

CHAPTER 3

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Introduction

A theoretical framework is the basis for any research work. In the context of looking at the nature of online chatting that has its own structure, the theoretical framework used for the purpose of making analysis is drawn from the works of Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson (1974) which focus on how conversations are structured. This study will focus on other aspects of conversational analysis although the data is extracted from online chat rooms. To proceed with this chapter, the section below will highlight the use of specific terms used in the context of this study.

3.2 Definitions of terms and concepts

Due to the many variations of interpretations of key terms used by different researchers in different studies, the researcher includes a section to define what would be some of the commonly used terms.

3.2.1 Internet-Based Communication

An Internet-based communication is one type of communication that shares several similarities between spoken and written communication. By communication, it is meant an exchange of message between two parties and the exchange here clearly refers to that which occurs in the context of the internet

with mediation characteristics that follow the server model for information exchange and regulations. The content can be encoded and decoded by using a variety of media types (text, graphics, sound).

3.2.2 Mediated

Mediation refers to the process of intervening or coming between online chatting sequences. The mediated message is created and presented via the chat rooms and in IRC, the users participate spontaneously in real-time text exchange.

3.2.3 Client

A client is any entity that is connected to a server. One client is distinguished from another client through a unique nickname that carries a maximum of (9) characters. In most instances, users have the liberty to choose a constant nickname although theoretically, each time they are connected to the server they can opt for any nickname they prefer. An example that depicts how a client is connected to a server with a certain nickname is given. In this example, a client is referred to as 'Little India'.

In addition to creating a nickname for self-use, all servers must also contain the following information about the client and this includes the client's real name and the host that the client is running on in addition to a username which the client appears to use as a host.

3.2.4 The Internet Server

In online chat rooms, a server serves as the backbone of the IRC, providing a point to which a client may be able to connect so that he/she can talk to the others. In addition, a server also serves as a point for other servers to connect to so that they can form an IRC network. The only network configuration that is permissible to the IRC servers is that of the spanning tree where each server acts as a central node for the rest of the net it sees.

3.2.5 Computer Network

The term computer network in internet is the relationship among computers that follow the server-server model that unifies characteristics where both the client i.e. the user and the *www* server collaborate to provide information.

A computer network consists of more than one server and terminal where digital information can be sent from any terminal to any other terminal within the same network. For instance, IRC networks such as (Eunet, IRC net, Undernet, Efnet, etc.) have a few servers and users and they share the same characteristics. An analogy for this would be people in the same room talking and listening to each other. Nevertheless, participants can exchange information privately. Anyone can leave a room to join a new conversation outside the room. It is also possible for one user to invite other users from another room into this conversation.

3.2.6 Channel

The use of the term ‘channel’ is linked to how Werry (1996) terms it, as a ‘small scale electronic communities’. This is because a channel enables users to create an infinite number of ‘chat rooms’ where conversations can take place. Thus, joining a conversation means joining one of the thousands of existing channels.

A channel cannot exist without any users on it. The name of each channel is initiated with a ‘#’ sign, and is followed by the number of channels. Amongst the popular ones are *#msn*, *#mamak*, *#bangsar*, *#kakilang*, and *#indian*. This study analyzes extracts from the *#msn* and *#mamak* channels for both English and Malay extracts.

3.2.7 Regulated Chat Room Participants

When a person signs up to participate in IRC the server will notify the other participants from the other end and similarly when the user quits. The given status of participants in chat room appears automatically. This information is indicated by three asterisks.

Examples:

1. *** tomato (Daniel @ brk-21-117....) has joined

11. *** kenny (kenny @) has left #mamak

The format of current status of participants is as shown below.

nickname I entry address I status I name.

3.2.8 Experienced Users

Experienced users are those who are familiar with the IRC language conventions.

3.2.9 Newbies

Newbies are users of the IRC, who have used the IRC less than two hours in a session and less than two years at a time. They usually have problems in deciphering the language conventions during interaction.

