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10

“Self” in Language, Culture, and Cognition

Yanying Lu



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“Self” in Language, Culture, and Cognition

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by Yanying Lu

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*In memory of my father, who always
made me feel loved for being myself*

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Preface

The way in which one uses language tells a lot about the individual. The present book tells the stories of twenty-five Mainland-born Chinese immigrants who joined a series of group discussions about their life in Australia. The study adopts an interdisciplinary approach to unpack linguistic manifestations and cognitive representations of “self” in the contemporary Chinese diaspora discourse. The research methodology incorporates elements from sociolinguistics, cognitive linguistics and the newly developed field of Cultural Linguistics.

The findings of the study reported in this book reveal how selfhood occurs at the interface of language, culture, and cognition. Mapping out the cognitive dimensions of “self” and discussing their relevance in constructing social and cultural identities in interactions, the study presents empirical and theoretical advancements through analysing how Chinese speakers’ self-perceptions influence their conceptualisations of social identities and the communication of which in a cross-cultural context.

Considering the power of language, migrant talk gives insights into understanding how contemporary Chinese immigrants perceive themselves and its impact on their social relationships. The study reveals a number of enduring and emerging beliefs that permeate these participating Chinese speakers who migrated to Australia in the early 2000s. The enduring beliefs, given their influence on various modern postulations of Chinese identity, provides clear evidence of cultural continuity. They shape the way Chinese people think about individuality, social relationships and collective identities. The emerging ones include views on cultural diversity and outlooks on migration, which impart wisdom to cross-cultural communication. These findings have significant implications for studying intercultural and cross-cultural communication as they reveal how traditional and modern ideas in Chinese culture are interacting with those of other world cultures.

CHAPTER 1

Migrating the Chinese self

This research explores Mainland-born Chinese immigrants' perception of selfhood. Against the background of contemporary diaspora discourse, Chapter 1 seeks to define the self at the interface of language, culture and cognition. It highlights the role of the cultural context in the production of socially transmitted norms and tendencies in the articulation of personhood in modern China.

Keywords: self, diaspora discourse, Chinese language, culture, cognition

1.1 The contemporary concept of self

At the occurrence of a shift in social sciences in defining “self”, the traditional view on it as being unified or indivisible has been replaced by the modern one which sees it as being fragmented and plural. The self, across various disciplines such as sociology, social psychology and linguistics, is also increasingly viewed as being constructed and sustained in the linguistic activities of the individual.

The current study takes a linguistic approach to the investigation of selfhood through examining the ways in which it emerges from people's talk. Linguistic and anthropological research cannot emphasise enough on the significance of language as a provider of symbolic resources for its speakers. It enables us to negotiate self-understandings and to exchange our views and opinions with others. Language also provides us with pragmatic strategies to achieve communicative purposes. In the linguistic process of differentiating and integrating a sense of self, we are defining who we are and becoming ourselves in relation to others.

Throughout one's lifetime, cognition serves as the anchor for comprehending and processing information, some of which has been passed on to them as cultural assets and some emerges from moment-to-moment negotiation of meanings. The exercise of our cognitive faculties through perception, thinking and imagination is crucial to gaining self-knowledge and to understanding the many meanings of a cultural being. Using various concepts related to the self or making reference to it through language is part of a socio-cognitive process in which we strive to become who we are in the context of the socio-cultural world we live in.

Knowing how those concepts are linguistically conceptualised and communicated among speakers of the same language on a day-to-day basis is key to understanding the communal dimensions of the lexicons in relation to the expression of the self and how the shared cultural knowledge shapes the way a member of that cultural group thinks and communicates, and vice versa. In the context of the present research, the contemporary concept of self highlights the process in which social performances and cultural imaginations are highly interactive and mutually constitutive (see Figure 1).

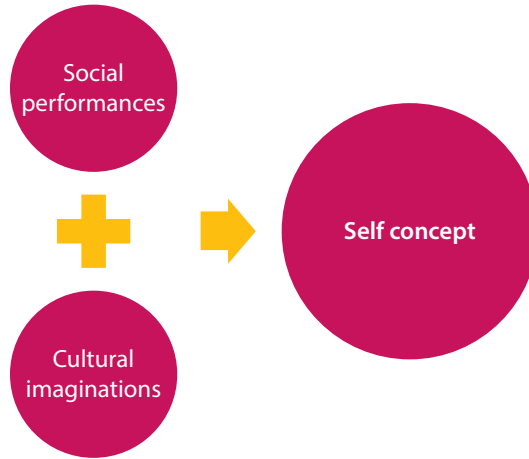


Figure 1. The contemporary concept of self

The social construction of the self through linguistic practices is a matter of social performance. According to the positioning theory originally outlined by Davies and Harré (1990), the choices that speakers make to position themselves with regard to others constitute emergent identities. These emergent identities account for aspects of the self. They are located in discursive interactions as observably and subjectively coherent positioning acts.

