

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter outlines the methodology adopted, the design of the study, the background of the subject and the participants involved, data collection procedures and how data will be analyzed and presented.

The researcher used a mixed method that comprises qualitative and quantitative presentation of the data (Cresswel, 2002). The reason for doing so is because one complements the other in terms of analysis whilst also enabling the researcher to conduct a more comprehensive research (Green, Caracelli, & Graham, 1989; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998). The distinctive difference between both quantitative and qualitative research method is that the former relies on numerical data (Charles & Mertler, 2002) while the latter is enquiry based. The purpose is of course to develop a more holistic picture of the study being performed and also to enable the descriptive data to be seen in a way that illustrates some numerical representation (Creswell, 1998, p. 15).

To ensure that a study is scientific and more reliable, researchers tend to use a number of approaches to accumulate their data. Calling this as the triangulation approach, it is meant to enable the researcher to corroborate the results and to ensure that no data is lost due to an oversight or a problem. Triangulation is supported by various scholars (Bryman, 2001, Morgan, 1998; Hammersley, 1996; Rossman and Wilson, 1994). Triangulation works on the assumption that each type of data analysis enhances the other

and as a whole the two approaches are juxtaposed to generate complementary insights that together, create a bigger picture.

3.1 Data Collection

In this study, the primary mode of gathering data was through close observations of the participants in interactions where data were tape recorded after consent had been acquired. In addition to this, field notes were also taken. Dalton-Puffer (2005) and Takano (2005) in their studies also showed evidence that field notes do support data collected from observation. Observations were made of the subject in her interactions with three tiers of people: higher authority, similar authority and lower authority. These people were those in the child's environment encompassing her parents, caretaker, mother's friends, the subject's own friends, a maid and her younger brother. Recording was done in the natural setting of the home or wherever the child may be placed after school. Where the data is in English, it is deemed as the variety most commonly used by Malaysians hence treated as Malaysian English (ME) and in this aspect, described as Malaysian English. Tamil may occasionally be used as the caretakers are Tamil speakers and so translations will be provided for such spoken data. Where interaction occurs between the subject and her friends, the language used may be in Malaysian English and also Malay but with the maid, it is purely Tamil only. Frankfort and Nachmias (1991) point out that participant observation is advantageous in two ways. Firstly, it is direct and secondly, it allows researchers to study the verbal and non verbal behavior as it occurs.

Observations were conducted as and when the interactions occur and no artificial scenario was set up. The tape recorder was then placed in the centre of the interaction so that the entire conversation can be arrested as clearly as possible. Conversations during

specific interaction times were recorded: mealtimes in particular breakfast and dinner times, recess times, and during visits made by her mother's friends or the subject's friends. In the context of this study the child's mother also serves as the researcher.

Data was collected for over 10 weeks and then transcribed. Sacks and Jefferson's (1974) transcription for writing out spoken data was used as a guideline for this study and where utterances were inaudible, they would be indicated with 'XXX'. The researcher made observations by participating in the interactions or as a silent observer while the subject was involved in her playing activities. Occasions for observing and recording data occurred during meal times with the family and while the subject was interacting with her friends.

3.2 Background of the subject and other participants

The subject of this study is a Malaysian Indian child of seven years of age and who is attending the first year of the primary school education in a suburb location. She is known as M and is the first child of a middle class Indian family. English is the first language of the subject and she started learning Bahasa Melayu at the age of 5 when she started pre- school. She has learned Bahasa Melayu for two years in the preschool and continued her primary education in a national type school. She speaks Bahasa Melayu fairly well as the language is the first language used in national schools. She started to communicate with her Malay schoolmates and her teachers in Bahasa Melayu. Despite her fluency in English, the subject code switches occasionally in Bahasa Melayu (National Language) and Malayalam and Tamil to express her messages and ideas to her

family members and her peers. Both parents are professionals and the subject also has a younger brother of around three years of age. The parents use Malaysian English with the subject but the caretaker and maid use Tamil, a sub-variety of the Indian languages. As stated, the subject uses English as her first language in the family domain. Although the parents can speak their mother tongues, they mainly used English to communicate with her. The subject had access to more than one linguistic code as a means of social communication. The subject was exposed to English, Bahasa Melayu, Tamil and a negligible amount of Malayalam. The South Indian maid and her caregiver spoke in their own variety of Tamil, her parents and other family members spoke in English mostly and her peers spoke in Bahasa Melayu and English while she was in her school. In the school where the child attends, Malay is the main medium used for teaching but English may be used among the children whose parents use English with them. The school is multiethnic and multicultural in nature with the majority of the students being Malays. Table 1 provides a brief background of the subject and her interlocutors.