3.2.10 Convention

The term convention refers to the emoticon and typographic features like punctuations, spelling, capitalization and other markers which are used during online chats.

3.2.11 Emoticons

They are simple strings of alphanumeric characters and punctuation symbols which symbolize facial expressions or emoticons that characterize the user.

For example, ☺ which means a smile or a feeling of happiness, ☹ which means a frown or a feeling of sadness etc. (Refer to the Appendix A for a list of different emoticons and their meanings).

3.2.12 Typographical Features

Typographical features refer to the capitalization, spelling and punctuation style used by the Malaysian IRC participants.

3.2.13 Eccentric Spellings

Eccentric spelling is a term used by Reid (1996) who uses it to refer to extended spelling forms which has communicative purpose.

3.2.14 Flooding

The term is used to mean 'ending too many lines' of (often predicted) text at the same time thus blocking the flow of electronic conversation on a channel.

3.2.15 Advertising

The term used includes inviting people to join other channels or visit others on the internet.

3.2.16 Begging or OP-begging

This term refers to asking for so called channel-operator rights. A channel operator (also called as chanelop or op) has some social rights to keep control over the channel and other users. The first person to create a new channel automatically becomes the operator, and in turn can give similar rights to others who subsequently enter the channel. The right of a channel operator include inter alias by setting channel properties (e.g. invite-only, mediate, kick people out, or ban) users out of the channel (Wauchope, 1997).

3.2.17 No caps

The term here means 'no capitalization', referring to the use of capitalized characters (e.g. HELLO!) interpreted as shouting on CMC.

3.2.18 Anonymity

Chat rooms are anonymous. In chat rooms, participants provide minimum information; the only information about a participant in a chat room is the name they have chosen for themselves. The name may sometimes hint at the sex of the user, e.g. Stargirl, Countess etc all of which are female names while on the other hand, names like Moonlighting, Le-TORQE, My-5thLUV, Trippal - may indicate male names.

Choosing a pseudonym in a nickname which indicates the opposite sex or neutral gender is called gender masking. Similarly, age race and ethnical community, socioeconomic status, profession or simple looks cannot be guessed as in direct personal contact. In face-to-face meetings, colour of skin, accent, clothes and behavior provide clues that enable us to some degree to 'categorize' the other person. In chat rooms, we can only see how others communicate. Language used while typing (i.e. native speakers can usually pick out non-native speakers), and the style can indicate some features of personality or cultural belonging, but it is, if at all, extremely hazardous response and can at best result in a chance hit.

3.3 Netiquette and Regulation

As with other forms of computer-mediated communication, IRC has a general order of conduct that has to be observed. There is an abundance of manuals available to assist IRC users and it includes a detailed section on 'netiquette'. Reid (1995) mentions that IRC has an uninhibited effect to text based CMC which

stems from the relatively anonymity and highly limited social and identifying context cues which characterize the medium.

Malaysians prefer using the IRC anonymity as the society is still not as open as the Western World. Chatters still prefer to hide under nicknames in order to get away with typing out whatever they want to say. The use of nicknames makes chatters more open and this creates an atmosphere of joviality. The safety of anonymity can 'reduce self consciousness and promote intimacy' between people who might not otherwise have had the choice to become close. It can also encourage 'flaming' which Kiesler Siegel and McGuire, (1984: 1123-1134) define as the gratuitous and inhibited making of remarks containing swearing, insults, name calling, and exchange between people who are shy except on computer-mediated communication. Interlocutors often open up to each other either to be someone whom they are not, or to be more themselves. Personal relationships amongst participants in computer-mediated communication systems can often be deep and highly emotional. Hiltz and Turuff (1985: 680-689; 101) who research in this field note that some participants in a system such as the IRC 'come to feel that their very best and closest friends are members of their electronic group, whom they seldom or never see'. They also mention that 'Internet romances and long distance relationships carried out over IRC, can result from increased tendency for participants in CMC systems to be inhibited.'

