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language teachers in Singapore

Peter Thomas Bodycott
University of Wollongong

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**Making the intrinsic explicit: A cultural
constructivist exploration of the subjective
educational ideologies of trainee Malay, Tamil
and Chinese language teachers in Singapore.**

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the
requirements for the award of the degree

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

from

THE UNIVERSITY OF WOLLONGONG

by

PETER THOMAS BODYCOTT

M.Ed (Hons)., M.Stud.Ed., B.Ed., Diploma in Teaching

Faculty of Education

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constant support which has helped maintain my personal balance. Throughout life, Syl has brought to each day, to each new twist in the journey, insight, optimism, strength, love and commitment. Her contributions are immeasurable and for them I am eternally grateful.

ABSTRACT

This study explores the intrinsic relationships between the personal constructs of teaching and learning that trainee language teachers bring to their formal teacher education study. The analysis represents an effort to look, from a cultural constructivist perspective, at the subjective educational ideology of trainee language teachers in Singapore. Subjective educational ideologies are grounded in the personal history of trainee involvement in both formal and informal educative cultures. This study demonstrates that it is possible to augment advances in understanding previously gained through research by examining those individuals and cultures that have principally and directly influenced the thinking and learning of the trainee i.e., teachers, parents, family members, peers and schools. Repertory grid and self characterisation written biographies, it is argued, provide a hermeneutic dialectic approach to cultural constructivist inquiry. These techniques are synergistic and ideally suited to the purpose of exploring trainee teacher thinking and underlying ideology.

Analysis of the data indicates that trainee teachers from different cultures, and educated in different mother tongues display a range of intrinsic constructs about language learning, language teaching pedagogy and language teacher characteristics. These trainees, upon entering a formal professional preparatory program, display a knowledge about the language teacher's personal and interpersonal skills and their role in creating an environment that facilitates language learning. Trainee knowledge and constructs about language teaching and learning are grounded in their personal history. That is, both informal and formal experiences of language, teaching and learning environments affect the development of subjective educational ideology.

These ideological principles form the foundation of trainee language teacher thinking and are more closely associated with elements from the informal educative culture of the home, that is, with one or both parents. Furthermore, the closeness of these associations suggests that this group of trainees validated these culturally influenced, personal constructs of language teaching and learning against elements from their formal education. The trainees' preferred approach to language teaching was found to reflect the way they learned language in the context of the home.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Introduction

*No man is an Island, entire of itself;
Every man is a piece of the Continent, a part of the main.*

John Donne Devotions XVII

1.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a conceptual overview of the study. This will involve providing details of the purpose and objectives of the study, the theoretical presuppositions underlying subjective educational ideology, the background events that led to its design and the rationale for the study. A conceptual outline of the cultural constructivist perspective adopted and the subjective nature of interpersonal cultural influence is provided, together with a discussion of the *a priori* assertions brought to the study. The chapter will conclude with an overview of the physical locus of the research design.

1.2 Purpose and objectives of the study

The purpose of this study is to explore the intrinsic subjective educational ideologies of trainee Malay, Tamil and Chinese elementary language teachers in Singapore. The goal is to develop an understanding of the patterns of meaning in trainee teacher thinking based upon mother tongue cultural grouping.

To achieve this the following objectives are proposed:

- To delineate, upon entry into formal language teacher training, the subjective educational constructs of language teaching and learning held by 12 trainee teachers. This focus responds to the expressed need for more systematic knowledge and insight into the knowledge base underlying trainee teacher thinking (Grossman, 1990; Feiman-Nemser & Buchmann, 1986; Lanier & Little, 1986).

- To appraise the language of the constructs used. In this respect the study goes beyond stated lexical items (constructs) and considers the hermeneutic, or interpretative implications of the language, thus providing further information about underlying educative ideology.
- To elucidate the influences that individuals from informal and formal education cultures have upon trainee language teacher construing. This objective responds to the call for more information about the effects of culture on teacher and trainee teacher thinking (Langer, 1988; Olson, 1988; Hamilton, 1993). The influences and constructs examined are firmly grounded in the experience, knowledge and language of actual trainees from different cultural backgrounds in Singapore.

1.3 Subjective educational ideology: Theoretical presuppositions

An ideology is the conceptual system by which a group makes sense of and thinks about the world (Glenn, 1994). Subjective educational ideologies are the culturally influenced, "personally" constructed beliefs or principles that constitute an individual's perceptions of teaching and learning. Glenn (1994) argues that "ideologies do not have equal sway," but rather "...a dominant ideology represents the view of the dominant group" (p.9). That is, the structure or hierarchy of ideological beliefs or, as referred to in this study "personal constructs," while subjective and personal in their construction, also reflect the culture or society in which the individual has been immersed. It is argued then, that subjective educational ideologies are culturally influenced personal constructs associated with teaching and learning.

Subjective educational ideology, subjective theories (Feiman-Nemser & Floden, 1986; Krause, 1986) and implicit theory (Wei Li-Chen & Spodek, 1993) share similar characteristics. All are concerned with 'getting inside' teachers' [trainees] heads "to describe their knowledge, attitudes, beliefs and values" (Feiman-Nemser & Floden, 1986, p.4-5). Subjective ideology however reflects the grounded, culturally influenced, personally constructed beliefs of

an individual. These core ideological constructs or beliefs permeate throughout an individual's cognisance, filtering new experience and providing the benchmark for what is acceptable and unacceptable in a religious, moral, political and, in the context of this study, educative sense. Subjective and implicit theories are developed from within the subjective ideological base and account for the different plans, hypothetical possibilities and assumptions made in accordance with the application of ideological beliefs to different phenomena. A language teacher working on a specific teaching unit will make decisions based on a theoretical system of rules governing the specific context of teaching. This is seen as the teacher's subjective "theory in use" (Argyris & Schön, 1974), but upon analysis also reflects a deeper level of ideological principles.

MacIntyre (1971) asserts that subjective ideologies contain four essential elements. The first element or feature of subjective ideology, is the very notion of subjectivity. An individual personally construes lived experience. These experiences are filtered through personally constructed interpretations of the world (Kelly, 1955a,b) which are unique to the individual. The work of Kelly and a more detailed examination of his "psychology of personal constructs" can be found in Chapter 2.

The second feature of educative ideology is that it "attempts to delineate general characteristics of nature and society or both, characteristics that do not belong only to the changing world or which can be investigated only by empirical inquiry" (MacIntyre, 1971, p.5). In this sense subjective ideologies are viewed as having characteristics similar to those of scientific theories. That is, they have an argumentative structure (see Krause 1986 —subjective theories; and Kelly's 1955a,b notion of man as scientist).

The third feature is that educative ideologies account for relationships between the intrinsic nature of the world, the cultural context of construing, e.g., morals, politics, religion, and how we, as language educators, act. The final defining characteristic of an educative ideology is that "it is not merely believed by the members of a given social group, but believed in such a way that it partially defines for them their social existence..." (MacIntyre, 1971, p,7). As such, subjective ideologies are relatively stable cognitive representations, altered only through extensive mediation and predication of subsequent experience.

Language teaching ideology then is, in a sense, a way of life. Ideological principles form a permeable foundation, which exerts an influence over actual behaviour and thinking of an individual in respect to the affective, social and academic domains. They also underpin the personal and professional development of the trainee teacher.

Finally, it is presupposed that subjective educational ideological constructs are accessible, by both trainee construer and researcher, through a combination of investigative techniques (see Krause 1986; MacIntyre 1971; Pope & Denicolo 1993; Viney, 1988).

1.4 Background to the study

This study attempts to examine the thinking of trainee language teachers. An exploration aimed at uncovering how years of exposure to first and second language teachers and classrooms has influenced trainee thinking and knowledge about their role as language teachers. I decided to undertake such a study as a result of intellectual unrest following the delivery of a lecture on the "Reading Process" at the National Institute of Education (NIE), in Singapore. It was during "question time" following the lecture that I was asked

to explain how I personally approached the teaching of reading in my Australian elementary classrooms. I provided explanations of practice, linking them to various theories, including "schema theory" (Anderson, 1977, 1984; Rumelhart, 1980). This theory posits that prior experience with the content of the reading material is highly desired, even essential for the reader to gain understanding from the text. Teachers who subscribe to this theory actively encourage trainees to use their prior knowledge of the field, the topic, or text type in order to fine tune trainee thinking prior to or during reading. The use of prior experience, I explained, enhances access to the semantics of the text. I provided outlines of the range of strategies that I used to bring this knowledge consciously to the task of reading. These included questioning, brainstorming and semantic mapping all which require different modes of language use. That is, they involve the trainees in reading, writing and speaking about experiences prior to reading. It was at this point that the lecture concluded.

Following the lecture, the notion of prior experience and my own classroom teaching caused me to question and re-examine the relationships I had been advocating in respect to the language teaching and learning process I was employing in this higher educative process. Why am I not practising what I'm preaching? How much do I know about what my tertiary trainees think or believe language teaching and learning is about? How has my trainees' prior experience as students influenced the way they see themselves as potential language teachers?

It was this stimulus, followed by another, during a lecture on the "Sharing of Reading: Using Big Books in the Classroom" that resulted in my desire to investigate this relationship further. During this lecture, following an oral reading of a text, a rhetorical question was asked of the group. "Tell me about your experience of a bed-time reading situation?" Of the four hundred 19–22

year olds, only ten trainees (all Malay) had experience of someone reading to them in bed at night. Yet the new English Syllabus (Ministry of Education, Singapore, 1991) encouraged the Shared-book approach (Holdaway, 1979) to reading instruction in elementary school. For many, my lecture had provided their first real experience of shared reading. There was a need then to investigate trainee prior experience and knowledge, and this need became the impetus for this study.

A problem central to this type of inquiry is determining how to get inside trainee teacher heads (Feiman-Nemser & Floden, 1986). A second problem relates to finding evidence of culture and tacit knowledge of language teaching. The study was designed using research from teacher thinking (Ben-Peretz, 1984; Ben-Peretz, Bromme & Halkes, 1986; Day, Calderhead & Denicolo, 1993; Elbaz, 1983, 1990; Munby, 1982; Olson, 1980), teacher education (Ben-Peretz & Katz, 1980, 1983; Ben-Peretz, Katz & Silberstein, 1982; Diamond, 1983, 1988, 1991; Diamond & Zuber-Skerritt, 1986; Pope & Denicolo, 1991; Pope & Scott, 1984; Zuber-Skerritt, 1987, 1989, 1991), cultural anthropology (Howard, 1986; Quinn & Holland, 1987; Valdes, 1986) and teacher knowledge (Grossman, 1990; Shulman, 1986a,b, 1987; Zeichner & Tabachnik, 1981) as guides. The purpose was to examine the personal biographical reports, elicited personal constructs and narrative construct descriptions of language teaching and learning for what they disclose of the personal ideological principles governing language teaching and evidence of cultural influence.

1.5 Rationale for the study

The impact of changes in research over the last ten years has broadened the kind of questions asked, the routes taken to answer them and what is accepted as data, argument and evidence (Langer, 1988). The result of this

broadening is what Langer argues has been an extension of our vistas "bringing us face to face with essential issues of individuals and their interactions in specific contexts of learning.... Deeply enmeshed in the underlying theoretical assumptions is the fact that individuals and interactions never occur in a vacuum, never in the momentary space they occupy; every interaction that occurs is strongly influenced by a host of experiences that each individual brings from school and from the home." (p.349). Given my experience with trainees outlined in the background to the study and the subsequent reflexive nature of my thinking, I decided to explore further the thinking of my trainees. I posited a tentative hypothesis that differences in prior experience in both the school and home cultural contexts, may lead to differences in the way individual trainees and groups of trainees respond to their formal professional preparatory program. If this were so we, as teacher educators, must take the resultant personally constructed views into consideration in the design and implementation of such programs.

I proposed that knowledge of prior experience-based subjective educational ideologies may indeed be helpful to teacher educators and to trainees as they enter their formal studies. For the trainer, this knowledge may shed light upon: how trainees' epistemological paradigms equate to the paradigmatic direction of their professional training program; how trainees make sense of their preparatory program; and how they may react when placed in language teaching situations. There may also be times when subjective educational ideologies, or lay theories, run contrary to those of a specific subject, program or even a potential employer (DiSessa, 1982; Roth & Anderson, 1988). At other times they may be in error, or result in trainees being highly resistant toward formal instruction programs (Holland, 1987). The trainer can, with knowledge of trainee thinking about teaching and learning language, adjust

the content of the preparatory program to meet the needs and understandings of the trainees.

A knowledge of the personal constructs that form a trainee's subjective educational ideology was therefore seen to be necessary for teacher trainers. This knowledge could provide a platform upon which to restructure a formal preparatory program in order to complement or challenge trainee thinking about the teaching and learning of language (Cannella, 1993; Feiman-Nemser & Buchmann, 1989). This would facilitate the transition of trainees from students to professionals. As Diamond (1988) states:

Very little of current formal education is designed to help students (or their teachers) to reorganise their past conceptions on the basis of new experience and to develop personally generated insights and paradigms, even though these learning processes may reflect higher stages of development. (p.139)

Therefore, in light of Diamond's comment, a knowledge of subjective educational ideologies may also prove beneficial for trainees. The knowledge could assist the trainee to not only appreciate the influence of personal experience, but to understand any resistance they may feel toward subject knowledge or pedagogical approaches (Holt-Reynolds, 1992). Shared understanding of trainee orientation and thinking may also help trainees to consolidate and extend their theoretical understandings, to challenge their own thinking, and to reconstruct personal theories from a more informed position.

Much of the work reviewed on teacher and trainee, lay theories and prior knowledge centred upon individual studies (Connelly & Clandinin, 1984; Elbaz, 1981) or case studies of teachers and/or teaching experience (Munby,

1983; Russell, 1987; Zuber-Skerritt, 1989). Despite calls for such an investigation little was found to be known or had been done to determine the effects of culture on the knowledge base of trainees or teachers. "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, p.69). Hamilton (1993) urged work in this area to "continue because recognition of teachers' cultural models can greatly enhance our understanding of classroom processes" (p.96). Hamilton went on to emphasise the impact of such research on the "theoretical and practical levels of education" (p.96). I found, as a teacher educator, studies of teacher and trainee teacher thinking interesting and enlightening. I found them to be of major importance to my role in that they extended general understandings of influence and action. Any movement then toward a "well established epistemology of practice" (Calderhead, 1993, p.16), must ensure that research recognises the influence of culture (Hamilton, 1993).

This study responds to this call and offers an added dimension to the literature through its focus on the subjective educational ideologies of trainee language teachers in Singapore. This setting offering a unique opportunity to study the influence of culture in a setting far removed from those previously undertaken. This research will provide greater understanding about the nature of subjective educational ideology, the relationship between personal constructs and the influence of individuals from informal and formal educative cultures. The results of this will have important implications for individual trainees, teacher educators and those involved in the enterprises of formal teacher education and inservice.

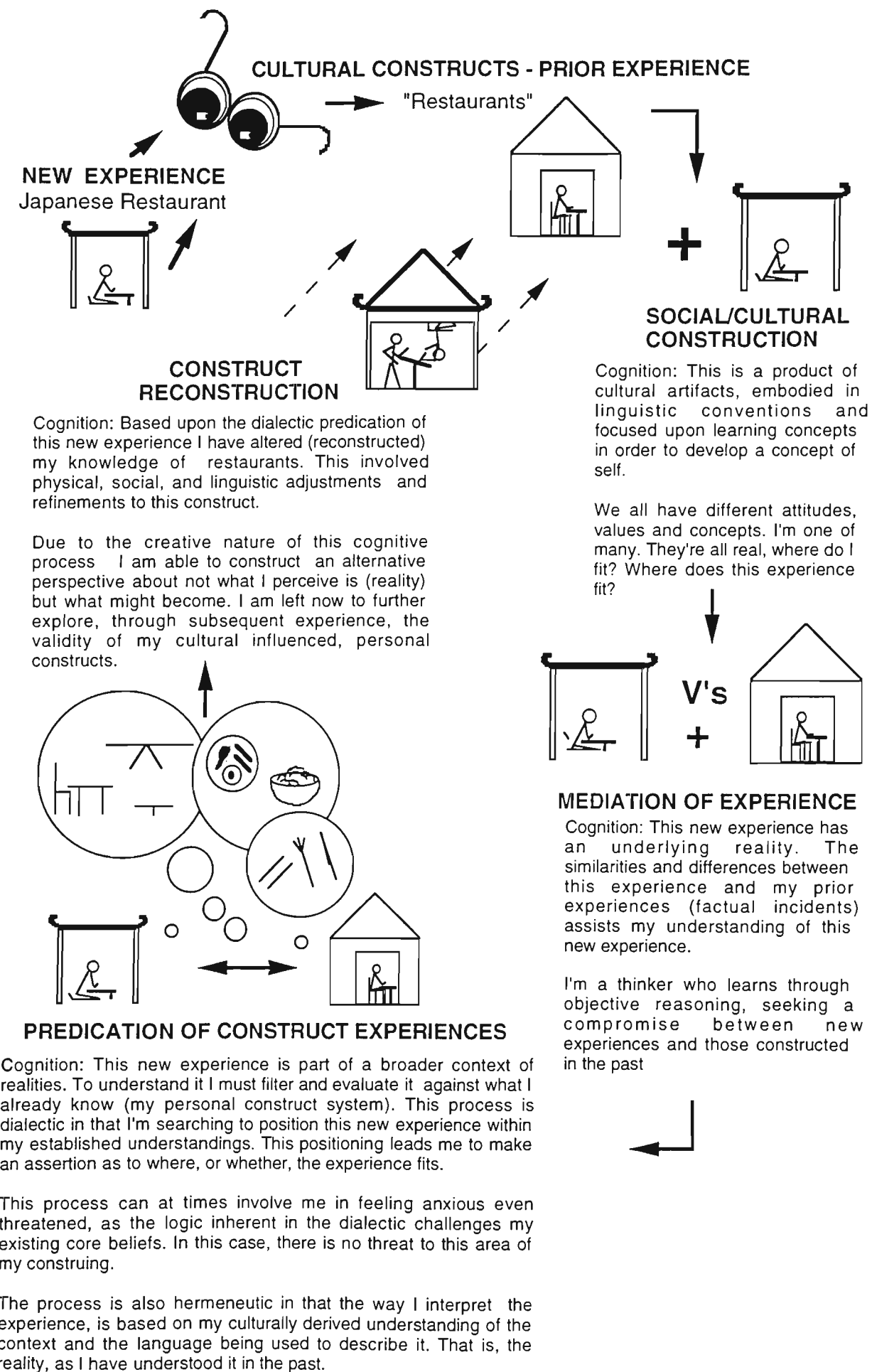
1.6 Conceptual locus: A cultural constructivist perspective

A cultural constructivist perspective is used as the conceptual platform from which to view the subjective educational ideologies of language teaching and learning that trainee teachers bring to their formal teacher preparation program. This approach is based upon a predication view of meaning construction, accommodating a similar view of the learning process and knowledge "construction" to that espoused by Kelly, (1955a,b). Figure 1.1 illustrates the features of this cultural constructivist perspective.

The selection of this perspective is grounded upon assertions about the accommodation of knowledge, and those construct alternatives that provide the scaffold of knowledge formation. The first assertion is that, to ascertain and understand cultural effects, research must step beyond the notion that behaviour, knowledge and personal meanings are merely responses to mediated events. It is believed that "accommodation" (Piaget, 1962) of behaviour, that is, the modification of existing schemas or constructs occurs after the schema has been assimilated in totality from the environment (Rychlak, 1990). The broader patterns of meaning filter the experience, and confirm, reject or qualify it in relation to developed patterns of contraposition.

The second assertion draws from cultural and social constructivist research which indicates that there exists no one reality, no one way from which to view the world and that experience and knowledge constructions are open to revision and are influenced by the personal nature of social experience (Harré 1987, cited in Rychlak, 1990; O'Loughlin 1992, 1993; Quinn & Holland, 1987; Wertsch 1991). It is these "constructive alternatives" that form the foundation of Kelly's (1955a,b) theory of personal constructs and which underlie an individual's view of reality. They also provide the foci of a cultural constructivist exploration of subjective educational ideology.

Figure 1.1 A cultural constructivist perspective of meaning creation



1.7 Subjective construction: Interpersonal cultural influences

Culture, in the context of this study, pertains specifically to how the teaching and learning of language is construed by trainee teachers from different cultures and the influence on personal construing of individuals from informal and formal educative cultures. Defining culture in this way, this study builds on the personal "cognitive perspectives" of teacher thinking that have dominated the research over the past 15 years. Olson (1988) declared that thinking is not "personal but interpersonal" (p.167). While personal construals of experience do provide information about the person and the experience, they also provide much information about the society to which the person belongs. An individual's personal interpretative recounts of language teaching, teachers, parents and tutors can tell us much about the rules by which that person, within that society or culture, has learned to play. "Such interpretation of the public, social process of teaching provides the backdrop against which cognitive analyses can be made" (Olson, 1988, p.168).

Language teacher education programs, such as that at the National Institute of Education, Singapore, focus on the professional preparation of each trainee. The formal teacher education program focuses upon developing trainees' personal practical knowledge (Elbaz, 1983, 1990), that is, the knowledge of language teaching that guides their practice. This knowledge is divided into categories such as knowledge of curriculum and instruction; knowledge of curriculum development; and knowledge of subject matter. Shulman (1987) characterised teaching knowledge base through categories of: content knowledge; general pedagogical knowledge; curriculum knowledge; pedagogical content knowledge; knowledge of learners; knowledge of educational ends, purposes and values; and a knowledge of educational contexts. What ever the division of knowledge boundaries, culture lies at the heart of any professional change or reform. That is, the formal educative

culture of the University, its staff and individual trainees all influence, and are in turn influenced by the culturally influenced, subjective educational ideologies of the others.

What cognitive presentations of (trainee) teacher knowledge lack is an appreciation of the influence of culture. Cultural experiences in the home and throughout trainee formal education influences the ways in which the trainee sees and comes to know the world. It is through these socio-culturally derived knowledge constructions that the trainee develops personal subjective understandings. Culturally influenced, personally constructed orientations to language, teaching and learning have, it will be argued, been developing since birth. They provide the accepted operating rules of the game that are approved of within the trainee's society. If trainees are to develop, or change, or operate within the society they need to understand:

- How to put the culturally established ground rules of the game into action;
- How to modify the rules if preconceived knowledge is no longer appropriate; and
- How to modify the rules to meet the needs of new experiences as they are encountered.

1.8 Culture and language

"The most obvious influence of language and culture on thought is that of vocabulary" (Valdes, 1986, p.3). Words and their associated meanings are suited to the environment in which they are used (Boas, 1986). Any interpretation (hermeneutics) of meaning by the speaker or listener would seem to require a reconstruction of the context in which the description (construct) arises. The implications of this influence requires the methodological design to encompass techniques through which individuality and commonality of meaning can be derived.

1.9 *A priori* assertions

This study is grounded upon assertions about language, learning and the teaching of language.

1.9.1 Prior experience influences thinking

This assertion posits that prior to beginning their brief, formal preparation as language teachers, trainees have been involved in a lengthy period of informal learning about teaching. This learning has occurred through observations of teachers and through participation as trainees.

These observations influence the way trainees construe their role as a teacher and how language is best learned. They come to their formal studies with personal history-based subjective educational ideologies or "lay theories" about good teaching practice (Knowles & Holt-Reynolds, 1991). These subjective educational ideologies are generated quite naturally from countless experiences with language teachers in both formal and informal situations—countless hours of demonstrations in, and observations of, teachers and language at work in schools, in homes and in the wider community (Lortie, 1975).

Subjective educational ideologies are based on "untutored interpretations" of lived experiences (Bullough, Knowles & Crow, 1989; Knowles, 1988). They are constructed unconsciously, without direct formal instruction (Vygotsky, 1978) and can remain dormant, as unexamined tacit knowledge (Barclay & Wellman, 1986).

1.9.2 Subjective formations of knowledge, understandings, and beliefs are the frame or cultural construction of meanings which human beings express and use to refer to themselves at a particular point in time.

This assertion draws from the field of philosophical hermeneutics wherein "Dasein," or the existentialist's study of being that applies to a person's place in time, is viewed as the fruit of process and discovery, or personal insight and interpretation rather than specific truths of system or method (Crusius, 1989). Trainee teachers' subjective educational ideology, as expressed through their language, is the result of personal educative and social interpretations of experience. These constructed interpretations are dynamic and open to change. This view of "Dasein" is synergistic with those held by personal construct psychology theorists, specifically Kelly (1955a,b) whose methods will be employed to examine individual trainee construct interpretations of language teaching and learning.

1.9.3 Personal constructed views can be elicited and interpreted for meaning

The elicitation of personal views can be achieved through a variety of methodological techniques that include humans as storytellers (Howard, 1988); biographical sketches and concept mapping (Denicolo & Pope, 1990); biography (Elbaz, 1990; Kelchtermans, 1993); working knowledge (Yinger & Hendricks-Lee, 1993); teachers' stories (Hansen Nelson, 1993); and craft knowledge (Batten, 1993; Day 1993). Of importance in any attempt at eliciting and interpreting personal views, is their 'personal' nature. They have been constructed through the preconceptions brought by the individual to the event. Therefore there is no single method that can be used to free the individual from understandings brought to each new experience. This assertion also holds true for the researcher in that, throughout the elicitation and analytic process, efforts must be maintained to ensure data are accurate and credible.

1.9.4 Knowledge of personal constructs will be beneficial to trainers and trainees

Throughout their formal preparation, trainees will meet with content which may or may not support their constructed view of language teaching. This implies the possibility that language teacher preparation programs may offer views of language teaching and learning which may cause trainees to alter or change their personal constructs. That is, the ideological foundations of the trainee may not correspond, or be compatible with those teaching or learning situations presented. This may cause problems and apparent inconsistencies between the content presented in the formal preparatory program and the trainee's teaching practices.

It is assumed that as professionals, trainers will be interested in the thinking of trainees. Trainee prior knowledge has a strong possibility of exerting negative and positive effects on trainee attitude and development as teachers. It is the responsibility of the trainer to take the needs and interests of the trainee into account when preparing and delivering a program of instruction.

Communicating the principles of teaching practice has been shown to be qualitatively unlike communicating the abstracted principles of any other profession (Feiman-Nemser & Buchmann, 1986; Holt-Reynolds, 1992; Zeichner, 1983, 1986). Unlike other professional development programs, teacher trainees come to their professional study with broad experience and knowledge of their future profession. For trainee language teachers this prior knowledge of schools, classrooms, teachers, and trainees is further augmented by their lived experiences with language. They come with subjective educational ideologies about how to be successful with pupils and what constitutes effective teaching practice. They also bring a wealth of experiences concerning how language functions. This is learned from their

subjective cultural point of view. This experience and knowledge about teaching and learning synergise to form subject-matter specific pedagogy (Clandinin, 1985; Connelly & Clandinin, 1986; Elbaz, 1981). Differences in prior experience, both at school and at home, may result in differences in lay theory and therefore in the way individuals respond to language teaching and the language teacher training process. Knowledge of trainee language teacher thinking will be of benefit to both the trainee and the trainer.

1.10 Physical locus of the study

1.10.1 Singapore

Singapore is a modern island city with a world class infrastructure. A city of diversity, the people of Singapore are regarded as its most precious resource, the key to higher economic status. Singaporeans enjoy a high standard of living and maintain a healthy respect for their cultural and historical roots. The population was originally immigrants from China, India, Peninsular Malaysia and today includes expatriate workers from all countries of the world. These people live in harmony, respecting and joining in a vast array of cultural and inter-cultural celebrations and nationally organised activities. Singaporeans are proud of their country and follow National campaigns, such as, "Toward Excellence in the Workplace," and "Speak Your Mother Tongue: Keep it Alive" without question or hesitation.

1.10.2 Education context

Throughout the last twenty-five years there has been a steady increase in the commitment to education with increased educational funding resulting in more places in schools, polytechnics and universities. Likewise, regular changes and updating of education programs have been implemented to ensure a greater flexibility and diversity of teaching content and approach. These

changes are aimed at ensuring a competitive edge and trends toward innovation and progress.

Historically, language education in Singapore has reflected an emphasis upon the mediation of language activity through physical and literal exposure (due to social, economic and geographic location) to the artifacts of various cultures. Likewise political emphasis, since 1965, has been on the maintenance of native cultural identity as a foundation of a broader multicultural Singaporean society. It is a society that uses the English language as a means of communication with the western world. In education, as in politics, Singaporeans are encouraged to understand English through an understanding of English speaking cultures. Cross-cultural understanding, in Singapore, is seen to be mediated through socially constructed and historically developing systems of artifacts (Scott, Cole & Engel, 1992; Vygotsky, 1978; Wertsch, 1985). Singaporeans are pragmatic people, a dynamic mix of Eastern and Western cultures. They adopt the best of all cultures. New ideas are trialed, assessed and modified to meet the needs of the wider society and the ideological beliefs of the political meritocracy. This process of cultural assimilation and mediation in the language classroom results in children learning and practising language from culturally informed positions.

1.10.2.1 Historical developments

The history of education in Singapore has transcended four distinct stages as outlined in Soon Teck Wong's (1988) monograph on Singapore's new education system – the British period prior to the second world war, post war developments until and ensuing from self government in 1959, and the rapid expansion of educational reforms which continued following the release of the Goh report, in 1979.

1.10.2.2 The British period

As guardians of native rights and customs the British government upheld the position of providing education for the indigenous people in the vernacular while acknowledging the importance of English to the employees of "the company" (East India Company). Hence a parallel system of schooling was established with vernacular schools for the Chinese, Tamil and rural Malay, and English schools largely run by missionary societies with some government aid.

1.10.2.3 Post war developments

During this period elementary school education began and was provided in all languages in accordance with the language spoken in the home. This was later amended to allow parents a choice in the language of instruction. Industrial unrest during the period saw the government attempt to take control of all schools, including the vernacular schools which, until this time, were funded by local communities, individuals or clan societies. The government takeover was a result of political unrest and the need to afford equal status of all schools. It wasn't until well after attaining self-government (1959) that the Ministry of Education was able to assert full control over all schools.

1.10.2.4 Self-government: A period of rapid expansion

Economic development was rapid and a need arose for a better trained, better educated work-force. The government was committed to making elementary school education free to all and thus established an accelerated school building program to accommodate the rising population. Despite this program it became necessary for buildings to be used by two sets of children (one in the morning and another in the afternoon—a practice which continues today).

As employment opportunities arose for Singaporeans, so did Singapore's status as a leading Asian financial centre. This provided excellent prospects for those fluent in English and placed greater demands on the Ministry of Education to provide suitably trained English teachers as increased numbers drifted to the English schools. This also created pressure at the cultural roots of Singapore's multicultural society. Pupils were in danger of losing all connections with their cultural roots. This prompted the education Ministry to reconsider its position with respect to bilingual education.

1.10.2.5 The Goh report and beyond

In 1978 a committee led by Dr Goh Keng Swee was established to examine problems in the Ministry of Education. The final report provided the foundation for a major overhaul of the education system in order to meet the rapidly changing social and economic needs of the country. It is with the back drop of the Goh Report that a "new education system" was established, and which the trainees involved in this study are products.

The Report recommended the introduction of streaming in the form of a 6-4-2 education system (six years of elementary, four years in secondary, and two years pre-university in a Junior College). The first streaming was to be undertaken following three years of elementary education. All pupils were to follow a common curriculum from P1 to P3 (Elementary Grade one to Three) and then they would be streamed based upon school-based examination performances in P2 and P3. Pupils were streamed on the following basis:

1. Those who passed P3 would be streamed to the Normal Bilingual course leading to the Primary School Leaving Examination (PSLE) in three years.
2. Those who failed P3 but passed P2 would be streamed to the extended Bilingual course leading to the PSLE in five years.

3. Those who failed both P2 and P3 would be required to sit for an Achievement Test (AT) set by the Ministry of Education. If they passed the AT, they would be streamed to the Extended Bilingual course. Only those who failed the AT would be streamed to the Monolingual course leading to the Primary School Proficiency Examination (PSPE) in five years.

(Soon Teck Wong, 1988, p.15)

In secondary schools pupils who passed the PSLE would be streamed as follows:

1. The top 19 per cent would be allowed to opt for either the Special course or the Express course, both of which lead to the "O" level examination in four years.

2. The next 40 per cent would be streamed to the Express course.

3. The next 10 per cent would be allowed to opt for either the Express or Normal course. The Normal course leads to the Normal level (N Level) examination in four years. Pupils who perform satisfactorily in the N level examination may proceed to do the "O" level after an additional year of study.

4. The last 40 per cent would be streamed to do the Normal course.

(Soon Teck Wong, 1988, p.16)

In 1983 the Ministry of Education announced the end of the parallel system of education begun during the British period. In its place was a single national language stream whereby all students were to study English as a first (educative) language (EL1) and either Tamil (TL2), Malay (ML2), or Chinese (CL2) as a second (educative) language. Double weighting was accorded to the two languages in the PSLE in order to give emphasis to, and support the Government's bilingualism policy. This was removed in 1985, however, when, in order to improve the accuracy of streaming, all PSLE subjects were accorded equal status.

Upon successful completion of the "O" Level examination, pupils are offered places in Junior Colleges where they undertake a two year program of study leading to an "A" Level examination. In accordance with their final pass, successful applicants apply for placements at either the National University of Singapore, Nanyang Technological University (NTU) or National Institute of Education (NIE) an Education arm of the NTU.

The trainees at Singapore's National Institute of Education reflect a cross-section of Singaporean cultures. Trainees enter teacher preparation following twelve years of primary and secondary education. During this time all have been exposed to, and examined extensively in, both their mother tongue and English.

The NIE conduct the only teacher preparatory program in Singapore. It offers courses in elementary English (EL1) teaching. This is a generalist training program where trainees train to teach English, Maths, Science and the Arts (art, music, physical education); or specialist language for the elementary school, i.e., one of either Tamil (TL2), Chinese (CL2) or Malay (ML2). In addition NIE conducts secondary teacher preparation in Physical Education, Science, Maths, and English and History as well as a range of adjunct external courses in special education and further professional development programs for the Ministry of Education.

Elementary school trainees are enrolled, in accordance with their "A" and "O" level passes, into either a Diploma in Education (Dip.Ed.) or Bachelor of Arts, Diploma in Education (B.A.Dip.Ed.) programs. It was from a single group of 450 Dip.Ed. and B.A.Dip.Ed. first year EL1, ML2, CL2 and TL2 trainees that volunteer trainee participants were sought.

1.11 Methods

1.11.1 Participants

The study involves twelve first year trainee volunteers from the Diploma in Education, elementary teacher education program. The program is conducted by Nanyang Technological University's, National Institute of Education, Singapore. All trainees are to be language teaching specialists in either Malay, Tamil, Chinese or English and represent the three main cultures that underlie Singaporean society.

1.11.2 Design

The study was divided into two phases relating specifically to its main objectives. The first phase examines the personal views of language teaching and learning of the participating trainees. This was achieved through an exercise involving written biography–self characterisation and personal metaphors of language teaching and learning. The use of metaphor was thought likely to provide trainees with an alternative language for communicating about language teaching and learning (Hunt, 1987).

In the second phase of the study the trainees participated in a personal construct interview. This involved completing a repertory grid, follow-up interview and written recounts of the contexts of construing. The repertory grid provided a window on the individual's personal view of language teaching and learning. When viewed critically through the eyes of the individual we are able to see interesting cultural features (Kelly, 1991, p.92). The repertory grid expresses the finite systems of cross references between the personal observations (elements) the trainee makes and the personal constructs the trainee holds. Grids act as a psychological equivalent of the first rough ground mirror of the individual's developing conceptual network (Thomas, 1978).

The exercises in Phase One provided information about the trainees' beliefs about their perceptions of the role as a language teacher. Analysis of the collective views provided an inter-cultural insight which together with data from Phase Two assisted in constructing a much clearer picture of the knowledge concerning teaching and learning and the influence of culture that the trainees bring to their formal teacher training.

1.12 Conclusion

Information pertaining to trainee teachers' knowledge may be useful to both teacher trainees and teacher educators. Trainees can make positive use of the information to facilitate the process of learning by retaining that which is valid and valuable in given contexts for their teaching and in their relations with future trainees. For teacher educators, an understanding of the relationship between trainee teachers' prior knowledge and the influences of teaching and learning cultures can lay the foundation for preparatory program development and the facilitation and understanding of trainee language teacher development.

This chapter has served to focus upon the broad aspects of the study, including the purpose and objectives of the study, the conceptual and physical loci, together with an overview of the research methods employed. Much of that which has been discussed in this chapter will be dealt with more fully in the following chapters. Chapter 2 explores the current literature in the fields of culture, constructivism, teacher knowledge and concludes with a discussion of cultural constructivism and the assumptions that underlie it.

Chapter Three discusses the choice of research paradigm and reviews related research methodology literature. It also serves to highlight the specific data collection and analysis procedures.

Chapter Four outlines the results of Phase One and Two data analysis. Results are presented in the form of individual case studies of the twelve participating trainee language teachers.

Chapter Five presents the shared meanings and relationships derived from cross case analyses and discussion. Emergent categories from the case studies are described together with a discussion of the grounded findings relating to the subjective educational ideologies of language teaching and learning, together with the influence of culture. Patterns of commonality within and across cultural groupings are presented.

Chapter Six discusses more fully the implications of the research findings.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Review of Literature

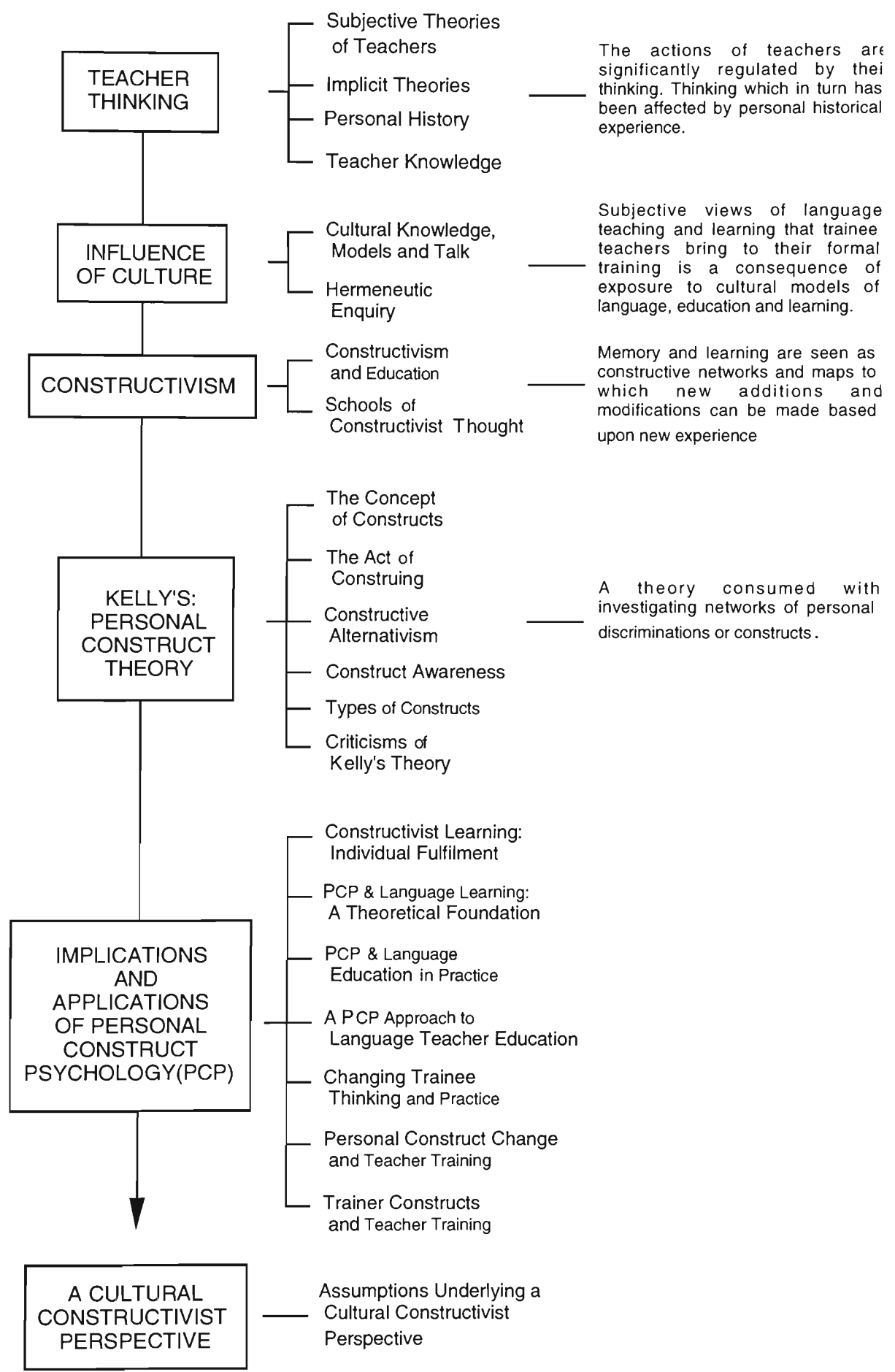
2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to address issues identified in the literature on teacher thinking, culture and constructivism that are relevant for the purposes of the study. The literature review draws together research from the disciplines of psychology, education and anthropology. Within these disciplines a wide selection of specific research fields were examined in order to determine the current state of research and related assumptions in the areas relating to teacher thinking, culture and constructivism.

The structure of the literature review is illustrated in Figure 2.1. which represents the bodies of literature reviewed and the major principles underlying each. The Figure also demonstrates how these seemingly diverse fields support the development of a cultural constructivist perspective from which the subjective educational ideologies of trainee teachers are viewed.

This review has six sections. It begins with an examination of developments in research on teacher thinking. This includes: subjective theories of teachers; implicit theories; influences of personal history; and teacher knowledge research. The second part shifts focus to the influence of culture. The third part of the review examines the developing area of constructivist research and constructivist studies related to education. Part four centres on an overview of Kelly's personal construct theory whilst Part five examines the implications and applications of PCP. This chapter closes with an overview of the cultural constructivist perspective (Part six) used to frame the exploration of subjective ideology and concludes with a summary of the major implications of the review.

Figure 2.1 Overview of literature reviewed, major principles and conceptual influence



2.2 Teacher thinking research

Research into trainee teacher construing can be identified in the broader domains of teacher thinking and personal history studies. The hypotheses of these types of research are that the actions of teachers are significantly regulated by their thinking, which in turn, has been affected by personal historical experiences (Corporaal, 1991). Inquiry into trainees' subjective educational ideologies of teaching and learning underlies much of the diverse and extensive literature in the field of teacher thinking (Connelly & Clandinin, 1986). Clark and Peterson (1986) divided this research into three main categories: teacher planning; teachers' interactive thoughts and decisions; and teachers' theories and beliefs. The research reported here relates most closely to this last category, as it shares with these related studies an attempt to make explicit the intrinsic cognitions of trainee teachers. The rationale for this type of research, as indicated in Chapter 1, section 1.5, is to further understanding of the ideological structures underlying trainee teacher thinking. This information will be of use as a basis for developing a formal teacher preparatory program more consistent with the ideological principles of the trainee and teacher educator. As Sarason (1993) observes:

Teaching teachers involves every psychological issue and principle involved in teaching children. The would-be educators, like the pupils they will later teach, are not uninformed, empty vessels, devoid of knowledge, assets, interest, and experience in matters educational. To ignore what the would-be teacher knows and has experienced, what that teacher aspires to be and achieve, is to seal off a gold mine in the face of poverty. (p.150)

What has been learned from the research literature is that "ideas—subject matter knowledge—cannot be translated whole and intact regardless of how flawless the presentation.... People construct ideas as they learn, and they use their prior knowledge, experiences, and beliefs, as well as interpretations they

generate in the moment, as the stuff out of which to build those ideas" (Knowles & Holt-Reynolds, 1994, p.6). Research that has led to these findings and to the development of the current research inquiry also stems from investigations that attempt to make explicit the intrinsic cognitions of trainees. Specifically, research studies focused on developing subjective theories of teachers (Feiman-Nemser & Floden, 1986; Krause, 1986); implicit theories (Wei Li-Chen & Spodek, 1993); the influence of personal history (Amarel & Feiman-Nemser, 1988; Gomez, 1988); and the broad research area of teacher knowledge.

2.2.1 Subjective theories of teachers

Few studies were identified as being overtly concerned with investigating the subjective theories of trainee language teachers. Corporaal (1991) found commonality in the cognition of trainee teachers with regard to ideal teaching performance, interpreting the results as being "realistic" beliefs of subjective student theory (p.322). Feiman-Nemser and Floden (1986) found that every teacher has their own decision-making process in the culture of the classroom. Subjective theories were found to guide teacher perceptions, explanations and predictions of classroom practice. Krause (1986) reports on a specific method for reconstructing and analysing the content of subjective theories. Results indicate categories of teacher goals and action specific to the contextual field of the study. Clearly, the group of teachers preferred neutral reactions, short range goals and considered characteristics of student behaviour in any decision to react. Further analysis, not reported, was undertaken to determine under which circumstances the subjective theories of teachers determine their actions. Clearly, the underlying assumption of these illustrative examples is that subjective theories are stable, accessible and, in the main, influence the actual behaviour of the teachers. Subjective and implicit theories are developed from within the subjective ideological base.

They account for the different plans, hypothetical possibilities and assumptions made in accordance with the application of ideological beliefs to different phenomena. These research examples are representative of personal theories in action (Argyris & Schön, 1974).

2.2.2 Implicit theories

Inquiries into implicit theories relate closely to subjective theory research and have been found difficult to isolate and categorise. Various terms have been used throughout the literature to describe similar phenomena: e.g. practical knowledge, teacher beliefs, knowledge in action can all be construed as implicit theory research. The major purpose of implicit theory investigations is "to make explicit and visible the frame of reference through which individual teacher's perceive and process information" (Clark & Peterson, 1986, p.287). Another commonality is that all these research investigations focus directly on the thought processes of the teacher (Clandinin, 1985). One study that uses the term "implicit theory" was conducted by Wei Li-Chen and Spodek (1993). This study sought out: the nature, contradictions among and influential factors on two preschool teachers' implicit theories. They identified ten categories of beliefs. These new teachers' implicit theories displayed a higher percentage of belief statements centred on children's needs than knowledge about teaching. Findings in respect to contradictions were inclusive, however results indicate two influential factors on their implicit theories: firstly their past personal experience in schools; and secondly their current experience as a teacher. These findings have implications for the present study in respect to comparisons of teacher and trainee beliefs. The present study, however, will build on the findings of influence by providing a much greater exploration of the trainees' experiences in formal and informal educative cultures. This, it is anticipated, will reveal more about the interpersonal associations and commonality of construing.

2.2.3 Personal history

The research of Gomez (1988) and Amarel and Feiman-Nemser (1988) illustrate the types of inquiry designed to gain an understanding of trainee teacher dispositions toward learning to teach. Using written responses, questionnaires and interviews Gomez (1988) and Amarel and Feiman-Nemser (1988) attempted to determine an understanding of trainee teachers' backgrounds in learning to write; and their views of what is needed to teach successfully.

Gomez' (1988) data reflected a diversity of findings related to a diversity in trainee backgrounds, experiences of learning to write and comments about the quality of good writers. Gomez concluded that trainee responses were often grounded on "questionable indices" and that their responses indicated a limited knowledge of what constituted good writing.

The Amarel and Feiman-Nemser (1988) study focused on the knowledge required to teach successfully. Their data reflected concerns with the managerial process of teaching, i.e., maintaining control. However, no mention was made of subject matter knowledge or learning.

These two representative studies exemplify the type of knowledge and understanding that can be gained and used by teacher educators in designing and conducting their professional development programs. The research however does not indicate, in any great detail, how knowledge is constructed or the foundation of that construction. That is, the process through which trainees have developed their personal understandings.

Research into the changing orientation or personal dispositions of trainee teachers indicates that there is a further need for research into what and how teaching knowledge is learned and constructed. Hollingsworth (1988, 1989), for example, investigated changes in trainee teachers' knowledge and beliefs throughout a fifth-year teaching program. The focus of this research was on monitoring the global changes in trainee knowledge and beliefs. Patterns emerging from the data led Hollingsworth to develop a model that illustrates the "critical role" prior beliefs play in the learning to teach process. As Hollingsworth (1988) states: "pre-program beliefs served as filters for processing program content and making sense of classroom contexts. ...Each new level of knowledge affected changes in pre-program beliefs" (p.9).

While Hollingsworth focused upon trainees undertaking a fifth-year reading program, the results are indicative of the need to examine all trainees' prior dispositions, when they enter teacher preparation programs. This influence is echoed in the research of Zeichner, Tabachnik and Densmore (1987), Zeichner (1986), Zeichner and Tabachnik (1985), Feiman-Nemser and Buchmann (1986) and Calderhead (1987). Pajares (1992) provides a concise overview, as a result of an extensive review, of the fundamental assumptions underlying studies of teachers' educational beliefs. Pajares concludes that investigations of teachers' beliefs need to continue for they are "a necessary and valuable avenue of educational inquiry" (p.326). It would appear from the literature that teacher education researchers, while aware of the power of "early enculturation in developing educational beliefs, they have failed to explore it" (Pajares, 1992, p.324). It is in this area that the "personal experience" of the learning to teach process is highlighted and calls identified for insight into how to assist trainees achieve their knowledge potential for successful teaching. This study explores this enculturation, the subjective

ideological foundation upon which personal constructions or beliefs are grounded.

From studies in research on learning to teach and other related studies in teacher knowledge and thinking, what has been learned is that there is no singular or universal way of referring to outcomes. Designations include: beliefs, attitudes, conceptions, orientations, perspectives, knowledge, constructs, concerns, and dispositions. While these terms hold slight differences in semantic intent, they are often used interchangeably and without clear definition.

2.2.4 Teacher knowledge

Current research in teacher knowledge has "renewed its efforts to describe and delineate the knowledge base for teaching" (Grossman, 1990, p.4) and marks a break from the behaviourist traditions that had dominated educational research (Carter, 1990). Examining the process of learning to teach from a "cognitive" orientation has its origins in similar shifts in the social sciences. (See Halliday 1975, for an example of this shift in linguistics and Kelly, 1955a,b for an example of the beginnings of the shift in psychology.) The cognitive shift in these disciplines was marked by qualitative type research which emphasised the interpretive study of social contexts and resultant influence upon knowledge acquisition.

The research literature in the area of teacher knowledge and thinking has grown steadily in the theoretical concepts undertaken and the epistemology of research design and practice. Examples of this research include a focus upon: metaphor and beliefs (Munby, 1982); practical knowledge (Elbaz, 1983); personal intentions (Day, 1984); intuitive theories (Pope & Denicolo, 1986); image (Clandinin, 1985); subject matter knowledge (Leinhardt & Smith, 1985);

personal practical knowledge (Connelly & Clandinin, 1984); teachers' perspectives (Tabachnik & Zeichner, 1985); teacher knowledge (Shulman, 1986a); scripts and schema (Clark & Peterson, 1986); humans as storytellers (Howard, 1988); and more recently working knowledge (Yinger & Hendricks-Lee, 1993); and craft knowledge (Batten, 1993; Grimet & Mackinnon, 1992).

2.2.4.1 Teacher knowledge: Personal schemata vs ecological views

Research on teacher knowledge draws together two extreme views on the construction and form that knowledge can take. First, personal schematic-theoretic research subscribes to the notion that teacher knowledge is inherently connected to ongoing events in the classroom context. Secondly, each person's knowledge is unique and cannot be compared or linked with others without affecting important nuances of meaning. An ecological perspective focuses on the teaching context and the demands and influences that context has on the teacher's knowledge and subsequent action. That is, it is the situation or context which shapes the way a teacher or trainee thinks (Carter, 1990).

While seemingly opposite, both views focus upon what teachers know and how their knowledge is influenced by varying teaching contexts. Carter (1990) cites two studies that exemplify how these perspectives converge. Firstly, she points to the work of Fernstermacher (1986) whose teachers were seen to use information about teaching as "practical arguments" for teaching action. These arguments acknowledge the personal voice of the teacher, and encompass specific personal interpretations of classroom events with general knowledge of content, students, learning and classroom situations that help teachers draw associations between various subject matters, general pedagogics and real world general knowledge. These teachers use these arguments in an

effort to improve or change teaching, learning, managerial or organisational approaches in the classroom.

Yinger (in Carter, 1990) argues that teachers use a "rich store of knowledge" that enables them to make sense of classroom and educative situations. This knowledge is grounded in experience, intention and understandings and when confronted with a situation is immediately applied. Yinger believes this knowledge is "holistic and patterned" and, as such, may be inseparable from action in the given situation. This, Carter (1990) believes would account for the inability of some teachers to speak analytically about what they do in different situations, because all they know is "whole actions connected to situational frames" (Carter, 1990, p.305).

Personal schemata and ecological views on the construction and form that knowledge may take illustrates the polarised extremes of the construct teacher knowledge. In given situations teachers draw from the teaching context in their decision making and at other times they may recall past experiences prior to making decisions. A problem associated with the ecological view in the context of exploring subjective ideological patterns of thinking is that it fails to acknowledge the cognitive nature and influence of prior experience. It assumes that ideological beliefs are mere socially constructed hierarchies of teaching behaviours. What ecological views do illuminate is the important role that cultural influence, through contextual experience, plays in the construction of teacher knowledge and understandings. For it is the mediation and predication of these experiences with established subjective schematic views which lead to the possibility of change and or refinement of the existing schema. The convergence of these two views forms the foundation of the cultural constructivist perspective from which this study explores subjective educational ideology.

2.2.4.2 Knowledge of practice

From research, a number of models of teacher knowledge have emerged. Elbaz's (1983) model of "practical knowledge," based on a case study of a secondary school teacher, for example, includes five categories: knowledge of self; knowledge of the milieu of teaching; knowledge of subject matter; knowledge of curriculum development; and knowledge of instruction. Practical knowledge, as used by Elbaz, refers to the knowledge teachers and trainees have of classrooms, learning situations and dilemmas that may confront or influence them in the practical application of their craft.

Researchers in this area subscribe to the notion that knowledge related to the practice of teaching evolves from practical thinking that ultimately leads to action related to the specific situation. Schön (1983) in "The Reflective Practitioner" argues that practice in these situations is experiential and evolves from reflection in action. Carter (1990) summarises: "practical knowledge is shaped by a professional's personal history, which includes intentions and purposes, as well as cumulative effects of life experiences" (p.300). It is through such reflective thinking that trainee teachers, for example, are able to clarify their thinking in anticipation of subsequent action (Elbaz, 1990; Yinger, 1987; Day, 1984). This research has implications for the study of subjective ideology —specifically in identifying the ideological beliefs that underlie trainee constructs of language teaching practice.

Related research in this field has focused upon the images (Clandinin, 1985), metaphors (Munby, 1982) and theories implicit in the real world action of teachers (Pope & Denicolo 1986; Connelly & Clandinin, 1984). The knowledge base for teaching is therefore seen to reside in the person-as-teacher together with the outward principles of practice. Clandinin and Connelly (1986) argue in favour of an understanding of teaching that does not

separate knowledge from the knower. A strength of practical knowledge research is its origins in the real world of teaching and teachers. It results in a very personalised view of teacher knowledge, "how the teachers learn by teaching and how teachers use their knowledge, rather than a generalised conception of what teachers know" (Carter, 1990, p.302). The implications of this research are that, while providing valuable models of research principles, methodology and insight into the characteristics of what teachers know, the research provides little information on how the knowledge is constructed or acquired.

Other efforts at describing teacher knowledge include Leinhardt and Smith's (1985) subject matter knowledge; Shulman's (1986a) seven categories: knowledge of content; knowledge of pedagogy; knowledge of curriculum; knowledge of learners and learning; knowledge of contexts of schooling; pedagogical content knowledge; and knowledge of educational philosophies, goals and objectives; and Apple's (1990) technical knowledge. That is, the maintenance of dominant hegemony (economic, political and cultural beliefs) through the educational culture of the school system. Research developments in the areas of teacher thinking and knowledge have, as stated by Clark (1988) moved from being merely "curious about teachers' thought and action" (p.7) toward a greater understanding of how to enhance teachers "professional development" (Calderhead, 1987, p.17). Further, the research highlights areas in which researchers and teachers are more likely to gain from those understandings achieved through a reflection and clarification of teacher thinking (Pope, 1993; Yinger & Hendricks-Lee, 1993; Elbaz, 1990; Yinger, 1987).

The current study will add to the fruits of these researches by going beyond many of the starting points, i.e., the teacher, the trainee teacher and

preparatory programs, by examining the subjective educational ideologies of individual trainees. Inherent in these ideologies are constructs that form the foundation scaffold through which language teaching practices and understandings are shaped. Subjective educational ideologies are "constructed" through personal interpretation, and are the result of exposure to teachers and cultural contexts of learning, both formal (school system) and informal (home). It is through these personally constructed ideologies that future professional development and thinking are filtered.

2.2.4.3 Learning to teach

To understand the impact of trainee teacher professional development programs, it is believed that attention must be first focused upon the trainees' prior professional knowledge of teaching. The relationship between the trainees' prior knowledge and teacher preparation programs have yet to be fully "conceptualised" (Grossman, 1990, p.3) and so research into the effects of teacher education has been hindered (Lanier & Little, 1986). Specifically, research which has the potential to augment a set of guiding principles of teacher education (Floden & Klinzing, 1990) or, at the very least, sensitises teacher educators to the impact of their own practice and thinking on their trainees (Clark, 1988).

The 1980's is identified as the period when research shifted toward the study of teacher cognition, i.e., the thoughts, judgements and decision making of teachers (Shulman, 1986b). This shift resulted in a description of, and subsequent models of teacher planning and decision making (Clark & Peterson, 1986). As Carter (1990) details:

In the past researchers have focused attention primarily on teachers' skills and dispositions. Recently, however, investigators, armed with the new conceptual and methodological tools of cognitive science and interpretive research, have begun to examine the character and substance of teachers' knowledge. ...It also seems to be a promising framework, establishing focus and coherence in research on how teachers learn to teach. (p.291)

The success or otherwise of teacher preparation programs is then seen to depend on an understanding of trainee the knowledge base for teaching. As Howsman, Corrigan, Denmark and Nash (1976) state "if the promise of the teaching profession is to be achieved we must attend to the process by which its knowledge base is developed and transmitted" (p.2). Before 1986, much of the research that had been undertaken focused on teaching behaviours as a determinant of teacher knowledge (Lanier & Little, 1986). This research seemingly lacked a theoretical framework that could account for the impact of prior experience on trainee knowledge and beliefs of teaching. That is, trainees' knowledge and beliefs of subject matter, student learning, students and pedagogical approaches to teaching (Grossman, 1990; Lanier & Little, 1986). Such "behaviourist" paradigms or "positivist" approaches can account for some aspects of teacher knowledge and development. However, due to the complexity of knowledge construction, it is improbable that one such paradigm or epistemology could account for all trainee knowledge and how that knowledge is acquired. Therefore, research aimed at determining knowledge of trainee teacher thinking may well need to draw from a wide range of epistemological and research paradigms, and which may require researchers to heed Pope's (1993) call, to "act as reflective practitioners and become aware of our [research] constructs in use and keep them under review —allowing ourselves the opportunity to extend our horizons" (p.29).

Heeding Pope's call this research study draws together research from psychology and education. The development of a cultural constructivist perspective has required the examination and re-examination of literature across a range of unrelated fields. The review process and study design have necessitated reflexive thinking about personal ideological beliefs about language teaching and learning, research method and analytic procedures. This process has meant acknowledging information gaps in my knowledge and understandings and has forced me to rethink, to reconstruct my own personal history in the hope of finding or creating directions and avenues through which these personal information gaps may be filled. This reflexive process has also instigated an "intellectual unrest" as I recount past learning and the influences exerted on me at the time.

2.3 The influence of culture

Social order exists because we as members of a specific society and culture put it there in the form of culturally constructed and accepted conventions e.g., categories such as trees, people, paper or social institutions such as schools, marriage and customs. Culturally constructed categories of objects exist, whereas socially constructed understandings are founded and maintained by the virtue that they adhere to the rules and conditions created by members of that society.

Knowledge of socio-cultural understanding reflects the degree to which people and individuals within a society, impose order on their world (Holland & Quinn, 1987). The constructed views of language teaching and learning that student teachers bring to their formal training is a direct consequence of exposure to cultural models of language, education and learning (Holt-Reynolds, 1992; Hollingsworth, 1989). As Holland and Quinn (1987) propose,

"a very large proportion of what we know and believe we derive from [these] shared models that specify what is in the world and how it works" (p.3).

In selecting papers for inclusion in this part of the literature review, as in the designing of appropriate methods for the inquiry, I was confronted with the enigma of cultural meaning. Reviews and studies of Keesing (1974), Howard, (1986), Valdes, (1986), Quinn and Holland (1987), and Hamilton (1993) demonstrate that endeavours to understand how cultural meaning systems are organised have challenged generations of anthropologists and researchers alike.

What has been learned is that the cultural knowledge base is not static. Rather personal understanding is extended through subsequent encounters with experience (Quinn & Holland, 1987). These socio-cultural understandings reflect accumulated knowledge and lay the constructive framework for subsequent learning. They act as a filter through which the fortunes and complexities of daily life pass.

This perspective, one of many traditions in anthropology, represents a cognitive view of cultural anthropological knowledge organisation. It is a perspective that views culture as shared knowledge, i.e., what people must know in order to act and interpret experience in the way they do (Quinn & Holland, 1987). It also has strong theoretical links with cognitivists' research, specifically in the area of the personal construing of experience, as espoused by Kelly (1955a,b). Construing is the act of applying personally developed construct interpretations of experience to the world. It enables an individual to "chart a course of behaviour" (Kelly, 1963, p.9), to develop, to understand, to reconcile experiences with established construct systems, in a continual quest for the development of 'better fits' over perceived realities. In this review of

cultural influence, cultural knowledge, models and talk and related hermeneutic inquiry I examine this link and in doing so establish the influence and place of culture and a cultural constructivist perspective through which the subjective ideologies of trainee language teachers are explored.

2.3.1 Cultural knowledge, models and talk

Stepping beyond the notion of the personal nature of cognitive content, Olson (1988) declared that thinking is not "personal but interpersonal" (p.167). That personal construal of experience, while providing information about the person and the experience, also provides much information about the society in which the person belongs. Little was found in the literature on the effects of culture on the knowledge base of trainees or teachers. This is despite Olson's (1988) call for such investigations:

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. (p.169)

Hamilton's (1993) response involved a study of teacher beliefs within the contexts of a school culture. What she found was that "the culture of the teacher and culture of the teacher's work place do affect the teacher's beliefs" (p.96). She concluded that cultural factors provide a means through which greater understanding of the teacher's decision-making process can be established. Hamilton's study holds important implications for the potential findings in respect to any related connections between beliefs and teaching practice found in the current research. While her study focused on established teachers, it is hypothesised that if similar findings are established in the current research, then trainee ideological beliefs may well prove predictors of future trainee teaching performance, and of teacher educator and trainee

relationships. These findings would hold consequences in the design of future language teacher education programs.

Hamilton (1993) urged work in this area to "continue because recognition of teachers' cultural models can greatly enhance our understanding of classroom processes...[and has an impact on] the theoretical and practical levels of education" (p.96). Studies of teacher and trainee teacher thinking together with cultural studies have a joint implication for the current research. They extend our general understandings of cultural influence and teaching action. Any movement toward a "well-established epistemology of practice" (Calderhead, 1993, p.16), however, must ensure that research recognises the influence of cultural models (Hamilton, 1993). As Langer (1988) states "differences in their prior experience (both in school and at home) may lead to major differences in the ways that different groups of students [trainees] respond to collaborative activities" (p.350).

Cultural models are presupposed by members of a society, are largely taken for granted and play an enormous role in the behaviour and understanding of the world the members portray. They reflect the members' impressions of the world through an interplay of language and meaning (Holland, 1985) and mental scripts (Schank & Abelson, 1977). These scripts are derived from daily experiences and result in an accumulation of knowledge interpretations of those frequently recurring events.

Cultural knowledge has been studied by examining the cultural patterns evident in the case-history of individuals (Langness, 1965; Mandelbaum, 1973). Cognitive anthropological theorists (D'Andrade, 1985; Keesing, 1974) suggest that the mental phenomena that constitute culture are those implicit understandings or rules used in the construction of propositions. These

propositions may, or may not, be directly translated into language and/or explicit action.

I assert that trainee teachers enter the formal training situation with a pre-conceived knowledge base for language teaching, that is, a set of ideological understanding and knowledge related to classroom routines and practices that each trainee believes will enable them to meet the demands imposed by the various teaching and learning situations that may arise. A perceived problem in determining these ideological foundations is determining semantic intent. If a construct "approachable" is elicited, what meaning does it hold for the trainee? Individuals do not always behave in ways consistent with those cultural beliefs or the theoretical orientations they verbally espouse. The meanings and patterns of action have their foundation in the context of real world experiences of teaching and learning. Trainee teacher thinking is shaped by each trainee's personal history and his or her personal biography. Therefore, any attempt at understanding the knowledge and cultural influences upon knowledge construction must employ a broad disciplined enquiry. This is attempted in this study by drawing upon hermeneutic philosophy.

