"LET'S WRITE IT DOWN, NO LET'S BE FRIENDS FIRST"

Dennis Day
Department of Linguistics
Gothenburg University, Sweden

Introduction

This paper presents a qualitative case study of communicative interaction between a Malay-Malaysian (MM) and a Chinese-Malaysian (CM). The study investigates the notions of rules of speaking in relation to how these two individuals, with quite different sociocultural backgrounds, work towards the goals of a specific social activity: planning a short presentation entitled "Malaysia: People, Progress, and Problems."

There are three main points I wish to make in this paper:

1) Investigating rules of speaking empirically is only useful if participants' motivation for a particular rule usage can be explicated.

(2) Point one necessitates an analytical model of the context of rule usage. Such a model should incorporate psychological, socio cultural, and physical parameters of context. The notion of social activity fulfils this purpose here.

(3) For an interaction to be classified as intercultural, it must be shown that participants are understanding the interaction as such. "Intercultural" here refers to properties of participants' perceived identities. An understanding of what is intercultural about the interaction should, therefore, have participants' identities as they are negotiated in the interaction as its point of departure.

Studies
backgounds and context as social activity (see below) affect cross-cultural

cooperation and in particular cross-cultural communication. More specifi-
cally, the results of this study can lead to a better understanding of the
processes through which fellow Malaysians achieve, or fail to achieve, the
goals of cooperative enterprise such as schooling, commerce, nation-
building, etc.

Approach

It is almost banal nowadays to state that the context of situation is of
crucial importance in understanding what people mean. Exactly what is
meant by context, however, is rarely explicated. I will, therefore, spend
some time here at the beginning with showing how context was treated in
the study There are three general reasons why context needs to be dealt
with first:

1)   A sociological reason: Rules and contexts determine each other
       Here and now these rules apply: raise your hand before speak
       ing, don't push and shove, be quiet, no chewing gum. If it is so
       that these rules apply, then the context is most likely a class
       room. Likewise, here and now are a teacher, some books, some
       pupils, some desks, etc. What rules apply? Most likely those
       that were just mentioned. The point here is that by behaving
       according to a particular set of rules we can make a context by
       which our communicative behaviour can be given an interpre-
       tation close to our intentions. And likewise, in a particular con-
       text, what we say will be interpreted, unless proven otherwise,
       as if we were accountable to the rules conventionally associated
       with that context.

2)   A pragmatic reason: Ask anyone about when they would act
       according to a rule, say "stop at red lights", and most likely
       they'll say all the time unless there's an emergency, their brakes
       don't work, they are absentminded, they want to feel really
       free, etc. Now this is the same thing as saying that the use of a
       rule depends on the context within which following the rule
       would be meaningful, relevant, common-sense, worthwhile,
       just, acting responsibly, etc. It follows then that we can't say that
       rules like the ones we are talking about will invariably apply
       because contexts are variable, so an understanding of contexts
       is crucial if we want to explain an individual's behaviour in a
       particular context as following from a rule.

3)   An epistemological reason: The results of this study are the re-
        sults of my interpretation of what went on during the interac-
        tion. The least I can do, to control my own mistakes, is to supply
        you with how I, and how I propose participants, understand
        the context.

In this study, context is paraphrased as the determined and deter-
mining parameters of an instance of a social activity
will be explained in some detail in the following section.

Social Activities

The notion of social activity allows us to abstract from the observa-
tion of people, places, and action, periods of social interaction bounded by
determined and determining parameters (see below) of that context. These
parameters, it is claimed, are attended to by participants and, as such, are
linked to participants' conscious and unconscious understanding of "what's
going on" Social activities can be said to occur if: 1) two or more individu-
als; 2) perform mental acts, exhibit behaviour or engage in action, 3) in a
coordinated way; and 4) which collectively has some purpose or function[1]
Social activities range along a continuum from more to less institutional-
ised forms. A chance encounter of two strangers may never become more
than an *ad hoc* social activity, while a recurring encounter of specific
individuals within a particular social institution for specific purposes, etc.
constitutes a more institutionalised, and thus norm-and convention- regu-
lated, social activity

Determined parameters are properties of linguistic and non-linguis-
tic behaviour involved in the activity while determining parameters are
factors controlling the activity. Both kinds of parameters can be further
distinguished as being either global or local, i.e. pertaining to the entire
activity or to a specific part, and as either collective or individual, i.e
depending on several individuals or single individuals.

