CHINESE TEACHER THINKING IN SINGAPORE
- A SOCIO-CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE

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Chinese Teacher Thinking in Singapore
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Abstract

This study sets out to describe Chinese teacher thinking in Singapore and explores it from a socio-cultural perspective, utilizing both quantitative and qualitative research methods, including a survey, semi-structured interviews and metaphor analysis. The survey involves 162 respondents and 62 in-service Singapore Chinese teachers are interviewed. Metaphors arising spontaneously from the survey, the interviews and classroom discussions of teacher training sessions are identified and analyzed to make teacher thinking explicit. Four areas of Chinese teacher thinking in Singapore, that is, Singapore Chinese teachers' beliefs and perceptions about teaching, learning, students and themselves as Chinese teachers, are described and then examined within its socio-cultural context. This study finds eight major characteristics of Chinese teacher thinking in Singapore, which indicate a strong belief in: (1) the teaching of Chinese culture; (2) the priority of moral education; (3) the teacher/student hierarchy; (4) the teaching of the text; (5) the transmission model of teaching; (6) the importance of examinations; (7) the importance of motivation and effort in learning; and (8) negative perception of themselves as Chinese teachers in Singapore. The study further shows that these characteristics of Chinese teacher thinking have deep roots in traditional Chinese educational thought and traditions and are embedded in the socio-linguistic and educational context of Singapore. The findings of this study help to identify the incongruence that exists between Chinese teacher thinking in Singapore and the theoretical assumptions underlying the more learner-centered communicative language teaching approach. This incongruence explains why some of the Chinese teachers in Singapore are reluctant to adopt the innovative teaching approach. This study suggests that a socio-cultural perspective is necessary in understanding teacher thinking, and that education reforms need to take socio-cultural contexts into consideration in order to be meaningful and successful. This study also demonstrates the validity of teacher metaphors in exploring teacher thinking.
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CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Problem

In Singapore, the Ministry of Education of Singapore (MOE) makes all decisions about broad aims and instructional objectives for language curriculum planning. The development of instructional materials is left to the Curriculum Development Institute of Singapore (CDIS) which translates the stated curriculum objectives into teaching materials and activities for use in the classroom. In 1991, the Ministry of Education launched the new English Language Syllabus (Primary and Secondary) after major language curriculum revision, which took place between 1987 and 1990. The new English Language Syllabus, as Ho (1998:240) observed, has been guided by a constructivist perspective of learning and a communicative teaching approach. The essence of the constructivist view of learning lies in that knowledge is actively constructed by the learner, not passively received (Von Glasersfeld, 1989). The communicative language teaching approach follows a functional instead of structural view of language, which perceives "language as a means of communication" (Harmer, 1991:41). The communicative teaching approach thus encourages learner-centered and task-based teaching activities in which students are trained to use language for communication.
In order to prepare teachers for the new English language syllabus, from 1986 till 1990, the Singapore Ministry of Education together with the Regional Language Center in Singapore started the Active Communicative Teaching (ACT) course for English language teachers in Singapore to introduce to them the constructive learning theory and the communicative language teaching approach. In 1991, assuming that other language teachers should also follow the innovative approach promoted to the English language teachers, the Ministry of Education launched the ACT teacher training course for both Chinese and Malay language teachers together with the Regional Language Center in Singapore. As one of the teacher trainers of the ACT course for Chinese language teachers, I often heard the following typical comment of Chinese teachers in my teacher training class:

*I think the teaching methods you have introduced to us are very appealing, but to be frank with you, I don't see myself using these methods very often in my classrooms due to our circumstances.*

- a Chinese teacher in the ACT course

The above statement suggests reluctance of Chinese teachers to adopt the innovative changes the ACT course was trying to promote although these teachers felt the new teaching approaches were "appealing". As a teacher trainer, I felt it was necessary to understand the underlying reasons why these Chinese teachers are reluctant to adopt the changes I have participated in promoting.
In order to understand teachers’ resistance to curriculum innovations, a phenomenon which has been observed by many researchers (for example, Fullman, 1991; Markee, 1997; Carless, 1999; Tabulawa, 1998; Cheah, 1998), Calderhead (1996) has suggested that researchers should look into the thinking of teachers, which has informed their practice. In fact, for more than three decades, researchers have been exploring teacher thinking, in order to understand why teachers do what they do. Therefore, in order to understand why Chinese teachers in my teacher-training class were hesitant to adopt the new teaching approaches proposed to them, an exploration of Chinese teacher thinking in Singapore seems necessary.

A review of the research literature on teacher thinking has indicated that researchers have taken two major theoretical perspectives in their approach to teacher thinking: the cognitive perspective and the socio-cultural perspective. Within the first perspective, the cognitive perspective, researchers have examined teacher decision-making, teacher knowledge and beliefs in isolation of the socio-cultural context in which teacher thinking takes place. The cognitive perspective has dominated teacher thinking research for more than two decades and has been criticized more recently for its lack of recognition of the role socio-cultural contexts play in teacher thinking. For example, warning against the lack of recognition of the cultural context of teacher thinking, Olson (1988:169) pointed out, “what teachers tell us about their practice is, most fundamentally, a reflection of their culture, and cannot be properly understood without reference to that culture”. O’Loughlin (1989) also indicated that teacher thinking must be examined within its social context as teacher thinking was socially constructed.
The second perspective, or the socio-cultural perspective toward teacher thinking has drawn the attention of researchers since the 1990s. This perspective has been influenced by developments in cognitive anthropology and cultural studies. Teacher thinking research that takes the socio-cultural perspective recognizes the role socio-cultural factors play in teacher thinking and has explored the influence of socio-cultural factors on teacher thinking through "cultural myths" (Tobin and McRobbie, 1996), and "cultural models" (Hamilton, 1993; Clarke, 2000). I will discuss these concepts in detail in Chapter 3. Most of the research focusing on the socio-cultural perspective, however, has been limited in its scale and scope. It has been carried out on a comparatively small sample of teachers (for example, Tobin and McRobbie, 1996) and sometimes, considerations of the social cultural factors are limited at the school culture level (for example, Hamilton, 1993). A more comprehensive study on teacher thinking seems to be lacking in the literature.

A further review of the literature in teacher thinking indicates that almost no in-depth research has been done on the thinking of Chinese teachers in Singapore. To fill the gap in research on teacher thinking and at the same time to attempt to solve the professional problem I was facing, as mentioned earlier, I embarked on the present study.

In this study, I aim first of all to describe Chinese teacher thinking in Singapore and then to explore and understand it within its socio-cultural context. I hope the research findings of this study will help me discover the underlying reasons why Chinese teachers in my teacher training class resisted the innovative curriculum changes proposed to them.
With the knowledge and insights gained from this study, I will be able to reflect on my own teaching practice and find ways to improve the teacher training courses I will conduct in the future. Additionally, the results of this study can help policy makers in Singapore understand the thinking of Chinese teachers and take their perspectives into consideration in future policy making.

In order to describe explicitly Chinese teacher thinking in Singapore and explore its relationship with the socio-cultural context of Singapore, I will ask the following five research questions:

1. What beliefs do Singapore Chinese teachers hold toward teaching?
2. What beliefs do Singapore Chinese teachers have toward learning?
3. How do Singapore Chinese teachers perceive students?
4. How do Singapore Chinese teachers perceive themselves as Chinese teachers?
5. How has the socio-cultural context influenced the above beliefs and perceptions of Chinese teachers with regard to teaching, learning, students, and themselves as Chinese teachers?

As listed above, the five research questions are asked to explore four areas of teacher thinking. These four areas of Chinese teacher thinking include: Singapore Chinese teachers' thinking about (1) teaching; (2) learning; (3) students; and (4) self as Chinese teachers. These four areas of teacher thinking are chosen to be explored here because of their importance in teacher thinking. More specifically, questions (1) to (4) are
asked for the purpose of describing Chinese teacher thinking in Singapore. Research question (5) is asked in order to explore and understand Chinese teacher thinking within its socio-cultural context. Answers to all five research questions can be used further to identify the underlying reasons why Chinese teachers in my teacher training course are hesitant to adopt innovative teaching approaches.

1.2 Theoretical Presuppositions

The present study draws upon theoretical concepts developed in the past three decades of teacher thinking research. Teacher thinking in this study is conceptualized as teacher knowledge, teacher beliefs or teacher perceptions. The meanings and definitions of these concepts will be discussed in detail in Chapter 3.

This study has been influenced by a socio-constructivist theory of knowledge and learning, developed from constructivist learning theory (Piaget, 1929 and Bruner, 1960) and socio-cultural learning theory (Vygotsky, 1978). Social constructivists situate knowledge within the context of specific cultural values, beliefs, and ideas (Wertsch, 1991). Learning is regarded as “a social process of making sense of what is already known” (Tobin and Lamaster, 1995:225). Influenced by this socio-cultural constructivist perspective, this study assumes that Chinese teacher thinking, which is conceptualized as teacher beliefs, perceptions and knowledge in this study, is directly related to the socio-cultural values, beliefs and ideas pertaining to Singapore.
1.3 Research Methods

To answer the research questions presented in Section 1.2, the present study has adopted a mixed-method approach in its research design, utilizing the survey, semi-structured interviews and metaphor analysis as research tools. The mixed-method approach was chosen mainly to enhance the reliability and validity of the study through triangulation (Denzin, 1978) and to add breadth and depth to the study. A detailed description of the research design and methodology can be found in Chapter 4.

1.4 Limitations of the Study

This study is limited to an examination of Chinese teacher thinking in Singapore within its special socio-cultural context. The results of this study therefore cannot necessarily be generalized and applied to Chinese teacher thinking in other contexts. Furthermore, this study has explored only four areas of teacher thinking. Other areas of Chinese teacher thinking in Singapore are not examined here due to limitations of space. Further studies should therefore be carried out in these unexplored areas of Chinese teacher thinking in Singapore in future.
1.5 Thesis Structure

This thesis consists of seven chapters. The present chapter is an introduction to the thesis, which introduces the research problem, the purpose of this study, the scope of this research, the theoretical framework this study has followed, the research questions and research methods. Chapter 2 provides the social context of Chinese teacher thinking in Singapore. Chapter 3 reviews the research literature on teacher thinking that has contributed to the development of the conceptual framework of this study. Chapter 4 reports the research methodology this study has adopted in answering the research questions. Chapter 5 presents and analyzes the research findings. Chapter 6 interprets the research findings from a socio-cultural perspective and explores the underlying reasons for the reluctance to adopt curriculum changes among the Chinese teachers. Chapter 7 concludes the study and points out a number of implications emerging from this study.
CHAPTER 2 THE CONTEXT

2.1 Introduction

As mentioned in the last chapter, this study believes that teacher thinking should be examined and understood within its socio-cultural context. The purpose of this chapter is therefore to introduce the context of Singapore, which Chinese teachers of this study are working in. An understanding of this context will facilitate our understanding of the relationship between Chinese teacher thinking and its socio-cultural context.

In the introduction of the Singapore context, I will focus on three areas. In the first part of this chapter, I will introduce the historical and demographic background of Singapore. In the second part, I will examine the socio-linguistic context of Singapore. In the third part, I will provide the educational context of Singapore. In the fourth part, I will describe briefly the history of Chinese teaching in Singapore.

2.2 The Historical and Demographic Background of Singapore

Singapore is an island country located at the southern tip of the Malay Peninsula in Southeast Asia. Its total land area is about 226 square miles. It was under British
colonial rule from 1819, when Sir Stamford Raffles first settled in the island, until 1959 when Singapore achieved dominion status under the rule of the People's Action Party (PAP). Singapore achieved full independence in 1965 and the PAP party has been the ruling party since then.

The early settlers in Singapore were immigrants from the southern provinces of China, the Malay Peninsula, India, the Middle East and some western countries. They came to Singapore for trade or to seek better living conditions. According to the most recent Singapore census of population (Leow, 2001), the population of Singapore has grown to 4 million in 2000, with the following ethnic components: 76.8% Chinese, 13.9% Malay, 7.9% Indian, and 1.4% 'others' including Eurasians and Arabs.

Within the last three decades, Singapore has grown into a thriving business and financial center in South East Asia. Singapore is cited in The World Economic Forum's World Competitiveness Report and the US-based Business Environment Risk Intelligence (BERI) as one of the best places in the world to do business (Haley 1998). It has also been ranked by the World Economic Forum (WEF) as the world's most competitive country in 1999 (ahead of the U.S. and Hong Kong) and the world's second freest economy (after Hong Kong). Additionally, Singapore citizens enjoy the highest average regional income (higher than the UK's $25,000).
2.3 The Socio-linguistic Context of Singapore

After the independence of Singapore, the PAP government granted official language status to English and three major ethnic languages: Mandarin, Malay and Tamil. English was also chosen to be the administrative language for government and commerce in Singapore because of its wide usage in international trade and the colonial history of Singapore. Malay was chosen to be the national language for historical reasons, performing more of a ceremonial than functional role.

Traditionally, in Singapore, most of the ethnic Chinese speak one or more of the following Chinese dialects: Hokkien, Teochew, Cantonese, Hananese, Hakka, Foochow and Mandarin. The ethnic Malays speak one or more of the following languages: Malay, Javanese and Boyanese. The ethnic Indians speak a variety of languages: Tamil, Malayalam, Telugu, Punjabi, Hindi, Bengali and Gujarati.

In the past three decades, “Singapore has been undergoing massive language shifts” (Baetens Beardsmore, 1998:85), which indicates that the linguistic profiles of the different ethnic groups in Singapore have also changed. In the following subsections, I will first discuss these language shifts and changes that have taken place in the socio-linguistic context of Singapore. I will then examine the underlying forces that have caused these changes.
2.3.1 Language Shifts in Singapore

According to Baetens Beardsmore (1998:85), in the past two to three decades, Singapore has experienced a primary language shift away from a multiplicity of languages toward the predominance of English as the major language of inter-ethnic communication. Parallel to the primary language shift toward English, there is a secondary language shift, which is away from different Chinese dialects towards Mandarin, especially among the Chinese population. The two language shifts are observable in the statistics on the language profiles of Singaporeans generated by the three major Singapore censuses of population in 1980, 1990 and 2000.

For better illustration, four pie-charts are provided on the next page according to the statistics presented in the Singapore Census of Population 1990 (Lau, 1993) and 2000 (Leow, 2001). Figure 2.1 and Figure 2.2 respectively show the proportions of the major languages spoken in Singapore as the predominant household languages in 1980 and 1990. These major languages include English, Malay, Tamil, Mandarin, Chinese dialects and Other Languages. According to the census in 1990, the predominant household language refers to the language or dialect spoken by the majority of members to related family members. Figure 2.3 and Figure 2.4 respectively demonstrate the proportions of the above-mentioned major languages spoken in Singapore as the most frequently spoken languages at home. According to the census in 2000, the most frequently spoken language refers to the language a person uses most frequently at home.
Figure 2.1 Proportion of Different languages as Predominant Household Language 1980

Year 1980 PHL

- Malay: 14%
- Mandarin: 10%
- English: 12%
- Tamil: 3%
- Dialect: 59%
- Others: 2%

Figure 2.2 Proportion of Different languages as Predominant Household Language 1990

Year 1990 PHL

- Mandarin: 24%
- English: 21%
- Dialect: 37%
- Tamil: 1%
- Others: 1%

Figure 2.3 Proportion of Different languages as the Most Frequently Spoken Language at Home 1990

Year 1990 MFL

- Mandarin: 39%
- Dialect: 24%
- English: 19%
- Malay: 14%
- Tamil: 3%
- Others: 1%

Figure 2.4 Proportion of Different languages as the Most Frequently Spoken Language at Home 2000

Year 2000 MFL

- Mandarin: 35%
- Dialect: 24%
- English: 23%
- Tamil: 3%
- Others: 1%
- Malay: 14%
The reason I have included two charts for the year 1990 is due to the fact that the census in 2000 only provides the statistics on the most frequently spoken language at home. For comparison purposes, I have therefore drawn two charts for the statistical data for the year 1990, one on the proportions of the different languages as the predominant household languages, the other on the proportions of the different languages as the most frequently spoken languages at home. As seen on page 12, these two charts look similar. This is predictable, as the two types of statistics reflect the same linguistic profile of Singaporeans in the year 1990.

In comparing the four pie-charts on the last page, it is clearly seen that minimum changes have taken place in the proportions of the ethnic languages spoken by the minority groups at home, such as Malay, Tamil and other languages, which have remained almost constant at 14%, 3% percent and 2% to 1% respectively. However, major changes have taken place in the proportions of English, Mandarin and Chinese dialects spoken at home either as the predominant household language or the most frequently spoken language at home.

From the four pie-charts on page 12, it can be seen that the percentage of English used as the predominant household language has grown from 12% in 1980 to 21% in 1990. The proportion of English spoken most frequently at home has increased from 19% in 1990 to 23% in 2000. The 2000 census of population further shows that the increase of English usage at home spreads over all ethnic groups in Singapore. To be more specific, from the year 1990 to the year 2000, the proportion speaking most frequently in English
at home has increased from 19 percent to 24 percent among the Chinese, from 6.1 percent to 7.9 percent among the Malays and from 32 percent to 36 percent among the Indians.

In addition, the 2000 population census shows that the increase of English usage at home is greater among the younger, the more educated and the better off Singaporeans. For example, according to the 2000 census, among the Chinese resident population, the percentage of children aged 5-14 speaking English as their principal home language has risen from 23 percent in 1990 to 36 percent in 2000; the percentage of young people aged 15-24 speaking English as their principal home language has increased from 20 percent in 1990 to 22 percent in 2000; among the Indians, English has become the home language spoken by almost half of the Indian children aged 5-14 years and 38 percent of the young people aged 15-24; among the Malays, the increase in usage of English as a principal language at home between 1990 and 2000 is the largest, from 7 percent to 11 percent, among the young working adults of ages 25 to 39 years.

English has not only become popular with the young, it has also been associated with the better educated and better off Singaporeans. According to the 2000 Census report, among the university graduates, 47 percent of the Chinese, 38 percent of the Malays, and 43 percent of the Indians speak English most frequently at home. In comparison, English is used by less than 10 percent of those with no qualifications for all the three main ethnic groups. The 2000 Census further indicates a positive correlation between socio-economic status and the use of English at home, with higher usage of English among occupants of the larger types of housing.
Apart from the increased usage of English as a home language, the pie-charts on page 12 also indicate a continuous increase in the proportion of Mandarin spoken at home. To be specific, the percentage of Mandarin used as the predominant household language has grown from 10% in 1980 to 24% in 1990, and the proportion of Mandarin spoken most frequently at home has increased from 24% in 1990 to 35% in 2000.

In comparison to the increased use of Mandarin, a sharp decrease in the percentage of Chinese dialects spoken at home can be observed in the four pie-charts on page 12, which is from 59% in 1980 to 37% in 1990, as the predominant household language, and from 39% in 1990 to 24% in 2000, as the most frequently language spoken at home. Among the Chinese population, the percentage of Chinese dialects used as the predominant household language has dropped sharply from 76.2% in 1980 to 48.2% in 1990, and the proportion of Chinese dialects spoken most frequently at home has decreased from 50.3% in 1990 to 30.7% in 2000.

To conclude the above discussion of the changes that have taken place in the socio-linguistic context of Singapore, it seems that within the last three decades, both English and Mandarin have increased in their usage in Singapore homes whereas the use of Chinese dialects have decreased tremendously among the Chinese population. Furthermore, in addition to its status as the language for government and commerce, in the past three decades, English has also grown to be the lingua franca for inter-ethnic group communication (Gupta, 2001). The association of English with the better educated
and the economically better off Singaporeans indicates that English has become a language of prestige.

To understand the reasons for the changes that have taken place in the sociolinguistic context of Singapore in the past three decades, it is necessary to examine the key language policy, the bilingual policy, which the PAP has adopted since 1966 until now, and the Speak Mandarin Campaign started in 1979, which is still held on an annual basis in Singapore.

2.3.2 The Bilingual Policy

The PAP government inherited from the British colonial authorities a segregated educational system with different language medium schools such as English medium schools, Chinese medium schools also called Chinese schools, Malay and Tamil medium schools. These different medium schools served mainly the purposes of their respective ethnic groups (Doraisamy, 1969). This segregated system of education has caused divisions and ethnic cleavages in the society. For the purposes of social cohesiveness and racial harmony, acting on the recommendations of the 1956 All Party Committee Report, the PAP government adopted a language policy of equal treatment for English, Chinese (Mandarin), Malay and Tamil. This policy allowed all four languages to be designated as official languages and taught in the schools. Bilingualism and trilingualism were set as targets for primary and secondary school children, respectively. That is, all students in the
Asian-language-medium would learn English as their second language, and all those in English-medium schools would learn the language associated with their ethnicity (Mandarin, Tamil, Mandarin), also called the “Mother Tongue”, as a second language. The choice of medium of instruction was subject-bound: In primary schools, Mathematics and Science were taught in respective mother tongues and all technical subjects in secondary schools were to be taught in English; and Civics was to be taught in the Asian languages in the English-medium schools.

In 1978, the twenty years (1958-1978) of bilingual and trilingual education was reviewed by a committee led by the then Deputy Prime Minister, Goh Keng Swee, resulting in the Report on the Ministry of Education 1978, generally known as the Goh Report 1979 (Goh et al., 1979). The Goh Report produced two major findings. Firstly, the bilingual policy had been ineffective. The committee found that more than 60 percent of the pupils who sat for the Primary School Leaving Examination (PSLE) (Primary Six) and GCE “O” level examinations (Secondary Four) had failed in both languages in their written and comprehension skills. The Goh committee pointed out the main reason for the failure of the bilingual policy: too much was being demanded from too many in terms of language competence. Furthermore, the committee identified the use of dialects in the home as being the key obstacle to the success of the bilingual policy. They explained that “the majority of the pupils are taught in two languages, English and Mandarin,” and “about 85 percent of these pupils do not speak these languages at home. When they are home, they speak dialects. As a result, most of what they have learned in school is not reinforced” (Goh et al., 1979:4). The second major finding of the Goh Report was that,
due to the large-scale movement to education in English, the traditional values were being lost among the students in Singapore.

In responding to the Goh Report 1979, the PAP government revised the bilingual policy and introduced major structural changes in the school system. The new goals for bilingual education were: to produce school leavers who are at least literate in one language if they cannot cope with two languages; to produce a majority of average and above average school-leavers who offer English as "first" language and Mandarin as "second" language in the examinations; to provide for the ablest who will do two "first" languages and possibly a third (foreign) language such as German, French or Japanese.

To comply with the new goals in language education, different streams were created at the primary and secondary levels. Pupils from Primary 4 onwards were to be allocated to "normal", "extended" and "monolingual" streams on the basis of their performance in the Primary 3 streaming examination in which both the first and second language carried double weightage. In 1991, the streaming was delayed until the end of Primary 4 instead of Primary 3 and another three different language streams were created EM1 (English and Mother Tongue at first language level), EM2 (Mother Tongue at the second language level), and EMO (oral Mother Tongue). At the secondary level, "special", "express" and "normal" streams were created for students who performed differently in the Primary School Leaving Examination. This new system will be described in more detail in the next section of this chapter.
With the new changes in the bilingual policy and the education system following the Goh Report 1979, bilingualism in Singapore has gradually been transformed into "English-knowing bilingualism" (Pakir, 1992:235), which is different from the classical view of bilingualism as the practice of alternately using two languages or more and the persons involved in doing so, as bilingual (see Weinreich, 1953:5). Just as Tay (1984:176) pointed out, a bilingual person in Singapore, is regarded as one who is “proficient in English and one other official language”. In 1986, the former Minister of Education, Tony Tan Keng Yam explained succinctly the English-knowing bilingual policy in the following words,

Our policy on bilingualism - that each child should learn English and his mother-tongue- I regard as a fundamental feature of our education system. Children must learn English so that they will have a window to the knowledge, technology and expertise of the modern world. They must know their mother-tongue to enable them to understand what makes us what we are today.

(Tan, 1986)

Implied in the above statement is the Singapore government’s view of the different polarized functions of English and mother tongues in Singapore society. According to Bokhorst-Heng (1999), the Singapore government aimed to make English play its role at three levels. First, at the national level, the Singapore government believed that English could help its people get access to the most advanced technology in the world and attract international investment, which would bring about the economic success of a small country like Singapore with limited natural resources. Second, at the community level, English, with no ethnic roots in Singapore, could provide a common ground for inter-ethnic communication. Third, at the individual level, since all members
of society would have access to English, equal opportunities for success would therefore be provided for people of all ethnic groups.

With the important roles given to English in Singapore, the Singapore government was apprehensive about the prospect that Singapore may become a pseudo-Western society with the increased influence of western culture, as Singaporeans meet western businessmen and tourists, read English-language publications, and watch English-language television programs. As the Singapore government believed maintaining the distinctiveness and identity of Singapore as an Asian society would help Singapore "endure as a nation" (Lee, The Straits Times 21 January 1999), to counteract westernization as a result of wide usage of English, the government of Singapore hoped mother tongues would play the functional role of keeping the younger Singaporeans anchored in their traditional cultures and values.

The above views on the polarized functions of English and mother tongues in Singapore are clearly reflected in the ministerial statement of Deputy Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loon in 1999 on the essence of the bilingual policy:

The Government's long-standing policy on bilingualism and learning of mother tongues in schools remains unchanged. English is and will remain our common working language. It is the language of global business, commerce and technology. But the mother tongue gives us a crucial part of our values, roots and identity. It gives us direct access to our cultural heritage, and a world-view that complements the perspective of the English-speaking world. It provides us the ballast to face adversity and challenges with fortitude, and a sense of quiet confidence about our place in the world. Maintaining our distinctiveness and identity as Asian society will help us to endure as a nation. This applies to all ethnic groups.

(The Straits Times 21 January 1999)
The implementation of the English-knowing bilingual policy helped to raise the status of English in the past three decades, as discussed in the last section of this chapter. It has also lead to a unified national education system with English finally replacing all other ethnic languages to be the only medium of instruction in Singapore schools.

From 1950s, more parents were sending their children to English medium schools as they believed an English education would give their children better career prospects (Goh et al., 1979). Furthermore, as PuruShotam (1987:98) noted, English-knowing bilingualism actually made Chinese-medium and other mother tongue-medium education redundant. “Why send your child to Chinese-medium education when the time table of an English-medium school ensured exposure to Chinese for up to forty percent of the time a child spent in school? ”, PuruShotam (1987:98) queried. Parents thus had much to gain and nothing to lose in sending their children to English-medium schools. A 1978 survey by The Straits Times revealed that, as long as there were economic advantages to English proficiency, parents would continue to choose English medium schools over Asian-medium ones (The Straits Times, 5 May 1978). As the popularity of the English-medium schools grew, enrolment at other medium schools dropped significantly. By 1976, no pupils enrolled in Primary One in Malay-medium classes; by 1982, no pupils enrolled in Primary One in Tamil-medium classes. The percentage of pupils registering for Primary One in Chinese-medium schools had also dropped from 46 percent of the total Primary One enrolment in 1959 to 0.7 percent in 1984. Noting that less than one percent of those eligible for starting primary schooling had enrolled in non-English medium classes, in December 1983, the Ministry of Education of Singapore announced that all pupils would
be taught English as their first language from 1987. Therefore, in 1987, at the primary and secondary level, a unified national education system with English as the medium of instruction finally replaced the multi-language streams of education. At the tertiary level, in 1979, English became the main medium of instruction in pre-university classes for the non-English stream. In 1978 and 1979, the Joint Campus scheme was introduced in the then University of Singapore and Nanyang University. Courses common to the two universities were conducted only at the University of Singapore’s Bukit Timah Campus, aiming to help the students of the then Nanyang University, then the only other university in the country and one which offered instruction in Mandarin to study in an English-speaking environment. In 1980, the two universities were merged to form the National University of Singapore. By 1980, all the tertiary institutions in Singapore offered instruction only in English.

To conclude, the implementation of the English-knowing bilingual policy in many ways elevated the status of English and made it into a language not only for government and commerce but also for education. The successful implementation of this policy explains the major language shift from a multiplicity of languages towards the predominance of English as the major language for inter-ethnic communication in Singapore. To understand the secondary language shift, which is from the Chinese dialects towards the predominance of Mandarin among the Chinese population, as discussed in the previous subsection, it is necessary to examine the annually held “Speak Mandarin Campaign” in Singapore.
2.3.3 The Speak Mandarin Campaign

On 7 September 1979, the then Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew launched a "Promote the Use of Mandarin Campaign" (now popularly referred to as "The Speak Mandarin Campaign"). This campaign has been held annually until today to encourage Chinese Singaporeans to speak more Mandarin than Chinese dialects. Bokhorst-Heng (1999) pointed out three reasons the government put forward in support of the "The Speak Mandarin Campaign". First, the educational reason, encouraging the speaking of Mandarin instead of Chinese dialects would reduce the linguistic burden of Chinese dialect-speaking children who had to learn English and Mandarin which they did not use at home. Second, the cultural reasons, the dominance of English created the threat of deculturalization and Western decadence especially among the majority Chinese Singaporeans, who "do not have such uniting factors as a common language and religion" (Ow Chin Hock, *The Straits Times* 16 Oct 1990) and therefore needed to be re-ethnicised through Mandarin, which would then provide them a cultural ballast. And through this re-ethnicisation, they would also be united and formed into one Chinese community. Finally, the communicative reason, Mandarin was neutral to all dialect groups and more suited to be the *lingua franca* for Chinese Singaporeans than English. Lai (1995) offered a fourth reason for the campaign, which was to placate those who were unhappy with the decline of Chinese language and culture due to the increasing use of English.

In its twenty-three years of history, the Speak Mandarin Campaign has targeted different groups of Chinese Singaporeans such as hawkers, public transport workers,
white-collar workers and senior executives. During its first 10 years, the central theme of the Speak Mandarin Campaign was “more Mandarin” and “less dialects”. In the second 13 years, the central message of the Speak Mandarin Campaign to Chinese Singaporeans has been that speaking Mandarin in place of dialects helps them better to understand and appreciate their culture and heritage. This central message is reflected in many of the launching speeches of the Speak Mandarin Campaign in the past few years. For example, in the 1998 launching speech of the campaign (Yeo, 2000) the then Information and Arts Minister George Yeo Yong-Bong stated:

The use of Mandarin will help us preserve and develop our own cultural roots. Chinese Singaporeans are the proud inheritors of 5,000 years of Chinese civilization, the longest continuous civilization in human history. Chinese culture and the Chinese language give us a sense of who we are, where we came from and what we can be. This is crucial as it is easy for the young to be overwhelmed by the culture of Hollywood, so pervasive the areas of information, education and entertainment today. The culture of a people gives its members internal strength. Without that internal strength, we will not be able to survive disasters, political turmoil and war.

The Speak Mandarin Campaign for the past twenty years has achieved great success. This is reflected in the secondary language shift that has taken place in Singapore for the past three decades, which is the shift away from Chinese dialects to Mandarin.

To conclude, in this part of the chapter, I have introduced the socio-linguistic context of Singapore by examining the changes and underlying reasons for these changes in the socio-linguistic context of Singapore. An understanding of this context will help us to understand the thinking of Chinese language teachers in this study, who are first of all
language teachers in Singapore. In the next part, I will provide the educational context of Singapore in which the Chinese teaches in this study work.

2.4 The Educational Context of Singapore

After the independence of Singapore in 1965, the ruling PAP government faced the twin challenges of uniting a segregated society and building up a vibrant economy. In a small country with few natural resources, the PAP government understood the importance of developing human resources through education. Therefore, from the founding of the country, the PAP government oriented education first of all for nation building and secondly for economic development (Gopinathan, 1997).

2.4.1 Education for Nation Building

As mentioned earlier, the British colonial authorities left Singapore with a segregated educational system with different medium schools. This segregated system of education has caused many social divisions and ethnic cleavages. To build up a socially cohesive society with people of robust sense of nationhood, the PAP government saw the need to establish a unified national education system and instill shared values among students in the schools.
With the implementation of the English-knowing bilingual policy, as discussed earlier, the national education system in which only English is the medium of education came in form in 1987. In the next subsection, I will describe this national education system with some of its characteristics.

2.4.1.1 The National Education System

As Figure 2.5 on the next page shows, a student can go through four levels of education in the Singapore national education system: primary education, secondary education, post-secondary education and university education. In the following sections, I will describe in more detail these four levels of education.

Primary Education

As indicated in Figure 2.5, primary education in Singapore consists of two stages. The first stage is known as the foundation stage, which includes the years from Primary 1 to Primary 4. The second stage is the orientation stage covering the next two years of primary education from Primary 5 to Primary 6. The foundation stage aims to provide students with a firm foundation in English, the Mother Tongue and mathematics. Students also learn subjects such as Music, Art & Crafts, Civics and Moral Education, Health Education, Social Studies and Physical Education. In the orientation stage, students are prepared for the secondary education.
Figure 2.5  the National Education System of Singapore (http://www1.moe.edu.sg/)

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In between the two stages of primary education, at the end of year 4, students have to take an important streaming examination, which assesses them in English, the Mother Tongue and mathematics. According to this assessment, students will be allocated to three types of classes in the following two years of primary education, namely EM1, EM2, and EM3. The best students are assigned to the EM1 classes. They have a choice to learn Higher Malay/Chinese/Tamil, that is, their Mother Tongues at a higher level. The majority of students are sent to the EM2 classes. They only learn their Mother Tongues at the second language level. The weaker students study in the EM3 classes. They learn all subjects at a lower level and are expected to gain oral/aural proficiency in English and the Mother Tongues.

The second certification examination for primary school students is the Primary School Leaving Examination (PSLE) taken at the end of Primary 6. This examination tests students’ ability in English, Mother Tongue, Mathematics and Science. Based on the results of this examination, students will be admitted to different courses in secondary schools, which allow them to study at different paces.

Secondary Education

Three different types of courses are offered in secondary schools in Singapore. They are the Special, the Express and the Normal courses, as indicated in Figure 2.5. Students of both the Special Course and the Express Course complete their secondary education within four years and sit for the GCE 'O' level examination at the end of their
fourth year. The Special Course differs from the Express Course in that, students of this course study their Mother Tongues at a higher level and sit for Higher Chinese, Higher Malay or Higher Tamil in the GCE ‘O’ level examination. The Special Course is a very prestigious course, which is offered to the top 10 percent of the PLSE passes.

As Figure 2.5 on page 27 shows, the other course offered in the secondary schools is the Normal Course, which is designed for students who are unable to meet the demands of the other two courses. There are two syllabuses for this course: the Normal Academic and the Normal Technical. The Normal Technical syllabus differs from the Normal Academic syllabus in that it prepares students mainly to enter technical institutions or join the working force after secondary school. The students in the Normal Course sit for the General Certificate of Examination (GCE ‘N’ level) at the end of the fourth year. After the GCE ‘N’ level examination, the more capable students can choose to study for another year and sit for the GCE ‘O’ level examination at the end of the fifth year.

Post-secondary Education

As indicated in Figure 2.5, upon completion of their GCE ‘O’ level examinations, students can apply for entry to a junior college for a two-year pre-university course, or a centralized institute for a three-year pre-university course. Admission is based on a points system computed from the aggregate of the student's GCE ‘O’ level result. Students have to score a minimum of C6 for the English language paper and D7 for the Mother
Tongue paper of the GCE ‘O’ level examination to be admitted to the junior colleges. Students studying in the junior colleges and pre-university centers sit for the GCE ‘A’ level examination at the end of their courses.

After the GCE ‘O’ level examinations, as shown in Figure 2.5, those who have passed can also choose to study in the polytechnics. The minimum requirement of the English language GCE ‘O’ level examination score for admission to the polytechnics is C6. There is no minimum requirement of the Mother Tongue GCE ‘O’ level examination score for admission into the polytechnics. In other words, students can fail their Mother Tongue and still go to polytechnics. Students studying in the polytechnics will graduate with professional diplomas after three years. Most students seek employment after graduation from polytechnics and some may move on to a degree course at a local or foreign tertiary institution.

As Figure 2.5 on page 27 shows, those who have passed the GCE ‘N’ level examination will either go to the Institute of Technical Education (ITE) or start their apprenticeship before employment.

University Education

Students who have completed their GCE ‘A’ level examination compete for limited places in three local universities: The National University of Singapore, the Nanyang Technological University, and Singapore Management University. Students
have to score a minimum of C6 for the English language paper and D7 for the Mother Tongue paper of the GCE ‘A’ level examination to be admitted to the two local universities. Students can be admitted on a provisional basis if they fail to score D7 in the Mother Tongue, provided they pass a proficiency test in their Mother Tongue before they graduate from the university.

To move up each of the four educational levels as described above in the current national education system in Singapore, performance in examinations seems to be the key factor in deciding the quality of education a student may receive in the next level. Examination performance has not only been used to measure academic success of individual students but also used to measure the success of teachers and schools. For example, every year, *The Straits Times*, the local newspaper, produces two special supplementary editions ranking all primary schools, secondary schools and junior colleges mainly based on students’ examination results. This ranking then serves as a reference for parents and students when they make school applications. The importance given to examinations in the Singapore education system helps to create an “examination culture” in the Singapore society (Cheah, 1998), and reflects the belief of the Singapore government in meritocracy. As the Deputy Prime Minister Lee Hsien Long (2000) pointes out, meritocracy underpins the entire Singapore system, as a meritocracy system assures people of all ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds equal opportunities for advancement. In other words, the government of Singapore aims to ensure that merit and performance rather than ethnic identification and family backgrounds will become the criteria for social mobility.
As examinations have such an important role in the Singapore education system, it is interesting to point out, for the purpose of this study, that the requirement of Mother Tongue examination scores for the entrance of post-secondary and tertiary levels of education is lower than that for English. This suggests that English is more important than Mother Tongues in the examination system.