2.3.2 Hermeneutic enquiry

The positivist philosopher Gadamer (1975) argues that experience and subsequent understanding is constructed through the preconceptions brought by the individual to the event. He posits that there is no prior state of understanding that is free of prejudice and that there is no single method that can be used to free the individual from those understandings brought to each new experience —these prejudices are shaped by the traditions that inform our way of knowing. Therefore cultural traditions and experience help shape trainees' understanding, their interpretations of teaching and learning, and

those preconceptions are then carried forward to each new experience and act of interpretation.

This notion of interpretative understanding and the influence it exerts on knowledge construction has much in common with ideas expressed by Kelly (1955a,b). Also Gadamer's belief that the rigour of research method cannot guarantee the "truth of research conclusions" has influenced the methodological design of this study. All data collection techniques will be reviewed in Chapter 3 and are seen to focus upon eliciting information within the personal and social cultural context of the events from which they have been derived, or are being applied.

2.4 Constructivism

Psychology has, over a period of thirty years, moved progressively from behaviouristic and associated positivistic influences toward more cognitive or humanistic approaches. This movement reflects a change in psychological research that acknowledges the proposition that as psychologists and researchers think, their subjects also think, and thus his or her thinking may have important implications in understanding their behaviour.

Associationist-behaviourist approaches to learning are, as a result of this change, being superseded and inculcated into new information processing approaches rooted in cognitive theories. These theories seek to explain behaviour in terms of the mental processing or metacognitive skills involved in learning, memory, problem solving and decision making (McKeachie, Pintrich & Lin, 1985).

These cognitive models assume that individuals can be described by specific psychological traits which have an influence upon the way they respond to environmental stimuli. (Pintrich, 1990, p.828)

Cognitive theories represented a focus upon individual differences. Pintrich's (1990) review of the implications of psychological research on teaching and learning highlights, with respect to teacher training and cognitive style research, two general perspectives that may affect an individual trainee teacher's development.

The first perspective is an older more traditional view which characterises cognitive style as a relatively stable set of dominant personality traits that are consistently expressed, as they interact with their environment. The second perspective is a more contemporary personality theory that conceptualises personality in a more dynamic, "process orientation" (Pintrich, 1990). In this research, the individual's cognitive style is seen as an "information-processing regulator" (Corno & Snow, 1986) which relates to the underlying personality constructs. This information-processing concept differs from that of cognitive ability in that it focuses on the mode of cognition as opposed to the content or level of cognition (Sternberg, 1985, cited in Pintrich, 1990).

An addition to the information processing research on cognitive style is the "surface versus deep" processing orientation to student learning and studying. The research findings of Marton, Hounsell and Entwistle (1984) indicate that orientations to learning and their actual learning and study strategies interact dynamically with the course content and context. "This conceptualisation of surface-deep processing proposes a more constructivist view of the learner in which individuals attempt to derive meaning from the course material in line with their intentions and purposes" (Pintrich, 1990, p.829).

Cognitive theorists clearly go beyond the basic construct of "reinforcement" fundamental to behaviouristic approaches. Memory and learning are seen as

constructive networks and maps to which additions and modifications can be made, based on new experience or for a specific purpose. From a somewhat static view of learning, cognitive approaches view learning and remembering as active constructive processes (Kelly, 1955a,b; Piaget, 1962, 1970). The movement toward cognitive views of learning has resulted in an explosion of research focusing on constructivist approaches to understanding teaching and thinking. The research itself exemplifies the multitude of aspects that influence the construction of knowledge and professional development.

2.4.1 Constructivism and education

Curricular reform movements across a range of disciplines and fields, including mathematics (Benbow, 1993; Borko, Eisenhart, Underhill, Brown, Jones & Agard, 1991; Lampert, 1990; Nicholls, Cobb, Wood, Yackel, & Patashnick, 1990; Schifter & Simon, 1992; Simon, 1993); special education (DeRuiter, 1991); science education (Hollon, Roth, & Anderson, 1991; Munby & Russell, 1993; Posner, Strike, Hewson, & Gertzog, 1982); early childhood (Ford Schattgen, 1993; Wei Li-Chen & Spodek, 1993); writing (Florio-Ruane, & Lensmire, 1990) computers in education (Scott, Cole & Engel, 1992); teacher development (Feikes, 1993; Ponticell, 1993); decision making (Fender Hayes, 1993); teaching promises and paradoxes (Maxon & Mahlios, 1993); negotiated understandings between teacher and students (Nystrand, 1991); and curriculum and assessment (DeVries, 1993), have at their core a constructivist perspective of knowledge. The promotion of this constructivist view of learning is likely to involve large scale changes in trainee or teacher thinking. The trainee's knowledge of subject-matter content and pedagogy, pupil learning, and professional development is likely to change as a result of developments and new experiences encountered in their formal preparatory program. In addition, to support change within the educational context a constructivist approach may well require educators to rethink and possibly

change their philosophical approach to teaching (DeRuiter, 1991; Holt-Reynolds, 1992; Hunsaker & Johnston, 1992; McDiarmid, 1990; Smith & Neale, 1991; Prawat, 1992; Rovengo, 1993). Educators who may have ideologically opposing views will, like the trainees they teach, resist imposed changes inconsistent with subjective ideologies. This highlights the importance of research that focuses on making explicit these intrinsic ideologies which then allow trainees and educators the opportunity to explore and examine their implications. As Holt-Reynolds (1994) states:

I believe that the personal history-based goals preservice teachers bring to our discussion [teacher education] do have value. I can make looking at the limits of their value much safer by showing preservice teachers how the research-based, theoretical contributions I have to offer often extend, elaborate, define and incorporate social, emotional, and affective goals. (p.34)

2.4.2 Schools of constructivist thought

Whilst constructivist research reviewed has a broad range of foci, the use of the "constructivist" designation is common across many fields and disciplines without clear definition. This leads to some confusion as to the theoretical and pedagogical assumptions underlying constructivism (Stoddart, 1993). This has led to somewhat heated debate in the literature between advocates of various constructivist positions. One example of this difference is found in O'Loughlin's (1992) socio-cultural deconstruction of Piagetian perspectives on constructivism and (1993) reply to criticisms of his position, by defenders of the view. From the research there appear to be three main interpretations and thus underlying cognitive views of the concept of construction. The first is based upon the theorising of Piaget (1962, 1970), the second on that of Kelly (1955a,b) and the third relates to social constructivists such as Harré (1987, cited in Rychlak, 1990) and socioculturalist thinkers such as O'Loughlin (1992, 1993) and Wertsch (1991).

Both Kelly and Piaget believed there was an underlying reality to what is understood from perceived experience (Rychlak, 1990). Kelly's use of the term construction was founded in the predication of experience in order to achieve meaning whereas Piaget's use of the term, while encompassing predication, saw it tied intimately with mediated activity –that is, the process under construction is not necessarily "conceived as the immediate creator of what is to be active within it, but rather as the conveyor of that which it takes in" and which, taken as given, is the basis of which it proceeds" (Rychlak, 1990, p.8-9). The meanings employed in a mediated construction process are construed on the basis of factual incidents from past experience. As O'Loughlin, (1992) described it, "Piaget viewed the entire purpose of intellectual growth as one of coming to know reality more objectively through developing increasingly decentred—and hence more objective—perceptions of reality" (p.793).

In predication, human reasoning is bounded by an oppositionality possibility. A language teacher, for example, may be viewed as approachable or unapproachable, –the reasoning person is forced to take a position on the basis of the broader experiential contexts of the knowledge construct "approachable". Through a mediational process the meanings under process such as "approachable" are never aligned or framed by the process but more employed as instruments by the process. The inherent meanings are explained in terms of the material and efficient causes and actions, without assigning any fundamental causes, intentions or purposes to things (Rychlak, 1990).

Piaget was somewhat drawn into a predication use of the term construction as essential to higher-order mental functioning. However, he worked from a predominantly mediational perspective. His use of the term "assimilation" may

be a result of his beginnings as a naturalist (Rychlak, 1990). In essence Piaget and subsequent researchers use the term construction more literally. New meanings are accommodated or adapted from the outset of mental life whereas those who have a more predication or Kellyian perspective refer to how meanings are developed within a context.

Predication then is seen as the affirmation, denial or qualification of broad patterns of human understanding and experience to narrow more specific patterns of understanding. For example the ideal language teacher may be seen as "understanding". In this example the wider range of meaning is "understanding", to which the narrower range of meaning "the ideal language teacher" is placed. The wider pattern of understanding or meaning allows the categorisation or classification of the narrow more specific object or understanding. Through the use of predication the context is established in which the minor premise and conclusions are situated. For example, good language teachers are understanding; this is a good language teacher, this language teacher is understanding (Rychlak, 1990).

Social constructivists such as Harré (1987, cited in Rychlak, 1990) and Vygotsky (1978) hold the view that cognition has its origins in the social world, and notably in the structure of language, that the organisation of the mind is a product of cultural artifacts, embodied in linguistic conventions and focused on learning concepts in order to learn a concept of self. In essence Harré's view is that individuals are influenced or moulded by their social surround and the cultural attitudes inherent in the language of the society. It appears that from Harré's view there is no theory of self outside our socially learned acquisitions (Rychlak, 1990). Lave (1988, cited in O'Loughlin, 1992) argues that meaning making is neither exclusively a product of the person acting, the activity, or the setting, but of the dialectical interaction among all three in a given context.

What is unclear, however, is how these acquisitions are learned, for in order to understand the influence and product of cultural immersion there must be an ideology or theory of learning that facilitates the assimilation of new socially constructed knowledge. Rychlak (1990) states that social constructivism is based on a Hullian theory of learning, which, has language as a mediation tool, as its basis. This leads Rychlak (1990) to infer that "Harré's social construction is just another name for the behaviouristic theories of old, which have the person shaped unidirectionally and totally devoid of dialectical reasoning capacities" (p.16). Therefore, by addressing the social context at the expense of the individual the "individual becomes a mediating process, a conveyor of the pre-established social structure rather than an active process in the creation of that social structure..." (Rychlak, 1990, p.17).

This study utilises a predication view of meaning construction and draws from the work of social constructivism (see Figure 1.1) and in so doing accommodates a Kellyian "construction" perspective of the learning process together with related social constructivist ideology. Such an approach is seen to bridge the main historical views of "ethos," the cultural context, and "eidos," cognitive structures and variables (Lonner & Triandis, 1990). Such an approach avoids Wertsch's (1991) argument that conventional models of psychology examine mental functioning "as if it exists in a cultural, institutional and historical vacuum" (p.2). It is these conceptual premises that underlie the "cultural constructivist" perspective utilised in this study, and from which the constructive frameworks and influences upon trainee language teacher knowledge are elicited and viewed.

The selection of a Kellyian perspective is grounded on assumptions about the accommodation of knowledge, and those construct alternatives that provide the scaffold of knowledge formation. Firstly to ascertain and understand the

effects of the contexts of culture, research must step beyond the notion that behaviour, knowledge and personal meanings are merely responses to mediated events. It is believed that "accommodation" (Piaget) of behaviour, that is, the modification of existing schemas or constructs occurs after the schema has been assimilated in totality from the environment (Rychlak, 1990). The broader patterns of meaning are seen to filter the totality of the experience, and confirm, reject and qualify them, in relation to developed patterns of oppositionality.

Secondly, the influence of culture is drawn from cultural and social constructivist research, specifically cultural research, which indicates that there exists no one reality, no one way from which to view the world –that experience and knowledge are open to revision and influenced by the personal nature of social experience. It is these constructive alternatives that form the foundation of Kelly's (1955a,b) theory, the individual's view of reality and provide the focus of cultural constructivist exploration of knowledge construction.

2.5 Kelly's personal construct theory

George Kelly (1955a,b) offered a "constructive alternative" to the approaches that had dominated psychology. It was from a cognitive-humanistic perspective that Kelly derived his theory of personal construct psychology (PCP) which is concerned with investigating networks of personal discriminations or constructs. Rather than adding yet another theory of psychological functioning, Kelly sought to unify cognitive psychology through integrating cognition and emotion, the central or unifying force being the inquiring (cognitive) nature of the individual. Emotion is viewed as the outward display of construct transformation (Bannister & Fransella, 1986; Diamond, 1991; Kelly, 1955a,b).

Personal construct theory was based on the central tenets of reflexivity and levels of abstraction. It does not claim to account for all kinds of human behaviour, but rather the reflexive formulation of the behaviour. In teaching, construct theory treats teachers as persons and persons as teachers. That is, the construals of teaching of a person using construct theory, results in view of teaching very much like that of the person (Bannister & Fransella, 1986).

The dynamic nature and broad range of convenience of the terms used to describe construct theory is testament to Kelly's attempts to avoid allowing it to be classified within traditional psychological theories (Bannister & Fransella, 1986). The theory is radical in that is deliberately free of content and attempts to make sense of content provided by the user. It is a psychological theory of the individual. Kelly (1963) wrote:

...the words man uses give and hold the structure of his thought, but, more importantly, the names by which he calls himself give and hold the structure of his personality. (p.56)

2.5.1 The concept of constructs

"A construct is a way in which some things [elements or items] are construed as being alike and yet different from others" (Kelly, 1963, p.105). They are essentially discriminations individuals make and which enable them to understand the way they experience the world, to understand their behaviour its significance, and the way in which they as individuals negotiate reality (Bannister & Fransella, 1986).

Man [sic] looks at his world through transparent patterns or templets which he creates and then attempts to fit over realities of which the world is composed. (Kelly, 1963, p.9)

It is this structure, this formation of constructs that provide the scaffolding in which our autobiography, our development, our understandings as individuals is continually being moulded, challenged and reshaped. Constructs provide a window or lens through which we are able to view development in progress at a single point in time, while acknowledging that time may well permit alternative constructions.

Personal constructs are then individual windows or lenses through which life's experiences are viewed. Kelly (1970) summarised that in our quest to understand and develop "...the events we face today are subject to as great a variety of constructions as our wits will enable us to contrive [and that] ...all our present perceptions are open to question and reconsideration and [that] ...even the most obvious occurrences of everyday life might appear utterly transformed if we are inventive enough to construe them differently" (p.1). He makes the point that reality is interpretive, and that we can only make assumptions about reality before proceeding to investigate the usefulness of our assumptions (Bannister & Fransella, 1986). In respect to teaching, teachers base their teaching on their perceived reality. Throughout the experience of teaching, events arise which result in teachers rethinking their view of teaching reality. This is not to suggest that teaching is viewed as a single reality, on the contrary, teaching may well consist of multiple realities or personal constructions.

Constructs are not merely verbal labels given to an experience. They may be "pre-verbal," developed in children prior to oral labelling; "partial verbal labels" whereby one aspect of an experience is identifiable and yet no verbal tag can be found for the discriminatory opposite; or "unconscious operants" where labels are provided at one level without awareness of the "lines of relationship between different parts of the construct network" (Bannister &

Fransella, 1986, p.27). Therefore, construct discriminations are provided for which the construct label does not fully identify. Constructs are personal discriminations and PCP is an attempt at understanding the ways in which individuals experience the world.

2.5.2 The act of construing

Construing is the act of applying personally developed constructs to the world. It enables an individual to "chart a course of behaviour" (Kelly, 1963, p.9), to develop, to understand, to reconcile experiences with established construct systems, in a continual quest for the development of better fits over perceived realities. Man is viewed by Kelly (1963) as an "incipient scientist" (p.12), and, as a scientist, s/he makes predictions about the nature of, or how particular phenomena work. These predictions are based on personal theories (established construct networks) and experiments (life's experiences) are applied to test the theory. If the experiment is successful, it is seen to validate that aspect of the theory which spawned it. If unsuccessful, the experiment is seen as an invalidation and a re-examination of the theory required (Dalton & Dunnnett, 1990).

Fransella (1980) criticised Kelly for his use of the term "man" in his term "man the scientist". Shaw (1980) uses the term "personal scientist" whilst Dalton and Dunnnett (1990) prefer "person the scientist". Throughout this study, when required, the term "person the scientist" will be used to describe Kelly's view of the active knowing person.

The construing or construct validation process is seen by Kelly as the type of activity in which all persons are involved. The likelihood of construct change or revision is determined by the immediacy of the experiences to which they are being applied. Kelly (1963) states that "if they [constructs] are used solely to

predict an event in the near future, such as life after death or the end of the world, they are not likely to be so open to revision" (p.13).

This has implications for language teacher training in that the lay theories of trainees need to be challenged during training i.e., exercises are provided that force trainees to apply their knowledge to new events in order to determine its relevancy. Constant reminding of "this is what it may be like, in your future classroom" may be too far removed and therefore may not result in construct change or revision.

2.5.3 Constructive alternativism

The epistemological assumption underlying Kelly's philosophical position is that of "constructive alternativism" (p.15). That is, a person's constructs or interpretations of the world are subject to revision or replacement. Kelly (1963) contends "that there are always some alternative constructions available to choose among when dealing with the world. No one needs to paint himself into a corner; no one needs to be completely hemmed in by circumstances; no one needs to be the victim of his biography. The philosophical assumptions underlying Kelly's personal construct theory are summarised by the "constructive alternativism" label. For a full explanation of the underlying assumptions see Kelly (1955a, 1963) and, Bannister and Fransella (1986).

2.5.4 Construct awareness

It is clear from self analysis that individuals are not fully aware of their construing process all the time (Dalton & Dunnett, 1990). There are times when we are cognitively aware of our constructs and assign suitable verbal labels in order to think or communicate about them. These constructs are said to be at a high level of cognitive awareness. Clearly then there are also constructs at low levels of cognitive awareness, that is they exist without the

individual being aware of them. Through a process of construct elicitation it is possible to raise constructs from a low to high level of cognitive awareness. This provides the therapist or researcher and individual the opportunity to explore the network of deeper level constructs and the control they have over selected elements.

2.5.5 Types of constructs

2.5.5.1 Core constructs

Within the construing process Kelly developed a systematic language for description according to the nature of control the construct had over the elements. Constructs that relate to the maintenance of self identity and existence were either "core" or "peripheral" (Dalton & Dunnnett, 1990, p.31). Core constructs govern the maintenance process and are central to the way in which individuals perceive themselves socially and personally, whereas peripheral constructs may be altered without serious threat to the core construct structure (Bannister & Fransella, 1986; Dalton & Dunnnett, 1990; Kelly, 1955, 1963).

Core construct structures are central to the way in which we, as individuals, evaluate our own behaviour. They consist of issues with which we are intimately concerned, that is, the social or practical situations in which we find ourselves. These core constructs assist in our understanding and in anticipating future action. In addition, when our core group of constructs are invalidated, our beliefs about our personal and social being or a situation are threatened. This threat is indicative of an imminent change in one's core construct structures (Kelly, 1955, 1963; Bannister & Fransella, 1986). An understanding of core constructs is seen to be essential for those engaged in attempts at developing other people. For example, a language teacher educator without knowledge of trainee constructs may, in enthusiasm, overtly

threaten trainee's core constructs resulting in a theoretically or pedagogically chaotic view of language teaching and learning. This confused state may impede the trainee's development and, in cases of extreme threat, could cause psychological damage to the individual.

In eliciting personal views or constructs the "possible self" concept comprise becomes vulnerable and responsive to change (Markus & Nurius, 1986). As self-efficacy influences a person's potential for change, the views they have of themselves are particularly sensitive to experiences that challenge their concept of self.

Many teachers and some motivation-training programs emphasise the belief that effort will cause success in school. The constructivist and progressive perspectives are distinguished from these by a concern that effort be directed specifically at the making of meaning. (Nichols, et al, 1990, p.120)

However threat does not always result in a change in one's core constructs. Kelly proposes that constructs are only threatening when they are themselves elements of the next higher order construct, on which the person is dependent for survival. Kelly (1963) cites the following example:

The construct of danger is a threat when it becomes an element in the context of death or injury. There are circumstances when it is not a threat, at least not a very significant one. A roller coaster elicits a construct of danger, but that danger is rarely placed in the context of death. (p.166)

Elements which are construed as threatening indicate the inherent nature of personal constructs. Construct systems are maintained by validation or clarification. An individual maintains control over their construct system by "maintaining a clear identification of the elements which the system excludes

as well as those which it includes" (Kelly, 1963, p.167). A person who continually construes events or activities as threatening is in essence admitting the very plausibility of the rejected elements. Confrontation with threatening constructs may, however, result in the further consolidation of the person's construct network, making change or further conceptual development extremely difficult. A trainee continually confronted with threatening experiences may resort to teaching in ways contrary to those desired by the educator, or be fearful of trying new pedagogical approaches.

Feelings of fear arise, however, when a peripheral part of a person's world becomes "meaningless and unpredictable" (Bannister & Fransella, 1986, p.24). While superordinate or core constructs are not invalidated, in fear there is a possibility that some incidental change will occur in the trainee's construct network.

Likewise, when situations arise which confront the individual's core constructs, yet lie outside the range of convenience of the construct system, the person is left feeling anxious. The person's reaction to the anxiety, the subsequent effect on the construct system depends largely on the loose-tight nature of the structure itself. Dalton & Dunnnett (1990) state that in anxiety situations the person "...may creatively move between tightness and looseness to try and develop some understanding, and thereby extend the range of convenience of the system" (p.34).

2.5.5.2 Loose-tight constructs

Tight constructs are those which lead to unvarying predictions, that is, the construer's view of life is highly organised and therefore makes the same predictions relentlessly (Dalton & Dunnnett, 1990). Alternatively, loose constructs lead to varying predictions, for example construed discriminations

between teachers may take the form of "approachable versus distant." These constructs are evaluative and the exact position difficult to ascertain. Dalton & Dunnett (1990) make reference to the fact that loose-tight constructs are the "extreme ends of the polarity" (p.33) and that most people's core constructs are tighter whereas their peripheral constructs are looser. The cycle through which constructs are applied to a given situation, evaluated (validated), and tightened (refined) in readiness for another predictive application derived from loose construct elements is referred to as the "creativity cycle" (Dalton & Dunnett, 1990).

2.5.5.3 Pre-emptive, propositional and constellatory constructs

"Pre-emptive", "propositional" and "constellatory" constructs are terms used by Kelly to describe the use of constructs rather than their position within the construct network. A pre-emptive construct is one that views the element to which it is applied, described by that construct alone. For example, a teacher is a teacher and only a teacher. The teacher cannot be viewed as a facilitator, as human, or anything else other than, a teacher. Pre-emptive constructs are severely restrictive and deny the rights of others to view the construed object or experience in any other light.

Propositional constructs are those which carry no implications or limitations regarding the extent for which the construct is used. A teacher can be regarded as a teacher and therefore one can make sense of how he or she reacts, what he or she says and does. That is not to say that this is the only way of viewing him or her. She or he may be equally seen as a friend, lover, as confused, or narrow minded. Propositional constructs are flexible and allow the incorporation of new elements into the construct system (Bannister & Fransella, 1986; Dalton & Dunnett, 1990).

Constellatory constructs are aligned with a constellation of other constructs and therefore provide a stereotypical perspective or limited range of thought; for example, if she is a teacher then she must also be, middle class, creative, compassionate and organised. These types of constructs restrict construing and reduce the likelihood of perspective review (Bannister & Fransella, 1986; Kelly, 1955, 1963).

2.5.6 Fundamental postulate and corollaries

PCP has at its core a fundamental postulate and eleven corollaries. In this section an outline and discussion will be provided of those corollaries related to this study. For a full explanation and analytic discussion of Kelly's theory see Bannister and Fransella (1986), Dalton and Dunnnett (1989), Kelly (1991, 1955a,b, 1963), and Mancuso and Adams-Webber (1982).

A person's processes are psychologically channelized by the ways in which he anticipates the world. (Kelly, 1963, p.46)

This fundamental postulate is Kelly's attempt at putting into words the very function of being. "Being fundamental, this postulate is not open to question" (Dalton and Dunnnett, 1989). If it is questioned, the statement is no longer accorded the status of postulate and it must then be recognised that we are "arguing from other postulates either explicitly stated or, more likely, implicitly believed" (Kelly, 1963, p.47). In essence, Kelly, through this postulate, stresses that our function of being is to understand our own nature, the nature of the world and to test our understanding in terms of how it guides us and enables us to view our immediate and long-term future (Bannister & Fransella, 1986); that is, a person's reaction to their environment is based on their way of seeing it. We as individuals are in a constant state of psychological motion and our psychological processes (or behaving) operate through a network of flexible pathways. These pathways have a clear structure, are frequently

modified, and enable the individual to anticipate the future. As Kelly (1963) states "it is the future which tantalises man, not the past. Always he reaches out to the future through the window of the present" (p.49).

2.5.6.1 Construction corollary

A person anticipates events by construing their replications. (Kelly, 1963, p.50)

Replication emerges through interpretation. As a student enters a lecture theatre, despite changes in the lecturer, or the text being presented, or the theatre layout, there is an air of familiarity, a replicated theme. To make sense of the external world, individuals categorise events into segmented repeated themes. These themes may at one level be concrete, for example ruler, chair, students; or they may be very abstract replications, for example jealousy, beauty or fairness (Bannister & Fransella, 1986). The recognition of likeness, and our wish to affirm the replication, is through the act of construing, or placement of personal interpretations. In order to make sense of an event or experience, we attempt to construe it in light of our established construct system. While the elicitation of these constructs results in the attachment of verbal labels, the act of construing requires discriminations to be made, many of which may be experienced non-verbally. Dalton and Dunnett (1990) note that many "constructions of events never reach our heads at all but remain as but feelings, sensations that we scarcely notice" (p.7).

The construction corollary can be likened to the act of reading, the function of which is to attain personal meaning through interpreting events in the text, validating them in light of constructed meaning and applying them to new segments of information. The reader is alert for textual signposts (developed from a replication of prior experience with the text type), which assist in

anticipating events and help in confirming or rejecting the developing personal meaning.

2.5.6.2 Individuality corollary

Persons differ from each other in their constructions of events. (Kelly, 1963, p.55)

This corollary highlights Kelly's notion of constructive alternativism. That is, there are an infinite number of ways in which the world can be construed. Extending the reading metaphor, this corollary simply means that given the same text, no two people will necessarily gain exactly the same meaning. Readers bring to the text experiences and understandings unique to themselves.

We each view the world, the text, through the windows of our personal construct system. A major implication of this statement is that when two people are seen to arrive at similar understandings it is not because they have had exactly the same experience but rather they have applied the same interpretations to the experiences (Kelly, 1963; Bannister & Fransella, 1986).

This corollary has implications for educators in that, as students construe the same events differently, they will anticipate different events which in turn will require them to make different decisions and so on. So while they are provided with similar experiences in the learning environment, they may react quite differently. This requires the educator to be aware of the individuality of students and to monitor reactions, for though they may have read the same book, or witnessed the same demonstration, they will have seen those through personal construct lenses. This poses implications for student assessment, course design and purpose.

2.5.6.3 Organisation corollary

Each person characteristically evolves, for his convenience in anticipating events, a construction system embracing ordinal relationships between constructs. (Kelly, 1963, p.56)

Here Kelly expresses his belief that personal perspectives do not exist in chaotic isolation but rather are related or ordered in a hierarchal fashion, i.e., there is a complex network of joining pathways which link constructs regarded as similar or equivalent into subordinate or superordinate positions within the individual's entire construct system. This system, as implied by the term "evolves" and through the fundamental postulate, is in constant motion; open to challenge and change.

2.5.6.4 Choice corollary

A person chooses for himself that alternative in a dichotomous construct through which he anticipates the greater possibility for extension and definition of his system. (Kelly, 1963, p.64)

This corollary suggests that conceptual development and change, rather than merely responding to an external stimulus, are the result of individual cognitive and conscious activity. That is, responsibility for change is embodied in the intentions of the individual and that any changes made enhance the subsequent prediction of events.

2.5.6.5 Modulation corollary

The variation in a person's construction system is limited by the permeability of the constructs within whose ranges of convenience the variants lie. (Kelly, 1963, p.77)

That is, an individual's construction system is limited by the degree to which the construction system is open to change, or the potential it has to accept new superordinate constructions within its range of convenience. The construction system structure is supported by groups of independently organised construct substructures. These substructures, like the whole construct system, are hierarchically organised at progressively higher levels of abstraction and are "functionally differentiated" to enhance the "range of convenience" (Zuber-Skerritt, 1991, p.61). This functional differentiation permits events or experiences, viewed as inappropriate by a construct or substructure (i.e., outside the range of convenience), to be applied to other constructs or substructures where they may be viewed as more appropriate or adequate. Hierarchical integration and an openness to accept new subordinate constructions within the system enhance the individual's ability to cope with change and make it possible for the individual to make a wider range of cross references within the system. These features are essential in the development and application of conceptual understanding.

In language teaching, a teacher may display hostility toward a new approach to instruction by "ensuring" or "making" the students' results support predicted outcomes. One reason for doing this could be that to acknowledge that the new approach works or that the older approach is lacking would require a personal change of such enormity that the admission is inconceivable because of the feeling of threat it evokes.

As conceptual development is not static but dynamic and changeable it would seem essential for teacher educators to have an understanding of their students' personal construct system in order to assess the permeability and range of convenience of the constructions that support it. These understandings may provide the teacher educator with an insight into

individual student resistance to change and a knowledge of how to support conceptual change through hierarchical integration.

2.5.6.6 Fragmentation corollary

A person may successively employ a variety of construction sub systems which are inferentially incompatible with each other. (Kelly, 1963, p.83)

This corollary proposes that individuals may intentionally employ seemingly incompatible or fragmented constructs, subsumed by some superordinate construct within the system, to test new hypotheses or constructs. This fragmentation can be an advantage in that constructions specific to a task or domain of inquiry may be tested or linked to other areas. For example, in teaching, fragmentation enables the individual to view relationships between different domains or teaching tasks. This ability is essential to those educators endeavouring to achieve conceptual development and change in their students. Zuber-Skerritt (1991) states however that some individuals "can tolerate more incompatibility than others, depending on the permeability of their superordinating constructs" (p.61).

2.5.6.7 Sociality corollary

To the extent that one person construes the construction processes of another, he may play a role in a social process involving the other person. (Kelly, 1963, p.95)

For language teacher training this corollary implies that it is essential that the trainer or educator has some understanding of the student's personal constructs of language teaching and learning prior to and during the design and implementation of a program of study. It would also be necessary for the students to have knowledge of their teacher's constructs. For communication

to be effective it is essential that language teacher educators subsume and understand the construct systems of their students in order to "interact with them" as opposed to simply teaching or training them (Zuber-Skerritt, 1991, p.60).

2.5.6.8 Commonality corollary

To the extent that one person employs a construction of experience which is similar to that employed by another, his psychological processes are similar to those of the other person. (Kelly, 1963, p.90)

By attributing approximately the same meaning to events, individuals share a similarity in tacit theory or cultural view of the world. This commonality or "similarity in what members of the group expect of each other", Kelly (1963) defines as culture. That is, individuals who show similarity in the ways in which they act, think, or construe events; anticipate or predict behaviour and in their expectations of experience or behaviour form a cultural group. This concept of cultural similarity and commonality of behaviour uses a person's subjectivity, and the personal nature of their meanings as the central focus of inquiry (Zuber-Skerritt, 1991). Therefore cultural identification, as defined, would be based not solely on the similarity of upbringing, socio-economic environment or mother tongue, but rather on the commonality of behaviour and the personal nature of meanings attributed to events by individuals.

2.5.7 Criticisms of Kelly's theory

Common criticisms of Kelly's theory is that it is too "isolationistic", (Bruner, 1956), too "mentalistic" (Bruner, 1956; Foulds, 1972; Morrison, 1982; Peck & Whitlow, 1975; Rogers, 1956), that the repertory grid used in the elicitation of constructs and dichotomous ratings is "unreliable" and lacks "validity" (Adams-Webber, 1979; Fransella & Bannister, 1977; Mair, 1977), and that there is an

"objectivist" use in the "person-as-scientist" metaphor (Epstein, 1980; Solas, 1992).

In essence, "isolationistic" criticisms focus on Kelly's failure to acknowledge his theory's historical ancestry. Bruner (1956) concludes "with respect to ancestry, Professor Kelly seems to care little for it " (p.356). This isolationism, according to Pervin (1973), is perpetuated by later Kellyian construct theorists, specifically Bannister and Fransella (1971) in their book *Inquiring Man..* "The constructs used by the authors are at times... so tight and pre-emptive [that they] preclude [the] incorporation of valuable insights from other theoretical points of view" (p.112).

Holland (1977) however points out that "isolationism" serves an important sociological function:

The emergence of new personality theories is accompanied by ambivalence towards predecessors as the new theorists filter out what they need from the past and construct around it a new position. (p.131)

It appears however, that the isolationism which marked the early stages of PCP has been overcome through integration with other disciplines (Neimeyer, 1985). Critics who contend that Kelly's theory is too "mentalistic", that is, that construct systems deal only with the description of a person's thinking and avoid the person's feeling, have failed to fully comprehend the dynamic nature of the metaphor "person-as-scientist" (Solas, 1992; Zuber-Skerritt, 1991). Kelly's theory is holistic, in that it deals with the complete person, thus avoiding the traditional psychological division of study, i.e., studies of the mind, behaviour or emotion (Bannister, 1970).

A major criticism concerns problems associated with the methodological use of the repertory grid as a procedure for eliciting and ranking of personal constructs, specifically, questions about its reliability and validity (Adams-Webber, 1979; Fransella and Bannister, 1977). Bavelas, Chan and Guthrie (1976) also express concern about the lack of "psychometric soundness" and, in this light Collet (cited in Neimeyer, 1985) expresses concern with the response restriction encompassed by grids that require a dichotomous rank ordering of elements.

These criticisms according to Neimeyer (1985) are indicative of a "rift between the methodologists and the [PCP] purists" (p.156). Neimeyer goes on to express a lack of optimism concerning the possibility of a "healthy resolution" to problems associated with repertory grids. He expresses a hope that methodological advancements in PCP theory will lead beyond the grid, and beyond psychology and into diverse fields such as "linguistics, ethno methodology..." (p.157).

In the grid's defence, Fransella and Bannister (1977) point out that "there is no such thing as 'the grid' because grids vary so widely in their form" (p.83). The validity of a grid rests "ultimately... [on] the way in which a mode of understanding enables us to take effective action" (p.74) as a result.

A failure to comprehend the "person-as-scientist" metaphor has, according to Solas (1992), led Epstein (1980) to mistakenly interpret the metaphor literally, resulting in an objectionist viewpoint, that is, that the person is "seen as a duplicator and recorder of external reality" (Solas, 1992, p.215) rather than an active builder of theories which provides "an active approach to life" (Kelly, 1963, p.18-19).

While Kelly's theory does place emphasis on the person and his or her personal nature of meaning, he also emphasises shared understandings through the sociality and commonality corollaries. This research follows in the footsteps of related research in higher education (Diamond, 1991; Pope & Denicolo, 1991; Solas, 1992; Zuber-Skerritt, 1991), which extend our understanding of Kelly's theory, in particular the commonality corollary, through an investigation of the similarity and commonality of shared personal meanings.

The following sections outline the nature and implications of a constructivist approach to language education and teacher training. Specifically, they highlight constructivist research in education and establish the need for domain-specific research such as that reported in this study.

2.6 Implications and applications of PCP

2.6.1 Constructivist learning: Individual fulfilment

The education of pupils and the training of teachers forms, within the teaching profession, a culture that can be understood within a constructivist framework (Black & Ammon, 1992; O'Loughlin, 1992; Solas, 1992). Research developments in philosophy, psychology (Teague-Ashton, 1992), cognitive science, sociology and anthropology (Black & Ammon, 1992) have all combined to foster an awareness within the education community of learning as a social constructive process.

Constructivist learning is viewed as more concerned with understandings achieved through relevant experience than with accumulated facts received from others, more imbued with meaning, more domain or situation specific, more influenced by social and cultural contexts, and, in general, less purely cognitive and less governed by abstract principles than traditional conceptions of learning. (Black & Ammon, 1992, p.324)

Kelly's constructivist ideas and his views of human behaviour, are synergistic with current educational thinking and practice (Cohen & Manion, 1989), specifically, the encouragement of individuals to become actively involved in the educative process through personal exploration and questioning. Language syllabus reforms in Singapore, for example, have emphasised the social nature of language learning. Elementary language teachers are encouraged to integrate the various modes of language through collaborative pair, group and individual activities. Teachers are encouraged to incorporate learning activities that are designed to allow individuals to explore and apply their language knowledge and skills in order to develop their personal understandings and abilities (Ministry of Education, 1991). The overriding tenet in this educative process is that an individual's learning is of central concern and it is the learner who is in control of the learning. It is then the teacher's role to facilitate ongoing individual language development as opposed to directly imposing adult perspectives or learning upon the child (Cohen & Manion, 1989).

Similar changes in educative philosophy are occurring in western higher education as exemplified by Rovegno (1993) who found that physical education majors had to recognise long-standing conceptions associated with sport in order to overcome the resultant cultural templates. As a result, new perspectives on the teaching of physical education were developed and framed by the goals of elementary education as opposed to the ideology of sport. These new perspectives included the provision of educative programs that support the needs of all children equitably.

Developments in the teaching of language as exemplified by: Singapore's New 1991 English Language Syllabus (Primary); developments in Singapore

education reform as outlined in the Goh Report (1979) and Soon (1988); and in teacher education Ho (1991) demonstrate how significant changes in policy may result in preservice language teachers encountering approaches to language teaching which run contrary to those experienced in their personal schooling. This exemplifies the need to understand the trainee's views (that is, their beliefs or constructs) prior to embarking on a program of language teacher preparation. For it is through these personal construct lenses that training experiences, i.e., theories and practices are filtered and future practice founded.

2.6.2 PCP and language learning: A theoretical foundation

PCP unifies language learning and teaching practices through the realisation of a balance between process, product and change. It provides a bridge between body and mind; theory and practice; experience and thinking; language and learning.

Kelly's PCP focus is upon holism, that is, the individual nature of the learner and learning. It is a theory deliberately free of content and while it challenges traditionally held psychological research boundaries it is seen to be synergistic with current developments within the field of language teaching and learning. Specifically the trend toward "whole language" teaching which encapsulates a focus on individual development, language learning in context, learning which is process oriented as opposed to traditional content based curriculum instruction; and, the incorporation of language learning across the curriculum. It is felt that a predication approach to meaning construction may well provide a theoretical foundation for these pedagogical developments.

2.6.3 PCP and language education in practice

A PCP view would see fundamental changes in the structure of language teaching and language teacher training. These changes may include the dissolving of traditional subject boundaries together with an added emphasis on developing and elaborating personal networks of integrated meanings. Inherent in such a system would be students who are actively encouraged to apply their understanding and views to new areas of study. This would enable them to test, through experience and within a supportive learning environment, the validity or invalidity of their views. A PCP approach may well see, for example, elementary pupils applying their personal views of problem solving and tertiary language teaching students applying their class management or learning theories across a broad range of contexts and subjects.

In elementary language education many of these practices are currently common place, particularly in classrooms where language teachers design their programs to incorporate principles of "whole language" (see Goodman, 1987, 1986; Goodman, Smith, Merideth & Goodman, 1987; Gunderson, 1989; Watson, Burke & Harste, 1989) or follow a "process-oriented syllabus" (Underhill, 1989).

A PCP approach to the practice of language education would see Kelly's sociality corollary extend the commonality corollary. Language educators assuming their students or pupils have some degree of commonality with each other, develop activities that enable them to construe, or develop the ability to construe, from another's view. This ability, I believe, also holds true as much for the educator as for the students or pupils.

The ability to apply constructs across contexts and to view and interpret an experience from another position is achieved by alternating between loose and tight construing (see section 2.5.5.2). Loose construing results in constructs being vaguely related with broad somewhat undefined expectations, whereas tight construing results in constructs being more closely related, clearly articulated and very specific (Bannister & Fransella, 1986). In teacher training this loose-tight construing can be seen in the early work on trainee teachers' views of children by Runkel and Damrin (1961). They found that throughout the preparatory program trainees' views moved from loose to tight to loose. They claim the success as a teacher is closely related to the distance moved in loose-tight construing.

In addition to providing insights into the student language teacher's construing, this study will, through construct analysis and construct descriptions, shed light upon the loose-tight nature of the individual's construct system and the inherent theoretical orientations of the student. Such knowledge may assist the educator in planning future learning or developmental activities to meet and challenge the individual's understandings.

2.6.4 A PCP approach to language teacher education

While current language classroom practice appears to link closely with a PCP theoretical orientation, the implications are much greater for language teacher education. Insights gained through PCP may account for the difficulty some student teachers have in accepting changes in language teaching theory or practice (they may hold very tight constructs of language teaching and learning or their established cultural construct system may run contrary to the approaches delivered or espoused at the training site).

It is accepted that trainee language teachers learn from observing teachers, and that these learnings result in: personally constructed views (Kelly, 1955a,b; Lortie, 1975); intuitive screens (Goodman, 1988); filters (Hollingsworth, 1989); and personal theories (Rando & Menges, 1991) of language teaching and learning. I also believe that these experiences may exert a strong influence over the students' future beliefs, their interactions with learners (Nunan, 1989) and the blending of formal theories or innovations presented throughout the preparation program (Anning, 1988; Au, 1990; Johnston, 1988; Munby, 1984; Olson, 1980; Taylor, 1990).

While research in the area of teacher knowledge is still in its "formative stage" (Carter, 1990), a generalisation that can be made is that trainee teachers' prior knowledge may have a constraining effect or influence on the student's teaching (Lacey, 1977; Lortie, 1975; Tabachnick & Zeichner, 1985; Zeichner, Tabachnick & Densmore, 1987). Little is yet known about the effects on undergraduate experiences of teacher's subject or pedagogical content matter knowledge and teaching (Ball & McDiarmid, 1990) and even less about the prior knowledge and beliefs of beginning teachers in specific subject areas. Thus, attempts to change or develop teaching behaviour in the context of in-service or pre-service programs may be seen to fail if these views are not taken into account.

Legutke and Thomas (1991) recommend that "the preparation of teachers for the experiential classroom needs to mirror in its procedures and methodology the experiential classroom" (p.305). While this may be the epistemological goal of a teacher preparation program, students may well enter their preparation program with alternative constructs of language teaching and learning that are the result of years of informal observations of teachers at work and through their personal experiences in learning. Attempts at

development that do not readily account for these cultural knowledge base constructions may be doomed to failure or, at the very least, become problems should the prescribed approach(es) run contrary to those embodied by the trainees.

In Singapore, trainee language teachers have been exposed, through the education system, their tutors and in their homes, to many examples of language teaching and teachers. These experiences, in both mother tongue and English, exert an influence on the development of the individual's view of what language teachers do and how best language is learned. Pre-service program success is dependent upon how the individuals have personally construed his or her prior experiences in the teaching and learning of language. For Singapore, success also includes producing students who can respond to changes inherent in a rapidly developing education system and in a rapidly developing country. One goal of teacher education in Singapore is to develop student ability to respond to changes within the education system through its pre-service and inservice programs (Sim & Ho, 1990).

2.6.5 Changing trainee thinking and practice

The concept of developing change in thinking and practice, whether through imposed changes in a syllabus or meeting the needs of individuals, may pose challenges to the teacher's core constructs of language teaching and learning. Reluctance to change may result when proposed ways of thinking require the individual to "relinquish the mainstays of an inveterate conceptual network" (von Glasersfeld, 1988, p.84). This requires them to reconceptualise their view of the world and may also involve a great deal of threat to the individual's construct system, especially when core constructs such as those associated with theory or beliefs are involved. These constructs have been validated and revalidated over a long time and, when a new experience

makes their template or fit over the world questionable, the result threatens the fabric of the construct system.

Research into the failure of educators and students to implement changes in educational practice has been seen to change focus from institutional factors to the personal characteristics of the teachers involved (Doyle & Ponder, 1977; McLaughlin, 1987; Peterman, 1991). Peterman (1991) examined the changing constructivist beliefs of teaching and learning of one science teacher, Debbie. This subject began the study with beliefs which supported the proposition that "through activity, students learn" (p.8). After the nine month research project, Debbie proposed that "learning is making sense of the world by organising information about experiences" (p.13). Peterman (1991) concluded that changes in Debbie's beliefs occurred throughout the staff development process and are representative of interactive processes rather than causal ones. The implications of this research are that it raises serious questions about the process of facilitating change, specifically about the interactive nature of beliefs and practice and change. Peterman's (1991) research provides evidence of the need for constructivist research designs that address the learner as an individual and which, having established an understanding of personal conceptual understandings, include "rich evidential arguments that challenge participants' beliefs" (p.15).

In Singapore, students' prior experiences of language teaching and learning contribute to and influence their personal network of meanings i.e., beliefs. The result of these constructed experiences is a "personal theory" of language teaching and learning. Little is known of the structure of these personal theories, especially in the field of language teacher training, and more notably, in areas where preservice language students are derived from a

2.6.7 Trainer constructs and teacher training

Implicit in teacher education is the acceptance of the assumption that teacher educators and their programs have something unique to offer in respect to professional training and development. Each trainer has developed unique skills and knowledge of language and education that qualifies him or her to work within the field of language teacher training. It is logical then to assume that from their extensive experience educators have well-developed views of language teaching that influence their training process and that may result in leading students toward similar ways of construing or at the very least towards making "positive decisions about the value of our [teacher educators] ideas (Holt-Reynolds, 1992, p.344).

Developments in, and the purpose of teacher training in Singapore are clearly reflected in Ho (1991), Sim and Ho (1990), Soon (1988) and Goh (1979). However the personal constructs of language teaching and learning that students bring to training may not be in tune with these aims. It then becomes the responsibility of the teacher educator to redirect or develop student thinking in accord with the goals of the institution and the Singapore education system. This redirecting is, however, based on the assumption that the teacher educator begins this redevelopment by gathering information about students' current theorising about the language teaching and learning process. To date there has been no research in Singaporean tertiary education to ascertain what students already know about the process of language teaching prior to beginning their training. Similarly, little research has been conducted into the personal conceptions of teaching and learning of bilingual students who have been educated in a multilingual environment. The results of this study will provide for Singapore, new knowledge derived from a locally conducted study. In this way, this study responds to a call by Ho (1991) and Sim (1990). The results of this study will also provide new

knowledge into the thinking of bilingual trainee students and the influence of cultural conceptions of language teaching and learning.

2.7 A cultural constructivist perspective

Pope and Denicolo (1991) argue that from their experience, teaching and learning may be construed as "a process of transmission of knowledge", where pupils' or students' "minds are containers to be filled" (p.94) as opposed to "learning as a personal creative act" in which it is the teacher's role to "help the learner to learn independently" (p.94). The goals of teacher education in Singapore exemplify this latter view of teaching and learning, which are founded on a philosophy of knowledge and personal development (Pope and Denicolo, 1991) synergistic with that of Kelly's PCP and developments in language teaching and learning. As Desai (1994) states, "personal construct psychology, because of its metatheoretical emphasis, seems an appropriate framework within which to integrate mainstream cross cultural, and alternative approaches to knowledge and meaning" (p.5). PCP then offers the theoretical basis of a cultural constructivist perspective from which to view trainee language teacher thinking.

In order to exchange information a common language is required. There can be no substitute for knowing the language for it is only through an appreciation of trainee language that genuine understandings can be developed. Therefore, the researcher needs to ascertain or learn as much about the trainee's language and learning culture as possible. Understanding language, I believe, is more than having a degree of mastery over the vocabulary or grammatical systems of a language for this is not always possible, but understanding is also achieved by having knowledge of the banks of cultural semantics and linguistic metaphor inherent in the language.

Over time and through more widespread exposure the cultural constructive process becomes more focused. However each new experience is validated, rejected or restructured through those culturally constructed perspectives begun at birth. This study will make explicit the cultural constructs often implicit in the personal constructs of teaching and learning held by principal caregivers. In addition these will be correlated against those constructs espoused in the practice of language teachers and the educative culture of learning. These culturally constructed perceptions influence interaction and communication with other members of the trainee's cultural group. These preconceptions provide the knowledge foundation through which the formal experiences of teacher preparation will be predicated.

Throughout the process of cultural constructivist interviewing and activities the emphasis is on the sharing of the other person's priorities of importance and relevance. Without this understanding the researcher is in danger of sending ambiguous messages or of misunderstanding those sent by the trainee. Differences in culture increase the likelihood of misinterpretation so it is essential that the cultural constructivist researcher specifically determine an understanding of cultural priorities, so that the likelihood of misinterpretation is minimised.

Inherent in this is the ability of the researcher to develop a sensitivity to factors that affect the trainee's learning context. This obviously includes culture and those skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening that need to be addressed so that trainees can communicate in the data collection process and in social settings outside their culture. This sensitivity serves also to build confidence in both the researcher and trainee and in the openness with which they will communicate.

2.7.1 Assumptions underlying a cultural constructivist perspective

The following are the assumptions on which a cultural constructivist view of subjective ideology are grounded:

What has been learned is that the cultural knowledge base is not static but rather is constantly evolving through the predication of experience with established culturally constructed patterns of meaning.

The predication process involves the mediation of cultural artifacts and results in the validation, rejection and/or restructuring of a the personal construct knowledge base.

Thinking is not personal but interpersonal, derived from exposure to socio-cultural experiences from birth. When two people are seen to arrive at similar understandings it is not because they have had exactly the same experience but rather they are seen to have interpreted the experience similarly.

Many constructions are not, or cannot be made explicit but remain as tacit understandings, feelings and sensations. Through appropriate methods these tacit understandings and relationships can be made explicit.

Any understanding of the preconceptions, beliefs, constructs... that form the trainee teacher's knowledge base are grounded on the premise that knowledge cannot be separated from the cultural context of the knower.

Each trainee's knowledge is unique and cannot be compared or linked with that of others without affecting important nuances of meaning.

By attributing approximately the same meaning to events, individuals share a similarity in tacit theory or cultural view of the world. This commonality or similarity in what members of the group expect or interpret provides the basis of a cultural constructivist definition of culture.

2.8 Conclusion

The implications of a cultural constructivist view of learning and the process of language teacher education are far reaching. Prospective language teachers need extensive opportunities to examine educational theories, research and practices in light of their own educational and professional constructs. Through such examination students will be more able to construct an understanding of language teaching and learning which will, in turn, successfully facilitate their students' construction of conceptual understandings of subject matter. Teacher trainers also need to understand how their students construe the teaching of their domain specific subject matter, if they are to match "their students' conceptual understanding with educational experiences that challenge students to develop more sophisticated understandings" (Teague-Ashton, 1992, p.322). Therefore "research is needed to identify the content and strategies that support and encourage... exploration of student [teacher] constructs of subject matter and critical views of education" (Teague-Ashton, 1992, p.322). This study purports to provide such research.

The ability to construe from the viewpoints of others and the intrinsic validation of a person's construct system is seen to be important if they are to develop professionally and further develop his or her relations with peers and students. Teacher education systems that support a predicationist constructivist view of knowledge acquisition focus on the incorporation of these views within "the teaching dialogue" and encourage their students in the cyclic process of pursuit, elicitation and sharing of personal constructions of reality (Pope and Denicolo, 1991, p.96).

Through this process the articulated views of the student can be examined and strategies devised to put student's perspectives to the test. This allows for the greater possibility of construct change through viewing the implications of personal theories as they are applied to different language teaching episodes. A PCP approach would result in the student applying a more 'scientific' approach to language teaching practice, whereby changes in social context, participants or behaviours would result in the application of alternative, and at times oppositional, theories in order to meet specific contextual requirements.

To develop training courses using a PCP approach, teacher educators must begin by re-examining their own constructs of language teaching and learning in light of changes in educational aims and objectives in rapidly developing countries such as Singapore. A change toward a PCP approach to teacher education, however, requires more than retrospective calls for new research through documentation and verbal labels. It requires the embracing of a new philosophy and psychology of thinking about the nature of language teaching and learning. As Calderhead (1987) states:

Unless courses are designed to challenge teachers' thinking about practice and encourage them to analyse and appraise their professional thinking, existing ...practice may be perpetuated and students left relatively unaffected by training itself. (p.17)

It is clearly then the responsibility of teacher educators to challenge their trainees' thinking about their approach to language teaching. This can only be achieved if they understand the viewpoints of the trainees. A cultural constructivist approach to teacher education further requires the trainer to accept the trainee's views or constructs and then to develop programs of instruction to meet or develop those views. This cannot be achieved without

an understanding of the knowledge, the constructs of language teaching that trainees bring to their training.

The next chapter focuses attention on the methodological issues surrounding the elicitation and analysis of trainee teacher thinking. An overview of the selected research design, physical loci, and credibility checks will be provided.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS

Methods

3.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is twofold. First, to examine the research literature and the methodological orientation of related personal construct and constructivist research in the fields of education, teacher thinking and cultural studies. Findings from these provide a rationale for decisions relating to the methodological design of this study. The second purpose is to provide details of the study's methodological design. This includes examining the case study design, trainee participants and the methodological procedures used. This section provides details of the data collection and analysis processes. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the hermeneutic dialectic nature of the inquiry and the validity checking procedures used. Figure 3.1 illustrates the structure of this chapter and the interconnectedness of the various methodological components.

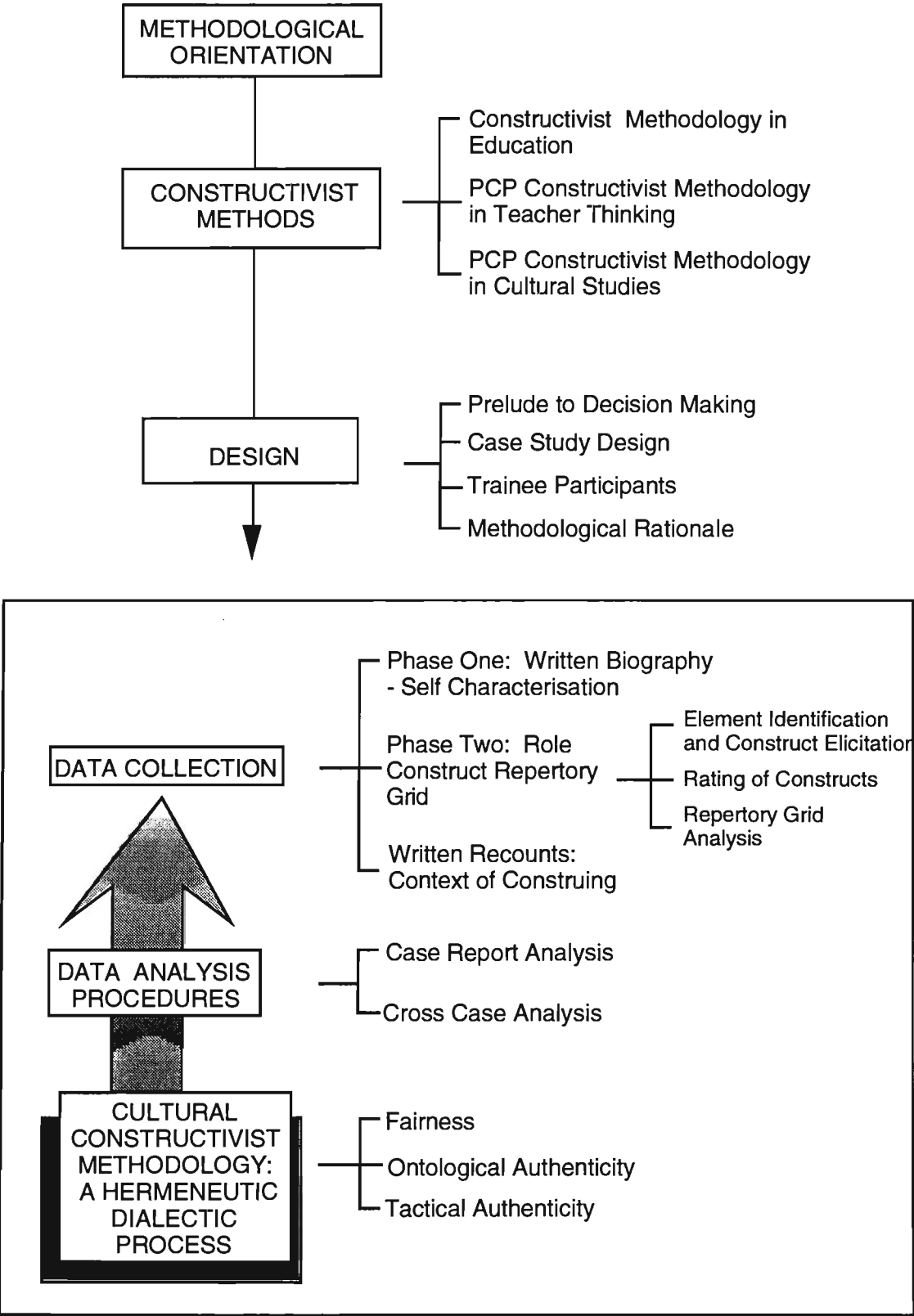
3.2 Methodological orientation

There are various ways of examining the influence and subsequent personal perceptions of experience (Kelly, 1991). The first is to look upon the individual as a final product of the social and cultural events that have transpired throughout the individual's lifetime. Investigations of this nature may involve taking down much of the individual's case-history and then investigating the events, their actual occurrence and the perceived consequence of them. Much research of this nature falls under the umbrella labels of personal-history and biography.

The second way is to focus on the events that have moulded trainee and teacher knowledge, attitudes, beliefs and values, i.e., to move away from a case-history to an examination of what the individual currently thinks. This

involves examining not only the knowledge he or she possess but also their personal beliefs and attitudes. Such research is based on individuals and

Figure 3.1 Structural outline of the research and methodological influences



what they currently know in order to better understand how they may react in varying situations. There has been a steady increase in this type of inquiry in the last decade.

This study leans strongly toward the second way of examining experiential influence in that it investigates the subjective ideological constructs of language teaching and learning held by 12 trainee language teachers in Singapore. In doing so the individual case-histories cannot be ignored. Exposure to cultural artifacts, events and experiences and how they are recalled reveal much about the individual's developing construct system and cultural influence. They are the signposts that mark the path of the individual's life and they lay the foundation for future learning and development.

It follows therefore that, in this study, individual trainee language teachers are not viewed as merely products of cultural exposure. The cultural environment which has influenced each trainee's development also provides a wealth of information about what is acceptable or unacceptable within that culture, as seen through the personal constructs of the trainee. These culturally influenced, personally constructed filters shape interpretations or construals of experience and assist in the validation of the personal construct system. Culture is demonstrated through the individual's subjective interpretations, that is, his or her ways of saying and doing things. An individual's personal interpretative recount can tell us much about the rules that person, within that society or culture, has learned to play by. "Such interpretation of the public, social process of teaching provides the backdrop against which cognitive analyses can be made" (Olson, 1988, p.168).

The purpose of this study is to explore the intrinsic subjective educational ideologies of trainee Malay, Tamil and Chinese elementary language

teachers—that is, those culturally influenced, personally constructed views of language teaching and learning trainees bring with them to their formal preparatory teaching program. In carrying out such an investigation the study also aims to identify evidence of cultural influence or patterning in the personal constructed knowledge base. In making methodological decisions for this study attention was drawn not only to previous use of similar methods but also to the use of responsive constructivist evaluation (Guba & Lincoln, 1989).

3.3 Constructivist methods

Whilst employing a naturalistic inquiry base Guba and Lincoln (1989) focus strongly on "a hermeneutic dialectic process that takes full advantage, and account, of the observer/observed interaction to create a constructed reality that is informed and sophisticated as it can be made at a particular point in time" (p.44). Another attraction of using their framework of "constructivist" inquiry was the possibility they claim of "submitting both the raw materials entering into the argument and the logical processes through which they were compressed and rearranged to make the conclusions credible" (Guba & Lincoln, 1989, p.44).

There are also the obvious connections between Kelly's PCP theory and Guba and Lincoln's constructivist paradigm. The clear contrast between conventional positivistic or scientific beliefs and Kelly's "constructive alternative" theory are illustrated in Guba and Lincoln's (1989) "contrasting beliefs table" (p.84). As discussed in Chapter 2, Kelly's Personal Construct Theory offers an alternative to conventional views of reality: the nature of human knowledge and the constructive cognition process; and inquiry based method. Kelly and constructivist researchers who have followed his constructivist traditions (see Bannister & Fransella, 1986; Diamond, 1991;

Pope & Denicolo, 1986, 1990, 1993) have developed, and advanced methodological understandings. Pope and Denicolo (1993) discuss the relationship of the grid in constructivist research, citing the similarity between Guba and Lincoln's (1985) approach to naturalistic inquiry and Kelly's (1955a,b) personal constructivism. Guba and Lincoln's (1989) publication proposes a research paradigm founded on the "phenomenological" use of qualitative methods. Guba and Lincoln (1989) and Lincoln, (1992, cited in Pope & Denicolo, 1993) propose a shift in "naturalistic" research paradigm toward a "constructivist" view.

The use of such a research paradigm is seen to embody the essence of Kelly's (1955a,b) "constructive alternativism". As Pope and Denicolo (1993) state, "the extent to which we develop our repertoire of constructs in creating a constructive alternative view of our world is limited only by our courage and experimentation with alternative views" (p.530). Naturalistic inquiry and a personal constructivist view of research methodology are seen as synergistic, and when used in the form of a "constructivist research paradigm", as in this study, they facilitate an understanding of personal meaning i.e., knowledge and belief construction from real world experience, through grounded analytic reconstruction. This approach may well serve to clarify questions by Warren (1990) concerning the role of personal construct theory and education.

3.3.1 PCP methods in education

Personal Construct Psychology and the related repertory grid methods have been used extensively in education (see Bannister & Salmon, 1975; Beail, 1985; Fisher, Russell & McSweeney, 1991; Fransella & Thomas, 1988; McQualter, 1985; Novak, 1990; Thomas & Harri-Augustein, 1985; Zuber-Skerritt, 1991). Pope and Keen (1981) promote the usefulness and relevance of PCP to education and specifically to teachers. They conclude:

We would suggest that each of us, from time to time, review how we are construing education and the extent to which we understand the position of others with whom we interact. This seems to be the central message of Kelly's work and one which we feel is relevant to those who wish for an effective and democratic education process. The responsibility for the future [education] lies therefore, not in the crystal ball, but in the attempts each and every one of us are making to reflect upon our 'personal constructs', and to negotiate with others who may hold alternative perspectives towards the construction of education. (p.163)

Beail (1985) provides an illustrative overview of the range of research in education which use Kelly's central themes and repertory grid method. The research cited covers an extensive range of settings and foci, from delinquent pupil behaviour to severely physically disabled people, to the use of grids in the classroom as a means of assisting pupils become more aware of their own behaviour in light of their classmates constructs. Fisher, Russell & McSweeney (1991) evaluated the use of repertory grids as an aid in course evaluation of nursing education. Using "Flexigrid" a computer software package aimed at analysing large numbers of repertory grids, the authors reported on the potential of grid analysis. They identified high levels of internal validity in their research findings which was "shown by the congruence of results from the focused grids and the content analysis" (p.55). Fisher, Russell and McSweeney (1991) list the following general assessment of the repertory grid technique:

1. The individual focus of the technique provides an effective means of exploring an individual's perception (of people, events, activities).
2. The conversational format which is an essential part of exploring the relationships revealed in the grid is simple, objective and enjoyable for the interviewee. Furthermore it is not anxiety provoking and the respondent is assured that his/her opinion are being sought.

3. The use of Repertory Grids allows a systematic collection of qualitative data and information. From this it is possible to explore the vocabulary of individual members of a group and that of their supervisors or teaching staff. This information may be used for questionnaire design which may itself be subject to more rigorous analysis.
- 5.[sic] Quantitative data, which may be obtained and analysed rapidly by using specialised software, can be complementary to qualitative data obtained by other means. The results of this analysis can be represented mathematically, diagrammatically and visually. The latter is relatively easy for respondents as well as course managers to interpret.
6. The use of repertory grids allows the effects of a course of study on an individual to be carefully monitored over a period of time, and corrective action taken where necessary.
7. The technique of clustering elements that are rated similarly provides information which approaches closely that produced by content analysis, thereby suggesting a good measure of internal validity.
8. The computer as a tool allows rapid analysis of data in a way that would normally be beyond the scope of participants.
9. As repertory grids are normally produced by face to face dialogue, the computer can make the process rather mechanistic. If this becomes a problem, the data for the raw grid may be first elicited on paper, [as has been done in the present study] and then subsequently be put into the Flexigrid using one of the menu options. The tedium of analysis is thereby removed as well as the problem of drawing out trees for visual interpretation.
10. The use of a 'proforma' [a specific procedure related to the study being reported] to allow students to note their initial views and then discuss them with a partner avoids the problem of protracted 1:1 interviews with a 'consultant'. Participants showed that they were generally able to analyse and make meaning of the focussed diagrams. This 'peer evaluation' is a very powerful tool for course managers. (p.55-56)

McQualter (1985) found PCP and repertory grid to be particularly relevant to the study of teaching and teacher knowledge. The theoretical framework was found to be "meaningful in numerous contexts" and a "practical methodology"

for tapping into the "personal practical knowledge" of trainees and experienced teachers (p.10). Thomas and Harri-Augustein (1985) focused on developing procedures through which teachers and students are able to become more aware of each other's perspectives, and as a result are more capable of self-organised learning. The repertory grid interview as used in Thomas and Harri-Augustein (1985) is seen as a useful conversational model. Zuber-Skerrit (1991) notes the importance of participant discussion, negotiation and confirmation in repertory grid technique. She found the technique to be "a powerful heuristic tool in higher education, not only to elicit people's personal constructs of research, teaching, and professional development from the researcher's perspective, but, as well, to help staff and students become more aware of their own and other people's personal perspectives..." (p.339).

