Chapter One

Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Grice (1975, p.39) suggested that human communication centres on four maxims: quality, quantity, relation and manner. These maxims are supposed to govern the production and interpretation of messages. However, these maxims are often not observed in any discourse (intentionally or unintentionally) by the speaker to convey a different meaning from what is being spoken.

In support of Grice's theory, Seymour (2001, p.6) claims that "humans tend to show change in both verbal and non-verbal communication due to influence of external factors such as the person they talk to , the setting in which the conversation takes place or even the audience around them in order to manipulate what they are saying". This research will be looking into the phenomenon of flouting of maxims and the discourse chosen for this purpose is staff meetings in three local private academic institutions.

Staff meeting is an event which is customary to any institution since the meeting is an effective way of sharing information among the staff. It is also a means for the top management of an institution to keep abreast with the development of their subordinates (Dylan, 2000, p.61). The meetings allow the staff to share their thoughts regarding their work to other colleagues and to get ideas on solving a problem.

As Heindin (2003, p.22) says, "flouting of maxims happens in any conversation" and staff meetings are no exception. Besides looking for ways in which the maxims are

flouted and also the reasons for it, this will also be a comparative study that highlights the differences in flouting of maxims by the staff during meetings recorded covertly and the ones recorded overtly.

1.2 Background of Study

In theory, people apply Gricean maxims in communication to "have an effective communication without any miscommunication" (Grundy, 2000, p.88). However, people deliberately flout the maxims and it does not lead to any miscommunication. When people flout the maxims, they have reasons for doing so and these flouts play a vital role in conveying messages intended by the speaker as well (Markkanen, 1997, p.41). Thus, this research focuses on how the staff flout the maxims during the meetings.

In addition to looking into the flouting of maxims, this research also addresses another concern: the differences in flouting of maxims in meetings recorded overtly and the meetings recorded covertly. Researchers who study spoken discourse in the field of pragmatics usually simulate situations similar to the area they are researching in and record the conversations of the participants to gather data for their research. Givany (1995, p.413) claimed that naturally-occurring conversations were rarely collected to be analysed because it was "a challenge for the analysts who believe spontaneous speech often appears incoherent and disorganized". Even if they want to record naturally-occurring conversations, they have to inform those whose conversations will be recorded because recording naturally-occurring conversations without the knowledge of the interlocutors involved is against the research ethics. In simulations and also in real scenario recording, the participants are aware that they are being recorded and there is a

possibility for them to not behave (or in this case, converse) as they would in their daily life (Cheng, 2001, p.50). Cheng (2001, p.50) even called this as one of the "researcher's dilemma" because it is important to get authentic data to get authentic results but it is always a challenge for the researchers since the authenticity in data collected tends to be lost due to several factors: awareness of the subjects of the research about their conversations being recorded would be one of the many to be mentioned. Cheng's argument was not a novel one since this was addressed earlier as the observer's paradox by William Labov (1972), who stated:

> *"… the aim of linguistic research in the community must be to find out how people talk when they are not being systematically observed; yet we can only obtain this data by systematic observation." (Labov, 1972, p.30)*

As a sociolinguist, Labov explained this term by quoting examples from his study, in which he recorded speeches to analyse the vernacular languages, but the data was hard to be obtained as the participants of the research adapted to formal register to speak because they knew someone was recording them.

Taking this into account, this study is meant to highlight how the academic staff change the way they speak in meetings because they are aware that their conversations are being recorded in addition to investigating how the staff flout the maxims during the meetings. For this purpose, staff meetings held in three academic establishments will be recorded in two different circumstances: one by informing all the staff in the meeting that the meeting would be recorded (overt recording); the other is by not acknowledging the staff about their meeting being recorded (covert recording). During the overt recordings, the researcher will be present in the meeting room and the researcher will be absent for the meetings recorded covertly. This will allow the researcher to make

comparisons for the maxim flouts between the meetings recorded overtly and covertly and identify the changes that realization of being observed could make in the participants' speech in the meetings.

1.3 Research Objectives

The objectives of this study are to:-

1. identify the ways in which the maxims are flouted in staff meetings.

2. determine the reasons for the staff to flout the maxims during the meetings.

3. investigate the differences in the flouting of maxims in staff meetings recorded overtly and the meetings recorded covertly.

1.4 Research Questions

1. How do the participants flout the maxims during staff meetings?

By answering this question, the researcher will be able to show the ways in which the maxims are flouted by the staff of three academic establishments during staff meetings. The strategies used to flout the maxims will be highlighted.

2. Why do the staff flout the maxims during staff meetings?

This question provides reasons for the staff to flout the maxims in the meetings. The reasons will justify the strategies used by the staff to flout the maxims in the meetings, which are identified in question one.

3. How does the flouting of maxims differ between the staff meetings recorded overtly and covertly?

As mentioned earlier, flouting the maxims is unavoidable in daily conversation and the flouts are done by the speaker for different purposes. By answering this question, the researcher will be able to compare how the participants change the way they flout the maxims (or even change the maxims to be flouted) based on their awareness or unawareness of the meetings being recorded for data collection. The comparison allows the researcher to demonstrate the extent to which naturally-occurring data would be natural when the participants know they are being observed or (and) recorded.

1.5 Theoretical Framework

This research does not look into the conversation maxims but focuses on the flouting of these maxims during staff meetings. In order to analyse the data collected in this research, the Cooperative Principle by Grice (1975, p.18) is used. By identifying how the principles are flouted in each meeting and by comparing the differences in which they are flouted in meetings recorded overly and covertly, the change in discourse by participants due to their knowledge of being observed by the researcher can be identified as well. For this research, the theoretical framework is the Cooperative Principle by Paul Grice (1975, p.18). The maxims are as follow:-

1.5.1 Maxim of Quantity

1. Make your contribution as informative as is required (for the current purpose of the exchange)

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

When speaking, the speaker's answer should have sufficient information for the listener to understand the answer. Giving too much information or too little information will flout the maxim. The following is an example of how Maxim of Quantity can be flouted.

Example 1

(A is asking B when B will be on her lunch break.)

A : At what time are you going to eat your lunch?

B : I am going to drop my son at school. Then, I'm picking up my dry cleaning. On the way, I need to make a quick stop at the saloon for my shampoo. Before I forget, please let me know if you need anything at the saloon too. Since the saloon is near to the tailor's, I might as well just pick up my clothes. You know? The one I booked for my cousin's wedding? Then, I'll be free to eat. Let's say I'll be eating around 2pm.

(taken from Irawati, 1996 , p.31)

Instead of saying 2pm, which is the required answer, B goes into a detailed explanation of what he or she will have to do before eating lunch. This is flouting Maxim of Quantity by giving too much information.

Another example for flouting this maxim is as illustrated below:-

Example 2

A : At what time are you going to eat your lunch?

B : Later.

(taken from Irawati, 1996, p.31)

In this example, although the answer is provided, it contains very little information that the other party cannot actually deduce the time. All A could know is that B is not going to eat the lunch now but there is no time indication even though A asked for the specific time from B.

1.5.2 Maxim of Quality – Try to make your contribution one that is true.

1. Do not say what you believe to be false.

2. Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence.

According to this maxim, a speaker should always speak what he or she believes is true. It also states that one should not say something without enough evidence to prove that the matter in question is true. This is the maxim to be flouted whenever the act of 'lying' or 'concealing the truth' occurs (Damien, 2002, p.8). An example for how this maxim could be flouted is shown below:-

Example 3

(A and B are at a shopping mall. A has chosen a gown which B thinks is too expensive since B bought the same gown for lesser price not long ago.)

A   :   I'm lucky to get this great gown for a cheap price, right?

B   :   Yes.

<div align="right">(adapted from Irawati, 1996)</div>

Here, the Maxim of Quality is flouted because B agrees with A about the gown being cheap although B actually thinks that it is expensive.

Example 4

(A and B are talking about the recent theft in their neighbourhood.)

A   :   How is it even possible? Such a safe area has crimes like this happening. Any idea who is behind this?

B   :   Who knows? Maybe Ron. I heard he is a drug addict. I'm sure he wouldn't think twice to break the house.

<div align="right">(taken from Irawati, 1996, p.32)</div>

In this example, B has flouted the Maxim of Quality by stating that Ron could be the one responsible for the recent theft in the neighbourhood based on the rumour B heard

about Ron being the drug addict. This statement is made without any evidence to support it.

1.5.3 Maxim of Relevance – Be relevant.

This maxim indicates that one should not wander away from the current topic being discussed. The answers given for a question should always be related to the questions asked. An example for flouting this maxim is shown below:-

Example 5

(A, the superior, is asking B about the student performance in the final exam for the recent term.)

    A   :   How is the overall performance of the students this semester?

    B   :   They did well last semester.

In this example, A clearly asks for the students' performance this semester. However, B answers how well they performed last semester. Here, the Maxim of Relevance is flouted since the answer given by B does not relate to the question by A.

1.5.4 Maxim of Manner – Be perspicuous

1. Avoid obscurity of expression

2. Avoid ambiguity

3. Be brief (avoid unnecessary prolixity)

4. Be orderly.

This maxim indicates that one should make sure that what he or she says could be easily understood by others. If others have trouble in getting what is being said, the message will not be conveyed properly. This maxim is all about "the use of brevity and

directness in the conversation, without verbose, ambiguous or unnecessary excessive language" (Baskaran, 2005, p.41). An example to show this is stated below:-

Example 6

(In a meeting, a programme coordinator asks one of the staff to handle the faculty booth during the open day of that particular university.)

A : I have no problem but I think Mr. X would be able to do a better job since I have to rush to handle the booth after my morning class while he is free.

The response given by A shows that he does not want to be responsible for the booth since he has more than he can handle for the day. Instead of saying he does not want to do it, he uses an indirect way of saying "yes" for the task first and then follows it by proposing another person for the job rather than saying "no".

1.5.5 Violating or Flouting the Maxims

Although the word 'violating' and 'flouting' refer to the same act of not observing Grice's maxims in conversations and breaking them, which usually denotes to conversational implicature, both terms differentiate the manner in which the maxims are not followed. When someone is said to violate the maxims, the speaker does not intend to not follow the maxims. It is unintentional because the speaker could be overcome by the need to give a response, regardless of whether that is the right answer to the question posed. On the other hand, flouting the maxims refers to the speaker's deliberate action of not following the maxims due to several reasons. The speaker is very well aware that what he or she utters is not the correct or the required response but the response contains implicated messages.

In this study, the maxim flouts are focused because one of the aims of this research is to show how the participants change the way they speak when they are aware that they are being recorded. Thus, the participants intentionally do not observe the maxims, which leads to flouting of maxims. However, there will be instances in which the participants do violate the maxims rather than flouting the maxims (mostly in covertly recorded meetings) but the violations are not focused here unless they are important to explain any research finding.

1.6 Significance of Research

Grice's maxims serve a purpose when they are followed and when they are not followed (Bradely, 2000, p.43). People flout the maxims for many reasons; the reasons are normally influenced by the external factors like the interlocutors involved in a conversation and the setting in which a conversation takes place. In this study, the aim is to show the ways in which the staff of an academic institution flout the maxims during staff meetings and the reason for them to do so. These reasons would provide insights to the factors that could contribute to the flouting of maxims in a formal situation, such as staff meetings in an academic institution.

This study could also show other researchers how the participants' awareness of being observed or being recorded could actually change their natural way of speaking and behaving, which ultimately leads to questioning the extent of authenticity of the naturally-occurring data. This will heavily influence the research findings and it would be difficult to prove that the findings of their research are accurate and applicable in the functional world since the data gathered do not accurately represent the language and behaviour of participants in a natural setting. Shanmuganathan (2005, p.78) explained

that due to research ethics, it is important for the researcher to inform his or her intention of recording the participants' conversations although he or she is a non-participant observer who wants to collect naturally-occurring data. She further stated that the data gathered after the researcher informs his or her intention of recording the conversation might still not be accurate. This research will demonstrate the ways in which the participants actually change their discourse after being aware that they were being recorded. This could help researchers to discover effective ways to gather and analyse data in natural settings in future and to minimize the observer's paradox during data gathering.

1.7 Conclusion

This research aims to investigate how the participants flout the maxims in staff meetings and also to find out how they change their way of speaking in a staff meeting due to their realization of being recorded. The data will be analysed using the Cooperative Principle by Grice (1975, p.18). This will help other researchers to come up with other solutions to gather data in a more natural way rather than creating simulations using participants or alert them about the recordings.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

Hortin (2001, p.551) indicated that one would never say the same thing in the same way under different circumstances. Our choice of words is constantly influenced by our surrounding. In this research, the focus is to investigate how and why the academic staff flout Grice's maxims during meetings and how the flouts are done differently in meetings recorded overtly and in those to be recorded covertly.

2.2 Related research

Although there are many studies done based on the workplace setting and also regarding Grice's maxims, a comparative study between the data collected via overt recording and covert recording has not been done yet in Malaysia. It could not be denied that there were many papers written based on this issue but an actual research with empirical evidence to prove the differences was not found. Since the focus of this study is relatively new, the related research discussed here are those revolving around workplace studies and Grice's maxims.

2.2.1 Research about meetings

There are several studies done previously using the workplace setting in the field of pragmatics. One of it would be by Shannon (2004), which focuses on (im)politeness in meetings at workplaces. The researcher gathered data for about six months from a corporate company situated in Australia. The focus of the research was to look into speech patterns that demonstrated impoliteness during the meetings. It was found that

impoliteness was frequently demonstrated by ignoring the person who was talking in the meetings. When there was a suggestion that did not meet everybody's requirement, especially the superior's, the point would be completely ignored and the meeting would move on to another issue. There were also instances in which the staff responded very vaguely towards a bad idea proposed by one of the colleagues. Although being vague and indirect has always been associated with politeness, in this case, indirectness was interpreted as being impolite. This was illustrated by explaining the scenario in which the person who suggested the idea (which was regarded as a very bad one by other staff) was waiting for a very clear answer and in response vague answers were given to show that the company was not going to use that particular idea. When that person pressed for a clearer answer, the staff chose to refuse a response (ignoring). Shannon (2004) also managed to analyse two meetings among the staff of similar rank and found that impoliteness was highly noticeable there. For instance, when one of the staff pointed out the mistake made by another staff, both of them got into a verbal argument that was filled with abusive words and both interlocutors disregarded the setting they were in. In those meetings, when the participants dislike any issue mentioned, they just asked the one stating the issue to "shut the mouth" rather than asking politely to not to speak about it.

