# CHAPTER 2

# LITERATURE REVIEW

## 2.0 Introduction

This chapter will begin with a brief discussion on Malaysian English (ME) which will be followed by discussion on the meaning of discourse. The reason for this is that the current study focuses on analyzing power display in the discourse of an Indian child in the Malaysian context and as such it is necessary to have a brief understanding of English as spoken in Malaysian (ME). It is then followed by a discussion on children's communication.  Next, the chapter goes on to discuss on power, status and power , power in children's talk,  turn-taking in conversations followed by aspects of conversations like interruptions, overlaps, and latching as these are relevant to the study in question. The discussion will then be accompanied by an explanation on politeness, politeness and power. Finally the chapter will end with a summary of all the issues discussed.

## 2.1    Malaysian English

Malaysian English (ME) is one of the many varieties of spoken English found in Malaysia (Asmah Haji Omar, 1992). Although the term 'ME' is often used to refer exclusively to the colloquial variety spoken by Malaysians, it actually encompasses all the sub varieties of English used by Malaysians. (Baskaran, 1994; Goudart, 1997; Morais, 2001 as quoted in Pillai, 2006 ). According to these scholars, ME is different from the standard variety spoken by native speakers. It is characterized by its own phonology, intonation and accent, and differences in vocabulary as well as its unique identity as a result of the influences of other Malaysian local languages (Asmah Haji

Omar, 1992). According to Gaudart (1995), the variety of English acquired in the Malaysian context would depend on the variety used by parents or caregiver, and this variety in turn, is determined by socio-cultural or socio-economic factors. Tay (1993:25) adds to this by pointing out that the variety of English spoken is also affected by the linguistic background of the other people in that community besides the speakers own linguistic background. In the current study, the discourse of the child analyzed would be representative of Malaysian English and this will be reflected in the grammatical structures which would portray some of the borrowed Malay tags such as 'lah'. According to Kuang (2002) the use of '*lah*' in discourse of Malaysians is associated with persuasion, disapproval and anger. Drummond (1993) suggests that discourse markers like *'uh', 'huh', 'yeah',* or oh provide space for speakers to perform different functions such as turn taking, as continuers or for topic shifts. In ME, '*lah*' plays a similar role in any informal discourse.  In addition to this, mother tongue influences such as Tamil address forms (in the current study) are also noted in the discourse of the speakers of Malaysian English.  In the Malaysian English  spoken by Indian speakers, terms such as '*amma*'(mother), '*appa*'(father) '*mama*'  (*uncle*), '*mami*'(aunt) and the respectful term neengal rather than nee (which is 'you' when referring to peers) is used (Shankar, 2006). These terms of endearment are often used as a means of positive politeness and it also enhances politeness as it is prevalent in Tamil socio-cultural norms (Pillai, 2008). However, the use of terms will not avert the power embedded in a person's talk.

## 2.2    Discourse

Over the years researchers have come to define discourse in many ways. Grice (1975) describes it as a set of principles for co-operative conversation. Grice sees the purpose of

talk as being a maximally effective exchange of information (Grice 1975). Crystal (1992; p 25) defines discourse as 'a continuous stretch of language larger than a sentence, often constituting a coherent unit'. In practical terms, it centers on the actual operation of language, beyond the restrictions of grammar. The overriding focus of discourse is on its context and the behavioural patterns that shape the social functions of a language. Any communicative function must include grammatical and phonological elements, but in real life situations, the context, situation, purpose, pitch, intonation and gesture can play a decisive role in the process of comprehension among interlocutors. The listener will search for coherence and meaning within the linguistic and contextual knowledge of the language and the situation as well as in the conceptual and formal schemata at its disposal. Besides that, cultural and socio-economic hurdle determines the attitude of a community (Iyngkaran & Kunalectchumy 2010). This shows that the language used of a child and the family members will be based on the socio-economic background of the family. Iyngkaran & Kunaletchumy (2010) state clearly that the attitude, lingua franca, value, expectations are distinguishably different. They also claim that there are differences between the successful Indian professionals and the less successful Indian working class culture. It is obvious that the language of these two classes will also differ in the level of politeness probably.

