

## CHAPTER SEVEN: ANALYSIS OF FRAMES

### 7.0 Introduction

The analysis of the differing language patterns in the communication of both groups of subjects in Chapters 5 and 6 indicated that there were inter and intra group differences with regard to the world views of subjects. Findings indicate that there is less homogeneity in Group 1 subjects' responses as three Group 1 subjects' patterns of communication bear similarity to that of Group 2 subjects. The discussion on Chapter 7 then focusses on the types of frames, and briefly on the levels of frames utilized by subjects, in their responses to the two interviews in order to confirm the findings in Chapters 5 and 6.

The type of framing or 'structures of expectation' utilized for analysis in this chapter are frames as used in Tannen's (1993) sense (cf. Chapter 2, section 2.6.2.3 & Chapter 4, section 4.5 and 4.8 for details on frames). Thus, Chapter seven focusses on the cultural aspects of these frames through an examination of its constitution which reflect the structures of expectation of subjects. As discussed by Tannen (1993), these structures are manifested through use of surface linguistic elements inherent in the discourse of subjects. Hence, consideration is given to these structures of expectation in order to locate the frames utilized by subjects. The chapter also discusses and identifies the sub-frames which make up the frames utilized by subjects in a particular culture. It is surmised that identification of the kinds and levels of frames used would reflect the constructed social reality of subjects' world view. As stated by Schiffrin (1994), the contextualization of the utterance motivates its use. Thus, it is crucial to identify the context(s) in which verbalization occurs to identify subjects' world views.

For this study, the structures of expectation discussed above are viewed to be similar to the contextual presuppositions mentioned by Gumperz (1982) as both are used as interpretive devices (cf. Chapter 4, section 4.5). Keeping in mind the attestation of Sapir-Whorf hypothesis of the relationship between language and cognition, it is surmised that

the English and Chinese language dominant subjects in the study would utilize pro-Western or Chinese cultural frames as a result of the influence of their dominant language and culture. Therefore, analysis is conducted through a comparison of subject's verbalization with the context of either the Western frame which focusses on the self and personal agency or the Chinese frame which focusses on the collective and collective agency. The aforesaid is based on the view that one of the distinctive differences between Chinese and Western culture lies in the concept of self which exerts great influences on attitudes and behaviour (Bond, 1991; Nisbett 2003; De Mente, 2000). It is also in keeping with Bordwell's (1985) and MacLacland and Reid's (1994) view that verbalizations are a result of subjects' interpretation through the process of matching their knowledge of reality as well as extra-textual knowledge of the world (See Chapter 2 for a related discussion).

Analysis of Chapter 7 is divided into two sections and is based on the 4 aspects or frames of the Family Descriptor Scale (FDS). These aspects were selected for analysis as they have been highlighted in Interview 1 or the Narrative Interview. The sequence of aspects are as follows: centrality of family relationships, filial piety, face and educational achievement.

### **7.1 Interview 1 or Narrative Interview (VCD 1)**

According to Tannen (1993), expectations can be reflected in the assumptions made with regard to actions and the broad context. In this study, it is reflected in the different level of contexts which also indicate the different types of frames utilized by subjects and is discussed in Appendix H, section 7.2.5. Although 10 aspects constitute the FDS, only four have been selected for analysis and discussion because these aspects seemed to be salient to subjects therefore more data was available from these 4 aspects and also because of constraints of space.

#### **7.1.1 Centrality of the family**

For the above aspect, subjects' views are reflected in the structures of expectation with

regard to the power the family has over its members, the differential priorities given to the family and its wellbeing by its members. The discussion is made with reference to the use of surface linguistic elements such as repetitions, adverbs, modals, auxiliaries and adjectives.

#### **7.1.1.1 Evidence of expectations for centrality of family in Group 1's narratives**

A comparison of the narratives from both groups indicate that the structures of expectation with regard to the issues mentioned showed that they are culturally determined as their narratives indicate the distinct influence of personal or collective agency. In stating and repeating two times, "they take good care..." before adding, "of course," MC5 was emphasizing and reinforcing on what was stated and expected of family members. Thus, MC5 elaborated that such acts of caring could cause them to "even sacrificed themselves" for the family. The use of the adverb, "even" serves to bring home the point of her argument, which is, sacrificing oneself is part of her notion of taking good care of family members. Thus, Lin (2000) stated that the family system is the negation of individualism because it deprives the young of freedom and enterprise. Below is an excerpt of MC5's narrative:

MC5: (2)...they take good care of their: : : ((tongue click)) what do you call? ah: family members, >they take good care of them, of course lah. < (3)So: they can even sacrificed themselves for this people.

The traditional Chinese family was however, run along patriarchal lines which meant that the head of the family wielded most if not absolute power over its members. The aforementioned is observed in the narrative of MC14 regarding the need for the daughter to "always follow" the father's wishes and decisions in marriage as the father was from "a conservative family." The use of "always" indicated that it is to be done at all times. Repetition of the words "follow" and "always" by MC14 was done perhaps to reiterate not only its significance in the traditional family set up but also to highlight his view of the expectation of the powerlessness of women then. Tannen (2007:60) quotes Labov to state

that repetition is evaluative as it functions not only to emphasize but also to contribute to a point. Therefore, the expectation of the daughter in the traditional Chinese family as outlined by MC14, was to follow her father's instruction at all times. Use of the modal "should" also indicated subject's expectation of what is appropriate or necessary. Taken as a whole, the daughter was expected to follow at all times her father's instruction. Below is an excerpt of MC14's responses:

MC14: (2) ...You have to always **follow** your: -the instruction from the parents... (5)But her father feel very upset because for him... his daughter actually **should follow, always follow** his instruction.

[emphasis by the researcher]

Similarly, subject MC15 spoke of the powerless position of the female in the family, where her future before marriage is determined by her parents, after marriage by her husband and still later, by her son.

Following is an excerpt of MC15's responses :

MC15: (2)Our Chinese **will** say, the woman, aa: "chai-chai chia chong fu, chu wai chong fu, lau lai chong cher." (3) That means, when the daughter not married yet, live with parents, the parents **will** arrange every-everything for her. After her marriage, her husband **will** arrange everything for her. And then when the woman become old, the son **will** arrange for her.

[emphasis by the researcher]

Notice the repetitive use of "will" in MC5's responses as he discussed what "the Chinese will say," followed by what the parents, the husband and the son "will" do for the woman. The modal "will" conveys the idea of predictability such as in having an expectation and in this instance it is MC15's expectation of what Chinese society as represented by what parents, husbands and sons have to say and do with regard to Chinese women. Thus, in the family, the male members of the family are viewed to be central in determining the future of its female members.

In fact, subject MC3 summed up the role of the female as represented by the heroine in the ancient household by stating that she "has to go through a lot of struggles and pressures from her family" as a result of its restrictive rules and regulations. Use of the auxiliary "has" plus the infinitive "to" carries the same meaning of necessity or must. Consequently, when MC3 stated that the heroine "has to" he indicated that the subject had no choice but to go through it. Therefore, "she is expected to be submissive to all these

traditions.” The idea of being submissive to the family and its traditions alludes to the structure of expectation with regard to the female in the Chinese family set up and the power of the collective as represented by the family and society. Given below are MC3’s comments:

MC3: (5)So, I think so aa: she also **has to go** through a lot of struggles and pressure from her family, um: and also from her peers. (6) And as a lady, she will have to, she is **expected to be submissive** to all these traditions.

[emphasis by the researcher]

Subject MC8 mentioned the family in passing through his remark on the moral value being better than what it is today:

MC8: (3)And also I saw the moral value is better then the society nowadays. 4)Like the **relationship between the family** and also the brother and sister and also the friendship.

[emphasis by the researcher]

Use of the adjective, “better” is subjective as it represents his view of the moral value then which is measured against his expectation of what it is perceived to be today. His reference to “the relationship between the family” members such as that between brothers, sisters and friends (family friends) alludes to the existence of strong familial ties among its members. Hence, the family is perceived to be central to its members as seen in the priority given to familial relationships.

#### **7.1.1.2 Evidence of expectations for centrality of family in Group 2’s narratives**

While Group 1 subjects discussed about the influence and power vested in the male members of the family in relation to the heroine and females in general, Group 2 subjects discussed about the individual in relation to the family such as focus on the female protagonist or heroine. Subject ME10 seemed dissatisfied with the heroine’s actions and found it unacceptable that she “has to sacrifice” for the family “all the time” as seen in the excerpt given below:

ME10:(9)And: like I say earlier, there are many things coming in and family is more important. (10)I feel that **all the time she has to sacrifice**, I mean she’ll put her own interests aa: you know, below the family. The family is her business **all the time**.

[emphasis by the researcher]

When she pointed out that the heroine “has to” she was inferring that there was no choice in the matter for the heroine. Repetition of the words, “all the time,” as well as the stress

on the word, “all” at the end of her response, drives home the point of her argument that the heroine had spent too much time on her family and too little on herself as “the family is her business all the time.” Increased stress on “all” indicated her concern or dissatisfaction with the great amount of time the heroine spent on her family. In brief, ME10 was not in favour of the heroine’s habitual practice of putting her personal interest on hold for the sake of her family which is in keeping with the Western frame of personal agency, with its focus on self rather than the collective.

Similarly, in line with the concept of personal agency, subject ME1’s focus on the heroine and repetition of the word “able” indicated her focus on the heroine’s ability and the idea of personal agency. Mention was therefore made of the heroine’s valiant efforts “to fight injustice and corruption” in order for her to “save her father and family name.” Therefore, she had to successfully undergo “many trials and challenges” which came her way. From her verbalization, it could be inferred that ME1 had great admiration for the heroine’s independent character because in attempting to put her family first, the heroine is seen to be noble, courageous and selfless. Thus, ME1 equated the heroine to the legendary Chinese heroine, “Fa Mulan.”

ME1: (6)Mm: Lai Kuan wanted to do all that and through aa: many trials and challenges, she aa: **was able** to fight injustice and corruption. (7)Ok: she was **also able** to save her father and family name as well. Okay, something like Fa Mulan, ok?  
[emphasis by the researcher]

Although the family was viewed to be important, the individual’s wellbeing took top priority. Consequently, the heroine was praised by a few Group 2 subjects for her boldness and non-conformity. Following is an excerpt of ME1’s responses:

ME1: (10)... Well, it should have been better for a girl who dared to be different in an age of conformity.

Even though the heroine disobeyed her parent’s wishes for an arranged marriage and ran away from home, subject ME2 stated that her problem was not in disobedience but because she was born “in an era that was too traditional” for her:

ME2: (14) Sadly to say, in my opinion, basically, she was a young lady that was **born in an era that was too traditional for her**. (15)She might have done well in our own generation ((laughs)).

ME2's use of the intensifier "too" indicated her expectation with regard to the time then, which was viewed to be overly traditional for the modern minded heroine. Moreover, when she stated that "she might have done well in our generation," the use of "might" indicated her expectation of the heroine fitting well into the present time. Thus, implying that it was the question of time and not the heroine who was to be faulted. ME2 also described her as a "modern woman, independent, one who had opinions of her own, who had guts, who was intelligent, who had great confidence in herself." The long string of adjectives implied that she was greatly admired and was nothing but outstanding. Tannen (1993:47) quotes Labov in stating that when adjectives appear in narratives, the quality expressed is significant as it is a product of an evaluative process. Similarly, ME4 was of like view when she stated that the heroine was a woman of "capability," as she "has the strength and ability of a man." Focus again was on the character of the heroine and the concept of personal agency. Consequently, subjects ME2 and ME4 stated that the heroine's failure at the conclusion was not because of her weakness but due to the fact that "she was born in the wrong era." In brief, part of the heroine's failure was attributed in part to the context or era in which she lived. Below is an excerpt of her narrative:

ME4: (2)Um: firstly, I feel that the lady in the first VCD has the strength and ability of a man but she was **born in the wrong era** because she was not given the opportunity to express herself, to be herself even though she has the capability.

[emphasis by the researcher]

### 7.1.1.3 Summary

In sum, it could be observed that the family occupied the highest priority for Group 1 subjects. Roles were clearly defined and understood by members of the family as focus was on the collective and collective agency. Females in particular, were expected to bow to the wishes of the family or the collective. Words such as "submissive," "follow" and "sacrifice" used by Group 1 subjects reflected the expectations with regard to the behaviour of the female individual in relation to the family. The notions of hierarchy, power

and obligation mentioned by Group 1 subjects, which pertained to the Chinese cultural frame of family with its expectations discussed earlier, denote Group 1 subjects' contextual presuppositions for the aspect of family.

On the other hand, priority was given to the self or personal agency, in particular the female individual as evidenced in the mention of the aspirations and desires of the heroine by Group 2 subjects. Some even voiced their dissatisfaction over the heroine's selflessness with regard to the family and view that as a noble character trait.

Interestingly, two differing views on the idea of sacrifice from the two different groupings acted as contextualization cues to indicate the differences in the frames and world views adhered by subjects. Recall that in the discussion on sacrifice, MC5 discussed about how family members are in the habit of helping each other and would go to the extent of sacrificing for their family. In contrast, subject ME10 from Group 2 voiced her concern over the heroine sacrificing for her family at the expense of her own personal interest. Thus, it is possible to infer that MC5 was functioning under the Chinese cultural view that one do not live for oneself but for the collective. However, ME10 felt concerned that the heroine sacrificed her self interest for the family as one should place one's personal interest above all else which was consistent with the Western concept of self. Excerpts of their verbalizations are as follows:

ME5:(2)... ah: family members, >they take good care of them, off course lah. < (3)So: they can even sacrificed themselves for this people...

ME10: (10)I feel that all the time she has to sacrifice, I mean she'll put her own interests aa: you know, below the family.

Unlike Group 2 subjects, none of Group 1 subjects praised the heroine for her sacrifice and nobility as they viewed it to be an obligation for the individual to see to the wellbeing of the family as Chinese society is likened to a society of families and not individuals (De Mente, 2000). Thus, Group 1 subjects utilized frames consistent with that of Chinese society, with its clearly defined roles, obligations, expectations and values whereas Group 2 subjects

utilized Western frames where the individual is highlighted and the self is placed above that of the family and or collective.

## 7.1.2 Filial Piety

In the discussion of filial piety, three areas or sub-frames will be discussed:

i) Authoritarianism ii) The institution of marriage and male progeny iii) Happiness and fulfillment in marriage. Note that these are the very frames which form the basis or foundation for the Chinese practice of filial piety and perpetuation of such authoritarian structures are maintained and sustained by the collective such as the family and society.

### 7.1.2.1 Authoritarianism – Familial and Governmental authoritarianism

#### 7.1.2.1.1 Evidence of expectations for authoritarianism in Group 1's narratives

At the apex of the Chinese authoritarian structure, was the emperor of China and being the head of the nation, he was vested with tremendous power and authority. Thus, his subjects were expected to honour and obey him, just as they were expected to be filial to their fathers who head the family. Six Group 1 subjects mentioned about an authoritarian king in their responses. The structures of expectation which relate to the practice of authoritarianism are observed in the following excerpts of their narratives:

MC1: (5) ...I think the King wanted Meng Li Chin. And he told Meng Li Chin, "I-I am the one who **forced your so-called fiancée aa: to marry** the other girl." (6)And Meng Li Chin was so very upset.

MC2: (14)So:, aa: after that the brother come to find Siew Wah. He hoped that Siew Wah can help the father because the **king already caught** the father.

MC5: (4)So, and on top of it is they-they ((tongue click)) they cannot object the-the **emperor's er: instruction**. (5)Whatever the emperor say, they must do. So: > if the **emperor asks** you to get married, you have to get married.<

MC6: (8)Finally: aa Mang Lai Kuan found out that he was actually her fiancée it was too late. (9)**The king forced** him to marry another woman.

MC7: And er: over here, she found out that: the king appointed her to be the official because he want her to be his wife. (23)**He also forced Siew Wah** to get married with another woman.

MC11: (6)But Sai Wah doesn't know that she: she was his fiancée as she uses a different name and aa she dressed like a man but in the end, the king forced aa this Siew Wah to marry another girl. [emphasis by the researcher]

In keeping with the frame of authoritarianism, MC5 spoke of absolute obedience to the orders of the emperor as subjects "cannot object to the emperor's instruction." The reason being that, "whatever the emperor say, they must do." There was no option or choice

involved as observed in the use of the modals “cannot” and “must.” Others from Group 1, talked of the king using force to achieve his own goals at the expense of others. Subject MC1 talked of the king revealing to the heroine that he was the person who forced her fiancée into a marriage which he did not want. Likewise, MC6, MC7 and MC11, talked of the king forcing the hero to marry another woman causing the heroine much sadness. While MC2 talked of the king detaining the heroine’s father in order to keep the heroine by his side. In contrast, there is no mention of the king in the verbalization of Group 2 subjects.

Authoritarianism is also observed in the narrative of MC14 when he related about how the villain, the son of a mandarin abused his father’s position and power. Given below is an excerpt of his narrative:

MC14: (8)So: but on the other hand, another hero we call, the guy, feel that loss of face lah because for him actually, he said this heroine **should** marry him because for-for him, he said er: otherwise he feel embarrassed lah, ya? (9)So: he **forced** his father to **force** the other party to **force**, I mean his daughter to marry him

[emphasis by the researcher]

Use of the modal “should” indicated MC14’s structure of expectation regarding the villain who felt that the heroine was under compulsion to marry him. Interestingly, the repetitive use of the word, “force” reinforced the idea of abuse of power by the mandarin’s son. Similarly, MC7 talked about a vengeful and egoistic mandarin and his evil son perpetrating crimes as a result of a perceived slight. The repetitive use of the word “force” again reinforces the idea of social inequality such as in the abuse of power by those at the apex of Chinese society:

MC7: (10)The parents refused the magistrate... (11)And er: this has made the magistrate angry and he purposely aa: report –giving aa accuse aa : accusing-giving false accuse aa: to Lai Kuan’s parent in order to put him into jail as revenge. (12)And er: at the same time, Lai Kuan’s servant, the girl servant was actually aa: **forced**, was taken away by the magistrate’s son by **force**. And she was **forced** to marry him.