The researcher concluded that impoliteness was highly influenced by power. Power was identified as the reason for the staff to restrain themselves from being rude in the presence of their superiors. However, the staff were not restricted when they had meetings with all the equally ranked staff and thus, politeness was less observed in those settings. Superiors maintaining politeness throughout meetings with their subordinates was an unexpected finding because in the meetings in which only staff of

equal rank were involved, the level of impoliteness was very high. The researcher explained that it could be possibly because a polite superior could get the subordinates to speak freely in meetings and to not appear to be too intimidating in order to encourage the subordinates to express their problems or any creative ideas. Meanwhile, the researcher indicated that the staff of equal ranks were more prone to be in a "friend zone", a term used by the researcher to refer to the relationship between these staff (which was to be hostile to each other at one moment and to be friendly towards each other at the next moment), because they were very comfortable with each other. Thus, the staff in "friend zone" demonstrated impoliteness in high frequency in meetings in which the superior was absent.

Schnurr, Marra and Holmes (2007) conducted a research similar to Shannon (2004), in which they looked into (im)politeness in New Zealand workplaces focusing on the Maori and Pakeha leaders. As explained in their research, Pakehas were the majority in New Zealand while the Maoris were the minority. The researchers looked into how the Pakeha leaders and Maori leaders opened their team meetings and also how they incorporated humour in their speech. From the data collected during the team meetings from 20 different organizations, the researchers found that Pakeha leaders tend to be very informal during the meetings. They normally started the meetings by making small talk with their colleagues (which was irrelevant to the meetings) and then indicated the shift into the subject matter of the meetings by using straight to the point sentences like "Well, let us start now" or "Okay, we start". However, the Maori leaders normally started their meetings with a prayer and they started the meetings right after the prayer ended. The researchers explained that Pakeha leaders took the meetings for granted most probably because they were the majority group in New Zealand while the Maori

leaders felt the need to demonstrate their spiritual beliefs as to maintain the customs of the minority group of New Zealand.

When the data was analysed for humour incorporation in meetings, the researchers found that Pakeha leaders were more humorous and they always conveyed their rejections towards an idea through humour. However, the Maori leaders used humour very scarcely throughout their meetings. This finding was explained by saying that Maori leaders took their meetings very seriously and they might find it very inappropriate to joke about anything in a formal setting, unlike the Pakeha leaders.

Although the study indicated the differences between the leaders from two different groups, there was very little explanation on how the Maori and Pakeha leaders were being polite or impolite in the meetings. The researchers discussed the leaders' practices separately and there was no comparison made between the two groups. Besides, the way the researchers provided examples of a Pakeha leader based on only one recording is questionable since they mentioned that data was collected from over 1500 meeting from different organizations. There was no statistics given and the only example from one meeting would not be sufficient to prove that a Pakeha leader was friendlier. His friendliness could the personal characteristic of the aforementioned leader rather than the influence of the community that person comes from.

Another research involving workplace setting was done by Greg (2002). This researcher focused on staff meetings and looked into persuasion skills by the subordinates into making their superiors agree to their ideas. The data were collected in a corporate company but the type of company or its location was not disclosed in the research.

However, from the transcript of meetings provided in the appendix, it could be deduced that it was an advertising agency. Greg recorded five meetings, which were chosen selectively, and analysed the ways in which the subordinates persuaded their superiors into agreeing to their ideas. He found that the subordinates usually "agree" with their superiors first whenever their ideas were rejected. Then, they started explaining how the ideas could backfire and damage the company. This speech was carefully tailored to highlight to their superiors that if the ideas went wrong, there would be minimal damage. Then, there was a move to talking about how the ideas could benefit the company. The researcher observed that the benefits were always regarding earning high income using low financial budget to materialize the ideas. Another pattern observed by the researcher was the subordinates' perseverance in making the superior agree to their ideas. This was further explained by stating that the subordinates would be silent for a while once their ideas were dismissed by the superior but they would bring them up whenever they had the chance to do so throughout the meeting, especially when any idea from another subordinate was rejected.

2.2.2 Research on Staff Meetings in Academic Institutions

Although all the studies above were regarding staff meetings, none of them were focused on the meetings from academic institutions, which is the focus of the current research. Mirth (2004) conducted a research using meetings in an academic establishment and the focus was to look into rejections. The researcher focused on meetings held in an elementary school and analysed the patterns used for rejecting a colleague's idea or suggestion. Data were collected in six meetings, which were themed after the school's sports day. The researcher found that hedges were frequently used in rejecting any unfavourable idea or suggestion by any staff. It was also noticed that the

one to reject would be the Principal or the Vice Principal (the superiors in that setting) and the other staff only contributed reasons to reject that particular idea.

Questioning the person who suggested the unfavourable idea was also used as a lead to rejection. The staff would ask a lot of questions to their colleague who had suggested the idea, which were cleverly tailored to highlight the disadvantages of that particular idea. After answering a few questions, the person to suggest that idea would keep quiet without pursuing it further. The researcher explained that it could be because the answers helped that staff to realize the weakness in his or her idea and just abandoned it.

Indirectness was also used for rejection. When the staff did not like the issue being discussed, they tended to give indirect responses. The researcher explained this phenomenon using Brown and Levinson's Face Threatening Act (1987), which showed that indirectness was one effective way to be polite and to not humiliate the person someone was addressing. In this scenario, as rejection was a Face Threatening Act, being indirect allowed the other staff to not let down the person who suggested the unfavourable idea. The researcher concluded that although most of the staff used a combination of the patterns mentioned above to reject certain issues or ideas, the final rejection always came from the person in charge of the meetings (who was the Principal or the Vice principal of the school). The person with higher power always had the final say. The researcher also mentioned that when the final rejection came from the superior, it was very straight to the point with a clear "No". Hedges, questioning techniques or indirect statements were absent at this stage.

2.3 Research Related to Grice's Maxims

Grice's maxims have been always famous for research based on discourse analysis. The maxims are used as tools to analyse and explain the findings of the research. One of such research was done by Brumark (2003). This researcher looked into the issue of indirect speech and implication during family dinners based on gender and age group. Data was collected by video-recording 19 families during their dinner. From the recordings, the researcher found that the mothers used indirect speeches and flouted the maxims very frequently. The fathers were mostly direct and they flouted the maxims only when humour was intended. Among the children, it was noticed that the teenagers flouted the maxims to make fun of others and also to joke about something among themselves and also with their parents. However, with the younger children, parents (mostly mothers) used indirect speeches to reprimand them or to remind them of something. The researcher concluded that females and teenagers flouted the maxims very frequently for implication and indirect speeches.

The research sheds light on the way family interacts with each other according to their age group. It shows how the heads of the families chose to flout the maxims differently when they were talking to different people and also for different purposes. However, the researcher could not prove that these interactions would be the same within those involved families with the absence of the recorder. This question is raised because in the data analysis, the researcher indicated that some children and some mothers moved away from the camera to avoid themselves from being heard or recorded when they wanted to say something. The fathers were described to be mostly quiet during the dinners and again, it could not be said that they would be naturally quiet during dinners on other days. Thus, the claim saying mothers were the ones to flout the maxims and to

use indirect speeches on high frequency could be debated. Another instance to support this statement would be the researcher's description of how some mothers started scolding their children but adjusted their speech into indirect statements and ironic jokes to maintain good appearance in front of the camera. This research is a good example to show how important the current research is.

Another research based on the Gricean maxims was by Turnish and Pandey (2001). These researchers focused on gossiping among the housewives in a rural village in India. They explained their findings based on how these housewives flouted the maxims in their gossiping session. The housewives who participated in this research were from a [1]'handicraft club' who met everyday at each member's house as their venue for meeting, which was determined by rotation schedule. Data was collected from ten gatherings and the recordings were later analysed for the maxim flouts. The findings revealed that these women mostly flouted the Maxim of Relevance and Quantity. The Maxim of Relevance was flouted when they were talking about their families. In many instances, the researchers noticed that the women tended to avoid answering the direct questions about their personal lives, especially about their husbands and in-laws. An example is as follow:

WA   :   Ye pulle, on mamiyaar onnoda sanggiliye poddurunthannga
           polurukku. Kelavi athaiyum pudinggukuccha enna?

           *(Girl, your mother-in-law seemed to be wearing your chain. Did
           that old lady took that from you as well?)*

WB   :   Vanam karukkuthulle?
           (Doesn't it look like it's going to rain?)
                                                    (taken from Turnish & Pandey, 2001, p.279)

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[1] The handicraft club referred to here was not a formal club. It is normal from women from rural area in India to form informal groups and make handicrafts together, usually weaving and embroidery. The products are sold to dealers in urban areas to increase their income.

This research highlighted how women interacted with each other and the different instances that contributed to the maxim flouts. One issue to be considered was the way the researchers analysed the Maxim of Quality. Although they mentioned that the women also flouted this maxim by saying some untruthful things, they did not explain further on how those were identified as flouting the Maxim of Quality. For example:-

W5 : (name), on veedukarar erumai kalavanipochunnu polambunare, perachana theenthuccha?

(Your husband was whining over his stolen buffalo. Has the problem been solved?)

W3 : Aa

(Yes)

(taken from Turnish & Pandey,2001, p.279)

As noticed, in this example, the researchers identified W3's statement about her husband's problem was solved as flouting the Maxim of Quality. However, there was no explanation given on how the researchers came to that conclusion. There was no indication of any contradicting statement being recorded during data collection for the researchers to identify what W3 said as untrue.

Mrong (1999) conducted a study on how students apologized to their teacher and how they flouted Grice's maxims in achieving this purpose. He recorded about 10 conversations between him and his students who came to apologise for any mistake they made in school. From the transcript, it could be seen that the students apologized mainly for three reasons: for being absent for any class, for not handing in the homework on time and for making noise in the classroom. He found that students had the tendency to flout the Maxim of Quantity by offering too much information to explain why they made the mistake in question or by not giving enough information

even when the teacher asked for explanation. He also stated that students flouted the Maxim of Manner by giving some very vague answers when the teacher demanded explanation for the students' mistakes.

Mrong concluded that students flouted these maxims because it was closely related to politeness. They flouted the Maxim of Manner to give vague answers as being indirect was their way of showing respect to their teacher. Giving a detailed account of why they committed the mistakes was another way for the students to show their respect towards their teacher as well. The researcher also noticed that some students just remained quiet when the teacher asked for explanation for their mistakes. This act was labelled as flouting the Maxim of Quantity as no information was given to the teacher.

One interesting finding was that the students did not flout the Maxim of Relevance at all. Every time the teacher asked questions to the involved students, the students always gave answers related to the questions directed to them. The researcher explained this phenomenon by referring to the politeness factor as well. From the interviews with students, the researcher found that those students considered responding to their teacher's (who was a superior in this context) questions with irrelevant answers as rude. Avoiding the teacher's questions was considered impolite too. Instead, the students preferred to not say anything at all; hence, they remained silent. One issue to be noticed in this research is that the researcher only collected the data by recording the conversation involving him and his students. There is possibility that the students tailored their speech according to their closeness to this teacher. Thus, in order to have variety, it would have been better if the researcher recorded the apologetic

conversations between the students and other teachers to show that the flouting of maxims occurred in the same way in all the conversations.

A'beis (2003) analysed the English situational comedy "Friends" and "The Nanny" and looked into how Grice's maxims were flouted in order to create humour. This researcher transcribed three episodes of each programme for analysis. The findings revealed that both programmes had the same way of flouting the maxims. Mostly, the Maxim of Relevance was flouted to make the character to appear foolish and clueless, which created funny moments in both sitcoms. Besides, the Maxim of Manner was flouted by giving ambiguous statements that could be understood in many ways, mostly in a sexual context. One difference to be found between these two sitcoms was that in 'The Nanny', Maxim of Manner was flouted by using very grand and complicated speech in many instances while in 'Friends', that type of speech was not found. The researcher explained that this difference could be because of different genre of those comedies. "Friends" focused more on a group of young urban professionals trying to succeed in a big city in their career and love life while "The Nanny" was more family-oriented as it was about a 30-year-old single woman trying to look after her employer's children while looking for love.

Another difference between these two sitcoms was that in "Friends", the Maxim of Quantity was flouted by offering very little information while in "The Nanny", it was flouted by giving too much information. Again, the researcher explained that this difference was due to the characters that appeared in both sitcoms. "Friends" portrayed a group of elite people who knew the decorum of urban society while in "The Nanny", the character came from a shady area of the city and often talked too much regardless

the setting and the people she was speaking to. The findings also showed that timing was very important to flout the maxims to create humour. A'beis explained that without perfect timing, flouting the maxims would not create fun moments; it could be considered rude and offensive. This research has its strength in explaining in detail about the issues that were never noticed before when watching sitcoms like how certain characters were stereotyped to flout certain maxims all the times. One minor problem is that the researcher did not make comparison between both sitcoms to determine the similarities. If that could have been done, the information could have been used to outline a general pattern in flouting Grice's maxims in creating humour.

Irawati (1996) analysed the conversation in SCTV programme named "Dunia Bintang" and she aimed to find which maxims were observed and which maxims were flouted in the programme. The researcher used Leech's (1976, as cited in Irawati, 1996, p.32) maxims to explain the reasons for flouting Gricean maxims in that programme. The results indicated that the Maxim of Quantity was frequently flouted in the show as it was important to make the show interesting. Meanwhile, the Maxim of Relevance was flouted the least. Although this study provides the basic information about which maxims were flouted in a television programme, Irawati's explanations on why they were flouted as such were not sufficient. The reasons given were not supported by any evidence and they seemed like the researcher's perception.

Ariffin (2000) also studied how the maxims were flouted but this researcher focused on 15 radio advertisements. She used Grice's maxims to analyse the advertisements except the Maxim of Quality as it would be difficult to prove the advertisements were giving true information about the products being advertised. The findings showed that the

Maxim of Quantity was flouted the most in order to give more information about the products while the Maxim of Relevance was flouted the least. The strength of this research is that the researcher had foreseen the problem in determining the flouting of Maxim of Quality and had excluded it from the analysis to give space to other three maxims, which could be determined more accurately using the data collected. However, the reasons provided by this researcher for the flouting of maxims were assumptions and guesses from the researcher as they were not validated by any empirical evidence.

2.4 Research Related to Power and Social Distance

Although power and social distance are not the focus of this study, it is important to look into these issues as they become the recurrent reasons for participants of the abovementioned research to flout the Gricean maxims in their speech. There were many studies regarding these issues but as per the focus of this research, only studies related to workplace and academic settings will be discussed.

Malisha (2008) conducted a study to determine the request patterns among colleagues in local insurance companies. The researcher collected the data by observation and writing down the dialogues as they occurred rather than recording the speeches to avoid disturbing the participants. The analysis revealed that power played very vital roles in determining the request patterns. When a superior requested something from his or her subordinates, the requests were very direct. There was no mitigation or hedge found in the speech. However, when a subordinate requested something from the superior, the request would always start with hedges, followed by a detailed explanation about a problem and finally the request would be made to let the superior understand that the request would solve the problem (either at professional level or at personal level). The

researcher explained that power held by the superiors in the companies made them "immune" to social norms (the researcher's way of saying that the superiors did not have to observe their politeness when they talked to their subordinates). When the request was made to another colleague of same position (equal power in the company) politeness was less observed and the requests were very direct as well. The study also revealed that age difference among the colleagues had high influence on the request patterns. When the superior requested something from his or her subordinate, it would be very polite if the subordinate was someone older than the superior. Nevertheless, the elder subordinate would never make direct requests to his or her superior due to that person's position in the company. The researcher concluded that in a workplace, the position of a person demanded respect from everyone in the company regardless their age or their relationship with the superior.