## 2.3  Children's Communication

Young children (school going) are aware of basic pragmatic rules and are more advanced in principles that govern face to face interaction (Ninio & Snow, 1994). Vygotsky (1987) points out that school age has a primary position in a child's development and this is, characterized by the richness and complexity of the processes that occur in the

development of the child's world. In addition, Clark (1993)  estimates that children from ages six to seventeen, have vocabularies which grow approximately at 3000 words a year, a process that parallels development in thinking, social and pragmatic functions. With these vocabularies children attain a fair competence in communicating with adults. According to McTear (1985), even young infants master the rudiments of conversational turn – taking before they are able to talk. Social cognition has been established to the degree that children of this age are interested in and can take the behaviours, emotions and intentions of others into consideration (Brown & Dunn, 1996; Carpendale & Lewis, 2004; Dunn, 1994). Children of this age have basic knowledge on how to make their conversations interesting. They tend to make their conversation interesting to capture the attention of people around them. They are also aware of how to express their needs through communication with their interlocutors in their day to day interaction.

According to Piaget (1955), all conversations of children fall into two groups, the egocentric and the socialized. The difference between them is in the functions they portray. In egocentric speech, the child only talks about himself and takes no interest in his interlocutor. In this kind of speech, the child does not try to communicate with others. He/she expects no answers and often does not even care whether anyone listens. The child's intention is to say what he/she thinks. In socialized speech, a child attempts an exchange with others – the child begs, commands, threatens, conveys information and asks questions as a participant actively involved. It has been pointed that children engage in six types of talk: play talk, personal/experience stories, self-talk, social talk, and "impending adult" talk (Duncan, 1974). Among these social talk is the most prevalent (Duncan, 1974). Children's talk in general is socially oriented and personal stories are prevalent (Duncan 1974). It is noted that children share stories about their thoughts, opinions and experiences.

Piaget's (1926) experiments show that a greater part of preschooler's talk is egocentric. He found that 44% to 47% of the total recorded talk of the children in their seventh year was egocentric in nature. Further investigations with six and seven year olds proved that even socialized, speech at that age is not entirely free of egocentric thinking (Piaget's 1955). Furthermore, besides their expressed thoughts, they also have great many unexpressed thoughts as the ages between seven to eight is the preoperational age (Piaget, 1955). Thus, language socialization is a process in which children are socialized, both through language and to use language within a community (Och & Schieffelin, 1984). Children are basically curious and to fulfill these curiosities, they ask endless questions about daily events. Hassan (2000, p 28) claims that, "participation in talk with others" is "an unavoidable aspect of human life".

Children's language abilities continue to grow throughout the school age years. They become able to recognize ambiguity and sarcasm in language as they grow. This is because the gradual process of acquiring social skills is due to their exposition to the society. One common view pointed out by Ervin – Tripp (1977) is that children are merely learners of the adult system. As they interact with adults, they not only acquire the rules of communication and socializing, they also learn to accommodate the adults.

Children of six to seven years old have learnt not only the basic rules of communication but also the more advanced principles that govern face-to- face interaction (Ninio & Snow, 1996). Social cognition has therefore been established to the degree that children of this age are interested in and can take the behaviors, emotions and intentions of others into consideration (Brown & Dunn, 1996; Carpendale & Lewis, 2004; Dunn, 1994). These children have a basic knowledge of language to make them heard and know how

to contribute in relevant ways in every day interaction in their daily lives (Blum-Kulka, Huck- Taglicht & Avni, 2004; Ninio & Snow, 1996). In this era effective communication is a great challenge for them so children of this age struggle, not just to learn new words and their meanings but also to learn to communicate effectively in accordance with what is expected in their culture (Ninio & Snow, 1996). Children at this age are more active in participating both at home and school, they become more independent in relation to different activities, build new relationships, and learn new interactive rules (Snow & Blum- Kulka, 2002; White & Siegel, 1982).