Apart from establishing a national education system to promote social cohesiveness in a multi-racial and multi-cultural society, as Tan (1997:93) pointed out, for the purpose of nation building, the Singapore government has also used moral education in schools to instill shared values among the young, with the purpose of "preserving a cultural and national identity against the perceived erosion of Asian roots by Western education and forging together the four major racial and cultural communities which at various stages had threatened to polarize". In the next subsection, I will discuss in detail the role of moral education in schools for the purpose of nation building in Singapore.

2.4.1.2 Moral Education

The strategy of the Singapore government to attach great value to the English language in government, business and education has helped Singapore gain a leading edge over other competitors in the access to the most advanced modern technology. This has eventually made Singapore one of the most important international finance and trade
centers in Asia. However the rapid industrialization of the country and the English medium education has subjected Singaporeans, especially the younger generation, to the influence of materialism and western culture and values. As Tai (1980:26) reported, Singapore youth has become “self-centered, materialistic, impersonal, apolitical” and considers education, money and occupation as the three most important symbols of success in life. Similarly, in a more recent study on Singapore youth values, Soh (1990:9) has found that students today seem to value a comfortable life, pleasure, an exciting life, freedom and social recognition. These values do not seem to reflect the traditional Asian values such as collectivism, interdependence, compassion, modesty and humility, control of emotion, and cultivation of morality.

The Singapore government has noted the change of values among young Singaporeans. In his opening address to parliament in 1990, the former President of Singapore Wee Kim Wee pointed out, “attitudes and outlooks of Singaporeans, especially younger Singaporeans have shifted. Traditional Asian values of morality, duty and society which have sustained and guided us in the past are giving way to a more Westernized, individualistic, self-centered outlook on life” (Wee, 1990).

Knowing that westernization can hardly be avoided in the process of rapid modernization and in an English-speaking environment, and realizing the danger of losing one's traditional culture, as the Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew in 1978 (Lee, 1978) pointed out in his National Day Rally speech:
A person who gets deculturalized - and I nearly was, so I know this danger - loses his self-confidence. He suffers from a sense of deprivation. For optimum performance a man must know himself and the world. He must know where he stands. I may speak the English language better than the Chinese language because I learnt English early in life. But I will never be an Englishman in a thousand generations and I have not got the Western value system inside; mine is an Eastern value system. Nevertheless I use Western concepts, Western words because I understand them. But I also have a different system in my mind.

The government of Singapore saw the value of moral education in promoting the "Eastern value system" among young Singaporeans. From the 1960s, several moral education syllabuses were introduced in the school curriculum. "Education for Living" was the first of these syllabuses, which was suffused with values like filial piety, social and individual discipline, concern for family, neighborhood and nation. The Mother Tongues were recommended for the teaching of this syllabus, which marked the beginning of an attempt to link the Mother Tongue with ethnic cultural identity by the Singapore government. Later, "Education for Living" was replaced by "Good Citizen" at primary level and "Being and Becoming" at the lower secondary level and a range of Religious Knowledge options, such as "Bible Knowledge", "Islamic Religious Knowledge", "Buddhist Studies", "Hindu Studies", "Sikh Studies", and including a much-promoted "Confucian Ethics" course at the upper secondary level (Tham, 1980; Gopinathan, 1988; Eng, 1992). At the end of the 1980s, the Religious Knowledge options were replaced by the "Civics and Moral Education" syllabus on the grounds that a secular state should not be seen as promoting religion. In addition to the "Civics and Moral Education" syllabus, in May 1997, the Ministry of Education launched "National Education" in schools, which aimed to instill the following five core values among the younger generation:
(1) Nation before community and society above self
(2) Family as the basic unit of society
(3) Community support and respect for the individual
(4) Consensus not conflict
(5) Racial and religious harmony

The importance of moral education in the Singapore education system is clearly reflected in the expected educational outcomes listed by Ministry of Education on its website (http://www1.moe.edu.sg/). As the list shows, the first outcome of education for primary school students is to “be able to distinguish right from wrong”; for secondary school students, is to “have moral integrity”; and for post-secondary and tertiary students, is to “be morally upright, and be culturally rooted”.

To sum up, the establishment of a unified national education system as a result of the implementation of the English-knowing bilingual policy and the promotion of shared values through moral education in schools, has helped the Singapore government enhance social cohesiveness in a previously segregated society.

In the above sub-section, I have discussed the pivotal role education has played in nation building. In the next sub-section, I will discuss the role education has played in the economic growth of Singapore.
The sudden decision of Britain to withdraw its military forces from Singapore in the late 1960s undermined an economy which had survived and indeed prospered as part of the British trading and military empire. To build up a strong economy in a small country with limited natural resources, the PAP government singled out industrialization as the basis of an economic strategy for modernization (Gopinathan (1997:38). With few natural resources, the Singapore government recognized the importance of a literate and technically trained workforce in an industrial economy. In order to build up this workforce, the Singapore government transformed education toward a technical orientation.

In 1968, a national-level council, the National Industrial Training Council was formed, which led to the establishment of a Technical Education Department within the Ministry of Education, overseeing technical education for Singapore as a whole. Since the establishment of this new department in the Ministry of Education, the school curriculum in Singapore has seen a shift from an academic focus to a technical focus, which aimed to make schooling more economically relevant. Greater stress has been placed on science, mathematics, technical studies and, for the less able, vocational studies. Since the 1960s, at the secondary and post secondary levels, many vocational schools and polytechnics have been set up. At the tertiary level, a Faculty of Engineering was created at the University of Singapore in 1969. In the early 1980s, additional educational programs were introduced for the training of the workforce, which included The Basic
Education for Skills Training (BEST), the Modular Skills Training (MOST) scheme and the Worker Improvement Secondary Education (WISE) program. As a result of the efforts made by the Singapore government to promote technical education in the schools, between 1970 and 1980 enrollment in technical and vocational institutes rose by 280%; between 1981 and 1991, it increased from 9% to 24% for polytechnics and from 6% to 21% for vocational institutes (Gopinathan, 1997). With the rapid development of information technology, in recent years, the Ministry of Education of Singapore has invested heavily in building up school computer laboratories, and training teachers and students to be computer literate.

The emphasis given to technical education in Singapore has helped to build up a strong technical workforce, which has played a major role in transforming Singapore into a thriving and prosperous economy. However, this emphasis on technical education may also create a culture that favors the learning of science subjects over human arts subjects among students in Singapore.

To conclude, the above discussion of the educational context in Singapore shows that education in Singapore has served both the purposes of nation building and economic development in Singapore. An understanding of the roles of education in Singapore will help the reader understand my discussion of Chinese teacher thinking in Singapore in the following chapters.
2.5 History of Chinese Teaching in Singapore

The teaching of Chinese language in Singapore started as soon as the early Chinese immigrants who mainly came from the southern part of China settled down on the island. In the beginning, dialects were the medium of instruction and textbooks were written in classical Chinese. The medium of instruction changed to Mandarin after 1917 when Mandarin became the national language of the Republic of China and textbooks written in colloquial Chinese replaced the Chinese classics following China's similar change after the May Fourth Movement in 1919. The teaching of Chinese temporarily disappeared during the Japanese occupation from 1941 to 1945, but reappeared as the main medium of instruction in the Chinese medium schools that sprang up the island after the Japanese occupation. After the independence of Singapore, as English replaced all other languages to become the medium of instruction in all schools, Chinese is taught as a Mother Tongue, mainly at the second language level with the majority EM2 Chinese ethnic students in primary schools and Express and Normal stream of students in secondary schools, and at the first language level with the elite EM1 primary students and the Special stream of secondary students.

In the earlier years of Chinese teaching in Singapore, the teaching method was based on reading aloud and rote learning (Wang 1970:24). Since the launching of the new English Language Syllabus in 1991, Chinese teachers as well as English and other language teachers are encouraged to conduct more learner-centered classroom activities in which all four language skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing, are integrated.
How much the new teaching approach has been actually carried out in the classrooms of Chinese teachers remains to be found out by future research.

2.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have focused on the introduction of the historical, demographic background of Singapore, its socio-linguistic and educational context. Due to limits of space of this thesis, I have reserved the discussion of the cultural aspect of the context for Chinese teacher thinking for Chapter 6, in which I tried to interpret findings on Chinese teacher thinking in this study. In the next chapter, I will review research literature on teacher thinking to develop a theoretical framework for the current study.
CHAPTER 3 LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to review research literature that has contributed to the development of the conceptual framework of this study. There are three parts in this chapter. The first part introduces the background of teacher thinking research to help readers understand the rationale for my research on teacher thinking. The second part reviews the two theoretical perspectives that have guided research on teacher thinking: the cognitive and the socio-cultural perspective. The third part examines research on teacher thinking that has produced findings relevant to the four areas of teacher thinking on which this study focuses.

3.2 Background of Teacher Thinking Research

Research on teachers and teaching has gone through several paradigmatic shifts in its history. These shifts often correspond to the different ways teaching has been viewed. Influenced by the behavioral view of teaching, which regards teaching as doing things, as behaviors and actions that lead to others’ learning, earlier research on teachers and teaching focuses primarily on the relationship between teachers’ classroom behavior,
students' classroom behavior, and student achievement. This body of research (see, for example, Brophy & Good, 1974; Flanders, 1970; Doyle, 1977; Dunkin & Biddle, 1974), often known as process-product research, assumes that teachers' classroom behavior (processes) influences students' classroom behavior, which ultimately affects students' achievement (products). In the process-product research, large numbers of teacher behaviors, which correlated with student outcomes, were identified and later used as reference by policy makers and practitioners for the enhancement of teacher effectiveness.

In the 1970s, researchers studying teachers and teaching became aware of the limitations of the process-product research, which did not seem to reflect the complexities of the classroom with its ever-changing events (Berliner, 1979). The dissatisfaction with the narrow focus of process-production research and the publication of some detailed ethnographic studies of classrooms in the late 1960s, such as Life in Classrooms (Jackson, 1968) and The Complexities of an Urban Classroom (Smith and Geoffrey, 1968), drew researchers' attention to the complex demands of the teaching role and the important contributions of teachers' own understandings of their work. The development of the cognitive view of teaching and the appearance of the qualitative and interpretive research tools further helped to shape a new direction of research on teachers and teaching, which started to examine a "teacher's subjective school-related knowledge which determines for the most part what happens in the classroom" (Halkes and Olsen, 1984:1). The research of this new direction is also known as the research on teacher thinking.
In comparison to the process-product research, which often examines the work of teachers based on the presumptions of the researchers, the research on teacher thinking explores how teachers understand their own work and therefore allows the “voices” of teachers to be heard.

In the above section, I have tried to provide the background of research on teacher thinking. In the following section, I will examine the two theoretical perspectives researchers have taken to explore teacher thinking.

### 3.3 Two Theoretical Perspectives

Two theoretical perspectives have been predominant in the research on teacher thinking for the past three decades. They are the cognitive and socio-cultural perspectives. Until the 1990s, most of the research on teacher thinking had taken the cognitive perspective, which explores teacher thinking without much consideration given to the socio-cultural context in which teacher thinking takes place. Since the 1990s, a limited amount of research has been carried out to examine the influence of socio-cultural context on teacher thinking. In the following sections, I will review these two theoretical perspectives on teacher thinking and the research that has been carried out.
3.3.1 The Cognitive Perspective

The cognitive perspective has dominated research on teacher thinking for more than two decades. According to Olson (1988), the research on teacher thinking that has followed a cognitive perspective includes two main streams: the psychological and the epistemological stream. The psychological stream of research occurred earlier than the epistemological stream and had its focus on the information processing of teachers. The epistemological stream of research moved further from the study of teacher information processing to the examination of teacher knowledge base. The following section of this chapter will review these two streams of research respectively, giving more attention to the epistemological stream of research, which has had a major influence on the current research.

3.3.1.1 The Psychological Stream

The early research on teacher thinking followed a psychological stream, which, as pointed out by Olson (1988), has focused on how teachers process information. In other words, the psychological stream of research conceptualizes teacher thinking as information processing, which includes pre-active, interactive and post-active phases. Researchers of this stream have explored teachers’ planning (for example, Clark and Yinger, 1979; Morine-Dershimer, 1977; McCutcheon, 1980) and teachers’ interactive thoughts and decisions (for example, Peterson et al., 1978; Conners, 1978).
Although the research into teachers' thought processes opened up inquiry into cognition of teachers, as Shulman (1986a) noted, this research tradition has closely resembled process-product research in its search for predictors of teaching effectiveness. For example, some investigators have treated the characteristics of experts' thinking as criteria for judging teaching effectiveness. Another criticism of this type of research is that the focus has been on cognitive processes, rather than on the more general knowledge, which guides the practice of teaching in complex classroom situations (Borko et al., 1988; Clark & Peterson, 1986; Marland & Osborne, 1990).

### 3.3.1.2 The Epistemological Stream

Since the 1980s, the epistemological stream of research has dominated the study of teacher thinking. Although both the psychological and the epistemological stream of research take a cognitive perspective toward teaching, the epistemological stream conceptualizes teacher thinking in terms of teacher knowledge, teacher implicit theories, and teacher beliefs, while the psychological stream sees teacher thinking as information processing or in terms of teacher planning and teacher decision making. The present study falls into the epistemological stream of research on teacher thinking, as it studies the implicit theories, beliefs, perceptions and metaphors of Chinese teachers. In the following sections, I will examine two important concepts: teacher knowledge and teacher beliefs, which have been the focus of study in most teacher thinking research of the epistemological stream, and are also the focus of the present study.
3.3.1.2.1 Teacher Knowledge

Influenced by theories of knowledge structure developed in cognitive psychology and artificial intelligence in the early 1980s, researchers explored teacher thinking by mapping and examining the knowledge base of teachers, which is believed to have guided teacher decision making and teaching behaviors in the classroom. The research on teacher knowledge can be generalized into three categories based on three different concepts of teacher knowledge: teacher subject knowledge, teacher craft knowledge and teacher personal practical knowledge. In the following sections, I will focus on examining these three concepts and review briefly the three categories of research on teacher knowledge respectively.

Teacher Subject Knowledge

One group of researchers represented by Shulman (1986a) took a particular interest in the domains of subject knowledge of teachers. Shulman (1986a, b) classified three types of subject knowledge teachers have: subject matter content knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, and curricular knowledge. According to Shulman (1986b: 9), subject matter content knowledge refers to the knowledge teachers have of the subject of a specific domain. Pedagogical content knowledge includes “the ways of representing and formulating the subject that make it comprehensible to others”, and “an understanding of what makes the learning of specific topics easy or difficult; the conceptions and preconceptions that students of different ages and backgrounds bring
with them to the learning of those most frequently taught topics and lessons”. Curricular knowledge refers to teachers’ familiarity of how knowledge is organized and presented in instructional materials. Examples of the assimilation of Shulman’s idea are found in the work of Peterson et al. (1989); Wolfe & Murray (1990); McDiarmid et al. (1989); Grossman (1987, 1989); Ormrod & Cole (1996) and Askew et al. (1997).

Following Shulman’s classification, Grossman (1988), in a study of high school English teachers, developed an expanded definition of pedagogical content knowledge, which she divided into four categories: conceptions of purposes for teaching subject matter, knowledge of students’ understanding (including common misconceptions and difficulties), curricular knowledge, and knowledge of instructional strategies. Silberstein & Tamir (1991), in their expert case study model, employed a notion of three areas of teacher knowledge: subject matter knowledge; general pedagogical knowledge; and content-specific pedagogical knowledge. Marks (1990) divided the pedagogical knowledge into four major areas: subject matter for instructional purposes; students’ understanding of the subject matter; media for instruction in the subject matter (that is, texts and materials); and instructional processes for the subject matter. According to Marks, these areas seemed to be highly integrated.

Many studies have found that teachers’ subject matter knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge both affect classroom practice and are modified and influenced by practice (for example, Wilson et al., 1987; Peterson et al., 1989; Wilson, 1989; Smith & Neale, 1989; Grossman, 1989; Roth, 1989; Hauslein & Good, 1989; Rovegno, 1992). The
disciplines in which teachers' subject matter knowledge was studied include mathematics (Lampert 1986), English (Grossman 1987), language (Freeman 1991), history (Wilson & Wineburg 1988), and social studies (Cornett, 1990; Gudmundsdottir & Shulman, 1989).

Although Shulman and his colleagues have emphasized the significance and complexity of teachers' subject knowledge, some researchers especially those who adopt a constructivist conception of teaching and learning have criticized Shulman's model of subject matter knowledge as basically a transmissive one (for example, Sockett 1987). Other researchers such as McNamara (1991) and Bennett & Turner-Bisset (1993) doubted whether or not it is possible in practice to make a clear distinction between subject matter knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge. McEwan & Bull (1991) argued that Shulman's distinction between content knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge is not justifiable; they state that all knowledge is pedagogical in varying ways.

Teacher Craft Knowledge

While Shulman and his colleagues concentrated on the structure and content of the subject matter knowledge of teachers, influenced by Schon's seminal work on the reflective practitioner (Schon 1983, 1987), another group of researchers focused on the practical nature of teacher knowledge. They explored the knowledge that teachers acquire within their own classroom practice, that is, the knowledge that enables them to employ the strategies, tactics, and routines that they do. Schon (1983) conceptualized this knowledge as "knowing-in-action" to highlight its dynamic nature. Brown and McIntyre
(1993:19) used the term “craft knowledge” to refer to “the professional knowledge which is not generally made explicit by teachers and which teachers are not likely always to be conscious of using”. Leinhardt (1990:18) stated that “expert teachers possess a practical knowledge of their craft, which is sometimes called the wisdom of practice”. As wisdom is normally gained through years of practice, the differences in the thinking and performance of novice and experienced teachers became the focus of most studies of teachers’ craft knowledge (see, for example Berliner, 1988; Housner and Griffey 1985; Genberg, 1992).

Teacher Personal Practical Knowledge

Whereas the researchers in the work described above focused on the practical nature of teacher knowledge, some other researchers (see for example, Elbaz, 1983; Schwab, 1971; Berliner, 1988; Kagan and Tippins, 1992; Clandinin, 1986; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1990) highlighted the personal nature of teacher knowledge. Their work is often known as research on teachers’ personal practical knowledge. They pointed out the strong influence of teachers’ personalities, their past experiences and their views of teaching on their practices. For instance, in a case study of a secondary school English teacher, Elbaz (1983) examined how the teacher’s own implicit theories about children and English influenced how she saw her own work.

Doubting the assumption that teachers’ knowledge is propositional and capable of being articulated, several researchers believe teachers’ knowledge may be better
represented in terms of metaphors (for example, Munby, 1986; Bullough, 1991; Grant, 1992; Korthagen, 1993; Cortazzi and Jin, 1999; Marchant, 1992; Block, 1992; Oxford et al. 1998), images (for example, Clandinin & Connelly, 1987; Johnston, 1992; Calderhead and Robson, 1991) and narratives (for example Cortazzi, 1991; Nias, 1989; Wasley, 1994).

In the proposal for the use of metaphors in the thinking about teacher knowledge, Connelly et al. (1997:671) pointed out that “metaphors give imaginative expression to personal practical knowledge making it possible for a person to explore hidden intellectual avenues contained in a metaphor’s frame”. Munby (1986:198) found metaphors powerful tools to discover “something about teachers’ beliefs or knowledge from the perspective of the teachers themselves”. According to Bullough (1992:240), “the identification and analysis of metaphors is a promising avenue for uncovering and then exploring assumptions about teaching and learning”. Cortazzi and Jin (1999:156) saw “metaphor activity as a bridge to talking meaningfully about practice, to understanding practice, and crucially, as part of practice itself”. In their research on some ESL (English as Second Language) teachers, Guerrero & Villamil (2000:348) noted that “ESL teaching is a complex profession that seems to be best captured by multiple metaphorical conceptions”.

The above review of some of the literature on teacher knowledge shows that one group of researchers have studied teacher thinking by exploring the nature and structure of teacher knowledge and its influences on teacher practice. The concepts this group of
researchers developed such as teachers' subject knowledge, teachers' craft knowledge and teachers' personal practical knowledge have provided important ways to think about and discuss teacher thinking. In this study, I will study the knowledge of Chinese teachers in Singapore by examining their perceptions of the purposes for teaching Chinese, their perceptions of student learning and the metaphors they use.

Apart from the concept of teacher knowledge, researchers have also used the concept of teacher beliefs to explore teacher thinking. In the following section, I will first examine the concept of teacher beliefs and then provide some of the typologies of teacher beliefs used in the literature on teacher thinking.

3.3.1.2.2 Teacher Beliefs

For much of the research on teacher thinking no clear distinctions are made between teacher knowledge and beliefs (for example, Fenstermacher, 1994; Alexander et al., 1991; Kagan, 1990). As Nisbett and Ross (1980:28) suggested, the rich store of knowledge that helps people understand their world and its flow of events was sometimes organized in schematic, cognitive structures while other times this knowledge was represented as beliefs or theories, or "reasonably explicit 'propositions' about the characteristics of objects or object classes". Garner and Alexander (1994) noted that the lack of distinction was attributable, in part, to the fact that few studies had investigated teachers' conceptualizations of these terms. Even the few studies carried out to investigate teachers and students' conceptualization of knowledge and beliefs (for...
example, Alexander & Dochy, 1995; Alexander et al. 1996, 1998) showed that teachers often seem to define knowledge and beliefs as overlapping constructs.

The few researchers that have attempted to point out the differences between knowledge and beliefs often find it hard to make such distinctions. For example, Pajares (1992) contends that belief is based on evaluation and judgment whereas knowledge is based on objective fact. Pajares (1992:310), however, questions whether knowledge can be separated from beliefs asking “what truth, what knowledge, can exist in the absence of judgement or evaluation?” Nespor (1987) seemed to be less doubtful of the distinction between the two concepts and suggested knowledge and beliefs should be distinguished along four dimensions: presumption of existence, ideal or alternative state, affective or evaluative loading, and episodic structure. The following section describes the meaning of teacher beliefs according to Nespor (1987) and another researcher, Calderhead (1996).

**The Concept of Teacher Beliefs**

Beliefs, according to Nespor (1987), assert the existence or nonexistence of things. A part of belief is a view of an ideal or alternative state that contrasts with current reality. Beliefs are also associated with affective and evaluative components – for example, feelings of what is and what should be. Finally, beliefs are often connected with particular well-remembered episodes or events. Agreeing with the contention that knowledge and beliefs are not always easily distinguishable, Calderhead (1996:715) suggested that “beliefs generally refer to suppositions, commitments, and ideologies,
[whereas] knowledge is often taken to refer to factual propositions and the understandings that inform skillful action”.

Due to the difficulties in making a distinction between the two concepts of teacher knowledge and teacher beliefs, as discussed above, this study will not distinguish the two concepts. However, for the purpose of discussion, in the following section, I will briefly list some typologies of teacher beliefs in the literature.

**Typology of Teacher Beliefs**

Calderhead (1996) has identified five main areas in which teachers have been found to hold significant beliefs: beliefs about learners and learning, beliefs about teaching, beliefs about subject, beliefs about learning to teach, beliefs about self and the teaching role. The present study has followed this typology of teacher beliefs and focused on the study of Singapore Chinese teachers' beliefs about teaching, learning, students and self as a Chinese teacher.

Choosing not to distinguish teacher knowledge and teacher beliefs, Borko & Putnam (1996) classified three domains of teachers' knowledge and beliefs: general pedagogical knowledge and beliefs, subject matter knowledge and beliefs, and pedagogical content knowledge and beliefs.
Clark & Peterson (1986) suggested two types of teacher theories and beliefs: teachers' theories and beliefs about students and teachers' implicit theories of teaching and learning.

In the above two sections, Section 3.3.1.2.1 and Section 3.3.1.2.2, I have examined two important concepts: teacher knowledge and teacher beliefs, which have been the focus of study in the epistemological stream of research on teacher thinking, and which are the focus of study in the present research.

In the whole of Section 3.3.1, I have provided an overview of research on teacher thinking that has taken a cognitive perspective. I have particularly focused on examining the different conceptions of teacher thinking which range from teacher decision making to teacher knowledge and teacher beliefs. Furthermore, concerning teacher knowledge and teacher beliefs, different typologies of these two concepts have also been developed. The multiple conceptions of teacher thinking reviewed so far suggest the complexity of teacher thinking and contribute to the conceptualization of teacher thinking in this current research. That is, within this study, teacher thinking will be studied in terms of teacher beliefs, perceptions, and teacher metaphors which have been studied as teacher personal practical knowledge.

Although teacher thinking research of the cognitive perspective has helped to explain “why teachers do what they do”, it failed to further illustrate “why teachers think what they think”. To understand why teachers think the way they do, researchers have
suggested looking into the socio-cultural context within which they believe teacher thinking is developed.

For example, after studying the perspectives of 14 teachers, Massey and Chamberlin (1990:133) inferred the evolution of teacher thinking from its socio-cultural context stating: “The tacit and unreflective nature of these perspectives seemed to be rooted in early learning in home, school, church and community, and later initial teaching experiences in schools”. Elbaz (1990:18) acknowledged culture as underlying teacher thinking in these statements: “This [concern for teachers’ voice] has generated efforts to present the teacher’s knowledge in its own terms as it is embedded in the teachers’ and school culture … the teacher’s voice must speak from an embeddedness with the culture of the particular school, school system, and society the teacher lives and works in”.

Olson (1988:67) further pointed out the social and cultural nature of teacher thinking when he stated that teacher thinking was “not personal, but interpersonal; public not private” and “what teachers tell us about their practice is, most fundamentally, a reflection of their culture, and cannot be properly understood without reference to that culture” (Olson 1988:69). O’Loughlin (1989) also argued that teacher beliefs about knowing, teaching, learning, and teaching practice were socially constructed and arose out of social interactions. It is therefore difficult to understand teacher thinking without considering the social context in which teacher beliefs are constructed.
The social and cultural nature of teacher thinking, which has been observed by Olson (1988) and O'Loughlin (1989), is clearly reflected in the conflicts that have been experienced by teachers and students from different cultures working together (Orton, 1990; Hofstede, 1986, 1991; Phillipson, 1992; Sampson, 1984; Holliday, 1994; Widdowson, 1993). For example, there has been wide report over the frustrations of both expatriate teachers and Chinese students in China in the English language teaching field. On the one hand, Chinese learners in China often perceive the teaching methods of their Western teachers as unsuitable to their needs (Grabe & Mahon, 1981; Burnaby & Sun, 1989; Yu, 1984; Wan, 1997; Cortazzi & Jin, 1996). Chinese teachers have often responded to Western methodology with a lack of comprehension, reluctance, skepticism or even resistance (Grabe & Mahon, 1981; Oatey, 1990; Morrison, 1989; McIlwraith, 1996; Zhang, 1995; Cortazzi & Jin, 1996; Wan, 1997). In the study of Sun (1990:79), Chinese teachers mentioned that expatriate teachers' teaching practices are "interesting, vivid and varied in form" but are not suitable to the needs of the students who often complain that "we learned nothing [and it is] but a waste of time". On the other hand, expatriate teachers in China as reported in Morrison (1989) complained that, the gift of new EFL methodology borne to China by foreign experts was not appreciated by Chinese learners, teachers and administrators.

Although the above-mentioned researchers have recognized the influence of the socio-cultural context on teacher thinking, all of them failed to explore further the actual ways the socio-cultural context influences teacher thinking. Rios (1996:7) pointed out this lack of research on the relationship between teacher thinking and its context in the
following statements “For the most part, what is missing in the research base on teacher cognition is the connection between teacher thinking and issues raised by our expanding interest in questions of diversity. Thus, when teacher thinking is made explicit, the context in which this thinking exists is usually not the subject of specific discussion”.

More recently, influenced by developments in cognitive anthropology and cultural studies, a few researchers have considered the socio-cultural nature of teacher thinking and attempted to relate teacher thinking to its socio-cultural contexts. Though limited in number, this group of researchers helped to establish a second perspective in teacher thinking research: the socio-cultural perspective.

3.3.2 The Socio-cultural Perspective

Researchers of the socio-cultural perspective have used “cultural myths” (Tobin & McRobbie 1996) and “cultural models” (Hamilton 1993; Clarke 2000) to explore teacher thinking and its relationship to the socio-cultural context.

Concurring with Barthes (1985), Tobin and McRobbie (1996:225) stated that “all actions are inextricably embedded in a culture in which experience and meanings are constrained by pervasive myths”. They clarified the meaning of myths by pointing out that “the meaning given to myths is not an idea that is wrong, but a belief that is referent for intuitive actions in given social settings”. Following Britzman (1991), Tobin and
McRobbie called these myths "cultural myths" and claimed that these cultural myths provide a set of ideals against which individuals could measure their thought and practice. In their study of a 20-year veteran teacher and 15 grade 11 students of his chemistry class in Australia through classroom observations, interviews and a survey, Tobin and McRobbie (1996) identified four cultural myths that had emerged from the narratives of Mr. Jacobs, the teacher and his students: the transmission myth; the myth of efficiency, the myth of rigor and the myth of preparing students for examinations. In their conclusions, Tobin and McRobbie noted asymmetrical relations of power that were evident in the different spheres Mr. Jacobs discharged his professional actions. In interactions with students, Mr. Jacobs constructed himself as having great power, whereas in changing curriculum, Mr. Jacob perceived his role was inscribed in such a way as to possess little power in relation to external agencies. Tobin and McRobbie (1996:238) therefore claimed that the personal constructions of self by Mr. Jacobs were "constrained by the social inscriptions of roles" and the personal constructions existed in a dialectical relationship with social constructions. Despite the fact that Tobin and McRobbie (1996) have associated socio-cultural factors with teacher thinking, they have failed to elaborate on the socio-cultural context and the actual ways it has influenced the formation of the cultural myths that have emerged from their studies. Furthermore, apart from drawing attention and curiosity, using the term "culture myths" to describe the influence on teacher thinking may indicate the lack of depth in locating the socio-cultural factors which have influenced the thinking of the teacher they have studied.
Hamilton (1993) is another researcher who has explored the cultural influence on teacher thinking. She conducted a case study of teacher beliefs in one Midwestern school through analyzing cultural models of teachers. Hamilton used the widely accepted definition of “cultural models” suggested by Quinn and Holland (1987:4): “Cultural models are presupposed, taken-for-granted models of the world that are widely shared by members of a society and that play an enormous role in the understanding of that world and their behavior in it”. In her study, Hamilton (1993:87) aimed “to identify the effects of cultural knowledge on teachers’ professional knowledge and professional practice”. The result of Hamilton’s study indicates that the culture of the teacher and the culture of the teachers’ work place do affect teachers’ beliefs. For example, a cultural model of the school, which Hamilton investigated, is “work hard to achieve rewards”. This cultural model manifests itself in all aspects of a teacher’s life, in their talk, in their practice and in their thinking about themselves, about their colleagues and students. Hamilton therefore proves the point that teachers’ thinking and practice is inseparable from the socio-culture context they are working in. The limitation of Hamilton’s study however, is that her study of the culture of teachers has been restricted to the school level. She ignored the socio-cultural factors at the society level.

Bodycott (1997) conducted another study that explores teacher thinking and its social cultural context. Through repertory grid analysis, Bodycott explored the subjective educational ideologies of 12 trainee Malay, Tamil and Chinese language teachers in Singapore, and reached the conclusion that the subjective educational ideologies of trainees had developed from exposure to formal and informal educative contexts and
elements. Bodycott failed to examine in depth the features of the socio-cultural context of Singapore and its influence over the education ideologies of trainees.

One recent study that has examined in more detail how the shared social cultural meanings influenced the individual teachers, was carried out by Clarke (2000). Clarke explored the cultural models of teacher thinking and teaching in Bangalore, South India by examining a sample of 24 teachers through interviews and observations. From Clarke's data, three broad areas of explicit cultural models of pedagogy have emerged. These areas concerned the instructional goals, the communication of knowledge and teacher-student interaction. From these explicit cultural models, Clarke further generated the implicit cultural models of teacher thinking in Bangalore such as acceptance of regulation; instruction as duty; and knowledge as static. In discussing these implicit models, Clarke pointed out the relationship between these implicit cultural models of with regard to teaching and the broader framework of meaning present in the culture. For example, in the discussion of the cultural model of acceptance of regulation by the syllabus and by school authorities, Clarke (2000:161) attributed the readiness of teachers in their acceptance of the regulations to the cultural phenomenon of "holism or intersubjective sharing that is characteristic of Indian society". Similarly, the implicit model of conceiving the task of instruction as a duty to be performed is also associated with one characteristic of the Indian society, which is the "duty-based code of living" (Shweder 1991), with its origin from Hinduism. Clarke (2000:158) concluded that "to a large extent, the implicit models that teachers hold are not just idiosyncratic and personal
but rather that these models are embedded in the broader social and cultural environment in which the teachers live”.

The studies discussed above are a few attempts that have been made to explore the influence of the socio-cultural context on teacher thinking. Although these studies have recognized the influence of shared social and cultural meanings on teacher thinking, they have not examined in depth how these social and cultural meanings influence the ways teachers think. Furthermore, the scale of these studies is limited as they explored either a small number of teachers or studied the socio-cultural contexts at the school level. To further the body of teacher thinking research from the socio-cultural perspective, in this study, I will examine the thinking of a completely different group of teachers and in a totally different socio-cultural context at a larger scale. Furthermore, I will use a multi-method research approach, which has not been used in these previous studies reviewed above.

Due to the limitation of space in a thesis, only four areas of teacher thinking will be studied from a socio-cultural perspective in this study. The following section will review teacher thinking research that has produced results in these four areas of teacher thinking in order to provide some background for the current research.
3.4 Findings of Research on Teacher Thinking

As mentioned earlier, the present study does not make a conceptual difference between teacher knowledge and beliefs. The following review of the literature therefore combines a review of literature on teacher knowledge and teacher beliefs including teacher metaphors. As the present study focuses on discovering Singapore Chinese teachers’ knowledge and beliefs about teaching, learning, learners and self as teachers, the review of the previous research in these four areas of teacher thinking will therefore follow four sub-headings:

(1) Teacher knowledge and beliefs about teaching;
(2) Teacher knowledge and beliefs about learning;
(3) Teacher knowledge and beliefs about learners; and
(4) Teacher knowledge and beliefs about self as teachers.

3.4.1 Teacher Knowledge & Beliefs about Teaching

Research has found teachers to hold varying beliefs about the nature and purposes of teaching. According to Calderhead (1996), four views of teaching have been prominent in teachers’ beliefs. Some teachers have perceived the nature of teaching as knowledge transmission, others as facilitation of learners’ learning. Some have viewed the purpose of teaching in terms of developing social relationship and a classroom community; others have seen them in more academic terms.
A large amount of research on teacher beliefs has been done on pre-service teachers. Hoy & Murphy (2001) summarized seven characteristics of prospective teachers’ beliefs of the nature of teaching based on research in this area (for example Blumenfeld, 1994; Brookhart and Freeman 1992; Hollingworth, 1989; Kagan & Tippins, 1992; Strauss, 1993; Weinstein et al., 1994): teaching is telling; teaching is covering the material; teaching is performing; teaching is directing; teaching is engaging students; teaching is nurturing; teaching is interpersonal.

Cortazzi and Jin (1999:163) summarized a list of conceptual metaphors about teaching from 140 British postgraduate students undertaking primary teacher training. These metaphors include: TEACHING IS A JOURNEY, TEACHING IS FOOD/DRINK/COOKING, TEACHING IS PLANT GROWTH AND CULTIVATION, TEACHING IS A SKILL, TEACHING IS AN OCCUPATION (OTHER THAN TEACHING), TEACHING IS ENTERTAINMENT, TEACHING IS SEARCHING FOR TREASURE, TEACHING IS FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS, TEACHING IS WAR and TEACHING IS CONSTRUCTION/(PART OF) A BUILDING.

The above brief review shows that research on teacher knowledge and beliefs about teaching has discovered the different views of teaching a teacher may hold. However, it did not explore from where these views arise.

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1 As a normal practice in metaphor analysis, the conceptual metaphors are capitalized.
3.4.2 Teacher Knowledge and Beliefs about Learning

Teachers' knowledge and beliefs about how learners learn are a critical component of teachers' pedagogical knowledge. As pointed out by Hoy & Murphy (2001), much of the research on teachers' beliefs about learning focuses on the active view of learning and passive view of learning. Teachers who hold the passive view of learning believe that students learn in a passive manner by responding to stimulants external to them. In contrast, teachers who adopt the active view believe that learners are active producers of their own knowledge.

Some studies on prospective teachers' beliefs about learning have shown that pre-service teachers often hold the passive view of learning (for example, Strauss, 1993; Strauss & Shilony, 1994). For example, Holt-Reynolds (1992) discovered through interviews with nine prospective teachers in a content area reading course that these prospective teachers rejected the student-centered, process-focused approach to classroom teaching introduced by the professor. Similarly, in Hollingsworth's (1989) study, half of the 14 participants entered the teacher training program believing that student learning was accomplished primarily through teacher-directed instruction, with little active student involvement. Researchers such as Hollingsworth (1989), Bird (1991), Ammon (1991), Levin & Ammon (1992) however, noticed that prospective teachers could change their views of learning from the behaviorist and teacher-centered view toward a more constructivist, student-centered view of learning as a consequence of the teacher training program.
Apart from research done on novice teachers, many studies on experienced teachers also show that teachers hold different notions of learning and they tend to teach in different ways according to these different beliefs. For example, Peterson et al. (1989) discovered that mathematics teachers with a more cognitive perspective on children’s learning used more work problems than teachers with a less cognitive perspective.