Even though this study lists some reasons for the staff in a company to change the way they make requests, the researcher did not really provide an outline for the patterns used by the superior to the subordinate or by the subordinate to the superior. It would have been better if outlines were given since they could show how the patterns were different from each other and to what extent power influenced this speech act.

Kogetsidis (2010) looked into the differences in apologies produced by native English speakers and non-native speakers. The researcher collected the data via DCTs in three universities. The participants were from various faculties. The findings showed that the native speakers structured their apologies based on the situation, the matter they were apologising for and also the person they were apologising to. Thus, their apologies had different degrees of politeness incorporated to this speech act. On the other hand, the

non-native speakers maintained a high degree of politeness in their apologies regardless of the mistake, the person to receive the apology or the situation. The researcher explained that the non-native speakers observed high degree of politeness in their apologies due to the social distance. Since the non-native speakers were far from their country and remained in a very close group, they treated anyone outside their group as strangers; hence, they showed high degree of politeness in their apologies. The researcher also found that some non-native speakers who managed to mingle with the native speakers and had spent more than 2 years in their respective universities structured their apologies quite similar to the native speakers. If the researcher could show how these non-native speakers apologised among their group members, it would be easy to see the difference in the degree of politeness they were showing the outsiders.

Shaheed (2004) also conducted a research about how reprimands were given in a publishing house. The researcher collected data via direct observation and recorded the patterns that occurred in the office. The research revealed that direct and strong reprimands were used by the staff only when they were talking to another staff of equal status. The superior, who had the higher power, always used indirect strategies to point out the mistakes of his or her subordinates. The researcher used Brown and Levinson's (1987, as cited in Shaheed, 2004, p.56) politeness model to explain the results of the study. Since reprimanding could make the listener lose his or her face, it was important for the speaker to structure the speech with appropriate words and with a certain degree of politeness. When a superior wanted to reprimand the subordinate, direct reprimands would jeopardize the work relationship between them and it would seem like the superior imposed power on the subordinate. On the other hand, staff of equal status did

not have to worry about offending the listener since they could not impose power on each other. Shaheed also found that social distance was important in giving reprimands as well. It was noticed that among the staff of equal status, a variety of strategies were used in giving reprimands based on the people involved. When the listener and the speaker had small social distance (close relationship), the reprimands were more direct. If the speaker had a big social distance (not very close to each other), mitigation devices like hedges and explanations were used in reprimands.

Based on the studies mentioned above, it is evident that power and social distance are important in structuring one's speech, especially at workplace. Although the current research does not look into the extent to which power and social distance can make the staff alter their speech in staff meetings, the possibility of these two issues being the reasons for the staff to flout the maxims in the meetings could not be overlooked.

2.5 Criticisms of the Gricean Maxims

Despite being used by many researchers as framework for data analysis, Grice's maxims are not without any criticisms. Many linguists have challenged the theory and some even proposed modification for the theory so that becomes more applicable in research.

Keenan (1976) related Grice's maxims to language universality and stated that Cooperative Principle (CP) is not universal. He cited the Malagasy community as example. This community achieves conversational cooperation by not sharing enough information. They are reluctant to share the information they know which could lead to losing their face by admitting the truth. In order to maintain their pride, the Malagasies

deliberately withhold information by giving vague answers when they are questioned. They also consider having information as a form of pride and they deliberately withhold information to not lose the pride; from Gricean point of view, they always flout the Maxim of Quantity. So, Keenan argued that in this context, Maxim of Quantity is not applicable to explain the conversational practice of this community.

Wierzbicka (2002, p.1191) criticized that rules as "avoid obscurity" and "say no more than required" were statements produced by an Anglo-American (in reference to Paul Grice) compared to a linguist who wanted to depict the natural logic of human communication. She stated that the maxims were supposed to produce "perfect responses" in communication, where the speaker and the listener would be very clear of what they were speaking about. She also stated that these maxims would not be able to explain the conversational practice in cross-cultural perspective. David (2009) agreed with Wierzbicka's argument by putting forth Asian culture as an example, in which indirectness is used as a form to express politeness. If this practice is to be explained using the maxims, this community would be flouting the Maxim of Manner frequently.

Makree (2008, as cited in David, 2009, p.49) stated that maxim flouts are very difficult to be identified. This linguist used the dialogue below to illustrate his argument.

John   :   Are you done yet?

Meredith :   Well, let's see, I've had to deal with seven near-catastrophic systems failures in the last four hours, Elizabeth dragged me to four different useless meetings, and someone replaced my regular coffee with decaf, so I'm only just getting caffeine in my system an I still have to track down whoever did it and slowly eviscerate them, which is a little higher on my to-do list at the moment than fixing your stupid computer, so no, no, I'm not done yet, actually.

John   :   Jeez, a simple "no" would have sufficed.

(taken from David,2009, p.49)

Makree explained that in the conversation above, more than one maxim was flouted. When Meredith gave all the irrelevant details about what she had gone through for the day before giving John an answer, she flouted the Maxim of Relevance. As she offered more information than required by John, she flouted the Maxim of Quantity as well. As Meredith's answer was unnecessarily prolix to John's question, she flouted the Maxim of Manner. The way she said she would kill the person who switched her coffee and how she exaggerated that decaf coffee almost failed her bodily functions show that Meredith flouted the Maxim of Quality. Makree argued that determining which maxim is being flouted in a conversation is difficult since Grice (1975) only offered general guidelines to identify the maxims. The guidelines would not be able to define the type of maxim being flouted in a conversation clearly because human communication is not solely based on words. There are other internal and external factors to influence the human interaction, which Grice's maxims fail to highlight.

Leech (1983, p.13) said that following Grice's maxims would become a barrier in using a language. He mentioned the maxims could be applied differently in different contexts. However, to observe all of them every time would not be practical. He also stated that there is no principle that could be absolutely applied to natural human communication. Brown and Levinson (1987) came up with categories to explain the flouting of maxims: for instance, when people flout the Maxim of Quality, it would be to create verbal irony and Maxim of Relevance is flouted to give hints or for presuppositions.

Harnish (1991, p.24) suggested that the Maxim of Quantity and Quality are merged into one because he argued that a statement is stronger when it gives enough information and the information is true. Gunarwan (1994, p.19) proposed the 'tolerant principle', a

principle applicable to Javanese community that highlights modesty, homage, awareness of one's place and thoughtfulness. He claimed that by adding this principle, Grice's Cooperative Principle will become complete.

Despite inviting many criticisms and suggestions for improvement, it could not be ignored that Gricean maxims helped the linguists see general patterns that emerged in human conversations. Some used the maxims to explain human communication and some challenged the maxims by stating that those rules are insufficient to explain the complexity of human communication. Either way, the maxims play a vital role in discourse analysis.

This research does not intend to prove or challenge the maxims. The maxims are only used as a framework to analyse the collected data.

2.6 Observer's Paradox

As one of the aims of the current research is to make comparison between data collected via overt recording and the one collected by covert recording, it is important to address the recent thoughts in academic world about the participants' awareness of being observed and recorded.

As stated in Chapter One, 'observer's paradox' is a term coined by Labov (1972, p.30), who mentioned that the data collected could be not accurate if the researcher informed the participant(s) before he or she starts recording that particular conversation. Although the notion was put forth many years ago, this still remains as a major downside in the research world. This issue was addressed in a paper written by Shanmuganathan (2005)

about the dilemmas faced by a researcher due to research ethics. She stated that there is a high possibility for the participants of a research to "play act" their conversations when they know that they are being recorded by the researcher. This prevents the researcher from collecting a naturally-occurring authentic data as the recorded conversation is not accurate or natural anymore. This claim is further substantiated by the researcher by referring to "British National Corpus", a research carried out in Lancaster University, as an example. The research aimed to collect natural language but the participants changed the way they spoke due to the influence of their concern to maintain good image in the recordings. Another example given was about a lawyer who could not talk much during recordings although she was known as a very talkative lady. Some participants were said to be "tongue tied" and preferred to remain silent throughout the recordings.

Tatton (2008, p.54) also expressed her concern regarding collecting "real" data for her research about strategies employed in apologies by native speakers of English and non-native speakers. Initially, data was collected by observing and recording daily conversations occurred but the researcher questioned the authenticity of that data since the participants might resort to speaking politely in "correct" ways instead of being natural due to their knowledge of their conversations being observed and recorded. However, this researcher finally resorted to Discourse Completion Task (DCT) in order to collect data for her research. She also had some simulated instances that required the participants of this study to re-enact how they would converse, focusing on the act of apologizing, if the similar situations occurred in their real life. After questioning the truth regarding her data collected through observations and recordings, her solution to

use DCT and simulations to collect data seem ironic as these methods do not ensure authentic data collection any more than observations could.

Wilma (2009, p.27) talked about how interviews became unreliable because the participants knew they were being recorded. She shared her experience of failure in collecting authentic data through interviews for her study about abused women as the interviewees kept quiet most of the time instead of answering the questions. They frequently glanced at the recorder when they were talking as well. Wilma stated that some interviewees started their sentences in one way but restructured their sentences after long pauses. Hence, the truth of information gathered became highly questionable since the interviewees demonstrated their tendency to withhold or modify the truth.

As mentioned above, what these researchers expressed in their papers is undeniable. One thing to be noticed here is that these researchers were from different fields: the researchers mentioned formerly were conducting linguistic researches and the latter a psychological research. Thus, this issue goes beyond every field of research. When the participants of a research know that their words are being recorded, they tend to not behave as they normally do. When one is being observed, that person becomes very conscious about every movement (s)he makes until everything that the person does will be what the person does not do under normal circumstances (Ulugbek, 1992, p.61). When the participants monitor and modify their language to suit what they think is normal for the world around them instead of realizing that their usual language is part of the world, the task of collecting authentic data becomes almost impossible.

2.7 Conclusion

The current study is different from the previous studies mentioned above because it incorporates all the three subjects mentioned above in one study: collecting data from staff meetings, analyzing the flouting of maxims and looking at observer's paradox. Another feature to differentiate this study would be the reasons that would be given for flouting the maxims during the meetings. Unlike the studies mentioned above, the reasons would be obtained via interviewing the participants rather than deducing them from the collected data. Finally, this study also looks into observer's paradox by highlighting the differences in a person's speech when that person is aware of the recording and when that person's speech is recorded covertly.

Chapter Three

Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter explains the methodology of this study. It discusses the background of the participants and methods used to collect data for the research. It also outlines the procedure for carrying out this research. The way in which collected data would be analysed is also included in this chapter.

3.2 The Research

This is a qualitative research. It looks into three issues: how the participants flout the Grice's maxims during meetings, why they flout the maxims as such and how they change the way they speak when they know the meetings are recorded. So, the analysis requires more explanation on the structures used to flout the maxims and the reasons for their actions. Thus, the research deals with detailed explanations of the findings since numerical representations of data could not provide much explanation regarding the results. Hence, this research is qualitative.

3.3 Participants of the Research

As this research focuses on the staff meetings, the meetings were limited to staff meetings held in three different academic establishments, which deal with language learning and teaching: Institute A, a local private university; Institute B, a local private college and finally Institute C, a language centre. The participants were the academic staff of the respective institutes and they vary from Professor to tutors in their respective institutes. As this research is about naturally-occurring data, none of the participants

were selected by the researcher. The participants of this research were the staff who were present for the meetings when the meetings were recorded for data collection.

3.4 Research Instruments

In order to collect data for this research, the researcher used an Apple iPod. The recordings were later transferred to computer in MP3 format to be transcribed for analysis. Semi structured interviews were used to collect data to enable the researcher to find the reasons for the staff to flout the maxims. The interviews were done after recording all the meetings for data collection. This was to avoid the participants from realising that they were recorded covertly before the data collection completed. If the participants were alert of covert recording, it might be a barrier to collect data in the following meetings as the participants would be suspicious that the meeting might be recorded and that would influence the way they speak in the meetings.

The interviewees were selected by the researcher since some findings needed further clarification from the source of data and it could only be achieved by interviews. During the interviews, the clips of recording of the staff meeting (regarding which the participants were questioned) were played to refresh their memory.

3.5 Pilot Study

It is important to mention that during the pilot study of this research, the aim was not to compare the differences in meetings caused by the awareness of participants being recorded for data. It was only focusing on the ways in which the staff violated or flouted the maxims in meetings. However, the researcher noticed that the staff refused to speak during the meetings whenever they knew that they were being recorded. Pre-designed

settings were considered as well but that would not be similar to naturally-occurring data. Thus, one recording was done covertly and when the data was compared to a previously recorded data (overt recording), it was found that there was a need to pursue the research in order to find the differences between different circumstances in data recordings. In contrast to initial goal of looking into both violations and flouting of maxims, the focus was given to flouting of maxims as this research wants to show how the participants deliberately change the way they speak in meetings during overt recordings of the meetings.

The questions for semi structured interviews were piloted by interviewing three staff who attended the meetings but they were not required for the interviews. Since all the three participants could understand the questions clearly and were able to give relevant responses, the questions were maintained for data collection.