Understanding a social activity's determining parameters allows us
insights into why participants act as they do in terms of their intentions,
environmental causes, and social conventions and norms. For example,
while at an auction, I raise my hand. In doing so I have displayed my
intention of making a bid in a normatively and conventionally appropriate
way, i. e. according to a rule, and in a way which, given the environmental
circumstances, might be perceived by others. That the reader can under-

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The bulk of this discussion is based on Allwood, 1976; 1984.

stand this example is due to his knowledge of the social activity known as an auction. Understanding a social activity's determined parameters allows us insights into how actions, such as hand raising, are organized as patterned meaningful behaviour.

Communication, itself a social activity though at a less abstract level, occurs in most social activities. In some cases it can be said that a social activity is communication, for example, a debate, a sermon, etc. Communication within activities may be instrumental towards achieving the activity's goals or it may be ancillary.

Below we will discuss determining and determined parameters in more detail and for ease of exposition our explication of the parameters will pertain to social activities where communication is instrumental in achieving the activity's goals.

1. Determining Parameters

A. Global-Collective

Global-Collective parameters determine the behaviour of all participants during a complete interaction and include: 1) the main function or purpose of the activity; 2) role configuration, i.e. the types of roles participants are required to enact in the activity; 3) artefacts, i.e. certain activities require standard instruments or objects such as pens, paper, computer screens; 4) general physical circumstances, i.e. what can be said, heard, and done will depend on factors such as temperature, noise level, visibility and so on.

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In Planning the Presentation interaction, we had "designed" the purpose, i.e. "Plan a 10-minute presentation of Malaysia in terms of people, progress and problems for people who know little of the country, artefacts, i.e. we provided pen and paper, and to some extent the physical circumstances, i.e. features of the studio, chairs, tables, etc. The participants were left to find their own role configuration.

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B. Local Collective

These parameters collectively determine behaviour at a specific point in the interaction. Essentially, they comprise clusters of global-collective parameters which are in effect at a given time. This allows activities to be embedded in one another as sequenced sub-activities, each with its own purpose, configuration etc. Sequenced sub-activities then become collective resources for work towards superordinate and other activities. Minimally, a sub-activity consists of a pairing of a sender activity with a receiver activity, such as question-answer, assert-listen, etc.

Essentially this is the "how to" stipulations of a social activity. For example, to have a meeting, you need to first elect a chairperson and secretary, then set up an agenda, open discussion of the first agenda point, etc. How our informants were to do Planning a Presentation was left up to them and it is here that we find interesting differences between them as revealed in the rules of speaking they seemed to be following.

C. Global Individual

Global-Individual determining parameters refer to the more or less stable mental and physical traits of individuals within the activity which are not given by the collective determining parameters. These parameters include physical handicaps, stable character traits, beliefs, values, attitudes, etc.

Many of these traits can be seen as originating in individuals' sociocultural background. Rules of speaking fall under this classification as well as, more generally, individuals' knowledge of and attitudes towards all other determining parameters of the social activity. Of importance in this study will be informants' understanding of a particular social problem in their home country. Also of interest will be informants' respective identities during the interaction. Our informants were young men, in their late twenties. Mohamad (M) identified himself as Malay-Malaysian, was from Kuantan, where his parents, after living most of their lives in a kampong, now run a small boutique. He has lived in Sweden off and on for about 5 years. He has personal reasons for being in Sweden and plans to return to Malaysia to live with his family. In Sweden he is employed as a teacher's helper. He has a high school education. Phillip (P) identified himself as a Chinese-Malaysian. He is from Kuala Lumpur where he grew up with his mother, his father having passsed away while he was a young child. He has lived in Sweden for some 2 years. He manages two upscale restaurants. He has a high school education and emigrated to Sweden as a family member.