Research on teacher beliefs has also discovered metaphors teachers use to express their view of learning. Munby (1986), for example, reported one of the earlier empirical studies done to explore teachers’ metaphors on learning. In this study, five experienced junior high school teachers’ metaphors for teaching were examined based on stimulated recall interviews and repertory grid interviews. Munby employed computer analysis to identify metaphors in the interview transcripts of one teacher, Alice. Throughout Alice’s speech Munby (1986:203) found fragments which suggested movement such as “keep it somehow moving smoothly”, “we were slow at getting started today”, “it went real well”, and “when I keep it going”. Everything about the class and the lesson appeared to be in motion, that is, the teacher, the students, and the subject matter. Munby therefore generalized the conceptual metaphor of LESSON AS MOVING OBJECT, which he believed Alice use to construct her reality. In a separate study, Munby (1987) again found the LESSON AS MOVING OBJECT from another teacher, but this time coupled with another metaphor, LEARNING AS A CONDUIT FOR COMMUNICATION. This particular metaphor depicted information as a commodity and communication of information works by transferring the commodity form one person to another. In this
metaphor the mind functioned as a container to be filled. That is, the teacher had the necessary information and he/she filled the mind of the student.

Cortazzi and Jin (1999) have also discovered teachers' conceptual metaphors with regard to learning after examining 128 experienced UK primary teachers' oral narrative accounts. Cortazzi and Jin (1999:159) found such conceptual metaphors as follows: “LEARNING IS A CLICK: it just clicked together; it’s clicked in his mind, he has clicked; it all clicked straight away; the words clicking and the number clicking; LEARNING IS LIGHT: the light dawns; he’s seen the light; the light in his eyes; her face lit up; a spark; this sort of flash going straight through; LEARNING IS MOVEMENT; it’s come; he came on; she came from nothing...”. Cortazzi and Jin (1999:160) pointed out that “considering that these kinds of narratives are often exchanged among teachers in school staff rooms, the metaphors seem to have the status of being key elements of a folk theory of learning”. In their conclusions, Cortazzi and Jin (1999:174) further noted that the metaphors generated from these teachers’ narratives also served as “bridges between teachers too” as they were shared by teachers in their staff-room conversations. These metaphors “may thus represent a mutual striving to explain the mystery of why and how children learn”.

Again, the above review of teachers’ knowledge and beliefs about learning failed to explain where these different views of learning came from.
3.4.3 Teacher Knowledge and Beliefs about Students

Much of the research on teacher attributions and expectations has shown that teachers often have different expectations and beliefs about students, which influence their classroom interaction patterns with and actions toward students. For example, teachers tend to respond with sympathy when they assume that student failure is attributable to forces beyond control, but with anger and punishments when they perceive that student failure is attributable to a controllable factor such as lack of effort (Stipek, 1996). Teachers are also found to group students for instruction based on their expectations of student ability. Teachers often ask the students of whom they have higher expectations, more and harder questions, and give them more chances and a longer time to respond, and interrupt them less often, than students whom they have lower expectations (Allington, 1980; Good & Brophy, 1997; Rosenthal, 1994). Teachers tend to be more encouraging toward those students for whom they have high expectations. They are observed to smile more often and demonstrate their warmth toward these students by leaning toward the students and nodding their heads as the students speak (Woolfolk & Brooks, 1983, 1985).

Research on teacher beliefs has also discovered metaphors that reveal teachers’ perception of students. For example, Block (1992) found interviewees in his study used the metaphor THE LEARNER IS AN ACTIVE CLIENT to express their perception of the active role learners should play in learning.
The above brief review of teachers' beliefs and perceptions of students shows
the lack of further examination of why teachers perceive their students the way they do.

3.4.4 Teacher Knowledge and Beliefs about Self

A number of researchers have studied teacher beliefs about their roles as teachers
by examining teachers' metaphors. For example, Marchant (1992) analyzed both
experienced and pre-service teachers' personal metaphors on a large scale using
statistical analysis. The research instrument he used included open-ended statements
such as "A teacher is like a ......; A student is like a......; A classroom is like ......" which aimed to elicit responses from 104 undergraduate students who were in teacher
preparation programs and 102 experienced teachers enrolled in master programs, on a
four-point Likert-type scale . His analysis yielded eight generic metaphors (he calls them
similes): TEACHER AS AUTHORITY: judge, police officer, prison warden; AS
CAREGIVER: parent, doctor; AS DIRECTOR: movie director, orchestra conductor; AS
CAPTIVE: prisoner; AS PARTY HOST; AS PERSON ON TRIAL: in a courtroom,
waiting for the verdict of the jury; AS REFEREE; and AS AGENT OF CHANGE:
advocate of change.

Block (1992) investigated the metaphors of 14 EFL teachers in Spain in
collection with those of 22 learners. In his interviews with teachers, Block identified
metaphors of the teacher such as TEACHER IS A CONTRACTED PROFESSIONAL
and TEACHER IS A SUPPORTIVE PARENT. Block further noted that while teachers
used metaphors similar to those that had appeared in applied linguistics literature, a gap existed between teachers’ and learners’ visions of roles of teachers and learners in the language classroom.

In a more recent study, Guerrero & Villamil (2000) studied twenty-two experienced ESL teachers in Puerto Rico and identified 9 key metaphors used by teachers to describe their roles: TEACHER AS COOPERATIVE LEADER, PROVIDER OF KNOWLEDGE, CHALLENGER/AGENT OF CHANGE, NURTURER, INNOVATOR, PROVIDER OF TOOLS, ARTIST, REPAIRER and GYM INSTRUCTOR.

Oxford et al. (1998) tried to group the metaphors they collected from personal narratives about teachers written by students, former students and teachers by four different perspectives on (language) education: Social Order, Cultural Transmission, Learner-Centered Growth and Social Reform. Metaphors generated in the Social Order perspective include TEACHER AS MANUFACTURER, COMPETITOR, HANGING JUDGE and DOCTOR; Metaphors that occurred in the Cultural Transmission perspective include TEACHER AS CONDUIT and REPEATER; Metaphors discovered in the Learner-Centred Growth perspective are TEACHER AS NURTURER, LOVER OR SPOUSE, SCAFFOLDER, ENTERTAINER and DELEGATOR; Metaphors found in the Social Reform perspective are TEACHER AS ACCEPTOR and LEARNING PARTNER.

The above review of previous research on teachers’ beliefs about themselves mainly concern the role of the teacher in relation to the student. These studies have
ignored teachers’ perceptions of their social self, which is reflected in their perception of their social roles and social status.

After reviewing research on teacher knowledge and beliefs mainly in the western context, in the next sub-section, I will look into research that examined teacher knowledge and beliefs in the Chinese context.

3.4.5 Teacher Knowledge and Beliefs in Chinese Context

With regard to teaching, research carried out in Chinese societies such as China, Hong Kong and Singapore (e.g. Jin & Cortazzi, 1998; Biggs & Watkins, 1993, Gao & Watkins 2002) suggests a transmission model of teaching, in which knowledge is transferred from the teacher, who is regarded as the source of knowledge, to the student, who is seen as the recipient of knowledge. Teachers in the Chinese societies were also found to regard helping students pass public examinations as one of the most important aims of teaching (e.g. Morris, 1985; Gao, 1996; Biggs, 1991, Cheah 1998). Another feature of Chinese teachers’ knowledge and beliefs of teaching lie in their preoccupation with the teaching of the text (Wang, 2001; Carless, 1999; Ng, 1994).

Concerning the view of learning, research conducted in Chinese societies revealed that teachers in these societies tend to regard effort and attitude instead of ability of students as the key factor that contributes to the success of learning (e.g. Biggs, 1996; Hau and Salili, 1991; Chan, 1992; Wang, 2001; Cortazzi and Jin, 1996).
Regarding Chinese teachers' perception of students and themselves, previous research found teachers in the Chinese societies see the relationship between teachers and students as hierarchical: the teacher as the superior providing knowledge, guidance and care to the student, and the student as the inferior showing respect and obedience to the teacher (e.g. Ho & Crookall, 1995; Scollon and Schollon, 1994; Cortazzi & Jin, 1999).

To sum up, the above review of research findings on teacher thinking has shown that although researchers have discovered teacher knowledge and beliefs about teaching, learning, students and teachers, they have not examined how this knowledge and these beliefs are developed from the socio-cultural context.

3.5 Conclusions

The review of research literature on teacher thinking in this chapter has shown that most of the research carried out on teacher thinking has followed the cognitive perspective of teacher thinking, which studies teacher information processing, teacher knowledge and beliefs including teacher metaphors in isolation of the socio-cultural context. Even the little research that has examined the influence of socio-cultural context on teacher thinking has been carried out on a small scale with limited consideration of the context at the society level. Thus the review of the research literature on teacher thinking in this chapter suggests the need for a more extensive and larger scale of study in the socio-cultural perspective of teacher thinking.
CHAPTER 4 RESEARCH METHODS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter reports on the research methodology this study has adopted in an attempt to answer the research questions set out in Chapter One. The first part of the chapter introduces the research design of this study, highlighting the benefits of a mixed-method approach of this study after reviewing research methods used previously in teacher thinking. The next three parts of the chapter respectively introduce the survey, the semi-structured interviews and the metaphor analysis methods. In each of these three parts, the rationales for choosing the research method, and the methods for data collection and analysis are introduced before a discussion of issues such as validity, reliability and ethics. The chapter ends with a summary of the research design.

4.2 Research Design

Generally speaking, two competing research paradigms have guided the design of educational research: positivism and interpretivism. The positivist research paradigm argues that the methods of the physical sciences are applicable to the social sciences, and that social science researchers can seek to find laws that govern social interactions,
similar to the way in which physical scientists can find laws governing physical phenomena. This belief is justified on the ontological grounds that reality is an external, independently existing frame of reference, quite separate from the observer of it. A social researcher is thus separate from the things being investigated and can therefore expect to conduct investigation without influencing the subject of the investigation (Smith, 1983; Welch, 1983). This positivist paradigm generally leads its followers to use quantitative research methods characterized by an objective approach to research, using neutral "scientific" language and attempting to ascertain absolute laws, causal relationships, facts and truths that govern the behavior of social systems.

The interpretivist paradigm, on the other hand, does not concern itself with the search for broadly applicable laws and rules, but rather seeks to produce descriptive analyses that emphasize deep, interpretive understandings of social phenomena. Ontologically, the interpretivist paradigm denies there is an objective reality independent of the frame of reference of the observer. Rather, reality is mind dependent and influenced by the process of observation. Further, as the social scientist is often studying the human mind-and using a human mind to do so-it is impossible in this context to completely separate the investigator from what is being investigated. The notion of the researcher being separate from the subject of the research is thus not compatible with this philosophy (Smith, 1983; Welch 1983). The interpretivist paradigm thus generally leads to the use of qualitative research methods that enable the researcher to gain a descriptive understanding of the values, actions and concerns of the subjects under study.
Historically, teacher thinking research has followed either positivism or interpretivism paradigms. That is, both quantitative and qualitative research methods have been used to “get inside teachers’ heads” (Feiman-Nemser and Floden, 1986:506) and make explicit the implicit knowledge, beliefs and perceptions of teachers.

As reviewed in the previous chapter, in the early stage of teacher thinking research, researchers have focused on the decision-making processes of teachers. Major research methods used to examine teacher decision-making processes include policy capturing (for example, Borko et al., 1979) and teacher commentaries such as think-aloud commentaries (for example, Yinger, 1980) and stimulated recall-commentaries (for example, Peterson & Clark, 1978).

The policy capturing method originates from laboratory psychology (for example, Hammond, 1971; Rappoport & Summers, 1973). It has been used to study teacher judgement and the factors that influence it. In a typical policy capturing study, a teacher is provided with a series of descriptions or vignettes of hypothetical teaching situations. These descriptions include all possible combinations of features of the subject of study and are systematically varied. The teacher is asked to make judgements or decisions about each description or vignette, usually on a Likert scale. These judgements are analysed to generate mathematical models that describe the relationship of teacher decisions and the features of objects being judged. The limitation of the policy capturing method lies in the relatively simple judgement situations and the limited number of features researchers can identify prior to the research.
Compared to the policy capturing method, teacher commentaries are less controlled by researchers and give teachers more freedom to comment on their work. For example, the thinking aloud technique allows teachers to verbalize all their thoughts while engaged in tasks such as lesson planning (for example, Peterson et al., 1978; Yinger, 1980) or making decisions about curriculum materials (for example, Yinger & Clark, 1982). The teachers’ verbalizations are recorded on audiotapes or sometimes on videotapes and later transcribed and analysed to find out the content and the sequences of cognitive processes teachers follow in their decision-making. The stimulated recall technique varies with the thinking aloud technique in that teachers comment on their teaching episode recorded earlier on a videotape or audiotape. Similar to the thinking aloud technique, teachers’ recall of their thought and decisions is taped and then transcribed and analysed. The teacher commentary techniques have been criticized by some researchers (for example, Calderhead, 1987; Yinger, 1986; Wubbels, 1992) for the potential compromise of reliability of the elicited reports they use when teachers make post hoc rationalizations for their behaviour and for the lack of adequacy of words representing thought.

As researchers shift their attention from the study of teacher decision-making processes to the study of teacher knowledge, teacher beliefs and teacher implicit theories, they tend to use such research methods as concept mapping, the repertory grid technique, ethnographical case studies and narratives.
The concept mapping research technique requires the teacher to brainstorm on a particular topic and produce a list of concepts. The teacher then needs to name the relationship between concepts. From this relationship, the researcher may identify the knowledge structures of the teacher. Although concept mapping has been found particularly useful in examining changes in teachers’ conceptions over time (for example, Morine-Dershimer, 1991; Morine-Dershimer et al., 1992), it is criticized for reducing teacher thinking to a set of propositional concepts and relations (Kagan, 1990).

Developed from Kelly’s (1955) personal construct theory, the repertory grid technique has been used to map out teachers’ understandings (Corporaal, 1991; Kompf, 1993; Pope and Keen, 1981; Bodycott, 1997). For example, Morine-Dershimer (1979) used the repertory grid technique to investigate teachers’ conceptions of their pupils. In this study, teachers were given three cards with names of three different children chosen randomly and asked to name the similarities and differences between two of the children. This procedure was repeated with other sets of cards until the same constructs began to be repeated and therefore identified as constructs for teachers’ conceptions. The repertory technique is relatively easy to use, but Calderhead (1987) argued that it imposed a simple bipolar structure on knowledge.

Ethnographical case studies using a variety of observational and interview procedures have been used in teacher thinking research over the past two decades to provide well-documented and insightful accounts of teachers’ thoughts and practice (Jackson, 1968; Lacey, 1977; Tabachnick & Zeichner, 1984; Leinhardt, 1988). The
drawbacks of the ethnographic methods are that they require analysis of large amounts of qualitative data and sometimes researchers’ own interpretations of the situation may be presented as the teachers’ understandings of the situation.

Narratives in the form of diaries (Tann, 1993), stories (Clandinin, 1986; Elbaz, 1983), or teachers’ life history accounts (Bullough et al., 1991) were used to describe teaching in teachers’ own words. This research method allows teachers to present their “voice”, which is often denied in social scientific research. Within teachers’ narratives, teachers’ beliefs or thinking about practice are sometimes presented in images or metaphors. These images and metaphors are sometimes seen as providing a better representation of teacher thinking (Clandinin, 1986).

In sum, the above brief review of different research methods used to explore teacher thinking shows that many techniques have been used to understand teacher knowledge, teacher beliefs and teacher conceptions. Most of the research on teacher thinking has adopted either quantitative methods or qualitative methods.

More recently, researchers have argued that a division of quantitative and qualitative approaches is not necessary. In fact, a combination of the two research approaches, that is, a mixed-method approach has great advantages. For example, Green et al. (1989) highlighted five major advantages of a mixed-method approach as follows: (1) Triangulation: Consistency of findings obtained through different instruments will increase the trustworthiness of the research findings; (2) Complementarity: The results of
one method can be clarified and illustrated by results generated from the use of another
method; (3) Development: The results from one method can shape subsequent methods or
steps in the research process; (3) Initiation: New research questions can be stimulated
from challenging results obtained through another method. (4) Expansion: It can provide
richness and detail to the study exploring specific features of each method. Other
researchers such as Creswell (1995:166,178) have described the mixed-method design as
representing “the highest degree of mixing paradigms” and using “the advantages of both
the qualitative and quantitative paradigms”. In a similar vein, sociologists Brewer and
Hunter (1989) have also suggested that a multi-method approach to research is superior
to mono-method research in that it provides grounds for triangulation.

In light of the above advantages, the present study has adopted a mixed-method
approach to research design utilizing the survey, the semi-structured interview and
metaphor analysis as the primary research methods. In the process of using these three
research methods, the survey, the semi-structured interviews and metaphor analysis were
conducted in a parallel manner. In other words, the survey questionnaire was
administered to respondents of 6 teacher-training classes at the beginning of their training
sessions within three semesters of one year, the interviews were conducted after each
training session, and the metaphors arose spontaneously from the classroom discussions
of the 6 teacher-training classes and from the survey and interview responses.

Each of the research methods chosen for this study has its advantages. The survey
method has the advantage of obtaining responses from a fairly large sample that can be
coded and statistically analyzed with the results being generalized to a wider population. The semi-structured interview method enables the researcher to gain insights into respondents' experiences, opinions, aspirations, attitudes and feelings and hear the "voices" of teachers. The metaphor analysis method provides a new way of understanding teacher thinking as "metaphors give imaginative expression to personal practical knowledge making it possible for a person to explore hidden intellectual avenues contained in a metaphor's frame" (Connelly et al., 1997: 671). In the following three sections, I will describe the use of these three research methods in this study respectively.

4.3 The Survey

In this section, I will first of all discuss the objectives of the survey. I will then introduce the sampling method of the survey and the profile of the teachers who have participated in the survey. The development and the piloting of the questionnaire will be discussed before the data collection and data analysis methods are introduced. In the final part of this section, the validity and reliability of the survey will be examined.

4.3.1 Objectives

This survey aims to find answers to the first four research questions asked at the beginning of the thesis. These four research questions are:
(1) What beliefs do Singapore Chinese teachers hold toward teaching?
(2) What beliefs do Singapore Chinese teachers have toward learning?
(3) How do Singapore Chinese teachers perceive students?
(4) How do Singapore Chinese teachers perceive themselves as Chinese teachers?

In answering the first research question, the survey focused on examining two areas of teachers’ beliefs about teaching. The first area is on teachers’ attitude toward the traditional approach to Chinese teaching, which is teacher-centered, text-based, and exam-oriented. The examination on whether Chinese teachers in Singapore still hold traditional views toward teaching may help to explain why these teachers are reluctant to adopt the innovative approaches to Chinese teaching, which is more student-centered and task based. The survey has further explored whether teaching level and years of teaching experience and gender of the teachers make any difference in teachers’ attitude toward the traditional approach to Chinese teaching. The second area of focus of the survey in finding out teachers’ beliefs about teaching is on the conception of Chinese teachers with regard to the aim of Chinese teaching. According to Shulman (1986a), teachers’ conception of the aim for teaching the subject is an important part of teacher subject knowledge.

In answering the second research question, which aims to discover Singapore Chinese teachers’ views of learning, the survey focuses on teachers’ views on the best ways to learn the language. In order to explore Singapore Chinese teachers’ perception of students, which the third research question aims to find answers to, the survey focuses on
examining teachers’ perception of the ideal students, the bad students and the current students they are teaching. In answering the fourth research question of this study, which is to examine Singapore Chinese teachers’ perception of themselves as Chinese teachers, the survey focuses on exploring Singapore Chinese teachers’ perception of their social role in Singapore and the rewards they get as Chinese teachers.

4.3.2 Sampling Method

Subjects are participants of six in-service teacher training courses for Chinese language teaching conducted by the Ministry of Education (MOE). Convenience sampling method is used in the survey as I am aware that MOE often makes an effort to ensure that teachers from different types of schools and backgrounds have equal opportunity to participate in teacher training courses. As seen in Table 4.1 in the next section, my sample is a fairly good representation of the research population, which is around 3000 Chinese teachers in Singapore.

4.3.3 Subjects

Subjects of the survey consist of 162 teachers from 53 different schools, teaching at primary (33%), secondary (31%) and junior college (JC) (36%) levels (see Table 4.1 and Figure 4.1). Among the subjects, 30% are male teachers and 70% are female teachers.
Table 4.1  
**Distribution of Teachers by Teaching Level, Gender**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Primary</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of Teachers</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total No. of Teachers</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>162</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4.1  
**Distribution of Teachers by Teaching Level**

Among the subjects, 27% have taught less than 10 years, 22% have taught 10 to 19 years, 30% have teaching experience of 20 to 29 years and 22% percent have taught 30 or more years (see Table 4.2 and Figure 4.2). The primary school teachers have taught on average for more years than the other two groups of teachers and the JC teachers seems to have taught fewer years.
Table 4.2
Distribution of Teachers by Years of Teaching

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years of Teaching</th>
<th>Primary</th>
<th>Secondary</th>
<th>Junior</th>
<th>College</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Below 10 years</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-19 years</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-29 years</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 and above years</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total: 53 50 59 162 100%

Figure 4.2
Distribution of Teachers by Years of Teaching

4.3.4 Research Instrument

The research instrument for the survey is a questionnaire (see Appendix I) that consists of three main sections. The first section collects descriptive information of the
subjects such as gender, school that the subject works in, level the subject teaches at and the numbers of years of teaching experience.

The second section of the questionnaire aims to find out the attitude of Singapore Chinese teachers toward the traditional approach to Chinese language teaching. Thirteen items of 4-point scale Likert-type of statements are included in this section to elicit responses of strongly agree (=4), agree (=3), disagree (=2) and strongly disagree (=1) from subjects. A mean equal to or above 2.5 is considered as an indication of agreement with the statement. The researcher chose the 4-point scale instead of a normal 5-point scale to encourage explicit indication of opinions. Subsequently, however, it was thought that a 5-point scale would have been better as it gives respondents the freedom to give a neutral response to the statement.

The third section of the questionnaire consists of 7 open-ended questions that aim to elicit teachers’ knowledge and beliefs about teaching, learning, students, and themselves as teachers.

4.3.4.1 Development of the Research Instrument

The 13 Likert-type scale statements in Section 2 of the questionnaire aim to elicit subjects’ responses toward a traditional approach to Chinese language teaching. The writing of these statements is based on the literature review of language teaching
approaches and my own knowledge and experience in Chinese language teaching and teacher training in Singapore. In Section 3, Question 1 attempts to elicit responses from teachers with regard to their beliefs about the aim of teaching; Question 2 aims to find out Singapore Chinese teachers' beliefs about the best way to learn Chinese; Question 3 to 5 seek to discover Singapore Chinese teachers' perception about ideal, bad and current students; Question 6 to 7 try to explore Singapore Chinese teachers' views of themselves as Chinese teachers by examining their perception of their social role and the rewards they receive as Chinese teachers.

4.4.4.2 Piloting the Research Instrument

The questionnaire was pre-tested on 32 in-service secondary school teachers who happened to be attending an in-service training course in early 1997. The reliability of the 13 items was computed based on the data collected in the pretest and an acceptable 0.63 alpha value was achieved. According to Oppenheim (1973), a reliability coefficient of 0.7 is significant and respectable and a slightly lower reliability coefficient than 0.7 may be tolerated in attitude questionnaires. As a result of this satisfactory test, no major changes to the items written were made except that I have reordered the 13 Likert-type statements in Section 2 of the questionnaire to discourage guesses from subjects about which factors the researcher is trying to get information about.
4.3.5 Data Collection

The questionnaire was administered over a year from July 1997 to June 1998 to teachers attending six different classes of in-service training courses organized by the Ministry of Education of Singapore for Chinese teachers. The researcher administered the questionnaire personally at the beginning of each training course. Each time before the respondents completed the questionnaire, the researcher explained the purpose of the survey and the way the questionnaire would be used in the future. Respondents were given free choice to remain anonymous and the right to withdraw from the survey at any stage of the survey. Out of 170 questionnaires issued, 162 valid questionnaires were returned.

4.3.6 Data Analysis

Analysis of the data collected in the questionnaire consists of two parts. The first part includes both descriptive and inferential statistical analysis of the responses to the 13 items of four-point scale statements. This was done with the aid of the statistical computer package SPSS (Version 10). This part of the analysis aims to find out the attitude of Singapore Chinese teachers toward the traditional approach to Chinese teaching and whether there are statistically significant differences in the attitudes of teachers of different teaching levels, teaching experiences and gender. The second part of analysis of the questionnaire is the content analysis of teachers' responses to the 7 open-ended questions. The content analysis was facilitated by the Longman Concordance.
computer program. Details of the different analyses conducted on the questionnaire data will be reported in the following sections.

### 4.3.6.1 Descriptive Statistical Analysis

The following four types of means and standard deviations were computed on the responses to the 13 Likert-type of statements in Section 2 of the questionnaire:

First of all, the means and standard deviations of the each of the 13 Likert-type statements were calculated. These means will indicate whether respondents agree with the statements. A mean that equals or exceeds 2.5 (strongly agree = 4, agree = 3, disagree = 2 and strongly disagree = 1) indicates that subjects agree with the statements. A mean that is lower than 2.5 shows that subjects disagree with the traditional approach. The average mean of responses to all the 13 Likert-type responses shows in general whether Singapore Chinese language teachers agree with the traditional views toward Chinese teaching. It is important to point out here that when the average mean is calculated, the responses to the second and third statements in Section 2 of the questionnaire will follow a reverse scale (strongly agree = 1, agree = 2, disagree = 3 and strongly disagree = 4), as they reflect an opposite view to that of the other statements.

Secondly, means and standard deviations of responses to 13 Likert-type responses by three different teaching levels were calculated. These means will show the differences
between teachers of three different teaching levels in their attitude toward the traditional approach to Chinese teaching.

Thirdly, means and standard deviations of subjects’ responses to all 13 items according to four different types of teaching experiences: below 10 years, 10-19 years, 20-29 years, above 30 year, were calculated. These means will indicate the differences between teachers of four different types of teaching experiences in their attitude toward the traditional approach to Chinese teaching.

Finally, means and standard deviations of subjects’ responses to all 13 items according to their gender were calculated. These means will show the differences between male and female teachers in their attitude toward the traditional approach to Chinese teaching.

4.3.6.2 Inferential Statistical Analysis

One-Way ANOVAs were conducted to compare the means of subjects’ responses to the items according to their teaching level, their years of teaching experience, their gender to discover whether there are statistically significant variances among these different groups of teachers. The dependent variable is the mean of each respondent’s response to all 13 items and the independent variables are the teacher level (primary = 1, secondary = 2, JC = 3), and the year group of different teaching experience (below 10
Follow up Tukey HSD tests were conducted on the statistically significant variances to find out which two groups of teachers according to different teaching levels and different years of teaching experience are statistically variant in their responses to the scales in the questionnaire.

4.3.6.3 Content Analysis

According to Reis & Judd (2000:317), “content analysis is the primary method of obtaining information from responses to ‘unstructured’ or ‘open-ended’ questions. Content analysis is therefore adopted for the responses to the 7 open-ended questions in the third section of the questionnaire. The approach to content analysis in the present research is an inductive one. In other words, instead of setting up the coding themes and categories before data analysis, the coding themes and categories emerged from the data. Such an approach is chosen because of the exploratory nature of this part of research. In the content analysis, the researcher first of all reviewed the responses to each question and listed preliminary themes found in the data. Themes according to Reis & Judd (2000:321), are the “the expression of a single idea” and are “the most useful unit of content analysis (Holsti 1969:116). After the initial review of data, the preliminary list of themes were tested again on more data to see how they fitted. Changes were made and
new themes were generated as more data were examined. When all the significant themes that fit the data were generated, the researcher then looked through the themes and tried to generate different categories out of the themes based on the principle of category construction principle proposed by (Holsti 1969:95). That is, "the categories should reflect the purpose of the research, be exhaustive, be mutually exclusive, independent, and be derived from a single classification principle". Frequencies of themes and categories were computed with the aid of the computer text analysis software Longman Concordance.

4.3.7 Validity and Reliability

4.3.7.1 Validity

In order to validate the research instrument and clarify what exactly the 13 Likert-type items in Section 2 of the questionnaire are measuring, a principal-component factor analysis with varimax rotation was conducted via the statistical computer program SPSS (Version 10) on the responses of the 162 subjects to the 13 items. For the purpose of interpreting the factors, 0.4 was taken to be the minimum significant loadings of variables on a factor. Altogether 5 factors (see Table 4.3 for detailed factor loadings) were generated.
Table 4.3
Rotated Component Matrix of Factor Analysis on Responses to 13 statements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Components</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Statements</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S1</td>
<td>-6.203E-02</td>
<td>-2.667E-02</td>
<td>.770</td>
<td>5.566E-02</td>
<td>.210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S2</td>
<td>4.202E-02</td>
<td>9.980E-02</td>
<td>4.520E-03</td>
<td>4.894E-02</td>
<td>.787</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S3</td>
<td>.191</td>
<td>-.146</td>
<td>-4.088E-02</td>
<td>9.529E-02</td>
<td>.765</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S4</td>
<td>.674</td>
<td>.206</td>
<td>.119</td>
<td>2.823E-02</td>
<td>.104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S5</td>
<td>.620</td>
<td>-9.955E-02</td>
<td>.175</td>
<td>.438</td>
<td>1.185E-02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S6</td>
<td>7.517E-02</td>
<td>.207</td>
<td>.122</td>
<td>.788</td>
<td>-1.993E-02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S7</td>
<td>6.024E-02</td>
<td>.153</td>
<td>-2.276E-02</td>
<td>.766</td>
<td>.181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S8</td>
<td>.188</td>
<td>.248</td>
<td>.581</td>
<td>-8.662E-02</td>
<td>-7.688E-02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S9</td>
<td>-8.648E-02</td>
<td>.721</td>
<td>4.959E-02</td>
<td>6.049E-02</td>
<td>.244</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S10</td>
<td>.348</td>
<td>.627</td>
<td>1.746E-02</td>
<td>.228</td>
<td>-.181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S11</td>
<td>.139</td>
<td>.743</td>
<td>5.825E-02</td>
<td>.172</td>
<td>-.140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S12</td>
<td>.798</td>
<td>6.820E-02</td>
<td>-3.501E-02</td>
<td>-6.151E-03</td>
<td>.128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S13</td>
<td>8.322E-02</td>
<td>-4.124E-02</td>
<td>.768</td>
<td>.167</td>
<td>-.183</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization; a Rotation converged in 6 iterations.

The clusters of statements under each factor were examined to discover the common traits of these statements. According to these traits, each factor was named (see Table 4.4 on the next page for the names of these factors and for the detailed clusters of statements under each factor). The names given to each factor seem to match the different traits of a traditional approach to language teaching mentioned earlier in this chapter. This section of the questionnaire therefore has achieved its face and construct validity. The questionnaire was also given to two colleagues who are proficient in both English and Mandarin to check the translation of the instrument. The validity of the survey research is further strengthened by the triangulation of different research methods adopted in this study as a whole.
### Table 4.4 Attitude toward a Traditional Approach to Chinese Language Teaching

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Features</th>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Statements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Traditional View of</td>
<td></td>
<td>Factor</td>
<td><strong>Teacher as the dominator in class</strong></td>
<td>Item 4 Classroom should be kept as quiet as possible.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching</td>
<td>Traditional</td>
<td>1</td>
<td><strong>Teacher as the dominator in class</strong></td>
<td>Item 5 The teacher should play the dominant role in the classroom.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Item 12 Teachers should keep a distance from students in class.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exam-oriented</td>
<td></td>
<td>Factor</td>
<td><strong>Teacher as the authority in class</strong></td>
<td>Item 1 Discipline in the classroom is crucial to successful teaching.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Exam-oriented</td>
<td>3</td>
<td><strong>Teacher as the authority in class</strong></td>
<td>Item 8 Teachers should have authority in class.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Item 13 Teachers should be respected by students in class.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text-based</td>
<td></td>
<td>Factor</td>
<td><strong>Examination-oriented teaching</strong></td>
<td>Item 9 Sentence structures are important as they are tested in exams.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Text-based</td>
<td>2</td>
<td><strong>Examination-oriented teaching</strong></td>
<td>Item 10 The prime task of Chinese teachers is to get through the textbook contents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Item 11 The main target for Chinese teachers is to improve students' exam scores.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Factor</td>
<td><strong>Text-based teaching</strong></td>
<td>Item 6 Chinese teaching is mainly teaching vocabulary in the text.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td><strong>Text-based teaching</strong></td>
<td>Item 7 I spend most of my time in class explaining the meaning of words and texts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Progressive View of</td>
<td></td>
<td>Factor</td>
<td><strong>Student-centered teaching</strong></td>
<td>Item 2 Students have the right to choose what to learn.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese Teaching</td>
<td>Progressive</td>
<td>5</td>
<td><strong>Student-centered teaching</strong></td>
<td>Item 3 Group work should often be conducted in Chinese lessons.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The number will be reversed when the total mean of all items are calculated to find out teachers' attitude toward the traditional approach to Chinese Teaching. (Responses were computed based on the following scale: strongly disagree=1, disagree=2, agree=3, strongly agree=4)*
4.3.7.2 Reliability

In order to test the reliability of the research instrument, an alpha reliability test was run on responses to the 13 items using SPSS (Version 10). This test generated an alpha value of 0.68 (see Table 4.5 for reliability test result). As discussed earlier, an alpha value of 0.68 is considered acceptable in this type of study. The instrument therefore appears to be reliable. Furthermore, in order to strengthen the reliability of the third part of the research instrument, very clear and precise language was used in the wording of the open-ended questions.

Table 4.5 Reliability Test Result for 13 Likert-type Statements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statistics for</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Variance</th>
<th>Std Dev</th>
<th>Variables</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SCALE</td>
<td>37.2037</td>
<td>13.7533</td>
<td>3.7085</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reliability Coefficients

N of Cases = 162.0
Alpha = .6831

To conclude, in section 4.4, I have described the use of the survey method in this study. In the next section, I will examine the semi-structured interviews in this research.
4.4 The Interview

In this section, I will first of all discuss the objectives of the interviews. I will then introduce the sampling method of the interviews and the profile of the teachers who have participated in the interviews. The development of the research instrument will be discussed before the data collection and data analysis methods are introduced. In the final part of this section, the transparency, consistency-coherence and communicability of the interviews will be examined.

4.4.1 Objectives

Through the interviews, the present study aims to gain more in-depth insight into Singapore Chinese teachers' knowledge and beliefs about teaching, learning, students and self as teachers by hearing their own "voices".

4.4.2 Sampling Method

A convenience sampling method is used in the present study. Respondents are participants on in-service teacher training courses for Chinese language teaching organized by the Ministry of Education of Singapore.
4.4.3 Subjects

Respondents of this study consist of 62 teachers from 42 different schools, teaching at primary (32%), secondary (53%) and junior college (JC) (15%) levels (see Table 4.6).

Table 4.6
Distribution of Respondents by Levels of Teaching (interview)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Primary</th>
<th>Secondary</th>
<th>Junior College</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of Teachers</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total No. of Teachers</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Among these respondents, 19% are below 30 years old, 19% are below 40 and above 30 years old, 32% are below 50 and above 40 years old and 29% are below 60 and above 50 years old (see Table 4.7). More female teachers (63%) than male teachers (37%) participated in the interviews.

Table 4.7
Distribution of Respondents by Age and Gender (interview)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of Teachers</th>
<th>No. of Teachers</th>
<th>% of Total No. of Teachers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>below 30 years old</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-39 years old</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-49 years old</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-59 years old</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>female teachers</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>male teachers</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.4.4 Research Instrument

The research instrument for the interview is an interview guide. The framing of the interview guide is based on the tree-and-branch model proposed by Rubin & Rubin (1995:159). In other words, the trunk consists of the main topics the research is exploring; the branches are the main questions. Each branch is explored with more or less the same degree of depth. The goal is to learn about the individual branches that frame the entire tree but still obtain depth and detail.

As the present research seeks to find out about Singapore Chinese teachers' knowledge and beliefs about teaching and learning, students and themselves as teachers, questions under each of these four domains of the present research were developed and included in the interview guide (See Appendix II for details). These questions were not planned to be followed rigidly so that the researcher could change some wordings to suit the interview situation.

Apart from the questions, different kinds of prompts, probes and checks are used during the interview to elicit more details, to clarify ambiguous information, and to signal to the interviewee about the expected level of depth or simply to show the interviewee that the interviewer is interested in the answers.
4.4.5 Data Collection

In discussing the method for data collection, I will focus on introducing the research site and the role of the researcher.

4.4.5.1 Research Site

Most of the interviews were carried out in the visitors' lounges or staff rooms of the schools where the respondents worked with a few conducted at the premises where the teacher training courses were conducted.

4.4.5.2 Role of the Researcher

On most occasions I entered the research sites as a teacher trainer trying to collect feedback from teachers with regard to the problems they may encounter in adopting the more communicative approach to Chinese language teaching in their classes. After hearing from teachers about their problems, I indicated my interest to know more about the teachers' views on other issues regarding Chinese teaching, learning and their job as Chinese teachers in Singapore. I made it clear that the interview data collected would only be used for research purposes and the identities of respondents would be kept confidential. On most occasions teachers readily agreed to the interview as the researcher had won their trust and established good rapport with them during their 30 to 40 hours of training sessions. All interviews were conducted in Mandarin, and most of them lasted
about 20 to 30 minutes, although some lasted longer. I was given permission to audio-tape all the interviews. The collection of interview data took place in 1998 and 1999 as I visited on and off the research site after the teacher training courses were completed for different groups of respondents.