3.6 Research Procedure

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                    ┌─────────────────────┐
                    │  Preliminary study  │
                    └─────────────────────┘
                              ↓
                    ┌─────────────────────┐
                    │ Get permission to   │
                    │ record the meetings │
                    └─────────────────────┘
                              ↓
                    ┌─────────────────────┐
                    │ Record the selected │
                    │     meetings        │
                    └─────────────────────┘
                              ↓
                    ┌─────────────────────┐
                    │ Transcribe the      │
                    │   recordings        │
                    └─────────────────────┘
                              ↓
                    ┌─────────────────────┐
                    │ Analyse the         │
                    │   transcripts       │
                    └─────────────────────┘
                              ↓
                    ┌─────────────────────┐
                    │ Semi structured     │
                    │ interviews after    │
                    │ obtaining           │
                    │ preliminary findings│
                    └─────────────────────┘
                              ↓
                    ┌─────────────────────┐
                    │ Analysis and        │
                    │   findings          │
                    └─────────────────────┘
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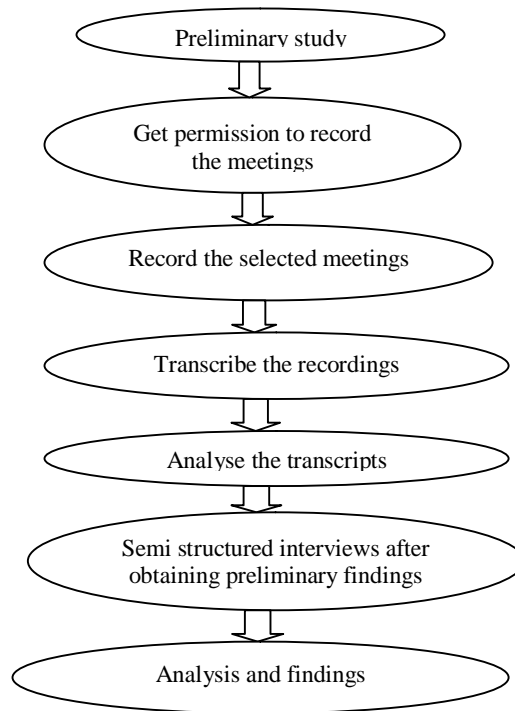
Figure 3.1 Research Procedure

The flow chart above summarizes the procedure of collecting and analysing data for this research. The researcher began the research by conducting a preliminary study at Institute A. Two meetings were recorded: the first meeting was recorded overtly and the second meeting was recorded covertly. The analysis showed that the staff did flout the maxims and the maxims were flouted differently when they knew that they were being recorded. Once it was found that the research could be continued as there was a need to answer the research questions, the research was started by getting permission from all the three institutes to record their staff meetings. Taking Schnurr, Mara and Holmes' (2007) research into consideration (see Chapter Two, page 14), the researcher looked into the meetings from three institutes; this helps the researcher to see consistent patterns in all the three institutes. If the recordings were from one institute using the same people, there would be questions about different results if the same research was

done at different institutions. By using the meetings from three different institutions that have no relation to one another, the reliability of the results could be assured. Permission was granted in all the institutes with the reminder of keeping the institutes' and the staff's names anonymous in the report. It is vital to explain that the permission came from the top management of the institutes selected for data collection for this study and these people were not involved in the meetings recorded for data collection. After that, appropriate meetings were identified to enable the researcher to collect the data. The recordings came from only the meetings by academic staff discussing academic issues and not from administrative meetings. It was to uniform the main theme of the meetings in all institutes as different issues may bring different outcomes.

In each institute, two meetings were recorded. The researcher made sure that both meetings occurred one after another so that the matters discussed in the former meeting would be discussed again under 'arising matters' in the latter meeting. It was done in this manner to enable the researcher to identify how the participants changed the ways in which they conveyed the same issue in the presence and absence of the researcher. The researcher chose the first meeting of each institute for overt recording while the covert recording was done for the second meeting. So, Meetings 1A, 3B and 5C were recorded overtly while Meetings 2A, 4B and 6C were recorded covertly.

Institute A, B and C were places where the researcher was attached to and the participants were familiar with the researcher. If a completely new institute was chosen for data collection, the presence of a new person (the researcher) in meetings might lead to many complications such as causing extreme discomfort to the participants to speak in front of a stranger. Another point to be highlighted is that the researcher was present

in all the meetings which were recorded overtly. Before the meetings started, all the participants were informed that the meeting would be recorded (which the staff agreed to). For the second meeting, the researcher did not attend the meeting but planted the recorder in the meeting room (with the permission of the authority of all the institutes involved in the research). In Institute A, the recorder was given to the secretary of the faculty, who was not involved in the meeting but whose presence was required to take the minutes of meeting. In Institute B and C, the recorder was given to the clerks of the respective institutes as they were the ones in charge of taking the minutes of meeting and they were not involved in the discussions. The ones to help the researcher to do the covert recordings during the meetings were given tokens as appreciation.

It was vital for the researcher to be absent from the meeting room since the participants of both meetings in each institute were mostly the same people and their knowledge of the previous meeting being recorded by the researcher might give rise to the suspicion of the second meeting being recorded as well. With the absence of the researcher, there was a high possibility for the participants to conduct the meeting as usual without any "staged" conversations. The participants were informed of the covert recordings after the data collection was completed.

After data collection, all the recordings were transcribed. For transcription, Jefferson's (1984, p.84) transcript notations were adapted by incorporating some notes from Tsui's (1994, p.69) transcript notations. The adaptation was important to capture a few details like the tone indicators, which were not covered by Jefferson's transcript notations. The transcripts were later analysed using Grice's (1975, p.18) conversation maxims. After obtaining preliminary findings, semi-structured interviews were carried out with

specific participants and the data from the interviews were analysed to identify the reasons for the participants to flout these maxims during meetings. Then analysis was carried out to investigate how the participants flouted the maxims differently when they knew that they were being recorded.

3.7 Using Grice's Conversation Maxims

As mentioned above, this research uses Grice's (1975, p.18) conversational maxims as the framework for the research. Philosopher Kent Bach (2001) mentioned the following regarding the maxims:

> *"…[W]e need first to get clear on the character of Grice's maxims. They are not sociological generalizations about speech, nor they are moral prescriptions or proscriptions on what to say or communicate. Although Grice presented them in the form of guidelines for how to communicate successfully, I think they are better construed as presumptions about utterances, presumptions that we as listeners rely on and as speakers exploit." (Bach, 2001, p.17).*

As explained by Bach, the maxims are not to be taken as the law of conversation but to regard them as presumption of how speakers speak and how the listeners perceive the speakers' messages. One point to be mentioned about Grice's maxims is that unlike other linguists to put forth their frameworks for discourse and to indicate the notion of people following those frameworks, Grice anticipated that his maxims might not be observed at certain occasions; hence, he put forth the notion of flouting the maxims. There were many disputes in the field of linguistics about following or not following

these maxims in social conversations but it is undeniable that these maxims serve as guidelines for successful communication. Not following the maxims hold certain reason for those to flout them: mainly the flouts are influenced by power, setting, relationship, and the topic of discussion between the speaker and the listener.

The researcher used these maxims to predict the supposed answers for the questions asked during the meetings and when the answers given flouted the maxims, the researcher could look into the reasons for those flouts and figure out if the participants' knowledge about meeting being recorded had served as the trigger for those flouts.

3.7.1 Coding the Data

In order to identify the flouts of the maxims, the marker of maxim flouts by Bing (2001) was used. This researcher compiled the ideas from various linguists to form the list of marker of maxim flouts. According to the list by Bing, flouts of maxims can be "indicated by the presence of hedging (Yule, 1996 in Bing, 2001, p.32), indirectness (Finegan et. al, 1992 as cited in Bing, 2001, p.33), open answer (Tubbs and Moss, 1996 as cited in Bing, 2001, p34) and detailed elements (van Djik, 1998 as cited in Bing, 2001, p.36)".

3.7.1.1 Hedging

Yule (1996 in Bing, 2001, p.32) explained that the term hedging describes words that tend to make things "more or less fuzzy". The table below lists the hedging markers suggested by Yule.

Table 3.1 Hedging Markers by Yule (1996)

Maxim	Hedging Markers
Quantity	1. As you probably know 2. So, to cut a long story short 3. I won't bore you with all the details, etc.
Quality	1. As far as I know 2. I may be mistaken 3. I'm not sure if this is right, I guess, etc
Relation	1. I don't know if this is important 2. This may sound like a dumb question 3. Not to change the subject, etc.
Manner	1. Oh, by the way 2. Anyway 3. Well, anyway 4. This maybe a bit confused 5. I'm not sure if this makes sense 6. I don't know if this is clear at all, etc.

3.7.1.2 Indirectness

Brown and Levinson (1987) stated that directness and indirectness of a response is highly related to politeness. Indirectness is often used to express politeness in many cultures. It could also be used to create phenomena like irony, understatement and metaphor. Thomas (1995, p.11) claimed that not all indirectness in speech is intentional. Some are due to linguistic inadequacy. When the speaker does not know how to explain a certain matter in a particular language, circumlocution is used for explanation and this is a form of indirectness too.

Finegan et. al (1992 as cited in Bing, 2001, p.33) listed four characteristics of indirect speech acts and these characteristics will be used as the markers to identify flout of maxims in this research. The characteristics are as listed below:

1. Indirect speech acts violated at least one maxim of the cooperative principle.

2. Literal meaning of an indirect speech differs from its intended meaning.

3. Hearers and readers identify speech acts by assuming that the interlocutor is following the cooperative principle.

4. As soon as they identified an indirect speech act, hearers and readers identify its intended meaning with the help of the knowledge of the context and of the world around them.

3.7.1.3 Open Answer

Tubbs and Moss (1996 as cited in Bing, 2001, p.34) suggested that answers could be categorised into two: open answers and closed answers. Open answers could be further divided into irrelevant answers, inaccurate answers and over-verbalised answers. Each of them flouts a maxim: irrelevant answers flout the Maxim of Relevance, inaccurate answers flout the Maxim of Quality and over-verbalised answers flout the Maxim of Quantity.

Closed answers can be categorised into two: partial answers and no answer. Both categories flout the Maxim of Quantity as they give less or no information.

3.7.1.4 Detailed Element

Van Djik (1998 as cited in Bing, 2001, p.36) stated that a speaker tends to give too much information if that information would help the speaker to portray a positive image. On contrary, if the information could threaten the speaker, then it would be offered less in speech or not at all. Both actions, however, flout the Maxim of Quantity.

The markers of maxim flouts mentioned above are only used as guideline in coding the data to identify the flouts. Thus, not all the markers could be identified in the data collected for this research and not all the markers are absolute in showing the flout of one maxim. Some markers might be listed here to indicate a particular maxim but there is always a possibility for that same marker to indicate a flout of another maxim, which is not listed here.

3.7.2 Nonverbal Cues

Nonverbal communication is communication without spoken or written words (Adler & Rodmen, 1991, p.12). In this study, nonverbal cues also play an important role in identifying flouting of maxims in the meetings. Adler & Rodmen (1991) suggested nine nonverbal cues to identify the maxim flouts but only three would be used to code data in this research. The three nonverbal cues are as explained below.

3.7.2.1 Gestures

Gestures are intentional emblems (Adler & Rodmen, 1991, p.14). For instance, showing thumbs up to congratulate someone or waving hands to grab someone's attention are gestures which a person performs to achieve a goal and he or she is aware of the gestures. However, there are many gestures performed subconsciously by a person, which conveys messages to people around him or her. As an example, when a superior asks his or her subordinate a question and the subordinate starts fidgeting instead of answering the question, it shows that the subordinate is reluctant to answer due to a certain reason. When the staff start to look at their watch constantly in a meeting, that shows that the meeting is exceeding the time limit or the staff have other things to

attend to. In this research, the staff's gestures would indicate if they were comfortable in answering questions asked to them in the meetings and it would enable the researcher to identify if the staff have flouted the maxims.

3.7.2.2 Face and Eyes

Facial expressions and eyes are known to communicate more than what a person says in words (Adler & Rodmen, 1991, p.15). For example, if a subordinate refuses to look at his or her superior when the superior asks him or her a question, it indicates that the subordinate refuses to answer that particular question and he or she is guilty for avoiding the question since the person is avoiding eye contact with the superior. Facial reactions like being surprised or angry are also important in communication. In this research, the facial expressions and eye movements would enable the researcher to identify the maxim flouts.

3.7.2.3 Voice

Voice communicates through its tone, pitch, volume, length of pauses and disfluencies like fillers and stammers (Adler & Rodmen, 1991, p.15). When a person pauses for a long time, that could be because he or she is thinking of what to say or how to say the message in a way intended by the speaker. High tone usually reflects excitement or anger and low tone shows disappointment or reluctance to obey instructions. In this study, the researcher would focus on these voice features to identify if the staff were flouting the maxims.

3.8 Confidentiality

As stated previously, the data for this study was collected from staff meetings with the permission of each institute involved in this study. However, the researcher could not provide the transcripts of complete recordings since there were many confidential matters discussed. Thus, the transcripts attached in the appendix had many parts deleted from them and all the names were withheld.

There would be no transcripts for the interviews conducted as well since the interviewees did not allow the researcher to record the interview. However, the researcher was allowed to take notes during the interviews. Since interviews were only to identify reasons for flouts of the maxims, not recording the interviews did not affect the study negatively.

3.9 Conclusion

As mentioned above, this chapter highlighted the ways in which this research was done by explaining how the data was collected and analysed. It also provided the rationale for using Grice's maxims as the theoretical framework for data analysis as well as the marker of maxim flouts (Bing, 2001) and nonverbal cues (Adler & Rodmen, 1991) used to code data. The results found from analysis will be provided in the following chapter.

Chapter Four

Analysis and Findings

4.1 Introduction

Goston (1966 as cited in Thomas, 1995, p.21) once quoted that people always "stage" their image. This quote is very relevant to the focus of this study, which looks into how people change the way they speak when they are being observed in addition to focusing on the flouting of maxims in staff meetings. This chapter presents the analysis of data recorded in the staff meetings in academic establishments. As mentioned in Chapter 3, the data was collected by recording six staff meetings. The meetings were categorized into three groups: Institute A (meeting 1A and 2A), Institute B (meeting 3B and 4B) and Institute C (meeting 5C and 6C). In meetings 1A, 3B and 5C, the recording was done overtly while in meetings 2A, 4B and 6C, the recording was done covertly. As mentioned in Chapter Three, Institute A is local private university, Institute B is a local private college and Institute C is a language centre. The meetings were transcribed and analysed to answer the research questions and thus, both the analysis and the findings will be explained according to the respective questions.

4.2 a) How do the participants flout the maxims during the staff meetings?

b) Why do the staff flout the maxims during staff meetings?

Since the ways in which the flouts were done and the reasons for flouting the maxims are very closely related, these two questions were analysed and answered simultaneously. Most of the examples given here are taken from meetings 2A, 4B and 6C (in which recording were done covertly) to not give rise to the question of participants manipulating their speech due to the presence of the researcher. Generally,

all the four maxims were flouted by the participants during their speech in meeting. The details are as follow:-

4.2.1 Maxim of Relevance

This maxim was flouted when the issues discussed became too sensitive for the person to whom the questions were being directed to. Answers given to those questions were irrelevant and most of the time, the answers did not even implicate other meanings; they were statements that would direct the focus to other issues. In other words, the questions were avoided. Questions were even responded with counter-questions. In other situations, the staff even used idiomatic expressions as their response, which did not answer the questions directed to them but those expressions did highlight their opinions regarding the questions directed to them. These findings are illustrated in the following excerpts taken from the transcripts.

4.2.1.1 Avoiding the question

Excerpt 1 (Meeting 2A)

(S1A is the superior and S3A is the subordinate. S1A wants updates about the foreign club opened for the students, of which S3A is in charge. S1A has asked for the report previously but S3A has failed to give it to S1A. S1A is asking about it again in the meeting)

S1A   :   Okay. How – how about ah the foreign club? Is there =
                                                                                  [
S3A   :   Club?
S1A   :   = any development? We've been WAITing long ((laughs))
S3A   :   Err – {There are} – um – I received some COMPLAINTS about staff ah being late.