D. Local-Individual

These parameters refer to the above individual traits at a given moment in the activity. Beliefs, attitudes and moods, for example, can change during an activity and affect subsequent behaviour.

To try in some way to capture these psychological aspects of the interaction we will refer to particular "situations", which are sequences

in the interaction and show how participants behaviour in these situations can be classified as oppressive, accommodative, avoiding, etc.

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2. Determined Parameters

A. Global-Collective

The global collectively-determined parameters of an activity refer to aspects of behaviour which require interaction and occur as a general pattern of the activity These parameters include the sequence of sub-activities typical of an activity, for example, a sequence of sub-activities; turn-taking regulations for who has the right to speak to whom, about what, for how long; and feedback routines for eliciting and giving feed back concerning perception, understanding, or attitudinal relations.

The social activities can be embedded within each other as sequences of sub-activities, accounting for an activity's step by step construction and allowing us to segment the behavioural stream within activities into meaningful units. A relevant question is how small do we make our segments. The answer is it depends on what we can observe the individuals under study attending to and our own common sense. It is true that while I am in a meeting at work, I am engaged in some abstract social activity of, say Earning a Living, but that certainly isn't what I am attending to at the moment. Rather, it is the mundane business of participating in the meeting, striving to make decisions as called for by the agenda.

B. Local-Collective

As noted earlier, the minimal collectively-determined local units are a pairing of a sender and a receiver activity These parameters are then, for example, the two parts of a sub-activity, the two turns of a turn exchange, and the act of eliciting and the act of giving feedback.

C. Global-Individual

This parameter consists of the tools used by an individual in linguistic communicative behaviour and therefore includes body movement, phonology, vocabulary and grammar. The parameter is individual as it is possible for one to utilize the tools without relying on the contribution of others.

D. Local-Individual

> Individuals incrementally contribute to the activity with specific
> utterance acts and body movements. It is these specific acts and
> movements which constitute Local-Individual parameters.

The four parameters above are the "nuts and bolts" in and between
the steps by which the interaction is constructed. My analysis of them is an
attempt to show their orderliness based on what I have elsewhere (Day,
1990), following Levinson (1983) to same extent, termed system constraints
and ritual constraints. The basic idea is this: the way in which participants'
contributions to the interaction, e.g. in the form of various speech acts, are
organised makes possible inferences as to what determining parameters
are obtaining for the contributions to be so organised.[2]

For our purposes, one way of understanding such an interaction
abstracted as a social activity is to note regular differences in how the
participants go about their work, and here the work is mainly commu-
nicative in nature, which seems to create problematic situations in the
interaction, for example, where participants seem to be antagonistic or
confrontational or in bewilderment. The next step is to show if and how
these differences in behaviour are reflective of differences in their respec-
tive sociocultural backgrounds. By this it is understood that differences in
sociocultural background become salient in the on-going negotiation of
participants' respective identities in the interaction and to be a source of
discord therein.[3] A prerequisite for problematic situations to arise, then, is

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[2]This will be exemplified in the results section. In order to do this type of analysis, the entire
interaction was video-recorded. A transcription was then made of verbal, non-verbal, and
non-vocal behaviour. Excerpts from the transcript and transcription conventions are shown
in Appedix 1. For reasons of space, the entire transcript is not included.

[3]Obviously any two participants within any social activity will differ from each other in
uncountable ways. The point here is that for these differences to matter in any real way to the
social activity as such, they need be displayed and acted upon by participants. Thus, what I
am advocating here is a definition of an "ideal type" of intercultural communication which
is based on participants' understanding of a particular communicative situation as such. We
cannot assume that because participants objectively have different sociocultural backgrourds
they are necessarily aware of this and acting upon their awareness. For example, two people,
strangers to each other, with varying backgrounds might be speaking on the telephone w th
a poor connection. Being barely able to make out what the other is saying, they may not be
aware of just how different they are. Their communicative behaviour might be likened to a
type of "telegraphese", where few metacommunicative (Bateson, 1978) signals would get
through. Granted their messages will be affected, most likely reduced in intentional depth
(Allwood, 1976) or misunderstood. Nonetheless, it seems unlikely that they would be able to
attribute these effects to different backgrounds.