4.4.6 Data Analysis

In discussing the method for data analysis, I will first introduce the general approach to the analysis of the interview data before I discuss the different methods used for the management of data, the coding of data, the writing of memos and the use of graphics in the process of data analysis.

4.4.6.1 The Approach

The interview data were analyzed using “analytic induction” (Cressey, 1953; Lindesmith, 1947; Robinson, 1951; Znaniecki, 1934; Hammersley and Arkinson, 1995).

On the whole, data analysis for the present study went through three levels of data transformation as proposed by Wolcott (1994): description, analysis and interpretation. At the level of description, data were presented and described as closely as possible to the original data, allowing the data to “speak for themselves”. The level of analysis involved the following activities proposed by Miles and Huberman (1994) and
Strauss (1987): carefully reviewing interview transcripts, creating categories of various types, developing and refining coding systems, writing working memos establishing relationships among various categories, generating propositions regarding the relationships, verifying and enriching emergent understandings by searching for negative evidences. The interpretation level of data transformation in the present study as Wolcott (1994:36) pointed out “transcends factual data and cautious analysis and begins to probe into what is to be made of them”. At this level, the social cultural and historical context of the research, the researcher’s personal experience and knowledge of technical literature and theories were brought into the interpretation of data.

4.4.6.2 Data Management

As pointed out by Miles and Huberman (1994), the main purposes of data management are to keep track of the huge amount of data, permit easy, flexible, reliable use of the data and allow other people to verify or replicate the study later on. The present study followed Levine’s (1986) general principles in the establishment of a storage and retrieval system for the interview data. In the following section, I will discuss the formatting, the cross-referral and the indexing of data in more detail.
Formatting

All interview data were transcribed and translated on paper first and later typed into the computer using a word processing software program such as Chinese Star for the original Chinese version of data and Microsoft Word for the English translation of data. Word document files or Excel worksheet files were created for all transcripts, memos, coding definitions and other type of processed data. Each file was given a name indicating the nature of the file and a reference number. For example, the file that contained the first transcript was named as TR 1 and ANM 1 is the name of the first analytic memo. Every file also took two forms. One is in the electronic form and stored on the hard and floppy disks and the other one as a hard copy. This was done to guard against accidental loss or destruction of the data in the electronic form.

Cross-referral

Apart from formatting data, data management for the present study also involved cross-referral. For example, responses included in a file would contain a reference number indicating the original transcript the responses were taken from.

Indexing

Different indexes were built to show coding systems, and file name systems.
According to Strauss and Corbin (1990:57), coding is understood here as "representing the operations by which data are broken down, conceptualized, and put back together in new ways. It is the central process by which theories are built from data".

Before coding the data, the researcher first built up great intimacy with the interview data through conducting the interviews, transcribing and translating the interviews. By the time the researcher approached coding, the general content of the data was clearly in the researcher's mind. Three types of codes mentioned in Miles and Huberman (1994) were used in this study (see Appendix III). They are the descriptive, interpretative and pattern codes. The descriptive codes were those that describe the category or theme without the researcher's interpretation. For example, "LG-Act-Reading" is a descriptive code to mark off the activity of reading appearing in the data; "LG-Meth" is however an interpretative code created after interpreting "reading" as a kind of "method" in learning Chinese; pattern codes such as "LG-THEORY" are even more inferential and explanatory, as they indicate the consistent theory Chinese teachers hold toward learning, which has influenced the teacher's suggestions of learning methods including the activity of reading.
Marginal Remarks

In the process of coding, sometimes ideas and reactions to the meaning of what is being read came up in the researcher’s mind. In such cases, remarks were written on the right margin of the transcript or document to guide the next round of reading, coding or memo writing.

4.4.6.4 Memos

Following Miles and Huberman’s (1994) advice, memo writing was given priority in data analysis. In this study, memos were written for many purposes: describing codes, explaining coding definitions, recording ideas, elaborating a concept, relating concepts to each other, generating propositions, and developing theories. Although, no standardized format was followed in writing memos, they were always dated and named with key concepts or categories, and linked to particular places in the field notes, or previously written memos and code notes. An example for the memos used in this study can be found in Appendix IV.

4.4.6.5 Graphics

Miles and Huberman (1994) recommended the use of matrices and networks to display data. Strauss (1987) introduced integrative diagrams to facilitate model building and theory building. In this study all the above tools were used in different stages of data
analysis. For example, Table 4.8 is a matrix that has been used to facilitate the development of different factors, which the interviewees have felt important to the successful learning of Chinese. Subsequently, these factors are examined to generate teachers’ views of learning.

Table 4.8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Reference No.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Motivation</td>
<td><strong>Integrative</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Love of language</td>
<td>(TR1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Love of culture</td>
<td>(TR1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interest</td>
<td>(TR33,7,12,42,43,4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Instrumental</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Exam</td>
<td>(TR1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Use</td>
<td>(TR31,34,42)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practice</td>
<td><strong>Reading</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not specific</td>
<td>(TR25,37)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Newspaper cutting</td>
<td>(TR9,14,39,40)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Novels</td>
<td>(TR14,16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Short articles</td>
<td>(TR42)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Writing</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Compositions</td>
<td>(TR9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Speaking</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Conversation</td>
<td>(TR37)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Listening</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TV news</td>
<td>(TR14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TV drama</td>
<td>(TR40)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Films</td>
<td>(TR14,42)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the sections above, I have described how the interview method is used in this study. In the next section, I will discuss the transparency, the consistency-coherence and communicability of the interviews.
4.4.7 Transparency, Consistency-coherence and Communicability

Rubin and Rubin (1995:85) agreed that the standards for good quantitative research were those of validity and reliability. "If research is valid, it closely reflects the world being described. If work is reliable, two researchers studying the same arena will come up with compatible observations". However, they pointed out that different standards should be used to judge qualitative research. They suggested that "the credibility of qualitative work should be judged by its transparency, consistency-coherence, and communicability". That is, good qualitative research should show transparency in its report of the basic processes of data collection. It demonstrates the fact that the researcher checked out ideas and responses that appeared to be inconsistent, and communicated the firsthand experiences of the researcher.

To ensure transparency, the present research established an audit trail from the outset, as recommended by researchers like Lincoln and Guba (1985) and Miles and Huberman (1994). The interview audio-tapes, transcripts, memos and coding notes are retained for confirmation by an independent auditor. The indexing and cross-referral system established in this study could allow the auditor to trace a quotation cited in the text back to the original data. The study showed consistency as the report of the present study would show when themes failed to hold, and further work is done to either revise the themes or figure out the conditions when the themes hold and when they do not hold.
The final report of the study would describe the first hand experiences of the researcher to meet the criteria of communicability.

To conclude, in section 4.4, I have described the use of the interviews in this study. In the following section, I will discuss the use of metaphors in the present research.

4.5 Metaphors

In this section, I will first of all discuss the objectives of the study of metaphors in this research. I will then introduce the profile of the teachers who have contributed the metaphors in this study. This will be followed by a description of the methods for collecting and analysing the metaphors.

4.5.1 Objectives

This part of the research aims first of all to identify the metaphors Singapore Chinese teachers have used in their discussion about teaching, learning, students and themselves as Chinese teachers. Through these metaphors, I hope to gain insights into the knowledge and beliefs Singapore Chinese teachers hold with regard to teaching, learning, students and themselves as Chinese teachers.
4.5.2 Subjects

The subjects for this part of the research are the participants of the six teacher training classes organized by the Ministry of Education of Singapore for in-service Chinese teachers in the year of 1997 and 1998. They were the same teachers who participated in the survey and interviews of this study (see Table 4.1 on page 77 and Table 4.6 on page 90).

4.5.3 Data Collection

In this study, all metaphors examined arose spontaneously from three sources:

1) responses to open-ended questions in a survey questionnaire
2) responses elicited in interviews with teachers
3) classroom discussions of six teacher training sessions

As the data collection procedures for the survey and the interviews have been discussed in the earlier sections of this chapter, only the data collection procedures for the data that arose from classroom discussions will be discussed in detail below.

During one session of each teacher training class, in the process of demonstrating a communicative writing activity, the researcher asked the teachers to write an essay on
the topic of “Singapore Chinese Teachers” in small groups. After their discussions, representatives from each group presented their essays using transparencies on the overhead projector. The researcher noticed that these teachers had used many metaphors in their presentations to explain their views toward the topic. The researcher took down the explanations of these metaphors in her notebook and, with the teachers’ permission, retained the transparencies that contained those metaphors after these teachers’ presentations. These transparencies and the researcher’s notes became the first set of data for the research on teacher metaphors in this study.

4.5.4 Data Analysis

The identification and analysis of teachers’ metaphors in this study has followed Lakoff's concept of conceptual metaphors (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980) and Cameron & Low’s (1999:88) general approach to metaphor analysis. This involves “collecting examples of linguistic metaphors … generalizing from them to the conceptual metaphors they exemplify, and using the result to suggest understandings or thought patterns which construct or constrain people’s beliefs and actions”.

The first procedure for data analysis was to list the metaphorical expressions produced by the participants after careful examination of the three sets of data. Conceptual metaphors were then generated from the metaphorical expressions. According to salient features, common elements, and similarities among these metaphors were then noted which later led to some basic conceptual categories representing
different aspects of teacher thinking. In the process of the categorizations, the researcher referred to conventional teacher metaphors discussed in the literature, participants’ explanations of the metaphors and the researcher’s knowledge and interpretation of the contexts and ways these metaphors were used.

In the discussion of the results of the metaphor analysis, the researcher tried to relate the participants’ assumptions and theories underlying the metaphors with various theoretical notions, principles, approaches, paradigms, or frameworks in the field of L2 and FL teaching and learning. As this is an exploratory study done on Singapore Chinese teachers, and there is no previous related research carried out in this area, the discussion therefore can only be limited to the results of this study.

In the above three sections, I have described the three research tools in this study, which include the survey, the semi-structured interviews and the metaphor analysis. In the following section I will make brief reference to a number of ethical considerations in the study.

4.6 Ethics

In this research, I have made special efforts to conform to the ethical standards set by researchers (Cohen and Manion, 1996). First of all, I am aware of the more authoritarian role I have as a teacher trainer, and made special effort to ensure voluntary participation by the subjects. For example, participants had the right to withdraw from
the survey or not to be interviewed if they chose to do so. Secondly, I have sought informed consent from respondents by explaining the purpose of the survey and the interview and the ways data collected would be used. Thirdly, anonymity and confidentiality of the participants in the research was assured. Fourthly, by the nature of the study, the subjects' views will be presented to policy makers, and therefore the study has the potential to contribute to knowledge that will benefit the subjects.

4.7 Conclusion

This chapter has introduced the mixed-method approach the study has adopted in its design. It has discussed in detail the objectives, the sampling method, the profile of subjects, the research instrument, the data collection method, data analysis method and issues of validity and reliability for each of the three research methods used in this study. Finally, ethical issues are also addressed. In the following chapter, I will present the results and data analysis of this study.
CHAPTER 5 results and analysis

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the data analysis results of the study. It consists of three major parts. The first part of the chapter reports on the findings of the survey. As the survey questionnaire consists of both close-ended and open-ended questions, the report of its results is therefore divided into two sections. The first section reports on the results of both the descriptive and interpretative statistical analysis of the data collected in response to the 13 Likert-type statements, which aims to examine respondents' attitudes toward the traditional approach to Chinese teaching. The second section presents the findings of the content analysis of the responses to the 7 open-ended questions in the survey questionnaire. The second major part of this chapter reports on the results of the qualitative data analysis of the interviews. Both the open-ended questions in the survey questionnaire and the guiding questions in the interview guide aim to elicit subjects' knowledge, beliefs and perceptions of teaching, learning, students, and themselves as teachers. The third part of the chapter reports on the findings of analysis of the metaphors generated spontaneously in the responses to the open-ended questions in the third section of the survey questionnaire, in the interview responses and in the classroom discussions in six in-service teacher-training sessions. These metaphors are believed to open another window for people to look into the thinking of Singapore Chinese teachers.
5.2 Results of the Survey

In this section, I will first present the results of both the descriptive analysis and inferential analysis on the responses to the 13 Likert-type statements in Section 2 of the questionnaire. I will then present the results of the content analysis of the responses to the 7 open questions asked in Section 3 of the questionnaire.

5.2.1 Results of Analysis of Data Collected from Section II of the Questionnaire

The second section of the questionnaire attempted to elicit responses from subjects to 13 Likert-type statements for the purpose of examination of subjects' attitudes toward the traditional approach to Chinese teaching. The descriptive analysis conducted on the data aimed to provide a general picture of subjects' attitude toward the traditional approach to Chinese teaching which is teacher-centered, examination-oriented and text-based. The One-way ANOVA inferential analysis was conducted to examine whether statistically significant differences existed in the attitude of teachers of different teaching levels, different teaching experiences and different gender.
5.2.1.1 Attitude toward the Traditional Approach to Chinese Teaching

The means and standard deviations of responses to all the 13 statements concerning subjects' attitude toward the traditional approach to Chinese teaching are presented in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1

Mean of Responses to All 13 Likert-type Statements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MEAN</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>1.92</td>
<td>3.69</td>
<td>2.8618</td>
<td>.2853</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Valid N (listwise) | 162

All Responses were computed based on the following four point scale: "Strongly Disagree=1", "Disagree=2", "Agree=3", "Strongly Agree=4". For Responses to Statement 2 and 3, the above scale is reversed.

As Table 5.1 shows, the average mean for all 13 statements that reflect a traditional approach to Chinese teaching is 2.86, which is above 2.50 (1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=agree, 4=strongly agree; for item 2 and 3, the scale is reversed when the average mean of all 13 statements is calculated as they reflect the progressive view of teaching). This seems to indicate that respondents agree with the statements that reflect a traditional approach to Chinese teaching.

The average means of responses to statements under each of the five factors generated by the factor analysis are presented in Table 5.2.
Table 5.2

Average Means of Statements under Five Factors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Factor 1</td>
<td>Teacher as the dominator in class</td>
<td>Item 4 Classroom should be kept as quiet as possible. Item 5 The teacher should play the dominant role in the classroom. Item 12 Teachers should keep a distance from students in class.</td>
<td>2.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factor 3</td>
<td>Teacher as the authority in class</td>
<td>Item 1 Discipline in the classroom is crucial to successful teaching. Item 8 Teachers should have authority in class. Item 13 Teachers should be respected by students in class.</td>
<td>3.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factor 2</td>
<td>Examination-oriented teaching</td>
<td>Item 9 Sentence structures are important as they are tested in exams. Item 10 The prime task of Chinese teachers is to get through the textbook contents. Item 11 The main target for Chinese teachers is to improve students' exam scores.</td>
<td>2.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factor 4</td>
<td>Text-based teaching</td>
<td>Item 6 Chinese teaching is mainly teaching vocabulary in the text. Item 7 I spend most of my time in class explaining the meaning of words and texts.</td>
<td>2.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factor 5</td>
<td>Student-centered teaching</td>
<td>Item 2 Students have the right to choose what to learn. Item 3 Group work should often be conducted in Chinese lessons.</td>
<td>2.15*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The number will be reversed when the total mean of all items are calculated to find out teachers' attitude toward the traditional approach to Chinese Teaching. (Responses were computed based on the following scale: strongly disagree=1, disagree=2, agree=3, strongly agree=4)
As Table 5.2 shows, the factor with the highest average mean for its statements, which therefore received the strongest agreement is the “Teacher as the Authority in class” factor (mean=3.54). This seems to show that respondents almost strongly agree (strongly agree=4) that teachers are the authority in class. The average mean of responses to statements under the factor “Teacher as the Dominator in Class” is also above 2.66. This shows respondents agree that teachers should play the dominant role in class. In Table 5.2, the average mean for the statements under the factor that reflects a progressive approach to Chinese teaching is 2.44 (1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=agree, 4=strongly agree), which is below 2.50. This seems to suggest that respondents disagree with the statements that reflect the progressive approach to Chinese Teaching. As Table 5.2 shows, the average means of the statements under the factors “examination-oriented teaching” and “text-based teaching”, are above 2.5, which indicate that the respondents agree with the examination-oriented and text-based approach to Chinese teaching.

In summary, the descriptive analysis of the data elicited by section II of the survey questionnaire shows that Singapore Chinese teachers agree with the traditional approach toward Chinese teaching which is teacher-centered, examination-oriented and structure-based. In the next three sections, I will present the results of the inferential analysis done on the responses to the 13 Likert-type statements in Section 2 of the questionnaire in order to find out whether the teaching level, the years of teaching experience and gender make a difference in the teachers’ attitude toward the traditional approach to Chinese teaching.
5.2.1.2 Differences in Attitude toward a Traditional Approach to Chinese Teaching Among Teachers of Different Teaching Levels

In order to explore whether there are statistically significant differences in the agreement with the traditional approach to Chinese teaching among teachers of different teaching levels (primary, secondary, JC), the One-Way ANOVA analysis was conducted to compare the average means of responses to all the 13 statements by respondents of the three different teaching levels. As illustrated before, and as followed by future analysis, responses to the two statements that reflect the progressive approach to Chinese teaching follow a reverse scale (Strongly disagree=4, Disagree=3, Agree=2, and Strongly agree=1), when the average means of all statements are computed.

Table 5.3 presents the average means of responses of teachers of three different teaching levels to all 13 Likert-type of statements in the second section of the questionnaire. Figure 5.1 is a bar chart presenting the visual view of these average means.

Table 5.3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LEVELS</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>2.9463</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>.2602</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>2.9538</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>.1852</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior College</td>
<td>2.7080</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>.3135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2.8618</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>.2853</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The average means of responses generated from respondents who teach at the secondary level and at the primary level are almost similar (Mean for primary= 2.946, Mean for secondary=2.953). The average mean for respondents that teach at the JC level is slightly lower (Mean for JC=2.708). The One-Way ANOVA analysis result presented in Table 5.4 shows that there is statistically significant difference (sig.=0.000) in respondents’ agreement with the traditional approach to Chinese teaching.

Table 5.4

One-way ANOVA: Attitude toward a Traditional Approach to Chinese Teaching by Teaching Level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>2.199</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.099</td>
<td>16.030</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>10.904</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>6.858E-02</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>13.102</td>
<td>161</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

116
The Post Hoc Tukey HSD test result, as shown in Table 5.5 suggests the statistically significant difference (sig. =0.000) exists between teachers who teach at the JC level and the other two groups of teachers.

Table 5.5

Tukey HSD Tests: Attitude toward a Traditional Approach to Chinese Teaching by Teaching Level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(I-J)</th>
<th>Mean Difference</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(I)</td>
<td>(J)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lower Bound</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEVELS</td>
<td>LEVELS</td>
<td>Interval</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-7.5472E-03</td>
<td>5.163E-02</td>
<td>.988</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>.2383</td>
<td>4.956E-02</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.1222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7.547E-03</td>
<td>5.163E-02</td>
<td>.988</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>.2459</td>
<td>5.034E-02</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.1279</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-.2383</td>
<td>4.956E-02</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>-.2459</td>
<td>5.034E-02</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>-.3639</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The mean difference is significant at the .05 level, 1=Primary, 2=Secondary, 3=JC

It therefore can be concluded that teachers who teach at the JC level agree statistically significantly less than teachers who teach at both the primary and the secondary level with the traditional approach to Chinese teaching.

5.2.1.3 Differences in Attitude toward a Traditional Approach to Chinese Teaching Among Teachers of Different Teaching Experiences

The average means of responses to all 13 Likert-type of statements generated from teachers who have four different types of teaching experiences (below 10 years, 10-19 years, 20-29 years, 30 and above years) are presented in Table 5.6 and Figure 5.2.
Table 5.6

*Attitude Toward a Traditional Approach to Chinese Teaching by Teaching Experience*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year Group</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Below 10 years</td>
<td>2.7585</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>.3385</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-19 years</td>
<td>2.7942</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>.2480</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-29 years</td>
<td>2.9199</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>.2242</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 and above years</td>
<td>2.9860</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>.2716</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2.8618</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>.2853</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 5.2

*Attitude Toward a Traditional Approach to Chinese Teaching by Teaching Experience*

As clearly seen in Figure 5.2, the average mean seems to increase as the years of teaching experiences increase. This suggests that the more experienced or the older the respondents are, the more they agree with the traditional approach to Chinese teaching. Table 5.7 presents the result of the One-Way ANOVA analysis on responses of subjects of four different types of teaching experiences and shows there is statistically significant difference (sig. = 0.001) in the agreement of teachers of the four groups.
Table 5.7

One-way ANOVA: Attitude toward a Traditional Approach to Chinese Teaching by Teaching Experience

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>1.303</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.434</td>
<td>5.815</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>11.799</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>7.468E-02</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>13.102</td>
<td>161</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Tukey HSD post hoc test results summarized in Table 5.8 shows that the difference has reached a statistically significant level (sig. = 0.002) between teachers who have taught the longest years (30 and above years) and those who have the shortest years (below 10 years). It therefore can be concluded that teachers who have taught 30 or more years agree statistically significantly more than teachers who have taught below 10 years.

Table 5.8

Tukey HSD Tests: Attitude toward a Traditional Approach to Chinese Teaching by Teaching Experience

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(I) Year Group</th>
<th>(J) Year Group</th>
<th>Mean Difference (I-J)</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval</th>
<th>Lower Bound</th>
<th>Upper Bound</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-3.568E-02</td>
<td>6.128E-02</td>
<td>.937</td>
<td>-.1931</td>
<td>-1.217</td>
<td>.1217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-1.614</td>
<td>5.710E-02</td>
<td>.024</td>
<td>-3.081</td>
<td>-1.4739E-02</td>
<td>-.6504E-02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-2.275</td>
<td>6.324E-02</td>
<td>.002</td>
<td>-3.900</td>
<td>-6.504E-02</td>
<td>-.2242</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.568E-02</td>
<td>6.128E-02</td>
<td>.937</td>
<td>-.1217</td>
<td>.1931</td>
<td>.1217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-.1258</td>
<td>5.952E-02</td>
<td>.149</td>
<td>-2.787</td>
<td>2.715E-02</td>
<td>.1931</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-.1918</td>
<td>6.543E-02</td>
<td>.018</td>
<td>-3.599</td>
<td>-2.3737E-02</td>
<td>.1931</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>.1614</td>
<td>5.710E-02</td>
<td>.024</td>
<td>1.474E-02</td>
<td>.3081</td>
<td>.1931</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>.1258</td>
<td>5.952E-02</td>
<td>.149</td>
<td>2.7147E-02</td>
<td>.2787</td>
<td>.1931</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6.6077E-02</td>
<td>6.154E-02</td>
<td>.706</td>
<td>9.2020E-02</td>
<td>-.2242</td>
<td>.8920E-02</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.
1=below 10 years, 2=10-19 years, 3=20-29 years, 4=30 and above years
5.2.1.4 Differences in Attitude toward a Traditional Approach to Chinese Teaching Among Teachers of Different Gender

The average means of responses to all 13 Likert-type of statements generated from teachers who are of different genders (male and female) are presented in Table 5.9 and Figure 5.3.

Table 5.9
Attitude Toward a Traditional Approach to Chinese Teaching by Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>2.9058</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>.2703</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>2.8428</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>.2906</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2.8618</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>.2853</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 5.3
Attitude Toward a Traditional Approach to Chinese Teaching by Gender

The average mean of responses generated from male respondents is 2.91, slightly higher than that of the female respondents, which is 2.84. This seems to suggest male
teachers seem to agree more with the traditional approach to Chinese teaching than female teachers. However, the result of the One-Way ANOVA (see Table 5.10) seems to suggest no statistically significant differences (sig=0.197) between the two groups in their agreement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 5.10</th>
<th>One-way ANOVA: Attitude toward a Traditional Approach to Chinese Teaching by Gender</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sum of Squares</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIMEAN *</td>
<td>Between Groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Within Groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To sum up the results of the descriptive and inferential analysis of the data elicited by section II of the questionnaire, on the whole, Singapore Chinese teachers agree with the teacher-centered, examination-oriented and structure-based traditional approach to Chinese teaching. Among teachers of three teaching levels, primary, secondary and Junior college, the JC teachers are statistically less traditional than primary and secondary teachers in their attitude toward the approach to Chinese teaching. Among teachers of different teaching experiences, the less experienced the group of teachers the less traditional they are in their attitude toward Chinese teaching approach. The most experienced group of teachers (those who have taught more than 30 years) are statistically more traditional than the least experienced group of teachers (those who have taught less than 10 years) in their attitude toward teaching approaches. Gender did not seem to make a difference in teachers’ attitude toward the traditional approach to Chinese teaching.
5.2.2 Results of Analysis of Data Collected from Section III of the Questionnaire

In this section, I will present the results of content analysis on the responses to the 7 open-ended questions in Section III of the questionnaire. The results of the content analysis are presented under the following topics:

(1) Beliefs about the aim of Chinese Teaching
(2) Beliefs about the best ways to learn the Chinese Language
(3) Perceptions of Students
(4) Perceptions of Self as Chinese Teachers

5.2.2.1 Beliefs about Chinese Language Teaching

The first open-ended question in the third section of the questionnaire aims to identify Singapore Chinese teachers' beliefs about the aim of Chinese teaching. The inductive content analysis shows that six major themes concerning teachers' beliefs about the aim of Chinese teaching emerged from the data. As shown in Table 5.11, among 150 respondents who have provided valid answers to the above question other than giving no comments, more than half (53%) or 80 of them reported that the aim of Chinese teaching is to "help students grasp the Chinese language". Sixty-four respondents or 43% of the respondents answered that "To help students learn Chinese culture & tradition" was their
aim of teaching Chinese. “To instill moral values in students” is the aim of Chinese teaching for 39% or 59 of the respondents. “To develop love of Chinese language and literature” are the aims for and 11% of the respondents respectively.

Table 5.11

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Frequencies</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Help students grasp the Chinese language</td>
<td>30 23 27</td>
<td>80 53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help students learn Chinese culture &amp; tradition</td>
<td>17 19 28</td>
<td>64 43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Input moral values in students</td>
<td>19 21 19</td>
<td>59 39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop love of Chinese language and culture</td>
<td>3 4 9</td>
<td>16 11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equip Students with Knowledge</td>
<td>6 3 3</td>
<td>12 8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help students pass examinations</td>
<td>1 0 2</td>
<td>3 2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop Chinese identity among students</td>
<td>0 1 1</td>
<td>2 1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help students know Chinese literature</td>
<td>0 1 1</td>
<td>2 1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raise Chinese language status</td>
<td>0 1 1</td>
<td>2 1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equip students with social skills</td>
<td>0 1 0</td>
<td>1 1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Comment</td>
<td>2 3 7</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In summary of the content analysis of responses to the question “What is the aim of Chinese teaching”, the results reported here seem to suggest that respondents in this study give as much attention to the teaching of Chinese culture and tradition and moral values as the teaching of the Chinese language and language skills. In addition, respondents also aim to develop love of the Chinese culture and language among students in Chinese teaching.
5.2.2.2 Beliefs about the Best Way to Learn the Chinese Language

In order to discover Singapore Chinese teachers' beliefs about Chinese language learning, the open-ended question "How can students learn Chinese well?" is asked in the third section of the questionnaire. Table 5.12 presents the results of the content analysis of responses to the above question.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 5.12</th>
<th>How to Learn Chinese Well?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Frequencies</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Pri</td>
<td>Sec</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Learning Attitude &amp; Motivation</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. correct attitude</td>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. interest</td>
<td></td>
<td>16</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. encouragement by parents</td>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. understanding of the importance of Chinese learning</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>104</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Learning Method</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. more practice</td>
<td></td>
<td>30</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. attentive</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>83</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Learning Environment</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. good language learning environment</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teaching Method</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. good teaching method</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Effort to Learn</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. work hard</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no comment</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.12 shows that 9 themes under five categories have emerged from the data elicited from 158 respondents who have provided valid answers. The most frequently occurring category of themes among the responses is the category "Learning Attitude &
Motivation”. Among the themes under this category, “correct attitude” is the answer of 27% of the respondents. The other themes included “interest” (22%), “encouragement by parents” (13%), and “understanding of the importance of Chinese learning” (3%).

“Learning Method” is the next most frequently occurring category of themes (83 times) in the data to the category of “Learning Attitude & Motivation”. The themes that fall under this category include “more practice” (49%), and “attentive” (5). It is interesting to point out that almost half of the respondents believed that the way to learn Chinese well is through “practice”, “Learning Environment” (15 times), “Teaching Method” (10 times) and “Effort to learn” (3 times). These frequencies seem to be much lower than those of the previous three categories.

To sum up, the above reported content analysis results with regard to teachers’ beliefs about Chinese learning seem to indicate that, on the whole, respondents in this study seem to believe that correct learning attitude and high learning motivation and more practice will help students to learn Chinese successfully.

5.2.2.3 Perceptions of Students

Three areas of subjects’ perceptions of students are examined in the present study. These three areas include subjects’ perceptions of ideal students, their perceptions of bad
students and their perceptions of current students they are teaching. The content analysis results in these three areas are presented as follows:

**Perceptions of Ideal Students**

As Table 5.13 shows, the content analysis of responses to the question “What kind of students do you think are ideal students?” has found 34 themes in the data that fall under 9 categories.

**Table 5.13**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Frequencies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Pri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Character</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. polite/respectful</td>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. good character</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. disciplined</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. helpful</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. responsible</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. modest</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. caring</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. obedient</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. sensible</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. sincere</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. grateful</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Attitude&amp; Motivation</th>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Frequencies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12. have initiative</td>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. love to study</td>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. serious in studies</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. want to excel</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. correct attitude</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classroom Behavior</th>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Frequencies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>17. attentive in class</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. hand in homework</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. ask questions</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. answer questions</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

126
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>21. express opinions</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. active to participate</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>16</strong></td>
<td><strong>37</strong></td>
<td><strong>29</strong></td>
<td><strong>82</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effort to Learn</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>19</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>32</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>23. diligent/hardworking</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>10</strong></td>
<td><strong>19</strong></td>
<td><strong>3</strong></td>
<td><strong>32</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Aptitude</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>16</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>24. able to think</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. creative</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. quick mind</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. able to apply</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. have learning ability</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29. able to learn independently</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Performance</th>
<th>14</th>
<th>13</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>28</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30. Good at studies</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31. Good at sports</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>16</strong></td>
<td><strong>13</strong></td>
<td><strong>1</strong></td>
<td><strong>30</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personality</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>32. Lively</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33. Team spirit</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Physical Appearance</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>34. tidy</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>2</strong></td>
<td><strong>0</strong></td>
<td><strong>0</strong></td>
<td><strong>2</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| No Comments               | 0 | 0 | 4 | 4     |

In the data elicited from 158 respondents who have provided valid responses to the above question, the most frequently occurring category of themes (138 times) is the category of “Character”. On top of the list of themes that describe the specific characters of the ideal students is the theme “polite/respectful” (53 times). The other themes of character include “good character” (28 times), “disciplined” (18 times), “helpful” (9 times), “responsible” (9 times), “modest” (8 times), “caring” (6 times), “obedient” (2 times), “sensible” (2 times), “sincere” (1 time) and “grateful” (1 time)
The second most frequently occurring category of themes is the category of "Learning Attitude & Motivation" (121 times). Among 158 respondents who have provided valid answers, 48 of them reported that according to them, an ideal student "has the initiative to learn", 42 felt that an ideal student "loves to study", 20 perceived that an ideal student is "serious in studies" (20 times), 7 felt that an ideal student "wants to excel" and 4 mentioned that an ideal student has "correct attitude".

The category "Classroom behavior" which includes themes such as "attentive in class" (23 times), "hand in homework" (17 times), "ask questions" (11 times), "answer questions" (11 times), "express opinions" (10 times), "active to participate" (10 times) is the third most frequently occurred category of themes.

The category "Effort to learn" and the category "Learning aptitude" have received the same frequency (32 times) in the data. This seems to suggest that respondents attribute the same significance to the learning efforts a student makes and the learning aptitude he/she possesses in their expectations of an ideal student. The theme occurring under the category of "Effort to learn" is the theme "diligent or hardworking" (32 times). The themes that fall under the "Learning aptitude" include "able to think" (16 times), "creative" (5 times), "quick mind" (4 times), "able to apply" (3 times), "have learning ability" (3 times), and "able to learn independently" (1 time).

Other categories than the above mentioned include the category of "Performance" (30 times), "Personality" (8 times) and "Physical Appearance" (2 times).
Their frequencies are much lower than the above mentioned categories such as “Character”, “Learning Attitude and Motivation” and “Classroom Behavior”.

To sum up, the results of the content analysis of responses with regard to teachers’ perception of ideal students seem to suggest that respondents in this study emphasize “Character”, “Learning Attitude & Motivation”, and “Classroom Behavior” than on the “Performance”, “Personality” and “Physical appearance” in their perception of ideal students.

Perceptions of Bad Students

The results of content analysis of the responses to the question “What kind of students do you think are bad students?” are presented in Table 5.14 on the next page.

Similar to the Question 3, which aims to examine subjects’ views of the ideal type of students, Question 4 which attempts to investigate subjects’ views of bad students also generated the same 8 categories of themes. However, here “Classroom behavior” appears the most frequently (111 times) occurring category of themes in the data. Under this category, the kinds of classroom behaviors of bad students include “not attentive” (63 times), “don’t hand in homework” (40 times) and “don’t participate in class” (8 times). It should be noted here that the nature of these classroom behaviors do not seem to suggest disciplinary problems in the classroom but rather indicate the dissatisfaction of the respondents over the lack of participation of students in classroom learning activities.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Frequencies</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Pri</td>
<td>Sec</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Classroom Behavior</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. not attentive</td>
<td></td>
<td>24</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. don't hand in homework</td>
<td></td>
<td>14</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. don't participate in class</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>42</strong></td>
<td><strong>41</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Learning Attitude &amp; Motivation</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. lack interest to study</td>
<td></td>
<td>20</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. bad attitude</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. passive attitude</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. lack wish to excel</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. not serious in studies</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>32</strong></td>
<td><strong>28</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Character</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. undisciplined</td>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. impolite/disrespectful</td>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. rebellious</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. bad character</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. restless</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. utilitarian</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. selfish</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. arrogant</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. inconsiderate</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. careless</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. like to bully others</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>24</strong></td>
<td><strong>34</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Effort to Learn</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. lazy</td>
<td></td>
<td>19</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>19</strong></td>
<td><strong>28</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Performance</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. poor in studies</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>1</strong></td>
<td><strong>4</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Personality</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. unsociable</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. lack confidence</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>4</strong></td>
<td><strong>1</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Physical Appearance</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. untidy</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>4</strong></td>
<td><strong>0</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Learning Aptitude</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. low learning ability</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. cannot think</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. dependent</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>0</strong></td>
<td><strong>0</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>No Comments</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>0</strong></td>
<td><strong>1</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**N=156**
Other than the above mentioned undesirable classroom behaviors, Table 5.14 shows that the next most frequently occurring category of themes that describe teachers' perceptions of bad students concerns "Learning Attitude and Motivation" of the perceived bad students. All of the themes that fall under this category seem to be of a negative nature. For example, respondents felt that bad students "lack interest to study" (66 times), have "bad attitude" (17 times), hold "passive attitude" (14 times), "lack wish to excel" (4 times) and "not serious in studies" (4 times).

The third most frequently occurring category of themes in the data that describes the perceived traits of bad students according to respondents in this study, is the category "Character". As Table 5.14 shows, the traits of character of bad students are of a negative nature which include: "undisciplined" (35 times), and "impolite or disrespectful" (31 times), "rebellious" (4 times), "bad character" (4 times), "restless" (3 times), "utilitarian" (2 times), "selfish" (2 times), "arrogant" (2 times), "inconsiderate" (2 times), "careless" (1 time), and "like to bully others" (1 time). It is interesting to note that the most frequently cited traits of the bad students, which are "undisciplined" and "impolite or disrespectful" are the opposite of the perceived traits of ideal students discussed in the previous section, which is "polite and respectful" and "disciplined".

Table 5.14 shows the fourth most frequently occurring category that reflect teachers' perception of bad students is the category of "Effort to learn" (66 times). The theme "lazy" demonstrates a lack of effort to learn on the part of the perceived bad students. Other categories of themes that have occurred in the data include
"Performance" (11 times), "Personality" (6 times), "Physical Appearance" (4 times) and "Learning Aptitude" (2 times). Their frequencies appeared to be much lower than the previously mentioned categories. It is not surprising that all the themes that fall under these categories are also of a negative nature.

To sum up, similar to the results reported in the previous section on teachers' perception of ideal students, the results of the content analysis of responses with regard to teachers' perception of bad students seem also to suggest that respondents in this study emphasize factors such as "Classroom Behavior", "Learning Attitude and Motivation", "Character" and "Effort to Learn" and than factors like "Performance", "Personality", "Physical appearance” and “Learning Aptitude” in their perception of bad students.

Perceptions of Current Students

Table 5.15 on the next page presents the content analysis results of responses to the question "What do you think of the students now?"

