

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents findings of this research. The findings are presented according to the following order :(1) the conversational skills of the subject according to Grice's Theory (2) the conversational skills of the subject according to SSJ Model (3) the pragmatic analysis of the subject according to LPA and (4) the description chart of Y's conventional skills.

4.1 SUBJECT'S CONVERSATIONAL SKILLS ACCORDING TO GRICE'S THEORY

This section focuses on the analysis of Y's conversational skills from Grice's perspective. Grice's cooperative principle requires that participants of a conversation to observe four maxims which are maxims of quantity, quality, relevant and manner. The following discussion will focus on analyzing the data according to each maxim.

4.1.1 Maxim of quantity

1. Make your contribution as informative as required.
2. Do not make your contribution more informative than is required.

The first maxim is maxim of quantity. According to this maxim, one must speak only sufficiently, not too much and not too little. Based on the data collected, Y did not have difficulty with this maxim since his speech is naturally short. His utterances were usually one to two-word phrases or incomplete sentences. Y seldom says more than what is being asked and he usually answers appropriately such as in the following instances;

Example 1 Data T 11 (lines 3-8)

3. M: Oh! do you want to talk about airport?
4. Y: Yes
5. M: Okay/ What do you see at the airport?
6. Y: Aeroplanes, shops, helicopters, Mc Donald.
7. M: What else/ can you see/ at the airport?
8. Y: KFC, escalator, people =< points finger as he speak>

Example 2 Data T1 (lines 13-21)

13. M: What is the capital of Melaka?
14. Y: Bandar Melaka.
15. M: Clever boy!. Now, lets look at the other brochure. This is Terengganu.

16. Y: < grabbed the brochure and read the map of Terengganu while giggling >
17. M: Have you been to Terengganu before?
18. Y: Yes
19. M: Where did you go?
20. Y: Awana Kijal. A resort, swimming pool, the beach, catch turtles.
21. M: Yes, abang. You remember what we did in Awana Kijal.
Do you want to go again?
22. Y: Yes, school holiday.

The utterances in example 1 and example 2 were straight to the point as Y did not elaborate on his responses or provided extra information. These excerpts illustrate observance of the first maxim of conversation. In example 2, line 20, Y attempted to give additional information such as Awana Kijal is a resort, there is a swimming pool, it is nearby the beach and they caught baby turtles. However, due to his low linguistic skill, these words were not strung together and therefore, made the utterance appeared choppy. In contrast, Y also displayed examples of violating this maxim such as in the following excerpts:

Example 3 Data T9 (lines 1-9)

1. D: Do you want some *kacang*?
2. Y: Yes.
3. Y: = at the playground
4. D: At the playground?= What do you see at the playground?

5. Y: <silent>
6. Y: At the cinema? < pointing his finger into the face of D>
7. B: No *abang*. =we are at the playground =Come go on the swing.
8. Y: Nnn....no. Eat popcorn, kacang, watch the movie. // Ice Age.

In this example, Y responded correctly in line 2, however, in line 3, he added the word “playground” which made his contribution more than necessary and confusing. Next, when F tried to clarify in line 3 by asking him “What do you see at the playground?” Y answered “at the cinema.” Here, Y did not provide informative contribution that his conversational partner is seeking. This behavior is considered as violating the maxim. In transcripts 2, 3 and 4 there were instances that showed Y flouted this maxim (there are examples in other transcripts too; but only these three data will be illustrated here). The excerpts are provided here:

Example 4 Data T13, (lines 1-12)

1. Y: Jelatik
2. G: sit down. How are you?
3. Y: I am fine, thank you.
4. G: Are you happy today?
5. Y: Going to Jelatik.
6. G: Do you feel happy today?
7. Y: Yes, Jelatik
8. G: Good. Sure ah, you feel happy ah? Do you want to sing hello song?
9. Y: (silent)
10. G: Do you want to sing hello song?

11. Y: Yes, Jelatik...(singing song)
12. Y: Jelatik

Example 5 Data T3 (lines 1-6)

1. M: Okay, now I want you to tell me what you had for breakfast?
2. Y: I see a
3. M: What did you have for breakfast?
4. Y: Wang (money)
5. M: What did you have breakfast this morning?
6. Y: I see.....

Example 6 Data T4 (lines 6-11)

6. D: Do you want some kacang? (*Would you like some peanuts?*)
7. Y: Yes.
8. Y: [at the playground].
9. D: At the playground? ↑ What do you see at the playground? ↑
10. Y:
11. Y: At the cinema. ↑

In these three excerpts, Y was not contributing informative utterances to keep the conversation going. In example 4, Y started the conversation by saying “Jelatik” which did not give the psychologist (G) any clue about the topic. G tried to distract Y by asking other questions but Y continued saying “Jelatik.” This pattern continued in example 5 when M asked Y what did he have for breakfast, Y answered “I see” and “*wang*”. He did not give the information that M was seeking. Similarly, in example 6, Y did not provide the information about playground and *kacang*. Perhaps, Y was hinting to D that we do not eat peanut at the playground but we eat peanut at the cinema. The researcher made inference based on the following utterance in line 11 when he said “at the cinema.” According to Blakemore (1992), there are many ways people expressed themselves, some express themselves explicitly and some express themselves implicitly. In this context, the subject expressed himself implicitly due to his poor linguistic skill. His utterances were mainly single words and limited syntactical structure. Therefore, it may seem that Y was violating the maxim of quantity from strangers’ perspective but it was actually relevant to Y. So, the issue of whether a person observes or violates Grice maxim of conversation is actually based on the hearer’s perception.

The occurrence of this maxim is summarized in the following table:

Transcript	Line Number	Total no. of utterances
T1	1-12	11
T2	4-5, 9-10	2
T3	11-13, 14-15, 17-18, 20-21	5
T4	6-7,16-17, 19-20, 26-27,	7
T5	2-3, 6-7, 9-10,11-12,	4
T6	1-2, 8-9, 12-14,	4
T7	1-3, 7-8	2
T8	3-8	5
T9	1-2, 11-12, 20-22, 23-25, 36-37,40-41	7
T10	1-2,7-9,28-42,43-46,47-50,53-55,57-58,63-65,70,76-82,82-93,96-99,	25
T11	1-4,11-12,17-18,19-22,36-37,38-9,52-55,62-63,70=71,81-82,89-90,95-96,99-100,115-119,139-140,182-183,187-188,201-202,228-229,231-232,238-244,263-264,275-283,292-293,300-305,314-315,365-367,374-375,386-387	44
T12	24-32,46-47,54-59,99-100,112-115,142-145,161-162,226,236,262-263,267,298-299,308-310,315-	21

	316,321-322	
T13	54-70,172-174,257-260	13
	TOTAL	150

Table 4.1 Maxim of quantity in Y's speech sample

4.1.2 Maxims of quality

1. Do not state what you believe to be false
2. Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence

The subject of this study seemed to observe this maxim in several instances such as in the following excerpt;

Example 7 Data T12 (lines 17-22)

42. F: What happened to his plants abang?
43. Y: It's broken.
44. F: Not broken, something eats it. What do you think eats it?
45. F: What do you think eats the plant abang?
46. F: You think it's rabbit or you think it's a dog?
47. Y: It's a dog.

In example 7, Y responded to the question from F appropriately. He expressed the truth that the plant is broken (line 43). The hearer did not believe Y's answer, he asked Y again and helped Y to answer by saying that the plant was eaten by an animal instead of broken. Line 47 is an example of Y violating this maxim. He is saying something that is false because dogs do not eat plants. This maxim states that “ *do not state what you believe to be false.*” Y violated this maxim maybe because he was distracted or may be because the conversation had gone too long. Another illustration of this maxim occurs in;

Example 8 Data T11 (lines 286-289)

279. F: = Azzari, what's he making?
280. Y: Making a fence. (Then, he said www....)
281. Y: Azzari, I don't want you www.
282. F: Abang, look what's he trying to do abang.
283. Y: Fence.
284. F: What's he gonna keep inside the fence abang?
285. Y: <Singing song>
286. F: What he keeps inside the fence?
287. Y: Some pigs.
288. F: No, I think they said chicken. I thought I heard they said chicken.
289. Y: Chicken.

Example 8, is part of a conversation about Discovery Channel program which showed animals and farm life. Y initially observed this maxim until line 287. However, in line 287, he answered pigs, although the actual answer is chicken. Here, Y responded with an information that is false because the program showed the farmer was constructing a chicken coop. This false statement was produced probably as a result of distraction (Y sang in the middle of the conversation). This may have caused him to lose focus and subsequently, made false statement.

This study discovered that there were 26 examples where Y did not observe this maxim. The finding is shown below;

Transcript	Line of utterance	Total no. of violation
T1	Nil	0
T2	Nil	0
T3	4	1
T4	17	1
T5	Nil	0
T6	Nil	0
T7	Nil	0
T8	Nil	0

T9	Nil	0
T10	Nil	0
T11	12, 25, 29,33, 37, 43, 47, 87, 111, 127, 239, 287,323, 382, 384,	15
T12	32, 162, 257, 285, 316, 499	6
T13	39, 70, 208	3
	Total	26

Table 4.2 Display of violation of maxim of quality

Table 4.2 refers to list of utterances that violated maxim of quality. The table shows that the number of violation of this maxim in Y's daily speech is very small. This subsequently can be translated into Y tells the truth most of the time and that he does not say something that is not true or something that he lacks evidence. At least to his ability, he probably thinks that he has given enough evidence for his conversational partner to understand his message; and that, he is not making false statements. It is very unlikely that Y was lying because children with autism have deficit in executive functions (EF). EF is a broad class of cognitive abilities involved in the regulation of thought and action. This class of higher cognitive abilities supports functions such as strategic planning, impulse control, working memory, organization of mean-end behaviors, and flexibility in thought and action (Sheinkopf, 2005)

The following discussion will elaborate five examples of how Y violated maxim of quality;

Example 9 Data T 11 (lines 11-16)

11. F: What is it about abang?
12. Y: Cameron Highlands
13. F: Like Cameron Highlands? Ya....?
14. Y: = ha,ha,ha.....
15. F: It is like Cameron Highlands, but it is not.
16. Y: ha, ha, ha <laughing and smiling>

In this excerpt, Y was watching a television program about a farm in England. He had been following the program from the beginning and his father expected that he knew that the place in the show was not Cameron Highlands (a resort in Malaysia). Therefore, the researcher concluded that Y was aware that he was not telling the truth. According to Sperber and Wilson (1986), Y may not be making false statement but instead making a false connection because Cameron Highlands has some similarities to England because both have cold weather (it is a hill resort), farms and cottages. Therefore, Y may be making connection between England and Cameron Highlands. Another example of Y making false statement is in;

Example 10 Data T3 (lines 16-23)

16. M: What did you have for breakfast?
17. Y: wang (*money*)
18. M: What did you have for breakfast this morning?
19. Y: I see.....
20. M: No,not I see. Say “I had “
21. Y: I had.....
22. M: [nasi lemak, chicken....
23. Y: =nugget, egg

In this example, Y knew that “money” is not food; and he knew that M wanted to know what he had at the school canteen. M continued interrogating Y until he was able to tell what he had for breakfast in line 23. So, in order to obtain the truth from Y, the conversational partner had to ask him several times because he got distracted and always lost his focus in a conversation. This phenomena is true in many cases of autistic children where the therapist or conversational partner has to do a lot of prompting to initiate them to express better, to obtain the desired response and to help them to recall (Lovaas, 1981).

4.1.3 Maxim of relation

This maxim refers to making our contribution relevant to the interaction. However, relevant is subjective to the context and interpretation of the hearer (Sperber and Wilson, 1986). The hearer must analyze the meaning of the intended message based on immediate clues from the environment, past experience of the topic and of the speaker. The speaker may mean differently than what he says and may seem like he is violating the maxim. When this happens, the hearer must analyze the background of the speaker and the context of the utterance. This statement is especially relevant to the subject and all autistic children who are known to speak aberrantly.

The following discussion will focus on Y's ability to observe Grice maxim of relation. In the data collected, Y displayed 221 relevant utterances out of 545 responses. Y utterances were mainly responses to questions from his conversational partners and therefore, were generally relevant. The table below summarizes the occurrence of maxim of relation in Y's speech.