3.4 Some Problems Unique to Text-base CMC

Studies found that problems also exist in chat room conversations. Five existing problems in chat room are listed below;

- 1) Lack of links between people and what they say,
- 2) Lack of visibility of text in progress,
- 3) Lack of control over turn position,
- 4) Lack of useful recording and social context, and
- 5) Threaded chat.

1) Lack of links between people and what they say

Apparently, is the lack of physical contact between people and what they say can create problems. This is due to the physical environment of virtual space. Messages get distorted and the identity of the person sending them may also be distorted. However this problem has been overcome such as users being provided with color or font to highlight a particular person i.e 'chatter'.

2) Lack of visibility of text in progress

There is no visibility of listener text-in-progress which means that participants do not receive sporadic rhythm in which the turn comes out. Users of IRC who are familiar with the procedure are however, able to connect turns quickly and also access the gaps between the turns because as they become more proficient as time passes, listeners are able to recognize those projections as the talk unfolds. Thus, as delays in chat rooms occur, users are able to type additional turns or grab the opportunity to start a new topic of conversation instead of waiting.

3) Lack of control over turn position

The lack of control over turn position is also a challenge. This occurs when conversation relates to shaping turns. However the technique used to accomplish this in spoken interaction is to undermine ‘moment-by-moment’ information about the reaction of those listening to them. This means that turns cannot be altered as they unfold, increasing the likelihood that they will be misunderstood or taken in the wrong way. With indication of listening, chat systems lose a great deal of their sense of social presence. Some systems have addressed this issue, such as Ericson et al. by presenting a ‘social proxy’, a graphic design that represent the activity of people with the application. This allowed people to have an intuitive sense of who was recently active but lack the genuineness to see turns-in-progress.

4) Lack of useful recording and social context

Due to a lack of useful social text recorded historically, most chat rooms and social spaces are not publicly persistent. Their content evaporates as soon as its scroll out of each user’s history buffer. This lack of persistence means that most chat spaces do not accrete a social history.

5) Threaded chat

The ‘*Threaded*’ chat addresses the problem of confusing history logs; lacks social history and the rupture of turn sequences in standard chat rooms. Threaded chat departs from traditional chat in a number of ways by bridging the gap between threaded asynchronous discussions and synchronous chats. All chat turns are

structured as a tree and similar to this structure are turns organized into response structures called threads which can grow to any size.

3.5 Shared Culture of IRC Participants.

The emergence of culture on the IRC is basically heterogeneous. IRC users can access the same system from all over the world. This creates a kind of culture that could challenge language styles.

The definition of culture owes much to Geertz's (1973) understanding when he said that it is a 'system of meaning that gives significance to shared behaviors which must be interpreted from the perspectives of those who are engaged in them.' He further states that 'Culture does not only include the systems and standards adopted by a group for 'perceiving, believing, evaluating and acting, but also includes the 'rules and symbols of interpretation and discourse', utilized by members of a group.'

Geertz also expands 'culture' to include 'a set of control mechanism-such as plans, recipe, rules, all these instructions (what computer engineers call 'programmer') for the governing behavior'. In this sense, it would seem that users of IRC constitute a culture or a community of people. The users are constantly faced with problems posed by the medium's inherent deconstruction of traditional model of social interaction based on the physical face-to-face proximity.

The measures taken by IRC users to meet their common problems posed by the medium's lack of regulating feedback and social context cues and its dramaturgical weakness, are anonymity and marker. To overcome this limitation, IRC users have devised a solution which uses symbols as a textual marker to achieve understanding of communication. Secondly, a variety of social sanctions have arisen among the IRC participants to punish users who disobey the rules of 'etiquette' or 'netiquette'.

In the Malaysian context, culture can be seen as a shared and commonly held body of general beliefs and values which defines the 'should' and 'ought' of life in certain ethnic communities. Hofstede (1990) indicates that 'culture is the collective ways the mind distinguish member of one group to another during interactions. It seems that a common characteristics which influences human's response to the environment' is that culture manifests itself both in patterns of language and thought and in forms of activity and behavior.