Table 3.1: Profile of Interlocutors

Status of Interlocutors	Position	Age	Gender	Race / Ethnicity	Education
Higher	Father (MN)	39	Male	Indian	Degree
	Mother (LG)	34	Female	Indian	Degree
	Aunties				
	A1 -	28	Female	Indian	Degree Student
	A2 -	56	Female	Indian	Lower Secondary
	A3 -	45	Female	Indian	
Equal	Peers		Female	Indian	Standard 2
	F1 -	8	Female	Indian	Standard 2
	F2 -	8	Female	Indian	Standard 2
	F3 -	8			
Lower	Younger Brother (MJ)	2	Male	Indian	Not Schooling Yet
	Maid (S)	33	Female	Indian (India)	No Education

For the purpose of this study, the interlocutors that the subject interacts with in this study have been categorized into three groups according to status: higher, lower and equal. The categorization was done based on two crucial criteria which are the age and social status of the interactants in relation to the child. The purpose for this categorization is to

identify whether there is any variation in the power displayed by the subject in her interactions with these interlocutors as a result of the status of the interlocutors. Parents are deemed to be of higher authority, peers, due to their same age and status were considered as of equal status and maids and younger siblings were considered to be lower status.

3.3 Transcription of data

The data was transcribed in detail as a complete record of the taped material and from the researcher's log book which was derived from the pen and paper method. The data was transcribed using a modified version of the Gail Jefferson (1978) transcription convention. As this whole study comprises Conversation Analysis CA this system of transcription fits the sequential analysis. This system is used widely by the CA researchers and it is also used as the base for a modified format by the researcher's preference. The transcription includes the full conversation of the subject with her interlocutors. Translation of face expressions and tones were also transcribed using symbols. Translation of other languages such as Bahasa Melayu, Malayalam and Tamil which was used by the subject in code switching was translated into English. Interpretation of words miss pronounced, coined words and other new words which were created by the subject to achieve her goal in her communication was also shown in the transcription using the symbols of transcription. Jefferson's transcription was selected for this study because it attempts to capture the talk as it is heard to participants and it is convenient to do interactional analysis.

3.3.1 Definition of Turn

A turn is seen as everything one speaker says before another speaker begins to speak (Sacks et al. 1974). A pair is made up two turns made by two different speakers and has referred to as an adjacency pair (Schegloff and sacks 1973). Overlaps are instances of simultaneous speech where the current speaker speaks at a minimal gap in the transition of a turn (within the last word of boundaries). In this study overlaps are seen as interruption. In turn taking system interruptions are defined as violations.

3.3.2 Interruptions as simultaneous speech

The commonest way of conceptualizing interruptive behaviour has been to consider it as simultaneous speech results in loss of the floor by the overlapper. Roger and Jones (1975) define interruption as “an instance in which the speaker in question was a second person to enter a period of simultaneous speech”. Natale, Entin and Jaffe (1979) define interruption as “the occurrence of simultaneous speech [.....] assigned to the participant who initiated speech while not possessing ‘the conversational floor’ (p.867). Beattie (1982) defined interruptions as “deviations from turn taking rule that specifies that only one party should talk at a time” (p. 93). The study will focus on the strategies of overlapping and latching as methods of interruption turns to gain the floor.

Using these two linguistic strategies, the study will be analyzed to show how power is being displayed by the child. According to Watts (1991), one salient type of non-politic behaviour, both linguistic and non linguistic, is an interruption. Interruptions have been used as the main framework to identify the exercise of power in the emergent network in the family discourse. The exercise of power will be envisaged through the interruptive

behaviour. Watts (1994) has also adopted interruption and turns as a theoretical term to envisage the power display in his study about close-knit family discourse.

3.3.3 Overlapping

When two or more people take the turn to talk at the same time, the resulting communication becomes incoherent and this act of talking simultaneously is identified as an overlap in speech. Thus an overlap occurs when a second speaker cuts in at the point where the first speaker is concluding his utterance. According to (Hutchby & Wooffitt, 2002 :78) cited in Thilagavathi, 2006:109) occurrences of overlaps are observable achievement of understanding between speakers. Further, overlaps can also be seen as show of power control over the first speaker who loses the floor to the second speaker.