3.3.2 PCP methods in teacher thinking

In research on teacher thinking, personal construct psychology and the repertory grid have been used by a number of researchers, for example, Corporaal (1991), Diamond (1991), Kompf (1993), Oberg (1986), Pope and Keen (1981) and Solas (1992). Corporaal (1991) found the repertory grid, "in principle" to be suitable for "retrieving cognitions of prospective teachers in making use of, their own terminology" but was less suited in larger scale applications (p.326). The problems experienced on large scale applications include the labour-intensive nature of both data collection and analysis. The analysis which is recommended should provide for the respondent to assist in interpretation "in dialogue with the researcher" (p.326). Autobiography and repertory grid, argues Solas (1992), are complementary and can be combined into a synergistic approach through which teachers' and students' thoughts can be given voice. Diamond (1991) believes that repertory grids as used in accordance with Kelly's PCP help teachers focus on the formation and

transformation of their points of view. This self-awareness is seen as vital, particularly in the area of pre-service teacher education where trainees "are exposed to new ideas and to difficult, even traumatic situations" (p.39).

3.3.3 PCP methods in cultural studies

McCoy (1983) used and reported the repertory grid technique as an important tool for intercultural and cross-cultural research. Kirkpatrick (1985) used Kellyian interview and triadic grouping with Marquesas Islanders, the results of which displayed Marquesasian attitudes toward "interaction, as a culturally valued process" (p.238). Kirkpatrick contends that similar studies in other cultures may yield quite different results as "personal distinctiveness is evaluated elsewhere in relation to group membership and the like [as in Western cultures], not interactive process, or because interaction is construed in very different terms" (p.238). Other studies include Neimeyer and Fukuyama's (1984) examination of counsellor's cross-cultural attitudes, cited in Desai's (1994) evaluation of PCP for cross-cultural research.

Desai (1994) provides a "Pros and Cons" of using personal construct theory, and related repertory grid method for the study of culture. The positive aspects have been reviewed in Chapter 2 and the findings inclusive of those which Desai lists. These are:

- 1) the philosophy of constructive alternativism (Kelly, 1955) on which the theory is based;
- 2) the compatibility of constructionism in general toward an understanding of the diversity found in individual world views among ethnic groups; and
- 3) the constructive metaphor for the person as an active, construing agent, a meaning seeking creature. (p.6)

The restrictions listed include having to rely on the technology of the repertory grid, the emphasis upon structure rather than the content of human cognition,

and assumptions regarding the personal variations in structure and content between individuals within and across cultures (Desai, 1994). This study avoids the first two criticisms through a "multi-method" (Pope & Denicolo, 1993) approach to data collection and analysis. The third criticism is made in the absence of adequate cross-cultural data. This study provides such data, specifically pertaining to the influence of personal learning culture on the individual. Cross-cultural comparisons will yield an understanding of constructs commonly seen within and across cultures. This information will lead toward a much greater understanding of the role of cultural constructs in the process of individual construing of language teaching and learning ideology.

3.4 Methodological design

3.4.1 Prelude to decision making

The research design and selected methods, like the research interest, as stated in Chapter 1 grew from personal experience and active participation prior to and during the research project. The logical link between the effects of cultural immersion, language, teaching, and the knowledge base for language teaching precluded the study of related issues in the professional preparation of language teachers. These interests and experiences allowed, even enticed, further investigation into the effects of prior learning and teaching upon trainee teachers.

Prior educational research (see Bodycott, 1994; 1993a,b,c; 1992a,b; 1991a,b,c; 1988, 1986; Whitson & Bodycott, 1992) reinforced ideas related to case-study as a useful methodological reporting framework. To fully understand the knowledge of trainee language teachers, an understanding of the trainee's world was seen as essential. This required a range of data

collection techniques, generating data which would be compiled into extensive case-studies of each trainee.

3.4.2 Case study design

The relative advantages of case study reporting have been well documented (see Cohen & Manion, 1989; Guba & Lincoln, 1989). Their use renders, in a holistic sense, constructions and reconstructions of experience which are not only factual, but in ways that clarify the experiential meanings and interpretations that can be made of those facts. The case report "cannot simply be about the evaluand and its context, but must enable readers to see how the constructors make sense of it, and why" (Guba & Lincoln, 1989, p.223). As my purpose was to develop an understanding of individual trainee language teacher constructs and the possible influences upon them, "case study reports" were seen as the most appropriate reporting format.

As Yin (1984) suggested, case study reports while generalisable as theoretical propositions at an individual level, may not be applied to actual populations. What the case study report represents is an attempt to gather in depth data on the content, character and organisation of an individual's knowledge with a view to contributing to a broader conceptualisation of teacher knowledge and thinking and their use in language teaching (Grossman & Wilson, 1987). The individual case report becomes, in this study, the first unit of analysis from which patterns or themes within the individual case are applied in "cross-case analysis" (Grossman, 1990, p.150).

This study encompasses 12 case studies of "beginning" trainee language teachers —to identify "upon entry" each individual's personally constructed knowledge of language teaching and learning. Much of the research undertaken on the influence of beliefs and personal histories, as reviewed in

Chapter 2, indicates that they exert a powerful influence on teacher decision making and action. Many of these reports have used retrospective case reports or self reports of teachers. There is, however, a paucity of research in the area of trainee teacher thinking and even less on the influence of educative cultures. Hence the case study findings of this study are likely to provide much needed information which may shed light on why professional teaching preparatory programs are relatively ineffective (Grossman, 1990).

3.4.3 Trainee participants

Twelve trainees participated from over one hundred who expressed initial interest. All had graduated from Singaporean Junior Colleges and had been accepted into the Diploma in Education elementary school teacher preparation course conducted by Nanyang Technological University's National Institute of Education (NIE), Singapore. Upon entry, trainees are required to elect the specific language they will be trained to teach i.e., Malay, Tamil, Chinese, or English. Those who elect English are required to teach Maths and Science, while trainees in the other language subjects were seen as language teaching specialists. The various language teaching groups are provided tutorials and lectures separately and in their related language. All trainees were exposed to programs of general education and student elected courses e.g., art, music. These courses were closely related to their chosen language teaching culture, with the exception of English. These additional courses were, as a rule, organised and taught by their respective language teaching lecturers and tutors. Trainee volunteers for this study were representative of the three cultural groups i.e., Malay, Tamil and Chinese.

3.4.4 Methodological rationale

The purpose of the study was to explore the subjective ideological orientations of these trainee teachers toward their role as language teachers. I anticipated that through an analysis of these underlying subjective ideologies light would be shed on the influences of past language teaching and learning experiences in both informal and formal educative cultures. Personal orientations or "the way we perceive reality based upon our cognitive structures and processes" (Borden, 1991, p.65) can determine the roles teachers play, and how they determine the approaches they use to teach language. They can also be "detrimental" to a person's ability to "get along" with people from other cultures (Borden, 1991, p.65).

The study then, has been designed to look into the individual's personal language teaching orientation in terms of the intrinsic cognitive processes and structures which are the foundation of their elicited views. Kelly (1963) presents the basic assumptions about personal orientations that are fundamental to this phase of the study. He uses the term, "personal construct" to describe the basic unit of cognitive structures. He sees personal constructs as "transparent patterns or templets which he (man) [sic] creates and then attempts to fit over the realities of which the world is composed" (p.8-9). It is the development of one's personal constructs which is seen as the processing aspect of cognition. Kelly says "man [sic] creates his own ways of seeing the world in which he lives; the world does not create them for him" (p.12). He goes on to say that "we assume that all of our present interpretations of the universe are subject to revision or replacement". Kelly calls this philosophical position "constructive alternativism" (p.15) which means that teachers can and do alter their personal orientations. Kelly says that "in general man [sic] seeks to improve his constructs by increasing his repertory, by altering them to

provide better fits, and by subsuming them with superordinate constructs or systems" (p.9).

This study aimed to select and implement data collection and analysis techniques which would assist in determining the individual student teachers' constructs or personal orientations toward their roles as language teachers. To exhibit an individual's construct system Kelly (1955a) devised the repertory grid which formed the basis of the second phase of data collection.

Cultural-constructivist inquiry deals with the student from within the realm of interpersonal relations. Central to Kelly's (1955a) fundamental postulate is the pursuit of understanding the anticipatory nature of a student's construing. While the repertory grid provides a useful clinical analysis of the current state of the person's construing, additional approaches are necessary to validate the clinical appraisals derived from the grid and to more fully understand the interpersonal roles and relationships that exist between the personal constructs. Phase One of the study therefore involved student participants elaborating through a self characterisation-biography exercise their personal views of language teaching and learning, and the role of the language teacher.

3.5 Data collection

3.5.1 Phase one: Written biography — Self characterisation

This exercise draws on the research of Hunt (1987) and Kelly (1955a,b). Hunt developed similar exercises to assist teachers identify their implicit theories on their role as teachers. Through such exercises he wanted teachers to talk about their role as teachers using their own language. He felt that teachers "do not have an agreed upon language to communicate with each other about their work" therefore they tend to "adopt the language of the theorist or

researcher". Hunt suggested that the use of personal metaphors provided an "alternative language for their communication" about their work (Hunt, 1987, p.75). Therefore this aspect was included in the exercise reproduced in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1

Written biography — Self characterisation instruction sheet

In order to more fully understand how you view language teaching and your role as a language teacher I would like you to complete the following exercise:

Imagine you are writing for a friend or an NIE colleague, someone with whom you feel comfortable. Tell them how you believe children learn to talk, read and write. Then describe how you would go about teaching them. In conclusion, explain what you see as the most important role of the language teacher. Conclude your piece with a metaphor which best describes your perception of the language teacher's role.

Students were asked to complete this exercise and all did so within 45 minutes. The instruction sheet was presented to students in four languages, Malay, Tamil, Chinese (Mandarin) and English. Students were given the option of recording their responses in either their mother tongue, that is the language first spoken at home, or English. Most students preferred to exercise the English option. It is worthy to note that this group of trainee participants had all studied and been educated in English from their first year in formal education and understanding the requirements of the task, including the metaphor, did not prove a barrier. Responses recorded in trainees' mother tongue were subsequently translated. The translations were cross checked by lecturing staff at the university for accuracy. Translation, while requiring preliminary organisation with respect to the arrangement of translators and university "member checkers", presented no obstacle for the researcher.

The objective of this exercise was to ascertain how the trainee perceived the world of language teaching and learning, and his or her role within it. The exercise was conducted in the first week of their training thus avoiding any potential influence by the program, the lecturers and/or the researcher. The results were seen to be the student's own interpretation of their world and the constructs that permeate it. Another advantage was that self-characterisation empowered the student. The student remained the focus of the research and this was seen to minimise student anxiety and/or threats associated with participating in the study at this early stage.

Analysis of the written biography-self characterisation exercise included establishing the cultural-context from which analysis was to be made. This was achieved through: identifying sequences of content and transitions from topic to topic; noting the sequence of paragraphs and generalisations made; observations of the protocol structure, (i.e., topic sentences and sentences that carry great generality); noting repeated terms or phrases; establishing any themes or cause-and-effect relationships; and, importantly, noting the dimensions or dichotomised alternatives used by the student.

The bringing out of metaphors was enhanced by the structure of this exercise. The trainees were first involved in recreating in their mind, and on paper, images of past language learning settings. This was seen to assist trainees in "bringing out" their metaphors from personal experience. This, according to Hunt (1987), is an "inside out" process as opposed to selecting a metaphor from "outside in", that is, the metaphors were grounded in the trainee's personally reconstructed images and language, rather than those of "theorists and researchers". The timing of the exercise also, as stated, assisted in generating personal metaphors, rooted in the language and experience of the trainee.

In essence analysis served to answer the following important questions about how the student perceives language learning and teaching and the derivatives of such perceptions: what are the most important aspects of language teaching and learning?; what significant events exist and what meanings do these events hold for the student?; what influences have existed and how have they affected the student as a person?; and how does the student perceive language teaching and their role within it?

3.5.2 Phase two: Role construct repertory grid

The repertory grid is best understood as a type of "structured interview designed to formalise a process for exploring another person's construct system" (Morine-Dershimer, 1983, p.6) and the many forms of repertory grid currently being used (see Bannister & Fransella, 1986). The repertory grid provides a window on the individual's personal view of language teaching and learning. When viewed critically through the eyes of the individual we are able to see interesting cultural features (Kelly, 1991). The repertory grid expresses the finite systems of cross references between the personal observations (elements) the student makes and the personal constructs the student holds. Grids act as a psychological equivalent of the "first rough ground mirror" of the individual's developing conceptual network (Thomas, 1978). If repertory grids are elicited over a period of time and then reflected upon, the processes of change, growth or decay can be monitored in the individual's personal orientation (Diamond, 1985). In this study students completed repertory grids at the beginning of their language teaching course.

The advantage of using the repertory grid technique is that it provides a means through which relationships between people can be examined as elements. It provides trainees with a way of discussing individuals without

getting caught up with interpersonal sensitivities. Grids can also reveal deeper "superordinate" constructs or views of people and practices. Using a "multi-method" approach to data collection it was anticipated that the repertory grid would provide structured information which can help the interviewee and the researcher understand the person's [trainee's] construction of reality (Pope & Denicolo, 1993, p.541). The repertory grid technique was done with full knowledge its limitations.

Limitations of the repertory grid technique are well documented in Solas (1992), Cohen and Manion (1989) and Neimeyer (1985). Concerns include the technological advances in grid form and Kelly's theoretical basis on which the grid was originally developed (Cohen & Manion, 1989). A second concern raised by Yorke (1987) relates to "vagueness in grids containing elicited constructs" (p.385) and the focusing of grid analyses on one pole of the bipolar construct distinction. This, Yorke believed, may lead to "unwarranted" inferences" about opposites or "bent" construct interpretations. Neimeyer (1985) also questions the methodological validity of the grid, specifically the "adequacy of the grid's verbal labels in capturing a respondent's construing" (p.397). Pope and Denicolo (1993) warn researchers that the repertory grid provides only "a partial record" (p.542) of the trainee's perspective and, as such, recommend that other methods may be needed to develop a clearer understanding of trainee views of reality, and to avoid such criticisms. Other concerns question the orthodoxy associated with the laddering procedure and the possibility of imposing constructs and the rating procedures. Here lies a fundamental difficulty in the theoretical underpinnings of the repertory grid. That is, the "rating of elements on constructs and the subsequent statistical analyses retain a positivistic core in what purports to be a non-positivistic methodology..." (Yorke, in Cohen & Manion, 1989, p.349). This study, through

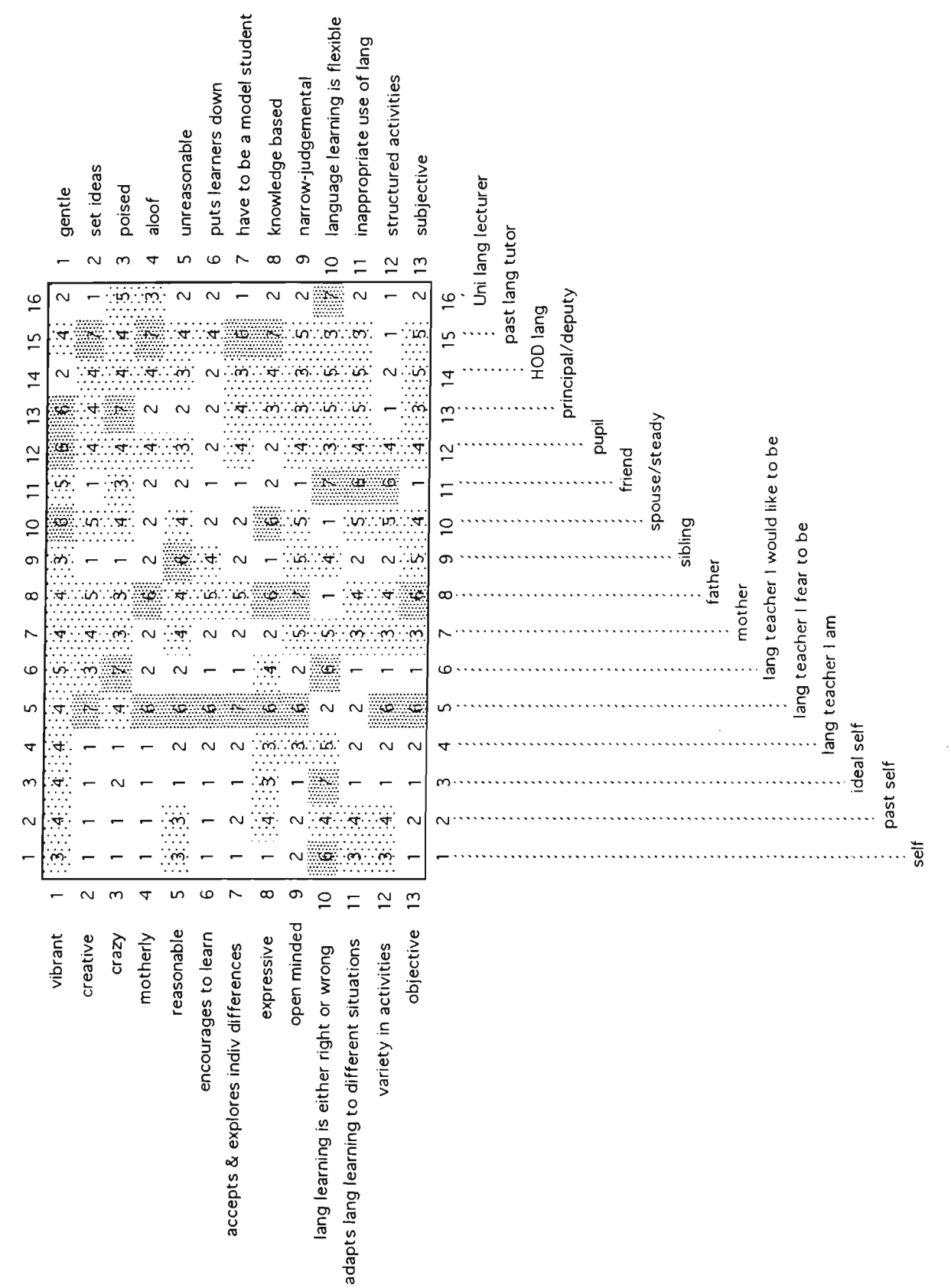
its range of data collection techniques, attempts to maintain a non-positivistic approach to analytical interpretations of repertory grid data.

Through the use of written biography – self characterisation data, and the written recounts of the context of grounded construct use, the shifting semantic understandings of constructs was fixed on the real world perceptions of the trainee. Used together with the repertory grid data, a triangulation (Guba & Lincoln, 1985) of methods was achieved. This triangulation was seen to enhance the rigour of such a constructivist inquiry (Pope & Dericolo, 1993) and maintain its focus upon personally grounded data. While the grid can provide much numerical data, the focus of the grid was kept on eliciting individual traits of personal language teaching ideology and cultural influence, as opposed to numerical measures.

3.5.2.1 Element identification and construct elicitation

The first step was to identify the elements which were seen to extend or influence the student's perception of their teaching role i.e., the individuals who were to be compared. A common set of sixteen elements were derived from the studies of Adams-Webber and Mirc (1976), Pope (1978) and Diamond (1985). The elements were cross checked for role relevancy by University lecturers and professionals from each of the cultural groups generating a combined representative listing of the elements most commonly identified as influential persons in determining and affecting an individual's view of language teaching and learning, and their view of a language teacher's role. This list is presented in Table 3.2. Instructions to trainee interviewees regarding the research and for the identification of elements can be found in Appendix 1 and 2. The element titles were presented in the following random order 1, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 10, 16, 15, 14, 13, 6, 3, 2, 4.

Figure 3.2 Completed repertory grid



The elements were presented to trainees in randomly derived lists of triads. (See Appendix 3 for the instructions to trainee participants with regard to the

process of eliciting constructs.) Students were asked "Which two are most alike and yet different from the other?" thus distinguishing two elements from the third. Interviewees responded through the elicitation of personal cases (historical experiences, narrative recounts) and, from these, their constructs were hermeneutically derived through interviewer/trainee discourse. Construct elicitation was ordered by the interviewee's responses and for this reason the course of construct discourse was not predictable before starting.

Throughout the construct elicitation process the interviewer had a number of ways in which to promote useful hermeneutics. One way was to 'uptake' (Nystrand, 1991, p.10), a process in which the interviewer incorporates previous students' answers into their subsequent questions. For example, when the interviewer asks "In what ways did they teach?" and the interviewee responds, "they demonstrated", to which the interviewer follows up by asking, "How did they do that?", both interviewer questions involve 'uptake'. By following up on the student's response in this manner, uptake was to prove a key technique for interacting with and elaborating student perceptions and interpretations (Nystrand, 1991, p.10).

The "uptaking" process is similar to that described in Hinkle's (1965) revision of PCP in which he noted a process called "laddering". This involves the "why technique" of question response. It calls on the interviewer to ask the trainee "Why?" For example, when asked whether they prefer to be seen as a language teacher who is "approachable" as opposed to "unapproachable", when they respond, the interviewer again asks "Why?" and the process continues. The result of the laddering technique is a clearer indication of the hierarchal nature of the trainee's personal construct system. The technique was found useful in cases where trainees wished to use repeated constructs.

Greater understanding of construct meaning was also achieved through laddering by asking, for example, "what constitutes approachable?"

Table 3.2
Element Title List

Figure number	Figure Description
1	Self
2	Past self
3	Ideal self
4	Language teacher I am
5	Language teacher I fear to be
6	Language teacher I would like to be
7	Mother
8	Father
9	Siblings
10	Spouse/Steady
11	Friends
12	Pupils
13	Principal and Deputy
14	Head of language department
15	Past language teacher
16	University language tutor

Interviewer questioning played an important role in the hermeneutic elicitation of personal constructs. The above questions "How did they do that?" and "In what ways?" or "Why?" exemplify the open ended nature of questioning. Questions were asked for which interviewees had no prespecified response or answer, allowing them to freely expose their feelings and interpretations.

Throughout the elucidation of constructs the interviewer endeavoured to say little, nod understanding, and check construct interpretation by asking follow-up questions or reiterating the construct explanation. The interviewer's

responses help the student to validate personal interpretations and understandings and allowed for further discourse if the meaning was unclear.

3.5.2.2 Rating of constructs

Once the constructs were elicited, trainees were asked to complete the grid by rating each element on a scale of one to seven, defined by each elicited construct pole shown in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3
Element ratings on elicited constructs

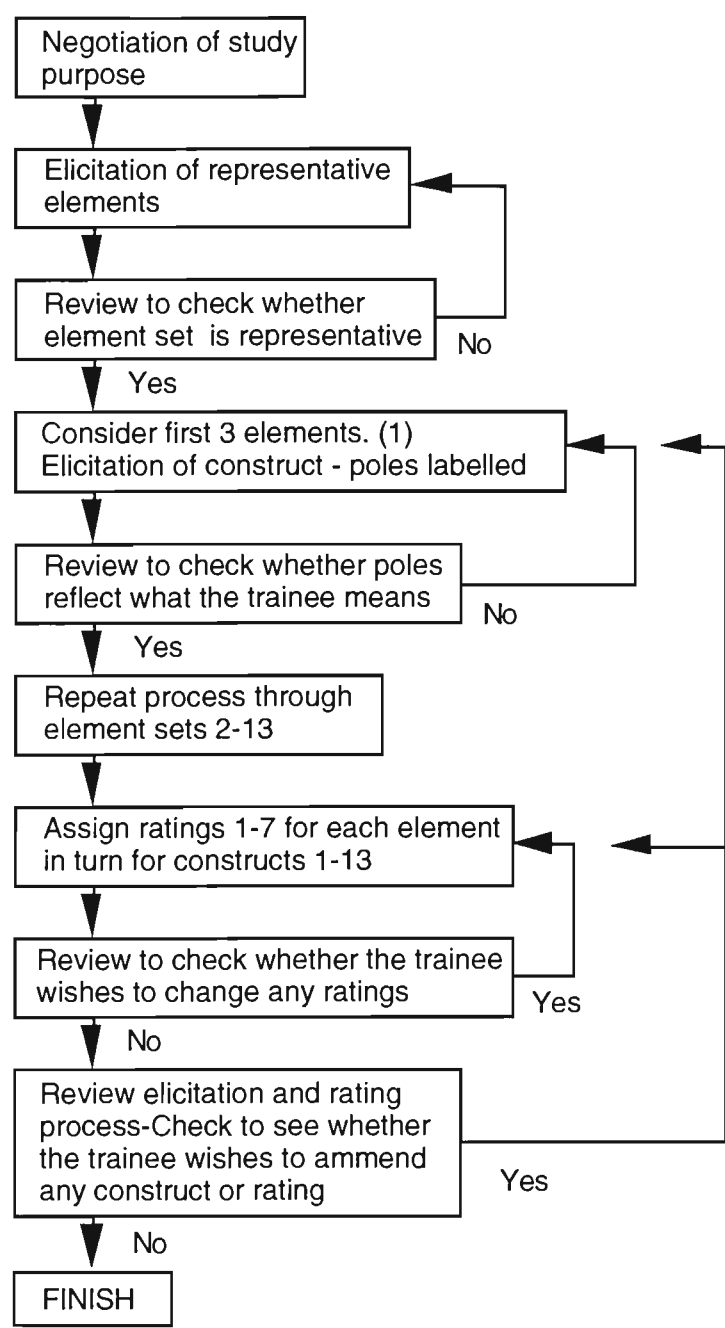
Construct Pole	Rating 1 - 7							Construct Pole
<i>passive</i>	2	1	4	6	6	5	3	<i>active</i>
	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	
Elements								

The instructions to trainees on this procedure are included in Appendix 4. The advantages of such an approach are that it offers the trainee greater latitude in distinguishing between elements, while at the same time allowing for most correlation techniques (Bannister & Mair, 1968). Rated repertory grids may be "regarded as a reflection of conceptual structure in which constructs are linked by virtue of them being applied to the same persons (elements)" (Cohen & Manion, 1989, p.342). Ratings and subsequent cluster analyses were undertaken using the FOCUS (Shaw & Thomas, 1978) computer software program. Figure 3.3 provides a flow chart of the construct elicitation and rating procedures.

3.5.2.3 Repertory grid analysis

Analysis centred on obtaining content information pertaining to language teaching ideology, language teaching role and cultural influence evidence. Through content analysis a range of recurrent categories became evident.

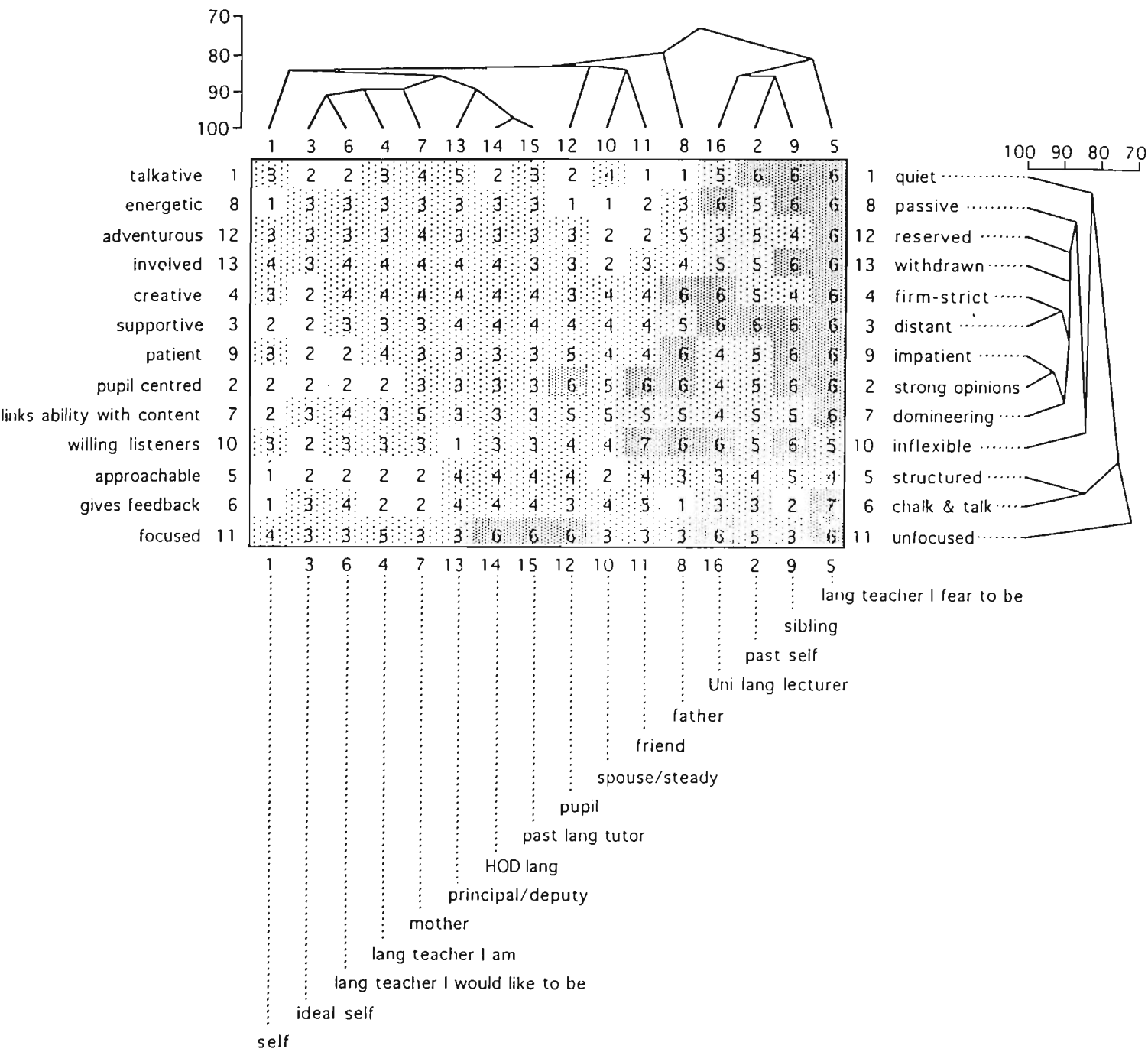
Figure 3.3 Flow chart of construct elicitation and rating



Categories included were, for example, learning environment, language teaching and influences. Initial patterning was further clarified through computer FOCUSing. This involved the reordering the rows of constructs and putting like with like for construct rows and element columns. The program computes distance scores between all construct and element pairs and then performs a two way hierarchical linkage analysis that focuses and clusters the

data and is illustrated by a tree diagram attached to the grid. See Figure 3.4 for an example of a completed cluster analysed repertory grid.

Figure 3.4 Cluster analysed repertory grid.



The use of a full grid, i.e., the triadic elicitation of constructs including ratings provided a wealth of data. Computer generated cluster analysis assisted in organising the information. This aspect of the FOCUS program has, according to Pope and Denicolo (1993), three main advantages: it removes "detail of relationships between elements/constructs in its visual presentation of data"; it "uses non-parametric statistics on the data, but makes no assumptions about

the absolute size of the difference"; and "it is relatively easy to reconstruct what the computer program has done (map) in relation to the grid" (p.536). For determining constructs related to language teaching ideology and role of the language teacher, the whole of the grid's contents was analysed. For the specific purpose of determining cultural influence, trainees and subsequent analysis were focused upon parts of the grid where they could compare themselves with the language teacher they would like to be, feared to be, and parents. The benefits of the FOCUS (Shaw & Thomas, 1978) program was that it provided a visual representation of the data which assisted in identifying and examining

Figure 3.5 Flow chart for the FOCUS algorithm



(Shaw, 1980, p.36)

patterns and themes which emerged for sharing with the trainees, and 'member checks' on the analysis procedures (see section 3.7). The FOCUS (Shaw & Thomas, 1978) grid algorithm is illustrated in Figure 3.5.

3.5.4 Written recounts – Context of construing

After the construct interview trainees were asked to complete a written recount of each construct generated during the interview. The instructions for doing so are included in Table 3.4. Analysis of the recounts followed the constant comparative method as used in analysing the written biography-self characterisation and case reports. Demographic information and extracts from biographies and contexts of construing can be found in Appendices 5, 6, and 7.

Table 3.4

Instructions for completing written recounts of context of construing

This task involves writing a definition and description of each construct elicited during your construct interview. Please structure your recount along the following lines:

- Construct: label or phrase used
 - Definition: a brief definition of what you mean by this construct. Begin this "I define to mean"
 - Descriptive Recount: A real world description of the construct, as you define it. You may like to begin with "for example..."
- During your interview you shared many stories, recounts, situations and descriptions of the contexts, people, their actions, behaviours and attitudes, from which you derived your construct. It is in this section that I again request that you share these with me. These descriptive recount will assist me in seeing exactly what you mean by the construct as you have defined it.

3.6 Data analysis

3.6.1 Case report analysis

The first stage of data analysis involved the independent coding of written biography-self characterisation and repertory grid data. The coding included categories for language learning, teacher knowledge and sources of teaching knowledge. Codes for the sources of language learning included learning by doing, learning by instruction (telling), learning by imitation and learning by immersion. Categories of teacher knowledge reflected specific categories of language teaching pedagogy i.e., reading writing, speaking and listening and a more generic pedagogical knowledge. Sources of language teaching knowledge included parents, peers, siblings, teachers, tutors, and a generic "significant others" category. This coding schema was finalised after the last coding of the twelfth set of data. Inclusion rules were determined and, upon refinement, each data set was reviewed.

The coding and categorisation of data for each case report followed what has been described in Glaser and Strauss, (1967) as the "constant comparative method of analysis" (p.101-116). The inherent procedures in this form of analysis are believed by Strauss and Corbin (1990) to provide the constructs, and "concepts in grounded theory [with] their precision and specificity" (p.62). Grounded theory, in their interpretation, stems from research that uses a "systematic set of 'procedures' to develop an inductively derived [grounded] 'theory' about a 'phenomenon'" (p.24). The methodological and analytic procedures facilitate the generation of a theory "that follows from the data, rather than preceding it" (Guba & Lincoln, 1985, p.204). The underlying procedures of "constant comparative method of analysis" are fully examined in the texts cited and are an implicit foundation of a "constructivist paradigm" (see Guba & Lincoln, 1989).

Reliability checks (member checks) on the coding of data were undertaken by two independent people familiar with the general coding categories. One, also a lecturer in Education had an intimate understanding of language learning and teaching. The other was from outside education and provided an independent check on the coded interpretations and having a background in psychology and experience in the functional application of Kelly's (1955a,b) PCP, was also to provide valued checks in the later analysis of repertory grids.

The biography and grid data for each individual were coded, analysed and summarised at one time. Then a first draft of a case study report on that teacher was written, which served to reduce and refine the data further. Trainee quotations were used where possible to maintain the human face of the data and to provide semantic clarification of constructs

The purpose of the case study report was to provide an in-depth vignette of each trainee, constructed around salient data pertaining to each trainee, and interpreted with reference to the research objectives. All data related to the research objectives were included. This broadened the study findings and highlighted areas for future inquiry. Checks on the reliability of interpretative reconstructions of individual data were undertaken by returning the case reports to the trainees for verification and comment. The final form of the case report encompassed data verified by each trainee.

3.6.2 Cross-case analysis

The second level of analysis involved cross-case report analysis. This involved comparing and contrasting individual case-reports. As the study was concerned with cultural influence, mother tongue was important. The first set of grouping involved analysing the sets of data of those teachers with similar mother tongue i.e., analysing the trainees by the language they speak at home

and in which they had undertaken formal second language instruction—Malay, Tamil or Chinese. It should be noted that in Singapore, the term "first language" is applied universally to English, as it is the language of communication, education and business. Contrary to most definitions of first and second language, mother tongues, although the first language in the home are considered the second language. In Singapore, the distinction, is based on the formal order of language instruction.


Cross-case analysis involved looking for patterns and themes that emerged from each mother tongue group. These themes were summarised into "conceptual memos" (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) which were essentially not about the trainees, or specific incidents or events as contained in the individual case reports (memos), but pertained more to the "concepts that represent abstractions of incidents, events, [or] happenings" (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p.203) cultivated by them.

Inherent in the cross-case analysis process was comparing individual constructs and the terms used to label them. Shaw (1994) constructed the following figure to display the possible overlap between constructs and terms. This overlap may lead to four possible relationships between the relevant parts of the trainees' construct systems. Shaw (1994) defines these as:

- consensus, or agreement, [which] occurs when there is agreement in both the constructs and terminology used;
- correspondence, or term disagreement, [which] occurs when different terms or labels are used for the same construct;
- conflict, or constructive disagreement, [which] occurs when the same term is used to describe different constructs; and
- contrast, or total disagreement, [which] occurs when different terms are used to label different constructs. (p.36)

Figure 3.6 Consensus, correspondence, conflict and contrast in construct terminology of individuals

Please see print copy for images



(Shaw, 1994, p.36)

These relationships form an integral part of cross-case analysis which, when clarified against written biography-self characterisations and written recounts of contexts of construing, provided a much fuller exploration of similarities in construing.

3.6.2.1 Cross-case analysis: Axial coding

"Axial coding" (Strauss and Corbin, 1990, p.211) of the three conceptual memos was performed. Patterns and themes of cultural influence on language teaching and learning, together with those related to a knowledge of language teaching pedagogy, were identified. It was at this stage of analysis that data from each memo were pieced together to form a more complete picture of the integrated whole. Axial coding facilitated the development of categories and sub-categories and the verification of their relationships. In practice, this involved asking questions about the generated data i.e., What are the conditions bearing upon this finding? What interactions have taken place? With whom? What are the consequences? Where does this finding fit with what is known about language learning?

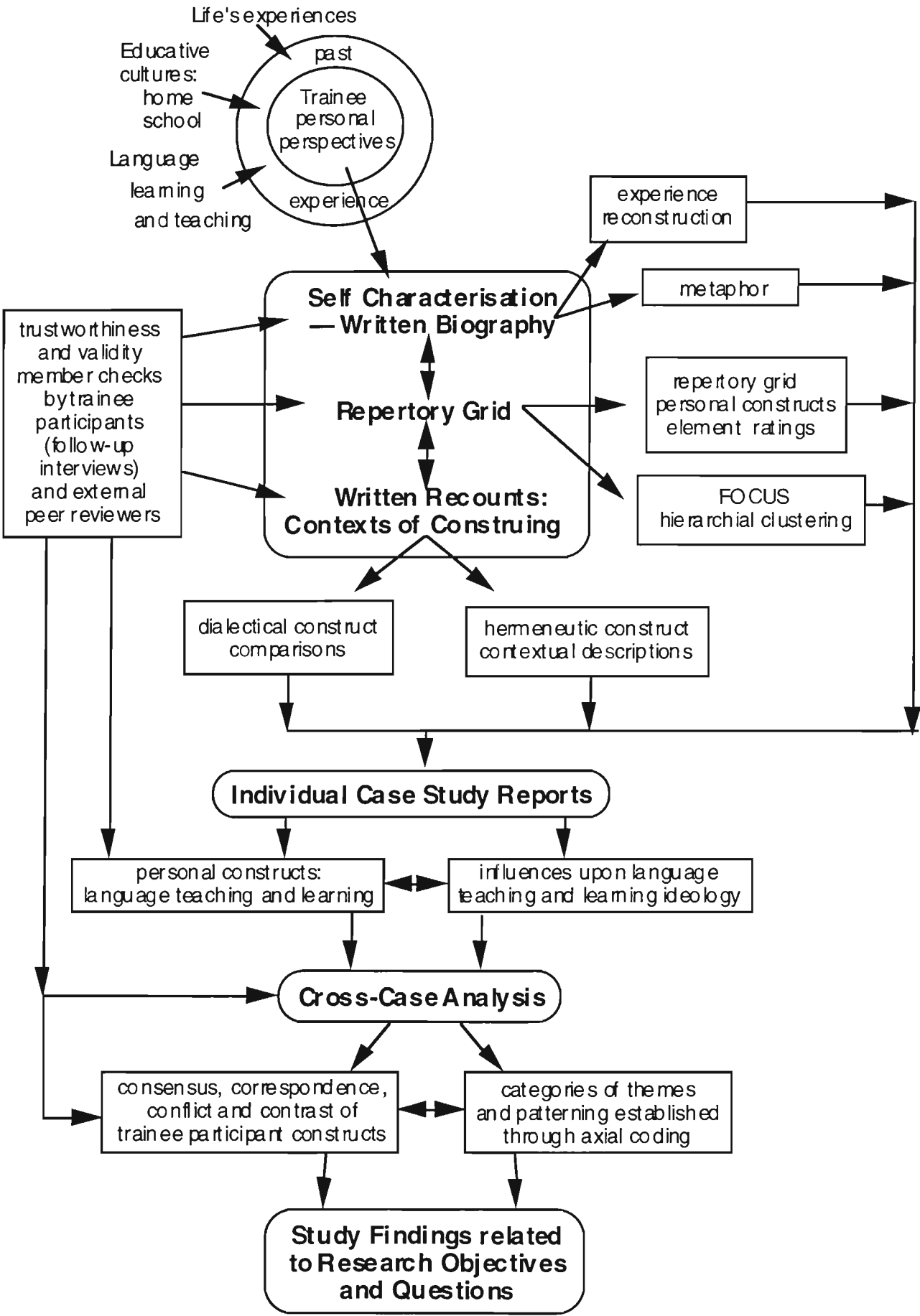
This level of analysis required returning frequently to the original individual data sets ie. the written biography-self characterisations and role construct repertory test, cluster analyses; the individual case reports; and cross-case memos to check, confirm, refute, or revise the constructed evidence and the validity of the interpretations. There was a noted similarity of this reconstructive-validity checking process and Kelly's notion of construct formation.

3.6.2.2 Cross-case analysis: The final stage

The final stage of analysis involved writing conceptual summary memos of each category related to the objectives of the study and checking all the resultant findings for trustworthiness and validity. Checks on the trustworthiness of the ways of construing (experiencing) the data were essential. Like the notion of "constructive alternativism" underlying PCP, the analysis of data generated a wealth of phenomena which could, on subsequent analysis, provide an "audit trail" (Guba & Lincoln, 1985, p.315) of category authenticity. The audit trail of findings were shared with the two individuals who had been involved in earlier "member checking" (Guba & Lincoln, 1985, p.315) of data.

Throughout the analysis, attempts were made to visually reconstruct not only the data collection and analysis process (see Figure 3.7) but also to visually display the emerging data sets relating to language teaching, learning and cultural influence. These visual reconstructions provided useful means to: record the ongoing analytical process; to display the complexity of data coding and inter and intra-categorical relationships; and to finalise the integration of data.

Figure 3.7 Summary flow chart of data collection and analysis procedures



3.7 Benefits of the methods used

The written biography – self characterisations were designed to provide information on the informal educative environment and language teaching and learning knowledge. As reconstructing language teaching knowledge had been found elusive in much of the reviewed research, trainees were asked to differentiate between the learning and teaching of different modes of language. This was to assist in ascertaining directly their beliefs and knowledge about the teaching of language, specifically their pedagogical content knowledge (Shulman, 1986a).

The role construct repertory test was used as a tool for examining in greater detail the stated constructs of teaching and learning. Specifically, it provided a more cognitive insight into this knowledge and how it was constructed. This aspect proved essential as it provided the means through which cultural influence was identifiable, particularly as the grid allowed correlations to be made at an interpersonal level.

3.8 Cultural constructivist methodology: A hermeneutic dialectic process

The data collection and analysis process, as described in this chapter, are representative of what Guba and Lincoln (1989) term an "hermeneutic dialectic" process (p.149). Cultural constructivist inquiry is, as outlined in Chapter 2, hermeneutic because of its interpretive nature. Personal constructs are individual interpretations of reality. The process of identification through self-characterisation-written biographies, repertory grids and written recounts of the context of construing provides interpretive reconstructions of the trainee's view of reality.

It is dialectic because, throughout the process of identification and analysis there is an internal comparison and contrast of experience and later of the

constructs themselves in order to achieve a superordinate synthesis and understanding of the network of constructs; that is, cultural constructivist inquiry of the type described in this study attempts to explore the connections not only between the individual's construct system, but through cross-case analysis, the construct systems of a group of individuals. The aim of such a process is to reach an understanding of the similarities and differences in personal perspectives, the results of which open the personal views of language teaching (ideology) and the influence of educative cultures for discussion.

"Trustworthiness" and "validity" (Guba & Lincoln, 1985; Patton, 1990; Strauss & Corbin, 1990) were achieved throughout the data collection and analysis process. Guba and Lincoln (1989) claim that the hermeneutic dialectic process is in itself a quality control mechanism as data are open for public inspection. Peer debriefing and member checking involved the researcher, trainee and member check team, in retracing interpretations of each construct, the grid analysis and subsequent synthesis of findings. This process restricted the possibility that "biases and prejudices of the evaluator can [may] shape the results" (p.244). Guba and Lincoln propose a set of criteria for judging the adequacy of constructivist inquiry, which they argue grow out of the paradigm itself. They argue that "authenticity" criteria can "be explicitly confirmed and would [should] be addressed in any case study emerging from a constructivist evaluation" (p.245). Before examining the results of this study an overview of these criteria as they relate to the study will be provided. The "authenticity criteria" include fairness, ontological authenticity, and tactical authenticity.

3.8.1 Fairness

This criterion ensures that the researcher treats trainees or "stakeholders" (Guba & Lincoln, 1989) in the inquiry fairly. They stress the importance of

maintaining an openness in negotiations which occur between research subjects and researcher. It is through the reconstructive negotiation process that a level of consensus can be reached with all participants. The data collection techniques were designed to empower the trainees, and where possible, maintain a focus on them and their responses at all times. The ethics of fair play and honesty between the researcher and trainee participants was ensured through open lines of communication and the member checking process.

3.8.2 Ontological authenticity

"This criterion refers to the extent to which individual respondents [trainee participants] own emic [personal] constructions are improved, matured, expanded and elaborated, in that they now possess new information and have become more sophisticated in its use" (Guba & Lincoln, 1989, p.248). The development of trainee participants was not an aim of this study, but ontological authenticity was achieved by allowing the trainees to clarify and amend any data so that it fully represented their view of reality at that point in time.

3.8.3 Tactical authenticity

This criterion focuses on empowering the trainees by encouraging them to get involved in the research. Throughout this study all trainees were encouraged to contribute their interpretations and clarifications on any aspect of the data collected and the researcher analysis. Trainees were asked to comment on all aspects of the researcher analysis and their comments and clarifications added in subsequent reviews. Follow-up correspondence with trainees indicates that they enjoyed, in general, their involvement in the research process and found it most "illuminating".

3.9 Conclusion

This chapter began with an examination of research literature and the methods of related personal construct and constructivist research in the fields of education, teacher thinking and cultural studies. This literature provided a rationale for decisions relating to the design of this study. Details of the study's data collection and analysis procedures were provided. The final section in this chapter has examined the hermeneutic dialectic nature of the inquiry and the authenticity steps undertaken to ensure that "trustworthiness" and "credibility" criteria were in place, and maintained throughout the data collection and subsequent analysis. The chapters that follow describe and discuss the findings of this inquiry.

CHAPTER 4

CASE STUDY REPORTS

Case Study Reports

4.1 Introduction

It is the purpose of this chapter to present individual case study findings. Trainee case reports are presented individually. Cross case analysis of individual trainee data, as indicated in the case reports, is presented in Chapter 5. Appendices 6 and 7 contain extracts from original biography, and written recounts: contexts of construing data.

4.2 Case study organisation and structure

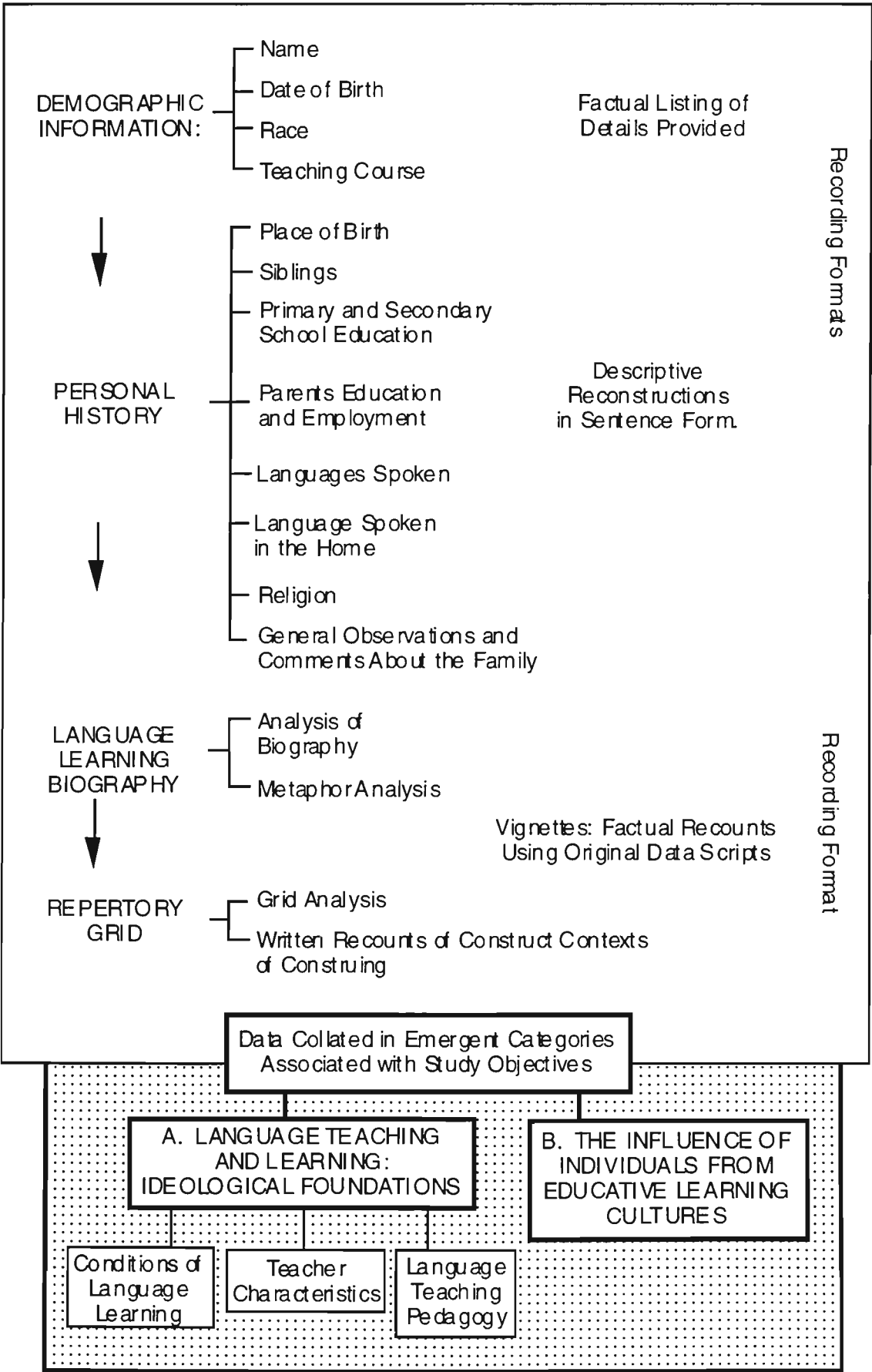
The organisation and order of case study analysis was determined randomly with each case study report presented in the same format.* Figure 4.1 outlines the case report structures and related procedures for inclusion. Data from each phase was collated and summarised into separate vignettes. These vignettes were then coded, analysed and sorted according to the following emergent categories: language learning guidelines; language teacher characteristics; and pedagogical approaches to language teaching. Checks on the reliability of interpretative reconstructions of individual data was undertaken by returning the case reports to the trainees for verification and comment, and through formal follow-up interviews. The final form of each case report encompasses data which has been verified by the respective trainee.

4.3 Trainee: Language information

Table 4.1 provides an overview of the presentation order of case studies and a tabular synopsis of language teaching specialisation and mother tongue language. For those participants who indicated a dual language spoken in the home, the language listed first on Table 4.1 is the main language of communication. For all but one participant, Serena, English is used as a

* It should be noted, that throughout each case study report, the elicited personal constructs and element titles have been *italicised* and that all quotations from students are direct and have not been grammatically edited.

Figure 4.1 Case report structure



second language. When questioned about this, Serena indicated that the focus on English was only a more recent event (in the last couple of years) when Serena's mother was concentrating on improving her English language.

For Serena, like all other Chinese speaking participants, the label "Chinese" refers to the Mandarin form of the language. All Chinese speaking trainees indicated a proficiency in either Hokkien or Cantonese dialects, but referred to the language of the home as Mandarin or by the general term, Chinese.

From the Table 4.1 it is also noted that none of the participants used a second or third language, apart from Chinese dialects, in the home. However, several of the participants had what they described as a "working" or "communicative" knowledge of languages other than English.

Table 4.1
Tabular synopsis of case report organisation, trainee teaching specialisation and mother tongue language

Participants	Trainee Language Teaching Specialist	Language Spoken at Home
Delaina	English (Dip Ed)	Malay & English
Normah	Malay (Dip Ed)	Malay & English
Norlieza	Malay (Dip Ed)	Malay
Ernie	Malay (Dip Ed)	Malay
Faizah	English (Dip Ed)	Malay
Shuh Yi	Chinese (Dip Ed)	Chinese
Teow	Chinese (Dip Ed)	Chinese & Dialect
Connie	Chinese (Dip Ed)	Chinese & English
Regina	Tamil (Dip Ed)	Tamil & English
Vimala	Tamil (Dip Ed)	Tamil
Bucktha	Tamil (Dip Ed)	Tamil & English
Serena	English (Dip Ed)	English & Chinese

4.4 Trainee case study: Delaina

Date of Birth: 18/11/72

Race: Ceylonese/Malay

Teaching Course: Diploma in Education Primary (English Specialisation)

Born in Singapore, Delaina is the second of four children. Both parents finished their schooling at Secondary 4 having completed their "O" Level examinations. Her father is employed as a Marine Assistant and her mother is at home full time.

Delaina was educated at a neighbourhood school in Keppel before proceeding to a mission based secondary where she completed her "O" Level examinations in 1988. These results allowed Delaina to progress on and complete her "A" Level examinations at Junior College.*

Both Malay and English language are spoken in the home. The Malay language is viewed as the mother tongue and is used exclusively in family discussions. English is spoken by the siblings but rarely by the parents, although both have what Delaina describes as "functional competence". That is, both parents can read, write and speak English however they prefer to use their mother tongue language within the family to maintain links with their cultural heritage. As a family they are "modern Muslims," that is, the parents allow their children some "liberties" in regard to dress, speech and social role. Delaina's parents encourage their children to share their views and to seek occupations in which they, the children, feel they will be most happy and successful. This the parents accept may well mean the possibility of their children living and studying in other countries.

* Junior Colleges provide students with a Ministry of Education funded and directed two year program of study culminating in A Level examinations. Pre-University Centres provide an extended 3 year program of study leading to the A Level examinations.

Language learning biography

Delaina believes that language learning begins in the "pre-natal" period. Using reading as an example, she states "children can learn to read much faster if their mother and father would be selfless enough to read for their foetus". The mother is seen as playing the central role in language learning. She provides the models of reading and speech that the child can imitate. Delaina states that "it is the mother's role to teach her children to use language."

Delaina notes differences in the way reading and writing are taught and learned. Formal teachers are seen to be responsible for providing models of language such as "sentence rich vocabulary" in their classrooms. These models "help each child imitate good sentence structure in his speech and help him to understand the flow of reading". Learning to write, from Delaina's experience, is seen to follow a part to whole approach. That is, the "basics of writing instruction" begins with "writing letters A-Z, then individual words. It is then that the teacher can begin to start teaching them to write sentences".

Repertory grid analysis with written recounts of construct contexts of construing

Delaina's completed grid Figure 4.2 shows four highly and similarly rated construct cluster groups. In the first cluster, the constructs *treats all fairly* and *reacts and responds to individual needs* as opposed to *biased toward individuals* and *provides information whether needed or not* are most similar. Delaina in this cluster grouping places a great deal of emphasis on the showing of "favouritism" and the provision of "praise" and "advice". Her written recounts describe language teachers who "praise a student regardless of popularity, when a good deed is performed." The negative role model was viewed as "openly praising the pupils she liked, even on their personal matters". She was also seen "praising favourite pupils' work done before

looking at in detail" and "not giving a chance to students [the teacher] perceived as poor."

In respect to reacting and responding to individual needs, Delaina recounts situations where the pupil's needs or "abilities" are taken into account. She emphasises the ability of the language teacher to "say the right thing at the right time" whilst "looking at the situation from the pupil's point of view." The negative model "fails to notice how the language teacher's nagging can affect children in a bad way."

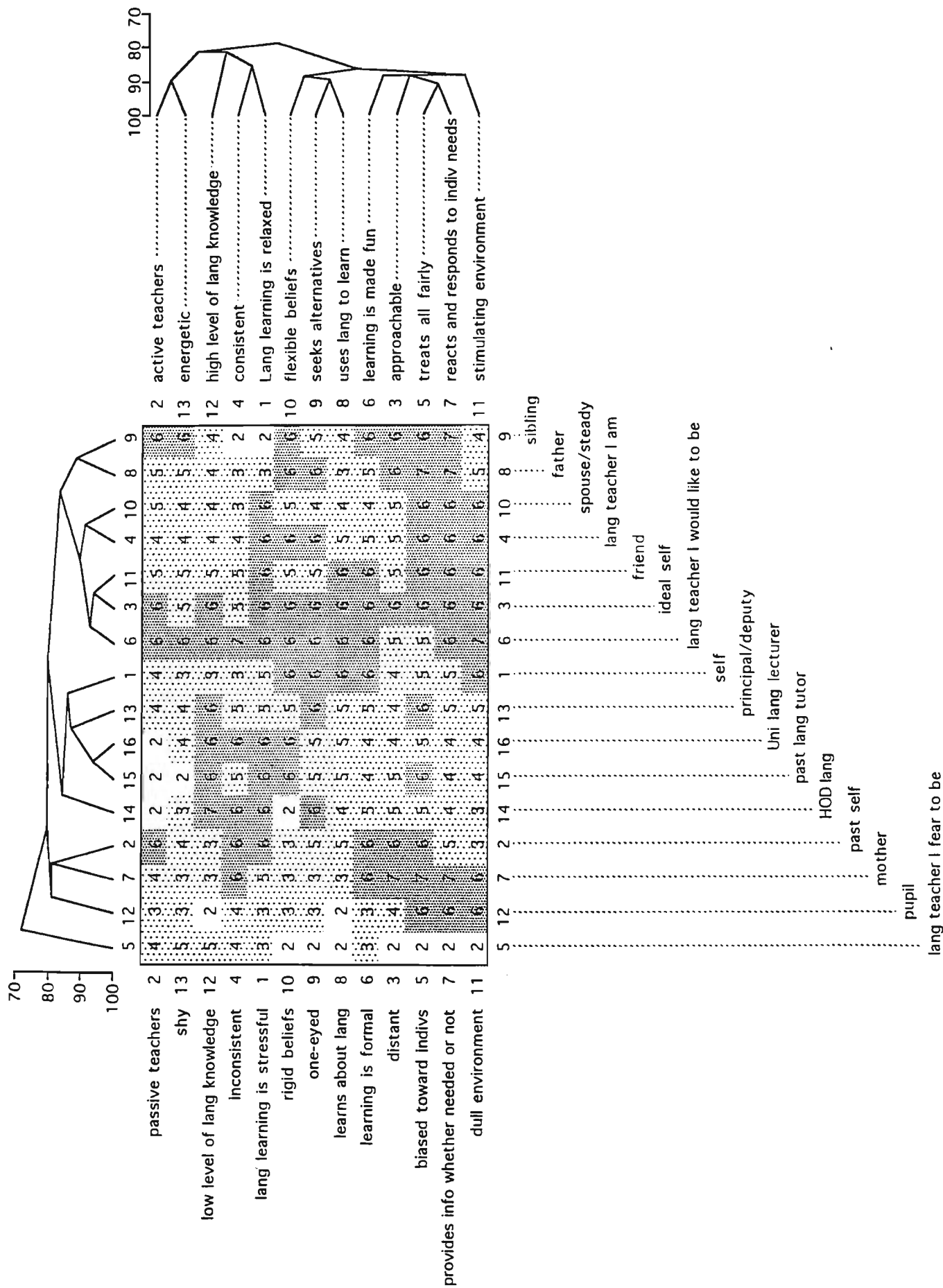
Closely linked to the first cluster group are *approachable, learning is made fun and stimulating environment* as opposed to *distant, learning is formal and dull environment*. This cluster of constructs is associated most closely with the elements *sibling, father, mother* and consistently with *spouse/steady, language teacher I am, friend, ideal self* and *language teacher I would like to be*. The construct *approachable* is defined by Delaina as "having the look of being understanding and empathetic." She recounts:

Melanie [*language teacher I would like to be*] teaches and jokes during her lesson whilst conveying important messages to her students. Her rapport and the way she communicates with her students instils a trust and admiration in the students for her.

"Fun" in learning is achieved by providing "real life experiences" and by allowing "play" in the classroom environment. For her, a language teacher should:

Not judging [sic] whether a student has learned, by just watching how he stares at a book or by the tons of work he does. All work and no play makes a dull boy. Fun [for the language teacher] involves looking at how well he does his work, whether he is enjoying it, and why, as well as looking at his errors.

Figure 4.2 FOCUS repertory grid: Delaina



Formal learning occurs when a language teacher takes learning very "seriously." In her view this implies the teacher has a "seeing is believing attitude. ...As long as they see people stressed and putting full effort into a certain job, then hard work has been put in and language learning achieved." This view Delaina believes leads to the creation of a dull learning environment. This type of teacher "doesn't see the beauty of life and language. ...He doesn't look at things in teaching as exciting and stimulating ...he will be indifferent to it [teaching and content]."

In the second construct cluster *uses language to learn, seeks alternatives and flexible beliefs* are opposed to *learn about language, one eyed and rigid beliefs*. These constructs are rated most closely to the elements *ideal self, language teacher I would like to be* and *self*. Through using language to learn we are able "to talk our way through something" and "learn from the reactions of people." In so doing, Delaina believes "we learn how to go about using language to obtain what we want." The opposing view is to focus on "learning how to speak for eg. [sic] by focusing on the grammar etc. not fluent usage."

Flexibility of beliefs refers to the ability of the individual "to accept any new ideas that make sense" as opposed to not being able "to be moved by whatever reason, proofs or ideas given...." Likewise the teacher who seeks alternatives will "look at things in different perspectives and believes and "practices that there is no one right way of looking at things."

The third cluster has the constructs *language learning is relaxed*, that is "stress free and playful" and *consistent* —someone who "works to a routine," linked with *high level of language knowledge* opposed to *language learning is stressful, inconsistent* and *low level of language knowledge*. This group is the most highly rated with the *language teacher I would like to be, university*

lecturer and *HOD language*. Delaina emphasises in her recounts and construct descriptions that she has "simply acquired language" and "does not know the rules of language," and that the ideal language teacher will be "very knowledgeable on language structure and the basics of language itself."

The fourth cluster shows the constructs *energetic* and *active teachers* opposed to *shy* and *passive teachers*. This construct cluster is associated with *language teacher I would like to be* and *sibling*. *Energetic* and *active* language teachers are "always doing things, very active, curious, ever ready to help and assist. They teach with 'rigour' and provide many activities, [which] incorporate real life examples at appropriate times."

Overall, the view of language teaching and learning for Delaina focuses on the importance of the individual and a teaching approach which is flexible and consistent. The characteristics include an energetic teacher who has a good grasp of the language, who conveys their teaching matter through a range of alternative methods and who makes language learning relevant and enjoyable.

The ratings indicate that most of the elements include a high degree of most of the constructs with the exception of the *language teacher I fear to be* who provides the opposing or negative role model. The *language teacher I would like to be* is the element rated most positively and which, together with the *ideal self*, *language teacher I am*, *spouse/steady*, *father* and *mother*, provide the foundation models of language teaching and learning ideology.

Metaphor analysis

The language teacher is like a gardener who tends his young seedlings, providing the care and attention required to ensure the growth of each plant.

The grounding of Delaina's metaphor indicates the importance she places on the focus and development of individuals. This fundamental grounding is linked most strongly in both her biography and repertory grid to her parents and the influence of immersive models of learning. The form of the metaphor also links to this individualisation through a structural picture of garden cultivation which results in independent growth.

There exists very strong construct correspondences in the concept of the language teacher's role and the metaphorical use of the gardener concept. These correspondences include the cultivation of each learner (individualised and knowledgeable approach); the hands on approach (active and energetic teachers); the fertility and need for nutrition (the need to relate teaching and learning to real life experiences; to seek alternatives should the need arise); and the importance of climate (stimulating, consistent environment).

Finally, the language teacher as a gardener implies that the teacher's mind is consumed with cultivating the minds of her pupils. The connotative meanings of this metaphor are illuminated through the implied meanings derived from Delaina's biographical account of language learning i.e., the notion that to improve or foster the mind requires an immersion in and succinct models from which the learner can draw. Delaina has a belief that language learning results from both an imitation of, and an immersion in language. It is this preparation which facilitates growth —the bringing of culture to that individual.

