CHAPTER TWO

LANGUAGE, CULTURE, THOUGHT AND WORLD VIEW AS PRODUCTS OF CONTEXT

2.0 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this chapter is to highlight the theoretical orientation(s) to guide the investigation, analysis as well as interpretation of the findings on the communicative patterns and framing of Malaysian Chinese subjects' world view as a result of social practice and context. The chapter begins with an overview of the language situation in Malaysia, a historical perspective of the Chinese diaspora and the Malaysian Chinese and their language use patterns. Following is a discussion of the five concepts in language which are integral to this study: knowing more than one language, culture, world views, thought and context. This literature review therefore focusses primarily on these five core concepts. Notions related to how understanding the world takes place is also seen as primary in the study. The last section of this review concentrates on issues related to understanding the themes forwarded by scholars regarding these issues viz Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis regarding the relationship between language and thought and concepts related to understanding the world viz. schema, scripts and frames.

2.1 Social approach to bilingualism in Malaysia

In view of the rapid social changes in the world today, Heller (2007) argues for the necessity to consider the social and political context in which bilingualism is embedded in order to understand what it represents as ideology and practice. Therefore, Heller reasons that it is necessary to view "language as social practice, speakers as social actors and boundaries as products of social action" (Heller 2007:1). A social approach to bilingualism then, situates bilingualism in a political, economic and historical context which produces relations of social difference and social identity. Therefore, in the discussion of the language situation in Malaysia as well as bilingualism or multilingualism in Malaysia, social,

cultural, political issues would be looked at to present a holistic picture of what bilingualism represents in the Malaysian Chinese context at this point of time.

2.1.1 The Language situation in Malaysia

Asmah (1992) describes the language situation in Malaysia as multilingual and generally diglossic. Even as early as 1982, Asmah noted that a large sector of the Malaysian population was bilingual and code-switching was a common feature of communication among Malaysians. Hence, code-switching has been viewed to be an entrenched code not only in the public domain (David and Powell, 2003; Powell 2005; Jariah Mohd Jan, 2003) but family domain as well (David, 2006). This is because Malaysia comprises three main ethnic groups; the Malays, the Chinese and the Indians and other minority groups such as the indigenous people as well as the Punjabis, Portuguese etc. who are classified as "others" in the population census. These different ethnic groups contribute to the diverse speech communities in Malaysia as their speech repertoires would consist of a native tongue, a second or third language besides the different dialects used by each speech group. This is further complicated by the linguistic repertoires of each community with their different range of varieties for use according to the context. It is hardly surprising then that Checketts (1999) commented about the multiplicity in the variety of settings and styles of conversation found in Malaysia as compared to most countries. In sum, the social environment in Malaysia contributes to the phenomenon of bilingualism and multilingualism.

Diversity in the speech communities is also a result of the education policy of Malaysia which according to Asmah (2003: 111), assigned different status to the various languages to indicate their "functions at the intra- and intercommunity levels and in official and professional situations." The implementation of the National Language Policy in Malaysia in 1970 accorded Bahasa Malaysia or the Malay Language the status of official language

of the country and the medium of instruction in all government schools. At present, Bahasa Malaysia or the national language is the medium of instruction in all national type government schools for the purpose of integration. It also plays a significant role in the official sphere such as government institutions and statutory bodies, educational institutions as well as the social life of all Malaysians. English on the other hand, is another language to be learnt in all government schools and is accorded compulsory status in the academic curriculum which continues to the university level (Asmah, 2003). It is also the dominant language in use in the sphere of banking, legal and medical professions (Chitravelu, 1985; Asmah 1992). Consequently, Asmah (2003) states that English is the second lingua franca in Malaysia after the national language, Bahasa Malaysia. However, in order to cater to the needs of the other ethnic communities, vernacular schools which existed since the British administration are allowed to function through use of the Mother tongue which is Mandarin or Tamil.

The discussion above which is also supported by studies conducted by Rosli Talif and Ain Nadzimah (2001) as well as Gill (2002) indicate that most Malaysians are bilinguals. Asmah (2003) is of the view that assigning English as the second language of importance reflects the government aim to make Malaysians Malay-English bilinguals. Thus, bilingualism is a common occurrence in Malaysia among the Malays while mulitilingualism is a common phenomenon among the non-Malay population (Rafik-Galea & Mohd Salleh, 2002). From the above discussion, it is clear that the education system of Malaysia, economic, corporate and career exigencies as well as the sociolinguistic interaction between the different ethnic races resulted in large bilingual and/or multilingual communities in Malaysia.

The above discussion provides an overview of the language situation among the different races in Malaysia of whom the Malaysian Chinese are part of. The following review

provides a historical perspective of the Chinese diaspora and the Malaysian Chinese who are part of the Chinese diaspora in the world today.

2.1.2 A Historical Perspective of the Chinese Diaspora and the Malaysian Chinese

The term "diaspora" has been used to refer to groups of people living away from their place of origin.   During the 18th and 19th century, the mass migration of Chinese from China to other lands as a result of war, poverty, trade or the hope for a better tomorrow, has created pockets of Chinese communities all over 109 countries of the world (Pan, 2000).   These communities do not include those in countries such as Hong Kong, Macao or Taiwan nor those who deny their Chinese descent and culture (Wang, 2001).   Thus, Heilbron (cited in Wang & Wang 1998), spoke of the diverse experiences of the diasporic Chinese in their migration abroad as some were traders who have journeyed to distant lands and they have set up communities to preserve their customs while others who were not so fortunate, were quasi-enslaved as coolie labourers.   Yet others, were referred to as voluntary exiles as they were eager to be repatriated.   All of them have adopted the life and language of the nations they have settled in.

These diasporic Chinese are known today as the overseas Chinese or "huaren," people of Chinese descent or "huaqiao" (De Mente, 2000; Wang, 2001; Yow, 2006) or even as the Jews of the East (Pan, 2000). They have been described as ethnic Chinese who are residents outside China and it is important to note that they do not identify themselves as "zhongguoren" or people from China (Yow, 2006). They have also been described as hyphenated Chinese such as Malaysian-Chinese, Chinese-American to name a few (Chen, 1997; Johnson 2000).   They are made up of a very diverse group because of the diverse ethnic composition of China.

Wang (2001) and Pan (2000) concur that the number of overseas Chinese is between 25 to 30 million, of which four-fifths reside in South East Asia.   However, Yow (2006) who

concurs with Lam and Graham (2007), places the number to be about 40 million and viewed them to be a formidable work force which contributed to the economic development of the place in which they settled. Pan (2000:206) stated that Mandarin was introduced as the lingua franca of all Chinese emigrants and stated that, "without Chinese education, there can be no Overseas Chinese." Therefore, the introduction of standard Mandarin is seen as a move to unify the Malaysian, Singaporean and Indonesian Chinese diaspora.

According to Wang (2001), the overseas Chinese community has never been homogeneous as different groups of Chinese possess different perceptions of their roles outside China. Not only do they have different role perceptions, Lim (2006) states that for diasporic Chinese, the question of identity such as what it means to be Chinese as well as having multiple identities are issues which confront them no matter where they are. Similarly, Pan (2000:247) is of the view that the diasporic Chinese "lead lives that are balanced on an invisible see-saw between two or more identities." Heilbron (cited in Wang & Wang 1998) talked about the pressing problem of the people in diaspora, one of which is the question of retaining what is distinctive about their culture and maintaining it appropriately in a multicultural environment. This is observed in the appeal which traditional Chinese values have to diasporic Chinese. For instance, Wang (2001) observes that Chinese no matter where they reside, attempt to propagate their culture through their concern over the teaching of the Chinese language. Thus, Wang is of the view that the future of "Greater China" which could refer to a future unified China or the Chinese economic periphery which would include Hong Kong and Taiwan or the cultural aspect of China such as its store of cultural values which has been enhanced by modern times, will have an impact on the Chinese overseas with regard to issues such as their national and cultural identity as well as their political and economic future.

Hou (2006) concurs with Wang (2001) that the numerical strength of the Malaysian Chinese diaspora coupled with a tradition of Chinese education have kept the Malaysian-

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Chinese identity distinct even after major changes occurred in the educational policy where emphasis is placed on the national language. Wang identified two important factors which distinguish the diasporic Chinese from other migrant groups. The first is the primacy placed on education which is evidenced in the spectacular successes of Chinese in education with their attendant successes in the economic, financial and managerial bases of the commercial world. Wang (2001) notes that as long as they reside in societies where there are opportunities for education, legal recourse to protect minority rights, where merit is rewarded and the social autonomy to maintain their Chinese identities the overseas Chinese would continue to live among non-Chinese in the modern globalized world.

2.1.3 The Malaysian Chinese and their language use patterns

The Malaysian Chinese are part of this particular group of Chinese diaspora known as the overseas Chinese and they form a significant minority in Malaysia. A remnant of them are descendents of early Chinese settlers who arrived in the 15th century and are known as the Straits Chinese or Peranakan. The Peranakan culture is a product of assimilation with the local Malay culture and is a unique blend of Chinese and Malay culture. It is evident in its unique language (which is a creole of the Malay Language), Peranakan clothing, Peranakan jewellery, Nyonya cuisine, Peranakan furniture and more. Unfortunately, at this point of time, this community is "gasping its last breath" as the "living breathing components of the culture are gradually vanishing" (Lee, 2004). A majority of Chinese Malaysians however, are descendents of Chinese settlers who arrived in the region in the 19th and 20th centuries. Most early Chinese immigrants arrived as penniless coolies as there was a big demand for labour in the mining and rubber plantation sector. Ho and Hou (2006) attribute the increase in Chinese immigration to factors such as increase in transportation and the favourable policy taken by the Malayan Colonial government. Malaysian Chinese are made up of several dialect groups which include the Hokkiens, Hakka or Khek, Cantonese, Teochews, Hainanese, Fuzhous and others who are

concentrated in the different regions of Malaysia. According to Yow (2006), Hokkien is the dialect of 1,946,698 Chinese in Malaysia, making it the highest percentage of Chinese in Malaysia. This is followed by Cantonese. Mandarin is also spoken but it is the language of the Chinese educated Malaysians and thus, has no sizeble native speaker community in Malaysia (Asmah, 2003).

