1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of study

Communication is made up of many different signs and sounds. Almost everything we do concern other people involves us in conversation (Nofsinger, 1990). Human communication is a process involving interactive and collaborative effort and its success is dependent on the joint responsibility of all participants involved (Grice, 1975; Clark, 1996). Unfortunately, we still experience problems during conversation that threaten to embarrass us to prevent from reaching our immediate or long-term goals.

However, in today's society, communication has changed. There are many new and improved technologies. Conversation is no longer exclusively a face-to-face act or a simple chat over the telephone (Haggerty, 2000). Nowadays, there are computers and the internet. The internet has become increasingly influential and essential to most people in this era of globalization. It has also become such a worldwide phenomenon, that most countries around the world are trying to embrace it, determined that it will bring many benefits in various kinds of ways. Asia is now excessively wired with Malaysia alone having approximately 16,902,600 internet users (ITU, 2010). The government also has been encouraging the public to be internet savvy as they try to promote it through education, career, lifestyle and many more. The government is also very keen on expanding the infrastructure, in order to make Malaysia as one of the modernized countries in the world. The cyber world also has become part of the norm in everyone's life as it is used as the medium of communication, thus the phrase 'world with no boundaries'. One of the primary purposes of media communication is to affect receiver's knowledge or behaviour by informing, directing, regulating, socializing and persuading (Baker, 2002).

With the internet, getting in touch with people all over the world seems a breeze as the technology develops, making our lives easier day by day. The presence of live streaming video calls, chat rooms, emails and social networks accommodate peoples' needs to communicate in different kinds of levels; between friends, family or even a stranger.

The internet is also one of the many means of communication that can simulate different aspects of natural face-to-face communication. It can also affect the quality of the interaction on multiple levels including the social qualities of the interaction. Although computer mediated communication (CMC) is not a novelty, its current extent is casting combustion of light and new information to the fresh, new environment created by electronic communications. Various researchers of both social science and linguistics are becoming increasingly interested in understanding the impact of CMC and its characteristic to people, groups and organization (Riva & Galimberti, 1997).

1.2. Communication Through the Internet

One common means of communication through the internet is through chat groups such as Yahoo Messenger and Internet Relay Chat (IRC). The chat room is the medium used for transferring messages between users. [1]Today, chat room talk is growing in popularity by the rising numbers of various chat rooms and its users in the internet nowadays. It is where people from Malaysia, for example, can communicate with others from any parts of the world via the internet.

Chatting is one of the most popular activities on the internet. It involves people from all walks of life and just about all ages who come together and join in to chat on variety of topics that they are interested in. Traditionally, chatting is text based but it can also involve audio and video. In public chat areas people use user names or nicknames or

[1] Internet World Stats (updated 31st March, 2011). Retrieved 23rd February, 2012, from http://www.internetworldstats.com/stats.htm

sometimes represent themselves as graphical icons or avatars as they are known in the chat world (Huffaker, 2004).

There was one point of time when chatting became so huge among internet users that it spread rapidly through out the entire world. Swiftly, computer and internet became essential in every home. This phenomenon happened due to the excitement of chatting online. People were really into this new thing where they interact or communicate with people they do not know. However, the risk of being deceived is quite high especially when you are in public chat areas where other users do not know you. When strangers chat with each other, it can be said that it is impossible to know everything about that person as they only choose certain information to be shared. Thus, there is no guarantee that the users in the internet are for real. Online communication tend to be more open because of what people will say to one another as they are not speaking directly to the other person.

It is always the case where, chatters tend to choose a nickname which, in a way reflects their personality. The way chatters portray themselves to others will give an automatic judgement on the kind of person they are. According to Walter (1993), although impression management occurs for many reasons, its primary purpose is to create and maintain a stable and favourable impression of the self. It is also said that the ability to present a desirable image to others also enhances self-image and increases psychological comfort. Berger and Calabrese (1975) went on to say that impression management is particularly salient in initial interactional, though strangers may be uncertain as to which behaviours would form an optimal impression.

In face-to-face interactions, strangers rely initially on the cultural and sociological levels of information to form and cast impressions, then move toward the psychological level (Miller & Steinberg, 1975). Through computer mediated communication (CMC),

social information can be exchanged to form and manage impressions and to develop relationships (Walther, 1992; 1993; Lea & Spears, 1991; O'Sullivan, 2000). Paralinguistic cues, such as linguistic style, politeness strategies, name usage and emoticons also convey social information that influences impressions (Postmes, Spears & Lea, 1998).

In contemporary U.S society, many adolescents spend a considerable amount of time in online interactions (Subrahmanyam, Greenfield, Kraut & Gross, 2001). The language used on the internet demonstrates an evolution of discourse (Crystal, 2001) and adolescent are in the midst of that language evolution (Greenfield & Subrahmanyam, 2003).

In public chat areas people can choose to be polite or else impolite as they are not interacting face to face. The study of CMC which refers to the process of using computers and other digital technologies to communicate, explores many of these issues. Scholars have actively explored how identity and language are manifested in this 'faceless' interactions. Past research in CMC environments, such as news groups and [2]MUDs (originally Multi- User Dungeon, with later variants Multi-User Dimensions and Multi-User Domains) has revealed interesting trends in the way individual identity is presented, language is used and interactions have transpired (Turkle, 1995; Herring, 2000; Crystal,2001; Calvert, 2002; Greenfield & Subrahmanyam, 2003). It includes the construction of online identity (Turkle, 1995; Calvert, 2002), dialogue and online interactions (Herring, 2000; Jenkins & Lee, 2003; Greenfield and Subrahmanyam, 2003) and the impact of technology on child and adolescent development (Roberts, Foehr, Rideout & Brodie, 1999; Subrahmanyam, Greenfield, Kraut & Gross, 2001).

[2] Bartle, Richardson (2003). Designing Virtual Worlds. *New Riders*. Pp. 9-10.

1.3. Statement of the problem

A lot of people often wondered whether online communication has any effect on the level of politeness in communication or interactions. As it is a 'faceless' community, people have yet to figure out if chatters tend to use the same politeness strategies as to their daily face-to-face conversations. Some chatters tend to impress the other person who is chatting with them, resulting chatters to use certain politeness strategies in order to project their intention. Whereas, some chatters could not care less about the other person who is chatting with them, resulting them to choose to be plain rude.

In online chat rooms, chatters usually do not know each other personally. Even then, at times when they know the person whom they are chatting with, they still use inappropriate words like swear words and discuss on taboo topics regardless of gender and age. Previous studies have indicated that men tend to be impolite and use coarse language compared to women (Lakoff, 1975; Holmes, 1993). Hence, will there be differences in the degree of politeness when the two genders communicate in online chat rooms? Will both genders talk politely? Furthermore, not only gender is the determiner of this study, age is also one of the important aspects to look at in this study. Does the younger generation practise politeness when communicating with the older generation? Thus, will there be any differences in politeness strategies used by different age groups? This online language continues to evolve and remains an important area of study when considering the styles in which internet users interact and construct their identity in online chat rooms.

1.4. Purpose of the study

The aim of this study is to delve into the Politeness Strategies used among internet users specifically chatters in the 'faceless' community of the instant messaging, focusing on the language used by different groups of ages. Particularly, this study investigates the types of strategies used in determining politeness and/or impoliteness and the differences in the use of language between genders and age groups.

Furthermore, studying a chat room or the 'faceless' community can provide a variety of insights into the ways males and females in different age groups present themselves and interact with each other. For the purpose of this study, differences in language represent an important aspect in different groups of age from an online identity. If gender and age differences are detected, they are not meant to over simplify issues of sociolinguistic but to provide insight and understanding into the ways these groups of people present themselves. This study is not limited to language use, politeness is also revealed through language forms and functions.

1.5. Research Questions

RQ1: What are the Politeness Strategies that are mostly used among the Malaysian chatters in the Instant Yahoo Messenger chat room?

RQ2: How are the Politeness Strategies used by the Malaysian chatters in the computer-mediated communication (CMC) context?

RQ3: How does age and gender affect the ways Malaysian chatters use the politeness strategies?

RQ4: How do distinct groups of people use politeness in their conversations in the CMC context?

1.6. Scope of the study

The current study is only limited to Malaysian chatters as sample materials are collected from Malaysia channel chat room in the Yahoo Messenger. It will not look into the international chatters drawn from other chat rooms. The focus for this study is to look at the ways these group of chatters greet each other in chat rooms, the topic and ways to lead discussions and word choices (lexical choices) used in the conversations. These chat scripts which are collected from the messenger are then analyzed using the Brown's and Levinson's politeness strategies.

It must be noted here that all the chatters are drawn from the researcher's group of friends and some of the chatters that were being made as the participants do not know each other while others might know each other mutually. Also, this study focuses only on the gender and age variables, thus social distances are not being considered in analyzing the data. So, the fact whether the chatter knows the other chatter or not will not be regarded as part of the factors or determiners.

The researcher is aware of each and every chatters' age and gender as all of the participants are known by the researcher mutually. Thus the issue of the computer being the safety net where individuals can hide behind the screen by using false identity will be ignored. Furthermore, the race, education and economical background of the participants are not an issue in this study, so, they will also be ignored.

1.7. Significance of the study

In today's society, social networks such as Facebook, Twitter and Myspace, online chat rooms and discussion groups grow in popularity and importance, and as these applications increase in both depth and range, so too will the analysis of these environments. Parallel to its growth, online chat rooms have gained the importance of being studied and as to prove

this, many researchers have broadened their studies to include online communication or online chat room communication.

This study is very important to create the awareness about language use among chatters to the public especially parents and guardians. It also aims to provide a comprehensive picture of what is happening to the use of language in this online community and how it might affect our daily interactions.

1.8. Definition of Terms used in the Study

Throughout this study, there are various terms that will be found and used frequently. The definitions given for these terms that can be found in this study are exclusively restricted to the use of this research only. This means these terms may carry other meanings in other contexts outside of this study. Thus, it has to be understood that the meanings presented below are based on the context of this research.

Gender has been used mainly to refer to the grammatical categories of masculine, feminine and neuter. However, in recent years the word 'gender' has become well recognized in its use to portray the sex-based categories, as in phrases such as gender gap and politics of gender. This usage is also used by the practice of many anthropologists, who reserve sex for reference to biological categories and using gender to represent social or social categories. Gender decides what is expected, what is wrong and right in a woman or in a man given context.

Politeness refers to gracefulness of manners which also represent the desire to please others by expecting or knowing their wants and wishes.

Impoliteness refers to the opposite of politeness. It represents a lack of good manners in a person's attitude. Words such as discourteous, disrespectful, ill-bred, ill-

mannered, rude and uncivil can be related to impoliteness. On the other hand, words such as rough, crude and raw can be defined as lacking of social refinement.

Netspeak is another term to refer to the language of the internet. Other terms that can be related to this word are Cyberspeak, Cybertalk, Netlish, Weblish, electronic language and computer mediated communication (CMC). Each term has a different implication. For example, Netlish is a straight derivation from the word 'English'. However it is not used widely thus its usefulness has decreased. The term 'net' becomes more multilingual in which electronic discourse emphasizes the interactive and dialogue elements.

CMC or computer mediated communication can be defined generally as any form of data exchange between two or more networked or wired computers. Often times, this term is used specifically to refer to the communication that occurs using the computer mediated formats (chat rooms, instant messages, social networks and e-mails) between two or more individuals. CMC sheds the spotlight on the medium itself.

The term **chat** can be defined as the informal conversation or talk in a familiar and easy environment. This conversation or talk is very convenient and is used in everyday life. A chat is to convey or carry out the exchange of information or ideas between two or more participants through speech.

The word **chat room** is a term used by mass media to explain any form of synchronous conferencing. Thus, this term can be used to describe any type of technology, from real-time online chat using any online forums or instant messaging to fully immerse graphical social environments. Online chat is one way of communicating by sending text messages to others in the same chat room at the exact time.

Netiquette is actually derived from two other words which are ‘internet’ and ‘etiquette’. These words are blended to form a new word netiquette. Communication is actually the process of exchanging information, ideas and/or thoughts between two or more individuals. However, when these exchanges become no longer attractive to a person, that particular communication no longer takes place because the recipient turns off his or her desire or need to understand. These events may happen in a situation as insignificant as grammar mistakes or as significant as the use of rudeness. Thus, many chatters try to maintain a standard exchange in order for their views to be desirable. This can be done by following the netiquette.

Emoticons are graphics that represent various emotions used by the chatters. They are used to explain the way chatters feel hen words that are typed are not enough. (i.e. ☺ represents smile or happiness and ☹ represents sadness). Chatters use these emoticons when chatting with friends and family to show how they really feel.

Acronyms are usually used in any daily conversations in the computer mediated communication (CMC). Usually acronyms can be found in chat rooms, instant messaging, social networking and SMSs. These acronyms are combination of letters and numbers that represent certain words or phrases. Chatters usually use these acronyms so that typing will be easier and more efficient rather than to type the full form of the words or phrases. Furthermore, commonly used phrase can be abbreviated by using only few characters. With the amount of communication that most people do these days using the computer keyboard, using acronyms can definitely save a significant amount of typing not to mention time. Some examples of acronyms are ‘BTW’ which stands form ‘by the way’, ‘LOL’ which stands for ‘laugh out loud’ and ‘BRB’ which stands for ‘be right back’.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1. Introduction

In chapter 1, I have reviewed politeness as one of the important aspects that should be looked into the study of discourse. With the growing popularity and importance of computer and the internet, computer mediated communication has emerged and spread among our society rapidly. Having this, it is now very important for us to learn more about the language and its use on the internet. As all these technological innovations are drastically changing our world, there is also a challenge in understanding the social, psychological and cultural impacts. For this purpose, this chapter examines issues on language in computer mediated communications and politeness expressions.

2.2. Virtual Communication

Communications does not only happen in 'real' environment where the speakers exchange words face to face. Today as the world becomes more wired day by day, communication also happens in the 'faceless' environment or community. It is the cyber world that has brought a new meaning for communication all together. Virtual conversation happens when the interaction is mediated by technology of a more or less virtual nature. Virtual communication or computer mediated communication (CMC) is defined by 'parcel-post-model' of communication as the passage of information from one person to another person through a channel is becoming absolute (Riva and Galimberti, 1998). Communication also only happens when the participants have some common grounds for shared beliefs, acknowledge each other's expectations and accept interactive rules as it develops the conversation on the right track (Clark and Shaefer, 1989). Through all the communication that is happening, CMC is giving rise to a new, alternative concept of communication as the shared construction of meanings (Kraut and Streeter, 1995).

There are two distinct types of CMC and they are termed as synchronous and asynchronous. Synchronous CMC is produced when the communication between two or more people or participants occurs simultaneously just like in any telephonic or face-to-face daily conversation. Asynchronous CMC occurs when the communication between participants is not simultaneous. Therefore, in order for CMC to be synchronous like any telephonic or daily face-to-face conversation, the computers are used as the means of the communication have to be linked in real time. The most common form of synchronous CMC would be the chat rooms and video conference.

On the other hand, the most common forms of asynchronous CMC are social networks and E-mails. When participants are communicating using these forms of CMC, the communication does not happen simultaneously. This is because one person will usually leave the message in the electronic inbox before the other person opens and reads it. This process may sometimes take days and it does not usually occurs naturally. The electronic bulletin board is also one of the examples of asynchronous CMC. Usually internet users will post up their messages or comments regarding a specific topic or area of interest. Other users will usually reply the comments or messages after they open and read them later. This also means that the communication that happens here is not simultaneous. Thus we can also say that in these asynchronous CMC like Emails, electronic bulletin boards and social networks, most of the time, there is no real time link between the computers of the interacting participants.

Unlike asynchronous CMC, the most important feature of a synchronous CMC is that it provides a real-time link between the participants' computers. The type of CMC that are used most commonly is of course the different kinds of chat rooms on the net. The Internet Chat Relay or more known as IRC used to be very popular in the early 2000, but today instant chats like Yahoo chat, Facebook chat and MSN messenger are more widely

used by the internet users. All these instant chats are forms of synchronous CMC which enables a group of participants or users to exchange instant messages and interact with each other in two different ways, either to send messages to a specified user or to a group of people in the chat room.

There are a few features that can distinguish synchronous CMC from asynchronous CMC. The features include multimediality, hypertextuality, packet switching, synchronicity and interactivity (Newhagen, 1996). To explain all these features, there is a technical explanation or reason between the differences of synchronous CMC and asynchronous CMC.

2.3. What is a chat room?

Many people have different ideas as to what chat actually means. Webster's Third New International Dictionary (1961) definitions of chat include:

Chat is an informal conversation or talk in an easy familiar manner

Informal refers to not of a formal, official or stiffly conventional nature. Appropriate to everyday life or use

Conversation gives the meaning of interchange through speech of information, ideas, etc or spoken communication.

Speech is the act or faculty of speaking. It also means utterance.

Utter is to give audible expression to (something).

Expression is the act or an instance of transforming ideas into words. It also means a manifestation of an emotion, feeling, etc. Without words. (for example in chat rooms

‘emoticons’ are used to illustrate emotions; smiling face,frown or symbols such as ☺ to show one is just kidding or laughing)

Communication is the imparting or exchange of information, ideas or feelings.

Talk is to express one’s thoughts or feelings or desire by means of words; to communicate by other means (lover talk with their eyes); to exchange ideas

Familiar means well known; frequent or customary, close. Intimate.

It can be derived that chat room conversation means conversation or talk which is informal in the form of electronic discourse.

According to Crystal (2001), a chat room is a synchronic multi-party electronic discourse communication. The conversations that occur in a chat room are in real time, continuous or on-going and are usually focused on a particular subject matter. Usually, the topic of the discussions may be reflected by the name of the chat room but these days the name can be random and does not necessarily reflect the topic of the discussion, thus making the environment or situation in a chat room as similar as to a real life chat. Moreover, often times that chat participants have general expectations that the language in chat room should have the features of real life chat.

2.4. Language on the internet

One of the most obvious features of the internet is the language used within the users which is also a representation of creative and innovative adaptations by users. Also, according to Crystal (2001), the language used on the internet demonstrates an evolution of discourse. In the internet community, this feature is known as Netspeak, the language of the internet which refers to both traditional linguistic forms and adapted ones that also include slang and non-standard forms that are sometimes used not only online but also

offline or in real life conversation. Netspeak has become an emergent discourse that is determined by the creativity of the internet users (Crystal, 2001).

Another feature that can be found in the internet community is the use of nicknames among the users. Nicknames are the names that one prefers to use in order for others to identify them. Some might use their own names but it is more often that chatters prefer to use other names to represent themselves especially in chat rooms. The choice of nickname is a ritual act, demanded by the culture to which the individual aspires to belong. Thus, when a participant joins a chat room, he/she may choose a nickname to represent them without having it clashes with other people's nickname.

The introduction of acronyms (eg: LOL= laugh out loud, brb= be right back) plays or variations of words (e.g. cya=see you, latah= later), graphical icons that represent emoticons, called emoticons (☺ or ☹) or graphical icons that represent a real person in a virtual context called avatars, are examples of a language produced by the online community which symbolizes how variation and alteration can enrich or enhance forms of discourse (Crystal,2001). This language continues to evolve and remains an important area of study when considering the ways in which internet users interact.

Some of the graphical icons from Yahoo chat instant messenger that have been used to represent emoticons in figure 2.1.