that participants design, through rules of speaking, their contributions to
the social activity for their respective partner(s) whom they perceive as
members of socioculturally different groups. Likewise, other participants'
perceived identities affect how their contributions are interpreted. In
parallel with this, other factors such as the purpose of the social activity at
hand, relations between the sociocultural groups in terms of which partici-
pants have been identified and so on may contribute to a problematic
situation.

With such situations as evidence, we might suggest that participants
are following different rules, in the sense of norms, originating in their
backgrounds for accomplishing the task at hand[4] Behavioural differences
arising from following varying rules need not occur, however, if one or
both participants accommodate, either by choice or force, to each other's
rule preferences.[5]

From this study, we might be able to hypothesize, for example, that
Malay-Malaysians prefer to behave, or take it as "natural" to behave
according to rule x in social activity z, and similar activities, as evidenced
by their manipulation and understanding of particular verbal and non-
verbal signs. Likewise, we might hypothesize that Chinese-Malaysians
prefer rule y in social activity z and similar activities. Let us say that rules
x and y have to do with which language varieties should be used in social
activity z. Taking social activity z to be the activity we had our informants
enact we might state the two rules as follows:

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[4]The idea that interlocutors following rules when communicating or, from another perspective,
that we can write rules which adequately account for the communicative performance, is
currently under hot debate (see, for example, Taylor and Cameron 1986 and for a critique of
the former, see Schiffrin, 1990). The perspective taken here is that rules are glosses for norms
for the rational and cooperative accomplishment of social life and that rules are both
regulative and constitutive of social activities, ie they not only guide behaviour but are part
of the relevant context necessary for the instantiation of a social activity. Rules of speaking can
be seen as a subset of rules for social behaviour or which match normatively appropriate
messages with conventionalized verbal and non-verbal signs.

[5]Yet another possibility is that participants follow different rules and this does not lead to
problematic interaction. Depending upon the social activity, participants unknowingly at
cross purposes may still successfully accomplish activity and individual goals. For an
example of this see Saville-Troike, 1988.

1)   x = in this context, i.e. in Sweden, in our video studio, these par-
        ticipants, etc. when enacting social activity z, i.e. preparing
        a presentation of Malaysia for a research project in this context,
        use Bahasa Malaysia,

2)   y = in this context, i.e. in Sweden, in our video studio, these
        participants, etc, when enacting social activity z, i.e. preparing
        a presentation of Malaysia for a research project in this context,
        use English.

From the discussion above of different kinds of intercultural contact,
the following types of intercultural interaction may arise when partici-
pants are to enact social activity z (see table on following page). "Rule
Alternatives" refers to the particular rule or combination thereof obtaining
in the interaction, or sequence within it. "Situations" refers to one of five
possible generalizations concerning socio-psychological contexts obtain-
ing in the interaction, or sequence. "Behaviour" refers to examples of types
of communicative behaviour which could be used, by the participants as
well as analyst, as evidence for both a particular rule alternative and a
particular situation. The examples of types of communicative behaviour
can be seen as initiations of or reactions to particular rule alternatives or
situations.

     This example of the interplay between rules, situations, and conse-
quences can be likened to an overly simplified and incomplete account of
some of the features of a dance. That individuals bring particular rules
originating in their socioculturalbackgrounds to bear is but one part of the
score on which the dance is based. Furthermore, in the step by step
construction of the interaction, things may change very rapidly. Partici-
pants align and realign themselves within the interaction in order to meet
immediate and long-term needs and as constrained by demands of the
dance itself, i.e both its physical, biological, ecological (or system) con-
straints, making sure that its pattern and rhythm are in harmony with the
way it is to be "heard" by fellow dancers (or its ritual constraints).[6]

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[6]For what it means to "hear" see Sacks, 1972.