3.6 Features and Rules Unique to IRC Conversations

As Bays has suggested, IRC is indeed a textual medium in which exchanges are organized much like everyday conversations but that, it also 'lies somewhere between written and spoken modes of communication' (Bays, 1998: 3-4).

In order to maintain conversational relevance, the participants need to streamline their writing for maximum speed. In addition to the features caused by matters of

velocity, the very medium of IRC itself imposes some of the dominant characteristics on the finished conversation. Lines for instance may resemble intonation units, and addressing is required to facilitate the notion of gaze. IRC is therefore a curious mixture of features that combine both spoken and written modes of conversation. However, IRC appears very close to spoken rather than specific features of its own forming a unique mode of conversation.

Figure 3.1 below shows a comparison of IRC conversation features with features found in face-to-face discourse.

Features resembling face-to-face	Features unique to IRC conversation
1. Intonation units and turns e.g. smile, Gesture etc.	1. Lack of punctuation e.g. Capitalization.
2. Turn-taking and turn-passing e.g. conversational interaction	2. Paralinguistic markers e.g. <i>lah, ma</i> etc.
3. Opening sequences introduced by servers e.g. 'hi'	3. Participants enter by login name
4. Addressing, observing and selecting topic e.g. Love, Marriage etc.	4. Explicit addressing e.g. calling the user identified by nicknames e.g. mizzy, ChinaDollie.
5. Pre-selection of topics e.g. sports, marriage etc.	5. Pre-selection of topics, e. g. sports etc.

Figure 3.1

Comparison of features found in face-to-face and IRC conversation.

Since the study of CMC dates back to about 15 years (Altun, 1998), early studies of CMC does not contain much social contextualization cues such as non-verbal cues that are present in face-to-face interaction management (Siegel and Macquire,1984). Recent research has however, provided clues of possible effects of interactional strategies used on CMC medium. (Rintel and Pittam (1997).

3.7 Collection of Data

The data of the study was obtained through the IRC chat room. The duration of real time chat is between 60 to 90 minutes. The data was downloaded from the *#mamak* channel and contained in Appendix C are real-time transcripts of conversations that were extracted and include turns in chat conversations.

3.7.1 Intervals

Initially 10 hourly intervals of chat were extracted which comprised of 180 participants comprising 56 participants were chosen to be analyzed in this study.

The choice of each extract was based on the following criteria;

- 1) The extracts were captured using hourly segments.
- 11) The extracts involved up to twenty turns in any given segment.

3.7.2 Topics

The topics were not specific or fixed by the participants who started the topic and participants who where interested to join in the conversation.

3.7.3 Participants

The participants were anonymous and only identified by nickname when they joined the channel e.g. <lolPOP>.

