

CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

4.0 INTRODUCTION

Every speech situation is mediated by different contexts with its different types and levels of frames in everyday interaction (Goffman, 1981) and even cognitive contexts as seen in the use of frames by Goffman (1974) and Tannen (1980) are socially grounded. Thus, the study will not only look at the social context but the cultural, political and psychological contexts that are represented in the study.

The first part of the study is informed by an earlier study conducted by Tannen (1980) in connection with a project directed by Chafe (1980) where a movie was shown to Greek and American respondents who were then required to tell what they have seen. The results from Tannen's (1980) study indicated that respondents from differing cultures rarely produce identical narratives as content is mediated by cultural and personal differences.

It is hoped that this present study which sets out to explore the language patterns and frames used by Malaysian Chinese who have been shaped by different language mediums as well as dominant language use would be able to contribute to the pool of knowledge in this area. This chapter outlines the investigative methodology adopted.

4.1 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The purpose of this study is to find answers to the following research questions:

1. What, if anything, are the differences and similarities in the patterns of communication among Chinese language dominant and English language dominant Malaysian-Chinese?
2. In what ways, do these patterns of communication reflect their world views?
 - i) Is there a consistent pattern of differences between both groups?

3. What are the frames that are present in the discourse of both groups of respondents:
 - i) In what ways do the frames reflect the world view of both groups of respondents?
 - ii) To what extent do the frames reflect the world view of the respondents?

4.2 Orienting Hypotheses

In the discussion of the orienting hypotheses, discussion will focus on the relationship between language and context (culture, society and the self) and how they are grounded in interaction and to a lesser extent, the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis.

The notion that language influences thought which is associated with the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis has been generally accepted. For purposes of this study, the researcher concurs with Johnson's (2000), Peters' (2000) as well as Kronenfeld's (2000) view on SWH in relation to the study (cf. Chapter 2, section 2.4.5). According to Johnson (2000), languages are the product of cultural frameworks which shape mental processes and organization of reality. It is therefore surmised that the shared knowledge and experience of subjects in the study will be reflected in their speech and language which to a certain extent shapes the thoughts and expectation of subjects.

Thus, the weaker version of the SWH seems a plausible explanation for the relation between language and thought. This hypothesis then has a bilateral relation with this study. This is seen in Kronenfeld's (2000) argument that the language used by its speakers in many instances, direct them to a certain view of the world. Knowledge of the rules governing what is appropriate to say, in a way constrains its speakers from speaking "freely." Thus, what is viewed to be normal and appropriate is often culturally relative. This seem to be the way the above scholars look at SWH, therefore the researcher also wants to discover if the study conducted on Malaysian Chinese will yield findings to support or negate SWH in a limited extent. The evidence from this study it is hoped, will provide

further data on which to evaluate the plausibility of this hypothesis. The hypothesis also serves as an explanatory framework for some of the data found in this study.

Another factor that will be investigated in the study, is context. As language is socially grounded, it is surmised that the context in which language takes place is also of significance. Thus, the study focusses not only on the language, culture and world view of the language users but also on the internal and external context, in particular, the cognitive context (e.g. frames) in which language takes place. This is essential as it determines the very processes of perception and thought which speakers bring to bear upon each event or situation represented in the study. Thus, Schiffrin (1993) states that language, culture and society are grounded in interaction.

The context in which an utterance occurs is viewed to be crucial in identifying the reasons for its occurrence. Seen in this way, culture does not exist in a vacuum, but rather in the society in which it is grounded, therefore, the socio-cultural, socio-political and socio-psychological context will have implications on the behaviour and thoughts of subjects of the study. It is surmised that an examination of the patterns of communication and the frames used by subjects as they verbalize their responses in the study will provide answers to the language, culture, thought, world view and context relationship. The study is guided by the assumptions that speakers who have either Chinese or English as their dominant language will have transferred some of the mechanism of their language patterns in the dominant language into the experimental study.

4.3 Pilot study

A pilot study to test the usefulness and appropriateness of the stimuli and questions for the study was carried out on four participants before the research proper started. The various stimuli and questions employed were chosen after some preliminary data for investigating the various themes in Chinese culture were collected. For example, respect for authority was chosen as an aspect but after piloting the study, it was found from subjects' responses

that respect for authority was discussed in relation to elders and the head of the family which overlapped with the aspect of filial piety and respect for elders. Therefore, this aspect was removed. Similarly, the aspect of humility was more popular with the four respondents rather than the aspect of kindness or patience. Since there is a need for research to be data as well as theory driven, the researcher had to revise and reconstruct some questions and stimuli as the study progressed. Thus, after piloting the study, the questions and stimuli of the study were further modified and polished before the research proper was conducted.