[emphasis by the researcher]

There were also indirect mentions of authoritarianism such as in the abuse of power by government officials. MC12 mentioned about how the heroine’s father “was framed.” In MC2’s account, another “noble family” whose marriage proposal was rejected by the heroine’s father, caused “things” to happen such as causing her father to be captured:

MC12: (5)Umm: and then somehow the family, the father was framed or something like that.  
MC1: (2) ... And then at the same time, there's another noble family who wanted to marry  
aa: Meng Li Chin. (3)But then the father said that he had already agreed to the first family.  
(4)And then there are things happening where by Meng Li Chin's father was caught. (5)And  
then: this Meng Li Chin disguised as a-as a guy and she wanted to: try to save the father,  
ok?

Authoritarianism by the family head was also mentioned by some Group 1 subjects. Their verbalizations were in keeping with the expectation of Chinese society with regard to filial piety and unequal gender roles where daughters are expected to comply with the commands and wishes of their parents. This is reflected in the use of word "follow" which was mentioned 5 times by MC14:

MC14: (5)But her father feel very upset because for him, ya, came from a conservative family, so he feel that, I mean, his daughter actually should follow, always follow his instruction. (6)So one of the er: example is I mean, he force his daughter to follow his instruction to marry a guy, ya, plan by him.

The coercive authority of the male head of family was also alluded to by MC14 who talked of the heroine's father wielding authority over his daughter when "he force his daughter to follow his instruction to marry a guy, ya, plan by him."

Similarly, MC9 talked about the traditional past where ladies had no freedom in the choice of a marriage partner as their fate are determined by parents:

MC9: (1) ...in the olden days, ladies does not have their right to do anything that they want, um: their fate are determined by their parents... (6) Even now also our Chinese society wants girls to get married before they are 30 years old. If not they will er: get criticism from the society.

Subject MC9 also stated that until today Chinese society continues to exert its power by perpetuating the expectation for ladies to be married before 30 years old or "they will get criticism from society." In using the modal "will," MC9 indicated that the expectation exists of criticism from society for unmarried girls above 30 years old. Although she stated that it is Chinese society which "wants" girls to do so, it goes unsaid that such expectations are still upheld by (1) traditional minded parents.

#### **7.1.2.1.2 Evidence of expectations for authoritarianism in Group 2's narratives**

On the other hand, seven Group 2 subjects mentioned about filial piety and its related sub-

frames. Recall from the above discussion on authoritarianism, three aspects such as authoritarianism of the Chinese monarch, palace officials as well as the family head, are highlighted in the verbalizations of Group 1 subjects. It is interesting to note that no mention was made by Group 2 subjects whatsoever of authoritarianism in a Chinese monarch. However, two Group 2 subjects, ME6 and ME9, mentioned about abuse of power by a corrupt palace official and only 1 subject, ME7, discussed indirectly about authoritarianism by the head of the family as observed below:

ME6: (2)...you'll see that there's this guy, just because of what we use to say "face" in Chinese, because of that: kind of frame her family...  
ME7: (7)... I couldn't say things like that to my child, "Look here, you marry this person here. Er: you have to listen to me because I am your father"... (18)Secondly, um: I think that aa:m if you really love your child, you need to trust him or her... (20)I am not saying this is right or wrong, you know. Because w-wh-where is there a basis for love if you force some one to marry somebody ( ).  
ME9:(9) ...just like the – that guy who wants to marry the woman. He couldn't get her, not because he loves her, not because he has failed-that, in that sense but because of face, because they are from a prestigious family, one who has power, one who has position with the imperial aa: palace...

In contrast to MC14's comment about filial piety, ME7 highlighted on personal agency by criticizing the authoritative roles of parents especially with regard to marriage and ascribed it to the "narrowness of society." In describing such society as being narrow minded, he was in fact ascribing a negative evaluative value to such society. Similarly, the use of force was strongly disapproved of by ME7 who questioned the validity of its use in the following remarks, "...where is there a basis for love if you force someone to marry somebody?" From the above comments, it could be observed that the structures of expectation alluded by ME7 with regard to the family set up comprises the sub-frames of freedom in the choice of marriage partners and the right to love which are in keeping with the Western frame of personal agency.

Other mentions of filial piety by Group 2 subjects such as ME1, ME6 and ME15, concern the heroine's filial effort to "save" her father. Thus, ME1 accorded her legendary status when she likened the heroine to a legendary heroine of old, "Fa Mulan" who achieved the unimaginable by saving her father and nation in war. She was seen to be noble, strong,

proactive and selfless in her quest to save her father and family. All the above indicated the focus on the self or individual and personal agency which is in keeping with a Western orientation. Excerpts of their verbalizations are given below:

ME10: (10)I feel that all the time she has to sacrifice, I mean she'll put her own interests aa: you know, below the family. The family is her business all the time.

ME1: (7)Ok: she was also able to save her father and family name as well. Okay, something like Fa Mulan, ok? ((chuckles))

ME6: (3)... she was kind of trying to help her father and stuff like that lah.

ME15: (4)It was: aa: about the girl and brother looking to save her father.

In mentioning about the “struggle” women has to undergo “to be themselves,” as men are “those in charge and in control,” ME8 alluded to his expectation of equality for women. Although traditional Chinese society was restrictive of women, there were still women “who want to exert themselves.” In brief, he was alluding to the fact that he acknowledged the existence of outstanding women then who in being themselves were not in conformity to societal expectations of filial piety:

ME8: (1)Aa: the 1<sup>st</sup> VCD clipping aa, generally, I feel that aa: women struggle to aa: how do I put it? To be the themselves. (2)And aa: and the men is the aa: are those in charge and in control of every situation. And women are supposed to be in the background, such as being a wife and things like that... (5)There will be some instances where women want to exert themselves.

The frame of filial piety employed by Group 2 subjects indicated a Western view of the self, especially the female self which was acknowledged directly or indirectly and given preference over the adherence to filial piety.

### **7.1.2.1.3 Summary**

According to Rappa and Tan (2003), the traditional Chinese family is based on the subordination of the younger generation to the older generation as well as female to male. (cf Literature review Chapter 3, section 3.2). This authoritarian structure is also replicated at all levels of society from the grass roots to the apex of society and was voiced distinctly in the narratives of Group 1 subjects such as in the mention of a tyrant emperor, abuse of power and authority by palace officials and the authoritarian behaviour of male family heads. In the Chinese feudalistic society, power accrued to the elites with the consequence that the commoner was left defenseless against the tyrant elites. It is also

clear that in traditional Chinese society, the self is viewed to be of no exceptional importance except for those who were in the upper echelons of society.

In the mention of authoritarianism, Group 1 subjects indicated the existence of the hierarchical social structures present in traditional Chinese society. These structures reflected the 5 cardinal relationships spoken of by Confucius with its emphasis on filial piety (Bond, 1991). In keeping with such unequal social structural set up, inequalities are viewed to be a social fact of life and considered a mandate of heaven (Bond, 1991). Thus, Group 1 subjects did not criticize the practice. In contrast, Group 2 subjects as mentioned above, voiced their dissatisfaction and criticism for all forms of authoritarianism and instead, favour freedom, equality and justice in all relationships which suggests a Western orientation in their world view. Constant references and focus on the individual and self act as contextualization cues to cue the listener to the Western cultural context adhered to by Group 2 subjects.

#### **7.1.2.2. Marriage and male progeny**

In the discussion which follows, issues such as importance of male progeny and their attendant biases towards females in traditional Chinese society were highlighted by Group 1 subjects. Such issues indicate their adherence to the Chinese frame of filial piety. Thus, in relating about them, subjects were in fact revealing their expectations about marriage and male progeny and delineating the frame for filial piety.

##### **7.1.2.2.1 Evidence of expectations for marriage and male progeny in Group 1's narratives**

Perpetuation of posterity, male posterity in particular, is regarded as an act of filial piety (Smith, 1986; Rattenbury 1949; Lin, 2000). Prioritizing on male progeny in order to trace one's lineage is viewed by the Chinese to be a form of social immortality as it imparts the idea that when one dies, one continues to live on in the great stream of family life made up

of future generations ( Lin, 2000). In referring to offspring, MC9 stated that it is a “must” for the Chinese as they represent insurance for old age:

MC9: (6) Even now also our Chinese society wants girls to get married before they are 30 years old... (7)And then Chinese also er er must have offspring to have- means aa they must have children to secure their life when they are old or when they are in old age.

The use of the modal “must” indicated that it is viewed to be a compulsion to have offspring. In brief, her frame for filial piety is in accordance to what “Chinese society wants” and what Chinese “must” do. She was in fact alluding to the powerful dictates of Chinese society and its influence over the social life as well as the socialization processes of its members.

Although it was not mentioned directly, responses by Group 1 subjects indicated that male progeny were preferred because traditional Chinese women were viewed to be weak and powerless. It is seen also in the mention of arranged marriages, their absence from decision making, deprivation from education and their lowly position in the family and society. In keeping with this cultural context, MC8 discussed about biasness against women in traditional society:

MC8: (1) For the 1<sup>st</sup> VCD, I saw the imbalance between the gender; between the man and woman in the society. (2) And then er: this has caused Lai Kuan to pretend like a man and to prove herself can be as-as a man.

He attributed biasness as the cause for the heroine to prove that she “can be as a man.” Use of the modal “can” indicated the expectation of the heroine to have the ability to be like a man. Likewise, MC9 mentioned about the biasness against women then:

MC9: (1) Aa: in the 1<sup>st</sup> VCD clip, aa: aa:m it says about a girl from the old society who could not have the same status as aa: the man because er: in the older days, ladies does not have their right to do anything that they want, um: their fate her determined by their parents. (2)Their marriage are arranged by their parent and what they can do is just sitting at home.

MC9 stated about ladies then who do “not have the same status as men.” Therefore, “what they can do is just sitting at home.” Use of the modal “can” by MC9 denotes ability, what the ladies are able to do, while the adverb “just” indicates merely or simply where the ladies are merely able to sit at home which indicates the expectation of their ability not amounting to much. In stating thus, she was indicating her expectation for ladies then to

have very little freedom as they were only allowed to remain quietly at home doing nothing in particular. This idea was also echoed in the narrative of MC14 who said, “if you are female, means you are female. You have always to follow...” Hence, in repeating, “you are female,” MC14 was indicating his structure of expectation of what being female entails in traditional Chinese society; being powerless and dependent. It is interesting to note that MC14 used the conditional “if” to convey his thoughts. In stating, “If you are female,” it connotes the idea of double sex standards. For example, women are expected to be virtuous while men are not. This view has been mentioned by Lin (1998: 147) who writes, “To the Chinese, a women is a women.” Given below are excerpts of MC14’s responses:

MC14: (2)... if you are female, means you are female. You have to always follow your: - the instruction from the parents, ya?

The expectation of women playing submissive roles is also remarked by MC15:

MC15: (1)... I will think last time, the Chinese woman, right? They don’t have the chance for higher education, they just need to stay at home and all their future are arranged with their parents... . (4) So er: the Chinese woman, last time they don’t have the right. They don’t have the right to fight with their future [decide their future]... (9) So they say, to this girl is: -that’s why the girl is: when married right? The girl is like water to: how to say? The water flow out, cannot come back already.

MC15 stated that daughters did not have “the chance of higher education” which is the gateway to power and success in the traditional set up of Chinese society. But “they just need to stay at home.” Use of “just” in his responses indicated that the women were simply or merely given the responsibility of staying at home. In fact, there were very little expectations with regard to their roles or responsibilities. Therefore, they are viewed to be weak and powerless. Subject MC15 stated that, “the Chinese woman, last time they don’t have the right.” This statement is repeated by MC9 earlier, “ladies does not have their right to do anything that they want.” The negative statements made by subjects MC15 and MC9 were in keeping with the traditional frame of filial piety which dictates that women play passive and submissive roles and were thus expected to live unproductive lives. In contrast, the son is viewed to be more important as MC15 stated “the son will carry the family name...” The use of “will” in this instance, indicated the predictability of an action or

occurrence. It also indicated MC15's view of the expectation for the perpetuation of the family name through sons. Daughters on the other hand, are likened to the occurrence of used water, "the water flow out, cannot come back already." Use of the uncontracted negative for the modal "can" indicated the expectation of the finality of marriage for the daughter who is unable to return to the fold of her family again. Thus, MC15 was alluding to the traditional Chinese frame of filial piety where married daughters were considered as "outsiders" to their former family as they perpetuate descendents for their husband's family.

#### **7.1.2.2.2 Evidence of expectations for marriage and male progeny in Group 2's narratives**

With the exception of ME13, none of Group 2 subjects mentioned about marriage and male progeny in their narratives. Subject ME13 adhered to a traditional view of filial piety with its related expectations through her reference to a Chinese saying and her explanation or rather defence of its practices. ME13 used the modal "may" to indicate the expectation of the Chinese being more willing to give up their lives instead of their surnames. To strengthen her argument, ME13 referred to a Chinese saying which reflects Chinese society's view through the use of "they" as in "they say," to support the practice of prioritizing on male progeny. Use of the modal "must" reflects her expectation of the Chinese who views it as a compulsion to have a son as this constitutes one of the basic tenets of filial piety:

ME13: (7) Back to filial piety, as you know, in the Chinese family, carrying down the family surname is very important. They **may** give up their life but not their surname, okay that's why Chinese boy or-or grown up men they: - when marry **must** have a son to carry down the surname. (8)Mm: just as they say, "part hang how wai sin." Even though you can bring a lot of riches for the family, but without a son to carry down the family's name, it is a kind of a-aa sin for the family...

[emphasis by the researcher]

#### **7.1.2.2.3 Summary**

From the discussion of Group 1 subjects, the Chinese traditional frame of filial piety concerning women is salient and it represents the reality with regard to women and the unequal social structures of traditional Chinese society which somehow lingers on even in today's traditional minded Chinese.

### **7.1.2.3 Happiness and Fulfillment in Marriage**

In the discussion of happiness and fulfillment in marriage as a sub-frame of filial piety, it is observed that much of what is viewed to be appropriate is in keeping with the Chinese cultural frame of filial piety. In the following discussion, the existence of structures of expectation is observed in the use of modals, inexact statements, negative statements, evaluative language as well as the reference to societal views.

#### **7.1.2.3.1 Evidence of expectations for marriage in Group 1's narratives**

According to Lip (1993), marriage is an event of importance and most traditional Chinese still hold to the view that it is an event that would bring great happiness and fulfillment to a person, especially for the woman. Lin (2000) stated that in China, women have been deprived of almost every right but not the right to marry as it has been viewed to be women's inalienable right. Consistent with the above frame, the expectation of happiness and fulfillment in marriage has been referred to in the verbalizations of Group 1 subjects.

According to Tannen (1993), inexact statements include altering events in the course of subjects' verbalizations as a result of their expectations with regard to subjects' frame.

Three Group 1 subjects namely, MC1, MC3, and MC7, altered the conclusion of the story:

MC1: (10)And then the so-called fiancée, called her and then propose to her.

MC3: (12)... I mean, aa: some times we want to see a good show so the story ends and finally they are together and it is a good ending.

MC7: (27)At the end-at the end, they reunited ((laugh)) because aa: because of the encouragement by the people around.

They talked about the two main characters being joined in wedded bliss which is not an accurate account of the story shown in VCD1. In a way, it reflects their expectations of a happy ending for the hero and heroine. The expectation of happiness and fulfillment in marriage is observed in the narratives of Group 1 subjects.

Talking about the heroine, subject MC3 stated that as a lady, "of course, one has to face ... her life's decision," which refers to the fact that the heroine, "will get married to a man."

When MC3 used “of course,” he was implying that the life decision which he talked about was something which was obvious or an accepted fact. Additionally, MC3 referred to the event of marriage as a “life’s decision,” a very important chapter or undertaking in the heroine’s life. Below is an excerpt of MC3’s responses:

MC3: (7)and er: she find her way out of the whole thing and of course, one has to face her  
aa: what do you call, her life’s decision. (8)She will get married to a man, she will also want  
to find the best person to marry.

Viewed in this light, he was probably inferring that the heroine had to face this important life’s decision which was marriage. The use of “will” as in “will get married,” indicated an expectation of an essential undertaking such as entry into the matrimonial state.

Tannen (1993) stated that negative statements are also indicative of non-fulfillment of expectations which is mirrored in MC13’s narrative. He remarked that after all the struggles and challenges, the heroine “still er: couldn’t marry with the guy” she loved “until the end.” Again an expectation seems to go unfulfilled in the above negative statement, that of the heroine not being able to get married after all her struggles. MC13’s use of the word, “still,” indicated an opposite state such as in the use of “nevertheless” or “yet.” The notion that at the conclusion of the story, the heroine should be able to get married to the one she loved is in line with the cultural frame of happiness in marriage at the end of a relationship:

MC13:(4) **so: until** the end, she still er: **couldn’t marry** with the guy.  
[emphasis by the researcher]

Similarly, the negative statements made by subject MC10, “I don’t like this movie,” because it is “not worth watching,” is also indicative of the defeat of an expectation. In stating what she did not like, she was in fact alluding to what she likes such as “shows that have a happy ending.” The expectation of a “happy ending” where the heroine would end in wedded bliss was not fulfilled. MC10 was in fact measuring her expectation of what constitute a good movie against what was seen. Clearly, MC10 was complying to the expectations of Chinese society where women are expected to be married for outside the confines of the family is the fearsome no man’s land inhabited by the sad and lonely.