A large segment of the Malaysian Chinese today are Chinese-speaking or Chinese-educated. Therefore, many of them speak their mother tongue and/or other Chinese dialects, Mandarin (the medium of education in Chinese schools) and Bahasa Malaysia while some can also speak English. Holmes (2001) states that the Malaysian Chinese's linguistic repertoire may consist of the following: two varieties of English, two different dialects of Chinese and its different styles, a standard Malay or/and a colloquial variety of Malay. These varieties are selected for use according to the social context in which communication occurs.

Two distinct but related trends in language acquisition and use among Malaysian Chinese problematize the language-culture relations among them. One important trend is the attendance of Chinese individuals in Chinese medium schools. Since languages carry social meanings, and social connotations as well as identity which is often defined by language, a person's social identity is thus signalled through language choice (Li Wei 2000; Holmes, 2001).   Therefore, the preservation of the Chinese language through Chinese language education is perceived by many as being crucial to the survival of the Chinese as a distinct community in Malaysia. Pan (2000:251) observes that the issue of Chinese education has raised sparks and quarrels in Malaysia because the Chinese are a very diverse people and Mandarin is therefore important to the Malaysian Chinese concept of unity as a people.   Pan (2000: 254) therefore concludes that symbolically it is important to the Malaysian Chinese as it represents "ethnic consciousness and solidarity." Ye (2003) pronounces the balance struck thus far as "a delicate one," as "many issues relating to the

identity of Malaysian Chinese remain unresolved" (Ye, 2003:67). This view has also been forwarded by Wang (2001: 130) who spoke of the paradoxes created by migration which has caused "overseas Chinese to be troubled and confused of what they were…" This identity crisis is also linked to what Lim (2006) refers to as the phenomenon of multiple identities.

Another trend in language use is the use of English as a first or dominant language among a sizeable portion of the urban Chinese and are referred to as English dominant or English educated Chinese. This is a result of the medium of education which was once in English or partly in English for those students who were in the transition period before the national language was fully used as the medium of instruction in all schools. These group of Chinese are also bilinguals as many of them are able to speak their mother tongue and/or other Chinese dialects, English and Malay. Although many of them speak Mandarin or their mother tongue fluently, most of them are unable to read or write in Chinese. As stated in Chapter 1, they have been disparagingly referred to as "er maozi" or a second class person as they are viewed by the Chinese educated Chinese to be diluted by English education and culture and hence, are distanced from the Chinese cultural heritage. Till today, such perceptions still persist among the Malaysian Chinese who are Chinese educated.

2.2 Bilingualism

To have a better grasp of the phenomenon of bilingualism in the Malaysian Chinese context, an overview of the aspects of bilingualism applicable to the Malaysian context with special focus on the Malaysian Chinese follows. The limited areas discussed include: definitions, key concepts with regard to bilingualism such as coordinate bilinguals, compound bilinguals, dominant bilinguals, passive or recessive bilinguals.

2.2.1 Definitions

Weinrich (1953:5) defines bilingualism as "the practice of alternatively using two languages" and views "the persons involved bilingual." Appel and Muysken (1987) stated

that the terms "bilingual" and "bilingualism" are also applicable to situations where there are more than two languages spoken as bilingualism is taken for languages that have been recognized conventionally and not to dialects of languages. Mackay (1962:52) defines bilingualism as "the ability to use more than one language." A more recent definition of bilingualism by Rudolfo Jacobson (2001), defines it as the tendency for bilinguals to use two different languages in different settings or the use of two languages in one communicative act as in code-switching. Li Wei's (2000) definition has elements of Mackay's and Jacobson. He views a bilingual person as someone who possesses two languages or people who possess differing levels of proficiencies and use interchangeably three or more languages. In contrast, Bloomfield (1933) defines bilingualism as "native-like control of two or more languages." The various definition of bilingualism as given above, differ with regard to minimal competency to a high degree of proficiency. Baetens Beardmore (1982) describes the different degrees of proficiency in approach as maximalist such as that of Bloomsfield and minimalist such as that of Mackay and Weinrich. With regard to the differences in approaches, Ng and Wigglesworth (2007) are of the view that there is a great necessity to focus on the skill contexts and the various degrees of bilingualism rather than on the degree of proficiency as a yardstick for bilingualism. However for purposes of this study, Li Wei's (2000) extended definition of bilinguals which encompasses people who have differing levels of fluencies and who use two or more than two languages will be applicable to this study on the Malaysian Chinese who speak two or more languages.

2.2.2 Key concepts

Several terms have been used to categorize bilinguals and the Malaysian Chinese bilinguals share some of the categories discussed below.

2.2.2.1 Compound and coordinate bilinguals

In the discussion of bilingualism, key consideration is often given to the age of acquisition

of a language and distinction is made between early and late bilinguals. Those who are exposed to two languages before adolescence are termed as early bilinguals while those who acquire the language after adolescence are termed as late bilinguals. Early bilinguals are also referred to as compound bilinguals where two languages are learnt simultaneously, often in a similar context while late bilinguals are also referred to as coordinate bilinguals where two languages are learnt in contexts that are distinctly different (Li Wei, 2000).

2.2.2.2 Dominant bilinguals

Dominant bilingual(s) is a term which is used to refer to bilinguals dominant in one language while the less dominant language used is referred to as the subordinate language Ng and Wigglesworth (2007). For example, the subjects of the study who are referred to as either English or Chinese language dominant Malaysian Chinese use either one of the languages mentioned as a primary language in all their communication. However, the term "dominance" may not be applicable to all domains. To demonstrate the above, Ng and Wiggleworth provide the following examples: A person who is dominant in French may not be dominant in all areas of French. A French-German computer scientist speaks French most of the time except in the discussion of computer science related topics as his training of computer science was done in German. Likewise, a Chinese London trained engineer may display a preference to discuss engineering research in English although her mother tongue is Mandarin Chinese.

2.2.2.3 Passive or recessive bilinguals

Ng and Wigglesworth (2007) define passive or recessive bilinguals as bilinguals who are undergoing a gradual loss in terms of competency as a result of disuse of the language. Since "recessive" conveys negative connotations, the term 'passive bilinguals' was used instead to describe this phenomenon. The following example is provided by Ng and

Wigglesworth to exemplify the phenomenon. A Dutch migrant may find himself isolated from his Dutch-speaking community as he encounters English speaking Australians on a daily basis. Hence, his proficiency in Dutch may deteriorate over time as a result of non-use of the language. Thus, language proficiency and fluency may increase or deteriorate over time.

2.3 Language, culture and thought

Many experts believe that the power of language distinguishes humans from animals because it is an extraordinary and almost wholly human attribute. This philosophy which emphasizes the role of language as a source of life and power is reflected in the myths and religions of the world. In Africa, a newborn baby is considered a "kuntu" (thing) as it has not become a "muntu" or person. They believed that only through mastery of language, could the child become a person. Although humans have the innate disposition for acquisition of language, the language they possess is not inherited genetically as language is acquired socially in a culture with other speakers. Therefore, the process of language transmission from one generation to the next is described as cultural transmission as language cannot be separated from its culture.

Whorf (1956) claims that where a certain culture and language develop together, significant relationships can be observed between grammatical aspects of a language and the characteristics of the said culture. Whorf provided examples by comparing American Indian languages such as Hopi with European Languages. He discovered differences between both the languages in such areas as thought, perception as well as in conceptual organization of experience (cf. Sapir Whorf Hypothesis).

Thus, Cole and Scribner (1974) state succinctly that it is unthinkable to conceive of any intellectual activity that is devoid of socio-cultural character as perception, memory and thinking are inextricably bound up in a child's socialization process as these aspects

are present in his activity, communication and social relations and is charged with socially defined meanings and emotions. Therefore, Cole and Scribner explain that language exists on both sides of the culture-cognition relationship. To get a clearer understanding of the language, culture and cognition relationship, a look at the theories which relate language to culture, thought and world view as well as context is relevant. A brief discussion of thought follows.

2.3.1 Thought

Hudson (1980) reasons that the relation between thought and culture is that culture which is socially acquired knowledge, is the part of memory which is acquired socially in contrast to experience. On the other hand, propositions which are regarded as true through experience, are not learned socially. Cultural knowledge aids one in interpreting behaviour and arriving at rather similar concepts or propositions.

According to Hudson (1980), cultural knowledge enables people to interpret its members' behaviour and conclude with similar concepts and propositions. Hudson states that there are three kinds of knowledge viz:

- cultural knowledge which is learned
- shared non-cultural knowledge which is shared by people everywhere but not acquired from each other
- non-shared non-cultural knowledge which is knowledge that is unique to the individual.

Hudson suggests viewing "thought' from the perspective of the theory of concepts which is criterial in nature since having a set of features is necessary to qualify it as a particular concept. Rosch (1976) has forwarded the theory that a concept is in fact a prototype. It is rather a description of a typical example of a particular concept. Evidence for the above has been proven through experimentation. The prototype based concept has many advantages as it could be learned very easily as only a small number of instances are

necessary. It also allows flexibility and creativity in its application. Thus, the prototype model provides the user unlimited freedom, creativity and flexibility in the application of concepts. It also acts as a useful tool to categorize social factors and correlate it with language. For example, in the field of language coherence and interpretation, Fillmore (1975, 1977) associates the prototype to the frame which is based on prior knowledge such as an expectation of the world, as a yardstick to compare and interpret new experiences about the world (cf. frames on section 2.7.2.3).