Transcript	Line of utterance	Total
T1	2,4,6,8,10, 12,14,16,17,19,21	11
T2	3,5,7,8,10,12,14	7
T3	10.12.13.19, 20,22	6
T4	7,17,21,23,25,27,30	7
T5	2,7,10,12	4

T6	2,8,9,12,14,13	6
T7	1,2,3,5,7,9	6
T8	4,6,1,2,8,9,10,12,14,16	10
T9	2,5,10,14,,21,19,25	7
T10	2,7,9,11,16,20,23,29,31,33,36,38,42,44,48,50,55,58,61,6 5, 75,78,82,91,94,97,99,102	28
T11	2,4,8,10,12,18,22,33,37,39,43,53,55,63,69,82,90,92,96,1 00, 108,109,116,119,162,168,174,171,178,180,193,188,202, 227, 232,236,239,243,248,264,276,280,291,293,295, 297,299,301,303,305,315,328,343,358,364,367,373,375, 378,362, 364,, 367	62
T12	6,23,32,35,36,41,47,51,52,55,57,59,99,100,112,114,116, 119,136,141,156,162,173,192,202,200,205,207,209,211, 216,222,257,276,267,289,303,299,301,338,345,357,430, 451,454,461,457,467,	48
T13	54,56,58,62,64,66,70,94,119,121,131,174,208,258,268,2 84,308,327,294	19
	Total	221

Table 4.3 Maxim of relation in Y's speech sample

Five examples of maxim of relation in Y's speech will be presented below:

Example 11 Data T1 (lines 1-6)

1. M: Look at this picture. What are they doing?
2. Y: Walking on the beach, sea side, blue.
3. M: Good boy!! What about the turtles? Can you tell me about the turtles?
4. Y: Swimming, in the water < accompanied by a laugh >
5. M: Lets look at the next brochure. What do you see?
6. Y: A'Famosa, river, museum, bullock cart, Melaka historical city
< pointing to the title of the brochure >

Example 12 Data T3 (lines 11-15)

11. F: So, what's he gonna do now abang? Azzari, what's he gonna do now?
12. F: What he's doing with his friend?
13. Y: Fishing.
14. F: Emm...you like to eat fish Azzari?
15. Y: Ya.

Example 13 Data T9 (lines1-9)

1. Y: Blanket
2. M: Do better
3. Y: Where is my blanket?
4. M: K, here is your blanket? What must we do before we sleep?
5. Y: Read Al-Fatihah....where is daddy? <puts his hands up to recite>
6. M: Bissmilla
Y: hirrahmanirrahim. Alhamdullila,.....
7. Y: Where is daddy? Daddy is [[in Singapore
8. M: [[in Singapore. He will come home tomorrow.
9. Y: Pick up at airport.

Example 14 Data T6 (lines 6-9)

6. Y: At the cinema? < pointing his finger into the face of D>
7. B: No *abang*. =we are at the playground =Come go on the swing.
8. Y: Nnn....no. Eat popcorn, kacang, watch the movie. // Ice Age.
9. Y: =at the cinema.

Example 15 Data T7 (lines 1-5)

1. Y: Nail clipper
2. Y: Cut nail
3. Y: It is long

< Y looks at his father's fingers while watching television in the lounge. He was commenting on the father's nails and hair, too >
4. F: OK, I will cut my nails tomorrow.= Now, lets watch tv. B, please Pass me the peanuts.

Examples 14 and 15 show Y's observance of maxim of relation. His answers correspond with the questions from his conversational partner, sufficiently informative, clear and did not contain false details. Based on LPA's assessment, Y's speech contain only brief and non-referential topics. Y did not elaborate his utterances to keep the conversation going. He produced more relevant utterances when he talked to his parents (example T1,T3 and T11) because they were able to structure the conversation and to control Y's focus through their knowledge of autism and experience living with Y. Nevertheless, there were instances that seems like Y violated this maxim such as in the following excerpts;

Example 16 Data T13, (lines 1-7)

1. T: Ok, sebelum ni siapa ajar Kemahiran Hidup? Cikgu Syikin, Cikgu Syikin eh? (ok, who teaches Living Skills before? Teacher Syikin, eh?)
2. Y: Dumbledore.

3. T: Aisyah, Aisyah cikgu tak tanya lagi. Bangun Syah.(Aisyah, Aisyah I haven't asked you yet. Get up Syah)
4. Y: Done. In a movement. Human being.
5. T: Ok. Aisyah bagi nama penuh. Lepas tu berapa orang adik beradik? Tinggal kat mana? (Ok, Aisyah give your full name. Then, number of siblings. Where do you live?)
6. Y: <Singing song>
7. T: Semua orang lain dah. Dahkan? (Everybody is done, right?)
8. S: Dah. (Done)
9. T: Ha...semua orang lain dah. (Ha! everybody is done).
10. Y: <Singing song>
11. Y: Dumbledore.

Example 17 Data T4 (lines 6-11)

6. D: Do you want some kacang? (*Would you like some peanuts?*)
7. Y: Yes.
8. Y: [at the playground].
9. D: At the playground? What do you see at the playground?
10. Y:
11. Y: At the cinema.

Example 18 Data T1 (lines 1-11)

1. Y: Jelatik
2. G: sit down. How are you?
3. Y: I am fine, thank you.
4. G: Are you happy today?
5. Y: Going to Jelatik.
6. G: Do you feel happy today?
7. Y: Yes, Jelatik
8. G: Good. Sure ah, you feel happy ah? Do you want to sing hello song?
9. Y:.... (silent)
10. G: Do you want to sing hello song?
11. Y: Yes,Jelatik...(Singing song)
12. Y: Jelatik

Example 19 Data T11 (lines 292-301)

- 292 F: Uhh, what animal is that abang?
- 293 Y: Hens, chickens.
- 294 F: Emm.
- 295 Y: Chop.
- 296 F: Chop and do what?
- 297 Y: Roast chicken.
- 298 F: They chopped the chicken and make roast chicken?
- 299 Y: Yes.

300 F: Emm, you like roast chicken?

301 Y: Mummy.

In example 16, Y kept saying “Dumbledore” in the conversation while others were talking about Living Skill course and about a girl named Aisyah. The teacher ignored Y and did not attempt to involve him in the conversation because Y was saying something she thought was irrelevant to the context. According to Sperber and Wilson (1986) the relevance of an utterance depends on context, cognitive skill of the listener and the information processing effort. The more effort the listener takes to understand the more relevance the utterance will be. Therefore, if the listener had the cognitive ability (the knowledge) and had put in sufficient effort to process Y’s utterance (for example, clarifying with Y) then “Dumbledore” would have been a relevant topic for the discussion. “Dumbledore” is a character from the movie Harry Porter. Since Y was the only person in the class who had seen the movie, it was difficult for him to share his intended message. In addition, Y’s failure to introduce the topic appropriately and to add more information, made him appeared irrelevant by his teacher and classmates. Similarly, examples 17, 18 and 19 illustrate Y’s utterances that did not seem to related to the context. In example 17, Y said “playground” when his father (F) offered him peanuts, then when F asked again, Y said “cinema.,” This scenario appeared twice in the data collected (also refer to T4, lines 6-11, recorded at home during dinner time)

6. D: Do you want some kacang? (*Would you like some peanuts?*)

7. Y: Yes.

8. Y: [at the playground].

9. D: At the playground? What do you see at the playground?

10. Y:
11. Y: At the cinema.

It seems like “peanut” represents an activity people normally do at the playground and at the cinema. This assumption is appropriate because in the corresponding utterances, Y talked about popcorn and watching a movie . Y provided adequate clues of what he was trying to convey in the following utterances.

In example 18, Y started the conversation with the word “Jelatik.” He made presumption that his hearer had the knowledge of what “Jelatik” means, that his hearer would want to talk about this topic and that his hearer knows that this is what he (Y) wants to talk about. However, due to poor opening and lack of referent, he was misunderstood by his therapist. Similarly, example 19 shows another miscommunication between Y and F because Y did not relate to the topic of conversation. In line 295, Y confused his conversational partner when he said “chop” without making any connection to his preceding utterance. When F pressed for clarification, Y said “roast chicken” which is another unrelated topic. F continued guiding Y to be more relevant by saying “They chopped the chicken and make roast chicken?” and then Y answered “yes”. From this example, it shows that when having a conversation with an autistic person, the conversational partner has to play a proactive role in prompting and guiding the autist to make his utterances relevant. Relevance also depend on the ability of the hearer to notice the implicature (Grice, 1975). Implicature refers to what is above and beyond the linguistic meaning. This principle applies in this context because when we talk to an autistic person, we have to look beyond the literal meaning as autistic people are not able to express

themselves clearly, they speak aberrantly and they produce insensible utterances. We must be prepared that it will take time to process their message, we have to look at surrounding clues and we have to analyze the subsequent utterances. With cognitive knowledge of the immediate context and knowledge of autism, only then we can make sense of what Y and other autistic are trying to deliver. Consequently, this finding is critical to the school teachers, the therapists and his parents to be aware of Y's language problem and to be equipped with knowledge on how to guide him to be relevant to the context.

4.1.4 Maxim of manner

This maxim consist of four principles:

1. Avoid obscurity of expression.
2. Avoid ambiguity.
3. Be brief.
4. Be orderly.

As we have seen earlier, the subject of this study has problem avoiding ambiguity and obscurity because of his autistic nature and because of the perception of his conversational partner and other hearers. Many of his utterances are interpreted as irrelevant by his hearer because they appear not to be related to the topic of discussion and the quantity of information is too little. Therefore, Y has inadvertently violated in numerous instances the first two principles of maxim of manner. The table below shows Y's observance of maxims of manner (1), (2) and (3).

Transcript	Line of utterance	Total
T1	2,4,6,8,10, 12,14,16,17,19,	11
T2	3,5,7,8,10,12,14	7
T3	10.12.13.19, 20,22	6
T4	7,17,21,23,25,27,30	7
T5	2,7,10,12	4
T6	2,8,9,12,14,13	6
T7	1,2,3,5,7,9	6
T8	4,6,1,2,8,9,10,12,14,16	10
T9	2,5,10,14,,21,19,25	7
T10	2,7,9,11,16,20,23,29,31,33,36,38,42,44,48,50,55,58,61,6 5, 75,78,82,91,94,97,99,102	28
T11	2,4,8,10,12,18,22,33,37,39,43,53,55,63,69,82,90,92,96,1 00, 108,109,116,119,162,168,174,171,178,180,193,188,202, 227, 232,236,239,243,248,264,276,280,291,293,295, 297,299,301,303,305,315,328,343,358,364,367,373,375,	62

	378,362, 364,, 367	
T12	6,23,32,35,36,41,47,51,52,55,57,59,99,100,112,114,116, 119,136,141,156,162,173,192,202,200,205,207,209,211, 216,222,257,276,267,289,303,299,301,338,345,357,430, 451,454,461,457,467,	48
T13	54,56,58,62,64,66,70,94,119,121,131,174,208,258,268,2 84,308, 327, 294	19
	Total	221

Table 4.4 Maxims of manner (1),(2) and 3 in Y's speech sample

Since Y adhered to maxim of quantity which states that one has to give clear and sufficient information, he automatically observed maxims of manner number 3 and number 4. These maxims state that one has to be brief and orderly. Previous findings on maxims of quantity (in 4.1.1) show that Y always gave brief and orderly response. He always wait for his turn to reply. However, there were instances of Y violating this maxim such as in the following examples:

Example 20 Data T14 (lines 160-165)

160. G: What is your schedule?

161. Y: Of the Jedi

162. G: What is your schedule?
163. Y: Math
164. G: Math
165. Y: Of the Jedi

Example 21 Data T14 (lines 261- 266)

261. G: What do you do in Presint 9 school?
262. Y: Putrajaya
263. G: What do you do there?
264. Y: Gas
265. G: I don't want to guess, you tell me what do you do there?
266. Y: <laughing> ESSO

In contrast, in examples 20 and 21, Y violated maxims of manner because he was ambiguous and obscure although he was brief and orderly. In example 20, “Jedi” is a character in the movie “Star War” which he saw on the television. Unfortunately, the therapist had no clue of what Y was talking about and therefore, ignored Y’s utterances. In the assessment of Y according to LPA, this behavior is perhaps a way of initiating a new topic of discussion. Similarly, example 21 which was taken from the same conversation shows Y’s inability to make his expression clear. When G asked him what he did in school, he answered Putrajaya (name of place) instead of telling G the school activities. In line 263, G asked him again the same question, but he answered “gas” and this time G had

completely misunderstood Y and said that she did not want to guess. But, the following utterance “ESSO” reflects that Y is talking about a ‘gas station’ because there is an Esso gas station near his school. However, due to the misconception and ignorance the therapist, she brushed off the information and made Y’s utterances appeared ambiguous.