Nine categories of themes emerged from the data. The category that occurred most frequently in the answers of respondents to the above question is the "Character" category. In the evaluation of their current students, 111 responses given by 156 respondents who have provided valid answers to the above question cited 16 different
Table 5.15

Perceptions of Current Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Frequencies</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Pri</td>
<td>Sec</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Character</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Negative)</td>
<td>1. utilitarian</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. selfish</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. undisciplined</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. impolite/disrespectful</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. arrogant</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6. indifferent</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7. not flexible</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8. no moral values</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9. snobbish</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10. heart-less</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11. narrow minded</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12. bad character</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>13. like to complain</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>14. demanding</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15. materialistic</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16. cannot face challenge</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>40</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Learning Attitude &amp; Motivation</strong></td>
<td>(Negative)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>17. lack of interest to study</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>18. passive attitude</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>19. study for grades</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20. not serious in studies</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>(Positive)</strong></td>
<td>21. love to study</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>(Neutral)</strong></td>
<td>22. afraid to lose out</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>23. bad attitude</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>25</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Performance</strong></td>
<td>24. poor in studies</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Learning Attitude</strong></td>
<td>(Negative)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>25. dependent</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>26. cannot think</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>27. lack imagination</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>28. cannot apply knowledge</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Problems Facing
*(Neutral)*

<p>| | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>29. face lots of stress</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Parental Influence
*(Neutral)*

<p>| | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30. protected by parents</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Classroom Behavior
*(Negative)*

<p>| | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>31. don't ask questions</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32. don't participate in class</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>3</strong></td>
<td><strong>0</strong></td>
<td><strong>1</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Effort to Learn
*(Negative)*

<p>| | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>33. lazy</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*(Positive)*

<p>| | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>34. hardworking</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>4</strong></td>
<td><strong>0</strong></td>
<td><strong>2</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Personality
*(Negative)*

<p>| | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>35. unsociable</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*(Positive)*

<p>| | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>36. lively</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>3</strong></td>
<td><strong>0</strong></td>
<td><strong>0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### No Comments

<p>| | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Negative traits of character of current students. These traits include “utilitarian” (77 times), “selfish” (22 times), “undisciplined” (19 times), “impolite/disrespectful” (16 times), “arrogant” (7 times) “indifferent” (6 times), “not flexible” (4 times), “no moral values” (3 times), “snobbish” (3 times), “heart-less” (2 times), “narrow minded” (2 times), “bad character” (1 time), “like to complain” (1 time), “demanding” (1 time), “materialistic” (1 time), and “cannot face challenge” (1 time). It is interesting to note that the five most frequently quoted themes used to describe current students which include “utilitarian”, “selfish”, “undisciplined”, “impolite/disrespectful”, “arrogant”, have also been used frequently to describe the perceived bad students of respondents, as shown in Table 5.14, which are the opposite traits of ideal students who are “polite/respectful”, “disciplined”, “helpful” and “modest” as shown in Table 5.13. Similarly, as Table 5.15 shows, most of
the more frequently occurring themes that fall under the category of “Learning Attitude & Motivation”, for instance, “lack of interest to study” (24 times), “passive attitude” (16 times), “bad attitude” (2 times) and “not serious in studies (1 time) are also the themes that occurred in the data which describes the characteristics of bad students according to Table 5.14. It seems true from the above analysis here that respondents in this study have quite a negative view of the current students. This negative view is also reflected in the negative themes that fall under other categories, which respondents used to express their perceptions of current students. As shown in Table 5.15, the categories that have emerged from the data are basically dominated by themes that have negative connotations. For example, in the category of “Performance”, 14 respondents feel their current students are poor in studies; in the “Learning Aptitude” category, respondents feel their current students are either “dependent on teachers” (4 times), or “cannot think” (3 times), or “lack imagination” (2 times), or “cannot apply knowledge” (1 time). Other categories that contain negative themes include “Classroom Behavior” (4 times), “Effort to Learn” (4 times) and “Personality” (2 times). The limited positive themes that have emerged from the data such as “love to study” (2 times) under the “Learning Attitude & Motivation” category, “hardworking” (1 time) under the “Effort to Learn” category and “lively” (1 time) under the “Personality” category can almost be neglected for their low frequencies. Some neutral themes are also found in the data. For example, “study for grades” (10 times) and “afraid to lose out” (4 times) are identified under the category of “Learning Attitude & Motivation” category, “facing lots of stress” (7 times) and “protected by parents” (6 times) are classified under the “Problems Facing” and “Parental Influence” categories. Again, the frequencies of these neutral themes are much lower.
than the negative themes that emerged from data. This shows that the majority of the responses expressing subjects’ views of their current studies are negative in nature.

To sum up, the results of the content analysis of responses with regard to teachers’ perception of current students seem to suggest that respondents in this study give more emphasis to factors such as “Character”, and “Learning Attitude & Motivation” than to factors like “Performance”, “Learning Aptitude” and “Personality”, which is similar to the data analysis results with regard to teachers’ perceptions of ideal and bad students. Chinese teachers in this study are also found to have negative perceptions of their current students.

**Summary of Analysis Results of Teachers’ Perception of Students**

In order to sum up the content analysis results of respondents’ perceptions of students, the data elicited by the above three questions that investigate subjects’ perceptions of ideal students, bad students and current students were compiled. The frequencies and percentages of all themes and categories that have emerged from the three sets of data were then computed and presented in Table 5.16 on the next page and Figure 5.4 on page 138.
### Table 5.16
Perception of Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Ideal</th>
<th>Bad</th>
<th>Current</th>
<th>Sum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Character</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>polite/impolite/respectful/disrespectful</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>disciplined/undisciplined</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Learning Attitude &amp; Motivation</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>285</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have love or interest/lack of love or interest to study</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have initiative/passive</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Classroom Behavior</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attentive/not attentive</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hand in homework/not</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Effort to Learn</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diligent, hardworking/lazy</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Performance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good/poor in studies</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Learning Aptitude</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Personality</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Problems Facing</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Physical Appearance</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Parental Influence</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No comment</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The top five most frequently occurring categories of themes in the three sets of data are “Character” (335 times), “Learning Attitude & Motivation” (285 times), “Classroom Behavior” (197 times), “Effort to Learn” (104 times). Their frequencies are much higher than the other categories of themes that have occurred in the data such as “Performance” (55 times), “Learning Aptitude” (44 times), “Personality” (8 times), “Problems Facing” (7 times), “Physical Appearance” (6 times), and “Parental Influence” (6 times).
This seems to suggest that, first of all, "character" is the most important factor that influences Singapore Chinese teachers’ perceptions and evaluations of students. Among the different traits, whether students are respectful and polite or not (100 times), disciplined or undisciplined (72 times), seem to influence most teachers’ perceptions of them. The second most important factor that influences subjects’ perception of students is the factor of “learning attitude and motivation” which was mentioned 333 times in the data. Whether students “have the love or interest to study” (134 times), and whether students “have initiative to study” (78 times) or not will decide how they will be perceived by the subjects in this study. “Classroom behavior” is the third most important factor (197 times) teachers consider in their perception of students. As shown in Table 5.16, the perception of respondents of students seems to be influenced mostly by whether students are attentive in class and whether they hand in homework. Whether students
make efforts to learn (104 times) is the fourth most important factor that respondents consider in their perception of students. Factors such as "Performance", "Learning Aptitude", "Personality", "Problems Facing", "Physical Appearance", and "Parental Influence" did not seem to play an important role in shaping teachers' perception of students.

5.2.2.4 Perception of Self as Chinese Teachers

In this study, the perceptions of Singapore Chinese teachers of themselves as Chinese teachers in Singapore have been explored from two dimensions. The first dimension examines Singapore Chinese teachers' perceptions of their social roles in Singapore society. The second dimension studies Singapore Chinese teachers' perceptions of their career as Chinese teachers in Singapore. The following two sections will present the content analysis results with regard to these two dimensions of teacher thinking about themselves as Chinese teachers.

Perceptions of the Social Roles

Table 5.17 presents the results of content analysis of responses concerning subjects' perceptions about the role of Chinese Teachers play in the Singapore society.
Table 5.17

Roles Chinese Teachers Play

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pri</td>
<td>Sec</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 pass down culture</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother Tongue</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 help students grasp mother tongue</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 raise student interest in mother tongue</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Values/Character</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 instill moral values</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 shape student character</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insignificant Role</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 play insignificant /secondary role</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exam/Syllabus</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 produce exam result</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 help students pass exams</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 finish syllabus</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teach</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Play important role</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Care for Students</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 care for students</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role Model</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 be a role model</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patriotism</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 cultivate patriotism</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Needs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 meet social needs</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no comment</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On top of the list of roles Chinese teachers play in Singapore is the role “passing down culture”, which received the highest frequency (61 times). In fact almost half of the 134 respondents (46%) who have provided valid answers reported that “passing down
"culture" is the role Chinese teachers play in Singapore. The second most quoted role of Chinese teachers in Singapore (54 times) is the role of promoting the Chinese mother tongue which includes "helping students grasp their mother tongue" and "raising students' interest in the mother tongue". The third most frequently occurring role of Chinese teachers in Singapore cited in the data is the role of "Instilling moral values" and "shaping student character", which received the frequency of 41 times.

The fourth most frequently cited role of Chinese teachers in Singapore in the data (21 times) is the role of "helping students pass exams" or "finishing the syllabus". Other roles mentioned in the data include "to be a teacher" (6 times), "educate next generation" (1 time), "play important role" (3 times), "care for students" (3 times), "be a role model" (1 time), "cultivate patriotism" (1 time), and "meet social needs" (1 time). Their frequencies are much lower than the first four most frequently cited roles reported above. In the data, as shown in Table 5.17, as many as 20 responses were evaluations of their roles as insignificant or secondary.

To sum up, the content analysis results of the responses regarding Singapore Chinese teachers' perceptions of their social roles seem to indicate that the most primary roles Chinese teachers play in Singapore is to "pass down culture", "help students learn their mother tongue", "instill moral values and develop student character" and "help students pass exams". Some respondents feel their roles in the society are insignificant or secondary.
Rewards Chinese Teachers Get

Table 5.18 presents the kinds of rewards respondents perceive Chinese teachers get.

Table 5.18

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N=129</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From Students</td>
<td>students have good result</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>recognition/love/respect from students</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Students' interest in Chinese language &amp; culture has increased</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>students develop character/values</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>130</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From Work</td>
<td>salary</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>enjoyment from teaching</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>recognition from parents/school</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>15</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Rewards</td>
<td>no rewards</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>no comment</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As many as 20 respondents did not provide any responses and 13 of them felt there are no rewards for their job. Among the rewards respondents have listed, the majority of them come from students. Respondents felt they were rewarded when their "students have good result" (52 times), when they receive "recognition/love/respect from students" (48 times), when "students' interest in Chinese language & culture has increased" (22 times) and when "students develop character/values" (8 times). A few respondents have mentioned rewards gained from their work. For instance, "salary" (7
times), “enjoyment from teaching” (4 times) and “recognition from parents or school” (4 times) are the rewards they get.

To sum up the content analysis results of responses with regard to Singapore Chinese teachers’ perceptions about the rewards they get as Chinese teachers, it seems that most of the perceived rewards come from students when they achieve good results in studies, show love and respect for the teachers, or develop interest in Chinese language and culture and correct values.

5.2.3 Summary of Survey Results

Results of analysis of data elicited both by the 13 Likert-type statements in the second section of the survey questionnaire and the 7 open-ended questions in the third section of the questionnaire are summarized as follows according to the five dimensions of teacher thinking on which the present study focuses, which include Singapore Chinese teachers’ beliefs and perceptions of teaching, learning, students, and themselves as Chinese teachers.

Beliefs about Teaching

The research shows that Singapore Chinese teachers on the whole agree with the traditional approach to Chinese teaching, which is teacher-centered, examination-oriented
and structure-focused. Among teachers of different teaching experiences, the less experienced group are less traditional in their attitude toward the Chinese teaching approach. The junior college teachers are also less traditional in their attitude toward the approach to Chinese teaching than the primary and secondary school teachers.

The study also shows that apart from teaching language and language skills, Singapore Chinese teachers also believe in the teaching of Chinese culture, tradition and moral values as the aim of Chinese teaching.

**Beliefs about Leaching**

In order to learn Chinese well, Singapore Chinese teachers believe that correct attitude and high motivation is important. Singapore Chinese teachers also believe practice will lead to the successful learning of the language.

**Perception of Students**

The research results in the perception and evaluation of students, Singapore Chinese teachers attach more importance to students’ character, learning attitude and motivation, participatory classroom behavior, efforts to learn than to students’ performance in studies, learning aptitude, personality, physical appearance. The Chinese teachers in this study seem to have negative opinions of their current students.
Perception of Self as Chinese Teacher

The research results show that Singapore Chinese teachers perceive themselves to play the social roles of passing down Chinese culture, helping students to learn their mother tongue, instilling moral values, developing students' character and helping students to pass examinations. Some teachers feel their roles in the society are insignificant or secondary. With regard to Singapore Chinese teachers' perceptions about the rewards they receive as Chinese teachers, most Chinese teachers feel rewarded when students achieve good results in studies, show love and respect for the teachers, or develop interest in Chinese language and culture and correct values.

In Section 5.2, I have presented data analysis results of the survey. In section 5.3, I will present the data analysis results of the semi-structured interviews.
5.3 Results of the Interview

The presentation of results in this chapter will follow the "letting the data speak for itself" (Miles & Huberman, 1994) principle, and interview extracts will be quoted under relevant themes to allow teachers' voices to be heard. The results of the analysis will be presented under four topics: Singapore Chinese Teachers' (1) Beliefs about Chinese Teaching, (2) Beliefs about Chinese Learning, (3) Perceptions of Students, and (4) Perceptions of Self as Teachers.

5.3.1 Beliefs about Chinese Teaching

The analysis of interview data shows that Singapore Chinese teachers have four major concerns and emphases with regard to Chinese teaching. These four concerns and emphases include:

(1) an emphasis on the teaching of moral values;

(2) an emphasis on the teaching of texts and vocabularies;

(3) a concern with covering the syllabus;

(4) a concern with producing examination results.
5.3.1.1 Emphasis on the Teaching of Moral Values

The emphasis Chinese teachers in Singapore put on the teaching of moral values can be noted from the statements some respondents in this study made about the lack of content on moral values in the new series of textbooks. As one teacher said,

*I think the new sets of textbooks are too shallow in content. Not many texts have significant meanings in them. For example, in one unit, all three texts are all about animals. I don't know what to tell students.*

(#Transcript 36 Page 9)

When asked to elaborate on the meaning of “what to tell students”, this respondent explained,

*At least some kind of thought. For example, from the lesson of 'Bat and Spider' students can learn something about how to be a person. For example, we shouldn't be as impatient as the bat. However, there is no such content in this text. There is no thought, no content, no depth in it. That's very bad. You know nowadays there is no other subject that can teach students how to be a person.*

(#Transcript 36 Page 10)

Another teacher expressed her preference of selecting reading materials with moral contents as follows:

*Different teachers have different standards in choosing reading materials. I like to choose texts that have some philosophical theory or something that I can use to teach my students how to behave as a human being. Other types of texts I like to choose are newspaper articles that discuss some social or*
moral issues. I like to choose these materials to teach them. I very rarely choose a purely descriptive article to teach because in this way I can instill more things in their brain.

(Some teachers even evaluate the success of a lesson based on whether students have learned moral values as well as understood what they have read in that lesson, as one teacher described,

At the end of the lesson, if they have understood the text and the moral values in it, then I would think it is a very successful lesson.

5.3.1.2 Emphasis on the Teaching of Text and Vocabulary

The interview data analysis results show that when asked about the procedures of a typical Chinese lesson, interviewees in this study gave a major emphasis to the teaching of vocabulary and the text. This emphasis on the teaching of vocabulary and the text is reflected in the typical learning activities (see Table 5.19) and teaching activities (Table 5.20) reported by the interviewees.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Activities</th>
<th>Typical students' activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading the text silently</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading the text aloud</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doing exercises of the text</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussing contents of the text</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Answering questions</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retelling the text</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summarizing the paragraph</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

148
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Learning Activities</strong></th>
<th><strong>Frequency</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reporting discussion results of text</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>112</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making sentences using the new words</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Vocabulary-related</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading the new word aloud</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Underlining new words</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copying new words and their explanations</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Looking up new words in the dictionary</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reviewing new words</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having new words dictation</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matching words into phrases</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guessing the meaning of words</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Correcting each other's mistakes</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>70</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Others</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening to the tape</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talking about things</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imitating the teacher or tape</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watching video</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>14</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The most frequently mentioned typical learning activities (112 times) (see Table 5.19) such as “Reading the text silently”, “Reading the text aloud”, “Doing exercises of the text”, “Discussing the text content”, “Answering questions of the text”, “Retelling the text”, “Summarizing the paragraph”, “Reporting discussion results of the text’ are activities to learn the text. Similarly, the most frequently carried out teaching activities (166 times) (see Table 5.20) which include “Explaining new words in the text”, “Asking students questions about the text”, “Summarizing the text”, “Reading the text aloud”, “Showing students pictures or photos related to the text” are all directly related to the teaching of the text.
The other type of learning and teaching activities that are most frequently carried out in a typical Chinese lesson are related to the learning and teaching of vocabulary. As Table 5.19 shows, the vocabulary learning activities such as “Making sentences with the new words”, “Reading the new word aloud”, “Underlining new words”, “Copying new words and their explanations”, “Looking up new words in the dictionary”, “Reviewing new words”, “Having dictation on new words”, “Matching words into phrases” and “Guessing the meaning of words” have occurred 70 times in interviewees’ responses. Similarly, as shown in Table 5.20, the vocabulary teaching activities such as “Writing down new words on the board”, “Making sentences using the new words” and “Listing new words” have occurred 9 times in the interview data.

Table 5.20

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Typical Teachers’ Activities</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Text-related</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explaining new words and the meaning of the text</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asking students questions about the text</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Correcting students’ mistakes</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summarizing the text</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading the text aloud</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Showing students’ pictures or photos related to the text</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introducing background information on the text</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>166</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Vocabulary-related</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing down new words on the board</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Briefly introducing the content of the text</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making sentences using the new words</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giving directions to students</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listing new words</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>15</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The dominance given to the teaching and learning of texts and vocabulary in Chinese lessons can also be noticed in one teacher’s description of the characteristics of a successful lesson:

The most important characteristic of a successful lesson, I think, is that students are able to understand the text and express their opinions about the text. If you ask them questions with regard to the text they know the answer. If you can achieve your target, that is, your students have understood the vocabulary and know how to use it, I would feel successful.

In another teacher’s account of the activities in her class, the emphasis on text and vocabulary teaching is also apparent:

We have lots of activities. For example, in the first two periods, I try to explain the text once, and introduce the new words. At the same time, I let them copy the new vocabulary. I don’t have much time for them to revise. We have lots of work sheets to do. We cannot finish everything, but we will choose some.

5.3.1.3 Concern of Covering the Syllabus

Respondents in this study constantly expressed their concern about completing the syllabus on time. In fact, many teachers felt frustrated because they had to rush through the lessons in order to keep up with the schedule to finish the syllabus. In the process of this, a lot of them felt they had to sacrifice teaching quality. One teacher stated her
unhappiness over failing to do as good a job as she wished in order to cover the syllabus in the following words:

We have to catch up the progress in covering the syllabus. We have to finish the lessons. I often feel we have to go through the texts in a hurried manner. We therefore cannot be very thorough and make sure everybody understands. I often feel very bad about it, but what can we do?  

(Number Transcript 4 Page 3)

One teacher expressed her frustration over her inability to teach the way she thought would benefit the students most as follows:

For me, the most difficult problem I face in teaching is "time": I think it is "time". Sometimes, I cannot balance time and the teaching materials. If (MOE) asks us to do too much and gives us very limited time, and because we are limited by our exam scope and system, therefore, sometimes we cannot teach to our best. Sometimes, we come across a text that can be well used and you can teach a lot to students, however, you have to think, I can't, I only have four periods to finish this text, otherwise, I will be out of touch with the teaching schedule. It therefore becomes impossible for you to fully exercise your teaching ability.

(Number Transcript 4 Page 3)

Another teacher felt helpless for leaving the weak students behind in the process of keeping up with the jindu (progress in covering the syllabus):

We have limited teaching hours. So it is with make-up lessons. We have to rush and rush all the time. Except for those good ones who can absorb, it is very hard for the weak ones to absorb. We are in such a rush. They cannot absorb. We have to move on. We cannot take care of the weak ones.

(Number Transcript 15 Page 2)
The pressure on teachers to cover the syllabus in time arises mainly from teachers' concern to produce good examination results among students. One teacher explained this concern as follows:

*Nowadays the syllabus is very much rushed. We have to finish two units within a week. The students don't have time to revise, they have forgotten everything without any impression when it is year-end exam time. I have to rush and cover the syllabus before I can take time for revision. I have to start a new lesson as soon as possible, otherwise if you cannot finish the syllabus it is your fault. The exam questions are given until here, you have to teach up till here.*

(#Transcript 3 Page 1)

Another source of pressure to cover the syllabus comes from parents who are afraid their children may fall behind others, as one teacher explained:

*We must finish covering the lessons on time no matter what, otherwise parents will come to interrogate you: "Why is my child still reading lesson 2 while other children in an other school are already in lesson 3?" Parents are very afraid their children will lose out to other children.*

(#Transcript 10 Page 1)

### 5.3.1.4 Concern of Producing Examination Results

Many interview responses in this study denoted a concern for producing good examination results. This concern is not only reflected in the priority given to the hasty coverage of the syllabus so that time might be saved to prepare students for examinations but also in teachers' choices of classroom activities. For example, many teachers acknowledged that communicative activities are more interesting and beneficial for students, yet they told the researcher frankly that they could not often conduct such
activities because of the amount of time these activities might take. One teacher offered the following remarks:

I know students would like these types of activities. But we cannot afford the time, we have to prepare them for exams. The principal will evaluate us based on the exam results we produce. Every year there is school ranking. We have to maintain our ranking position if not improve it.

(#Transcript 16 Page5)

The reason for the concern to produce examination results has also been illustrated in the account of the above teacher. That is, teachers and schools are often evaluated purely based on the examination results they produce.

The attention the teachers give to examinations is also reflected in some teachers’ complaints over the low requirement of Chinese results for university entrance. They believed this low requirement of Chinese results compared to that of other subjects was the main reason for the lack of motivation among students to learn Chinese. One teacher stated:

Maybe it has to do with our Chinese policy all the while. Their English is better. Some of them feel they only need a C6 to get into the university, or even a D7 is fine. Therefore, they don’t care very much. And they can take the exam three times. If I don’t make it this year, I will do it next year. If I fail next year, I still have another chance. They can take the exam three times. Therefore they never take Chinese seriously.

(#Transcript 33 Page 2)

Examination grades were also the basis for one teacher to decide whether to reward her students or not:
If you scold them, blame them, you will make them lose heart. It will be better if you encourage them. Sometimes I will buy some sweets, some small gifts. When their dictation score has reached 1000, I will write “Congratulations, you have gained 1000” in their dictation book. Then I will give them a small present. Therefore, they will try very hard to study. Although they cannot get 100 or 90, I feel I have achieved my purpose.

(#Transcript 12 Page 2)

The concern to produce good results is so central to teachers’ work, some teachers gain their job satisfaction from the fact that their students have done well in examinations, as one teacher noted:

When my students gained good results and I accompany them to get prizes, I will have great sense of achievement in my work.

(#Transcript 36 Page 5)

Another teacher felt all her hard work was rewarded when students got good grades in examinations:

We Chinese teachers face lots of pressure. Apart from teaching, we have lots of administrative work. What’s more, we need to do administrative work in English. We have to hold on. We have been teaching like this for tens of years. So long as the students can get good grades we will be happy.

(#Transcript 16 Page 4)

5.3.2 Beliefs about Chinese Learning

The analysis of interview data has generated three key factors that Singapore Chinese teachers believe will contribute to the successful learning of the Chinese language. These three factors are: motivation, practice and students’ efforts.
5.3.2.1 Motivation

Half of the interviewees point out that students cannot learn the language well without motivation. In general, two types of motivation occurred in the responses of teachers: integrative and instrumental motivation (Gardner & Lambert, 1959).

**Integrative Motivation**

Under the category of integrative motivation the main themes identified are “love of Chinese language”, “love of Chinese culture” and “interest in the language”.

Stressing on the relationship between the “love of Chinese language”, the “love of Chinese culture” and learning, one teacher notes:

*The teachers in school should help students to love the language they are learning. The teachers themselves should try to inspire them. When they are teaching they should try to influence students with their love of the language. The children will then be able to appreciate. They will study when they have feelings for the language. ... ... I feel that language, if you ask them to learn by rote, they will study for the sake of studying, or study for the subject. I feel in that case, it will be very hard to learn the language. The love teachers have for the culture should gradually influence students. Then, we should really introduce more... like going to tea with them.*

(#Transcript 1 Page 2)

Other teachers consider whether the students show interest in what they are learning as a kind of criterion for judging success or failure in teaching and learning:

*I feel when your students are interested in what they are learning, you have already gained.*

(#Transcript 12 Page 1)

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If they are interested in this subject, they can therefore learn. .. .. Some students are not interested and don’t like your class, then, you won’t be successful. They won’t listen to you.

(Transcript 9 Page 1)

In the development of the integrative motivation among students, respondents feel that teachers play an important role in three ways. First, as quoted previously, teachers can become a source of inspiration when they try to influence students with their own love for the Chinese language and Chinese culture in teaching. Second, when a good relationship between teachers and students is established students will develop an interest in the language out of respect and love for the teacher:

No matter which subject, I think the relationship between teachers and students is very important. To establish a good student-teacher relationship doesn’t mean we have to cater to their likes, it is like, if we have a good relationship with them, they start from respecting you to loving you, then he will want to study.

(Transcript 7 Page 1)

This view of the effect of good relationship between teachers and students upon students’ motivation is further illustrated in the joke one respondent had with her student:

Once my student told me: “I didn’t like Chinese. I used to hate Chinese very much. This year I have started to like Chinese.” Then I said: “Do you like Chinese or like me?”

(Transcript 12 Page 1)

The third way teachers can motivate students to learn the Chinese language is through teachers’ tireless efforts in “encouraging” students, as one teacher illustrated:

The encouragement of the teacher is also very important... If the students now want to learn Chinese well, teachers must help them a lot, assist them, encourage them, encourage them to have interest in the subject and keep their interest all the time. Because they may have interest in the first year,
they may not have interest in the second year. Because they may change if they come across other subjects or other pressures. Therefore, when they cannot learn Chinese well, we have to spend a lot of efforts to teach them, and at the same time encourage them to have interest in the language and help them to know the importance to learn Chinese well.

(#Transcript 43 Page 5)

The fourth way teachers can motivate students is by introducing interesting teaching and learning activities such as using CD-ROMs and organizing culture appreciation activities. One teacher explained her effort to make the Chinese class interesting as follows:

…….Therefore, we have to make our lessons very lively, very interesting. Really, sometimes myself like to read some jokes. I will write down the interesting things and when I teach some words I will tell a touching story to attract their attention. Sometimes they like them and tell me: “It is very interesting, teacher.”

(#Transcript 12 Page 6)

Apart from teachers, the attitude of parents will also influence the integrative motivation of students. If parents show favour to the language their children are more likely to develop an interest in the language:

If parents at home can give emphasis to Chinese, they either like or give emphasis to Chinese, more or less they will influence their children ….. if parents at home put emphasis on Chinese, I feel, if they ask their children to do more reading, or talking or introducing some literature works, films, so that they can have more Chinese……

(#Transcript 4 Page 2)

However, if parents are indifferent to the language, their children will adopt the same attitude. This is pointed out by one of the respondents:

If we want to improve the Chinese level of students, the most important thing to do is to change the attitude of parents and the society toward Chinese. Some parents say "It is OK, I have money, if my child is not good
Instrumental Motivation

In the dimension of instrumental motivation, interviewees notice that students’ instrumental motivation to learn the Chinese language is affected by two factors: the examination system and the usefulness of Chinese in the society. One teacher explained how the unfavourable examination system with regard to Chinese language has lowered students’ motivation to learn the language as follows:

Maybe it has to do with our Chinese policy all the while. Their English is better. Some of them feel they only need a C6 to get into the university, or even a D7 is fine. Therefore, they don’t care very much. And they can take the exam three times. "If I don’t make it this year I will do it next year. If I fail next year I still have another chance." They can take the exam three times. Therefore, many students feel they only need a "pass" in the subject. They don’t make an effort to do and to listen. The problem lies in here, they don’t want to learn.

Another teacher pointed out the relationship between students’ learning motivation and the socio-economic status of Chinese this way:

The most important factor is the attitude of the society toward Chinese and the value of Chinese in this society. People are always very pragmatic. Just like now China starts to develop, and some people have started to emphasize on Chinese...... Well, I think it is quite impossible to ask everybody to take Chinese seriously unless one day China becomes very strong and everybody has to learn its language. I feel it all depends on how China is.
5.3.2.2 Effort

The third key factor interview respondents in this study believe will decide whether students can do well in the learning of Chinese language is the factor of “effort”. Many respondents feel the main reason for the failure in Chinese language learning is students’ lack of effort, as one teacher vividly remarked:

None of these students are stupid. When you scold them, they can argue very well with you, but when you ask them to study, they won’t raise a finger. It is like squeezing toothpaste. If you don’t push them, they won’t move ahead.

(#Transcript 3 Page 3)

In describing the difficulty teachers face in helping students who refuse to make efforts to learn the Chinese language, one teacher lamented:

As for the weak students, they would make no efforts to learn at all. It is like pulling the ox up on the tree. It takes the power of nine oxen and two tigers to pull them up. Still you fail to pull them up.

(#Transcript 22 Page 2)

5.3.2.3 Practice

Practice is another key factor which interviewees believe contributes to the successful learning of Chinese, as one teacher pointed out:
If they want to learn Chinese well, they have to do more listening, speaking, reading and writing. Their problem is that they don’t practice enough.

This belief in practice is also reflected in the frequent use (18 times) of the word “more” (see Figure 5.5) in the responses of the interviewees.

Among the four language skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing, the interviewees seemed to attach more importance to the practice of reading. This emphasis on reading can be illustrated by the computer printout of a word frequency analysis (See Figure 5.5) run on the computer software Longman Concordance.

**Figure 5.5**

*Longman Concordance Results: Frequency of “more”*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concordance for &quot;more&quot; (18 lines)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Text: APPEND-1.DOC (6c)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Line</th>
<th>Text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>we should really introduce more ... going to tea with them, a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57</td>
<td>you must read more. They don’t have time to read</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57</td>
<td>they don't have time to read more. They read more English. I of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57</td>
<td>me to read more. They read more English. I often encourage th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57</td>
<td>ten encourage them to read more and the good students write m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57</td>
<td>nd the good students write more compositions. I give them com</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>109</td>
<td>encourage students to read more, and put knowledge in their b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>111</td>
<td>no, I still prefer reading more books. If there are good TV s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>127</td>
<td>I think they should read more and increase the amount of re</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>127</td>
<td>concerned you have to read more, speak more. They have too li</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>127</td>
<td>u have to read more, speak more. They have too little of this</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>142</td>
<td>unless we give them more exercises and provide them so</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>159</td>
<td>important thing is to read more.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>193</td>
<td>Therefore students now pay more attention now to Chinese. We</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>204</td>
<td>id learn to talk to people more. I sometimes watch the TV pro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>210</td>
<td>in touch with the language more. I am from a Chinese school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>216</td>
<td>n class. They need to read more newspaper and books other tha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>216</td>
<td>Chinese classes. There are more these kinds of students in ou</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The word “read” appeared extremely frequently (29 times) in teachers’ responses with regard to how they think students can learn Chinese well. One teacher stated this emphasis on reading as follows:

*I think they should read more and increase the amount of reading. As far as language is concerned you have to read more……*

(#Transcript 16 Page 1)

Another teacher, agreeing with the view that students should practice more in reading in order to learn Chinese well, complained of the lack of practice in reading as well as writing Chinese among his students. This teacher further pointed out the emphasis given to the English language and the subsequent lack of time for Chinese language learning as the reason for the lack of practice in Chinese:

*You must read more. They don’t have time to read more. They read more English. I often encourage them to read more and the good students I encourage them to write more compositions.*

(#Transcript 9 Page 1)

The emphasis given to the English language rather than Chinese language which discouraged students to spend time practice their Chinese language skills is also noted by another teacher who blamed the parents who failed to buy Chinese books for their children to read:

*Parents now on the whole emphasize English. They buy very few Chinese story-books. Less than half of the families have Chinese books. Very few students borrow Chinese books in the library. Maybe it is because of this environment…*

(#Transcript 16 Page 1)
The importance Singapore Chinese teachers attach to practice in learning can also be seen from the ways some interview respondents discuss their own successful Chinese language learning experiences. As one teacher recalled:

*I read a lot when I was in the primary school, such as the book ‘Journey to the West’. There were no televisions or computers at that time. The only pastime I think was reading books and newspapers. Maybe, I think, that's how I grasped the language.*

(#Transcript 14 Page 1)

5.3.3 Perception of Students

The data analysis of interview responses shows that interviewees in this study are most concerned with the character of students in their perceptions of them. They seem to think more highly of students who show respect to teachers than students who only do well in their studies. As to current students they are teaching, they perceive them as disrespectful, undisciplined, spoiled and uninterested in the learning of the Chinese language.

5.3.3.1 Value Good Character

Interviewees in this study seem to judge a student as good or bad mainly based on his/her character rather than his/her academic performance. One teacher highlighted the importance of character in the following way:
I think character is the most important. Every time I tell my students that even though they get good grades, when they go out to work, they won’t have an “A” printed on their faces and expect people to recruit them. Even if your degree is not very high, but your trustworthiness, your character can win people’s trust, this is the most important.

(#Transcript 1 Page 3)

One type of character interviewees in this study mention the most frequently is the character of respectfulness toward teachers. One teacher felt it was more important for students to be respectful to teachers than to do well in their schoolwork:

If a student is good at his schoolwork but does not have good character, I would not regard him as a good student. He is not as good as the student who is weaker in studies but respectful to teachers. Some students are weak in their studies but they respect teachers. For example when he sees that you are carrying very heavy bags, he will come to you and say “Teacher, I will help you.” But those who are good in their studies, they may not do this. To me, having good character is more important. If a student is a bit weak, maybe it is because he is not that smart. But if he is willing to study, I will like this type of students better.

(#Transcript 16 Page 2)

Similar views are reiterated by another teacher, who criticized those students who do well in their studies but fail to show respect to teachers:

Some students that are good at their studies think they are superior, they seem to consider everybody and everything beneath their notice. He won’t put you in their eyes. Take a look at the good class, after they graduate they won’t recognize you. On the contrary, those that are in the weak class, you often punish him but he will call you and when he meets you he will greet you. It seems that those that are good at their studies pretend not have seen you. He will take another way around. I won’t appreciate this type of students even if they are good at their studies.

(#Transcript 17 Page 2)
5.3.3.2 Value Positive Attitude

Apart from the character of a student, another quality of students valued by interviewees in this study is the attitude toward their studies. Teachers in this study appreciated active attitudes and efforts students made to study and listed them as the major characteristics of good students. For example, one teacher commented:

*Good students are more active in their studies. They will finish their homework quickly when you give to them, because they are afraid of losing out. The bad students, most of them, just drift along. They do their homework casually and hand them in. Some of them even need to be pushed before they will do the homework.*

(#Transcript 15 Page 1)

Another teacher provided a similar comment:

*The difference lies in their attitude. Good students take initiatives. Whatever you ask them to do, they will quickly do it. Bad students are very sloppy. We have to spend great efforts to push them. They don’t hand in their homework in time. They don’t care.*

(#Transcript 22 Page 2)

5.3.3.3 Perceptions of Current Students

In the eyes of most interviewees in this study, the students they are teaching currently are disrespectful, undisciplined, uninterested in the learning of the Chinese language, and poor at Chinese.
Disrespectful

Compared with students in the past, many teachers complained that students now showed little respect to teachers. For example, one teacher complained that some of her students would argue with her when she pointed out their mistakes:

*They don't know how to respect teachers and follow the right way. They don't know how to treat teachers. They don't know you are a teacher and how they should respect you. When they have made a mistake they won't admit their mistakes but argue with you.*

(#Transcript 24 Page 1)

Another teacher mentioned that nowadays students did not show as much respect to teachers as they used to in the past because they no longer stood up to answer teachers’ questions:

*In the past, whatever you say to them, they are very attentive. When you asked them questions, they would stand up respectfully to answer your questions. Now they won't stand up even if you ask them.*

(#Transcript 37 Page 5)

Some teachers blamed parents for the disrespectful attitudes of their students. They felt that the disrespectful attitude of parents had influenced their children in their attitude toward teachers, as one teacher complained:

*The reason that students have less respect for teachers now is because of their parents. Parents in the past were very respectful of teachers. Now, they pretend not to see you or know you when they see you sometimes. Everything is "you give my child ..., you give my child compositions, you give my child this and that".*

(#Transcript 8 Page 1)
One teacher felt that one of the reasons today’s parents no longer showed much respect to teachers was because parents now had better education and felt they were equal if not better than teachers intellectually:

Parents no longer respect the teachers any more. In our generation, our parents didn’t know many words. They were very respectful of teachers. They would listen to whatever the teacher said. They thought they had sent their children to school for them to be taught by teachers. The teacher could teach them to become useful persons, etc. Parents now are more educated. Some of them consider themselves infallible, and better than teachers.