Table 1: Example of Types of Intercultural Interaction

RULE ALTERNATIVES	SITUATION	BEHAVIOUR
1. Rule x obtains.	Rule x obtaining in spite of CM's preference for rule y could be classified as an oppressive situation.	MM explicitly demands x and/or language competency effects and/or CM follows x but withdraws and/or there are signs of strong negative emotions towards each other etc.
2. Rule x obtains	Rule x obtaining and CM voluntarily relinquishing his claim for rule y to obtain could be classified as an accommodative situation.	no signs of strong negative emotion and/or active engagement by CM and/or similarity incommunicativestyles and/or language competency effects etc.*
3. Rules x and y obtain interchangeably	Rules x and y obtaining inter-changeably could be classified as a situation of compromise	code-switching by both and/or active engagement etc.
4. CM follows rule x and MM follows rule y	Rules x and y obtaining independently of each other could be classified as conflictual	signs of strong negative effect toward each other and/or obliterative overlap
5. Neither rule x nor rule y obtains, rule a obtains, instead.	For example, another in-common language variety is used. Such a situation could be classified as one of avoidance.	language competency effects and/or topic selection effect**

*   This is the rule which obtained throughout most of the interaction, i. c. MM accommo dated to CM'S preference for English.

**   The idea here is that use of language foreign to both participants might affect what is talked about, e.g.it might be difficult to talk about "very" Malay or Chinese "things" in English or it might be easier to initiate "tabooed" topics in English.

Results

In this section I will attempt to show how particular aspects of Phillip and Mohamad's behaviour during the interaction, i.e. its determined parameters, can be best understood in the light of a particular set of determining parameters, i.e. rules of speaking. Basically what I will do is, after a general overview, point out examples of communicative behaviour which seem to exemplify certain rules of speaking.

After initial talk about how the interaction was to proceed, what I term Procedure below, the interaction seemed segmented into sequences of talk on different topics: people, progress, and problems respectively. That "problems" appears more than once indicates that this topic was dominant in the interaction, a phenomenon which will be discussed further on. Another segmentation of the interaction can be made in terms of different socio-psychological situations, such as accommodative, conflictual, etc. The two types of sequences run parallel to each other as shown in figure 1:

Figure 1: Sequences of Topic and Situation

Topic	Situation
Procedure	Compromise
	Conflictual
Problems (1)	Conflictual
People	Accommodative
	Compromise
	Accommodative
Problems (2)	Conflictual
Progress	Conflictual
	Accommodative.

Now there are several types of rule incompatibilities behind these various situations. From the excerpt of Procedure in Appendix 1. we can see, for example, the compromise situation is an attempt to proceed with the interaction with P speaking English and M Bahasa Malaysia. The

conflictual situation during Procedure is caused by P wanting to write down the main "points" first and M wanting to be friends first. Under problems (2) the conflictual situation has to do with M wanting to keep the talk concrete and personal while P wanted the talk abstract and impersonal. More often than not either P or M accommodated to each other For example, following the second conflictual situation during Procedure, P went along with M's suggestion to be friends first, thus accommodating to M.

While processes of accommodation and compromise are very interesting phenomena, I will limit the discussion here to rules of speaking which seem to hold during situations of conflict (see Table 1 above). My reasoning here is that this type of situation is more problematic for communication, at least in the short term. Based upon an analysis of conflictual situations within the interaction, Table 2 below, illustrates the types of rules of speaking P and M seemed to be following during those situations. As in the examples given in Table 1, all rules apply to this context, i.e. in Sweden, in our video studio, with these participants etc, when enacting social activity z, i.e. preparing a presentation of Malaysia for a research project in this context.