Figure 2.1: Graphical icons in Yahoo IM

	:)	happy		:-c	call me - New!
	:(	sad		:)]	on the phone - New!
	;)	winking		~X(	at wits' end - New!
	:D	big grin		:-h	wave - New!
	;;)	batting eyelashes		:-t	time out - New!
	>:D<	big hug		8->	daydreaming - New!
	:-/	confused		I-)	sleepy
	:x	love struck		8-|	rolling eyes
	:">	blushing		L-)	loser
	:P	tongue		:-&	sick
	:-*	kiss		:-$	don't tell anyone
	=((	broken heart		[-(	not talking
	:-O	surprise		:O)	clown
	X(	angry		8-}	silly
	:>	smug		<:-P	party
	B-)	cool		(:|	yawn
	:-S	worried		=P~	drooling
	#:-S	whew!		:-?	thinking
	>:)	devil		#-o	d'oh
	:((	crying		=D>	applause

Graphic taken from http://usefulshortcuts.com/yahoo-messenger/smileys-emoticons.php

2.4.1. Netspeak

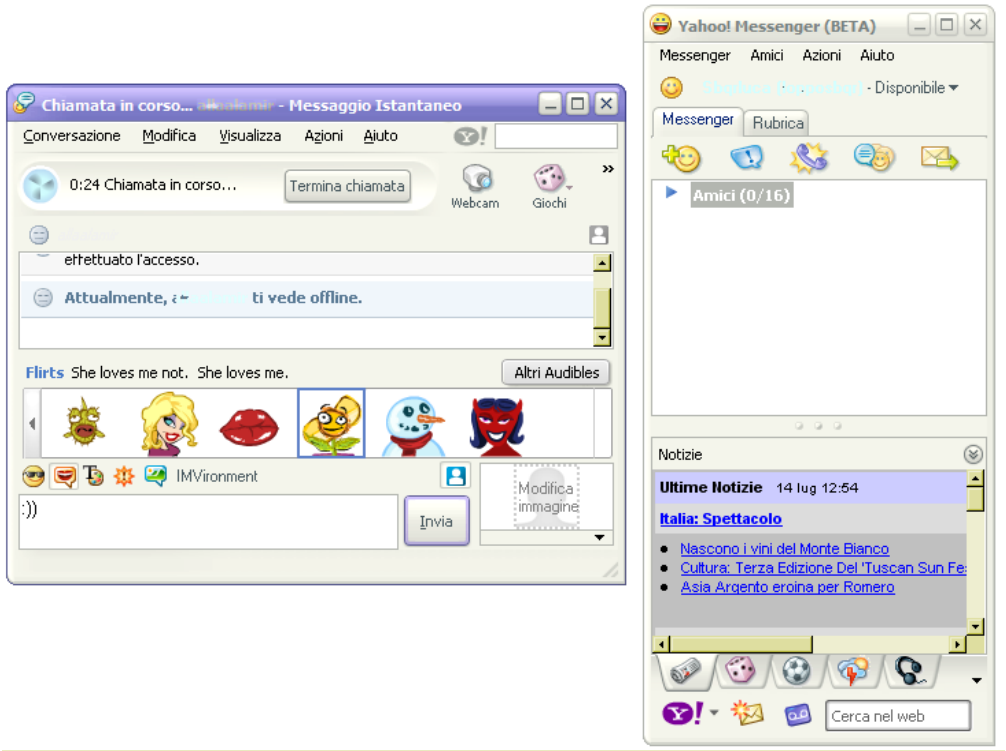
According to Crystal (2001), Netspeak is a unique form of communication because it relies on the elements of both speech, which is face-to-face and usually informal and casual, and writing, which is more static and can be removed from the reader. The examples of communication through the web such as social networking and forums seems more rigid and static, thus they are closer to the written word. On the other hand, instant messaging and chat room provide synchronous modes of communications making them similar to the face-to-face interactions.

Netspeak is the result of both content and the channel of the technological medium that has gained popularity especially in recent years. Most of the content is easily available. For example, acronyms to shorten messages, the use of emoticons or other graphical forms and even the informal and casual tone of e-mails, instant messages, chat rooms and social networking portrays the spirit of discourse on the internet (Crystal, 2001). Yet the communication patterns of the younger generations which can be found largely in the instant messages, e-mails and SMSs might be the result of the ways in which these technologies are designed. Instant messaging and mobile phone SMSs may ignite very short conversations and one-liners, whereas e-mail might risen the combination of letter writing and informal conversations with more time to convey the message. Among all the acronyms used in the internet, 'LOL' is one of the most used acronyms especially among the internet users (Haig, 2001). These acronyms and initialisms of internet slangs or Netspeak is convenient to chatters because it saves more time as internet users do not have to type more words (Haig, 2001). A study done on college student about the use of abbreviations or Netspeak in CMC and specifically in instant messaging has found that about 90 initialisms were used. Among the initialisms used, 31 of them were CMC-style abbreviations and 49 of them were emoticons (Philipkoski, 2005).

Crystal (2001: 28) also depicts, "what makes Netspeak very interesting as a form of communication is the way it relies on characteristics belonging to both sides of the speech/writing divide". He also stresses on the situation of e-mails and chat groups in virtual world, though expressed through the medium of writing, demonstrate several of the main characteristics of a speech. They are time-governed, expecting or demanding an immediate response, extremely brief in terms of the messages can be deleted (i.e. e-mails and SMSs) or may be lost to attention as chatters scroll off the screen (i.e. instant messages

and chat rooms) and the expression used shows much of the urgency and energetic force which is the main characteristic of a face-to-face conversation. The situations are not exactly 'spoken' by the participants. We 'write' e-mails not 'speak' them (Crystal, 2001). But chat rooms are for chatting and people definitely 'speak' to each other.

Figure 2.2: Example of Yahoo Messenger Chat Window



One of the main reasons the internet was invented is to make communication between people seem easier. This means that we no longer need to meet a person in order to communicate nor we need to call (which involves costly bills) our loved ones who are far away from home. With internet, we are automatically connected to the whole world. Internet also connects a number of different people and groups around the world. Language is one of the main distinguishing features from one group to another group, where each group having its own unique words and expression. That difference is parallel to different profession or ethnic groups employing a dialect or way of speaking. Communication features that are always used in the internet among chatters of different dialect groups

include the emoticons and common abbreviations but there is also a huge difference between each one of them. According to abbreviations.com (2005), these are some of the most popular abbreviations (among thousands of abbreviations) used among chatters in the internet.

Table 2.1: List of abbreviations

Abbreviations	**Meanings**	**Abbreviations**	**Meanings**
10Q	Thank You	FAM	Family
2G2BT	Too good to be true	FAQ	Frequently asked questions
2Moro	Tomorrow	FRM	From
4ever	Forever	FTW	For the win
Abt	About	FYI	For your information
AFC	Away from computer	G2G	Got to go
AKA	Also known as	G8T	Great
ALOL	Actually laughing out loud	GMTA	Great Minds think alike
ASAP	As soon as possible	IDK	I don't know
ASL	Age/Sex/location?	ILY	I love you

ATM	At the moment	ILY2	I love you too
BRB	Be right back	ILYSM	I love you so much
BTW	By the way...	IMU	I miss you
CULTR	See you later	ITTYL	I talk to you later
DIY	Do it yourself	J/K	Just kidding
DNC	Do not care	LOL	Laugh out loud
DND	Do not disturb	ROTFL	Roll on the floor laughing

List is taken from http://www.abbreviations.com/acronyms/CHAT

In short, the language of the internet will never stop to evolve together with that community that participate in its discourse, and idea that is reflected in Chomsky's (1999) which says that the knowledge of a certain language is grown within its speech community. This also includes the language use, pronunciation and also interpretation. New types of technologies may also help to determine in which way that particular language is interpreted and by analyzing communication patterns among different technological context provides insight for educators, parents, technologists and scholars who are interested in knowing the impacts of modern technology on people.

2.4.2. Netiquette rules

There are rules, known as netiquette rules to be observed when one chats in the chat room. Some examples of netiquette rules derived from Shea (1994) are as follows:

- Capital letters- mean that you are shouting and it really turns some people off
- Respect other people without judgment
- Lurk before you leap
- Think globally because people from other nations, cultures or ethnic backgrounds may not understand you well intended home span colloquialism.
- Keep standards high- people will always form opinions about you based on your standards, and it is often extremely difficult to gain the respect of others when they observe you continually exhibiting your own low standards.
- Give newbies some slacks- when newbies make obvious errors, remember that you were once a newbie, and would you have wanted to receive a harsh correction for something which you did not understand?

2.4.3. Computer mediated communication (CMC)

Communication can be defined as the exchange of information or ideas between two or more individuals. This of course is related especially to oral language and face-to-face communication, in which telephone conversation is being excluded. Computer mediated communication (CMC) provides a link between oral and written communication which produces a categorical change that affects not only the concept of what conversation is but the speaking-writing dichotomy as well.

According to Crystal (2001), CMC also portrays the process of communication in which the human uses computers to communicate through either synchronous (real-time) or asynchronous (postponed time) methods to exchange ideas (in this case, texts), pictures and multimedia (i.e. songs, data, videos etc.) It is a medium of interacting or communicating written messages to people in all parts of the world using the internet.

Nowadays, there are no longer space boundaries or barriers as the CMC is used widely as a very convenient method to communicate with people all over the world. Not only that, CMC has definitely changed the ways of communicating in various aspects, especially in most organizations and workplace. CMC has changed the structure of communication channels between people thus making internet the most commonly used medium of communication (Jaffe et al., 1995). Kanfer (1999) also states that various segments of the industry, commerce, government, academia and the public are increasingly using CMC as a virtual meeting place. Furthermore, the use of CMC has made e-mails pervasive throughout work and personal environment.

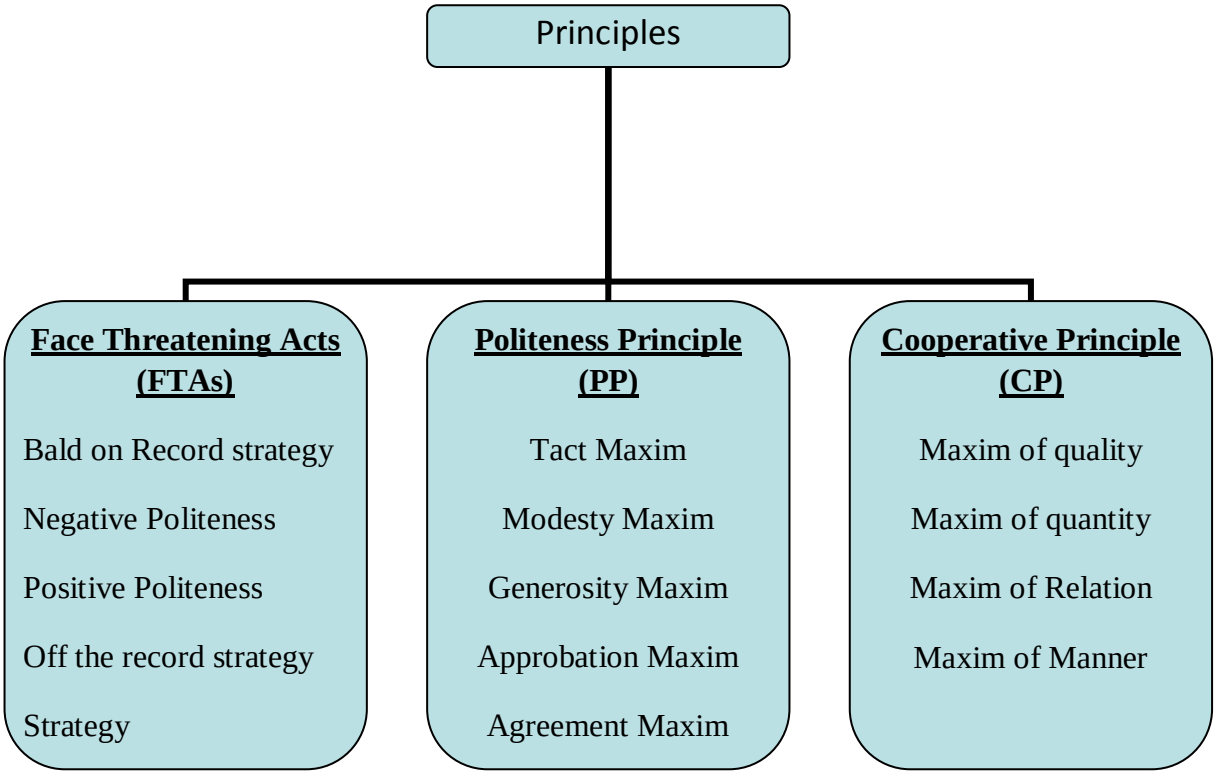
Not only CMC has changed our perspective on the medium of communication, according to Tidwell & Walter (2002), it also suggests other ways on understanding and studying the human behavioural and social networks. It has now can be equalized to face-to-face exchange as a common method for individuals to communicate with one another. In addition, the use of CMC as a communication method is not restricted to formal, constructed e-mails but also is generally used for informal communication especially among friends and families. Garton (1995) and Labaton (1995) also present that some employers or co-workers can chat with one another privately, using this method, while working side by side and this leads to a friendlier working environment. The use of this method also lessens the formality and tension in communication and is usually reflected in language, leading to a conversational style of communication, with a personal note.

Calvert (2002) also suggests that when an individual is wired or being online, it also allows him or her to look more into various sides of identity, especially those who are not really comfortable in a non-virtual world. There are, however, issues on politeness among individuals being questioned. This includes language used by different gender and age groups in portraying politeness.

2.5. Theories of Politeness and Cooperative Principle

Politeness is one of the aspects of pragmatics in terms of its use in a certain language determined by a peripheral environment. This peripheral environment is the environment in which the communication takes place which also is determined by the social status of the participants. Politeness also is a system used by a speaker (addressor) in order to keep up to the addressee's expectations.

Figure 2.3: Framework of Politeness and Cooperative Principle



According to Grundy (1995: 135), the factors or determiners of the need to use politeness strategies in a certain conversation are **distance, power and imposition**. Imposition refers to every action which threatens the addressee's autonomy and freedom of action and usually is conveyed in the form of an order. Apart from that, power refers to numerous factors such as the position of the participants in the society and also age whereas distance implies the evaluation of the other's place in the world, degree of familiarity and/or solidarity towards the addressee.

Scollon and Scollon (1995) also presented the politeness systems theory which is also noteworthy in this field. They observed three politeness systems which are the deference politeness system, the solidarity politeness system and the hierarchical politeness system. The differences between all three systems is mainly based on whether there are power differences (+P or –P) and the social distance between the participants (+D or –D).The deference politeness system is one in which the participants are considered to be equals or near-equals but treat each other at a distance. In a solidarity politeness system, the speaker may feel neither power difference (-P) nor social distance (-D) between them (in this case; friends or best/close friends). The hierarchical politeness system may be widely recognized among companies, government and educational organizations, in which the speakers resort to different politeness strategies.

There are a few theoretical works developed in this area of study which are very influential in determining or categorizing politeness. The line of thought are linked up closely to studies carried out by Grice's Cooperative Principle (1975), Brown and Levinson's notion of 'face'(1978) and Leech's Politeness Principle (1983).

2.5.1. The Gricean Cooperative Principle

The Gricean maxims are a framework for understanding how humans cooperate socially in their use of language. Grice (1975) first formulated the notion of the so-called cooperative principle. This is not to say that only one type of cooperation underlies all communication. Rather, it attempts to characterize the more generally cooperative aspects of human behaviour across situations. In a nutshell, here are the Gricean maxims:

Maxims of Quality

- Don't say what you believe is false
- Don't say something you lack adequate evidence for.

Maxims of Relevance

- Be relevant

Maxims of Quantity

- Make your contribution as informative as is required
- Do not make your contribution more informative than is required

Maxims of Manner

- Avoid obscurity of expression
- Avoid ambiguity
- Be brief
- Be orderly

Grice believes that anyone who engages in a conversation would have these maxims in mind.

2.5.2. Brown's and Levinson's theory of politeness

Brown and Levinson (1987) suggest politeness as a compensation action taken to counter-balance the disruptive effect of face-threatening acts (FTAs). In addition, they also describe Face Threatening Acts as "acts that infringe on the hearer's need to maintain his/her self-esteem and be respected" (Brown and Levinson, 1987).

According to Brown and Levinson, politeness strategies are developed in order to save the hearer's "face". Face refers to a speaker's sense of linguistic and social identity, which is defined as "the public self-image that every member (of the society) wants to claim for himself" (Brown and Levinson, 1987).

2.5.2.1. Face Threatening Acts (FTAs)

According to Goffman (1967), a person's face is the most personal possession and is the centre of one's security and pleasure (p.10). Brown and Levinson (1987) defined face as "something that is emotionally invested and that can be lost, maintained or enhanced and must be constantly attended to in interaction" (p. 61).

Goffman (1967) also mentions that everyone's face is "on loan.....from society" and that every interaction requires a person to work to maintain the integrity of his or her face which is also referred to as "face-work" by Goffman (1967).

Brown and Levinson (1987) also believe that every culture has different levels of required politeness and various ways on how to be polite to others. However, all people have the desire to be appreciated and protected (Littlejohn & Foss, 2008, p.125). Thus these theorists separated the face needs into two categories which are "positive face" and "negative face" (Wilson, Kim & Meischke, 1991/1992, p. 216).

The “positive face” of an individual needs to be appreciated and approved, to be like and honoured. The concept is multi-dimensional, as it pertains to a range of characteristics, actions and possessions in which an individual desires others to appreciate (Wilson, Kim & Meischke, 1991/1992, p. 220).

On the other hand, one’s “negative face” needs to be free from intrusion or imposition (Littlejohn &Foss, 2008). The “negative face” is a one-dimensional concept where Brown and Levinson (1987) state it pertains to “very restricted aspect of a hearer’s self image focusing on his/her wants to be unimpeded”.

Every utterance is potentially a face threatening act (FTA), either to the negative face or to the positive face. Often times, infringing to one’s positive or negative face cannot be avoided. Some speech acts such as requests, refusals or directives seem to be inherently face-threatening. Therefore, people need to employ politeness strategies to redress the FTA. According to Brown and Levinson, Face Threatening Acts (FTA's) are acts that infringe on the hearers' need to maintain his/her self esteem. If we do or are about to threaten someone’s positive or negative face, but do not mean it, we need to minimize it by applying politeness strategies.

There are four polite strategies; Bald on Record, Positive Politeness, Negative Politeness, and Off-the-Record (as suggested by Brown and Levinson, 1987).

2.5.2.2. Politeness Strategy

According to Brown and Levinson (1987), politeness strategies are developed to save the hearer’s face. Face refers to the respect that an individual has for him or herself, and maintaining that “self-esteem” in public or in private situations. Their notion of ‘face is derived from that of Goffman (1967, as cited in Brown and Levinson 1987) and from the

English folk term, which is related to notions of being embarrassed or humiliated, or 'losing face'. Brown and Levinson stated that there are two types of face in an interaction which are positive and negative face. A person's positive face is the need to be accepted, even liked, by others, to be treated by members of the same group, and to know that his or her wants are shared by others. Whereas a person's negative face is the need to be independent, to have freedom of action and not to be imposed on by others (Yule, 1996).

i. Bald on Record Strategy

In the bald on record strategy, the speaker provides no effort to minimize threats to the other person's "face." The prime reason for its usage is that whenever a speaker (S) wants to do the FTA with maximum efficiency more than he wants to satisfy the hearer's (H's) face, even to any degree, he will choose bald on record strategy (Brown and Levinson, 1987: 95). There are, however, different kinds of bald on record usage in different circumstances, because S (speaker) can have different motives for his or her wanting to do the FTA with maximum efficiency. It is divided into two classes which are cases of non-minimization of FTA and cases of FTA-oriented bald on record usage.