4.4 Context as represented in the study

As discussed above, the role of context is crucial in this study as language does not take place in a vacuum but in the society in which it is grounded. The model below conceptualizes in diagrammatic form the layers of context involved in this research. The diagram is an attempt by the researcher to provide a more nuanced empirical grasp of the levels of context the study covered as interactions can only be understood with regard to context. Thus, a discussion of the various contexts in the form of concentric circles for the study is needful.

Figure 4.1: The many levels of context as represented in concentric circles for the study



4.4.1 Context of Situation

As revealed in the diagram, the study was conducted in a speech situation which was embedded within many levels or dimensions of context and content. The first level of context in this study is represented by the smallest circle which is the context of situation. It represents the context in which the interview was conducted: who the subjects were; what the format of interaction was, what was the level of mutual knowledge. Subjects of this study were not told about the purpose of the interview but were asked to respond to Video clips (refer to Chapter 4, section 4.6.2.2 & 4.6.2.3) and textual stimulus (Chapter 4, section 4.6.3.1). Since they found themselves to be in an experimental situation where their verbalizations were audio recorded, the situational context itself may have a bearing on the subjects' performances. According to Malinowsky (1923), comprehension of discourse is possible when the larger socio-cultural framework within which they are embedded is taken into account. The context of situation or the specific context in this study encompassed the interview which was made up of the participants or interviewees and the researcher who was the interviewer as well as the spoken language medium. The content of the communication is the subjects' narrative of the events seen in Video clips which reflect their expectations about movies, movie-viewers and expectations about people, objects and events which may be triggered through viewing the story in Video clips.

4.4.2 Conversational Topics

The second level of context was the conversational topics which encompass the events in the Video clips as well as the situations and views provided for under the Family Descriptor Scale or FDS (Refer to section 4.6.3 for details). The topics for the second interview were chosen from texts such as news items, sayings, proverbs and movie clips. Therefore, the second level of context also comprised the various texts used in the interview, the degree of openness of the text, the subject matter of the text as well as the mode of message

encoded in the texts. Two different contexts are provided in the two Video clips. The first depicts life in ancient China, while the second is set in modern day Singapore. The settings in the Video clips provide the social, spatial and temporal framework for the events to be situated. The Video clips were adapted from Chinese movies. This was done to ensure that all subjects were able to understand Chinese in order to respond to the questions in the interviews that follow. Cantonese, a popular Chinese dialect, was used in the first Video clip (VCD1) while its subtitles were in Mandarin. The second Video clip (VCD2) was in both English and Mandarin and subtitles were also in both English and Mandarin.

4.4.3 Family

The third level of context is the overall theme that pervaded throughout the various textual materials used. Whatever aspects that have been highlighted for the interview or questionnaire, invariably focussed back on the overall theme of family. Thus, the context of text included both the conversational topics as well as the overall theme or domain of family. The theme of family was chosen as it has been viewed to be more emphasized among the Chinese than other races and is viewed to be the root of Chinese society and the contributant of all Chinese social characteristics (Lin, 2000). Additionally, it is one of the components of social structure for cultural patterning as discussed in Kraft's (1979) model of world view (cf. Chapter 2. section 2.3.3).

4.4.4 Interlocutors' world view

The fourth level of context is the interlocutors' world view. It represents the beliefs, values, expectations as well as preferences of the interlocutors. Therefore, level 4 of context in this study is subsumed under the wider context which is context of culture as world view lies at the heart of culture. Subjects are expected to draw on this inherent pool of existing knowledge as they respond to the questionnaires as well as interviews in the study.

4.4.5 Subjects' primary culture

The fifth level of context is the primary culture of the respondents as culture is deemed to encompass respondents' world views. Therefore, respondents would be rooted in the world view of their culture. Thus, context of culture (the knowledge systems brought by the individual into the speech situation) encompasses both the cultural, sociological and ideological aspects of context. This is in keeping with the views of Ochs (1991:1) who noted that the "social and psychological world in which the language user operates at any given point of time must be taken into consideration when context is examined."