Finally, maxims of manner (3) states that in a conversation, the participants carry out their turns in an orderly manner. Each participant knows when it is their turn to speak although there is no written rule on the length of time and the order of turns. For this analysis, the researcher placed Y in a pair conversation and in a multiple conversational partners situation (for example, T13 shows Y in his classroom with his peers and teacher and T14 shows Y at a family friend’s house who has a 14 year old autistic son). In a pair conversation, the turn-taking is systematic because it involves only one speaker and one hearer. After all, Y only takes his turn when the partner ask question. Therefore, there is no overlapping of turn. The sequence went smoothly until the end of the conversations (refer to T1, T3,T4,T5,T8,T9,T10 and T14 in the appendix). In example 22, Y started the conversation by taking three turns consecutively because his conversational partner did not pay attention to him. So, Y reacted by speaking continuously to intimidate his partner or to initiate response.

Example 22 Data T7 (lines1-3)

1. Y: Nail clipper
2. Y: Cut nail
3. Y: It is long

<Y looked at his father's fingers while watching television in the lounge. He
was commenting on his father's nails and hair. His father was ignoring him. >

4. F: Ok, I will cut my nails tomorrow=
5. =now, let's watch tv
6. Y: cut hair at the barber

Example 23 Data T6 (lines 12-16)

12. Y: go home/ eat dinner
13. Y: fried rice, chicken and egg=
14. Y: =fried rice, chicken and egg
15. M: Ok, we will eat chicken and egg/but no fried rice
16. Y: white rice

Example 24 Data T8 (lines 1-10)

1. Y: Airport?
2. Y: Airport?
3. M: Oh! do you want to talk about airport?
4. Y: Yes
5. M: Okay/ What do you see at the airport?
6. Y: Aeroplanes, shops, helicopters, Mc Donald.
7. M: What else/ can you see/ at the airport?
8. Y: KFC, escalator, people =< points finger as he speak>

9. Y: =Daddy goes to the airport=
10. Y: =Daddy goes to Shanghai

In these three examples, Y did not observe the order of the conversation. He spoke persistently about his father's nails and hair cut and that he wanted response from his father immediately (example 22). Similarly, in example 23, Y is expressing his request that he would like "fried rice, chicken and egg" for dinner. He was very persistent about his demand and not willing to negotiate about the "fried rice." He replied "white rice" in line 16. Finally, in example 24, Y spoke consecutively by taking M's turn in line 2 by repeating the word "airport" and then assumed the turn-taking sequence after M spoke in line 3. The exchanges from hereon went smoothly until line 8. Y got excited about going to the airport to pick up Daddy who had gone to Shanghai (lines 8-10). This scenario reflects typical feature of an autistic child that they lose their focus when they are excited about something and tried to manipulate his hearer to talk about the topic that is favorable to them. Nevertheless, in Y situation, he generally observed the turn-taking sequence quite well because he does not have many conversational partners at one time. Transcripts T13 and T14 proved that when there were more than two participants in the group, Y became lost in the conversation because he does not have the skill to participate in a group conversation. Y was not able to make positive contribution to the discourse because due to his poor conversational skills. When he attempted to participate, he was often misinterpreted as being irrelevant because he did not have proper opening or closing. He changed topic frequently and usually produces word chunks instead of a complete sentence.

In general, Y observed all the maxims proposed by Grice. Although, he seems to violate some maxims, but the percentage is too little. Table 4.5 summarizes Y's observance of the four maxims. The maxim that has the lowest score is maxim of quality. This reflects Y's character who does not tell lies or give false information. Indeed, autistic children do not tell lies intentionally and if their utterances seem to be false it is actually manifestation of their weak language competence. This statement is justifiable in this study where three autistic teenagers were involved (James for the pilot study, Ahmad (A) in T13, and Yusoof (Y); and they all displayed similar level of language ability and similar level of observance of Grice's theory. They all speak out of context but they are not giving false information. Based on the researcher's experience and contact with the three autistic teenagers, it shows that they appear to observe maxim of quality consistently.

Types of maxim	Observance	Percentage
<p>Quantity</p> <p>1. make your contribution as informative as required</p> <p>2. do not make your contribution more informative than is required</p>	150	27%
<p>Quality</p> <p>1. do not say what you believe to be false</p> <p>2. do not say what for which you lack adequate evidence</p>	26	4.7%
<p>Relation</p> <p>Be relevant</p>	221	40.5%

Manner		
1.Avoid obscurity of expression.	221	40.5%
2.Avoid ambiguity.		
3.Be brief.		
4.Be orderly.		
Total utterance produced= 545		

Table 4.5 Summary of Y observance to Grice maxims

In terms of other maxims, Y generally observes all of them. However, he still requires extensive communicative therapy to improve his conversational skills. From the data collected, Y produced 150 utterances for maxim of quality; 221 utterances for maxim of quantity and 221 utterances for maxim of manner out of 545 utterances. The number of maxim observed is relatively low compared to the number of utterances he produced. According to Grice's theory, this is inadequate for Y to have meaningful conversation. With more understanding from the people around him (for example his teachers and his therapists), Y's ability to communicate will improve if he is given more opportunity to express himself. The goal for his immediate contacts from hereon, should be to raise Y's observance of the three maxims (quality, quantity and manner) to above 70%.

4.2 CONVERSATIONAL SKILLS OF THE SUBJECT ACCORDING TO SSJ MODEL

This section describes Y's verbal behaviours in his daily conversations with various contacts and in various domains. The behaviours that were focused on are as the followings:

- | | | | |
|-------|-------------------|-------|-------------|
| 4.2.1 | turn-taking | 4.2.4 | latching |
| 4.2.2 | adjacency pair | 4.2.5 | overlapping |
| 4.2.3 | topic maintenance | 4.2.6 | repetition. |

4.2.1 turn-taking

In this study, Y observed turn-taking sequence quite consistently in a pair conversation for example in T1, T2, T3 and T4 where it involved only Y and his conversational partner. However, when placed in a group, Y was left out of the conversation because he did not know how to take turn unless he was invited. According to Bellini (2008), children with ASD are often excluded from social activities because of their poor social skills (ex. turn-taking and initiating a conversation) which often preclude them from establishing meaningful social relationships. This is evident in example 25 below:

Example 25 Data T12 (lines 1-17)

1. A: Please call me Ahmad.
2. R: Ok. Can I call you something else?
3. A: No, I don't want. Please, please. Don't don't.
4. F: No no, don't don't.
5. R: Azzari, azzari, talk to Ahmad, Azzari. Show Ahmad what are the animals. Come, tell tell tell Ahmad.
6. Y: What are the animals?
7. A: Please call me Ahmad.
8. R: Ok Ahmad. Come talk about the animals.
9. A: Don't call me Fawwaz.
10. R: Ah?
11. A: Don't call me Fawwaz.
12. R: Ok ok.
13. A: Please la call me Ahmad.
14. R: Ok, Azzari.
15. F: Azzari, describe the animal abang.
16. R: Abang, can you describe the animals to Ahmad? This one, kata Ahmad... (*say Ahmad*)
17. Y: [[Ahmad.
18. R: This is...

In this example, Y only spoke in line 6 after R coaxed him to say something to Ahmad (A). Taking turn is particularly difficult in a bigger group especially if there is a dominating participant such as A who persistently repeated himself. A did not leave a gap for Y to take the floor. Y, on the other hand, did not attempt to step in because he had nothing to contribute to the topic.

Example 26 Data T11 (lines 12-27)

12. Y: It's a DVD.
13. T: Kalau zaman dulu, zaman P.Ramlee lagi besar dia punya...dipanggil piring? (*What did people listen to during P.Ramlee era ?*)
14. S: Piring besar. (*big plate*)
15. T: Bukan piring besar. Piring hitam. (*No, not big plate. Record*)
16. S: Piring hitam. (*Record*)
17. Y: <Singing song>
18. T: Ha...piring hitam besar. Dia bulat...lepas tu bunyi, getaran jiwa... (*Ha, Big record. It is round and can produce sound*)
19. Y: <Singing song>
20. Y: DVD.
21. S: Oh, yang macam...macam muzium. Piring yang besar (*Oh! like those in the museums. Big record.*)
22. T: Ha. Macam yang muzium tu. (*Ha! Just like the national museum*)
23. S: Ada lagi? (*Is there anymore record today*)
24. T: Ada lagi. (*Yes*)

25. S: Ada jual lagi ke cikgu? (*Do they still sell?*)
26. T: Ada kat Muzium. Ada la kat muzium. (*They still have at the museum*)
27. S: Ada jual lagi ke? (*Do they still sell them?*)

In example 26, Y was not given a chance to explain about DVD because T and S were talking about music record and about Malaysia legendary artist, P.Ramlee. She talked about the leisure activity people did in the early days, when there was no DVD; and that people listened to P.Ramlee from the gramophone. In these two examples, Y did not take his turn appropriately because of his inability to contribute to the topic of discussion. His utterances did not relate to the context (Grice, 1975) and did not have referent (Lucas, 1980) and in addition, he did not observe the turn taking sequence suggested by SSJ model (refer below);

TURN	1	2	3	4
SPEAKER	A	B	A	B

The failure to take his turn is due to his poor social and communication skills. Y did not have the knowledge that he was supposed to participate in a group conversation and not wait to be invited. According to Gray & Garand (1993), persons with autism have impairment in the ability to read and understand social situations, to respond appropriately to relevant social cues, and to shift attention as necessary. They have deficit in language processing and non-verbal communications and may miss the cue that they are supposed to participate.

In the following instances, Y missed his turns because he was singing or was silent such as;

Example 27 Data T4 (lines 1-5)

1. Y : Sotong. (squid)
2. D: Sotong apa? (What squid?)
3. Y:
4. D: Sotong apa, Yusoof? (what squid, Yusoof?)
5. Y:

Example 28 Data T4 (lines 14-19)

14. D: When are we going to Corrus Hotel?
15. Y:
16. D: When are we going to Corrus Hotel?
17. Y: Monday.
18. D: No, today is Tuesday. We are going to Corrus Hotel tomorrow.
When are we going to Corrus Hotel? So.....,
19. Y:

Silence during his turn to speak reflects several cognitive disabilities such as lack of understanding of the question and lack of focus. For instance, in line 18-19 (example 28) Y had to use logic of what day tomorrow is. This requires some information processing and time which people around him are not willing to wait. In addition, Y's could have lost his attention of the topic because F was spending too much time on the same issue. Therefore, Y was not able to return to the topic and make contribution. Autistic people are known to have short attention span and slow cognitive processing skill. Therefore, they require more time to understand information and to respond (Reed, 1994). Most of them however, are not able to do these during their turns. Consequently, the delay leaves a gap in the conversational exchanges and they often miss their turns.

4.2.2 Adjacency Pair

Adjacency pair (AP) refers to consecutive, contingently related utterances produced by two speakers (Thomas, 1995). It must have two turns, placed next to each other and are ordered. The following illustrations are taken from Liddicoat (2007:107)

(1) question-answer

John: What time's it?

Betty: Three uh'clock.

(2) greeting-greeting

Amy: Hello.

Jenny: Hi.

(3) summon-answer

Terry: hey, Paul.

Paul : uh, yeah.

(4) telling-accept

John: I've jus' finish my las' exam

Betty: that's great.

These examples show the pairwise fashion of most conversational structures and show how AP keeps a conversation going as it initiates the hearer to respond to the preceding turns and therefore, constraint the topic from getting out of context. AP determines how the conversation will proceed and will generate more related sequences. The basic sequence of AP is closely related to turn-taking because it makes speaker change a relevant next action.

The following discussion will focus on the display of AP in Y's speech. Data from example 29 (data T1) show a systematic and organized sequence of AP between Y and R because the researcher used two travel brochures to keep Y focused and to control the topic of discussion. Y was less anxious and less distracted to shift topic because the attractive

brochures helped him to continue talking about the pictures. Examples of dialogues from this data are shown below;

Example 29 Data T1 (lines 7-15)

- 1 .M: Look at this picture. What are they doing?
2. Y: Walking on the beach, sea side, blue.
3. M: Good boy!! What about the turtles? Can you tell me about the turtles?
4. Y: Swimming, in the water < accompanied by a laugh >
5. M: Lets look at the next brochure. What do you see?
6. Y: A'Famosa, river, museum, bullock cart, Melaka historical city
< pointing to the title of the brochure >
- 7 M: Look at the man . 'what's he doing?
8. Y: Taking photograph, tourist.
9. M: Rrr..iight. Where is he taking the photograph?
- 10.Y: In front of A'Famosa.