In cases of non-minimization of FTA, maximum efficiency is very important, and this is mutually known to both H (hearer) and S (speaker). The situations are presented as follows:

Bald on Record Strategy (non-minimizing of FTA)
a. In cases of great urgency or desperation. b. Cases of channel noise, or where communication difficulties exploit pressure to speak with maximum efficiency such as in calling across a distance. c. Task-oriented, in this kind of interaction face redress will be irrelevant. d. S's want to satisfy H's face is small, either because S is powerful and does not fear retribution or non-cooperation from H.

e. S wants to be rude without risk of offending, so S does not care about maintaining face.
f. Sympathetic advice or warnings.
g. Granting permission for something that H has requested.

On the other hand, in cases of FTA-oriented bald on record, the use of this strategy is more oriented to the face. In other words, it is used where face involves mutual orientation, so that each participant attempts to predict what the other participant is attempting to foresee. For in certain circumstances it is reasonable for S to assume that H will be especially worried with H's potential violation or S's maintaining. There are three functional categories or areas where we expect the pre-emptive invitations to occur in all languages (which are potential to FTA):

Bald on Record (FTA-oriented)
a. Welcoming b. Farewell c. Offers

ii. Positive Politeness Strategy

The positive politeness strategy is usually seen in groups of friends, or where people in the given social situation know each other fairly well. It usually tries to minimize the distance between them by expressing friendliness and solid interest in the hearer's need to be respected. The only feature that distinguishes positive politeness compensation from

normal everyday intimate language behavior is an element of exaggeration. There are fifteen sub-strategies that are used in positive politeness strategies:

Positive Politeness Strategy
a. Notice, attend to H (his interests, wants, needs, goods). b. Exaggerate (interest approval, sympathy with H) c. Intensify interest to H d. Use in-group identity markers e. Seek agreement f. Avoid disagreement g. Presuppose/raise/assert common ground h. Jokes i. Assert or presuppose S's knowledge of and concern for H's wants. j. Offer, promise. k. Be optimistic l. Include both S and H in the activity m. Give (or ask for) reasons n. Assume or assert reciprocity o. Give gifts to H (goods, sympathy, understanding, cooperation)

iii. Negative Politeness Strategy

Negative politeness is defined as "a redressive action addressed to the addressee's negative face: his want to have his freedom of action unobstructed and his attention unrestricted" (Brown and Levinson, 1987). Negative politeness strategy recognizes the hearer's face, but it also recognizes that the speaker is in some way forcing on them. Some of the sub-strategies of negative politeness are:

Negative Politeness Strategy
a. Be conventionally indirect. b. Question, hedge. c. Be pessimistic. d. Minimize imposition e. Give difference f. Apologize g. Impersonalize S and H h. State the FTA as general rule i. Nominalize j. Go on record as incurring debt, or as not indebting H.

iv. Off-the-record Strategy

According to Brown and Levinson (1987), a communicative act is done off-record if it is done in such a way that it is not possible to attribute only one clear communicative intention to the act. Thus, if a speaker wants to do an FTA, but wants to avoid the responsibility for doing it, he can do it off-record and leave it up the addressee to decide how to interpret it. Some sub-strategies of off-record:

Off-the-record Strategy
a. Give hints b. Give association clues c. Presuppose d. Understate e. Overstate f. Tautologies g. Contradictions h. Be ironic i. Use metaphors j. Use rhetorical questions k. Be ambiguous l. Be vague m. Over-generalize n. Displace H o. Be incomplete, use ellipsis

2.5.2.3. Brown's and Levinson's negligence of impoliteness

From Brown and Levinson's politeness strategies, it can be seen that the performance of FTAs is being avoided and this leads to the area of linguistic impoliteness being ignored. Eelen (2001) also argues that the Brown and Levinson's negative and positive politeness strategies "stipulate how to be polite rather than impolite". However, Eelen does admit that Brown and Levinson do not claim to look at impoliteness, thus they cannot be criticized for something that they did not claim to do at the first place. But he goes on to argue that politeness and impoliteness are "two sides of a coin", and so "any theory that pretends to say something valuable about one side, automatically needs to deal with the other side as well".

Apart from the argument made by Eelen (2001), Culpeper (1996) also believes that "in order for a theory of politeness to be comprehensive, it is integral that the topic of language impoliteness is address. Culpeper attempts to define impoliteness as the opposite or reverse of politeness. He analyzes some context of linguistic use which are a documentary programme on army training and literary drama where he separates examples of impolite linguistic behaviour. In the army training documentary, he lists the examples of impoliteness by the trainers to the recruits.

However, according to Mills (2002) a certain linguistic behaviour is not classified as impolite in a certain community of practice although it may be considered as impolite in other community. This is because of the diverse social rules that are employed by different community. For example, in Culpeper study on the army training documentary, the dominant group in the interaction, the officers, have managed to achieve a situation where this seeming excessively impoliteness is considered to be the norm among them. Therefore, Mills suggests that impoliteness only exists when it is classified as such by certain, usually dominant community members and/or it leads to a breakdown in relations.

2.5.3. Leech's politeness principle

Apart from the concept of face in the study of politeness, there is also a principle with a series of maxims which is also related to the study of politeness. This principle focuses on the smooth flow of communication which Geoffrey Leech (1983) proposes as a way to explain how politeness operates in conversational exchanges. Leech (1983) defines politeness as forms of behaviour which establish and maintain comity in a social interaction in an environment of relative harmony.

Leech (1983) in an elaboration on Politeness Principle (PP) identifies six Maxims as listed below.

a. Tact Maxim (minimizing cost to the other and maximizing benefit to the other)
b. Generosity Maxim (minimizing benefits to self and maximizing cost to self).
c. Approbation Maxim (minimize dispraise of the other and maximize praise of the other)
d. Modesty Maxims (minimize praise to self, maximize dispraise of self)
e. Agreement Maxim (minimizes disagreement between self and the other and maximizes agreement between self and the other).
f. Sympathy Maxim (minimizes antipathy between self and the other and maximize sympathy between self and the other).

(Principles of Pragmatics. Leech, 1983)

The reason why Leech (1983) introduces this principle is so that it can compliment Grice's (1975) 'Cooperative Principle' (CP). For a communication to be effective, the use of these two principles of clarity and politeness often clash, arising as a response to the dictates of the situation. Exceptionally, clarity can usually give rise to the roughness and extreme politeness, vagueness (Morand and Ocker, 2002). Thus a balance between the two is to be maintained for cooperation between the sender and the receiver. Leech also strongly suggests that PP has a stronger or greater binding force than CP. For example, if an individual is being rude and impolite, cooperation also would not follow. Thus the cooperative attitude required Grice's CP needs the observance of PP. In short, Leech is suggesting that PP has a higher role over the CP (Liu Renqing, 1987).

Leech (1983) also stresses that a factor worth considering before beginning a discussion on politeness is that the term is relative.

2.5.4. Lakoff's rules of politeness

Lakoff (1973) also presents the following rules of politeness that are designed "to make one's addressee think well of one" and consequently, "to impart a favourable feeling about the content of the communication" :

a. Don't impose (distance)
b. Give options (deference)
c. Make A feel good (camaraderie)

The first rule suggests that a person should always keep his or her distance from other people by not imposing. For one person to keep their distance from the people around him or her, a more technical vocabulary and formal expressions or ways of communicating has to be used. This is to eliminate any personal form of emotions while communicating.

The second rule implies that in order for us to be liked by our addressees, we have to say things hesitantly, not stating things exactly or more like using euphemisms. This means that the speaker is actually leaving an option or choice of decision to the hearer. Lakoff also believes that women often use this method when communicating. This is to show that they always consider others and would like the hearer to make the decision. Also, often times a younger speaker will also use this method when communicating with an older hearer.

The third rule focuses on the equality between the speaker and the hearer. The reason being it allows the chance for both speaker and hearer to be more close to each other. In certain situation, indirectness can be employed in this rule as it ignites the understanding between the hearer and the speaker.

According to Lakoff (1973), it was found that conversationalist typically do not say exactly what they mean. Here, indirectness is used often for two main reasons. First, it is used so that a person can save his or her face when a conversation contribution is not well received. Secondly is so that a sense of understanding can be achieved when a person is being misunderstood without saying what one means.

2.6. Politeness

Politeness is an aspect of pragmatics in that its use in language is determined by an external context. This external context is the context of communication, which is determined by the social status of the participants. Politeness is a system used by the speaker in order to keep up to the addressee's expectations. According to Grundy (1995: 135) the determiners of the need to use politeness strategies are distance, power and imposition. Imposition covers every action (including speech acts) which threatens the addressee's autonomy and freedom of action and usually is conveyed in the form of an order. On the other hand, power is evaluated in terms of numerous factors such as position in society and age whereas distance implies the evaluation of the other's place in the world, degree of familiarity and/or solidarity towards the addressee.

The politeness systems theory advocated by Scollon and Scollon (1995) is also noteworthy in this field. They observe three politeness systems which are the deference politeness system, the solidarity politeness system and the hierarchical politeness system. The distinction of the three systems is mainly based on whether there exists power difference (+P or -P) and on the social distance between the interlocutors (+D or -D). The deference politeness system is one in which participants are considered to be equals or near equals but treat each other at a distance (e.g. classmates). In a solidarity politeness system, the speakers may feel neither power difference (-P) nor social distance (-D) between them (e.g. friends). The hierarchical politeness system may be widely recognized among

companies, government and educational organizations, in which the speakers resort to different politeness strategies.

2.6.1. Gender and politeness

The topic of politeness has proved to be a popular line of enquiry studies in recent years, with interest originating from Lakoff's (1975) anecdotal assertions that women are linguistically more polite than their male counterparts. Similar conclusions have been drawn by Brown (1980) and Holmes (1995) who offer empirical evidences to justify their arguments. Holmes (1995) offers a detailed analysis of linguistic politeness and gender, drawing on her own and other's research in variety of contexts. Her study on speech patterns of men and women and their relationship to status and power found that there are differences in politeness patterns between men and women. Holmes notes that the more polite tone of women's speech is often associated with submissive social roles. Women also communicate in a more tentative manner. As Crawford (1997:428) argues, Holmes manages to incorporate a large amount of material "under her politeness umbrella", including critical reviews of influential language and gender studies conducted by Zimmerman and West (1975), Fishman (1978; 1980) and Tannen (1984; 1990). Holmes concludes that the multitude of evidence that she has collected over a number of years clearly demonstrates that women are linguistically more polite than their male counterparts.

However, researchers including Cameron (1995; 1996; 1997) and Bergvall, Bing and Freed (1996) have questioned assertions such as those made by Holmes and others, where men and women are seen as having distinctive speech styles. They argue that viewing men and women in a dichotomised way results in a gross oversimplification of the complexity of language and gender. It not only ignores cultural differences, and differences that may result from other social variables such as class, age and ethnicity. As Freed

(1996:55) points out whilst "people generally persist in believing that.....women are more polite than men," research which continues to address such questions is both "misguided and naive". She argues that researchers need to abandon frequently asked questions such as "what differences exist between men's and women's speech?", as this serves only to perpetuate stereotypes about male and female discourse.

Cameron (1995) argues that stereotypes of male and female speech styles lie in the persistence of both the power/dominance and culture/difference approaches to language and gender. Both approaches assume that there is a pre-existing difference between male and female speech patterns.

2.7. Gender and CMCs

From the researches done on language and gender previously, it was suggested that differences in language usage by men and women are because of the different socio emotion factors. One reason is that may be language in CMC would differ considerably in task oriented situations.

According to Redino, 1997, an analysis of conversation from an Internet Relay Chat Channel shows that "women tend to make more use of qualifiers, exaggerations, extreme politeness, tag questions while put-downs, strong assertions and sarcasm characterize make language" (cited in Jessmerand Anderson, 2001:333). Furthermore, Witmer and Katzman (1997) also agree that women use more 'graphical accents', for instance "whooaaaaaaa" or "ooooooohhhhh" more than men, which also suggest that they tend to portray more emotional tone in their messages. This also proves that there are definitely differences between men and women use of language in online communication.

On a different note, male style in CMC is seen in various characteristics which are "put downs, strong, often contentious, assertions, lengthy and/or frequent postings, self-promotions and sarcasm" (Herring, 1997:7). According to Gefen and Straub (1997), men and women tend to use and understand language in different ways because of these differences that they employ in CMC. Most research findings also prove that there are definitely differences in how men and women use their language when communicating in chat rooms. Apart from that, women's speech is also seen to be more categorical (Preisler, 1986). While men tend to be more competitive in their conversations, women tend to show cooperation or agreement in their conversations (Coates, 1996). Therefore, these characters in speech suggest differences in language used by men and women.

According to Coates (1996), in real life situations, men and women use interaction patterns which are organizationally suitable rather than gender specific. This also explains on how they use their language in "same-sex" and "mix-sex" conversation. Thus, the findings of this research would automatically expand to CMC users develop principles and understandings that help them to create bonds, ties and communication patterns that are organizationally correct rather than gender specific.

Although there are still arguments focusing on similarities and differences in language usage across genders which are often based on the choice and use of politeness maxims, it can be seen obviously that the politeness maxims portrayed in language are used in clusters by both men and women. Also, according to Kaul and Kulkarni (2005), "in majority of emails used by males and females, more than one maxim of politeness is operational which encompasses variations in language use".

Gender issues remains as an important analysis as they do not exist online. For example, according to Lee, Huang & Oshagan (1995), females may be more influenced to hide or fake their gender within CMC context. One reason being is their fear of being harassed or disturbed by males (Herring, 1993).

Herring (2000) also finds that women are more influenced to thank, appreciate and apologize and to be upset by violations of politeness. These do not happen to most males as their approach towards language use is different. Women tend to be more emotional when they communicate and really consider what others think of them. This is especially true when they are communicating among themselves. Women do not like to be treated rudely and they really want to give a good impression to others.

On the other hand, males tend to be more impersonal and less emotional or sensitive and use a more fact-oriented language (Savicki et al., 1996). Males are also less concerned with politeness and sometimes violate expected online conduct (Herring, 2000). Also, compared to males, females are found to be more 'friendly' and 'smiling, while males usually present themselves as 'confident' (Arnold & Miller, 1999).

2.8. Politeness Strategies: Power, Social Distance and Cost of Imposition

According to Brown and Levinson, there are generally three factors that determine the choice of politeness strategies among speakers and the addressees. When it comes to power between the speaker and the addressee, it determines what kind of redressive action the speaker might take with FTA. Usually, we put more effort in being polite when conversing with people who are in positions of greater social power than we are. Here, social power can mean age, job and so on. Thus, we are more polite when talking to an older person than to a younger one than us. Also, we are more polite when talking to our

bosses than to the cashier at a supermarket. All these factors determine our choice of politeness strategies.

Furthermore, Brown and Levinson also stated that social distance between the speaker and addressee plays a big impact in the choice if politeness strategies. This also determines how we address one another and how we speak and go about the conversation. For example, we tend to be more polite when talking to strangers than we are when conversing with our close friends. We feel more comfortable and safe to be abrupt with people that we are close with. Especially in the Malaysian context, to be abrupt with a total stranger is not acceptable in the society. Miriam Mayerhoff also suggested that when we are completing a task with someone we are not so close with, we might ask for something in a less direct way, showing more attention to their negative face wants. For example, instead of just asking "Can you pass me the telephone accounts?" we might say "Excuse me, are those the telephone accounts? Could I have them for a second?" and be less direct in our speech.

The third factor that Brown and Levinson suggested in determining the choice of Politeness strategies was how big the social infraction is. Different requests have different social weight. This is what they meant by cost of imposition. For example, we can ask any strangers for the time and the politeness strategy that we choose might pay little attention to face wants. We can just ask "sorry, do you have the time?" or "What's the time?" without being worried of having to be indirect, However, when we want to ask for money, we would want to consider asking them from the person that we know and not just any stranger. The more money we need to borrow, the better we have to know that person whom we are borrowing from. For instance, if we were to just borrow RM 10 or 20,we might just ask some of our colleagues, but if we were to borrow RM 2000, we would want to ask from our family members or relatives.

Thus, under this framework, there are three social variables that shape or determine how people choose the politeness strategy that they want to use when conversing. Our attention to other's positive or negative face wants will be determined by the relative power and social distance of the participants and by the social cost of imposition.

2.9. Impoliteness in CMCs

The Cooperation Principle (CP) has the function of regulating the words so that cooperation for task oriented communication is solicited, while Politeness Principle (PP) stresses tactful expressions for effective, goal oriented communication. However, CMC creates an asymmetrical imbalance in the sender-receiver relationship, the sender can transmit information and get cooperation underway, but has no guarantee that the recipient has received the message and will respond in a positive manner (Riva & Galimberti,1998). Additionally, politeness 'rules' differ depending on the situation in which or for which the message has been drafted (Argyle, 1992). Differences in CMC arise because the communicators have a sense of anonymity which could encourage them, for example, to be impolite and express their hostility or resentment explicitly (Reid, 1995). This problem does not arise in dyadic communication as speakers adapt to the speech styles of the co-interactants for higher acceptance and better understanding.

O'Sullivan and Flanagin (2003) observe the use of 'flaming' in an online communication. Typical descriptions represent flaming rude or insulting using "nasty and often profane diatribe" (Chapman, 1995). It is derogatory, obscene or inappropriate language (Seabrook, 1994). Flaming is also similarly described as "the hostile expression of strong emotions ad feeling" (Lea et al., 1992:92). However, others describe it as antisocial interaction and for it is a form of social aggression (Colomb and Simutis, 1996).

According to Lea and Spears (1991), depersonalized interaction (as in the case of emails) leads to 'less personal communication'. Often, we become secure in our anonymity and hence are less bound to social norms. Garton & Wellman, 1995; Weisband & Reining, 1995; Carnevale & Probst, 1997 (cited in Jessmer and Anderson, 2001) state that employees communicating with their supervisors through emails might lose their supervisor's sense of status and could end up in miscommunication. Chapmen (1995) adds that when people are physically removed from each other, the level of politeness decreases considerably. In this context two questions arise: 1) in situations where cooperation is uncertain, do the recipients respond with the same degree of politeness as initiated by the sender? and 2) Does the level/extent/degree affect the level of cooperation? Bunz and Campbell (2002) outline that message containing both verbal and structural politeness indicators elicited the most polite responses. Their observation suggests that the email recipients detect politeness indicators, and accommodate this politeness by including similar politeness indicators in their email responses.

In short, cooperation can be achieved by using politeness markers and indicators such as hedged, super polite forms and avoidance of flaming in CMC. Although, there is a sense of anonymity in online conversation which can lead to an expression of impoliteness or hostility, these expressions are communicatively essential and important in the study of chat room discourse.

2.10. Linguistic features in conversation

Conversation is viewed as a set of organized and structured approach in conversational settings. More commonly known as linguistic features in conversation, it includes directives, hedges, turn-taking, adjacency pairs, indirectness, minimal responses, compliments, interruptions, verbosity, tag questions, etc. Such approaches to conversation

take the form of a set of prescriptive rules which describe what a conversation should be. Below are some of the commonly used approaches in conversational linguistic features.

2.10.1. Indirect request

A request can be performed directly or indirectly. In performing a direct request, the speaker "utters sentence and means exactly and literally what he says" (Searle, 1979:59). On the other hand, when a speaker performs an indirect request, "he utters a sentence, means what he says but also means something else". A fairly simple structural distinction between direct and indirect request is shown as follows:

Sample 1.

"what a terrible mess!" (indirect)

"Clean up the mess!" (direct)

Being indirect is one important way of being polite or tactful in conversation (Brown & Levinson, 1978). Jacobs and Jackson (1983b:299) argue that "people are goal-oriented and often try to understand remarks by searching for their relevance to plans for practical actions". They propose a continuum of directives ranging from direct request through indirect request based on inferential processes such as implicature, to even more veiled request like speech act based on what precedes or follows in the conversation.