(#Transcript 7 Page 2)

According to one teacher, parents often doubted and challenged teachers’ authority in front of their children, which this teacher believed discredited teachers in the eyes of their children:

Parents now give me the impression that they don’t respect teachers. I don’t know what they have against the teachers. or they feel, sometimes teachers say one word… you feel that what you gain cannot match what you give. Sometimes they doubt about teachers’ teaching method. Sometimes they come to argue with you. Some other times they have something else against you. Unconsciously, the way parents talk at home more or less will influence their children, it will, greatly influence, the child listens to what parents say, what they say will more or less influence them. As far as I am concerned, since I have been teaching for such a long time and I am about to retire, I feel I am not respected.

(#Transcript 4 Page 2)

Western influence is another reason some teachers felt that parents and students today no longer respected teachers. One teacher pointed out that a lot of parents today were educated in the English language and therefore influenced by western values, which did not emphasize the respect students should show to teachers. In explaining the reason why parents today are disrespectful to teachers, one teacher said:
I think the main reason lies in the medium of education. Because in the English-speaking schools or English schools, they don't have the so-called Zun Shi Zhong Dao [respect the teacher and observe the right way]. In our Chinese tradition teacher enjoys a special position. They don't know that. Sometimes, the terrible thing is, they even say: "My father is a tax payer and if he doesn't pay tax where are you going to work?"

Another teacher felt that the Western way of bringing up children, which had influenced modern parents had blurred the boundary between the older and the younger generation, which ultimately contributed to the disrespect students show to teachers:

It is because of their families. I think parents are too indulgent of their children. Now they have fewer children and therefore spoil them. They will give their children whatever they ask for. They don't respect the elders at home. I just gave them an oral test recently. It was about the issue of getting along with elders. The question asks whether one can scold parents. He said if his parents had done wrong he could then scold. Our value in the past was that whether the parents were right or wrong we should respect them and not scold them. Parents now think they should treat their children as friends and they can discuss with their children on things. The bordering line between parents and children has gradually blurred. He would tell you that is how he talks to his mother."

Another teacher concurred:

"I dare not say. Maybe it has to do with the change of the environment, or maybe more of the parents of our students are English educated. Their approach to teach their children is very different from us who were educated in Chinese. They give more freedom to their children and emphasize more on individual development. They very seldom discipline them. Maybe there is this sort of influence. I myself am not very clear."

Many teachers believed that the lack of respect for teachers among students was caused by the neglect of discipline at home. One teacher analyzed the reason students were less respectful than those in the past in the following way:
Twenty years ago, children were very respectful of teachers. Maybe they were influenced by their families. They were very respectful of teachers. Now the situation is that some students like to talk back to teachers. Maybe in the past they had big families, or bigger families. There were at least four siblings in a family. Now families are small. Parents tend to spoil their child. In addition, in Singapore, everyone wants to live a better life, therefore both the father and the mother have to go out to work. It will indeed be very difficult for the family to live a comfortable life if only one person works. As a result, the maid spends more time with the child. Parents seem to pay less attention to teaching their children the right way.

Other teachers felt the mass media also played a role in influencing students to show less respect to teachers. One teacher said:

_I always think it has to do with the influence of the general mood of the society. A lot of TV programs.... Although the producers of some TV programs have their own views, they think they can teach students from the adverse side. I always feel they did not achieve their aims. On the contrary, they have instilled the improper, incorrect thoughts in students' minds._

Undisciplined

Teachers in this study not only perceive their students as disrespectful but also feel they are undisciplined. In comparison to the students in 1970s, one teacher felt students now did not follow the "order" in the classroom:

_Students now are more open and freer in their thoughts. When we were students, that is, in 1970s, we had the fear and respect for teachers. Now they seem to be very free, very equal to teachers. They talk whenever and whatever they want to talk. They seem to be too free, as if there is no order. For example, they should have raised their hands before they speak, they don't do that. They talk whenever and whatever they like. Sometimes this affects the order in the classroom._
Another teacher found it very hard to control her students nowadays:

Students now are very restless. If you relax a little bit, they will start to make noises. They will not listen to you. You have to scold them all the time. They will not do what you ask them to do. You have to order them or you have to warn them that you won’t let them go for recess or keep them in school when everybody else can go home. Only then will they say, OK, they will do what you ask them to do.

(#Transcript 22 Page 6)

On most occasions of the interviews, teachers blamed parents for the lack of discipline of their children:

Most parents have to go out to work nowadays. They don’t have much time for their children. Sometimes in order to release their guilt for not spending time with their children, they spoil their children and give them whatever they want and allow them to do whatever they want to do. The child therefore thinks he can do whatever he wants in school.

(#Transcript 37 Page 6)

Some teachers felt modern parents were too protective of children and therefore undermined the disciplinary power of teachers in class. One teacher explained the reasons why students were harder to discipline now:

The reason students are harder to teach now is because of their parents. They often come to complain. We cannot scold them. We cannot do anything now. They will go to the principal and complain about you. It is not OK if I discipline, neither it is OK not to discipline. In the past, if we stare at them, they will understand we are not happy about what they are doing. Now they won’t care even if you stare at them ten times. They don’t care. Sometimes, they would tell you that you cannot point at them with your fingers.

In a word, parents are much more protective of their children than before. If the teacher gives them some opinions, they will think of some, make some reasons or find some excuses to defend their children. In a word, parents now feel their children are always right.

(#Transcript 5 Page 2)
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(#Transcript 5 Page 2)
Uninterested in Learning Chinese

Another complaint teachers have with their current students is that they show little interest in learning Chinese. One teacher felt students learned Chinese just because they had to pass the Chinese examination in order to move on to the next level of school:

Most of the students don't like Chinese very much. They only treat it as a subject, as an exam subject. They only need to pass it. They do not really like Chinese and look for some books to read. They don't treat it as part of Chinese culture. They treat it as a subject. They have to read because they have exams.

(#Transcript 19 Page 2)

According to one teacher, her students are so reluctant to study Chinese even ice-cream didn't help very much as incentives:

My biggest problem is that I don't have enough tricks. At first, I bought ice-cream for them. They would be very happy and learn a little bit. But after two days, there was no ice-cream, and they wouldn't want to study.

(#Transcript 18 Page 4)

Interviewees in this study believe two main reasons have caused students today to lose motivation to study the Chinese language. First of all, the low requirement of Chinese results for university entrance and the numbers of chances one student has to take the Chinese O' level Examination demand less effort and motivation from students to study Chinese well, as one teacher pointed out:

Some students never pay attention to Chinese. They feel they don't need to spend too much time on Chinese. Maths and science subjects are more important. Comparatively speaking, they don't spend that much time on Chinese.

(#Transcript 26 Page 1)
Secondly, teachers feel the discouragement from parents for their children to spend time to study Chinese also adds to the lack of motivation of students to learn the Chinese language. One teacher stated:

*The problem we are facing now is some parents don't regard Chinese as very important. Therefore, here, you are “pushing”, here you are “squeezing”, here you are “encouraging”, at home, they pour a basin of cold water. For example, we recommended readings to students, the children were very excited and they ran home, their parents said 'Aiya, no use'.*

(\#Transcript 1 Page 6)

Another teacher also had the same observation:

*In fact, in the kind of environment of Singapore, there are lots of opportunities to learn. Really, there are lots of chances. But sometimes parents have their favorites. Some parents say: “Chinese does not matter, Chinese is not important, you can take it easy.” Therefore, on the surface, Chinese is very important. Chinese is this and that. But in fact, in their judgment, they still have favoritism. Therefore, sometimes you know they may not do what they say.*

(\#Transcript 12 Page 3)

**Low Proficiency in Chinese**

Compared with students in the past, interviewees in this study feel the proficiency of current students in the Chinese language is much lower and their knowledge about Chinese literature is very limited:

*I feel their vocabulary is very small and their Chinese level is very low. Basically these, like for example when I try to draw an analogy using Zhu Ge Liang (a main character in Chinese classic literature) in the Three Kingdoms, they will ask who is Zhu Ge Liang. They won't understand. You have to explain to them. If you mention the Empty City Trick, they will not understand. You have to tell the whole story. After you finish the story, they won't remember. Next time they come across Zhu Ge Liang, they don't know who he is again. Therefore, it is very hard to teach nowadays.*

(\#Transcript 33 Page 3)
In describing the frustration she had with the low level of Chinese of her students, one teacher said:

*Now I am in charge of Sec 3 and also in charge of their discipline problems. When they have committed discipline problems, if you ask them to write down what they have done wrong, you cannot bear to read it. In the end, I have to surrender and allow them to write in English. I can read English. Then they can finish writing very fast.*

(Transcript 41 Page 4)

Another teacher had the same complaint of the weakness of students in Chinese:

*My Primary 6 students are very weak. They can only write one or two correct sentences in their compositions. We have to spend great efforts giving them remedial lessons every week. But when they go home, how should I say, when they come back to school the next day, their mistakes are still not corrected.*

(Transcript 10 Page 2)

### 5.3.4 Perceptions of Self as Chinese Teachers

With regards to teachers' perceptions of themselves as Chinese teachers the themes that emerged from the data include teachers' perception of their roles and status in the society, and the rewards they receive as Chinese teachers.

#### 5.3.4.1 Roles of Chinese Teachers

Teachers in this study have perceived themselves playing the role of passing down Chinese culture and values to the next generation. One teacher found this role challenging:
We Chinese teachers face the challenge of passing down the basic Chinese value system and making Singapore society less westernized.

(Transcript 12 Page 7)

In commenting on the major difference between Chinese teachers and English teachers, one teacher pointed out that Chinese teachers played a special role in teaching the traditional Chinese values to students:

Chinese teachers emphasize more the traditional values and moral education. English teachers are more westernized in their thoughts. Chinese teachers emphasize more on promoting some values, for example, when some teachers find students make some mistakes in their daily life, they point them out and correct them. English teachers might not want to do so.

(Transcript 13 Page 2)

One teacher described how she played the role of instilling values in her students in a Chinese lesson:

I don’t know whether the other subject teachers like mathematics teachers will add something about moral values. It is very difficult, very difficult to have a connection. For example, just now we talked about the attitude of Li Nan Xing [Singapore’s famous actor], if we had more time we could have discussed more. Maybe they will say he is not right because he is acting in a show. I will then tell them, apart from acting, it is true with all other profession. You will have opportunities like this and you can bring in things.

(Transcript 18 Page 4)

Most teachers are proud of the role they have played as a culture transmitter, such as the teacher who said the following:

Since I was Chinese educated, I feel proud to be a Chinese teacher because we are teaching our mother tongue to our next generation. Therefore, I feel very comforted that I have not let myself nor my people down.

(Transcript 43 Page 8)
A few teachers, however, are unhappy to be stereotyped as the moral corrector and consider such stereotypes as a burden. One such teacher explained:

*It is not right for Chinese teachers to carry the burden of moral education. We know it is our responsibility but if you over emphasize, students will have a bad impression of us. That is, they feel when Chinese teachers come in the class they will talk about how to behave. This way, we find it even more difficult to carry out this task. They emphasize too much. Anything that has gone wrong, they will say Chinese teachers should have this culture, this value and everything else. Thus students don't have very good impression on us. Why do English teachers allow us to do this but not Chinese teachers? Students will feel we are especially strict with them. For example, when we want to show a film to students, we have to consider what shots or what content are in the film. The GP teachers don't have to worry about all these. They can even take students to see a film on homosexuals. Students will then feel we are very rigid. They don't understand why we cannot show them that kind of film as we like. If you show them a controversial film, you will be blamed and accused. They will say: “How can this be? How can the Chinese teacher do such a thing?” They have the stereotype of Chinese teachers. They have to like this not that. This is wrong. We are also moving with the times. Why are we so special?*  

(#Transcript 32 Page 2)

5.3.4.2 Status of Chinese Teachers

The two themes that describe the status interviewees think Chinese teachers in Singapore have in comparison with teachers of other subjects are that Chinese teachers are inferior and that Chinese teachers are insignificant. One teacher stated that Chinese teachers had an inferior status in the following words:

*Chinese teachers are not treated as being as important as other subject teachers. In a society where English is the dominant language, Chinese teachers are to some degree under discrimination. The path of Chinese teachers is not easy.*  

(#Transcript 1 Page 4)
Another teacher felt that Chinese teachers were often overlooked and ignored by the school because they were not as vocal as other teachers due to their lack of proficiency in English, which was the administrative language in schools:

For a long time, Chinese teachers have been overlooked or ignored. Frankly speaking, we are the silent group. We feel this way because we cannot use the administrative language efficiently to express ourselves. We are apprehensive whenever we try to speak because others may find our mistakes. As a result, we try to speak less so as to make less mistakes. In the end, we dare not speak or speak less and less. When we attend meetings, we just sit there, sometimes we are asked to give our opinions, but we don't understand the meaning very well. If we say anything it might be wrong. Therefore, we always sit at the very back of the room. Only the English teachers express their opinions about things.

(#Transcript 43 Page 11)

5.3.4.3 Rewards for Chinese Teachers

Three types of rewards for teachers have emerged from the interview data. The most frequently cited type of reward for Chinese teachers is the love and respect they get from students. One teacher recalled how she was touched by the love and care of her students and felt it was worthy to be a teacher as follows:

One time I told my students I couldn't have my lunch because I had to give them make-up lessons and I didn't have the time to eat. We finished school at one o'clock, the make-up lesson had to start at 1:30, and the queue was very long, I didn't have time to buy my lunch, therefore, sometimes I had to go hungry until 3:30. I told them I couldn't have my lunch because of them. Some students ran to the canteen to buy a piece of bread for me. At that time I was very much touched and felt it worthy to be a teacher.

(#Transcript 12 Page 4)

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The second type of reward teachers get is also from students. That is, when students had gained more interest in the Chinese language and culture or achieved good results in their studies as a result of teachers' hard work, teachers feel extremely gratified and rewarded. One teacher said:

The biggest reward is when your students have accomplished something and they come back to see you and tell you that you have taught them and you have taught them well, and they have learnt lots of things from you. They are very happy because they become successful. It is this one sentence. This is my sense of achievement. When they have achieved something, it means we have also achieved something. Therefore this is our greatest reward. There is not much other reward.

(#Transcript 37 Page 11)

The third type of reward teachers think they get is from teaching itself. One teacher explained:

Teaching on the whole is a very good kind of enjoyment. You can see a child grow from knowing nothing to being able to do great things after they graduate. You don't need to ask for anything else. It is very satisfying.

(#Transcript 6 Page 2)

5.3.5 Summary of Interview Analysis Results

To sum up the results of the interview data analysis, with regard to Singapore Chinese teachers' beliefs about teaching, it seems that Singapore Chinese teachers believe that they should not only teach the Chinese language but also more importantly, the cultural and moral values to their students. The most typical teaching activities reported by the Chinese teachers in this study seem to be related to the teaching of texts and vocabulary. There is also a concern among Chinese teachers in this study about covering the syllabus on time and producing good examination results.
Concerning Singapore Chinese teachers’ beliefs about Chinese learning, the analysis of the interview data has indicated that Chinese teachers in this study have felt that the motivation of students, both integrative and instrumental, the amount of practice students have, and kind of efforts students make to study Chinese will decide whether they will learn Chinese successfully.

Regarding the perception of students, Chinese teachers in this study are found to value good character and positive attitude in students. The interview data also indicate that Chinese teachers in this study seem to have quite negative opinions about their current students. They have complained that their students are disrespectful, undisciplined, uninterested in learning Chinese and very poor at Chinese.

With regard to Singapore Chinese teachers’ perceptions of themselves as Chinese teachers, the interviews show that Chinese teachers in this study see themselves as playing the role of passing down Chinese culture and moral values to students. In spite of the important social role Singapore Chinese teachers perceive themselves to be playing, they feel inferior, insignificant and ignored in the society. As for the rewards they get, many teachers feel rewarded when students show love and respect to them and when students make progress in their studies and character development.

In section 5.3, I have presented the analysis results for the semi-structured interviews. In section 5.4, I will go on to present the results of metaphor analysis.
5.4 Results of Metaphor Analysis

In this section, I will present the metaphors generated from three sources of data: (1) the responses to the open-ended survey questions; (2) the responses to the interviews; and (3) classroom discussions during in-service teacher-training courses. As Section 4.6.4 described, during the analysis of the metaphors, the metaphorical expressions that have appeared in the above three sets of data were first identified and listed. Conceptual metaphors were then generated from the metaphorical expressions and later put into different categories based on different themes they express. In the process of categorizing metaphorical expressions to generate conceptual metaphors, difficulties have been experienced in deciding which category a certain metaphorical expression should go when this expression had more than one meaning. On these occasions, I have chosen to rely on the more significant meaning the teacher wants to express through the metaphorical expression based on my acquaintance with them and what they have said during the teacher training sessions. For example, the metaphorical expression *candle* may suggest the teacher is a light giver or a sacrifice, as the candle burns itself to give light. I have chosen to put this expression under the category that has generated the conceptual metaphor TEACHER AS SACRIFICE because teachers use the expression *candle* in the process of discussing the sacrifices Chinese teachers make for students.

Table 5.21 on the next page is a summary of the metaphors generated in this study.
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<td>1. Know-all</td>
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<td>慈父和慈母</td>
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<td>救世主</td>
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<td>28. Babysitter</td>
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<td>30. Tuition teacher</td>
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<td></td>
<td>保姆</td>
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<td></td>
<td>课堂上的娘，姨，姐</td>
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<td></td>
<td>补习老师</td>
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<td>12. TEACHER AS SACRIFICE</td>
<td>31. Candle</td>
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<td></td>
<td>32. Scapegoat</td>
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<td></td>
<td>蜡烛</td>
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<td></td>
<td>代罪羔羊</td>
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<td>Social Status of Chinese Teachers</td>
<td>13. TEACHER AS CULTURE-TRANSMITTER</td>
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<td></td>
<td>33. The missionary of cultural transmission</td>
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<td></td>
<td>34. Torch passer of Chinese culture</td>
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<td>35. Spreader of Chinese culture</td>
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<td>36. Guardian angel of mother tongue</td>
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<td>37. Passer of incense</td>
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<td></td>
<td>38. Backbone</td>
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<td></td>
<td>39. Firm rock in midstream</td>
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<td>肩负文化传承使命者</td>
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<td>中华文化的传薪者</td>
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<td>中华文化的传播者</td>
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<td>母语守候神</td>
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<td>中坚分子</td>
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<td>中流砥柱</td>
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<td>Social Status of Chinese Teachers</td>
<td>14. TEACHER AS INFERIOR PEOPLE</td>
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<td></td>
<td>40. Second class teachers</td>
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<td>41. Second class citizens</td>
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<td>42. Less important figures</td>
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<td>43. Filipino maids</td>
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<td>第二等教师</td>
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<td>菲佣</td>
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<td>15. TEACHER AS UNPROFESSIONAL PEOPLE</td>
<td>44. Typist</td>
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<td>45. Printer</td>
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<td>46. Cleaner</td>
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<td>47. Data input person</td>
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<td>48. Clerk</td>
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<td>49. Office boy</td>
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<td>50. Copy cat</td>
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<td>打字员</td>
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<td>资料输人员</td>
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<td>抄写者</td>
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<td>16. TEACHER AS VOICELESS PEOPLE</td>
<td>51. Dumb</td>
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<td></td>
<td>52. Silent lamb</td>
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<td></td>
<td>53. The target of anger</td>
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<td></td>
<td>54. Old ox</td>
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<td></td>
<td>55. Silent ploughman</td>
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<td></td>
<td>56. Modern antique</td>
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<td>哑巴</td>
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<td>沉默的羔羊</td>
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<td>出气筒</td>
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<td>默默耕耘者</td>
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<td>现代的古董</td>
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As Table 5.21 shows, 56 metaphorical expressions were found in the data. These 56 metaphorical expressions were generated into 16 conceptual metaphors, which were then put into three major categories. The first category of metaphors has described what Chinese teachers are to their students. The second category of metaphors expressed the perception of Chinese teachers in this study with regard to their social roles. The third category of metaphors has revealed the perception of Chinese teachers of their social status. In the following three sections, I will analyze these three categories of metaphors respectively.

### 5.4.1 What Teachers are to Students

The first category of metaphors generated in this study expresses teachers’ perception of who they are in relation to students. As Table 5.21 shows, 12 conceptual metaphors were generated from 32 metaphorical expressions that have expressed Chinese teachers’ perception of who they are in relation to students. These 12 conceptual metaphors include: TEACHER AS KNOWER; TEACHER AS SOURCE OF POWER; TEACHER AS TRAINER; TEACHER AS GUIDE; TEACHER AS ROLE MODEL; TEACHER AS ARTIST; TEACHER AS ENGINEER; TEACHER AS COUNSELOR; TEACHER AS NURTURER; TEACHER AS SAVIOR; TEACHER AS CARE-TAKER; and TEACHER AS SACRIFICE. Underlying these metaphors are the beliefs Chinese teachers hold with regard to teaching and learning. In the following sections, I will examine these 12 conceptual metaphors and what they have revealed about the thinking of Chinese teachers in this study respectively.
5.4.1.1 TEACHER AS KNOWER

As shown in Table 5.21, 6 metaphorical expressions (No.1 to No.6), which include *know-all*, *live dictionary*, *omnipotent Ph.D*, *Chinese know-all*, *kaleidoscope*, and *knowledge transmitter*, all express the concept that 'the teacher is a knower'. Therefore they lead to the generation of the conceptual metaphor TEACHER AS KNOWER.

In fact, such metaphorical expressions as *know-all*, *Chinese know-all* not only express the view that the teacher knows but also that his/her knowledge is complete. The metaphorical expressions *omnipotent Ph.D*, *kaleidoscope* also emphasize the completeness of knowledge teachers are supposed to possess, as Ph.D holders are often seen as having extensive knowledge in their special areas, and the *kaleidoscope* is known to provide multi-dimensional views. The metaphorical expression *live dictionary* further indicates that teachers do not only possess complete knowledge but their knowledge is true and authoritarian, as people normally do not question what they find in dictionaries. The metaphorical expression *knowledge transmitter* has expressed the view of Chinese teachers in this study that, teachers not only possess knowledge but also transmit their knowledge to students.

The perception of the teacher as someone who possesses complete and authoritative knowledge, as indicated by the above metaphorical expressions, has several implications for the understanding of Chinese teachers' views about the nature of teaching and learning. First of all, if teachers are seen as having complete and
authoritative knowledge, students will be discouraged to provide answers or opinions different from those of the teachers. Secondly, when the teacher is viewed as the transmitter of knowledge, the student will then be perceived as the receiver of knowledge instead of the contributor of knowledge. In other words, the conceptual metaphor TEACHER AS KNOWER, as expressed by the first 6 metaphorical expressions, seems to imply the belief of Chinese teachers in the a transmission model of teaching and learning in which teachers pass knowledge to students, instead of a constructive model of teaching and learning in which teachers and students construct knowledge together.

5.4.1.2 TEACHER AS SOURCE OF POWER

As shown in Table 5.21, the metaphorical expressions monkey king, thousand-hand Buddha and superman (No.7 to No. 9) contain rich images of powerful figures that appear in both western and oriental cultures, generating the conceptual metaphor TEACHER AS SOURCE OF POWER.

In the classic Chinese story “Journey to the West”, “monkey king” is able to change into 72 different forms to confuse its enemy. He is able to play all kinds of tricks and solve all kinds of problems. In using monkey king to describe themselves, the Chinese teachers in this study are suggesting that they are expected to have the skills and capability to solve any problems students may have. Similarly, both the “thousand-hand Buddha” and “superman” are well known figures in eastern and western culture who
possess extraordinary power to help those in need. The comparison of themselves to these two powerful figures further reflects the perception of the teacher as someone who is powerful and resourceful, able to solve all kinds of problems for students. The teacher is therefore seen as the giver of power and the student, the beneficiary of power.

5.4.1.3 TEACHER AS TRAINER

In comparison to the conceptual metaphors TEACHER AS KNOWER and TEACHER AS SOURCE OF POWER, the conceptual metaphor TEACHER AS TRAINER generated by the metaphorical expressions coach and trainer of animals (No. 10 to No. 11), shown in Table 5.21, focuses more on the transmission of skills from the teacher to the student. It is interesting to note that in the metaphorical expression trainer of animals, Chinese teachers in this study used the word "animals" to describe the students they are supposed to train. As animals are usually more difficult to teach than human beings, the use of "animals" here seems to indicate the difficulties teachers face in transmitting their skills to the students.

As the typical activities the trainer or coach normally does is to model and give instructions, the comparison of the teacher to the trainer or coach therefore reflects the views of Chinese teachers in this study with regard to what teachers are supposed to do in class, that is, to offer models and to give instructions. The role of the student in class therefore becomes to follow the models and instructions teachers give.

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5.4.1.4 TEACHER AS GUIDE

Both the metaphorical expressions *tour guide* and *road guide* (No. 12 to No. 13) have presented the TEACHER AS GUIDE, who have the obligation to provide directions for students. As the *tour guide* is assumed to know the way and lead the way, and the *road guide* is the reference people turn to when they get lost, the comparison of the teacher to them therefore suggests a view of the teacher as the leader that students should follow in order to reach their destinations in learning.

5.4.1.5 TEACHER AS ROLE MODEL

The metaphorical expression *role model* (No. 14) in Table 5.21 explicitly presents the TEACHER AS ROLE MODEL for students. When the teacher is the role model in learning, what is expected of the students is naturally to follow the model teachers provide instead of creating their own models.

5.4.1.6 TEACHER AS ARTIST

The conceptual metaphor TEACHER AS ARTIST is generated from the two metaphorical expressions *artist* and *performer* (No. 15 to No. 16), shown in Table 5.21. To compare themselves to artists and performers, who are often known for their creativity and ability to entertain, the Chinese teachers in this study seem to express their
perception of the nature of teaching as creative and entertaining with the students acting as the masterpiece they work on and the audience they entertain.

5.4.1.7 TEACHER AS ENGINEER

Both metaphorical expressions engineer and engineer of the soul (No. 17 to No.18), present the teacher as an engineer, who has the ability to put things together and make things work. In comparing themselves to engineers, the Chinese teachers seem to say that they can fix things for their students including their emotional or spiritual well-being, as expressed in the metaphorical expression engineer of the soul.

5.4.1.8 TEACHER AS COUNSELOR

The conceptual metaphor TEACHER AS COUNSELOR is generated from the two metaphorical expressions counselor and listener to students' problems (No.19 to No.20), shown in Table 5.21. The presumption underlying this metaphor is that the teacher is expected not only to meet the academic needs but also the emotional or spiritual needs of students.
5.4.1.9 TEACHER AS NURTURE

The metaphorical expressions *gardener, second parents and loving father and mother* (No.21 to No.23), shown in Table 5.21, present the teacher as someone who is a care-giver, nourishing, influencing and fostering the potential capabilities of the learner. As parents are often concerned not only with their children's academic progress but also the total development of the child, the teacher being compared to parents in the above metaphors suggests a view of the teacher as someone that cares for the total development of their students including teaching them right from wrong.

5.4.1.10 TEACHER AS SAVIOR

In the metaphorical expressions *doctor and rescue personnel* (No. 25 to No.26), shown in Table 5.21, the teacher is seen as someone who can save students from life threatening problems. The metaphorical expression *savior of the world* (No.24) emphasizes more on the role Chinese teachers play in solving spiritual problems of students. The *woodpecker* metaphorical expression suggests that teachers can protect students from bad influences in their lives just as the woodpecker protects the tree from harmful worms. It seems obvious that the conceptual metaphor TEACHER AS SAVIOR, generated from the above three metaphorical expressions, highlights the important role of the teacher in the lives of the students as an important solver of both their physical and spiritual problems.
5.4.1.11 TEACHER AS CARE-TAKER

The metaphorical expressions baby sitter, mother, auntie, elder sister in the classroom and tuition teacher (No. 28 to No.30), shown in Table 5.21, have presented the teacher as the care-taker of students. The choice to use feminine elders such as mother, auntie, elder sister to describe teachers highlights the special care teachers take to help their students to learn in class. The metaphorical expression of tuition teacher highlights the special efforts teachers make after class to help students with their studies, as the job of the tuition teacher is to help students with their schoolwork problems after class.

5.4.1.12 TEACHER AS SACRIFICE

The similarity between the metaphorical expression candle (No.31) and scapegoat (No. 32) presented in Table 5.21 is that they both indicate a quality of sacrifice. The candle burns itself in order to give light to others. The scapegoat sacrifices itself so that others can live without blame. The association of teachers to the candle and the scapegoat not only suggests the sacrifice teachers make to help their students succeed and at the same time promotes the teacher to a position of nobility.

In summary, the first 32 metaphorical expressions shown in Table 5.21 have generated 12 conceptual metaphors, which have perceived the teacher as the knower, the source of power, the trainer, the guide, the role model, the artist, the engineer, the counselor, the nurturer, the savior, the care-taker and the sacrifice. Underlying this
perception of the teacher is the belief of Chinese teachers in this study in the transmission model of teaching and learning. In this model, knowledge is transmitted from the teacher to the students instead of constructed by the teacher and the students; power and skills are given to students at the disposal of the teacher; directions and models are presented to students to follow; wisdom and counsel come from the teacher; sacrificial love and care are bestowed upon students by the teacher. In every aspect, the teacher enjoys a superior position compared to students. Further discussions of what these metaphors have revealed about the thinking of Chinese teachers in this study will be presented in the next chapter.

5.4.2 Social Roles of Chinese Teachers

As shown in Table 5.21, seven metaphorical expressions (No.33 to No. 39) present the TEACHER AS CULTURE TRANSMITTER. They describe Chinese teachers as the missionary of cultural transmission, the torch passer of Chinese culture, the spreader of Chinese culture, the guardian angel of mother tongue, the passer of incense. The missionary of cultural transmission metaphorical expression emphasizes the sense of mission Chinese teachers feel to transmit Chinese culture to the next generation in a more and more westernized society like Singapore. The torch passer of Chinese culture expression highlights the sense of obligation of Chinese teachers to pass down the Chinese culture to the next generation, as the duty of the torch passer is to pass the torch to the next person. The guardian angel of mother tongue seems to suggest Chinese teachers are protecting the mother tongue from being harmed by something. In the
Singapore context, the harm may come from the competition and dominance of the English language. As in Chinese culture, to “pass the incense” means to give birth to a son that will carry the family name, seeing Chinese teachers as passer of incense highlights the significant role Chinese teachers play in preserving the Chinese identity of students. This importance attached to the job of the Chinese teachers is also reflected in such metaphorical expressions as backbone and firm rock in midstream.

To sum up, the second category of metaphors generated in this study has presented the perception of the Chinese teacher in Singapore as playing an important role of transmitting the Chinese culture to the next generation.

5.4.3 Social Status of Chinese Teacher

The third category of metaphors reflects Singapore Chinese teachers’ perceptions of their status in the education system. These metaphors seem to indicate a pessimism and dissatisfaction with their status.

5.4.3.1 Inferior

The metaphorical expressions second-class teachers, second-class citizens, and less important figures (No.40 to No. 43) present the TEACHER AS INFERIOR PEOPLE. They indicate a sense of inferiority Chinese teachers have to other teachers in the school.
This feeling is also reflected in the metaphorical expression *Filipino maids* (No. 43), as in Singapore, the Filipino maids enjoy lower social status in the society.

Metaphorical expressions No.44 to No. 50 in Table 5.21 present the TEACHER AS UNPROFESSIONAL PEOPLE, which further expressed the sense of inferiority of Singapore Chinese teachers feel about their status through the comparison of their work to the work of the typist, the printer, the cleaner, the data input person, the clerk, the office boy and the copy cat, who are not usually considered as professionals as teachers.

### 5.4.3.2 Ignored

The metaphorical expressions *dumb, silent lamb, anger-releasing tube, old ox, silent ploughman*, (No. 51 to No. 55) all present the TEACHER AS VOICELESS PEOPLE, and therefore ignored under many circumstances. The *silent lamb* and *anger-releasing tube* metaphorical expressions reveal a sense of helplessness and sacrifice Chinese teachers may feel about their situations. The *old ox* and *silent ploughman* metaphorical expressions present the Chinese teacher as someone who are hardworking and make no complaints. The sentiment expressed through the metaphorical expression *modern antique* (No. 56) is that in a modern society such as Singapore, Chinese teachers are like antiques that belong to the past.
5.4.4 Summary of Metaphor Analysis

The above analysis of the metaphors generated spontaneously from classroom discussions of teacher training sessions, an open ended questionnaire and semi-structured interviews first of all, shows that Singapore Chinese teachers perceive themselves as the authority and provider of knowledge, power and skills. They also see themselves as protectors and care takers of students and believe they have made sacrifices to help their students. These perceived roles of Chinese teachers suggest a belief in teacher authority and teacher-centeredness in teaching.

Secondly, the metaphor analysis has also revealed a strong awareness of Singapore Chinese teachers to transmit Chinese culture to the next generation. This discovery is not surprising as the government of Singapore made it a policy to use the mother tongue as a way of preserving traditional culture and values.

Thirdly, through the analysis of teachers' metaphors, Singapore Chinese teachers are found to feel inferior and ignored in the Education System. They maintain a very negative view of their profession.

So far, I have presented the research results of the survey, the semi-structured interviews and the metaphor analysis. In the next section, I will summarize these results according to the four major areas of teacher thinking this study has been focusing on.
5.5 Summary of Research Results

In this section, the findings generated by means of three different research methods, that is, the survey, semi-structured interviews and metaphor analysis on Chinese teacher thinking with regard to the four major research areas of teacher thinking in this study are summarized.

First of all, with regard to Singapore Chinese teachers’ knowledge and beliefs about teaching, the results have shown that Chinese teachers in this study have regarded the aim of Chinese teaching as not only the teaching of Chinese language and language skills but also the teaching of Chinese culture and moral values. The research results also indicate that Chinese teachers in this study believe in the transmission model of teaching, which is teacher-centered, exam-oriented and text-based. The belief in the transmission model of teaching is also reflected in the metaphors Chinese teachers have used to describe who they are in relation to students: TEACHER AS KNOWER; TEACHER AS SOURCE OF POWER; TEACHER AS TRAINER; TEACHER AS GUIDE; TEACHER AS ROLE MODEL; TEACHER AS ARTIST; and TEACHER AS ENGINEER. Apart from transmitting knowledge and skills, Chinese teachers in this study have believed teaching is also to provide emotional and spiritual support to students, as expressed in the following metaphors: TEACHER AS COUNSELOR; TEACHER AS NURTURE.; TEACHER AS SAVIOR; TEACHER AS CARE-TAKER; and TEACHER AS SACRIFICE.
Secondly, with regard to Singapore Chinese teachers’ knowledge and beliefs about learning, the research results have shown that Chinese teachers in this study believe that the key factors that lead to the successful learning of Chinese language include: correct learning attitude; high learning motivation especially interest and love of Chinese language and culture; more practice, especially in the reading skill; and efforts students make.

Thirdly, with regard to Singapore Chinese teachers’ perception of the students, the research results have revealed that Chinese teachers in this study are found to base their perception of students on their character, their learning attitude and motivation, their classroom behavior and the efforts they make in learning. Therefore, according to the Chinese teachers in this study, good students are polite, respectful, disciplined, helpful, responsible and attentive in class. They hand in their homework on time, and actively participate in asking and answering questions in class. On the other hand, bad students are undisciplined, impolite, disrespectful and rebellious, and not attentive in class. They neither hand in their homework promptly nor participate actively in classroom activities. They have poor learning attitudes and low learning motivation, and lack effort to learn. As for the current students they are teaching, Chinese teachers in this study see them as utilitarian, selfish, undisciplined, impolite, disrespectful, arrogant and indifferent, lacking in interest to study the Chinese language, passive in learning attitude, and poor in their proficiency in Chinese. This perception of the current students seems to indicate an overall dissatisfaction with the students today, as the characteristics of their current students resemble those of the bad students.
The research results further indicate that Chinese teachers have blamed parents for bringing a bad influence on their children. They have felt parents today are disrespectful of teachers, because they are better educated and influenced by western cultural values, which they believe do not hold teachers in as high respect as in eastern cultural values. They have also blamed parents for not disciplining their children at home. Apart from parents, Chinese teachers in this study believed the mass media have played a role in encouraging disrespect for teachers among students by undermining teachers’ image and status in the films they show. As for the lack of interest to study the Chinese language, Chinese teachers in study have blamed the exam systems in Singapore, which demands lower Chinese language proficiency to get into higher educational institutions.

Finally, with regard to Singapore Chinese teachers’ perception of themselves as Chinese teachers in Singapore, the research results suggest that Chinese teachers in this study feel rewarded when students show love and respect for them or when they have made progress in their studies and increased interest to learn the Chinese language.

As for the social roles Chinese teachers play in Singapore, the research results show that Chinese teachers see themselves playing the role of passing down Chinese language, culture and traditional values to students. They see this role of transmitting the Chinese traditional culture to the younger generation in Singapore as a mission and they act as guardian angels in preserving the Chinese language and culture in a more and more westernized society. Another social role Chinese teachers in this study feel they play is developing moral character among students. Helping students pass exams so that students
can move on to the next level of the academic ladder is an additional role Chinese teachers in this study perceive themselves as playing in the society.

In contrast to the perception of the importance of the social roles Chinese teachers perceive themselves to be playing, Chinese teachers in this study view their social status as inferior and insignificant. They regard themselves as "second class teachers" and "second class citizens" in the society. They feel ignored and disadvantaged in a society where English is given prominence and western values become more and more influential. They use metaphors such as "dump", "silent lamb", "the target of anger", "old ox", "silent ploughman" and "modern antique" to describe their inferior and disadvantaged position in the society. They even perceive their job as unprofessional as the job of the "typist", the "printer", the "cleaner", the "data-input person", the "clerk", the "office boy" and the "copy cat".