## 2.4 Power

According to Russel (1938, p. 10), the "fundamental concept in social science is power in the same sense in which energy in physics". In another study interactants can exercise power in order to achieve their own aims or to resist the aims of others (Locher, 2004, p. 2). According to Locher (2004) the exercise of power is assumed to occur in and around relationships and this is reflected through the degree of solidarity between interactants. Habermas (2001) argues that power is inherent in all verbal interaction, which embodies the distribution of power among participants. Ng and Bradac (1993) argue that language reveals, creates, reflects, obscures or depoliticizes power.

Power is not derived from language but language can be used to challenge power, to subvert it and to alter distributions of short or long term power (Kress 1989). According to Ervin–Tripp (1984) power relations are expressed through control acts, which are defined as follows: offers, request, orders, prohibition and other moves that solicit goods or attempts to effect changes in the activities of others. According to Fairclough (1989),

no language in use can ever be neutral or objective and it is common for the emergence of a hidden or open agenda of assumption which will determine the verbal interactions of the participants. Thus, discourses can never be free of power. He further explains that there will always be a point of view, a hidden or open agenda of assumptions according to which the participants will interact verbally.

The standard definition of power in the functional tradition of Durkheim and Weber (1991) is that power is the opportunity of imposing one's will on other. The following points are relevant to the definition mentioned. Power is latent faculty, or potential, invested in the person who exercises it, i.e. an abstract form of possession. The exercise of power is intentional. What is intended is the carrying out or not carrying out of an action by another person, whereby action here should be understood in the widest possible sense. If a second person is forced by the exercise of power to accept a set of principles, rules, conventions, then the change from non acceptance to acceptance is an abstract form of "action". The intended "action" is against the will of the second person. The difficulty with this type of definition concerns the intentionality involved in the exercise of power.

Fairclough (1989) claims that ideologies are often linked with power because ideologies are bound to particular conventions. Some researchers have focused on ways in which language and power are linked in multicultural and multilingual settings (Gumperz, Jupp and Roberts, 1978 and Gumperz, 1982b). Others have concentrated on social domains in which power is exercised (O'Barr, 1982 and Davis, 1988). In later studies Fairclough (1992) and van Dijk (1993, 2001) see power accruing to verbal interaction and the claim of power is determined by the interactant's institutional role, socio- economic status, gender or ethnic identity. van Dijk (2001) defines social power as control and he claims

that groups have power if they are able to control the acts and minds of other groups. Watts (1991) claims that the exercise of power in institutionalized settings is more overt whereas in family settings or within members of a close–knit social network, power is more covert and it would be difficult too see how that power is being constructed within the network.

In a recent study conducted by Walkinshaw (2007), power refers to a relationship of dominance and submission in which one person is able to control the behaviour of the other. Power may also be associated with power distance which refers to the degree to which a society views inequality as normal. (Hofstede,1991). This appraisal seems to be relevant to the Asian culture and especially in the Indian culture where the Indians believe that the younger generation should respect the older ones ( Shankar, 1994).

There are two ways of looking at the concept of the power. One is identified as 'power to' and the other as 'power over' (Wartenberg 1990, Barnes 1988). 'Power to' refer to the ability an individual may temporarily possess and use, while 'power over' refers to the hierarchical relationships between individuals which can result in control, dominance, influence, etc. Dahl's (1957) approach is behaviorist in nature, where the power can only be said to have occurred when there is an actual change in the behavior of the person over whom power was exercised. According to Dahl (1957), a power relationship can be detected in 3 ways: (a) when there is a conflict over values or course of action between A and B; (b) when B complies with A's wishes; and (c) when B does not comply because he is fearful that A will deprive him of a value or values which he regards more highly than those which would have been achieved by non compliance. Dahl's (1957) approach adds a second dimension to power, namely that power can play a role in non-decision making, which means that it is not necessarily observable as action.