In the excerpt above, it is evident that the answer given by S3A did not explain the latest developments with the club, which was requested by S1A. From the way S1A said that they had been waiting for a long time for S3A to give the progress report

regarding the foreign club, it could be said that S3A faced some problems with that matter and that person was being held responsible for any problem to occur with the club. From the way S3A hesitated to answer (which was demonstrated by fillers like "Err" and "uhm" as well as abandoning the initial response to construct a new one), S3A was not comfortable answering that question. Thus, S3A replied to the question by shifting the focus of the meeting to another matter, which was about the complaints made against the staff who were not punctual for work. This situation is similar to the example highlighted by Turnish and Pandey (2001) in their study about women in villages in India (as mentioned in Chapter Two). In that study, the researchers did state that those women changed the topic of their conversation when the questions directed to them became too personal or too uncomfortable to talk about. They had the tendency to divert the focus to something else to avoid from answering the questions, and by doing that, they flouted the Maxim of Relevance. In this study, S3A could be said to encounter the same situation as those women in the abovementioned research.

4.2.1.2 Question responded with counter-question

Excerpt 2 (Meeting 2A)

(S4A is in charge of the students from Group 1. He requests permission from S2A, who is the superior, to allow the students to participate in an upcoming event organized by the institution)

S4A : Group 1 students – uhm – {they} – Group 1students want to joint the (type of event). Err – (name of the event)?
S2A : S5A, don't we eh ((2 sec)) what – yeah. Too many from Group 2 right? It's okay. I kno:w.

This excerpt shows the way S2A gave an irrelevant answer to S4A's question. Although the question was to ask permission to let the students from Group 1 to attend the theatre, S2A's rhetorical question to S5A, who was in charge of the students from Group 2,

about the number of students in Group 2 indicates that S4A's request was denied due to the large number of students in Group 2. Here, the maxim was flouted by answering the question with a counter-question which would imply to S4A that his request was not accepted. Besides, S2A did not even give chance to S5A to answer his questions. It shows that S2A clearly posed to question to S5A to let S4A know that he was not allowed to bring his students. In Chapter Two, under Mirth's (2004) research about how ideas were rejected in school meetings, he mentioned that the principal asked the person who suggested the idea a few questions that would eventually lead to the one to come up with the idea to keep quiet after realizing the weakness of his or her idea. In this excerpt, S2A used the same technique. The only difference was that instead of asking questions to S4A, S2A just asked S5A about the number of students in Group 2 to make S4A realize that there would not be enough space to allow the students from Group 1 to attend the event. In order to achieve this purpose, S2A flouted the Maxim of Relevance.

4.2.1.3 Using idiomatic expressions

Excerpt 3 (Meeting 4B)

(S1B is the superior and S5B is the subordinate. Students lodged a complaint against S5B and this is not the first time for S1B to receive such a complaint regarding S5B. S1B demands to know why S5B repeats the same mistake)

S1B : S5B, tell me. HO:W you manage to do THA:T mistake again? Students coming to see me – parents- I don't knowlah. {Why} ((3 sec)) uhm – you tell me.
S5B : ((21 sec)) Hmm ((24 secs)). Just give a dog a bad name.
S1B : ((13 secs)) ((clearing throat)) {Just} – Just don't repeat the mistake.
S5B : ((silence))

This excerpt shows how the Maxim of Relevance could be flouted by giving a figurative answer. S1B was questioning S5B about the mistake S5B made in his work and instead of offering an explanation to defend himself, S5B chose to give an

idiomatic expression. The expression implies that since S5B made the mistake once, it would be pointless for him to respond to S1B's demand for explanation; from the way S5B maintained his silence instead of defending his actions, it could be concluded that S5B deliberately gave that idiomatic expression to emphasise the fact that nobody would believe in his explanation if he were to give any. S5B's act of flouting the Maxim of Relevance when he responded to his superior's direct question contradicts the finding by Mrong (1999, p.112), who stated that the subordinates (or students who participated in his research) did not flout the Maxim of Relevance when they were responding to the questions from their superior (the teacher) (see Chapter Two). During the interview, S5B stated that he was not intimidated by S1B and S1B's position because S5B knew S1B even before S1B was promoted to a higher post. S5B also mentioned that S1B was very new to the superior post. Thus, S5B used idiomatic expression to express his refusal to offer explanation. The choice of expression (which includes the word 'dog') showed his frustration towards the incident as well. His long pauses before responding to the superior's questions also played the part here to show that he was not very comfortable in answering this question. In the interview, S5B explained that he indeed was not comfortable to answer that question in front of the other staff. Thus, he concluded his feelings and his discomfort in one idiomatic expression, which flouted the Maxim of Relevance.

4.2.2 Maxim of Manner

The Maxim of Manner refers to "the use of brevity and directness in the conversation, without verbose, ambiguous or unnecessary excessive language" (Baskaran, 2005, p.42). In the meetings, this maxim was flouted by either giving vague or indirect answers when the staff realized that they might have acted against the superior's

instructions and there was need to defend their actions. Ambiguous answers were also given to mislead those to ask the questions. The staff also became ambiguous when they were reluctant to point to the person who made some mistakes in their work. At times, this maxim was flouted to create humour during the meeting. These are shown in the excerpts below.

4.2.2.1 Indirect speech

Excerpt 4 (Meeting 4B)

(S1B is the superior and S3B is the subordinate. S1B wants to know if S3B is giving notes to the students online as the institute does not allow the staff to use Internet to share the notes to avoid outsiders from getting the notes).

```
S1B  :   S3B, do you give notes online =
                              [
S3B  :                           Me?
S1B  :   = for your lessons? – Yes, you.
S3B  :   Ummm. (( 12 secs)). I photostat most of the notes, S1B. {Online} – err – I
         ask the students to photostat =
                         [
S1B  :                     no online notes?
S3B  :   = my notes. (( 3 secs)) – err – not really. But online is easier, S1B. Very fast.
         So to save time, I e-mail the notes.
```

In this example, it could be noticed that S3B did not say that she gave the notes online straight away. First, she mentioned that she also photocopied "most" of the notes and finally admitted that she gave the notes online to save time and also because it was convenient. Here, S3B flouted the Maxim of Manner by not giving a direct answer of "yes" but instead, chose to give a long and indirect answer. At one instance, S3B actually mentioned something about 'online' but then discontinued that statement. During the interview, S3B stated that it was her mistake to post the notes online although it was against the institution's rule and admitting the mistake without any defence would earn her a reprimand from her superior; so, cushioning the impact by mentioning something that could make S3B's mistake minor could save her from being

scolded in front of the other staff. Thus, it was safer for her to use this indirect approach. The way S3B flouted the maxim was very similar to the findings in research by Greg (2002). Greg mentioned that once the staff's ideas were rejected, they agreed to the superior's decision and then listed all the benefits that could be gained from their rejected ideas. Here, S3B followed the strategy of stating the benefit of sharing notes via e-mails after she had denied that she did not disobey the department's rule.

4.2.2.2 Vague answers

Excerpt 5 (Meeting 6C)

(S3C is responsible to promote the institution's library to the students. S3C is supposed to increase the number within 6 months. S1C, who is S3C's superior, wants to know if S3C has succeeded in the task given to him).

S1C : Students use the library more now. ((1 sec)) Yes?
S3C : Uhm – ((8 secs)) that. //$_{\text{MAYBE}}$//.

S3C's answer to S1C's question was very vague. By saying "maybe", S3C could indicate that there was increase in the number of students to use the library or there was no change. This could obscure S1C's understanding since there was no specific answer. His low tone in saying "Maybe" also indicates that S3C was either unsure of what to say or he did not want to say anything in the meeting in front of the staff. During the interview, S3C clarified that "maybe" was the best way for him to answer since he did not have any news regarding the number of students. As he had not looked into this matter prior to the meeting as instructed, the only way to save his face was by giving vague answers rather than admitting that he had no idea of the progress. This action could be explained by Brown and Levinson's Face Threatening Act (1987), a theory that suggests that certain speech acts like self-humiliation and confession can threaten the face of a speaker. In this situation, S3C felt threatened and he was afraid of the

humiliation he would have to go through. Thus, he flouted the Maxim of Manner to save his face.

4.2.2.3 Ambiguous responses

Excerpt 6 (Meeting 2A)

(The institute will be examined by people from an organization. S6A is responsible to collect the subject files from the staff to be shown to those people later for inspection. S2A is asking if everybody has submitted the files.)

S2A : (name of an organization) is coming next week right? S6A, are the files in?
S6A : S2A, all cooperate =
               [
S2A :   That's good.
S6A : = well. They know – uhm – they know about the files.
S2A : Good then.

In this excerpt, the answer given by S6A did not intend to indicate that the staff had

handed in the files. S6A wanted to hint that the staff knew their responsibility but they

failed to complete and submit the files anyway. However, since S6A's response was

ambiguous, S2A understood the answer as there was no problem with file collection and

moved on to discuss the next issue. When asked for the reason for ambiguous answer

during the interview, S6A mentioned that her respect for her colleagues and the need to

maintain good relationship with everyone prompted her to not say anything to S2A. If

she explicitly told S2A that many staff did not hand in the files, especially when the

staff involved were sitting in the same room, it might have created problems for her.

Thus, she gave an indirect answer which led to S2A's misunderstanding. S6A also

explained that her answer was also meant as a reminder to all the staff who had not

handed in the file. She wanted to show them that she could bring the matter to S2A at

anytime but she would give the staff chance to complete the files. Thus, S6A's flout

was intended not to let S2A know about the staff's failure in following instructions to

submit the files as well as to warn the staff to complete the task given to them. In

Mirth's (2004) study, the findings showed that the participants flouted the Maxim of Manner as this speech act was a Face Threatening Act (Brown & Levinson, 1987). In this excerpt, S6A flouted the Maxim of Manner for the same reason. In order to not threaten her colleagues' face (the hearers), she did not give a clear answer to S2A's question.

4.2.2.4 Using prolixity

Excerpt 7 (Meeting 6C)

(S5C is responsible in ordering lunch for an upcoming event. S1C wants to know the menu S5C has decided. S1C is the superior and S5C is the subordinate but both of them are peers and are very close to each other.)

S1C : S5C, you ordered – eh – lunch for the event right? What did you order?
S5C : Only the dish fit for Go:ds – crispy tender chicken fried to perfection to accompany milky rice and fried peanuts. Err – eggs sunny side up to elevate our mood =
　　　[
S1C :　((laugh)) Yeah , right!
S5C : = and anchovies too.

This excerpt shows how S5C flouted the Maxim of Manner by using prolixity. The proper answer here would be "*Nasi Lemak Ayam*" (a type of Malaysian dish). But, she used a very grand speech and quoted Julius Caesar to list the menu she ordered for the event. Most probably, it occurred because S1C and S5C are peers and they had a very close relationship. If this response was used in any other meeting with another person, S5C would be considered disrespectful towards the speaker who asked the question and also towards the meeting. In addition, in the interview, S5C mentioned that she flouted the maxim to be humorous. As this conversation occurred at the end of the meeting, most of the participants were tired of sitting there for a long time; thus, S5C made the effort to make jokes to lighten up the room, which was effective since not only S1C, but everyone to attend the meeting was laughing at her response. This could be compared to

A'beis (2003) who mentioned that timing is very important in violating the maxims to create humour. In the meeting, S5C's timing in flouting the maxim created humour.

4.2.3 Maxim of Quantity

This maxim requires people to give enough information to make the other party understand what he or she is saying. Giving too much or too little information would be considered as flouting this maxim. In the meetings, the staff flouted this maxim constantly. They gave too little information when they were expected to elaborate more; this happened when they did not want to share particular information in front of the other staff to avoid any misperception. In other instances, they offered more information due to politeness and to make their work very clear to avoid any misunderstanding. The examples are as follow:

4.2.3.1 Too little information

Excerpt 8 (Meeting 2A)

(S8A previously has suggested some marketing strategies to increase the number of student enrolment to the institute by two thousand students for the next term. S2A has given the permission to S8A to carry out the suggestions and now S2A wants to know if S8A's marketing strategies are successful).

S2A : S8A, what happened to your marketing strategy?
S8A : Marketing? ((laughing nervously)) hmm ((8 secs)). All good.
S2A : How good? We've TWO THOUSAND students?
S8A : ((laughing)) ((11 secs)) Very good.

Here, S2A questioned S8A to get the updates about the marketing strategies proposed by S8A initially. However, S8A flouted the Maxim of Quantity by offering too little information about the progress. All she said was "All Good". Even when S2A asked S8A to elaborate how well the strategies were working in increasing the number of student enrolment, S8A just replied "Very good", another response which offered too

little information. The flouting of maxim can be identified by how S8A was laughing nervously when S2A asked her about the marketing strategy. When she was asked to explain, again S8A laughed and paused for a long time to think of what to say before saying "Very good". During the interview, S8A clarified that she did not want to say anything because she did not want to be perceived as bragging about how well her ideas succeeded in increasing the student enrolment. She said the other staff might label her as being proud if she had said that she managed to get more students than expected for the next term. That was why she did not elaborate even when S2A asked her to explain the outcomes of her marketing strategies. S8A's comment about "bragging" could be related to Gunarwan's (1994) suggestion (see Chapter Two) regarding incorporating modesty in Grice's maxims. In this excerpt, S8A flouted the maxim due to modesty as well.

4.2.3.2 Closed Answers (No Answers Given)

Excerpt 9 (Meeting 4B)

(S6B is S1B's secretary and she is responsible to inform S1B about the daily activities. Here, S1B wants to know why S6B did not inform him about the postponement of a meeting with another department.)

S1B : S6B, I went to (name of department) and they ((chuckles)) – they say meeting *sudah ditunda* (has been postponed). *Ini apa cerita*? (Care to explain?)
S6B : ((silence))
S1B : They say they e-mail you last week. So? You //DIDN'T// check your MAIL?
S6B : ((clearing throat)).

This is another instance in which the Maxim of Quantity was flouted. S1B clearly asked S6B for an explanation since it was S6B's duty to inform S1B if there was a change in his schedule. However, S6B chose not to say anything. She just remained silent instead of giving S1B an answer. From the way S1B increased his tone when he said "//DIDN"T//, it could be noted that S1B was not happy with S6B's action. In the interview, S6B

mentioned that she was too embarrassed to explain as it was her mistake to not inform S1B about the postponement and she did not want to instigate S1B; it would cause S1B to reprimand S6B in front of everybody by admitting her mistakes. Again, S6B's reason to flout the maxim could be related to Face Threatening Act (Brown & Levinson, 1987), which could explain that S6B did not want to go thorough the self-humiliation by confessing her mistake in the meeting.

4.2.3.3 Too much information (Detailed Element)

Excerpt 10 (Meeting 2A)

(S9A is responsible for the library. She interviewed the students regarding their library usage and the students have requested the department to provide more books since the books available currently are insufficient for them to refer to. S2A is asking S9A if there is any suggestion to increase the amount of books in the library.)