Overlapping in conversations is quite natural. As described in Chapter two, overlapping is a process where one person starts to speak before the other ends. There are two primary ways in which the interrupt of the second person happens. One way is the first person finishes his/her main point, which is spotted by the second person who interrupts as the first person starts elaborating or slowing. The alternative interrupt happens when the second person butts in earlier than might be expected, for example through enthusiasm, ignorance or in a power move. Jiahong Yuan, Mark Liberman & Christopher Cieri (2007) distinguish these two types of speech overlaps: (1) One side takes over the turn before the other side finishes (turn-taking type), (2) One side speaks in the middle of the other side's turn (backchannel type).

In this study instances of overlap will be indicated in the transcription through use of with the left bracket at the beginning and the right bracket. One set of brackets is inserted surrounding the first speakers overlapping utterance portion, and a second set of brackets surround the second speakers overlapping portion. This notation signals that the two bracketed utterance portion were uttered at the same time. (Jefferson 1983). An example of the transcription of data recording overlap is given below:

LG: Ya ya wait [baby].

M: [You always like that you know you say you will tell but you won't tell any story.]

3.3.4 Latching

Latching refers to a point in conversation where there is no pause between turns. Latching is often taken as a mark of cooperation in order to latch a turn so precisely onto the proceeding; the speaker has to attend closely to the contribution of others. (Young 1999) Latching according Jefferson occurs when one word or turn occurs directly after the other with no gap. Jefferson. Uses equal sign (=) to indicate this. An example indicating the occurrence of latching as transcribed from the data collected in this study is given below:

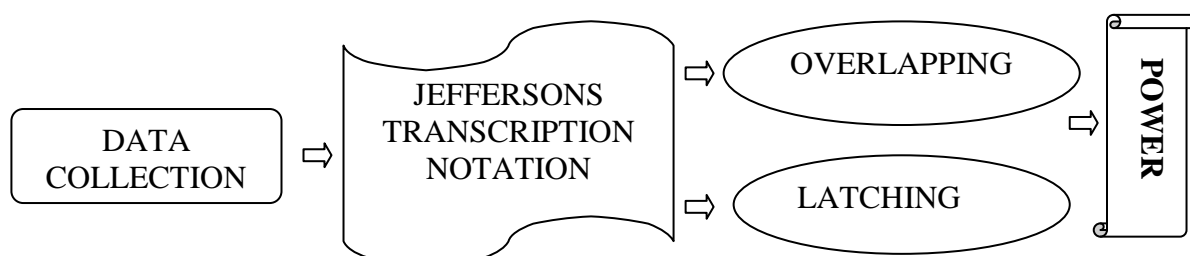
LG : Close this bottle=

M : =That wan cannot close

3.4 Framework of Analysis

Many influential researchers of the twentieth century have explored the use of power. Among these are Russel (1938) Weber (1947), Dahl (1957), Bachrach and Baratz (1970), Lukes (1974), Dahl (1957), Gumperz (1982), O’Barr and Davis (1982), Ervin-Tripp (1984) Habermas (1986), Davis (1988), Fairclough (1989) Wartenberg (1990), (Van Dijk (1991), Watts (1991), Hofstede (1991), Ng and Bradac (1993), Walkinshaw (2001), Habermas (2001) and Locher (2004). For the purpose of this study of power concept, the researcher will use the typical discourse analysis of turn takings and interruption to interpret power displays in the child’s conversation. Watts (1991) demonstrates how intervention behaviour which is interpreted as interruptive used in distribution of power between the family members have been established consolidated and renegotiated during the course of the interaction. Watts also delineated that interruptive verbal behaviour as an important feature of the interaction, since it can be interpreted as giving evidence for shifts in the distribution of power. For the purpose of this study, the following procedure will be used to analyse the data collected.

FIGURE 3.1: Procedure for Data Analysis



3.5 Summary

This chapter highlights the methodology of the study. The researcher has presented a detailed outline of the study including its research design, subjects of the study, research instruments, data collection procedures and also data analysis techniques. The next chapter reports the findings and presents an in depth discussion of the findings.