Lukes (1974) considers Bachrach and Baratz's (1970) understanding of non-decision making power where when no grievances are perceived, and then there is no power involved. Lukes (1974) on the other hand introduced his three – dimensional approach to power which is also another relevant concept of power in this study. Lukes (1974) approach completely moves away from the behaviorist approach since his definition of power is based on the assumption of latent conflict and real interest. It can be summarized as A exercises power over B in a manner contrary to B's interests. (Lukes 1974).

The existence of power in institutionalized setting too has been the subject of numerous studies. Davis (1988) points out that people frequently find themselves in situations which are not of their own preference to do a task. In such situations, they are obliged to force others to act against their will. In institutionalized settings, an individual may be invested with the ability to cause others to act against their will, but not necessarily implied intentionally. It may simply be a result occurring from their status within that social structure. It is also noted that power in this kind of setting involves the idea that the second person is expected to carry out the action against her or his will. For example in institutionalized setting such as schools, the army base, law enforcement offices, teacher's training colleges ,etc. the person expected to carry out the action may do so willingly because he or she realizes that doing so is in his or her best interest. Another point that is observed in this setting refers to the investment of the faculty to make another person carry out something against his or her will.

For Giddens (1976) power in interaction is a matter of "employing facilities to achieve outcomes" (as quoted in Davis 1988: 83). From her study of Gidden's (1976) work,

Davis (1988) derives five principles ways of looking at power:

1) power as integral to social interaction
2) power as intrinsic to human agency
3) power as a relational concept, involving relations of autonomy and dependence
4) power as enabling as well as constraining
5) power as process.

Principle 2 and 4 allow modifies Weber's (1947) definition of power such that it is no longer merely the ability of the individual to impose one's will on others, but more generally the capacity possessed by individual or group to achieve his or her goals. If this involves conflict with the interest of others, then power will of course entail the ability to impose one's will. Principle 1 summarizes the obvious fact that power can only be seen as product of inherent to social structures. Thus, power is relative to one's status with respect to others in the social group and it is always revealed in interaction with others. In this context distribution of power fluctuates and the two concepts may be viewed in terms of a process of principal 5. Watts (1991:60) simplifies the definition of power as follows:

> An individual A possesses power if she or he has the freedom of action to achieve the goals she or he has set her or himself, regardless of whether or not this involves the potential to impose A's will on others to carry out actions that are in A's interest. On the other hand Lukes (1974) looks at the power as latent conflict and real interest 'A exercises power over B when A affects B in a manner contrary to B's interest'.

Power can only be said to have occurred when there is an actual change in the behavior of the person over whom power was exercised. A has power over B to the extent that he can get B to do something which he would not otherwise do. Power is a 'reaction' to behaviorist approach and introduces the notion of conflict and the possibility of non-decisions. A power relationship exist when there is a conflict over

values or course of action between A and B. B complies with A's wishes. B does so because fear that B will deprive him.

## 2.5 Status and Power

According to Watts (1994) power is relative to one's status with respect to others in the social group. As such, status can be determined in many ways. An individual's status may be determined in a number of ways, through education, wealth, age, sex or by the possession of specific mental or physical abilities. Status is thus dependent on the set of values attached to these and many other features by the culture concerned and it also involves the systems of social hierarchies which help to determine who possesses greater potential power in what social activities. It fluctuates from culture to culture, from social group to social group.

Lyons (1977) says status is a scale of social standing that is often realized in differing socially standing that is often realized in differing socially dietetic linguistic forms. Brown & Gilman (1960) simplify the concept of status as such:

1) Equivalent status
2) Inferior status
3) Reverential status
4) Superior status

## 2.6  Power in Children's Talk

Children develop a range of communication styles, which is appropriate in certain types of situations. For example a child takes various factors like age, sex, status, relationship of the person and the context in which the communication is taking place into account when he or she is communicating with a person as they grow older.