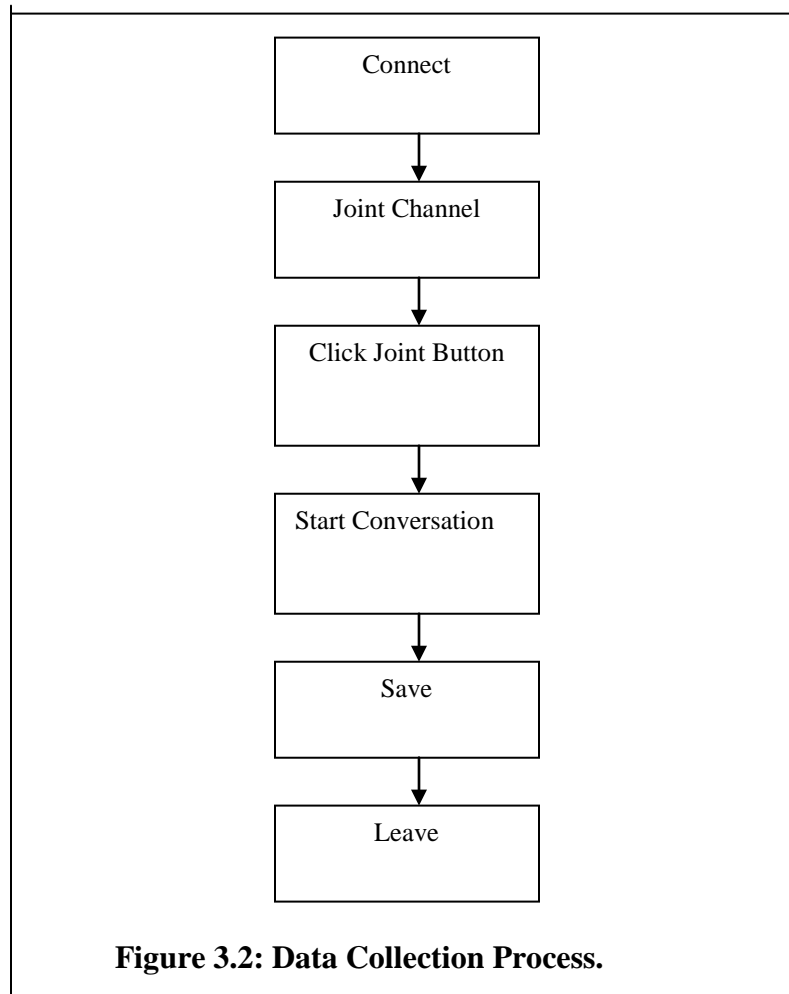
There were instances where participants changed their nickname in the middle of the conversation, but this did not create confusion as changing nicknames was informed by the given status of participants. Given status of participants is an automated signal by the server to show firstly, the changing of nickname by the participants and secondly who joined and left the chat room.

3.7.4 The Method Used to Collect Data Extract.

A channel folder is used to record a list of channels which appeared and the researcher chose *#mamak* channel by clicking the joint button. Moments later the *#mamak* window opened indicating that the line is opened.

3.7.5 Process of Data Collection

The chat began when a message was typed and the entire key was pressed. The message was sent to the *#mamak* channel which everyone on the channel could see. At the end of each interval session, the researcher would leave the chat room by clicking the close button. The conversations were saved on diskettes. The process is schematically presented in Figure 3.2.



3.8 Data Analysis

A qualitative method is adopted in this study. Two types of framework were used to analyze data. They are;

- 1) Conversational Analysis (CA).
- 2) Discourse Analysis (DA) was used to examine and help analyse the data.

Conversational exchanges were divided into turns at talk or taking turns. The talking turn is one of conversation for interactional discourse of conversational

analysis. Emoticons and abbreviations are also of common features that are important to all chat room discourse user (Crystal 2001, Rivera, 2002). The study done by Sacks (1974) reveal a socially embedded reading of 'chat'.

The methodology of the analysis as mentioned draws on the conversational behaviors of the 'chatters'. Conversation is an activity which is directed to achieve a social goal, (e.g. the establishment of roles, presentation of self as well as the linguistic goals in the communication of meanings). Speakers recognize and conduct conversations when they are seen to be sharing assumptions that enable them to interact with each other and to interpret conversation as an ongoing, developing and related succession of utterances.

Based on data compiled and analyzed, the various distinctive features showed that the language of the IRC during turn taking convey multiple meanings. It was observed that this suggests the IRC carry functions which may meet the intentions of the speakers. These characteristics while employed as a tool for performing online functions, give understanding to what the users wish to communicate and is actually a process of interpreting and what is intentionally meant.

Utilizing the downloaded scripts, this study will attempt to illustrate that turn-taking contributes to new formations leading towards repertoires in chat room 'talk.' It also shows particular meanings and systems to construct core Malaysian cultural conceptual values relevant to the online community.

3.9 Conversation Analysis

Conversation in turn-taking holds that talk in an orderly manner . It is ‘organized by the use of machinery deployed and adapted to local contingencies of interaction across an immense variety of social settings and participants’ (Zimmerman and Boden, 1991: 8). This implies that the truth value of any statement is indexical, that is ‘assigned dynamically (Geis, 1995: 18-37). Moreover, the indexical truth of a statement is constructed (Boden, 1994: 18) through the ongoing situation by its participants.