Hence, the idea of loneliness and sadness is alluded to by MC10 when she talked of the heroine “crying” and being “alone in the end.” MC9 was like minded when she stated that women must get married in order to “avoid loneliness” later on in life. Below are excerpts of their responses:

MC9: (4) ... we Chinese think that girls must get married to have a life partner, and also to avoid loneliness in their lives later when they are old... (6)Even now also our Chinese society wants girls to get married before they are 30 years old. If not they will er: get criticism from the society.

MC10: (8) Aa: I mean, I don't quite like this show and I see it as a waste of time to watch a show like this because I like shows that have a happy ending. (9)And in this show, I see Lai Kuan as crying aa: you know, in the end because Siew Wah married another woman. (10) So: Lai Kuan is alone in the end, so: this show is not worth watching.

In view of the Chinese cultural frame with regard to marriage, it is plausible that Group 1 subjects altered the ending whether consciously or unconsciously as such endings seemed unacceptable to them. Likewise, MC9 stated that Chinese preferred girls to be married before the age of 20 in traditional times and 30 today in order “to avoid loneliness” and “criticism from society.” The above statements clearly indicate the expectation of society at large impinging on the consciousness and behaviour of its members. Recall that subject MC10 also forwarded a similar view that outside the confines of marriage and home, is sadness and loneliness. Moreover, the scene of the heroine crying bitter tears of sadness and/or regret as a result of a failed engagement was apparently not forgotten by its viewers. These became salient points for Group 1 subjects in their discussion of marriage being a fulfillment for a Chinese person.

In VCD1, the main character, Lai Kuan, was shown to be weeping tears of regret and sorrow at the loss of her fiancée. Six Group 1 subjects, MC2, MC6 MC10, MC11, MC12 & MC13, mentioned her loss at the end of the VCD. Although they mentioned about the heroine feeling sad and regretful, interestingly none of them provided any positive comments or ascribed responsibility to the heroine for her loss. She was viewed to be helpless and powerless. Two Group 1 subjects namely MC1 and MC12 mentioned about Lai Kuan regretting at the end of the story. MC2 even mentioned that the heroine “don't

know what to do,” thus, depicting her as being powerless, helpless and being overwhelmed by her circumstances. It also indicated MC2’s structure of expectation for women; outside the confines of marriage and home the woman is a lost being. Below are excerpts of Group 1 subjects’ narratives:

MC2: (16) but it is too late for him for he has already married another lady. And then Lai Kuan **feel regretted and sad**. (17)She she feel that he must committed and respect his marriage lah and she then she **don’t know what to do**.

MC6: (9)So, Mang Lai Kuan **felt very sad** because she **lost the opportunity to marry a good man** and the man she loved so much.

MC11: (8)This Siew Wah and Lai Kuan met in the end but it was too late already because Siew Wah had married already so: aa :Lai Kuan was **very sad**.

MC12: 7)And: but at that moment the guy is supposed to marry some other fellow, er: some other fella, er: some other girl ((laughs)). (8) ...I think she **regretted and : have not telling him earlier on lah**.

MC13: (4)so: until the end, **she still er: couldn’t marry** with the guy. (5)But finally the guy thought the girl had been dead and then he marry to another girl.

[emphasis by the researcher]

#### 7.1.2.3.2 Evidence of expectations for marriage in Group 2’s narratives

In contrast, none of Group 2 subjects altered the story. Instead, a few discussed the emotional conflict faced by the heroine and the belief that she would learn from her sadness. For example, subject ME1 stated that the heroine “had to undergo the bitterness and pain of regret and loss.” Mainly, Group 2 subjects highlighted on responsibility and consequence for one’s actions and the hope of a good life outside the folds of marriage. This view is in direct contradiction to that of Group 1 where a majority of them viewed marriage as the only future for women. To substantiate the above views, evaluative elements or linguistic devices are used by subjects to indicate the elements of expectations in their world view.

Subject ME1 referred to her dissatisfaction at the way things turned out for “a girl who dared to be different.” Below is an excerpt of her narrative:

ME1: (9)Well, mm: its so sad-that it has to end this way. I felt that the ending should have been better, perhaps I should be the director! (10)Aa why? Well, it should have been better for a girl who dared to be different in an age of conformity. But then in reality there are no easy answers, right? (11)I believe Lai Kuan would be a wiser, stronger and more matured lady aa from this sad experience. That’s it.

Her dissatisfaction was not motivated by societal norms with regard to women but in the expectation of a good conclusion for an exceptional person. Use of the modal “should” which indicated her view that, “the ending should have been better,” revealed an expectation not being met. This is reinforced by her statement that “its so sad that it has to end this way.” When she used the adjective “sad,” she was indicating her expectation as well as the non fulfillment of a good ending. Use of “has to” revealed her view that the conclusion was inevitable. ME1 took a positive view of the robustness and resilience of the heroine’s character when she stated that the heroine “would be wiser, stronger and more matured” woman in future. Use of the modal “would” indicates her expectation of the heroine to be a better person in the future. In brief, ME1 spoke of the heroine facing a hopeful tomorrow even after an unsuccessful relationship, even outside the confines of marriage.

Similarly, ME2 mentioned that the heroine’s superior intellect “couldn’t resolve” the conflict she was embroiled in. The negative statement indicates an expectation of the heroine being able to solve her problems and although she could not, ME2 felt that at the conclusion, the heroine “was able to realize,” that “it was the consequences” of her own actions that led to her sad predicament. Repetition of the word, “consequences,” indicated her focus on the heroine’s own actions as being one of the causes of her failure. On a positive note, subject ME2 focussed on personal responsibility and agency and concluded that the heroine would learn and be wiser in the end. Below are excerpts of ME2’s narrative:

ME2: (10) And : she took fate **into her own hands** and she ran away... (11) And it led to some **consequences** whereby because of her actions, she was separated from him ... (12) And she found out too late that these actions which she took **into her own hands**, had caused her the love of her life. And she couldn’t resolve this even with her great intellect...(15)So she was er: -but in the end, I think, er: she was able to: to: realize that er: the **consequences** led to the:- the **consequences** of her actions, led to the sad ending of the story.

[emphasis by the researcher]

Likewise, ME4’s negative comment about the heroine “not able to tell the truth” or “be truthful to herself” reveal the unfulfillment of an expectation. It is clear that ME4 viewed the

self to be central in its decision and priorities with regard to marriage. Marriage for Group 2 subjects was an individual rather than a family affair. Thus, ME4 stated that it was bad for the heroine “not able to tell the truth” to others but to even deceive herself was an act of betrayal which had dire consequences as observed in the repeated use of “therefore.” ME4 viewed her to be a capable person in contrast to Group 1 subjects who stated that “ladies do not have their right to do anything” and “they just need to stay at home and all their future are arranged.” To ME4, the heroine was not powerless but blameworthy.

Below is an excerpt of her narrative:

ME4: (2) Um: firstly, I feel that the lady in the first VCD has the strength and ability of a man... (3)...she was not able to tell the truth or be truthful with herself. (4)Therefore, she lost out on the opportunity to tell the person that she aa:m that she love him and therefore she lost out on the opportunity of a good marriage.

Concerning the issue of coercion in marriage, ME7’s use of the adverb “very” reflects the intensity and extremity of his repugnance to the idea. This idea was further reinforced through his reference to how he “squirm[ed] in discomfort,” at the thought of parents coercing their children into marriage. After some digression, in chunk (20), he questioned the love of a parent for his child by using force in the issue of marriage. In chunk (23) he stated about the need for “liberty” to make decisions such as freedom in the choice of a marriage partner. From the narrative of ME7, it is possible to observe that the structures of expectation such as the sub-frames of fairness, love and liberty played prominent roles in ME7’s frame of marriage especially with regard to decisions concerning marriage. In brief, the self is viewed to be central in marriage decisions and coercion or parental intervention in marriage decisions were strongly opposed by ME7:

ME7: :(1) Ok, um: its: when I watch a movie like that, ...certain messages are immediately very, very clear. (2)... Lots of things I am very, very uncomfortable with... (13)Let’s look at what is fair for people in general. (14)Now er: can a parent go to a child and say, “Listen, you marry that person there because I think I- I- she’s right for you. You know, you’ve got to listen to me because I am your father...” (20)... Because w-wh-where is there a basis for love if you force some one to marry somebody ((unintelligible))... (23)...The thing is that we all have a sense of liberty to make decisions in life.

### **7.1.2.3.3 Summary**

The frames utilized by both groups of subjects indicated their differing views about the self.

Consistent with the Western frame of self and personal agency, Group 2 subjects generally view the self as genderless, strong, independent and in control and thereby responsible for all its decisions and actions. The self is also viewed positively as it is expected to possess the ability to recoup from losses and to move on. Thus, the constant focus on the heroine, and to a lesser extent, on the hero by Group 2 subjects. Focus on the heroine's outstanding ability, character, aspirations, actions and dilemma serves as contextualization cues to indicate the Western frame of prioritizing on the self or individual.

On the other hand, the self is not prominent in Group 1 subjects' discussion. In particular, the female "self" has been stereotyped to be subdued, weak and dependent on the dictates of family and society. Outside the family and home, the female self is viewed to be alone, vulnerable and lost; an almost non-existent entity. Thus, focus was on the social structure of Chinese society, and the need to abide by the norms of Chinese society where those from the lower rungs of the family or society were expected to submit to those from above and at the apex (Bond, 1991). As discussed, the word, "follow" which is repeatedly used by some Group 1 subjects indicate the expectation of Chinese society for its members to defer to those in authority. It also acts as a contextualization cue to indicate the focus on the power of the collective with its attendant sub-frame of authoritarianism. Thus, the differing concepts of self with regard to filial piety were portrayed by both groups of subjects in their narratives.

### **7.1.3 Educational Achievement**

For the above aspect, Group 1 subjects did not discuss about education directly in their verbalizations. Education is mentioned in passing as being the domain of the males in traditional Chinese society. However, more Group 2 subjects mentioned about education directly and indirectly.

#### **7.1.3.1 Evidence of expectations for educational achievement in Group 1's narratives**

In the narratives of Group 1 subjects who mentioned about education, structures of

expectations exist with regard to education being the sole domain of the males. Hence, his focus on what men could do and what women could not do. Subject MC3 talked about exam halls where “only” males “could go in” which indicated his expectation that men but not women were given the opportunity to be educated as seen in the use of the modal “could.” Likewise, MC15 talked about Chinese women who “don’t have the chance for higher education.” The contracted negative “don’t” reveals MC15’s expectation with regard to women and education. In highlighting the fact that women were being denied the opportunity for higher education, he was in fact revealing the expectation with regard to women in traditional Chinese society. Below are excerpts of their narratives:

MC3: (4)For example, in the exam hall, **only** man **could** go in and no ladies are allowed to compete with the others lah.

MC15: I will think last time, the Chinese woman, right? They **don’t** have the chance for higher education, they just need to stay at home...

[emphasis by the researcher]

### 7.1.3.2 Evidence of expectations for educational achievement in Group 2’s narratives

In the mention of formal education, Group 2 subjects discussed about the heroine, a women of caliber, going against the norm and excelling academically. In contrast, there was no mention of the heroine doing so in the narratives of Group 1 subjects.

Education was mentioned indirectly by ME10 when she talked about the heroine going for exams and being successful in them. ME10 also indicated her structure of expectation with regard to the female self and education:

ME10: (11)And about the part when she goes for exams or you know, she did well in the public exams. (12)I feel that it is very **unfair** that um: she **has to** work **so** hard to prove that she: the female is always – I mean, you **have to** work **so** hard to prove that you are better than the male.

[emphasis by the researcher]

In stating that it was “unfair” for the heroine to work hard, ME10 was in fact, indicating her dissatisfaction and her expectation of fairness and equality for the female especially with regard to education. In stating that the heroine “has to” or “have to” work hard she was in fact indicating the necessity for the heroine to work in such a manner as a result of the

practice of unfairness. Moreover, when she used “so” before the adverb “hard,” ME10 was in fact emphasizing on the extreme effort expended by the heroine to prove her worth. Viewed in this context, it indicated her expectation of equality for all where there is no need for anyone to prove themselves. Repetition of the words, “so hard” emphasized ME10’s view of the inequality in society which has caused the heroine to work in such a manner.

Inequality in educational opportunities is also observed in the narratives of Group 2 subjects. Following are excerpts of their narratives:

ME1: (5)Ok, in the movie, women in traditional times in Chinese society, they have to fight very hard to prove that they are as good as the men ...

ME2: (2) ...it is a story about a lady who was born in an era whereby ladies were not allowed to have an education. (3) Therefore, in order for her to pursue an education, because she was intelligent, hmm: she disguised herself as a guy...

ME3: (5) the heroine is the antithesis to all these Chinese customs and culture lah.

ME6: (1)In the 1<sup>st</sup> VCD, this girl actually wants to prove that she is better than a guy...

ME8: And women are supposed to keep quiet and things like that. (5)There will be some instances here women want to exert themselves.

ME9: (4) So aa: to be able to see in the 1<sup>st</sup> VCD, to see a female that excels aa, who excels in education and in many ways better than a male which is her brother, aa: is: rather something which is counter cultural lah, alright?

ME11: (2)And aa: who has also has something to prove that woman can do much better than men aa: in a male dominated society, ok?

ME1 mentioned indirectly about education in chunk 5, where the heroine’s very purpose was to “prove” that she was “as good as the men” particularly in the field of education. Thus, in the use and stress on the intensifier “very,” ME1 was emphasizing on the adverb “hard” to indicate how hard women had to work to be on par with men. ME1’s use of “have to” also indicated the necessity for traditional women to work hard in the face of inequalities and discrimination. ME2 mentioned about the heroine dressing up as a guy because she wanted to pursue an education at a time where ladies were “not allowed to have an education.” Use of the negative also indicates the defeat of an expectation for women to pursue education.

Focus on women as individuals is seen in the narratives of Group 2 subjects. ME9 talked about education being the gateway to success in Chinese society and noted that for a female to be successful and to excel in education was “counter cultural.” This idea was

strongly upheld by other Group 2 subjects, such as ME3 who commented that she was the “antithesis” of Chinese tradition and culture. This was also alluded to in subjects ME6’s and ME11’s account about the heroine wanting to be better than men in the area of educational achievement. It is also in keeping with ME8’s account of instances where women of such strong caliber wanted to “exert themselves.”

Another distinct point raised by a few Group 2 subjects is with regard to the extended frame for education. Education is viewed as a product of life’s experiences which is in line with the Western belief in the “value of knowledge for its own sake” (Nisbett 2003: 31). Subject ME7 stated that making wrong decisions as a result of exercising one’s individual liberty was “part of the learning process.” This was also echoed in ME2’s view that there was some good to be had from the heroine’s failed engagement; she “was able to realize that her actions led to the sad ending of the story.” This aspect of education was also mentioned indirectly by subject ME1 who stated that the heroine would have learned from her sad experience and become a more matured lady. Similarly, learning from the good values seen in the VCD as in, “we still need to learn,” is mentioned in passing by MC5. Her use and stress on the adverb “still” in her narrative indicated her expectation of the continuous need to learn from others. Their narratives follow:

- ME1: (14)I believe Lai Kuan would be a wiser, stronger and more matured lady aa from this sad experience.  
MC5: (9)And: er: I think some of the values are very good. So: we still need to learn from er: the people lah even if we see it’s a show lah, of course.  
ME2: (18) but in the end, I think, er: she was able to: to: realize that er: the consequences led to the:- the consequences of her actions, led to the sad ending of the story.  
ME7: (25)Now, if we were to make a wrong decision, is it bad? (26)No, its part of the learning process.

### **7.1.3.3 Summary**

From the above discussion, there are observable differences in the frames employed by both groups of subjects. Although only 2 Group 1 subjects mentioned about education, it could be observed that they only state what women were not allowed to do; which was to go into the exam hall and to pursue education. In stating thus, they were inferring to their

focus on society or the collective with its norms and regulations. Hence, focus on the collective acts as a contextualization cue to indicate the importance placed on the Chinese society or collective with its dictates as to how its members were to behave.

For Group 2 subjects, education is not only confined to formal education but it also encompasses life long education. Expectations with regard to education and what it does were observable in the narratives of Group 2 subjects. In the narratives of Group 2 subjects, women in particular the heroine, was assigned proactive roles in the face of discrimination and inequalities. The heroine was not reported as “being acted” upon and passively receiving the consequences of such treatment but rather finding ways and means to overcome the inequalities and prejudices against females. Thus, focus was constantly on her and what she did which also serves as a contextualization cue to indicate the importance placed by Group 2 subjects on the self and its wellbeing as opposed to society with its social structures and norms. Thus, the concept of self and the idea of personal agency are indirectly inferred and highlighted in their narratives with regard to the heroine and her quest for education, equality and freedom which is consistent with Western frames of the self.

#### **7.1.4 Face**

The aspect of face was mentioned by 2 subjects from both groupings. The structures of expectation in their narratives are manifested through use of negatives and evaluatives.