A. Language teaching and learning: Ideological foundations

Analysis of Delaina's grid indicates that as a language teacher, she perceives herself to be more like the language teacher she would like to be than the language teacher feared to be. Areas where she sees herself as different from the most liked teacher are in terms of consistency, level of knowledge and energy level of teaching. Likewise Delaina sees herself in follow-up grid discussions as lacking the "fine" practical (pedagogical) knowledge of how to make language learning fun and yet maintain functionality and communicativeness to the real world of language use. Delaina sees the elements *ideal self* and *friend* most closely linked to the language teacher she would like to be. Linked to this cluster, but not rated as highly is the element *father*.

Delaina as a language teacher and her father share a similarity in their treating of others fairly and their reactions to others. Both elements are viewed as flexible and individuals who actively seek alternatives to problems and situations. In respect to language teaching and learning, Delaina believes she is much more relaxed and knowledgeable about ways of using language to learn, than her father.

Delaina's mother also shares a similarity of construing with her (as a language teacher) in the fair treatment of individuals and the perceived need to provide a stimulating learning environment. However her mother is more prone to make language learning fun and display greater consistency in her approach. While Delaina and her father are viewed as more rigid in their beliefs and approach to learning as a group, they share similarity in energy level and level of language knowledge.

As a language teacher, Delaina shares several characteristics with the teacher she fears to be, namely in the energy and activity levels of her teaching approach, the level of language knowledge, degree of shyness, and the consistency with which they approach learning tasks and learners. However, there are some areas where she sees herself as markedly different from the feared teacher. These include the perceived nature of the learning environment i.e., the support offered, the relaxed nature of learning, the enjoyment it affords and the stimulation it offers the learner. Delaina also sees herself as more focused on the functional uses of language and more flexible in her teaching approach —flexible in both her beliefs and in the methods she uses to teach. Delaina sees equality in the treatment of individuals as very important, whereas the feared language teacher is seen to be biased toward certain individuals, thus she sees the need to react and respond to individual needs as opposed to the provision of content, whether the pupil requires it or not.

From Figure 4.2, together with the construct descriptions and biography of learning, the following categorical descriptions of Delaina's current view of language teaching and learning ideology are derived.

Conditions of language learning

Language is learned best in a stimulating environment that is geared towards catering for the needs of individual students. This environment is one in which language learning takes place in an "enjoyable" and "fun" atmosphere and where play is incorporated into language lessons. A stimulating environment includes teaching and activities which are relevant to real life and related to the individual needs of the children, who it is believed, learn language best in an environment which is consistent and which has well established "routines."

Teacher characteristics

The ideal language teacher possess the ability to treat all children fairly and to make the language learning experience enjoyable and relevant. This includes having the ability to "say the right thing at the right time" in order to facilitate pupil understanding. The teacher must also be flexible in his or her beliefs. That is, the language teacher must posses the skill of listening to pupils and "if it is reasonable and does make sense, accept the idea." In so doing the teacher becomes more "approachable" and "instils a trust and admiration for her."

Language teaching pedagogy

The preferred pedagogical approach is one in which language is used functionally and through a variety of alternative methods. The language teacher models language from which children are able to learn from, and imitate. The approaches to teaching oral and written language differ. Speaking and reading are learned through modelling and imitation whereas writing follows a part to whole approach i.e., single letters comes first, followed by words and then sentences.

B. The influence of individuals from educative learning cultures

At this point in time Delaina shares greater similarity of personal attributes with that of her parents as opposed to the language teacher she would most like to be. This is most notable in the fair treatment of individuals and their shared ability to "say the right thing at the right time" (react and respond to individual needs). Other individuals from more formal educative cultures such as the *principal/deputy*, *past language tutor* and *HOD* (Head of Department –Language) are also rated much lower on their ability to react and respond to individual needs, but the *principal/deputy* and *past language tutor* share with her parents the ability to *treat individuals fairly*. In respect to the influence of

individuals from formal and informal learning cultures it would seem that there is no obvious leaning toward personal characteristics of either the home or school, apart from the negative role model presented by the language teacher feared to be.

Delaina's current view of herself as a language teacher displays higher correlation toward her parents than to the language teacher she would like to be. This association is most apparent in her perceived level of language knowledge and in the knowledge she has of the management approaches needed in order to become a more active and energetic language teacher. She does however feel more confident than her father or mother in her perceived ability to use language as a means "to obtain what she wants." Few of Delaina's elicited constructs relate specifically to language teaching pedagogy. This became even more apparent when construct definitions were derived from the construct contexts of construing data.

4.5 Trainee Case Study: Normah

Date of Birth: 14/5/70

Race: Malay

Teaching Course: Diploma in Education (Malay Specialisation)

Born in Singapore, Normah is the fifth of six children. Her mother was mainly home educated in a Malay kampong (village) and later in a kampong school. Her father left school at Secondary 3, without completing his "O" Level examinations. Her father is employed as an Acid-Fitter and her mother is at home full time.

Educated at a Tampines neighbourhood school, Normah continued on to secondary where she completed her "O" Level examinations. These results allowed her to progress and complete the "A" Level examinations at Junior College. Prior to applying for teacher education, Normah worked in sales and did some relief teaching.¹

Malay and English language are spoken in the home, however Malay is used in family discussions which involve her parents. Normah's parents are "very strict" about the use of English in the home, therefore it is spoken only on "rare occasions." Neither parent speaks English, although Normah describes instances when both show comprehension of it. Normah describes her family as "non fundamentalist" Muslims and all the children have been encouraged to seek occupations in which they will be most happy. Normah's siblings are employed in a variety of occupations which include a Captain in the Army, a teacher, a store supervisor and a flight steward. Whilst her parents are "reasonably broad minded," the whole family strictly practise the Muslim faith.

¹ In Singapore relief teachers require no formal qualifications. For many students, their interest in teaching springs from relief teaching experiences.

Language learning biography

From her experience the mother has the "primary" or central role in the teaching of language. Through "talking with" and "talking to" the child, and the "child [sic] innate capacity to absorb the words being taught to them," the child begins to learn to talk. It is "surrounding of the child in oral language" and what Normah describes as "the frequency factor" which allows the "sounds of the words and their meaning to register in the child's mind. After the child has been familiarised with the words/phrases, she/he will produce them as output." Learning to read "comes after the child has acquired speech. ...it is more a process in making the child associate the meaning(s) he has learnt [sic] than to only understand the particular alphabets [graphic cues] and how they are arranged [phonic cues] in the words."

Learning to write, from Normah's experience, would be "impossible for a child if he does not recognise the alphabets contained in a word and [sic] or possess the knowledge pronouncing [sic] the word." The processes of learning to read and write are very similar and from Normah's perspective and experience, very closely associated. "Writing would be meaningless if there were no comprehension."

Repertory grid analysis with written recounts of construct contexts of construing

Normah's completed grid shows three highly rated construct cluster groups. The commonality of the first group ranges from 91%–89%. Figure 4.3 shows that the constructs *friendly* and *patient* contrasting with *unapproachable* and *intolerant* as most similar. According to Normah most language teachers who are friendly are also "approachable" and "easy to talk to." For example, this type of teacher "always smiles, even when meeting them [the pupils] outside the class. In class... they [the teacher] never embarrass a pupil in front of the class as a form of punishment." Normah, citing an unapproachable teacher

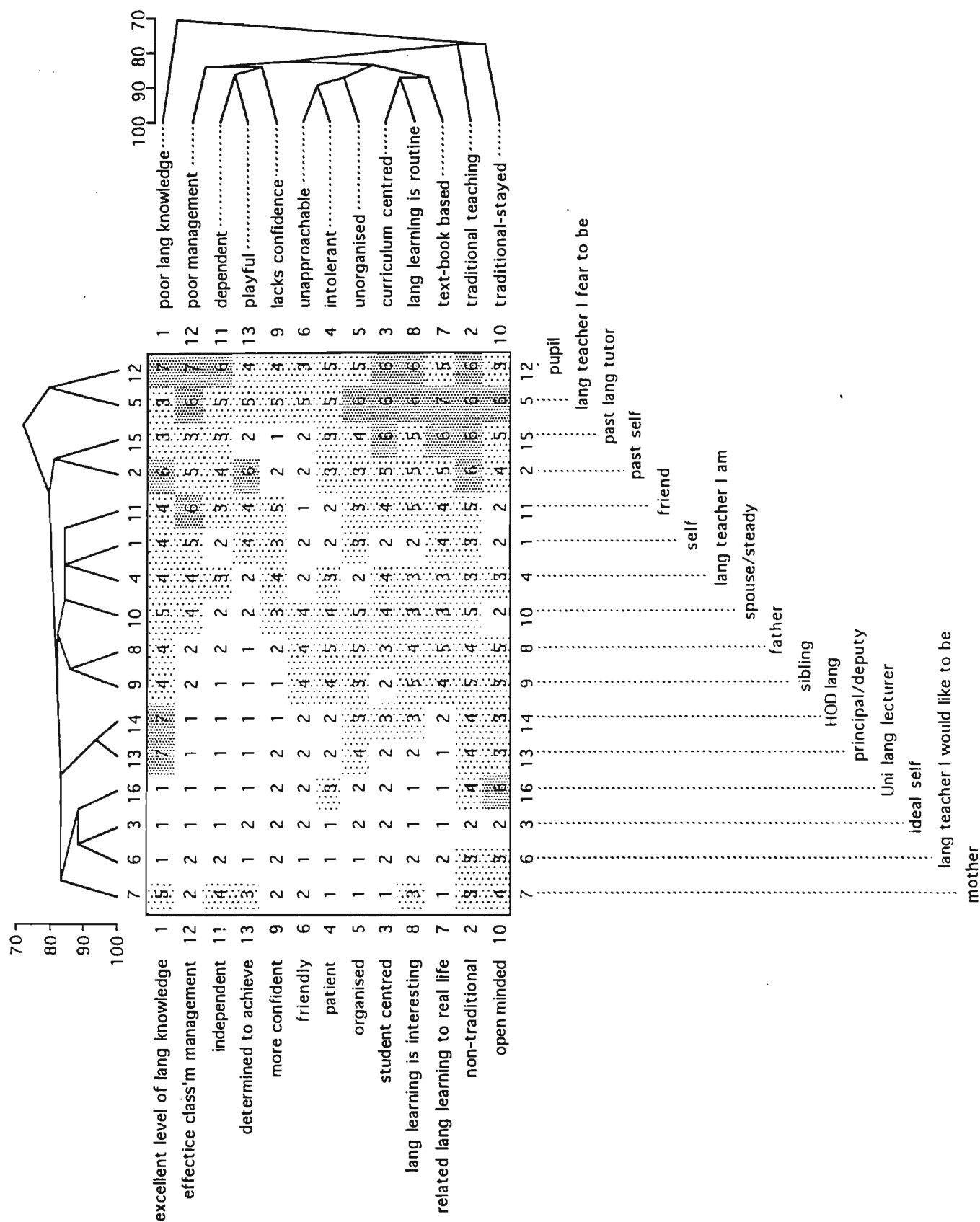
"Mrs Lau" states that "she always gives stern looks" so that "pupils will not break the rules ...this works for her and helps in controlling the class ...Most of the pupils are so quiet and tense when she [Mrs Lau] is in the class." Closely linked to this cluster is *organised* as opposed to *unorganised*. The organised language teacher "knows where he keeps things... never loses his student books, etc." These aspects of experience are most highly rated and associated with the elements *mother, language teacher I would like to be, ideal self, principal, HOD language* and *friend*.

A second cluster showing a commonality of 87%–88% is *student centred* and *language learning is interesting* as opposed to *curriculum centred* and *language learning is routine*. Normah describes student centred to be:

Student centred teaching is when pupils are encouraged to give their views. For example, they are encouraged to ask questions or give their views on certain topics. The teacher would not mind if at times certain topics discussed is [sic] outside the syllabus as long as it is in one way or another, will benefit the pupils.

What makes language learning interesting from Normah's experience is the "exploration of language and situations where it is used." She cites an example of "deeper learning" which resulted from word study activities. "As I began to learn about some words that actually existed and that could be used as replacements for some English words that I often use, I began getting more interested in the language."

Figure 4.3 FOCUS repertory grid: Normah



A closely linked construct, also showing a commonality of 87%, is *relating language learning to real life* which contrasts with *text book based*. These aspects of experience are most highly rated and associated with the elements *mother, language teacher I would like to be, ideal self* and *principal*. Normah projects that:

In the ideal language classroom, in order to make my lessons more interesting and relevant, I would try to relate real life experiences to the topic being taught. In this way I would hope to arouse the interest of my pupils. That's the way which has worked best for my interest and learning, not so text based practice.

The ratings in Figure 4.3 shows *independent, determined to achieve* and *more confident* in the third cluster to be most functionally similar, and opposed to *dependent, playful* and *lacks confidence*. The personal characteristic of independence means that the language teacher is able to "depend on" herself for many things whilst accepting the need to "ask for help from someone if it be really needed." A "single mindedness" and "hardworking nature" is also characteristic of teaching and learning, and which Normah believes brings about a "well educated" person who has the confidence "to talk and thus socialise better."

A closely linked construct to this cluster is *poor management* in contrast to *effective classroom management*. This cluster is associated with the elements *language teacher I would like to be, ideal self, principal, HOD language, sibling* and *father*. Management, as defined by Normah, refers to the language teacher's ability to "control her classes very well." This ensures that lessons can be "carried out without many interruptions." Poor management results when "the language teacher is too lenient on his pupils."

Three constructs stand apart from the others. The first is *traditional teaching – non-traditional*, which is associated with the elements *pupil*, *language teacher I fear to be*, *past language teacher* and *past self*. The second is *traditional/stayed – open minded* which rates closely to the *language teacher I fear to be* and *university lecturer*. These two constructs share commonality of rating with most of the elements, the exception being *self*, *friend* and *the ideal self*.

Traditional teaching from Normah's experience is "when the teacher is always talking and the children just listen. There is not much [sic] participation or activities which involve the pupils, it is mainly a chalk and talk method." This method "reminds me [Normah] of my time in primary school." The alternative approach embraces the notion of student involvement through "a discussion between teacher and pupils." Normah illustrates this approach by referring to the language teacher she would like to be and an activity where "he [the teacher] would ask his students to talk into a microphone so as to build their confidence." She notes how the teacher listened to students and always "encouraged them in their efforts".

Normah's definition of *open minded* is "not being too conservative" and she clearly positions herself i.e., "I might be open-minded but, neither am I too liberal." Normah's elaboration includes an example of traditional thinking about the role of women. She elaborates with the following example:

Being an open minded person, I am able to take things openly. For me as long as a woman is doing a decent job (any kind of job) maybe even being an engineer or a pilot, which are normally thought of in the manly [sic] domain, this is all right.

A more traditional point of view being:

He denies the fact that it is all right for women to do such jobs but for him [sic] it is best for women to be, for example, a teacher. For me this is a traditional view because in the olden days, if one is a teacher, one is always treated with full respect and so on.

In review discussions Normah highlighted that these types of traditional views are common to "Malay educated people." Normah stated clearly that she views herself as "English educated" and her parents as "non-traditional."

The third construct, *poor language knowledge – excellent level of language knowledge* shares the highest rating with *pupil, HOD language* and *principal/deputy*. Normah regards herself as "more proficient in English than in Malay" and although she is training to be a Malay teacher "I have a lot to learn." By this she is referring not to "the spoken ability" but to a deeper knowledge of the "grammatical rules." The broad range of ratings in Figure 4.3 for this construct relates to the level of Malay language knowledge. Many of the elements share a mid or low rating in their level of Malay language knowledge, as defined by Normah.

Overall experience of language teaching and learning for Normah focuses on rating constructs highly against a negative role model, i.e., the language teacher she feared to be. The positive experiences exemplify a view of language teaching and learning where teacher's possess the personal characteristics of patience, friendliness and confidence. The language teacher is one who is confident and determined to achieve. Her teaching approach is student centred and related to real world experiences. This makes the learning experience more relevant and interesting. The ideal language

teacher is organised and has effective classroom management skills in addition to possessing an excellent level of language knowledge.

Metaphor analysis

A language teacher is a mother who feeds students with correct pronunciations... as these are the basis of other skills. The language teacher is like the minerals in the soil, supplying the nutrients that nourish the plants (students).

Normah's metaphor focuses on the role of the language teacher and when examined together with the biographical and construct data reveal a window on her developing ideology of language learning. The grounding of Normah's metaphor indicates the importance she places on the provision of learning conditions and input which facilitate the development of individuals. The structural and sensory picture derived from the metaphoric form is one of a nurturing mother figure providing physical, cognitive and socio-emotional support. This support takes the form of activities and language teaching which nourishes individual students and results in independent growth.

Strong construct correspondences occur within the form of the metaphor. These include: the nourishment of individuals (student centred and knowledgeable approach); the mother figure (patient, friendly, open-minded, confident, an effective manager who is well organised); the feeding and provision of nutrients (the relating of language learning to real life); and life sustaining support (determined to achieve - always keeping an open mind); and the importance of feeding environment (ability to use non traditional approaches should the need arise).

Normah's metaphor contains both physical and interpersonal connotative meanings which are further enhanced by those presented in the biographical

recount, specifically, the implication that the teacher's role is to feed or nourish. The metaphor expresses the ideal that dedicated teachers will spend their energies in the provision of knowledge and wisdom that will sustain pupil growth. Secondly, the metaphor implies that pupils will feed off or "absorb" the teacher's offerings. The second aspect also implies an acceptance that the nutrients being offered are acceptable or required and if they are not, then the tastes or needs of the individual will be met by another means.

A. Language teaching and learning: Ideological foundations

From Figure 4.3, Normah's view of herself as a language teacher is more closely associated with the language teacher she would like to be than with the language teacher feared to be. The commonality of construct ratings indicate that at this point in time Normah is developing toward a similar ideological position as the language teacher she would like to be. She shares with the most liked teacher a similarity of rating in the areas of traditional teaching, organisational abilities, the level of conservative or liberal thinking brought to the classroom (non-traditional) and, a "hardworking and serious" approach to language teaching.

Normah currently shares with the language teacher feared to be, a mid-point positioning in construct ratings of Malay language knowledge, confidence, independence and patience. Given Normah's relating of confidence to levels of education and the ability to "talk and socialise better," a much clearer picture of Normah begins to develop. At this point in time Normah is still very much the learner in her perceived education. Because she equates educative knowledge with the ability to teach, by gaining a higher degree of Malay language knowledge she feels her confidence level will rise. This in turn, will result in a language teacher who is independent of those more knowledgeable others around her and thus, in respect to language teaching ability, Normah

will be "more tolerant and understanding." To illustrate intolerance Normah defends the negative model by stating "that Cheng [Malay teaching role model] is not the opposite of Abbas [positive role] ...but rather he is pressured to act more strictly because of his position. ...he is not able to understand what is happening with his pupils' language and this effects their behaviour."

Normah closely associates the elements of the *ideal self* and the *language teacher she would like to be*. Linked to the element cluster are her *university language lecturer* and *mother*. Normah as a language teacher and her mother share a similarity of construct rating in the areas of friendliness, organisation and in the ability to make learning relevant and interesting using non traditional teaching approaches. Normah however, views her mother to be a more capable manager of learning who therefore has a greater propensity to cater for student centred learning. The only area where Normah rates herself as a language teacher higher than her mother is in her determination, which is an aspect of commonality which she shares with her father.

Whereas Normah's ideal positioning is toward that of her mother and the language teacher she would like to be, her current positioning is more closely associated with her father. They share similarities in ability and thinking in the areas of: Malay language knowledge; patience; their focus on student centred learning; the importance of making learning interesting and related to real life; open mindedness; and the use of non-traditional approaches to life and teaching. Normah however rates herself as better organised, more friendly and approachable than her father.

From Figure 4.3, together with contextual recounts of constructs and biographical data, the categorical descriptions of Normah's current view of language teaching and learning become evident. These categories include:

conditions that facilitate language learning; language teacher skills; and language teaching pedagogy.

Conditions of language learning

Normah believes that language learning should occur in an "organised" environment where the children are "surrounded in language". The teacher is responsible in such an environment for "talking to" and "with the children". Through such involvement the students are provided examples of language in use, "as it is used in real life". Children learn through the "frequency of the examples" and the "relevancy" of them. These teacher examples allow "language sounds and meaning to register" in the [each] child's mind. Another condition, derived from Normah's data, is that once "familiarised with aspects of language" they (the children) should be free to "produce" them. The teacher, like a "mother", is responsible not only for supporting the children's efforts but for nourishing and extending their development. This is achieved by "listening to the children", by being "friendly and approachable". The language teacher, like a mother, listens to what the children are saying and provides the necessary responses and follow-up.

Teacher characteristics

The ideal language teacher has the ability to be patient or "tolerant and understanding" of her pupil's needs. She is "open minded," allowing them some liberties and "encourages them to make decisions and choices for themselves." The ideal language teacher is confident, "not shy of her ability" and "independent." That is, "I [Normah as a language teacher and ideal self] can be depended on to do many things. ...and will ask for help from someone else if I really need it." The ideal language teacher is "determined to achieve" (hardworking and serious about their work) and is an "effective classroom manager" who has the ability to conduct her language lessons "without much

[sic] interruption." The teacher does this without being "too lenient" with her children. This teacher also has an excellent knowledge of the Malay language and seeks non traditional approaches to teaching it.

Language teaching pedagogy

The biography and metaphor provide insights into Normah's perspective of Malay language teaching pedagogy. The approach is one in which the lessons are "interesting", there is a depth of language study, and yet there is always a close relationship to real life. That is, it is an approach that goes beyond the traditional "chalk and talk" and seeks to "involve the children in discussions and activities."

Normah views the teaching of reading and writing as following that of spoken language. Her view is akin to a cognitive or psycholinguistic approach to reading and writing instruction. From her biographical recount Normah alludes to a strong reading, writing and spoken language connection. She sees not only the logical connection in the acquisition process, but also the figurative relationship of meaning to language use. Language is an encoding and decoding of meaning. This learning process, given the metaphoric use of "mother" and conditions of learning derived from the data, resembles a socio-functional context of language use.

B. The influence of individuals from educative learning cultures

Formal educative role models, together with the mother and father, share the highest commonality and positioning closest to the positive construct pole.

Normah as a language teacher, at this point in time, associates a greater similarity of construing with that of her parents than with the teacher she would like to be. Collated data would suggest that Normah, in identifying the language teacher she would like to be is looking to a person who espouses

similar ideological and personal characteristics to those "absorbed" from informal education in the home. The language teacher she would like to be contains attributes associated with one or both parents, i.e., is determined to achieve and independent, as is her father. The teacher is organised, student centred, relates language learning to real life, is patient and friendly, uses non traditional teaching methods and is open minded, as is her mother. Both the parents and this teacher have a high degree of commonality in their confidence and ability to manage and control individuals.

Normah's constructs and learning biography indicate little about specific language teaching pedagogy apart from the ability to relate language learning to real life and to make it interesting. The only reference is in her contextual recount and definition of the construct *non traditional* where she refers to the use of a microphone and the recording of oral language during language lessons. The language teacher she would like to be has a much higher level of language knowledge than either parent or herself, as a language teacher. She views however the *ideal self* as having such a knowledge of Malay language.

4.6 Trainee case study: Norlieza

Date of Birth: 15/9/70

Race: Malay

Teaching Course: Diploma in Education (Malay Specialisation)

Born in Singapore, Norlieza is the fourth of five children. Her mother was educated in an Arab school and completed her education at Secondary 3. Her father completed his schooling at Secondary 4 after completing his "O" Level examinations. Both parents were born in Singapore. Her father is employed as a Technician and her mother is at home full time. Both parents are fluent Malay and English users, that is "they can communicate without any problems in reading, writing and speaking."

Educated at a neighbourhood school in Kaki Bukit, Norlieza continued on to secondary school where she completed her "O" Level examinations, in 1986. These results allowed her to progress and complete the "A" Level examinations at an Ang Mo Kio neighbourhood pre-university centre. Prior to applying for teacher education Norlieza worked full time as a bank clerk.

Malay and English language are spoken in the home with family discussions held in their mother tongue, Malay language. The siblings more than the parents, speak English in the home. Norlieza describes her family as "open and involved" in both their approach to the Muslim faith and in their approach to learning. The children have been encouraged from "the earliest times" to discuss problems and issues no matter how personal. Norlieza draws "great strength from the family." Her siblings are employed in a variety of occupations which include: a child care teacher, artist and display artist. The youngest sibling remains a student and is working toward completing her "O" Level examinations in 1994.

Language learning biography

Norlieza's biography focuses on the "fundamentals of learning development", those being "reading, writing and oral language." The breakdown of language into components had "never occurred" to her before entering formal language teacher training and undertaking to participate in this research study. "From the many lessons that I have participated in I realise now that deficiency in any of these three skills will devoid the children of effective learning - cognitively and affectively." Norlieza stresses that:

Being asked to think about how I learned or how I think others learn language has made me realise that if a child cannot read, it is not likely that he or she is able to write. And [sic] in order to improve his or her skills in these aspects of language, he or she has got to ask questions, thus the oral skill.

Teaching the three aspects of language involves the language teacher in being "creative and this [creativity] must coincide with the aims of the subject or syllabus. However the teacher should participate together with the activities that she has planned." Norlieza believes that "an active language teacher, would be the most effective guider for the children."

Language learning begins with "the spoken and then follows reading and then writing." However, all three must involve each other because without one the child will not be as affective in their learning and language usage [sic]."

Repertory grid analysis with written recounts of construct contexts of construing

Norlieza's completed grid, Figure 4.4 shows three highly rated construct cluster groups with the commonality of the first and largest cluster ranging from 91%–87%. The constructs *teaches using real life experiences* and *uses a variety of language types* are opposed to *dull teaching* and *focuses on written*

language. These constructs are most highly rated at the positive pole with the *language teacher I would like to be*, *ideal self*, *self*, *language teacher I am* and *HOD language*. Norlieza relates language teaching and the use of real life experiences closest to the *language teacher most liked to be*. Likewise the language teacher most feared to be is linked closely with the construct *dull teaching*. This, Norlieza defines as "someone [a language teacher] who has limited variety in teaching methods." She elaborates this construct in the following example:

Mrs Goh would say 'all right, turn to pages..., read lines... to ... now do the following exercises. I'll be here if you need help...' And [sic] the work keeps piling and little help is ever received.

This type of language teacher shows little interest in "further explanations or activities which could stimulate better understanding." In fact, in a negative construct description (focuses on written language) of the language teacher feared to be Norlieza states:

She would lay out some 'theories, activities or rules' and you would have to be a real good listener because if you miss a sentence, you would not be able to understand the whole lesson. The next thing you know she will give exercises and there will always be that 'remember your exams are just around the corner...' so there is always a high degree of pressure around.

Norlieza defines *teaching using real life experiences* as "always comparing [what is being studied] with something or someone that makes easier or clearer our comprehension." Her validating example:

Mr Osman would lay out [explain and define] a theory or rule and then he would say 'take yourself/myself for example...' and he would go on and relate the rule to our situation or his real life experiences; hence bettering our understanding.

The ideal language teacher "uses a variety of tasks and activities" and differs his or her "approach to induction for different topics." For example, certain composition [writing] topics would be started off with a brief debating session, or discussion forum and so on."

Closely associated constructs in this cluster are *progressive*, *knows how to use language*, *explores language and its uses*, *creative in approach* and *focused on language knowledge*. The corresponding constructs more closely associated with the negative pole of experience are *stagnant*, *poor language ability*, *uses basic language*, *lacks imagination* and *unfocused*. Without exception the elements *language teacher I fear to be* and *past language tutor* receive the highest rating closest to the negative construct pole, whereas more positive ratings are allocated to the *language teacher I would like to be*. Other positive elements rated highly in this cluster are the *HOD language*, *self* and *ideal self*.

Progressive language teachers encourage their children "through their teaching activities to learn more about the language and to upgrade their language knowledge ...I still bear in mind a teacher once told me that if you learn and practice a new word a day, you would have 365 new words in a year." If the teacher and pupil *know how to use language* they "are able to use language correctly, ...convey the right message." Stagnant language teachers are always "sticking to the syllabus and to learning the same thing over and over again." Those with *poor language ability* are "not bothered and just say what comes across their mind, ...not bothered about the tenses, vocab. expression etc."

"Not bothering to expand his field of knowledge is also characteristic of one who *uses basic language* and, as indicated in Figure 4.4, Norlieza's *father*

and *spouse/steady* fall into this category. Those who *explore language and its uses* are intent on "finding out more about language and putting it [the knowledge] to use."

A characteristic construct of the ideal language educator is one who is *creative in approach*. That is, the teacher is "able to motivate [children] through a variety of language learning methods. ...I would try out the various methods and experiments in a language activity until I find the best way to get the message across. Of course the best is always yet to come." A teacher who *lacks imagination* uses "similar and familiar methods" all the time. Norlieza elaborates:

Although Mrs Tang had been able to instil the right environment for learning, I feel she needs to try out new methods just to surprise the children, to get her message across another way. Its like you [the pupils] know what she's going to do next.

Norlieza demonstrates the importance individuals need to place on language learning through her construct *focused on language learning* as opposed to *unfocused*. Positively rated individuals are "interested and prioritise language teaching and learning." Norlieza rates her *past self* lowly in this respect but uses an example of a more current experience to illustrate her *ideal self*:

I would go all out to learn language because you can only master it with hard work. During my "A" Levels at a particular pre-university centre, I had to travel twice a week to another Centre to have my L2 [Malay Language] lessons because my school did not provide these lessons. It was tough but it did not bother me because I was interested.

A second cluster showing a commonality of 87%–90% is *tells how and what to do* and *ordered* in contrast to *encourages free thinking* and *encourages*

experimenting with language. The elements *principal*, *language teacher I fear to be* and *past language tutor* are construed and rated very highly on these constructs but are least likely to be associated with the positive pole of the constructs. Together with the closely linked construct *task oriented*, these constructs form an impression of a "domineering" or *ordered* educator who "never accepts others' opinions." A language teacher with these characteristics is often *task oriented* and is "always trying to complete the syllabus on time regardless of the time of day. In the process, the teacher, consciously or otherwise, creates tension and pressure on the students." The "task oriented teacher does not allow for the individual needs of her students." An example of this type of teacher is provided in the following description which also illustrates a lack of understanding of individual needs and creativity.

Mrs Tang provided us with a log book in which we were supposed to note down our daily experiences related to some language item. There was a student who experienced and therefore wrote about some extraordinary experience. He was stood up and embarrassed in class because Mrs Tang thought the example was non-sensical. That I remember was a blow and very de motivating for him.

The third and smallest construct cluster *language learning is hard work* and *language learning is a chore* are construed very similarly but at the negative pole of the grid. In contrast, the opposing more positively rated constructs are *language learning is made fun* and *displays a love and value of language teaching*. Language learning can be made fun by creating a "conducive environment." In such an environment "the teacher gets involved with the children, she relaxes them by getting them to tell jokes or on occasions simply telling about embarrassing moments. This encourages everyone to get involved and want to come to her class." Making language learning hard work evolves, in Norlieza's experience, from the teacher "mercilessly adding on

work." In such a class there is a "scent of authority in the air." Language teaching involves creating in students a "love and value for language." Using the language teacher she would like to be as an example Norlieza explains:

Mrs Tang is a strict language teacher. An error made in using language is almost a sin. She made me realise that language learning cannot and must not be taken for granted. It needs lots of hard work and interest to really appreciate the meaning of any language.

Keeps to self in contrast to *inquisitive* is a construct that stands apart and is experienced mostly in relation to *past self*, *father* and *ideal self*. Norlieza feels at this time, as in the past, that she "keeps to herself especially during lessons. I would not even ask if I didn't understand." Her mother however is at the positive extreme "she asks many questions which she thinks will help me better understand." Norlieza cites a negative experience of her *principal* who was in her eyes "sadistic because her punishment for unsatisfactory answers was to ask the student to sit at one corner of the class and she would ignore him/her for the rest of the lessons." This type of experience reinforced Norlieza's decision to keep things to herself in class.

Overall, experience of language teaching and learning for Norlieza focuses on rating constructs highly against a negative role model—in this case the language teacher she feared to be. The positive experiences exemplify an approach to language teaching and learning that relates language to real world experiences. This facilitates an exploration of language and its uses, which in turn provides children with the opportunity to practice using it. The ideal language teacher in Norlieza's experience maintains a focus on the importance of language knowledge and infers a teacher who has the ability to make language learning fun. This teacher is creative, uses "various methods" through which to motivate and stimulate pupil learning, encourages student

involvement and designs activities that are "aimed at pupil needs." As such, he or she accepts different opinions and encourages "pupils to widen their knowledge on language by expanding and experiencing it."

Metaphor analysis

Language teaching and learning is creative. Like a dancer who must work with music the steps must flow and be in harmony. And like learning to dance the dancer must learn the basics before creativity can take over.

The grounding of Norlieza's metaphor emphasises the importance she places on the "hard work" required to be successful. The language learning experience for Norlieza, as indicated in her biographical and contexts of construing data has not been an easy one. She missed entry into Junior College because of poor English grades and therefore had to complete her "A" Levels at a pre-university centre. While at the centre she had to travel some distance to undertake her Malay second language classes. The language teacher she would like to be (worked in this centre) displayed a "love and value of language and teaching." This teacher made Norlieza "realise that language learning cannot, and must not, be taken for granted. It needs lots of hard work and interest to really appreciate the meaning of any language."

Hard work and dancing are concepts commonly linked and provide a clear physical picture of the practice and effort required in language learning. Within this form, strong comparisons exist between the metaphoric use of dancing with language teaching and learning. These correspondences include: the "creative" nature of the implied dance (encourages experimenting with language; creative in approach; explores language and its uses); the feedback required from the dance teacher (encourages free thinking-listens to

others' opinions); the enjoyment and rewards offered by the experience (learning is fun-a conducive learning environment); the dynamic nature of learning to dance (progressive-always learning more about language and the and upgrading language use); the importance of basics to the final performance (the fundamentals of learning development, reading, writing and spoken language-deficiency in any of these three skills will devoid children of effective learning); and, "work[ing] with music the steps must flow and be in harmony (allows for individual needs).

Norlieza's metaphor conveys a connotative definition of her experience, both physically and socially. Her metaphor implies the physical hard work required for both language teachers and learners, and the notion that language teachers will be consumed with the ideal of being "focused" on their work and the work of their pupils. That is, they will provide for and be involved in sustaining pupil growth in language ability. Secondly, the metaphor implies the social nature of learning as a place where the individual finds satisfaction. As Norlieza, whilst checking data interpretation commented:

It's not merely having a lesson planned and getting on with your work. Language teaching is much more than that. It's being able to be competent, to be spontaneous and sensitive towards the needs of your pupils, your syllabus, your school and importantly to your culture. The same can be true of our [Malay] dance.

A. Language teaching and learning: Ideological foundations

From Figure 4.4 Norlieza's view of herself as a language teacher is more closely associated with the language teacher she would like to be rather than with the language teacher feared to be. The commonality of construct ratings indicate that at this point in time Norlieza is developing toward a similar ideological position as the language teacher she would like to be. She shares

with the most liked teacher a similarity of rating in the areas: allowing for individual needs of children; and the experimentation with language, that is, the widening of language knowledge through experience. They share similarities in their knowledge and practice of "us[ing] language correctly... to convey the right message." In Norlieza's view they are both progressive, that is, they are "always learning more about the language."

Norlieza rates herself as different from this teacher in the areas of knowing how to make language learning fun and in their levels of creativity i.e., ways of being able to "motivate [learners] through a variety of language learning methods and develop their ability to explore language and its uses."

Norlieza currently shares two constructs with the language teacher she fears to be. These are in the areas of exploring language and its uses and level of inquisitiveness. Both are at a mid-point in the level of personal involvement in language lessons and data indicate that Norlieza at this time would like to ask more questions in order to "make students understand better."

Norlieza is confident in knowledge of language and in her ability to undertake a career as a Malay language teacher. She does view herself as lacking in the finer points of Malay language teaching or pedagogic skills. Given a higher degree of pedagogical content knowledge her confidence level will rise, which in turn will result in a language teacher more like the one she would like to be.

Norlieza closely associates the elements of the *ideal self* and the language teacher she would like to be. Also linked to this element cluster is the *HOD language* to whom she rates herself closer than any other. They share a commonality rating of 90%. Norlieza in a follow-up discussion stated that "Miss Chan put me on the right track in respect to English language learning. She

boosted my confidence." The difference between the *HOD language* and the language teacher she would like to be is in the making of language learning fun. The follow-up clarification interview revealed that "Miss Chan was very firm, not so much joking, and she had to be. I wasn't the best student when we started and I had my "A" Levels to pass." From these associations Norlieza has developed an approach to language teaching which is closely modelled on her personal history, specifically that of teachers involved with her as a "struggling" language student.

From Figure 4.4 together with contextual recounts of constructs and biographical data the categorical descriptions of Norlieza's current view of language teaching and learning become evident. These categories include: conditions that facilitate language learning; the language teacher skills; and language teaching pedagogy.

Conditions of language learning

Language learning should occur in an open environment where the "individual needs" of the children are taken into account in lesson planning. In such an environment children are "encouraged" to "accept other people's opinions although not always agreeing with them." Children are encouraged to try out "their understandings of language" as a way of "learning more about the language and upgrade[ing] language use." The teacher is responsible for providing children with the language "basics" of reading, writing and spoken language. Using this knowledge and with the teacher as a "guide," the children, like creative dancers are encouraged to "explore" and "experiment" with language. This will require the children and the teacher to focus and work hard to "appreciate the meaning of (any) language."

Teacher characteristics

The ideal language teacher has the ability to be "creative" and to be "focused on language knowledge." This requires adopting new methods when necessary and "go[ing] all out to learn language. Inherent in this is the dedication and commitment of the teacher to both the children and to the specific subject. The teacher must be "flexible" in thinking and therefore place the "individual [learner] needs" and interests ahead of the syllabus. This flexibility, in Norlieza's experience, frees the class from related "tension and pressure." The ideal language teacher is "encouraging", but not so "domineering and full of authority" so as to "demotivate the class." A delicate balance is also required in the teacher's ability to ask questions and yet "keep to themselves." By doing this the children are free to ask questions which may help their understanding.

Language teaching pedagogy

The biography and metaphor provide insights into Norlieza's perspective of Malay language teaching pedagogy. The approach is one in which the teacher and lessons "display a love and value for language" and always maintain a close relationship with real life. It is an approach that extends a stagnant view of language teaching —it goes beyond just "sticking to the syllabus and learning the same thing over and over."

Norlieza views the teaching of reading and writing as following that of spoken language. Her view is akin to a cognitive or psycholinguistic approach to reading and writing instruction. From her biographical recount Norlieza projects a strong relationship between reading, writing and spoken language. She sees the logical connection in the acquisition process i.e., spoken, reading and writing, and the importance of affective learning to the child's "cognitive and social development." This importance permeates throughout

her data and subsequent perspective of the ideal language teaching approach. However, Norlieza provides little information on the specifics of language teaching pedagogy. Given the metaphoric use of dancing and conditions of learning derived from the data, language teaching pedagogy may well resemble a socio-behavioural approach. Children are taught the basics of each language component and are then, with guidance, encouraged to explore creatively how the components work in different contexts. The dance metaphor, the construct elaborations and links to feedback strongly support a social view of language teaching and learning.

B. The influence of individuals from educative learning cultures

Formal educative role models share highest commonality and positioning closest to the positive construct pole. Norlieza as a language teacher, at this point in time, associates greater similarity of construing with formal educative role models than with either parent. Collated data suggests that Norlieza, in identifying the language teacher she would like to be, is looking to individuals who have assisted her in attaining language success, particularly at the "A" Level examinations. The ideological and personal characteristics of these role models, do however share similarities with those constructed from informal education in the home, i.e., the language teacher she would like to be contains attributes associated with one or both parents.

The language teacher she would like to be, both parents and the language teacher Norlieza views herself as, share in the encouragement of free thinking and in their abilities to teach using real life experiences. As a language teacher, Norlieza and both parents are viewed as similar in respect to the making of language learning fun, their creativity, the variety of tasks and activities they bring to the learning situation, and their progressiveness. The language teacher she would like to be and *HOD language* are generally more

highly related toward the positive construct pole on these constructs, which is interpreted as validating Norlieza's established construct system.

Her parents are described as approaching both their faith and language learning from an "open and involved" perspective. Higher order, more super-ordinate constructs of openness, sharing, love and value equate to more sub-ordinate constructs i.e., listening to individuals, personal involvement and support, hard work and interest. These manifest themselves in the preferred language teacher's classroom in the form of approaches to teaching such as "allowing for individual needs," "making language learning fun and teaching using real life experiences," and a "creative, or focus(ed) on language learning." Cultural constructs from the home, in Norlieza's case, are validated against the formal educative context, that is, Norlieza's personally constructed, culturally influenced constructs are matched against the perceived constructs of the language teacher she would like to be. This matching results in a validation of her personal construing, with the ideal language teacher rating higher than her parents because the teacher has most knowledge the language teaching context.

Norlieza's constructs and learning biography indicate little about specific language teaching pedagogy apart from the ability to teach using a variety of language types i.e., using different approaches and the use of real life experiences to make learning more interesting. She uses a "composition topic... [being] started off with a brief debating session" as the only specific example of variety in approach.

4.7 Trainee case study: Ernie

Date of Birth: 8/9/70

Race: Malay

Teaching Course: Diploma in Education (Malay Specialisation)

Born in Singapore, Ernie is the 3rd of five children. Her mother was educated in an Arab Primary school and did not complete any secondary schooling. Her father completed his education also at primary school having attended a Malay village "kampong" school. Her father is employed as a School Attendant whilst her mother has not worked outside the home.

Educated at neighbourhood girls' primary and secondary schools in Temasek, Ernie went on to complete her "O" Level examinations in 1986. These results allowed her to progress on to complete the "A" Level examinations at Tampines Junior College. Before applying for teacher education Ernie worked as a clerical officer.

Malay is the only language spoken in the home. The older siblings speak English but rarely in front of their parents. The younger two siblings, having just entered formal schooling, are beginning to learn English but as neither parent speaks English "particularly well" they are both "firm" about its "non-use" around the home. Ernie's father whilst "supporting" his children and their "efforts" in education and chosen occupations has not, according to Ernie, been "that encouraging of my decision to become a teacher. He'd prefer me to settle down, get married and have children." Ernie's older siblings are employed, one as a promotion's assistant and the other as a delivery assistant. The latter having completed a modified program at primary school. The "modified" level of education is equivalent to completing two additional years at primary school. The whole family abide "strictly" the Muslim faith.

Language learning biography

From her experience the mother plays the "model" role in the teaching of language. Ernie believes that:

Children are born with innate intelligence and the ability to communicate with others, in their own way. This is seen by their cries when they are hungry and by throwing tantrums when they do not get their own way. These are actual manipulations on their part to get their message across and to get what they want from adults.

The mother's role is to provide a supportive environment to "facilitate" language learning. She outlines her understanding of how this environment affects the child's learning.

With time and encouragement, rewards and motivation the child learns to distinguish the good from the bad and eventually to develop and engage in cognitive thinking. In the first stage, therefore the child develops through imitation and modelling of his family and siblings actions, their thoughts and behaviours. The values, beliefs, attitudes, perceptions etc. of the family are inculcated into his well-being and personality.

Ernie demonstrates her intuitive or culturally constructed views about learning to speak, read and write. Through her biographical and reflexive recount Ernie provides an insight not only into her personally constructed ideological schema of language teaching and learning, but the broader framework of "meaning" required for communication to take place.

Learning to read and write should be taught at an early stage starting with bedtime stories. This habit can therefore develop in the child, as my mother did for me, a love for books and words. He is then able to recognise meanings and words but without the ability to spell them.

I strongly believe that it is easier to teach a child who already knows the meanings of words because the next stage that the child has to go into is to be able to spell those words that he already knew [sic]. ...a child learns [to write and spell] from interactions of words with adults. The teaching task is made simpler [sic] when the child is able to identify the meanings of the word with its spelling (form).

Clearly, Ernie sees the aim of language teaching as the "maximisation of learning while making the learning experience a fruitful, motivating, rewarding and life-long process." She does this through "relating stories which interest them" and "grouping them to make sure that they participate actively."

Repertory grid analysis with written recounts of construct contexts of construing

Ernie's completed grid shows a distinctive polarisation of construct and element ratings. Ernie has focused on more positive role models in her selection of elements as all display a large degree of commonality on the elicited constructs. Negative elements are fewer and include the *language teacher I fear to be* (extreme negative pole), *pupil*, *sibling*, *past self*, and *father* who all share a mid range of construct rating and a commonality above 80%. The remaining elements form a single cluster with the highest commonality of 95% being the *language teacher I would like to be* and *ideal self*. Linked to these are the elements *university lecturer* and *past language tutor* which show a commonality of 91%. These are linked to *friend*, *language teacher I am*, and *self* showing a commonality range from 87%–90%. An isolated cluster, displaying a high degree of commonality but less closely associated with the main cluster are the *HOD language* and *principal*.

Figure 4.5 displays two highly rated construct cluster groups. The commonality of the first group ranges from 90%–97% and contains the constructs *language learning is for life* and *language learning applies to the outside world*, in

contrast to *language learning is unimportant* and *curriculum-content based*. From Ernie's experience, language learning "particularly English language, is very essential for a person to know very well in order to hold jobs with good prospect and money." Therefore language teachers "both Malay and English" should relate language learning to the outside world, that is, where "examples from everyday situations are taken and applied to language learning in the classroom." Ernie has experienced language lessons where "it is easier to understand certain concepts taught when a teacher links them to examples in everyday life situations." The elements *friend*, *HOD language* and *principal* teach in this manner and it is through such teaching that "we could see how language learning is applicable... and not limited to the school boundary." In the past, Ernie (*past self*) and the language teacher feared to be, "could not see the importance of language [Malay or English] and as such "taught strictly based on the school curriculum."

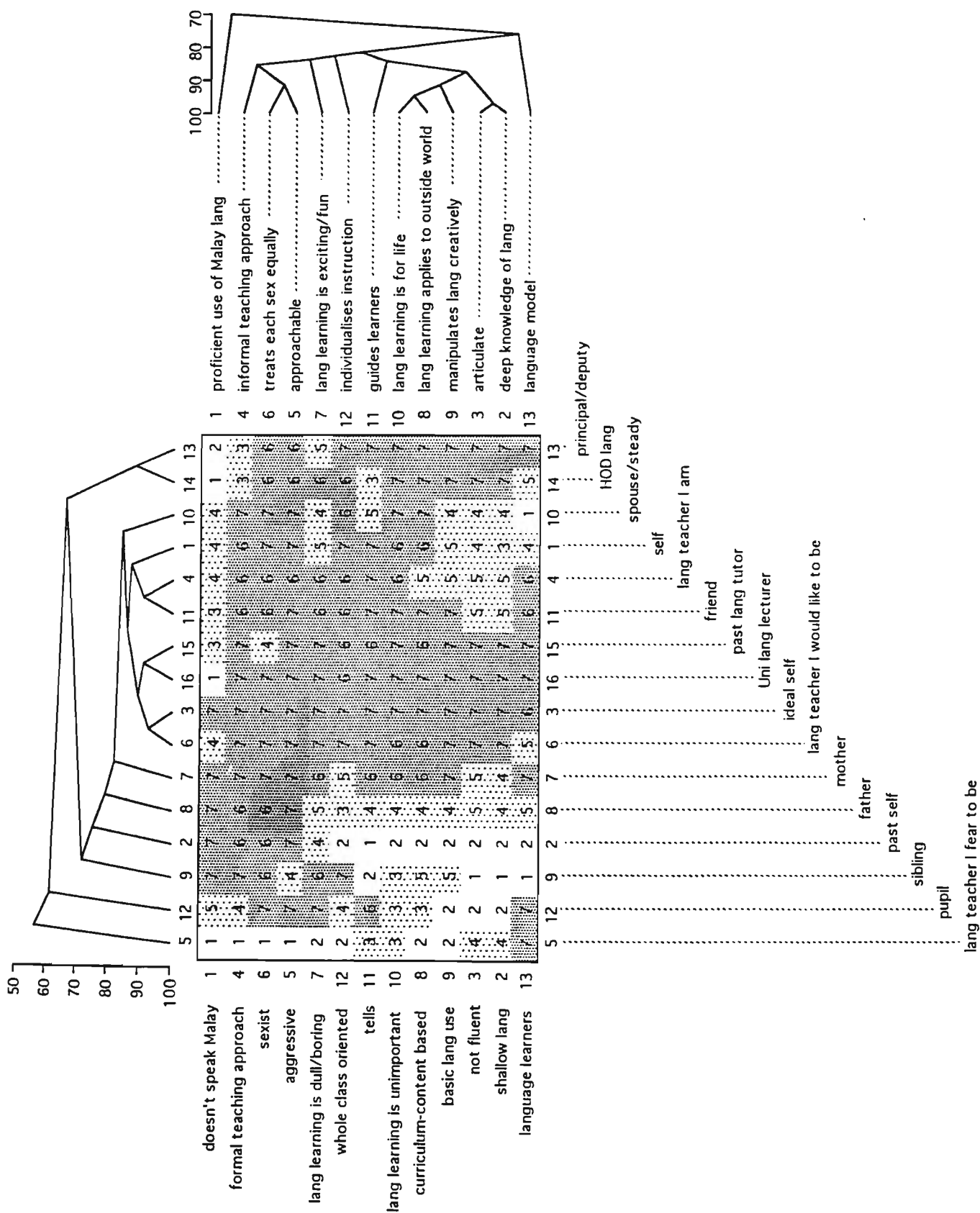
Paired in this cluster and showing a commonality of 99% are the constructs *articulate and deep knowledge of language* as opposed to *not fluent* and *shallow language*. Ernie describes an articulate language user:

They have no problem in expressing themselves and putting forward their ideas in a very well defined manner. They are able to choose the words best to describe what they have in mind. It seems they can easily manipulate the English language.

The opposing construct relates to oral proficiency in English. Ernie rates herself (*past self*) together with *siblings*, and *pupil* toward the negative construct pole and her construct descriptions reveal that "as for me, I find it very difficult to express myself in English. I know that I do not have to use bombastic words to express myself all the time. I can easily use very simple English and yet to me these are not so effective. I get very frustrated whenever

I failed [sic] to do so." These same elements also share similar commonality with the construct *shallow language*.

Figure 4.5 FOCUS repertory grid: Ernie



Those elements which share the highest rating on the positive construct *deep knowledge of language* include the *principal, HOD language, past language tutor, university lecturer, ideal self* and the *language teacher I would like to be*. Deep knowledge is defined as "the persons concerned have gone through a lot of language experiences, gaining more and more knowledge each time."

Related to this construct pairing and having a commonality of 90%, is *manipulates language creatively* in contrast to *basic language use*. The elements *principal, HOD language, friend, past language tutor, university lecturer, ideal self* and the *language teacher I would like to be* and *mother* are most closely associated with the positive construct *manipulates language creatively*. Effective manipulation is defined as the ability "to speak and write in a particular language (English or Malay) well." Ernie explains the context in which this construct is developed:

Even though my mother received no English education, the environment has more or less exposed her to the language. So she has picked up simple English from the mass media and sometimes from me and my brother. So even though she has only a basic knowledge of English she can manipulate the language well enough to get her meaning out.

Linked to this cluster of constructs, displaying a commonality of 85% but which stands slightly apart is *guides learners* as opposed to *tells*. These constructs are derived specifically from experience with language teachers. The language teacher who guides "show[s] the students the way[s] to develop and improve their language, giving them [the students] as much experience as possible correcting them where necessary."

Ernie describes how this construct functions based on her own and a classmate's perception. They both perceive "language teachers as people

who guide us along." This shared perception is based on Ernie's belief that "we normally have the same taste."

Teachers teaching language especially should be very patient with the students. It is not because students are naughty but because learning language takes a lot of time. Students cannot show improvement over night. Some of them take a long period of time before the teacher can see their progress. So, a teacher needs to motivate them as much as possible by giving them lots of experiences in the area they are weak in. She should also use a lot of praises when her students do a wonderful job. If they make mistakes she should not pin them down but guide them to do it the right way, giving them encouragement that they need to learn.

Language teachers who "tell" focus on "telling students what to do and scolds [sic] them if they do wrong." Ernie associates the elements of *past self*, *sibling*, *language teacher I fear to be* and *HOD language* similarly—they involve the greatest degree of the negative aspects of construing.

The ratings in Figure 4.5 show *treats each sex equally*, *approachable* and *informal teaching approach* as opposed to *sexist*, *aggressive* and *formal teaching approach* forming the nucleus of the second cluster. This cluster shares a commonality rating of 87%–93%. Treating the sexes equally is a personal characteristic associated with many of the elements, the exception being the element *language teacher I fear to be*. Ernie believes that "both sexes, male and female students should get equal attention" and goes on to describe the affects of a sexist language teacher.

He favoured the girls more than the boys. It was pretty obvious. For example, to the girls he could be very gentle and kind. However, to the boys he was very rough and punished them for the slightest mistakes done. [sic]. To the girls, he always gave complimentary remarks. This should not be the way. Such an unfair treatment may hinder learning and students who are adversely affected may develop hatred towards the teacher and worse still, they may hate the classroom, the subject and the school.

An *approachable* language teacher is "easy to talk to. He is always prepared to listen to our problems and give us some advice." The contrasting construct "aggressive" is defined as a person who is "very rough in his actions. He frightens other people and makes them feel uneasy to share their thoughts with." The element *language teacher I fear to be* is most closely associated with this negative aspect of construing. This element also is the only element closely linked to a *formal teaching approach* which is described as one "where the teacher acts as an authoritative figure once he steps into the classroom. There is no warmth throughout the lessons he conducted and he expects his students to listen to him all the time cause [sic] he thinks he is always right."

Contrary to this position is the teacher who practises an "informal approach" to language teaching. From Ernie's experience traditional language lessons involve the students "have[ing] to listen and learn from the teacher... while the teacher plainly explains everything." Informal teaching "involves a lot of participation from the students themselves." This participation requires the students be "treated like adults...[they] accepted our ideas and opinions even though they may have been contradictory to theirs." The informal approach of these type of teachers make students "feel non-threatened" in respect to what they say in class and therefore they are more willing "to having [sic] a try at more difficult things."

Closely linked constructs to this cluster are *language learning is exciting/fun* and *individualises instruction* in contrast to *language learning is dull/boring* and *whole class oriented*. Making language learning exciting involves the language teacher in developing "a lot of activities... to create the kind of learning environment that the students would enjoy." The language teacher feared to be is the element most closely associated with the negative construct

of making language learning dull or boring. "Without any tasks planned out by the teacher to stimulate students' interests, the learning of language could turn out to be dull and boring."

Individualising instruction involves "provide[ing] students with individual attention from the teacher which brings the teacher closer to her students." The opposing view is to "communicate with the students as a whole class more than with individual students." Ernie explains:

A [language] teacher should understand each and every student well. This can only be done if the teacher always communicates with them individually. From here she would know where are her students' weaknesses and strengths and how to guide them.

Two constructs stand apart from the others in Figure 4.5. The first is *language model* as opposed to *language learner* and the other the *proficient use of Malay language* in contrast to *doesn't speak Malay*. The elements *sibling* and *spouse/steady* are most closely associated with the negative construct pole of *language learners*. "As both are still studying they rely very much on their teachers to provide them knowledge of language." Highly rated elements including *mother*, *past language tutor*, *university lecturer*, *principal*, *pupil* and *language teacher I fear to be* all whom are viewed as language models, i.e., they are "looked on as capable and effective" language users and as such "portrayed [sic] a good image for others to follow."

Those elements rated closest to the negative construct pole of not speaking Malay "do not speak or understand Malay at all" and instead "use English to interact and communicate with people around them." These are the only elements who do not have Malay language "as their mother tongue language."

Overall, experience of language teaching and learning for Ernie focuses on rating constructs highly against positive role models. In this case the language teacher she feared to be. The positive experiences exemplify a view of language teaching and learning where teachers relate teaching to real life experience. This is achieved through language learning activities focused on the individual interests of the students. The ideal language teacher has the ability to manipulate language creatively, is articulate and, as a result of extensive experience, has a well-developed knowledge of language. Being approachable facilitates the creation of an environment of informality in which each sex is treated equally. This ideal language teacher guides students to "develop and improve" their language knowledge and abilities. As such he or she is a "capable" and "effective language teacher" who is a person to be "looked on" as a language model.

Metaphor analysis

A language teacher is a facilitator of language learning. The teacher is like a model, a mirror image of what the children should be like.

Ernie's metaphor focuses on the role and characteristics of the ideal language teacher and when examined together with her biographical and construct data reveal a window on her developing ideology of language learning. The grounding of Ernie's metaphor points toward the importance she places on the provision of a learning environment and activities that reflect the model teacher's knowledge of language. This knowledge develops and recaptures language as it used in the outside world. The structural and sensory picture derived from the metaphoric form is one of duplication where a figure acts, and the projected act is reproduced. As a living model the language teacher represents a reflective thinker who takes into consideration the physical, cognitive and socio-emotional needs of pupils.

Strong construct correspondences occur within the form of the metaphor. Mirrors are strong, they come in many forms and yet with their form and inherent strength they are also fragile. The correspondence is seen to exemplify the humanness of the language teacher as a person who thinks, acts and responds according to personal beliefs, reflexion, or reflective thinking about a given situation. There may arise times when the teacher may need to act in ways which "do not strictly follow traditional classroom situation[s]" or in the interest of individual pupil needs the teacher may be required to act in different ways. Ernie's mirror reflects an image similar to her mother, whom she views as one to imitate in respect to the provision of a "supportive environment" and as a "facilitator of language learning." This facilitation continues as the child grows to more mature understanding. If through "listening to our [pupil] problems" (*approachable*) the teacher realises that environment has become "dull or boring" then "activities" can be designed and introduced to reflect "the kind of learning environment that the student would enjoy" (language learning is exciting and fun). Children are seen to learn language through imitating first their parents, specifically the mother and then the ideal language teacher —the most positive role model.

Ernie's metaphor contains both physical and interpersonal connotative meanings which are interpreted to imply that the teacher's role is to be a model language user. The metaphor expresses the ideal that dedicated teachers will spend their time acquiring and expending knowledge from which their students can model. Secondly, the metaphor implies that pupils will feed off or "imitate" the teacher's offerings which implies an acceptance that the knowledge being offered is required, and if not, then the interests of the individual will be met through other activities.

A. Language teaching and learning: Ideological foundations

From Figure 4.5 Ernie's view of herself as a language teacher is more closely associated with the language teacher she would like to be than with the language teacher feared to be. The commonality of construct ratings indicate that at this point in time Ernie is developing toward a similar ideological position as the language teacher she would like to be. She shares with this teacher a similarity of rating in the area of guiding learners and a belief in language learning for life. They share an approach to language teaching which is informal, exciting, relevant to the outside world and individualised. They bring to the classroom a belief that each sex should be treated equally and that language teachers should have an approachable nature and proficiency in Malay language.

Ernie differs from this teacher in her knowledge of how to relate language learning to the outside world and in her ability to manipulate language effectively. Due to this teacher's experience she is believed to possess a greater depth of language knowledge and articulateness. Ernie rates herself higher on the construct, language model – language learner, due to her increased proficiency in the "Malay" language.

Ernie currently shares with the language teacher feared to be a mid-point positioning in construct ratings of articulateness, depth of language knowledge and rating as a language model. The language teacher feared to be is seen to be an effective language model because she has formal language qualifications, and as such possesses the ability to communicate in English clearly. Ernie's view of the role model relates more to an ability to communicate than toward a language teaching model.

Ernie closely associates the elements of the *ideal self* and the language teacher she would like to be. Linked to this element cluster are her *university language lecturer* and *past language tutor*. Her *friend, self* and *language teacher I am* share an 89% commonality in rating. Associated with this cluster are the elements *spouse/steady, mother, father, past self* and *sibling*.

Ernie as a language teacher and her *mother* share a similarity of construct rating in the areas of making language learning exciting and informal. They share an approachable nature, an articulateness and a belief that both sexes should be treated equally, and that language learning is for life. Both share similar thinking in respect to the language teacher's "guiding role" and the need to be a model for learners. Ernie views her *mother* to be more proficient in Malay language and a slightly better model of language use than herself as a language teacher. The only area where Ernie rates herself as a language teacher higher than her *mother* is in the ability to individualise instruction.

Ernie's ideal positioning is toward that of her *mother* and the language teacher she would like to be. She does share a close association with her *father* in core personal values of treating individuals equally, the need to "involve" learners in the learning process, to accept their "ideas and opinions" (informal teaching approach) and in the preparedness to "listen to [our] problems and give [us some] advice." Apart from proficiency in Malay language Ernie rates herself higher than her father on all other constructs.

From Figure 4.5, together with contextual recounts of constructs and biographical data categorical descriptions of Ernie's current view of language teaching and learning become more evident. These categories include: conditions that facilitate language learning; the language teacher skills; and language teaching pedagogy.

Conditions of language learning

Language learning, Ernie believes, should occur in an environment where all children are treated equally and as individuals. Ernie emphasises the need for the teacher to be responsible in such an environment for guiding language learners. They "show them way[s] to develop and improve" their language abilities. Through such involvement the students are provided examples of language in use i.e., as it is "applied to the outside world". Learning language "takes a lot of time" so the teacher "needs to motivate them as much as possible by giving them lots of experiences...." These experiences will allow the students "to gain more and more knowledge each time" they undertake the activity. The exposure of children to effective models of language Ernie believes can affect the child's learning:

In the first stage, therefore the child develops through imitation and modelling of his family and siblings actions, their thoughts and behaviours.

This exposure immerses the child in language experiences from which the child can model or imitate. It is this immersion which exerts a cultural influence on the child i.e., the thoughts and beliefs of the family are picked up by the child through participation and involvement with family members.

Ernie's data also reveals the importance of feedback to the child's learning. "If they make mistakes she [the language teacher] should not pin them down but guide them to do it the right way, giving them encouragement that they need to learn." This "supportive environment" facilitates language learning. "With time and encouragement, rewards and motivation the child learns to distinguish the good from the bad...." Providing such feedback facilitates the aim of language teaching, which as Ernie perceives, it is the "maximisation of learning while

making the learning experience a fruitful, motivating, rewarding and life-long process."

Teacher characteristics

The ideal language teacher has the ability to be "approachable." i.e., is "easy to talk to. He is always prepared to listen to our problems and give us some advice." The ability to listen to students is recounted throughout Ernie's data, notably in negative context descriptions. For example, her view of traditional language lessons involves the students "have[ing] to listen and learn from the teacher... while the teacher plainly explains everything." A traditional teacher acts as an authoritative figure. "There is no warmth throughout the lessons he conducted and he expects his students to listen to him all the time cause [sic] he thinks he is always right."

More effective language teachers possess the ability to accept student ideas and opinions even though they may be contradictory to the own position. This type of behaviour ensures that students "feel non-threatened" in respect to what they say in class and therefore are more adept at "...having a try at more difficult things."

The communicative characteristic of the ideal language teacher is also seen to be important in the development of effective student – teacher rapport. It assists the teacher individualise instruction and by getting to know the students the teacher "is better able to identify and understand her students' weaknesses and strengths and how to guide them."

Language teaching pedagogy

The biography and metaphor provide few insights into Ernie's perspective of Malay language teaching pedagogy. The inferred approach is one in which

tasks are planned out by the teacher to stimulate students' interests. This ensures that the learning of language remains exciting. Ernie cites an example of a language teacher who begins her lessons by "...talking with us, or sometimes she tells us a joke or asks us to share something funny or embarrassing." This individualising of language teaching "...brings the teacher closer to her pupils."

Ernie's beliefs concerning subject learning and associated pedagogic knowledge can be seen in her example of learning to read and write. She believes that both should begin at an early age. Learning to read begins with exposure to "bedtime stories". This forms "a habit that can be developed later in the school years." Ernie believes that reading precedes writing and spelling.

"I strongly believe that it is easier to teach a child who already knows the meanings of words because the next stage that the child has to go into is to be able to spell those words that he already knew [sic]. ...a child learns [to write and spell] from interactions of words with adults. The teaching task is made simpler [sic] when the child is able to identify the meanings of the word with its spelling (form).

The pedagogic approach for teaching writing is not explained in the data. Follow-up conference data revealed that Ernie had little knowledge of how to teach writing except "to have the children copy words down and get their letters right." When prompted about story writing as opposed to handwriting she replied "I don't know, give them a topic and ask them to write. But its hard if they can't spell the words." The relationship which Ernie sees between writing and correct spelling, which given her beliefs about the language teacher's role and language learning in general, I propose, be an area which could be explored further in her future tertiary language teaching studies.

B. The influence of individuals from educative learning cultures

Formal educative role models, together with the mother and father share the highest commonality and positioning closest to the positive construct pole. Ernie, as a language teacher, at this point in time associates greater similarity of construing with the teacher she would like to be. Collated data suggests that Ernie, in identifying the language teacher she would like to be, is looking to a person who espouses similar ideological and personal characteristics to those of the mother. For example, the language teacher she would like to be has attributes associated with one or both parents. The language teacher she would like to be is approachable, treats individuals equally and is informal in teaching approach, as are both parents. This teacher makes language learning fun, relevant to the outside world and is fluent in her language (manipulates language creatively), as is Ernie's mother. Both "show students the way to develop and improve" their language (guides learners), however the mother is rated much higher as a "language model." The influence of family on the developing child is summarised in the following quote taken from Ernie's biography. Ernie states that, "the values, beliefs, attitudes, perceptions etc. of the family are inculcated into his well-being and personality."