4.4.6 Malaysian Chinese community

The final level of context is the macro-context, that is the community in which subjects function. The context here would be the Malaysian Chinese community and its practices. Within the Malaysian Chinese Community are two distinct groups of Chinese which is represented by Group 1 and Group 2 Malaysian Chinese who are differentiated by their dominant language use and medium of education. They are the products of the socializing practices inherent in the Malaysian Chinese community. Integration of all the varied contexts discussed above is an attempt to analyse discourse as a social process. The diagram below discusses how the social, cultural and political forces and practices within the Malaysian Chinese community mould its members' world view and behaviour which in turn forms the context of the Malaysian Chinese community.

4.4.7 Social cultural practice and world view

Figure 4.2: World view as a product of the socio- cultural practice of the Malaysian Chinese community

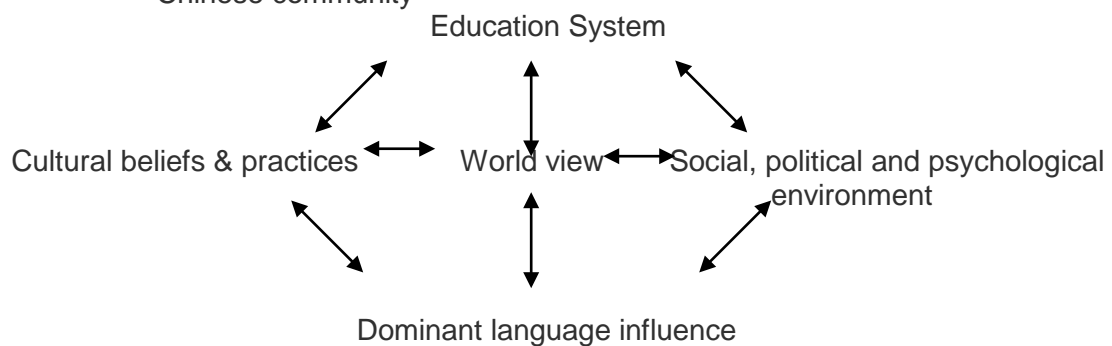


Figure 4.2 indicates how socio-cultural practices mould one's world view and behaviour. The arrows indicate how the interaction of the four factors discussed above produced the world view of the subjects. The above formulation which was drawn partially from Kulick's (1992) study was adopted in order to indicate (as in Kulick's study) that processes of socio-cultural reproduction and change in bilingual settings cannot be fully clarified without reference to the complex relationships among political economy, ideology and communicative practices in particular socialization practices. In the Malaysian Chinese community, subjects' world view and culture are couched in the language medium of education as subjects are influenced by the teaching and learning practices as well as the educational ideology inherent within each school type during their formative years of growth. The education medium in particular, Chinese medium schools use standard Chinese as their dominant language of communication, which in turn exerts to a considerable extent the dominant language use. The next factor of importance is the political context. The political context or environment to a large extent shapes the education system of the country which in turn influences subjects' world view, dominant language use as well as subjects' choice of educational medium. The dominant language in which subjects function was the next factor highlighted as it would provide access to the different worlds of thoughts and practices as well as groups of people and their practices as well. This would serve to strengthen, maintain or weaken subjects' world view and culture acquired through their formative years of learning and growth. In the case of the Malaysian Chinese, their world views and behaviour are products of the complex relationship between the education system, social, political and psychological environment, dominant language use as well as cultural beliefs and practices inherent in the home and society.

4.4.8 Context - Western and Chinese world view

As the study is a study of the world view of two groups of Malaysian Chinese who possess different dominant language and education medium, it is surmised that they would

subscribe to different world views. In order to compare subjects' world views, it is therefore needful to anchor the investigation on responses to a topic common and integral to the life circumstances of both groups. For the purpose of this study the topic selected is Family. Different aspects are posed for subjects to respond to and their responses are then analyzed vis-a-vis the subjects' orientation (Western and Chinese) with specific focus on the self with regards to personal agency and collective agency. This is also in keeping with the view of Rajoo (cited in Mohd. Taib Osman 1985) that the self is central in any study of world view. Thus, in the analysis of the patterns of communications and frames, the self and how it is portrayed and viewed by subjects of the study is taken into consideration.

For the purposes of this study, the researcher used Nisbett's (2003) listing of the broad differences between Chinese and Westerners with regard to personal and group agency as listed below.