S2A : Yes, S9A, how could we stock the books?
S9A : ((1 sec)) Well – er – our library only has – uhm – limited collections – if we can call it a co:llection. It was found 3 years ago and until now we never did anything to get more books =
                          [
S2A :   {That's why we}
S9A : = and now we suddenly need the books. I talked to students – and – uhm – they say they want books for their subjects – you know what I mean? =
                                                      [
S2A :   Yes
S9A : = so I wrote a letter to the management but – don't know if I can – I don't know =
         [
S2A :   The management?
S9A : = if we can send. Yes – the management.

In this excerpt, the Maxim of Quantity was flouted by S9A by offering too much information. All she needed to say was about the letter but she went into explanation about the history of the library and talked about the students' request. The response for S2A's question came after a long-winded explanation. From the interview with S9A, it was found that she flouted the maxim because she felt that it was her responsibility to tell the staff what happened before and what would happen after this. She wanted to

keep everyone updated regarding the library to avoid any misunderstanding. Besides, she also indicated that she asked the students about their expectations about the library. S9A wanted to indicate that she was doing something to solve the problem although before this nobody took any action to find a solution for this existing problem. As proposed by Van Djik (1998 as cited in Bing, 2001) (refer to Chapter Three), S9A flouted the Maxim of Quantity to portray a positive image of her being responsible for the library.

Excerpt 11 (Meeting 4B)

(S1B is the superior and S6B is the subordinate. S6B is in charge of organizing an event for the department. S1B wants to know the date to hold the event.)

S1B : When should we organize the event?
S6B : Exams finish Thursday – Friday meeting – err ((2 secs)) Weekend is =
                                                    [
S7B :   No, no.
S6B : = not good. Yah, not weekend. Next Monday marks due. Wednesday?
S1A : Don't you want to share your Tuesday plans?
S6B : ((laughs))

In this excerpt, S6B explained the reasons for choosing Wednesday by stating the plans for other days before concluding that Wednesday would be a better day to have the event. It could be seen that towards the end of the excerpt, S1B humorously asked S6B to explain what she would do on Tuesday since she left that day out. It served as an indication to S6B as she gave unnecessary details. In the interview, S6B explained that she did not want to say "Wednesday" abruptly because it would seem impolite. She was obligated to explain the reason for selecting Wednesday so that it would not appear as if she selected that day to accommodate her personal schedule. This is similar to the finding by Mrong (1999) in his research, which indicated that the students gave a detailed explanation to their teacher about their reasons to commit the mistakes due to

politeness. In addition, this is also similar to Malisha's (2008) finding in her research who explained that the subordinates would always give detailed explanation for every request they make to their superior due to power distance and politeness. Here, S1B was the superior and S6B, was obligated to be polite due to the power distance between them.

4.2.4 Maxim of Quality

This maxim indicates that one should not say anything that he or she thinks is not true. Through analysis, it was found that the staff flouted this maxim by saying something that they did not believe to be true. This flout was identified by comparing the excerpts from overt and covert recordings. One interesting issue to be noted is that the Maxim of Quality was often flouted by flouting the Maxim of Manner and Quantity. The examples are as given below.

4.2.4.1 Flouting the Maxim of Quality

Example 1

Excerpt 12 (Meeting 1A)

(S1A, the superior, usually asks his staff if there is any problem with work before he ends the meeting. Here, he is asking S4A if there is any complaint).

S1A : S4A, any problem with your staff? Any complaint?
S4A : ((3 secs)) ((looking at the researcher)) Not really – no.

Excerpt 13 (Meeting 2A)

(This is meeting to follow Meeting 1A in the same institute. Again, S1A, the superior, is asking everyone if there is any problem with work before he ends the meeting).

S1A : Let's go around the table. If I don't ask, *nanti* (later) I will be cursed. ((laughs)).
S4A : Uhm – excuse me Prof =
　　　　　[

S1A : Yes, S4A.
S4A : = I want to say one thing. I received a complaint a month ago from students. They say their lecturer cancel class many time – uhm – no replacement.

In Excerpt 12, S4A clearly flouted the Maxim of Quality by saying that there was no problem with her subordinates although at that time, students had already complained about a particular staff who cancelled most of the classes without replacements. S4A told the truth only in Meeting 2A. This flout was heavily influenced by the presence of the researcher in Meeting 1A. The way S4A hesitated and looked at the researcher before answering showed that she was not comfortable in having her complaint being recorded. In the interview, S4A confirmed that she did not say anything in Meeting 1A because it was being recorded and talking about her subordinate would be inappropriate. However, in Meeting 2A, the recorder was planted and the researcher was not present in the meeting and this explains her act of telling S1A about her problems in Meeting 2A.

4.2.4.2 Flouting the Maxim of Quality by flouting the Maxim of Manner

Example 2

Excerpt 14 (Meeting 3B)

(S1B is the superior. S4B is in charge of analysing the semester results and normally she helps the failures to take special exams to let them progress to the next semester.)

S1B : The failures – uhm – they are taken care of?
S4B : Hmm ((looking at the researcher)) – // MAYBE //
S1B : ((clearing throat)) okay then. Do something. Report once done – anything else?

Excerpt 15 (Meeting 4B)

(S1B, the superior, wants to know what S4B has done to help those failures in order to let them continue their following semester.)

S1B : So, what happened with failures? Any =

```
                                        [
S4B  :                                   Ah, that
S1B  :   = news?
S4B  :   Uhm – actually nothing could be done from the beginning. They repeat three
         times – still failed. Really can't help =
                                        [
S1B  :                                   Nothing?
S4B  :   = them. Yes, they've to repeat the whole course.
S1B  :   Well – (( clearing throat )) we've to do what we've to do right? Just let them
         repeat then.
```

In Excerpt 14, S4B flouted the Maxim of Manner by offering vague answer to S1B when he was asked to help the students who failed the semester. However, Excerpt 15, which was taken from the meeting preceded by Meeting 3B, shows that S4B flouted the Maxim of Quality in Excerpt 14 since in the following meeting, she confessed that nothing could be done to help those failures. She deliberately withheld the truth and gave an idea to S1B that the failures could be helped although she was aware that the students could not be helped. In order to flout the Maxim of Quality, S4B actually flouted the Maxim of Manner. In the interview, S4B explained that she did not want to say anything regarding this matter since the meeting was being recorded. Thus, her only choice was to give an answer that could stop the superior from pursuing the matter further. Even from the way S4B looked at the researcher and answered in a very low tone, it was evident that she was hesitant to speak during recording.

4.2.4.3 Flouting the Maxim of Quality by flouting the Maxim of Quantity

Example 3

Excerpt 16 (Meeting 1A)

(S3A teaches a subject which requires the students to produce a play at the end of the semester. S1A, the superior, is very impressed with the play, which was adapted from the Form 5 literature novel, and he wants to promote the play to schools in other states)

S1A :   You see – we've good play I think we should just go to other states. What the
         point of only being here? It can teach a lot to the students what? They need it

for their exam. S3A, look into that matter – ah? Good right?

S3A   :   ((9 secs)) Uhm - hmm

Excerpt 17 (Meeting 1A)

(This is taken from the same meeting as Excerpt 14. Here, S1A has left the room for break and S3A is expressing her opinions regarding S1A's request to promote the play to schools in other states)

S3A   :   Err – this – uhm – I think I should say it before S1A comes back. Does he know the play isn't used in every state? I mean – what's the point in going to Perak if they don't even use the book in syllabus?

S6A   :   Try explaining to him before he really make you do something =

                                                            [

S7A   :   Yup

S6A   :   = about it.

S3A   :   I should but who's gonna talk to him? Aiyo ((30 secs)) can you imagine going to other schools with students there ((chuckle)) and then – the school says we don't use this play and students won't learn anything. That'd be sight to see, I tell you.

In Excerpt 16, S3A flouted the Maxim of Quantity by giving a closed answer to S1A's question. The respond did not explain S3A's opinion regarding the matter but it was more to being submissive to S1A's suggestion. However, when this excerpt was compared to Excerpt 17, it could be seen that S3A flouted the Maxim of Quality. That person clearly disagreed with S1A's idea but he only expressed it in Excerpt 17 to a fellow colleague. The sentence "... who's gonna talk to him?" shows that S3A was very reluctant to tell her honest opinion regarding this matter to S1A. In the interview, S3A stated that rejecting the superior's suggestion was always very risky and she did not want to disrespect S1A by pointing out the flaw in his idea. But, since S6A and S7A were the colleagues, S3A was not intimidated to speak the truth. This is another instance that could be explained by the Face Threatening Act (Brown & Levinson, 1987), where the subordinate feared threatening the superior's face. Thus, she preferred to flout the Maxim of Quality and said something she did not believe in. Besides, this finding could also be explained by power distance. Shaheed (2004, p.70) explained that

power and social distance made the subordinates to be very polite towards their superiors when they are carrying out an FTA. Since disagreeing is also an FTA and S1A was S3A's superior, she chose to lie about her opinion.

The findings for flouting the Maxim of Quality could be explained by citing Makree (2008, as cited in David,2009, p.47), who stated that it is difficult to label a flout under one maxim due to complexity of human interaction. Thus, in this research, some of the flouting of Maxim of Quality could actually be labelled under flouting the Maxim of Quantity or Manner if the analysis was done on surface level (without comparing the scripts from other meetings).

4.2.5 The reasons for flouting the maxims

Although the reasons for the staff to flout the maxims were already mentioned above, it would be clearer to provide a list of the reasons given by the staff during the interviews.

4.2.5.1 Power distance and Face Threatening Act (FTA)

As stated in Chapter Two, power distance and Face Threatening Act (Brown & Levinson, 1987) were the recurring reasons for the staff to flout the maxims during the staff meetings. For instance, the staff flout the Maxim of Quality by agreeing with their superiors although their opinions differ from the superior's; if they had disagreed, it would embarrass the superior. Besides, the subordinates also tended to flout the maxims when they interacted with their superiors during overt recordings to avoid saying something that might embarrass their superiors, which in turn would put them in predicament as the meetings were recorded.

Face Threatening Act (FTA) influenced the flouting of maxims when the staff wanted to say something about their colleagues during both overt and covert recordings. Since some statements might embarrass their colleagues, the staff flouted the maxims to protect their colleagues' image. However, the maxims were frequently flouted for this reason in overt recordings compared to the covert recordings. Although the superiors did not mind scolding their subordinates in front of the other staff in the meetings, they did not do that during overt recording of the meetings; although the subordinates did not mind pointing out the superiors' mistakes in the meetings, they were reluctant to do so during overt recordings. Even when the staff wanted to confess their mistakes, they did so during meetings recorded covertly and not in meetings recorded overtly. Although delivering false reports was professionally wrong, the staff did that during overt recordings to avoid embarrassment. Sometimes, they flouted the maxims if the issues to be discussed became too sensitive for them (which would eventually put their image in jeopardy if the staff continued the discussion).

Thus, it could be concluded that the Face Threatening Act (Brown & Levinson, 1987) played a crucial role in making the staff to change the way they flouted the maxims in overt and covert recordings. Even though power distance between the superiors and subordinates as well as the politeness factor also had influence to this phenomenon, FTA played a major part in overt recordings. This finding further substantiates the finding of research by British National Corpus (as stated in Shanmuganathan, 2005, p.78), which mentioned that the participants changed the way they spoke during data collection to maintain a good image.

4.2.5.2 Confidentiality

During overt recordings, it was noticed that the staff flouted the maxims to avoid stating any information that could bring negative impact to their institutions. Whenever they wanted to talk about the staff problems or students' academic achievement, they would always look either at the researcher or at the recording device and abandon their speech; sometimes, they diverted the focus to another matter. As these matters were considered confidential for the institution, the staff did not want them to be recorded.

4.2.5.3 Humour

Albeit the fact that staff meetings were formal events of academic institutions, the data revealed that there were instances in which the staff flouted the maxims to create humour. Flouting the maxims to create humour happened scarcely in the meetings; still, it was one of the reasons for flouting. During the interviews, the staff stated that they had to create humour as the meetings had tendency to be held for long hours. Humour helped the staff to become energetic and the mood of the meetings became livelier too.

The above mentioned reasons are not particular to flouting one specific maxim; they could be the reasons to flout any of the four maxims.

4. 3 How does the flouting of maxims differ during the staff meetings recorded overtly and covertly?

Another reason to conduct this research was to look at how the staff flout the maxims during meetings when they knew that they were being recorded. The difference was determined through the changes in their maxim flouts. It was observed that the staff

flouted the maxims in different ways when they were recorded. The findings are given below.

4.3.1 Maxim of Quality

As mentioned earlier, the staff flouted this maxim in order to maintain their good name and also to respect their superiors. The examples are as follow:

Example 4

Excerpt 18 (Meeting 1A)

(It is the end of the term and every staff must hand in the mark analysis that shows the students' progress for their respective subjects. S1A, the superior wants to know if S9A will take a long time to finish this job as he does not adhere to the dateline given).

S1A   :   Do we need to wait for a long time for the marks analysis, S9A?
S9A   :   No, Prof. Sorry.

Excerpt 19 (Meeting 2A)

(This is the meeting to follow Meeting 1A. Again, S1A asks S9A if he needs more time to complete the analysis).

S1A   :   Okay – S9A, no analysis right? Need =
                                        [
S9A   :   Yes.
S1A   :   = more time?
S9A   :   Yes Prof. Another ((3 secs)) three – err – two weeks, Prof.

From the excerpts above, it could be seen that S9A was not telling the truth when S1A asked if it would take a long time to finish the analysis and S9A said no. However, in the second meeting, which was recorded without the participants' knowledge, S9A admitted that she needed more time to finish the analysis. This flout of maxim could be said to be highly influenced by his knowledge of the meeting being recorded. From the interview, it was found that S9A chose to not tell the truth to appear not irresponsible in

the recording. In Meeting 2A, S9A had no problem in admitting the truth that she needed time because he did not know the meeting was still being recorded covertly.

Example 5

Excerpt 20 (Meeting 3B)

(S4B is the coordinator of a course and some of her students did not manage to pass a particular subject although they have repeated the same subject thrice. So, these students could not graduate and their candidature has expired. S1B wants to know if S4B has any suggestion to help them.)

S1B : The failures – uhm – they are taken care?
S4B : Hmm ((looking at the researcher)) – Maybe.

Excerpt 21 (Meeting 4B)

(This meeting succeeded Meeting 3B. Again, S1B wants to know how S4B helped those students mentioned in Meeting 3B.)

S1B : So, what happened with failures? Any =
                                    [
S4B :   Ah, that
S1B : = news?
S4B : Uhm – actually nothing could be done from the beginning. They repeat three
        times – still failed. Really can't help =
              [
S1B :   Nothing?
S4B : = them. Yes, they've to repeat the whole course.

Again, these excerpts demonstrate how S4B flouted the Maxim of Quality by saying that the failed students might be taken care of in Meeting 3B (which was being recorded overtly) and then saying that those students really could not be helped in Meeting 4B (which was recorded covertly). During the interview, S4B mentioned that admitting to be unable to help those students -in a meeting being recorded by someone - might lead to other people to perceive S4B as someone who could not think of a simple solution to help those students. One interesting point to take note here is that S4B flouted the Maxim of Quality by flouting the Maxim of Manner. In Meeting 3B, she uttered a

"Maybe" as the response when S1B asked if S4B has solved the problem; in other words, she gave a vague answer which could be interpreted by S1B that there was a simple solution to help those students. After recording Meeting 4B, it was found that S4B actually flouted the Maxim of Quality in Meeting 3B.