Ernie's constructs and learning biography indicate little about specific language teaching pedagogy apart from the ability to relate language learning to real life, to make it interesting, individualised and the need for the teacher to show ways in which language can be improved.

The language teacher she would like to be has a much greater depth of language knowledge derived from experience (formal education), is more articulate i.e., can use words "in a very well defined manner" and is better at individualising instruction. Ernie explained in a follow-up interview "that my

mother always just seemed to know our strengths and weaknesses, and because their [sic] was only two of us treated us as individuals."

4.8 Trainee case study: Faizah

Date of Birth: 29/5/72

Race: Javanese/Malay

Teaching Course: Diploma in Education (English Specialisation)

Born in Singapore, Faizah is the elder of two children. Her mother completed her education at Secondary 3 and currently works as an Operations Assistant. Her father completed his schooling at Secondary 4 and went on to complete a Polytechnic course in electronics. He is employed as a Technical Officer. Faizah's mother was born in Singapore, her father in Johore, Malaysia. Her mother is Malay, father is Javanese, and Faizah proudly labels herself as Javanese. Both parents are fluent Malay and English users.

Educated at a neighbourhood school in Clementi, Faizah continued on to secondary school where she completed her "O" Level examinations, in 1987. These results allowed Faizah to progress and complete the "A" Level examinations at St Andrews' Junior College. Prior to applying for teacher education Faizah worked as a relief teacher in a Clementi neighbourhood school.

Family discussions were once held only in their mother tongue, Malay language. However, since the birth of her sister, English "has been more prevalent" although still predominantly used by the siblings. Faizah describes her family as "reasonably modern thinkers" in their approach to schooling and the Muslim faith. Both parents "are strict and serious about learning" and both children have been encouraged from "as early as I can remember to get a good education, University, if possible." Faizah's sister who is aged 9 "...already she believes she will go on to University study."

Language learning biography

Faizah's biography focuses on her experiences as a relief teacher. "As a relief teacher I found that children learn to talk, read and write by first observing and then just plain imitating." Before entering formal language teacher training Faizah had "never given much thought about how children learn." What she noticed when relief teaching was that "they [students] are very keen observers and hence they seem to learn very fast. They are also a curious lot, willing to learn new things."

Learning language involves a teaching approach which encourages "informal learning...." The teacher must be at hand and be patient enough to entertain the many curious minds." Faizah describes how this involves "communication between the students and teacher." She outlines characteristics of an "informal" teaching approach to be "film shows, play acting and various methods of teaching which do not require direct textbook learning...." Faizah believes that "children learn best when they are playing and enjoying themselves."

Repertory grid analysis with written recounts of construct contexts of construing

Faizah's completed grid, Figure 4.6, shows four highly rated construct cluster groups. The commonality of the first cluster is 90% and links the constructs *high level of language knowledge* and *independent* against *low level of language knowledge* and *dependent*. These constructs are most highly rated at the positive pole with the *language teacher I would like to be*, *HOD language* and *university lecturer*. The element *principal* shares a high rating on the level of language knowledge but is seen as less independent. Faizah equates the level of language knowledge to experience and level of education achieved.

For example, when Ivan and I speak [English] we might make simple grammatical mistakes due to ignorance of the rules. Oliver however, being more highly educated about language, might not make such a mistake.

Independent refers to the "free thinking nature of the person," that is, the person "is flexible in their thinking and can look at events from different angles." Faizah cites the example of a language teacher who "selects [teaching] materials based on her students' interests, not always dictated by the syllabus."

Linked to this cluster and experienced most in relation to the *HOD language*, *friend*, *language teacher I fear to be* and *university lecturer* is *anxious* in contrast to *takes time*. Faizah relates the level of personal anxiety to the individual's focus on attaining results. She recounts how "Mrs Shamini [language teacher she would like to be] would take her time in teaching us. She didn't pressurise [sic] our learning but allowed us to come to understanding without always being concerned about exams and results."

A second cluster showing a commonality of 87%–88% contrasts *uses experience to learn*, *freedom to choose* and *informal* with *learn through imagination*, *textbook based* and *formal*. These constructs are most positively associated with the elements *pupil*, *spouse/steady* and *HOD language*. The elements *language teacher I would like to be* and *mother* are highly related on the constructs *informal* and *freedom to choose*, while the element *father* shares the highest rating on the construct *informal*. The *ideal self* and *self* are also closely associated with *uses experiences to learn* as opposed to *learn through imagination*.

Within this cluster two related patterns emerge in Faizah's data. The first relates to "freedom" and the second to the need for "practical experiential learning." Informal teachers "allow[s] the free flow of opinions and allow room for discussion with students even if it means going beyond the text." Using *experiences to learn* means "as far as possible, to create an experience for each student, for eg. like an experiment... and then ask the students to derive and explain what they are doing." Faizah further illustrates practical involvement in language learning with the following example:

About 2 years ago, Mrs Moliah [Language and Social Science teacher] organised a study tour to Bali because she felt that only then would her students be able to relate to the case study that they were doing on Bali.

The construct *freedom to choose* operates at two levels in Faizah's construct descriptions. The first is at the level of reading where she uses her mother and herself as examples. "Ma and I, we would seldom follow closely with the text, just close enough to get the meaning. ...whereas Fatimah would read it thoroughly, as she would feel much safer that way." The second level relates to a preferred informal teaching approach. Formal language teachers "follow exactly from the textbook" whereas informal teachers allow a "free flow of opinions and allows room for discussions." This allows the teacher and students the freedom to discuss and share opinions openly and employ personal language strategies in a given activity.

The third construct cluster relates specifically to the purpose of language learning. The constructs *learning is for self* and *practical* are contrasted with *rote learning* and *memorising*. Most elements are rated highly on these constructs with the exceptions being the *language teacher I fear to be* and the *university lecturer* on the construct *practical*. These elements are more likely to characterise an approach to learning which involves *rote learning* and/or

memorising. Those associated with the positive poles employ strategies which focus on learning activities and language "which are absolutely necessary to the real world." Language learning according to Faizah is an individual activity.

Language learning is for ourself [sic]. Teaching [language] activities should be based on each student's needs and what they are interested in. We are in charge of learning. ...Mrs Lim [language teacher feared to be] on the other hand enjoys memorising new words whenever she can. Her teaching is very predictable, just going over and over things. Boring us all.

The fourth cluster, *demonstrates how* and *learn from mistakes* are opposed to *tells what to do* and *perfect model of language use*. Displaying a commonality rating of 87% these constructs are rated most closely to the elements *language teacher I would like to be*, *HOD language*, *ideal self*, *language teacher I am*, *self* and *father*. Some language teachers "just tell students what exercises to do, but for me I'll do a few relevant examples with them first. ...telling them what to do maybe, OK, when dealing with older or more independent students, but for me, I have to deal with much younger students who need a lot of guidance." Faizah illustrates the importance of mistakes in her own language learning.

Ivan [pupil] and Fatimah [friend] always look on me as a perfect model of language because I am to be a teacher. For example, if I make a mistake in spelling or pronunciation etc they would be shocked. For me, I learn through making these mistakes and I believe that nobody is a perfect model of language.

Two constructs stand apart in Faizah's grid and have a commonality of 70%. The first is *technical jargon used* which is contrasted with *simple language used*. "When explaining a lesson I would use simple language not some

bombastic words." The elements *university lecturer* and *language teacher I fear to be* are rated highly in respect to using "technical jargon" whereas, *sibling, pupil, language teacher I would like to be, self, past self, father, mother, principal* and *friend* "would use very simple language to explain a concept to students."

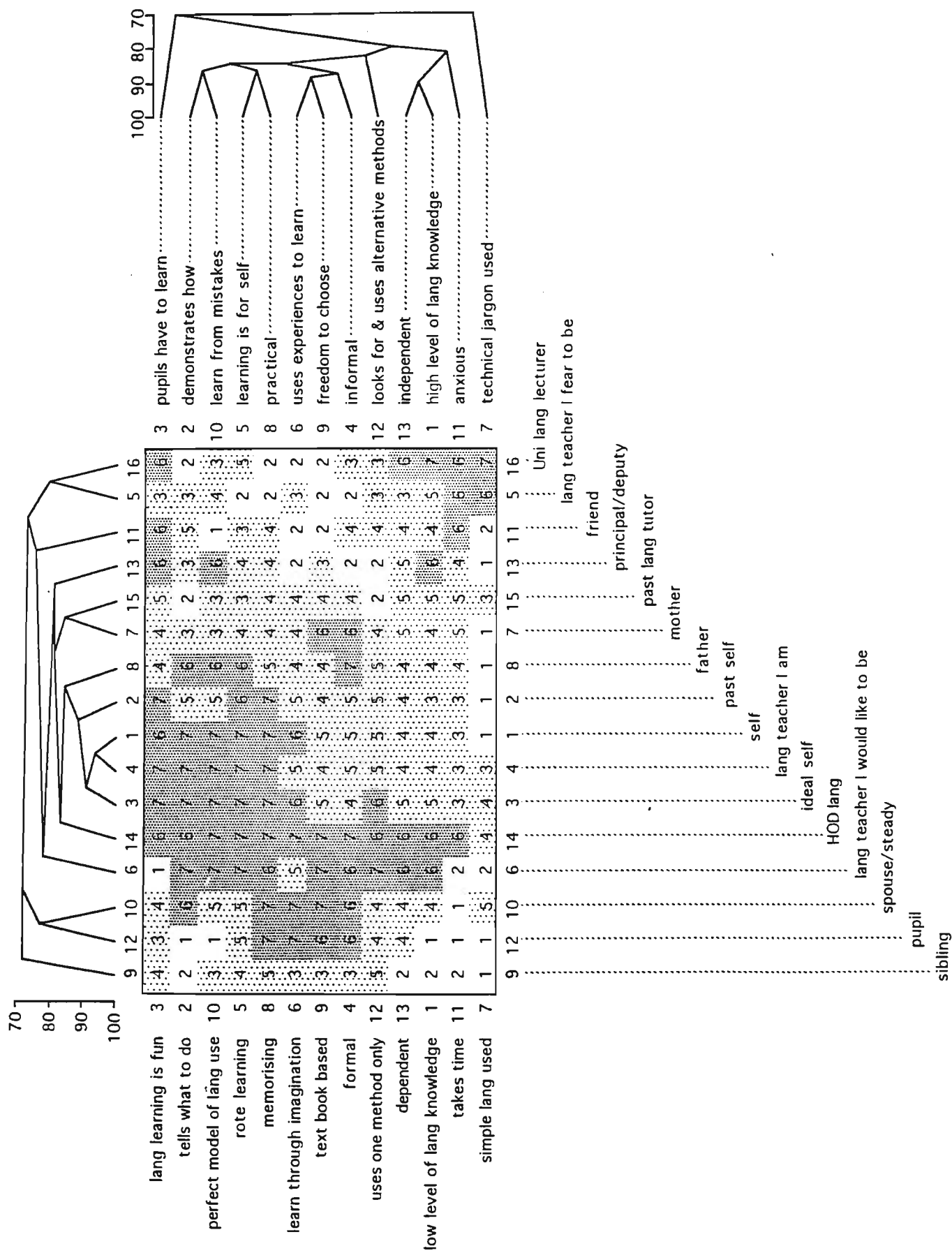
A second construct which stands apart is *pupils have to learn* in contrast to *language learning is fun*. The element most closely associated with the contrast, or positive aspect of experience, is the *language teacher I would like to be*. This construct relates closely to the creation of a positive language learning environment. "Even though students do not have to learn a particular aspect of English, they would still want to learn." Faizah illustrates this in the following description:

Students are willing, or will want to learn, even though the content is not in their syllabus. This might be due to the way we approach the subject. We interact together with the students during the lesson. Some language teachers give an impression of being unapproachable and create a formal atmosphere. This might discourage students from learning.

Overall experience of language teaching and learning as illustrated in Faizah's grid focuses on rating elements highly against negative construals of experience. The positive experiences exemplify an approach to language teaching and learning that relates language to real world use. This facilitates learning through language experience and it is the ideal language teacher in Faizah's experience who is responsible for creating an informal environment where both teacher and student are relaxed and fully involved. The ideal language teacher is approachable, uses simple language, and appreciates that children require some freedom of choice. He or she provides teacher

demonstrations of language activities, time to practice and a range of activities in order to maintain their interest and the "want to learn."

Figure 4.6 FOCUS repertory grid: Faizah



The ratings indicate that most of the elements include a high degree of most of the constructs. The exceptions being the *language teacher I fear to be*, *university lecturer*, *friend*, *sibling*, *pupil* and *spouse/steady* who provide the generally opposing role models. *Language teacher I am*, *self* and *ideal self* are the elements which display greatest commonality. The *HOD language* and *language teacher I would like to be* are rated most positively and together with *language teacher I am*, *past self* and *father* would seem to provide the foundation models of language teaching and learning ideology.

Metaphor analysis

Language teaching and the language teacher is like that of a circus clown's performance. The clown must have the ability to not only to entertain but to encourage and motivate fellow performers and the audience.

The grounding of Faizah's metaphor emphasises the importance she places on the high level of skill required to make the language teaching act look simple. The performance takes practice and as such the performer must be able to listen and learn from their mistakes. Language teaching as performing provides a picture of an actor and audience—in the clown's act audience involvement is sought.

With the context of clowning, Faizah draws on many correspondences within the form of the metaphor. The clown makes every day events interesting by making fun of them. It is through the building of suspense which ensures audience involvement, and that attention is engaged and maintained. Much of what the clown does is predictable because the audience is provided with the "big picture" and then is left to engage in the unfolding of the trick or act. The clown is approachable, friendly and caring, yet is also spontaneous. Children

therefore like to play act the clown, trying out the tricks and activities gained from the clown's demonstrations.

Faizah's metaphor conveys a connotative definition of her experience, both physically and socially. Her metaphor implies the work required for both language teachers and learners and that they will be consumed with the ideal of "looking for and using alternative methods" through which to engage students in the act of language learning and use. Secondly, the metaphor implies the social nature of learning performance i.e., just as the language teacher performs there will be a receptive audience who will be drawn into the practicalities of performance. Likewise, when the students perform, the teacher and peers act as the audience and as such they facilitate the "free flow" of opinions and as "keen observers" they will learn from the student's performance. Mistakes are a realistic possibility in any performance and therefore the performer must, for the benefit of the audience, continue using them as a learning tool. Associated with clowning are the concepts of fun and enjoyment. Two concepts central to Faizah's developing language learning ideology are that "children learn best when they are playing and enjoying themselves."

A. Language teaching and learning: Ideological foundations

From Figure 4.6 Faizah's view of herself as a language teacher is more closely associated with the language teacher she would like to be than with the language teacher feared to be. The commonality of construct ratings indicate that at this point in time Faizah is developing toward a similar ideological position as the language teacher she would like to be. She shares with the most liked teacher a similarity of rating in the areas demonstrates how, learn from mistakes, learning is for self and the practical nature of language learning. They also share similarities in the use of language

experiences to learn. That is, they share a view of learning in which the relevancy of the topic under study is made apparent.

Faizah rates herself as different from this teacher in the following ways: knowing how to make language learning fun; developing and implementing strategies that facilitate the freedom of choice; informality of teaching approach; knowledge of alternative methods; independence from the curriculum; and level of language knowledge. Faizah also rates herself marginally higher in her level of anxiety and use of technical language.

Faizah currently shares four constructs with the language teacher feared to be. These are in the areas of level of language knowledge, independence, knowledge of alternative teaching methodologies and in the practical use of experiences to learn.

Faizah closely associates the elements of the *ideal self*, *language teacher I am* and *self*. Linked to this element cluster is also the *HOD language*. At this point in time, she rates herself closer to her *father* than any other element. They share a commonality rating of 85%–94%. Faizah and her *father* share greatest similarity of rating on the constructs *demonstrates how*, *learn from mistakes* and *learning is for self*. In a follow-up discussion Faizah stated that "Baba [father] and Ma [mother] taught me about how to treat others and this helped me to understand how we learn." From these associations Faizah has developed an approach to language teaching which is closely modelled on her personal history, specifically her father and specific teachers involved with her as a language student.

From Figure 4.6 together with contextual recounts of constructs and biographical data categorical descriptions of Faizah's current view of language teaching and learning have been identified. These categories include: conditions that facilitate language learning; the language teacher skills; and language teaching pedagogy.

Conditions of language learning

Despite Faizah's claim that she had "never given much thought to how children learn" her data reveals a body of ideas that, based on her experience, reflect a developing ideology of language learning. Beginning with her beliefs about students, Faizah states that they are "willing" learners and that they come to the language learning situation "wanting" to learn. Inherent in this, is the belief that the subject matter is worth learning and therefore, it must hold some relevancy to the student's needs or interests.

They are also a curious lot, willing to learn new things... Language learning is for ourself [sic]. Teaching [language] activities should be based on each student's needs and what they are interested in.

Faizah has noted, from relief teaching experiences and from her sister's language learning, that learners are "very keen observers." It is from their observations of teacher "demonstrations" of language use and associated activities that the children learn. From her own experience she has noted that the responsibility for learning is in the learner's hands "we are in charge of our own learning."

Not only is the language teacher charged with demonstrating language but also with creating an environment in which students are free to "interact and share opinions." This social nature of language learning involves not only students but also the teacher, for "some language teachers give an impression

of being unapproachable and create a formal atmosphere. This might discourage students from learning." Faizah prefers an informal approach which she believes encourages children to learn through "playing and enjoying themselves." Related to this is the use of "simple" language by the teacher "to explain" concepts to students."

Another condition of Faizah's approach to language learning involves the use of language through a range of experiences brought about by alternative teaching methods. This involves more than "just going over and over things," but rather the creation of language experiences which encourage students "...to relate" what they are studying to areas "beyond the syllabus."

The final inherent condition relates to the importance of mistakes in language learning development. "I believe that nobody is a perfect model of language" and as such Faizah views errors and subsequent feedback from the audience or learners as integral to the teaching, learning performance.

Teacher characteristics

The ideal language teacher possesses the ability to "allow the free flow of opinions and allow room for discussion with students even if it means going beyond the text." This requires of the teacher, personal characteristics such as having a flexibility of thought, and patience. These attributes enable the teacher to "look at events from different angles" and to take the time necessary "to entertain the many curious minds."

This "ideal" teacher also exercises independence in the selection of teaching materials. Faizah cites the example of a language teacher who "selects [teaching] materials based on her students' interests, not always dictated by the syllabus." This she believes makes language learning less

"pressurise[ing]" and thus allows students to "come to understanding without always being concerned about exams and results."

Faizah construes the ideal language teacher as one who is "approachable, uses simple language and appreciates that children require: some freedom of choice; teacher demonstrations of language activities; time; and a range of activities in order to maintain their interest and the 'want' to learn." This teaching performance takes practise and as such performers (teacher and students) must be able to listen and learn from their mistakes.

Language teaching pedagogy

The biography and metaphor provide insights into Faizah's perspective of ideal language teaching pedagogy. The approach is one which involves much "informal" communication between the students and teacher. She outlines characteristics of such an "informal" teaching approach to be the use of "film shows, play acting and various methods of teaching which do not require direct text book learning...."

Language teaching activities need to be employed which are "fun" and "enjoyable." These "practical" activities, "for eg. like an experiment... stimulate children's learning as they use the experience to learn." Faizah provides few specific examples of these activities or how they relate to learning the different language modes, however she does provide an insight into her understandings of the reading process in a construct description. Elaborating the construct *freedom to choose* she uses an example of her mother and herself. "Ma and I, we would seldom follow closely with the text, [we'd just read] close enough just to get the meaning. ...whereas Fatimah would read it thoroughly, as she would feel much safer that way." This example illustrates Faizah's belief that reading is a meaning centred process as opposed to a

simple decoding procedure. From this description, and the related constructs, it can be inferred that in order to teach reading Faizah would focus on the attainment of meaning first and that this can be obtained through a variety of procedures. Hence, she believes that no one method should have preference over another.

Given the metaphoric use of clowning and conditions of learning derived from the data, a socio-functional approach to language learning emerges. Children learn language through observation and demonstrations of language as it is used in real life situations. Language learning and teaching are marked by individual teacher and learner performance, and this performance implies the physical and social involvement of the audience.

B. The influence of individuals from educative learning cultures

Faizah has developed an approach to language teaching and learning which is closely modelled on her personal history, specifically her father and those teachers directly involved with her as a language student. Formal educative role models share highest commonality and are rated closest to the positive construct pole in respect to both language teaching and learning. Faizah, as a language teacher, at this point in time shares a similarity of construing in respect to the language learning with these role models and her father. Collated data would suggest that Faizah, in identifying the language teacher she would like to be, is looking to individuals who share a similar ideological positioning in respect to basic learning and treatment of individuals, to that of her father.

The language teacher she would like to be and her father are rated similarly in respect to their use of experiences to learn, the belief in the freedom of choice, level of independence, level of language knowledge and anxiety. Faizah rates

herself higher in the use of technical jargon and the ability to make language learning fun. She perceives both parents to be "strict and serious about learning" but despite this strictness, her father is rated most positively in respect to "allow[ing the] free flow of opinions and... room for discussion" (informal). While the language teacher she would like to be and *HOD language* are generally more highly related to the positive construct pole across the grid, they are also seen to be validating Faizah's established construct system.

Her parents are described as "reasonably modern thinkers" in their approach to their faith and "strict and serious" in their approach to language learning. Higher order, super-ordinate constructs relating to responsibility and sharing equate to more sub-ordinate constructs i.e., learning is for self, and learning from our mistakes. These constructs manifest themselves in the preferred language teacher's classroom in the form of teaching behaviour such as "doing [demonstrating] exercises for them and providing "guidance" for more dependent learners, the sharing of and "learning from mistakes" in an "informal" atmosphere where there exists a "freedom of choice," and teacher beliefs, such as acknowledging who controls the learning act i.e., "we [the students] are in charge of learning. Culturally derived constructs, from the home in Faizah's case, are validated against those from a more formal educative context. That is, Faizah's personally constructed, culturally influenced constructs are matched against the perceived constructs of the language teacher she would like to be and results, at this point in time, in a validation of her personal construct system. The ideal language teacher and *HOD language* rate higher than her parents because they, as practising teachers, have much greater knowledge of formal language teaching contexts.

4.9 Trainee case study: Shuh Yi

Date of Birth: 20/10/72

Race: Chinese

Teaching Course: Diploma in Education (Chinese Specialisation)

Translation: Shuh Yi's original demographic information and learning biography was written in Mandarin. The originals were transcribed and subsequently authenticated by Shuh Yi.

Born in Singapore, Shuh Yi is the elder of two children. His mother was educated to Primary school level and did not complete any secondary schooling. His father completed his education also at primary school. His father is employed as a Businessman whilst his mother continues to work in the home.

Educated at a mission primary school, Shuh Yi continued on to a neighbourhood secondary school in Bedok where he completed his "O" Level examinations, in Secondary 4. With these results Shuh Yi gained entry to Tampines Junior College and went on to complete his "A" Level examinations. Shuh Yi applied and gained entry into the Diploma in Education (Chinese) program immediately following his "A" Level examinations.

Chinese and Dialect are the languages spoken in the home. Shuh Yi and his younger brother speak Chinese, Dialect and English however as neither parent speaks English there is "no question of it being used in the home, even by my brother and I." Shuh Yi's parents are very "encouraging" of their children's "attempts" in education as Shuh Yi states, "they bring us tutors in English, Mandarin and mathematics during primary school." His mother especially "is very proud that I go on to be a Chinese language teacher." Shuh Yi states that his father "he would prefer I go to university and study business, but my grades were not so high."

Language learning biography

From Shuh Yi's experience, parents and the media play an important role in the teaching of language. He believes that in learning to speak:

Children normally imitate family member's conversation habit. They will also follow the actors or actress of the TV program conversation to wider [sic] the vocabulary usage area.

The parent's role in the teaching of reading is to "read story books together." Through this "children normally are guided and accompanied by the parents." In writing, similarly, the parents from Shuh Yi's experience are very involved in teaching.

Before they are in kindergarten, at home, normally parents will teach them how to write A B C or 1 2 3. Some parents, like mine, will paste few Chinese words on stickers to the wall, to teach them how to read and write. In a weeks time, when they see the words often they will know how to pronounce, read and write, therefore they learn some of the words. After a week, parents change the stickers (new words).

Shuh Yi notes how the influence of the language teacher can turn some children off learning. "To learn language through these three methods [described above] normally is what's done. Normally a child does not like certain language because he/she does not like the teacher. To let children to like or respect is the first step of language teaching."

Shuh Yi clearly states the aim of the language teacher i.e., the "work" of the language teacher is to "pass on the originally [sic] knowledge to the next generation, including the culture and pithy of language."

Repertory grid analysis with written recounts of construct contexts of construing

Figure 4.7 displays three highly rated construct cluster groups. The commonality of the first group ranges from 92%–90%. The constructs *less tolerant* and *respectful* are opposed to *tolerant* and *tactful*. The element *language teacher I fear to be* is most closely associated with the negative pole of the constructs. *Less tolerant* is defined as "not having patience when dealing with student problems, whereas *tolerant* teachers "take time to deal with problems." Shuh Yi cites the following example, "Tan Peng Soon [language teacher feared to be] is always hurrying us to finish our work no matter whether we have understandings or not. If we ask him to explain he scolds us."

Respectful is defined as "looking toward the person with respect because of their ability or knowledge. *Tactful* on the other hand refers to "people who are quiet and despite holding status or more knowledge do not demand such respect." The elements *ideal self*, *principal*, *mother*, *HOD language*, *language teacher I would like to be* and *university lecturer* are construed very similarly and involve the greatest degree of all positive aspects of construing.

Linked to this cluster are the constructs *book centred*, *tells what*, *limited methodology* and *structured approach* in contrast to *links language to real life*, *tells how*, *allows for individual differences* and *pupil centred*. Shuh Yi describes *book centred* in the following example:

Tan Peng Soon will only talk about what is to be learned on the student's part and what is in the text. Most of the lessons did not help us to understand how to do the lesson better.

In defining linking language to real life experiences Shuh Yi recalls a primary school experience. Goh Kwun Yeow (language teacher most liked to be):

He had discussions with the class as a whole. Sometimes he shared his life experiences back in China with us during the lesson whenever he could. And the topic he discussed/shared with us always related to the learning text, so as to foster understanding of the text and to enrich our thoughts on culture and morality.

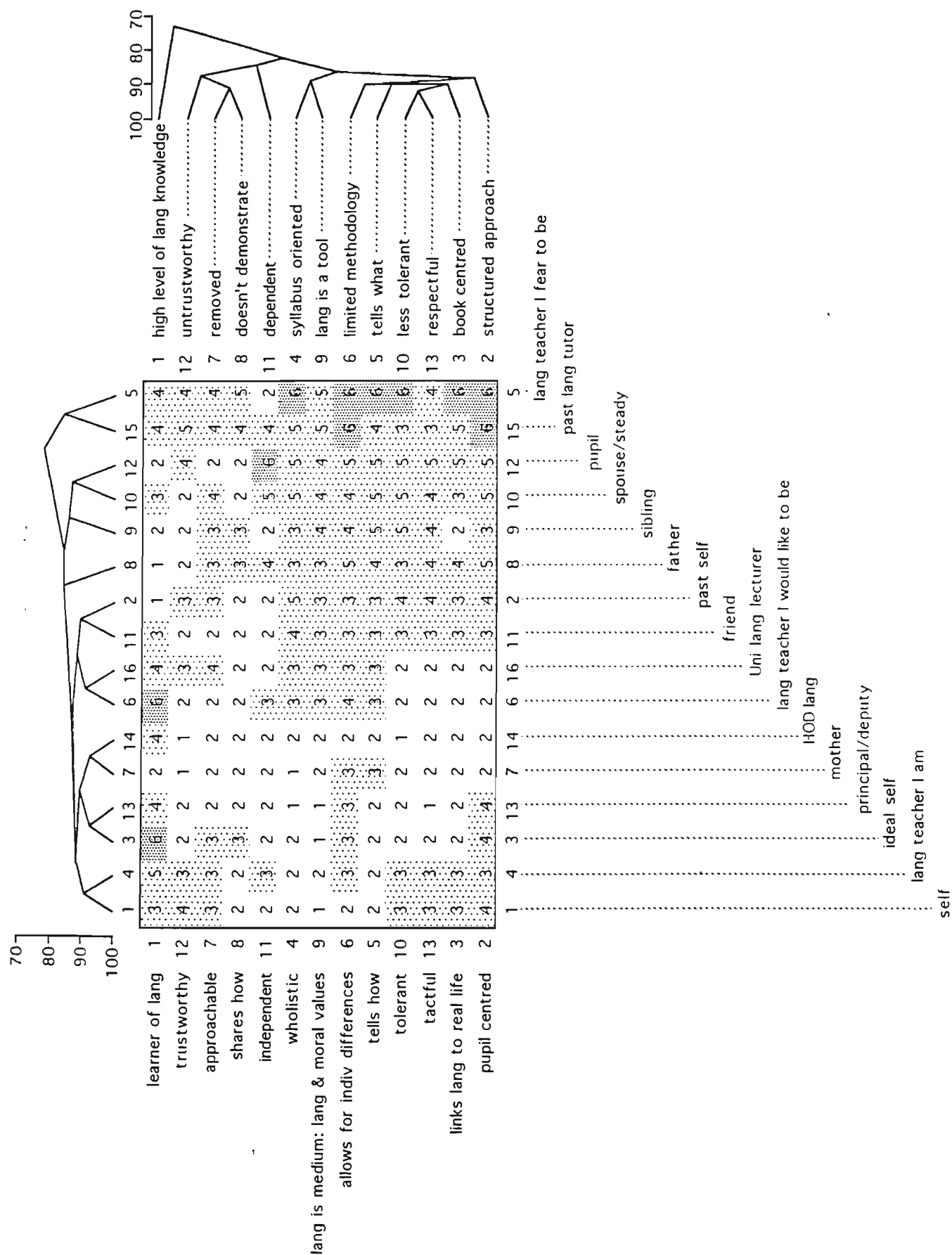
Tells what is defined as "the teacher doing all the talking" whereas *tells how* is defined as "when the teacher starts a sharing/discussion and then permits the class to share their opinions." Closely linked to this construct and highly associated with the language teacher feared to be and *past language tutor* is *limited methodology* as opposed to *allows for individual differences*.

Despite lengthy experience some language teachers are perceived as having "few methods or knowledge of methods to teach individuals." Others, such as *self* and *HOD language* "have better exposure to the types of psychology of children and are hence better able to teach and allow for individual differences."

Miss Teo [*HOD language*] for example was always concerned with the well being of her class. She checked and rechecked understandings by questioning and sometimes quizzes and groups for remedial work.

Showing a commonality with this cluster is the construct *structured approach* which means "his style of teaching is very much book centred and one of instructing the students what is to be done for his lessons. He plans his lessons according to the content of his handouts and/or text." Shuh Yi is left to conclude of this teacher "to a very great extend [sic] he informs no new knowledge of the subject or item."

Figure 4.7 FOCUS repertory grid: Shuh Yi



In contrast, *pupil centred* is defined as a language teacher who is a "facilitator of learners." Using himself as an example Shuh Yi states:

I will like to tailor my language teaching approach and/or teaching methods to the learning styles and needs of the class of students generally. Unlike my time they will be able to learn language on their own without lagging behind the syllabus for school learning.

Shuh Yi in the follow-up clarification interview said that "when student needs are missed out and text books take over, then some students get behind in their work. This can then affect their confidence and later ability."

The second cluster, *removed, doesn't demonstrate* and *untrustworthy* are opposed to *shares how, approachable* and *trustworthy*. These constructs display a commonality of 92%–90% and are most positively associated with the elements *principal, mother, HOD language, language teacher I would like to be* and *friend*.

An *approachable* teacher "is able to communicate freely with the students. Mr Chia [*university lecturer*] though willing to share his experiences in class, is still removed and keeps his distance with the students." Mr Chia, is however, cited as a positive example of the construct *shares how*. "His main purpose in teaching us is to help us better understand teaching and language better. He not only tells us what he's [*sic*] expectations and what to do, he shows us how to do it. This I feel must take a lot of practice but you learn to understand better by actually seeing."

Shuh Yi uses his *past language tutor* to illustrate the construct *untrustworthy*. "She was always making promises and never keeping them. She promised to reward the class for better grades and she didn't. This happened all the time.

We stopped listening and trying so hard to get what she promised." More *trustworthy* elements include *spouse/steady*, *sibling*, *father*, *friend*, *language teacher I would like to be*, *HOD language*, *mother*, *principal* and *ideal self*. All these elements are likely to involve a high degree of positive construing on the construct *trustworthy*.

The final construct forming this cluster is *dependent* in contrast to *independent*. The element *pupil* is most negatively associated with this construct. Independent people "are able to learn and do things without support of others, or without being influenced by other people's likes/dislikes.

The third and smallest cluster opposes *syllabus oriented* and *language is a tool* with *wholistic* and *language is a medium: language and moral values* respectively. Language is viewed by Shuh Yi "as more than just a tool to be studied and used." He states:

It is through Chinese language that the culture of our ancestors is learned. The values and morals that our parents develop within us are shared and discussed through the language. Doing the same talk and discussing about Chinese culture in another language would not be the same, it is our culture's links.

Syllabus oriented is defined as "being mostly concerned with worksheets and examination results" whereas *wholistic* "is the treatment of the whole person to get good examination grades and good ability with the language."

High level of language knowledge and *learner of language* are constructs that stand apart and are experienced mostly with the elements *language teacher I would like to be* and *ideal self*. Having a *high level of language*

knowledge involves "being able to speak, read and write Chinese language masterfully." This according to Shuh Yi can take "many many years of study."

Overall, experience of language teaching and learning for Shuh Yi focuses on rating constructs highly against negative role models i.e., the language teacher he feared to be and to a lesser extent the *past language tutor*. The positive experiences exemplify a view of language teaching and learning where teachers relate lesson content to real life experience. This not only makes language more interesting and related to the needs of the pupils but it serves to strengthen cultural links. The ideal language teacher has the ability to show off a *high level of language knowledge* and how language can be used in a variety of ways. This teacher is *tolerant, independent, approachable* and *trustworthy* and is focused on the *wholistic* development of individuals.

Shuh Yi's completed grid shows a distinctive polarisation of construct and element ratings. Clearly Shuh Yi has focused on more positive role models in his selection of elements, all of whom display a large degree of commonality on the elicited constructs. Negative elements are fewer and include the *language teacher I fear to be* (extreme negative pole) and *past language tutor* (twice) and *pupil* (once) rated toward the negative aspect of construing. The remaining elements form clusters at the positive pole. *Self, language teacher I am, ideal self, principal, mother, and HOD language* are spread across the mid-range of construing. An isolated element is *father* who shows a distinct lack of commonality with any other element.

Metaphor analysis

A language teacher is a nurseryman, sowing seeds, providing the soil, fertiliser making sure they are cultivated, giving them life, watching them bloom.

The grounding of Shuh Yi's metaphor points to the importance he places on the development of individuals. This fundamental grounding is linked most strongly in the data of his parents. It is they who have guided and surrounded him in language, and it is from them and the environment they created that he has developed and blossomed as a language user. The form of the metaphor also links to individualisation through a structural picture of a nurseryman surrounded by seedlings, carefully, patiently, cultivating, nurturing and coercing them toward independent growth.

There exists very strong construct correspondences in the concept of the language teacher's role and the metaphorical use of the nurseryman. These correspondences include: the cultivation of each learner (pupil centred, wholistic, tolerant of needs and time required); the practical approach, getting the hands dirty (independent, showing how); fertilising (linking to real life, as a medium for cultural and moral values); need for nutrition (variety of tasks); and the importance of climate (approachable, trustworthy).

Finally, the metaphor of the language teacher as a gardener implies that the teacher's mind is consumed with cultivating cultural and language understandings in his pupils. The connotative meanings of this metaphor are illuminated through his belief that children learn from exposure to and observations of language as it is being used.

A. Language teaching and learning: Ideological foundations

From Figure 4.7 Shuh Yi's view of himself as a language teacher is more closely associated with *self*, *ideal self*, *principal/deputy*, *mother* and *HOD language* rather than with the language teacher he fears to be. The commonality of construct ratings indicate that, at this point in time, Shuh Yi is developing toward his ideal of an effective language teacher. He shares with

these elements a similarity of ideological positioning in areas related to language teaching role i.e., the need to share or demonstrate, to tell how, to be tolerant and approachable, to be trustworthy, and to provide links between language and real life situations. These elements also share a similarity in personal characteristics, specifically their independence, tolerance of individual differences and wholistic individualised view of language learning and teaching. Shuh Yi rates himself as similar to the language teacher feared to be in respect to his current level of language knowledge, trustworthiness, approachability and the quietness in which he will go about teaching.

From Figure 4.7, together with contextual recounts of constructs and biographical data, categorical descriptions of Shuh Yi's current view of language teaching and learning can be summarised under the headings: conditions that facilitate language learning; characteristics of the language teacher; and language teaching pedagogy.

Conditions of language learning

Language learning should occur in an environment where the cultivation of each child is of paramount importance. Shuh Yi believes that children begin to grow as language learners through the "imitation" of different family members' conversation habits. "They will also follow the actors or actress of the TV program conversation to wider [sic] the vocabulary usage area."

A condition of language learning then, is that the child or learner needs to be surrounded with language either directly i.e., family members, or indirectly through radio or TV. A related condition is that more knowledgeable individuals must share just how language may be used and for different real life purposes, that is, the child doesn't learn to talk through worksheets but through using natural (real life) language. Children need to practice using

language until such time as they are independent and as each learner is different time must be allowed for each child to develop "wholistically."

Teacher characteristics

Shuh Yi's data clearly reflects his construals of the ideal language teacher. This teacher approaches language learners with a patient, tolerant attitude. He is prepared to "take time to deal with student problems" while adhering to the syllabus requirements. The ideal language teacher is very concerned with individuals and as such, endeavours to make language lessons relevant and practical. The teacher believes in learning by doing and thus shares and demonstrates his vast knowledge of the language. He also encourages and cultivates children's understanding and use of the language.

The ideal teacher appreciates the power of language and ensures that it is used not only as "a tool" but as a means for exploring the related culture. This teacher is trustworthy and is "able to communicate freely with the students." The teacher is independent of others around him and therefore is able to learn and do things without the support of others, or without being influenced by other people's likes/dislikes. In addition "he is able to speak, read and write the Chinese language masterfully."

Language teaching pedagogy

Shuh Yi's data provides little insight into specific language teaching pedagogy. General ideological groundrules include small group and whole group discussions and sharing of opinions. Activities that facilitate the use of real natural language in a variety of ways such as the checking of individual understanding through questioning and quiz like activities.

Shuh Yi believes that children learn to read through interactions involving parents and the "read[ing of] story books together." From his experience children are guided and supported by their parents in language learning. His citing of how his parents used word cards as a means to teach reading illustrate the type of pedagogic procedures he suggests be used.

Finally, Shuh Yi cites an example of a pedagogical approach that has been labelled "storytelling." In this story telling session the teacher shares his "experiences back in China." These types of sessions were "discussed [and] shared with us [and] always related to the learning text, so as to foster understanding of the text and to enrich our thoughts on culture and morality." The main purpose of this type of activity, according to Shuh Yi, was to help students "better understand" and relate culture to their language learning.

B. The influence of individuals from educative learning cultures

Formal educative role models *principal/deputy, HOD language and language teacher I would like to be*, together with the *mother* and *ideal self* share the highest commonality and positioning closest to the positive construct pole. Shuh Yi, as a language teacher, at this point in time associates a greater similarity of construing with that of his father than with any formal educative element. Collated data would suggest that Shuh Yi, in identifying himself as a language teacher, is looking to his father as a model.

Shuh Yi as a language teacher and his father share a similarity of rating on the constructs *approachable, independent, tolerant, tactful, links language to real life* and *pupil centred*. The element *mother* and Shuh Yi (as a language teacher) share similarity of ratings on the constructs *shares how, wholistic* and *language is a medium: language and moral values*. Shuh Yi as a language

teacher, his father and mother are rated equally on the construct *allows for individual differences*.

At this point in time Shuh Yi's data indicates a view of the world influenced by, and reflective of, the views of his parents. Exposure to formal educative models have validated much of Shuh Yi's construct system and have provided examples of excellence in language teaching. Data collection and analysis has also revealed areas where his construct network can be developed. Shuh Yi's grid indicates a loose-tight construing of himself (language teacher I am) as evidenced in his non-alignment with any one formal educative element preferring to maintain distinct construals of himself as a language teacher as different from formal educative elements. His construing may be challenged by examining the related constructs, their theoretical basis and pedagogic implications.

4.10 Trainee case study: Teow Hiang

Date of Birth: 11/6/72

Race: Chinese

Teaching Course: Diploma in Education (Chinese Specialisation)

Translation: Teow Hiang's original demographic information and learning biography were written in Mandarin. The originals were transcribed and subsequently authenticated by him.

Born in Singapore, Teow Hiang is the youngest of five children. His mother completed teacher training in the People's Republic of China before moving to Singapore where she attained the level of Deputy Principal prior to retiring from the teaching profession. Teow Hiang's father completed his "A" Level equivalent examinations in Singapore and is currently employed as an Underwriting Executive.

Educated at a neighbourhood school in Serangoon Gardens Teow Hiang continued on to a Technical Secondary where he completed his "O" Level examinations and gained entry to Nanyang Junior College. Following his "A" Level examinations Teow Hiang was accepted into the Diploma in Education (Chinese) program.

Chinese and English are the languages spoken in the home, however English is not spoken "as a rule" with his parents. Teow Hiang's parents "encouraged" all of their children to pursue "higher education" and are both "very happy with the positions we have received." Teow Hiang's siblings are employed in a variety of occupations which include a cook, a professional musician with the Singapore Symphony Orchestra and two others completing Bachelor of Arts degrees—one in graphic design and the other in history and politics. His decision to follow his mother into teaching was "most welcomed" by her "although she would've liked me to have gone to N.U.S. (National University of Singapore) first."

Language learning biography

From his experience, parents play an important role in the teaching of language. Teow Hiang believes that in order for children to learn to talk parents must "let children listen and read aloud more to them, use question and answer way or even telling a story from the television, radio program." Teow Hiang believes that "children are very capable in imitation [sic]."

The parent's role in the teaching of reading is to "cultivate reading ability... by establishing the reading habit" in the child. This is achieved by "read[ing] more interesting story books besides textbooks" which he feels assists the child "increase his vocabulary." Teow Hiang recounts how his mother taught him to write, "first she began with letters and words, then with a daily diary. We would read newspaper cutting (clippings) and write like articles [sic]." Teow Hiang believes that as a language teacher he would get his students to "participate more in activities like calligraphy etc." and that the three basic characteristics of language teachers are:

Let pupils listen more, talk more, write more and so on, [sic] start[ing] from this respect move ahead cultivate and correct their pronunciation. Use lively interesting teaching method [sic] to cultivate them. Have the enthusiasm to [sic] language for instance, read interesting magazines. The teacher should tell them some interesting storys [sic] or let them participate in drama, public speaking, reading aloud, cross talk, guest [sic] the word activities or even bring them on outings (excursions), make use of live examples, let them have the deep impression [sic] in order to get the best result.

Teow Hiang further notes the characteristics and "important role[s]" of the language teacher:

Must be very patient, help pupils to like their language, feel proud of their own language. So the language teacher should use the lively interesting methods to cultivate pupil interest. Beside the basic pronunciation and phrases explanation, teachers should have some activities and different ways of teaching to let them like their own language most.

Teow Hiang clearly states the aim of Chinese language teaching "is to create an interest and relevance of the mother tongue language." This is illustrated in the final phrase of the former quotation i.e., "to let them like their own language most."

Repertory grid analysis with written recounts of construct contexts of construing

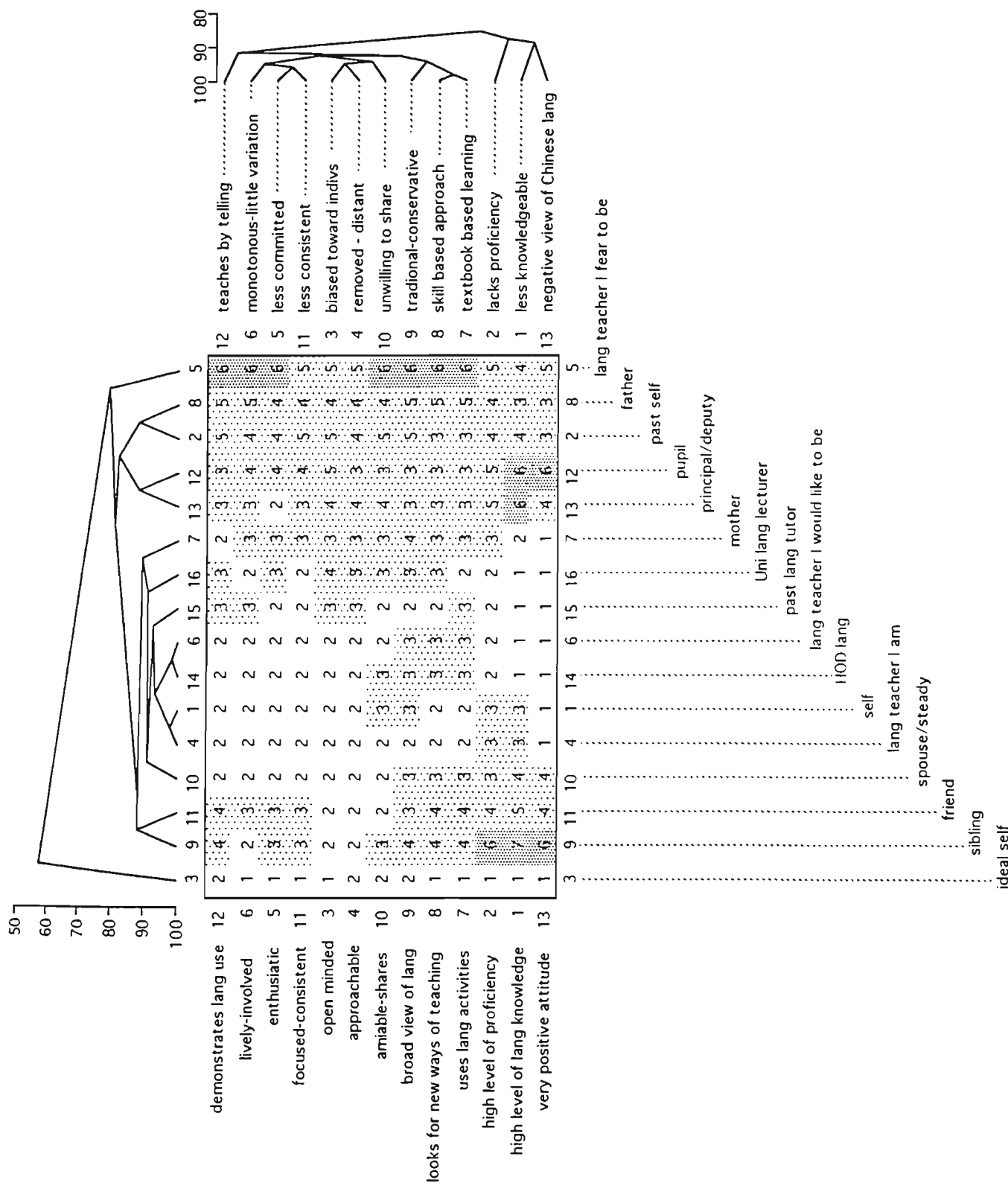
Figure 4.8 displays three highly rated and a fourth more lowly rated construct cluster group. The commonality of the first group ranges from 95%–98% in which the constructs *skill based approach* and *text book based learning* are contrasted with *looks for new ways of teaching* and *uses language activities*. From his experience, language teachers who are focused on textbook learning are highly likely to be skills oriented in their teaching practices. These constructs are most closely associated with the element *language teacher I fear to be*. The elements most likely to be linked to the contrasting, or more positive aspects of experience are the *ideal self*, *language teacher I am* and *self*. Teow Hiang illustrates the use of language activities through his construct descriptions and projective thinking. "Having watched mum I know that there is much preparation and thinking about ways to get knowledge of language across. I would use activities such as playing with language type games and even tape recordings to stimulate the use of language. I think that students need to learn to use language like those ancestors. To learn to use the language as it has been done in the outside world." A *skill based approach* is perceived to be "like Mr Chong, he just says open your textbooks, do

exercises 1 2 3, never changes his approach just over and over the same thing. Very boring, students don't want to go to his class."

Linked to this cluster and showing a commonality of 95% are the constructs *traditional-conservative* as opposed to *broad view of language*. The element most highly associated with the negative aspect of experience is *language teacher I fear to be*. Traditional or conservative language lessons involve the students "listening to the teacher talk and talk... explaining everything in minor [minuscule] detail... too much to remember." A *broad view of language* "involves more student involvement, like talking, question and answering, debating, public speaking." Teachers who subscribe to this broad view also see the need to link language and culture. So he or she "chooses to teach using activities and real examples from the Chinese culture." Traditional teachers, "don't think students have any knowledge, they nothing to say, and the teachers think they know everything."

The second cluster *less committed*, *less consistent* and *monotonous-little variation* are contrasted with *enthusiastic*, *focused-consistent* and *lively involved*. The element *language teacher I fear to be* is most closely associated with the constructs *less committed* and *monotonous-little variation*, but also the construct *less consistent*. *Ideal self*, *spouse/steady*, *language teacher I am*, *self*, *HOD language* and *language teacher I would like to be* are construed very similarly and involve the greatest degree of all positive aspects of construing.

Figure 4.8 FOCUS repertory grid: Teow Hiang



In respect to enthusiasm the ideal language teacher would "take an interest in all that he teaches. This means the contents [sic] and the students' interests." Teow Hiang cites Miss Tan as an example of a language teacher who is *enthusiastic* and *lively-involved*:

She always asked us what we thought, if we were interested and if some of us were not then she changed it to make it more interesting or skipped over the topic onto something more interesting. She always had a smile and rarely did she scold us. Even when she had to she seemed to be looking out for our welfare.

A *less committed* language teacher "Mr Goh put the syllabus and exam results ahead of his students' interests." Teow Hiang emphasises the ability of Miss Tan to make language learning relevant to her students whereas Mr Goh remained "focused" on the requirements of the syllabus. A *focused-consistent* teacher "she (Miss Tan) always checks on our understandings, by asking questions. She always tries to trick us in quizzes so as to check our knowledge." The negative model "only checks sometimes because he is too [sic] busy moving to the next topic to review, one thing is done after another, no checking, some people don't even understand."

The third cluster has the constructs *biased toward individuals*, *distant-removed* and *unwilling to share* opposed to *open-minded*, *approachable* and *amiable-shares*. Teow Hiang's construct descriptions illuminate the personal characteristics that make a language teacher. Emphasis is placed on the "fair treatment" of individuals and being "open minded."

Mr Chong he would make his mind up about a student and would never change it even if they did well in exams. For others he would praise them, without really taking notice of their effort or results.

An *open-minded* language teacher is seen to "treat everyone the same, that way they will all try their best and not be put of [sic] learning the language." Teow Hiang continues a pattern of relating and validating strong teacher values against the *ideal self*. From his experience, the ideal person is *approachable*, that is, "easy to talk to, always pleasant, a teacher who may play with the students at lunch and never embarrasses them for making mistakes." This teacher is *amiable*, i.e., is "prepared to even outside the classroom." Teow Hiang cites a *distant-removed* teacher, "Mr Goh he never speaks or smiles, just scolds and is very tense. He never seems to relax or enjoy teaching. This makes students not want to come to his class and has a negative influence on their language learning." Teow Hiang has very tight construals of the characteristics which the ideal language teacher should possess.

The final cluster *lacks proficiency, less knowledgeable and negative view of Chinese language* are contrasted with *high level of proficiency, high level of language knowledge* and a *very positive attitude*.

Mr Chong [language teacher feared to be] teaches English and although he speaks Mandarin he is not very interested in it. He, like Pui Fen [second brother] and Shaun [pupil] sees no need for the Chinese language outside education. They are more interested in English and put efforts into learning it 'because it's the language of the world' Mr Chong would say. I have always liked Mandarin because it is the language of my culture and when I'm with my family and relatives and friends that's what we speak. I believe Singaporeans should all keep their mother tongue alive if not we may lose the connection, with hundreds of years of our culture.

Teow Hiang construes those who have a *high level of proficiency* and knowledge of language as having "had a great many experiences in which they have been forced to use language." These experiences lead toward a

"deeper understanding for how language works, the grammar and pronunciations." Teow Hiang associates his second brother (element-sibling) closest to the negative pole in this cluster. "Pui Fen, shows very little interest or aptitude for the study of Chinese language, because once he finished his "O" Levels he wanted to give up all Chinese language study, he said 'he hated it.' He even gets into trouble at home for speaking English."

One construct which stands apart from the others in Figure 4.8 is *teaches by telling* as opposed to *demonstrates language use*. Teow Hiang rates the elements *ideal self*, *spouse/steady*, *language teacher I am*, *self*, *HOD language*, *language teacher I would like to be* and *mother* most positively. "The ideal language teacher shows his students some examples of how, what he wants them to do, should be done. This way he can be sure that they understand." Teow Hiang contrasts this with a description of Mr Chong's (language teacher feared to be) teaching. The description also illustrates the influence of his mother's approach to teaching:

Mr Chong talks and talks and expects us to write down notes as he talks. He goes so fast that students have trouble keeping with him and he never gives out notes. Everyday it is the same thing. Rule after rule, this does this and so this... it gets very confusing. My mother on the other hand always showed me how to do things. Like in Maths and in reading and writing. I remember her saying 'you can do this Teow Hiang watch as I do it and then you try.' I think this is how I learned, I followed her demonstration and then she corrected me, and I tried it again and again until I got it right.

Overall experience of language teaching and learning for Teow Hiang focuses on rating constructs highly against a negative role model. In this case the language teacher he feared to be. There is however, a high commonality in the constructs elicited and this suggests a tightness of construing. This

tightness may cause some conflict as Teow Hiang enters the "real world" of language teaching situations are encountered which conflict with his present view of the ideal language teacher. The positive experiences indicate a view of language teaching and learning in which the teacher displays enthusiasm, is involved, open minded and approachable. Teaching activities and experiences are based on real life examples of language use. Expectations and procedures are demonstrated to students to ensure understanding. Similarly, the ideal language teacher is always on the lookout for new ways of getting his message across. This teacher treats individuals fairly, shares understandings and experiences and is approachable. Finally, the teacher possesses a high level of proficiency and knowledge of language which is transmitted to students through a very positive attitude. This, Teow Hiang believes will not only facilitate language learning but will inculcate a love and value for language learning, thus strengthening cultural links.

Most of the elements in Figure 4.8 include a high degree of most of the constructs. The exception being the *ideal self* who provides the opposing or more positive role model. The *language teacher I am, self, HOD language* and *language teacher I would like to be* are the elements which display greatest commonality, i.e., 98%. Together with the *past language tutor, university lecturer, mother, spouse/steady* and *father* these elements provide the foundation role models of the ideal language teacher. When examined in light of the biography and construct descriptions, data reveals evidence of a tightly developing teaching ideology based on the characteristics of the ideal language teacher's personality and some evidence of cultural influence on language learning ideology.

Metaphor analysis

The language teacher is the lighted candle which gives out light to a dark place.

Teow Hiang's metaphor focuses on the role and characteristics of the ideal language teacher and when examined together with his biographical and construct data, it reveals a window on his developing ideology of language teaching. The grounding of Teow Hiang's metaphor points toward the importance he places on the personality of the language teacher. Teacher role models, particularly his mother, have provided him with an insight into language and his culture. The language teacher's role is to enlighten students, to bring them in from the cold and provide a light from which they can see by. The structural and sensory picture derived from the metaphoric form is one in which light is provided to an otherwise darkened place. With the light in hand the teacher is able to lead and shift his student's vision not only toward the light itself but to a clearer understanding of the different areas on which the light falls.

Strong construct correspondences occur within the form of the metaphor. Candles come in many forms and give off many types of light. Yet with their changing form the light can arouse and make interesting an otherwise darkened place. The illumination provides a form from which greater understanding of self and position can be derived. The teacher is in the position of providing light for his students and like candlelight he or she emits warmth, security and performs with the liveliness and consistency of the flame—the emitted light falls on all and can be shared by all.

Teow Hiang's metaphor contains both physical and interpersonal connotative meanings which upon interpretation imply that the teacher's role is to provide illumination for his students. The metaphor expresses the ideal that dedicated teachers will spend their time and energies in the transference of language knowledge and in so doing, shed light on to the related language culture.

Secondly, the metaphor implies that pupils will bask in the teacher's light, "imitating" the teacher's demonstrations. A negative connotation of this metaphor is that some teachers may provide less illumination or warmth. These teachers, like an almost consumed candle, burn less consistently, lack proficiency and thus can be viewed as less committed or unwilling to perform its function. This connotation strengthens Teow Hiang's metaphor and illustrates not only the positive construals of experience but the negative as well.

Language teaching and learning: Ideological foundations

From Figure 4.8 Teow Hiang's view of himself as a language teacher is more closely associated with the language teacher he would like to be, the *HOD language* and *self* than with the language teacher he fears to be. The commonality of construct ratings indicate that at this time Teow Hiang is developing toward a similar ideological position to that of the language teacher he would like to be. He shares with the most liked teacher a similarity of rating in the areas of approachability, open-mindedness, sharing, consistency, enthusiasm level of involvement with students, an approach involving demonstrating and a positive attitude to Chinese language teaching. This attitude is despite the *language teacher I would like to be* element not being a Chinese language teaching specialist.

Teow Hiang differs from this teacher in his conservative view of language teaching. He also rates himself at this point, as slightly higher in respect to being a skills-based and traditional in his approach to teaching and the use of language activities. Teow Hiang does however view himself as having greater proficiency and knowledge of the Chinese language.

He currently shares with the language teacher feared to be a mid-point positioning in respect to the level of language knowledge and proficiency. Teow Hiang has a very positive perception of himself as a language teacher. He closely associates the elements of the *ideal self* and the language teacher he would like to be. The element *ideal self* stands apart from the others and most definitely represents the greatest degree of all aspects of construing. The areas in which he perceives the need for greater development are in his level of Chinese language proficiency and language knowledge. In all other respects he is of the belief that he possesses the characteristics, that from his experience, the ideal language teacher must possess.

Teow Hiang as a language teacher and his mother share a similarity of construct rating in the areas of attitude, level of language knowledge and the use of demonstrations as a mode of language teaching. He views himself to be slightly more committed, consistent, lively, open minded and approachable. In the follow-up interview Teow Hiang commented on this point, "my mother has been retired from teaching for several years I feel I am more positive and confident about being a language teacher than she. After all, she has taught language for so many years. Still most of what I know about people and language I have received from her." Apart from proficiency and knowledge of the Chinese language Teow Hiang rates himself higher than his father on all other constructs. "Whilst my father was involved in my upbringing it was mum who did most of the teaching with the family."

It is from Figure 4.8, together with contextual recounts of constructs and biographical data, that categorical descriptions of Yeow Hiang's current view of language teaching and learning have been identified. These categories include: conditions that facilitate language learning; the language teacher skills; and language teaching pedagogy.

Conditions of language learning

Language learning should occur in an environment where all children are treated equally and as individuals. The children are perceived to be "very capable" and as such Teow Hiang emphasises the need for the teacher to immerse the children in language experiences from which they can model or "imitate". This immersion also exerts a cultural influence on the children. Through such experiences in language the children will learn to "like" their language.

The teacher is responsible for the language learning environment. Demonstrations can be used to highlight the teacher's expectations and the functional nature of language, i.e., how language is "applied to the outside world". These demonstrations help "guide" the children "show them way [sic] to develop and improve" their language abilities.

Another condition of language learning is that children are provided with the opportunity to "listen more, talk more, write more". This implies that to learn language children require time to practice using all their language skills. Through such practice the teacher is able to "check on our understandings" a process which involves providing children with some form of "feedback" as to the progress they are making.

Like in Maths and in reading and writing. I remember her [mother] saying 'you can do this Teow Hiang watch as I do it and then you try.' I think this is how I learned, I followed her demonstration and then she corrected me, and I tried it again and again until I got it right.

Teacher characteristics

Teow Hiang's data provides a clear indication of those constructs that characterise the ideal language teacher. The teacher must be "very patient" and "help pupils" through demonstrations and have a "very positive attitude" to "like" and feel "proud" of their own language. The ideal language teacher must possess the ability to develop greater interest and relevance (culturally) in his language through the use of "language activities" and the employment of "new ways of teaching."

Traditional teachers are construed as thinking that students have little "knowledge, nothing to say" whereas the ideal language teacher involves all the students in lessons through "enthusiasm" and by "take[ing] an interest in what they have to say."

An essential characteristic of an effective language teacher is the emphasis they place on the "fair treatment" of individuals. An open-minded language teacher is seen to "treat everyone the same, that way they [the students] will all try their best and not be put of [sic] learning the language." This characteristic complements another which is the need to be "approachable." Teow Hiang views this as being "easy to talk to, always pleasant..." and someone who "...never embarrasses them for making mistakes." Such a teacher creates an atmosphere whereby students will want to come to class.

Language teaching pedagogy

Children are construed as learning through observing, imitating and doing. They "model" from their parents initially and later their teachers. Teow Hiang believes that by "read[ing] more interesting story books besides textbooks, ...through tell[ing] them some interesting storys [sic]," by encouraging them to "...participate in drama, public speaking, reading aloud, cross talk, guest [sic]

the word activities or even bringing them on outings [excursions]," children will learn to "make use of [real life language] live examples." This involvement he believes will lead to the "best results."

Activities such as language games and tape recordings are used to "stimulate the use of language" because they provide greater opportunity for "student involvement, like talking, question and answering, debating, public speaking." These activities, especially when linked to real life examples taken from the language culture assist students to see the relevance of their language and culture, which in turn assists them to "like their [cultural] language."

Teow Hiang construes the teaching and learning of reading, writing and speaking similarly. Each begins by surrounding the child in models of the language to be learned. The children are then involved in learning through activities designed to stimulate language use eg. "Question and answer" in speaking, reading "words and interesting storys [sic]" that will "cultivate" the reading habit and "diary writing" and "light calligraphy" in writing. Teow Hiang data indicates a belief concerning how children learn to read, i.e., it begins with exposure to "bedtime stories" which form a reading habit that can be further developed. Teow Hiang also believes that reading precedes writing and spelling. Given the metaphoric use of the candle and conditions of learning derived from the data, his intrinsic approach to language teaching and learning process indicates a socio-behavioural view of language teaching.

B. The influence of individuals from educative learning cultures

The formal educative role models, *HOD language* and *past language tutor* together with *mother* share the highest commonality and positive aspects of construing. Teow Hiang as a language teacher at this time associates a

greater similarity of construing with the teacher he would like to be. Collated data would suggest that Teow Hiang, in identifying the language teacher he would like to be, is looking to a person who espouses similar ideological and personal characteristics to those of his mother. This is most evident in the positive construals of *self* and *ideal self*. The *ideal self* being the element most closely construed with the positive construct pole. Construals of *self* and associated constructs are acknowledged by Teow Hiang as having been influenced by his mother.

"Having watched mum I know that there is much preparation and thinking about ways to get knowledge of language across. I would use activities such as playing with language type games and even tape recordings to stimulate the use of language. I think that students need to learn to use language like those ancestors. To learn to use the language as it has been done in the outside world."

Inherent in the constructs of *open-minded*, *approachable*, *amiable-shares* and *consistent* are personal values shared similarly by all elements depicted in Figure 4.8. Similarly, the constructed views of the ideal language teacher have their origins in the construct descriptions, biographical and metaphor data. Teow Hiang has selected elements or positive language teaching role models who share a similarity with his own construct system. This validates his current view of language teaching and learning —a view which has its origins in the informal learning culture of the home. Teow Hiang's mother as a teacher is the candle, who has through her teaching, expended her energies in the transference of teaching and learning wisdom to her son Teow Hiang.

4.11 Trainee case study: Connie

Date of Birth: 3/5/71

Race: Chinese

Teaching Course: Diploma in Education (Chinese Specialisation)

Translation: Connie's original demographic information and learning biography were written in Mandarin. The originals have been transcribed and subsequently authenticated by her.

Born in Singapore, Connie is the elder of two children. Her mother completed her education at Secondary school and currently works as a Clerk. Her father completed his schooling at the National University of Singapore (N.U.S.) where he attained a Bachelor of Arts degree. He is currently employed as a Social Worker. Both parents were born in Singapore and speak "fluent" Chinese and English.

Educated at neighbourhood primary and secondary schools Connie completed her "O" Level examinations and progressed on to complete her "A" Level examinations at Anderson Junior College. Connie was accepted into teacher training as a result of her "A" Level passes. She has not worked full time, but has been employed part-time at K.C. Tang's Shopping Emporium for a number of years.

Family discussions are normally held in both mother tongue Chinese and English language. Chinese "seems to dominate family matters because they (discussions) usually involve my aunts and uncles." Connie describes her family as "open" in their approach to "talking about personal and political stuff." Both parents "are very serious about us [Connie and her brother] getting a good education" and both have had personal tutors "in all examinable subjects" throughout their formal education.