They also learn pragmatic and practices speech acts in everyday interaction. Along with pragmatic skills, they exercise power to different tiers of people around them after recognizing the age, status and position of the person they are interacting. The realization of power exercise is regardless of their knowledge but they still use the power by evaluating the status of their interlocutors. Power constitutes status while status hierarchy is in constant flux. As Maltz and Borker (1982, p.207) describe speech is used in 3 major ways: (1) to assert one's position of dominance, (2) to attract and maintain an audience, and (3) to assert oneself when other speakers have the floor.

As children grow, they learn more than language structure. Children's turn taking differs from the model proposed by Sacks et al. (1974) in that there are fewer overlaps and longer gaps and this may happen because children have not yet acquired the ability to project possible turn completion points (Gearhart and Newman 1977). Jamison (1981) found that overlaps increased with age and also occurred more regularly at turn transition relevant points. In another words, as the child grew older, they seemed to be developing the ability to anticipate possible completion points. McTear (1995), from his examples says that the children orient to the turn-taking system by timing their turn beginnings with precision (Jefferson 1973) and by relinquishing the floor in the case of overlap in order to maintain the basic turn-taking principle of 'one speaker at a time' (Sacks et al. 1974).

The function of language is to create and maintain a relationship among equals. This is inclusive of criticizing and arguing in ways that don't threaten, nor acting bossy or carrying out a power talk. Thus, friendship among children especially are made and broken with language (Lever, 1976). However power construction through language

of a child has not been to studies as far as concern. Majority of power construction in oral communication have been only carried out among the adults in institutionalized and family domain by some of the researchers. Millar and Millar (1977) have distinguished between domineeringness and dominance. Domineeringness refers to an individual's one-up behavior whose purpose is conversational control. However, only when it is responded to with a one – down response by the others does dominance result.

Children are not only aware of pragmatic functions but are also fairly good at exercising a little power on their selected interlocutors who they think have less power and less influence than them. According to Blum-Kulka (1992), family, parents and children are bounded to each other by asymmetrical and highly intimate affective relationships. Family speech patterns are more focused on solidarity and informality (Pillai S., 1998). Therefore, sometimes children use direct style of communication with their parents although they are aware of their parents' status. Indirect strategies can be used to realize power or to increase the force of the message (Brumark, 2006). Most of the time, parents use directives towards children. Hence, children are bound to some kind of communication rules. In some occasions, children tend to take their rights to talk to parents by having solidarity as their base. This research will look at the speech pattern of a child interactant who demonstrates power in her conversation with three level of interlocutors; those in a superior position represented by her parents and aunts, those on the same level represented by her peers and lastly those in an inferior position represented by her maid and younger brother.

## 2.7   Turn Taking in Conversations

According to Testa (1988), overlaps and interruptions are common in any conversation and are not considered rude. A turn is seen as everything one speaker says before another speaker begins to speak (Sacks et al. 1974). Allwood (1992, p.2), however, defined a turn as "a right to communicate and is normative rather than a behavioural unit". However, it has been suggested that children's turn–taking differs from the model proposed by Sacks (1974) where there are fewer overlaps and longer gaps. Gearhart and Newman (1977) say this happens probably because children may have not acquired the ability to project possible turn completion points. A pair is made up of two turns made by two different speakers. Normally they take turns at holding the floor and it will be done without overt negotiation.

 It must be noted that different cultures have different degrees of tolerance for silence between turns, overlaps in speaking, and competition among speakers (Finegan 2004). He also emphasizes that social inequality between conversationalist (boss and employee, parent and child, doctor and patient) is often reflected in how often and when participants claim the floor. In American work settings, superiors commonly initiate conversations by asking questions and letting subordinates report. Thus, subordinates hold the floor for longer periods of time than superiors. In some cultures, superiors talk while subordinates listen (Finegan, 2004).