2.3.2 Culture

In his book, *The Mind of Primitive Man*, Franz Boas (1911) strongly opposed the identification of race with culture and rejected the formulation for the equation of race with culture. Herzkovits (1965: 10) in his reassessment of Boas' contribution, upheld Boaz's views by concluding that "the concept of race (denotes) a scientific dead-end" in the explanation of culture.

Goodenough (1957) states that, "a society's language is an aspect of its culture... The relation of language to culture is part to whole." Since learning a language is part of the socialization process, it is contained within culture. Hudson (1980) explains that what is learned from society is represented by the area of overlap between language and culture. However, some aspects of language as well as concepts are not learned from society so language is not wholly contained within culture.

Edward, B. Tylor (1832-1917), the father of modern anthropology, gave one of the earliest and most celebrated definitions of culture. In his well-known definition, Tylor (1871:1) defines culture as "a complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society." Johnson (2000) on the other hand defines culture as symbolic systems which create webs of meaning. It is made up of three interrelated systems such as system of cultural

abstractions, cultural artifact as well as cultural language and communication. However, the role of language and communication is centrally placed.

Redder and Rebein (1987) provided a pragmatic view of culture, looking at culture as an "ensemble" of social experiences, thought structures, expectations and practices of action which possesses the quality of a "mental apparatus." As the study focusses on the world views of subjects, it is surmised that investigating the social experiences, expectations and practices of action which constitute subjects' mental apparatus will provide clues to subjects' world view. Therefore, Redder and Rebein's definition will be the working definition for the research.

2.3.3 World view

In the theory of world view, a major subdivision in anthropology descends from the work of Sapir and others. They consider world views as cultural knowledge systems. According to Luzbetak (1988), world view is part of culture and is one of the broadest concepts in the cultural domain. Hiebert (1985) defines world view as basic assumptions of reality which is revealed in the behaviour and beliefs of a culture.

In a similar vein, Kraft (1979) defines world view as the way culture patterns reality to be - what is actual, probable, possible or impossible. Hence, Kraft (1979: 53) sees world view as the "central control box" of a culture as it "lies at the very heart of culture" as such, it is perceived to be the organizer of a "culture's conceptualization." In the area of cultural patterning, Kraft views world view to consist of 4 structures with its substructures: social structure (family, association, political, economic and education structures), linguistic structure (semantics, grammar and phonology), religious structure (beliefs, values, rituals and mythology) and technological structure (tools and techniques).

According to Sire (as summarized in Bressler, 1994), a world view is a set of assumptions we consciously or unconsciously hold with regard to the basic make up of the world. These

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assumptions enable people to make sense of the world and provide them with a way of viewing the world.   Similarly, Hiebert (1983) states that world views are important as they provide people with understandable ways of looking at the world through its various dimensions.

In the past, it was believed that the real world could be observed, studied and described objectively and exactly as it exists.   However, at the present time, man discovered that human knowledge is extremely limited and selective and therefore, we can only deal with the real world but never with the world in actuality. As a result of this limited knowledge, anthropologists often refer to models.

Luzbetak's (1991) model of world view comprises three dimensions namely, the cognitive, emotional and motivational dimension. Luzbetak states that the cognitive dimension of world view dictates how and what society thinks of life and the world. In short, it shapes the cognitive processes of society.   He compares the differences in the cognitive dimension by comparing the emphasis placed on reasoning by Westerners as compared to the analogy, association, emotion and mysticism by Easterners. The emotional dimension directs society about how to feel, evaluate and react to the world and reality while motivational dimensions concern society's basic priorities, ideals, desires, aspirations and goals with regard to its comprehension of the universe.

From the above, it is possible to conclude that the way people see and interpret reality can be termed as a world view. Rajoo (cited in Mohd. Taib Osman 1985) defines it as man's outlook of himself in relation to the world. Thus, Rajoo is of the view that in any study of world view, the self is the axis. The researcher concurs with the above view and will therefore examine this aspect as how the self is viewed and how it views others is of relevance to this study.

Hiebert (1985) lists a number of important functions of world views. World views act as cognitive foundations to justify our explanatory systems. Geertz (1972: 169) points out that a world view provides us with a model or map of reality for structuring our perceptions of reality.

World views provide emotional security. In the face of a plethora of new experiences and chaotic external world with its uncontrollable forces of disease, death, suffering and an unpredictable future, man relies on his deepest cultural beliefs in order to obtain comfort and security.

World views serve to validate our deepest cultural norms to enable the evaluation of our experiences and courses of action. Hiebert likens it to a map for behaviour guidance. In sum, world views play both predictive and prescriptive functions.

Hiebert states that world views enable one to understand cultural stability and opposition to change. Generally, in traditional societies, fundamental beliefs and assumptions are shared by its members and are taught to children to ensure its perpetuation and change is often resisted. On the other hand, change in world view occurs when major internal contradiction occurs. When the contradictions are minor, it only triggers a revision of beliefs or modification of behaviour. This idea is also expressed by Fantini (1991) who discussed about changes in world view. Fantini is of the view that interaction between components such as the cultural context, semantics and symbolic systems form the basis of world view. These components differ from culture to culture, thus, contributing to the differing visions of the world by differing societies. However, when there is substantial progress in a second language, a reconfiguring of the interrelationships between these components occur leading to a change in world views.

2.3.3.1 Oriental and Western World views

Nisbett (2003) states that the ancient Greek and Chinese philosophies were remarkably divergent as were their social structures and conceptions of themselves. According to De Mente (2000), Westerners have a keen sense of individuality and personal worth and hold on to the belief that everyone is responsible for his or her own behaviour. In contrast, the cultural practice of the Chinese was to deemphasize the individual while prioritizing on the family and group.

Nisbett (2003) refers to the Greeks as the main source of Western philosophy. The Greeks who lived from the third to the sixth century B.C., viewed attending plays and poetry readings as special occasions and were willing to endure hardships to travel to distant places to do so. The Greeks, more than any other people throughout the ages, had an extraordinary sense of personal agency which has been defined as a sense of being in charge of their own lives and being at liberty to act as they chose. Accompanying their sense of personal agency, the Greeks possessed a strong sense of individual identity and curiosity about the world. Thus, they viewed themselves as unique individuals possessing distinctive qualities and goals. To the Greeks, a definition of happiness includes possessing the ability to exercise their powers in pursuit of excellence free from constraints. A tradition of debate arose from their sense of personal agency. Nisbett (2003) mentioned the maritime location of the Greek city states as a factor for the uniqueness of the Greeks. Although trading was a lucrative occupation, Greek traders sought to educate their sons not because of any material gains from education but rather as a result of curiosity and a belief in the value of knowledge for knowledge sake.

On the other hand, the Chinese who existed at the time of the ancient Greeks, viewed special occasions as opportunities to visit friends and family. Nisbett (2003) views harmony as a counterpart to Greek personal agency. It is based on the view that every Chinese is a member of collectives such as the clan, village and in particular the family. The ancient Chinese do not focus on the individual in isolation as the saying goes, "I am

the totality of roles…" as the individual "lives in relation to specific others" (Nisbett, 2003: 5). This is based on the Chinese idea of happiness which consists of an ordinary country life lived within a harmonious social network. Thus, the Chinese had a sense of collective agency which is reflected in the Confucian human-centered philosophy of China. It is revealed in the hierarchical obligation in the relationship pairs of society which span from the apex to the grass roots of society such as the relationship between emperor and subjects, parent and child, husband and wife, elder brother and younger brother as well as between friend and friend. Hence, the Chinese individual is socialized into a large complex organization with the knowledge that clear mutual obligations act as a guide to ethical conduct. Individual distinctiveness and equality is not viewed to be desirable nor necessary as harmony is the chief goal of Chinese social life. Therefore, one is discouraged from participating in any form of confrontation or public disagreements within the social group.

2.3.3.2 Core values and attitudes

The cultural values of a group which distinguishes it from other groups can be observed in its core values. This includes its ethno-specific language, music, family structure, artifacts, food, arts and crafts. Smolicz (1981a), who developed the idea of core values, forwards the idea that some diverse items can be omitted without affecting group stability while others which are considered as 'pivots' act as support to the social and identification of the group cannot be omitted. Through these core values, the group is identified as a distinctive cultural community. These core values however, becomes more significant and distinctive when there is a threat to its culture and identity in the face of external intrusion and pressure.

Among the core values emphasized by some groups is the mother tongue which is a vital representation of ethnic identity. In cultures which are centered on language, mother tongue remains a core value of the culture and survival as well as existence of the group is

dependent on the preservation and maintenance of the mother tongue. Thus, language is a symbol of unity and a necessary criteria for group membership. Resilient maintenance of a language and culture in a multicultural and multilingual environment is dependent on how successfully the culture of a group is able to interact with new cultures from other groups. Interactions between the said culture and cultures from other groups would enable members to construct their own system of cultural values.

Clyne (1985) states that the most influential factors for determining the rates of language maintenance and shift are cultural core values, degree of similarity to dominant group (i.e. rules of communication) and the extent of intermarriage. Holm (1993) points out that although language values have their origins in the socio- historical developments and conditions of a community, maintenance and loss of a language and culture is not solely dependent on the group's linguistic tenacity. Other factors that play contributing roles include the dominant group's view, attitude and support towards linguistic pluralism.