The next step in our analysis is to show how these differences in rules of speaking are reflective of P and M's respective sociocultural backgrounds. In other words, we need to show that Phillip and Mohamad are identifying each other in contrastive ways and, in this case, we are interested in seeing if they identify each other as Chinese Malaysian and Malay-Malaysian respectively There are several kinds of communicative phenomena which indicate that this is the case, but for the sake of brevity I will only mention a few anecdotally (see Schenkien, 1978 for more discussion). First, there is the fact that P and M are in our studio in the first place. We explained to them that we were interested in observing communication between Malaysians. Although we could have asked two Malays, or two Chinese, etc., it did seem reasonable to us and I assume reasonable to P and M that to capture communication between Malaysians, given Malaysia's self-proclaimed ethnic diversity it was better to get two interlocutors from different ethnic groups. Similarly, Phillip and Mohamad are both immigrants to Sweden and, they are meeting for the first time. For such people, nationality is an obviously relevant part of their identities in many social activities. Second, within the interaction itself, we find the following phenomena. In the initial discussion of "people of Malaysia", it seemed natural to Phillip and Mohamad to categorize people as belonging to different "races", Chinese, Indian, Malay, etc. In the first "problem" discussion, Mohamad asks Phillip if he has heard of the problem in Kota Bharu to which Phillip asks if he means the problem for Malay-Malaysians

or the Chinese Malaysians. Once again an ethnic distinction is made. Further on we see Mohamad making a point of telling Phillip that his brother is married to a Chinese girl and that he has lots of Chinese friends. Phillip brings up the problems of being Chinese and doing business in Malaysia, and so on. From these phenomena it is reasonable to infer that P and M are identifying each other, and to some extent have been identified by us, as members of ethnic groups and that these identities are relevant for them in this interaction.

Table 2: Problematic rules of speaking

	Phillip		Mohamad
r:1-	write down main points independently first, then debate what to leave in.	r:1-	get to know one another first through conversation. Make connections between P's social network and M's
r:2-	approach topic of Malaysia abstractly, give statistics, refer to institutions, laws etc. Show similarities, generalize.	r:2-	approach topic of Malaysia concretely, give examples based on one's own experience, refer to persons. Show variety, be specific.
r:3	turns should be long, uninterrupted and built up with connectors such as "therefore", "consequently", etc	r:3-	turns should be short, overlapped, and built up with connectors like "and", "then", etc.**
r:4-	feedback should be neutral in terms of attitude.	r:4-	feedback should be positive in terms of attitude***

* Interestingly, Phillip was the first to follow this rule. However it was while he and Mohamad were "writing down the main points" and, thus, seemingly outside of the Planning social activity. Inside the activity proper, it is clearly Mohamad's preference.

** While at first glance, these types of rules might seem to be related to the fact that P is more proficient in English, M's following of this rule is consistent, intuitively at least, with his other rules.

*** By feedback I mean signs such as interjections, back-channel cues, etc which serve to signal perception, comprehension, and attitude.

Now these different rules of speaking are neither exotic nor esoteric. Nor are they something we would include in museums of Malay or Chinese heritage. Rather, they are reflections of how two people from these sociocultural backgrounds have utilized their linguistic repertoires in a particular social activity which we have shown to be subjectively and objectively intercultural.[7] This is to say that the rules themselves are probably not particular to Chinese-Malaysians or Malay-Malaysians, but why should they be? It is here we see the importance of adding the condition that Mohamad and Phillip identify themselves as Chinese and Malay respectively Why should we assume that either of them is going to treat the other as a co-member of their respective sociocultural groups? This would be a valid inference if we could have shown that Phillip and Mohamad were speaking according to some particularly Malay or Chinese rules. I contend that no such rules, as such, exist. What exists are differences in the use of rules within particular social activities.

The preceding discussion does not mean that Phillip and Mohamad do not act the way they do because they are, both from our and their perspectives, Chinese and Malay respectively It merely excludes the explanation that they are blindly following socioculturally different rules of speaking. Phillip and Mohamad's respective identities can, in fact, offer a reasonable explanation of why they have followed the different rules shown above.