A normal conversation will involve the process of turn taking but in cases where power is exerted, this process will not be followed as the speakers' ability to continue is interrupted.  According to Watts (1991), intervention of the second speaker in the first speaker's turn prevents the first speaker from continuing the speech as the second

speaker may intervene by latching onto the first speaker's turn. Silence may also be used to create the power influence. In addition, intervention may occur when the second speaker projects the end of the first speaker's talk and then enter into it shortly before the first speaker's turn is over. Such a scaffolding technique will decide the power exercise as to who grabs the turns. The silence of the other speaker as mentioned above also plays an important role to distinguish the power influence between the two interlocutors. In this scenario, power discourse is determined by who takes over a turn and gains the floor.

Jamaliah (1995:49) defines a turn as "the basic unit of talk" where the turn refers to "a shift in the direction of the speaking flow which is characteristic of talk". She says that in order to gain control of the floor, turn taking mechanisms will occur. The speaker will compete to get 'the floor' so that he/she can be heard. However it must be noted that in some conversations, the turn is open and free and the speaker can 'come in' and 'out', speakers can McCarty (1977) says that in any piece of natural English discourse, turns will occur smoothly with only little overlaps and interruption and only very brief silence between turns. He then said people take turns when they are selected or nominated by the current speaker.

Hymes (1972), Jaffe and Feldstein (1970), Kendon (1967) and Miller (1963) have suggested that the' taking of speaking turns is a language universal'. According to Sack and Schegloff and Jefferson model, it is possible to influence the listener's behaviour in taking the turn and the influence is derived primarily through the illocutionary force of the utterance. In any conversation according to Sacks, Schegoff and Jefferson (1974) we can observe the following:

1. Speaker change recurs, or at least occur
2. Overwhelmingly one party talks at a time.
3. Occurrences of more than one speaker at a time are common, but brief.
4. Transition (from one turn to a next) with no gap and no overlap are common.

5. Turn order is not fixed, but varied.
6. Turn size is not fixed, but varies.
7. Length of conversation is not specified in advance.
8. What parties say is not specified in advance.
9. Relative distribution of turn is not specified in advance.
10. Number of parties can vary
11. Talk can be continuous or discontinuous
12. Turn allocation techniques are obviously used. A current speaker may select next speaker or parties may self select in starting to talk.
13. Various turn- conversational units are employed
14. Repair mechanisms exist for dealing with turn-taking errors and violation.

(Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson, 1974: 700)

Socialized speech involves the participation of others. Piaget characterizes four types of socialized speech. The first is adapted information in which the child takes into account the presence of others and exchanges his thoughts with them, by telling them something that might interest them and influence them or by getting into an argument or collaboration. The other categories are criticism; commands, request, threats; and questions and answers. Socialized speech, especially in the form of arguing, is seen as the beginning of the child's consciousness of the rule of logic and of the form of deductive reasoning (Piaget, 1959: 42). This shows that socialized speech appears later than egocentric speech. Sack, Schelogff and Jefferson (1974) propose a model that accounts for smooth turn-transfer and yet allow for silence and overlap. According to Sacks (1995), the founder of the conversation analytic method, the basic unit of the conversation is "turn" where shifts in the direction of speaking "flow". Denny (1975) says turn taking in conversation is most easily categorized as part of the ethnography of speech.

## 2.8 Interruptions

Interruptions can be viewed as violations of the turn- taking; one person taking another person's speaking turn away from them (Talbot 1992, p 86). According to Watts (1994),

interruptive verbal behaviour is an important feature of the interaction since interruptions can be interpreted as evidence to show that the distribution of power is occurring. Some interruptions signal a lack of interest in the other speaker's topic. In the public context, a well-timed interruption can effectively halt a speaker in his/her tracks. Interruptions are classified as deep intrusions into the boundaries of a unit type prior to the lexical element which could be considered the termination of a unit type Zimmerman and West (1975). On the other hand, sustained interruption may disrupt someone's talk completely and the interrupter takes over the floor. Holmes (1995) says that interruptions are generally impolite discourse strategies. An interrupter intrudes on the speaker's verbal space. In Beattie's (1983) study interruptions were classified by using a modified version of the categorization scheme devised by Ferguson (1976). Every attempt at a speaker change is labeled and interruptions were identified on the basis of three criteria: 1) success, 2) presence of simultaneous speech and 3) utterance completion. Thus, interruptions are turn-taking violations because one person takes over another person's speaking turn. Harrigan (1980, p.105) defines "a turn which includes upon the current speaker's turn causing him to hesitate, repeat, stumble in speech, stop talking, or lose the attention of the auditors.