In the next chapter, I will discuss these research findings within the socio-cultural context of Singapore.
CHAPTER 6  DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

6.1 Introduction

The previous chapter has presented and analyzed the findings of this research, which helps to describe Chinese teacher thinking in Singapore, particularly in four areas: teaching, learning, students and self as a Chinese teacher. The purpose of this chapter is firstly to interpret these findings from a socio-cultural perspective, examining how Chinese teacher thinking is embedded in the socio-cultural context of Singapore. Secondly, this chapter aims to explore the underlying reasons why Chinese teachers in the teacher training courses are reluctant to adopt the innovative pedagogical changes, as mentioned at the beginning of the thesis.

6.2 Chinese Teacher Thinking: a socio-cultural perspective

In this section, I will focus on examining some of the major characteristics of Chinese teacher thinking which have emerged from this study, and discuss these characteristics within the socio-cultural context of Singapore.
The research findings presented in the last chapter have shown eight major characteristics of Chinese teacher thinking in Singapore, that is, a strong belief in: (1) the teaching of Chinese culture; (2) the priority of moral education; (3) the teacher/student hierarchy; (4) the teaching of the text; (5) the transmission model of teaching; (6) the importance of examinations; (7) the importance of motivation, efforts in learning; and (8) negative perception of self.

In the following sub-sections, I will discuss these characteristics of Chinese teacher thinking within their socio-cultural context.

6.2.1 Strong Belief in the Teaching of Chinese Culture

Chinese teacher thinking in Singapore, as shown in this study, is marked first of all, by a strong belief in the teaching of Chinese culture. In fact, Chinese teachers in this study have regarded the teaching of Chinese culture as one of the most important aims of Chinese teaching. They even described themselves as the missionary of cultural transmission, the torch passer of Chinese culture, the spreader of Chinese culture and the passer of incense. Implied in these metaphors is a strong sense of mission among Chinese teachers in this study to pass down the Chinese culture to the next generation. This strong belief in teaching the Chinese culture among Chinese teachers in this study will be easier to understand if we consider the socio-linguistic context of Singapore. As discussed in Chapter 2, in order to counteract Westernization as a result of rapid increase of English usage and industrialization in the country, the Singapore Government hopes Mandarin
will play the functional role of cultural ballast for the Chinese Singaporeans. This functional role of Mandarin in conveying the Chinese traditional values to the ethnic Chinese Singaporeans has been further highlighted in the last ten years of the Speak Mandarin Campaign, in which the central message is that speaking Mandarin will help Chinese Singaporeans better understand and appreciate their culture and heritage. Therefore, the strong belief in the teaching of Chinese culture among Chinese teachers in this study can be seen as arising from an awareness of the functional role of Mandarin in Singapore society.

Furthermore, the desire to teach Chinese culture among Chinese teachers in this study may reflect the Chinese long tradition of “passing the incense to the next generation”, that is, to carry on the family name or family identity. For the Chinese teachers in this study, the knowledge of Chinese language comprises a significant part of a Chinese identity in a multi-racial country. That is why, when asked the question by students, “teacher, why must I learn Chinese?”, many teachers answered: “because you are Chinese”. The desire to keep the Chinese ethnic identity among the younger generation of Chinese through the learning of Chinese culture and Chinese language may have grown stronger now for the Chinese teachers, as English has emerged as the more popular language of the young Chinese population.

Additionally, the desire to teach Chinese culture among Chinese teachers in this study reflects their reluctance to see the next generation become too westernized, as Chinese teachers in this study seem to believe that western culture is bad and corrupting.
This prejudice against western culture is reflected in the fact that Chinese teachers in this study have associated bad behaviors of students, such as being impolite and undisciplined, with the "western way of behaving". They have also blamed parents for being too "westernized" to show respect to teachers. One teacher even complained that the students in his class no longer raised their hands to ask for permission to speak, because they had been influenced by the "western way of behaving in class". Other "western behaviors" of students, which some Chinese teachers in this study find hard to accept, include patting teachers on their shoulders, calling teachers by their first names, failing to greet teachers in the corridor, and answering questions without standing up. Many teachers in this study see these "western ways of behaving" impolite and unacceptable, as they go against the "Chinese ways of behaving in class and treating teachers", which regard the teacher as superior always and treat them with great respect.

In fact, the negative perception of Western culture among Chinese teachers in this study reflects the social rejection of the so-called "Western values" as decadent and eroding for an Asian society in Singapore. As Clammer (1997) observed, in Singapore, "Western values" had often been demonized and used as a contrast to "Asian values". Included among the latter are universally accepted as "good values" such as belief in hard work, thrift, honesty and self-discipline.

Naturally, for many Chinese teachers, the way to change students' "western ways of behaving", which are undesirable, is to teach them the "Chinese ways of behaving" by teaching them the Chinese culture.
To sum up, the above discussion of the first characteristic of Chinese teacher thinking has shown that the strong belief of Chinese teachers in the teaching of Chinese culture has, in fact, developed both from an awareness of the social functional role of Mandarin in Singapore to preserve the Chinese identity of Chinese Singaporeans, and from a voluntary desire to extend their own culture and discourage the development of undesirable student behaviors as a result of too much western influence.

6.2.2 Priority of Moral Education

Apart from the teaching of Chinese culture, Chinese teachers in this study are also found to prioritize the teaching of moral values. They have regarded the teaching of moral values as one of the most important aims of Chinese teaching. In the choice of teaching materials, they have preferred the kind of materials that contain moral lessons, or those that can teach students “how to behave as a human being”. They have also judged students as “good” or “bad” based on whether they have such moral characteristics as being “polite”, “respectful”, “disciplined”, “helpful”, “responsible”.

The emphasis Chinese teachers in the current study give to moral education may be explained first of all, by the traditional emphasis on moral education in Chinese societies, under the extensive influence of Confucian educational thought.
Confucius believed that learning was not to be focused only on attaining the skills for a particular profession, but for growth in moral judgment and self-realization. For example, Confucius said “In ancient times, learning was for self-improvement; nowadays men study in order to impress people” (Waley, 1989:187). Confucius told his students that “the horse Chi [a famous horse] was not famed for its strength but for its inner qualities” (Waley, 1989:189). This emphasis on moral education and character development has been consistent in all Confucius’ teachings and is reflected especially in his descriptions and discussions of the traits of Junzi, a superior man or a gentleman with moral perfection. The topic of Junzi formed a significant part of the teachings of Confucius. In fact, in Analects, the classic book that collects Confucius’ teachings, Junzi was mentioned 107 times (Xu 1982) and his traits were contrasted with that of the Xiaoren (commoner) in 60 of the 492 chapters of Analects.

According to Confucius, a Junzi “sets his heart upon moral force” (Waley, 1989:104) whereas a Xiaoren sets his heart upon material comfort. A Junzi always seeks goodness as “the gentleman who ever parts company with Goodness does not fulfill that name”, and “never for a moment does a gentleman quit the way of Goodness” (Waley, 1989:103). A Junzi “takes as much trouble to discover what is right ” (Waley, 1989:105) and “in his plans, thinks of the Way ” (Waley, 1989:199). He “takes the right as his material to work upon and ritual as the guide in putting what is right into practice”(Waley, 1989:197). A Junzi “does not preach what he practices until he practiced what he preaches”(Waley, 1989:91). A Junzi “can see a question from all sides without bias” (Waley, 1989:91). He “behaves with courtesy to others and observes the rules of ritual”

As indicated in the above description of the ideal person Confucius believed education should produce, the ultimate objective of teaching, according to Confucius is to convert people into *Junzi* with moral perfection. This priority given to moral education and the development of character in Confucian educational thought has impacted the thinking of Chinese educators even until today. For example, in interviews with 135 Chinese university student teachers, Jin and Cortazzi (1998:752) found that in their description of good students, Chinese teachers felt that "the moral standard is very important, showing politeness, manners, being willing to help others". These Chinese teachers were proud to claim that their school "insists in putting moral education in the first place." In a study on the cultural trends of basic attitudes and approaches of Chinese students in a university in China, Wang (2001) discovered 81.82% of the students attached importance to the development of their personality during studies. In a critique of the more learner-centered, process-oriented Target-Oriented Curriculum (TOC) initiative in Hong Kong from a moral perspective, Cheng and Wong (1996) indicated that the purpose of education was not only to enable students to learn but also to train character and develop conscientiousness and altruism. This purpose to cultivate character among students in education is also reflected in the well-known Chinese phrases such as *jiao shu yu ren* (teaching the book and cultivate the person) and *chuan dao shou ye*, (preach the Way and teach the profession).
Apart from the traditional Chinese emphasis on moral education, the emphasis the Singapore government attached to moral education may also explain why Chinese teachers in this study have given priority to the teaching of moral values. As discussed in Chapter 2, moral education in Singapore has become a tool for the Singapore government to build up a cohesive society with Asian values. It is interesting to point out that the kinds of character valued by Chinese teachers in this study are those typical of the "Asian values" promoted in Singapore, like being "polite", "respectful", "disciplined", "helpful", and "responsible", in contrast to the so-called "Western values", which include individualism and materialism.

Additionally, the special role Chinese teachers have played in the instruction of moral education subjects in schools for the past three to four decades may have also contributed to the emphasis given to the teaching of moral values among Chinese teachers in this study. As discussed in Chapter 2, as early as in the 1960s, mother tongue teachers, including the Chinese teachers in this study, were often assigned to teach the moral education syllabuses such as "Education for Living", "Being and Becoming", "Good Citizen", "Religious Knowledge" and "Civics and Moral Education". This association of moral education subjects and mother tongue teachers may provide another explanation why Chinese teachers in this study have attached great emphasis on the teaching of moral values.

Furthermore, the desire to teach moral values may have also arisen from the dissatisfaction among Chinese teachers in this study with the lack of moral character
among the current students they are teaching. As this study has found out, Chinese teachers hold a very negative view of their current students. They have used words indicating a lack of good moral character, such as “utilitarian”, “selfish”, “undisciplined”, “impolite/disrespectful”, “arrogant”, “indifferent”, “not flexible”, “no moral values”, “snobbish”, “heart-less”, “narrow minded”, “bad character”, “like to complain”, “demanding”, “materialistic”, and “cannot face challenge” to describe their current students. This lack of good character among their current students may have prompted Chinese teachers in this study to attach more importance to the teaching of moral values.

To sum up, the above discussion indicates that the priority Chinese teachers give to moral education, which has marked the thinking of Chinese teachers in this study, can be attributed to the traditional emphasis on moral education in Chinese culture, the emphasis on moral education in the Singapore society, and the special role Chinese teachers have taken as subject teachers of moral education, and the dissatisfaction of Chinese teachers with a lack of the right moral character among current students they are teaching.

6.2.3 Teacher/Student Hierarchy

The third characteristic of Chinese teacher thinking that emerges in this study, is the belief in the hierarchical relationship between the teacher and the student. As presented in the last chapter, Chinese teachers in this study have used twelve conceptual
metaphors to describe who they are to the students. These 12 conceptual metaphors include: TEACHER AS (1) KNOWER; (2) SOURCE OF POWER; (3) TRAINER; (4) GUIDE; (5) ROLE MODEL; (6) ARTIST; (7) ENGINEER; (8) COUNSELOR; (9) NURTURER; (10) SAVIOR; (11) CARE-TAKER; and (12) SACRIFICE. As discussed in the last chapter, in all of these metaphors, the teacher is seen as superior to the student, as the teacher is assumed to be the giver, and the student therefore to be the receiver, of knowledge, power, skills, spiritual and emotional support to the student.

Similar conceptual metaphors that reflect a hierarchical relationship between the teacher and the student are also generated in Cortazzi & Jin’s (1999) study. In this study, 113 Chinese students were asked to complete the sentence stem: A good teacher is ... . From their responses, Cortazzi & Jin (1999:168) found that among the dominant metaphors the 113 Chinese students had used to describe a good teacher include were such conceptual metaphors as “A GOOD TEACHER IS A PARENT; A SOURCE OF KNOWLEDGE; A GUIDE; and A MODEL FOR MORAL EXAMPLE”.

The hierarchical relationship between the teacher and the student reflected in the metaphors in this study as well as Cortazzi & Jin’s (1999) study reflects the traditional Chinese cultural view of the teacher/student relationship. According to Confucius, there are five relationships (Wulun) that two humans can have. They are the relationship between ruler and ruled, father and son, older brother and younger brother, husband and wife, friend and friend. Confucius believed that every party in these five relationships had their proper roles and duties. Except for the friend and friend relationship, in each of the
relationships, there was a superior person and an inferior person. The superior person was supposed to set a good moral example for and bestow care on the inferior person, and in return the inferior person owed the superior person his or her full respect and obedience. Confucius said “Let the prince be a prince, the minister a minister, the father a father and the son a son” (Waley, 1989:166). He believed that propriety to behave according to the roles in all relationships was important to maintain social harmony. Confucius taught his students that “a young man’s duty is to behave well to his parents at home and to his elders abroad” (Waley, 1989:84), because “surely proper behavior towards parents and elder brothers is the trunk of Goodness” (Waley, 1989:83).

Although there were no direct comments on the teacher/student relationship in the *Analects*, from the relationship Confucius demonstrated with his students, it could be inferred that Confucius presumed the relationship between teachers and students resembled that of the ruler and the ruled and that of the father and son. Therefore, in the teacher/student relationship, the teacher is in the superior position and is supposed to set a good example for and bestow care on the student and the student is in the inferior position and should respect and obey the teacher.

The importance of propriety of behaviors in the above social hierarchical relationships has been observed by a number of scholars who have researched Chinese society (see, for example Hsu, 1985; Chu, 1985; Hwang, 1987, Scollon and Scollon 1994). In their ethnographic study of L2 lectures in Hong Kong, Flowerdew and Miller (1995) discovered that most expatriate lecturers they interviewed found their students to
be extremely deferential. Szalay et al. (1994:245) found that “PRC students are particularly inclined to view their teachers in an idealized role endowed with a great deal of authority, esteem, and respect”. They further discovered that Chinese students did not only see the teacher as mediator or transmitter of knowledge, but also as “an idealized role model, a resource for solving all types of human problems, a model for lifestyle as well”. Similarly, Ho & Crookall (1995) also found that both Chinese teachers and students have tacit assumptions in the teacher-student hierarchical relationship which set the classroom context in which students showed their respect for the teachers as authorities, and the teachers showed their love (in the sense of pastoral care) for the students. In their discussion of the fundamental differences in the interpretations of authority by Asians and Westerners, Scollon and Scollon (1994:21) pointed out that “the Asian focuses on the care, nurture and benevolence (or their absence) of the person in authority while the westerner tends to focus on the restriction, limitation and dependence of the person over which the authority is exercised”.

The Chinese cultural perception of the teacher as the authoritative figure in the hierarchical teacher/student relationship explains why, as reflected in the first six conceptual metaphors mentioned earlier, the teacher is presented as the authority of knowledge, the giver of power, the deliverer of skills, the provider of directions, the model to be followed and the creator of new things. It further sheds light on the underlying reasons why Chinese teachers in this study are found to believe in the dominant roles teachers should assume in the classrooms, as the decision-maker, the corrector and answer-provider of students’ problems.
Additionally, the Chinese cultural perception of the teacher also as the “care-giver” helps us understand why Chinese teachers have used the other six of the 12 metaphors mentioned earlier, presenting the teacher as the provider of care, love, and other spiritual and emotional guidance and counsel to students. Furthermore, the Chinese cultural perception of the reciprocal duties between the teacher and the student explains why the Chinese teachers in this study have put being “polite/respectful” on top of the list of characteristics of the kind of ideal students they wish to have, and why the Chinese teachers feel dissatisfied with the students that have shown no respect them.

To sum up, the above discussion of the third characteristic of Chinese teacher thinking in Singapore suggests that the belief in the hierarchical relationship between the teacher and the student among Chinese teachers in this study is rooted in the traditional Confucian views of human relationship.

6.2.4 Preoccupation with the Teaching of Text

Chinese teachers in this study are found to attach great importance to the teaching of the text, as they spend most of their time in class explaining the meaning of texts to the student. According to the reports of Chinese teachers in this study, the most typical learning and teaching activities carried out in their classrooms are related to the comprehension of the texts. Chinese teachers in this study have believed that practice in reading is the key factor, leading to the successful learning of the Chinese language.
This preoccupation of text teaching among Chinese teachers in this study reflects the Chinese tradition of "valuing of the written language" (Holliday 1997:415), and teaching of texts. For example, in a study on the cultural trends of basic attitudes and approaches of Chinese students in a university in China, Wang (2001) discovered Chinese students think of a book as the carrier and authority of knowledge. In Hong Kong, Carless (1999) noticed that teachers there put great emphasis on covering the textbook. In a study of English language teachers in Hong Kong, Ng (1994:82) found "many teachers, perhaps as a result of perceived or actual pressure from the school or from parents, try to 'finish the textbook' with little regard to the ability of the students".

The value given to the teaching of texts in Chinese culture can be traced back to the importance given to classics and written text throughout Chinese history. The centuries of civil service examination system in ancient China, which enables the poorest scholar to attain high political and social status mainly tests the scholars' ability to analyze and write about passages of Confucian text. The way students were taught in traditional Chinese private family schools known as Si Shu, where most people received their education in China before 1862, has also contributed to the preoccupation of the teaching of text in Chinese culture. As Shu (1961) described, the central activities in Si Shu, included the reading of Tang poems and Chinese classics by Confucius. A typical lesson in the Si Shu, included the following procedures: The lesson started with a revision of the old material learnt the day before involving recitation of the texts. After the revision, the teacher explained the meaning of the new words in the new learning material, comparing the different uses of these words. The teacher then moved on to a
discourse analysis of the sentence, paragraph and the passage. After analyzing the text, the teacher checked students’ comprehension and asked students to read the text as many as 100 times.

It is suggested, therefore, that Chinese teachers’ preoccupation with text teaching, as shown in this research, can be explained by the Chinese traditional emphasis on written language and text teaching.

6.2.5 Transmission Model of Teaching

The belief of the Chinese teachers in the authority of the teacher and the text, as discussed in the above two sections, implies a transmission model of teaching and learning, which is considered as a Chinese cultural model by Jin & Cortazzi (1998). They have suggested a Chinese cultural model of learning English, in which “the teacher and the textbook are seen as authoritative sources of knowledge”, and the grammar rules and meanings of text are transmitted from teachers to students who learn through “dedication and hard work” (Jin & Cortazzi, 1998:102). Implied in this cultural model of teaching is a “quantitative conception” of learning and teaching, which sees learning as a matter of how much is learned and teaching as the transmission of knowledge (Biggs and Watkins 1993). Within this cultural model, knowledge is transmitted from the teacher to the student instead of constructed by the teacher and the student together.
This teacher-centered transmission cultural model of learning and teaching explains why Chinese teachers in this study have ranked being “attentive in class” on top of the list of the typical classroom behaviors among the ideal students, and being “not attentive” as the most typical classroom behavior of the bad students.

Many other studies conducted in Chinese societies have also reflected this transmission cultural model of learning and teaching. For example, Gao (1996) observed 17 senior secondary physics lessons in Guangzhou, China, and found that teacher lecturing occupied 65% of the class time, teacher-student interaction (question-answer or discussion) occupied 23% of the class time; only 1% of the class time was spent on students’ observing or experimenting or doing group discussion. In another study by Gao and Watkins (2002), after interviewing 18 and surveying 450 teachers in China, Gao and Watkins developed a model of conceptions of teaching appropriate for secondary school Physics teachers in the Guangdong province of China. One of the five conceptions in Gao and Watkins’ model is labeled as “knowledge delivery” (Gao and Watkins 2002:65), which is based on the view that “teaching is a process of delivering knowledge and skills”. In one of the first classroom-based studies conducted in Hong Kong second language classrooms, Tsui (1985:24) found that the “interaction generated was predominantly a teacher-centered question-answer-feedback interaction during which knowledge was displayed and evaluated”. Similar teacher-centered classroom interaction patterns are also found in other studies in Hong Kong (for example, Wu, 1993; Pennington, 1995; Evans, 1997). Young (1987) reviewed research conducted in China,
Hong Kong and United States, and found that Chinese teachers prefer a more teacher-centered style of management than their Western counterparts.

The transmission model of teaching has so predominated classrooms in Chinese societies that when the learner-centered and process-oriented communicative approach to teaching is introduced in these classrooms, as Morris (1992, 1995) discovered, limited impact took place in these classrooms. For example, Evans (1996) found that the communicative approach, which guided the official English syllabus in Hong Kong in 1983, was never actually implemented on a wide scale in the classroom. The difficulties of implementing communicative approaches in other Asian contexts have been discussed by Hui (1997) in China; Li (1998) in South Korea; and Cheah (1998) in Singapore.

This study further shows that some differences exist among teachers of different teaching levels and different years of teaching experience in the strength of their belief in the transmission model of teaching. To be specific, among teachers of three teaching levels, primary, secondary and Junior college, the JC teachers believe less in the transmission model of teaching than primary and secondary teachers; among teachers of different teaching experiences, the least experienced the group of teachers believe less in this cultural model of teaching than the most experienced group of teachers. As JC teachers are the youngest group of teachers among the teachers of three different teaching levels, the findings of this study with regard to the differences among different types of teachers can be generalized as that the younger teachers have less belief in the transmission model of teaching. This difference in the attitude among Chinese teachers
can be explained by the fact that the younger teachers may be less influenced by traditional Chinese education thoughts than the older teachers as the society in which they grow up is more modern or less traditional.

In sum, the above discussion indicates that the Chinese cultural model of teaching and learning has influenced how Chinese teachers in this study think about Chinese teaching and learning.

6.2.6 Concern of Examinations

The concern of examinations, as discovered in this research, has influenced the pedagogical decisions of Chinese teachers. For example, many of the Chinese teachers in this study have preferred the more traditional activities such as reading and doing exercises, which they believe can help students score better in examinations, to the more communicative learning activities, even though they admit these activities are beneficial to students.

Apart from influencing the pedagogical decisions, the emphasis on examinations has also influenced how Chinese teachers perceive their job as Chinese teachers, as good student examination scores have become the major source of satisfaction and sense of rewards among Chinese teachers in this study.
Furthermore, the Chinese teachers in this study have blamed the Singapore school examination system, which has a lower requirement for the Chinese language than other subjects, for the lack of motivation in learning Chinese language among their current students. In Singapore, the minimum “O” and “A” level Chinese exam results requirement for students to go to the junior colleges and later to local universities which are heavily subsidized by the government is only D7, less than the passing mark which is always lower than the minimum requirement for English, which is C6. Students can be enrolled in the polytechnics even when they score below D7, but they have to score C6 and above in English.

This awareness of the comparative lower importance attached to Chinese language in the Singapore examination system, in a way affected Chinese teachers’ perception of their social status. For example, Chinese teachers have used metaphors such as “second class teachers”, “second class citizens”, “less important figures”, “Filipino maids” to suggest the inferior social status of Chinese teachers due to the comparatively insignificant role of the Chinese language in the Singapore examination system.

The concern with examinations among Chinese teachers in this study reflects an examination culture in Chinese societies, which originated in ancient China. For example, in the Han Dynasty (206 B.C.-220 A. D.), the ruling administrations would select filial sons (xiao), honest people (lian), frank demonstrators (xian liang fang zheng) and talented intellectuals (xiucai) to take part in a certain examination and appoint them as officials. In the Three Kingdoms Period as well as in the Jin Dynasty, a nine-rank judging
system was introduced for the selection of higher officials. The Emperor Wen of the Sui Dynasty in 587 A. D. set up two exam branches that test people’s moral character and knowledge. In 606 A. D., Emperor Yang (605-617 A.D.) set up another branch called jinshi, which started formally the imperial examination system Keju. The imperial examination system was further developed in the Tang, Song, Ming and Qing Dynasties. For example, during the reign of Emperor Taizong (976-997 A.D.) in the Song Dynasty, those who excelled in the imperial exams were conferred three types of titles by the emperor. The emperor would announce the names in order of their scores, and bestow them a banquet and assign them to different government posts. In the Ming and Qing dynasties (1368-1911 A. D.), the imperial exam was held once every three years and at four levels: the country examination, the provincial examination, the academy examination and the palace examination. Only when one passed a lower-level examination, was he qualified to sit for one of a higher level. Those who passed the country examination were called xiucai. Those who passed the provincial, the academy and the palace examinations were called juren, gongshi and jinshi respectively. All those who have obtained the title jinshi could have their names carved on a special tablet and offered important positions in the government.

The preoccupation with examinations still prevails in modern Chinese societies. For example, Gao (1996) surveyed 450 school physics teachers in Guangdong, China, and found that teachers regard students’ marks in public examinations as the most reliable and valuable indicator of successful teaching. Even those teachers who did not agree that exam records are the most important measure of student learning spent lots of
time in collecting exam-related information and seeking clues to public examination questions. Several teachers in Gao's (1996:8) study reported their “central focus in teaching was that all students got good marks in the national entrance-examination”.

Similar to the teachers in China, Hong Kong secondary teachers also see their allotted task as maximizing their students’ results in the public examinations (Morris, 1985). Many research studies have noticed that the teaching and learning in Hong Kong have their focus on the preparation for external examinations (Beeby, 1966; Biggs, 1991; Morris, 1985).

In Singapore, Cheah (1998:196) also talked about an “examination culture”, which indicated a “nation-wide obsession with excelling in examinations” as “examination results are seen as the way into the top streams and the top schools in the country”. As Chapter 2 of the thesis discusses, at every school entrance level, students get admission to different types of courses, and therefore receive different quality of education based on the examination scores they have achieved; every year, in Singapore, the schools are ranked in the local newspapers according to the average scores their students have produced. The examination culture having so dominated the Singapore education system, it has therefore become easier to understand why Chinese teachers, as direct participants in this culture, have been so concerned with examinations in their pedagogical choices and views of rewards as Chinese teachers, as discussed earlier.

The importance of examinations in different Chinese societies as mentioned above can be seen as a reflection of Confucius’ belief in meritocracy over aristocracy.
Confucius believed that everybody, from high or low birth, had the right to receive education and rise to important positions if they were good. Therefore, in Chinese societies, examinations have become "the means by which even the poorest could gain entry into the powerful" (Tang & Biggs 1996:159).

To sum up, the above discussion of the fourth characteristic of Chinese teacher thinking in Singapore reveals that the concern with examinations among Chinese teachers in this study is closely related to an examination culture existing in many Chinese societies, including Singapore.

6.2.7 Emphasis on Motivation and Effort in Learning

The Chinese teachers in this study are found to believe that a correct learning attitude, interest in the Chinese language, more practice and working hard are the most important factors, leading to the successful learning of Chinese. They have even distinguished the good students from the bad students based on their learning attitude and motivation. For example, Chinese teachers in this study have regarded those students who "have initiative", "love to study", are "serious in studies", "want to excel" and have "correct attitude" as good students; and those students who "lack interest to study", have "bad attitude" or "passive attitude", "lack wish to excel" and are "not serious in studies", as bad students. Chinese teachers in this study even consider the increase of students' interest in Chinese language and culture as an important reward to them. This emphasis
given to learners' motivation, attitude and learning efforts rather than learning aptitude reflects the Chinese cultural view of learning.

Confucius presumes that most people have the potential to learn when he said "there is a difference in instruction but none in kind" (Waley, 1989:201), and "by nature, near together, by practice far apart. It is only the wisest and the very stupidest who cannot change" (Waley, 1989:209). Confucius confessed that even he was "not one of those who have innate knowledge" and pointed out that he was "simply one who loves the past and who is diligent in investigating it" (Waley, 1989:127). In other words, Confucius attached more importance to motivation and effort than innate intelligence in learning. He believed that "he who is diligent succeeds in all he undertakes" (Waley, 1989:211). In fact, motivation and effort are so important for Confucius that he even refused to teach those who are not motivated to, or make no efforts to, learn. "Only one who bursts with eagerness do I instruct; only one who bubbles with excitement, do I enlighten. If I hold up one corner and a man cannot come back to me with the other three, I do not continue the lesson" (Waley, 1989:124). In learning, Confucius felt that people should be so earnest that they learn as if they were following someone they could not catch up and as though it were someone they were frightened of losing (Waley, 1989:136).

The emphasis on effort and hard work in Confucian thought has had a profound impact on the way the Chinese view learning for thousands of years. In fact, this belief that effort and hard work will lead to success is reflected by many Chinese phrases and folk stories. For example, in the Chinese phrase, "xue hai wu ya qin wei jing" (The ocean
of learning is boundless and diligence is the way to success), diligence is seen as the key to the mastery of knowledge. The well-known Chinese stories of *xuan liang ci gu* (hanging one's hair on the pillar of the roof and piercing one's leg) and *zao bi tou guang* (digging the hole on the wall to borrow light) contain vivid models of earnest students diligently seeking knowledge. In order to stay awake to study, one of the heroes in the *xuan Hang ci gu* story hangs his hair on the pillar of the roof so that he won't fall asleep. The other hero in the same story pierces his leg with a big needle to keep himself awake when he becomes too sleepy. The *zao bi tou guang* story describes a poor young man drilling a hole in his wall to borrow light from his rich neighbor to read his borrowed books, as he is too poor to have any night oil.

The above-mentioned phrases and stories have inspired many Chinese young people to work hard in their studies. They have also helped to shape a culture that emphasizes effort in learning. This culture is reflected in the way Chinese accounts for the successes and failures of learning. As Biggs (1996:9) pointed out, “numerous studies have drawn attention to the fact that Asian cultures attribute success to effort, and failure to lack of effort, whereas Westerners tend to attribute success and failure to ability and lack of ability, respectively.” For example, in one of the studies in Hong Kong, Hau and Salili (1991) found secondary students in Hong Kong attributed academic success first to effort and last to ability. Similarly, in a study of Hong Kong elementary school children and their mothers, Chan (1992) discovered that both children and their mothers gave the highest ratings to “effort” among eight attributes that might contribute to academic success. In explaining failures in learning mathematics, Hess et al. (1987) noticed that
mothers of less successful children in Hong Kong gave the greatest emphasis to lack of effort. In the People's Republic of China, Wang (2001) discovered that 94.95% Chinese university students surveyed agreed diligence was the most important way for successful studies. In an attempt to investigate different cultures of learning, Cortazzi and Jin (1996) asked 135 university Chinese students to write essays on "good students" and found almost half of the respondents said a good student was "hard working".

Therefore, the emphasis given to learners' motivation, attitude and learning efforts by Chinese teachers in this study can be seen as a reflection of the Chinese cultural view of learning.

### 6.2.8 Negative Perception of Self

Chinese teachers in this study seem to have a very negative perception of themselves. This is seen in such metaphors as "second class teachers", "second class citizens", "less important figures" and "Filipino maids", which indicate the unhappiness among the Singapore Chinese teachers regarding their downgraded status in the education system. The feeling of the inferiority of Chinese teachers in this study is so strong that they have used the names of the following professions which are considered normally not as professional as the teaching profession to describe the jobs they are doing: "typist", "printer", "cleaner", "data input person", "clerk", "office boy" and "copy cat".
This negative perception of the social status of the Chinese language teachers may be a reflection of the dissatisfaction and loss felt by Chinese teachers after English took over Mandarin as the medium of instruction in all schools in Singapore. As discussed in Chapter 2 of this thesis, in 1987, English replaced all other languages in Singapore to become the medium of instruction in all schools. As a result of this change of medium of instruction in schools, the status of Chinese language became less important. This decrease in the importance of the Chinese language may have contributed to the negative perception of Chinese teachers in this study with regard to their social status.

With the change of medium of instruction in Singapore schools, the administrative language in the schools has also changed from different ethnic languages to English. Many Chinese language teachers felt this demand to use English in their work put them in a disadvantageous position compared to English teachers, as they are less proficient in English because the majority of them have been using Mandarin as the main medium of education and communication in school and work. This feeling of inadequacy in the administrative language in addition to the Chinese tradition of keeping one's "face", helps to explain why Chinese teachers have used such metaphorical expressions as "dumb", "silent lamb", "the target of anger", "old ox", "silent ploughman", "modern antique" and "scapegoat", to describe themselves. These expressions have suggested the helplessness Chinese teachers in this study feel with the disadvantages they have as Chinese language teachers who have to work in an English-dominated society.
To sum up, the negative perception of their social status among Chinese teachers in this study can be seen as a result of the change in education policy in Singapore.

6.2.9 Conclusion

The discussion of the eight characteristics of Chinese teacher thinking that emerge in this study has shown that all of these characteristics of teacher thinking are related to either Chinese cultural beliefs or the social context of Singapore. This close relationship between Chinese teacher thinking in this study and its socio-cultural context justifies the socio-cultural perspective this study has taken in its approach to teacher thinking. It also therefore strengthens the argument proposed at the beginning of this thesis, that is, teacher thinking must be examined and interpreted within its socio-cultural context.

After describing Chinese teacher thinking and examining the relationship between Chinese teacher thinking in this study with its socio-context, in the next section, I will explore some of the underlying reasons why Chinese teachers who have participated in the teacher training courses, which aims to introduce to them the more innovative approaches to Chinese teaching, have shown reluctance to adopt these curriculum changes.
6.3 Underlying Reasons for Teachers' Reluctance to Change

In order to discover the reasons why Chinese teachers attending an in-service teacher-training course organized by the Ministry of Education of Singapore are reluctant to adopt a more learner-centered innovative approach to Chinese teaching, which was introduced to them during the training course, the present study explored the thinking of Chinese teachers by first describing it and then trying to understand it in the socio-cultural context. The findings of this study have shown that incongruence exists between the theoretical assumptions underlying the innovative approach to Chinese language teaching and the socio-culturally defined implicit beliefs and perceptions of Singapore Chinese teachers with regard to teaching, learning, the role of teachers and the teacher/student relationship. This incongruence, the researcher argues, may have contributed to the reluctance of participants of the teacher-training course toward a change in their teaching approach, as expressed in the statement quoted at the very beginning of this thesis. The following section will discuss the incongruence between the thinking of Chinese teachers and the underlying theoretical assumptions of the innovative approach to Chinese teaching.
6.3.1 Incongruence between Chinese Teacher Thinking and the Assumptions Underlying the Innovative Language Teaching Approach

The innovative language teaching approach introduced in the earlier-mentioned in-service teacher-training course has been influenced by a constructivist view of knowledge and learning and the communicative approach to language teaching. Based on the findings of this study, Chinese teacher thinking in Singapore is found to be incongruent with the theoretical assumptions of the constructivist view of learning and the communicative language teaching approach in at least the following five ways:

6.3.1.1 Knowledge by Construction vs. Knowledge by Transmission

One of the assumptions underlying the innovative approach to language teaching promoted by the Ministry of Education of Singapore is the constructivist view of knowledge, which believes that learning is an active process in which learners construct new ideas based upon prior knowledge and experience (Bruner, 1966). Knowledge, according to this constructivist view, is constructed by the learner based on his/her prior experiences and through interactions with the socio-cultural context (Brooks & Brooks, 1993; McCarthey & Raphael, 1992). The role of the teacher in a constructivist classroom is more of a “midwife in the birth of understanding” (Von Glasersfeld, 1995), or of a
coordinator, facilitator, and resource advisor (Gergen 1995) as the student constructs meaning. The constructivist view of learning seems to contradict the beliefs Singapore Chinese teachers in this study hold with regard to learning. As discussed in the previous chapter, influenced by the traditional cultural beliefs about teaching, learning and teacher/student relationship, Singapore Chinese teachers in this study view the teacher as the source of knowledge, and learning takes place when the expert knowledge of the teacher is transmitted successfully to the learner, who is seen as an empty vessel ready to receive this knowledge. Following this view of learning, Chinese teachers in this study expected students to be attentive and disciplined in class and blamed the lack of attentiveness in class for some students' failure to learn the language well.

6.3.1.2 Learner Control vs. Teacher Authority

As the constructivist view of learning recognizes the significance of the unique prior experiences of learners in the acquisition of new knowledge, learners therefore take the central position in the classroom. Furthermore, a democratic classroom environment that emphasizes shared responsibility and decision-making between learners and teachers is encouraged in the constructivist classroom because the constructivist teacher believes in learner contribution and learner autonomy (Dershem, 1996). Some advocates of constructivist learning theory even suggest that teachers should negotiate curriculum with learners in order to custom-build classes every day to fit the individuals who attend (Smith 1993). The increased control and authority given to the learner in the constructivist view of learning, which has influenced the innovative teaching approach
introduced to the Chinese teachers in this study, is incongruent with the supreme authority given to the teacher in the belief systems of Chinese teachers, as discovered in this research. It is therefore not too difficult to understand why Chinese teachers who have described themselves as “know-all”, “live dictionary”, and “omnipotent Ph.D” are reluctant to accept a teaching approach that minimizes their authoritative status over learners.

6.3.1.3 Task-based vs. Text-based

Another theoretical influence over the innovative teaching approach promoted to the Chinese teachers in the in-service teacher-training course mentioned at the beginning of this research report is the communicative approach to language teaching. As described at the beginning of this report, teachers are encouraged to conduct meaningful task-based learning activities in the teacher-training course, as the communicative language teaching approach assumes that the opportunity for learners to negotiate meaning during meaningful interaction is of crucial importance for language learning in the classroom (see Hatch, 1983; Pica & Long, 1986). These task-based classroom activities, which are encouraged in the innovative teaching approach, are unfamiliar to the Chinese teachers who are found in this study to believe in the text-based, teacher-student questioning-answering classroom interaction pattern.
6.3.1.4 Process-oriented vs. Product-oriented

Both the constructivist learning theory and the communicative approach to language learning theories underlying the innovative approach to Chinese teaching have emphasized the learning process rather than the learning product, as learning is seen as a process of constructing meaningful representations and language learning is believed to take place in the process of meaning negotiations. In this process, students' errors are seen as positive signs of learner efforts in making sense of the experiential world. This emphasis given to process in constructivist learning theory and the communicative approach to language teaching is in direct opposition to the priority given to the completion of the teaching material and the production of exam results by Chinese teachers in this study.

