‘You guys **want or not?**’. This time the maxims are fulfilled as L gives the affirmative ‘Yeahlah’ directly. This is the same in (45). Y’s answer ‘Uh huh’ displays agreement to S’ query ‘Have you **observed or not...?**’. The question ‘or not’ seem to suggest that the hearer is given a choice of answer either in affirmative or negative.

The next example illustrates another instance where ‘or not?’ is used.

- (46) 2CH 162 Y : = it’s all: her husband’s fault. This is how she starts ‘All Chong’s fault, it’s all her, his fault you know. **You know why or not?**’ Because ah, yesterday was her leave, her birthday so nice. Next day husband drops her off (*voice high pitched*) ‘Chong where’s my laptop?’ ‘I didn’t pack it, I thought you took it’ ‘How can you not bring my laptop, Chong:.. ((laughter)) We were away for one weekend’ Blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. () what? Seven something in the morning? Before eightlah. Calls the son, ‘Son, your father left my laptop there, YOUR father left my laptop there. I need it blah, blah, blah. So okay, later she needs to got out and collect something. ‘So you take it to your office, I come pick it uplah on my way back’. So okay fine. Once the driver pulls up to the side of the road, she gets out, she totally misses the curb this side.
- 163 C : Aiyoh.

In extract (46) Y utilizes the tag question “or not?” – ‘You know **why or not?**’ but did not wait for a reply from her friends and goes on to give a lengthy description of what had happened to her colleague. Here she failed to fulfill the maxims of relevance (in asking a question wait for an answer), manner (be orderly) and quantity (do not say

more than what is required). Nevertheless, her friends are still attentive and the response in turn 163 'Aiyoh' (a blend of Malay and Chinese akin to 'My goodness') signals to Y that they are listening and still present on the conversational floor.

4.4.2.2 *Kan?*

Another form of questioning which the participants resort to is '*kan?*'. Kow (1995) states that "The word *kan* is an abbreviated form of the Malay word *bukan* which can function as a question tag". '*Kan*' generally appears right at the end of an utterance (see example 47 and 48). However, in this study it is also found to appear right at the beginning of an utterance (see examples 49 and 50). Roughly translated, it is similar to the use of 'right?' at the end of a question in informal conversations. In the extracts below, '*kan*' is employed by the women as a method of eliciting an agreement and support from the hearers.

(47) 3ST 615 S : Football.
616 J : Maybe he wants to look tough, **kan?**
617 S : He doesn't look tough.

(48) 4SL 862 Y : Exactly.
863 S : A very good boyfriend **kan?**
864 Y : Yeah.

In (47), J is trying to get her friends to agree with her but S refutes her statement by disagreeing indirectly 'He doesn't look tough' – this creates non-fulfillments in the maxims of quantity (S could have just said 'No') and manner (be direct). The next example (48) illustrates an instance where Grice's maxims were aptly fulfilled. The

work of *'kan'* in turn 863 is used to elicit an affirmative response, in which Y dutifully adheres to.

- (49) 1F 511 S : I was thinking about] it masa Steve kerja kat
Singapore then I thought kerja kat
Singapore you become like this,like this,
like this then so okaylah
512 L : I think we live our life too [carefully
513 S : **Kan?**] Malas alreadylah
514 L : Me too

- (50) 5HL 835 V : Didn't. Yeah.
836 T : As long as she's coming to Malaysia, she
don't care anymore.
837 K : **Kan**, like Elaine tadi?
838 V : Like you know.

Example (49) and (50) are more uncommon occurrences of *'kan'* – which appears at the beginning of an utterance. The use of *'kan'* in (49) is employed by S as an agreement to L's preceding statement that they live their lives too carefully where as in (50), it is used to prompt an agreement from V. V however teases K by questioning K's knowledge of Elaine by saying, 'Like you know' (her so well). Here V's response is indirect and somewhat vague (hence resulting in non-fulfillment)

4.4.3 The *'lah'* particle

One very prominent aspect of Malaysian English is the use of the *'lah'* particle in conversations. This colloquial feature is used informally and is considered a relaxed form of speech. As established in Chapter 2, *'lah'* is used for many reasons – from “signaling intimacy” to “emphasizing support” to “avoiding conflicts” (Jamaliah Mohd. Ali; 2000: 28).

4.5 Conclusion

This area of research from the perspective of fulfillment and non-fulfillment of maxims in the conversations of Malaysian women friends is one where very little work/ research has been done on. Therefore, the results of findings from this study is limited in terms of the body of work in which it can be compared to.

Nevertheless, patterns indicate that in conversations among these women friends, fulfillment and non-fulfillment of Grice's maxims do occur. Qualitative analysis supported by quantitative data suggests that in maxim fulfillment, the women employed discourse features such as minimal responses, hedging, repetition, laughter and simultaneous/ overlapping speeches. Where non-fulfillment is concerned, findings indicated similarity with Brumark's (2006) observation that violation and flouting of maxims appear in the form of pragmatic effects such as humor, sarcasm and irony and echoic use. Statistical data confirms that humor via teasing and joking plays a more prominent role than that of sarcasm and irony or echoic use in maxim non-fulfillment.

Features of Malaysian English and the influence and melding of the many cultures, races and religion are evident in the conversations. What is interesting is that the use of Malaysian words and Manglish (code-switches, word blending etc) did not appear to disrupt the flow of the conversations and that these influences can contribute towards fulfillment as well as non-fulfillment in Grice's maxims.