Structure, should be accomplished and through moment-by-moment turn-taking procedures of everyday talk’ (Zimmerman and Boden, 1991: 17).

‘Turn-taking constitutes a part of a conversation analysis, integral to the formation of any interpersonal exchange’ (Boden, 1994: 66). In one of her recent works, (*The Business of talk Organization*) by Deidre Boden identified the following list of ‘essential features of turn-taking’.

- 1) One speaker speaks at a time.
- 2) Number and order of speakers vary freely.
- 3) Turn varies.
- 4) Turns are not allowed in advance but also vary.
- 5) Turn transition is frequent and quick.
- 6) There are few gaps and few overlaps in turn transition.

A final rule of turn-taking is that in multiparty situations, “the system exhibits a bias toward a ‘breakdown’ in two party talk” (Zimmerman and Boden, 1991: 14).

This process of turn-taking “depends on the resumption between all parties to the interaction that any particular turn was intended and accordingly shaped for the specific and audience at hand” (Zimmerman and Boden, 1991: 11). Recipient design is known whereby the speaker creates their recipients in mind, and listeners are motivated to ‘hear’ a turn that is for them, and participants closely and constantly track the strategy of the talk to hear ‘their’ turn” (Boden 1994: 70).

In other words, a speaker crafts his or her turn after analysis of what he or she wishes to accomplish by it.

Listeners, having followed the orderly conversation, attempt to understand how this latest turn fits into the structure of the conversation.

‘Participants are able to understand how a turn fits into the greater structure of the conversation because turns tend to be organized into a kind of matching process: greeting / greeting or question / question’ (Boden, 1994: 68).

‘Adjacency pairs of all sorts function as a kind of driving mechanism urging forward turns and topic, insistent in both design and impact. The interactional and structural force of a question demands its answer. Answers derive their status and shape from their immediate placement after a question in their reciprocal recipient

design. The one shapes the other, in predictable, precise and pattern ways' (Boden, 1994: 111).

Until now, conversation itself is considered a 'reciprocal and rhythmic interchange of verbal emissions with emphasis added' (Allen and Guy, 1974: 11). As observed, this definition is antiquated. Now that real-time, synchronous interaction can occur via typing, conversation should no longer be considered a merely verbal phenomenon.

Internet chatting can be said to be definitely a conversation as such, although with several interesting changes from the traditional verbal face-to-face interaction. The researcher also wishes to emphasize that where there might be a variation of interaction, there are turns identified in the scripts downloaded from the chat room being observed.

This study is based on the assumptions that users in the sample are free to interact on IRC and this involves a deconstruction of traditional assumption about the dynamics of communication and the construction, of alternative system. IRC is essentially a playground. Within its domain people are free to experiment with different forms of communication and self representation. Within IRC, power is challenged and supplanted by rituals combining both destruction and rejuvenation (Boden, 1994). This means that users shape themselves according to or conform to conventions of social context but they learn to 'play' their cultural game.

Such movement is constructed from strategies for the introduction of topics, opening and closings, the pairing of utterance in conversation and turn-taking conventions. Conversation is seen to have not only linear structure but hierarchical structure, topics being recited within topics for example, to mention at one point in conversation, serving as assumed background knowledge of things said previously. The acquisition of conversational skills is dependent upon not only these linguistic aspects of conversational discourse, but knowledge of the social constraints in which they operate in a particular culture. (Fairclough, 1995).

3.10 Turn-Taking

Interactional turn-taking is a very important aspect of human social behavior and this involves coordinating movements between conversing partners, one acting as listener and another as speaker. Conversation exchange cited by Levinson (1983) says that turn-taking when observed can be characterized in the following ways:

That during a conversation, A talks and stops. B, takes over, talks and stop; and so on having the pattern of A-B-A-B-A-B across two participants. However, certain phenomenon seems to follow this normative in CMC turn-taking procedures.