Mummy and father have been pushy about us getting ahead. That's because they want us to do well, be successful. Singapore is very competitive y'know and they want the very best for us. Even though he has a degree father wants the same for us, maybe even better.

Language learning biography

Connie's biography was written in three sections: parents and learning; formal teaching of language; and the language teacher. From her experience "parents and surrounding friends" play an important role in the teaching of language. Connie believes that "before children talk they already, through listening and seeing, know much about their surroundings." So "children learn how to talk through their observing of things and conversations of people [sic]."

Connie also believes that "as they learn to talk, they [children] build up the foundation of reading." From her experience parents play an important role in the teaching of language. She states "learning will be easier if the opportunity is given to let children have the initiative and interest to the subject matter or thing." Interest alone is not seen as enough as Connie clearly points out that with "a lively and an interesting study environment, and parent guidance and practice all at the same time, the result of study and learning will be better."

Language teachers "in teaching language, pass on their knowledge of language they should emphasise more variety of teaching activities, should be relaxed and teaching materials should be significant." Connie continues in this section to emphasise the affective nature of the language classroom and its effects on those in it.

Teaching is not only in the classroom, constant breakthrough and experiments with language outside lets the pupils feel that the study of language is a fun activity, with an unstressed frame of mind will be the best.

An important characteristic of the language teacher, from Connie's experience, "...is his or her personality." This involves the teacher being more than "happy and respectful to their work and children." The teacher must:

Have understanding, patient to each of the pupils, have a courageous spirit to try out new experiments [activities outside the syllabus], maintain[ing] a happy frame of mind.

Repertory grid analysis with written recounts of construct contexts of construing

Connie's completed grid shows four highly rated construct cluster groups. The commonality of the first cluster ranges from 80%–90%. Figure 4.9 shows that the constructs *all students involved*, *energetic*, *effective communicator* and *mature language user* are opposed to *poor control*, *passive*, *all talk* and *learning about language* respectively. These constructs are most highly rated at the positive pole with the *principal/deputy*, *ideal self*, *language teacher I would like to be*, *past language tutor* and *university lecturer*. The element *sibling* is closely associated to being an *effective communicator* and having *all students involved*. The *HOD language* is rated highly as a *mature language user* and in the ability to get *all students involved*. The element *father* is perceived to be an *effective communicator* whilst *self* is highly *energetic*.

Getting students involved refers to the language teacher's ability "to have groups of children working in the classroom, and all the students doing things." In contrast, those elements linked to the negative aspect of construing such as *pupil*, *past self*, *self* and *mother* have *poor control*. That is, they have had "less experience with lots of people in groups. Mummy has only me and

The construct *energetic* is defined as having "an interest in passing on whatever passion for knowledge she has to her students" whereas *passive* language users "go about language without much interest, they use it and that's all, no passion." Similarly the *effective communicator* is "able to deliver his or her ideas with accuracy and humour." Whereas Mr Tan, the language teacher feared to be, "is all talk, goes on and on, very monotonous and is very hard to understand." Connie perceives mature language users to "have the ability to use her knowledge of language to clarify any doubts or to correct any mistakes that her students have made." Those elements allied to the negative aspect of construing are viewed as "learners of language, they don't really have the same knowledge because of their lack of experience."

Linked to this cluster and showing a commonality of 80% is the construct *little interest in individuals* in contrast to *teaches whole person*. The elements *language teacher I would like to be*, *past self* and *sibling* are construed very similarly and involve the greatest degree of all positive aspects of construing. These elements are "respectful of individuals, have a high regard for the student's point of view, even when, if they sound silly." Connie believes that "language teachers should try and see students as individual human beings with needs and feelings, not just as a class."

A second cluster showing a commonality of 85% contrasts *rebellious* and *unpredictable* to *knows what he wants* and *predictable*. The elements *spouse/steady* and *past self* are allied toward the negative aspect of construing whereas *mother* and *language teacher I fear to be* have a greater degree of positive construct ratings. "Rebelliousness [sic] does not fit into the language teacher's profile of good students." Connie views the ideal student as one "who knows what he wants and goes about getting it." Language teachers who are construed as *predictable* "are routine in terms of their

actions and behaviour, especially with mistakes. This helps the children learn because they are less stressed, the teacher is consistent so they know how she will react."

The third cluster harnesses *sees links with culture* and *seeks alternatives*. They are opposed to *expressive* and *direct teaching*. "Direct teachers stay with the syllabus always." The language teacher who seeks alternatives "is more aware about student needs and problems, therefore looks for the best way to help students solve their problems." This means going outside the syllabus and using real life examples if needed." This teacher also "sees natural links with understanding culture." The teacher "makes language lessons as lively as possible and helps students to establish links with their culture, through the use of language."

The fourth cluster in Figure 4.9 couples four constructs which display a commonality of between 80%–86%. They are *relates language to real life experiences*, *autonomous*, *allows mistakes: important* and *looks to encourage*. These are opposed to *structured approach*, *syllabus based*, *trys to maintain control* and *non-supportive* respectively. The elements *spouse/steady*, *university lecturer*, *past language tutor*, *self* and *sibling* are construed most positively and are more likely to:

Make the student see the practical need for language and language study. That with language knowledge and daily communication students are able to see and practice part of their culture. A *structured approach* to language teaching means that the teacher goes strictly by, her methods and teaching go according to those described in the Teacher's Edition. Learning of the language is confined only to the textbook; and not to the practical needs of the students.

This structured approach relates to a pattern of construing in the construct *syllabus based*. Language teaching is viewed as being "tied to the syllabus" whereas autonomy of teaching is defined as when the teacher "goes outside the syllabus." The teacher "helps the students to appreciate the beauty of the language, in terms of its cultural history. This also means that learning of the language is not based on the syllabus, but on one's experiences as well." Elements displaying a positive association with this construct are *spouse/steady*, *past language tutor*, *language teacher I would like to be*, *friend* and *sibling*. Connie's *university lecturer* and *spouse/steady* also display a positive association with *allows mistakes: important*.

The construct *allows mistakes: important* requires the teacher to "encourage children for their efforts, no matter if they have made an error. Some teachers like to maintain control of their student's work so they restrict their movement and actions. This way the children all act the same and are sometimes scared to try because they might get a mistake [sic]." The elements *spouse/steady*, *university lecturer*, *language teacher I would like to be*, *friend*, *pupil* and *principal* look to encourage and "support" learners. Connie states:

The teacher is able to provide not only academic guidance but also emotional support for their students. Emotional support is in terms of praise, encouragements [sic] and being there to listen to their problems.

Overall experience of language teaching and learning for Connie focuses on rating elements highly against negative construals of experience. The positive experiences exemplify an approach to language teaching and learning that relates language to real life experience. This facilitates learning, not only about language, but also about the related language culture. The ideal language teacher in Connie's experience sees links with culture and displays a concern for both the academic and emotional well being of all students.

Connie believes that student needs and interests are important to language learning and that to facilitate language learning the teacher must look beyond the syllabus guidelines. The teacher must can get all students involved and to maintain control of the learning environment. He or she is energetic, that is, focused on sharing knowledge of language, interested in the well being of individual students and therefore looks to encourage them whenever possible.

Figure 4.9 displays a loose-tight nature of construing. This is indicated in the lower commonality percentages and spread of ratings in respect to both elements and constructs. With the elements *sibling* and *spouse/steady as exceptions*, the ratings indicate that most of the elements display some commonality but at a low rate. The elements *mother* and *language teacher I fear to be* display a commonality of 80% and linked to these elements is the *language teacher I would like to be*. Connie indicated in a follow-up interview "that all of the individuals selected as elements could be learned from" and "had much to offer as language teaching models." Connie can see the positive and negative aspects of individuals and various teaching approaches. It is this flexibility in her construing which may well support and help Connie adapt to the real world of the language teacher.

Metaphor analysis

Language teacher is like a gardener.

The grounding of Connie's metaphor points to the importance she places on the development of individuals. This fundamental grounding is linked most strongly in both her biography and repertory grid references to the academic and emotional support of learners. The form of the metaphor creates a structural picture of the cultivation of individuals resulting in independent

growth. This growth being reflected in the academic, emotional and cultural well being of the individual.

There exists very strong construct correspondences in the concept of the language teacher's role and the metaphorical use of the gardener concept. These correspondences include: the cultivation of each learner (teaches whole person, autonomous, allows mistakes: important and all student's involved); the hands-on approach (energetic teachers); the fertility and need for nutrition (relate language to real life experiences, mature language user, seeks alternatives and looks to encourage); and the importance of climate (sees links with culture, predictable and effective communicator).

Finally, the metaphor of the language teacher as a gardener implies that the teacher's mind is consumed with cultivating the minds of her pupils. The connotative meanings of this metaphor are illuminated through the implied meanings derived from Connie's biographical account of language learning. Specifically, the notion that to improve or foster the mind requires observation and practical involvement with more knowledgeable and effective communicators. Connie has a belief that language learning results from an imitation of, and an immersion in language. It is this preparation which facilitates academic (language development) and cultural growth.

A. Language teaching and learning: Ideological foundations and influences

From Figure 4.9 Connie's view of herself as a language teacher is a shared association with the language teacher she would like to be and the language teacher feared to be. The commonality of construct ratings indicate that at this time Connie is developing toward a similar ideological position as the language teacher she would like to be in respect to her personal ability to get

her message across (effectiveness as a communicator), maintain the energy required and interest in the passing on of language knowledge, and in her ability to encourage learners. As a teacher, she shares with this element similarity of beliefs in the need to seek out teaching and learning alternatives and allow individuals to make and learn from their mistakes. She differs from this teacher in her specific knowledge of language teaching, i.e., how to be more predictable, "work to plans," relate language to real life experiences, be autonomous, and in her knowledge of how to teach the whole person.

Connie rates herself as similar to the language teacher feared to be concerning the ability to control the class and in their maturity as language users. At this time she has a very negative perception of her teaching approach as evidenced by rating herself lowly on the constructs *structured approach* and *syllabus based*. All three elements share a similarity of rating regarding fostering links with culture.

The *language teacher I fear to be* and *mother* share an 80% degree of commonality on negative aspects of construing. They are both very sure of what they want, but concerning language knowledge they are passive about sharing it. Connie in a follow-up interview stated "Mummy and father have never had the need to share their language knowledge, except with my brother and I. So they just keep to themselves and only discuss language when they have to." The elements *language teacher I fear to be* and *mother* are extremely predictable, structured, and emphasise the need to adhere learning to the syllabus. This strictness was also clarified by Connie, "Mummy more than father was concerned with us doing what we were told by our teachers. She would say 'no matter how boring, just do, you need for the exams.' This was very frustrating, annoying."

From Figure 4.9, the contextual recounts of constructs and biographical data, categorical descriptions of Connie's current view of language teaching and learning are summarised under the headings: conditions that facilitate language learning; characteristics of the language teacher; and language teaching pedagogy.

Conditions of language learning

Language learning should occur in an environment where the cultivation of each child (teaches whole person, autonomous, allows mistakes: important and all student's involved) academically, emotionally and socially is of paramount importance. Connie believes that "before children talk they already, through listening and seeing, know much about their surroundings." The first condition of learning then is that a language rich environment be established in which language washes over the child. Connie believes that children "learn how to talk through their observing of things and conversations of people." A second condition requires the provision of language experiences and examples which relate to the child's needs and interests.

From Connie's experience it is important that the child is left in control of language learning. It is their "initiative and interest" in the "subject matter" that "stimulates" language learning. However, "interest alone is not seen as enough" as Connie illustrates, "a lively and an interesting study environment... together with parent guidance and language practice, all at the same time... will result in much better language learning."

The condition of parental guidance relates not only to providing demonstrations of language, but encouragement and feedback to the children on their performance (allowing them to make mistakes). The language teacher should be "encouraging children for their efforts... provide[ing] not only

academic guidance but also emotional support for their students. Emotional support is in terms of praise, encouragements [sic] and being there to listen to their problems."

In Connie's experience she has parents who also have very high expectations of success concerning children's learning. These expectations are predictable and validated against real life examples, i.e., "...Singapore is a very competitive place..."

Teacher characteristics

An important characteristic of the language teacher, from Connie's experience is "her personality." This involves more than being "happy and respectful to their work and children" for the teacher must display an "understanding" of and be "patient" toward each child. Connie also sees the need for this teacher to have a "courageous spirit," that is, a willingness to go beyond the syllabus should student needs require it.

The positive experiences of language teachers derived from Connie's data exemplify a teacher who also validates the content of her teaching against real life experiences. This facilitates learning not only about language but, about the related language culture. The ideal language teacher in Connie's experience sees links with culture and displays a concern for both the academic and emotional well being of her students. This teacher believes student needs and interests are important to language learning and that to facilitate language learning he or she must look beyond the syllabus guidelines. The teacher also can get all students involved and to maintain control of the learning environment. He or she is energetic, that is, focused on sharing knowledge of language, interested in the well being of individual students and looks to encourage them whenever possible.

The ideal language teacher also possesses the ability to deliver lessons with "accuracy and humour" and yet have the strength and maturity to "use her knowledge of language to clarify any doubts or to correct any mistakes that her students have made." This maturity comes from being an experienced language user and an "effective communicator." This teacher is "respectful" of all students and supports the "open" sharing of opinions. Students are respected as "individual human beings with needs and feelings, not just as a class." This teacher focuses on teaching the "whole person," i.e., the teacher provides "academic guidance" and "emotional support for all students in the form of praise and encouragement."

Language teaching pedagogy

The biography and metaphor provide insights into Connie's perspective of ideal language teaching pedagogy. The approach is one which involves an emphasis on a variety of "significant" teaching activities. These are presented in a relaxed "unstressed" manner which capitalises on the "affective nature of the language classroom."

Connie views a "group of children working" to be an important mode of teaching and learning in the ideal language teacher's classroom. Children, Connie acknowledges learn as much about language from outside the classroom as they do from formal lessons within it, therefore she sees the importance of bringing "real life experiences" into the classroom whenever possible.

The ideal language teacher is always looking for new "alternative" ways of meeting "students' needs." This may mean adopting an approach or teaching topic from "outside the syllabus." Language teaching itself should involve

student's practicing daily the various modes of language and it is through such "practice," and "daily communication [that] students are able to see and practice part of their culture." These she believes helps students appreciate the beauty of language, in terms of its cultural history.

B. The influence of individuals from educative learning cultures

Connie has developed an approach to language teaching and learning which is closely modelled on her personal history, specifically the influences of her mother and selected teachers she has experienced as a student. Formal educative role models share highest commonality and are rated closest to the positive construct pole in respect to language teaching and learning. Connie, as a language teacher, at this time shares a similarity of construing concerning language learning and teaching with the language teacher she fears to be and her mother. Connie's grid does, as discussed, indicate an even sharing of constructs, with no real extreme or consistently rated negative role model, therefore validation of construing occurs against all elements selected.

Connie currently has more in common with her mother than any other element. They share a similarity of construct rating in both their beliefs about language teaching and personal values related to the treatment of learners. Both believe that language teaching should be "expressive" but also see how language can be linked with cultural understanding. They see the need for some direct instruction but recognise that there are alternative approaches which the language teacher may use. Both elements are rated as being quite structured and syllabus oriented regarding language teaching. They share personal characteristics of looking to encourage learners, are respectful of the need for individual based teaching but as described in the repertory grid analysis, have little knowledge of how to undertake such an approach or how to get larger groups involved. As language learners both are construed to be

relatively experienced teachers although the mother is rated slightly higher. Finally, "Ma and I have the ability to share clearly."

Connie's data indicates a view of the world modelled on that of her mothers. Exposure to formal educative models has validated much of Connie's construct system and provided examples of excellence in language teaching. Given Connie's loose-tight construing she would appear not to align or construe herself tightly with any one formal educative element. She therefore maintains distinct construals of herself as a language teacher from more formal educative elements and even *self*. It is the changing of context from informal learning and social behaviour, i.e., the familiar school environment and associated student roles, to a more formal, unfamiliar role as language teacher, which is currently challenging Connie's construals of self. This has resulted in a tightening of her construct system toward a view constructed and influenced by the culture of her home.

4.12 Trainee case study: Regina

Date of Birth: 10/1/67

Race: Indian

Teaching Course: Diploma in Education (Tamil Specialisation)

Born in Singapore, Regina is the eldest of three children. Her mother and father were educated in Singapore both leaving in Secondary 1. Regina's father is retired having spent his life working from the family "shop house." Since retiring he has worked as a volunteer after care worker whilst her mother has worked at home full time, "occasionally helping out in the shop house."

Educated at a mission primary and secondary school, Regina completed her "A" Level examinations at a neighbourhood secondary school. Before entering teacher training, Regina worked as a Senior Day Care Teacher (pre-primary School). This position required no formal qualifications and it was this experience which "stimulated my interest in teaching."

Recently married Regina no longer lives at home. However, for the purposes of this study she elected to talk as if she was still living at home. Tamil and English language are spoken in the family home however all family discussions are held in the family's mother tongue, Tamil language. The nature of the family business, a shophouse along Serangoon Road, requires the family members to deal with tourists and locals on a daily basis. Therefore all family members speak Tamil, English, and Malay while her mother can also speak Hokkien, though "her proficiency in most is not that good." While English is rarely spoken in the home Regina has observed "when Appa [father] told stories of English tourists he does so in English." Regina recalls that her parents "were always very busy, working long hours so we had to do homework and study in the shop."

All the children have "been successful" in gaining employment, her brother is an aircraft technician and her sister is a corporate secretary. Regina is the first to undertake tertiary studies and states that "my parents are very proud and they tell everyone who enters the shop —bit embarrassing for a 25 year old."

Language learning biography

Regina believes that language learning begins in the "pre-natal" period. "I believe children, from the time they are in the mother's womb, have the ability to somehow understand what's going on around them. The language and feelings of the mother and father, especially after birth, influence the child's learning and thinking." Regina uses an oral language example to illustrate her point.

Just sitting down having an impromptu conversation with a child will introduce simple vocabulary and knowledge into his mind. A child who constantly hears a word or idea will automatically be able to say these words and ideas.

Regina provides more insight into the effects of the learning environment through a reading example. She states "a teacher should portray reading as having something more than just mere words. When a teacher can effectively read or show how to tell a story and make it a very interesting story telling session, children will acquire the interest to read." To make it interesting, "children love it when you use facial gestures and make it sound as if its real."

Using experiences gained from her previous teaching experience she believes that by "allowing a child to scribble what he knows is all right. Giving a child activities like paper tearing, dough-playing etc. will enhance fine motor

skills and give him or her confidence when actual writing is taking place." Encouragement "rather than discouragement" is also believed to help the child in their learning.

Repertory grid analysis with written recounts of construct contexts of construing

Regina's completed grid shows two highly rated construct cluster groups. The commonality of the first group ranges from 90%–82%. Figure 4.10 shows that the constructs *supportive*, *love and value language*, *encourages language use* and *demonstrates* in contrast to *forceful*, *uses language as a tool*, *concerned with accuracy* and *copy work from board* to have the highest commonality within the cluster.

From her experience language teachers who are friendly are *supportive*, that is "encouraging" and most likely to also *love and value language*. The elements *father*, *past self*, *self*, *ideal self*, *language teacher I am*, and *university lecturer* are all rated highly in this respect. Regina uses her friend as an example of support and encouragement. "Calistra [*friend*] and I have been good friends for almost 14 years. ...she is a very understanding and helpful person. We think alike sometimes." The elements *mother* and *language teacher I fear to be* are most closely associated with the negative aspects of this construing, as "forceful." That is, they are very firm, determined and view language as a "tool," —a mean to an end, i.e., "to write letters to the 'Forum' (newspaper) and recommendations, etc." On the other hand elements such as *father*, *past self*, *self*, *ideal self*, *language teacher I am*, and *university lecturer* "love and value language". Regina illustrates this, and the influence of her father in the following description:

My father is probably another great influence where [sic] my language acquisition. I used to write reports and letters for my father a great deal. In the process, I learnt many new words and actually enjoyed the writings. In school, I liked writing essays/compositions. My father used to buy books on enrichment of English Language. Nevertheless I speak Tamil to both my parents. I was curious about the English language and the fondness started when I was in Primary 1 – a time when I had completely no grasp of the English language.

The elements *father*, *ideal self*, *language teacher I am*, and *university lecturer* are construed very similarly in respect to the constructs *encourages language use* and *demonstrates*. Using an example of the language teacher she would like to be, Regina demonstrates how someone who encourages language use can also hinder learning. Mrs Seow:

A European lady married to a Chinese was probably the biggest influence in my life where language was concerned. I admired the way she spoke and always wished that I could someday be able to speak as fluently and as confidently as her. Indirectly, just by listening to her speak, it encouraged the rest of us to use language effectively. However, she was very concerned with accuracy which made me over conscious about the way I spoke.

Demonstrating is viewed as "showing how to do something/actual real life experience" whereas copying work from the board means "a dictated way of getting students to do something." This approach to language teaching is perceived as "passive and uninteresting."

I recall my days in Primary School as having to copy loads and loads of written work from the board. It wasn't enjoyable. I hope I will be able to give my students a lot of hands on experiences.

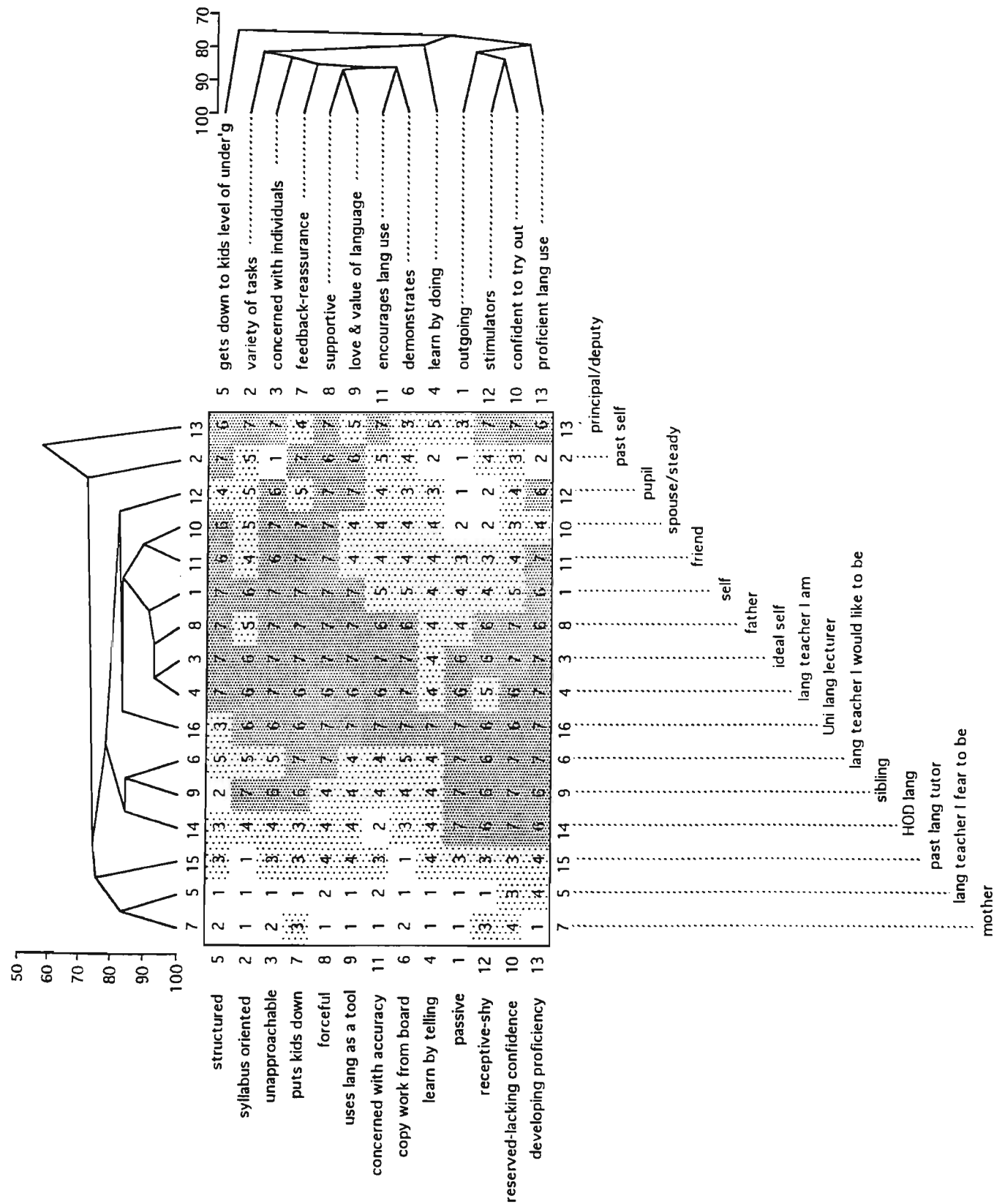
Linked to these constructs and showing a commonality of 88% is *feedback/reassurance* as opposed to *puts kids down*. Regina recalls that as a language learner "I always wanted comments or praise for my efforts. I lacked confidence and was looking for reassurance not only from teachers but also from parents." At times however Regina came across language teachers who would "put kids down." That is, they were always "giving negative feedback." She recalls:

I remember when I was in Primary 5, my teacher Ms Wee [language teacher feared to be] just didn't like me and always picked on me. I became very reserved and less confident as a result. I hope I will be fair to all students and be more understanding.

This example highlights the need to treat students as individuals and *concerned for individuals* is a construct closely linked in the cluster. This concern is defined as "truly caring for the well being of their students." Regina cites Mrs Seow and Mrs Joseph (*principal*) as elements who display a high degree of concern for individuals. Illustrative examples of their concern include the "bringing of sandwiches" to students who had after school activities (Mrs Seow), and "dropping in on classes" to see how they were going. Mrs Wee [*university lecturer*] is seen as slightly more "approachable" due to her being a "down to earth kind of person" whereas being a principal "made it difficult for students to approach Mrs Joseph."

The elements *sibling*, *principal*, *past self*, *self*, *ideal self*, *language teacher I am*, and *university lecturer* exhibit greatest degrees of positive construing on the construct *variety of tasks*. "Mrs Wee made her lessons very interesting because she planned different activities for us to work on and on top of that she had a good sense of humour. Nevertheless she still abide [sic] by the syllabus."

Figure 4.10 FOCUS repertory grid: Regina



The element *university lecturer* is the only element rated highly on the final construct, *learn by doing*, that forms this cluster. This construct is defined as "learning through real life experiences." Regina cites an example of a time when "Mrs Seow, ...asked me what I had observed rather than tell me what I would see." This learning "by telling" is characteristic of a teaching approach in which "the person in authority... dictated" what the students were to do.

The second cluster, showing a commonality of 85%–80% is most closely associated with *HOD language, sibling, language teacher I would like to be, ideal self* and *university lecturer*. The element *language teacher I am* shares this high rating except on the construct *stimulator – receptive/shy*. The elements *father* and *principal* are also rated highly on three of the four constructs which form this cluster, the exception being ratings on the construct *outgoing – passive*.

The constructs showing highest commonality in this cluster are *stimulators, confident to try out* as opposed to *receptive/shy* and *reserved-lacking confidence*. Highly rated elements on these constructs are "more willing to try out new ideas" and "experiment with activities." Lowly rated elements are considered to be "not so willing to experiment" and are considered "too shy to ask questions." In Regina's view, these constructs "boil down to a lack of confidence." Those considered outgoing have a "very flexible, pleasant and approachable personality" as opposed to being "passive" or "reserved and as such they are unable to voice out opinions." Regina recalls:

I was an extremely passive, quiet and reserved person. I just couldn't bring myself to voice out opinions or even to express myself. Mrs Wee [*university lecturer*] has the kind of personality that encourages me to want to speak up in class! Her personality is one that is very encouraging. In fact she points out mistakes tactfully but firmly, that only gives me confidence to try again.

The final construct in this cluster is *proficient language use* as opposed to *developing proficiency*. The element *mother* is most closely associated with the negative aspect of construing. She "is still striving to achieve excellence where language proficiency is concerned," whereas highly rated elements have the ability to "speak very well and very confidently."

Gets down to kids level of understanding in contrast to *structured* is a construct that stands apart, but is still experienced most in relation to *language teacher I am*, *ideal self*, *father*, *self*, *friend*, *spouse/steady*, *past self* and *principal*. These elements view language learning and teaching "from the child's point of view," as opposed to being *structured* in their approach. This involves being "very rigid in their method of teaching with no allowance for flexibility. They are strictly syllabus oriented. In lessons like these I remember feeling tensed [sic] all the time."

Overall, experience of language teaching and learning for Regina focuses on rating constructs highly against negative role models. In this case the language teacher she feared to be and her mother. The positive experiences exemplify a view of language teaching and learning where the teachers approach their language classes with a love and value of language. They are concerned with individuals and as such endeavour to make language lessons relevant, practical and ensure that they are delivered at the student's level of understanding. The teacher believes in learning by doing and as such demonstrates and encourages language use. The language teacher is confident, outgoing and displays a proficiency in their use of language.

Metaphor analysis

A language teacher is like a gardener tending to his plants. Right from the beginning the plant has to be well-taken care of for it to grow into a sturdy plant bearing fruits and flowers. A child needs a good foundation and like the gardener the language teacher can build that for him or her.

The grounding of Regina's metaphor points to the importance she places on the focus and development of individuals. This fundamental grounding is linked most strongly in the data to her father and the influence of formal educative models of language teaching. The form of the metaphor also links to this individualisation through a structural picture of the gardener cultivating and nurturing individual plants—independent growth being the result.

There exists very strong construct correspondences in the concept of the language teacher's role and the metaphorical use of the gardener concept. These correspondences include the cultivation of each learner (concern with individuals, getting down to kid's level of understanding and supportive); the hands on approach (confident to try out, learn by doing and encourages language use); the fertility (striving for excellence in proficiency) and need for nutrition (variety of tasks); and the importance of climate (feedback/reassurance and support).

Finally, the metaphor of the language teacher as a gardener implies that the teacher's mind is consumed with cultivating the minds of her pupils. The connotative meanings of this metaphor are illuminated through the implied meanings derived from Regina's biographical account of language learning—her belief that children learn from exposure to and observations of language being used. This learning begins "in the womb," from the time of planting and it is this preparation that facilitates growth.

A. Language teaching and learning: Ideological foundations and influences

From Figure 4.10 Regina's view of herself as a language teacher more closely associated with her *sibling*, *ideal self*, *university lecturer* and *father* than with the language teacher she fears to be. The commonality of construct ratings indicate that at this time Regina has a very high perception of herself as a language teacher. She shares with these elements a similarity of ideological positioning in areas related to the role of the language teacher, i.e., the need to demonstrate, support, encourage and provide feedback, provide a wide variety of language tasks, and time to practice using language. These elements also share personal characteristics, specifically in their levels of confidence and language proficiency and, in their love and value of language. Regina rates herself as similar to her *mother*, i.e., toward the negative aspect of construing regarding her shyness.

The *language teacher I fear to be* and *mother* share an 83% degree of commonality. As the most negative aspects of construing they are both structured in their approach to language teaching and to individuals. The *mother* is rated higher however in the provision of *feedback* and *willingness to try out new ideas*. Regina in a follow-up interview stated:

Ma doesn't really have that good a proficiency in any language other than Tamil. Therefore she could hardly help us during our schooling so my father did. Ma is much stricter about everything than Appa, so when it comes to learning language she saw the syllabus and our teachers as the only way to do it. She wanted us to be very well behaved children both at home and at school, so this influenced her approach with us.

The categorical descriptions of Regina's current view of language teaching and learning are summarised under the categorical headings: conditions that facilitate language learning; characteristics of the language teacher; and language teaching pedagogy.

Conditions of language learning

Language learning should occur in an environment where the cultivation of each child is of paramount importance. Regina believes that children begin to grow as language learners before birth. From the time they are in the mother's womb, they "have the ability to somehow understand what's going on around him or her." This infers a condition of language learning whereby children learn from a subconscious engagement with language in their environment.

Just sitting down having an impromptu conversation with a child will introduce simple vocabulary and knowledge into his mind. A child who constantly hears a word or idea will automatically be able to say these words and ideas.

This condition assumes that children have language around them and that this language is "real." That is, language is being used for a variety of real life experiences and to make the learning experience relevant, it is related to the real world interests of the child.

From Regina's experience, it is important that the child be allowed to "practice" using language, without a concern for accuracy. Overt concern for mastery or accuracy is seen to place a pressure on the learner. In Regina's case this "made me over conscious about the way I spoke" which affected "my fluency and confidence." Similarly, when the child practises there is a need for "feedback" and "reassurance" and "praising the child" for all efforts.

Teacher characteristics

Regina's data reflects a surety in her construals of the ideal language teacher. This teacher approaches language classes with a love and value of language, is concerned with individuals and therefore endeavours to make language lessons relevant and practical. They do this by providing a variety of learning tasks and ensure that each is delivered at the student's level of understanding. The teacher believes in learning by doing and as such demonstrates, encourages and supports children in their use of language.

The ideal language teacher is a "down to earth kind of person" who exudes confidence and proficiency in their use of language. The teacher is approachable, displays a good sense of humour and is willing to try out new ideas and activities in their teaching. All language lessons and feedback take into account "the child's point of view."

Language teaching pedagogy

The biography and metaphor provide few insights into Regina's perspective of ideal language teaching pedagogy. Specific pedagogic examples of Day Care teaching activities are included, i.e., giving children activities like paper tearing, dough-playing, etc. are cited, however specific language teaching activities are not provided.

Regina's construals of the ideal language teacher's role are also very clear, but her construct descriptions lack specificity concerning pedagogy. Her preferred teaching approach does however promote the notion of using a "variety of tasks" to meet student needs. The preferred approach is one which the teacher shows learners "how to do something" [use language] using examples based on "real life" language use. Negative teaching approaches

have students "copying... loads and loads of written work from the board" which is perceived by Regina as "passive and uninteresting."

The inculcation of the reading habit is inherent in the ideal language teacher's approach to teaching. This is achieved through expressive reading, the sharing of stories and through storytelling. These specific examples provide the only real insight into Regina's knowledge of language teaching pedagogy.

B. The influence of individuals from educative learning cultures

Formal educative role models, together with the father share the highest commonality and positioning closest to the positive construct pole. Regina as a language teacher at this time however, associates greater similarity of construing with that of her father than with any formal educative role model. Collated data would suggest that Regina, in identifying herself as a language teacher is looking to her father a model.

Linked to the *language teacher I am* cluster is the *university lecturer*. Despite having only three meetings with this person before completing the Repertory Grid interview, Regina more closely associated herself with this person, than with any other formal educative model. The *university lecturer* and *father* do however share a similarity of construing in respect to the concern for and support of individuals. Regina construes a similarity in their approach to language teaching and learning, specifically in the provision of demonstrations, encouragement and feedback to learners. Both display a love and value of language and are confident in their abilities as language users.

While these similarities exist the *university lecturer* is rated higher on the construct *learn by doing* as opposed to *learn by telling*. This, more than any other construct, is specifically related to the pedagogic knowledge of language

teaching. In this respect the university language lecturer, due to the nature of his profession has much greater understanding of those activities that will get learners involved in using language.

Regina's data illustrates the profound influence of her father on her perception of herself as a language teacher. She acknowledges this in the following recount:

My father is probably another great influence where [sic] my language acquisition. I used to write reports and letters for my father a great deal. In the process, I learnt many new words and actually enjoyed the writings. In school, I liked writing essays/compositions. My father used to buy books on enrichment of English Language.

At this time Regina data indicates a view of the world modelled on that of her father's. Exposure to formal educative models has validated much of Regina's construct system and provided examples of excellence in language teaching. Regina's grid indicates a loose-tight construing and while appearing not to align or construe herself tightly with any one formal educative element, she maintains a distinct view of herself as a language teacher which is different from formal educative elements.

4.13 Trainee case study: Vimala

Date of Birth: 5/6/72

Race: Indian

Teaching Course: Diploma in Education (Tamil Specialisation)

Born in Singapore, Vimala is the fourth of five children. Her mother was educated to Primary 6 level in the Malaysian town, Malacca. She is currently employed as a Productions Operator. Her father completed his "O" Level examinations whilst living in Johore Baru, Malaysia. He is employed in the Singapore Courts as a Junior Bailiff. Vimala's parents met, married and moved to Singapore to begin married life and have since taken up Singaporean citizenship.

Educated at neighbourhood primary and secondary schools, Vimala completed her "A" Level examinations successfully while studying at Nanyang Junior College. Before entering teacher training, Vimala worked as an Operations Assistant in the DBS Bank.

All family discussions are held in the family's mother tongue, Tamil language. The nature of her parents' occupations requires them to speak mainly English throughout the day, so "my father's English is quite good, my mother's not so good." All family members speak both Tamil and English but in the home English is "hardly ever" spoken, "except when we are doing our study as young students, then we must speak English for the practice."

Vimala's older sister works as a bank teller, and following his "A" Level examinations her brother "entered for his N.S. [compulsory two year National Service training in the Army]. Vimala's youngest sister is currently undertaking her "O" Level examinations and "she would like also to be a Tamil teacher."

Language Learning Biography

Vimala establishes at the start of her biography the "importance" of the environment, family and peer influence on a child's language learning. She believes that:

Children learn to think and behave according to the type of environment they grow up in. Usually children learn to adopt the behaviours of their parents at a very young age. As they grow older, they are then not only influenced by their family members but also their peers and friends.

Vimala has observed "expecting mother [s] reading a story book to her unborn child." The "reading habit is developed by the encouragement given in the home" and she further clarifies the role and purpose of the parents concerning reading.

This shows their [parent] interest in the child's academic development. Therefore as they grow older or when the children enter Primary School education he or she would have adopted the habit of reading through their parent's influence.

The school's main role then "is to further develop this [the child's] reading and talking ability and then teach these children to write." Vimala provides an insight into how she, as a language teacher, would go about this development.

I would not only tell them to improve themselves by reading more books but by completing more and more work books. This is only one aspect of language teaching in the primary school. I would tell them an interesting story and when it reaches the climax, I would tell them to go to the library and get the book out and read it themselves.

Regarding the teaching of spoken language, Vimala believes "more interactions between students should be encouraged as they would feel more at ease when discussing with their friend's first than with the teacher." As a future language teacher Vimala "would enrich my [her] students morally as well as the contents of the subject to be taught."

She views the goal of language education as "something different from when I went to school. The students should not be trained to reproduce what ever the teacher has taught them, but to use these informations [sic] and think for themselves. Therefore education should enrich the students in quality and quantity as well."

Repertory grid analysis with written recounts of construct contexts of construing

Vimala's completed grid shows three highly rated construct cluster groups. The commonality of the first group ranges from 95%–90%. Figure 4.11 shows the constructs *approachable* and *shows empathy* contrasting with *isolates individuals* and *dominant* as having the most commonality. The elements *friend*, *sibling*, *HOD language*, *language teacher I would like to be*, *spouse/steady*, *past language tutor*, *ideal self*, *self*, *past self* and *language teacher I am* are construed very similarly and involve the greatest degree of all positive aspects of construing. As one who shows empathy "I [Vimala] always try and put myself in another person's shoes to understand their feelings and actions." Being *approachable* is defined as "being friendly towards pupils" in contrast to someone who *isolates individuals*. This type of person "doesn't really help pupils when they come to her, whereas if I laugh and joke with my pupils this allows them to trust me and approach me when they need help."

The enjoyment of teaching and approachability of the teacher is carried over in the related construct *pupil centred*. Showing a commonality of 92%, this construct is defined as "including as many activities in my lessons in order for my pupils to enjoy the lessons." Vimala's rationale for doing so is summarised in the following extract from her context of construing recount.

By making them participate in activities, I believe that they will learn more and they will remember what they have learned better. I always try and get feedback from my pupils. If they don't really enjoy the activities I would try to modify them to suit my pupils.

The negative aspect of construing results in a view and approach to language teaching that is *opinionated*. "Mr Kannabaran [the language teacher feared to be] forms his own opinions and is always right. When he gives activities or decides on them, because he is more experienced, they are used no matter how his pupils react." Linked to these constructs and showing a commonality of 91% is the construct *lively-checks pupil understanding*.

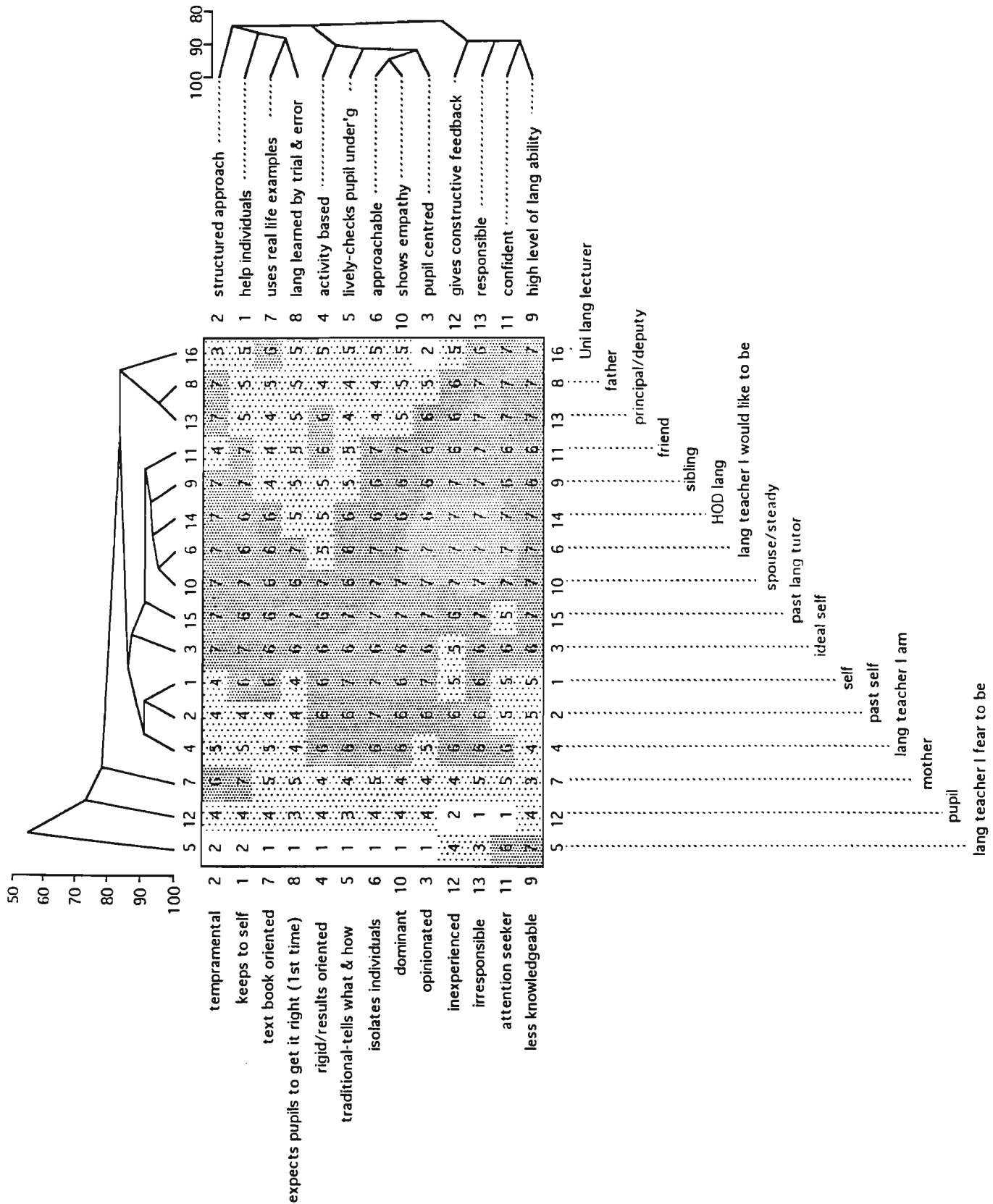
Being lively is construed as "makes a few jokes and creates a friendly atmosphere in class." The negative aspect of this experience *traditional-tells what to do* is epitomised in Mr Kannabaran.

He is a traditional teacher. When he tells his pupils what to do it has to be carried out. He doesn't bother to listen to his pupils point of view, nor does he accept his own mistakes. His teaching is not pupil centred as he does not incorporate activities into his lessons. He [Mr Kannabaran] always gives destructive feedback —if any.

Mrs Chan, the deputy principal and a language teacher on the other hand provides a more positive approach. "She gives constructive feedback to the class, ...she also pauses in between her lessons to check if the pupils

understand what she is teaching. If she finds students are 'lost' she would take the trouble to explain again."

Figure 4.11 FOCUS repertory grid: Vimala



The final construct in this cluster is *activity based* in contrast to *rigid/results oriented*. Mrs Ramasamy, the language teacher Vimala would like to be:

Is flexible in the sense that even though she has planned activities to be taught for that day she would quite easily change them if the arises [sic]. She knows her work well and is also an experienced language teacher therefore she is able to make quick and accurate changes if the need arises. Miss Saras (past language tutor) is more rigid. She teaches her pupils based on examinations questions. She is reluctant to give extra information during her lessons.

Vimala, in this cluster, is focussing on the characteristics of the language teacher and his or her related teaching approach. Negative aspects of construing and recount descriptions are associated with the language teacher feared to be. Positive aspects include a teacher who incorporates activities into her teaching, and is flexible and lively. Vimala through these constructs emphasises examples where positive models display "pupil centredness", i.e., they are concerned for ensuring that each pupil understand the content of the language lessons.

In the second construct cluster, *confident, high level of language ability, responsible* and *gives constructive feedback* are contrasted with *attention seeker, less knowledgeable, irresponsible* and *inexperienced*. From Vimala's experience those who are *confident* "do not rely on teachers to give attention." Whereas the negative aspect of construing, the *attention seeker* is "always talking and needs [sic] the teacher to notice him and ask him to keep quiet. He makes teachers spend more time with him to ensure that the work gets done." The element most closely associated with this aspect is the *pupil* "Bala."

Bala and other elements *mother* and *language teacher I am* are also viewed as *less knowledgeable*. That is, compared to other elements they "know less" about language. The *pupil* is also seen as the most *irresponsible* of all elements although the *language teacher I fear to be* is rated closely toward the negative pole. The element *pupil* "is more concerned about himself than with others and he usually doesn't keep his promises." The opposing more positive construct, *responsible*, is perceived as "doing work dutifully." Linked to this construct is *gives constructive feedback* which is defined as being "constructive in her feedback. She [Mrs Ramasamy *language teacher I would like to be*] always has the welfare of her pupils in mind." Other elements due to their perceived "lack of experience" are "unable to give such constructive feedback."

The third and final cluster group consist of four constructs which display a commonality of 90%–85%. Most highly and positively rated on the four constructs are the elements *ideal self*, *past language tutor*, *spouse/steady* and *language teacher I would like to be*. These elements *use real life examples*, they believe that *language is learned by trial and error*, they *help individuals* and would employ a *structured approach* in their teaching. The use of real life examples involves "language exercises from the real world" as opposed to having a "text book orientation —only uses examples given in the text book."

Mistakes or errors are viewed by Vimala as important aspects in a child's language learning, i.e., "I learned by making lots of mistakes" whereas the elements *language teacher I fear to be* and *pupil* "expect perfection the first time round. Mistakes are seen as a sign of weakness." With this view of the world the language teacher feared to be is also construed by Vimala as one who *keeps to self* as opposed to *help[ing] individuals*.

Mr Kannabaran [language teacher feared to be] is less approachable since he is always keeps to himself. This is so because he 'lives in his own world.' He is a very deep thinker and is constantly occupied with one thing or another, more than with individual pupils.

This element is also rated *temperamental* in contrast to others who are most positively construed as being *structured*. *Temperamental* language teachers like her *university lecturer*, "lose their temper and show it in class" whereas others like *self* "are able to solve problems quite rationally. I am structured in my approach to problem solving in my work and would try not to pressurise [sic] my pupils too much."

Overall, experience of language teaching and learning for Vimala focuses on rating constructs highly against a single negative role model, i.e., the language teacher she feared to be. The positive experiences exemplify a view of language teaching and learning where the teachers approach their language classes with a concern for individuals. This is exemplified in his or her endeavours to make language lessons lively and enjoyable through being approachable, having an empathetic manner, the use of real life examples and activities which involve language use. The ideal language teacher's approach to learning incorporates an acceptance that mistakes are an important part of learning as is the need to provide constructive feedback. The teacher is responsible, dutifully completing his or her work and is someone who emits a personal confidence and maturity. This maturity is associated with the high level of language knowledge attributed to her profession.

Metaphor analysis

Language teaching is like a mountaineer who not only knows the mountain and is able to guide people along its paths and experience the beauty of the surroundings —the people will then be able to see it and relate to it for themselves and one day be able to find new ways to climb and appreciate the mountain.

The grounding of Vimala's metaphor indicates the importance she places on the focus and development of individuals, i.e., guiding individuals toward higher levels or platforms from which to view the world. This fundamental grounding is linked most strongly to formal educative models of language teaching. The form of the metaphor also links to individualisation through a structural picture of climbing and the guidance along paths toward the summit of the language knowledge mountain, the result of which is an increased level of individual appreciation and ability.

There exists very strong construct correspondences in the concept of the language teacher's role and the metaphorical use of the mountaineer. These correspondences include: the guidance of learners (help individuals, pupil centred); the practical nature of the experience (activity based, uses real life examples); the support required (learned by trial and error, gives constructive feedback); the safety of the climb and inherent in the approach taken (confident, high level of ability, responsible); the conquering of fear of failure (lively, checks understanding); and in the ultimate purpose of the undertaking, i.e., to lead people "along its [the language knowledge] paths and experience the beauty of the surroundings —the people will then be able to see it and relate to it for themselves and one day be able to find new ways to climb and appreciate the mountain [language]."

Finally, the metaphor of the language teacher as a mountaineer implies that the teacher's mind is focused on guiding individuals toward new, higher levels of understanding. Ascending the language knowledge mountain in search of new peaks of understanding. The connotation implies also that the teacher/guide is prepared to cover the risks involved in such an endeavour

and as such has safety and support mechanisms in place should the novice climber falter or fall.

A. Language teaching and learning: Ideological foundations and influences

From Figure 4.11 Vimala's view of herself as a language teacher is more closely associated with her *self* and *past self*. Linked to these elements is the language teacher she would like to be, *spouse/steady*, *HOD language*, *sibling*, *friend*, *past language tutor* and *ideal self*, all of which provide models of the ideal or most positive aspects of construing. Vimala's ideological view of language and learning, is characterised through the commonality of construing in the areas of teacher personality traits (confidence, responsibility, approachability and empathy), language teaching approach (lively) and language teacher behaviours (give constructive feedback, checks understanding and is activity based).

Vimala rates herself as a language teacher, similar to her *mother* concerning the level of language knowledge. Vimala and her *father* are similar in their high level of confidence, responsibility and in the giving of constructive feedback. Her *mother* and *father* are construed as similar in their empathy, approachability, liveliness, structured teaching approach and activity based approach to learning. As a group the *mother*, *father* and *language teacher I am* elements are construed as being quite pupil centred in their approach to language learning, an approach that includes activities and the allowance of mistakes. While the mother is rated slightly higher on expectations of getting it right sooner than later, Vimala rates her mother much higher on the construct of helping individuals.

"Because of the nature of my job, I [Vimala] know a lot more about language and teaching." At this time Vimala is more closely associating herself, having gained acceptance into teacher training, with formal educative role models of language teaching. The mid-point positioning of her parents and the closeness of rating with herself as a language teacher suggests a strong similarity in ideology between formal and informal educative role models. It is through these models that Vimala's construct network of ideal language teaching and learning has been validated.

Categorical descriptions of Vimala's ideology of language teaching and learning are summarised under the headings: conditions that facilitate language learning; characteristics of the language teacher; and language teaching pedagogy.

Conditions of language learning

Language learning should occur in an environment where the ultimate purpose of language teaching and learning is to "guide people" toward "higher levels of understanding and ability of use." In such an environment "the people will then be able to see it (language knowledge and uses) and relate to it for themselves and one day be able to find new ways to climb and appreciate" it.

Vimala believes that children learn language through "interactions" with their environment. The "family and peers influence" each child's language learning and it is through these social interactions with language that the individual's learning of language is supported and sustained. The surrounding of children in such an environment infers that children will engage with the language as it is being used.

This condition is met through the provision of language activities that "use real life examples," that is, they are relevant to the child's needs, interests and culture. Through such activities children practice using language and as such will "make mistakes". Participation through language practice is seen as fundamental to language learning as it is learned "through trial and error." Language learning is conditional on the teacher "checking understanding," showing "empathy" and providing "constructive feedback" because it is from these that the child learns language.

Teacher characteristics

Vimala's data reflects a surety in her construals of the ideal language teacher. This teacher makes language lessons lively and enjoyable, through being approachable and having an empathetic manner. As one who shows empathy, the language teacher will always examine the situation from the other's perspective "in order to understand their feelings and actions."

The ideal language teacher incorporates real life examples and activities involving language use into all language lessons and conveys a belief that mistakes are an important part of learning, as is the need to provide constructive feedback. The teacher is responsible and dutifully completes all work. The teacher emits a personal confidence and maturity which is associated with the high level of language knowledge attributed to her and reflected in the status of the teaching profession.

Language teaching pedagogy

Vimala's data provide insights into her perspective of Tamil language teaching pedagogy. The approach is one on which the lessons are student centred and "use real life examples." That is, they are "activity based" which is an approach

that goes beyond the traditional "tells what and how —results oriented, text book teaching."

Vimala's construals of the ideal language teacher's role are very clear, but her construct descriptions lack specificity concerning pedagogy. One example of pedagogical content knowledge however is cited. It is a reading example where Vimala states that it is the role of the school and teachers "to further develop this [the child's] reading and talking ability and then teach these children to write." Specifically:

I would not only tell them to improve themselves by reading more book but by completing more and more work books. This is only one aspect of language teaching in the primary school. I would tell them an interesting story and when it reaches the climax, I would tell them to go to the library and get the book out and read it themselves.

Vimala views the teaching of reading and writing as following that of spoken language. This process, given the metaphoric use of "guide" and conditions of learning derived from the data, resembles a structured socio-functional context of language use.

B. The influence of individuals from educative learning cultures

Formal educative role models *past language tutor, language teacher I would like to be* and *HOD language* together with her informal student models *ideal self, spouse/steady* and *sibling* share the highest commonality and positioning closest to the positive construct pole. Most constructs are construed very positively, with the exception being the *language teacher I fear to be*, who with the pupil, are most closely associated with the negative aspects of construing.

Vimala's data reflects the "importance" of the learning environment, specifically the influence of parents, family and peers. She believes that:

Children learn to think and behave according to the type of environment they grow up in. Usually children learn to adopt the behaviours of their parents at a very young age. As they grow older, they are then not only influenced by their family members but also their peers and friends.

Her data, particularly the high correlation of construct element ratings, indicates that Vimala is validating her established constructs against formal educative models. These constructs firmly reflect those inculcated in the informal cultural learning environment of the home. Her constructs focus on the treatment of individuals and related personality characteristics however few deal specifically with constructs derived solely from formal educative settings.

Exposure to formal educative models has validated much of Vimala's construct system and provided examples of excellence in language teaching. Models to which, given acceptance into formal teacher training and the status involved, Vimala more closely rates herself. She, as evidenced in this data, would appear not to construe herself tightly with any one formal educative element, preferring to maintain distinct construals of herself as a language teacher, and as a person –*self*. Given her view of status equating to ability, her position concerning these constructs may well, I propose, tighten as she completes formal language teacher training.

4.14 Trainee case study: Bucktha

Date of Birth: 7/10/67

Race: Indian

Teaching Course: Diploma in Education (Tamil Specialisation)

Born in Singapore, Bucktha is the youngest of three children. Her mother was born and educated in Penang, Malaysia. She left school after successfully completing the "O" Level equivalent examinations. Her father was born in Singapore and completed his "O" Level examinations. He is employed as an Accounts Officer while her mother has remained at home full time.

Educated at a neighbourhood primary and a mission secondary school Bucktha completed her "A" Level examinations at Dunearn Secondary School. Before applying for teacher education, Bucktha worked in sales and as a relief teacher.

Tamil and English language are spoken in the home however all family discussions are held in the family's mother tongue, Tamil language. The siblings speak predominantly English but as all are single and live in the family home Bucktha's father is "very firm" about Tamil use around the home. Bucktha states that, "we are always getting into trouble for speaking English." While her parents are "fluent readers and writers of both English and Tamil they prefer to use the Tamil language." All the children have been encouraged to seek "good occupations" their "Papa" (father) was "insistent that we study hard and get good results. To him good passes mean better jobs." Bucktha's eldest sister is employed as a sub-editor having completed a B.A. (Hons) in Literature at N.U.S and her brother is a primary school English teacher.

Language learning biography

Bucktha believes "that children are able to imbibe language right from the outset, that is, while they are in the mother's womb. Knowledge is gained through their mother's pursuit for knowledge." The mother is therefore seen as playing a "key role" in language learning.

The mother talks with the child and it is from a "very young age" that "children learn to talk through their sharp hearing powers. They pick up bits and pieces of information" from the language of those "surrounding the child."

Learning to read and write follow that of talking and are "skills taught at a much later stage when they are able to talk coherently." Bucktha feels that the "learn[ing] to talk, read and write [follow] through a number of processes." The most important role of the language teacher "is to make children interested in the language and give him a sense of pride and belonging to the language." This is achieved through "expose[ing]" the child "to various ways of learning a language, through listening and speaking skills."

Repertory grid analysis with written recounts of construct contexts of construing

Bucktha's completed grid shows two highly rated construct cluster groups. The commonality of the first group ranges from 91%–82%. Figure 4.12 shows the constructs *impatient* and *strong opinions* contrasted with *patient* and *pupil centred*. Most highly rated on these constructs are the elements *language teacher I fear to be*, *sibling* and *father*. The constructs *friend* and *pupil* are also highly rated on the construct *strong opinions*.

From her experience language teachers who are friendly are also *patient* like her mother. "She listens to all my problems and gives me advice accordingly."

As Bucktha states:

Mrs Maualakshmi K [language teacher feared to be] is very impatient when she has strong ideas and people fail to understand or interpret them. When she feels strongly about something or she feels she is right she is very eager to put it across, that is when she becomes very impatient.

On the other hand, "I [*language teacher I am*] am more pupil centred..." than the elements *language teacher I fear to be*, *sibling*, *father*, *friend* and *pupil*. "Miss Low [past language tutor] and I think of encouraging pupils to voice their opinions and even when he (the student) has got the wrong answer, we would try not to make him feel out of place." The positive pupil centred nature of the language learning environment makes is one in which "student is [are] made to feel happy and wanted in the classroom."

Closely linked to this cluster are the constructs *domineering* as opposed to *links ability with content*. The element *self* is rated positively whilst the *language teacher I fear to be* is more highly rated and associated with the negative pole of construing. The construct *links ability with content* is defined as "always having the students' interests and needs at heart." Citing Miss Sivan (language teacher she would like to be) as an example, Bucktha observes that:

Whatever she teaches, says and does must benefit the students. She doesn't seem to mind what method we use to make sense or comprehend a situation, so long as we are able to perform well in the work. She is at times domineering only when there is a necessity, when something has to be learned. She is in control of the class. When a topic is being taught she draws connections from previous lessons. She also tries to bring in real life situations —situations students will be familiar with.

Linked to these constructs is a cluster pairing *firm-strict* and *distant-removed* as opposed to *creative* and *supportive*. *Firm-strict* is defined as "making pupils listen and understand their lessons." Focusing on a positive construct recount Bucktha states:

Both Miss Sivan and Mrs Low [past language teacher] are creative in the sense that they have really new and refreshing ideas about how to involve pupils and make pupils learn new language concepts through a fun way. Difficult language items are taught to pupils in a way to keep them interested throughout the lesson.

Distant-removed teachers such as the language *teacher I fear to be*, *sibling*, *university lecturer* and *past self* are elements who are construed as being "removed from their students, they have little to do with them". Supportive elements are likened to Miss Sivan (language teacher she would like to be).

Miss Sivan is one of the teachers I admire a lot. She is supportive and encouraging in the sense that when you get the answer wrong she is always there for you. She projects a very warm image and is willing to discuss any matter that bothers you. It is this extra openness, friendliness and her willingness as a listener that really attracts me to her.

A closely linked construct, showing a commonality of 90% is *withdrawn* in contrast to *involved*. *Withdrawn* is defined as being "unfocused [sic] on student needs" whereas *involved* teachers "take student interests and past learning into account when planning their lessons." Showing equal commonality are the constructs *reserved* as opposed to *adventurous*. Language teachers who are *adventurous* "try out new ideas" whereas those who are reserved, "like to play it safe, like chalk and talk." Bucktha explains, "like in language lessons,

activities like making students work in pairs or in groups and making them talk and express themselves is of great benefit to them."

The final two constructs which form this cluster are *passive* in contrast to *energetic* and *inflexible* as opposed to *willing listeners*. These constructs display a commonality of 88% and 83% respectively and are less closely associated with the main cluster. From personal experience, Bucktha recalls being "quite passive in class" and elaborates, "the class atmosphere was not very conducive for me to express myself, not many people asked questions or were encouraged to do so. The teachers just asked 'any questions' for the sake of asking." *Energetic* teachers "get involved and really have a lot of talking in their classroom."

From her experience *inflexible* people "are easy to predict, are persistent and have fixed ideas which are unreasonable at times." *Willing listeners*, like the elements *ideal self* and *principal/deputy* on the other hand, "always listen when a person is talking sensibly and logically." The final construct in this cluster is *quiet* as opposed to *talkative*. Elements associated with the quiet or negative aspect of construing include *past self*, *sibling* and *language teacher I fear to be*.

I am talkative in the sense that I now ask many questions in class and if I have any queries I don't hesitate to ask. Although I'm quiet at times, this is only when I am trying to avoid someone.

The second cluster displaying a commonality of 82% contrasts *structured and chalk and talk* with *approachable* and *gives feedback*. Positive aspects of construing are associated with the elements *self*, *language teacher I am* and *mother*. Being *approachable* is defined as "making you feel good about yourself by giving you positive comments." Bucktha recounts:

If you have any doubts about anything you can ask them without wondering about what they will think. They are friendly and very structured in a sense. They have systematic ways of handling situations which prove to be very effective on my opinion.

Chalk and talk is "like when I was in primary school and you copy notes, and do this, do that with no praise or encouragements [sic]." *Giving feedback* is perceived as an important aspect in the child's language learning.

I think feedback in the form of encouraging words or remarks are vital to a child's development. It is psychologically motivating. Even taking the trouble to talk and guide the child on a personal basis is important.

Unfocused in contrast to *focused* is a construct that stands apart, but is still experienced most in relation to the *language teacher I fear to be, university lecturer, pupil, past language tutor* and *HOD language*.

Thilaga, my friend is very focused in the sense that she knows what she wants. Her ideas and feelings are clear cut. I used to be unfocused but now, I find I am sure of myself. By reading and mixing with people, I know exactly what I want.

Overall, experience of language teaching and learning for Bucktha focuses on rating constructs highly against a negative role model, i.e., the language teacher she feared to be. The positive experiences exemplify a view of language teaching and learning where the teacher possesses personal characteristics of patience, creativity, energy and a sense of adventure. The teacher is focused on his or her work and talkative. This language teacher is one who supports students through effective feedback and by being a willing listener. The preferred teaching approach is student centred and as such links teaching activities to the needs of students.

Metaphor analysis

A language teacher is like a sculptor who moulds a child's life.

Bucktha's metaphor focuses on the role of the language teacher and the grounding of the metaphor indicates the importance she places on the provision of learning conditions and teaching that facilitate the development of individuals. It is behaviouristic in that control remains with the sculptor. It is the sculptor who has the vision, the clay is malleable and therefore must conform to the shape chosen. The structural and sensory picture derived from the metaphoric form is of a sculptor manipulating clay into a preconceived shape. The shape has a beauty and balance reflected in the eyes of the beholder. The clay itself however must contain properties that facilitate its malleability and later strength. These properties will determine the success of the product from the sculptor's point of view.

Strong construct correspondences occur within the form of the metaphor. These include the need for creativity or "refreshing new ideas" in the work, and the "use of experience and real life" as a "guide" in the development of the sculpture. The sculpting process requires a patient approach in which the sculptor is "focused", the environment supportive and "systematic to be effective." Finally, the sculptor approaches his or her craft with sensitivity but when there is a necessity, when something has to be produced, then the sculptor "must take control" of the situation.

Bucktha's metaphor contains both physical and interpersonal connotative meanings. Meanings further enhanced by those presented in the biographical recount. Specifically the implication that the teacher's role is to sensitively and skilfully mould children's thinking, "to make" them interested. The metaphor

expresses the ideal that dedicated teachers will spend their energies casting and generating images of effective language use. As such, their time will be spent bringing knowledge to bear in the development and creation of each artifact. Secondly the metaphor implies that pupils, like clay, contain the necessary properties to "imbibe" the sculpting process.

A. Language teaching and learning: Ideological foundations

From Figure 4.12 Bucktha's view of herself as a language teacher is more closely associated with the language teacher she would like to be than with the language teacher feared to be. The commonality of construct ratings indicate that at this time Bucktha rates herself as being 90% like the language teacher she would most like to be. She shares with the most liked teacher a similarity of rating in the areas *energetic, adventurous, involvement, creativity, support, pupil centredness, ability to link content to student needs, willingness to listen, approachability* and *level of focus*. Bucktha rates herself higher however in the use of *praise*. The language teacher she would like to be is more *talkative* and *patient*.