## 2.9 Overlaps

An overlap occurs when two or more people take the same turn to talk at the same time, leaving part of their utterances unheard. An overlap occurs when the second speaker cuts in just before the first speaker finishes his/her sentence. A speaker who overlaps sometimes helps to finish the first speaker's last words. Occurrences of overlaps act as the 'observable achievement of mutual understanding' (Hutchby & Wooffitt 2002 cited

in Thilagavathi, 2006) and this understanding allows the speech interaction to progress. Overlaps are instances of simultaneous speech where a speaker other than the current speaker begins to speak at or very close to a possible transition place in a current speaker's utterance that is within the boundaries of the last word (Zimmerman and West, 1973, p.14). It is this proximity to a legitimate point of speaker alternation that leads us to distinguish overlaps from interruptions. An interruption in this context then is seen as penetrating the boundaries of a unit-type *prior* to the last lexical constituent that could define a possible terminal boundary of a unit-type. (Zimmerman and West, 1973, p.114)

Overlaps are viewed as a show of power control over the host and therefore can be disruptive (Thilagavathi, 2006). According to James and Clark (1993) as cited in Thilagavathi (2006), dominance in conversation is evident not only by the amount of communication, but by the amount of interruptions as well. Tannen (1993) states that scholars recognize intuitively that interruptions and topic control in conversation encourages power imbalance (Tannen 1983, cited in Thilagavathi, 2006). Jamison (1981) finds that overlaps increase with age and they also occur more regularly at turn transition relevant points. This indicates that as children grew older, they would also develop the ability to anticipate possible completion points. She also claims that overlapping is being used to express other speakers' preference and opinion to other speaker. When overlaps exist in this type of situation that is where power subsist because through overlapping the first speaker holds the floor and does not want to relinquish. According to Yuan , Liberman and Cieri (2007) overlaps can be analyzed in two types. Type 1 is analyzed as one side takes over the turn before the other side finishes (turn taking type). The second type is one side speakes in the middle of the other side's turn (backchannel type).

## 2.10 Latching

Latching is a constituent used by Jamaliah (1995) in her work on Malaysian participants. According to her, latching occurs when the current speaker is interrupted by the other speaker to complete the first speaker's speech in advance without the presence of simultaneous speech. The interrupter has cut across the current speaker's utterance not aiming at the floor, but attempting to help the current speaker to complete his or her sentences (ibid., 1995). This can be defined as power because the interrupter would not intrude into the first speaker's turn or complete the turn because he or she feels has the right or privilege to do so.

Coates (1989) introduces a kind of interruption that is similar to latching in her work. She refers to it as interruption completion-overlaps (1989). Coates says that such instances entail a sense of cooperativeness. She argues that completion overlaps do not constitute any attempts to win the floor over the first speaker but instead they function as supporting and cooperating with the current speaker.

## 2.11 Politeness.

Politeness can be said to be an expression of concern for the feelings of others (Holmes, 1995). Holmes claims that people may express concern for the feelings of others' in many ways such as apologizing for an intrusion, inviting a new neighbour for a cup of tea and using 'sir' or 'madam'. Politeness has two approaches: negative politeness a behaviour where speakers impose their will on others also known as 'face threatening'

and positive politeness which involves sociable behaviour that expresses warmth towards an addressee (Brown and Levinson, 1987). According to this approach, any utterance which could be interpreted as making a demand or intruding on another person's autonomy can be regarded as face-threatening act. Even suggestions, advice and request also can be regarded as face-threatening acts, since they potentially impede the other person's freedom of action. Holmes (1995) claims that the term politeness describes a formal withdrawal and distancing, where the intention is not to intrude or impose. Holmes (1995) also says non–intrusive behavior is also labeled as 'polite' in everyday usage.