2.10.2. Minimal responses

Schegloff (1982:78-79) argues that recipients of a potentially multiunit turn produce mmhmm, uh huh, yeah, and so forth as continuers by saying something like "uh huh" participants avoid taking a full turn at talk. Listeners use these minimal responses to display to the speaker that they are paying attention, listening, and perhaps even understanding.

Sample 2

Speaker A: get on the free way

Speaker B: mm hmmm

Speaker A : and get off at Burbank boulevard

Speaker B : mm hmm

Speaker A: head towards the mountain

Speaker B: mm hmm

(Psathas, 1986, cited in Nofsinger 1990:120)

Speaker B's responses in sample 2 function as continuers because they lead to speaker A taking an immediate next turn and producing the next piece of directions. This also displays that speaker B interprets speaker A's direction as adequate and informative as possible.

2.10.3. Collaborative completions

Another conversational device that displays alignment between participants is the collaborative completion. In contrast to formulations, communication skills courses generally do not teach collaborative completions. On the contrary, we may even discourage their use, treating them as a form of "interruption" (Nofsinger, 1990:122).

Lerner (1989:173) provides a brief description of collaborative completion such as the one seen in sample 3.

Sample 3

Speaker D: if you bring it in to them

Speaker E: it don't cost you nothing

Lerner's argument to collaborative completion is that the organization syntax of certain utterance is in two parts, and the occurrence of the first component allows other participants to project what the second component might be. The recipient can then peremptively complete the first speaker's utterance.

2.10.4. Repair

According to Nofsinger (1990), conversation like other forms of human behaviour, is not perfect. Everyone has experienced forgetting a word, using the wrong one, starting a sentence and then having to start over, realizing that what has been said is unclear, and the like. Sometimes in conversations, participants routinely make various sorts of errors and then either revise what they have said or have the problems rectified by other participants. The general technical name for the processes through which we fix conversational problems is repair (Schegloff et al., 1977:362-365).

Example 4

Speaker O: she tasted it? Is it l- in a liquid form?

Speaker P: yes

(Frankel, 1989, cited in Nofsinger, 1990:125)

Self initiation occurs when speaker O produces the trouble source and marks it as problematic by breaking off after the first sound of a word. Then speaker O immediately produces what appears to be an alternative expression. This is self-repair (see figure 2.3).

Speaker O breaks off the sentence after the “l” sound changes to “in a liquid form”. This is self- initiated self-repair. When some other participant does the repair, we call it other-initiation or other-repair (Schegloff et al., 1977:362-365). Successful repair and improved alignment is often a joint accomplishment of the participants

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

In this chapter, there were several methods used in order to identify and explain the politeness strategies used among the Malaysian chatters in Yahoo Messenger. There are several parts in this chapter that describe the participants involved in the sampling, methods used, instruments adopted for data collection, data gathering methods and data analysis methods involved throughout the research period. The data that were gathered will then first be identified, interpreted, analyzed and summarized in order to produce results to the research questions to this research.

3.2. Sample population

The data for this research was collected based on a specific sampling within a small group of Malaysian chatters. There are two groups which were divided according to their age and gender. The first group consists of Malaysian chatters in the age range of 15-20 years old (10 males and 10 females) and the second group consists of Malaysian chatters in the age range of 21-26 years old (10 males and 10 females). Thus, the total of sample involved in this research is 40 together. This will be the researcher's defined population as a representative of the Malaysian chatters.

The samples, who participate as chatters in Yahoo Messenger, are the target group of this research due to their constant appearance in Yahoo Messenger chat room to exchange ideas, stories or information among themselves, report on their daily activities and to catch up on the latest trends of whatever that interests them. This can be seen clearly through the topics of discussions in a certain chat room.

All participants who are engaged in the chat room conversations could converse in both Malay (Bahasa Malaysia) and English language based on the language that they used in the chat room. The tables represent the participants in the sample group for this study:

Table 3.1: Sample population according to gender

Transcripts	**Number of participants**		**Total number of participants**
	Male	**Female**	
Chat script 1	4	3	7
Chat script 2	2	2	4
Chat script 3	1	2	3
Chat script 4	3	3	6
Total	10	10	20

Table 3.2: Sample population according to age groups

Transcripts	**Number of participants/ Age Range**		**Total number of participants.**
	15-20	**21-26**	
Chat script 1	3	4	7
Chat script 2	3	1	4
Chat script 3	2	1	3
Chat script 4	2	4	6
Total	10	10	20

3.3. Research instrument

During the data collection for this research, a total of 125 minutes of chat scripts was collected over a period of 4 days from the private chat room of Yahoo Instant Messenger. The Yahoo Instant Messenger is a chat software that can be downloaded over the net for free. It allows a person to talk or chat online synchronously or in real-time with friends and family. The chatters can sign in through their Yahoo Instant Messenger using their e-mail address and password, thus one need to have an e-mail account with Yahoo. After logging in, the person is allowed to add new friends into the chat room or discussion forum. The users or chatters will also be alerted when members or friends logged in to the chat room and this allows a person to chat with another person or with several people.

There are features such as group conversations, customization of text font, size and colour, emoticons, send and receive e-mail messages, add contact list, toast and sound alerts (for every new message received and when someone signs in), audio/video conversation, fun and games application, file exchange, display pictures, window

background and custom emoticons. This is where the researcher gets the sample scripts which contribute to the data set.

The chat scripts that were collected from all the chat rooms are conversations of 10 to 35 minutes in length. The researcher took about 2 weeks in order to collect all the chat scripts from the chat rooms. The researcher also chose weekends and public holidays in the month of May, 2011 because the amount of chatters in the messenger during the weekend is more compared to weekdays based on early observations.

3.4. Methods

The methods that were used for this study is mainly qualitative approach. This is due to the need of the researcher to describe the use of language in the chat room. Thus, this means that there are no mathematical terms displayed to portray the results from the analysis. According to Bogdan and Biklen (2003), there are about five main characteristics of qualitative research, and the method of this research was determined based only on these characteristics.

They are :

a. Naturalistic: qualitative research has actual settings as the direct source of data and the researcher is the key instrument (p.4)
b. Descriptive data: qualitative research is descriptive. The data collected take the form of words or pictures rather than numbers (p.5)
c. Concern with process: qualitative researchers are concerned with process rather than simply outcomes or products (p.6)
d. Inductive: qualitative researchers tend to analyze their data inductively (p.6)
e. Meaning: “meaning” is of essential concern to the qualitative data (p.7)

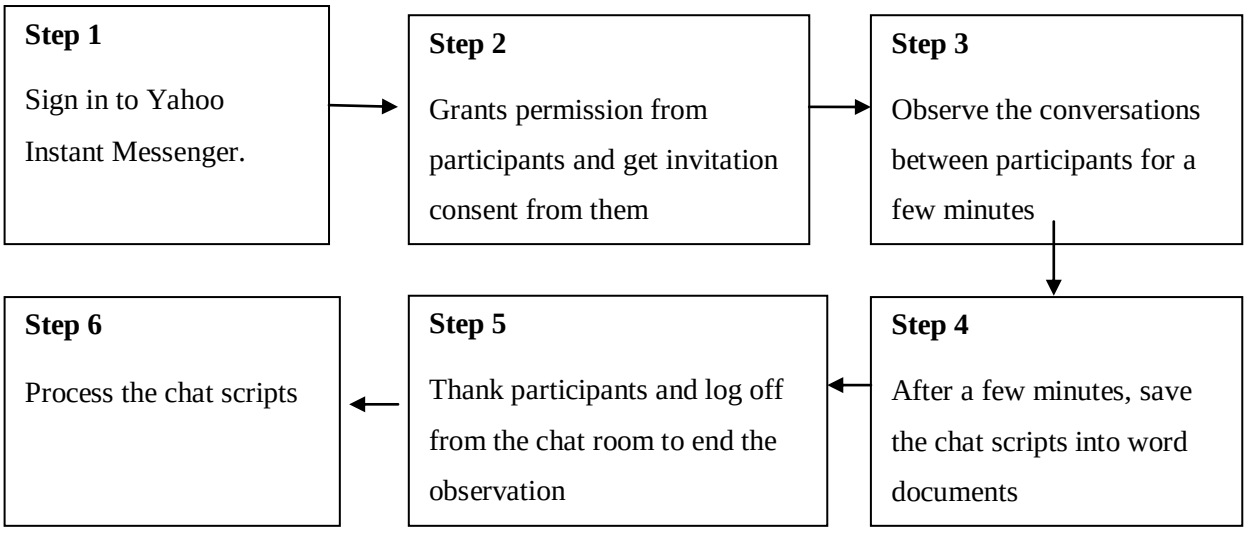
Before collecting the chat scripts, consent from the chat room participants were asked and obtained. After that, the researcher observed the participants' conversation and gathered the chat scripts after a few minutes. Then, the chat scripts were analyzed in order to find out if there are regular or similar patterns which the chatters or participants employ during their conversations. However, all the chat scripts that were too short or lack of information in terms of politeness aspect were disregarded. After the right amount of chat scripts have been selected, the analysis and interpretation were carried out.

To explain the findings on of this research, examples of chat scripts are provided. The discussed words or phrases that were used in the conversations will be highlighted so that the findings can be portrayed clearly. However, only relevant and significant data will be analyzed as to answer the research questions that were proposed in chapter one.

3.5. Data collection

The very first stage of the data collection is done by using the observation method. This method is chosen parallel to the qualitative method or approach that is being employed in this study. Furthermore, observation method also has several advantages. First, it requires the researcher to be on-site so as to give the researcher the chance to study or examine the use of chat room language among chatters closely. By doing this method, it allows the researcher to be more alert, open to changes and new ideas as well as inductive in the approach that the researcher employed. Also, observation is important in terms of getting a better understanding of the context or setting in which chat room language operates. Finally, this approach also gives the chance to the researcher to see things "that may routinely escape conscious awareness" (Paton, 1990).

Figure 3.1: Steps Involved in Data Collection



During the data collection, the researcher has obtained permission to enter the private chat room to observe the conversations among the participants. This means, the researcher is only acting as an observer and does not participate directly in the conversation. After getting the permission from the chatters, the researcher was then invited to the private chat room in Yahoo Instant Messenger. The researcher will first connect to the internet and log in using Yahoo e-mail account into the Yahoo Instant Messenger. It is important to get permission from the chatters because the Yahoo Instant Messenger is a private chat room and for a person to chat with other people, he or she needs to get invited into a chat room. Furthermore, the chatters' privacy has to be respected.

The researcher chose weekends and public holidays to observe or collect data and this is because there appears to be an apparent trend that most chatter tend to spend more time chatting online during this period of time. Thus, more chat scripts can be collected from the participants involved.

As an observer participating in the chat room, it is necessary to log in using a nickname.

The final step of data collection is to process the chat scripts. This is done in three stages. First, each sample is labelled as text A-E accordingly. Secondly, certain exchanges are numbered and labelled alphabetically according to the utterances of selected speakers. The researcher has to be selective because there are many users who just enter or join into chat but at times they leave the chat room after participating in just one exchange. Lastly, before printing the scripts, font colour, font type and size of the collected scripts are standardized to Black, Times New Roman, size 12 with single spacing as this would ease the task of reading and analyzing the scripts. However, all features of chat room language such as emoticons and pictures are retained in their natural forms. They are left unchanged as to preserve the originality of the chat room language, which serves as the core element for this study. Data analysis takes place once printing of the scripts is completed.

3.6. Data analysis

From the data gathered, the analysis is made using conversational analysis (CA). CA will be applied during data analysis as it gives the researcher more opportunity to explore in detail every line of the chat scripts. Due to the fact that CA aims to identify the principles that enables individual to negotiate and exchange meaning, it also enables an in depth analysis of the data and this allows the researcher to focus on the relationship between conversation and language. The central question addressed by CA is how conversations work. It involves a series of moves, turns, goals and strategies. Since analyzing chat scripts require line by line analysis, CA allows the researcher to explore linguistic cues which are going on in conversations.

Apart from having the opportunity to analyze the scripts in greater length, CA also enables the researcher to interpret the situations and messages they encounter in the chat room and at the same time unfolding hidden messages. Gradually, this will allow the researcher to see and produce coherent pattern(s).

CA generally attempts to describe the orderliness, structure and sequential patterns of interaction, whether it is an institutional (in the school, doctor's surgery, courts or elsewhere) or casual conversation.

In light of this, one of CA's principle practitioners, Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson (SSJ) (1987), has previously identified basic structures such as turn taking organization, turn-allocational component, sequence organization, adjacency pairs, pre-sequences, preference organization, repair and action formation in Conversational Analysis.

For the purpose of this study, the researcher will only be looking at language use and other politeness strategies as part of CA. As stated earlier, this study examines the presence of politeness amongst Malaysian chatters of different ages and genders in online chat room conversations focusing on politeness strategies and language forms and functions. Thus, conversations collected will be analyzed using the Conversational Analysis (CA).

4. DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

4.1. Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher will be discussing the findings and data analysis of the chat scripts that have been collected for the study. The chat scripts consist of conversations amongst Malaysian chatters in the chat room of Yahoo Messenger. The analysis of the data focuses on the samples of extracts or excerpts of the chat scripts which reveal relevant and significant findings that will provide answers to the research questions put forward.

As discussed in earlier chapters, the researcher will be discussing on the aspect of politeness and language use among Malaysian chatters of different gender and age groups using the data that have been collected. Basically, the findings are divided into different sections that will be discussed further in this chapter. This division is also based on different aspects of gender and age in politeness and language use. Specifically, the results involve the disclosure of politeness features based on Brown and Levinson's theory of politeness and other politeness features such as greetings, emphatic stress, capitalization and excessive punctuation marks, profanity language self censorship, and excessive politeness. Linguistic features used in the conversation such as the use of particles and code-switching are also looked into in order to contribute to the results that provide answers to the research questions. For each feature, descriptive information of the chat scripts is presented followed by comparisons of male and female as well as different age groups.

4.2. Language Forms and Functions

As discussed in the earlier chapter, one of the areas that this research will delve into is the presence of politeness among Malaysian chatters through the use of language forms and functions. The researcher has divided this area into two main topics which will be discussed in this section. At this point, the data that has been collected will be studied in terms of the politeness features of (1) greetings and excessive politeness (2) leave- taking (3) emphatic stress, capitalization and excessive punctuation marks (4) profanity language and (5) self censorship.

4.2.1. The use of Emphatic Stress, Capitalization and Excessive Punctuation Marks

Communicating through the computer is not the same as communicating face-to-face in terms of the way we show emphasis. In face-to-face communication, we show emphasis using different kinds of tones (pitch level, stressing, etc.) and facial expressions. It is easier to interpret the message that is being conveyed by the speaker or hearer. Facial expressions that can be seen and different tones that can be heard make it easier for the message to be understood. However, in this 'faceless' and 'voiceless' community, the chatters were found to be using emphatic stress to show that they are emphasizing something. Although it is not a face-to-face conversation, the frequent use of chat room as the mean of communication has changed the way people communicate in this 'faceless' community. The emphasizing of something is employed by using capitalization, punctuation marks and words that can show the degree of emphasis (very, extremely, so etc.)

Text 1

RubyNii: I came to mcdonalds juz nao and no one was there .....hmm

Oscar: I was there hahahaha

RubyNii: SHUT UP! Don't lie!

As can be seen in text 1, emphatic stress is used to show a person's feelings or emotions when they interact with one another. According to text 1, RubyNii used capitalization and an exclamation mark to show that she disagrees strongly with Oscar's statement. She knows that Oscar is lying and she didn't believe him. She was also frustrated that no one showed up at McDonalds. Thus, due to all these reasons, RubyNii decided to use capitalization and an exclamation mark to show what exactly she really feels. By using these features, she is able to show that she is feeling frustrated and angry that no one showed up and that Oscar decided to joke about it. For this situation, the capitalization and exclamation marks used by RubyNii is seen as a normal behaviour because she was being provoked at times when she feels frustrated. Thus, this is not seen as impolite and it is acceptable especially with the people that they mutually know. Furthermore, people understood that she used capitalization and exclamation marks because she wanted to show her frustration and it is seen as 'appropriate' in the conversation as Oscar also provoked her when she was already upset. When this is not seen as impolite by people, others will not be offended if she were to use these features in her conversation as they will understand the reason that makes her use those features.

Text 2

RubyNii: ahahahah whateverlah!

BunnyP: yaaaaa whateverla!

GaGa09: where can whatever...serious matter maa

SherWi: serious matter ur head la!hahahaha

GaGa09: my head? UR HEAD LAA!! Hahahahah

RubyNii: lolx

In text 2, it can be seen that GaGa09 used capitalization and exclamation marks in return to the remarks made by SherWi. In this situation, GaGa09's behaviour is also considered normal because she is using capitalization and exclamation marks in reply to SherWi's remarks about her. In this extract, "your head" is considered an insult in the Malaysian context and to use it with capitalization and exclamation marks seems impolite. In this context, when GaGa09 uses capitalization and exclamation marks, it is considered that GaGa09 is screaming (Wilson, 1992). However, in this situation, it seemed like all the participants were just joking around with each other and their insults did not seem to be serious. This can be seen as some of them even laugh at the insults that were made by SherWi and GaGa09. Again, this behaviour is accepted as the participants did not have any problem with it. This kind of behaviour will be accepted as long as all the participants in the conversation are sharing the same background knowledge. According to Wilson (1992), there seems to be a trend towards group solidarity amongst users of CMC which aimed to reduce social distance and emphasize group membership. Thus this explains why the participants seem to not mind about GaGa09's behaviour. If there is a

miscommunication between them, or if they were strangers, some of the participants might feel offended by the remarks. Thus, it is important to realize that social distance plays an important role in the choice of language features in conversations.

Text 3

BobbYVal: i just saw her last night!

BobbYVal: so ugly la she ahahahahaa

Hex: so mean la youuu hahaha

BobbYVal: really maaa..she has EXTREMELY ugly face. Pimples here n there!

In text 3, BobbYVal used capitalization for the word 'extremely' so emphasize his seriousness about someone's ugly face. He also wants the other participants to know the degree of his seriousness and the condition of the person's face that he was discussing about. Moreover, the capitalization of the word 'extremely' also portrays his tone in his 'speech' just like a face-to-face conversation. This capitalization represents the stress that is used in the word 'extremely'. Usually, in any conversation in a chat room, this example can be seen quite regularly as to show emphasis to whatever that is being discussed. This type of behaviour also does not show impoliteness as it is used in order to emphasize certain things. It has been accepted now by chatters and used widely among them when discussing about certain things.

Text 4

Freddiexx: transformers was awesome!

Gilly45: transformers was FREAKIN AWESOME!!

Freddiexx: hahah ya ya u win :p

Other than using capitalization and exclamation marks to emphasize on specific things, they are also used to portray the rising of tone in a conversation. This can be seen frequently used in arguments, competitions and repetition. For example, in text 4, it can be seen that Gilly45 wanted Freddiexx to know that the movie transformers was not only awesome but it was 'freaking' awesome. 'Freaking' here refers to a strong word as in 'very' or 'extremely'. Thus he uses capitalization and exclamation marks to show his arguments on how good the movie was.

Text 5

Blank: oh no! Asos is having a sale! I love asos!!!

RedRH: omg!asos sale?serious?

Jamie: I LOVE ASOS TOO!!!! Arghhh sale sale sale!

Blank: yes really!!!! They're having a sale!

Example from text 5 is similar to the one in text 4, where there is use of capitalization and exclamation marks to show the rising tone in the conversation. In text 5, Jamie is also showing her agreement to Blank's statement about how she loves the brand ASOS. In a way, they are also thinking in the same way about being obsessed on something.