Distinctive Traits of Personal Agency:

1. A sense that they are in charge of their own lives and have the freedom of choice in their behaviour.
2. An interpretation of happiness as the ability to exercise their powers in the pursuit of excellence free from constraints.
3. A strong sense of individual identity.
4. Oriented towards personal goals or success and achievement.
5. Preference for equality in personal relations.
6. Feeling good about themselves through personal successes and the possession of positive qualities.
7. The self is viewed to be unique, with its personal distinctive attributes and goals.
8. Personal agency in the Greek sense fueled a tradition of debate (oratory and argumentation).

Distinctive Traits of Group or Collective Agency (Nisbett, 2000; Bond, 1991).

1. Membership in a collective or several groups such as the family or society and group goals and activities are the concern (concerned with self-control in order to minimize friction with others in the group).
2. Happiness is to live a plain country life in a harmonious social network.
3. A strong sense of group identity- the individual is part of a large, complex and benign social organization where the ethical conduct of the individual is guided by clear demarcated obligations.
4. Success is sought as a group goal.
5. Equality of treatment is not taken for granted.
6. Feeling good about themselves is likely involved with the sense that they are meeting in the group's expectation and are in harmony with the group of which they are members.
7. Individual distinctiveness or equality of treatment is not personally desirable.
8. Any form of confrontation was discouraged to avoid the spectre of "luan" or disorder.

4.5 Definitions of Key terms and concepts

Given below are definitions of terms and concepts used in the study as adopted from the sources.

- 1) Patterns of communication (Woods and Kroger 2000) - Patterns essentially involve the recognition of relationships between features of discourse such as within or across subjects, sections, or occasions. For the purposes of this study, the patterns discussed would be the unconscious and conscious habitual linguistic behavior of subjects as they verbalized their responses.
- 2) Frames:
 - i) Cognitive or knowledge frames (Tannen, 1985)- Expectations of participants about people, events, objects and settings and ways to interact.
 - ii) Psychological or interactive frames (Bateson, 1972) - These frames function as guides for interactants to interpret each communicative episode before responding appropriately.

3) Contextualization cues:

i) Gumperz (1982) defines them as any feature of linguistic form which acts as signaling devices for contextual presupposition. They act as framing devices which indicate the frame in which an utterance is to be perceived and interpreted.

ii) Schriffrin (1993) states that they reflect the interactional view of communication as being situated and aids the interactant to locate the frame to situate an utterance.

4) Contextual presuppositions (Gumperz (1982) - They are similar to background knowledge which aid in the inferencing process and denote two levels of meaning. At one level, it is denotative of the communicative activity type while at the next level, the particular illocutionary act intended by the speaker.

5) Structures of expectation (Tannen 1993) - They are referred to as prior or organized knowledge which is used to measure new perceptions to make interpretation possible. Thus, it is observed that contextual presuppositions which constitute one of the constructs for interpretation in Interactional Sociolinguistics are similar to Tannen's structures of expectation. Although both terms come from different traditions of discourse analysis, the terms are assumed to be similar in this study.

6) Diaspora (Webster's New World dictionary, Third College edition) - Diaspora is any scattering of people with a common origin, background or belief.

7) Malaysian Chinese - For purposes of this study, the definition of this term would encompass any Malaysian who is of Chinese descent.

8) English language dominant subjects - Subjects who are English language dominant are subjects who are either educated in English and/or use English as a dominant language among their social network such as their family members, friends and relatives. Moreover, they would profess themselves to be English dominant language subjects.

9) Chinese language dominant subjects - Subjects who are Chinese language dominant are subjects who are Chinese educated and who use the language as a dominant language among their social network as described above. They would also profess to be Chinese educated subjects.

10) Personal Agency (Nisbett (2003) - A sense of being in charge of one's life and having the freedom to act as one chooses.

11) Collective Agency (Nisbett, 2003) - focus is on group or collective goals and importance as well as obligations to the collective.

4.6 DATA COLLECTION

4.6.1 Subjects

The subjects were all ethnic Chinese. However, they were divided into 2 groups based on which language was dominant in their life: English or Chinese. This was determined based on their responses to the questionnaire (See Appendix A).