Example 6

Excerpt 22 (Meeting 5C)

(The institute faces problem with one particular course, which S6C is in charge of, because not many students want to follow the whole course. Many of them quit just after a few weeks. Thus, the course is labelled as problematic and S1C wants to know if the problem still persists.)

S1C : So, what's happening to (name of the course)? Urm – the problematic one.
         Many students =
                    [
S6C :   Huh?
S1C : = stopped after a term. Any problem now?
S6C : That – hmm- (looking at the Ipod) – nope.

Excerpt 23 (Meeting 6C)

(This meeting is held after Meeting 5C. S1C wants to know the number of students in the problematic course mentioned in Excerpt 22.)

S1C : S6C, how many students in (name of the course)?
S6C : Yah – about that – *Puan* (Madam). (name of the course) no students now. All
         stopped =
         [
S1C :   Really?
S6C : = after a term. Yes. Difficult to find tutor and students don't want different
         people teaching everytime. They stopped.
S1C : Okay. We really need to search for people now.

This example shows that S6C still had problems with that particular course since all the students registered for the course did not extend their candidature for the following term. However, she denied having any difficulty in Meeting 5C (which was recorded overtly). Later, in Meeting 6C, S6C mentioned that she had no students in that class.

This is another instance of flout of the Maxim of Quality. As she mentioned in the interview, S6C did not want to share her problems when the meeting was recorded and since she was aware that the meetings were very frequent, she preferred to wait to share her problems in another meeting rather than letting her problem be recorded by the researcher. S6C also explained that in Meeting 5C, S1C asked S6C about her course after mentioning that the course, for which S6C was responsible, had always been problematic. If S6C said that there were no students in that class, it might seem like she was not doing a good job in managing that particular course and she did not want to give that impression in a recorded meeting.

From the examples given above, it could be deduced that the staff flout the Maxim of Quality when the recordings were done overtly to maintain their reputation. They did not mind telling something they knew was not true to keep their good names rather than telling the truth and put their name at stake. This could be explained using Brown and Levinson's Face Threatening Act (1987) to show how the staff valued their reputation.

4.3.2 Maxim of Quantity

Maxim of Quantity was flouted in an interesting way during the staff meetings. When they knew the meeting was being recorded, they flouted this maxim by offering too little information. However, when they did not know that they were being recorded, they flouted this maxim by offering too much information. Examples are as follow.

Example 7

Excerpt 24 (Meeting 1A)

(S5A is in charge of conducting the vetting sessions for final exam papers and collecting them to be edited. S1A wants to know the progress of vetting held by S5A initially).

S1A : Now – uhm. Let's discuss the vetting. S5A, anything to sa:y?

S5A : Not much, Prof. Err – we've done the first vetting. Papers are in.
S1A : No problem?
S5A : ((laughing nervously while glancing at the researcher)) Some, but manageable I should say.

Excerpt 25 (Meeting 2A)

(This meeting is held after Meeting 1A. Again S1A asks if S5A still have any problem the vetting sessions and also in collecting the final examination papers.)

S1A   S5A, vetting?
S5A   Yes, Prof. Uhm – I said before we did first vetting. It took three days for =
                                                          [
S1A   Three days?
S5A   = to finish. Yup. (name of a final paper) had a lot of mistakes. Many MCQ questions didn't have answers. Some people didn't turn up for vetting. No response to calls=
           [
S10A   Classlah.
S5A   = and sms. I understand about class but vetting is during lunch hour. I purposely made it lunch time for full attendance.
S1A   It's okay, S5A. We'll look into this matter.
S5A   Thanks, Prof. And some didn't bother giving the papers on time. I =
                                                          [
S1A   I see.
S5A   = gave them the table. Need to take action, Prof. Some hand in the papers but horrible mistakes – they assume others will correct in vetting. Too much work, Prof.

In excerpt 24, S5A gave adequate information for the question directed to her. She mentioned that there were some problems but nothing too complicated occurred. However, in excerpt 25, she flouted the Maxim of Quantity by giving too much information about the problems she faced regarding her vetting sessions. In the interview, S5A said that the flout was because in Meeting 1A, she did not want to share the problems in detail as the researcher was recording the meeting. As vetting was related to examinations, she had to be very cautious about what she wanted to say. She did not want to complain about her colleagues which would be recorded as well. On the other hand, she went into detailed description of the problems in vetting in Meeting 2A

as she did not know she was being recorded. S5A felt comfortable to vent out all the problems in the meeting.

Example 8

Excerpt 26 (Meeting 5C)

(The institute is organizing a play, which would be held on a Saturday, and S1C, the superior is informing the staff that attendance is compulsory.)

S1C : The play is at (venue for the play) – Saturday 8.30 compulsory =
                                                    [
S4C :   Saturday?
S1C : = attendance. Yes, Saturday. Any problem, S4C?
S4C : ((silence)) ((looking at the Ipod))
S1C : Good.

Excerpt 27 (Meeting 6C)

(This is the meeting to follow Meeting 5C. S4C wants to share her opinion regarding the compulsory attendance for the play, which was mentioned in Meeting 5C).

S4C : S1C, about this Saturday =
                     [
S1C :   Yes?
S4C : = play ((1 sec)) we've problem – err – I mean we've assignments due =
                                                    [
S1C :   Huh?
S4C : = this week. Oh – uhm – it's the MUET camp. You put us on duty.
S1C : Oh ((laughs)) em ((2 sec)) Yeah I forgot ((clearing throat)). Then you go to
        MUET. Sorry.

In Excerpt 26, S4C flouted the Maxim of Quantity by giving a closed answer, which was to offer no information about her problem in coming to play scheduled on Saturday night. Her silence misled S1C to understand that S4C had no problem but was just whining about the weekend schedule. That was why S1C continued the meeting by saying "Good". However, in Excerpt 27, she explained that she could not attend the play because S1C had already given her another engagement regarding the MUET

campaign. In the interview, S4C said that she kept quiet in Meeting 5C out of respect for S1C. This circumstance shows that S4C already realized that she could not attend the play since she was assigned by S1C to be involved in the MUET campaign. She restrained herself from saying anything that could point out S1C's mistake as the meeting was being recorded and it would be embarrassing for S1C. Since in Meeting 6C S4C did not know about the recording, she did not hesitate to point out S1C's slip and put everything into perspective. S1C was obviously embarrassed when she realized her mistake as indicated by her laughter and throat clearing action to gather her thoughts together. Thus, it could be said that S4C have anticipated this scenario and flouted the Maxim of Quantity in Meeting 5C to avoid embarrassment to any party. According to Face Threatening Act (Brown & Levinson, 1987), S4C did not say anything in Meeting 5C since pointing S6C to her mistake would threaten S6C's face.

4.3.3 Maxim of Manner

It was observed that the staff flouted the Maxim of Manner by giving vague and ambiguous responses when they knew that the meeting was being recorded. However, in meetings recorded covertly, they flouted this maxim by mostly giving indirect responses. At certain times, they even used exaggerated vocabulary to make fun of other staff.

Example 9

Excerpt 28 (Meeting 1A)

(S2A is responsible for a group of students and S1A wants to know if there is any problem in handling the students.)

```
S1A   :   Moving on to S2A, any problem? Students =
                             [
S1A   :                      {The thing is} ((looks at the researcher))
S2A   :   = settled in? Yes? (( 1 sec )) Anything?
S1A   :   Uhm – yeah – maybe. (( 2 secs )) I'll check and get back to you, Prof.
```

Excerpt 29 (Meeting 2A)

(This is the meeting after Meeting 1A. Here, S2A is explaining the problem she is facing with her group of students she is responsible for).

```
S2A  :  Excuse me, Prof, I =
                        [
S1A  :                  Yeah, S2A?
S2A  :  = have – we've problems in class allocation. We =
                                            [
S1A  :                                       What happened?
S2A  :  = don't – yeah – not enough classes. (name of a department) tool all and our
         students have no class and – uhm – I don't know what to do. Can Prof talk to
         the management? Class start next week and I'm stuck with this.
```

As could be seen from the excerpts above, when the meeting was being recorded, S2A was reluctant to share her problems and instead gave a very vague answer of 'Maybe' to S1A. She flouted the Maxim of Manner by not saying clearly if she was facing a problem or not. In contrast, in Meeting 2A, S2A shared her dilemma of not being able to get enough classes to accommodate the students under her responsibility. She even asked for help from S1A. In the interview, S2A stated that she felt embarrassed about admitting her helplessness and it being recorded by the researcher. That was the reason for her to bring that issue to the following meeting, which, to her knowledge, was not being recorded.

Example 10

Excerpt 30 (Meeting 1A)

(S5A, the superior, received a complaint from S11A's student about his carry marks not given by the staff at the end of the semester. S5A wants to know what S11A wants to do to solve this problem.)

```
S5A   :  S11A, student called me about marks – uhm – that ((looking at the
          researcher)) – yeah – {we}
S11A  :  Which student, S5A?
S5A   :  There's problem with marks but it's okay. Nothing serious. Let's continue.
```

Excerpt 31 (Meeting 2A)

(This is the meeting to follow Meeting 1A. In this meeting, S5A again asks S11A to clarify what the student was complaining about.)

S5A   :   S11A, your student called me – he said you didn't give him carry marks. What =

                                       [

S11A :   Which student?

S5A   :   = is the problem? ((1 sec)) I can't remember his name but you come to office later. I don't want any of this problem you see – you people have too much fun, play all the time and now this and =

                    [

S11A :   {But I didn't}

S5A   :   = create problems. You didn't? He say he scored the tests then how come no marks? Check your record people. Every sem the same thing – I'm tired settling your mess, you know that? I've work too – I can't be dealing with your students. S11A, settle this immediately. If =

                     [

S11A :   Yes, S5A.

S5A   :   = you don't then he can't get his marks you know? System closed already. Write a letter. Let him graduate. You people mess with final sem students what for? Do your work people.

As shown in these two excerpts, there was flout of the Maxim of Manner in Excerpt 30 when S5A mentioned that there was a problem but she misled S11A into believing that the problem was not something severe that could not be handled. However, in Excerpt 31, S5A did indicate the severity of the problem (which could hinder a student from graduating) and even reprimanded S11A for her carelessness. Most probably, S5A hesitated to mention the severity of the problem to S11A in Meeting 1A because she was concerned about S11A's reputation. Besides, S5A did not feel comfortable in pointing to her subordinate's mistakes when the meeting was being recorded. This could be seen by her action of looking at the researcher before she explained further about the problem and then rephrased her sentences to keep the problem light. This flout also shows that S5A respected her subordinates and that could be seen from the way she scolded S11A as if she was talking to a whole group using plural referential

phrases like [2]"you people". This incident is similar to what Wilma (2009) mentioned in her paper about how her interviewees restructured their sentences during recordings, as stated in Chapter Two. In Meeting 2A, S5A reprimanded S11A by mentioning the worst possible scenario that could happen if the problem was not solved. She even mentioned that the problem stemmed from S11A's playful nature.

Example 11

Excerpt 32 (Meeting 3B)

(The institute wants representatives from every department to do some marketing regarding the courses offered in each department. S4B, the superior, chooses S5B and S6B to represent the department.)

S4B   :   We have to do marketing at – huh ((1 sec)) seven schools. S5B and S6B,
              please be prepared ah. Next Monday.
S5B   :   Monday, Prof? But we've =
                       [
S6B   :   Prof, CLASS!
S5B   :   = classes. Yeah, Exactly.
S4B   :   Postpone them.
S5B   :   ((glancing at the researcher)) //We could do that//

Excerpt 33 (Meeting 4B)

(S5B is not happy to be chosen as the representative to do the marketing for department. So, she is explaining her reason for not being able to do the job.)

S5B   :   Prof, about the marketing =
                [
S4B   :   Yes?
S5B   :   = next Saturday – uhm – Prof, we're in week 14 =
                             [
S4B   :   ((bc))
S5B   :   =and next week students are sitting for exams already – time table is out =
                                          [
S4B   :   Yes?

---

[2] "You people" is a direct translation from Malay Language, which is S5A's mother tongue. In Malay, plural pronouns are used to refer to singular people as a form of respect and S5A uses the same technique in English to show respect to her colleagues.

S5B   :   = we can't change. On Monday we've to have revision. How about sending the (course name) people?

This example shows how the same person flouted the Maxim of Manner due to the overt and covert recording. In Excerpt 32, in which S5B knew she was being recorded, she gave an ambiguous answer to S4B. When S4B asked S5B to postpone the classes, she said she "could" do it in a low tone, which meant that she had the ability to postpone but she did not want to postpone the classes. However, S4B could have interpreted that response as S5B agreeing to what he said. In Excerpt 33, S5B flouted the maxim by giving indirect statements. Instead of saying she did not want to go for the marketing activity on Monday, she started her explanation by stating that she had limited time to finish her lessons before final examination and she ended with a suggestion of sending those who were teaching another course (who were free at that time since students from different courses would have different semester breaks at different times). In the interview, S5B said she felt comfortable of talking at length when she knew she was not being recorded.

Example 12

Excerpt 34 (Meeting 6C)

(S2C, the superior, asks S5C, the subordinate, of her opinion regarding a certain issue. However, S5C is distracted by something else and does not respond to S2C's question.)

S2C   :   S5C, what do you think?
S5C   :   ((silence))
S2C   :   S5C, ((3 secs)) Your Majesty S5C, would =
                                   [
S5C   :   Huh?
S2C   :   = it be possible for Your Majesty to join this lowly meeting? Princess can leave your beloved subjects for a while.
S5C   :   ((laughs))

Here, it could be seen that S2C flouted the Maxim of Manners by using a very grand speech to grab S5C's attention, who was busy playing with her mobile. Although it was

meant for S2C to tell S5C that S5C's attitude of not paying attention could be regarded as disrespectful, the flout took a different turn when everyone started laughing, including S2C. This type of situation did not occur in meetings recorded overtly. When they knew that they were being recorded, the participants acted according to the setting and were very formal.

4.3.4 Maxim of Relevance

The analysis shows that the staff flouted the Maxim of Relevance. Most of the flouts for this category were done by diverting the meeting into another topic rather than pursuing the current topic in question. There were also instances in which this maxim was flouted for humorous purposes.

Example 13

Excerpt 35 (Meeting 1A)

(S7A is in charge of a certain course and previously, the staff did not cooperate well in teaching the course and it caused some problems. S2A wants to know if there is any recent problem and how S7A copes with it.)

S2A : Right – S7A, (course name) is fine right?
S7A : So far so good.
S2A : Any problem with supervisors? Our staff? Problem like last time?
S7A : Er – I have to say something about our students, Dr.