Capitalization and exclamation are mostly employed by the younger group where they are seen as young and energetic when they are excited about something. Usually, among the younger groups, it can be seen that they maintain good rapport with others by being polite such as agreeing to one's statement and showing their interest in a particular topic that is being discussed as presented in ***Text 4*** and ***Text 5***. Both males and females were seen employing this method in order to show solidarity and to maintain a good relationship with one another.

Text 6

Dani: really? Eh when is it again?

Rob: HOW MANY TIMES MUST I TELL YOU??!

Dani: y r u angry??

Rob: because i don't like to repeat myself thousands of times.

Apart from using emphatic stress to maintain solidarity(***Text 4*** and ***Text 5***), it can also be used to show a certain degree of irritation or annoyance. As we can in text 6, Rob used capitalization and punctuation marks to show that he was irritated on the number of times he had to repeat himself to Dani. Perhaps before this he had told Dani about it but Dani still asked the same question again. This triggered Rob's annoyance and he decided to use capitalization and punctuation marks to show that he is annoyed. Not only that, Dani also noticed that his friend was annoyed by him and asked why he was angry towards him. In this situation, Rob is considered to be rude as he uses capitalization and excessive punctuation marks without being provoked. He was also serious about his statement and did not show any intention to joke around.

Text 7

Dani: **HELLO EVERYONEEE**

Dani: **WHAT'S HAPPENING? ITS A HOLIDAYY! HAHA**

Aiman: what's with the caps?

Dani: **WHY? LET ME USE THE CAPS LA. NO PROBLEM**

Aiman: seriously? Lose the caps bro.

PaulieD: yea, whats with the caps? Lose it!

Dani: **NO. I'LL USE THE CAPS. THANK YOU.**

Dani: **BTW, HAPPY HOLIDAY BRO!**

Aiman: yea Happy holiday. Do u really have to use the caps?

Dani: **YES!**

Aiman: *sigh* fine....whatever...

On a different note, the use of capitalization might also spark irritation or annoyance in other participants. As what can be seen in text 7, Dani constantly used capitalization in all his conversation and this triggers Aiman's and PaulieD's irritation. Aiman is seen irritated by Dani's behaviour and asked him to stop using capitals throughout the conversation. However, although Aiman has already asked Dani to stop using capital letter, Dani refused to stop and that irritates him even more. In this conversation, it can also seen that PaulieD was irritated by Dani's behaviour. He too asked Dani to stop using capital letters. Usually, in a situation like this, chatters avoid using capital letters throughout the entire conversation. Chatters only use capitalization and punctuation when they want to emphasize on certain issue. Furthermore, according to

Netiquette Rules by Shea (1994), the use of capital letters means that you are shouting and it could be a turn off for some people and this is seen as impolite.

Clearly, the examples from all the extracts from the chat scripts shows that chatters used capitalization in order to show emphasis, the degree of stress in terms of utterances, irritation or annoyance, curse, agreement and obsession towards certain things. Also, chatters tend to use many strong words to make a statement seems obvious and to call for attention of other chatters. even though it is being portrayed as impoliteness where it represents the act of shouting, it is sometimes not seen as rude because in this 'faceless' community there is no other way to represent the actual speech acts other than using capitalization and excessive punctuation marks to express themselves.

It depends on the situation where a chatter should be considered polite or impolite. For example, if the chatter was to use capitalization and punctuation marks without any reason at all (or without being provoked) then the chatter is considered impolite. However, if the chatter uses capitalization and punctuation marks just because he or she wants to maintain a good rapport, then the chatter should not be considered as rude or impolite.

Apart from that, the results also show that chatters tend to use emphatic stress in order to show strong emotions or opinions about a certain issue or subject, to show interest or excitement and to show strong impression regardless of their gender. Also, chatters may use emphatic stress to show irritation or annoyance towards something or someone. However, it is a grey area to consider one person as polite or impolite because what is considered polite for a person might not be polite to another.

4.2.2. Greetings and Excessive Politeness.

It is a norm that in every conversation participants use any forms of greetings before starting their conversation. This applies to not only face to face conversation but also in the computer mediated communication. Usually, when a person enters a chat room, they will greet other participants as a sign of politeness. This form of politeness also is referred to as netiquette, a word derived from network and etiquette. Not only that, some even go beyond that by using excessive politeness. This is done by using multiple polite words such as "please", use of modals "could" and "would" and kin terms. This makes their speech to be more careful when conversing with certain groups of people especially the elderly.

Text 8

Dani: hey everyone!! I'm Dani ☺

Mimi: hi darling!!!

Dani: hi honey!

Joe: oh this is Dani! I've heard so much about you from Mimi man!

Joe: nice to meet you! Finally!! Lolx

Dani: lol okay man nice to meet you too!!!

As seen in text 8, Dani introduces himself to the other chatters in the chat room. He is aware that there are other chatters who might not know who he is, thus an introduction is compulsory to avoid any awkwardness in the conversation. Also, Joe accepts his introduction by telling Dani that he has heard a lot about him from Mimi. This is also a feature of politeness where Joe is trying to save Dani's face.

Text 9

Dani: Happy holidays ya'll!

Tom: hey dani!!! Happy holidays to you too

Tom: hope you have a great holiday bro!

Dani: you too bro!

In certain cases, some chatters start their conversation by wishing each others on a particular celebration that took place. In text 9, Dani and Tom started their conversation by wishing each other "happy holidays". Not only that, they also wish for the other participant to have a good holiday. Usually, in this case, when a person wishes them on any occasion or celebration that they are celebrating or experiencing, they tend to reply the same in order to maintain and show solidarity. This is also a politeness feature where not only we greet people by wishing them but also try to maintain the solidarity.

Text 10

Dani: hey Joan

Dani: what u up to today?

Dani: ☺

Joan: Yo Dani! ☺

Joan: uhh nothing much. Juz staying home doing nothing

Joan: boring huh?

Text 11

Rob: Dude! Yooo!!

Tina: Yo dude!

Tina: lolx watsap?

In texts 10 and 11, it can be seen that among the younger chatters, they tend to greet each other with a more informal style. Words like "hey", "yo", "man" and "dude" are used frequently among them. This is also common among the younger group of chatters especially when they know each other mutually and are good friends/associates. Addresses like "dude" and "man" are used regardless of gender as a sign of familiarity among them.

Text 12

Fiona: hey rob...could u please e-mail me the notes from teacher farhana's class? **Please?**

Fiona: **please? Please?**

Rob: yea sure.

Rob: i'll email it to u by tonite ya?

Fiona: aww thx so so much ya?

In text 12, it can be seen that Fiona is using excessive politeness when conversing with Rob. This is because she uses the word 'please' for more than two times. Although this is not necessary in any conversation, women tend to apply this in their daily conversation. Excessive politeness is seldom seen in men's conversation except if he is conversing with a person who is older than him.

Text 13

Jeremy: **bro**, i need ur help **bro**...please?

Jeremy: can u help me **bro?**

Gangga: Watsup?

In text 13, it can be seen that Jeremy is using excessive politeness by using multiple kin term "bro" and also the word "please". Jeremy is younger than Gangga so when he wants to ask for a help from Gangga, he uses these features in order to make sure that he is being polite to Gangga. However, this seldom happen among the male chatters as their level ego is high and their tendency to use excessive politeness is very low.

4.2.3. Leave-taking

Another form of politeness is leave-taking which can be seen in the data. Similar to greetings, leave-taking is a notion where a person has to acknowledge other participants if he or she is going to leave the chat room. This behaviour portrays polite behaviour and a way to respect others in the chat room.

Text 14

Mike: ehhh oklah. Got to go

Mike: a lot of assignments to settle. Can die. Better do now

Linda: lolx. Ok ok. I'll c u later!

In text 14, Mike acknowledges Linda that he has to leave the chat room. He even tells her the reason for his leaving. In addition, Linda not only responds but acknowledges his leave-taking. It is a norm that a person acknowledges others if he or she is leaving the chat room. This is to avoid awkwardness or misunderstanding among other chatters. Leaving the chat room abruptly without informing is also seen as a sign of impoliteness.

Text 15

Dinnie: okay leaving now

Beth: heyyyy where are u going?

Dinnie: lol. Got work maa

Dinnie: haha

Beth: oooo ok ok.

However, in text 15, Dinie acknowledges Beth that he is leaving (taking leave from the conversation). Instead of explaining himself, Beth asks him where he is going before acknowledging his leave-taking. Soon after Dinnie explains, Beth agrees and acknowledges Dinnie's leave-taking.

Text 16

Ary: erghhh i hate this software! Ruins everything!

Ary: !!!

Beth: why la? Watsap?

***Ary has left the conversation**

Beth: ????

Beth: wats wrong with this girl?

Mimi: hahahah...

In text 16, it can be seen that Ary left the chat room abruptly without acknowledging others. It is clear that Beth thinks it is inappropriate of Ary to leave the chat room without acknowledging others. She is seen irritated as she says "what is wrong with this girl?. In other words, in order to avoid miscommunication, it is better to acknowledge others when you are leaving the chat room. It is also considered as rude or impolite to leave the chat room abruptly in the middle of a conversation.

In any conversation, face-to-face conversation or CMC, greetings and leave-taking are considered a norm and are essentials. In the CMC, one must greet other chatters before starting their conversation. Also, one has to acknowledge other when they are planning to leave the chat room. When one greets other chatters, this can avoid confusion and awkwardness in the chat room. It is also rude to interrupt a conversation without any introduction. It is also considered as rude if one abruptly leaves the chat room without letting the other chatters know. Leave-taking is important as it avoids miscommunication

and misinterpretation of situation in the chat room. Not only that, excessive politeness is also seen used by some of the chatters in the chat room. Excessive politeness is not a compulsory feature like greetings and leave-taking but it is a way to show that someone really respect the other when communicating. This happens especially when the chatters are not of the same age or the age gap between the chatters is big. Also, females tend to use excessive politeness more than male as suggested in the data.

4.2.4. Profane language

Swear words or taboo words are considered rude in almost every culture around the world. People will try to avoid using them in their conversation. Parents especially will try their best to refrain their children to use these taboo words. However, today, due to modernization and the influence of the western world especially in the entertainment, swearing has been absorbed into our society. In addition, this phenomena has developed rapidly especially among the younger generations. According to the data, younger generations are no longer ashamed to use these taboo words in their conversation. It is sad but true that our language has been abused by the practice of vulgarity in speech.

Text 17

Awie: we have to pay for the entrance la

Black: what? I tot no need??

Black: **shit**! No money laaa!

Awie: tell me about it.

Awie: me no money too ☹

In text 17, Black uses the taboo word "shit" when he finds out that he needs to pay in order to enter a party. He cursed in order to let out his shock and anger to what he has been told. This sample shows that the younger generation (as Black is 17 years old) is not ashamed to use profanity language in their conversation. Not only that, his friend Awie also didn't show any disapproval when Black cursed after knowing the fact that he has to pay for the entrance. In this case, although it is considered ill-mannered or rude to curse, but if it is approved by the hearer, then it is not considered as rude. This is because profanity language has become a norm to both of them that for them it is okay to use the taboo words in conversation. Furthermore, they mutually know each other and are considered as close friends.

Text 18

Awie: how was the movie last night?hahah scary huh?

Black: ahahah scared the living **hell** outta me!! **Insidious shit.**

Awie: ahahahhaa :P

Julie: eh Black, u cannot stop swearing ah?

Julie: swearing only all the time!

Black: ahahhahaha

Awie: lolx

Black: it's in me dy...hahah

In text 18, Black swears again by using words like “hell” and “shit” to describe his experience watching a movie. According to the sample, Awie doesn’t have any problem with Black’s swearing but Julie mentioned that Black always swears and requests for him to stop swearing. Thus, in this situation, Black is considered as impolite because his swearing is not acceptable by another chatter who happens to be Julie. Julie also feels uncomfortable with Black’s swearing as she suggested that Black should stop immediately. Furthermore, Black didn’t apologize after Julie’s disapproval of his swearing. He just laughed and said swearing has become part of him.

Text 19

Wolf90: hahahhaha what a looser

Dani: ahahhaa

Dani: **a real son of a bitch i am!**

Dani: ahahhaha

Wolf90: you sure are!! Ahahahha

In text 19, Dani is not ashamed of cursing and referring himself as ‘son of a bitch’. He is also agreeing with Wolf90’s statement saying that Dani is a looser. In this case, both of them understood that this conversation is not serious and both of them do not mean to hurt each other’s feelings. It is more like a joke to both of them. Thus, with this mutual understanding, it is not considered rude to use the mentioned taboo word.

Throughout the analysis, profanity language may or may not cause offense to other people. Although taboo words are universally considered rude, in today's society, some cases are not considered as impolite or rude when the participants in the conversation accept the use of his vulgar words. However, there are still quite a number of people in our society, especially elderly and parents who do not accept profanity language to be used in everyday conversation.

4.2.5. Self censorship

From the samples that has been extracted from the data, the researcher also has found that some chatters tend to censor themselves when they use strong swear words in the chat room while chatting with others. This is also referred to as self-censoring where the chatter uses sound replication, incompletion technique, asterisk or acronyms instead of typing the full spelling of that particular swear word.

Text 20

Wolfie90 : ok chow piggy!

Dani: **celaka you son of a *****

As what can be seen in text 20, Dani uses the asterisk in order to self censor himself when he is cursing. It is obvious that his intention was to curse but he decided to use the asterisk instead of spelling the word in full. This behaviour can be seen as a display of politeness where he thought about the other person that he is talking to and decide to censor the word. He knows that the other chatter might feel offended if he were to bluntly use profanity language in their conversation. This is also seen as a way in order to maintain

solidarity between chatters. Cursing might annoy or irritate some people and in order to avoid that kind of situation, chatters use other options when cursing in the chat room.

Text 21

Robin: wth

Uses the form of acronyms to avoid being impolite and despised by others.

Text 22

Dani: *toot*

Dani uses sound replication to censor his intended strong language. Dani's effort to substitute the strong language with sound replication makes his ill intention to swear less questionable.

Text 23

Kenny: what the...

In text 23, chatters also employ the incompletion technique when they decide to use profanity language in their conversation. Again, Kenny's intention was clear, that he wanted to curse but he is trying his best to imply politeness and so tried to control the harshness of his language. Thus, instead of completing the phrase, he left it incomplete

with the taboo word not being mentioned (in this case, typed). He did this so that his speech or phrase would seem more subtle to other chatters.

In conclusion, by using this self-censorship strategy, chatters are able to maintain solidarity and will be more respected when they use less vulgar (impolite) language. This is because chatters are being judged by their language use in the chat room. Just as it works in our normal face-to-face conversation, people tend to judge us on how we communicate with others. However, the researcher has also found that this strategy is employed more frequently by the older age group. The younger age group do not seem to mind using vulgar or taboo words bluntly. This is due to the effects of their surroundings and the mentality of different age groups. Younger ones tend to swear more in order to sound more 'cool' and 'mature' while the older ones were already aware of the negative effects of using profanity language.

4.3. Politeness Strategies Used Among the Chatters

According to the data that have been collected, the politeness strategy that is commonly used by the Malaysian chatters in Yahoo Messenger is the Positive Politeness. It was used 50 times among the chatters followed by Bald on Record with 28 times and Negative Politeness with 16 times. The percentage for all the three strategies are: Positive Politeness with 52%, Bald on Record with 29.1% and Negative Politeness with only 16.6% of usage. The least used Politeness Strategy was Off-the-record with just only 2 times of usage which gives the percentage of 2%. The results can be seen in table 4.1:

Table 4.1. : Distribution of the Politeness Strategies among the Malaysian chatter

Politeness Strategies	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Off the Record	2	2
Negative Politeness	16	16.6
Positive Politeness	**50**	**52**
Bold on Record	28	29.1
Total	96	100

Formula:

E.g. Positive Politeness: 50/96 x 100 = 52 %

The frequency count of each variation of Positive Politeness strategy used by the Malaysian chatters in Yahoo Messenger is as follows:

Table 4.2. : Frequency of occurrence of each variation of Positive Politeness strategy.

Positive Politeness	Frequency	Percentage (%)
To Give Reasons (or ask for)	3	6
To Give Gifts to Hearer (understanding, cooperation, sympathy or goods)	**14**	**28**
To assert common ground/raise/presuppose	1	2
To Seek for Agreement	2	4
To notice Hearer (H's interest, wants, needs or goods)	11	22
Exaggerate (sympathy with H or interest approval)	3	6
To use in-group identity markers	6	12
Avoid Disagreement	2	4
To include S and H in the conversation	5	10
To intensify interest towards H	3	6
total	50	100

Table 4.3. : Distribution of the Positive Politeness strategy among the Malaysian chatters.

Gender	Frequency	Age Group	Frequency
Male	22	**15-20**	**27**
Female	**28**	**21-26**	23
total	50	total	50

Table 4.4: Examples of positive politeness in a conversation

No.	Chatters and Dialogues	Chosen strategy
1.	AJ : hey, kecik. miss u..... =) NZ : aww...i miss u too :s hows workin life? AJ : hectic. **susah gila....(EXTREMELY HARD)** =(how r u?	Positive Politeness (Exaggerate)
2	ES : my dear..ur pics are **awesome..** NZ: u girls shud haf come earlierr! bole join i. AM : That's Y.. sume salah Joja... sbb die kje kiitorg ne tnggu!! Tp Best siot... **rs mcm nk cium2 je FerG n TaBoo..** **Translation:(that's why, it's Joja's fault,he's working and we have to wait for him!! But we enjoyed, feel like kissing Ferg and Taboo)**	Positive Politeness (Exaggerate)

According to the data that can be seen in table above, Malaysian chatters used many variations of Positive Politeness strategy in their conversations in the chat room. Based on the result, it is clear that the chatters frequently used "to give gifts to hearer" (28%) when conversing with other chatters. This may happen when chatters share stories

about themselves or state their opinion about something. Furthermore, it is well-known fact that most chatters use the chat room to interact with others to share their experiences or stories among themselves. In this kind of situation, when S satisfies H's positive face by giving gift, not in the form of things but in the form of human relation that wants to be liked, care about, understood, admired and listened to. However, it is common to see this kind of strategy to be used in the normal face-to-face conversation but to see it being used in this 'faceless' community proved that people still want to be liked and admired even when others are not physically present in front of them. Furthermore, it is also the human nature to share and able to understand each other's feelings and thoughts even when they are not communicating face-to-face.

The distribution of the variation of Bald on Record strategy :

Table 4.5. : Frequency of occurrence of each variation of Bald on Record strategy

Bald on Record.	**Frequency**	**Percentage (%)**
To Grant Permission	0	0
Task Oriented	1	3.5
S wanting to be rude	6	21.4
S wants to satisfy H's face is small	4	14.2
Desperation	4	14.2
Case of channel noise	2	7.1
Sympathetic Advice or warnings	**11**	**39.2**
total	28	100

Table 4.6. : Distribution of the Bald On Record Strategy among the Malaysian chatters

Gender	Frequency	Age Group	Frequency
Male	**17**	**15-20**	**19**
Female	11	**21-26**	9
total	50	total	50

Table 4.7:Examples of Bald on record strategy in a conversation

No.	Chatters and Dialogues	Chosen strategy
1.	NZ: will be ditching Beyonce's cncrt for Man U vs Liverpool game. am i still a GIRL? hmm. :/ HT: **let me c... yes if u support liv... haha... anti man u!!!!**	Bald on Record (S wants to satisfy H's face is small)
2.	PH : where u uploaded them tak ada pun EC : **aiyo madam.. it's in the photo album la.. bukak mata besar2 sikit. (open your eyes bigger)**	Bald on Record (S wants to be rude)

As shown in table above, Bald on Record politeness strategy is the second most employed strategy by the Malaysian chatters in the Yahoo Messenger chat room. Malaysian chatters use this strategy mostly by giving other chatters sympathetic advice or warnings (39.2%). In line with Positive Politeness strategy, this may happen because the nature of the conversation is in the form of sharing stories, ideas and opinions. It is a norm for everyone to release their stress or tension by logging into the cyber world and share

stories or whatever they really feel about something among each other. Bald On Record strategy is also commonly used among speakers/chatters who have a very close or intimate relation with each other (i.e. siblings, friends). Apart from this result, it is also found that Bald On Record strategy is used more commonly in the younger group. This means, the older group does not use this strategy quite often. This may happen because the younger group who are mostly students do not feel the need to minimize the threat to H's face believing that both S and H understand that they do not mean to embarrass each other purposely. Furthermore, these students may have a closer relation with one another because they see each other every day during school or college. As for the older group who are mostly working might not face the same situation as the younger group thus they tend to feel the need to minimize the threat to H's face.