##### **7.1.4.1 Evidence of expectations for face in Group 2’s narratives**

This aspect appears to be significant to ME6 and ME9. It was mentioned 4 times in ME9’s narrative. In mentioning about the marriage proposal, ME9 was careful to describe the villain’s motive for his dissatisfaction with regard to his failed marriage proposal:

ME9: (10) ...He couldn’t get her not because he loves her, not because he has failed-that, in that sense but because of face, because they are from a **prestigious family**, one who has power, one who has position with the imperial aa: palace aa: and so: for the other family to refuse marriage is –is a slap in the face.

Repetition and stress on the word “not” in chunk (10) reinforced the idea of a defeat of an expectation by ME9. Moreover, increase in stress and intonation indicate ME9’s point of argument that the villain’s frustration at his failed marriage proposal was not because of unrequited love or failure to secure a much desired marriage but rather it was perceived to be “a slap in the face,” as a result of an inflated ego. The reason for the villain to behave thus was, “because he came from a rich, prestigious and powerful family.” The abundant use of evaluatives such as “rich,” “prestigious,” and “powerful” indicated subject’s negativity towards the son of a palace official and his abuse of power. Viewed in this context, it is possible to infer that the rich and powerful gentry are perceived to abuse their powers to protect their own “face” against the poor “faceless” citizen. This is consistent with the adherence to Western frames where notions of justice, fairness and equality occupy top priority (Nisbett, 2000). The above view was also expressed by ME6 and an excerpt of her narrative is given below:

ME6: (2)dealing with a lot of **petty jealousy** feelings just that only. (3) ... there’s this guy, just because of what we use to say “**face**” in Chinese, because of that: kind of frame her family, (4)give her family a lot of problems ...

[emphasis by the researcher]

The aspect of face was alluded to by subject ME6 as a “petty jealousy,” thus, inferring that “face” is viewed to be something trivial or of no account. Interestingly, ME6 mentioned “just” twice in her reference to the aspect of face. In stating about the heroine encountering a lot of adventures, ME6 mentioned that the heroine also had to deal “with a lot of petty jealousy feelings just that only.” The use of “just” with “that only” somehow indicates that it was nothing more than a trivial and insignificant jealousy. Again, when introducing the villain, she was quick to mention, “just because of what we use to say “face” in Chinese.” The use of “just” again reinforces the idea of “face” being insignificant but nonetheless annoying. From the above verbalization with regard to “face,” it is clear that ME6 did not uphold the Chinese frame for “face” nor did she hold it in high regard. From the above discussion, it is clear that both Group 2 subjects assigned negative qualities to the aspect of face.

#### 7.1.4.2 Evidence of expectations for face in Group 1's narratives

The aspect of face has been equated to shame (Goldblatt, 2000). This is observed in the reference by MC14 to the villain who felt, "embarrassed" at the failed marriage proposal:

MC14: (8)So: but on the other hand, another hero we call, the guy, feel that loss of **face** lah because for him actually, he said this heroine **should** marry him because for-for him, he said er: otherwise he feel **embarrassed** lah, ya?

[emphasis by the researcher]

The above also reinforced the Oriental idea that loss of face is synonymous to shame. In accordance with this frame, MC14 reported on how the villain felt about his marriage proposal to the heroine, "this heroine should marry him." In stressing on "this," MC14 was in fact indicating that the character was referring to a particular person, namely the heroine. In using the modal "should," he was indicating how imperative it was for the heroine to marry him in order for him to avoid losing face.

In the same vein, subject MC2 referred to the villain or "guy" and his family feeling "very offended" when their marriage proposal was turned down:

MC2: (6)But the Lai Kuan father turned down her proposal. So, they feel **very offended** and lose **face**.

[Emphasis by the researcher]

Use of "very" in this instance, portrayed the intensity of feeling assigned by the subject to the character discussed. Use of the connector "so" indicated the villain's loss of face and dissatisfaction as a consequence of a failed marriage proposal. In short, the above subjects described the villain and his family's loss of face as an act of offence and shame which is consistent with the frame of "face" practiced by Chinese society. As focus is on personal relationships and the importance of "face," problems are resolved through the mediation of a third party. According to Lin (2000), the mediator is successful if his "face" is "big" enough. Hence, social inequalities exist between the rich, powerful and well-connected and the poor and less fortunately circumstanced. However, inequalities are seen and accepted as a social fact of life and a reflection of the mandate of heaven by the Chinese (Bond, 1991). Such social inequalities are reinforced by the society or collective and are realized in the practice of face. Focus on the legitimacy of such social inequalities

acts as a contextualization cue to indicate the importance of face and the collective within the hierarchical structure of Chinese society.

#### **7.1.4.3 Summary**

From the discussion above, the treatment of “face” by both subject groups differed in the way it was viewed and verbalized in their narratives. It appears that subjects’ views and interpretation of the practice of face are consistent with the cultural orientations which they subscribe to. The contextual presuppositions of Group 1 subjects with regard to the aspect of face and its attendant social inequalities indicated that it was a practice sanctioned and perpetuated by Chinese society or collective. Thus, Group 1 subjects explained and reported about the aspect of face without criticizing the villain or his family for their actions. In contrast, Group 2 subjects’ assignment of negative qualities as well as criticisms of face act as contextualization cues which reflect their adherence to the Western ideal of justice and equality for every individual.

### **7.2 Interview 2 or the Structured Interview**

The discussion of Interview 2 or the Structured Interview encompasses four aspects of the FDS: centrality of family relationship, filial piety, education and face. Aspects such as centrality of family relationship and filial piety will be discussed at length while aspects such as education and face will be discussed briefly as the evidence of expectations which indicate the respective frames of subjects are repeated. However for the aspects of education and face, only findings that provide further information to the constitution and types of frames utilized by both groups of subjects will be given due consideration in the discussion.

#### **7.2.1 Centrality of Family Relationship**

Stimulus 1: Your sister is in deep financial crisis, would you invite your sister and her family to stay with you and your family to alleviate their financial problems?

The discussion of the above encompasses the structures of expectations manifested through the use of modals, affirmatives, auxiliaries plus infinitives, evaluatives and use of the conditional “if.” It is also observed in the sub-frames which constitute the frames of centrality of family relationship for the two different groups of subjects.

#### **7.2.1.1 Evidence of expectations for centrality of family relationship in Group 1’s verbalizations**

Conformity to societal norms was perceived to be a common practice and worthy of no special merit by most Group 1 subjects. Moreover, aligning oneself to societal norms was perceived to be a necessity as some Group 1 subjects in particular, MC6 and MC15, felt obligated to do so as a result of societal demands.

The idea of offering help to a sibling was never a question to many of Group 1 subjects who readily affirm their intention to provide aid through the use of modal auxiliaries as well as affirmatives. This was witnessed in subject MC1’s attestation of granting help to a sibling because he or she is viewed to be a part of the family. Affirmatives and positive responses from Group 1 subjects such as, “for sure” by MC1, “sure” by MC8 and MC14, “definitely” by MC10 and MC5, “no reason that we don’t do that” by MC7 acted as indicators of subjects’ certainty and intention to extend help. They highlight the importance of the familial bond which was attested and inferred to by Group 1 subjects in their answers. Use of modal auxiliaries such as “should,” “must,” or “need,” by Group 1 subjects also indicated their schematic knowledge of the expectations, obligations or even the compulsions imposed on them as members of family by society at large. Thus, family loyalty and allegiance featured prominently in the verbalization of Group 1 subjects:

- MC1:(6)...For sure we are going to help because they are part of my family members.
- MC2:(1) yes, I will invite my sister to –and: her family to come over and stay with my family.
- MC5:(1)...most Chinese they will definitely help their sister and try whatever way they can...
- MC7:(1) O.K., as a sister there is no reason that we don’t do that, you see.
- MC8:(1) Sure, I will because aa: even if he is our good friend, we will do like this. Even more [so] he is our brother or sister, our own family member.
- MC10:(1)Aa: Yes, definitely. I-I will do that. Because: aa:m first, she’s my sister.

MC14:(1)Yes. I-I-I will do it lah, ya? If for me, because for me, as I say lah, because the Chinese place great importance on family life lah.

It is interesting to note the difference in some Group 1 subjects' responses to the question posed. The sub-frame of harmony features prominently directly or indirectly in subjects' narratives to signal the expectations which subjects have. Most subjects indicated their willingness to share their home with their siblings and families as it is in line with the expectation of Chinese family and society. Notice the repeated use of the modal "need" in MC2's responses. MC2 spoke of family loyalty as a result of family instruction which speaks of the social practice of the Chinese to prioritize on interdependence and harmony in the immediate as well as extended family:

MC2: (1) yes, I will invite my sister to –and: her family... Because in Chinese aa: we believe, ok since the: small, our family bring up, aa we need to er: to live together as a big family and then we need to help each other. (2)And then the second point is: that: aa family harmony is the fundamental aa I would say, teaching in a Chinese family... If lets say, they ask for help and then we never help them, so in order aa aa to make it the situation to the the family be harmony we need to offer the help to them.

It was not liberty but harmony which was highlighted by MC2 in response to the question posed. MC2 referred to the Chinese beliefs which they have been taught, "we need to live together," so "we need to help each other." Use of the modal "need" indicated her expectation of what is viewed to be necessary. As a member of the family, siblings are expected to live together, help each other and protect each other in exchange for their loyalty (Watkins & Biggs, 1996).

Although MC1 indicated his inability to accommodate his sister and family, use of the conjunction "but" indicated the denial of the expectation in the preceding sentence (Lakoff, 1971), thus revealing his expectation to provide help as observed in his responses given below:

MC1: (1) In my opinion, I don't think I would invite them to stay with me... (5)But I would not just stay like that. I would invite them or with the help of my other family members, we discuss and find ways to help her solve this problem. (6)Maybe financially or any other ways. For sure we are going to help because they are part of my family members.

His assurance of providing help revealed his knowledge of the expectation of a brother to a

family member. Thus, he stated that he “would not stay like that,” but rather he promised to render help in “other ways.” In stating so, it indicated MC1’s view of his sister’s financial plight as a collective problem. Therefore, he promised to garner help from his “other family members.” In stating “I would,” use of the modal “would” indicated his determination to provide help through the collective strength of his family members. In stating “for sure we are going to help,” he indicated his assurance and the promise of certain help because “they [his sister and family] are part of my family members.” In stating so, it revealed his alignment to societal norms and expectations.

Subject MC5 discussed about traditional Chinese society not thinking twice about extending help to their siblings. In using the adverb “definitely,” she was emphasizing on the strength of her intention to help her sister:

MC5: (1)Mm: I think that this type of situation if happen in the olden days, aa:m most Chinese they will definitely help their sister and try whatever way they can... (4)And er if this type of –if this problem happen to me and my sister is in this type of financial crisis, I will definitely help her because I have a really good sister...

Likewise, through the use of the modal “will,” MC6 stated her intention to provide help:

MC6: (1)If my sister or brother is in deep financial crisis aa: I think: I will invite them to stay with me aa: because they are my sister and brother...(3)Even aa:: even if Chinese don’t help our sister or brother the Chinese society will also talk, will talk about us... they will think-they will say, the last time, this grandpa do the wrong thing so you see lah, now the grandson lah aa: aa: aa, do the same thing also...(4)So: sometimes we have-we have **no choice**. @@We **need to do**@@ this type of things lah.

MC6 explained that she would do so because “they are my sister and brother” as this is in line with the Chinese view of putting other family members before oneself (Bond, 1991). However, she also explained that she had “no choice” in the matter as society would be critical of them should they refused to do so. In stating, “we need to do this type of things lah,” use of the modal “need” indicated that she felt they were under compulsion to extend aid to their siblings as, “Chinese society will also talk, will talk about us, at behind lah.” In using the modal “will” twice, MC6 indicated her certainty of criticism from society. The stress on “us” indicated her focus on those who withhold help to their siblings which is speaker inclusive. In short, MC6 indicated her expectation of not having any options when

family members are in dire need of help. Notice the laughter which accompanied her attestation about needing to do such things. In stating thus, she was aligning herself to societal expectation which in turn cues us to MC6's structure of expectation of what society would expect its members to do.

Similarly, subject MC15 discussed about the need to help his sibling in order to avoid ugly talk from Chinese society. This is seen in his reference to "people" to represent society at large, who "will think," and who "will say" or rather gossip about them. To avoid them, MC15 alludes to the need to align to society's prerogatives. Use of the modal "will" indicate what MC15 expects to happen as a result of not extending financial help to a sibling in need:

MC15: (2)Because aa: when they do the wrong thing, the people will think, this family aa: their teachings are very bad, their teaching very lousy and then will involve all the family members... (7)... It's a very, very small problem, they will spread into a big problem, you know...(8)So: what I think when the Chinese family facing the problem, all the family, all the family members must, I think must come up to help him or her to settle the problem, right?

When MC15 stated that people "will spread" it into a big problem, he was again revealing his expectation of what negative recourses society members could take such as spreading rumors to defame a person or persons. MC15 in the above discussion also brought forth a powerful thought to galvanize the Chinese family, which is the fear of disunity. He alludes to the Chinese fear of losing face and reputation as a result of malicious rumors. The family is thus viewed to be an indivisible unit and its survival and prosperity could only be realized if it is functioning properly. A dysfunctional family is viewed to be in danger of bringing ruin to its family members (De Mente 2000). Hence, MC15's evaluative comment that "bad" or "lousy" family teachings will ultimately "involve all the family members." Furthermore, use of the adverb "very" emphasizes the negative aspect of "bad" and "lousy" family teachings. Therefore, MC15 used "must" to indicate compulsion on the part of family members to help their siblings. Repetition of the modal "must" indicate the pressing need to offer assistance to their siblings to prevent the matter from becoming "a big problem."

Similarly, MC11 began by indicating that he “should” help his sister:

MC11: (1)As a brother, I should help her... (2)You know, in Chinese we have this phrase, “sek zou yan?” as brothers, I must “sek zou yan!” have a sense of duties as a person...

When MC11 stated that, “I should help,” it indicated his expectation of being obligated to do so. Use of the modal “should” also indicated his expectation of what was appropriate to be done. However, in referring to a Chinese phrase regarding the role of a brother, he stated that he “must” know his role. The use of “must” indicated compulsion, thus, what was initially viewed to be appropriate as observed in the use of “should” became a necessity. Note that reference to the Chinese phrase, “sek zou yan” again indicated his support and agreement which probably acted as a reminder to himself about his duties as a person which is consonant with the practices of Chinese society.

Likewise, MC14 stated that he “will do it,” even if his wife “may not be happy.” Notice the laughter that accompanies the above statement probably indicated his dismay and discomfort but it also indicated his resoluteness to abide by his obligation as a brother as he viewed it to be something which “cannot be avoided.” Use of the modal “cannot” indicate his expectation of not having the power to avoid his obligation and role as a member of the family. Repetition of “cannot” reinforces this expectation and when he stated “we still have to help” he was indicating that whatever happens, the need to help is there as indicated by “still.” Use of the auxiliary “have” plus the infinitive “to” reinforced his expectation of something which is necessary, which is akin to “must” and as such is in line with the practices of Chinese society to put the family first:

MC14: (1)Yes. I-I-I will do it lah, ya? If for me, because for me, as I say lah, because the Chinese place great importance on family life lah. So: for me, we have to help our-our sister or brother because if they really have problems, they cannot be avoided lah. (2)May be our: my-my wife may not be happy ((laughs)) but I cannot-I still have to help them lah. For me lah, mm:

#### **7.2.1.2 Evidence of expectations for centrality of family in Group 2’s verbalizations**

Use of the conditional “if” which featured prominently in Group 2 subjects’ responses

indicated the structures of expectation which subjects have with regard to the issue of extending help to a needy sibling:

ME1: (2)But: aa we need to talk first about arrangements and preferences to avoid unnecessary squabbles later on, you know. (3)But it'll be better **if** you do not stay together because once you have your own family

ME2: (3)But if they have no necessity for shifting house, I may help them financially **if** I can...(7)-**if** she's not agreeable to what I say, then of course, she can choose an alternative means...

ME4: (4)...and em: **if** we can er: discuss these areas and understand each other fully. I believe that we can live together happily and peacefully.

ME5: (1) Er: my first reaction would be "No" **if** she has her own family. (2)**If** she is single, and alone, yes, by all means I would... (3)**And if** I had the means, I will rather that I would rent a room for her family to stay. **And if** she is in a very bad financial crisis I would probably try as much to help. (4)But the last thing I would do is to invite the family to come over...

ME10: (2)...Each family has their core values and putting two families together is not a good idea. (3)So I'll rather lend them the money **if** I have the money than ask them to come and live with me.

ME14: (3)But **if**, it comes to the worst scenario and I do not have a choice, er: yes, I will aa: invite them to come over stay to stay with me. But er: under some terms and conditions...

ME1 stated openly that it would be better "if" her sibling and family do not stay with her. On the other hand, ME2 stated that she would do so "if" she is financially able which again indicates that help to be given was conditional. Similarly, ME4 stated that "if" she could come to an amicable agreement with her sister regarding living arrangements, then and only then would she invite her sibling over. ME5 provided many perspectives and alternatives regarding extending help to her sibling. Use of "if" indicates that help is contingent on certain requirements which has been underlined by her. ME10 on the other hand, stated clearly that her preference would be to provide financial help to her sister on the condition, as noticed in her use of "if," that she has the means to do so which suggests that help is conditional and not guaranteed. ME14 also used the conditional "if" to indicate that only in the worst scenario would he invite his sibling over but again it has to be on under some conditions. The above use of the conditional "if" by Group 2 subjects indicated that the help to be given to their siblings is conditional upon certain prerogatives and terms and is not a guaranteed occurrence. Thus, use of the conditional "if" indicates the expectation of extending help only when certain preferred conditions (their comfort, convenience and preferences) are met, not when it did not. This suggests that subjects

were operating from the Western orientation of prioritizing on the self instead of the family or collective as the help to be given would not be extended at the expense of the self or the immediate family.