By means of narrating self-worth, needs, social responsibilities, moral principles, and ideals of the good, people situationally produce their own positions and perceive positions that their interlocutors take. Key to such practice is its performative nature with regard to the speaker’s imagination and evaluation of self-perceptions in social interactions. The self we speak about, therefore, indirectly indexes who we think we have been and who we want to be in the eyes of others.

While self-understandings are unique to the individual, they nonetheless reflect the broader cultural background of that individual. With regard to the aforementioned social act of speaking of oneself, the linguistic practice of relating oneself to others tells many personal stories. The manners in which these stories are told

and the values they transmit are subject to the ecological, cosmological, social and moral orders permeating the culture in which the individual is nurtured.

Concerning the sense of self that is culturally-situated, the conceptualisation of cultural identities is contingent upon the social positioning of self and other in relation to forming cultural imaginations, which is highly relative and context-dependent. In cross-cultural comparisons, the positioning of one another as “imagined” members of larger cultural collectives is a way to consolidate perspectives and viewpoints that are seen as unique to certain cultural groups or a method for rationalising differences and even misunderstandings in the cross-cultural context.

Modern psychological and anthropological studies go even further in saying that the self forms an integral part of a cultural system (e.g., Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Marsella, De Vos, Hsü, & others, 1985; Shweder & Bourne, 1982; Triandis, 1989). The cultural experience of the self may include naming different cultural groups and discussing their collective features. These linguistic interactions reveal how individuals imagine their place within the cultural group with which they identify. The socio-cultural categories that arise from these activities provide researchers with a window into the mental models of a culture’s members.

Among the contemporary Chinese immigrants there remains a strong causal assumption about how selfhood develops out of nationhood. A number of participants indicate that they see themselves as not only responsible for their individual image, but also for a collective image, the image of China. The cultural imagination of what it means to be Chinese is inseparable from their sense of self. The convergence can be traced back to the classic view of personhood in the Confucian school of thought. Other examples of present-day cultural thinking showing an intimate relationship between individuality and being Chinese can also be said to reflect the legacy of the conceptions of Chinese selfhood in late Qing and early Republican China.

As for how Chinese people perceive themselves and what cognitive models they rely on for conceptualising collective identities, the answer can be found in the way they use the Chinese language when talking about themselves. This is the point of departure for this book. This insight paves the way for understanding how Chinese think about themselves and what they expect from others. Linguistic features of speaking about oneself in Chinese also provide a rich resource for exploring the cultural meanings of being Chinese in the contemporary world.

1.2 Contemporary Chinese immigrants

The current book is a report on the cross-cultural experience(s) of a group of Chinese immigrants in Australia. The history of Chinese-Australians goes back a long way. Ever since the gold rush in the mid-19th century, waves of immigrants from Mainland China and Southeast Asia have contributed to the ever-growing Chinese communities in Australia.

In the most recent wave, individuals born in China made up the third largest group of overseas-born Australian residents, accounting for 2.2% of Australia's total population, according to the latest Census data (ABS, 2016). These Chinese immigrants represent a new and growing group of global citizens living in a society where multiculturalism and plural understanding of identity is celebrated.

The interviewees of the present study were born and raised in China in the 1980s and 1990s. Some have been studying in Australia with the intention of permanently staying there. Others have lived in in the world's sixth largest country for several years upon receiving tertiary education and have entered its labour force. These young professionals are likely to contribute massively to the social landscape of contemporary Australian society in the long run.

As members of the same generation, these participants have a common understanding of China and her history in the twentieth century as a result of the education they received in Mainland China. The responses and comments from these participants contain contemporary Chinese ways of viewing personhood. The term “Chinese” embraces a global perspective in the present study. It is a constellation of cultures that emerge from the interaction among these interviewed Chinese immigrants in Australia, the interpretation of which contributes to the plurality of Chinese cultures in the global sense. The analysis will be carried out by detailing the Mandarin Chinese lexical system of individuality and collective identity.