The distribution of the variation of Negative Politeness strategy:

Table 4.8. : Frequency of occurrence of each variation of Negative Politeness strategy

Negative Politeness	**Frequency**	**Percentage (%)**
Minimizing Imposition	1	6.2
To Apologize	4	25
To be Indirect	2	12.5
Impersonalize S and H	**6**	**37.5**
To use question and hedge	3	18.7
Total	16	100

Table 4.9. : Distribution of the Negative Politeness strategy among the Malaysian chatters

Gender	Frequency	Age Group	Frequency
Male	7	**15-20**	5
Female	**9**	**21-26**	**11**
Total	50	total	50

Table 4.10: Example of negative politeness strategy in a conversation

No.	Chatters and Dialogues	Chosen strategy
1.	NK : i got a newwww BB,,please private msg me ur numbersss! **PL: im sorry, but I think I lost ur number la,, =(sory againnn..** BS: okayyyyy missy!! NK : paullllllll!!! How could u??!!!	Negative politeness (apologize)

According to the results, it is obvious that the Negative Politeness strategy is not much used by the Malaysian chatters when they are communicating with one another in the Yahoo Messenger chat room. The Negative Politeness strategy is only used in a total of 16 times by the chatters. The Negative Politeness strategy that is commonly used by the chatters is by impersonalizing S and H (37.5%). In this situation, it can be seen that it is rather common to impersonalize when the chatters do not have a close relation with one another. Also, when the social distance between S and H is vast, chatters tend to use this

strategy in their conversation. Furthermore, in Malaysia, using Negative Politeness strategy in our conversation is considered "polite" which explains why we tend to apologize dozens of times to our lecturer, boss or anyone of a higher authority when we want to ask for something. Also, this strategy tends to be used among chatters who do not have close relation with one another. Titles such as Dr., Sir, Madam, Ma'am, Miss etc. are commonly used in a conversation to address people of a higher authority or when the relation between S and H is not that close.

Lastly, a speaker uses Off the Record strategy when he or she wants to avoid the responsibility of doing FTA. Whenever Off the Record strategy is being used, the speaker is leaving the FTA up to the addressee to decide on how exactly he or she wants to interpret it. This is because the speaker is saying something in general (with less information) or different from what he or she means (Brown and Levinson's, 1987:211).

Table 4.11. : Frequency of occurrence of each variation of 'Off the Record Strategy'

Off the Record	Frequency	Percentage (%)
To use saying	0	0
To give association clues	1	50
To be over-generalize	0	0
To be vague	1	50
Total	2	100

Table 4.12. : Distribution of the Off the Record strategy among the Malaysian chatters.

Gender	Frequency	Age Group	Frequency
Male	**2**	**15-20**	**2**
Female	0	**21-26**	0
Total	50	total	50

Table 4.13: Examples of Off the Record strategy in a conversation

No.	Chatters and Dialogues	Chosen strategy
1.	YT: I'm about to explode. All this while I tot shes comin!!!! Wtff?? HF: **oooooo…. Someone's really mad.** KP: I noeeee,,,y did she canceled her concert? =(	Off the Record (be vague)

As shown in table above, Off the Record strategy is very rarely used by the Malaysian chatters. Based on the results of the present study, it is found that Malaysian chatters used 'Off the record strategy' for a total of 2 times only. Malaysians use this strategy by giving association clues and being not so clear towards the topic of conversation.

In conclusion, the linguistic features and politeness strategies identified in the data collected are some of the important aspects of conversational strategies and politeness features in our everyday life. Not only we use them in our everyday face-to-face conversations, but also we employ them in the chat rooms. The results drawn from this

research also show that all the politeness features are being used by the Malaysian chatter appear to be more polite and help to maintain solidarity in their conversations in the chat rooms. The language features were employed by the chatters regardless of their gender. However, in terms of the use of politeness strategies in chat rooms, there are differences in the frequency of occurrence based on gender and age groups. It is also identified that,the goal of all these chatters in the use of these politeness strategies and language features is to maintain solidarity and enhance friendship regardless of the difference in the frequency of occurrence (in usages). Indeed, some of them use it so that they do not offend other chatters and end up being hated by others. Thus, we can conclude that in social interactions, face-to-face and CMC, politeness and morale are important in order to maintain the social order.

5.0. CONCLUSION

This research is an extended study of existing researches in the area of applied linguistics with particular reference to the study of politeness and conversation analysis in language use by chatters in online chat rooms. Researches that have been done on language, gender and age, politeness and computer mediated communication (CMC) have inspired other researchers to undertake studies in these areas. Undeniably, it has also inspired the present investigator to study the language features and politeness strategies used by the Malaysian in a web based chat room called Yahoo Instant Messenger which is also a private chat room in the Malaysian context. Thus, this study provides insight of language and politeness amongst Malaysians based on their gender and age in chat room discourse.

Goals and Aims	**Research Questions**	**Outcomes**
To investigate Politeness Strategies used among chatters, focusing on language use by different genders and group age.	1. What are the Politeness Strategies most used among Malaysian chatters in the Instant Yahoo Messenger chat room?	Positive Politeness is the most used Politeness Strategies among the Malaysian chatters.

To look into types of Politeness Strategies used among Malaysian chatters in CMC which also determine the politeness and impoliteness in chat rooms.	2. How are the Politeness Strategies used by the Malaysian chatters in the computer-mediated communication (CMC) context?	There are several ways on how the Politeness Strategies are used by the Malaysian chatters and the most common ones are: - To Give Gifts to Hearer (understanding, cooperation, sympathy or goods) - Sympathetic Advice or warnings - Impersonalize S and H
	3. How does age and gender affect the ways Malaysian chatters use the politeness strategies?	Since there are some accepted, traditional ways of how men and women communicate, this also affect on how they use the Politeness Strategies in their

		conversations. Masculinity and femininity definitely determine how they use the politeness strategy in the chat rooms. Furthermore, the younger age group is found to use more of the Positive Politeness because of their need to satisfy H's face is high. Teenagers (who are also students) feel the need to be polite to maintain solidarity in order for them to be liked among friends.
	4. How do distinct groups of people use politeness in their conversations in CMC context?	The most commonly used Politeness Strategy (Positive Politeness) was used mostly among females from the

		younger age group. Thus, it can be concluded that Malaysian females tend to be more polite than Malaysian males (who tend to be more impersonal) and the younger age group tend to use more of the Positive Politeness strategy to satisfy their hearer's face in their conversations.

5.1. Language forms and Functions

The first data collected was the language forms and functions found among the chatters in the chat room. These forms and functions were used by both genders and age groups during their interaction among themselves in the chat room. These forms and functions were also used to fulfil their ultimate goal which is to maintain the solidarity and thereby enhance friendship. Almost every chatter used these features as they are seen as the norm in Malaysian society.

5.1.1. Greetings and Excessive Politeness

It is also a known fact that when a chatter enters a chat room, he or she is bound to greet the other chatters in order to avoid awkwardness. It is also stated in the netiquette that by greeting others when entering a chat room is considered polite and this kind of behaviour should be a norm among all chatters around the world. When such behaviour is seen as polite by almost everyone in the online community, chatters are expected to greet others in order to maintain solidarity regardless of their gender and age group. It is also seen just like in real life communication where a person greets another when they meet by saying ‘hi’, ‘hello’ or ‘hey’.

The chatters will usually introduce themselves first before they continue to chat further with other participants. They say ‘hey’ or ‘hi’ accompanied by a brief introduction of who they are, if it is their first encounter with one another. For those who already knew each other, they usually address one another as ‘dude’, ‘guys’, ‘babe’ and ‘man’ regardless of gender and age group. Not only that, sometimes, if there is any festive season or celebration, the chatters even greet one another. By doing this, the participants are avoiding awkwardness and miscommunication among themselves. This behaviour is also considered polite and should be present in any online communication.

Furthermore, some chatters tend to use excessive politeness when conversing. This depends on his or her goal and purpose in that conversation or age and gender factors. For example, a younger male have the potential to use excessive politeness when he is conversing with an older male that he clearly respects. On a different situation, he might not use excessive politeness when conversing with a male of his age group or younger. The same holds good with females as they tend to use excessive politeness if they think that saving the other person’s face is important.

5.1.2. The Use of Emphatic Stress, Excessive Punctuation marks and Capitalization

During their communication in the chat rooms, the participants used emphatic stress in different ways in order to show their real emotions in the exchange of their online interactions. In face-to-face everyday conversation, it is easy to emphasize or show emotions in our speech by just using voice tones (rising, falling, level, etc.) and expressions. However, in CMC, Malaysian chatters tend to use capitalization and excessive punctuation marks in order to convey their real emotions to others during their interactions.

In the chat rooms, Malaysians usually use capitalization to show their emotions in their interactions. This usually happens when they are feeling excited, irritated, annoyed or just become angry. They show this kind of features when they are cursing, scolding or agreeing to something with the other participants. In order to show or to let the other participants know about how they really feel, they tend to use emphatic stress in their exchanges. The use of capitalization usually portrays the strength or force of an utterance in the conversation. Also, when the participants use capitalization, it shows as if they are raising their voice either to show their anger, excitement or simply being playful. The use of capitalization is seen as normal among the chatters especially when they try to express themselves to the others. Thus, although the use of capitalization is against the netiquette, if used in appropriate contexts, this feature is considered normal among the chatters who know one another.

Similarly, the use of excessive punctuation marks also portrays the real tone of everyday face-to-face conversation. When the participants are using excessive punctuation marks, it demonstrates that the participants are serious and firm in their 'speech' in the chat room. In the 'faceless' and 'voiceless' community, the participants feel the need to express themselves by using excessive punctuation marks when communicating with others. This

is another way apart from using capitalization. However, if excessive punctuation marks are used together with capitalization, it creates greater emphasis or force in the participants' 'speech'. Thus, the use of capitalization and excessive punctuation marks greatly rely on the participants' intentions and needs to bring out how they want others to read their exchanges.

5.1.3. Leave taking

Greeting each other before chatting becomes necessary, as in the case of 'leave taking' and chatters are expected to inform others when they are leaving the chat room. When a chatter leaves in between the conversation or a room without telling or informing someone else present there, it will create a miscommunication among them or stir confusion in the chat room. Other chatters might speculate and this will leave an uncomfortable situation between them. Thus, leave taking is also seen as one of the important features of politeness in CMC regardless of one's gender and age.

Overall, based on how Malaysian chatters use 'leave taking' in their conversation in chat rooms, it can be said that they are considered as polite since they know the basics of courtesy by following the netiquette rules. There are various ways on how they demonstrate leave taking such as informing each other that they are leaving the conversation or chat room or simply by suggesting or hinting other chatters. These behaviours portray politeness and help to maintain solidarity among them. Therefore, like greetings, leave taking is also equally important in helping chatters to maintain good rapport and relationship among themselves.

5.1.4. Profane language

Profane language is usually used in certain situations in a conversation. There must be specific reasons for the participants to use profane language. According to the data, it can be seen that the participants use profane language when they are feeling disappointed with someone or something. It is also used to show frustration, worry or anger towards someone or something. It can be seen or heard quite often that younger generation use profane language to show their emotions to other people. Some may think that by using profane language, a greater impact can be achieved. Participants also tend to use this language when something unexpected happened to them. In a way, they are expressing their shock or doubt on a certain matter by using these taboo words. Also, it is sometimes used just for fun among group of friends without any reason at all.

Although profane language is used for certain reasons, it still portrays ill-mannered behaviour because it is inappropriate, rude and offensive thus is not acceptable by the society. In other words, this language represents impoliteness in this research. As profane language is unacceptable in our society, chatters are expected to avoid using it in their conversation with others. What chatters write usually portrays their personality, and often times that people judge others by observing the way they use language when chatting with other people. Thus, chatters must keep the language standards high because it determines how others will perceive them (Shea, 1994). Because of that, when someone uses profane language constantly it will be hard for him or her to gain the respect of others. The use of vulgarity also leads to improper manner thus it is hard to maintain the level of solidarity among the chatters.

5.1.5. Self-censorship

Even though profane language is seen as improper or inappropriate, people still use it in their daily conversations, either face-to-face conversation or in chat rooms. However, some may consider the effect of using vulgarity thus they opt to use self-censorship in order to sound less offensive and rude. When a person uses self-censorship in his or her conversation, the taboo words, which are usually considered as offensive, sensitive and hurting, will usually be deleted or suppressed in their conversation.

Nowadays, with the influence of western culture, the use of profane language found to be common among the Malaysian chatters. However, depending on individuals, the use of self-censorship varies, according to what is considered safe by the chatter. There is also a moderator, who controls and observes chat rooms in certain chat sites. Usually, in the presence of a moderator, chatters are always careful of their language use. If they feel like using profane language, they will opt to use self-censorship in order to sound less impolite. Hence, they will not be banned or kicked out of the chat room. The moderator has the right to ban or move chatters out of the chat room.

According to one of the findings of this study, self-censorship is done by deleting or suppressing taboo words using sound replication, asterisks, acronyms and incompletion strategy. Although the chatter has the option of not using any vulgarity, but the need or intension to use self-censorship is seen as part of the politeness strategy. In a way, it makes the use of vulgarity more subtle.

5.2. Politeness Strategies used Among Chatters

The findings of this study has proven that not only politeness strategies are used in face-to-face conversation, but also they are used in the 'faceless' community or CMC as presented by the Malaysian chatters in Yahoo Messenger chat room. Generally, politeness is used in our conversation to maintain solidarity or the social value practiced in our community, including the virtual community. Chatters use the strategies of politeness when they converse or communicate in order to reduce the FTA of 'saying' something. The findings show that of all the politeness strategies, Positive Politeness strategy is used most commonly among the Malaysian chatters in Yahoo Messenger chat room. Most chatters who use this strategy have the addressee's feeling or face in their mind. They need to save the addressee's face in order to maintain solidarity or a good rapport. This result is also parallel with the one in which chatters were to have a face-to-face conversation (in which they tend to use this strategy in order to be liked, accept and understand each other). Thus, the result also supports Brown and Levinson's theory which says that politeness strategy "contains statement of friendship, compliments, etc".

According to the findings, Bald on Record strategy is also found to be widely used by the Malaysian chatters in Yahoo Messenger chat room. This is probably because most of the chatters know each other mutually, thus they have a very close or tight relation with one another. According to Brown and Levinson's theory, people or chatters who use this strategy are most likely to be friends or have an intimate (close) relationship with one another. This situation also explains the phenomenon where friends who mutually know each other converse or interact through chat rooms in order to share thoughts and feelings whenever they aren't able to meet or have a face-to-face conversation. This might be because of the time factor or other constraints they have. Also, according to Brennan and Ohaeri (1999), people use this strategy which makes a person sound less polite because it

saves time to use bolder and shorter forms of sentences. Instead of typing hedges and indirect requests which require more typing and time, chatters tend to be straight forward or direct.

Negative politeness strategy is normally used by the Malaysian chatters whenever they need to ask other chatters for something or to do something. It is also used when the chatter wants to show that he or she knows or recognizes that the hearer does want to have his or her freedom of action to be open. However, what is different between the conversation in chat rooms and face-to-face conversations is that chatters tend to minimize the imposition of the FTA by writing smiley signs, for example, =), ;) or expressions that portray happiness such as 'hehehe' or 'hihihi'. This happens because of the fact that chatters cannot see each others' face in the 'faceless' community.

Off the Record politeness strategy is seen as the least used strategy among the Malaysian chatters in Yahoo chat room. This might be due to the existing social distance between the chatters. As explained earlier in Chapter 4, Malaysians tend to be indirect when conversing with those who are of a higher ranking in society or simply older. This is because the speaker, or in this case, the chatter wants to remove any potential of being imposing.

5.3. Summary

Parallel to the massive increase of internet usage, research on language and linguistics in computer mediated communication also has gained its importance in this field. Language is no longer limited to face-to-face discourse but now it has become common in the internet. According to Crystal (2001), language on the internet demonstrates a new type of discourse that is shaped by the creativity and innovation of its communication of users. By using this model, the discourse patterns of the Malaysian

chatters can be identified. In addition, politeness can only be identified when the discourse patterns of the chatters are revealed.

Language is used differently by men and women in different contexts. Although we agree that they speak the same language, they use it in their conversations in distinct ways. In our society, there is a concept or a way of thinking that there is a traditional way on how men and women should use language in terms of word choice, directness and indirectness. But, in this research, the language forms and functions are used equally by both the genders. In this study it can also be seen clearly that men and women used politeness strategies differently but in terms of language forms and functions, there is no difference in styles for both men and women. Males tend to use Bald on Record and Off the Record strategies in their conversations. On the other hand, females tend to use Positive Politeness and Negative Politeness strategies when conversing with others. In terms of age groups, the younger group tend to use Positive Politeness, Bald on Record and Off the Record strategies more than the older age group. The older age group tend to use Negative Politeness more.

On a different note, the use of profane language should also be looked into as it portrays impoliteness by chatters. Both men and women of both age groups used this language when they are conversing with others. Although the frequency of occurrence between men and women varies, they are aware that these taboo words may offend others, hence the use of self-censorship. Self-censorship should be encouraged as it helps to curb the cursing habit in our society. It seems that cursing has become common and sometimes it is hard to control. In other words, self-censorship promotes politeness and at the same time helps chatters to gain respect of others by abiding the social rules (Jamaliah Mohd Ali, 1995)

On the whole, this research proves that people are still concerned about being polite even in the 'faceless' community. Chat rooms also usually focus on building or developing rapport amongst chatters and this leads to chatters being polite regardless of gender and age. However, the way of being polite in the chat room is slightly different from being polite in face-to-face conversations. This means, chatters have to be able to understand the real meanings behind the use of emphatic stress, capitalization and excessive punctuation marks as well as language use in greeting and excessive politeness, leave taking, profane language and self-censorship. This understanding is also important because it determines the level of politeness amongst the Malaysian chatters in the chat rooms.

5.4. Recommendations for future study

Within the study of computer mediated communication (CMC), there are various potential areas to be deeply looked into. One of the interesting areas that could be looked into is the difference in the use of profane language among male and female chatters. It would be interesting to see how both the genders use vulgarity in their conversation. Furthermore, profane language has become common among chatters and it would not be a waste if we look into it. Another interesting area that could be looked into is the way different age groups make requests and handle rejections in their conversations. A lot of studies have been done on gender but there are only very few studies that focus on age. In this new era, it would be highly useful and interesting to see how the present day modernization has changed or gradually changing the way youngsters communicate with the older generation.

A cross-cultural study which compares the politeness strategy used by the Malaysian and English chatters in the private messages can also be undertaken in the future. In addition, cross-cultural studies with reference to Tamil and Chinese chatters can be undertaken in the multilingual context of Malaysia. This is because in each culture,

people have different values (social, cultural, etc.) in communicating; thus it will influence the politeness employed in the same context.