First, one can generalize from the two sets of rules that Phillip seems to be following an abstract and impersonal strategy, while Mohamad is doing just the opposite, trying to be concrete and personal. Second, we noted earlier that the topic of problems arose more frequently than other topics. In fact we can say that the "problems" discussion is pervasive throughout the conflictual situations of the interaction. Furthermore, the "problems" which are discussed are problems between Chinese and Malays as ethnic groups. Phillip views the ethnic problem as follows: the government must raise the Malays to socioeconomic equity with other ethnic groups so that all members of Malaysia's ethnic groups can contribute to the unification of people in Malaysia under a common nationalist identity, namely Malaysian.[8] Now, given that Phillip and Mohamad's

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[7]In other words, it does not seem commonsensical to suppose that Phillip and Mohamad could not follow each other's rules in other situations. Therefore the rules posited are part of similarly educated Malays and Chinese individuals' linguistic repertoires.

[8]By ethnic groups, in this instance, I mean political organizations which define their membership by attribution of such characteristics as common geopolitical origin, socioeconomic interests, linguistic varieties, etc.

identities are ethnic and given that the "ethnic problem" in Malaysia seems to be understood as defined above, what would be the best way for them to communicate with each other so as to defend their definitions of the problem and to maintain some form of cooperation? The answer is, quite simply, precisely as they did communicate with each other.

To Phillip the problem is that Malays are favoured over Chinese because they are Malays. Mohamad's identity in this interaction is based on him belonging to this social group. Thus "Mohamad as a Malay" is metonymic of the problem. To get rid of his problem, then, Phillip attempts through his communicative behaviour to depersonalize the interaction. To Mohamad the problem is that identities are ethnically based as opposed to nationalistically based. Phillip's identity is ethnically based, therefore he is metonymic of the problem for Mohamad. To get rid of his problem, then, Mohamad attempts to reach such a personal level that abstract categories like ethnicity become irrelevant.

It may seem odd that Phillip and Mohamad are doing what they can communicatively, given a particular set of circumstances, to maintain cooperation, yet that cooperation, partly because of the way they are communicating is on very shaky ground. The oddity in this may dissipate somewhat if we bear in mind that it is not a rule of speaking per se which is creating the conflict, rather it is Phillip and Mohamad's implicit understanding of a social problem in which, because of their respective identities, they are constituted. Thus, they are both trying to do the right thing, trying to overcome a problem, yet they are seemingly unaware that the rules of speaking they are following are reactions to the problem differentially defined.

Conclusion

In this paper, I have tried to show how differing rules of speaking within a particular social activity might be explained. In doing so I have emphasized that the context in which informants are doing things with language, i.e. what social activity they are engaged in, and the characteristics of their respective identities as they are developed during the interaction are of crucial importance. Furthermore, I have tried to show how rules of speaking, as analytical constructs, are only useful when their use by informants can be shown to be motivated by the exigencies of cooperation. The particular rules I have discussed do not appear particular to either of Phillip or Mohamad's sociocultural groups, yet that they are members of these two groups, and thus identified in the interaction, is reflected in the use of these rules within this social activity

It is, of course, difficult to generalize from the findings of a case study. Other Chinese-Malaysian and Malay-Malaysian individuals in different social activities may act quite differently A study such as this can be useful in generating descriptions of and explanations for intercultural behaviour which can be tested for adequacy in future studies. Such studies can test the generalizability of the results shown above by taking account of the social activities informants are engaged in and the outcome of negotiations of informants' identities within those activities.

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APPENDIX 1

Transcription Conventions:

(.)	micro pauses
(20)	20 second pause
,	continuing intonation
?	rising intonation
!	animated intonation
***	quieter speech
>*<	quicker pace
-----	emphasized, stressed speech
=	quick starts after previous speech
[ ]	overlapped speech
\	interrupted speech
	continuing sound