2.3.3.3 Biculturalism

According to Paulson (1972), it is possible to become bilingual without becoming bicultural but not the reverse. As such, Paulson cites attributes and perceptions as important requirements in being bicultural because emulation of behaviour is only possible when one approves of it. Therefore, of crucial importance in the process of attainment of a bicultural status is whether the process is voluntary. Kleinjans (1975) suggests a model with three categories for becoming bicultural. The categories are: cognition, affection and action. Paulson (1972) quotes Edgerton's monograph which links temperament to deviance. Although every society has cultural rules for appropriate behaviour, people do not follow according to it because temperament does not frequently give way to cultural pressure. This is observed in the individuality of temperament where individuals have the opportunity to select between cultural systems. Some cultural traits will be viewed to be good or bad and they will have to pick accordingly. Paulson stated that in the case of individual

eclecticism, the bicultural individual may demonstrate his/her imperviousness to sanctions which he/she dislikes.

2.4 Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis (SWH)

2.4.1 Introduction

A number of linguists such as Gumperz and Levinson (1996:2) are of the view that the Sapir-Whorf's Hypothesis (1956) could be traced back to Boas, Humboldt, Sapir and Whorf. However, Wilhelm von Humbolt (1767-1835) deserves special mention. William von Humbolt argues that each language possesses its own unique "weltanchauung" or world view. He saw different languages as giving access to different cognitive perspectives or world views. He states that "The diversity of languages is not a diversity of sounds and signs but a diversity of the views of the world" (Humboldt 1903-36 IV :27).

The notion of language playing an important role in a person's world view is central to the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis which will henceforth be referred to as SWH. The hypothesis holds that we use language to organize, categorize and segment our experiences in order to render them meaningful, the way language is organized will determine how we perceive the world. Therefore, language provides us with a ready-made system to categorize what we perceive and this in turn makes us perceive the world in those same categories.

2.4.2 Linguistic Determinism

Two of Whorf's hypotheses which consist of a strong linguistic determinism and a weaker linguistic relativity, are popularly known as Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis, has been adopted for discussion by scholars. In its strongest form it holds that language determines thought as we can only think in the categories provided by our language. Hence, people from different cultural backgrounds do not share the same way of thinking as a result of differences in language.

An extract of Sapir-Whorf's (1956:213-214) theory which is considered as an extreme formulation is given below:

> We dissect nature along lines laid down by our native language …the world is presented in a flux of impressions which has to be organized by out minds-and this means largely by the linguistic systems in our minds. We cut nature up and organize it into concepts, and ascribe significances as we do, largely because we are parties to an agreement to organize it in this way – an agreement that holds throughout our speech communities and is codified in the patterns of our language. The agreement is of course and implicit and unstated one, BUT ITS TERMS ARE ABSOLUTELY OBLIGATORY; we cannot talk at all except by subscribing to the organization and classification of date which the agreement decrees. We are thus introduced to a new principle of relativity, which holds that all observers are not led by the same physical evidence to the same picture of the universe, unless their linguistic backgrounds are similar, or can in some be calibrated.

Some of the problems encountered in the interpretation of the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis are observed in some of the sentences in the passage above which indicate extreme relativity and determinism such as "we dissect nature largely along lines laid down by our native language" and "observers are not lead … to the same picture of the universe." However, use of the word, "largely" suggests the possibility of thought independent of language.

Linguists often state that the clearest statement of Whorf regarding linguistic determinism is found in his writing regarding "The relation of habitual thought and behaviour to language." In the statement, Whorf remarks that a close relationship exist between language patterns and cultural norms leading to each influencing the other. In this partnership the nature of language is the factor that limits free plasticity and rigidifies channels of development in the more autocratic way. This is so because language is a system, not just an assemblage of norms (Whorf 1956:156).

Hill (1988) is of the view that the above statement does not support even a moderate form of linguistic determinism. Hence, Cole and Scribner (1974) state that statements of Whorf's which might imply linguistic determinism have often been contradicted by Whorf's interpretive methods which focusses on the discovery and comparison of patterning in a variety of languages.

Cooper and Spolsky (1991) attribute the extreme statements of Whorf to his occasional urge to be provocative. Lee (2000) is in agreement with Alford (1978) that the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis has been misinterpreted as it was not the theory complex itself which

has been met with resistance from its detractors, but an oversimplified and reduced section taken out of context which is known today as the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis.

According to Hill (1988), original demonstrations by Boas (1889) and Sapir (1925, 1933) showed that the sound patterning of our language constrains our perception of behaviour remain convincing till today. Rice (1980, cited in Hill, 1988) demonstrated that difficulties encountered by American English speakers to understand and remember Eskimo stories overcome their difficulty when they assimilate them into their English schemata. Whorf's work as an insurance adjustor led him to the discovery of the power of labels to affect behaviour, remain unchallenged till today.

Alford (1978) is of the opinion that Whorf has been a victim of "a good deal of misrepresentation." Hill (1988) who shares a similar view, states that Whorf "is a miscellany" as none of Whorf's works displayed any radical form of linguistic determinism except a tendency toward hyperbole. Schlesinger (1991) pointed out that Whorf often expresses himself in an ambiguous fashion, thus many of the things said of Whorf is influenced largely by each writer's world view.

Whorf based his argument on his study of the Pueblo Hopi culture. He claimed that the language of the Hopi Indians led them to view the world differently from other people such as the English or speakers of the Indo European languages which is observed in his popular statement, "We dissect nature along lines laid down by our native language." In his analysis of the Hopi verb system, Whorf claims that the Hopi conception of time is distinctly different from those of the Western cultures. Whorf pointed out that the verb tense system of the Indo European Languages indicate that the speaker of the language view time moving like a road, with the future moving into the past. In contrast, the absence of tenses in Hopi verbs indicate that the Hopi thinks in terms of cycles of events instead of units of time. Analysis of Hopi by specialists such as Matloki (1983) have invalidated Whorf's claims.

Another argument of Whorf with regard to the grammar of Hopi was the absence of distinction between "animate" and "inanimate" entities. For example, clouds and stones were categorized as "animate." Whorf concludes that the Hopi considers clouds and stones as living entities and attributes this view to the influence of their language.

Sampson (1980) as well as many other scholars disagree with Whorf's above view. Sampson points out that French language mark differences in sex grammatically. Hence, the terms used for females have special "female markings" and these are also used for stones and door. It is erroneous to conclude that doors and stones are female entities and are similar to women to the French. Yule (1985) concludes that the problematic conclusions arrived at are a result of confusion between linguistic categories such as "animate" and "feminine" and biological categories such as "living" "female."

Other examples provided by Whorf include a comparison between English and Eskimo. In comparison to the English, the Eskimos have a variety of words for snow such as flying snow, slushy snow and dry snow. Whorf argues that the Eskimos' language allows the Eskimo to categorize what he sees differently from the English speaker. Clearly, the above examples, raise several questions. Does a lack of separate terms for certain phenomena indicate that users of that particular language are unable to distinguish these phenomena? Are the Eskimos the only people who notice the differences in snow? Yule (1985) is of the view that though the English do not have many terms to describe snow but they have the ability to manipulate language to refer to the different kinds of snow.

Radical linguistic determinism which states that, "All thinking goes on in language," makes little sense. It is therefore not surprising that it has been subjected to severe criticism. The above view is untenable as it implies that no specific claim can be made regarding a world perspective mediated by a different language. Thus, Pinker (1994:3), a detractor of the

SWH from the universalist school of thought, stated that "No one is really sure how Whorf came up with his outlandish claims but his limited badly analyzed sample of Hopi speech and his long time leanings towards mysticism must have contributed." However, no one has yet proven conclusively to support or negate the role of language influencing thought.

Cole and Scribner (1974) argues against linguistic determinism by stating that importation of words from one language to another reflect the flexibility of languages as limitations in the lexicon of a language does not lessen the user's ability to discriminate. Cole and Scribner cite the example provided by Rivers (1901) concerning the Murray islanders who do not have any term for the colour blue. Instead, they borrowed the English term and incorporated it into their language as "bulubulu."   To strengthen their view further, Cole and Scribner cite certain aspects of language behaviour to demonstrate the unacceptability of Whorf's claim. Whorf's own linguistic behaviour such as in the translation of the Eskimo terms for snow into English, is evidence to the contrary. Although it is possible to translate from one language to another term for term, much of its meaning may be lost, preservation of the semantic content argues against any hard and fast rules. Hudson (1980) states that difficulties in translation between languages demonstrate one aspect of linguistic relativity as evidenced in some items of languages which express meanings not expressed in others.

The fact that one could translate from one language to another is proof that radical determinism is untenable. Schlesinger (1991) attempts to modify the above thesis to the notion that "much thinking goes on in language" instead of "all thinking" because Schlesinger subscribes to the view postulated by many writers that there is another medium of thought besides language. This medium or mental language is the language of thought which has been known as lingua mentis or mentalese. Schlesinger proposes another viable move to retain the extreme form of the above thesis. He argues from the perspective that it is possible to express thought in any language. This is possible

as any ideas incorporated in a given language is expressible through paraphrase. The two moves mentioned above however, do not rule out the possibility of an influence of language on thought.

Wiezbicka (1992) states that the lexicon of most languages are language-specific which supports the notion that variation in lexicon reflects cultural differences among differing communities. Therefore, the lexicons of differing languages suggest differing conceptual universes, "and not every thing that can be said in one language can be said (without additions and subtractions) in another... " Wiezbicka (1992:20).

Hudson (1980) forwards two areas of restriction on relativity which is seen in the area of prototypes and basic-level concepts. Use of such concepts is a result of the need to convey maximum information through minimum effort. It is also seen in the tendency of the world to provide ready-made concepts as in the use of prototypes which shows little variation between societies.

Rosch (1976) developed a conceptual theory known as the prototype which is a typical instance of a particular concept. For example, an object is viewed not simply as a bird or not a bird, but it is to a certain degree a bird, according to how similar it is to the prototype. Evidence from experimentation revealed that using the prototype concept, a clear distinction could be perceived between members and non-members of the prototype. For instance, from a list of eight, robins and swallows were considered most typical of birds while penguins and chickens were not. Chairs and dressers were considered as most typical items of furniture while radios and ash trays are not (Clark and Clark, 1977).