In this example, there are five APs. Each pair is completed because Y responded. The first pair part (FPP), which is line 1 and 2 generated the second pair part (SPP) line 3 and 4 and so on. M had to ask many questions because Y contributed minimally to the conversation. Refer to example 30, data T3, (lines 11-19);

Example 30 Data T3 (lines 11-19)

11. M: How was the food?
12. Y: =delicious! Restaurant?
<M gave a confused look, Y responds>
13. Y: I want to go to restaurant.
14. M: Why? You just finished breakfast.=
15. Y: =to eat butter prawn at Palace of the Golden Horses <name of a hotel>
16. M: <quiet, no response, looks loss>
17. Y: Do you like butter prawn?
<no response>
18. M: Is it delicious?
19. Y: Yes

In this example, the FPP did not generate the next SPP because Y was repeating the same utterance “I want to go to restaurant” instead of generating new related utterance. In addition, there was role-reversal taking place here, Y was speaking first (when M gave nonverbal response during her turn) in line 17. The sequence of AP now was Y speak first, then M, then Y again and then M. Thus, Y had broken the sequential chain. However, although Y was now the first speaker, he did not initiate the next SPP. M being the second speaker was still prompting Y to produce subsequent AP. This scenario takes place in all the transcripts (except T1) because the recordings were not guided as in T1. In the rest of the data, the conversations were not guided. Therefore, Y was not able to stay on the topics and as a result, he produced many unrelated utterances which is not unusual for autistic

children because of their attention deficit, they tend to express disconnected ideas. Further examples of lack of AP in the subject are listed here:

Example 31 Data T11 (lines 16-23)

16. F: No, his occupation. What is the man's occupation?
17. Y: Duckling.
18. F: No, but the man's occupation. What's the man's occupation?
19. Y: <Watching television>
20. F: Where does he lives abang?
21. Y: Cameron Highlands.
22. F: It is in England abang.
23. Y: England.

Example 32 Data T13 (lines 28-37)

28. T: Yuri Azzari? Correct? Never mind. Tinggal? Tinggal kat mana? Azzari kat mana? You duduk kat mana?
29. Y: Azzari.
30. T: Tinggal kat mana?
31. Y: King night...bin bon Rizal.
32. T: Ok. Ahh...apa yang Azzari suka? Ah? Kartun?
33. Y: Fantastic Four.
34. T: Fantastic Four. Lagi?
35. Y: Incredibles.
36. T: Incredible Hulk.

37. Y: Incredibles.

Example 33 Data T14 (lines 267-276)

267. G: Are you doing work?

268. Y: Alone

269. G: You're doing work alone

270. Y: (Laughing) stamp

271. G: Later, later. Tell me what do you like to do at school? Besides study, math, English and working. What do you like?

272. Y: Snack(singing)

273. G: Study. Do you like to do a lot of study in school?

274. Y: Yes(singing)

275. G: Study./ you like to study. / let's write down study // is that true?

276. Y: Yes, snack

As mentioned earlier, AP sequence is closely related to turn-taking system whereby first speaker makes a statement, second speaker who understands the statement respond appropriately and then goes back to first speaker (Liddicoat, 2007). Thus, one cycle is completed. In examples 31, 32 and 33, the subject fulfilled the order of AP sequence whereby each sequence was completed. However, the contents of the utterances are not informative and cannot help generate new adjacent utterances. This happens because many autistic children like the subject lack understanding of the previous talk (Conti-Ramsden, 1992); and as such had difficulty producing adjacent pairs.

4.2.3 Topic maintenance

Topic maintenance refers to staying on the topic during a conversation. It is one of the skills known to be lacking in children with autism and related disorder. Among the reasons are restricted interest, short attention span and difficulty in distinguishing relevant and irrelevant information, identifying sounds and reading body language in a speech. When we listen to a conversation, we have to direct our attention to the person speaking to us and simultaneously process the sounds of the words and the body language. With these interplay of activities that are going on in a speech, children with autism face a challenging task to stay on focus during a conversation. In this study, the subject illustrated this difficulty and how it impaired his social and communication skills.

Example 34 Data T6 (lines 1-6)

1. D: Do you want some *kacang*?
2. Y: Yes.
3. Y: [at the playground
4. D: At the playground?= What do you see at the playground?
<silent>
5. Y: At the cinema? < pointing his finger into the face of D>

Example 35 Data T14 (lines 68-86)

68. Y: Nak minum..(*I want to drink*)
69. G: You can ask-
70. Y: *Jelatik*..Teacher can have some water?
71. G: Very good
72. Y: Tick...
73. G: Take the water icon first
74. Y: (Laughing)
75. G: Good
76. Y: (Laughing while drinking water) Snack
77. Y: *Drink. Ape. Dandruff*
78. G: I have no dandruff
79. Y: Dandruff(laughing)
80. G: OK,finish?
81. Y: Finnish
82. G: What are we pointing to do now?
83. Y: 'My *reading*', brain gym
84. G: Brain gym,but today no music. so we're going to do brain gym
without...?
85. Y: <silent>
86. G: Without mu..
87. Y: [sic
88. Y: Without music ok? Keep the chair first.
89. Y: Teacher Grace , duduk

90. Y: Sit down, sit down
91. Y : My *hair* is brown
92. G: No,your hair is dark
93. Y: Brown
94. Y: Dark brown
95. Y: My hair is brown (implying Grace hair is brown)
96. G: My...Oh, your hair is brown. Teacher's hair is brown because of the sunlight

In example 34, there are five exchanges and Y shifted topic twice, which are “ at the playground” and “at the cinema”. In example 35, there are sixty-one exchanges and Y shifted topic six times. The topics are “ Nak minum, Jelatik, Drink, Ape, Dandruff, Hair, and Snack. “ Y changed topic abruptly during his turns instead of elaborating or reciprocating appropriately to keep the topic going. He did not make related comments about the topic introduced by his conversational partner; or initiate proper openings and closings to each topic. The topics did not change in stepwise fashion. This awkwardness makes his utterances choppy and disconnected. This is evidenced in all the data collected and shows that Y had inability to maintain a topic.

4.2.4 Latching

Another noticeable feature in Y's daily conversation is latching. This term refers to when one spate of talk directly follows another, with no discernible pause. The speaker continued to speak on another line even though he was interrupted (Psathas, 1995). The symbol used to represent latching is (=) . In this study, Y displayed some examples of latching such as in, T6, T7, T8, T14 (the excerpts are shown below)

Example 36 Data T6 (line 1-16)

1. D: do you want some kacang (peanuts)?
2. Y: =yes
3. Y: =at the playground

This behaviour appeared again in the same conversation in line 8-9;

8. Y: nnn....no. eat popcorn, kacang, watch the movie / Ice Age
9. Y: `=at the cinema

After a while, Y started talking again and went up to his father and said;

12. Y: go home/eat dinner
13. Y: =fried rice, chicken and egg?
- 14: Y: =fried rice, chicken and egg
15. D: OK, we will eat chicken and egg / but no fried rice.
16. Y: White rice ! <pointing his index finger in the air>

In this example, Y continued talking about dinner although he was interrupted by D in line 15. D tried to stop Y from repeating “fried rice, chicken and egg” but Y persisted talking about the same topic. This pattern can be equated to the term perseveration in Lucas perspective and almost similar to repetition because when Y latches in line 14, he repeats the same line because to emphasize his intent and tried to influence his hearer to listen to his request. Similarly, in example 37,

Example 37 Data T7 (line 1-5)

1. Y: Nail clipper
2. Y: Cut nail
3. Y: It is long

< Y looks at his father’s fingers while watching television in the lounge. He was commenting on the father’s nails and hair, too>

4. F: OK, I will cut my nails tomorrow.= Now, lets watch tv. please pass me some peanuts.
5. Y: Cut hair at the barber.

Another reason why sometimes Y latches is because he has high anxiety level. He did not have the patience to wait for his conversational partner to respond; and he wanted to achieve his gratification instantly (in this case, he wants F to cut his hair at that moment).

The occurrence of latching in the data is summarized below;

Data	T6	T7	T8	T12	T14	T2
Line no.	2-3	1-3	1-2	97-98	11-12	7-8
	8-9		8-10		87-89	
	12-14				96-98	
					141-142	
					228-230	

Table 4.6 Display of latched utterances in Y's speech

4.2.5 Repetition

One of the trademarks of children with autism is that they like to repeat themselves. They do this to achieve their goals for example, to get what they want or to initiate a conversation. In this study, Y expressed his desire to go to the movie in T5 but this was not fulfilled and therefore, he repeated the desire in T6. This situation reflects Y dissatisfaction about not being taken to the movie yet. The excerpts of both data are shown here.

Example 38 Data T5 (lines4-7)

4. Y: Ice Age ! <name of a movie>.
5. M: Do you / want to watch a movie?
<Y remains silent and looks away>
6. M: Do you / want to watch a movie?
7. Y: Ice Age; pop corn, *kacang*

Example 39 Data T6 (lines 3-9)

3. Y: [at the playground
4. D: At the playground?= What do you see at the playground?
5. <silent>
6. Y: At the cinema? < pointing his finger into the face of D>
7. B: No *abang*. =we are at the playground=Come go on the swing.
8. Y: Nnn....no. Eat popcorn, kacang, watch the movie. // Ice Age.
9. Y: =at the cinema.

In another instance, such as example 40, Y wanted his father to go to the barber. He repeated the idea about going to the barber three times in this conversation.

Example 41 Data T7 (lines 1-9)

1. Y: Nail clipper
2. Y: Cut nail
3. Y: It is long

< Y looks at his father's fingers while watching television in the lounge. He was commenting on the father's nails and hair, too>

4. F: OK, I will cut my nails tomorrow.= Now, lets watch tv. B, please pass me the peanuts.
5. Y: B cut hair at the barber <while looking and pointing at the younger brother>
6. F: OK, tomorrow, we will cut our hair. Who cuts hair/ *abang*?
7. Y: Barber.
8. F: Good.= What does a barber use to cut hair?
9. Y: Scissors, shaver!

Example 41 Data T8 (lines 1-10)

In other recordings such as example 41 (dataT8), Y repeated the word "airport" several times because he wanted to go to the airport and to initiate a conversation,

1. Y: Airport
2. Y: Airport

3. M: Oh! do you want to talk about airport?
4. Y: Yes
5. M: Okay/ What do you see at the airport?
6. Y: Aeroplanes, shops, helicopters, Mc Donald.
7. M: What else/ can you see/ at the airport?
8. Y: KFC, escalator, people =< points finger as he speak>
9. Y: =Daddy goes to the airport
10. Y: =Daddy goes to Shanghai

Y's repetition showed some noticeable patterns such as that he repeated single phrase; repeated several lines consecutively; takes a break then repeated again. These patterns showed up in example 42;

Example 42 Data T14 (lines 1-12)

1. Y: Jelatik
2. G: sit down. How are you?
3. Y: I am fine, thank you.
4. G: Are you happy today?
5. Y: Going to Jelatik.
6. G: Do you feel happy today?
7. Y: Yes, Jelatik
8. G: Good. Sure ah, you feel happy ah? Do you want to sing hello song?
9. Y:.... (silent)

10. G: Do you want to sing hello song?
11. Y: Yes, Jelatik... (Singing song)
12. Y: Jelatik

Y repeated the word “Jelatik “ again in line 66-70.