In the model proposed by Sacks (1974), the turn taking system for conversation can be described in terms of two components and a set of rules.

- 1) There are two various unit-types with which a speaker may set out to construct a turn. Unit-types for English include sentential, casual, phrasal,

and lexical constructions. The boundaries of those units are defined as having transaction-relevance place (TRP). Such transactional-relevance places provide listeners with the opportunity to take the next turn.

- 2) This component is about turn allocation. The allocation techniques are distributed into groups.
 - a) Those in which next turn is allocated by current speaker selecting next speaker.
 - b) Those in which a next turn is allocated by self selection. All these have been mentioned to us previously.

3.10.1 Contrast of Turn-Taking (SSJ 1974) on IRC.

In face-to-face conversation, Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson (1974) observe, how speaker change occurs. The spoken conversation can be said to follow a normative ideal of precisely alternative turns. The word 'precisely' refers to timing of transaction from one speaker turn to next, which is ideally supposed to occur with no (or minimum) gap, and no overlap between speakers.

Gaps on IRC chats were also considered. Often a considerable time lag exists between when a message is sent and its respondent, especially in asynchronous forms of CMC such as *email*. Synchronous CMC involves more rapid exchanges of turns, but delays may be caused by system 'lag' and disrupted turn adjacency.

3.10.2 Turn- allocation During Conversation

Conversation is composed of speech between at least two people organized by turns. A turn is a period of talk for each speaker, ideally only one person talks at some time. In formal situations such as rituals, meetings, and public lectures turns are often allocated by a moderator or predetermined according to participants' roles. In unstructured, spontaneous conversation, however participants must determine from moment to moment when it is appropriate to take turn. Sacks (1974: 704) propose the following rules governing turn allocation:

For any turn, at the initial transition-relevance place of any initial turn construction unit;

- a. the current speaker selects the next speaker and transfer occurs at that place;
- b. the next speaker self-selects, the first starter acquires rights to a turn, and transfer occurs at that place;
- c. if neither (a) the current speaker selects the next speaker nor (b) another party has self-selected, the current speaker may, but need not, continue, thereby claiming rights to another turn-constructural unit.

In order to converse smoothly, conversationalist must further coordinate transfer so as to minimize gap and overlap between adjacency turns (Sacks, 1974). In face-to-face conversations, transition-relevance places (where turn exchange is likely to occur) are indicated by a variety of prosodic and visual cues.

These include utterance-final intonation, declaration, final stress, pausing, sustained eye contact, and signaling of the head or hands (Duncan, 1972). In telephone conversations, prosodic but not visual cues are available, turn transitions can still take place smoothly (McLaughlin, 1984). Text only IRC lacks both prosodic and visual cues, however the IRC considers how turns are allocated in a synchronous chat room.

3.10.3. Techniques of Turn-Allocation and IRC

Lunsford (1996) systematically compares turn-taking organization in Internet Relay Chat (IRC) with the turn allocation model of Sacks, (1974), and concluded that turn allocation in IRC is fundamentally different from turn-taking during discourse. According to Lunsford (1996), everyone in the chat room has an equal opportunity to transmit a message at any given time. A speaker can then allocate the next turn by means of three turn allocation technique:

- 1) Speaker addresses individual participating by screen name.

Example:

Line 22; Redlittle princess: **Ancient**

- 2) Speaker addresses the whole group within a given room. The implication is that all present should respond.

Example:

Line 49; Trippal-k-k : *hi I'm back*

- 3) Speaker elicits reaction from anyone who cares to respond, often by means of making a provocative statement.

Example:

Line 33; Pearlie456: **wat is he toking????**

Lunsford (1996) notes that chat message is usually, but not always equivalent to a turn, as in the case of turn which is too long to be sent as a single message, or a message that contains more than one functional turn. Evidence found in turn allocation strategies can be found in Chernys (1999: 18). His observations note the use of third person present tense descriptive actions to stimulate bids for conversation floor such as 'x' raises her hand to request for permission to speak in the instance of interaction patterns in a social '*Multi-user Dungeon or Dimensions*' (MUD), which she claims serves the function of eye gaze in face-to-face communication.