2.4.2.1 Empirical studies

According to Gumperz and Levinson (1996) the above theory caught the imagination of

anthropologists, linguists and psychologists as well as members of the public. It prompted many empirical studies which aimed to test and elucidate the hypothesis. Berlin & Kay's (1969) experiment on colour perception and naming, decisively refuted the SWH and terminated the tradition of experiments. The SWH was further discredited by the rise of cognitive sciences which is based on human genetic endowment and focus on the universality of human cognition. This change in sentiment was strengthened by the discovery of significant semantic universals in colour terms, the structure of ethnobotanical nomenclature and kinship terms. A brief discussion of the colour term research follows.

In the early seventies, researchers in the colour domain challenged the linguistic relativity thesis. Research by Berlin and Kay (1969) contradicts the notion of the colour space as a source of uniform physical variation. From a spectrum of colours given, subjects from twenty different languages were asked to choose the best examples of basic colour terms in their language. Findings indicate that the boundaries of the colour terms varied widely but the focal colours were stable. Another study, modelled after the Brown - Lennebergy experiments, revealed that many focal colours could be remembered more accurately than nonfocal coulours even by speakers of languages who have no basic hue terms. Heider (1972: 20) suggests that relationship between language terms and concepts may be a reverse of what is commonly understood. "The colour space would seem to be a prime example of the influence of underlying perceptual cognitive factors on the formation and reference of linguistic categories."

Another ingenius experiment to test the above hypothesis is concerned with linguistic categories which take account of the shape of objects. Carrol and Cassagrade (1958) reasoned that since the Navaho grammar places importance on shape, form and material of things, it seemed reasonable to assume that Navahos have a propensity to be led by the above mentioned attributes. Carrol and Casagrade (1958) conducted a study which was

focused on the object sorting behaviour of matched age of Navaho children. The task given to the children were to match an object with a pair of objects shown. For example, the experimenter showed a pair consisting of a yellow rope and blue stick. The subjects were then given a match a yellow stick to the pair given. Results revealed that young Navaho-speaking children have a propensity to match the items on the basis of form instead of colour.

In Boston, a similar experiment was conducted on middle-class English speaking children. Results revealed that there was a preference for form over colour. Carroll and Cassagrade (1958) hypothesized that differences could be a result of the amount of experience in shapes and forms learned by Navaho children through language as well as non - language experience. Generally, results reveal that grammatical categories in languages do affect matching. Such findings support the weak form of linguistic relativity which states that concepts differ in their availability in different cultures rather than the strong version. However, there is also the need to recognize the limitation of the above experiments as colours and shapes constitute very limited semantic fields.

2.4.3 Linguistic Relativism

The weak form of SWH or Linguistic relativism proposes that language is not only a medium for expressing thought, it acts as a mould for shaping thought. Thus, the language we acquire from young, serves to direct the particular way we observe and structure the world.

To indicate his partial support for linguistic relativism, Hudson (1980) states that it is plausible to make use of different values in belief systems according to linguistic varieties used at the time of speaking. To show the above, Hudson recounts an experiment carried out by Ervin-Tripp on bilingual Japanese women. Although Hudson reports that the experiment has many weakness such as a very limited number of subjects, no clear percentage of women who demonstrate change in attitude as a result of spoken language

as well as number of tasks which demonstrate the above, he however view it pertinent to recount the experiment. Subjects in the experiment were Japanese women who are married to American ex-servicemen. Each of the women in the experiment was interviewed once in both English and Japanese. In the said experiment, the women were requested to perform different tasks which required ability to use the language creatively. One of the task given was to complete a number of fragments such as," I like to read … ." When interviewed in Japanese, they might complete the sentence with "...about sociology" which reflects a Japanese set of values as opposed to " ...comics once in a while as they sort of relax the mind," which reflects values learned in America. Similar differences were observed in other tasks such where the Japanese women were required to comment on a pictorial stimulus showing a farm with a farmer ploughing in the background, a woman leaning against a tree and a girl in the foreground carrying books in her arms.   When the interview was conducted in Japanese, they provided the following responses:

> A student feels in conflict about being sent to a college. Her mother is sick and her father works hard with out much financial reward. Nevertheless, he continues to work diligently, without saying anything, praying for the daughter's success. Also he is a husband who never complains to his wife.
>
> (Hudson 1980: 98)

When conducted in English, the same women might provide the following answer:

> A sociology student observing farmer at work is struck by the difficulty of farm life.
> (Hudson 1980: 97)

From the above discussion, there is some limited evidence to support the view of language imposing on thought.

2.4.4 Resurgence of interest in the SWH

Interestingly, Paul Kay together who with a collegue had supposedly refuted the SWH through their publication of their findings on colour terms in 1969, stated that "a more cautious Whorfianism seems to be supported by the results" of his new research on SWH done in 1984 (Koerner, cited in Putz and Vespor, 2000).

The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis has generated an increased interest among linguists especially in the last decade. The effect of languages on the thought and behaviour of its users continue to fascinate linguists. Fishman (cited in Hill 1988) writes that the Whorfian claim has been sufficiently controversial that it continues to be studied by contemporary scholars as the implications of the hypothesis are serious as few scholars would deny completely the of role of linguistic relativity.

A recent experiment to test the validity of the SWH such as whether language per se affects categorization of objects was carried out by Nistbett, Li-jun Ji and Zhiyong Zhang (2003). Nisbett (2003) reports that word triplets (for instance, panda, monkey, banana) were given to Chinese and American college students and they were asked to indicate which two of the three words bear close relations. The Chinese students for the study were students residing in America or in China and were tested either in English or in Chinese. According to Nisbett, if SWH holds water, then the language used for testing the Chinese students should produce differences. The Chinese students when tested in Chinese should more likely prefer relationships such as monkey and banana as the basis for grouping and more likely to prefer taxonomic categories such as monkey and panda when the test was administered in English. Since psycholinguists believe that bilinguals are not alike as they can be broadly divided into "coordinate bilinguals" or "'compound bilinguals" (See section 2.2.2.1), Nisbett and his team of researchers tested on both types of bilinguals. The Chinese from China and Taiwan are categorized as coordinate bilinguals (English is learnt relatively late and confined to school contexts) while Chinese from Hong Kong and Singapore are categorized as compound bilinguals (English is learn relatively early and is used in more contexts). Furthermore, both these societies, Hong Kong in particular, are highly Westernized.

Nisbett (2003) reports that the results were most unexpected. Results indicate marked differences between European Americans tested in English and coordinate Chinese speakers tested in Chinese irrespective of place of residence. Americans were found twice as likely to group according to taxonomic category while Chinese nationals and Taiwanese were found twice as likely to group according to relationship when tested in Chinese. Next, the language they were tested upon did make a difference for the coordinate bilinguals because when tested in English, they were much less likely to group according to relationships. However, for compound bilinguals from Hong Kong and Singapore, their grouping of word triplets indicated a pro-Western orientation independent of language used. Interestingly, the results indicate no differences for compound speakers whether they were tested in English or Chinese.

Nisbett reports that the implications were clear: culture affects thought independent of language for the compound bilinguals. Nisbett also stated that there is a clear effect of language independent of culture for Chinese coordinate speakers as they respond differently when tested in English and in Chinese. Thus, Nisbett concludes tentatively that there is an influence of language on thought as long as different languages are viewed to be associated with different mental representations. There is therefore evidence that for the Chinese, the world is viewed more in terms of relationships than for Westerners.

Although the study of linguistic relativity remain a complex undertaking and research evidence makes the strong form of the Sapir Whorfian Hypothesis untenable, the implications of the hypothesis are serious as few scholars would deny completely the of role of linguistic relativity.

From the writings and discussion of the many contributors thus far, it is clear that the main problem encountered in accessing Sapir-Whorf hypothesis is the problem of inescapable circularity. As Holmes (2001) stated, it is possible to observe that languages differ and

conclude that speakers thoughts also differ. However, the only evidence to indicate thus is observed through use of language. Herein lies the challenge, to access thought through language use and using it as evidence of the thought processes.

Lucy (2000: xi) is of the view that appraisal of SWH necessitates the providence of "a contrastive language assessment and an associate cognitive assessment with respect to some reality." In view of the above, very few studies have been capable to demonstrate linguistic relativity as many of the studies conducted are but incomplete formulations.

2.4.5 Discussion of Relevance of the Sapir-Whorfian Hypothesis in the light of recent developments

Gumperz and Levinson (1996) stated that recent developments in modern linguistics indicated that meaning is no fully confined to the areas of lexicon and grammar. In view of new findings and developments in the linguistic sphere, Gumperz and Levinson (1996:7) stated that, "In this changed intellectual climate, and in the light of the much greater knowledge that we now have about both language and language processing, it would be pointless to attempt to revive ideas about linguistic relativity in their original form."

Recent developments in the linguistic sphere saw researchers expanding the range of the hypothesis by discussing beyond the confines of grammatical and lexical levels. Gumperz and Levinson (1996:7) is of the view that currently, the issue of linguistic relativity enormously widened. It has shifted from issues related to grammatical categories and individualized culture to the focus which include communication such as interaction in social settings as well as to contextualization of individual patterns of cognition. Thus, Gumperz and Levinson is of the view that such shift brings together a constellation of notions related with linguistic relativity in the light of current theory which enriches the original hypothesis. Briefly, a discussion of three current views with regard to SWH follows.