6.3.1.5 Skill-Based vs. Value-Based

It was hoped that the introduction of the innovative teaching approach to Chinese teachers would help them adopt more learner-centered and communicative teaching activities to increase students' interest in the learning of the Chinese language, as well as helping students grasp communicative skills in the Chinese language. Therefore, the choice of teaching materials is based on whether they are interesting and helpful in enhancing students' communicative competence. As Chinese teachers in this study are found to regard moral education and the development of student character as important
aims of teaching, the neglect of the teaching of moral values in the innovative teaching approach may be considered by Chinese teachers as a weakness.

To sum up, the above-discussed underlying assumptions of the innovative approach to Chinese teaching are incongruent with Chinese teacher thinking described by this study. This incongruence may explain why Chinese teachers who participated in the teacher-training course are reluctant to carry out the changes in their classrooms.

In conclusion, the discussion of the research results in this chapter has suggested a close relationship between Chinese teacher thinking and the socio-cultural context. Further comparison of Chinese teacher thinking which emerges in this study and the underlying theoretical assumptions of the teaching approach I have proposed to the Chinese teachers in the teacher training courses indicates significant incongruence, which may account for the reluctance of these teachers to accept the new teaching approach.

The next chapter concludes the study and discusses the implications of the research findings of this study for teacher thinking research, teacher education and curriculum reforms.
CHAPTER 7 CONCLUSIONS & IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Introduction

This study set out to make explicit the implicit beliefs and perceptions of Singapore Chinese teachers. It also aims to explore the relationship between teacher thinking and its socio-cultural context. This chapter concludes the study by summarizing the research findings of this study and discussing the implications of such research findings for teacher thinking research, teacher education and curriculum reforms. Suggestions for further research are proposed at the end of the chapter.

7.2 Conclusions

This section summarizes the research findings under the following topics:

(1) Chinese Teacher Thinking in Singapore

(2) The Influence of the Socio-cultural Context
7.2.1 *Chinese Teacher Thinking in Singapore*

In order to describe Chinese teacher thinking in Singapore, four research questions were asked at the beginning of this study:

(1) What beliefs do Singapore Chinese teachers hold toward teaching?
(2) What beliefs do Singapore Chinese teachers have toward learning?
(3) How do Singapore Chinese teachers perceive students?
(4) How do Singapore Chinese teachers perceive themselves as Chinese teachers?

Answers to the above four questions help to make explicit the implicit beliefs and perceptions of Singapore Chinese teacher thinking in four basic areas of teaching and learning:

7.2.1.1 *Singapore Chinese Teachers' Beliefs about Teaching*

Concerning the aim of Chinese teaching, this study finds that Chinese teachers in Singapore believe that the aim of Chinese teaching is not only to help students grasp Chinese language and language skills but also to pass down Chinese culture to the next generation and instill moral values among the younger generation.
With regard to the teaching approach, Chinese teachers in this study are found to believe in the transmission model of teaching, in which the teacher, who is viewed as the authority and source of knowledge and skills, transmits knowledge and skills to the student, who is seen as the receiver of the knowledge and skills. The belief in the transmission model of teaching is also reflected in the conceptual metaphors Chinese teachers have used to describe who they are in relation to students: TEACHER AS KNOWER; TEACHER AS SOURCE OF POWER; TEACHER AS TRAINER; TEACHER AS GUIDE; TEACHER AS ROLE MODEL; TEACHER AS ARTIST; and TEACHER AS ENGINEER.

Implicit in the transmission model of teaching is a hierarchical teacher/student relationship in which the teacher is the superior who commands respect and obedience from students and the student is the inferior person who enjoys love and care from teachers. The emotional and spiritual support teachers are seen to provide for students are expressed in the following conceptual metaphors: TEACHER AS COUNSELOR; TEACHER AS NURTURER; TEACHER AS SAVIOR; TEACHER AS CARE-TAKER; and TEACHER AS SACRIFICE.

As for teaching activities, this study finds that Singapore Chinese teachers rely very much on the teaching of text, which includes reading the text aloud, paraphrasing and explaining the text to students. Chinese teachers in this study are also found to choose classroom activities that will help students score in examinations.
7.2.1.2 **Singapore Chinese Teachers' Beliefs about Learning**

This research shows that Chinese teachers in Singapore believe that the key factors leading to the successful learning of Chinese language include: a correct learning attitude; high learning motivation which includes interest and love of Chinese language and culture; more practice, especially in the reading skill; and learner efforts.

7.2.1.3 **Singapore Chinese Teachers' Perception of Students**

Singapore Chinese teachers in this study are found to base their perception of students on their character, learning attitude and motivation, classroom behavior and the efforts they make in learning. According to Chinese teachers in this study, good students are polite, respectful, disciplined, helpful, responsible and attentive in class. They hand in their homework on time, and actively participate in asking and answering questions in class. On the other hand, bad students are undisciplined, impolite, disrespectful and rebellious, and not attentive in class. They neither hand in their homework promptly nor participate actively in classroom activities. They have poor learning attitudes and low learning motivation, and lack effort to learn. As for the current students they are teaching, Chinese teachers in this study see them as utilitarian, selfish, undisciplined, impolite, disrespectful, arrogant and indifferent, lacking in interest to study the Chinese language, passive in learning attitude, and poor in their proficiency in Chinese. This perception of the current students seems to indicate an overall dissatisfaction with the students today, as the characteristics of their current students resemble those of the bad students.
Furthermore, Chinese teachers blame parents and the mass media under the influence of Western culture for the lack of respect for teachers among current students.

7.2.1.4 Singapore Chinese Teachers' Perception of Self

This study finds that Singapore Chinese teachers have very negative perceptions of themselves. They perceive their social status as inferior and insignificant. They regard themselves as "second class teachers" and "second class citizens" in the society. They feel ignored and disadvantaged in a society where English is given prominence and western values become more and more influential. They use metaphors such as "dump", "silent lamb", "the target of anger", "old ox", "silent ploughman" and "modern antique" to describe their inferior and disadvantaged position in the society. They even perceive their job as unprofessional as the job of the "typist", the "printer", the "cleaner", the "data-input person", the "clerk", the "office boy" and the "copy cat". As for the rewards they get as Chinese teachers, this study shows these come from receiving love and respect from students and seeing students make progress and cultivate interests in their studies.

To sum up, eight major characteristics of Chinese teacher thinking emerged from the above summary of research findings, that is, a strong belief among Singapore Chinese teachers in: (1) the teaching of Chinese culture; (2) the priority of moral education; (3) the teacher/student hierarchy; (4) the teaching of text; (5) the transmission model of
teaching; and (6) the importance of examinations; (7) the importance of motivation, efforts in learning and, (8) the negative perception of themselves as Chinese teachers.

The above beliefs and perceptions of Singapore Chinese teachers which emerge in this study are in opposition with the underlying theoretical assumptions of the innovative learner-centered task-based communicative language teaching approach promoted by the Ministry of Education of Singapore. The opposition, first of all, lies in the fact that Singapore Chinese teachers believe in the transmission model of teaching in which knowledge is transmitted to the learner whereas the innovative teaching approach assumes that knowledge is constructed by the learner and the teacher. Secondly, Singapore Chinese teachers perceive the teacher as the authority of knowledge who is in the dominant position in the classroom whereas the innovative teaching approach encourages the student to take a more important and active role in the classroom. Thirdly, Singapore Chinese teachers center their teaching activities upon the text whereas the innovative teaching approach favors task-based learning activities. Fourthly, Singapore Chinese teachers aim for the learning product, which is often measured by examination scores, whereas the innovative teaching approach regards the learning process as important as the learning product. Finally, Singapore Chinese teachers see the teaching of culture and values as an important part of language teaching, whereas the innovative teaching approach focuses only on the development of language skills.
The incongruence of Chinese teacher thinking and the theoretical assumptions underlying the innovative teaching approach provides one reason why some of the Chinese teachers in my training course were reluctant to adopt the new teaching approach.

Apart from making explicit the implicit beliefs and perceptions of Singapore Chinese teachers, which were summarized in this section, this study has also examined the influence of the socio-cultural context upon Chinese teacher thinking in Singapore.

7.2.2 The Influence of the Socio-cultural Context

In order to explore the relationship between Chinese teacher thinking and its socio-cultural context, a fifth research question stated as follows was asked at the beginning of this study

(5) How has the socio-cultural context influenced the above beliefs, views and perceptions of Chinese teachers with regard to teaching, learning, students, and themselves as Chinese teachers?

The answer to the above question shows that Chinese teacher thinking is deeply rooted in Chinese educational thought and traditions as well as the socio-linguistic and educational context of Singapore.
7.2.2.1 Influence of Chinese Educational Thought and Traditions

Traces of Chinese educational thought which here mainly refers to Confucian educational thought and traditions, have been found in the thinking of Singapore Chinese teachers in this study in many ways.

First of all, the moral emphasis of Confucian educational thought is reflected in Singapore Chinese teachers' belief in character development and moral education as one of the aims of Chinese teaching. It has also influenced the way Singapore Chinese teachers perceive their students, when they place moral character on top of the list of the traits of good students.

Secondly, the long Chinese examination tradition, which originates from Confucius' preference of meritocracy over aristocracy, is reflected in the concern of Singapore Chinese teachers with producing good examination results. This concern is found to be one of many reasons Singapore Chinese teachers feel reluctant to adopt the learner-centered communicative teaching approach, which is less examination focused. In addition, the influence of the examination tradition on Chinese teacher thinking can be noted from the fact that Chinese teachers in this study blamed the comparative insignificance of the Chinese language in the Singapore examination system for the lack of learning interest and motivation among students. Furthermore, the relatively low status of the Chinese language in the examination system also made Chinese teachers feel inferior and insignificant compared to teachers of other subjects. Examinations have been
so important to Chinese teachers in this study that many of them feel rewarded as teachers when their students achieve good examination results.

Thirdly, the traditional emphasis on text in Chinese teaching is also found to be true with Chinese teachers in this study, who spend most of their time in class conducting text-related learning and teaching activities.

Fourthly, the traditional Chinese transmission model of teaching, in which the teacher transmits knowledge and skills to the student, has found agreement with Chinese teachers in this study. The presumption of the role of the teacher in the Chinese cultural model of teaching as the authoritative source of knowledge and skills in the Chinese culture of learning is found to be implied in such teacher metaphors as “know-all”, “live dictionary”, “omnipotent Ph.D”, “Chinese Know-all”, “kaleidoscope”, “knowledge transmitter”, “monkey king”, “thousand-hand Buddha”, and “superman”.

Fifthly, the traditional Chinese attribution to success by learning attitude and motivation instead of learning aptitude complies with the perception of Chinese teachers in this study with regard to factors that contribute to the successful learning of Chinese language. Furthermore, the possession of good learning attitudes has even become one of the most important criteria Chinese teachers in this study use to judge whether a student is good or bad.
Sixthly, the traditional Chinese cultural expectation of the hierarchical teacher/student relationship is also reflected in the thinking of Chinese teachers in this study. They are found to appreciate most the respect from students and feel unhappy when students are disrespectful. Additionally, Chinese teachers in this study have perceived themselves to be the care-taker, spiritual and moral guide to students, as expected in the Chinese cultural expectation of teachers.

To sum up, the above research findings show that Chinese teacher thinking is deeply rooted in Chinese cultural views and traditions of teaching and learning. In the next section, I will discuss the influence of the socio-linguistic and educational context of Singapore on Chinese teacher thinking.

7.2.2.2 Influence of the Socio-linguistic and Educational Context of Singapore

The influence of the socio-linguistic and educational context of Singapore has influenced the beliefs and perceptions of the Singapore Chinese teachers in the following ways:

Firstly, as Gupta (2001:5) points out, the many changes of language policy over the course of the twentieth century have “reinforced the role of English as the inter-racial language par excellence in Singapore”. As the language of government, commerce,
industry and education, for the past three to four decades, English has gained superiority in status over other ethnic languages in Singapore including Mandarin. In the education domain, this superiority of English has increased even more as all subjects in schools are taught in English. Naturally, Mandarin, which was once the medium of instruction in Chinese medium schools, has fallen from grace and is taught only as a subject in schools. This loss of status of Mandarin has influenced the way Chinese teachers in this study feel about their own social status, which is inferior and insignificant. This sense of inferiority among Chinese teachers in this study is reflected in the metaphors they use to describe themselves. These metaphors include “second class teachers”, “second class citizens”, “less important figures” and “Filipino maids”. The feeling of inferiority among Chinese teachers in this study is so strong that they have used the names of the following professions which are not considered normally as professional as the teaching profession to describe their profession: “typist”, “printer”, “cleaner”, “data input person”, “clerk”, “office boy” and “copy cat”.

Furthermore, the change of administrative language for Chinese teachers after English became the medium of education increased the frustration of Chinese teachers who are not as proficient in English as their counterparts because most of them went through a Chinese-medium education. This frustration over their inability to express themselves as efficiently as other subject teachers is reflected in such teacher metaphors as “dumb”, “silent lamb”, “the target of anger”, “old ox”, “silent ploughman”, “modern antique” and “scapegoat”.

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Secondly, the social perception of the role of the Chinese language in Singapore as cultural ballast is found to have influenced the thinking of Chinese teachers in their beliefs of the aims of Chinese teaching, which include the teaching of Chinese culture and tradition and moral values. Their perception of the roles they play in the Singapore society is implicit in such metaphors they used to describe themselves as "the missionary of cultural transmission", "torch passer of Chinese culture", "spreader of Chinese culture", "guardian angel of mother tongue" and "passer of incense".

To sum up, the above research findings indicate that Chinese teacher thinking in Singapore is closely related to the socio-linguistic and educational context of Singapore as well as deeply embedded in the Chinese educational thought and traditions.

To conclude, in this study, I have explored Singapore Chinese teachers' knowledge and beliefs about teaching and learning and their perception of students and themselves. Furthermore, I have examined the close relationship between Singapore Chinese teacher thinking and its socio-cultural context. In the penultimate section of this chapter, I will discuss the implications of this study for teacher thinking research, teacher education and curriculum reform.
7.3 Implications

In the following two sub-sections, I will discuss the implications of this study for teacher thinking research, teacher education and curriculum reforms respectively.

7.3.1 Implications for Teacher Thinking research

This study has shown that the beliefs and perceptions of Singapore Chinese teachers with regard to the fundamental issues of teaching and learning are deeply rooted in Chinese cultural views and traditions of teaching and learning, as well as the socio-linguistic and educational context of Singapore. An implication of this research finding for teacher thinking research is that a socio-cultural perspective is necessary in understanding why teachers think the way they do due to the close relationship between teacher thinking and its socio-cultural context.

The multi-method approach used in this study to explore such a complex topic as teacher thinking has proven to be very effective. Through a triangulation of data derived from multiple data sources the credibility (Guba and Lincoln, 1989) of the assertions of this study is ensured.

In addition, the metaphors generated from this study have shown to be effective in uncovering the implicit beliefs and perceptions of teachers. What these metaphors reveal
is congruent with results generated using other techniques, and this demonstrates the usefulness of using teacher metaphors in exploring teacher thinking.

7.3.2 Implications for Teacher Education & Curriculum Reforms

This study is a first attempt in describing Chinese teacher thinking in Singapore. This effort of making explicit the implicit beliefs of Singapore Chinese teachers with regard to the fundamental issues of teaching, learning and learners as well as the perception of themselves as Chinese teachers, has important implications for Chinese teacher education and curriculum reforms in Singapore.

As this study finds out, the constructivist view of learning and the communicative approach to language teaching, which the ACT course was promoting to the Chinese teachers in Singapore are in many ways incongruent with the basic assumptions and beliefs of Singapore Chinese teachers with regard to teaching, learning and teacher-student relationship. The discovery of these discrepancies should prompt the teacher educators and policy makers in Singapore to ask questions as to why such discrepancies exist and whether it is feasible to effectively introduce a teaching approach which is so incongruent with the current thinking of Chinese teachers.
This study may provide one answer to the first question, that is, the incongruence may arrive partly from the difference in the socio-cultural contexts, from which Chinese teacher thinking and the innovative teaching approach originate. As this study shows, the thinking of Chinese teachers is in many ways influenced by the traditional Chinese educational thought and the social context of Singapore, whereas the innovative teaching approach, which is based on the constructivist learning theory and communicative approach to language teaching, originates mainly from the Western societies with different socio-cultural contexts from that of Singapore.

Another source of the incongruence between current Chinese teacher thinking and the innovative teaching approach lies in the difference between the Chinese language and the English language. One important feature of the Chinese language is its logographic writing system, which is different from the alphabetic writing system of the English language. The fact that these two totally different language writing systems may require different ways of teaching provides another explanation for the difference in views toward the approaches to teaching by the Chinese language teachers in this study and by those who established the communicative language teaching, which was mainly for English language teaching.

With regard to the feasibility of introducing a teaching approach to Chinese teachers, which is incongruent with their current thinking, the answer seems to be a negative one, as many scholars (e.g. Hollingsworth, 1989; Munby, 1984; Richardson, 1994) have warned that teachers’ adoption of innovations or new practices depends on
the degree to which the assumptions inherent in the innovation are congruent with the
teachers’ beliefs. Therefore, to avoid failure in implementing curriculum reforms, the
Ministry of Education, which is the planner of curriculum reform and organizer of
teacher courses in Singapore should review its policies of directly borrowing educational
concepts developed in other contexts. In fact, Dimmock (1998) once pleaded that policy
makers should avoid ‘policy cloning’, that is, to borrow directly education polices
developed in another culture without considering the host socio-cultural context. For the
Ministry of Education, “perhaps, before rushing in to adopt Western methods they
should look more seriously at the validity of these views at least in their cultural context
if not more broadly” (Watkins, 2000:171). This resonates with the statement of Dimmock
& Walker (1998:487) that “the phenomenon of exporting reforms from societies and
importing them into others whose characteristics, values and conditions are different,
raises legitimate concerns about their cultural appropriateness”.

However, the seemingly unfeasibility of introducing a teaching approach, which
is incongruent with the current thinking of Chinese teachers in Singapore should not
suggest that we must totally forsake introducing new teaching approaches originating in
the Western context to Chinese teachers at all. Here, we must caution against the practice
of “throwing the baby with the bath water”. If we only emphasize the differences
between the thinking of Chinese teachers in Singapore and that of language teachers in
other contexts, we then ignore the fact that universal rules govern language learning and
learning in general in all contexts, and that there might be better ways to teach Chinese.
Furthermore, if the current approach to teaching Chinese is perfect, there will not be so
much complaint by the Chinese teachers in this study of the lack of interest of learning Chinese and the low Chinese proficiency level among their students.

Perhaps the Chinese traditional wisdom of *qu ren zhi chang, bu ji zhi duan* (adopt the strength of others to complement the weakness of self) can shed light on the attitude we should take with regard to adopting innovative approaches to Chinese teaching. In other words, instead of blindly adopting a teaching approach developed in other social and educational contexts, policy makers and teachers themselves should first examine the strengths and weaknesses of both the new and old teaching approaches and then develop an approach this is better and more appropriate approach for the local context. This means that special efforts in the teacher training courses should be made to raise teachers' awareness of the merits and limitations of different teaching approaches including their own. In addition, teachers should also be encouraged to critically review their beliefs and perceptions that guide their teaching practice, as Schon (1987) believes that this type of reflective activity will help teachers improve their practice and become more ready to adopt changes. Furthermore, as pointed out by Bullough (1992:240) that “the identification and analysis of metaphors is a promising avenue for uncovering and then exploring assumptions about teaching and learning”, teacher educators in Singapore should therefore learn from the metaphors used by Chinese teachers as identified in this study and guide Chinese teachers to reflect upon the metaphors they have used and furthermore to generate new metaphors which will facilitate the adoption of curriculum innovations, as metaphors also “play a role in the process of teacher self-formation and self-exploration” (Bullough & Stokes, 1994:200), and are “powerful new tools for
generating new ways of thinking about teaching and learning” (Tobin and Tippins, 1996:711).

Apart from reflecting on the old teaching approach and examining the appropriateness of the innovative teaching approaches in the socio-cultural context of Singapore, other research findings of this study also deserve the attention of policy makers, teacher educators as well as Chinese teachers in Singapore. For example, the overall negative perception of students among Chinese teachers may produce the “self-fulfilling prophecy” effect among the students. In other words, if Chinese teachers do not have high expectations of their students, their students may end up not doing well because of the lack of expectations of their teachers. To change the negative perception of students, it is necessary for the Ministry of Education to explore further the underlying reasons why Chinese teachers develop the negative perception of their students and then introduce measures to help teachers overcome their negative perceptions of students.

Furthermore, the Ministry of Education should note the unhappiness of Singapore Chinese teachers over their social status and their sense of inferiority and helplessness which partly results from the higher status of English in Singapore society and the fact that Chinese teachers have to work in the English language, in which the Chinese teachers are less proficient than their counterparts. This sense of inferiority may produce low morale among Chinese teachers, which will eventually bring negative consequences for Chinese teaching. In order to boost the morale of Chinese teachers, the Ministry of Education as well as school principals should be more sympathetic and provide other
communication channels to encourage those Chinese teachers that have difficulties in English to participate in school discussions and conferences. Another way to enhance the morale of Chinese teachers is to hear their “voices” and take them into consideration in policy making, as this will give teachers a sense of ownership, a lack of which, as Morris (1998) believes, often explains why curriculum initiative are found ineffective, and mismatches exist between the intended and implemented curriculum. In a highly centralized educational system such as Singapore, where curriculum renewal tends to be imposed on teachers from the top such as the Ministry of Education, there is more urgency to hear the “voices” from teachers. This study may facilitate the Ministry of Education in hearing Chinese teachers’ “voices” by presenting them.

7.4 Limitations and Suggestions for Further Research

This study has limited the exploration of Chinese teacher thinking in four basic areas, that is, Chinese teachers’ beliefs about teaching, about learning, teachers’ perceptions of students and themselves as Chinese teachers. Further research is needed to investigate other areas of teacher thinking.

This study has focused on studying Chinese teachers in Singapore. Future research should be conducted on the thinking of other subject teachers and examine whether their thinking also reflects the same influence of the socio-cultural context of Singapore that has influenced Chinese teacher thinking in Singapore. In addition, further
research is needed to explore other aspects of the socio-cultural context of Singapore upon Chinese teacher thinking. Future research should also be carried out to find out to what degree Singapore Chinese teachers have implemented the innovative teaching approach promoted to them in the ACT course.

Finally, on a personal note, as a teacher trainer of Singapore Chinese teachers, the journey I took to explore the thinking of my trainees has been fruitful. It not only furthers my understanding of Singapore Chinese teachers, but also helps me to reflect upon my own thinking and practice. There is no doubt this journey has been rewarding, and yet it has not come to an end. There is so much to learn. Learning is after all, a process.
Appendix I

Questionnaire

Section I Please introduce yourself by filling in the following blank.

Sex: M _______ or F _______

School

Position

Education qualification

Professional training qualification

Level of teaching

Years of teaching

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### Section 2

*Please tick in the column to indicate your opinion of the following statements.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Discipline in the classroom is crucial to successful teaching.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2 Students have the right to choose what to learn.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 Group work should often be conducted in Chinese lessons.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4 Classroom should be kept as quiet as possible.</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 The teacher should play the dominant role in the classroom.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Chinese teaching is mainly teaching vocabulary in the text.</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>7 I spend most of my time in class explaining the meaning of words and texts.</td>
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<tr>
<td>8 Teachers should have authority in class.</td>
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<tr>
<td>9 Sentence structure is important as they are tested in exams.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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The prime task of Chinese teachers is to get through the textbook contents.
华文教师的主要任务是完成教材

The main target for Chinese teachers is to improve students’ exam scores.
华文教师的主要目标是提高学生成绩

Teachers should keep a distance from students in class.
教师与学生在课堂上应保持距离

Teachers should have be respected by students in class.
教师应得到学生的尊敬

Section 3

Please answer the following questions:

1. What is the aim of Chinese teaching?
   华文教学的目的是什么?

2. How can students learn Chinese well?
   学生怎样才能学好华文?
3. What kind of students do you think are ideal students?
你觉得理想的学生应是怎样的学生？

4. What kind of students do you think are bad students?
你觉得坏学生是怎样的学生？

5. What do you think of the students now?
你觉得现在的学生怎样？

6. What sort of role do Chinese teachers play in Singapore?
华文教师在新加坡扮演什么角色？

7. What kinds of rewards do you get as a Chinese teacher?
作为华文教师你有什么回报？
Appendix II

Interview Guide

Chinese Teaching

1. What do you think are the characteristics of a successful lesson? Why?
2. What problems have you encountered in Chinese teaching?
3. What are the typical teaching activities you have in your Chinese classes?

Chinese Learning

1. How do you think students can learn Chinese well?
2. How did you learn Chinese well?
3. What advice will you give to students to help them to learn Chinese well?

Student

1. What are the differences between students now and students in the past? Why?
2. What kind of students impress you the most?
3. What do you think are the differences between good and bad students?

Self as Chinese Teachers

1. How do you feel about your job as a Chinese teacher? Why do you think so?
2. What is the biggest reward you get as a Chinese teacher?
3. What are the differences between Chinese teachers and teachers of other subjects?
Appendix III

**Codes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TG: Teaching</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TG-Aim: Teaching aim</td>
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<tr>
<td>TG-Aim-Exm: Teaching aim, exam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TG-Aim-Mor: Teaching aim, moral values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TG-Aim-Cul: Teaching aim, culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TG-Aim-Oth: Teaching aim, others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TG-Act: Teaching activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TG-Act-Text: Teaching activity, text-related</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TG-Pro: Teaching problem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TG-Pro-St: Teaching problem from students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TG-Pro-Par: Teaching Problem from parents</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LG: Learning</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LG-Act-reading: learning activity, reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LG-Att: Learning, attitude</td>
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<tr>
<td>LG-Eff: Learning, effort</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LG-Meth: Learning method</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LG-Meth-Pra-Rd: Learning method, practice reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LG-Theory: Learning theory</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ST: Student</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ST-Char: Student character</td>
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<tr>
<td>ST-Att: student attitude</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ST-Apt: student aptitude</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ST-Pre: present student</td>
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<tr>
<td>ST-Pas: past student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ST-Idl: ideal student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ST-Bad: bad student</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SF: Self</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SF-Sr: social role of self</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SF-Ss: social status of self</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SF-Rew: reward as a Chinese teacher</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix IV

MEMO

Category: LG-PRA-RD

Reference: TR 14, TR 16, TR25, TR 37, TR40, TR42,

Date: 10 July, 2000

Teachers here have been emphasising on the importance of practice in the learning of Chinese language. They seem to hold the behaviourist view toward learning. They also seem to have developed this view of learning through their own experience of learning.

Another important observation with regard to practice is that they seem to mention the practice of the reading skill much more often than the other skills. This emphasis on the reading skill might be a reflection of the way Chinese language is taught traditionally.

Further readings should be done to find out how Chinese language is traditionally taught either in China or overseas to see whether Singapore Chinese teachers’ behaviourist view of learning and their emphasis on the importance of the reading skill are affected by the traditional teaching method of Chinese.
Appendix V

(QTR12)

问题：学生怎样才能学好华文？

回答：我觉得当你的学生对所学的东西感兴趣时，就是你的收获了。我曾经有学生跟我讲，我不喜欢华语，我以前很讨厌华文的，今年我开始喜欢华文。我说：“你是喜欢华文还是喜欢我呢？”

首先你自己要有教华文的兴趣，要有精神，那么能够简化，虽然是很深的东西，但你要把它简化，你要知道小孩子的困难在哪里。有些做这个作业，他的困难在哪里，他哪些字会写错，你都要预先知道，那么你在指导他们的时候呢，你就要点出来，他学得会，他的成绩提高了他自然就会有兴趣。有时候我觉得是这样。

你去骂他，谴责他，让他灰心，不如去鼓励他，有时买点糖果啊，一些小礼物啊，当他们写到达到1000分的时候，我就会在写写薄那边写恭喜你啦，你得1000分，那我就送他一个小礼物，所以他们就会很拼命地去读。

虽然他并不能拿到100分拿到90多分，但是我觉得我的目的已经达到。

Q: How can students learn Chinese well?

A: I feel when your students are interested in what they are learning, that’s your gain already. Once my student told me: “I don’t like Chinese. I used to hate Chinese very much. This year I have started to like Chinese.” Then I said: “Do you like Chinese or like me?”

First of all you have to have the interest in teaching Chinese. You should have kind of spirit. Then you should be able to simplify things. Although it is very difficult you have to simplify it. You have to where the difficulties of the children are. Sometimes you do this homework, where is his difficulties, which words he is likely to make a mistake, you have know before hand. Then when
you are guiding them, you have to point them out, he is able to learn, his grades have improved and automatically they will show interest. Sometimes I feel so. If you scold him, blame him, you will make him lose heart. It will be better if you encourage him. Sometimes I will buy some sweets, some small gifts. When their dictation score has reached 1000, I will write “Congratulations, you have gained 1000 ” in their diction book. Then I will give him a small present. Therefore, they will try very hard to study. Although they cannot get 100 or 90, I feel I have achieved my purpose.

问题：你对现在的家长有什么看法？

回答：现在的家长呢都是年轻一代的，已经很西化了，所以他们对孩子只会爱，而不懂得教。所以他们什么事情都是老师的错甚至有的家长来学校说老师你不要管我的孩子这么严。因为曾经有老师向我反应过：我读的书虽然不比你多，但我赚的钱是你赚的钱的10倍，所以这个老师觉得非常伤心。

你给多又说压力，你给少又说没有给，又跟某某学校比，别的学校有很多补充资料而这边又没有，所以我们出题目等都是要很小心的，不能有差错，所以我们得审查了又审查，尽量避免不要出差错，词啊或字的不要超过我们的范围。现在做老师也不简单。

其实，在新加坡这种环境，他们很有机会学呀，真的有很多机会，但有时候是家长有些偏差。有的家长说：华文不要紧，华文不重要的，慢点学，因为是学生跟我讲的，所以他们表面上讲，华文很重要啊，华文怎么样，可是真正的呢，在衡量之中呢，他们还是有偏差，所以有时候是你知道，但你未必做得到啊。

Parents are the younger generation. They are very westernised. Therefore they only know to love the children but don’t know to teach them. Therefore, whatever things happen, they will blame the teachers. Some parents even come to school and ask the teachers not to be so strict with their children. Once one teacher told me (one parent said): “I don’t have as such education as you, but I earn 10 times the money you earn.” This teacher is therefore very sad. If you give a lot, they will say too much pressure, if you give a little, they will say you don’t give much, and will compare with other schools. Other schools give lots
of supplementary materials but not here. Therefore, we have to be very careful with our exam questions. We cannot have any mistakes. Therefore, we have to check and check and try our best not to make mistakes. The words or characters have to be within our syllabus. It is not easy to be teachers nowadays.

In fact, in the kind of environment of Singapore, there are lots of opportunities to learn. Really, there are lots of chances. But sometimes parents have their favouritism. Some parents say: “Chinese does not matter, Chinese is not important, you can take it easy.” Because one student told me. Therefore, on the surface, Chinese is very important, Chinese is this and that, but in fact, in their judgement, they still have favouritism. Therefore, sometimes you know they may not do what they say.

问题：好学生与差学生有什么区别？

回答：好的学生比较自动。你稍微指点一下，他就会去做，比如说，我们现在有些什么专题制作，有些好公民什么的，他们都会做得到洋洋大观啊，他们的家长也会帮他们。他们也准时交，又做得很好。那些差的班呢，就是你要追得很久他也不交，交来呢，一两面乱乱写，那么那些孩子还会打字，打得漂漂亮亮给你，这就是不同了，还有收钱了，收集东西，你就觉得好的班是容易得多了。

好的比较懂事而且交代什么事情给他做啦，他都会给你做得好的，差的，有时也是啦，虽然他们功课差，有时他们也是不错了。好象那次我就跟我的学生讲，我帮你们补课我有时候都没有吃了，因为我我都来不及哇。一点放学，一点半就开始补课，学生排队很长，没有时间买来吃，所以说有时是真的饿着肚子上到三点半，那我就跟他们讲，我为了你们，我连午餐都没有吃。有的学生就跑去食堂里面去买一块面包给我说老师给你吃，那时候，我很感动啊。可是后来我就不吃他的，为什么呢？因为他写写拿6分。我说我吃不下，因为你的听写只有6分，你拿回去吃。他看着我发呆了，不见的说，好的学生全部都是好的。所以，你要欣赏他好的一面，好象他觉得你能够接受他，他也能够接受你。
The good students study more voluntarily. You just need to guide a bit and he will do it. For example, if we have some project work now, like some Good Citizens, they will be able to write a lot. Their parents will also help them. They can hand in their work on time. As for those weak classes, you have to chase them and they still won’t hand in their work. Even if they hand in, there are only one or two scribbled pages. The other kinds can also type. They type very beautifully and hand in to you. This is the difference. And also the time for collecting money, collecting things, you feel that the better classes are much easier.

The good one understands things and whatever you tell him to do, he will be able to do it well. As for the weak ones, sometimes, although they are weak in their studies, sometimes they are not very bad. For example, one time I told my students I couldn’t have my lunch because I had to give them make-up lessons because I didn’t have the time to eat. We finish school at one o’clock, the make-up lesson has to start at 1:30, and the queue is very long, I don’t have time to buy my lunch, therefore, sometimes I have to go hungry until 3:30. I told them I couldn’t have my lunch because of them. Some students ran to the canteen to buy a piece of bread for me. At that time I was very much touched. But I didn’t eat the bread. Why? Because he only got 6 points for his dictation. I told him I couldn’t eat his bread because he only get 6 marks for his dictation. I asked him to eat the bread. He looked at me stunned. It is not always true that the weak students are all bad. Therefore, you have to appreciate his good side. Like if he feels you can accept him, he is also able to accept you.

问题：现在的学生与过去的学生有什么区别？

回答：以前的学生比较会自动自发地去学，对学习比较有兴趣。现在的学生好象你在教什么，他就是在应付你，做给你，他没有想到说我要精益求精啊，做好一点啊，得到老师的嘉奖啊。

他们这样子是因为他们的家庭教育。因为现在的家长多数把他们的孩子丢给女佣啦或长辈去看。下班回来难得看到孩子。孩子也懂事，蛮乖的了，所以就宠他们啦，那他们在父母的后面是怎样一回事，有时是两回事啦，
Students in the past were more likely to study voluntarily. They seemed to be more interested in studying. Students now seem to just deal with you, do for you. They never think of they should seek perfection, do better to get the praise or reward from teachers.

The reason they become what they are is because of family teaching. Because most of the parents now leave their children to their maids or their parents to look after. After work, they see the children very rarely. The child is also very smart and quite obedient, they therefore dote on them. Then how they act behind their parents is often another matter. Therefore when come to school, they thought they can be treated leniently as by their grandmas or maids. They therefore feel we are too strict with them. You know what my student ask me today: "Teacher, why are you so gentle today?" . Normally, I have to rush through the text, very rushed, therefore, I was very fast, very fast in order to achieve my purpose, like I have eight procedures that I have to finish. He then asked me.

问题：你在教学上遇到什么问题？

问答：好的班还可以，坏的班就不行。一般在管的问题，遇到比较差的班，我就觉得管比较难，你要管好他不容易，因为他们字给你乱乱写，秩序很坏，你就镇他们五分钟了，十分钟了，讲课的时候你又发现他们有的不听了，你讲的时候他也讲，所以我们必须要非常生动了，非常有趣了，真的，有时我自己本身喜欢看一些笑话了，有趣的东西就把它记下来，我自己讲词语的时我就会讲一个小动人的故事去吸引他们。有时他们很喜欢跟我说：老师很有趣啊。
Q: What problems have you encountered in teaching?

A: The good classes are OK, but not the bad classes. Normally is the problem of management. In the weaker classes, I feel it is hard to manage. It is not easy to manage them well. Because they will scribble their characters, and their classroom order is very bad. If you calm them down for five minutes, ten minutes, when you are lecturing, you will find some of them are not listening. When you are talking, he is also talking. Therefore, we have to make our lessons very lively, very interesting. Really, sometimes I myself like to read some jokes. I will take down the interesting things and when I teach some words I will tell a touching story to attract their attention. Sometimes they like them and tell me: "It is very interesting, teacher."

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Q: What roles Chinese Teachers play in Singapore?

A: In fact the class I have now is like this, I ask them to voluntarily, like our national day is coming, I said to them, you should show your patriotism to the country. After I said to them, they will make some small national flags and hang them up. That is, I want to create a good atmosphere in the class, that is, there should be some cohesive power, I feel I need to lead them. Often times, they like to tease their classmates, like they will woo others to show they are happy in their hearts or happy over their classmates’ misfortune. I feel it is not very right for them to do so. Some students don’t know what cohesive power is.

We Chinese teachers face the challenge of passing down basic Chinese value system and making Singapore society less westernised.

Q: What are the typical teaching activities you conduct in your class?

A: For example, let the students read the text aloud, learn the new words, explain the meaning of the word, read the text, explain the text to the student, ask questions about the text and do exercises after the text, etc.
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