68. Y: Nak minum..(*I want to drink*)
69. G: You can ask.
70. Y: Jelatik. Teacher can have some water ?

The excerpts above show that the repetitive words serve the function to initiate as proposed by Reed (1994) who claimed that “repetition in children with autism serves the pragmatic functions to request or to initiate a conversation”. This terminology “repetitive” corresponds with the concept “verbal perseverance” used by Lucas (1980). To summarize this finding, Y’s repetition shows some noticeable patterns such as:

- i. repeats a single phrase,
- ii. repeats several lines consecutively and
- iii. takes a break and then repeats the topic again

4.2.6 Overlapping

When one person talks while another is still talking, it is called overlapping. This phenomena is indicated by ([) at the start of the overlapping (Liddicoat; 2007). Overlapping occurs when the next speaker does not observe the transition relevance place

(TRP) which is the “moment” or “place” where turn-taking transition takes place (SSJ; 1980). For example,

M: I was glad [you came

E; [and yer friends] are so darling

(Heritage; 1984:198)

This phenomena is also present in Y’s speech such as in the following examples:

Example 43 Data T14 (lines 17-18; 209-210; 233-234)

17. G: This is last // [week

18. Y: [last week

209. G: Do you [like / that?

210. Y: [like that?

233. G: want to do one last sheet, / [one last?

234. Y: [minum

Example 44 Data T2 (lines 10-11)

10. M: Yes, Daddy will buy some chocolate [and t-shirts

11. Y; [chocolate and t-shirts

Example 45 Data T3 (lines 18-19)

18. M: Is it deli [cious ?
19. Y: [y...es

Example 46 Data T10 (lines 28-29; 35-36; 41-42;)

28. I: sit first, sit first, okay, after brain gym / [what will you do?
29. Y: [rest
35. I: and [then...
36. Y: [art, shower
41. I: no, no, not yet. You don't wan to do any work, [at all ?
42. Y: [rest

The above examples illustrate Y's pattern of overlapping. The overlapping normally takes place at the end of the first speaker's turn and when there is a break indicated by the symbol (/) such as example 46. In addition, Y has the ability to anticipate what the other speakers next word will be and therefore, he interrupted in order to control the direction of the conversation (example 46, line 35). When he interrupted at inappropriate TRP, overlapping occurs. Another unique feature of overlapping in Y's speech is the motivational factor. He did not overlap to take over the floor as in the speech of normal people but rather due to anxiety to impose his intent such as in examples 44 and 45. In example 44, he overlapped the phrase "chocolate and t-shirts" because he wanted his father to buy these items at the airport. In example 43, he persistently overlapped with

G by saying “rest” because he did not want to hear G say anything else. In general, Y’s overlaps to make a stand and not to take over the floor. The table below summarizes the occurrence of overlap in Y’s speech.

Data	Line number	No.of overlap
T2	10-11	1
T3	21-22	1
T5	11-12	1
T7	6-7	1
T9	40-41	1
T10	1-2, 28-29, 35-36,41-42, 47-48, 63-64, 98-99	7
T12	26-27, 101-102, 266-267, 472-473	4
	TOTAL	16

Table 4.7 Display of overlaps in Y’s speech

The table above reflects the relatively small number of overlaps that take place in Y’s daily interaction (from 14 transcripts). It only emerges in seven transcripts. This behaviour is the least disturbing in Y’s communication deficit compared to repetition.

4.3 PRAGMATIC SKILLS OF THE SUBJECT ACCORDING TO LPA

This study discovers that the subject has some pragmatic disability in his daily conversation. This finding is based on LPA (1980) which was designed to assess pragmatic skills for children who have been diagnosed with language disorder. Therefore, the researcher feels LPA is a suitable tool to assess the pragmatic skills of the subject. There are nine questions in LPA. The result of the analysis is discussed below:

4.3.1 Does the child's language contain objects, actions and events in a variety of relationship?

Yes, in the data collected, Y displayed some examples of the above elements in his speech such as in the following excerpts:

Example 47 Data T2 (lines 1-3)

- 1: Y: Blanket
- 2: M: Do better
- 3: Y: Where is my blanket?

Example 48 Data T3 (lines 3-10)

- 3: M: What did you have for breakfast?
- 4: Y: Wang (*money*)

5. M: What did you have for breakfast this morning?
6. Y: I see
7. M: No, not I see. Say "I had"
8. Y: I had
9. M: [nasi lemak, chicken < M tried to initiate Y to respond appropriately>
10. Y: =nugget, egg

Example 49 Data T11 (lines 95-98)

95. I: Yusoof color *apa tu?* (what are you coloring?)
- 96: Y: strawberry
- 97: I: strawberry. Strawberry *warna apa?* (what color is the strawberry?)
98. Y: merah (*red*)

Example 50 Data: T10 (lines 73-77)

- 73: G: Take the water icon, first. < the psychologist asking Y to take the cue card with the picture of water from the visual chart>
- 74: Y: <picks the card and laughs>, snack!
- 75: Y: Drink, ape, dandruff < continues to giggle>
- 76: G: I have no dandruff.
- 77: Y: Dandruff < giggles and looks at G>

Example 51 Data T5 (lines 6-7)

6: M: Do you want to watch a movie?

7: Y: Ice Age, pop corn, kacang (*peanut*)

*Ice Age is the name of a movie

The use of objects (which are underlined) in his speech were present in all the transcripts. However, he did not elaborate the objects by giving more information. For example, in T11 there were nineteen examples of the use of objects at different points of the conversation. In T8, there were eight instances of objects throughout the seventeen exchanges between Y and M (mother). The number of object corresponds to the length of the conversation. The longer the conversation, the more objects were found. The objects were usually nouns. Y usually mentioned object when he responded to the interlocutor's question " such as pop corn, kacang in example 51 (above); wang in example 48, and strawberry in example 49. Next, Y used objects to express his desire, for example in T10, he repeated the word "snack" four times in different turns as a way to escape from the task of finishing the therapy session. We can conclude that the object "snack" in example 50, was used as a representation of his feeling of boredom with the task, based on Blakemore (1992) explanation on understanding utterances. She said that the audience must recognize the intended communication in order for the conversation to be relevant, particularly when an utterance is repeated so many times. The hearer must recognize the context in which the utterance is expressed. In this example, it is quite obvious that the object "snack" reflects

more than just food but rather as a sign of boredom since the therapy session was already one hour.

Another example of the use of object, was example 52, where Y uttered the word “blanket” because he wanted to sleep. In this instance, he mentioned an object to start a conversation. Normally, Y’s mother will expand on the object mentioned to teach him to ask in complete sentence such as in lines 3 and 4:

Example 52 Data T2 (lines 1-4)

1. Y: blanket
2. M: do better
3. Y: where is my blanket?
4. M: Okay, here is your blanket.

Example 53 Data T8 (lines 1-6)

1. Y: airport
2. Y: airport
3. M: Oh! Do you want to talk about airport?
4. Y: Yes
5. M: Okay! What do you see at the airport?
6. Y: aeroplanes, shops, helicopters, Mc.Donald.

Since his mother has knowledge of Y's language problem, she tried to expand on the object that Y uttered by asking many questions on the topic. This is one of the strategies recommended by Ann Quill (1997) to expand an autistic child's verbal communication skill. In conclusion, Y used objects in his speech for two functions such as making a request and starting a conversation.

As for the use of action, Y exhibited several examples of the use of action words in his speech, such as in the following examples:

Example 54 Data T2 ((lines 9 -12)

7. Y: pick up at airport
8. M: We will go to airport with your brother and sister.
9. Y: go to airport. eat at Burger King, buy chocolate.

Example 55 Data T3 (lines 13- 15)

13. Y: I want to go to restaurant
14. M: Why? You just finished breakfast =
15. Y: =to eat butter prawn at the Palace of Golden Horses Hotel

Example 56 Data T7 (lines 1- 5)

1. Y: nail clipper
2. Y: cut nail
3. Y: it is long
4. F: ok, I will cut my nails tomorrow.=now, let's watch tv.
5. Y: cut hair at the barber

Example 57 Data T6 (lines 6 – 8)

6. Y: At the cinema? < pointing his fingers into the face of D >
7. B: No abang. = we are at the playground = come go on the swing
8. Y: Nnn....no. Eat popcorn, kacang, watch the movie // Ice Age

The above examples show that the subject knew when to include action in his speech. The usage was appropriate such as in example 55, he displayed two examples of action verbs such as “I want to go to a restaurant” and “to eat prawns...” . In the latter phrase, Y was able to combine *infinitive to* in his action phrase. This is rather interesting as it requires a good grasp of the knowledge of grammar. In example 54, Y expressed his desire to go to airport through the phrase pick up because his father was coming home on this day. In this situation, action words were used as imposition that he wanted to pick up Daddy from the airport and to do other things such as eating burger and buying chocolates. In another interesting perspective, Y also used action words to reflect the event he was

looking forward to which was picking up Daddy at the airport. Other examples of expressions of events are in:

Example 58 DataT4 (lines 12-21)

12. D: Do you want some eggs?
13. Y: Go Corrus Hotel?
14. D: When are we going to Corrus Hotel?
15. Y: < silent >
16. D: When are we going to Corrus Hotel?
17. Y: Monday
18. D: No, today is Tuesday. We are going tomorrow. So,
when are we going to Corrus Hotel?
19. Y: < silent >
20. D: Wednesday
21. Y: tomorrow

In this example, the event that Y was talking about was a stay at Corrus Hotel to celebrate New Year eve (refer to the rest of the conversation in Appendix A). In T4, there were two examples of events which were “going to Corrus Hotel” and “celebrate New Year” (line 24). He was able to combine action verbs with the event appropriately. It seemed like Y possess reasonable knowledge of syntax that he seldom made grammatical errors in his sentences or phrases. He was able to use the correct verbs and tenses in many of his utterances.

The question whether the object, actions and events were expressed in a variety of relationships is clear here as Y was able to produce different utterances with these elements. For instance, in example 58, Y did not respond to his father's question which was about eggs. Instead, he mentioned an event "to the Corrus Hotel" which has no relationship to eggs.

4.3.2 Does the child use a variety of forms to express a variety of functions?

Yes, the subject used a variety of forms to express a variety of functions. However, the variety is limited to two forms namely the interrogative form and the declarative form. Interrogative form is used to ask question while the latter form is used to make a statement or to initiate conversation. The use of interrogative form is illustrated in the following data:

Example 59 Data T2 (lines 5 – 13)

5 Y: Where is my blanket?

6 M: K, here is your blanket? What must we do before we sleep?

7 Y: Read Al-Fatihah..... where is Daddy?

(lines 12-13)

12 Y: When is Daddy coming back?

13. M: Tomorrow. Now, go to sleep?

There is limited example of the use of interrogative form in the samples collected. The researcher consulted Y's parents about this issue and they confirmed that Y still had problem with asking question. Most of the time Y made declarative statement in his daily interaction. He seldom ask question. The parents usually made guesses of his intent from the declarative forms that Y uttered by observing the non-verbal features such as rising his tone, raising his index finger and coming closer to his hearer. If these behaviours accompany his utterance, then, it was most likely that would it be a question or a request. For instance;

Example 60 Data T5 (lines 9 -11)

6. Y: y.....yes. Mummy go the office =
7. M: Why do you want me to go to the office? = Why?
8. Y: Because / I want to sleep.

When Y uttered line 6, he accompanied the statement with non-verbal features mentioned above. Another example of this pattern is in,

Example 61 Data T6 (lines 12-16)

9. Y: go home / eat dinner = ? <looking into the face of M>
10. Y: =fried rice, chicken and egg =
11. Y: =fried rice, chicken and egg
12. M: ok, we will eat chicken and egg / but no fried rice!
13. Y: white rice? <pointing his index finger in the air>

In line 12 (example 61), Y's intention was to ask "Can we go home to eat dinner?" He however, did not use the modal verb or question marker "can" and thus, gave the impression to his hearer that he was making a declarative statement. One of the problems noted among children with autism or language disorder is the absence of function words in their speech (Long, 1994). Their speech contains mostly content words. Bartolucci and Steiner (1980) who conducted a study on the use of functors among autistic children claimed that autistic subjects omitted function words frequently and independently of the grammatical complexity of their language. Therefore, this phenomena explains Y inability to form questions appropriately and that he prefers to use declarative statement. This is one of the shortcomings in the speech of Y and that is something he is still working on with his therapists.

4.3.3 Are the child's utterance appropriate to the context?

Yes and no. The subject utterances sometimes matched the context and sometimes did not.

For example,

Example 62 Data T13 (lines 36-43)

36. T: Your dad's name?
37. Y: Rizal
38. T: Nama ayah...nama ayah.....nama ayah? *What is your dad's name?*
39. Y: Dumbledore
40. T: Nama ayah apa? Azzari tinggal kat mana? *What is your dad's name?*
Where do you live?
41. Y: <singing a song>
42. T: Ah.....! Tinggal kat mana? *Where do you live?*
43. Y: Yuri Azzari

Example 63 Data T11 (lines 24-29)

24. F: What is the man's occupation abang?
25. Y: Bath tub
26. F: What ?
27. Y: A bath tub
28. F: No, his occupation. What is the man's occupation?
29. Y: Duckling

Example 64 Data T11 (lines 254-261)

254. F: What are they doing abang? What are they doing abang?
255. F: Umm he puts coffee
256. Y: Perut (*stomach*)
257. F: He's boiling some
258. Y: < screaming >
259. F: Azzari....
260. Y: Boiling
261. Y: Perut (*stomach*)

In example 62, Y did not respond appropriately to T (teacher) for example in line 38, when the teacher asked him about his dad's name, he answered Dumbledore. In this example, he repeated Dumbledore (a character in the movie Harry Porter) twice, which is a topic that he may want to talk about but was not acknowledged by the teacher. Since Y enjoys going to the movie; it is relevant to assume that he wanted to talk about it. Next, in example 64, Y gave wrong answers to the question about occupation. He knew what occupation meant but he answered bath tub and duckling. This similar situation also occurred in example 59, where he answered perut (*stomach*) when his father (F) was talking about making coffee. Several irrelevant utterances occurred in the data collected and the number vary according to the length of conversation. In longer conversation, he produced more irrelevant sentences while in shorter conversation he produced nil or less irrelevant utterances. For example, in T13, there are 388 exchanges between Y and F (father), Y produced 137 utterances in this conversation of which 44 are out of context

phrases (32%). In T2, Y produced 9 relevant utterances out of 14 exchanges. In this data, both Y and M (mother) were talking about picking up daddy at the airport which is something that Y looked forward to. Therefore, he was more focused and spoke in context.