From the observation in the chat room, participants use various means to circumvent problems caused by lack of non-verbal cues and disrupted adjacency, including addressing others by name and engaging in a conversation with the larger group than with targeted individuals. However, it is not apparent that turn allocation behavior in chat rooms is fundamentally different from that of face-to-face speakers in groups. (Cherneys, 1999: 192).

Herring (1999: 32) notes that common strategy for creating cross-turn coherence is adhesively a vocative use of the intended addressee's name (Werry, 1996). This

can be seen in every turn. It is a form of ‘current speaker selects next speaker’ (strategy A) in Sacks (1974) turn allocation model and in Lunsford’s (1996) strategy B, and can be assumed strategy C where speaker continues. More over the technical ability to take a turn must be distinguished from social appropriateness of doing so, both face-to-face and in CMC. Social appropriateness of when to speak or not is determined in part by speaker abilities and roles.

3.10.4 Adjacency Pairs and IRC

Participants on the IRC face certain challenges when interacting as compared to face-to-face conversation. The lack of non-verbal cues with text only on CMC that is characterized by disruption in turn adjacency, is a condition in which logically related turns are separated by unrelated turns, often from other conversation (Herring, 1999).

Disrupted adjacency is especially common in multiparty participants IRC. This is caused by technical properties of CMC systems such as delays in message transmission (e.g. system ‘lag’) and linear display of messages in the order received by the system, without regard for the senders’ intention to respond to a particular message.

This is illustrated by the following sample from the relay chat script which shows the disrupted adjacency.

Examples:

Line 166; Ancient tales: **mizzy....jom main**

Line 168; LovingMama1: *heheh Opah badminton with 2 shuttle mah....*

Line 169; mizzy28F: **jum.....main apa ekk .**

Line 171; mizzy28F: **main chess**

The above represent the connections between turns in this sample schematically as in Figure 3.1. The message lower in the diagram is considered to be responding 'backward' (or in this case upwards) to a previous message in each case.

Disruption of extended sequences are also common on IRC in the sense that there are problems in keeping up with topics on line that is related 'threads' or sequences of exchanges on particular topic relevant messages do appear while scrolling and individual messages keep appearing, thereby disrupting topics being discussed or even totally being out in the cold. Perhaps for these reasons, topics decay quickly in computer mediated discussions, hasten along by off topic digressions and tangential observations which move the discussion away from its original focus.

3.11 Mechanisms of Turn-Taking

The mechanism of turn-taking developed by Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson (1974) called a 'Simplest systematic for organization of turn taking for conversation Language' as follows:

- 1) The sequence of talk proceeds through time, and the events that takes place must be ordered in some way, what is called for in the elaboration of conversational sequencing devices.
- 2) There should be bound limits in bracketed sections of conversation. The function of boundary limits is indicated to participants where some events begin and where it ends. Some of these have been viewed namely, talking turns, adjacency pairs, opening sections, closing sections.
- 3) The transactional moves; the function of this is to indicate participants significant conversational display (utterance or gesture) for their relationship i.e. their behavioral interactional implications. Thus sequencing devices, boundary limits, and transactional moves are theoretical mechanisms that are available to participants for ordering the sequence of talking turn utterances within conversation.

3.12 Summary

This chapter discusses the theoretical framework that is used for this study which is drawn from several researchers. The examples from the corpus of data contained in Appendix C illustrate language use within the Malaysian IRC. Also presented is the methodology used to collect the data and how it is analyzed.

It was observed that turn-taking in the chat room is similar when written to that of face-to-face procedure however, use nicknames in their greetings so as to preserve

anonymity in the chat room. Emotion and various other cues to compensate for body language is characterized by the use of emoticons, capitalization, spelling specification and extension, Code switching and lexical shifts which have been briefly illustrated by examples in chapter four.