Johnson (2000) relates culture to the SWH by indicating how perceived reality is a product of the interplay between language and cognition within a culturally specific speech community. Whorf's statement which was often quoted to indicate the above (cf. section 2.4.2), involves usage of words such as "largely" and "an agreement" which is found in the earlier part of his statement and "absolutely obligatory" in the later part of his statement. Johnson (2000) likened the said statement to that of a contract where certain things are agreed upon even when other possibilities exist. Once agreement is reached, the contract is viewed to be binding. Thus, Johnson (2000: 51) states that "the explicit link to culture is that languages (in all their varieties) are culturally relevant and culturally relative." Thus, cultural frameworks produce particular languages, which shape mental processes and the construction of reality which in turn function to create cultural frameworks.

In the area of lexical semantics, Kronenfeld (2000) utilizes the Saussarean framework of *langue* and *parole* to explain his theory. He views *langue* as a cognitive system while *parole* consists of concrete acts that constitute speech. Kronenfeld considers the relationship between cognition which is implicit in lexical categories and cognition which is explicit in behavioral categories. Kronenfeld's study of Fanti kinship indicated that essential categories relate to core or prototypical referents. However, as much of lexical usage do not match directly the mental representations of referents (core referents) in question, it entails use of extended referents such as denotative, connotative or metaphoric referents which implies the existence of non-linguistic coded thought.

Thus, the Whorfian issue is observed not through raw perception or thought but through categories which assimilate perception and thought. As much of the content of such cognitive systems is linguistically coded, it offers another sense of language shaping thought (collective thought). This is realized in the instance where language dictates which thoughts are expressible or rather which thoughts can be viewed as a basis for collective

action. Konenfeld reasons that everyone possesses the linguistic resources of his/her community. Thus, in constructing speech one has to consider the community whom one is addressing such as what and how a talk is going to be understood, what patterns from other communities which members have knowledge of and how use of outside resources are interpreted. Kronenfeld provides the instance where Halvard Vike (1996, cited in Kronenfeld, 2000) demonstrated how a particular political language renders inexpressible the many thoughts of workers and politicians in the Municipal council of Skein Norway. This is due to the conventions of public discourse which dictates what counts as constructive contributions which is viewed as a constraint on thought. Kronenfeld (2000) reasons that since language is a social construct and a system of collective representations, the "thought" which language shapes is collective. Thus, in constructing a speech act, consideration has to be given to the community which is addressed. In brief, the issue is how the message is likely to be interpreted, construed or understood by listeners in a given context.

Thus, the issue of context and community reminds one of Whorf's famous example of how a major fire started as a result of a careless worker tossing a smoldering cigarette butt into the "empty drums" of gasoline. The problem lies with the use of default meanings. Thus, Kronenfeld reasons that use of a particular label to categorize often have an impact on subjects' perception and behaviour.

Another perspective with regard to the SWH is given by Peeters (2000) which concerns linguistic and cultural relativity in discourse. Peeters quotes Whorf's writing (1956: 156) by arguing that Whorf was in fact referring to cultural relativity although it was not mentioned clearly. This view is shared by Bickel (2000) who states that the SWH encompasses similarities between unconscious cultural and behavioural norms such as overall patterns of thought and behaviour characteristic of a society and large scale linguistic patterns such as observable patterns in that society's language. Peeters (2000) investigated the reality

of two apparently opposing culture-specific values such as "engagement" and "restraint" through a comparison of evaluative expressions used by each group. His investigation was supplemented with the use of proverbs, colloquial phrases, quotes, expressions, excerpts from a Policy letter, magazine, cartoon as well as data drawn from interviews. With regard to the French value of "engage," Peeters states that vigorous assertion of one's viewpoint and to take stands is part of the norm for the French. A reluctance to take sides is given negative connotations as it is viewed to be almost similar to an act of cowardice. On the other hand, Peeters argues that the Anglo-Saxon ideal is "to show restraint" in conversation in order to avoid the risk of being associated with erroneous opinions or be involved with other people's business. Therefore, one should present one's views with circumspect and be noncommittal. Peeters therefore reinforces his argument by quoting Wierzbicka (1991:69) who asserts that, "in different societies, and different communities, people speak differently. Thus, a community's cultural values affect its conception of its communicative behaviour in relation to what is "normal" and "expected." Thus, the above discussed is about cultural relativity of cultural values. Thus, learning and using proper language forms ensure successful participation in communication.

The researcher concurs with Johnson's (2000), Peters' (2000) as well as Kronenfeld's (2000) view on SWH in relation to the study. Languages are the product of cultural frameworks or in Kronenfeld's view, collectives, which shape mental processes and organization of reality. These cultural frameworks incorporate values and behaviour which affect the community's conception of its communicative behaviour in relation to what is "normal" and "expected." In a capsule, Johnson (2000) said, language is culturally relevant and culturally relative.

2.5 Context in Discourse

In the area of context, both internal and external context would be highlighted. Cooley (1902) states that if a situation is seen to be real then it is real in its circumstances. Therefore, context could be based on one's inner subjectivity of a situation and one's

perception of social circumstance and the social consequences which manifests as a result of such perception. Thus, identification of the various kinds and levels of context is needful to further verify the world view of subjects who are divided along lines of education medium and dominant language use.

Drawing on the work of linguists in cognitive and social interactive fields, Baker (2005: 322) stated that context has been variously conceptualized as "an abstract, psychological construct that exists within rather than outside, or independently of, the mind of the language user..." Van Dijk (2001a), a proponent of the cognitive driven approach, views contexts as participants' mental constructs and therefore not social situations.

Ochs (1979:1) specified some of the basic parameters of context as a point of departure for the analyst which include "the social and psychological world in which the language user operates at any given time." He provides the following dimensions that context must cover:

1. Setting

Setting encompasses the social and spatial framework which situates discourse.

2. Behavioural environment

It includes how participants utilize their bodies and behaviour as a resource for the framing and organization of interaction. Kendon (1992) demonstrated how participants were able to use spatial orientation and posture to display access to the actions of others and thus frame the talk produced.

3. Language as context

Language in interaction invokes context and serves to provide context for other interaction for instance, in the utilization of contextualization cues (Gumperz, 1991). Unlike earlier views which proposes context as a frame which surrounds talk, the way in which talk is structured in Gumperz's view, constitutes a main resource for the organization of

context. Therefore, talk can create appropriate context for the interpretation of discourse (Goodwin, 1987).

4. Extra situational context

In order to understand a conversational exchange, the background knowledge which is needed extends beyond the local talk or immediate setting. Schiffrin (1987) in discussing the occurrence of language in context, include cognitive contexts where past experience and knowledge is stored and retrieved, cultural contexts which comprises of shared experiences and world views and social contexts where the self and others rely on institutional and interactional orders as tools for interpretation of situations and actions. Cicourel (1992) argues strongly for a rich ethnographic description and frames of relevance in which the interaction is embedded.

Fantini (1991: 122) argues that since knowledge can be both data and concept-driven as stated by Duchan & Katz (1983), context can therefore be recognized as data-driven processing while culture can be understood as a "collective form of concept-driven processing." When a young child undergoes the socialization process through recurrent patterns or routines, he/she develops certain expectations. Bandura (1977) states that expectations formed by the child are not only cognitive but also cultural in nature because of the influence of others such as the family and school community.

Ochs (1979) and others have observed that there are two principal analytics of context. One of these focuses on information-processing strategies to enable the listener to understand talk better while the other, breaks down those features of interpersonal speech events that have a bearing on talk. Both of these combine cognitive and social aspects of context into packages labelled as frames, schema, schemata, scripts or speech events. (Tannen 1979). Talk then, takes place within frames in terms of schema or script or it may even be embedded in several constituent elements. The notion of "frame"

(Bateson 1972, Goffman 1974), "schema" and speech event are powerful models for thinking about context.   Following is a discussion of an approach to discourse that highlights upon situated meaning or meaning in context.

2.6 Interactional Sociolinguistics

Schriffrin (1994) states that context as represented in "situation" is crucial to Interactional Sociolinguistics. This is because priority is given to social interaction and situations such as participation frameworks and the presuppositions which arise as a result of situated interaction. Therefore, focus is on the different types of context such as context which is internal and external to the individual.   According to Schriffrin (1994), the major contributors to this field of linguistics are Gumperz and Goffman and used extensively by Schriffrin (1987a) and Tannen (1989a). Although it is a very diverse field, several basic beliefs provide unity to this field and they are: language, context and the interaction of self and other. The discussion that follows will focus on the above contributors.

Gumperz (1982a: 12) noted that "what we perceive and retain in our mind is a function of our culturally determined predisposition of perceive and assimilate." As a consequence, this could lead to communication difficulties as what is perceived as similar or dissimilar is culturally determined.

Similarly, Goffman (1967a) who focusses on social interaction, also places language in the same social and interpersonal contexts that provide the presuppositions crucial in the decoding of meaning. In Goffman's view, the self is a social or interactive construction. Gumperz studies in interracial and interethnic settings indicated that differences in marginal features of language such as signalling mechanisms could lead to problems in interactions and relationships.   Gumperz (1982) regards these signalling mechanisms which include contextualization cues, contextual presuppositions as well as situated inferences as aspects of language and behaviour which connect what is said to contextual

knowledge of activity types. Schiffrin (1994) refers to this signalling mechanisms as constructs.

Contextual presuppositions are regarded as a type of background knowledge which aids in the inferencing process. According to Gumperz (1982a:131), "a contextualization cue is any feature of linguistic form that contributes to the signalling of contextual presupposition." Gumperz (1982a: 2) states that such cues provide conversationalists with the device "to rely on indirect inferences which build on background assumptions about context, interactive goals and interpersonal relations to derive frames in terms of which they can interpret what is going on." Schriffrin (1994: 403) states that contextualization cues also reflect the interactional view of communication being situated and aids in conveying the meaning and illocutionary force of a message by aiding the recipient to locate the "frame" to situate an utterance.