One possible explanation for Y's reaction in longer conversation is that he wanted to restructure the conversation. He was trying to redirect his conversational partner to introduce new topic as he found the present one daunting ; or he wanted to take over the turn-taking order. He may be impatient to talk about what he had in mind as his father had taken two turns and talked about "making coffee" which could be boring to him. This is illustrated in lines 254-255, example 64;

254. F: What are they doing abang? What are they doing abang?

255. F: Umm he puts coffee

256. Y: Perut (*stomach*)

On the other hand, there were several instances where Y displayed appropriate utterances such as in:

Example 65 Data T10 (lines1-7)

1. Y: Jelatik
2. G: Sit down. How are you?
3. Y: I am fine, thank you.
4. G: Do you feel happy today?

5. Y: Yes, Jelatik

Example 66 Data T10 (lines 96-99)

96. I: Yusoof, color apa tu? (*what are you coloring?*)

97. Y: Strawberry

98. I: Strawberry. Strawberry warna apa? (*what color*)

99. Y: Merah (*red*)

Example 67 Data T8 (lines 1-17)

1. Y: Airport?

2. Y: Airport?

3. M: Oh! do you want to talk about airport?

4. Y: Yes

5. M: Okay/ What do you see at the airport?

6. Y: Aeroplanes, shops, helicopters, Mc Donald.

7. M: What else/ can you see/ at the airport?

8. Y: KFC, escalator, people =< points finger as he speak>

9. Y: =Daddy goes to the airport

10. Y: =Daddy goes to Shanghai

11. M: Yes, he will buy some chocolates= Do you miss him?

12. Y: Y..yes!

13. M: Tonight, we can have dinner together / the whole family= I will
cook

rice, chicken curry, and fish

14. Y: [fried chicken
15. M: No, chicken curry
16. Y: Fried rice?
17. M: White rice!= Ok, we are here (at the airport)

Note: They reached the airport and had the food Y asked for.

In examples 65, 66 and 67, the subject's reaction to the context was very positive. He produced utterances that were appropriate and had referents. In example 67, the referent here was the airport and its connection to the absence of his father. Whenever, daddy goes away, the family will go to the airport to send him off and will pick him up when he returns. According to Lucas (1980), a hearer must be able to identify the speaker's referent or contextual referent in order to maintain the conversation. Therefore, M (mother) was able to identify immediately Y's intention when he mentioned "airport" at the beginning of the conversation (lines 1-2). This indicates that Y produced utterances appropriate to context if the factors such as topic and duration of conversation were relevant to him.

4.3.4 Does the child answer question appropriately or does the child just respond?

In the samples collected from Y it shows that he only responds. For example,

Example 68 Data T 7 (lines 6-8)

6. F: OK, tomorrow, we will cut our hair. Who cuts hair/ *abang*?
7. Y: Barber.
8. F: Good.= What does a barber use to cut hair?
9. Y: Scissors, shaver!

Example 69 Data T8 (lines 2-8)

2. Y: Airport?
3. M: Oh! do you want to talk about airport?
4. Y: Yes
5. M: Okay/ What do you see at the airport?
6. Y: Aeroplanes, shops, helicopters, Mc Donald.
7. M: What else/ can you see/ at the airport?
8. Y: KFC, escalator, people =< points finger as he speak>

Example 70 Data T11 (lines 1-6)

1. F: What are we watching, abang?
2. Y: Asian Food Channel
3. F: That's the channel abang. But //
4. Y: = AFC
5. F: But, what's the name of the programme?
6. Y: 703

In these examples, Y only responded and did not answer questions in detail. This is very typical of the subject conversational style whereby he never elaborated a topic.

Nevertheless, the subject understood questions directed to him. This reflects his cognitive processing ability.

4.3.5 Does the child initiate or create new utterances in new contexts?

Yes, the subject initiated new utterances but they were ambiguous and were often misunderstood by his hearer. Examples of this effort are evidenced in examples 71, 72 and 73.

Example 71 Data T10 (lines 1-13)

1. Y: Jelatik
2. G: sit down. How are you?
3. Y: I am fine, thank you.
4. G: Are you happy today?
5. Y: Going to Jelatik.
6. G: Do you feel happy today?
7. Y: Yes, Jelatik
8. G: Good. Sure ah, you feel happy ah? Do you want to sing hello song?
9. Y:.... (silent)
10. G: Do you want to sing hello song?
11. Y: Yes,Jelatik...(Singing song)
12. Y: Jelatik
13. G: Listen/ Yusoof, listen. Teacher wants to tell something

Example 72 Data T13 (lines 1-4)

1. Y: <singing song>
2. T: Ok, sebelum ini siapa ajar Kemahiran Hidup? Cik gu Syikin, Cik gu Syikin, eh? (*who taught Living Skill before? Teacher Syikin, teacher Syiken, eh?*)
3. Y: Dumbledore
4. T: Aisyah, Aisyah, cikgu tak tanya lagi. Bangun , Syah.
(*Aisyah, I have not asked you yet. Get up, Syah*)

5. Y: Done. In a movement. Human being.
(lines 10-12)
10. T: Ha, semua orang lain dah (*Ha, everybody has finished!*)
11. Y: <singing song >
12. Y: Dumbledore
(lines 23-24)
23. T: OK, Cikgu tulis, eh (*ok, teacher writes, eh*)
24. Y: Dumbledore.

Example 73 Data T11 (lines 24-27)

24. F: What is the man's occupation abang?
25. Y: Bath tub
26. F: Www.....what?
27. Y: Bath tub
(lines 197-202)
197. F: Fruit garden
198. Y: Fruit garden
199. F: Listen, watch
200. Y: Makan (*eat*)
201. F: Makan apa abang? (*what do you want to eat abang?*)
202. Y: Makan nasi (*eat rice*)

In example 71, Y started the conversation with the word “Jelatik” and repeated five times in a brief 13 exchanges. This word refers to a name of a street in Kuala Lumpur which he may have passed by during one of the family outings. Y repeated this word several times because he wanted the hearer to change topic and talk about “Jelatik.” According to Lucas, this behaviour is called “verbal perseveration” which is reiteration of a particular word, phrase, sentence or idea. It is different from echolalia because it is uttered in a meaningful context and it is perpetuated throughout the conversation. In the above examples, Y was trying to initiate new topics by repeating the words “Jelatik” (example 71); Dumbledore (example 72) and “”makan” and “bath tub” (example 73). These words were repeated several times to get the attention of his conversational partner to change to these topics. Unfortunately, he was ignored because the perception that his conversational partner held towards him is that Y likes to repeat himself. This information is based on feedback obtained from Y’s teacher, psychologist and peers. Another factor that causes Y to be misunderstood is the lack of referent in his utterances. It was difficult for his conversational partner to identify what Y was referring to.

4.3.6 Does the child use forms that are rigid?

Yes, the subject’s utterances are rigid in terms of structural form and intonation. He produced short phrases usually between one to two-word utterances. Although he had displayed some examples of interrogative form but the number is too insignificant. For example, in data T13, there are 388 exchanges taking place between Y and F (father), the former produced 120 utterances which were all in declarative form. In data T11, there were 103 exchanges between Y and I (Ignatius, the psychologist); and Y produced 39 utterances

of which only one is in interrogative form. In shorter conversations such as data T3 which had 22 exchanges, Y produced eleven utterances which were in declarative form but no interrogative form. This pattern was consistent across the sixteen samples of speeches collected. This analysis is summarized in Table 5.1.

Form	T1	T2	T3	T4	T5	T6	T7	T8	T9	T11	T13
Declarative	13	7	11	8	5	9	6	10	12	39	120
Interrogative	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
No. of exchanges in each transcript		14	22	30	13	16	9	17	43	103	388

Table 4.8. Structural forms in Y's daily conversation

The table above provides a general picture of Y's ability to produce declarative and interrogative forms. Although there are examples of interrogative form, these utterances are normally probed by his conversational partner (refer example 72) line 3, and sometimes he produced interrogative form on his own such as in lines 5 and 7

Example 74 Data T2 (lines 1-3; 5-7)

1. Y: Blanket
2. M: Do better
3. Y: Where is my blanket?
5. Y: Read *Al-Fatihah*....where is daddy? (puts his hands up to recite)
7. Y: Where is daddy? Daddy is [[in Singapore

Note: *Al-Fatihah* is a verse from the Quran

Y high frequency of declarative form and the absence of other forms such as interjection, complex sentences and subordinate clauses reflect Y's problem in acquiring other forms or variations. According to Conti-Ramsden (1992), language impaired children produces limited range of communicative intents, high frequency of abandoned utterances (utterances which are mentioned but not expanded on) and less sophisticated responses. Their responses are brief and are not complemented with appropriate intonation. They produce many abandoned utterances which are spoken in flat tone. Therefore, their family members make guesses of their intents. All of these attributes resulted from the rigidity of speech patterns. These features correspond with Y utterances and as such therefore, the researcher can conclude that Y's speech pattern is rigid.

4.3.7 Does the child exhibit any specific language disorders?

After answering 5.1.1 – 5.1.6 it is quite apparent that Y had some language disorders that Lucas suggested in her Pragmatic Analysis namely (i). referents (ii). topic closure (iii). tangentiality, and (iv) verbal perseveration. These items are spotted in Y's speech samples and will be discussed here:

4.3.7.1 Referent

According to Lucas (1980), referent is the contextual topic that people can identify with in a conversation in order to keep it going. This is one of the major problems faced by children with autism because they are not able to identify the referents talked about in a conversation and likewise, their conversations also do not have referents. People who talk to autistic children often are not able to identify the main idea that these children want to convey. Their utterances consists of strings of individual words that do not contain meaning to ordinary listeners. For instance,

Example 75 Data T4 (lines 6- 11)

6. D: Do you want some kacang? (*Would you like some peanuts?*)
7. Y: Yes.
8. Y: [at the playground].
9. D: At the playground? ↑ What do you see at the playground? ↑

10. Y:

11. Y: At the cinema.↑

When his father (F) offered him some peanuts at the dinner table, Y answered “yes” and then said “playground” which is confusing. Instead of expanding on “ yes” and “kacang”, Y jumped into another topic “playground.” This response confused F and thus, he continued dinner and ignored Y; and then offered Y other dishes that were served on the table. Lucas (1980:66) further emphasized that children with language disorders often have difficulty selecting the appropriate referent, their answers to questions or their attempt to continue the topic of conversation is ineffective. This problem is further displayed in the following example from Data T10 (lines 1-13),

1. Y: Jelatik

2. G: sit down. How are you?

3. Y: I am fine, thank you.

4. G: Are you happy today?

5. Y: Going to Jelatik.

6. G: Do you feel happy today?

7. Y: Yes, Jelatik

8. G: Good. Sure ah, you feel happy ah? Do you want to sing hello song?

9. Y:.... < silent >

10. G: Do you want to sing hello song?

11. Y: Yes, Jelatik...< singing song >

12. Y: Jelatik
13. G: Listen/ Yusoof, listen. Teacher wants to tell something

Y continuous insistence with the word “Jelatik” bored his therapist Grace (G) and she tried to stop him by telling Y that she had something else to tell him. The therapist could not understand Y’s insistence because there was no referent in his utterances. This reflects Y’s inability to make his conversational partner recognize the referent in his utterances.