In recent studies of cross-cultural adaptation, theorists start to view the cultural transition among immigrants as an open-ended process. The impact of their home culture may continue to shape their way of life in the new cultural environment. Aspects of the home culture can also exert an influence on their accommodation of new experiences. The interaction among immigrants and with people from other geographic or linguistic backgrounds helps them accommodate more diversified views than they would have received prior to migration as well as repackaging their beliefs and convictions shaped by their past experiences.

The reported group of Chinese immigrants has not been studied systematically. The central theme of the present book is thus to gain a deeper understanding of the younger Chinese generation born in China after the country adopted the Reform

and Opening-Up policy.¹ The formal education they received in Mainland China was still heavily advocating nationalism and the communist ideology. However, they also grew up in times when drastic social and economic reforms were taking place in the country.

The contemporary globalised world has made it possible for the current generation of young Chinese immigrants to contrast and identify with a variety of cultural collectives. They have had a distinctive material, cultural and political experience that their parents' and grandparents' generations could not have had. The demography and the historical background of the participants forms the socio-cultural context for a descriptive interpretation of the stylistic way they speak and talk about themselves. Conceptualisations and reconceptualisations of enduring and emerging cultural beliefs all carry profound socio-cultural implications.

1.3 The discourse of contemporary Chinese identity

Theorists and researchers with an interest in cross-cultural differences have often argued that members of different cultures and in different historical periods have diverging beliefs or ideas about the nature of personhood. In this spirit, a variety of empirical studies contrasted the self in Chinese and other Eastern cultures to the Western conception and proposed revisions to the existing Western theories to accommodate cross-cultural differences (e.g., Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Marsella et al., 1985; Shweder & Bourne, 1982; Triandis, 1989).

The difference between Western and Asian models can be traced back to indigenous Chinese schools of thinking, such as Confucianism, one of the dominant ideologies in Chinese imperial societies. Confucius's teachings, therefore, have become an important resource for interpreting the Chinese personhood. For example, the Confucian moral principle of interdependence as a result of fulfilling role obligations can be said to influence Chinese people's inclination to be socially dependent on one another.

Whether the Chinese self is purely reactive to role expectations or individually autonomous has been the subject of a great deal of debate. Anthropologists Fei Xiaotong and Francis L. K. Hsü embraced a psycho-cultural perspective and depicted features of Chinese social networks in the form of a continuous field of concentric layers. According to Fei, the Chinese self is bound to others in a social

1. The second generation of the central leadership of the Communist Party of China, led by Deng Xiaoping, started the implementation of a series of political and socio-economic reforms in 1978 in the People's Republic of China (PRC).

network. The extent of intimacy with another person is reflected by the relative position of that other person within the concentric circles of one’s psychological field (Fei, 1948, pp. 24–27). Similarly, Hsü argued that the Asian conceptualisation of the individual removes the individual from the centre of the world and recognises that the individual is embedded in a social network (Hsü, 1971). Hsü believes that Chinese people’s inclination to be socially and psychologically dependent on one another is influenced by Confucian moral principles.

Although the participants of the present study may not explicitly discuss their understandings of influential premodern Chinese schools of thought, such as Confucianism and Daoism, their statements about how they perceive themselves as Chinese, how they view other Chinese people, and how they see themselves in relation to non-Chinese people, all indicate some socially-constructed norms and ideals of what it means to be a good person. However, a narrow interpretation that places the focus on the continuation of traditional Chinese thinking suffers the drawback of being culturally essentialist. The idea of self-awareness in the Chinese context is open to numerous interpretations.

From a constructivist perspective, Western notions, such as individuality and national identity, since entering the modern Chinese vocabulary in the early twentieth century, have gone through waves of vernacularisation in which indigenous Chinese notions always play a large role. A number of Chinese terms related to the conception of the self, such as *guomin* ‘national people’, *geren zhuyi* ‘individualism’ and *guominxing* ‘national character’ embody the discourse of nation-building in which some premodern ideas have been revisited by some influential intellectuals in modern China. Key attributes of the self found in their writings are never short of re-interpretation and re-imagination of some “old” values.

Notions from traditional Chinese literature about selfhood along with many other premodern ideas of a person prescribe the appropriate types of social roles people ought to play in an ideal society. Such assumption continues to influence the Chinese discourse of individuality and collectivity, particularly in the twentieth century where new senses of Chinese self were discussed to produce new cultural meanings. To this day, interpretations of traditional Chinese concepts have still never ceased to spark a great deal of discussions on the making of an idealised Chinese identity.