Bucktha currently shares with the language teacher feared to be a mid-point positioning in construct ratings of inflexibility. Though she is a "willing listener, my moods are unpredictable and subject to change." At this time Bucktha has a very positive image of herself as a language teacher and feels she has all the characteristics necessary to be a good language teacher. Of the constructs elicited she rates herself close to the ideal or most positive aspect of construing in all respects. Bucktha closely associates the elements of the *ideal self* and the language teacher she would like to be and links the element *mother* to this cluster. Bucktha, as a language teacher, and her mother share a similarity of construct rating on all constructs except *strong opinions – pupil*

centred. On these constructs, Bucktha rates herself as more able to "make students feel happy" and "to voice their opinions."

Categorical descriptions of Bucktha's current view of language teaching and learning can be summarised under the headings: conditions that facilitate language learning; characteristics of the language teacher; and language teaching pedagogy.

Conditions of language learning

Bucktha's data reflects conditions relating to an immersion in language and the need to practice and gain feedback. Inherent in this is the provision of language activities related to the real world of the child. A learning environment grounded on conditions of firmness and strictness and which provide a systematic structure within the learning environment.

Language learning should occur in an environment where the cultivation of each child is the focus. Bucktha believes that children "imbibe" languages prior to birth, i.e., from the time they are in the mother's womb, they learn from an engagement with feelings associated with the "mother's pursuit for knowledge." It is the pursuit of knowledge that "from the outset" facilitates language learning. "They pick up bits and pieces of information through their power of hearing from the language of those surrounding the child."

A related learning condition is using language with the child. "Just sitting down having an impromptu conversation with a child will introduce simple vocabulary and knowledge into his mind. A child who constantly hears a word or idea will automatically be able to say these words and ideas." This condition assumes that the language it is being used for a variety of real life experiences and alludes to a condition of making the learning experience

relevant by relating learning to the real world interests of the child. The focus on individual development and relevancy of language learning experience assists in making learners "feel happy and wanted in the classroom" and thus facilitate their language learning.

From Bucktha's experience it is important that the child be allowed to practice using language, in the classroom. This is created through group activities, questioning and "lots of talk." When the child practices there is a need for "feedback... praising the child for their efforts." As Bucktha states:

I think feedback in the form of encouraging words or remarks are vital to a child's development. It is psychologically motivating. Even taking the trouble to talk and guide the child on a personal basis is important.

An associated condition is the "systematic" nature of the learning environment. That is, "ways of teaching" which from the teacher's "experience" prove to be "very effective." The ideal learning environment encapsulates a degree of firmness and strictness "in order to achieve [teacher's] goals and make pupils listen and understand their lessons."

Teacher characteristics

The positive experiences exemplify a view of language teaching and learning where teachers possess personal characteristics of patience, creativity, energy and a sense of adventure. The teacher encourages children to "get involved" through allowing "a lot of talking in their classroom."

The teacher is focused on his or her work and encourages students to "openly share their opinions." This focus is obtained "by reading and mixing with people", i.e., through experience. The ideal language teacher supports students through effective feedback and by being a willing listener. His or her

teaching approach is student centred and as such links teaching activities to the needs of students. The teacher is concerned with individuals and as such endeavours to make language lessons relevant and practical. This is achieved by providing a variety of learning tasks which are linked with the student's ability.

Language teaching pedagogy

The biography and metaphor provide few insights into Bucktha's perspective of ideal language teaching pedagogy. Her preferred teaching approach does however promote the use of "real life situations" to meet student needs. Inherent in the teaching approach are "new and refreshing ideas about how to involve pupils and make pupils learn new language concepts through a fun way." This is achieved through small groups in the classroom.

The implied pedagogical approach is one in which the teacher's goal "is to make children interested in the language and give him [them] a sense of pride and belonging to the language." This is achieved by "exposing the child to various ways of learning a language, through listening and speaking skills." More difficult language items "are taught to pupils in a way to keep them interested throughout the lesson." The ideal language teaching approach is to "bring in real life situations, situations students will be familiar with."

Bucktha's data suggests a "teacher in control" approach to language teaching. The frequent uses of the term "make" and clarifications such as "she is at times domineering, only when there is a necessity or when something has to be learned... she [the teacher] is in control of the class. They have systematic ways of handling situations which prove to be very effective on my opinion." This use of language infers a teacher centred, teacher dominance over children and their language learning. This is reinforced by her metaphor

where control in the moulding process remains with the sculptor. It is the sculptor who has the vision, the clay is malleable and it must ultimately conform to the shape chosen.

Construct data also reinforces this assessment. While Bucktha views herself most positively in her construals of those characteristics associated with effective language teachers and teaching, her mid-point ratings also suggest that there is room for development. More specifically her construct descriptions and clarifications as quoted in the previous paragraph indicate a looseness in her construing, and the lack of specificity in respect to examples or constructs related to pedagogy also indicates some flexibility in her construing.

Learning to read and write are noted as following that of talking. They are "skills taught at a much later stage when they [children] are able to talk coherently." In general, Bucktha feels that "learn[ing] to talk, read and write [follow] through a number of processes." The exact nature of these processes is difficult to ascertain from the current data. What is alluded is the connection between learning to read and other language modes, i.e., from a "very young age children learn to talk through their sharp hearing powers. They pick up bits and pieces of information through their power of hearing" from the language of those "surrounding the child."

B. The influence of individuals from educative learning cultures

The formal educative role model, *language teacher I would like to be*, together with the *mother* share the highest commonality and positioning closest to the positive construct pole. Bucktha, as a language teacher at this time associates greater similarity of construing to that of her mothers. Collated data would suggest that Bucktha, in identifying herself as a language teacher, while more

closely associating herself with *mother*, also shares a similarity of construing to that of her *fathers*.

Mother, father and language teacher I am share a similarity of construing in respect to the energy required to get involved in discussions. They are adventurous, "willing to try out new ideas" and are prepared to get involved, although the father is slightly more reserved. They share a belief in "supporting and encouraging" learners, however her father is rated as slightly more distant. All three elements are highly rated on the giving of feedback whereas the father and Bucktha, as a language teacher, are more domineering than the mother —she would appear to be more prepared to link content with the learner's ability.

The element *father* is rated closer to the negative aspect of construing in respect to *firm/strict, impatient, strong opinions* and *inflexible*. Construct descriptions indicate that Bucktha while rating herself closer to her mother on these aspects, also positions herself with her father. For example, Figure 4.12 indicates the *language teacher I am* is closer to the positive aspect of being a willing listener and her construct description also indicates that she views herself this way, but it also indicates "that my moods are unpredictable and subject to change... I always listen... but sometimes I am turned off. I also have some fixed ideas." Likewise, on constructs *strong opinions — pupil centred* and *impatient — patient*, Bucktha rates herself closer to her mother but in the construct descriptions provides examples of how she is subject to change —a change more closely associated with her *father*.

At this time Bucktha's view of the world is modelled on that of her parents. Exposure to formal educative models has validated much of Bucktha's construct system and provided examples of excellence in language teaching.

Bucktha's grid indicates a loose construing at this time, as she associates herself with both positive and negative aspects of construing although never to the extreme. As a language teacher she shares a similarity of construing with both parents. Her views of language teaching and the role of the language teacher is perceived to be influenced more by these informal educative role models than those identified formal educative models.

4.15 Trainee case study: Serena

Date of Birth: 21/12/72

Race: Chinese

Teaching Course: Diploma in Education (English Specialisation)

Born in Singapore, Serena is the eldest of three children. Her mother completed her education at Secondary 3 and currently works as a Concierge. Her father completed his schooling at Secondary 4 and is currently employed as a Senior Postmaster. Serena's mother and father were born in Singapore. Both parents are fluent Mandarin and English users.

Educated at mission primary and secondary schools, Serena completed her "A" Level examinations at Catholic Junior College. Serena applied and gained entry into the Diploma in Education (Chinese) program immediately following her "A" Level examinations. On acceptance into teacher training, prior to enrolment, Serena took it on herself to visit her old primary school and observe several English and Chinese language classes.

Chinese and English languages are spoken in the home. While the siblings speak English in the home her parents "would prefer we [they] didn't." As both parents speak English, Serena believes "it is difficult for them to change our speaking when they know, we know, they understand everything we say." Serena describes her mother as "with it" and her father as "more Chinese in his beliefs about family unity." All three children have been encouraged to "be very good at schooling and studies." As such language tutors have "been employed for all of us, especially in our Chinese studies." Serena's siblings are both at school, one in primary, the other in secondary 4.

Language learning biography

From her experience the familiarity of the learning environment is essential to the learning of language. Serena states:

A child like anyone would be afraid of talking/communicating for the first time in an environment unfamiliar to them. When a child is first born into the world, it needs to adapt (himself/herself) to the surroundings, feel comfortable before she or he can respond to it.

Once comfortable, children learn to talk by engaging with the language which surrounds them. Constant exposure to the language of the parents, together with their favourable reactions results in the learning of spoken language.

Children first learn to talk by listening to the conversations/sounds made by people around them (eg. their parents). With the constant communication made by their parents, they absorb what they hear and with the confidence and encouragement by their parents, they learn to talk.

Learning to read and write follow learning to speak. Serena draws links between reading, speaking and writing.

Reading and writing would come at a later stage. The child would have to understand what he is saying before he can express his thoughts, feelings about the passage he is reading. Writing is an area whereby the child expresses his ideas.

Teaching language involves "getting the students interested in a subject which is abstract." To do so, involves the teacher thinking "of things that interest a child at that age she is dealing with." These activities get the child "involved" in using language to learn, for example, "let them think/reflect on a particular passage they read."

The most important role for the language teacher is to "give encouragement to the students." This shows them "that she has confidence in them." Serena notes that the language teacher should not focus his or her "concern" on the student's "abilities but rather on their effort."

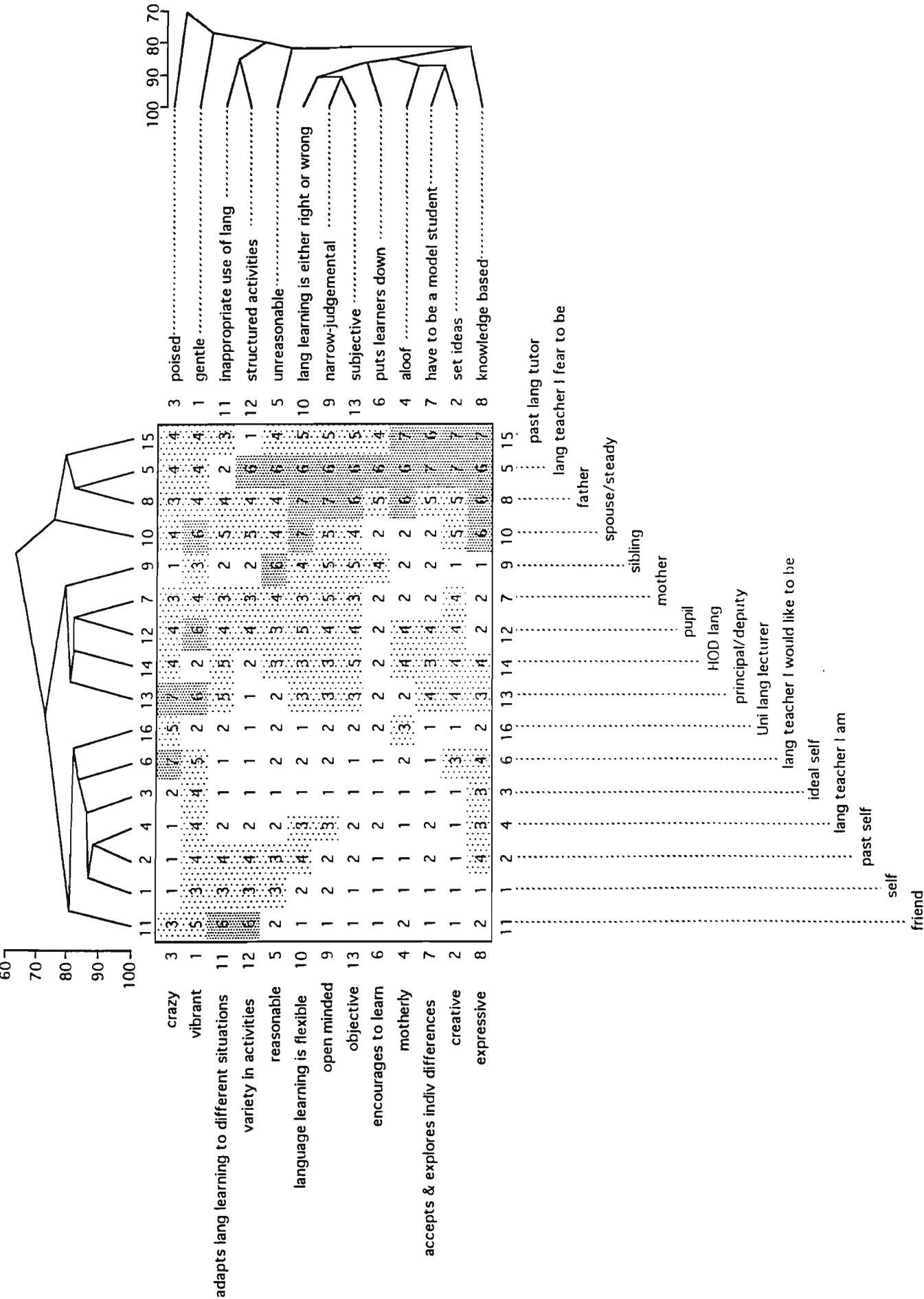
Repertory grid analysis with written recounts of construct contexts of construing

Serena's completed grid shows three highly rated construct cluster groups. The commonality of the first group ranges from 93%–91%. Figure 4.13 shows constructs *narrow-judgemental*, *subjective* and *language learning is either right or wrong* opposed to *open-minded*, *objective* and *language learning is flexible*. These constructs are most closely associated with the elements *language teacher I fear to be* and *father*, and are more likely to involve negative aspects of construing.

Narrow-judgemental is defined as being "closed up, not willing to listen, or reflect and learn from others" whereas *open-minded* is a "willingness to listen to what others have to say and realising that we can learn from one another and help each other grow." *Objective* thinkers, like "Mrs Wight (Language teacher most liked to be), are "not influenced by personal feelings or opinions."

Mrs Wight would listen to a situation of misunderstanding and come up with an appropriate measure. However should another problem arise she would not link it up with the previous problem and be influenced by it or to get judgemental. She still credits the good character of the person though certain problems may arise.

Figure 4.13 FOCUS repertory grid: Serena



Subjective thinkers such as the element *sibling* are "influenced by personal feelings and are therefore sometimes unfair." The elements *father* and *language teacher I fear to be* involve the greatest degree of negative construing in regard to this construct and together with *spouse/steady view language learning as either right or wrong*, i.e., they are "fixed and rigid" in their beliefs. Serena uses a related example to illustrate her point.

My dad does not believe he can learn from others especially his children. He is quite self righteous and thinks that his philosophies are right. For eg. he would ask us to do things like get him a cushion, toast him some sandwiches but he never does it himself, let alone do it for us

On the other hand, the elements *friend, ideal self, language teacher I would like to be* and *university lecturers* are closely associated with the opposing, more positive aspect of experience —*language learning is flexible*. This is defined as "being able to change so as to meet new needs."

For eg. the books might tell us how children learn best, however that is in general. I feel that things are situational [sic], everyone is different and learns and reacts differently, thus we can't say it is right or wrong. Who are we to judge? Are we to stifle the way they learn best? What makes us sure that one 'right' approach might not be the child's wrong approach. Thus, I am receptive to new ideas and will try my best to adapt accordingly, as it is never too late to learn and we never finish learning. My dad being the way he is, has taught me that.

Linked to this cluster and showing a commonality of 88% is the construct *puts learners down* as opposed to *encourages to learn*. Putting learners down is defined as "making a person feel small and worthless" and the language teacher feared to be is most closely associated with this negative view of experience.

For example, "Ms Lim [language teacher feared to be] would always like to scold a person calling them silly and stupid when someone makes a slight mistake."

Encourages to learn is defined as meaning "supportive." Serena cites the example of a student "unable to grasp whatever is being taught and gets all his work wrong. The teacher in this case is patient and takes the time to help him along with it."

The second cluster contrasts the three constructs *have to be a model student*, *set ideas* and *aloof* with *accepts and explores individual differences*, *creative* and *motherly* respectively. The elements *friend*, *self*, *past self*, *language teacher I am*, *ideal self* and *sibling* are viewed as most likely to involve the positive aspects of experience related to these constructs. The elements *past language tutor* and *language teacher I fear to be* are closely associated with the negative aspects of construing. They share a belief in *model students* who are defined as not only "being good academically, but also in leadership qualities." The opposing, more positive view, *accepts and explores individual differences*, is defined as:

Taking a person as he is not expecting him to change (for your [teacher's] sake) just because you cannot accept that character but learning to love him/her and to see the beauty in the person, bearing in mind that everyone is different and has potential in different fields.

Having *set ideas* is a construct which specifically relates to language teaching and is defined as being "fixed, rigid, unwilling to venture or explore new ground." Serena cites the negative example of her *past language tutor*, "Mr Kwan wouldn't think of making his lessons more interesting. You literally know exactly how he is going to conduct his next lesson." Contrasting with this view

is the language teacher who is *creative*, "having new ideas, imaginative and not being afraid to try something new." For example:

My observations before starting teacher training were of this young teacher, Miss Ong. She was not afraid of trying new and different approaches in each of her lessons. So different from when I was at primary school. She would introduce a reading article using D.R.T.A. [Directed Reading Thinking Activity] with the children and then link it up with the topic being studied. This was followed by using real life situations with concrete ideas and objects so they could see the relevance of the topic.

A *motherly* teacher is "caring, firm and yet gentle." Additional elements closely associated with this positive aspect of construing are *spouse/steady*, *mother* and *language teacher I would like to be*. *Aloof* teachers on the other hand are "detached" like Mr Kwan (language teacher feared to be). "He did not seem friendly. He always looked serious and stern, ...when he teaches us it is all fact based, he did not ever expose his feelings in teaching."

Linked to this construct, but showing less commonality is *knowledge based* as opposed to *expressive*. The elements *father* and *sibling* share with the *past language tutor* and *language teacher I fear to be* a high rating on the negative view of experience. These elements share a belief in language teaching based on "issues founded in facts." More *expressive* teaching is based on the "sharing and speaking of one's thoughts and feelings about language topics and issues as important to language teaching and in language classrooms."

The third construct cluster links *inappropriate use of language* and *structured activities* in contrast to *adapts language learning to different situations* and *variety of activities*. Having an *inappropriate use of language* "means using words wrongly and getting the wrong meaning or idea across," whereas

adapting language learning to different situations is a characteristic applied to more effective users of language and their functional use of language. It is:

The ability to use appropriate language at different times so that the message with the right tone and connotation would be put across. If I were to talk to a friend it would be casual, informal with perhaps a little language switching here and there. However if I was to talk to my lecturer it would be more serious, with more respect and direct 'correct' single language use.

Having *a variety of activities*, is a construct which in language lessons requires the language teacher to "use different approaches." These activities are viewed as making the lesson more "interesting and enjoyable, whereas *structured* activities "follow a pattern." For example, (a past language tutor—Mr Kwan) "before his lesson you would know that firstly he would run through the comprehension passage, next he would ask for answers and he would then provide his own additional notes..." The element *friend* is associated with this negative aspect of construing and in a follow-up interview Serena indicated that "Pat prefers structured teaching and teachers. She likes it cause it's predictable and she works better in that sort of environment."

Slightly removed from this cluster is *unreasonable* as opposed to *reasonable*. Serena associates her sister toward the negative construct *unreasonable* because she is, as Serena claims, "illogical in her thinking and unfair in her approach to people." Being *reasonable* is defined as "being fair."

Mrs Calaso [*principal*] would not tolerate undone work. However, she was still reasonable as she would listen to your reason/explanation. She would always try and understand, not just pounce on us without first listening to our point of view.

Two constructs stand apart on Serena's grid. The first contrasts *gentle* with *vibrant*. Gentle language teachers are "are quiet and careful" and "go about their business without really disturbing anyone, but they still get the job done. They just do it differently." *Vibrant* teachers "are alive and active and thus enjoy making language lessons interesting by coming up with new ideas and this enthusiasm is contagious and energises the students to try and learn more."

The second isolated construct is experienced most in relation to the elements *language teacher I would like to be* and *principal*. They are construed as being *poised* as opposed to *crazy*, i.e., "wild, anything goes."

Mrs Wight [language teacher most liked to be] was much in control of the class in any situation. She did not need to raise her voice but there was this air about her that would make people listen to her. This did not mean that her English lessons were stifling. They were interesting. For eg. there was this song 'Starry starry night' in my English text and Mrs Wight bought in a tape of the song. We listened and discussed how it made us feel. How the singer got his message across through the lyrics and mood of the music.

Overall, experience of language teaching and learning for Serena focuses on rating constructs highly against a negative role model, who in Serena's case is the language teacher she fears to be. The positive experiences exemplify a view of language teaching and learning where the teacher is vibrant, open minded, creative and expressive. The ideal language teacher shows great concern for the individual in his or her classroom. The students are treated reasonably, almost motherly and the teacher explores their individual differences. As a teacher he or she makes language lessons interesting through a variety of activities which are flexible and adapted to the needs of the group as required. The ideal language teacher possesses a mix of poise

and craziness, thus ensuring "student interest" and an "enjoyment" in what they are learning.

Metaphor analysis

Language teaching is like an open container of food. The language teacher's role is to nourish his students with the food of language. Each will need a different amount, and eats it a different way, but need the food to survive and function.

The grounding of Serena's metaphor points toward the importance she places on the provision of language learning which nourishes and sustains individual student development. The structural and sensory picture derived from the metaphoric form is of a container and its contents. There are many types of container and an equally wide variety of food and nutritional value. The language teacher is charged with providing students with samples to nourish and sustain independent growth.

Strong construct correspondences occur within the form of the metaphor. These include: the nourishment of individuals (accept and explores individual differences); a smorgasbord of food (variety of activities) and presentation techniques (crazy, poised, creative). There is a flexibility in eating establishments and the service required, as is the realisation that food may be presented for different purposes, and as such, the partaker needs to be fully aware of the various modes and associated etiquette. As the food container is open, the metaphor suggests that willing partakers are free to sample the contents. They do so with the knowledge that the server, waiter, Maitres d'hotel or Chef is available to assist not only in the consuming process but in developing their knowledge about the food selection, i.e., knowledge about the ingredients, their sources, their applications and modes of presentation. In so doing the individual leaves having fully partaken of the experience, better

informed, more capable in their practical application of such knowledge and with a more fully developed palette.

Serena's metaphor contains both physical and interpersonal connotative meanings which are further enhanced by those presented in her biographical recount. Specifically, the implication that the teacher's role is to feed or nourish. The metaphor expresses the ideal that dedicated teachers will spend their energies in the preparation and provision of knowledge and wisdom that will sustain pupil growth and satisfy their appetites. Secondly, the metaphor implies that pupils will feed off the offerings which also implies an acceptance that the nutritional value of the food being offered is acceptable or required. If they are not, then the tastes of the individual will need to be met by other sources.

A. Language teaching and learning: Ideological foundations

From Figure 4.13, Serena's view of herself as a language teacher is more closely associated with the language teacher she would like to be than with the language teacher feared to be. The commonality of construct ratings indicate that, at this time, Serena has a well-developed perception of herself as a language teacher. She shares with the most liked teacher a similarity of rating in the areas of adapting language learning to different situations, uses of a variety of activities and the acceptance of individual differences. They also share similar personality characteristics, i.e., they are both reasonable, open minded and creative. As a language teacher, Serena views herself as crazier and more motherly than the language teacher she would like to be. Similarly, this teacher is viewed as slightly more expressive, open minded, flexible in her approach to language learning and vibrant. All shared constructs are most closely associated with the positive extreme of construing.

Serena currently shares with the language teacher feared to be a mid-point positioning in ratings on the construct *vibrant – gentle*. She shares a 90%–82% commonality of rating with *self*, *past self*, *ideal self*, *language teacher I would like to be* and *university lecturer*. *Past self* and *language teacher I am* share the highest commonality of 90%.

Serena, as a language teacher, and her *mother* share a similarity of construct rating in the areas of *vibrant*, *open-minded* and a belief in adapting language learning to the needs and interests of individuals. Both share a high rating in respect to the acceptance of individual differences. They are "caring, firm yet gentle" (motherly) and support learners throughout the learning process. Serena however rates her mother as more expressive, i.e., she is more capable of sharing her "thoughts and opinions." Serena's ideal positioning is more toward that of her *mothers* than her *father*, i.e., she rates herself as a language teacher higher than her father on all aspects except for a shared mid-point positioning on the construct *vibrant – gentle*.

Categorical descriptions of Serena's current view of language teaching and learning can be summarised under the headings: conditions that facilitate language learning; characteristics of the language teacher; and language teaching pedagogy.

Conditions of language learning

Language learning should occur in an environment where the development of each child is of paramount importance. A secure environment is seen by Serena as facilitating individual student growth and therefore teachers and parents need to focus on the individual learner in order to provide whatever is necessary to allow the learner "to adapt himself or herself to the surroundings, feel comfortable before she or he can respond to it."

Within this environment there is a constant exposure to the language of the parents. This exposure (immersion) together with their favourable reactions (feedback) results in the learning of spoken language.

Children first learn to talk by listening to the conversations/sounds made by people around them (eg. their parents). With the constant communication made by their parents, they absorb what they hear and with the confidence and encouragement by their parents, they learn to talk.

From this quotation and Serena's data generally, it can be inferred that in order to "absorb" the language of their surroundings the learner must also "engage" with it. That is, the content of language lessons and teaching must in some way be relevant to the needs of the child.

Finally, the provision of "encouragement" (feedback) to the learner is essential. This encouragement is in the form of praise for their efforts and shows the learners the confidence the teacher has in them, and which in turn provides them with greater "incentive to continue with their learning."

Teacher characteristics

Serena's data reflects a surety in her construals of the ideal language teacher. This teacher approaches language classes with an open mind, a willingness to listen to what others have to say" and an acceptance that everyone, including the teacher, can learn from and help one another. There is a vibrancy in the ideal language teacher's approach to teaching because she is full of energy and enthusiasm about her subject.

The ideal language teacher's approach to learners and to language learning is flexible. That is, there is always a willingness to change the teaching approach to suit new learning needs. The ideal language teacher shows great concern for the individual in the classroom, treats children reasonably, almost motherly and explores their differences. As a teacher he or she makes language lessons interesting through a variety of activities which ensure "student interest" and "enjoyment" in what they are learning. This teacher sees beyond the ability of the student and into their character. The teacher is always on the lookout for individual student strengths and potential.

Language teaching pedagogy

Serena cites several examples of language teaching pedagogy, specifically in the area of reading which she has either observed or directly experienced as a pupil. Positive examples include the use of Directed Reading Thinking Activity (D.R.T.A.) and the way in which the activity was linked to functional language use.

She [language teacher observed] would introduce a reading article using D.R.T.A. with the children and then link it up with the topic being studied. This was followed by using real life situations with concrete ideas and objects so they could see the relevance of the topic.

Another reading example involved getting pupils involved in using language through a procedure involving, reading, thinking and reflecting on meaning in a selected article. A third example was cited in a negative construct description and was also related to reading:

Before his lesson you would know that firstly he would run through the comprehension passage, next he would ask for answers and he would then provide his own additional notes...

A fourth example recounted the use of music in a secondary school language lesson. "There was this song 'Starry starry night' in my English text and Mrs Wight bought in a tape of the song. We listened and discussed how it made us feel, and how the singer got his message across through the lyrics and mood of the music."

These examples indicate that Serena is aware of specific language teaching methods. In general terms she indicates a preference for activity based learning as opposed to "language teaching based on "issues founded in facts." Serena also indicates in the following quotation, an awareness and knowledge of the functional uses of language, including differences in tenor.

If I were to talk to a friend it would be casual, informal with perhaps a little language switching here and there. However if I was to talk to my lecturer it would be more serious, with more respect and direct 'correct' single language use.

Learning to read and write, Serena believes, follow learning to speak. Serena also indicates links between reading, speaking and writing. "Reading and writing would come at a later stage. The child would have to understand what he is saying before he can express his thoughts, feelings about the passage he is reading. Writing is an area whereby the child expresses his ideas."

B. The influence of individuals from educative learning cultures

Formal educative role models, together with the *mother*, *self*, and *ideal self* share the highest commonality and positioning closest to the positive construct pole. Serena, as a language teacher, at this time associates a greater similarity of construing with that of the language teacher she would like to be than with any formal educative role model. Collated data suggests that in

identifying herself as a language teacher, Serena is aware of the influence of her parents. For example she acknowledges their language teaching role:

Children first learn to talk by listening to the conversations/sounds made by people around them (eg. their parents). With the constant communication made by their parents, they absorb what they hear and with the confidence and encouragement by their parents, they learn to talk.

Using her father more as a negative role model, Serena acknowledges his influence on her construing of experience. "I am receptive to new ideas and will try my best to adapt accordingly, as it is never too late to learn and we never finish learning. My dad being the way he is, has taught me that." In this context her *father* has a view of language learning that is either right or wrong, as opposed to flexible.

The element *language teacher I would like to be* is rated higher than *language teacher I am*, *mother* and *father* on the construct *language learning is flexible*. This teacher, Mrs Wight has greater experience and pedagogic "know how" regarding the design of language learning situations that will cater for individual student needs than does Serena or her parents. She does share a similarity of rating with one or both parents on the constructs *expressive*, *accepting individual differences* and *poised* —personal confidence and control. Apart from constructs more closely associated with language teaching, the language teacher most liked is rated as more *open minded*, *reasonable* and *creative*. That is, she is construed as showing fairness and a greater willingness to listen and try out new ideas.

Serena's data indicates a view of the world modelled on that of her parents. Exposure to formal educative models has validated much of Serena's

construct system and provided models of excellence in language teaching. Serena has reconstructed a view of herself as a language teacher closely resembling the language teacher she would most like to be. This role model shares similar constructs to her parents, however in the context of language teaching they are not rated as highly.

Serena's grid indicates a loose-tight construing as she aligns herself with several formal educative elements. Her constructs show a range of commonality and groupings which also indicate a flexibility or loose-tight construing. She does have tight construals of herself as a language teacher, as indicated in Figure 4.13, however construct descriptions and biographical data would suggest a more expansive construct network that is less tight and more open to change.

4.16 Conclusion

This chapter has reported the findings of individual case study analysis. These findings have all been subjected to review and verification by the member check team and the individual trainees themselves. The chapter that follows provides details of cross-case study analysis.

CHAPTER 5

SHARED MEANINGS AND RELATIONSHIPS: CROSS-CASE ANALYSES AND DISCUSSION

Shared Meanings and Relationships: Cross-Case Analyses and Discussion

5.1 Introduction

This chapter considers the constructs used by the trainees and the commonality of construing within and between the different mother tongue groups. The findings presented pertain to the goal of this study which was to explore patterns of meaning in trainee teacher thinking based upon mother tongue cultural grouping.

The analysis of grouped case reports revealed recurrent categories manifest throughout the multiple case reports. Categories, subcategories and themes were not imposed upon the case reports "but evoked from within them" (Gardner, 1983, p.177). These categories provided a useful heuristic in understanding what the trainees construed to be essential in their work as language teachers.

The chapter begins by describing the categories resulting from the cross case analysis of each cultural group. Analysis is presented through a discussion of Tables relating to the three identified aspects of trainee subjective educational ideology. These aspects were identified and refined in the case study reports, i.e., language learning guidelines, language teacher characteristics and pedagogical approaches to language teaching. Those constructs most frequently cited within and between the subcategories were examined for commonality. Findings relate to the first study objective of delineating subjective educational ideological constructs of language teaching.

The second half of the chapter contains the findings related to the second study objective. That is, to elucidate the influences upon trainee language

teacher construing of individuals from informal and formal educative cultures. In the final chapter the implications of the results are discussed and related to past and future research. A structural overview of the chapter and developmental links as a result of cross case analyses is illustrated in Figure 5.1.

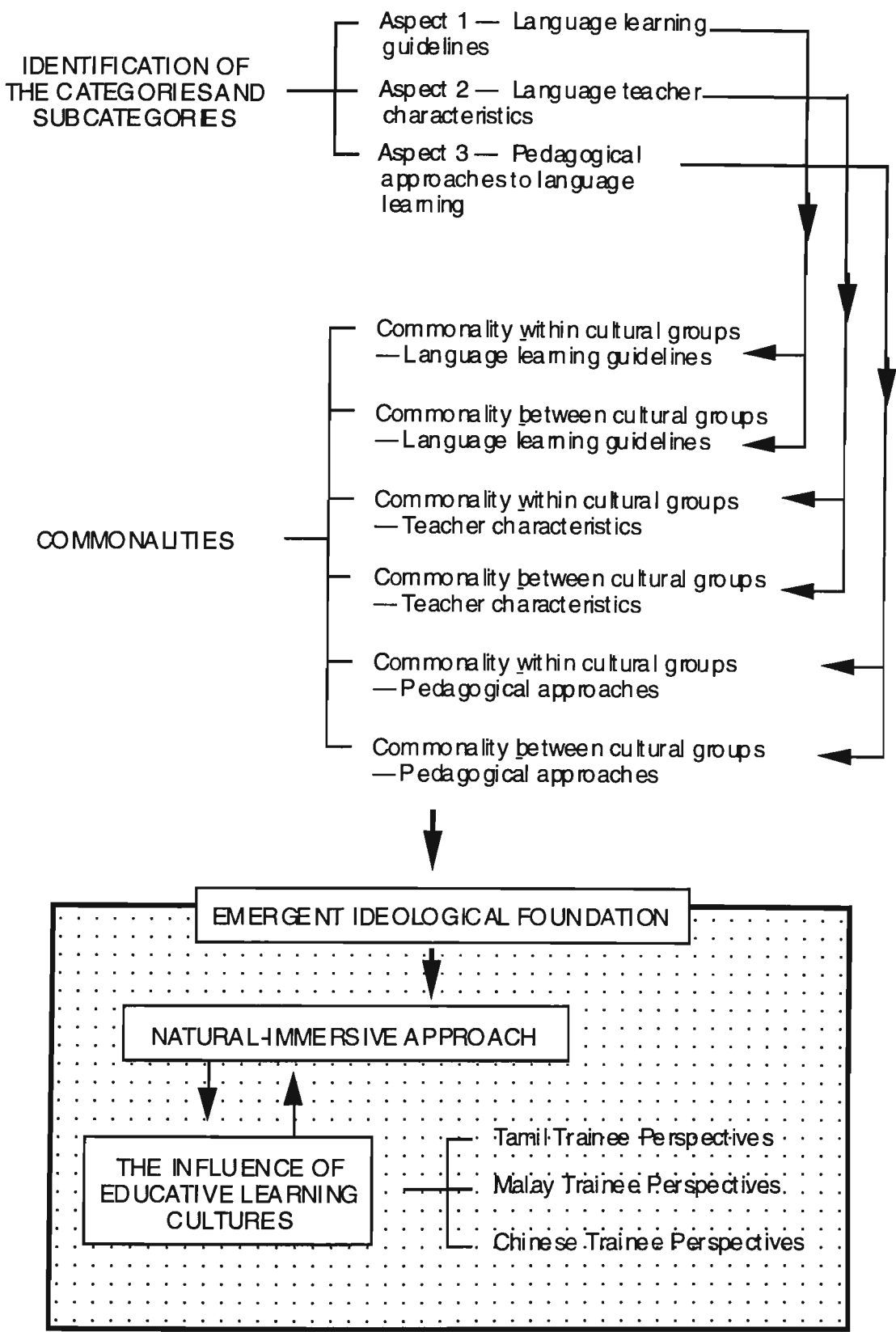
5.2 Description of the categories and subcategories

5.2.1 Aspect 1 — Language learning guidelines

The first category identified within the language learning guidelines was labelled, "Classroom" and was divided into two subcategories "Classroom Atmosphere" (CA) and "Classroom Management" (CM). CA data included constructs that were used contextually to describe the tone, mood or prevailing feeling associated with being in the classroom. Malay student examples of CA included, "friendly, fun and enjoyable." Data classified as CM, are illustrative of those controlling principles that facilitate the organisation and running of the classroom, for example, "well established routines, and organised." Tables 5.1, 5.2 and 5.3 detail "language learning guideline" categories for Malay, Chinese and Tamil students, respectively.

"Teaching" is the second category and was divided into the three subcategories "Teaching Approach" (TA), "Contextualised Teaching" (CT) and "Order of Teaching" (OOT). In this category, data was grouped for the purpose of delineating preferred aspects of language teaching. TA constructs illuminate those features that line the language teaching pathway, representing foundation conditions of language teaching. For example, they include statements like "children are encouraged to experiment and explore with language" and "time is provided for language meanings to register with each child."

Figure 5.1 Structural overview and developmental links as a result of cross case analyses



CT includes those construct statements that infer links between language learning in school and language use in wider society, i.e., a Malay example includes "language teaching and examples are all related to the real world or 'life'." OOT represent those that infer an order in the teaching of language modes, content knowledge, language concepts and skills, for example, "developing language fluency and ability, content knowledge and then rules."

The third category was labelled "Teacher and Student" and was characterised by the subcategory "Affective Relationships" (TASAR). This describes data pertaining to affections or those which may affect the emotional state of the student. Malay student examples include statements such as "all students are treated equally" and "teachers and students accept individual differences in ability and opinion."

The final category was entitled "Student" and was represented by the term "Student Characteristics" (SC). Data was incorporated that specifically related to the distinctive character of a student, eg. "willing listeners and keen observers."

5.2.2 Aspect 2 — Language teacher characteristics

The first category within this aspect was labelled "Personal" and was divided into three subcategories "Personal Characteristics" (PC), "Interpersonal" (PI) and "Above and Beyond" (PAB). Statements that referred to the distinctive personal character of the teacher were listed under PC, for example "patient, tolerant, trustworthy." Data statements that inferred a relationship between the teacher and other individuals were listed under PI. Chinese student examples of PI include, "takes time to deal with student problems" and "emphasises the fair treatment of individuals." The final subcategory, PAB, evolved from data that described situations where the teacher(s) went, or looked beyond the

roles and responsibilities regularly expected of them, eg. "uses language as a means for exploring cultural roots." Tables 5.4, 5.5, 5.6 detail "teacher characteristic" categories for Malay, Chinese and Tamil students, respectively.

"Teaching" was the second category and was divided into three subcategories named "Product of Teaching" (POT), "Content of Teaching (COT) and "How to Teach" (HTT). Data that reflected the consequence of language teaching were grouped under the label POT. Malay student examples of these include statements such as, being "focused on developing student ability" and "understanding, and not always exam oriented." Those relating to the constituent elements of language teaching were listed under COT. Some examples of these include, "selects materials based on student interests" and "uses real life examples in activities." Statements and constructs related to the process of teaching were grouped under the label HTT, eg. teachers must "use simple but relevant language, to allow the free flow of opinions, and to encourage students to ask questions."

5.2.3 Aspect 3 — Pedagogical approaches to language learning

The first category was labelled "Knowledge" and was divided into three sub categories: "Subject Matter Knowledge" (SMK); "Pedagogical Content Knowledge" (PCK) and associated sub subcategories —speaking (PCKS), reading (PCKR) and writing (PCKW); and "Above and Beyond" (KAB). Borrowing the subcategory terms from Shulman (1986), SMK includes knowledge of language together with knowledge of the structures comprising language. Examples include, statements such as "language learning involves an encoding and decoding of meaning." PCK draws specifically on general pedagogical knowledge relating to the teaching of speaking (PCKS), reading (PCKR) and writing (PCKW). Examples include, "give students a topic and ask them to write," and "reading, thinking and reflecting on text meaning facilitates

student involvement in the reading process." Tables 5.7, 5.8, 5.9 detail the "pedagogical approach to language learning" categories for Malay, Chinese and Tamil students, respectively.

"Lessons," the second category, was divided in two subcategories labelled "Lesson Purposes" (LP) and "Lesson Structure" (LS). Students frequently cited constructs and examples relating to the objective or goals of language teaching. Data of this nature were grouped under LP and were included if they represented or inferred a language objective which was to be attained. Some Malay student examples of LP include, "to develop a love and value of language" and "to have fun and enjoyment in language learning." Features of language lesson structure —those actions, processes or practices involved in the construction of the lesson were grouped under the label LS. Tamil examples include, "groups and pair work should be used to assist students to express themselves" and "the teacher shows students how to do things."

The final category was titled "Learning" and was represented by the subcategories "Acquisition Sequence" (LAS) and "Principles" (LPR). The data classified under LAS represent the order in which the various modes of language come into a learner's possession eg. "speaking precedes reading and then writing." Student data categorised as LP reflected the origins or source of learning, i.e., the fundamental basis of language learning. For example, a Chinese student statement that children "learn through surrounding the student in language models from a very early age" or when it can be inferred from a Malay student's case report that learning is behavioural eg. "learning involves copying what is being said, doing what you are told."

Table 5.1
Language learning guidelines — Malay trainee perspectives

CLASSROOM	TEACHING
Classroom atmosphere stimulating enjoyable * fun friendly interactive sharing	Teaching approach activities related to individual student needs* play is incorporated * teacher shows or demonstrates ways to develop and improve * alternative methods used consistent teaching approach high frequency of language use (practise) and examples children encouraged to experiment and explore with language children allowed to try out and test their understandings time is provided for language meanings to register with each child
Classroom management well established routines organised responsibility for learning is left in the learner's hands	Contextualising teaching language teaching activities and examples are all related to the real world or "life" * language meanings and understandings are seen to be important and are emphasised
	Order of teaching spoken language comes first followed by reading and writing developing language fluency and ability, content knowledge and then rules
TEACHER AND STUDENT Affective relationships all students are treated equally the teacher talks to, and with the students the teacher listens* teachers and students accept individual differences in ability and opinion the teacher provides feedback	STUDENT Characteristics willing listeners want to learn keen observers

* most frequently cited by students

5.3 Commonalities

5.3.1 Commonality within cultural groups — Language learning guidelines

From the descriptions provided by Malay trainees in their case reports, the most frequently cited guidelines for language learning and teaching relate to creating an "enjoyable" classroom atmosphere (CA) where "the teacher listens" (TASAR). The TA includes references to procedures such as,

"activities related to individual student needs", "play is incorporated," the "teacher shows or demonstrates [for children] ways to develop and improve," and "language teaching activities and examples are all related to the real world or life" (CT). Table 5.1 provides full details of Malay student categorisation concerning language learning guidelines.

Commonality among Chinese students are identified in the TASAR, TA, CT and OOT subcategories. See Table 5.2 for full details of Chinese student categorisation. Trainees share a belief that "students should be praised for their efforts" (TASAR). Chinese trainees share a commonality in thinking in respect to TA. "The development of each child is [seen to be] of paramount importance." As such, "mistakes are allowed" as children are "involved" in "practice using language." Chinese students believe one of the teacher's roles is to "demonstrate how language functions" and to ensure that all children have "exposure to real life language" (CT). Commonality was also noted in the order of teaching OOT sub-category. Specifically, that children "learn to talk by listening to the conversations and sounds" that surround them.

Tamil trainees showed greater commonality, across a greater range of language learning categories, than Malay or Chinese students. As indicated in Table 5.3 the CA is one in which children will feel "secure". The security of "the mother's womb" is used metaphorically to illustrate the affective nature of an environment that facilitates the earliest imbibing of language. Children "learn to talk by picking up bits and pieces of information by listening and engaging with the surrounding language" (OOT). Commonality within the TASAR category results in the teacher providing "constructive feedback" to learners on their progress. Tamil trainee case reports indicated the need for students to be "praised and encouraged for their efforts." The ideal TA is

Table 5.2
Language learning guidelines — Chinese trainee perspectives

CLASSROOM	TEACHING
Classroom atmosphere secure encouraging lively interesting	Teaching approach the development of each child is of paramount importance* students must engage with the language surrounding them mistakes are allowed* students need to practice using language and this involves them in their learning* language experiences and examples are provided that relate to the student's needs and interests high expectations are prominent and strived toward teacher demonstrates how language functions* the teacher checks understandings time must be provided to allow each child to develop teaching focuses on the whole person, i.e., academic, social and emotional well being
Classroom management students should be left in control of their learning teacher guides or shows students ways to develop and improve	Contextualising teaching exposure to real life language* need to immerse the student in language experiences from which they can imitate* the social environment influences language learning
TEACHER AND STUDENT Affective relationships students are praised for their efforts* guidance is provided the teacher provides feedback and emotional support the teacher listens to student problems all students are treated equally and as individuals	Order of teaching learn to talk by listening to the conversations and sounds around them*
	STUDENT Characteristics student initiative and interest stimulates language learning are very capable can and will learn to like their language

* most frequently cited by students

centred upon "cultivating individuals." Learners "should be allowed to practice using language" and therefore activities should provide opportunities for them "to engage with the language surrounding them." With this practice come mistakes, and these are "viewed as integral to language learning." Learners

are "surrounded in language" (CT), which is to be "used for a variety of real life experiences and purposes." Language learning "is made relevant by relating it to the real world interests and needs of the student" (CT).

Table 5.3
Language learning guidelines — Tamil trainee perspectives

CLASSROOM	TEACHING
Classroom atmosphere secure* happy	Teaching approach cultivating individuals is of paramount importance* learners must engage with the language surrounding them* students should be allowed to practice using language*, without a concern for accuracy mistakes are viewed as integral to language learning* interaction and participation are encouraged the teacher checks student understandings group activities, involving questioning and lots of talk promote language learning
Classroom management teacher guides students to higher levels of understanding and ability firmness and strictness required for the teacher to achieve teaching goals	Contextualising teaching need to surround the learner in language* language is used for a variety of real life experiences and purposes* learning is made relevant by relating it to the real world interests, and needs of the student*
TEACHER AND STUDENT Affective relationships teacher provides constructive feedback* and reassurance students are praised and encouraged for their efforts*	Order of teaching learn to talk by picking up bits and pieces of information by listening and engaging with the surrounding language*
	STUDENT Characteristics imbibe of language actively pursue language knowledge

* most frequently cited by students

While some commonality existed within cultural groups, the small number of participants means that group findings cannot be said to representative, nor can the findings be generalised to other people of similar culture or mother tongue. Relationships identified between cultural affiliation and aspects of language learning do provide some basis for future study. Each stage of analysis can be criticised on the basis of small numbers. This criticism is

discussed in Section 6.1. Cross cultural comparisons do however reveal greater commonality of construing.

5.3.2 Commonality between cultural groups — Language learning guidelines

Malay, Chinese and Tamil trainees displayed the greatest commonality in their construals of preferred language teaching approach (TA). All the case reports tended to express the belief that ideal language teaching is "child centred," i.e., individual children's interests and needs are taken into account by the teacher in the design and implementation of teaching activities. These activities require a "high frequency of practice" and thus, "mistakes" occur as they "try out and test their understandings." Similar commonality was identified in respect to contextualising language teaching (CT). Children are believed to learn language by being surrounded in real life examples, related to their individual experiences. They "engage" or get involved with the language and activities surrounding them (TA). The language teacher in such an environment is seen to be responsible for providing children with individual constructive "feedback" about their efforts. This, it is believed, will reassure and support language development (TASAR).

Malay and Chinese trainees shared a view that "responsibility for learning" is the learner's and as such learners need to be "left in control of their learning" (CM). Similarly, they construe that "all students are individuals" and, as such, need to be "treated equally." Several Chinese and Tamil trainees agreed that children's efforts require "praise and encouragement" (TASAR).

Some commonality existed between individual Malay and Tamil trainees in respect to providing a "secure" learning environment (CA), that is, where children are well "supported" in their language learning. There was a shared

belief that children "want to learn" language, and that they "actively pursue language knowledge" (SC).

Table 5.4
Language teacher characteristics — Malay trainee perspectives

PERSONAL	TEACHING
Personal characteristics flexible in thinking * open-minded patient creative non-threatening focused on the development of language learning instils trust and admiration confident	Product of teaching focused on developing student ability and understanding* not always exam oriented language is seen to be important to cognitive and social development and functioning
Interpersonal gets to know students develops rapport treats all fairly provides advice when required easy to talk to a good listener* can keep personal opinions to self doesn't dominate	Content of teaching selects materials based on student interests uses real life examples in activities
Above and beyond goes beyond that which is required in order to deepen levels of understanding steps outside the syllabus when required student needs are placed ahead of the syllabus* looks at events from different angles	How to teach provide time for discussion uses simple but relevant language allows the free flow of opinions accepts student ideas and opinions allows freedom of choice demonstrates how to do exercises provides a range of activities* uses different teaching approaches* encourages students to ask questions* encourages students to make decisions for themselves identifies and understands student weaknesses and knows how to guide learners in order to develop them

* most frequently cited by students

5.3.3 Commonality within cultural groups — Teacher characteristics

Malay trainees displayed a commonality of thinking within the subcategories PC, PI, PAB, POT and HTT. As highlighted in Table 5.4, Malay trainees shared a belief that language teachers need to be "flexible in their thinking," that is, to

have a preparedness to change ideas, should the situation or pupil "idea" be "reasonable" and "make sense." This requires the teacher "to be a good listener" (PI). An example of the teacher's flexibility of thought is also the

Table 5.5
Language teacher characteristics — Chinese trainee perspectives

PERSONAL	TEACHING
<p>Personal characteristics</p> <p>patient*</p> <p>tolerant</p> <p>vast language knowledge</p> <p>trustworthy</p> <p>communicates freely with students</p> <p>independent of others - is not easily influenced by their likes or dislikes</p> <p>displays a mastery of Chinese language*</p> <p>very positive attitude</p> <p>open-minded*</p> <p>approachable —easy to talk to</p> <p>happy —enthusiastic*</p> <p>energetic*</p> <p>strength and maturity of language knowledge</p> <p>effective communicator</p>	<p>Product of teaching</p> <p>adheres to syllabus requirements</p> <p>works toward developing a greater interest in, and showing cultural relevance of language*</p> <p>students will want to come to language classes</p> <p>language learning facilitates learning about the related culture*</p> <p>focused on sharing knowledge of language</p>
<p>Interpersonal</p> <p>takes time to deal with student problems</p> <p>concerned with individuals*</p> <p>emphasises the fair treatment of individuals</p> <p>respectful to students and their work</p> <p>is concerned with the academic, emotional and cultural well being of the student</p> <p>praises and encourages</p> <p>a good listener</p> <p>accepts that we all can learn from each other</p>	<p>Content of teaching</p> <p>validates content of teaching against real life experiences</p> <p>links language with cultural content</p> <p>student needs and interests are important in the design of the language teaching program</p> <p>prepared to change her approach to suit new learning needs</p>
<p>Above and beyond</p> <p>uses language as a means for exploring cultural roots</p> <p>a courageous spirit</p> <p>a willingness to go beyond the syllabus should student needs require it</p> <p>looks beyond the language ability of the individual, looks into their character, the beauty in the person</p>	<p>How to teach</p> <p>makes lessons relevant and practical*</p> <p>helps students through demonstration</p> <p>employs new ways of teaching language, such as language activities*</p> <p>has the ability to get all students involved</p> <p>maintains control of the learning environment</p> <p>looks to encourage individual students whenever possible*</p> <p>delivers lessons with accuracy and humour</p> <p>can correct any mistakes students have made</p> <p>supports the open sharing of opinions</p> <p>always on the lookout for individual strengths and potential</p>

* most frequently cited by students

preparedness to step "outside the syllabus when required" (PAB). With respect to the product of language teaching the "child centred" guidelines identified are also evident. The POT is "focused on developing student ability and understanding." Agreement on how to achieve this (HTT) involves "different teaching approaches" which incorporate "a range of activities." The language teacher and the approaches used should "encourage students to ask questions."

Chinese trainees shared a belief in the language teacher being "patient, open-minded, enthusiastic and energetic" (PC). The language teacher is "concerned with individuals" (PI) and thus makes language teaching and lessons "relevant and practical" (HTT). This is achieved through employing "new ways of teaching language such as language activities."

Throughout language teaching the teacher "looks to encourage individual students whenever possible" (HTT). See Table 5.5 for Chinese trainee perspectives of the ideal language teacher. Chinese trainees shared commonality in thinking toward the result of language teaching (POT). Language teachers work "toward developing a greater interest in, and cultural relevance of language," that is, language teaching "facilitates learning about the related culture." This links with, and reinforces the importance of findings on "contextualising teaching" indicated in Table 5.2.

Tamil trainee data on language teacher characteristics is presented in Table 5.6. They shared a commonality of thought with respect to the language teacher being "approachable" (PC) and supportive of students through "the provision of effective feedback" (PI). The approach to teaching (HTT) is "student centred" and incorporates "practical activities." Language teaching "encourages students to get involved in language lessons" through (CT)

which "links teaching activities to the needs of students." The result of such teaching is the maintenance of lesson relevance "to individual student interests and abilities" (POT).

Table 5.6
Language teacher characteristics — Tamil trainee perspectives

PERSONAL	TEACHING
Personal characteristics patient creative energetic a sense of adventure focused on work approachable* responsible confident maturity displays a high level of language knowledge loves and values language good sense of humour	Product of teaching endeavours to make lessons relevant to individual student interests and abilities*
Interpersonal a willing listener supports students through the provision of effective feedback* displays empathy toward student problems, actions and situations	Content of teaching links teaching activities to the needs of students* mistakes are important pointers to student needs
Above and beyond willing to try out new ideas and activities	How to teach teacher encourages students to get involved in language lessons* allows students to talk a lot in the classroom* encourages the open sharing of opinions employs a student centred approach* practical activities are included* lessons are lively and enjoyable ensures that tasks are delivered at the student's level of understanding believes in learning by doing and therefore demonstrates language use

* most frequently cited by students

5.3.4 Commonality between cultural groups — Teacher characteristics

Malay, Chinese and Tamil trainees shared greater commonality of thinking with respect to language teacher characteristics than language learning guidelines. They shared a positive view of those PC's and attributes of the

ideal language teacher. All groups shared a common belief that the language teacher be "patient." This, together with language guideline data, indicates a need to understand individual students and a preparedness to allow students to learn at their own rate. Such a teacher has well-developed interpersonal skills (PI). The teacher takes time and makes an effort to "get to know students" and "deal[s] with student problems." An "empathy is displayed toward student problems, actions and situations." The teacher is therefore more prepared to offer "advice when required" and "is a good listener."

Data from Malay and Chinese trainees indicate that the language teacher should be prepared to go above and beyond the syllabus (PAB) in order to meet "student needs." Data from Tamil trainees did not indicate going outside the syllabus. However one trainee did indicate the need for the teacher "to try out new ideas and activities." Tamil trainee data indicate greater rigidity and emphasis on the importance of routine. This will be discussed in the findings related to the perspectives of pedagogy.

The three groups displayed a commonality of thinking with respect to aspects of HTT and POT. The teacher's role is clearly to demonstrate for the students "how to do exercises" and how language can be used. The teacher involves students in "practical activities" and "encourages" them "to make decisions" and in the "open sharing of opinions" (HTT). Student "needs and interests" are taken into account by the teacher in the design of language teaching activities and materials (COT). Finally, Malay and Chinese data indicate a broad view of the POT, that is, language teaching was seen to be more than developing subject matter knowledge and abilities. The focus is also on the individual student's "social development and functioning" (Malay). Chinese trainee data links to this line of thinking in the emphasis they placed on language teaching and its relationship to the development of cultural understandings.

Table 5.7

Pedagogical approaches to language teaching — Malay trainee perspectives

KNOWLEDGE	LESSONS
<p>Subject matter knowledge language learning involves an encoding and decoding of meaning reading is a meaning centred process as opposed to simply decoding language serves many functions and teaching it should encompass similar use*</p> <p>Pedagogical content knowledge <u>Speaking</u> learned through imitation learned through modelling</p> <p><u>Reading</u> learned through imitation learned through modelling</p> <p><u>Writing</u> part to whole, i.e., letters, words and then sentences give students a topic and ask them to write about it</p>	<p>Lesson purposes to develop and display a love and value of language language is functional* learning tasks are planned to stimulate student interests while meeting their needs* to have fun and enjoyment in language learning language learning involves practice and application in different contexts</p> <p>Lesson structure incorporates a wide variety of alternative methods teacher models or demonstrates language use and students are allowed to practice following this lead language activities should be used such as film shows, play acting, experiments, etc.</p> <p>LEARNING Acquisition sequence speaking precedes reading and then writing*</p> <p><i>Principles</i> learn through imitation learning is social* learning involves copying what is being said, doing what you are told learning is functional*</p>

* most frequently cited by students

5.3.5 Commonality within cultural groups — Pedagogical approaches

Malay trainees shared a commonality of thinking with respect to SMK, LP, LAS and LP. Table 5.7 provides an overview of Malay trainee perspectives of language teaching pedagogy. Language, it is stated, "serves many functions and teaching it should encompass similar use" (SMK). This SMK link to the shared view that language is essentially "social" in its learning origins (LP).

The LAS is that "speaking precedes reading" and writing follows. Commonality within LP reinforces that of SMK, in that the purpose of language lessons is to teach students about the various language functions. At the same time these "tasks are planned to stimulate student interests while meeting their needs" (LP).

Chinese trainees shared a commonality of construing in respect to PCKS, i.e., they believed that teaching children oral language involves "telling students' stories" and "language games and tape recordings that stimulate oral language" use. As in their "teacher characteristics" Chinese trainees agreed that "through daily use of language students are able to see and practice part of their culture" (KAB). Table 5.8 displays full details of Chinese trainee perspectives in respect to language teaching pedagogy. Learning to read and write follows learning to speak (LAS) and the structure of language lessons incorporates "activity based learning strategies" which "include real life examples whenever possible." During the lesson "the teacher [is seen to] models and guides language learners." The LS includes the use of co-operative groups which are seen as an "important mode of language teaching and assist greatly in the development of language ability." The purpose of language lessons (LP) is to "assist students to see the relevance of language and of the culture."

Tamil trainees shared a commonality of pedagogic thinking in the areas of PCKR, LAS, LS and LP. Language teachers inculcate the reading habit in their students through "the sharing of stories and through storytelling" (PCKR). Learning to speak "precedes reading" and these are followed by writing (LAS). The structure of language lessons (LS) is commonly perceived to incorporate "a variety of tasks to meet student needs" through the "inclusion of

Table 5.8
Pedagogical approaches to language teaching — Chinese trainee perspectives

KNOWLEDGE	LESSONS
<p>Subject matter knowledge language involves differences in language function, i.e., mode and tenor changes</p>	<p>Lesson purposes to gain meaning from a text to express personal thoughts and feelings about a passage to express ideas clearly through written language to help students appreciate the beauty of language in terms of its cultural history activities like talking, questioning, debating and public speaking when used in conjunction with real world examples from the language culture will assist students to see the relevance of language and of the culture*</p>
<p>Pedagogical content knowledge Activities can be designed that may integrate all aspects of language, or other subjects, i.e., music, art, etc.</p>	<p>Lesson structure the incorporation of activity-based learning strategies* lessons are presented in an unstressed manner co-operative groups are an important mode of language teaching and assist greatly in the development of language ability* important to include real life examples whenever possible* activities such as drama, public speaking, reading aloud, cross talk, guess the word activities and excursions all assist in developing real world use of language need for daily practice in the various modes of language teacher models and guides language learners*</p>
<p>Speaking learning to speak involves telling students stories* and encouraging them to do the same language games and tape recordings stimulate oral language*</p>	
<p>Reading Directed Reading Thinking Activity (D.R.T.A.) together with real life situations - concrete ideas and objects assist students in learning to read and in learning about reading Reading, thinking and reflecting on text meaning facilitates student involvement in the reading process learning to read involves reading interesting story books</p>	
<p>Above and beyond through daily use of language students are able to see and practice part of their culture* storytelling sessions allow the teacher to share cultural experiences, to foster understandings of the text and enrich thoughts on culture and morality</p>	<p>LEARNING Acquisition sequence reading and writing follow learning to speak* teaching and learning of reading, writing and speaking follow a very similar path</p>
	<p>Principles learning occurs inside and outside the classroom learn through observing, imitating, and doing learn through surrounding the student in language from models from a very early age need to develop positive usage habits learning is social learning is behavioural</p>

* most frequently cited by students

"new, refreshing" activity-based learning strategies, the purpose of which is to "link language learning to the real world" (LP). See Table 5.9 for an overview of Tamil trainee perspectives of language teaching pedagogy.

Table 5.9
Pedagogical approach to language teaching — Tamil trainee perspectives

KNOWLEDGE	LESSONS
Subject matter knowledge reading, writing and speaking are skills which need to be taught	Lesson purposes link language learning to the real world* to make students interested in the language and promote a sense of pride and belonging to the language bring in real life situations, situations the students can relate to
Pedagogical content knowledge <u>Speaking</u> learned through imitation <u>Reading</u> inculcation of the reading habit is achieved through the sharing of stories and storytelling* learned through modelling workbooks help students improve their reading ability to stimulate reading, read them an interesting story and when it reaches the climax, tell them to read it themselves	Lesson structure uses a variety of tasks to meet student needs* the teacher shows students how to do things inclusion of "new, refreshing" activity-based learning strategies* groups and pair work should be used to assist students to express themselves the teacher maintains control of language learning language teaching is structured and systematic LEARNING Acquisition sequence speaking precedes reading and then writing* Principles learn through picking up bits and pieces from the language surrounding the child learning is social learning is functional learning is controlled

* most frequently cited by students

5.3.6 Commonality between cultural groups — Pedagogical approaches

Malay, Chinese and Tamil trainees displayed less commonality in thinking about preferred language teaching pedagogy both within and across cultural groups. The individuality of trainee personal history and experience may be

one reason to account for this. There was however, some commonality across the sample. As a group, they acknowledge the belief that "speaking precedes the learning of reading and writing" (LAS) and that the LP is to develop a "functional" use of language, i.e., the "practice and application" of language to "real life situations the students can relate to." Individuals within each group shared commonality in respect to SMK, PCKS, PCKR, LS, LP, AND LPR. Malay and Chinese trainees displayed a similarity in SMK. That is, that "language involves differences in language function, i.e., mode and tenor changes" and as such "teaching it should encompass similar use." Malay and Tamil trainees shared statements regarding learning through "imitation" and "modelling" in the areas of PCKS and PCKR. These statements are not defined in the data however, it can be inferred from references to teacher modelling and demonstrations in LS and HTT that students learn by initially reproducing or copying their teachers' examples. These examples as indicated in CT and COT are relevant to student interests and needs. An example is found in Chinese and Tamil PCKR where the sharing of stories was seen to result in the development of a positive reading habit. Tamil and Chinese trainees cited the use of "activity-based learning strategies" and tasks as important components within the LS. Similarly, they use "co-operative groups" and pair work as modes of learning within LS that can "assist students" to use their language, and therefore develop on their language ability. Tamil data concerning LS indicated an element of teacher control and structured, systematic teaching. Malay and Chinese trainees shared specific examples of language activities that can be used to "assist in developing real world use of language." This included "film shows, play acting, experiments, activities such as drama, public speaking, reading aloud, cross talk, guess the word activities and excursions."

All three groups displayed a commonality of thinking in respect to LPR, specifically that language is social and functional, and is learned from an early age by imitating the surrounding language. The groups also shared a belief that language learning is controlled, which means at times "doing what you are told."