4.3.7.2 Topic closure difficulties

This is another area of difficulties faced by Y and most children with autism due to their inability to recognize topic and object of conversation. In the above example for instance, Y persistently said the word “Jelatik” because he had a goal in mind that he wanted to go this place. He answered appropriately when G asked him about how he was doing (line 2), but he did not drop the topic “Jelatik” because he is dissatisfied with G’s response (G pretend to ignore him). So, he continued with another topic when his conversational partner tried to close the topic for him. Y could not close the topic “Jelatik” and continued to repeat the phrase. Another example of topic difficulties faced by Y is in the example below;

Example 76 Data T6 (lines 1-11)

1. D: Do you want some *kacang*?
2. Y: Yes.
3. Y: [at the playground
4. D: At the playground?= What do you see at the playground?
<silent>
6. Y: At the cinema? < pointing his finger into the face of D>
7. B: No *abang*. =we are at the playground =Come go on the swing.
8. Y: Nnn...no. Eat popcorn, kacang, watch the movie. // Ice Age.
9. Y: =at the cinema.
10. D: OK, if you are a good boy,/ we go to the movie tomorrow. Now, go
play with your brother, go.
11. B: Come *abang*!

Y walked to the available swing and swung himself as hard as he could. After a few rounds of good swings, he walked to his father and said;

12. Y: Go home/ eat dinner.
13. Y: =fried rice , chicken and egg? =
14. Y: =fried rice, chicken and egg
15. M: OK, we will eat chicken and egg / but no fried rice.
16. Y: White rice ! <pointing his index finger in the air>

In this conversation, Y changed topics four times (about playground, cinema, eating dinner and fried rice) and did not close each one appropriately. In a longer conversation such as in T13 (there are 388 exchanges), Y changed topics twenty times and abandoned each topic because his conversational partner did not pursue most of the utterances he produced. Lucas stated that topic closure is difficult for these children because they do not know boundary. Topic boundary refers to closure of a topic or the ending of a topic. It is not marked by any linguistic marker but must be decided by the speaker himself. These children have difficulty identifying the beginning and the ending of a topic and will continue to repeat, rephrase and reiterate until the conversational partner put a stop. For example in T13, Y repeated the topics many times in different places because he was dissatisfied that his messages were not pursued and therefore, he did not close the topic.

4.3.7.3 Tangentiality

This pragmatic feature is difficult to ascertain in Y's speech samples because all his utterances seem to be non-tangential to each other unless one analyzes them from speaker meaning point of view (Y's possible intent). In the data collected, many samples show that Y did not make association to the prior utterance such as in the following examples:

Example 77 Data T13 (267-270)

267. T: Teacher's name, Mohd. Rizal

268. Y: Rizal

269. TA: Wah! Good.

270. Y: Sharpener

Example 78 Data T13 (267-270)

283. TA: Ini apa ? Rock ? (*what is this ? Rock?*)

284. Y: Orange

285. TA: Aaaah

286. Y: The Fantastic Four

His topics are mostly disconnected from each other and irrelevant to the preceding utterance. In example 78, when the teacher asked him what he was coloring, he said “orange”, then followed by “The Fantastic Four.” Fantastic Four is a movie of four superheroes fighting against force of evil. If one had not seen the movie, one would not understand why Y said “orange” and may assume Y was saying something non-tangential; but he was actually making an association between the color “orange” with the main character of the movie which is a villain wearing orange costume. According to Sperber and Wilson (1986) Y’s utterance is relevant and has tangentiality because he was making an association between “orange” and Fantastic Four. However, these two utterances seem non-tangential because Y did not use any sentence connectors to connect the utterances. Lucas further supported this statement by saying that it is very common among children with some form of mental disability to produce chunky and non-tangential utterance unless his conversational partner is able to analyze their intent carefully. In order to understand what Y meant in this excerpt, it requires someone close to him or someone who had seen the movie to interpret his message and to recognize that Y was saying something

tangential. Therefore, tangentiality in individuals with autism is subjective and can only be traced by a CA who is sensitive to this syndrome.

4.3.7.1 Verbal perseveration

Yes, Y displayed this behavior consistently throughout the data collected. There were numerous examples of this speech behavior in the data collected. In fact, being perseverative is one of the features of autism, Muggleton (1997). These children like to repeat phrases persistently until they feel satisfied with the response they get from their conversational partner. Y also used this approach to manipulate his conversational partner to switch to his topic such as in the following example;

Example 79 Data T13 (lines 53-67)

53. T: Ok. Ahh...apa yang Azzari suka? Ah? Kartun? (*What does Azzari like, cartoon?*)
54. Y: Fantastic Four.
T: Fantastic Four. Lagi? (*some more*)
55. Y: Incredibles.
56. T: Incredible Hulk.
57. Y: Incredibles.
58. T: Lagi? (*some more*)
59. Y: The movie.

60. T: The Incredible Hulk The Movie.
61. Y: The Incredibles The Movie.
62. T: The Incredible The Movie.
63. Y: Toy's Story 2.
64. T: Toy's Story 2.
65. Y: Batman begins/ Adventures...ventures...of tomorrow.
 Superman Returns
66. T: Azzari tengok kat mana? Tengok kat rumah? Tengok kat rumah?
 (*where do you watch these movies, is it at home*)
67. Y: DVD

In this example, Y eventually succeeded to direct the teacher to talk about DVDs because he has all the DVD he mentioned at home. He used verbal perseverance to manipulate his conversational partner to talk about what he likes. These patterns also present in other transcripts such as;

Example 80 Data T11 (lines 310-327)

- 310 F: Azzari, look.
- 311 F: Uhh...
- 312 Y: Chicken chopped.
- 313 F: Chopped the chicken?
- 314 F: How many roast chicken do you want?
- 315 Y: Two. Mummy to buy roast chicken.
- 316 F: Only if you...

- 317 Y: [[Behave.
- 318 F: Oooh!...look at that. What's he doing abang?
- 319 F: What's he trying to do now?
- 320 Y: Chicken.
- 321 F: Ah? What's the man trying to do?
- 322 F: He's trying to do what abang?
- 323 Y: Cut the roast chicken.
- 324 F: No, catch the chicken.
- 325 Y: Catch the chicken.
- 326 Y: Cut/ Cut the roast chicken is gone.
- 327 Y: Fried/ fried chicken, roast chicken// for dinner.

In this example, Y manipulated his father (F) to eventually talk about roast chicken and requested to have this dish for dinner. He also tried to negotiate with F that if he cannot have roast chicken, he could at least have fried chicken. In these two examples, Y used verbal perseveration as a strategy to take control of the conversation. Lucas pointed out that children with language problems tend to repeat intensely or uses verbal perseveration when they are under pressure to give high cognitive input. In these examples (79 and 80), Y was under pressure to participate in a conversation with his teacher and classmates and with his father. Both conversations were long and demanded Y's cooperation to join in the topics that they were discussing. However, Y found these topics boring and not interesting and therefore, he tried to direct the conversations toward his topics of interest.

4.3.8 Does the child use a variety of speech acts?

No, the subject used mostly one type of speech act namely the locution stage, which is merely stating concept such as “Jelatik,” “rest,” “sleep” and “roast chicken.” According to Austin (1962)’s Theory of Speech Act, language is used to create obligation, to influence the action of others and to create new social relationship not merely to describe. He further emphasized that there are three levels of speech act: locution (concept), illocution (meaning) and perlocution (performing). Y’s conversational skill at this point only qualifies level 1 (concept) of Austin Speech Act for example;

1. Y: Jelatik
 2. G: Sit down. How are you?
 3. Y: I am fine, thank you.
 4. G: Do you feel happy today?
- Y: Yes, Jelatik

Nobody around him understood his intent from the word “Jelatik” because it was a concept uttered without appropriate gesture and intonation. A conversational partner can only respond appropriately if he or she can identify the type of speech act in the utterances. As such, his conversational partner ignored him in this transcript because she could not make sense of what Y was saying. Other examples of disruption of speech act are as below:

Example 81 Data T11 (lines 24-29)

24. F: What is this man's occupation *abang*?
25. Y: Bath tub.
26. F: What?
27. Y: A bath tub.
28. F: No, his occupation. What is the man's occupation?
29. Y: Duckling.

Example 82 Data T2 (lines 15-24)

15. I: Not yet,teacher talking to you.come here(2x)
16. Y: Rest
17. I: <persuaded Yusoof to do work>
18. Y: Rest
19. I: No, / you rest=
20. Y: =Rest
21. I: No, / first whose talking to you? Do schedule first
22. Y: Rest <Yusoof insists to rest>
23. I: Do schedule. Put your time when you want to rest
(shows Yusoof chart twice)
24. Y: <Sits on chair> Art

Example 83 Data T12 (lines 53-62)

53. A: What do you like to eat?
54. Y: I eat strawberry.
55. A: Strawberry?
56. Y: Spaghetti.
57. A: Spaghetti?
58. Y: And chicken.
59. A: Chicken.
60. Y: Where do you live?
61. Y: I live Bukit Tinggi.

These are further examples of Y's limited speech acts which are mainly locution (concept). This confused his parents because Y always said isolated words such as "bath tub" and "duckling" ; and completely irrelevant to the questions. The usage of these words is always out of context and did not carry any proposition whether they are questions, commands or warnings. Y's utterances usually consist of single words, lack performative verbs and monotonous. The absence of these elements in a conversation will result in communication breakdown. In example 83, Y said "sphagetti" after he said "strawberry" and it is difficult to predict what speech act does "strawberry" carries because there was no connection of strawberry to the context of the conversation (no strawberry was served when they visited A's house). The researcher was not sure whether it was a command or a request. There is no propositional content in the word "strawberry." Lucas stated that in order to obtain effective use of language, the words must be relevant to the context and they must signal propositions such as interrogative (ex.may I?) , exclamative (ex. what a

beautiful dress!) and imperative (ex. put the books down) request and so on. If a person's speech contains only declarative statements such as in Y's conversation, it is hard to identify the intent of the utterances. Another example are lines 15 – 22 from the same transcript;

- 15: I: Not yet,teacher talking to you.come here(2x)
16. Y: Rest
17. <persuaded Yusoof to do work>
- 18 Y: Rest
- 19: I: No, / you rest=
20. Y: =Rest
- 21 I: No, / first who is talking to you? Do schedule first
22. Y: Rest <Yusoof insists to rest>

The psychologist (I) ignored Y's persistence utterance "rest" because he was not sure what Y was trying to convey. Since Y uttered only one word and in declarative tone, I was not able to identify the intent and therefore, communication breakdown happens. In short, for this aspect of pragmatic skill, Y still has to learn to expand his length of utterances so that he can include some functional words to make it sufficient for his conversational partner to identify his intent.

4.3.9 Does the child use a variety of terms to denote time, space, quantity and / does the child use a variety of qualifiers?

This question has 4 parts: time, space, quantity and qualifier. The following discussion will focus on one item at a time. First, this discussion will discuss the aspect of time. In this context, Y displayed some variety of time indicators such as “tomorrow,” “good night,” “when” (example 84 in T2), Tuesday, Wednesday and Monday (these examples are present in T4); present tenses such as “goes to Shanghai” and “it’s broken,” “playing guitar”; and “baked” to indicate past tense (T13).

Next, is term for space. Y used a variety of terms to reflect space such as “nearby” in the utterance “cottage nearby a river” (example in T11). This reflects Y’s knowledge of location. Y is able to use “preposition” of spatial correctly such as in the following utterances: “at Bangsar Village “ (name of a shopping center); “at Sunway Pyramid Ice” (name of a shopping center) in T13; and “ Daddy in Singapore “ in T2. These utterances reflect Y’s awareness of spatial. When the conversation is carried out in an open space such as at the playground, Y tends to use more preposition “at” to reflect his ability to recognize spatial and location. This is evident in the following example;

Example 84 Data T2 (lines1-10)

1. D: Do you want some *kacang*?
2. Y: Yes.
3. Y: [at the playground
4. D: At the playground?= What do you see at the playground?

<silent>

6. Y: At the cinema? < pointing his finger into the face of D>
7. B: No *abang*. =we are at the playground =Come go on the swing.
8. Y: Nnn...no. Eat popcorn, kacang, watch the movie. // Ice Age.
9. Y: =at the cinema.
10. D: OK, if you are a good boy,/ we go to the movie tomorrow. Now, go play with your brother, go.

In this example, Y uttered the word “at” three times to signify location. From these two excerpts (example 84 and example 85), the researcher makes an assumption that Y has good knowledge of perceptions of space to adequately explain the situation. This is further proven in example 85. In this data, Y was discussing some pictures from the tourism brochures using suitable preposition with his mother, for example;

Example 85 Data T1 (lines 6-15)

6. M: Look at this picture. What are they doing?
7. Y: Walking on the beach, sea side, blue.
8. M: Good boy!! What about the turtles? Can you tell me about the turtles?
9. Y: Swimming, in the water < accompanied by a laugh >
10. M: Lets look at the next brochure. What do you see?
11. Y: A’Famosa, river, museum, bullock cart, Melaka historical city
< pointing to the title of the brochure >

12. M: Look at the man . 'what's he doing?
13. Y: Taking photograph, tourist.
14. M: Rrr..iight. Where is he taking the photograph?
15. Y: In front of A'Famosa.