The Chinese respondents represented in the study, were assumed to possess different cultural orientations although they were similar ethnically. A total of 30 respondents were selected at random for the study. 15 of them have English as their dominant language while the other 15 have Chinese as their dominant language or were Chinese educated. All the respondents were able to speak and understand Mandarin, the official Chinese language and one of the widely spoken Chinese dialect which is Cantonese as they are from Kuala Lumpur where Mandarin and Cantonese are used widely as a mode of communication among the Chinese population. They also have to be able to converse in English as the interview is conducted in English in order to verify that subjects are bilinguals with different dominant languages. Subjects were selected according to the following criteria:

1. They must be Chinese by ethnicity as the aim of the study is to verify if the dominant language of subjects overrode ethnicity as an influence on the world view of subjects.

2. They must have different dominant languages and in this case, Mandarin / Cantonese or English.
3. They must be able to speak and understand Chinese such as Mandarin and Cantonese as these two varieties of the Chinese language are popularly used by Malaysian Chinese in urban centres such as Kuala Lumpur. Moreover, a basic understanding of both the varieties in particular Cantonese is needed to comprehend the VCD clippings which were used as stimulus for the questions in the study.
4. Subjects within the age range of 25-50 years of age were used in the study. It was hypothesized that they would:
 - a. have enough cultural knowledge in order for their culture to be palpable in the interview.
 - b. be matured enough to provide individually distinctive views when responding to the variety of stimulus and questions for the interview.
 - c. be proficient in the English language to respond to the stimuli presented in both interviews as subjects have at least a Malaysian Form 5 secondary education (equivalent to the "O" level) as both English and Bahasa Malaysia are taught as compulsory subjects in schools.
 - d. have enough language and discursal skills to comprehend each situation represented and be able to articulate their distinctive stand on issues and situations presented.

4.6.2. Research Tools

The corpus for analysis in this study consists of the audio recorded spontaneous responses obtained from 30 respondents after they watched a video clip (VCD1) for Interview 1 of the Narrative Interview and responded to a set of stimulus for Interview 2 of the Structured Interview. The data represents responses of two groups of Malaysian Chinese who use either English or Chinese as their dominant language. Two main tools

were used in the collection of data: a questionnaire and two interviews which were audio-recorded. The data collection procedure will be briefly discussed.

4.6.2.1 Questionnaire

The first instrument employed was a questionnaire (given in Appendix A) as it was a quick and useful instrument for reaching and retrieving from subjects the necessary information for the preliminary stage of data collection. The questionnaire consists of a total of 10 questions featuring the 10 aspects of the Family Descriptor Scale (for details refer to section 4.6.3).

The questionnaire is divided into two sections, section A which encompasses 8 questions. Items 1 - 8 are intended to elicit information of subject's age, dominant language, language use as well as educational background. Some of the questions regarding language background have been modified from the language background questionnaire which was used in a research done on Celtic Language attitude sponsored by the Economic and Social Research Council (Baker, 1992). Section B comprises questions intended to elicit responses related to the 10 aspects of the family descriptor scale. It is intended to gauge the subjects' cultural orientation. A total of 10 questions, (Items 9 -19), featuring the 10 aspects of the FDS were used. The Quick Discrimination Index (Q.D.I.) format has been employed in the questionnaire to increase authenticity in subjects' answers as they were only required to tick the appropriate answers of their choice. The Q.D.I. incorporates the Likert scale which consists of a five option response with regard to intensity of feelings and preferences towards the 10 aspects of the Family Descriptor Scale. It was also employed for greater accuracy in data collection. In order to avoid subjects' reactivity, it is entitled simply as "Social Attitude Survey" (Refer to Appendix A for the Q.D.I. Questionnaire). The responses of the 30 subjects were collected before these same respondents proceeded to the two interviews which were conducted in English.

4.6.2.2 Interview 1 (Narrative Interview): Interview 1 was conducted immediately after the questionnaire was administered. Respondents watched a 20 minute video clip with the researcher. They were asked the following question: “Please tell me what happened in VCD1 which you have just seen.” With the respondents’ permission, the responses were audio recorded. Since one of the contextual factors that could affect research findings was the setting of the interview, the researcher hoped to create a more informal atmosphere by conducting the interview in places chosen by subjects. As the objective of this study is to discover how subjects construct what is seen and perceived with what is accepted by him/herself as reality or internalized knowledge schemas, the focus of analysis was directed at both the internal and external context. The internal context examined in Interview 1 was the inner subjectivity of the film-viewer (knowledge schema) as well as the viewer’s perception of the external context (the film and the interview situation) and the inherent external context. Thus, the cognitive context is socially, culturally and psychologically grounded by the matrix of all the different kinds and levels of contexts inherent in this study. It is surmised that all the above will be reflected in the discourse patterns and frames engaged by each subject as they respond to the interview task.