In family discourse, politeness is seen in a different manner. This is because family discourse involves power and solidarity. As discussed in Chapter1, Blum-Kulka (1992) conclude that discourse amidst close knit group such as within the family, parents and children, is based on a bond which is asymmetrical the members use solidarity and informality as the base in interactions. As a result of this, interruptions exist in the conversations. Blum-Kulka (1992) have also stated that politeness tend to be associated with social distance. Thus the degree of politeness also varies according to the status of the interlocutors. As the family discourse is informal, the degree of politeness also varies. Occasionally, the informal talk becomes too direct and seems to be impolite. However, Blum-Kulka (1992) points out, this direct style of communication is not "devoid of politeness" but it happens because of the intimacy of the family members. Pillai (2000) has shown that the family members used more direct styles among each other. She claims that this occurs due to their closeness, familiarity and solidarity. Fraser (1990) says the conversational contract is based on some initial set of rights and obligations that every interactant sets out with.

## 2.12   Politeness and Power

According to Fraser (1990), 'politeness is a state that one expects to exist in every conversation. Brown and Wolfson (1984) on the other hand, regard power as an important factor explaining some patterns of linguistic politeness. Politeness can also be seen as the expression of the speakers' intention to mitigate face threats carried by certain face threatening acts toward another (Mills, 2003, p.6) Being polite, therefore consist of attempting to save face for another. Politeness has its significance in a persons direct and indirect speech.  An indirect and direct speech may or may not contain politeness. It also depends on the power a person has when he/she is interacting with his/ her interlocutors.

Further, politeness stems from the desire to maintain the social equilibrium between the interactants and to present and have confirmed an identity that allows the exercise of power without endangering the social fabric. According to researchers politeness is hard to define as power. Firstly, its definition is confused within a polite behavior and normal behavior and secondly, the context of a situation with all its aspects and variability. Thirdly, a comprehensive theory of politeness which is indeed applicable in every situation needs to be able to suit both spontaneous and more ritualized behavior.  On the basis of the relevance theoretical approach, for a better understanding of power and politeness, a row of theory should be viewed.

The face saving view of politeness by Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987) is one of the most influenced functions. Brown and Levinson's argue that face threatening act often

requires a mitigating statement or some sort of politeness or in line of communication will break (Brown& Levinson, 1987). Power and politeness are often related to one another. Messages can be conveyed in a polite way using power. A person in a higher status can use politeness as a tool in his command to make his or her subordinate to carry out things without conflicts. As it is stated by (Watts 1991, p 60) to impose A's will on others to carry out actions that are in A's interest. As an addition to this opinion according to Lukes (1974), one affects or coerces another person in manner contrary to another person's interest. Thus one can use politeness in his or her interaction to achieve his or her goal without causing any conflicts or latent conflict. In this way power is being practiced in a subtle way by using politeness in either institutionalized or in a close-knit family domain.

According to Galbraith (1983, p 2), power has been defined as 'the possibility of imposing one's will upon other persons, or the ability to control the behaviour of others (Brown and Gilman, 1960. Brown and Levinson (1987) also define relative power in a relationship as the degree to which on e person can impose their plans and evaluations at the expense of other people. Leech (1983) has a similar perception where he discusses power or 'Authority of one participant over another'.

## 2.13  Summary

In this chapter, the notion of discourse was first defined. It has been stated that discourse can be defined as conversation between two or more interlocutors. Grice (1975) has stated that cooperation is an important aspect in discourse while Crystal (1992) claims that there is a sense of continuity in discourse. Next, the chapter went on to define

children's communication in which it discusses how children's learning is acquired from the adult system (Ervin-Tripp, 1977) as well as through a habit of socialization (Piaget, 1955). The issues related to power, power in children's talk, aspects of conversations encompassing interruptions, overlaps and latching were also provided.