In this conversation, there are more varieties of spatial indicators such as in front of, in, and on as the topic was about places and travelling. In these types of topics, there are usually a lot of questions that begin with "where.?" As such, the subject was required to reply with suitable preposition of spatial. Here, Y responded accurately to all the questions directed to him. This shows that Y possesses adequate knowledge of preposition and good perceptions which enable him to describe the pictures effectively.

Next, concepts for determiners and quantifiers. Y shows adequate skill in the use of words related to quantifiers such as; "it's a salmon" (L127, T11) for singular, "this is an animal" (L 471, T12) for singular ; "the grapes" (L217, T11), "some eggs" (L362, T11; L12, T4) for plural ; "can I bring another one" (L230, T13) is an example of quantifier for more ; "*tiga, lima* (three, five)" (line 236, T13) is an example of quantifier for number or amount (refer T13). In this conversation, the teacher gave him only two pieces of papers so Y negotiated with T to have three or five more pieces.

Finally, concepts for qualifiers. Y uses qualifiers sparingly. "Qualifiers" are words that describe and provide more accurate definitional meaning for another word, a phrase, or a clause. Qualifiers are usually made up of adjectives and adverbs for example, green apple and slow cooking. In this study, the subject have limited qualifiers because his utterances

are mainly concepts. Qualifiers do present in Y's speech such as in T6, T11 and T12 (listed below)

T6	L15 (fried rice)
T11	L71 (real duck), L74 (little duck), L82 (small fish), L84 (fishingrod), L100 (big fish), L108 (cut the big fish), L109 (big), L183 (delicious), L198 (fruit garden), L297 (roast chicken), L328 (fried chicken)
T12	L29 (big), L37 (blue whale), L116 (favorite animal), L160 (the train is long), L192 (chocolate cake), L342 (green dinosaur), L479 (black people)

In these examples, Y uses only adjective qualifiers. In fact, there is no adverb qualifier present in all the transcripts. Y uses simple qualifiers such as “blue,” “long” and “big” which can be found in the speech of school children.

From this qualitative language analysis, it appears that Y has pragmatic language disorder. He does not have problems in semantic, syntactic and phonological areas. In general, Y is able to understand utterances produced by his conversational partner, able to produce syntactically correct word order, and has clear pronunciation. His linguistic performance overall is not fully developed as Y is still producing early developing concepts such as “rest,” “blanket”, “green dinosaur” and “long train” which is very far

behind his chronological age (CA). His vocabulary skill remains constant since the first transcript (T1) which was recorded in 2004 until the last transcript (T13) which was recorded in 2007. In terms of semantic disorder, this is more of manifestation of pragmatic disability rather than purely semantic issue. According to Lucas, a child with semantic disorder would display different signs from a child with pragmatic disorder although there are some overlapping for example, a semantic disorder child would often exhibits puzzled facial expressions, such as a raised eyebrow or furrowed forehead because the child cannot expressed acquired knowledge. On the other hand, a child with pragmatic disorders would have more problems with disruption of speech acts, never initiates verbalization to meet specific needs and lacks the ability to specify referents. In addition, a child with pragmatic disability makes frequent utterances that lack clarity and insufficient intensity. For example, Baltaxe (1977) reported that adolescent autistic children tend to ask the same questions over and over again, despite having received an answer such as in the following illustration;

Example 86 Data T10 (lines 1-8)

1. M: What do you want to do today?
2. Y: Go to the hotel! < while pointing index finger, and came closer >
3. M: No/, not today. We only go to hotel/ when we go on a holiday, ok?
4. Y: Ice Age ! <name of a movie>.
5. M: Do you / want to watch a movie?

<Y remains silent and looks away>
6. M: Do you / want to watch a movie?

7. Y: Ice Age; pop corn, *kacang*
8. M: Ok! Those are names of food.

This example corresponds with the study conducted by Ensrud and Tomblin (1982) who found that autistic children used questions more frequently as devices to initiate interaction. These questions usually were inappropriate or irrelevant to the topic being shared. They will repeat these questions until they get response from the conversational partner and thus, engage in an interaction that interest them (the autistic children). This unusual strategy used by autistic children to initiate and engage in a conversation constitutes pragmatic disability.

As such this study concludes that Y has pragmatic disorder and that his language skill is still at the early language development. He displays all the symptoms listed in LPA. This disability caused him significant impairment in social language use.

4.4.4 PRAGMATIC DESCRIPTION CHART OF THE SUBJECT'S CONVERSATIONAL SKILLS ACCORDING TO GRICE THEORY

The following table summarizes Y's pragmatic disability in a diagrammatic form.

Maxim	Description	Example
quantity	make your contribution as informative as required do not make your contribution more than required	Q: how are you? A: I am fine, thank you. Q: how are you? A: I am okay. I just came back from an exhausting holiday.
quality	do not state what you believe is false do not say for which you lack evidence	Q: who eats the plants?The dog or the rabbit? A: the dog
relation	be relevant	Q: when you are angry, what do you do? A: go to quiet area
manner	avoid obscurity, ambiguity; be brief and orderly	Q: do you want to talk about airport? A: aeroplanes,shops, helicopters

Table 4.9 Description of Y's pragmatic skills

Table 4.9 summarizes Y's pragmatic skills using Grice's theory with examples of related utterances produced by Y. This table maybe used to estimate other autistic teenagers' conversational skills (with similar background). On the other hand, figure 4.6 illustrates the maxims that Y observed and violated. The boxes containing "yes" shows Y's observance and the boxes with "no" reflects Y's non-observance of Grice's Theory. Subsequently, the box that contains subordinates "yes" and "no" shows that sometimes he observed and sometimes he violated.

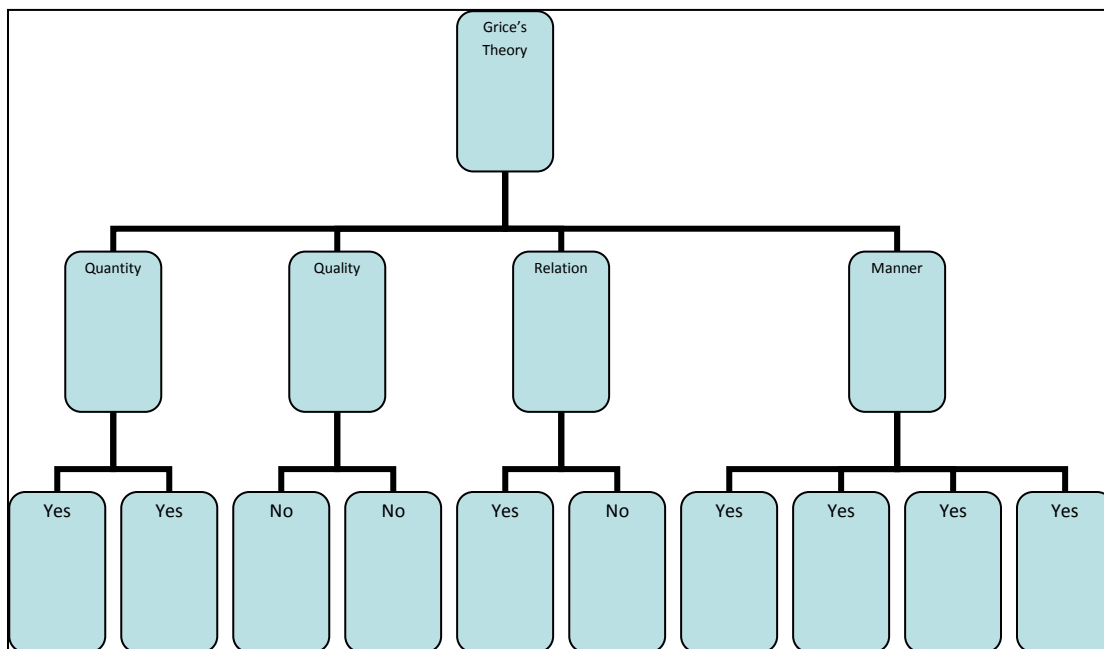


Fig. 4.6 Pragmatic chart of the subject conversational skill based on Grice's Theory

4.5 CONCLUSION OF THE FINDINGS

Findings from this analysis reveals that the subject lacks the requirement to hold a meaningful conversation because of his weaknesses in maxim of relation and maxims of manner stated by Grice's theory. However, he observeg maxims of quantity and maxim of quality diligently. In terms of maxims of quantity, Y was able to observe this maxim naturally by virtue of being autistic. He speaks naturally little in quantity and therefore, Y did not risk violating these maxims because he is honest and very literal. He did not lie or exaggerate. Next, in terms of maxim of relation (be relevant) Y faces major problem observing this maxim because he was not able to maintain relevance in his daily conversation. He went off topic many times due to his attention deficit and limited range of vocabulary. He was not able to hold his attention for a long time and able to express

himself clearly because he has limited vocabulary. Finally, as for maxims of manner Y was able to observe two of these maxims which are being brief and orderly. However, he was unable to observe the first two parts which are obscurity and ambiguity. In the data collected, Y's utterances were generally brief and followed the turn-taking sequence. On the other hand, Y's speech also contain many obscure and ambiguous utterances due to lack of syntactical structures and lexicon. His utterances generally contain only content words and no functional words. Functional words are important because they make utterances grammatical and informative. The deficits faced by Y in fulfilling Grice's maxims of conversation is expected because he is autistic while Grice Theory is meant for normal people. Nevertheless, this theory enables us to analyze above and beyond the linguistic meaning through the concept of implicature. As such, when Y's utterances were analyzed according to the context, many of his ambiguous and irrelevant responses were actually relevant and contain meaningful intents. They were only irrelevant to the perception of the hearer.

Next, findings from SSJ models showed that Y displayed some of the elements of communicative behaviours that they proposed. The communicative patterns that were observed in Y's speech were: adjacency pair, turn-taking, repetition, latching, overlapping and topic maintenance. Other patterns such as repair, topic closure and topic opening were not discussed here because they were not present in Y's speech. The first pattern analyzed according to SSJ model was adjacency pair (AP). Y seems to lack the ability to produce AP since his utterances were generally disconnected and did not pave way for subsequent utterances. In terms of turn-taking, Y seems to adhere to the order of speaking. He did not interrupt to take over the floor. In fact, Y's contribution was mainly responses to questions.

Another significant feature of Y's conversational skill is topic maintenance. This feature corresponds with AP. Since he was not able to produce AP consecutively therefore, this indirectly affected his ability to maintain a topic. The next pattern is repetition which is the most dominant feature in Y's daily conversation and autistic children in general. He repeated the same topic many times in one conversation (refer to discussion 4.2.3). The following pattern which is latching also occurred in Y's speech and can be described as familiarity with the phrases. Y seems to know what his conversational partner is going to say and therefore, will finish the word or phrase for the partner. Next, overlapping is also present in Y's conversation especially when he was anxious to express himself. He was not able to wait for his hearer to finish talking. However, the number of overlapping incidences was very low.

Finally, this study used LPA to determine Y's pragmatic disability. LPA is an assessment used for children who have been diagnosed with language disorder. It is assumed that many of the pragmatic issues faced by autistic children are actually manifestation of their poor linguistic skill. However, in Y's case, he seems to have more problem in the pragmatic aspect than the linguistic aspects. He has clear pronunciation, has knowledge of semantic (he understands what is being spoken to him) and able to produce syntactically correct sentences. What he actually lacks of is the skill to converse such as topic opening, topic maintenance, adjacency pair, and adhering to the maxim of conversation. Nevertheless, both aspects are interrelated to each other and are equally important for successful conversation.

In a nutshell, this study feels that the subject faces the most challenge in the pragmatic aspect compared to other aspects of language (phonology, morphology, syntax and semantic). He requires intensive support from his caretakers, people around him and his school teachers to improve his pragmatic skills.

4.6 SUMMARY

This chapter has discussed the data from three perspectives namely from Grice's Theory, SSJ Model and LPA. This approach was taken to ensure wider scope of conversational pragmatics are covered for example, Grice theory explain the linguistic requirements for a conversation for normal speakers; SSJ Model is a conversational analysis framework which help to explain the communicative behaviours that are not covered by Grice; while LPA helps to explicate the communicative features of children with language disorder. Therefore, by combining these three frameworks, the findings of this study would be more thorough. Several examples from Y's speech samples were included to clarify the explanation.