4.6.2.3 Interview 2 (Structured Interview): The second interview which is referred to as the Structured Interview, represents the full range of the Family Descriptor Scale or FDS. It was conducted to confirm subjects’ cultural orientation and is based on a number of stimuli to elicit subjects’ responses: Video clippings (referred to as VCD2), situational prompts, sayings, proverbs or newspaper clippings. For this interview, subjects were allowed to look through the stimuli and questions before the interview was conducted. Subjects’ opinions and expectations with regard to the ten different aspects in the domain of family were recorded. Subjects were requested to respond to various stimuli for the analysis of world view. (The full texts for Interview 1 and 2 are given in Appendix C).

Subjects were aware that their responses were being audio taped. Subjects were given the option to finish both Interview 1 and 2 in one session or to undergo a second session either the next day or a few days later. This limited time frame was maintained to ensure that subjects could still recall what they had seen in the video clippings.

The conversation was two way and subjects were allowed the liberty to respond in whichever manner they deemed suitable. Subjects were guaranteed personal and institutional anonymity and information obtained for the study, would be kept strictly for research purposes only.

4.6.3 Construction of the Family Descriptor Scale

The stimuli for this study are constructed based on the Family Descriptor Scale or FDS which is used as the model for analysis of context. It was developed and modified from Pyong Min Gap's (1995) Pan-Asian Unity scale which consists of nine values: Group rather than individual orientation, filial piety, respect for authority, self-control and emotional restraint, educational achievement, shame as a source of control, virtue associated with middle position, high status for the elderly and centrality of family relationships.

Moreover, the family domain has been selected because it is regarded as the root of Chinese society from which all Chinese social characteristics are derived (See Chapter 2). Based on the above premise, the family domain and its aspects will have implications on the communication patterns and frames utilized by the two different groups of subjects.

Briefly, the FDS consists of values and practices selected to elicit responses to the 10 aspects that underpin and shape Chinese cultural life and act as interpretive frames. Hofstede (1980) considers values as a component of the dimensions inherent in culture and has used them to compare cultures. Moreover, it has been shown that differences

and similarities between cultures can be detected through the use of highly culture specific values (Bond, 1988; Chinese Culture Connection, 1987).

As discussed in Chapter 3, the following are 10 sub-domains which constitute the frames of the Chinese family: centrality of family relationships, filial piety, respect for elders, dependence vs independence, humility, middle path (self-restraint), face, educational achievement, moral values and religious beliefs.

4.6.3.1 Textual stimulus for Interview 2 or the Structured Interview

Table 4.3 Textual stimulus for the Structured Interview

Family Aspects	Questions for Interview	Stimulus Used
Aspect 1: Centrality of Family Relationship and responsibilities Issue: Importance of Family relationships	1) Would you invite your sister or brother and her/his family who are facing financial crisis to stay with you and your family?	Text 1: A Hypothetical question
Aspect 2: Filial Piety Issue: Bearing sons to carry on the family name	2) What is your view with regard to the saying by Mencius?	Text 2: In Search of the Real China by Ke, L. J. (2002:71) A Literary Text
Aspect 3: Respect for Elders Issue: Viewing aged persons as jewels to the family.	3) Do you consider an aged person as a jewel to his family? Please give reasons for your answers.	Text 3: Origins of Chinese People and Customs (Asia Pac, 2001).
Aspect 4: Dependence vs Independence Issue: Interdependence among family members with the firm as a large family	4) A boss dismissed one of his worker because of a fire in the factory even though he was told by his general manager that it was a mishap. Later, the worker kidnapped the boss's son in order to obtain some ransom money to settle debts back home. Who should bear the greater blame in this incident?	Text 4: VCD2
Aspect 5: Humility	5) In the VCD clipping, the heroine discouraged her superior from praising her publicly as she likens it to boasting and taking pride in herself. What is your view?	Text 5: VCD1