Hence, the notion of interpretive frame is closely tied to contextualization cues which function as framing devices. In the discussion of participation framework which was described as a set of positions taken by an individual in relation to an utterance, Goffman (1974) distinguishes between the concepts of frames and footing. To Goffman, frames are used to define situations and are maintained through experiences while footing is "the alignments we take up to ourselves and the others present as expressed in the way we manage the production or reception of an utterance" (1981c:128). According to Goffman, shifts in footing and alignments could be identified through contextualization cues which signal the things in a context which contribute to situated presuppositions and hence to the related frames which are in operation. This is in line with Tannen's (1984) reference to metamessage.

From the above discussion of Gumperz and Goffman's work, Schriffrin (1994) felt that two central issues feature prominently to provide unity to sociolinguistics. These issues concern the interaction between the self and other, as well as context. Schriffrin (1994)

comments that the work of both scholars have highlighted the fact that language is indexical of the social world. Gumperz, for example, has indicated that language is an index to the background cultural understandings such as inferences about what is meant through an utterance. On the other hand, Goffman views language as an indicator of the social identities and relationships formed through interaction. Both scholars have highlighted the fact that different intentions and different selves and others which occur in different contexts where utterances are produced, provide inferences to situate speakers' meanings.

The organization of background knowledge is known by different categories such as schemata, scripts and frames. Following is a discussion of each of these categories.

2.6.1 Schema

A closer look at context which is of great importance to the analysis of discourse is background knowledge or schema. Different categories such as schemata, frames and scripts have been utilized in organizing knowledge in memory. Tannen (1979) is of the view that the various categories mentioned, seem to be related in some sense to Barlett (1932). Schemata has been defined by Van Dijk (1981:141) as "higher level complex knowledge structures" which according to Anderson (1977) functions as "ideational scaffolding."

The concept of "schema" used by both Andersen and Tannen has been derived from the writing of Barlett (1932). Barlett stated that ". . . the past operates as an organized mass rather than as a group of elements each of which retains its specific character." (p.197). To emphasize that memory is constructive, Barlett stated that the individual "has an overpowering tendency to get a general impression of the whole; and, on the basis of this, he constructs the probable detail" (p. 206). Barlett highlights an important aspect of schema by stating that it is not static but dynamic "actively doing something all the time" (p.201).

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2.6.2.2 Script

The notion of "script" is associated with the work of Shank and Abelson (1975). Abelson's notion of script spans three broad fields such as ideology, story understanding and social behavior. He highlights the relationship between scripts, attitudes and behavior. An understanding of an individual's script would explain the link between the individual's attitude and behavior. Two kinds of scripts have been differentiated by Shank and Abelson which is: situational script and planning scripts. Planning scripts describe the choices available to a person when s/he strives to achieve a goal while situational scripts is a connected sequence of intentional events. Schank and Abelson's (1975) notion of a script is best exemplified in the following restaurant scene:

> John went into the restaurant. He ordered a hamburger and a coke. He asked the waitress for the check and left.

The reference made to "the" waitress and "the" check as if they were mentioned previously, indicate the existence of scripts in knowledge structures.

2.6.2.3. Frames

Benarek (2004) provides an overall view of frame theory by stating that it involves our knowledge of the world. A frame was initially deemed as a mental knowledge structure which reflects the basic or typical features of the world. The frame concept has attracted researches from diverse fields and background such as philosophy and psychology (Konerding, 1993), linguistics (Fillmore, 1982), artificial intelligence (Minsky,1975,1977), sociology (Goffman, 1974, 1961), discourse analysis (Brown and Yule, 1983; Muller, 1984; Chafe, 1977a; Tannen, 1993) to name a few. The discussion of a large number of fields and authors has been done by Tannen (1993:15-21) and Konerding (1993:20-77).

Tannen's (1979) introductory article on frames and its related metaphors spans different disciplines characterized by major differences in emphasis, usage and sometimes confusing overlapping terminology (Maclachlan and Reid, 1994; Benarek, 2004).

Consequently, the term 'frame' was associated with different but related phenomena. Other expressions such as schema, script, scene were also related to the notions of frame. Benarek (2004) is of the view that the expressions mentioned differ in the area of emphasis and can be hardly distinguished as they may be considered as instances of frames as well. Therefore, Benarek concurs with Fillmore (1982), by viewing frame as "a general cover term for the set of concepts variously known, in the literature on natural language understanding, as 'schema', 'script', 'scenario', 'ideational scaffolding' cognitive model', or 'folk theory' (Fillmore, 1982: 111).

Minsky's definition of frames is often cited as frame theory and has been associated with his work in artificial intelligence.

> "When one encounters a new situation...one selects from memory a structure called a frame. This is a remembered framework to be adapted to fit reality by changing details as necessary. A frame is a data-structure for representing a stereotyped situation like being in a certain kind of living room or going to a child's birthday party. Attached to each frame are several kinds of information…some are about what one can expect to happen next" (Minsky 1977: 355)

In Minsky's view, a frame is a mental representation of the knowledge of the world that we have, it is a data structure which can be retrieved from the human memory when the need arises. Minsky (1977: 356) proposes that once a frame is selected to represent a situation, "a matching process assigns values to each frame's terminals, consistent with the markers at each place." Therefore, it indicates that our knowledge is kept in a very large number of frames and frame system in our memory.

Currently, a frame has been defined as a knowledge structure which is acquired through socialization and in the words of Benarek (2004:690), such knowledge structures are "constructed out of our experience and is a product which is diachronically and culturally dependent." Tannen (1993) and Yule (1996: 87) have demonstrated that frames are culturally dependent while Benarek (2004) speaks of diachronic dependency as a logical consequence of socialization. Stubbs (2001) states that frames however, when established are rather stable in nature with some frames being more stable as they are not

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easily changeable as such stable frames which are usually related to objects or situations, have exhibited the same features for centuries and there is no indication that there would be a change in future. Example of such frames are bedroom frames which are likely to remain stable while fluid frames such as concepts or situations are more likely to change. However, two theoretical affiliations exist in the discussion of frames namely the 'cognitive' schemata as forwarded by Bartlett and the 'psychological' frames as derived by Bateson. The discussion that follows would focus mainly on the latter's work.

2.6.2.3.1 Psychological frames

Psychological frames which has often been referred to as interactive "frames of interpretation" is characterized by the work of anthropologists and sociologists such as Bateson (1972) who introduced the term, as well as most of those who have built on his work such as scholars in the fields of anthropology (Frake 1977), sociology (Goffman 1974) and linguistic anthropology (Gumperz, 1982; Hymes 1974).

Bateson (1972) is of the view that ability to communicate at different levels of abstraction involves the ability to recognize a signal as a signal. Three levels of communication have been identified by Bateson and they are: simple denotation, metalinguistic (reference to language used in statements) and the metacommunicative message (e.g. messages about "meta" or status of the communication). To Bateson, metacommunicative messages are thought of as psychological frames as they aid in the interpretation process to indicate what people mean in daily exchanges. For instance, whether a statement is meant as a joke or a warning and so on.

2.6.2.3.1.1 Metamessages

In line with Bateson's view on metamessages, Tannen (1980) distinguishes between the message which is what is said and the metamessage, what is meant. Metamessages are also conveyed through the use of various kinds of indirectness as a device of "testing

interactional waters before committing too much - a natural way of balancing our needs with the needs of others" (1984:60).   Hints such as these are conveyed through non-verbal cues such as paralinguistic cues or prosodic features in utterances.

Paralinguistic cues encompass features such as gestures, postures, facial expressions and others while prosodic features include pitch and intonation, pauses as well as loudness and softness.   Such cues enable speakers to frame metamessages to signal various moods such as anger, sarcasm, impatience, excitement and others.   Thus, Tannen places importance on recognition of the above cues on how these framing devices operate in order to avoid misinterpretation in conversations as a result of social-cultural practices.

In sum, Tannen's reference to the "frame" is applicable to both metamessages and structures of expectation which are utilized during the interpretive task.   Tannen (1979) reports of a study to investigate the existence of frames through use of linguistic evidence. In her analysis, many kinds of linguistic evidence have been identified which revealed the imposition of speaker's expectation on the content of a film.   The linguistic evidence include additions, negatives, inferences, generalizations, omissions, repetition, false starts, back track, hedges and other qualifying words or expressions, interpretation, moral judgment, inexact statements, modals, incorrect statements and contrastive connectives. The collected data of the study indicated that structures of expectation operate in relation to all these areas: objects and events shown in the movie, the interview situation itself, watching the movie as well as in the verbalization of the story seen.

2.6.2.3.3 Cognitive frames

The second theoretical affiliation in the discussion of frames in this study is the 'cognitive' schemata forwarded by Bartlett.   Tannen (1993) in her review of literature suggests that all the concepts which were referred to as schemas were variously labelled in many fields such as artificial intelligence, cognitive psychology or linguistic semantics.   Tannen is of the

view that these concepts in fact reflect the notion of structures of expectation and was referred by Tannen as "knowledge schema." Tannen defines knowledge schemas as participants' expectations about people, events, objects, setting in the world, as distinguished from alignments being negotiated in a particular interaction (Tannen and Wallet, 1993).

Minsky (1977) views a frame to be a mental representation of our knowledge of the world. It is likened to a data structure located in human memory and can be retrieved as and when needed. It contains a network of nodes and relations which appears to be structured at different levels. The top levels are fixed and represent components of situations which are stable and always true while the lower levels possess many terminals or "slots" that must be filled by specific instances or data. These specific instances or assignments can represent smaller sub-frames and normally have to fulfill conditions specified by terminals or markers.

In the words of Minsky, a frame's terminals are:

> Normally filled with 'default' assignments. (...) The default assignments are attached loosely to their terminals, so that they can be easily replaced by new items that fit better the current situation. (...) Once a frame is proposed to represent a situation, a matching process tried to assign values to each frame's terminals, consistent with the markers at each place" (1977:356).