APPENDICES

Appendix A

Chat script A

ionlyphuckvampires: W

corinney_1987312 joined the room

foxxxyapril931: any1 here feeling as lazy as me? haha im me to chat

corinney_1987312: Hello

g.bella30: char muri

ssj5gotenks2099: o.o

bansley_1978460 left the room

prattuyw: Someone PM me I need to smile !

g.bella30: hb

ms_stealy0_man: Donna, has there been rioting by you?

ssj5gotenks2099: dont come back gay boy

jocker.samy left the room

agatoneq_1976976 joined the room

y_a_h_0_0_connecting_people:

ms_stealy0_man: It's mental here.

y_a_h_0_0_connecting_people: \:ي ظ

rdamodar_1989111 left the room

prattuyw: am i the only girl here?

bunnyley02: who is gay boy ssj ?

corinney_1987312 left the room

mhmd2009mahmoud2009 left the room

y_a_h_0_0_connecting_people: he means his dad

g.bella30: all are gays, sleep with each other lol

ms_stealy0_man: It's some crazy ****.

melinda_murphy4945: you want to chat? send me a PM

lo23man joined the room

agatoneq_1976976 left the room

bunnyley02: i'm curious abt ssj coz he always knw gay ppl

vishu_world29 left the room

n33d_f0r_5p33d999cc: mosy i give up

n33d_f0r_5p33d999cc: mic ur's

ms_stealy0_man: Me?

ms_stealy0_man: N)

n33d_f0r_5p33d999cc:

pop1_is_ma_bed: u sure lol a drunken nite out n boredom lmao

ssj5gotenks2099: thats cuz i use to come in here way to much -.-

ms_stealy0_man: I was sober that day.

ssj5gotenks2099: and they have admitted it to being gay -.-

saaw joined the room

bunnyley02: lol

pop1_is_ma_bed: o ok then i will believe u was a gd girl lol

stoner_l8_2011 joined the room

g.bella30: bunnny

nojho89 joined the room

bunnyley02: yep bella ?

saaw: bunny hunny

melinda_murphy4945: boyz where arre you?

g.bella30: how old is bunny?

y_a_h_0_0_connecting_people: need for speed

stoner_l8_2011 left the room

y_a_h_0_0_connecting_people: nascar where are yu

ionlyphuckvampires: W damn mosy how many names u gonna bring in?

y_a_h_0_0_connecting_people: i dunno yet kim

ionlyphuckvampires: W

bunnyley02: TJ join us here

bhuvano_1979385 joined the room

y_a_h_0_0_connecting_people: i just proved some thing

baldwinq_1976366 joined the room

bianca_schiffer764: any guys want to chat?

billyo_1985472 left the room

y_a_h_0_0_connecting_people: n33d_f0r_5p33d999cc u dont even dare to talk to me when ever u are not on mic

carmen_salinas906 left the room

bairns_1977598 left the room

g.bella30 left the room

me-for-you_1: thats ur fact

ssj5gotenks2099: -.-

me-for-you_1: your a fucking rat

trash__queen joined the room

trash__queen: anyone seen clyde?

ssj5gotenks2099: o.o

vctm joined the room

ssj5gotenks2099: i hope he fell down a well o.o

ms_stealy0_man: Nice,.

bunnyley02: who ssj ?

me-for-you_1: look for him in the dictionary

trash__queen: quit being a smart ass

me-for-you_1: who is clyde

ssj5gotenks2099: rather be a smart ass then a dumb ass

trash__queen: good for u cupcake

reefer_girl_high: ms lol

ms_stealy0_man: What?

ms_stealy0_man: He probably is.

me-for-you_1: and who is clyde?

trash__queen: no one u need to worry ur self about

reefer_girl_high: too out there

reefer_girl_high: lol out there

reefer_girl_high: you know what i mean?

ms_stealy0_man: His latest piece of ass.

ms_stealy0_man: I'm guessing.

bunnyley02: >>>>><<<<<<

trash__queen: hardly

ssj5gotenks2099: i hate when ppl say that o.o

ms_stealy0_man: No sane person would look for him.

vctm: ok shut ur mouth then go find ur clyde in some bitchs

vctm: lmao

ssj5gotenks2099: o.o

ssj5gotenks2099: lol

ionlyphuckvampires: W eww

reefer_girl_high: and got a reply

reefer_girl_high: omg she asked a simply question lol

reefer_girl_high: move on or dwell ;-"

steve+hk: what ever

pabel_1977547 joined the room

steve+hk: she looks like ******

ms_stealy0_man: Well if they knew him that well, she'd have his messy.

pabel_1977547 left the room

steve+hk: i have afeeling

nojho89 left the room

ssj5gotenks2099: no

reefer_girl_high: yeah you dont look faroff

reefer_girl_high: probably

adnane_1981271 joined the room

trash__queen: damn it was a ******* question

roesalita joined the room

trash__queen: back up

ms_stealy0_man: It was a question about Clyde.

ms_stealy0_man: Not many people like him.

me-for-you_1: iam one of em

ionlyphuckvampires: W

ms_stealy0_man: So you're bound to get smart ass replies.

steven478178 joined the room

un1versal_ch4tter joined the room

adnane_1981271 left the room

ssj5gotenks2099: except the lame girl that dates his loser ass -.- even

steven478178 left the room

ionlyphuckvampires: W

roesalita left the room

trash__queen: well i dont yah-date so calm it down

reefer_girl_high: afterall the kafuckall

ms_stealy0_man: No clue.

me-for-you_1: that ******* was locking this room and i unlocked it thro chat abuse he thought i booted his ids what alame ass

reefer_girl_high: ah ok

reefer_girl_high: dads gonna be pissed lol

reefer_girl_high: he loves his soccer

ssj5gotenks2099: trash all girls that date clyde say that he has his ways to make u

reefer_girl_high: omfg

trash__queen: dude i have a man

trash__queen: off the internet

trash__queen: so....

ssj5gotenks2099: lol so?

y_a_h_0_0_connecting_people: good for u

ionlyphuckvampires: W

trash__queen: i aint gonna date that kidd

ssj5gotenks2099: think that would stop him from trying?

y_a_h_0_0_connecting_people: trash talk about ur real life some where else

ms_stealy0_man: Everyone says that.

reefer_girl_high: sorry dad ove u but dont kill the messenger

reefer_girl_high: love*

ms_stealy0_man: "Oh I hate Clyde!"

ms_stealy0_man: Pffft.

melinda_murphy4945: one of you needs to IM me.. i need some ASSistance

ionlyphuckvampires: W

ssj5gotenks2099: lol

ssj5gotenks2099: ikr

y_a_h_0_0_connecting_people: ms stealy u were one of em may be

kerri_paquin_593: wutz up ppl here

ms_stealy0_man: No.

ms_stealy0_man: I'm good.

ionlyphuckvampires: W

ms_stealy0_man: I have a man.

ms_stealy0_man: I don't need no *****.

ionlyphuckvampires: W so true char

vctm: every one says that

y_a_h_0_0_connecting_people: yes

ssj5gotenks2099: i wish i had a girl then i wouldnt need to be here lol o.o

larend_1986212 joined the room

melinda_murphy4945: so what are you fellas up 2

larend_1986212 left the room

ionlyphuckvampires: W mosy u confusin me doin that

reefer_girl_high: males always say that too

saaw: lmao

jdyre_1981523 joined the room

foxxxyapril931: chat? message me

ionlyphuckvampires: W and u know me.... that is easy to do

zbhaskar_1981948 joined the room

steve+horn left the room

ms_stealy0_man: Has everyone got the same font?

ms_stealy0_man: Or is it one person?

saaw: iam every one

ionlyphuckvampires: W its all mosy

bbialy_1988377 joined the room

bbialy_1988377 left the room

vctm left the room

saaw: mic is free nascar never open ur mouth wid me again *****

reefer_girl_high left the room

un1versal_ch4tter left the room

axtono_1978983 left the room

aloysiuse_1987749 left the room

y_a_h_0_0_connecting_people: kim

ms_stealy0_man: Lmfao.

ionlyphuckvampires: W yessumz?

y_a_h_0_0_connecting_people: trash queen still looking for clyde please give her ahand!!!

y_a_h_0_0_connecting_people:

ms_stealy0_man: What a ********.

trash__queen: oh shush ur lips

ionlyphuckvampires: W fuk that nasty ass loser

ms_stealy0_man: I was close to Clyde.

ms_stealy0_man: Untill he opened his mouth.

ionlyphuckvampires: W he is a ******* dickless *******

y_a_h_0_0_connecting_people: u were close ?

ms_stealy0_man: Yes.

ms_stealy0_man: Not like that.

y_a_h_0_0_connecting_people: what happened

ms_stealy0_man: Just friends.

y_a_h_0_0_connecting_people: tell us

siavash_xml joined the room

ms_stealy0_man: He said some ****.

y_a_h_0_0_connecting_people: about you?

ms_stealy0_man: Partly.

ionlyphuckvampires: W i know a story about clyde!

y_a_h_0_0_connecting_people: what was ur reaction

joejohnpawl joined the room

pop1_is_ma_bed: im bak

ms_stealy0_man: I told him to go **** himself.

y_a_h_0_0_connecting_people: LMAO

ms_stealy0_man: He begged me to talk to him.

ms_stealy0_man: WB Donna.

pop1_is_ma_bed: ty mosy

pop1_is_ma_bed: ty char

y_a_h_0_0_connecting_people: welx , stop starring at me

y_a_h_0_0_connecting_people:

bunnyley02: wb mz

fionne_1989446 joined the room

pop1_is_ma_bed: ty bunny

fionne_1989446: Hello

y_a_h_0_0_connecting_people: bunny u still alive?

ms_stealy0_man: Kim, you gonna tell us that story?

ionlyphuckvampires: W yes,

y_a_h_0_0_connecting_people: i like stories

ms_stealy0_man: Me too.

bunnyley02: lol i'm still alive

y_a_h_0_0_connecting_people: i might sleep now

didoroda22 joined the room

ionlyphuckvampires: W i have a friend, who was dating him, he tried to control her every move. she wasnt even allowed in chat without him.

naquila_1981179 joined the room

ms_stealy0_man: Oh snap.

ms_stealy0_man: I heard too.

ionlyphuckvampires: W how pathetic

alicynd99lne89 joined the room

y_a_h_0_0_connecting_people: oh really?

bunnyley02: wow kim tat really bad

y_a_h_0_0_connecting_people: he dont trust any one?

ionlyphuckvampires: W yessumz. hes an insecure prickless ass

y_a_h_0_0_connecting_people: may be he had afeeling that she ganna cheat him

ms_stealy0_man: He said **** about me. So my girl got into it with him, in a chat room. & he flipped the **** out.

joejohnpawl left the room

siavash_xml left the room

bhriguy_1989621 left the room

y_a_h_0_0_connecting_people: **** about you? what kind of ****?

y_a_h_0_0_connecting_people: i wd like to know

ms_stealy0_man: Personal ****.

y_a_h_0_0_connecting_people: C'mon

bajax_1987848 joined the room

ssj5gotenks2099: o.o

y_a_h_0_0_connecting_people: i wont tell no body

ms_stealy0_man: Na'. I don't want Yahoo knowing my business.

ssj5gotenks2099: lmao

bunnyley02: yahooooo

bajax_1987848 left the room

barrowcyyp joined the room

ssj5gotenks2099: its yahoo everyone tells everyone everything o.o

y_a_h_0_0_connecting_people: bunny

y_a_h_0_0_connecting_people: aiight Stealyo

abire_1981443 left the room

duaney_1986182 left the room

hassanhasona2009 joined the room

trash__queen left the room

sholar4people left the room

firakiq_1978647 joined the room

ms_stealy0_man: I can put my life on that chick running to Clyde & telling him all about this room.

y_a_h_0_0_connecting_people: yall dead?

pop1_is_ma_bed: Mirror Mirror on the wall hassanhasona2009 Your not the fairest of them all... (9579)

y_a_h_0_0_connecting_people: what ever ms

bunnyley02: i see dead ppl

y_a_h_0_0_connecting_people: i want him to come over here and fight

pop1_is_ma_bed: which chick char

ms_stealy0_man: trash__queen

pop1_is_ma_bed: prob him in disguise

y_a_h_0_0_connecting_people: she ganna tell him what did we say about him

brandk_1978941 left the room

ionlyphuckvampires: W

hassanhasona2009 left the room

murad.yemeni joined the room

ionlyphuckvampires: W im sure hes heard it all before, hes proud of his rep.

bunnyley02 left the room

ms_stealy0_man: I don't doubt he's in this room already.

ms_stealy0_man: He's in every room.

pop1_is_ma_bed: its not a gd rep tho

y_a_h_0_0_connecting_people: my be he is donna

bunnyley02 joined the room

y_a_h_0_0_connecting_people: donna ur clyde

pop1_is_ma_bed: lol am i

ms_stealy0_man left the room

y_a_h_0_0_connecting_people: iam not sure

pop1_is_ma_bed: how am i clyde

louizamae joined the room

pop1_is_ma_bed: louiza

y_a_h_0_0_connecting_people: may be ur not donna and ur somebody else

louizamae: DONNA

pop1_is_ma_bed: wtf

y_a_h_0_0_connecting_people: wheres ur id

bunnyley02: wb louiza

y_a_h_0_0_connecting_people: mz care bear *****

pop1_is_ma_bed: believe me im not clyde

louizamae: thanks bunny

y_a_h_0_0_connecting_people: i know

pop1_is_ma_bed: i still hav that id

jfalda_1981131: Hello

bavole_1982963 joined the room

bavole_1982963 left the room

bunnyley02: yw louiza

y_a_h_0_0_connecting_people: okay am joking

pop1_is_ma_bed: Mirror Mirror on the wall jfalda_1981131 Your not the fairest of them all... (9581)

na_boontham joined the room

louizamae: i missed donna and the mirrors

pengennyoblack_out joined the room

bronaa_1976376 joined the room

pop1_is_ma_bed: lol

louizamae: oh how i love it lol

donohuey_1984161 left the room

pop1_is_ma_bed: mosy if u thought i was clyde ud of never let me add u

tarthus_1975302 joined the room

jfalda_1981131 left the room

tarthus_1975302 left the room

boltonm_1980741 joined the room

louizamae: mosy you have many accounts too?

boltonm_1980741 left the room

y_a_h_0_0_connecting_people: yea sorry louza

daniroller365 joined the room

y_a_h_0_0_connecting_people: louiza

bunnyley02: she cool right with the mirror

aseeme_1986504 joined the room

louizamae: lol why you asking sorry

pop1_is_ma_bed: i think most ppl hav loads of ids

louizamae: yeah she def is

aseeme_1986504 left the room

pengennyoblack_out: zzzzzzzzzzzzzzz

Appendix B

Chat sript B

RubyNii: I came to mcdonalds juz nao and no one was there .....hmm

Oscar:I was there hahahaha

RubyNii: SHUT UP! Don't lie!

BunnyP: awww chillax Ruby

Oscar: yea man chillax, don't be too stressed up wey!

RubyNii: aw no one will understand, im reali mad lio

BunnyP: awww kucikucickuciiiciii hahahhaha LOLOLOLOL

RubyNii: ahahahah whateverlah!

BunnyP: yaaaaa whateverla!

GaGa09: where can whatever...serious matter maa

SherWi: serious matter ur head la!hahahaha

GaGa09: my head? UR HEAD LAA!! Hahahahah

RubyNii: lolx

GaGa09: Neways,any1 seen Rob? Been missin him hihihihihi

SherWi: u two love birds, get a room!!!!!!

GaGa09: LOL f**k off Sherwi ahhahahaha

SherWi: niceeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeee o_0

RubyNii: mind the language hoi!

Oscar: u guys r mentallllllll! Hahaha!!

SherWi: eh wait! Whats our test will b on again ey?

SherWi: ne1 noes??? Please pleaseee???

Oscar: who ask u no come?????lazy ass!

SherWi: oi, im sick ok??? Choy!

RubyNii: test on chap 4,5 and 6. Crazy liooooo

SherWi: watttttt???SERIOUS??? damn shit alot!!! Im dead la

GaGa09: hahahhaha we all die 2gther!!! Lets?

BobbYVal joined the room

GaGa09: well well wellll bobby in the huozeeeeee

BobbYVal: yo yo yo LOL hws every1 2nite????

RubyNii: hey bobbyyyy wat u up too?

SherWi: hey bob

BobbYVal: hey ladies. Nothing much juz chillin

BobbYVal: a bit stressed up tho. U noe abt the quiz? Test or wat shit u call it?u noe?

SherWi: hahahha we were jz talkin about it

RubyNii: LOLOLOLOLOL

GaGa09: and i was saying, we r gona die 2gther hahahha

BobbYVal: true dat!!!

BobbYVal: btw ne 1 seen sheena??

BobbYVal: u noe the new chat room girl?

BobbYVal: i just saw her last night!

BobbYVal: so ugly la she ahahahahaa

Hex joined the room

Hex: hellllllooooooooooooooooooooooooo

BobbYVal: Hex ma mannnnnn

BobbYVal: i saw sheena yesterday man!!ugly as hell!!

Hex: so mean la youuu hahaha

BobbYVal: really maaa..she has EXTREMELY ugly face. Pimples here n there!

RubyNii: hoi!!so mean! Im telling her!!!!

GaGa09: hahahah mentallllll

BunnyP: omg thats fucked upppp hahah. Where did u see her?

BobbYVal: Mcd yesterday, with her mom. She came to me and reminded me about the other day. I was..... speechless ahahahhaa

SherWi: ahahhhahaha well considering her “confidence” shes quite annoying

SherWi: so yea whatever

RubyNii: ahahhaa yea, she cant stop saying how she look like pan-asian? Like wth????

BobbYVal: ahahah butoooohhh pan-asian!

GaGa09: ahahahahha wey stop weyyyenuf

Gilly45joined the room

Freddiexx joined the room

Blank joined the room

RubyNii: yeaaastop alreadyyyyy gahhh

BobbYVal: ok ok but u guys gotta c her mannnnn im SERIOUS

Gilly45: helloooo ya’llllll

RedRH joined the room

Jamie joined the room

Gilly45: wat u been up too? Btw ne 1 seen transformers??dammit fucking goodddd

Freddiexx: transformers was awesome!

Gilly45: transformers was FREAKIN AWESOME!!

Freddiexx: hahah ya ya u win :p

Blank: oh no! Asos is having a sale! I love asos!!!

RedRH: omg!asos sale?serious?

Jamie: I LOVE ASOS TOO!!!! Arghhh sale sale sale!

Blank: yes really!!!! They’re having a sale!

RubyNii: wel hello helooo peopleeee wazappp?

Blank: hey ruby....24 hours chatting izit?hahahha

RubyNii: ahhahaha bored laaaa

GaGa09: she no work can la hahahaha

SherWi: i wanna see transformers tooooo shit

Dani joined the room

Dani left the room

BobbYVal: transformers r for retards hahahhahaha kidding!

Dani joined the room

Dani: wat is uppp peopleee?

Rob joined the room

Rob: yo bitchesss ahahahha

Dani: hello Robbie

GaGa09: oh look its the retardsss ahahhha

Dani: woiii!! Lengchai laaa ahhahaha

RubyNii: ewwwww

Rob: guys please do come for our band promo k?

Rob: support us come come come

Dani: when????

Rob: dis Saturday, come la bring chicks k?hahahah

Dani: hafto pay ah?

Rob: ya, but about 15 per head. U rich bastard come ok?

Rob: azika's gona be there!

Dani: really? Eh when is it again?

Rob: HOW MANY TIMES MUST I TELL YOU??!

Dani: y r u angry??

Rob: because i don't like to repeat myself thousands of times.

Dani: psycho okla i'll come

Rob: roger me la ifanything i can help u enter

Dani: ya ya will do but must confirm again later.

Rob: the fuck??u going or nottt??

RubyNii: wat r u guys talking abouttttt????