In direct contrast from the rest of Group 2 subjects, ME13 readily offered to help her needy sister. In stating the affirmative “of course,” she indicated her certainty and willingness to extend help. Thus, she aligned herself with the Chinese frame of family solidarity through the popular Chinese saying of blood being thicker than water:

ME13: (2)But on my part, if my sister is in deep financial crisis of course, I will extend my hand to help her and invite her to stay with me. Because after all, we are Chinese, blood is thicker than water.

As stated above, 73.3 % or most Group 2 subjects were not in favour of inviting their siblings over to stay with them and were quick to indicate their reluctance. Their non-affirmative answers were discussed previously (cf. Chapter 6, section 6.1.3.1). Thus, it was clear that precedence was given to self and personal agency by Group 2 subjects.

### **7.2.1.3 Sub-frames for centrality of family in Group 2’s verbalizations**

The major reasons cited by many Group 2 subjects for their strong reluctance were their individualistic life styles and preferences as well as the need for privacy. These sub-frames which constitute Group 2 subjects’ frame of centrality of family also serve to indicate their expectations. Excerpts of their responses are given below:

ME1: (3)But it’ll be better if you do not stay together because once you have your own family, its better not lah. Because, privacy and space is of utmost importance to me lah.

ME4: (4)And at the same time, I will also respect the privacy of her family and aa: give her room and –and-and space for herself and em: if we can er: discuss these areas and understand each other fully.

ME5: (5)You see, whatever it is, I always believe that once a couple have a family, they ought to be at er:- they ought to have their own place and we ought to have our own place.

ME11: (5)And since the place is a place to stay, I believe they also would prefer to be on their own. They would have their own freedom. (6)I would be prepared to rent a place for them to stay. That’s not a problem.

ME15: If it’s a long term measure: problems will probably arise and that’s the point when ((inhalation)) probably will ask them to move out to another house. (3)Maybe will even pay for-pay for the rental but ((tongue click)) move out!

Chief among these frames are the expectation for the occurrence of misunderstanding and squabbles when living together in close proximity. In brief, they had the expectation of all the negative consequences which might arise as a result of living in close proximity with each other. Subject ME1 mentioned about the “squabbles” that would arise, ME4 talked about “friction and conflicts,” ME5 highlighted on the occurrence of “family conflicts,” ME11 discussed on “issues and problems,” ME15 anticipated about the “problems that will arise” while ME7 discussed on the ways and means to avoid situations where they “don’t disrespect” each other when living in close proximity. In brief, instead of focussing on the Chinese cultural view of the family taking precedence over personal interests (De Mente, 2000), a number of Group 2 subjects were very open about their feelings (cf. chapter 6, section 6.1.3.1).

Group 2 subjects also indicated their personal preferences as reasons for their reluctance which include the sub-frames of privacy and freedom in relation to the frame of family:

ME1: (3)But it’ll be better if you do not stay together because once you have your own family, its better not lah. Because, privacy and space is of utmost importance to me lah.

ME3: (2)But of course, if I have a little bit more money, I wouldn’t mind getting a house for her, you know...

ME4: (3)The areas which I need to aa: discuss with my sister are: - which I felt is important to me is the privacy of my family, er: cleanliness of the house and also I: I like to live in a peaceful environment.

ME5: (5)You see, whatever it is, I always believe that once a couple have a family, they ought to be at er:- they ought to have their own place...

ME10: (2)I would avoid living with them because I believe my family comes first. Each family has their core values and putting two families together is not a good idea.

ME11: (5)And since the place is a place to stay, I believe they also would prefer to be on their own. They would have their own freedom. (6)I would be prepared to rent a place for them to stay...

ME15: (2) If it’s a long term measure: problems will probably arise and that’s the point when ((inhalation)) probably will ask them to move out to another house. (3)Maybe will even pay for-pay for the rental but ((tongue click)) move out!

ME1 cited her preference for “privacy and space” as being of “utmost importance.” Use of “utmost” indicated the intensity of her preference such as being of greatest importance. In stating thus, she was indicating the high expectation that she placed on privacy and space. Likewise, ME3 stated that if she was financially sound, she “wouldn’t mind” renting a house for them, which again alludes to the idea of her personal preference for privacy for the

family. On the other hand, ME11 mentioned about freedom as in the preference “to be on their own” for her sister and family such as possessing a place of their own. The freedom so mentioned could also be likened to privacy cited by other Group 2 subjects. Likewise, ME4 mentioned about the “need to discuss” about privacy and space as well as cleanliness and a peaceful environment. The mention of “need” indicated her view of what is viewed to be necessary or of importance. In the same vein, ME5 cited about the importance of privacy for a couple as, “they ought to have their own place.” Use of the modal “ought” again conveyed the idea of necessity and her expectation for the couple to have a place of their own. This idea was repeated by ME10 who stated that “each family has its core values” and these values might come into conflict when two families stay together. ME10 was quick to state her priority which was “my family comes first.” Consequently, she would consider extending financial help to her sibling a more favourable course of action.

The idea of extending financial aid or renting another place has also been voiced by many Group 2 subjects in relation to the sub-frame of privacy with regard to the family. Subject ME15 demonstrated this when he stated, “maybe even ...pay for the rental but move out!” In the event when problems arise as a result of household squabbles, ME15 stated that moving out was not an option for his sibling and family but a definite occurrence as the interest of his family comes first.

#### **7.2.1.4 Sub-frames for centrality of family in Group 1’s Verbalizations**

For Group 1 subjects, a number of sub-frames could be observed: familial loyalty and allegiance, obligation to the family as observed in the reference to one’s role in the family, harmony, responsibility, face with its related sub-frames of pride and shame as well as reputation were highlighted. Subjects’ responses also highlight the crucial role of the Chinese socialization process in “training” the young to conform to familial practices.

A majority of Group 1 subjects view the family as a collective or interdependent unit. As

MC2 mentioned earlier, achievement through cooperation and mutual dependence is encouraged among its members. With regard to the collectivistic nature of Chinese culture, Steven & Lee (1990) stated that increased interdependence among family members result in increased mutual obligations. Thus, MC2, MC6 and MC15 spoke of the expectations of society or collective with regard to the obligations that family members have towards each other and the family. Below are excerpts of their responses:

MC2: (1) ...Because in Chinese aa: we believe, ok since the: small, our family bring up, aa we need to er: to live together as a big family and then we need to help each other.

MC6: 3)Even aa:: even if Chinese don't help our sister or brother the Chinese society will also talk, will talk about us, at behind lah.

MC15: (2)Because aa: when they do the wrong thing, the people will think, this family aa: their teachings are very bad, their teaching very lousy and then will involve all the family members...

MC2 spoke of being taught from young to live together and help each other as members of the family. Likewise, MC6 spoke of helping her sibling as something in which she has “no choice.” Similarly, MC15 spoke of aiding a sibling to avoid being criticized by Chinese society for having “lousy family teachings.” Thus, Bond (1991:6) observes that “family relationships become a lifelong affair” and “even after one has married, the obligations continue.” This is reflected in the belief encapsulated in the Chinese proverb which states that within the womb of the family, “you and I are one” (Bond 1991: 6), thus, pointing again to the Confucian belief that there is “no me in isolation... I am the totality of roles I live in relation to specific others...” (Nisbett 2003:5). Thus, societal views and reactions were placed at the forefront of their discussion as conformity was expected of its members. For example, MC6 and MC15 discussed about the need to avoid society’s criticism which suggest of their fear of being ridiculed and belittled by the Chinese community which act as cues to contextualize subjects’ narratives. Thus, the idea of face was alluded to by subjects MC6 and MC15 while the idea of retribution for one’s deeds was also alluded to by several Group 1 subjects in line with Chinese culture and cognition.

Superimposed frames are observed in the responses of Group 1 subjects such as MC3, MC4 and MC12 as their focus were on personal priorities and views rather than on the

collective. Excerpts of their responses are given below:

MC3: (3)Aa: and er: if that is- that is my sister I would look at her as one of the family member regardless of you know, what the Chinese thought that she is now married off to one of the family and follow the surname of the husband. Er: to me, there is no er: line drawn between the in-laws.

MC4: (2)... Because If lets say they were to stay in the house, and then er my own time table I won't want them to alter that table,

In doing so, they suggest the presence of conflicting frames and how subjects aligned themselves to the situation at hand. Subject MC4 discussed about her willingness to accommodate her sister and family which is in keeping with Chinese cultural practice to prioritize on family but only on her own terms as she did not want them to upset, her personal "time table" which is also in keeping with the Western frame of prioritizing on the self and personal agency. Subject MC3 on the other hand, stated that he would help his sister and treat her as a family member although Chinese society may view it to be inappropriate as married daughters are not considered to be part of their former family. Similarly, MC12 voiced his willingness to invite his sibling over if the situation was unavoidable:

MC12: (1)Ya, if it has to come to that point aa: I have no problem lah. (2...Umm: of course, I would also have some time frame for them to solve their problems. (3) So its not that I wouldn't like but a: : a : :((vocalic sounds)) I think privacy is very important to me lah. I don't like people to: just intrude my privacy...

However, MC12 discussed about giving a time frame for his sibling to solve her problems. Although MC12 stated that he wouldn't mind inviting his sibling over but his hedges and production of vocalic sounds indicated the he probably meant otherwise. Such paralinguistic cues clearly signalled subject's discomfort which suggest the presence of conflicting frames as inviting his sister and family over would impinge on his desire for "privacy" which is consonant with the Western practice of personal agency.

### **7.2.1.5 Summary**

From the above discussion, Group 1 subjects have an intense sense of moral obligation and family honour which is observed through their structures of expectations. It is also manifested through the sub-frames associated with the collective and collective agency.

Thus, the sub-frames of familial loyalty, harmony and obligation to the family as well as face were highlighted. In contrast, the sub-frames of privacy and space, freedom, responsibility and accountability to oneself and one's immediate family as well as individualism in life style, practices and preferences featured prominently in many of Group 2 subjects' discussion. All Group 2 subjects with the exception of ME13, share a single unifying factor which is prioritizing on the self and personal agency rather than the collective or extended family.

### 7.2.2 Filial Piety

Stimulus 2: Not having a son to carry on the family name amounts to breaking the ancestral linkage. It is regarded as the most serious filial failure by Mencius or Meng Zi, a renown master of Rujiao or Confucianism. What is your view with regard to the saying by Mencius?

In the discussion of the above aspect, subjects' structures of expectation were revealed through the use of evaluatives (adverbs and adjectives), modals, repetitions, contrastive connectives and paralinguistic cues which indicate subjects' expectations with regard to the maintenance of filial piety through male progeny.

#### 7.2.2.1 Evidence of expectations in Group 1's verbalizations

Differences in framing could be observed in the issues related to sons. Although Group 1 subjects stated that it was a traditional practice, their verbalization revealed that it is still prioritized by many of them. MC5 and MC11's verbalizations reflect the importance of male progeny:

MC5: (7)... it is **very** important from er: until today, it is **still** very important. So the Chinese **will** somehow try to get a son.

MC11: (4)But today these have changed. People say daughters are better **but** when it comes to preferences, they **will** still go back to the son. (9)Mencius's way of thinking is **still** happening today.

[emphasis by the researcher]

For example, when MC5 stated that "it is very important," and repeated the phrase by adding the adverb "still," she is probably emphasizing her expectation with regard to the

traditional importance of having male progeny which has continued and is still in existence today. Thus, MC5 talked about what the Chinese are expected to do with her reference to the modal “will.” Since sons are viewed to be important, they will procure a son in whatever way they could as seen in the use of the adverb, “somehow.” Although MC11 stated that times have changed with regard to the sentiment of prioritizing on sons, use of the connective “but” indicated the opposite of what is expected such as the current preferences for daughters. Thus, in stating that they “will still go back to sons,” it indicated the previous expected preference for sons.

Similarly, sons are viewed to be important by MC12 and MC13:

MC12: (8)However, the-the culture is structured in such a way that **only** the son has the right to carry on the linkage which I think is sad. So I have **no choice but** to you know, follow the –the-the cultural-culture re?

MC13: (2)Um: well, aa: for now I think er: I: because I not yet married so- I didn’t feel any difference having a son or daughter. (3)**Of course**, maybe I might also as this Meng Zi said ok? If I don’t have a son, I’ll not have er: my descendents later. Don’t have “Tan” my surname, right? So: aa: that might be one case, that I might think about it also. (4)Even though now I feel like it doesn’t matter, I **just** feel like a: daughter, ya.

[emphasis by the researcher]

MC12 used the adjective “only” to refer to sons to indicate that there are no other choices apart from sons. Thus, he stated that he had “no choice” or options while use of the connective “but” served to negate his disagreement to the notion of sons being the preferred choice for ancestral linkage. Similarly, MC13 stated that although it did not matter to him “now” if he had sons or daughters, but use of “of course” indicated his expectation of something being expected such as adhering to Meng Zi’s view with regard to male progeny in future, after marriage. Likewise, MC14 and MC15 discussed about the importance of sons to the Chinese:

MC14: (3)Mm: for me, I think you cannot apply, I mean, in today’s world lah, ya? Because aa: today is totally different like what happen in the past...(5)But nowadays, different already... Well, but I believe some of them still they still have this kind of mind. I think majority lah, ya. May be 70 or 80%. (12)For me, that’s why rich people normally, they want to have a son. (softer)They want to have a son... (13)For-for Chinese that’s why Chinese surname is **very important**, ((whisper)) **very, very** important, you see.

MC15: (17)So: the Chinese family, the son is **very** important because the son carry the family name, ha? So: aa:m Chinese will say, “wu shi wei bu siao ye.” If you don’t have son aa, you know, “bu siao”, you know. Not filial, you know. (18)So, you **must** try your best to get one son at least, you know. ((Inhalation)) If you don’t get one son, the family will: another people **will laugh** at you. “All daughter, all daughter.” Ayoh, our Hokkien **will** say, “se ma si cha bor kiah, chi geh cho pai tai chi, eh.” “Do the wrong thing,” they say the

parents do the wrong thing, all: all daughters. (23)So aa: so aa Chinese society, the son is very important...

[emphasis by the researcher]

MC14 began by stating that today, times have changed and one “cannot apply” traditional thinking such as prioritizing on sons. On second thought, MC14 stated that “some” people still do so today. MC14 however, corrected himself further by changing the mentioned “some” people to “a majority” in the next sentence. Later, MC14 reiterated the importance of sons through repetition of the clause, “they want to have a son.” This is further emphasized through repetition and stress on the adverb “very” in the following phrase. It is interesting to note that MC14 repeated the phrase at a much lower volume at the conclusion of his discussion which probably acts as an afterthought to reinforce his change in argument with regard to his expectation regarding sons. Likewise, MC15 used the intensifier “very” to indicate the great importance attached to sons. To reiterate his view, he quoted a Chinese phrase to indicate what the Chinese “will” say for those who do not have sons. Use of the modal “will” indicate his expectation of what Chinese society would do, which is to view such a person as unfilial. Hence, the modal “must” is used to explain how imperative it is to have a son as he expects society to exert its own social control through criticism and ridicule. This is observed through references to people “will laugh” or “our Hokkein (a Chinese dialect) will say.” MC15’s account of the traditional belief and the restrictive roles for females revealed the structures of expectations that existed then:

MC15: (12) But they [the daughters] **cannot** carry the ancestral tablet or “sen chu pai”. (13)... The daughter’s house **cannot** ... Because daughter is like the water, you know. If flow out **cannot** get back already. (14)If you marry with the: - for example with the boy aa: I mean Lau lah, your daughter is carry Lau already no more her family[surname] already. So **cannot** carry the ancestral tablet... (17)So aa: so aa Chinese society, the son is very important. They carry ancestral aa:m tablet, ah? Aa:m aa:m daughter **cannot**...

[emphasis by the researcher]

Traditionally, the daughter was restricted from doing a lot of things, hence the abundant and repetitive use of “cannot” in MC15’s narrative. The repetitive use of the modal “cannot” not only indicated MC15’s stress on the numerous prohibition imposed on daughters but also the expectation of the powerless and lowly position of women as delineated by society or collective. Hence, reference was made to daughters as used

water that “flow out” from the house to indicate that once married, daughters were viewed to be of no longer any utility to the family. Such powerful stereotypes about the differences between men and women again serve to cue one to the focus on society and its power and control over its members.

#### **7.2.2.2 Evidence of expectations for filial piety in Group 2’s verbalizations**

Evaluatives such as adjectives and adverbs featured prominently in the verbalizations of Group 2 subjects. They were used by subjects to mirror their strong reactions and negative feelings to the above aspect as a result of their personal expectations with regard to the aspect of filial piety. ME1 pronounced the ideas expressed as “absolute rubbish,” “outdated,” and being “truly archaic” while ME3 stated that such ideas are, “not applicable,” and “not workable,” in this modern time. ME7 expressed such thoughts as “nonsense and rubbish,” ME10 pronounced the saying as “a lot of crap,” ME11 referred to such practices as “ancient Chinese principles,” ME12 viewed them to be “rubbish,” while ME15 categorized the ideas stated as “a load of poo,” (cf. Chapter 6, section 6.2.3.1) which indicate the opposing frames that subjects hold with regard to the traditional Chinese frame of filial piety. Moreover, use of critical and strong language acts as contextualization cues to indicate their adherence to the Western frame of debate and rhetorical combat (Nisbett, 2003).