Excerpt 36 (Meeting 2A)

(This is the meeting to follow Meeting 1A. S7A, the subordinate wants to let S2A know what he has been doing although she was not asked about that).

S7A : Dr, I need to share something with our friends.
S2A : Yes, yes, sure.
S7A : Thanks. Okay friends. I need to tell you ah many schools called an supervisors haven't visited them. Students called me too. Of course lah I understand you all are busy but please ah, do go to your schools – if possible do it before next week. I'm =
              [
S2A :   Who?

S7A : = not pointing – oh – many Dr. Not going to say who they are. You know who you are ah friends. Students create problems THAT I can deal with but friends with problem – sorry to say Dr I'm disappointed. I didn't want to say anything last week because – you know lah. So please do what you have to do – thank you.

In Meeting 1A, when asked about problems regarding staff who were teaching the course to which S7A was the coordinator, S7A diverted the topic to the students' problems. There the maxim was flouted. In Meeting 2A, however, S7A gave a long speech about the staff's problems and appealed to them to do their jobs. These excerpts also demonstrate that the flout of Maxim of Relevance is actually a flout of Maxim of Quality; S7A mentioned that there was no problem with the course when S2A asked for the report although it was not true, as could be seen from Excerpt 36.

Example 14

Excerpt 37 (Meeting 3B)

(S4B and S7B are peers and they might have been selected to represent the department for a workshop. S4B asks S7B the venue for the workshop).

S4B : By the way, are we going for workshop?
S1B : Yup - I need people.
S4B : Err – where could it be? ((looking at S7B))
S7B : ((8 secs)) ((chuckles)) We love US too much.
S4B : Huh? – What?
S7B : Nothing – venue later.

Excerpt 38 (Meeting 4B)

(S4B asks S7B about the venue for the workshop again)

S4B : Where's the venue for the workshop?
S7B : You know these cheapskates. What do you think?
S4B : Err, (name of a resort)?
S7B : You re:ally think they'll send you //^{OUT}//?
S4B : Oh no!

In Excerpt 37, when S4B inquired about the venue, S7B flouted the Maxim of Relevance by stating how the institute loved itself too much. However, S4B could not comprehend the underlying message of that sentence. Then, S7B informed that the venue would be decided later. However, in Excerpt 38, S7B was not hesitating to be sarcastic: he described how the management operated on a strict budget regarding outdoor activities and flouted the Maxim of Relevance again. When S4B guessed that it could be a nearby resort, S7B again flouted the maxim by questioning S4B if he believed that the venue would be somewhere out of the institution. Here, the flout was humorous and everyone in the room laughed once the question was posed. In the interview, S7B stated that he did not make any comment about the institute's way of handling professional courses because he did not want his speech to be recorded. Besides, he mentioned that looking at the Ipod made him nervous and he could not even elaborate when S4B did not understand his joke in Excerpt 37. In the following meeting, he still did not want to give the name of the venue straight away because he wanted to highlight the institution's principle on not having venue outside the campus for staff activities. That could be noticed from his condescending tone. Thus, the Maxim of Relevance was flouted differently in both meetings.

One matter to be noticed was that the staff did not make any jokes and they maintained formality throughout the meeting in Meeting 1A, 3B and 5C. On the other hand, they flouted the maxims to create humour in Meeting 2A, 4B and 6C. This could be explained by the overt recording. Whenever the staff wanted to say something, they always looked at the recording device or at the researcher. This action was followed by a short or a long pause before they say what they wanted to say. This non-verbal reaction indicates that the staff were uncomfortable and they wanted to "act" as they

ought to be in a formal setting rather than being themselves. Hence, those meetings turned out to be very formal and almost everyone had a serious tone when they spoke. However, when they did not know that the meetings were being recorded, the staff constantly flouted the maxims and created jokes which contributed to a very friendly atmosphere. That explains the reason for not providing any example from Meeting 1A, 3B, and 5C for flouting the maxims to create humour.

4.4 Comparison of flouting of maxims between overt recordings and covert recordings

The table below demonstrates the frequencies of the maxims being flouted in meetings recorded overtly and covertly.

Maxims			Overt Recording		Covert Recording	
Maxim of Relevance	a.	Avoiding the question	14		9	
	b.	Question responded with counter question	5	**19**	6	**16**
	c.	Using idiomatic expression	0		1	
Maxim of Manner	a.	Indirect speech	16		9	
	b.	Vague answers	26	**61**	12	**38**
	c.	Ambiguous responses	19		14	
	d.	Using prolixity	0		3	
Maxim of Quantity	a.	Too little information	11		5	
	b.	Closed Answers	13	**32**	12	**36**
	c.	Too much information (Detailed Element)	8		19	
Maxim of Quality	a.	By Maxim of Manner	-	-	4	**13**
	b.	By Maxim of Quantity	-		9	

Table 4.1: Comparison of flouting of maxims between overt recordings and covert recordings.[3]

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[3] The numbers shown in the table were obtained from the complete data, inclusive of those parts which were deleted in the transcripts provided in the appendices.

The table above indicates that the staff flouted the maxims during both overt recordings and covert recordings. The difference is in the number of frequencies in which each maxim was flouted in both meetings. For instance, the Maxim of Relevance was flouted 19 times in overt recordings while in covert recordings, the flout occurred 16 times. The Maxim of Manner was flouted 61 times during overt recordings while in covert recordings, the maxim was flouted 38 times. The Maxim of Quantity was flouted for 32 times in overt recordings and in covert recordings, it was flouted for 36 times. Although the numbers for flouting the Maxim of Quantity were approximately close, the difference is in the strategies used. It was noticed that during overt recordings, the staff flouted this maxim by giving closed answers (identified 11 times in the data) while in covert recordings, the flout was done by giving too much information (19 times). Flouting of Maxim of Quality could not be identified within overt recordings. The data from covert recordings were necessary to compare the statements given by the staff in the meetings recorded overtly to determine if those statements were meant to flout the Maxim of Quality; hence, the result of analysis for flouting of Maxim of Quality is given in a separate table. The findings show that the staff flouted the Maxim of Quality for 13 times (as identified by comparing the data from overt and covert recordings).

Although the reasons for the staff to flout the maxims were identified and explained earlier, the difference in the frequencies of flouting the maxims as shown in the table above could be explained by the staff's awareness about the meetings being recorded. Once they knew the researcher was recording the meetings, the staff had a tendency to flout the maxims either to maintain their good image or to keep the issue confidential. Even in the interviews, the staff admitted that they did not want to say anything as the meetings were being recorded. However, during meetings recorded covertly, the staff

flouted the maxims for various reasons; the reasons were not limited to confidentiality and maintaining good image anymore. Reasons like showing respect and being humorous were to name a few.

Hence, it could be concluded that once the participants are aware that their discourse is being recorded or they are being watched by the researcher, they deliberately change the way they behave and communicate, just as explained by Labov (1972) using the term Observer's Paradox (see Chapter Two).

4.5 Additional findings

As explained in Chapter One, Grice (1975) explained that when someone flouts the maxims, that person is aware that he or she is not following the maxims. The action is deliberate on behalf of the speaker. On the other hand, violation of the maxims refers to the situation in which the speaker does not realize that he or she is not following the maxims. It is an unintentional act by the speaker. After analyzing the data, it was found that during covert recordings, the participants mostly violated the maxims. They did not follow the maxims and most of the time they did not even realize that they were giving irrelevant or vague answers. This could be identified by their responses to the questions posed, which were preceded by very short pauses. The short pauses indicate that the staff did not take a long time to think and structure their responses. On the contrary, the participants flouted the maxims during overt recordings. They deliberately held back the truth and did not offer expected answers because they were aware that the meetings were being recorded. This could be noticed by the way the speakers started to say something and then they discontinued the sentence only to begin a new statement, which was always a contradiction of what they tried to say earlier.

This reaction was similar to the mothers' reactions in Brumark's research (2003) about flouting the maxims during family dinners. Brumark explained that whenever the mothers were not happy with their children's behaviour at the dinner table, they would start to scold their children and then restructure their sentences to say something different from what they had said initially. Besides, as observed by the researcher, long pauses before answering and frequent glances towards the recording device and the researcher, who was present in the meetings also indicate they deliberately "modified" their responses, which led to flouting of the maxims. Further evidence was garnered when the meetings from overt recordings and covert recordings were compared and they showed how the same questions elicited different responses from the same people in two different meetings. However, since determining the differences between violating and flouting the maxims was not the focus of the current research, the data only focuses on the flouting of the maxims.

4.6 Conclusion

This chapter discussed the data analysis and the findings. From the analysis, it was found that the staff flouted the maxims in various ways for various reasons; there was also differences in the way they flouted those maxims when they knew that they were being recorded despite the fact that the participants were from different institutions and they were recorded under different circumstances.

Chapter Five

Findings and Discussion

5.1 Introduction

To recapitulate, the study explores the ways in which the participants flout the maxims during the staff meetings and also to investigate the differences in flouting of maxims during the staff meetings when the staff are aware that the meetings are being recorded and when they are not aware of it. For this purpose, the researcher recorded six staff meetings in three different academic establishments in two ways; at each institution, one meeting was recorded overtly and another one was done covertly. The meetings were transcribed and analysed to highlight the differences.

5.2 Findings

This study is carried out to find answers for three questions. The questions and answers are as follow:

5.2.1 a) How do the participants flout the maxims during the staff meetings?

b) Why do the staff flout the maxims during staff meetings?

These two questions were analysed simultaneously as the ways in which the flouts were done and the reasons for flouting the maxims are closely related. From the analysis, it was found that the staff flouted the Maxim of Relevance when they want to avoid any question or issue that becomes too sensitive or too personal for them to be answered in front of their colleagues. They answered such questions with completely irrelevant statements that would direct the attention of the meeting to another issue or even ask a

counter-question instead of answering the question directed to them. It was also found that they used idiomatic expressions to answer the questions, which implicated other meanings, rather than answering explicitly.

The Maxim of Manner was flouted by the staff by giving ambiguous answers and by resorting to indirect speech when they wanted to answer the questions they were not comfortable answering to. At one instance, this maxim was flouted by using a very grand language to achieve a humorous effect.

The Maxim of Quantity was flouted when the staff did not offer sufficient information regarding a certain matter and when they gave very detailed responses on particular issues. It was observed that getting the clear message across was the prime reason for giving too much information and embarrassment caused the staff to give insufficient information on certain topics.

Finally, the Maxim of Quality was flouted due to their respect for their superiors and colleagues, which caused them to agree with certain issues that they actually disagree to or believe in.

To summarize, the staff used many strategies to flout the maxims. However, the reasons for them to flout the maxims were largely influenced by the social distance (the relationship between the superior and the subordinate) and Face Threatening Act (Brown & Levinson, 1987), which refers to the staff's need to maintain good image in front of their colleagues.

5.2.2 How does the flouting of maxims differ between the staff meetings recorded overtly and covertly?

Upon comparing the meeting transcripts from overt and covert recordings, it was found that the staff flouted the maxims due to their knowledge of meetings being recorded. They changed the way they spoke and the change could be seen from the way the maxims were flouted differently in their speech. For instance, the Maxim of Quality was flouted during overt recordings as they did not want to be impolite to their superiors by indicating their (superior's) mistakes in front of the researcher.

In relation to the Maxim of Quantity, the staff were prone to flout this maxim by offering too much information during covert recordings and by giving very few details during overt recordings. The interviews with the participants revealed that the reason for them to flout this maxim was because they were hesitant to speak when they knew they were being recorded and they felt comfortable in sharing their thoughts during covert recordings.

The Maxim of Manner was flouted during overt recordings by offering ambiguous and indirect answers for the questions asked as the staff did not want to mention certain issues explicitly. However, in covert recordings, the staff used grand language for their responses for humorous purposes.

The instances in which the Maxim of Relevance was flouted by staff during the meetings were very minimal compared to the flouting of other maxims. If the Maxim of Relevance was flouted, it was to shift the focus meeting from the matter in question.

5.3 Discussion of findings

In relation to the first research question, it was evident that the staff of each academic establishment were flouting Grice's maxims throughout the meetings in various ways to achieve certain goals. This is not an unusual phenomenon as Grice (1975) mentioned that people do not observe the maxims and this leads to implicature, which makes any conversation very "complex and interesting" at the same time. When the transcripts of meetings from overt recordings and covert recordings were compared, it was evident that the staff did change the way they spoke because they knew they were being recorded. This supports Lobov's (1972, p.30) statement about observer's paradox; it would be difficult to get authentic data when the participants "put up a play" for the observers rather than behaving normally. Then, collecting "authentic" data would be not possible anymore as the utterances recorded are inauthentic. Based on the findings of this research, one might argue that the participants flouted the maxims during their speech to protect confidential matters from being recorded. All the participants were well aware that the researcher was a part of their institution and they were informed that no confidential or sensitive issues would be included in the research. Still, they preferred to change the way they spoke. They withheld their true responses and hesitated quite frequently just because they were intimidated by the presence of the recording device on the meeting table. In addition, there was a change in the reasons for staff to flout the maxims in overt recordings as well; from the interviews, it was found that the staff flouted the maxims in overt recordings mainly because they did not want the researcher to record their statements, unlike the many reasons identified for flouting the maxims in covert recordings. This further proves that informing the participants would not produce authentic data. Thus, if a researcher informs his or her participants of the research that their conversation would be recorded for data collection as mentioned

in the research ethics, there is a high possibility for the researcher to not be able to obtain authentic data.

5.4 Limitations of the research

The findings of this research are limited to academic meetings from three indicated institutes only. The results may vary if the same research is conducted in other settings using other participants. Furthermore, the researcher was familiar with all the participants of the meetings. If the meetings were conducted by those who were not familiar with the researcher, the results may be different as well.

Another limitation for this research was getting the permission to record the meetings overtly and covertly. The researcher was fortunate to get the consent from the three institutes to participate in this research. However, if this research is to be conducted at other places, one might have to go through a long procedure to get permission to record the conversations via both means.

5.5 Suggestion for future research

The current research looked into flouting of Grice's maxims by the participants. Since the focus of this research is on the structure used to flout the maxims and the differences in those structures when data was collected overtly and covertly, the underlying meanings carried by the flouting of maxims were not highlighted. Thus, in future, implicatures produced in meetings or in any other settings when the data is collected overtly and covertly could be studied. This could further substantiate the findings of this research.

5.6 Conclusion

This study answered three research questions asked in Chapter One: how the staff flout the maxims during staff meetings and how these flouting differ when they know that their meetings are recorded. From the data analysis, many structures were identified for the flouting of maxims. The results also reveal that the staff did make a lot of changes in their speech when they were aware of the recordings. This was identified by comparing the transcripts of meetings recorded overtly and covertly. The findings highlight the irony of research ethics. If a researcher is obligated to inform the participants to record authentic data, the data to be collected may not be authentic anymore.