DATASEGMENT 1: Procedure	Comments

1. P: talk about people first
          [ ]
2. M.   Yea I think so
3. P·   hmm so people they are
4. M.   so what kinda language you want
          to talk? (1.5)
5. P·   talk in Malay (,) or?
6. M: Yea we can speak ahh we speak
          Malay (3) kita sudah sekarang
7   P·   jaah I speak very difficult >very
          difficult< (1) Jag*· aku its difficult
          [ ]   * jag = I in Swedish
8   M: saya
9. P·   ja saya ja
10. M: I don think so difficult you just try a bit
11. P·   yes
12. M: no problem for that (.5) so now we sta
13. P: maybe we go in English first (,) all
          the points
14. M: I can't so good English
15. P·   maybe you go in Malay I go in English   The compromise regarding lan-
                                                    guage choice begins here after
                                                    the abortive attempt to speak
                                                    Malay Between lines 17 and 18
                                                    Mohamad is speaking Malay
                                                    while Phillip listens and mini-
                                                    mally responds

16.M.   :ok

17 P·   because I hear I understand what you
        are talking but I can't speak so fast

18. M: ...di Malaysia berbahasa China dan
        India=

19 P·   umm=

20.M.   harus berbahasa kebangsaan Malaysia
        so dan kita harus bersatu padu=

21. P· umm=

22. M. you understand dat?

23. P· uhhuh

24. M. so (,) dan saya harap uh kita akan
        bicara (2) *you* can talk

25. P· uhh ok maybe like that Mohamad   This compromise also fails and

26.M: mm   brings on Phillip's suggestion

27 P·   you can write everything you want to   to overcome the language prob-
        write in your language   lem by writing things down first.

28.M.   mm   Although Mohamad agrees he

29. P· I write everything I want to write   does not dothis, trying instead to
        about people now   engage Phillip in conversation.

30. M. > ok but <   See especially lines 63-67

31 P·   and then we come to a conclusion later Other signs of a conflictual

32. M. ok,   situation are the numerous

33. P· ok it's much better like that?   overlaps and interruptions here.

34. M. mmm I think so? because, but I don't
        understand to talk
                    [   ]

35. P· you write all the topic you
        want

36.M.   because it's difficult for me because here
        I speak Swedish so/

37.P·   We talk Swedish, why not?
        (3)

38.M: Can *you* speak Swedish?   This attempt to create an avoid-

39. P· Ja, jag kan, om det ar Idttare   ance situation by choosing to

40. M. ok we/   speak Swedish also failed.

41 P·   sa kan vi prata svensk, va?

42. M: aha =

43.P·   vi kommer Idttare till alla punkter   Translation:
        e sent innan vi liksom prata/   39: yes, I can, if it's easier

44.M: ahaa (2) so we must talk with ahh   41 so we'll speak Swedish, ok?
        Dennis first

45.P: no its ok   42: ok

46. M: umm   43: we'll get to the main points

47.P·   We write down the points first because   easier and then we can
        we're gonna talk   sort of
                [   ]

48.M.   ok!

49. P·	about Malaysia which the people don't know (some 5 minutes writing)		Interestingly Phillip initiates this sequence of talk and the talk has
50. P·	where you work in now		more to do with being friends
51. M.	I work in a school		which is notably Mohamad's
52. P·	mmmhu		preference. The talk's position-
53. M.	You're workin in a Japanese restaurant?		ing in the interaction, however, reveals it to be "outside" of the
54. P·	yea		Planning social activity Thus,
55. M.	tha's near Bacchus		in contrast to Mohamad, Phillip
56. P·	yea, yea you know that?		does not feel this is an appro-
57. M:	uh I been there one, I think I saw you in the kitchen =		priate way to go about Plan- ning.
58. P·	jasa		
59. M.	cookin =		
60. P·	no I don't cook		Phillip goes along with this thus
61. M.	I think you standin in bar		ending the conflictual situation
62. P·	I stand in the bar and do work, talk with guests (writing 2 min)		for the time being. However, other problems arise throughout
63. M.	I don know what to talk about (writing 1 min)		the interaction whenever the topic of Problem is discussed.
64. M.	we must talk		
65. P·	humm (1 min)		
66. M.	I neva do this before (50)		
67 M.	It's difficult for me (2 min technical interruption)		
68. M:	I don't think we need to write, just talk about that and we just uh like uh because now I don't know you and then I feel like I know you and then we can talk like friends		