Thus, when ME1 pronounced the view as “outdated” which is evaluative in nature, she was again measuring it against the modern or Western view of equal rights with regard to women. Similarly, when ME7 stated that the saying, “just sort of wipes out all the daughters of the world,” it indicated the strength of his disagreement. Use of “just” which has been referred to as “a formulaically common qualification-plus-hedge” such as “just sort of” by Tannen (1993: 28), reveals the expectation of more than is expected as it serves to underplay the statement. Pronouncing the statement by Mencius as “stupid” which is also evaluative in nature, ME7 was in actuality indicating his strong rejection of the

thoughts expressed and his expectation of the crucial role of women in society today. ME9 categorized those who uphold such practices as those who “rigidly” subscribe to Confucianism. The evaluative use of the adverb “rigidly” somehow portrays the person who do so as being inflexible which suggests of a negative characteristic. ME14 on the other hand, indicated his disgust by stating his firm refusal to answer to the question posed. He stated that the statement “shouldn’t be” which again indicated his expectation of what should be. From the above discussion, the contextual presuppositions of women being individuals who share equal rights with their male counterparts were strongly portrayed by Group 2 subjects. In brief, women were empowered by the above Group 2 subjects who were operating in accordance with Western frames of equality and fairness. Below are excerpts of their verbalizations:

ME1: (10)To get to the point, this view aa is **outdated** lah as women are given equal rights in almost everything, be it salary or property today.

ME7: (16) ...This **just** sort of wipes out all the daughters of the world, isn’t it? Why a woman? You don’t have a woman, how can you bear children? (17)How **stupid**...

ME9: (6)It is true lah to any Chinese who rigidly subscribes to Confucianism.

ME14: (5)Aa: I totally disagree with that. I think this statement **shouldn’t –shouldn’t be**. I am not answering this, I-I disagree.

[emphasis by the researcher]

Evaluatives such as adverbs and adjectives occur infrequently in narratives thus, it has been assumed that their presence are indicative of the significance of the quality that has been highlighted and they act as comparatives to what might have been expected (Tannen, 1993). From the above, it is clear that the presence of evaluatives in the verbalization of Group 2 subjects indicate the structures of expectation which subjects have such as their strong rejection to the idea of producing male progeny as a yardstick for filial piety.

### 7.2.2.3 Sub-frames for filial piety in Group 1’s verbalizations

Another aspect of difference in the framing of the two groups of subjects is observable in the high regard and adherence to historical and traditional words of wisdom. Group 1 subjects’ reference to Chinese historical records, proverbs and sayings indirectly

highlighted on Chinese society and its cultural practices and norms. A fuller description is given in Chapter 6, section 6.2.2. Excerpts of their responses are given below :

MC5: (6)Oh, in Chinese it is **“Wu hou wei da”** ok? ah: ya, to Chinese, to carry the sir name is very important. (7)But, er: it is very important from er: until today, it is still very important.  
MC15: (17) So: aa:m Chinese will say, **“wu shi wei bu siao ye.”** If you don't have son aa, you know, “bu siao”, you know. Not filial, you know.  
ME13: (9)Because as they say, **“fai soi part lou pit yan teen.”** Which means whatever property they have, whatever it is they have, they will definitely pass down to the people within their own family, having the same surname. Which means passing down to their sons.  
[emphasis by the researcher]

In contrast to the strong language used by Group 2 subjects to refute the thoughts portrayed in the sayings of Meng Zi, Group 1 subjects chose to explain about traditional Chinese culture and its practices. This is in keeping with the Chinese aversion to the spectre of “luan” or chaos. Bond (1991) views the Chinese intolerance to combative language and aggression as vigilance against disunity and disharmony which is observed in the references and allusions that Group 1 subjects make regarding the issue of chaos or “luan” :

MC1: As long as they are good, really-they-they have good education. They can contribute they **do not make trouble**. That is the best thing.  
MC2:(7) So in general term, take filial piety means to take care of one's parents and **not to be rebellious** so show love and support for each other.  
MC5: (9)... So, the son may not be er: he may not er: er: what you call ((tongue click)) he **may not up to your expectation**. So, **he will not bring good names** to your family  
MC7: (7)Aaa: of course, it is good to have sons and daughters at home. But when you don't have that kind of a choice, we we look at er: look at er: the **behaviour** of our sons and daughters more than -more than whether it's a boy or girl, ya.  
[emphasis by the researcher]

Thus, argumentative, combative language, debate and controversy prioritized by the West are not encouraged by the Chinese who prioritized on harmony. Therefore, the Chinese are weak in the development of persuasive argument (Nisbett, 2003). With regard to the above, Bond (1991) reports that verbal fluency is lacking among Chinese students as they are not trained to develop debating skills. Hence, the verbal tests of achievement of Chinese students are lower than those of Westerners.

#### 7.2.2.4 Sub-frames for filial piety in Group 2's verbalizations

Subjects' cultural affiliation and world view is observable through the sub-frames which they forward to support their stand. Issues pertaining to equal rights, values, practicality

and current practices which uphold individualism constitute the sub-frames for the frame of filial piety held by Group 2 subjects. Subject ME1 spoke of equal rights for women, ME6 spoke of her personal views such as treating parents well while they are alive instead of conducting ostentatious funerals when they are dead to impress people and create a good image for themselves, ME10 spoke of focussing on upholding family virtues instead of stressing on the need to have a son. All the above issues which stress on individuality in a way act as contextualization cues to indicate the Western practice of focusing on personal agency where the self and freedom is prioritized above all else. Note that ME6 and ME10 pointed to some of the undesirable Chinese cultural practices of stressing on the superficial instead of the essential such as conducting expensive funerals for parents instead of honouring them when they were alive or prioritizing on having sons without spending quality time for their upbringing. Excerpts of Group 2 subjects' verbalizations follow:

ME1: (3)...Because, privacy and space is of utmost importance to me lah.

ME10: (4)...It's only a name, ok? (5)What about the virtues of the family which is more important?

ME6: (4)What is important is how you treat your parents when they are alive and not to show people that you are actually a filial son or daughter after they are dead with some pompous ceremony.

From the above, it is observable that almost all Group 2 subjects, except for ME13, adhere to Western frames for family and the self. Most of them personalized their responses and openly discussed about their personal views and responses, many of which are in opposition to Chinese practices and thought. Therefore, the frames they adhered to with regard to filial piety are in conflict with that of Chinese society. Below are excerpts of their responses:

ME6: (2)...For me, **family name is not that important**. (3)This-this-this-this is something the: old Chinese folk believe in.

ME7: (11)So: no, I don't agree with it and I think its very stupid and foolish. I think if you have a daughter aa: **I don't care about the ancestral linkage**. I just care about the fact that she is my child.

ME8: (3) ...**I don't care who Mencius is**. It doesn't bother me what he thinks but I have no problems without having a son to carry on the family name.

ME10: (4)... I mean, technically, you can have the family name being carried on by an adopted son. **It's only a name**, ok?

ME15:(5) ... **filial piety is only of use if you are still alive**, once you are gone, that's it!  
What's the use of filial piety?

[emphasis by the researcher]

### 7.2.2.5 Summary

From the above discussion, references to Chinese sayings and societal norms with its strictures on women where women are viewed as powerless and worthless such as in the reference to women as “used water” by Group 1 subjects act as cues to indicate the Chinese cultural and cognitive context of Group 1 subjects' world view.

It is interesting to note the contrasting frames adhered to by both groups of subjects with regard to the issue of male progeny. Following are 3 Group 1 subjects' responses:

MC8: (3)If the society all bow to this statement, that means there will be ((sigh)) no women in the future. All will be dominate by man. And ancestral linkage will be nothing that's all.

MC9: (3)Aa: this was an olden day quote lah. (4)So, I don't really I don't really er: its beyond **our** control. As long as **we** have children, we have er: offspring, it is good enough. It doesn't matter whether it is a boy or girl.

MC10: (4)Aa:m it's the male who decides the sex of the child lah. So: er: if I fail to get a son, so: its not **my** fault loh.

Notice the difference in stance taken by ME2 and ME3 with regard to the issue of male progeny:

ME2: (9)Whether **you** are able to have descendents, to have progeny it is : : out of your control. There could be could be physical problems, there could be so many factors that has control over the situation...

ME3: (3)I'm not agreeable to this at all. Because even **my** dad: he has four daughters, you see. He –he does not regret it anyway-in anyway.

[Emphasis by the researcher]

Such contrasting frames also indicate the contrasting expectations or presuppositions which subjects have. Although two Group 1 subjects indicated their disagreement to the view that failure to produce males is a serious breakage of ancestral linkage, they nonetheless functioned within the Chinese frame of filial piety. For MC8, the female is viewed to be just as important not because of his stress on equality for the female but rather for the preservation of ancestral linkage. Similarly, MC9 and MC10 denied that it is the fault of the female if no sons were produced but they personalized the issue by stating that it was not their fault if they failed to produce sons. Their responses served to indicate their personal involvement in the Chinese cultural practice of prioritizing on sons and faulting the female for failure to produce sons.

### 7.2.3 Education

Stimulus 3: “wang zi cheng long, wang nu cheng feng” Hoping for the future generation to obtain excellence in education. Could this saying be applied to the Chinese family?

The discussion for the aspect of education is done briefly as the structures of expectations for both groups of subjects are repeated. In response to the above question posed, subjects indicated their expectations of what is appropriate or hoped for in the use of surface linguistic elements such as modals, negatives, evaluative language, intensifiers, paralinguistic cues and moral judgments. It is also evident in the sub-frames which were mentioned or alluded to by subjects in the course of their verbalizations.

#### 7.2.3.1 Evidence of expectations for education in Group 2’s verbalizations

In response to the above stimulus, the following Group 2 subjects’ use of surface linguistic elements revealed their structures of expectation. ME2’s structure of expectation is revealed through the use of the negative “not,” the modal “shouldn’t” and a paralinguistic cue such as stress. Similarly, ME4 and ME6 spoke of the negative aspects of education. ME4 highlighted on the negative practice of the Chinese in placing education above self-worth. The use of an evaluative and adverb as well as repetition revealed ME6’s structure of expectation with regard to education. The self is prioritized above education in line with the Western concept of education. ME7’s use of the adverb “so” and use of negatives indicated his negative judgment of Chinese who do not know the true worth of education. ME8 indicated his disagreement to authoritarianism in education. To ME8 and ME9, education was again viewed from the aspect of self, how they themselves felt about it and it is consistent with the Western cultural view of prioritizing on the self. Likewise, ME15’s frame for education is observed through the use of the negative “not,” use of adverb “only” as well as the modal “will” which reflect many aspects of Western principles such as not viewing education as a means to an end and valuing individual talents above educational success. Examples of their responses are given in Appendix G section, 7.2.3.1.

From the above discussion, although Group 2 subjects indicated agreement to the saying, it is observable that Group 2 subjects' frame for education focusses on the self and education is viewed to be an on-going process and for the development of the individual. Hence, some of them indicated that it was not viewed to be the top priority nor was it viewed to be instrumental in the definition of a person's success.

### **7.2.3.2 Evidence of expectations for education in Group 1's verbalizations**

Almost all Group 1 subjects' frame of education is consistent with the Chinese cultural frame of education being a gateway to success in life and wealth. It is understood that high ranking officials in traditional China had wealth, fame, respect and upward social mobility (Watkins and Biggs, 1996). Consequently, emphasis on educational excellence has been viewed in a positive light and is linked to the aspect of face. The achievement of family glory through success in the imperial exam is the primary dream of the traditional Chinese (Gateway to Chinese culture, 2003). Consistent with the idea of family glory and success, MC3 used the modal "should" as well as the evaluative "good" to describe the Chinese high expectation of their children to be phoenixes. Repeated use of the evaluative "good" by MC3 as well as the use of nouns such as "somebody" and "nobody" revealed his positive expectation of education. The idea of pride such as the achievement of face through education has been mentioned by MC4 and MC6. Excerpts of subjects' responses are given in Appendix G, section 7.2.3.2.

Success in education is also viewed as a kind of old-age insurance for parents, achieving a high social status and upward mobility, ensuring the maintenance of pride for parents as seen in the responses of MC4, MC5, MC6 and MC10. While MC2, MC9 and MC11 discussed about the Chinese placing great priority on education as success in education is linked to the expectation of success in life or a promising future. MC5 alluded to the expectation of educational excellence as a means to financial soundness and security for aged parents. Seen in this context, success in education fulfills many instrumental needs.

In brief, to the status and society conscious Group 1 subjects, education has been viewed to be a means to an end as it has been viewed to be instrumental to the achievement of one's desires. This is in keeping with the findings of Stigler and Smith (1985) that the academic success of Chinese children represents a source of pride for the entire family while failure is a source of stigma for the family.

Stevenson & Lee (1990) states that Chinese children work hard not to satisfy personal goals alone but to the goals set by their families or group. Thus, the frame of education was linked to the idea of pride and success for the family and clan.

To achieve the above, subjects mentioned about parents sending their children to endless tuition classes to ensure educational success. This is so because Confucianists associate education and learning with effort as Confucian tradition rests on the assumption that it is possible to educate everyone. Watkins and Biggs (1996:28) quote the *Analects* and *The Mean* to support this view. Confucius stressed that:

"it does not matter whether you are born with knowledge, or you attain knowledge by learning, or you attain knowledge by taking pain to learn, once you attain knowledge, it is all the same."

Watkins and Biggs (1996) suggest that to Confucius, differences in intelligence, is not a factor which inhibits one's educability but a person's incentive and attitude to learn does. Thus, effort and hard work is stressed and reference to tuition classes is evident in Group 1 subject's verbalizations. Reference to discipline or authoritarian control of parents with regard to education has also been mentioned by Group 1 subjects in line with the Chinese view of education (cf. Appendix G, section 7.2.3.2).

Consistent with the Chinese frame of educational success, most Group 1 subjects chose to explain about the proverb, or quote the proverb and relate it to the Chinese family and society as discussed earlier in chapter 6, section 6.4.2. In a way, it indicated their agreement and support for the proverb. Only one subject, MC12, indicated disagreement to the view through the use of evaluatives, repetitions and negative statements. Viewed in

this context, MC12's frame for education is consistent with the Western frame where education is considered as a means to an end and not an end in itself.

### **7.2.3.3 Summary**

The frames on education which emerged in the discussions of both groups of subjects indicated that they were culturally oriented. Through subjects' responses, it is possible to observe how Group 2 subjects' view educational excellence and what it symbolizes. Frames identified with individualism such as self worth, self esteem, freedom and liberty were mentioned in conjunction with the aspect of education. In sum, education was valued as a means for the development of the individual or as result of a strong belief in valuing knowledge (Nisbett, 2003). In contrast, Group 1 subjects view education as a means to an end such as in the attainment of "face" which encompasses respect, pride, status as well as material wealth. Another aspect of education which emerged through the verbalization of subjects such as MC3 and MC6 (cf. Appendix G, section 7.2.3.2) was that education was viewed to be a way to please parents. Hence, education was valued for its instrumental functions.

From the above discussion, it is possible to note the distinct differences in the frames employed by both groups of subjects. Group 1 subjects' frame for education is a result of socio-historical and economical factors which focuses on collective agency as its bottom line. It is the collective's decision to consider education as an invaluable tool to upward social mobility. Hence, Bond (1991:14) comments, "childhood achievement is almost exclusively defined in academic terms" as social skills, personal fulfillment and athletic performance are viewed to be secondary for the Chinese. Consequently, massive pressure is exerted on children by parents to achieve academic excellence (Bond, 1991) and this is confirmed in the responses of Group 1 subjects who talked of tuition classes and pressuring their children in their studies. Group 2 subjects on the other hand, placed the self and personal agency above educational performance. Hence, the mention and

focus on the self and individualistic ideals of self-worth, liberty and freedom in relation to education is evident in their verbalizations.

Traditionally, education has been viewed to be of great importance by the Chinese as a result of the various societal frames for education which has its roots in the ancient Confucian esteem of education as well as the expectations of education being the gateway to success and a better life. Such frames are still held today by Malaysian Chinese and findings confirm that generally, both groups of subjects still endorse education to be important and crucial to success and achievement in life. Bond (1991) notes that the obsession with academic achievement still remains among Chinese today as academic achievement is viewed to be a major escalator to higher positions. Hence, the evidence of the superimposed frames in the verbalization of Group 2 subjects where subjects acknowledge the importance of education however, the self is given precedence over educational excellence.

#### **7.2.4 Face**

Stimulus 4: Chinese people place face value highly- Mianzi literally means “face value” has long been observed by most Chinese. As the saying goes, “Man live for face as trees grow for bark. Please comment on the newspaper clipping about “face.”

The discussion on the aspect of face encompasses the different frames which subjects have with regard to face. These frames are manifested through the structures of expectations which are revealed through the presence of surface linguistic elements such as the use of negatives, evaluatives, intensifiers, modals and repetitions. As much of the findings with regard to the use of frames by both groups of subjects are repeated, only findings that would provide further information on the constitution of frames such as that given in section 7.2.4.3 were discussed at length.