GaGa09: retard stuff ahahahha

BunnyP: boringggggggggggggggggggg

Oscar: imam go now gotta dinner

Oscar left the room

Hex: any1 wanna teman me dinner?

Gilly45: hex lets go, i c u at mamak depan rumah in 10 ok?

Hex: ya ya bole hungry cpat skitttt

Gilly45: wait la babii i change clothes first

Hex: kk i'l go 1st

Hex left the room

Freddiexx: hahahhaha cacat, btw y suddenly so quiet?every1 asleep dy???

Jamie left the room

Blank left the room

Gilly45 left the room

RubyNii: wey sherwi open up ur email i sent u something

Appendix C

Chat script C

freakermind@ymail.com: plz stop

w_h_i_t_e_man left the room

punkeymonkey2462: eww

jdkarl23: that i cooked myself tho so i kno its cooked

jdkarl23: mute it if you no likey

punkeymonkey2462: i dont eat any meat

theoneandonlynater left the room

jdkarl23: dont complain

jdkarl23: are you a vegan?

punkeymonkey2462: no

punkeymonkey2462: i do eat eggs

punkeymonkey2462: and cheese

punkeymonkey2462: drinkmilk

freakermind@ymail.com: eggs

fluffbugg left the room

jdkarl23: so your a vegetarian?

hardcore_3001: i eat anything but vegitables lol

punkeymonkey2462: nooooo not t all

punkeymonkey2462: at*

punkeymonkey2462: yea i am

billie_morales2160 left the room

venomous.chaos87 joined the room

pr_happy10 joined the room

punkeymonkey2462: music?

billie_morales2160 joined the room

burnt_ joined the room

freakermind@ymail.com: whats the use stayfree ?? plz explain

jdkarl23: one sec

xjessiejinx left the room

punkeymonkey2462: hell yea

maxpower044 joined the room

dustindust99 left the room

ashely_arline243 left the room

malhotra_eklavya joined the room

malhotra_eklavya left the room

allysdabomb219: boreddd

dariki_1986439 joined the room

peterls2003 joined the room

punkeymonkey2462: BIG FONT.

jdkarl23: big font

burnt_: ¹ big font = gay

wildslutx left the room

punkeymonkey2462: burnt

jdkarl23: no one care wtf you say burnt

punkeymonkey2462: u hurt my feelings

jdkarl23: go troll somwhere else

burnt_: ¹ sorry

punkeymonkey2462: waite

jacklyn_deford875 joined the room

punkeymonkey2462: wait*

punkeymonkey2462: if i was gay....

burnt_: ¹ lol @ everyone saying "troll" lately

burnt_: ¹ be original next time

jdkarl23: maybe its cause you are?

punkeymonkey2462: all the guys would wanna watch

jdkarl23: just puttin it out there

peterls2003 joined the room

burnt_: ¹ maybe cos u dont know me so shut tha **** up dood lol

jdkarl23: id watch if you were gay monkey

punkeymonkey2462: lol

jdkarl23: id do more than watch

burnt_: ¹ lol @ captain save a ho

burnt_: ¹ smh

punkeymonkey2462: its ok burnt i aint mad at ya

burnt_: ¹ neither am i

punkeymonkey2462: chat anger is stupid

jdkarl23: i concur

burnt_: ¹ *mute*

jdkarl23: cool story bro

macdadd2505 joined the room

punkeymonkey2462: robots.....

mms_28@ymail.com joined the room

mms_28@ymail.com left the room

ema_ollis_795: who wants to chat with me? hah

mizzwikkidmonalette420: WHOOP WHOOP MCL

punkeymonkey2462 left the room

allysdabomb219: heyyy

ew3a_reglak joined the room

ribbythelovefrog joined the room

pr_happy10 left the room

ew3a_reglak left the room

audrybrownlee412: guyyz pvt me NOW! HERE!

pderren_1979317 joined the room

mizzwikkidmonalette420: hello

mike_hawkins73: ello

jim_spade2002 left the room

mizzwikkidmonalette420: who said hello fukkerz

mike_hawkins73: me

mizzwikkidmonalette420: lol ur funny

mike_hawkins73: so i've heard lol i do this on chatrooms every night

mizzwikkidmonalette420: thats wuts up yp

tera_williamson2008 joined the room

mike_hawkins73: lol yea!

tera_williamson2008: heyy

mizzwikkidmonalette420: huh srry was jammin wut did u say

tera_williamson2008 left the room

mike_hawkins73: idek lol

carrion_harvest joined the room

donnarv48: creepy critier

loki2628: hello

mizzwikkidmonalette420: ha

wtf_amoureux: Heyyy

spoiled.princess_hitler: oh look its the **** hi again

mike_hawkins73: hello people!

donnarv48: hey

carrion_harvest: hey

spoiled.princess_hitler: how yew doing?

ema_ollis_795: whut is upp here

loki2628: im a ****?

spoiled.princess_hitler: billie_morales2160 I love you. (543)

spoiled.princess_hitler: No!

mizzwikkidmonalette420: yeahhh

donnarv48: go ahead your in room 3

spoiled.princess_hitler: wait, he is in undies?

theoneandonlynater left the room

joeh_06_08 left the room

mizzwikkidmonalette420: lol

spoiled.princess_hitler: how about panties?

spoiled.princess_hitler: pink ones

spoiled.princess_hitler: you suck

burnt_: ¹ wdf

spoiled.princess_hitler: Hawt

mizzwikkidmonalette420: yeahhh faggg lol jkjk

donnarv48: brett 07 are you my cousin?

maribelpacman: hi

spoiled.princess_hitler: lemme get a viagra real quick

loki2628: im in red addias shorts

mike_hawkins73: lawl

mizzwikkidmonalette420: lol kool jajaj i knwe it

mike_hawkins73: woh me 2

mizzwikkidmonalette420: knew**

spoiled.princess_hitler:

spoiled.princess_hitler: lmfao!

donnarv48: freedom

mizzwikkidmonalette420: noo i am

maribelpacman: hi

mizzwikkidmonalette420: nahh i am

maribelpacman: hi

maribelpacman: hi

spoiled.princess_hitler: how fat we talking here

mike_hawkins73: hello !

loki2628: im not fat

mizzwikkidmonalette420: victor?o.O?

loki2628: im 6'1" 170lbs

mike_hawkins73: lmao he's concerned with the weight rofl

spoiled.princess_hitler: thats a man.

mizzwikkidmonalette420: who me?

mike_hawkins73: woh! this rock room!

maribelpacman: hi mike -hawkin

mizzwikkidmonalette420: lol\

maribelpacman: lol

th3patient: blinks *

mike_hawkins73: :/

mike_hawkins73: thats ****** upppppp

spoiled.princess_hitler:

th3patient: wow

maribelpacman: hi mike

donnarv48: wakesup th3

mike_hawkins73: hey

mike_hawkins73: my names derek

spoiled.princess_hitler: you love it, dont lie

th3patient: i am awake

spoiled.princess_hitler: your name is bob.

donnarv48: derek is a nice name

mike_hawkins73: thanx

donnarv48: lets spin

mike_hawkins73: bob the muthafuckin builder

th3patient:

spoiled.princess_hitler: LOL

mizzwikkidmonalette420: lol

spoiled.princess_hitler:

maribelpacman: somebody hi there

mike_hawkins73: lmfao names derek , and no!

spoiled.princess_hitler: hi mari

maribelpacman:

mike_hawkins73: brb

spoiled.princess_hitler: Tyt

maribelpacman: hi mike

spoiled.princess_hitler: Brb, someone call me when my whore gets back

spoiled.princess_hitler: my whore=mike

maribelpacman: hey

maribelpacman: hello

derek.bloxom joined the room

loki2628: how much do u charge for mike a night?

loki2628: and do u accept credit cards?

derek.bloxom: i'm back guys

maxpower044 joined the room

spoiled.princess_hitler: backkkk

donnarv48: max

spoiled.princess_hitler: Wb whore

maribelpacman: hi derek

donnarv48: something wrong with that guy

loki2628: or am i getting a deal?

derek.bloxom: i am the official E-whore rofl

spoiled.princess_hitler: no, hes just not pretty

th3patient: farts *

maribelpacman: how are you dear /

donnarv48: peu

spoiled.princess_hitler: you love it

mizzwikkidmonalette420: lol

loki2628: does he come with a paper bag or do i need to get my own?

spoiled.princess_hitler: pucker up

derek.bloxom: pass rofl

spoiled.princess_hitler:

derek.bloxom: ewwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwww

donnarv48: where did these tards come from?

maribelpacman:

wwwwwwwwwwwwwweeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeehhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh

th3patient: shrugs *

maribelpacman: wwwwwwwwwwhhhhhhhhhhhhhhwaaaaaaaaaaaaa

spoiled.princess_hitler: you are much too uptight

apoorv_lennon joined the room

selfsuck4 joined the room

donnarv48: move them to the back of bus

th3patient: back of the buss negrooooo

spoiled.princess_hitler: LOL

derek.bloxom: hitler ur the racist

donnarv48: no rtards

derek.bloxom: jk

spoiled.princess_hitler: i never denied it

th3patient: wow

derek.bloxom: rofl

payabletome: ok?

spoiled.princess_hitler: okay. i had mexican food

donnarv48: oh man wheres my bug spray?

papawanaplay joined the room

derek.bloxom: hitler is mine ***** gtfo

spoiled.princess_hitler: itsa gonna be spicey!

hardcore_3001: lol

payabletome: u are a spic

maribelpacman: hi hello there

donnarv48: not me fool

maribelpacman: **** you...

spoiled.princess_hitler: lol@bug spray

spoiled.princess_hitler:

spoiled.princess_hitler: marybell pacman

donnarv48: you wished

koko_brns79 joined the room

derek.bloxom: lmao

maribelpacman:

donnarv48: go

derek.bloxom: microphone seduction

donnarv48: leave

maribelpacman:

derek.bloxom: ROFL

kiran4frienz left the room

mizzwikkidmonalette420: lol

mizzwikkidmonalette420: jajaj

spoiled.princess_hitler:

derek.bloxom: u monsta!

donnarv48: yes your in room 3 exit to the left

Appendix D

Chat Script D

N4n4: hello helloooo sweetheartsssssss !!!!

AnneJuhee : hey, kecik. miss u..... =)

N4n4 : aww...i miss u too :s hows workin life?

AnneJuhee : hectic. susah gila.... =(how r u?

N4n4: im okay, same ol same ol...LOL hows the wedding prep coming alonggg??

N4n4: omg im soooooooo excitedddd cant wait

AnneJuhee: i knowww right?? Well prep all is good. Stil tryna slim down a bit hahaaha

N4n4: slim???!!! What the..... r u crazy? U r freaking slim wey!!!!

estherCC joined the room

AmarRr joined the room

N4n4: Amarrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrr

AmarRr: yooooooooooooo hahahaha hey syg

AnneJuhee: here we go again hahahahhaa

AmarRr: oh shut up anne. F u! Hahahah

AnneJuhee: ahahhaha ya ya okay give chance!!! Buwekkkk

N4n4: have u eaten baby??lets go dinner?

AmarRr: lets! But later can? Around 11?i'll pick u kay?

N4n4: yayayayayyyyyyyyy!!!!ne1 wants to join? Haha

estherCC: Me!! Bwek!

AmarRr: hey retard! Haha wat u up to??

esterCC: bored as hellll. Eh wheres the pics??i wanna c!

N4n4: omg EC u haven't seen them? Awesome im tellin ya!

estherCC: reallyyyyyyyy???gimme gimme

AmarRr: hahaha go to my fb page, click on the "fun" album

estherCC: ok ok wait

PiNkHead has joined the room

PiNkHead: wello everyoneee wazap?

estherCC: hey Julie! Y so late u online??

PiNkHead: gotta send my bro la babeeee

estherCC : my dear..ur pics are awesome..soooo nearrrrrrr!! shit!

N4n4: u girls shud haf come earlierr! bole join i.

estherCC : That's Y.. sume salah Joja... sbb die kje kiitorg ne tnggu!! Tp Best siot... rs mcm nk cium2 je FerG n TaBoo..

estherCC: Beyonce also coming right????

N4n4: will be ditching Beyonce's cncrt for Man U vs Liverpool game. am i still a GIRL? hmm. :/

PiNkHead: let me c... yes if u support liv... haha... anti man u!!!!hahahaha

AmarRr: oiiiiiii thats my girl ure talking about. damn u!!

N4n4: hahahahhahaha whateverrr, its ok baby

N4n4: but yea! I think i'll go for MU hahaha

AmarRr: thats my girlll ehhehehe

AnneJuhee: omg u guys get a rooommmmmm please la haha

PiNkHead : where u uploaded them tak ada pun

estherCC : aiyo madam.. it's in the photo album la.. bukak mata besar2 sikit.....

PiNkHead: oh ya gotit got it heh

NKornel joined the room

NKornel left the room

Badsignal9 joined the room

NKornel joined the room

estherCC: kornellllllllllll stop it!

NKornel left the room

AmarRr: hahaha psycho

NKornel joined the room

Paulie9090 joined the room

NKornel: wazappppppppppppppp????wats happenin?

NKornel : i got a newwww BB,,please private msg me ur numbersss!

Paulie9090: oh hi kornel!

Paulie9090: im sorry, but I think I lost ur number la,, =(sory againnn..

Badsignal9: okayyyyy missy!!

NKornel : paullllllll!!! How could u??!!!

AmarRr: baby its almost 11 wanna go?

N4n4: Lets b! Gimme 5 mins tops

YouTHEman joined the room

HarRyF^ joined the room

KP210921 joined the room

AmarRr: aite...

Paulie9090: btw any1 going to RTW tomrw?????im so exciteddd shit

N4n4 left the room

NKornel: i ammmmmmmmmm im super excited tooooooo hahahaha

YouTHEman: did i hear about RTW?????hell yea im going! FTW!!

YouTHEman: misha goin too rite? I need a ride!she promised me dy

Paulie9090: misha??misha Roberts izit??nolah! i asked her she sed no?

Paulie9090: u sure?

YouTHEman: u kidding me??fuck what the hell?

YouTHEman: how am i gona go thennn???fucking car used by parents fuck

YouTHEman: I'm about to explode. All this while I tot shes comin!!!! Wtff??

HarRyF^: oooooo…. Someone's really mad.

YouTHEman left the room

Paulie9090: woah he's really pissed

AmarRr left the room

NKornel: yea cz she promised him, n he got no transport to go.

PiNkHead: i noe hw he feels. 1 time my fren stood me up oso. Felt like crap.

PiNkHead: one time say ok, then not ok, then ok...lastly stood me up. Really suck i tell u

NKornel: yea i now what u mean.....

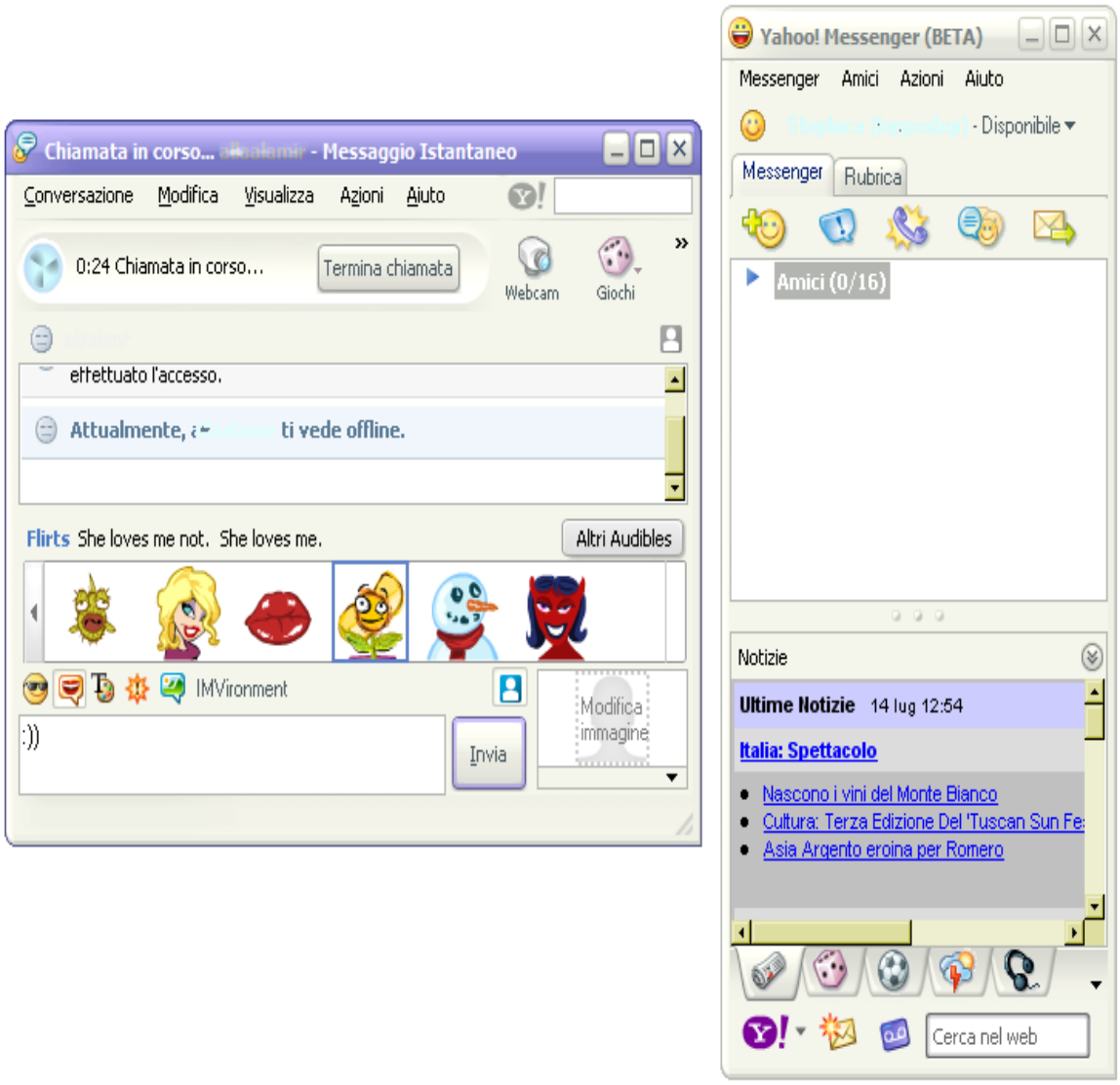
Appendix E

Emoticons from Yahoo Instant Messenger

	:)	happy		:-c	call me - New!
	:(	sad		:)]	on the phone - New!
	;)	winking		~X(	at wits' end - New!
	:D	big grin		:-h	wave - New!
	;;)	batting eyelashes		:-t	time out - New!
	>:D<	big hug		8->	daydreaming - New!
	:-/	confused		I-)	sleepy
	:x	love struck		8-|	rolling eyes
	:">	blushing		L-)	loser
	:P	tongue		:-&	sick
	:-*	kiss		:-$	don't tell anyone
	=((	broken heart		[-(	not talking
	:-O	surprise		:O)	clown
	X(	angry		8-}	silly
	:>	smug		<:-P	party
	B-)	cool		(:|	yawn
	:-S	worried		=P~	drooling
	#:-S	whew!		:-?	thinking
	>:)	devil		#-o	d'oh
	:((	crying		=D>	applause
	:))	laughing		:-SS	nailbiting
	:|	straight face		@-)	hypnotized
	/:)	raised eyebrow		:^o	liar
	=))	rolling on the floor		:-w	waiting
	O:-)	angel		:-<	sigh
	:-B	nerd		>:P	phbbbbt
	=;	talk to the hand		<):)	cowboy

Appendix F

Sample of Yahoo Instant Messenger chat



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