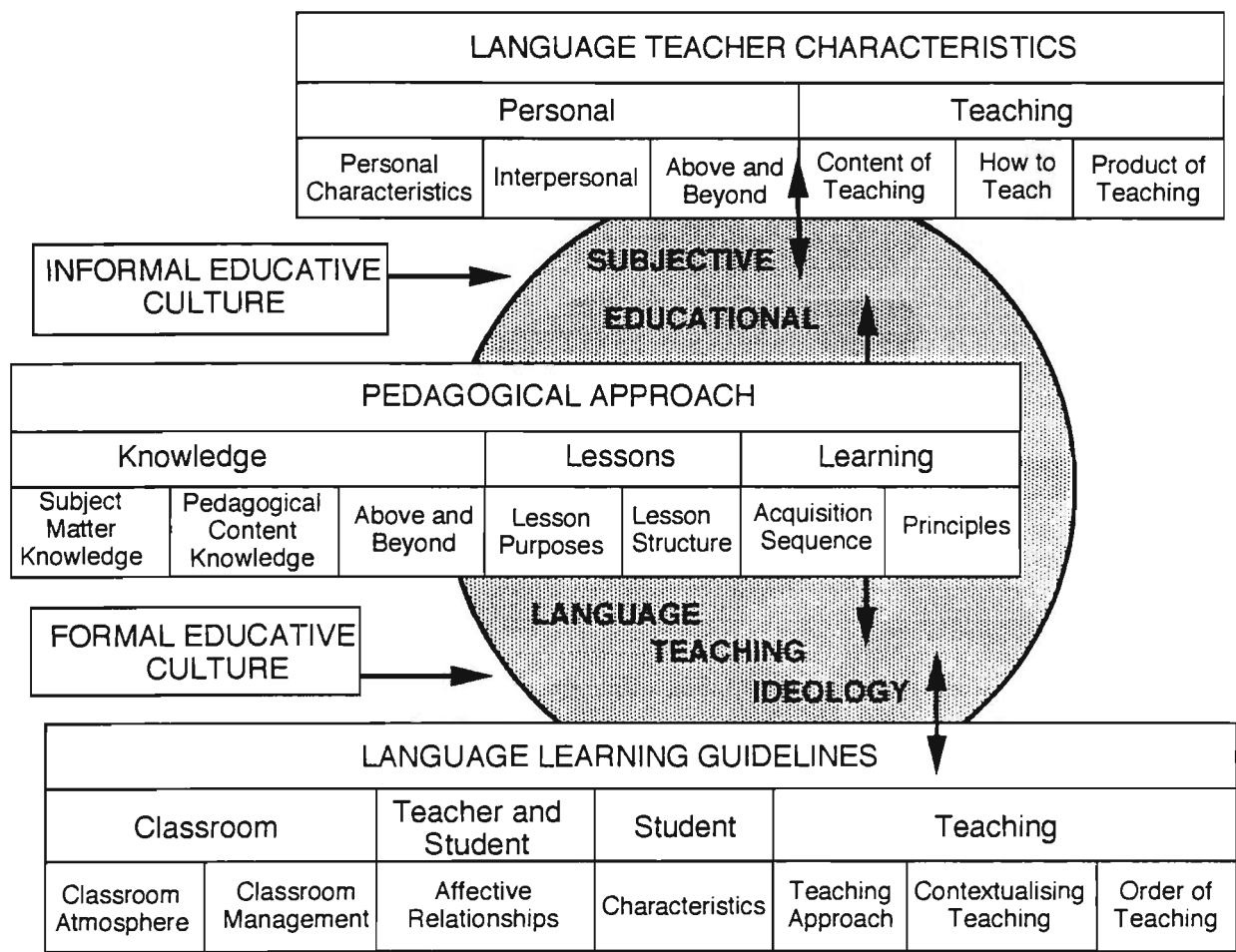
5.4 Emergent ideological foundation

Examination and analysis of case study data revealed the categorical construction of the subjective educational ideologies of language teaching. Figure 5.2 illustrates a model of subjective educational ideology based on the findings of this study. It needs to be emphasised that categorical divisions and descriptions reflect the data derived from the study sample. The divisions while arbitrary, are seen to work in a complementary manner. Therefore any examination of a specific category or trainee needs to be undertaken with an understanding of the broader categorical context of trainee thinking.

Findings indicated that trainees have a broad knowledge of language learning and pedagogy. Trainees however, display greatest commonality in identifying those personal features that characterise the ideal language teacher. Analysis also revealed some commonality within cultural groups, however due to limitations in the size of the study sample, discernible patterns of thinking within cultural groups were not identifiable. One exception was the Chinese trainees who displayed a commonality of thinking with respect to the use of language to develop and explore aspects of Chinese culture.

A more general commonality of thinking across cultural groups was found in respect to teaching guidelines, teacher characteristics and knowledge of language teaching pedagogy. Collective ideologies reflect what I have labelled a Natural-Immersive Approach to language teaching and learning.

Figure 5.2 Model of subjective educational language teaching ideology



Included in the model of subjective educational language teaching ideology illustrated in Figure 5.2 is the affective influence of both informal and formal educative cultures. These influences form the basis of the study's second objective. Findings related to this objective follow an examination of the most salient distinctions of this Natural-Immersive view or approach to language teaching and learning.

5.5 Natural-immersive approach

The natural-immersive approach identified through cross-case analysis, promotes an ideological positioning closely resembling the way language is stated to have been acquired naturally, in the home. Trainees recall, as language learners being literally surrounded by their language. The language

of the home is social and functional (Halliday, 1975) and the children learn to imitate this language in accordance with the specific context of use. Language meanings are inferred and generalised, as new information is provided in the context of meaningful activity. Learners from birth are actively involved in meaning making and develop the ability to differentiate linguistic function in accordance with mother tongue and "father tongue" cultures (Bodycott, 1988). Chinese trainees specifically referred to the use of language as a mean through which to transfer and develop cultural understandings, a process mirroring that of their parents and the natural language of the home. Without exception the language of the home for trainees involved in this study was that of their mother's tongue or culture. Therefore the immersive language of the home was natural or true to real life. No evidence was identified to suggest that trainees learned to speak by means other than naturally occurring immersion.

In the "ideal" language classroom this immersion manifests itself in the provision of a child centred, activity-based approach to teaching. Activities are designed with students needs and interests in mind. The provision of culturally rich contextually relevant information, stimulates the active participation in, and use of the information. It is from an engagement with these activities and the information they convey that learners are able to detect individually relevant information and learning cues to aid their development. Engagement is not only fostered through the material to be learned being relevant and interesting, but, as in the home, through the positive interpersonal relationships established within the learning environment.

These relationships include the feedback provided in response to learning efforts, i.e., praise and encouragement. The teacher (parent) takes time to deal with learner problems and above all listens to and displays an empathetic

concern for learners as individuals. Linked to this is the notion of learner control. Malay and Chinese trainees specifically mentioned the need to acknowledge who controls the learning process. While the teacher or parent exerts control over the structure of the learning environment, it is the child or learner who decides what is to be taken in, or learned (Cambourne, 1988). Linked to this natural interpretation of learner control is decision making. Trainees promoted the natural involvement of learners in the learning process. That is, as learners naturally practice using language, they also take responsibility for making decisions. The ideal language teacher, like a parent, encourages the child to share his or her ideas. It is through such sharing that the child is able to test personal construals, understandings or knowledge. This provides the teacher or parent with an insight into such thoughts or knowledge and the learner with feedback on their thinking.

The natural-immersive approach sees learning as a process through which the organisation of language knowledge can be developed. It is an approach in which learning is contextualised and implicitly based on individual student needs and interests. Findings related to the patterns of meaning in trainee teacher thinking indicated a need for further exploration of such views, to further define the extent of shared ideology and patterns of inherent cultural thinking.

5.6 The influence of educative learning cultures

The findings of this study indicate that trainees come to formal teacher education training with a well-developed subjective educational ideology of language teaching and learning. However, I believe that it is also of primary importance to elucidate the influences of educative learning cultures on trainee language teacher construing. This then, is the second objective of my study. The findings that follow relate to this belief. With this knowledge we are

provided a more complete picture of trainee construing. As indicated in the preceding chapter there are some common patterns of construing across the cultural groups. This phase of the study aims to find answers to questions like "who or what influences trainee language teacher construing, and in what way?" and "why do trainees construe language teaching, learning and teachers the way they do?" Findings will provide information on the development of language learning ideological constructs. Results were derived from analysis of biography, repertory grid and written recounts of construing data. They have been grouped according to mother tongue language in an effort to also illuminate developing patterns of cultural influence within cultures.

Informal and Formal educative learning cultures are distinguished by the following criteria:

- a. formal educative learning cultures include those elements (individuals) associated with any conventional form of schooling, outside the home, i.e., language tutors, principal/deputy, HOD, lecturers, teachers;
- b. informal educative learning cultures include those elements not associated with a formal, official or conventional education, i.e., mother, father siblings, friends, etc.

5.6.1 Tamil trainee perspectives

Construct analysis indicates an even spread of element ratings between informal and formal educative elements. The current view of Tamil trainees (*language teacher I am*) indicated a closer association with the informal elements, (*mother* and *father*) than with the formal. The most highly rated formal elements were *university lecturer* for one trainee and *language teacher I would like to be* for the other two. When formal elements are rated higher

they are in areas related to a knowledge of teaching or pedagogy, i.e., how to get to the children's level, how to help individual learners and subject matter knowledge, i.e., level of language ability.

Tamil trainees displayed a commonality of construing in respect to the ratings of themselves as language teachers, their parents and specific highly rated formal elements. Data does not indicate a great difference in construing between any of these elements. This suggests that Tamil trainees have a very positive self image. It also indicates a tightness in their construing. Tamil student repertory grids displayed a general consistency of construing across all elements. Even those elements, such as the *language teacher I fear to be*, which lie at the outer or negative pole were construed by these trainees as containing positive construct associations. The tightness of construing is seen to maintain trainee personal integrity. It acts as a safeguard against possible threats when exceptions are encountered to customary ways of thinking. In other words, Tamil trainee perspectives of the elements are filtered through their own personal constructed meanings. In order to avoid threats that may be associated with this new learning context, they construe themselves and other elements very similarly, thus maintaining a personal status quo during this orientation into formal teacher training.

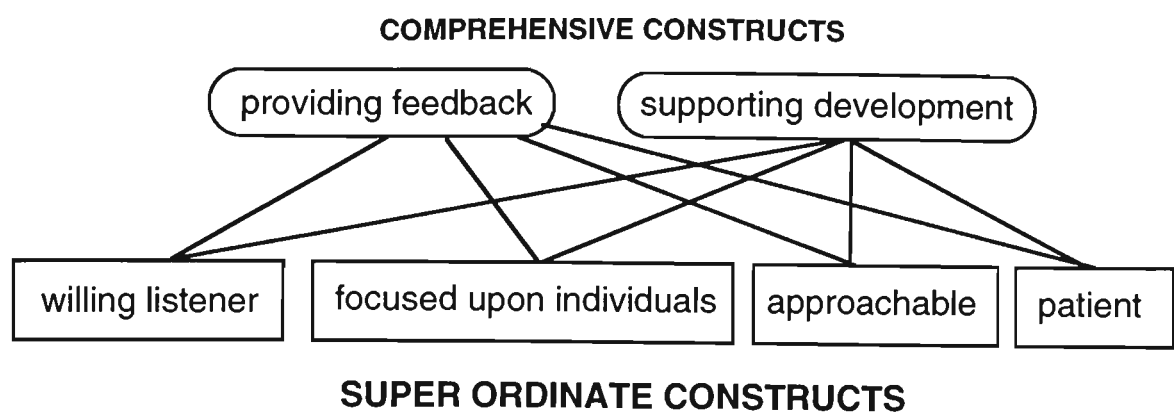
Analysis of the data indicated that the trainees' perception of themselves as language teachers display greater commonality with mothers than with fathers. Trainees most closely associate themselves with *mother* in the areas of "personal characteristics" and "teaching approach." These "personal characteristics" include being confident, talkative, energetic, adventurous, creative, patient, a willing listener, approachable and focused on individuals.

The informal education of trainees in the cultural context of the home is seen to result in trainees adopting similar personal constructs to their mother. These constructs help govern and maintain each individual trainee's personal state of being. They are at the same time "superordinate" in that they include other things or events as part of their context. These superordinates effect the way the trainee construes the world. For example construct associations of "teaching approach" which include activities such as providing feedback, getting involved with learners, supporting development and showing ability with content, may all be affected by and reflective of each other.

Figure 5.3 illustrates how constructs relating to the personal can result in a superordinancy of thinking with respect to construing an approach to language teaching. The result of this is what Kelly (1955a) describes as "comprehensive constructs", that is, they "subsume a wide variety of events" (p.391) and, in the case of trainee teachers, these events relate to teaching approach.

Associations with the element *father* relate more to "teaching approach" and the "product of teaching" than to personal characteristics. Tamil fathers and their daughters share an approach to teaching which includes using a variety of examples related to the child's level of understanding, providing feedback, supportive and encouraging of efforts, and the need for demonstrations. The result of language teaching is the development of a love and value of language. As individuals, fathers are construed as supportive, confident, responsible and proficient in their language ability.

Figure 5.3 Links between superordinate constructs and comprehensive constructs of language teaching



Mothers and fathers exert an influence of the development of their children's learning from birth. The individual Tamil trainees, in the context of this study, associated themselves with one or other and, at times, both parents more closely than any other element. The established environment for learning language, and parental responses to this learning has had profound affect on the way trainees construe themselves as future language teachers. This is particularly evident in the elicited personal and interpersonal characteristics of the language teacher, and to a lesser extent on the related "comprehensive constructs" of language teaching approach.

5.6.2 Malay trainee perspectives

The five Malay trainees, (all female) like their Tamil counterparts, projected a positive view of themselves as language teachers. This is evidenced by the closeness of association in their personal constructs of themselves as language teachers with both formal and informal elements. Findings indicate that two Malay trainees rated themselves lower than formal educative elements in respect to teaching approach and related personal characteristics, specifically, knowledge of learning alternatives and how to react to individual needs. Trainees view themselves as more anxious about getting things done, whereas the *HOD language* are more prone to take their

time. In respect to informal elements one trainee rates themselves lower than either parent in respect to the level of Malay language knowledge while another trainee rates the element *mother* as more fluent in Malay.

Malay trainees construed themselves as language teachers more closely with informal elements than formal. All but one trainee rated formal elements, i.e., the *language teacher I would like to be*, *HOD language*, *principal/deputy* and *past language tutor* higher on constructs relating to language teaching pedagogy. This included: how to make language learning fun, how to relate learning to real life, strategies for exploring language and making the language teaching program student centred. Four of the five trainees displayed a common belief that people who represent formal elements have greater subject matter knowledge. The other trainee construed her HOD element as more fluent. Common personal characteristics include degrees of patience and independence of thinking.

Malay trainees displayed a close association with both *mother* and *father* elements. The *mother* and *language teacher I am*, and *self* elements shared commonality in respect to constructs relating to "personal and interpersonal" characteristics and to a lesser extent "how to teach." Shared personal characteristics included: being independent, organised, friendly, i.e., easy to talk to, confident —never feels inferior, and as language models, i.e., looked on by others as an example. Personal characteristics associated with fathers included a determinedness to achieve, i.e., serious and hardworking and, patient, i.e., tolerant, understanding and relaxed.

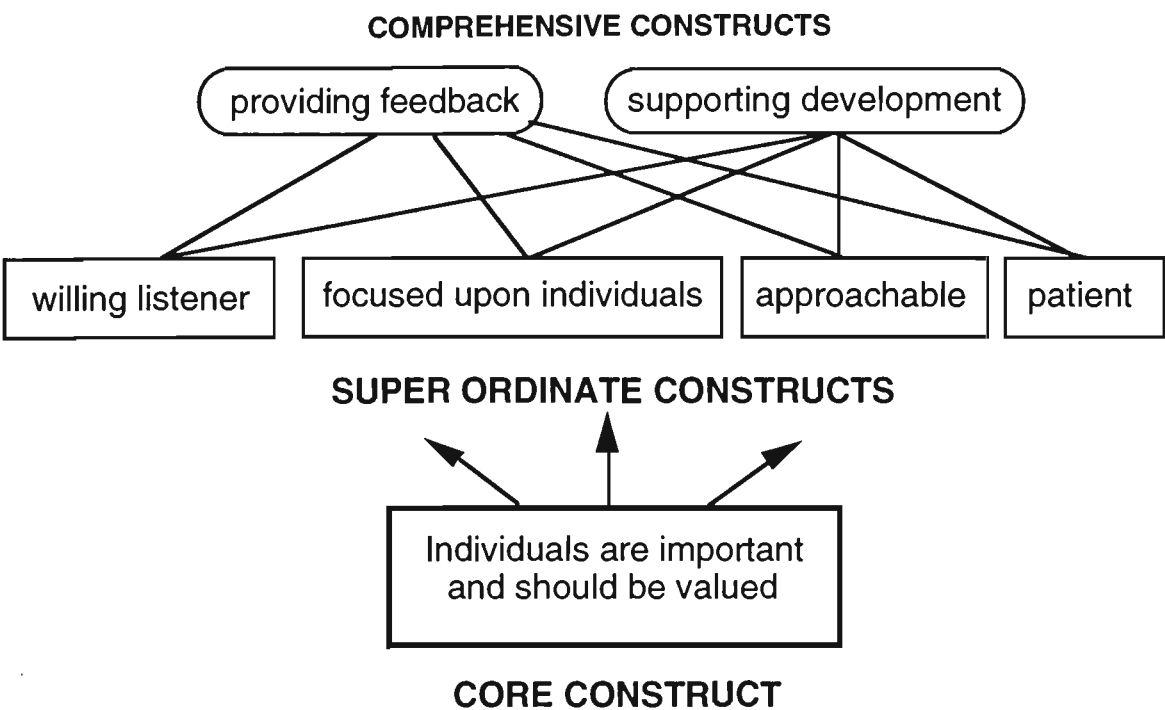
Mothers and trainees shared interpersonal characteristics such as the acceptance of others' opinions, i.e., free thinking, focused —prepared to go

all out for individuals and what they want, and treating individuals fairly. Shared construing of how to teach included ensuring that learning is student centred and fun (*mother*), that activities are related to individual student needs which involves the teacher demonstrating ways to improve (*mother* and *father*), and a freedom of choice and a range experience to learn (*father*).

Fathers and trainees share an equality of rating with respect to their levels of language knowledge (subject matter knowledge) and beliefs about the contextualising of teaching (CT), specifically, that different language types should be applied to different real life language topics, and that it is important for students to be "always making comparisons with real life to aid their comprehension."

The cultural environment of language and educative immersion established in Malay trainee homes was reflected in the positive association trainees had with either or both parents. This was evident from the shared perceptions related to personal and interpersonal characteristics of the language teacher, how to teach and the importance of contextualising language teaching. The influence, particularly of mothers, on the personal construing of their daughters was a pattern which developed between Tamil and Malay trainee data. More specifically, constructs indicate a deeper level of learning culture influence. Higher order "core" constructs provide the foundation on which super and comprehensive constructs are developed. An example is illustrated in Figure 5.4 These "core" constructs are developed in the cultural context of the home and remain the basis of individual trainee construing.

Figure 5.4 Core construct foundation of trainee language teacher construing



5.6.3 Chinese trainee perspectives

Two of the four Chinese trainees displayed a more positive self concept of the *language teacher I am* than either the Malay or Tamil trainees. This is evident in the equal or higher ratings of themselves to formal and informal elements. One trainee rated herself most closely with the negative element the *language teacher I fear to be* while the fourth trainee rated himself highly while maintaining a "respect" for the status of the formal element *HOD language*. He consistently rated this element higher. Follow-up discussions with the trainee indicated that "he [HOD] is very experienced and knowledgeable. Therefore I must respect his position... in the future I wish to be like this man."

Ratings indicated that Chinese trainees viewed themselves as language teachers to be more similar to informal than formal elements. Those formal elements with whom they did more closely associate included the *language teacher I would like to be*, *HOD language* and the *language teacher I fear to*

be. Chinese trainee construing of formal elements was different from that of Malay and Tamil trainees. Chinese trainees rated formal elements higher on some personal characteristics, specifically their being approachable, independent, tolerant, tactfulness, creativity and expressive use of language. However, they share with Malay and Tamil counterparts, a belief that formal elements have greater knowledge of language (subject matter knowledge) and in their personal levels of language proficiency.

One student had, as stated, a negative concept of herself as a language teacher rating herself closest to the *language teacher I fear to be*. She viewed this element as being more knowledgeable with respect to language teaching pedagogy (HTT), i.e., knowledge of alternative activities and ways of individualising instruction to ensure student involvement and the predicability of teaching, i.e., a structured approach. She felt unsure of what she wanted and that she lacked energy and confidence in her ability to encourage students (PC). She did, however, consider herself as more tolerant of learning mistakes and as more likely to get students involved in their learning. Upon examination of informal element ratings and descriptions this trainee displayed a commonality of construing with the informal element, *mother*. As a language teacher the trainee felt her teaching was slightly more predictable and that she had greater knowledge of what she wants than her mother. The mother, on the other hand, was construed to be better at getting students involved and as having more energy.

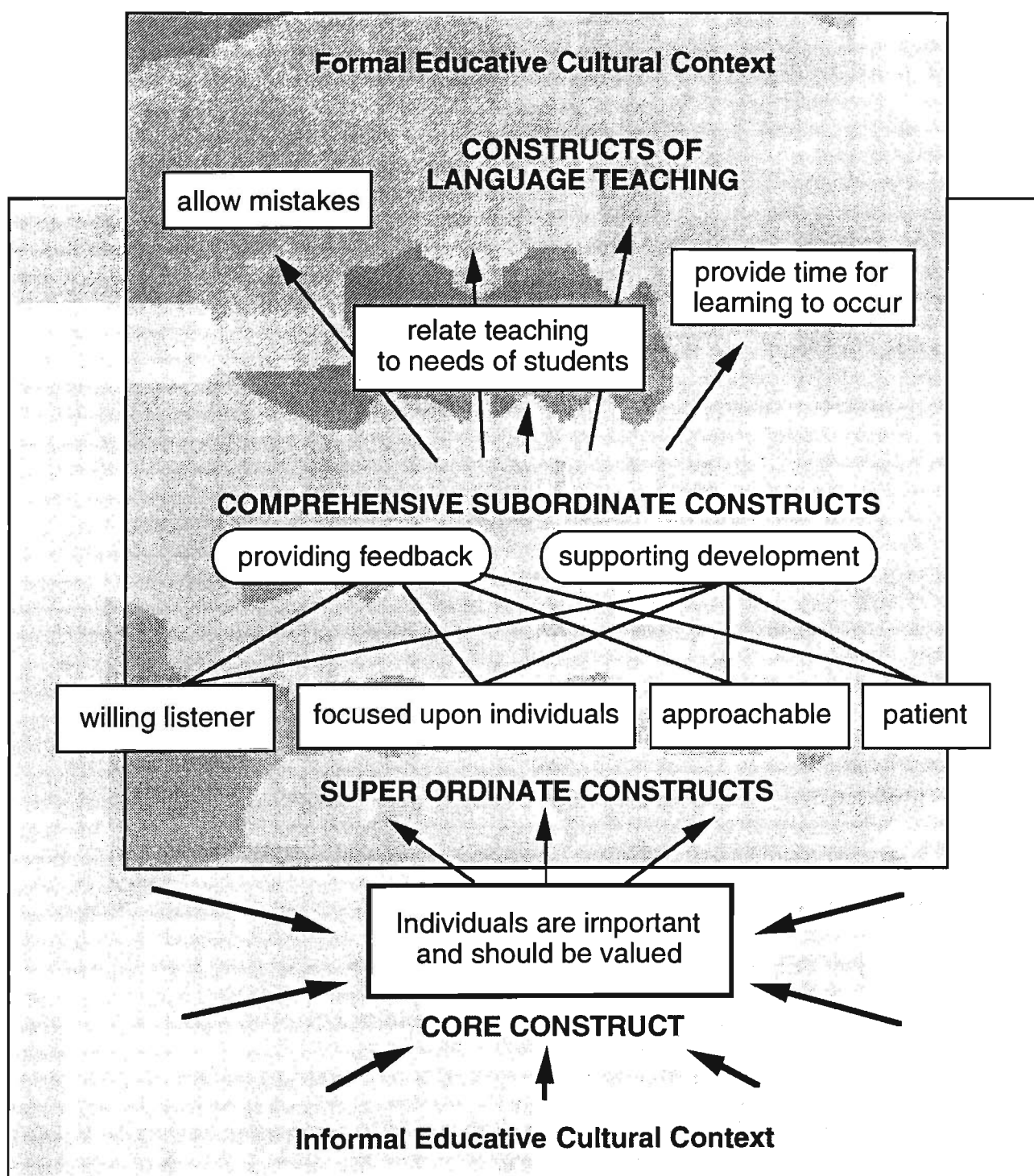
Mothers were more often cited as displaying closest commonality with the trainees current view of themselves as language teachers. A difference between Chinese trainee construing and Malay and Tamil trainees was in the categories of similarity. Chinese trainees saw *self*, *language teacher I am* and *mother* elements, as more similar in respect to teaching approach (HTT) and

to contextualising instruction (CT) than in relation to personal characteristics. PC were linked more to *father* elements by one male Chinese trainee. This father and son shared personal characteristics of being approachable, independent, tolerant, tactful and pupil centred. The preferred approach to teaching (HTT) consisted of demonstrating language use, providing encouragement and feedback, and the acceptance of individual differences.

Informal elements and Chinese trainees shared a belief in the contextualising of teaching (CT), that is, the linking of teaching to real life examples which were related to their culture. This view was more closely linked with the mother. As discussed, the linking of culture and language learning is unique to Chinese trainee construing. It may illustrate further, however, the influence of informal learning culture on the establishment of core constructs. In this study, core constructs are viewed as having been established by the mother, in the educative cultural context of the home. Thus, they are influenced by the culture in which they are constructed and trainees entering into formal teacher education are likely to still hold with these core views. These views are deep rooted in the individual trainee construct networks. They form the basis on which trainees construe their personal history. They are the culturally constructed morals and values held most closely and which, as illustrated, permeate and maintain construals of language teaching and learning.

At the other end of the construing scale are subordinate constructs specifically included in the superordinates and related to the context of use. As illustrated in Figure 5.4, comprehensive subordinate constructs link to specific constructs of language teaching practice. For several trainees in this study these constructs will be tight (i.e., cannot really be altered) and for others they will be loose (i.e., may lead to or be applied to varying or different situations and yet still retain some identity).

Figure 5.5 Cultural influence on trainee language teacher construing



5.7 Conclusion

In this chapter the results, which emerged from the cross-case analysis of individual trainee case studies were presented. The findings indicate that trainees come to formal teacher education training with a well-developed

subjective educational ideology of language teaching and learning. Analysis delineated the general extent of subjective educational ideology —the characteristics of the language teacher, pedagogical approach and language learning guidelines. These subjective educational ideologies were found to develop from exposure to formal and informal educative contexts and elements. Trainees displayed greatest commonality in respect to identifying the personal features that characterise the ideal language teacher. Discernible patterns of thinking within cultural groups were not identifiable, however Chinese trainees displayed a commonality of construing in respect to the use of language to develop and explore aspects of Chinese culture. Collective constructs reflect what has been labelled a "Natural-Immersive Approach" to language teaching and learning.

Analysis of the data indicated that trainees construed themselves closer to informal elements, specifically mothers and to a lesser extent fathers, than to formal educative elements. The influence of informal educative cultural context resulted in the establishment of "core" constructs. These deep rooted core views permeated throughout the personal construct network, resulting in "superordinate" and "comprehensive subordinate" constructs relating to language teaching and learning. Trainees were shown to validate these culturally influenced, personally constructed views against all other elements. The ideological approach to language teaching and learning was modelled and constructed on personally constructed views of the world, grounded in the cultural context of the home. Positive role models were seen to construe in a similar way to the trainee, thus reinforcing or validating their personal views. Trainees rated formal elements higher in their knowledge of language teaching, language fluency and proficiency. Trainees while having well-developed ideological principles of language teaching and learning, had limited knowledge of how those principles could be translated into practice.

For teacher educators interested in affecting a change in trainee teacher construing, the loose-tight nature of individual trainee construing, the "permeability" of superordinate constructs and their relationship to pedagogical content knowledge" hold major implications. These implications will be discussed in the final chapter.

While the construals of subjective language teaching ideology and elements who exert an influence on it were derived from only a small number of participants, these findings provide some understanding of how trainees construe language teaching and learning in relation to their personal history. In the following chapter the results of this exploration will be related to the findings of previous research reviewed in Chapter 2, and the implications of the research design discussed.

CHAPTER 6

**RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS
AND CONCLUSION**

Research Implications and Conclusion

He who is not pleased by it does not have to use it and he who is against it is not obliged to find it true. Let it go forth into the world for the benefit of those who can discern its meaning.
(Jung, 1958, p.608)

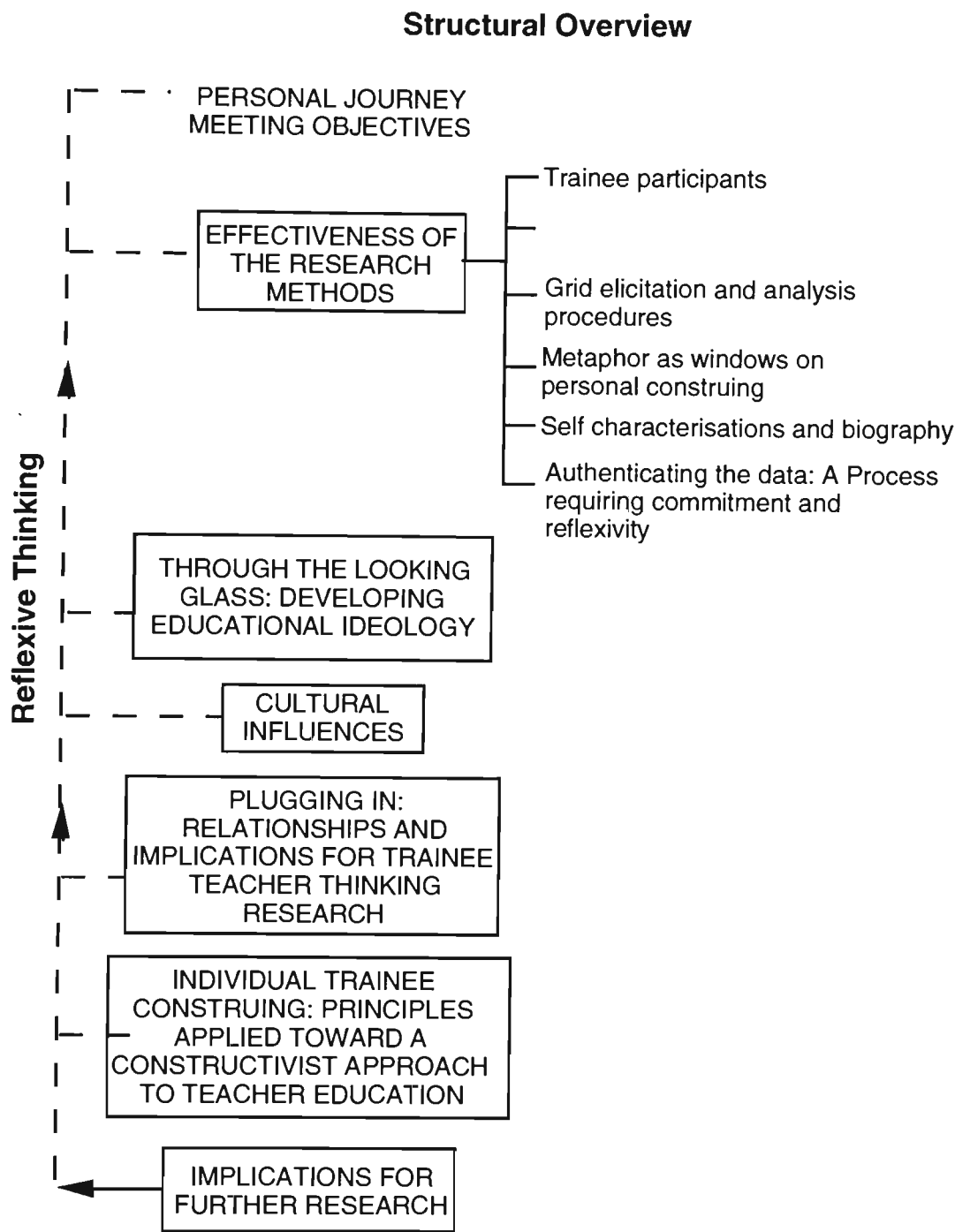
6.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the implications of the research undertaken here. It addresses important questions about the research process and findings. Were the methods selected useful for eliciting and studying the data? How do the findings concerning subjective educational ideology contribute to related research? What implications does it have for the formal training of teachers? Finally, having answered and commented on these questions and implications, suggestions are made for further research before concluding the thesis. Figure 6.1 illustrates the structure of this chapter and the reflexive nature of the research process.

6.1.1 The personal journey: Meeting objectives

I have, through the methods selected and analytic procedures employed, achieved my goal of making the intrinsic patterns of meaning underlying the subjective educational ideology of trainee language teachers explicit. The research has demonstrated the nature of subjective educational ideology and the influences cultural contexts of construing have on its development. The elucidation of categorical patterns of trainee teacher construing has been made possible by bringing together commensurate pools of data through a range of synergistic data collection procedures. The research was undertaken in a context of mutual trust and support.

Figure 6.1 Structural framework and reflexive nature of the research journey



For me the research process was an experience in loosening and tightening (Kelly, 1955a) of my personal construals of language teaching, learning and research. Acknowledging and then abandoning my preemptive construing of language teaching and learning has resulted in a wealth of findings which hold far-reaching implications for future personal construing. The abstraction and manipulation of significant relationships are my attempt to tighten the

various alternative constructions and effects on trainee language teaching and learning experience. The results of my research were never intended to form a body of knowledge to be accepted as an absolute or truth. Rather they resemble more closely Kelly's (1955a) notion of "constructive alternativism," that is, one way of looking at subjective educational ideology.

6.2 Effectiveness of the research methods and design

6.2.1 Trainee participants

The methods are open to some criticism in respect to the selection of trainees. Data were collected from volunteers only, which may have introduced some bias to the findings. The volunteers may have been more positive than other trainees, evident from their enthusiasm to become involved in the project, and adding to an already heavy first year study commitment. Secondly, as the trainees were being studied on entry this may also have had some affect on their construing. In Singapore, student competition for places in higher education at the university level is "fierce." Having gained a place, trainees may have been overtly enthusiastic or positive about their future role, and in their status of having achieved a tertiary place. Thirdly, the trainees may have perceived some status in working closely with an expatriate, and on a research program, though this did not become apparent at any stage in the research. A bond was developed between the researcher and trainees. However, this bond was always kept on a professional level and the additional work for the trainees as a consequence of their involvement probably quickly removed any euphoria associated with participating in the research.

A major criticism can be levelled at the small number of trainees studied, and this did hamper attempts to isolate patterns of commonality within cultures. However, the study required the collection of complex and extensive data

through personal interviews, written biographies and recounts of contexts of construing and the number of trainee participants needed to be small enough for this to be done effectively. The study began with repertory grids for over 40 trainees being completed, however all but twelve found the additional data collection and follow-up commitments more than they could handle, and exercised their rights as volunteers to withdraw. Fortunately, once grids began to be analysed, no trainees withdrew from the study. The findings therefore cannot be said to be representative of, or generalised to other people within the various cultures. The inter-cultural and intra-cultural relationships between mother tongue cultures and aspects of language teaching ideology do however provide a base for future anticipations and need to be explored further with larger numbers. Further, Malay, Chinese and Tamil trainees in Singapore cannot be said to be representative of Malay, Tamil and Chinese people *per se*. A cross cultural comparison using similar methods of data collection would provide further understanding of how subjective educational ideologies of language teaching and learning differ cross culturally, and within similar cultural groups in different cultural settings.

All the trainee participants in this study had relatively stable home learning experiences as evidenced in the written biography and self characterisations. Future study may incorporate an interview with trainees prior to selection to include those who have had varied educative experiences in the home. Trainees whose parents have separated or divorced may improve the representativeness of the participant sample.

6.2.2 Grid elicitation and analysis procedures

The combination of procedures used for data collection were appropriate for a model of a person as subjective, active and creative. Repertory grids together with self-characterisations and written recounts-contexts of construing allowed

trainees to "use their own words and to indicate issues" (p.541) which they found personally relevant and important to them (Pope & Denicolo, 1993). The results highlighted how individual trainees evolve subjective systems of attitudes, activities, and guidelines (Adams-Webber & Mirc, 1976; Ben-Peretz & Katz, 1983) for construing their role as professional language teachers. The methods favoured qualitative, subjective material and proved amenable to limited quantitative analysis. Trainees found the repertory grid elicitation and analysis process interesting, though time consuming. They became very involved in explorations of their construct systems and several reported responses and changes in their construing some twelve months after their involvement in the study.

FOCUS grid method (Shaw & Thomas, 1978) and analyses for exploring commonality of construing between individual elements were of great value in understanding the connections and commonality of construals of language teaching and learning experience. The method, however, is limited to individual grid comparisons, and therefore statistical comparison between groups was not possible. Future research may consider using the Sociogrid method (Shaw, 1980) for statistical explorations of the commonality of construing within small groups. Nevertheless, the FOCUS grid data provided a richness of data which was invaluable in discerning and understanding individual trainee construals of language teaching and learning and selected elements they identified.

What this study confirmed is that trainee teachers come to formal teacher training with constructed knowledge and beliefs about language teaching and learning. Repertory grids have proven, on this small scale, a valuable tool for retrieving these intrinsic ideas (Pope, Denicolo & Bernadi, 1990), although like Corporaal (1991) and Yorke (1987) I found them labour-intensive in

respect to data collection and analysis. Larger scale explorations of teacher and trainee teacher cognition may be advised to use alternative methods such as biography and metaphor.

6.2.3 Written recounts of the contexts of construing

Written recounts of the contexts of construing were found to be invaluable to the trainees and to myself as a researcher. They were essential for deconstructing and reconstructing construct and element meanings and articulating construals of experience. It is a testament to the virtuosity of personal construct psychologists that intrinsic construct meaning can be derived from grid elicitation alone. In the context of this sample, I could not have evaluated or confirmed the extent of construing, or related similarities and differences in contexts, without formal written contexts of construing. These also facilitated greater involvement and personal ownership of analytic discoveries, thereby deepening joint understandings of the realities and implications of construing. Written contexts of construing enabled trainees to be more actively involved in the research analysis process, and together with metaphors, proved to be most important and valuable aspects of the research method.

An important consideration for future research using the methods of this study may involve deeper exploration of the mother-daughter, mother-son, father-daughter, father-son relationships in respect to language and learning. These relationships are likely to produce greater understandings of the culturally influenced core ideological constructs underpinning personal construing. Understandings of this complex subsystem of core constructs may, as indicated in this research, have an important bearing on future development of superordinate and subordinate constructs of language teaching pedagogy.

6.2.4 Metaphor as windows on personal construing

Trainee metaphors of language teaching were all firmly grounded in their personal histories as language learners in various educative contexts. Metaphors encapsulated images of language teaching and learning which represented and validated the biographical and repertory grid data. Their content reflected the nature of language teaching and, for some, the affective relationships between teacher and learner. Metaphors were therefore seen as indicative of the practical and personal elements that shaped the intrinsic ideology underlying the language teacher's role. They served as a bridge between the conscious or concrete and the unconscious or intrinsic. This view is supported by Siegelman (1990) who states that this language "is concrete and visual, which is the first language any of us know, [and] it has powerful connections with the unconscious" (p.xi) and my findings add to the research of Bullough, Knowles and Crow (1989) and Knowles and Holt Reynolds, (1991).

The value of metaphors and the analytical results derived in this study support the findings of Cole's (1990) investigation into the developing conceptions of teaching as evidenced in teachers' personal histories. Moreover, the use of metaphor is seen to provide a representative snapshot of trainee teacher thinking at a specific point in time. This snapshot is experientially based and indicative of the culturally constructed suppositions intrinsic in individual trainee's histories. The findings support the seminal work of Lakoff and Johnston (1980) who make the point that "...no metaphor can ever be comprehended or even adequately represented independently of its experiential basis" (p.19). Further they stress that:

Cultural assumptions, values and attitudes are not a conceptual overlay which we may or may not place on experience as we choose. It would be more correct to say that all experience is cultural through and through, that we experience our 'world' in such a way that our culture is already present in the very experience itself. (p.57)

This work of Lakoff and Johnson (1980) adds further support for a "cultural constructivist" approach used as the basis for exploring intrinsic educative ideology. They write "that metaphor is pervasive in everyday life, not just in language but in thought and action. Our ordinary conceptual system, in terms of which we think and act, is fundamentally metaphorical in nature" (p.3). A further value of metaphors for understanding trainee thinking is that they provide a convenient pathway to understanding the influence of personal history. Findings on the use of metaphor as a support for repertory grid data indicates that metaphor and subsequent contextual analysis may be useful in identifying constructs of language teaching and learning. The benefits of this are that larger numbers of students could be accessed and metaphoric analysis could be used as a component of the formal preparatory program.

6.2.5 Self characterisations and biography

The use of biographical data further supported the development of grounded contextual categories. They provided not only contextual information but insight into the tacit learning approach adopted by the parents as illustrated in the stories and anecdotes of individual trainees. The combinations of methods for data collection, together with the self characterisation exercise facilitated the telling of stories, which were then examined for similarity and differences. This was seen as a means of avoiding problems associated with the lack of coherence and consistency of tacit knowledge (Elbaz, 1990). The use of a "multiple-method" approach (Viney, 1988) to data collection led to more trustworthy and meaningful data analysis and subsequent findings. The use of self characterisations and biography highlighted the potential importance of story as a way of gaining insight into relationships between thought and action (Tabachnick & Zeichner, 1984) and the effects of educative experience and culture of teaching (Feiman-Nemser & Floden, 1986). The self

characterisations and limited biographical data provided few stories however related to the personal practical knowledge (Connelly & Clandinin, 1984; Elbaz, 1983) of the trainees.

6.2.6 Authenticating the data: A process requiring commitment and reflexivity

A key component of data analysis was authenticating the emerging storylines and categories by the trainee participants and external peer reviewers. Follow-up interviews with trainees proved enlightening and useful. Trainees used the opportunity to clarify and expand on data provided in their final case report and cross-case analysis. As I left Singapore before completing the analysis, this final verification was undertaken by mail and telephone. The commitment and mutual trust established throughout the research process between trainees and myself is an example of what Guba and Lincoln (1989) describe as a "risk" associated with constructivist research. As a research team we had to accomplish a large amount of work in a short time:

Because trust is normally built between individuals only over a long period of time, this means that evaluators must work within constraints that do not normally apply to, say, the cultural anthropologist, who is often in a setting for years at a time. But inquirers must elicit maximum co-operation from all those with whom they work if the work is to be successful and to possess integrity. (Guba & Lincoln, 1989, p.134)

It is a tribute to the trainees involved in this study that they stayed the distance, despite heavy commitments and pressures on their personal time. The group showed a genuine interest in the research process as they did in the findings. Trainees became interested and involved in the coding and emergence of analytic categories. Discussions during this time further highlighted the powerful influence involvement in such a project can exert. Trainees hypothesised about how they as teachers could undertake similar classroom-

based research. This related finding yields another potential area of research inquiry, i.e., the effects on trainee teacher construing and practice of personal involvement in a research project.

6.3 Through the looking glass: Developing educational ideology

My findings would suggest that the subjective ideologies of this group of trainee teachers are most closely associated with the views of the mother. I interpreted this to be a direct result of the mother's role (as evidenced in the biographical data) as the principle carer of the child and her role in the child's initial language development. Personal subjective constructions develop from exposure to new experience and, as my findings illustrate, these constructs create contexts, that are in turn "given life by that erected context" (Guba & Lincoln, 1989, p.60). The "natural-immersive" approach to understanding how language is taught and learned forges further links between educative ideology and mother as the principal care giver. Trainee data shows that it is the mother who principally immerses and engages with the child as an infant and it is from her that the child develops a healthy sense of self. Underlying this personal constructed sense of identity, is the pervading cultural, religious, political, educative ideological principles representative of the mother's and of the father's subjective ideological positioning. What this research has shown (albeit through the filtered lenses of trainee construing) is that, despite years of exposure to formal educative culture, trainees maintain little change in respect to educative ideology. Future longitudinal study of parent and child construing throughout the course of a child's educative history would yield a great depth of data on ideological influence, development, change and coping strategies. The implications of this would be far reaching especially to those interested in developing change in individuals or groups.

Subjective ideological constructs of language teaching and learning have been identified most clearly in the superordinate constructs of the trainees. Future research needs to address, as indicated, the mother-daughter, mother-son, father-daughter, father-son, mother-father and sibling relationships to more fully elicit the culturally influenced core constructs of educative ideology. It is from such understanding, across a range of cultures and cultural contexts that a clearer view of ideological influence can be identified. This can then be used with students to develop their personal understanding and strategies for coping with potential changes within the construct network.

6.4 Cultural influences

Findings support Hollingsworth's (1989) notions that these constructs, or what she describes as perspectives, "serve as culturally based filters" (p.162) through which the trainees view their role and practice of language teaching. Analyses between and within cultures have resulted in the identification of a systematically organised framework through which culturally constructed ideological principles of language teaching and learning permeate. Results indicate that influences within the educative culture have a significant effect on trainees' construals of language teaching and learning. This supports Hamilton's (1993) findings derived from the influences of school culture on the interactions that occur within the classroom. Specifically, that "the personal cultural history and the culture of the school affects them [teachers' beliefs] as they enact their practice and work with students" (p.96). Identifiable principles of language education ideology are concerned with the importance and value of the individual. While these principles are subjective personal constructions, they are predicated through interpersonal relationships (Olson, 1988). Findings indicate a range of similarities and differences in trainee construing within and across cultural groups and highlight the importance of establishing and maintaining an effective relationship between teacher and pupil, lecturer

and student, from the beginning stages of the education process. A failure to elucidate and take time to understand the culturally influenced ideological controls over an individual's construing may isolate the trainee or pupil and hinder future development. For example, a failure to take into account the importance of Chinese cultural experience, as viewed through personal constructs, may well affect the trainee's adjustment into his or her professional development program and/or subsequent reaction to trainer-preferred teaching pedagogics. Individual trainee constructs of language teaching and learning, as evidenced in my findings, are the tools through which trainees manipulate new experiences.

6.5 Plugging in: Relationships and implications for trainee teacher thinking research

Research on teacher and trainee teacher thinking, as indicated in Chapter 2, has had a broad range of focus from examining aspects of teachers' and students' personal characteristics to student and teacher behaviour. The assumptions underlying such studies are that an individual's "personality variables translate directly or indirectly into good teaching and learning performance" (Solas, 1992, p.205). What my research has verified is that personality variables are reflected in trainee teachers' construals of language teaching. They are what the trainee construes as most clearly supportive of his or her personal cultural contexts of construing. However, whether these teaching and learning practices are "good" will be determined through the subjective educational ideology of the individual who is making the judgement. What counts as good "depends on the listener" (Elbaz, 1991) who plays an active role in making sense of reality as seen through their own personal construct filters. My findings also suggest that students have less knowledge about how to put their beliefs about language learning into practice. Therefore, to infer that personality variables or stated beliefs will translate "directly" into teaching performance is problematic. Trainees may

display teaching practices that do not hold with their ideological principles of education. This is possible, due to trainees being unsure of how to implement their "preferred" approaches, and this has serious implications for teacher educators and the trainees themselves. It may cause personal confusion and anxiety because they, as trainees, lack the pedagogical content knowledge and understanding of how to implement personal educative ideology. Teacher educators who place trainee learning ahead of program content in the initial stages of teacher preparation and who take the time to work with students to explore personal ways of construing teaching and learning may develop language teachers more aware and thus more capable of implementing teaching practices consistent with their ideological beliefs. Undertaking such an approach also benefits the teacher educator. Once made explicit, the trainee's personal constructs of language teaching and learning can be challenged and developed.

Research undertaken in the area of teacher beliefs centres on the view that beliefs are the best indicators of teaching decisions (see Bandura, 1986; Clark, 1988; Cole, 1989). If we accept that personal construing delineates how things or experiences are alike and yet different, then this organised differentiation could logically be conceived of as a belief. Such beliefs, like the network of constructs they reflect, in turn mirror the "socially constituted understandings" (Holland & Quinn, 1987) of the individual's cultural context. These beliefs are continually open to question and clarification through exposure to new experiences. Decisions then about teaching, illuminate the range of convenience of a particular construct or set of constructs. The result being observable teaching practice reflecting a polarised extreme of a construct's range of convenience, and therefore not totally consistent with subjective belief statements. Also, given the generally poorly developed loose constructs of language teaching pedagogy of the trainees in this study, belief

statements alone may not be the best indicators of the decisions they may make in respect to language teaching pedagogy. Further research into beliefs would do well to investigate the underlying values, role relationships, pictorial images (Calderhead & Robson, 1991) and range of convenience of those constructs on which belief statements are founded. The findings and implications of this study provides support for Pajare's (1992) argument that "the beliefs teachers hold influence their perceptions and judgements, which in turn, affect their behaviour in the classroom" (p.307). However this research further clarifies the influencing nature of beliefs and their usefulness for making sense of the effect of contexts and cultures (Nespor, 1987). Further, by concentrating on developing subjective ideology, this study provides a demonstration of how trainee teachers' perceptions of language teaching and learning are shaped by ideological belief systems beyond the immediate influence of trainers and educators. I anticipate that the implications of this will spark further discussion concerning the relationship between the cognitive abstractions of beliefs and constructs, and the possibility of designing an educative context which takes account of trainees' subjective beliefs. This study has created a unique perspective from which future study and debate concerning the nature and role of beliefs can blossom.

Related research into the knowledge growth of teachers and trainee teachers, as indicated in Chapter 2, has also focused on the content of teacher thinking. These studies have concentrated on the practical knowledge (Connelly & Clandinin, 1985; Elbaz, 1983); subject matter knowledge (Grossman, 1990; Leinhardt & Smith, 1985; Shulman, 1986a); and pedagogical content knowledge (Grossman, 1990; Shulman, 1986a). There is a similarity among three of Elbaz's (1983) five categories of practical knowledge exhibited by a practising teacher. These are: knowledge of subject matter; knowledge of instruction (lesson purpose, lesson structure, how to teach, product of

teaching, acquisition sequence and teaching approach); and knowledge of the milieu of teaching-the classroom (classroom management, atmosphere and affective relationships). Trainees in this study exhibited little knowledge of the political milieu or relations with other teachers or educative administration. What the findings of this study do indicate is the underlying personal ideological construct filters through which future knowledge attained from language teaching experience will pass. Findings also indicate little specific pedagogical content knowledge, specific curricular knowledge or related instructional strategies or knowledge of language teaching content, syntactic structures, etc. Trainee data do however provide a wide range of general pedagogical knowledge (Grossman, 1990) concerned with classroom management, classroom atmosphere, teaching approach and general features of how to teach within the language arts curriculum. These similarities support Grossman's (1990) proposition that "four general areas of teacher knowledge can be seen as the cornerstones of the emerging work on professional knowledge for teaching: general pedagogical knowledge; subject matter knowledge; pedagogical content knowledge; and knowledge of context" (p.5). Most notable is my finding concerning the importance these trainees place on language teaching activities and teaching approaches which are based on real world language use and function. This links with Lampert's (1984) findings about "context-specific" teaching of experienced teachers. More specifically, these trainees believed that language teaching should be related to and adapted to meet the needs and interests of individual students. As indicated, Chinese trainees extend the contextualisation of language teaching to include the development and enhancement of their cultural heritage.

This research contributes a holistic view to the study of trainee teacher thinking by providing evidence that trainee teacher thinking and the whole

subjective ideological base have intrinsic subjective meaning. The meanings of smaller units such as words, sentences, discourses and practices associated with language teaching are merely derived from a larger ideological belief system (Fodor & Lepore, 1992). Likewise, as a model the study encompasses findings related to many of these prior research agendas. Specifically, it has illustrated the place of teacher characteristics and knowledge within an ideological framework and has demonstrated the permeation of core ideological constructs through superordinate beliefs toward comprehensive subordinate constructs of language teaching pedagogy. In addition it has highlighted similarities and differences within and between trainees, specifically in their translation of educative ideological principles into language teaching and learning approaches. Finally, through its design, the research has provided illustrations of how ideological principles are grounded and applied in individual trainee cultural contexts of construing.

My study provides empirical support for studies like that of Zeichner et al., (1987) who suggested that professional or formal teacher education programs elaborate rather than "radically change" student teachers' perspectives. As demonstrated in my study, constructs of language teaching and learning are grounded in culturally influenced core ideological principles closely related to the construct of self. Any attempt to force change in these may threaten the individual's sense of being which may cause a tightening of construing and rejection of, or resistance to, change. The study also highlighted that trainees have limited knowledge of how to apply these ideological principles in the real world of language teaching. Therefore, another possible explanation for reluctance to change is that students may only select those aspects of the training program that validate that which their personal constructed views can withstand, without causing major shifts or threats. This could, as Zeichner's

study found, lead to minimal change in teaching approach let alone "radical changes" in thinking.

6.6 Individual trainee construing: Principles applied toward a constructivist approach to teacher education

Findings of this study demonstrate how constructivist perspectives on language teaching and learning may provide a framework through which trainee teachers can become more aware of the nature and implications of personal construct formation. This awareness is recursive for, as the trainees in this study found, not only did they become more knowledgeable about themselves as learners but the reflexive thinking process affected the way they construed learners and learning in the classroom. This finding is supported by Fosnot (1989). As trainees have new experiences and explore their own personal "constructions" of the world, new or refined constructions are created. These are used as the basis for understanding subsequent experiences and so on. Insights into the world of personal construing, the influence of culture and implications for language teaching create, for the trainee, greater understanding of alternative ways of construing. A constructivist approach to developing trainee language teachers places individual learners and learning at the centre of the professional development program.

As evidenced in the findings of this study, the personal educative history of individual trainees forms an experiential knowledge base from which they construe guidelines of effective language teaching (Holt Reynolds, 1992). The practices of the ideal language teaching role model are consistent with trainees' subjective culturally constructed ideological principles. By basing our (teacher education) programs around the personal constructs of trainees, we as teacher educators are more able to develop program experiences that reflect the needs and interests of our trainees. This view is supportive of

Zeichner and Liston (1987) who believe that trainee teachers require the same supportive, facilitative learning environment as do children, in which trainees are expected to be a combination of artist, naturalist and researcher (Perrone, 1989). These views are synergistic with those promoted by Kelly (1955a,b) and supported by Diamond (1988) who states:

At this stage teachers are not concerned to reproduce the theories of their teacher educators, but are helped to construct their own subjective theories of teaching, that is to explicate and further articulate their currently implicit theories. By bringing such previously uncharted domains under control, their existing frameworks can be renewed.
(p.137)

Having established personal constructs of language teaching and learning, the teacher educator would emphasise understanding the implications of the constructed views. This would involve "unpacking" intrinsic guiding principles and examining the varied implications of such views for language teaching pedagogy. Holt Reynolds (1992) suggests that in order to achieve such a goal we need "vehicles-activities, experiences and assignments-that will invite preservice teachers to share their rationales and beliefs" (p.345). The teacher educator may even adopt "social reconstructionist" (Cannella, 1994) type strategies for providing trainees with "experiences in experimentalism and reflective inquiry" (p.32) and in problem solving. Through such exercises students would be asked to share further their personal views of teaching or learning in relation to the set experience. Experiences then would be varied and geared toward the trainee examining the range of convenience of his or her construct system, and testing the relevance and validity of it across a range of authentic classroom situations. This type of pedagogy links with literature that suggests that learning experiences should challenge existing educational beliefs and resolve any contradictions (Cannella, 1994; Feiman-Nemser & Buchmann, 1989). Such a program, like this study on which it is

based, must be undertaken within a context of collegial support and encouragement. Educators need be always cautious of the influence personal history based construals of language teaching and learning has on core ideological constructs.

6.7 Implications for further research

The review of methods used in this study indicated that further research is required in order to validate the findings of the study. The methods could be modified or extended to meet and extend the ideological parameters and commonalities identified within and across cultures. Longitudinal cross cultural studies and replications of this study's approach, with larger and more representative samples, have been advocated as necessary follow-up research. Further examination into the use of metaphor as a tool for unpacking personal construct may yield a more accessible path from which to explore trainee ideology and the influence of personal history on a much larger scale.

Trainee involvement and interest in the coding and emergence of analytic categories highlight another potential area of research inquiry. That is, research into the effects of personal involvement in a research project on trainee teacher construing and practice. This form of inquiry could easily be an adjunct to any investigation of personal construing.

The findings also indicate areas within the cultural context of the home that may provide promising ground for future research. Studies of mother-daughter, mother-son, father-daughter, father-son relationships and experience in relation to mother tongue culture and educative cultural experience will yield a wide range of understandings and identification of core cultural constructs. Similarly, studies into relationships between personal construals of educative ideology and religious and political ideology would

broaden our understanding of core ideological constructs and assist in identifying the permeation of these constructs throughout the individual's construct hierarchy.

The single most important implication of this study for future research lies in the need to recognise the complexity and subjectivity of human experience and culture, and the relevance specific contexts can have on human endeavour.

6.8 Concluding remarks

This study set out to explore the intrinsic subjective educational ideologies of trainee Malay, Tamil and Chinese language teachers in Singapore. The goal was to explore patterns of meaning in trainee teacher thinking based on mother tongue cultural grouping. The major objectives were to: delineate subjective educational ideological constructs of language teaching; and to elucidate the influences on trainee language teacher construing of individuals from informal and formal educative cultures. On the basis of this exploration the following conclusions are drawn:

1. Trainee teachers from different mother tongue educative cultures displayed a range of intrinsic ideological constructs and images about language learning, language teaching pedagogy and the characteristics of the language teacher;
2. Upon entering a formal professional preparatory program trainee language teachers' knowledge about a teacher's personal and interpersonal skills and his or her role in creating an environment that facilitates language learning, are more identifiable than knowledge about teaching, such as how to plan, classroom management and specific pedagogical content knowledge;

3. Trainee teachers' constructs about language teaching and learning are grounded in their personal history, that is, both informal and formal experiences of language, teaching and learning environments;
4. The ideological principles that form the foundation of trainee language teacher thinking are more closely associated with elements from within the informal educative culture of the home, that is, one or both parents. Furthermore the closeness of these associations suggests that this group of trainees validated these culturally influenced, personal constructs against elements in formal educative cultures construed as positive language teaching models. Therefore trainees' preferred approach to language teaching is more reflective of the way they were raised and taught language in the context of the home than with their formal schooling experiences; and
5. The personal knowledge of the trainee reflects predicated cultural understandings and beliefs which are personally constructed through interpersonal relationships. Exploration of trainee teaching thinking cannot be undertaken without reference to the culture in which the individual has been immersed.

The subjective educational ideologies intrinsic in this group of trainee language teachers' thinking were derived from their personal constructs, biographies and metaphoric images. The associated methods are viewed as synergistic because findings derived from each were found to support each other. Findings, however, do not provide a complete or full account of the individual trainees' subjective educational ideology of language teaching, nor can they be generalised to other trainees of similar mother tongue cultures, inside or outside the Singaporean context. Nevertheless, the findings provide information about the integrated body of knowledge that trainees may draw on, and how that knowledge originates and influences how they perceive themselves as language teachers. Making explicit these understandings has implications for the personal development of each individual trainee and for teacher educators concerned with developing preservice or inservice

programs of instruction that will influence thinking and subsequent teaching behaviour. Finally, as Olson (1988) concludes:

Accounts of teacher perceptions of their practice are a vital source; they are not privileged, and they are at some removed from the way knowledge is acted out. The know-how embedded in that acting is what is crucial, and that know-how reflects what it is that has to be learned in the society of that teacher. What is to be learned depends on how those societies make sense of what they are doing, that is on their culture, and it follows that three important questions for further research are these: what societies, what cultures, what virtues? (p.169)

Heeding Olson's call, this study, as a model, has provided empirical evidence in support of answers relating to these questions. The challenge for future researchers is to build on these findings, to develop methods that support the elicitation and exploration of the intrinsic culturally influenced subjective educational ideologies of trainee language teachers and which, in the interest of change and understanding, encompass these ideologies as integral components in formal development programs.

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APPENDIX 1

**INFORMATION TO PARTICIPANTS REGARDING
RESEARCH AND REP GRID**

INFORMATION TO PARTICIPANTS REGARDING RESEARCH AND REP GRID

"The research in which you are about to participate is looking at trainee teacher's views of their role as language teachers.

What we are going to do is to work together on what is known as the Rep Grid. (At this point, the Rep Grid is shown to the participant). The Rep Grid is a technique designed to isolate the discriminations you use when you try to anticipate the events of the world. For example, when I say the girl is lazy, I am saying that the girl is lazy, the girl is not active.

The discriminations you make are your constructs. the Rep Grid is designed to elicit your constructs such as lazy-active. To find the constructs you use, I am going to ask you to compare elements. Elements can be anything at all, the ones we will use are mostly people. I am going to ask you to compare three people at a time, rating the similarities and differences between them. This discrimination is your construct."

APPENDIX 2

INSTRUCTIONS TO PARTICIPANTS FOR IDENTIFYING ELEMENTS

INSTRUCTIONS TO PARTICIPANTS FOR IDENTIFYING ELEMENTS

"On these cards are some titles which should suggest to you, people you know. I would like you to write the names of these people on the back of the cards."

Let's take the first card 'self'. This is you. Write your name on the back of the card. Let's look at the second card, 'past self'. Who does this card suggest to you? Write the name of that person, or some other way you can identify that person on the back of the card.

You may find that after card No. 8, you will think of someone whose name you have already written. When this happens, try to think of another person who fits the title.

You may also find that it's not possible to name a person, for example a son, if you don't have a son. Don't let this worry you, put the card aside and go on with the next card.

Do you have any questions?"

Order Displayed

1, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 10, 16, 15, 14, 13, 6, 3, 2, 4.

APPENDIX 3

INSTRUCTIONS TO PARTICIPANTS FOR ELICITING CONSTRUCTS

INSTRUCTIONS TO PARTICIPANTS FOR ELICITING CONSTRUCTS

"Let's spread the cards out in front of you, so that you can see them all.

"Now, I am going to give you the number of three cards., and I would like you to tell me a way in which two of these people are alike and thereby different from the third. Start by deciding which two are similar. Then tell me what makes them different from the third."

"Do you understand?"

If yes, elicit the construct and proceed with the ratings.

If no, go through the instructions again.

APPENDIX 4

INSTRUCTIONS TO PARTICIPANTS EXPLAINING THE RATING OF ELEMENTS

INSTRUCTIONS TO PARTICIPANTS EXPLAINING THE RATING OF ELEMENTS

"O.K., we now have your constructs. We are going to use these constructs to describe all the other elements on the grid. To describe them, we will use a rating scale of 1 to 7. So, let's consider the lazy girl example, 1 means lazy and 7 means active. But some people are in between lazy and active. 1, 2, 3 are at the lazy end, and 5, 6 and 7 are at the active end. 4 is about the middle.

Now, I would like you to give ratings to these elements. Let's begin with 'self', how would you rate yourself on your construct? Are you at this end (mention construct pole), or at the other end (mention construct pole), or do you lie somewhere in between?

Do you understand what I want you to do?"

If yes, have the subject rate all the elements on each construct sort.

If no, repeat the explanation.

APPENDIX 5

**TRAINEE DEMOGRAPHIC
INFORMATION**

TRAINEE DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Please fill in the following details.

Note: All information provided by you will be kept strictly confidential.

Name : _____

Date of birth : _____

Place of birth : _____

Race : _____

Education history:

Primary _____

Secondary _____

Junior College _____

N.T.U./N.I.E _____

Employment History:

Previous occupation (full time) _____

Marital status : _____

Languages : _____

Language spoken at home: _____

Parents:

Mother:

Place of birth _____

Age _____

Education _____

Occupation _____

Languages _____

Father:

Place of birth _____

Age _____

Education _____

Occupation _____

Languages _____

Demographic information cont...

Siblings:

Sister(s):

Place of birth _____

Age _____

Education _____

Occupation _____

Languages _____

Brother(s):

Place of birth _____

Age _____

Education _____

Occupation _____

Languages _____

Sister(s):

Place of birth _____

Age _____

Education _____

Occupation _____

Languages _____

Brother(s):

Place of birth _____

Age _____

Education _____

Occupation _____

Languages _____

Sister(s):

Place of birth _____

Age _____

Education _____

Occupation _____

Languages _____

Brother(s):

Place of birth _____

Age _____

Education _____

Occupation _____

Languages _____

Signed : _____

Date : _____

APPENDIX 6

EXTRACTS FROM WRITTEN BIOGRAPHY – SELF CHARACTERISATION DATA

EXTRACTS FROM WRITTEN BIOGRAPHY - SELF CHARACTERISATION DATA

A child like anyone would be afraid of talking / communicating for the first time in an environment unfamiliar to them. When a child is first seeing upon into this world, it needs to adapt (himself / herself) to the surroundings, feel comfortable before she or he can respond to it.

Children first learn to talk by listening to the conversations / sounds made by people around them (eg their parents) with the constant communication made by their parents, they absorb what they hear and with the confidence to encouragement by their parents, they learn to talk.

Reading and writing would come at a later stage. The child would have to understand what he or she is doing before he or she starts to write. It is only when the child expresses his ideas that he or she starts to write.

As a teacher / language, she has to get them interested in a subject that is abstract. She has to think of things that interest a child at that age. She is dealing with things that are abstract to get the child involved. Let them think / reflect of a particular experience they read. Let most of all she must give encouragement to the students. She must that she has confidence in them. She must not be so concerned with their academic abilities but rather their effort.

APPENDIX 7

EXTRACTS OF WRITTEN RECOUNTS — CONTEXTS OF CONSTRUING DATA

EXTRACTS OF WRITTEN RECOUNTS — CONTEXTS OF CONSTRUING DATA

No. Date

10 Construct: Learning flexible - adaptable

Definition: "I define learning flexible - adaptable, to mean able to change so as to be suitable, for new needs."

Description: For eg the teacher might tell us how children learn best, however, what we in general

I feel that things are situational, everyone

is different and learning and reacts differently

Thus we can't say we are right or wrong,

as who are we to judge, are we the

teacher the way they learn best? What

makes us see what are right approach

might not be the child's wrong approach

Thus, I am receptive to new ideas and

will try to learn to adapt accordingly, as

it is better too late to learn and we

can never finish learning

3. 11	Construct : adapts language to different situations
	Definition : "I don't adapt language, it changes, it adapts to the situation. It means being able to use appropriate language at different times so that the message with the right tone and connotation would be put across."
	Description : For eg, if I were to talk to a friend, it would be casual, informal with a little code-switching here and there. However, if I were to talk to my lecturer, it would be more serious, with more respect and direct.

CENSTA 7 min