##### **7.2.4.1 Evidence of expectations for face in Group 1’s Verbalizations**

Group 1 subjects discussed the aspect of face in relation to society. The use of surface

linguistic elements such as evaluatives, modals, paralinguistic cues, repetitions and primary auxiliaries plus infinitives by Group 1 subjects such as MC1, MC2, MC4, MC5, MC6, MC9, MC11, MC14 and MC15 indicated their structures of expectation with regard to face. For example, MC1 and MC2 viewed face as a product of socialization as it is culturally inculcated early in a person's life. MC4 on the other hand, used the intensifier "very" repeatedly to indicate the strength and degree of her conviction with regard to the importance of face. Likewise, repeated use of evaluatives by MC5 and paralinguistic cues such as stress and volume also indicated the high expectations placed on face and its maintenance by Chinese society. The evaluatives which featured in MC6's responses also serve to indicate the frame of the importance face. Likewise, MC9, MC11, MC14 and MC15 also indicated their expectations about the importance of face through the use of evaluatives. However, much of MC15's expectation regarding face has to do with what "Chinese society" or "community" has to say. Refer to Appendix H, section 7.2.4.1 for further examples and explanation.

The indirect mode of communication is observed through the mention of the negative aspects of face by two Group 1 subjects, MC1 and MC15. As discussed earlier (cf. Chapter 6, section 6.4.3.3), it was seen through MC1's indirect way of stating about the negative aspect of face. Similarly, MC15 only mentioned about face being a "problem" after discussing much about the importance of face to Chinese society. This could indicate how both subjects aligned themselves to society's view of the importance of face perhaps to soften the impact of their negative statements with regard to face. It also suggests the conflicting frames which subjects hold with regard to face. Excerpts of their verbalization are given in Appendix H, section 7.2.4.1.

Some Group 1 subjects, MC1, MC9 and MC10 made references to the saying in Chinese before translating them into English, which probably indicated their agreement and support of the saying. Use of Chinese idioms as in the example of face being like water and sun to

the Chinese by MC15 also served to indicate emphasis on the importance of face which constitutes his frame for face (cf. Chapter 6, section 6.4.2).

MC12's view on the other hand, was a departure from the rest of Group 1 subjects. His structure of expectation with regard to face is seen in the use of evaluatives, negatives and modals which indicated his expectation and focus towards the self and individual as opposed to the focus on society and its practices by Group 1 subjects. Examples of the above mentioned subjects' responses are given in Appendix G, section 7.2.4.1.

#### **7.2.4.2 Evidence of expectations for face in Group 2's verbalizations**

Similar to MC12, Group 2 subjects' frames for face were tied to the notion of the self which pertains to individualism, self-esteem, progress or to their own personal opinions rather than the opinions of society or community. A number of Group 2 subjects, ME1, ME2 and ME10, used evaluatives and contrastive connectives to voice their view that face is universal, thus negating face as the sole domain of the Chinese. Refer to examples of their responses given in Appendix G, section 7.2.4.2.

Most of Group 2 subjects' frames for face are discussed in relation to the self. However, subjects' verbalization also highlighted on the pros and cons in the observance of face. As many as ten Group 2 subjects affirmed the importance of maintaining face to the Chinese through the use of evaluatives such as adverbs and adjectives. The responses of a few Group 2 subjects will be discussed briefly. In stating that Chinese people place face value "highly," ME1 was in fact indicating her structure of expectation of face being of high social worth. Again when subjects pronounced face to be "important," they are indicating their structure of expectation with regard to face. The notion of face as a "most important measure of social worth" (Lam & Graham 2007:138) has been mentioned directly and indirectly by subjects. Conversely, seven Group 2 subjects discussed about

the negative aspects of face through evaluatives. Refer to examples of their responses given in Appendix H, section 7.2.4.2.

It is interesting to note that although some Group 2 subjects affirmed the importance of face which indicated their awareness of its importance to the Chinese, they also stated their focus on the importance of self such as the need for self esteem, self-pride or their opinion that face is not that important. This suggests the use of superimposed frames by subjects who were able to empathize with the Chinese practice of face but on the other hand, they also indicated their adherence to Western values such as prioritizing on self as well as the concepts and values related to self.

A clear example of the above is observed in the verbalization of ME11 who indicated his understanding and empathy by advocating “respect” for those who practice face but he also indicated his adherence to the Western concept of prioritizing on the individual such as in the preservation of the heroine’s father’s life above the practice of face. The following excerpts in bold are Group 2 subjects’ verbalizations which indicate their affirmation of the importance of face with reference to the Chinese while excerpts in italics indicate their adherence to Western frames:

ME1: (15)Er: yes, I think it is true. Em: Chinese people place face value highly. (16)To scold a person publicly will be viewed as to shame a person publicly and not to give him face. (17)*We should not do that because it belittles a person’s self esteem. Er: I think that is very important to an individual.*

ME2: (24)**I think that it is true that face is very important for the Chinese** but it is equally important to everyone. *There should be a measure, er: having er: self-pride, you know, but not excessively,*

ME3: (14)**Ya: this “mianzi” is very important.**

ME5: (20)**This er: this one certainly live up to its day, this Chinese proverb because especially amongst the Chinese businessman.** (22)*If we have to live up to people’s aa: reputation just because we want face value then we’re only pushing ourselves to people’s expectation... We’re just denying ourselves the truth of who we are in actual fact.*

ME8: (11)**Aa: I-I believe this is aa: true among Chinese aa: where, where they place a lot of emphasis on face value...** 12)*Aa: but I think that over emphasis on face value also has its negative aa: aspect aa: I feel that if a: if a- if a person has er: done something wrong, I mean he must sort of admit it lah. Even-even though not publicly, among his family, he must admit his-his-his wrong ok?* (13)But aa: I believe that we should give him face

ME9: (16)**Ya, “yan yu min, yu pei”. We live for face. I live for face.**

ME11: (33)**Ok, face aa:? Um: I think aa: we should respect aa:m this value...(35)...** the video clipping, the lady, she did not give the father’s best friend any face. But it was her father’s life at stake, you know. (39)*You respect it but we do not aa: let it govern us where*

*there is more: where there is competing interests, they are more important than keeping face. So: we have to be wise, when we give face and when we do not.*

ME12: **(11)That's a pretty good observation of the Chinese people...**(13)*And if we're conscious of that then we tend to avoid a lot of the issues aa:m ok but don't necessary agree that face value is that important.*

ME13: **(19) Mianzi is very, very important and observed by most Chinese.**

ME14: **(12)Ya, face value is actually er quite important for most Chinese...**(14) *It depends that ya, it does have the value, from my point of view, its just that er: its not, it's not the most important thing.*

ME15: **14)Eh: : you mean face value aa? Yes: true, very true.** Aa: Chinese do put a lot of emphasis on face.

#### **7.2.4.3 Evidence of expectations to indicate Group 2 subjects' dual frame for face**

Following is a discussion on the dual frames adhered to by Group 2 subjects with regard to face. A clear example of the above is observed in the verbalization of ME11 as discussed above. It is interesting to note that although some Group 2 subjects indicated awareness and affirmed the importance of face to the Chinese, they also stated their focus on the importance of self such as the need for self esteem, self-pride or their opinion that face is not that important.

This suggests the use of superimposed frames by Group 2 subjects who were able to empathize with the Chinese practice of face but on the other hand, they also indicated their adherence to Western values such as prioritizing on self as well as the concepts and values related to self. The excerpts are given in bold in section 7.2.4.2.

Seven Group 2 subjects' frame of face is a combination of both Chinese and Western views as observed in their responses. Use of modals, evaluatives, repetitions and negatives to name a few, indicate their structures of expectation in the practice of face. In keeping with the Chinese frame of face, ME1 explained about the importance of face to the Chinese and explained why one "should not" scold another in public. Use of the uncontracted negative modal "should not" indicated it as a prohibition as it would bring "shame" or loss of face to the Chinese. This reflects ME1's awareness and understanding of the practice of face among Chinese. On the other hand, in accordance to the Western concept of self and personal agency, ME1 commented that public upbraiding was unacceptable as a person's self esteem is "very important." Use of the evaluatives such as

“very” and “important” indicate his structure of expectation of how significant self esteem is to the individual. Taken together, ME1 revealed his ability to move between two cultural frameworks through the use of the superimposed frame.

Likewise, ME2 and ME5. ME2 while stating that “face is very important for the Chinese” also reminded the hearer that face is “equally important to everyone.” Use of the intensifier “very” as well as the evaluative “important” reflected ME2’s expectation of it being especially important for the Chinese but in stating that it is “equally” important to others, it indicated her ability to view the observance of face from other perspectives. The mention of “self-pride” which is an important concept of the self or individual indicated her Western orientation. She equated face to “self-pride” which she felt to be “important” to everyone, not necessarily to the Chinese alone. However, ME2 stated that there should be a measure of self-pride. In using the modal “should” twice, she indicated her expectation of what is appropriate or necessary. ME2’s use of negatives such as “not excessively,” and “not too much importance,” to explain about the phenomenon of self-pride, indicated her expectation for the need for balance in self-pride as well as focusing on self-pride. Likewise, in accordance to the focus on self, or the individual, ME5 commented that face is something she “would not hold on to.” In using the modal “would not” she was in fact alluding to what she would hold on to which was placing importance on “who we are.” Face to ME5 was having to live up to “people’s expectation,” and in doing so “we won’t be ourselves,” as we “won’t be at ease at all.” Use of double negatives indicate ME5’s expectation of what we ought to be (knowing who we are) but could not as a result of wanting face. Thus, ME5 indicated that the self is of greater importance than face as maintenance of face could lead to negation of self. However, ME5 also discussed about the importance of face to the Chinese especially Chinese businessman. Thus, it is observed that ME2 and ME5’s frames of face were a combination of both Chinese and Western concepts as both subjects indicated awareness of its importance and indicated

identification with the Chinese for doing so as seen in the use of plural pronoun “we.” However, they also adhere and prioritized on the Western concept of the importance of self.

Similarly, ME3 and ME9’s frame for the aspect of face is a combination of both Western and Chinese frames:

ME3: (14)Ya: this “mianzi” is very important. Because I’m Chinese, I also feel that I need a lot of “mianzi.” You know, I don’t like it when people don’t give me face lah.

ME9: (16)Ya, “yan yu min, yu pei”. We live for face. I live for face. If I want to stand out in society, I want to have some face. Aa: it is important to have some face. (17)Face has to do with your name. Aa: if your name is no good, your face is no good. So: aa: it has to do with it. And I think it is important, I agree.

ME3 spoke of face and the importance of the self by focusing on herself in particular, “I’m Chinese, I also feel that I need a lot of “mianzi.” Use of negatives by ME3 such as, “I don’t like it” when people “don’t give me face,” also showed her expectation of what she likes, that is to be given face by the people she interacts with. The frequent use of the personal pronoun “I” pointed to her focus on herself as opposed to others or society. Similarly, ME9 began by stating, “we live for face,” followed by “I live for face.” Repetition of the words, ‘live for face’ stresses on the import of his argument that face is important to everyone. The following sentence, “if I want to stand out in society, I want to have some face,” again pointed to ME9’s argument about his personal conviction of his need for face seen especially in the repeated reference to “I” and “want.” The arguments forwarded by both ME3 and ME9 which focused on their personal convictions, allude to the importance of the self and how the self reacts and feels towards the aspect of face.

From the above, it is observed that face is discussed in relation to the self. From the discussion of Group 2 subjects, face is therefore, an individual’s rather than society’s perception. See below ME4 and ME6’s personal views:

ME4: (8)In my opinion, if we are to place a very high value on on face, then it will hamper our progress in life. So therefore aa: we should not er: put such great emphasis on it.

ME6: (19)When you talk about face, Chinese- I notice that the Chinese society do have this problem. And this is actually a problem... (21)I think basically, when you talk about face, when you –when you value face too highly, it brings a lot of conflict in the society. (22)And:

aa: this aa: is not actually a good characteristic. @@The Chinese should get rid of this@@ ((laughs)).

The negative aspect of face is also discussed through the use of evaluatives. ME4 spoke of the negative practice of placing “very high value on face” which poses as a hamper to progress. Use of the intensifier, “very” again indicated the extremity of the value discussed. As a consequence, ME4 used the modal “should not” to indicate her expectation of not placing high value on face. Likewise, ME6 warned about face being a “problem.” In stressing that face is “actually” a problem, subject’s use and stress on the adverb reflects her expectation of face to be viewed seriously as a problem. Repetition of the word “problem” further reiterates her expectation of the practice of face as a problem. Therefore, ME6 warned about valuing face “too highly” as it could cause problems such as “conflict to society.” The use of the intensifier “too” by ME6 indicated ME6’s expectation of there being a greater degree or amount of face than was desirable, necessary or acceptable which could again be problematic. As a consequence, she advocated that the Chinese “should get rid” of face. Use of the modal “should” indicated ME6’s view of doing something pertinent such as the removal of the problematic practice of face. Thus, ME6 indicated a proactive stance with regard to face being problematic.

When ME7 spoke of face being synonymous with “pride,” he was in fact indicating the negative aspect of his frame for face:

ME7:(33)I think the face thing is synonymous with the word, “pride” which you find also in your interview here, right? (34)So, I think that man lives to look proud and look that they are as perfect um: well done if you are. (35)That’s why man is stirring themselves away from God so much because they sense man, they are proud and everything else... (36)Well, if they are perfect, why don’t you go to God? You are kind of transparent and realize where your mistakes are....

In explaining his view, he stated that men who are “proud” and who view themselves to be “perfect” distance themselves from God. The use of the evaluative adjectives “proud” and “perfect” indicate his negative expectation with regard to men who practice face. In utilizing the rhetorical question, “if they [men] were perfect why don’t you go to God?” ME7 was in fact alluding to his expectation of face being a contributant to the imperfection within

men who distance themselves from God. Subjects ME8, ME11, ME12 and ME14's frames for face are also a combination of Western and Chinese concepts. Refer to section 7.2.4.2 for examples of subjects' responses.

A departure from the negative views of face by Group 2 subjects was observed in ME15, ME9 and ME13's positive frame for face. Face was mentioned in relation to Chinese society and the value of integrity as well as a prosperous China. Thus, face is felt to be "very, very important" to the Chinese and to ME13 as well. In the use and repeated mention of the intensifier "very," ME13 was in fact indicating her strong and positive frames for face. ME13 likened face to the situation of the tree and its bark and stressed about its great relevance to people, especially when living amidst people in Chinese society. Use of the rhetorical question, "If we are not given face, where can we hide our face?" only served to bring home the point of her argument, which is, face is of crucial importance for existence in Chinese society. In like manner, ME15 spoke positively of face. ME15 felt that Chinese put a lot of emphasis on face as one has to live up to the promises made. The value of face was seen in the progress made by the Chinese throughout the centuries.

Excerpts of their responses are given below:

ME9: (16) We live for face. I live for face. (17)If I want to stand out in society, I want to have some face. Aa: it is important to have some face. (18)Face has to do with your name. Aa: if your name is no good, your face is no good. So: aa: it has to do with it. (19)And I think it is important, I agree.

ME13: :(28) *Mianzi* is very, very important and observed by most Chinese. As this saying, *yan yu min si, shi yu pei*. What more when we are living among peoples? If we are not given face, where can we hide our face?

ME15: (32)...Aa: Chinese do put a lot of emphasis on face. And: to a certain extend it is good because it also means that if you give your word, you keep your word ((inhalation)). (33)Em: its integrity and: I think it's a rule that has seen China progress for: : so many centuries...

#### **7.2.4.4 Summary**

Among the 4 aspects analyzed, the aspect of face is the most controversial as the lines of demarcation between the structures of expectation in both groupings were less significant. In fact, in aspects such as importance and definition of face, there were convergence of views between both groups. However, there were also differences in the structures of

expectations with regard to face as to its practice. These differences also indicated that they were culturally determined as the views mentioned were consistent with their cultural orientation. The idea of face as a product of socialization and being a collective good gaining societal sanction has been highlighted by Group 1 subjects in various and multiple ways. Reference to Chinese proverbs and sayings could be viewed as contextualization cues to indicate endorsement for the Chinese thoughts encapsulated in them.

On the other hand, the aspect of face has been mentioned together with self by Group 2 subjects. Face, according to a majority of Group 2 subjects, is how it is perceived by the individual rather than how it is viewed by society. Although it has also been mentioned by Group 2 subjects as a product of socialization, subjects' focus was on consideration and sensitivity to others who practice face which is again consistent with the Western view of individual rights to personal views and opinions.

As discussed earlier, seven Group 2 subjects displayed both Chinese and Western frames with regard to face which indicated their bi-cultural abilities and the existence of superimposed frames to view face from both orientations. It is surmised that when face is perceived to be important to the Chinese, subjects were operating from the Chinese frame of face. However, Group 2 subjects also stated about the negative aspects of face such as equalizing it to pride or the excessiveness which it could entail. They also discussed about the importance of self in relation to face which is Western in concept. Therefore, Group 2 subjects' Western frames of self were superimposed onto their Chinese frame of face as subjects have been enculturated in the Malaysian Chinese society since they are members of the Chinese society. Exposure to the English language at home, school and their social networks of family members, friends and relatives provided access to the Western world view of self and themes associated with individualism. Interactive frames could be seen in the alignments which Group 1 subjects, MC1 and MC15 take, in the course of their verbalization which is in keeping with the Chinese practice of maintaining harmony among

the group by stating about the positive aspects of face before commenting on the negative. Group 1 subjects also reflected a strong Chinese orientation with regard to face as almost all of them spoke of the positive aspects of face, which again reinforces their support for the adherence and maintenance of the phenomenon of face in the Malaysian Chinese society. A discussion on the extraneous factors in frames follows.

### **7.2.5 Extraneous factors in frames**

In the discussion of the above, mention will be made of the various significant levels and aspects of frames in operation in both Interview 1 and 2. These frames are a result of the intertwining between the context as well as content of the narrative and is manifested through the context of activity, textual materials as well as context of culture (Refer to Appendix H, section 7.2.5, 7.2.5.1, 7.2.5.2 and 7.2.5.3 respectively).