Table 4.3, continued

Aspect 6: Middle Path (self-restraint)	6). Please comment on the saying just expressed.	Text 6: A Chinese saying: "Nan ren liu chier bu liu lei" A man's blood may flow but not his tears.
Aspect 7: Educational Achievement	7) Could this saying be applied to the Chinese family?	Text 7: A Chinese proverb: "wang cer chen long, wang nu chen feng" Hoping for the future generation to obtain excellence in education.
Aspect 8: Face	8) Please comment on the proverb.	Text 8: A Chinese proverb: "Jia zou pu ker wai yang" News which would cause shame to the family must be kept a secret.
Aspect 9: Adherence to Moral Values	9) Please comment on the saying expressed	Text 9: A Chinese saying: "hao sing you hao bao, hao you hao bao, e you e bao." There is repayment for good and bad deeds
Aspect 10: Religious beliefs	10) Please comment on the above proverb	Text 10: A Chinese saying: "Sheng si you ming, fu gui zai tian." Life and death are decreed by fate. Riches and honour are determined by heaven.

4.6.3.2 Contents of VCD 1.

When a Chinese physician in traditional China discovered that his daughter, Mang Lai Kuan, had defied the conventions of society by dressing and acting like a man, he decided immediately to curtail her exploits by agreeing to an arranged marriage for his daughter to his long standing friend's son, Wong-Po Siew Wah. Meanwhile, the Lau family also came forward to ask for the hand of his daughter in marriage. However, Lai Kuan's father rejected the marriage proposal from the powerful Lau family on the pretext that he had already accepted the proposal of marriage from the Wong-Po family. In retaliation for loss of face as a result of the failed marriage proposal, the Lau family accused the Mang and Wong-Po families to be in league with rebels. Thus, the Mang and Wong-Po family had to

go through a lot of trials to escape the wrath of the Lau family. In the course of their trials and adventures to save their families, both the heroine Lai Kuan and the hero, Siew Wah, who did not know the true identities of each other, fell in love. This is because Siew Wah thought that his fiancé, Lai Kuan, had died while attempting to escape from the clutches of the Lau family. When finally, they get to disclose their true identities to each other, Lau Kuan was shattered by news of Siew Wah's coerced marriage to another. She returned home inconsolable, convinced that Siew Wah was forever lost to her.

4.6.3.3 Contents of VCD 2

VCD2 is generally about the problems Singaporean adults and children face at their work places and schools respectively. As a result of the rat race, people who are perceived to be weak, slow and non-high fliers are discriminated by those who viewed themselves to be on the upper rung of society. The question of face, self esteem and success featured largely in the story where characters have to grapple with the issues mentioned as they go about their daily lives in modern Singapore.

4.7 Data Transcription

The corpus consists of audio recorded discs of subjects' responses to the selected extracts of texts and movie clips. Interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed using regular English orthography. The exact words of subjects have been presented regardless of whether they are grammatically or lexically accurate as phonological accuracy and deviations are not highlighted in this study. Transcription conventions for the study were adapted from Dubois et. al.(1991), Jefferson (1979) and Gumperz (1992). The transcribed data was analyzed according to discourse chunks for the first and second interview. Subjects' discourses were chunked following the system adapted by Chafe's (1997b) project studying the recall of events.

An example of chunking taken from Chafe is as follows:

In talking about my trip to Boston, I might break it into (1) getting there (2) what happened

while I was there (3) returning home.

He suggested that it is not the only way or even the most common way to organize an account of a trip. He may even have broken it into the following:

1. going to the airport
2. the plane trip
3. being met at the other end

In this research, the researcher chunked the subjects' verbalizations according to ideas for ease of referencing as it is not a linguistic analysis. Therefore, when the data given is a big chunk, the researcher broke it down to smaller chunks. However, ease of reference took higher priority as the main focus of the research is on subjects' world views and expectations rather than on chunking or presentation of subjects' responses. For example, when two ideas are presented as a result of the conjunction "and," if it is a short sentence or idea, it may not be broken into two but it may be linked to another to make it a bigger unit:

MC2: (13)So, after that um: the brother very happy lah. And happy he came back to tell Lai Kuan, the father already released...

Similarly, not every idea unit will begin with "because" as some of the idea units are rather small. Since the data for the research is rather broad, ease of reference would be the main consideration in chunking the responses of subjects.

Transcription conventions used in the study are given in Appendix B.

4.8 Modes of Analysis

The data was analyzed in relation to language patterns and frames within the parameters of the Family Descriptor Scale utilizing the Interactional sociolinguistic approach. In keeping with Johnson's (2000) view that culture frames communication as it directly influences its form and content, analysis will look at the discourse patterns and frames utilized by subjects.