Minsky views some of the assignments as mandatory while others are optional. Therefore, in our memory knowledge is stored in a very large number of frame or sub-frames. When we encounter a different or new situation, a selecting and matching process begins as in a frame being "evoked on the basis of partial evidence or expectation. Then the frame selected is compared to the new experience or situation and features of this new experience are assigned to the frame's terminals. Minsky's frame theory is not without criticism. According to Benarek (2004), one of the shortcoming of Minsky's frame theory is its "fuzziness" as he relies on the power of his hypothesis and the reader's ability to imagine the cognitive aspects of his proposal. Minsky's concept of the frame as being a

cognitive phenomenon as it is a mental structure that is stored in the mind has been widely accepted today by most linguists. It is viewed as a knowledge structure that is not innate but acquired through the process of socialization as well as experience.

Minsky (1975) differentiates between obligatory or optional features in frames. However, Benarek (2004), prefers to refer to them as central or peripheral features. For example, in a bedroom frame, the bed would be a central feature as expectations of it are also high. Other features such as chair or table might not necessarily be found in the bedroom but they could be part of the frame as well. Benarek (2004:291) views the features of a frame to be situated on a scale as it is "not easy to discover which are really obligatory." Hence, the example given, a bedroom is still a bedroom even if no beds are there as one may sleep on the floor. Therefore, the central feature of a bedroom frame is its function rather than what it consists of. In sum, Benarek's (2004: 691) working definition of a frame is derived from Minsky's (1975) and Ungerer and Schmid's (1996)definition:

> A frame consists of cognitive features or components and heir relations. A feature
> component can itself be a sub-frame. The features seem to exist on a scale ranging from central to peripheral and provide default assumptions by supplying prototypes. Associated expectations are higher with regards to central features than with regards to peripheral features...

Benarek quotes Tannen (1993), who distinguishes between frames that refer to events or objects and sums up that frames probably could be used to refer to persons, actions, places, types, roles or events. In view of its usefulness, Hoyle (1993) points to the crucial role of framing in communication such as in speech activities and interactions.

For purposes of this study, Tannen's (1993) definition of frames will be of relevance to the study. The researcher proposes to utilize frame theory and its methods of investigating the broader and not directly observable world view. As world view is a broad area, the researcher is of the view that the use of frames enables one to analyze it in a more tangible manner. Thus, use of frames are essential as they are indispensible tools to segment events, objects, situations etc, which will then provide the necessary clues or

indicators to a person's thinking and behavior. In brief, the researcher surmises that analysis of these mental constructs will reflect the world view of the person. The researcher proposes that frames therefore enable one to study in a contained form the larger component known as world view (cf. Chapter 4, section 4.8).

2.7 Communicative Patterns in Discourse

Forgas (1998) in his discussion of communicative episodes highlighted two features: predictability and cultural specificity. He attributes it to culture providing its speakers with similar cognitive schemas which direct language usage as well as communicative conduct. In a similar vein, Johnson (2000:58) states that "language encode cultures according to ways in which they are structured…" Consequently, it is reflected in the discourse patterns of each culture which serves to reflect their individual world views. Thus, discourse patterns play a primary role when cultural backgrounds are highlighted. For this study, a number of communicative patterns have been identified. These patterns constitute the unconscious and conscious habitual linguistic behaviour of subjects which recur in the two interviews. The common patterns discussed are: use of pronouns as identity markers, use of explanations, directness and indirectness as a mode of communication as well as categorical organization.

Johnson (2000) observes that Asians place more emphasis on the smooth and appropriate process of communication rather than its outcome as they do not wish to jeopardize the group's harmony. Hence, this communication style has been referred to as, "politeness and process orientation" by Cheng (1987) as what is emphasized is not the product but the process. In opposition, Servaes (cited in Johnson 2000: 239) explains that Americans are preoccupied with "rugged individualism," "speaking one's mind," "making one's point," "being assertive," and "arguing forcefully and logically." However, for the analysis of this study, it will be broadly categorized under individualistic and collectivistic orientation. Although the distinction between individualism and collectivism is said to be highly

controversial, the above orientation is adopted as the study investigates Malaysian Chinese who are embedded in a Malaysian society which is Asian and to a large extent viewed to be collective in orientation.

2.7.1 Individualistic versus Collectivistic Orientation

As discussed above, the individualistic mindset focusses on the self and therefore one of its manifestation is observed through personalization of individualistic views. Therefore, they are oriented to speaking their mind, being assertive and arguing forcefully and logically. They are also more concerned with their personal goals and individual distinctiveness (Nisbett, 2003). Therefore, success is sought for personal merit as contrasted to the collectivistic mindset where success is sought as a group goal (Bond 1991; Watkins & Biggs, 1996). Those who are communally oriented would emphasize on the group's views and expectations. Hence, they would put their personal preferences below that of the group which they are part of. Another of its manifestation would be in the use of markers of identity. In brief, all actions, behaviours and attitudes that focus on the self would be deemed to be individualistic in orientation while those that focus on the group would be deemed to be collectivistic in orientation. Subsumed under the above orientation are four significant patterns identified in the study.

2.7.1.1 Use of pronouns as identity markers

Discussion of the above is based on two types of pronouns namely, the singular pronoun "I" and its related forms such as "me" and "my" and the plural pronoun "we" and its related forms. Use of singular pronouns will be viewed from both Western and Chinese orientations. The Western orientation views the use of the singular pronoun as a marker of an individualistic identity which is in line with Gofffman's (1990) reference to the 'ego identity.' It is about one's subjective feelings about oneself and situation as well as of one's uniqueness. It includes the authority to direct one's behaviour such as in the shaping of one's social roles and interpreting the expectation of these roles. On the other

hand, discussion of the Chinese use of the first person singular pronouns is in line with Rosemont's (cited in Nisbett 2000:5) view of Chinese traditional thought where "there can be no me in isolation, to be considered abstractly…I live in relation to specific others." Thus, the singular pronoun "I" and its related forms are used in relation to the "we" of the collective where "I" is viewed to be part of the "we." This unique pattern of personal identity is seen when some changes in the role of an individual will affect the roles of others. The Eastern concept of self as an indistinctive entity has also been highlighted by Geertz (1983: 67) in his discussion of how the Moroccan identity is an attribute borrowed from his/her setting. Thus, the self is marked both contextually and relativistically. It is in keeping with what has been discussed earlier in section 2.3.3.1, that emphasis on the individual in isolation is not a practice of traditional Chinese.

Collective identity is indicated through the use of the collective pronoun, "we" and its related pronouns such the possessive determiner "our' or the objective case of the plural pronoun 'us." It is speaker inclusive and is used to indicate commonality of cultural or familial experience and shared emotional dispositions which relate to cultural attitudes and values as well as solidarity towards one's group and excluding "others" who have no membership in the collective.

2.7.1.2 Use of explanations

In commenting on the Chinese love for history, Yen Mah (2003) states the need to relate and explain past events in order to provide a window to the Chinese mind. Thus, Yen Mah notes that citation of proverbs and summarizing past legends, events, occurrences and practices have been favoured by Chinese as a way to explain and express their thought.

2.7.1.3 Directness and indirectness as a mode of communication

The direct mode of communication is observed when a person relates his or her ideas openly without fear or hedging, sharing his or her ideas or feelings willingly and without hesitation. Conversely, the indirect mode of communication is adopted when subjects are

reluctant to do the above in order to maintain 'face" for the listener and speaker. Tannen (1980) quotes Kaplan about conventional rhetorical structures of language groups. The Chinese and Korean approach in writing is marked by indirection and digression while Americans favour "a straight line" or "coming to the point" structure or being direct. Indirectness in communication is confirmed by Young (1982) in her study of the use of politeness norms. The direct mode of communication is utilized by Americans in business negotiations as they prefer to get to the point of discussion in the shortest time possible and dislike beating about the bush (Lam & Graham 2007).

2.7.1.4 Categorical organization

Nisbett (2003) states that European or Western thought is based on the assumption that the behaviour of objects can be understood through straightforward rules. Thus, Westerners have a strong tradition of interest in categorization as a means to aid them in the application of rules to objects in question while formal logic is applied in problem solving. Nisbett states that the reverse applies for East Asians as the world appears to be more complex for them. Thus, consideration of a host of related factors is deemed needful. Moreover, formal logic plays an insignificant role in problem solving and a man who seems overly concerned about logic is viewed to be immature. Thus, categorical organization of information is deemed to be a Western trait and is used for clarity of communication. This is also in keeping with Nisbett's (2003) observation that Westerners are taught to communicate their ideas lucidly and to utilize a "transmitter" orientation so that they could be easily understood by the hearer. Should miscommunication occurs, the fault lies with the speaker. Asians on the other hand, favour a "receiver" orientation in communication, where the onus is on the hearer to understand what has been said. Thus, those who utilize a receiver orientation emphasize on careful decoding of messages while those who favour a transmitter orientation emphasize on clear encoding of messages in order for the receiver to decipher the correct message. Thus, categorical organization is a way in which to ensure clear conveyance of messages.

2.7.2 Summary

This chapter discusses the various theoretical orientations which form the framework for the study. The discussion of the Malaysian language situation with special focus on language use among Malaysian Chinese provides the background or context to situate the study. Focus on both the internal and external contexts is viewed to be necessary as they play crucial roles in the interpretation of any event, situation or behaviour. A discussion of the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis and its related experiments to test its validity has been included. To conclude, the chapter not only discusses the theoretical assumptions in which the study is grounded, it also provides a comprehensive overview of both the social, cognitive, cultural as well as psychological context of language use among Malaysian Chinese through use of notions related to how understanding the world takes place.