### **7.2.6 Summary**

Findings from linguistic evidence indicate the existence of many levels and types of frames in both the Narrative and Structured Interviews. The most prevalent of which are knowledge frames or schemas followed by interactive and superimposed frames.

Findings indicate that differences which exist in the constitution of the frames utilized by both groups of subjects were consistent with the findings of the communicative patterns of subjects in both interviews. Analysis of surface linguistic elements in subjects' verbalizations indicate that the frames employed by a majority of Group 1 subjects were consistent with that of Chinese society and ideas of collectivism while those employed by a majority of Group 2 subjects were consistent with that of Western society where the self or individualism is given focus and importance.

Tannen (1993) outlined 16 types of surface linguistic evidence to indicate the existence of structures of expectation in her study. Some of which have been identified in this study while others not mentioned in her study such as conditionals, auxiliaries forms, verbs and

nouns have been found to feature significantly in Group 2 subjects' verbalization. In particular, conditionals and affirmative were found in the aspect of centrality of family (cf. Chapter 7, section 7.2.1.1 and 7.2.1.2) while paralinguistic cues in the aspect of education also function as significant cues to subjects' cultural orientation.

The distinctive contextualization cues observable in the verbalizations of subjects throughout the study is cultural in the sense that both groups of subjects conform to the frames of their various cultural orientation. For Group 1 subjects who are Chinese language dominant subjects, they prioritized on collective agency where preservation of harmony and face is important. Thus, constant reference and focus on the collective such as Chinese society or community and family as well as references to Chinese sayings and proverbs function as clear contextualization cues of the Chinese frames adhered to by subjects to remind the listener of the cultural context of their discourse. They not only signal the Chinese frames adhered to by subjects but also the contextual presuppositions adhered to by subjects in quoting them.

Their concern for group harmony and face are manifested in their attempts to present a picture of themselves being in harmony with the general group consensus while avoiding any kind of confrontation. As a consequence, they indicate great concern about how they might be perceived by society and others. More often than not, Group 2 subjects were very direct and open in the presentation of their personal perspectives and convictions (cf. Chapter 6, section 6.2.3.1 and chapter 7, section 7.2.2.2) and did not discuss Chinese societal norms or the exercise of social control by Chinese society. Although there were instances where subjects indicate their ability to embrace the Chinese practice of prioritizing on education and the observance of face, they nonetheless, indicate their adherence to Western world views where the self is viewed to be of primary importance. However, discrepancies in the pattern of subjects' responses point to the existence of

another type of frame, which is referred to in this study as the superimposed frame. Its occurrence and constitution will be discussed in the final chapter.

Findings through the analysis of frames indicate that distinct differences from both groups as discussed above were a result of differences in subjects' world views while similarities though of less significance, such as in the area of perception towards face and education are also a result of the socialization processes undergone by the two different dominant language groups which will be discussed in the concluding chapter. The above findings corroborated with the findings on the patterns of communication utilized by both groups of subjects in the previous chapter.

Thus, the above findings to appears to confirm the weak form of Sapir-Whorfian hypothesis with regard to language use and in this instance, dominant language influencing world view. It also highlights on Gumperz's view that speakers are members of social and cultural groups and their language use reflect their group based identity which are continual indices as to who they are and what they intend to communicate. Therefore, language, culture and society are shown to be interactively grounded and embedded in the verbalizations of both these group of subjects in both the Narrative and Structured Interviews.

### **7.3 Conclusion**

The conclusion for this chapter is based on the analysis of frames of communication for Interview 1 or Narrative Interview and Interview 2 or Structured Interview and answers the research questions for the study.

#### **7.3.1 RQ 3 i) What are the frames that are present in the discourse of both groups of subjects?**

Findings in Interview 1 or Narrative Interview reveal that in all 4 aspects of the Family Descriptor Scale, there were significant differences in the structures of expectations which

indicate the frames utilized by both groups of subjects. Although there are many levels of frames due to the many levels of context present in the study (cf. Chapter 4, section 4.2.2), focus was on the significant frames in the narratives of subjects. In the main, cognitive frames or knowledge schemas consistent with subjects' cultural orientation as manifested through structures of expectations, featured significantly in both groups of subjects' narratives. The superimposed frame which is a combination frame as a result of enculturation and cultural adaptation is also observed in the narratives of a few subjects.

Group 1 subjects who are Chinese language dominant indicated a propensity to subscribe to Chinese cultural frames where priority and focus is accorded to the collective. It is observed that most Group 1 subjects tend to possess a low conception of self which is contrasted by the high regard for the collective and collective agency. Chinese cultural frames closely linked to the unequal social structures within the family and society as well as the collective and collective agency such as harmony and face also featured prominently in the narratives of Group 1 subjects.

On the other hand, Group 2 subjects who are English language dominant subjects indicated a propensity to subscribe to Western cultural frames where the self is given high priority and personal agency is foregrounded. Thus, the Western frame of self which encompasses a distinctive individual identity and a sense of personal agency which prioritizes on equality, justice and freedom (Nisbett, 2003) were observed in the narratives of Group 2 subjects.

The Superimposed frame mentioned earlier is also found in the narratives of a few subjects from both groups. In Group 1, three subjects such as MC3, MC4 and MC12 and 1 Group 2 subject, ME13, demonstrated the ability to utilize the superimposed frame when they were able to combine both the Chinese and Western world view in their narratives. However, there were degrees of differences between the subjects mentioned. For example, MC3 and MC12 indicated a more consistent use of the Western frame compared

to the Chinese frame while ME13 indicated both Chinese and Western frames in her narratives. In particular, ME13 demonstrated strong affinity to Chinese thinking with regard to moral values.

In Interview 2, three types of frames have been identified through the analysis of the structures of expectations in the discourse of subjects. In the main they are: knowledge schemas, interactive frames and superimposed frames. The most common of which are cognitive frames and are observed in the verbalizations of both groups of subjects. On the other hand, the interactive frame is observed in the alignments subjects take to represent their membership and solidarity with the collective as observed in the verbalization of Group 1 subjects such as MC6 and MC15 in the aspect of Centrality of family (chapter 7, section 7.2.1.1). The superimposed frame is observed in the different cultural frames utilized by subjects as a result of the process of enculturation as observed in the views expressed by Group 2 subjects in the aspect of face (cf. Chapter 7, section 7.2.4.3) as well as the responses of a few subjects from both groups such as MC3, MC4, MC12, ME9 and ME13.

### **7.3.2 RQ 3 ii) In what ways do the frames reflect the world view of both groups of respondents?**

The most common frame utilized by subjects in both interviews is the cognitive frame or knowledge schema which represents knowledge of one's culture and world view. Through the use of this frame, two world views were evident and are revealed through subjects' constant reference to either Chinese or Western cultural practices and norms as well as through their positive and negative comments, their support, praise, approval, ready cooperation or criticism and objection to Chinese cultural practices and norms.

In interview 1, findings reveal that the cognitive frames as represented in the structures of expectations in the verbalization of subjects indicate their cultural orientation and world view. In the aspect of centrality of the family, the structures of expectation as represented

through repetitions, adverbs, modals, auxiliaries and adjectives indicate the extent of power the family exerts over its members and the differential priorities accorded to the family by subjects from both groups. Group 1 subjects indicated that consistent with the Chinese cultural view of prioritizing on the family, focus was on familial authority and harmony. On the other hand, Group 2 subjects focussed on the self and its goals, aspirations and wellbeing and discussed it in relation to the family which is in keeping with a Western orientation.

For the frame of filial piety, findings reveal that the frames associated with the above aspect such as authoritarianism, prioritization on male progeny, happiness and fulfillment in marriage featured significantly in Group 1 subjects' verbalization but were either absent or insignificant in Group 2's narrative. Notice that these are the associated frames which are crucial to the aspect of filial piety in Chinese culture. For Group 2 subjects, authoritarianism was not a significant factor in their narrative but rather the female self was given focus and preference over the practice of filial piety. Next, Group 1 subjects discussed about the preference for and the importance of male progeny to the traditional as well as modern Chinese. It is interesting to note that this sub-frame of filial piety was not mentioned by any of Group 2 subjects. The sub-frame of happiness and fulfillment in marriage was highlighted by Group 1 subjects. In contrast, Group 2 subjects' narratives revealed the expectation they have with regard to the self, such as the self exerting control, being assertive and pro-active in relation to the issue of marriage as they constitute their sub-frames of filial piety.

In the aspect of educational achievement, Group 1 subjects spoke of formal education being the domain of males while Group 2 subjects linked education to life-long education, fairness and equality in education and the female "self" taking a pro-active role to overcome biasness.

In the aspect of face, priority was given by Group 2 subjects to notions of justice, fairness and equality which are consonant with Western thought and orientation. Hence, face was viewed to be negative and problematic such as in the reference by Group 2 subjects to the abuse of power by palace officials while most Group 1 subjects mentioned and explained about the essentiality and importance of face to the Chinese community.

As in Interview 1, the most common type of frame utilized by subjects in Interview 2 is the cognitive frame or knowledge schema. A brief discussion of the aforesaid frame in the four aspects analyzed follows:

In Interview 2, Group 1 subjects prioritized on familial and societal expectations with regard to roles, obligations and responsibilities towards the family and its members in the aspect of centrality of family. They also mentioned about the importance of family image such as the need for maintenance, preservation and perpetuation of a good family name and the responsibility of family members to fulfill these goals. Thus, most Group 1 subjects readily indicated agreement to extend help to their siblings as they were operating from the Chinese cultural context, thus viewing it to be a kind of social obligation, an expectation which has been inculcated in them since young as the family is viewed to be an indivisible unit. These represent the frame of centrality of family for Group 1 subjects, consonant with the Chinese cultural frame where the family is viewed to be a collective.

On the contrary, most Group 2 subjects prioritized on self and placed the self and personal agency above the family. Therefore, subjects spoke of privacy and space, personal convenience, freedom, individualism such as in life style, practices and preferences, responsibility and accountability to oneself. Hence, the contextualization cue of personal agency permeates in the verbalization of Group 2 subjects and is the focus in the discourse of most Group 2 subjects.

In the aspect of filial piety, Group 1 subjects' discussion of the restrictive roles and biasness towards women reflect the existence of powerful Chinese stereotypes concerning

males and females in their knowledge schema. Discussion of authoritarianism and its perpetuation through the unequal social structures in Chinese society as well as their high regard for and adherence to Chinese historical and traditional words of wisdom indicate their support for filial piety as well as delineate their frame for filial piety. On the contrary, Group 2 subjects repudiated the traditional frame of filial piety where perpetuation of sons were viewed as links to ancestors. Their strong criticism and objections indicate their non-conformity to the norms and practices mentioned. Analysis of their structures of expectation revealed that subjects prioritized on the self and personal agency hence, values, practices and rights which uphold individualism formed the frame of filial piety for Group 2 subjects. Thus, subjects discussed about their personal views with regard to filial piety as opposed to societal views which indicate that Group 2 subjects were operating from the Western cultural context of prioritizing on the self and personal agency.

In the aspect of education, the sub-frames which constitute individualism such as self worth, self esteem, freedom and liberty as well as focus on the self and its views were highlighted by a number of Group 2 subjects. In sum, the self is given priority and education was valued for knowledge and as a means for the development of the individual which is consonant with the Western frame of education. In contrast, Group 1 subjects' frame for education was linked to the family and society where it is prized for its instrumental potential such as maintenance of "face" for the family in order to acquire respect, pride, status as well as material wealth. It was also prized by parents as insurance for their old age. Hence, education was valued for its instrumental functions such as furthering the goals valued by society or collective which act as contextualization cues to the Chinese cultural frames of subjects.

In the aspect of face, the lines of demarcation between the frames of both groups were less significant. Although Group 1 subjects mentioned face as a product of socialization, they emphasized on how and why face was viewed to be important as a collective good.

On the other hand, the aspect of face has been mentioned together with self by Group 2 subjects. Although it has also been mentioned as a product of socialization, subjects' focus was on consideration and sensitivity for those who practice face. However, a majority of Group 2 subjects' focus on how the individual perceives face rather than how it is perceived by the collective. In sum, Group 1 subjects' frame for the aspects mentioned were consonant with that of Chinese culture while that of Group 2 were in keeping with that of Western society.

The interactive frame is observed when subjects aligned themselves to the views of society to indicate their conformity and solidarity with the group. These subjects may not subscribe to these views on their own. This is observed in the responses of Group 1 subjects when they stated about how society would gossip and criticize them if they do not align themselves to the practice of face (cf. Chapter 7, section 7.2.4.1). In the adherence to the interactive frame, it is observed that some subjects aligned themselves to the frames that were perceived to be appropriate and sanctioned by society before they presented their personal views. Young (cited in Gumperz 1982) stated that the Chinese often delay stating their propositions as they prefer to first establish a shared context in discourse before proceeding to do so.

Use of alignments as discussed above in the mentioned sections indicate that conflicting frames exist as a result of perceived clash in cultural values and personal perspectives and preferences. Conflicting frames are observed through the indirect statement of views (cf. Chapter 6, section 6.4.3.3 and Appendix F, section 6.4.3.3). For example, MC1 and MC15 aligned themselves to the views of Chinese society by agreeing or sanctioning a practice or view before presenting an opposite or contrasting view which they hold (cf. Chapter 7, section 7.2.4.1). Thus, aligning themselves to Chinese practices and thought serves also as contextualization cues through which participants signal identity and membership and hence the world views they hold.

The superimposed frame is observed in the different cultural frames utilized by subjects. This is observed when there is a superimposition of different cultural values, practices or thought patterns on another culture. Subjects thus, demonstrate a bicultural world view in that they possess features of not one but two cultures in their knowledge schema. This is observed in the verbalization of Group 2 subjects in the aspect of face (cf. Chapter 7, section 7.2.4.3).

From the discussion above, it is pertinent to conclude that the frames adhered to by Group 1 subjects are Chinese culture specific while that subscribed by Group 2 subjects are Western culture specific.

### **7.3.3 RQ 3 iii) To what extent do the frames reflect the worldview of respondents?**

To a large extent the frames utilized by both groups of subjects in Interview 1 indicate the world views of subjects. From the 4 aspects examined, it appears that both groups utilized differing frames. The main trends in the findings indicate that consistent with the Chinese world view, there is a tendency for Group 1 subjects to focus on the family and society with its norms and practices. Hence, the tendency for subjects to adopt societal views and judgments with regard to issues related to the family, filial piety, education and face as well as explain or refer to Chinese sayings, views or proverbs. Sensitivity to how one is perceived by others which relates to one's image or reputation is fore-grounded in the discussion by a majority of Group 1 subjects.

In the aspect of centrality of family, sensitivity is observed through Group 1 subjects mention about the crucial need to help their siblings so that they would not be criticized or maligned through malicious talk by members of society. In the aspect of filial piety, subjects mentioned about the following: the need for females to bow to the wishes of parents, the father exercising authoritarian control over the household, the authoritarian structure of traditional Chinese society and the submission of those below to those at the

apex of society as well as early marriage for females. Contravening the norms of these social structures drew serious repercussions for the individual such as criticism, ostracization or even death. In the aspect of education, subjects mentioned about the need to excel in order to secure pride and a good name for the family. While in the aspect of face, subjects discussed about the shame or loss of face experienced by the villain and his family in a failed marriage proposal which is consistent with the frame of “face” practiced by Chinese society. Thus, collective agency is prioritized while the individual is delegated to be a follower.

On the other hand, Group 2 subjects’ narratives indicated focus on the individual and personal agency. This is reflected in their narratives which indicate their personal responses and views towards the different issues. Focus was on the heroine, her abilities, struggles, hopes and dreams. Although the heroine was criticized for her inability to be direct and open, she was nonetheless admired for her boldness and her aspiration to be different. The concept of self and the themes related to self such as the equality, freedom as well as the belief in a self which is distinct and strong has been mentioned by Group 2 subjects. In the aspect of centrality of the family, the heroine was admired as she dared to be different. Moreover, she was seen to possess a distinctive personality with her individualized views and was valiant in her struggle to protect her father and family. Thus, she was even likened to the legendary heroine, Fa Mulan. In the aspect of education, she was lauded for her effort to study and to excel in education. While in the aspect of face, Group 2 subjects criticized the villain for bringing hardship to the heroine’s family because of a failed marriage proposal. Seen in this context, focus was predominantly on the individual and personal agency rather than on society and its norms and practices which suggests strongly of a distinctly Western world view. In sum, subjects’ focus and priorities act as contextualization cues to the different frames utilized by the two different groups.

Discrepancies in the responses of 3 Group 1 subjects and 1 Group 2 subject indicate that

these subjects do not conform to the pattern of discourse usage among their groupings. The three Group 1 subjects utilized predominantly Western frames while ME13 utilized predominantly Chinese frames in her discourse.

The above findings are confirmed in two aspects in Interview 2. From the four aspects examined, significant differences were found in aspects such as centrality of the family and filial piety. However, in some areas of education and in the aspect of face, the lines of demarcation are less distinct as there were convergence of views between the two groups of subjects on the importance of face and how face is viewed.

In all the frames, even for the aspect of face, two distinctive factors demarcate the narratives of both groups of subjects; personal and collective agency. Group 1 subjects prioritize on collective agency with its focus on harmony such as harmonious interaction and social network, interdependence, proper relationships, responsibilities, familial or group advancement and societal sanctioned norms of behaviour while Group 2 subjects prioritize on personal agency with its attendant focus on individualism, self-advancement and satisfaction, freedom, equality, independence, objective thought and a strong sense of personal identity.