The researcher proposes that it is possible to “analyze” world view through the use of frames. In Discourse Analysis, frames are utilized as a method to study the way in which people think and behave as they are regarded as knowledge structures which capture the typical features of the world (Benarek, 2004). This has also been stated in Tannen’s (1993) definition of frames being the expectation we have about people, objects, events etc. in the world as the mind understands the world through use of templates - such as frames, scripts, prototypes etc. Utilization of frames as a tool for understanding, therefore, provides a method of making practically viable the study of something which is large and intangible such as world view. Frames therefore “break down” world view into a number of analyzable “components.” Thus, the network of frames will provide a picture of a particular person’s thinking. Since there are not only knowledge frames (cognitive frames) but attitudinal frames (interactive frames) as well, the researcher proposes that the use of frames in the study enables one to study in a contained form the larger “component” known as world view.

In the analysis, frames were not only used to observe how the two groups of respondents frame their ideas but also to compare the various social, cultural and psychological frames reflected in the responses of subjects. The use of the family domain in this study was to provide access to the various frames under which respondents function. For example, what are the aspects highlighted by subjects as they operate under the selected familial aspects which in turn will provide clues to the world views of respondents.

The framework for analysis of frames is the use of knowledge schemas as well as interpretive frames which in turn consist of the following constructs or framing devices: contextualization cues, contextual presuppositions and situated inferences which would be manifested in the use of surface linguistic elements. The kinds of evidence the researcher looked for when utilizing “cognitive schemas” or “structures of expectation” in the data are “surface linguistic phenomena” (Tannen,1993) such as repetitions, hedges and other

qualifying words or expressions, negatives, modals, adjectives, moral judgments, conclusions, generalizations and inferences. Attention was also focussed on paralinguistic cues such as intonation, word stress and volume as these can also contribute to reflect subjects' expectations about events and situations.

To conclude, in the analysis of data, the order of analysis was from smaller to larger units such as from patterns to frames of subjects. For instance, communicative patterns are part of frames which are components of world views. The patterns of communication utilized by subjects would be confirmed by the frames utilized by subjects which would indicate the world views of subjects.

4.8.1 Social Attitude Survey

The survey data was quantitatively analyzed to gauge subjects' cultural orientation. However, only simple percentages were calculated.

4.8.2 Interview 1 (Narrative Interview)

Analysis of the Narrative Interview began with an examination of the discourse patterns utilized by subjects and this in turn was used to detect the patterns of communication. A comparison was made between the patterns of communication utilized by the two groups of subjects through a close examination of their discourse in Interview 1. Analysis of the second section of Interview 1 would be based on use of cognitive frames or "structures of expectations" popularized by Tannen (1993) as well as the psychological frames or interactive frames of interpretation popularized by Bateson (1972). To identify the levels at which the frames operate, the researcher looked out for linguistic, contextual and paralinguistic cues.

4.8.3 Interview 2 (Structured Interview)

Analysis of the patterns of communication utilized by subjects in the Structured Interview focussed on three major patterns namely: use of pronouns as identity markers, explanations and direct and indirect modes of communication. Analysis of the Structured

Interview from the aspect of frames will be done as in the Narrative Interview. As the two groups of Malaysian respondents come from different dominant language backgrounds, the researcher hopes to discover if the patterns of communication as well as frames used by the two groups of respondents are different.

4.8.4 Triangulation of Instruments

Since one of the modes utilized in the study was the interview, the researcher is aware that “the context” which was the interview, may not necessarily provide an accurate picture of reality. Respondents may provide answers which they perceive to be acceptable or preferred by the majority. Thus, the researcher triangulated the various instruments used such as the use of questionnaire and interviews to ensure accuracy of results. Lee (2003) is of the view that since research questions dictate the choice of research tools, the scope of study has a direct influence on the specific types of relationships, processes and direction the research methodology would take.

4.9 Summary

Chapter Four begins with a discussion of individuals bringing different contexts into every speech situation which are reflected in the presence of numerous levels as well as types of frames as a consequence of subjects’ beliefs, attitudes, values as well as personality. To investigate the above, a conceptual framework is necessary. The conceptual framework for the study encompasses a discussion of the following: orienting hypotheses, the pilot study, context as represented in the study, the data collection procedure including stimuli construction, criteria used in the choice of subjects, data analysis and triangulation of instruments as well as transcription conventions.