The discourse of nationalism and individualism in modern China has also informed a rich socio-political context for the interpretation of the cultural influences on participants’ stylistic way of speaking and talking about themselves. When unpacking the cultural meanings of self-related descriptions in the modern Chinese language, one needs to consider the underpinning nationalistic and ideological context which could well be shaping the ways in which participants in this study construct facets of the self.

Some nationalistic ideas have become a shared cultural resource on which Chinese speakers draw in self-expression and might also have influenced the assumptions that the present cohort holds. We cannot gain a full understanding of the types of statements made by the participants in this project without exploring the meanings of these notions with reference to their first uses in the historical context of modern China.

In any case, it is clear that premodern Chinese teachings on interpersonal relationships continue to be relevant to the study of contemporary Chinese people's social experience of the self. The nationalistic and ideological context of modern Chinese discourse on the self and the society is also pertinent to the discussion. The Chinese immigrants are likely to have internalised the official narrative of nation-strengthening as part of their overall perceptions of being a Chinese person in the global world.

Society has witnessed a profusion of alternative modes of thinking. Awareness of these many viewpoints enables scholars to investigate many alternative realities, including different culturally oriented conceptualisation models of personhood. As explained previously, this book explores how the self is conceptualised in Chinese through the discursive interaction among a group of Mainland-born Chinese people. The aim is not to compare them to other groups of people in terms of their cultural characteristics and cognitive patterns, nor is it to generalise their perceptions of different cultural norms and behaviours.

Instead, the interplay of Chinese conceptions of personhood and Western theories of individuality has been presented here as an example to show the complexity that one must overcome while interpreting the cultural meanings of the self. The formulation of an interdisciplinary framework is essential to overcoming the complexity. The interdisciplinary approach also has the benefit of broadening the discussion by exploring the construction and negotiation of social identities in the cross-cultural context. This will be elaborated on in the remaining chapters by marking out the methodological significance and contribution this book is making in the related areas of study.

1.4 An overview of the present research

Drawing on the latest developments in sociolinguistics, cognitive linguistics and the newly developed Cultural Linguistics, the ways self and other are conceptualised in the social space offers philosophical insights for gaining a better understanding of the interplay of how individuals perceive themselves as having an identity vis-à-vis others and how they construct relationships and group belonging with other individuals through imagination.

While the interviewed participants discuss their lives as immigrants, their views on migration, individuality, and collective identity emerge as reoccurring themes, which they treat as key cultural assets. Their evaluations and discussions of being Chinese serve as the primary target for investigation. The participants' narrative accounts of being an individual, evaluative remarks concerning collective identity and their use of embodied metaphors for the inner self, have been analysed discursively and conceptually. These utterances show how speakers discursively perform their social identities with shifting perspectives and how they employ numerous symbolic and pragmatic strategies to display and claim various interpersonal relationships. They also depict the speakers' inner being, their interpersonal proximity and their imagined positions within relationships and groups.

The present research discusses the idea of becoming oneself as a matter of social performance. Situated in the contemporary Chinese diaspora discourse, Chapters 2 to 4 explore the performative aspect of migrant talk. Chapter 2 introduces methods for the analysis of identifiers for enacting a self-image in discourse, laying the groundwork for a qualitative analysis of the implications of nuances of many variations. Self-references, naming Chinese socio-cultural groups and utterances that are evaluative or reflective of the typicality of being who they are form part and parcel of Chinese ethnicity.

Speaking of oneself also reflects the speaker's understanding of some enduring socio-cultural values. Responses and comments from these participants that contain references to collective identities or membership in Chinese socio-cultural communities reflect the cultural ways of viewing personhood in contemporary China. Analytical perspectives from sociolinguistics help break down the value-laden statements provided by the participants and determine their pragmatic as well as moral implications.

Chapter 3 and Chapter 4 focus on utterances that reflect descriptions of individuality, interpersonal relationships and discussions about social collectives, and uncover social constructions of the self among contemporary Chinese which are deeply embedded in their language use. These two chapters will interpret how some premodern ideas and values, and the re-imagination of them in the nation-building discourse in modern China have carried over into the language of contemporary Chinese immigrants. These ideas are a shared cultural resource on which Chinese speakers draw for self-expression in their social interactions. Speakers negotiate a number of normative presuppositions with their audience in order to enact a favourable self-image and to establish a sense of correctness. In the meantime, they also project their own creation of meanings onto some imagined cultural collectives.

The current book also tests out the general belief that a person's navigation in the world is built upon a cognitive anchor by addressing the cognitive basis for the

conceptualisation of the self and the construction of identities with regard to the cognitive strategies of the speaker. Chapter 5 analyse the ways in which speakers conceptualise individuality, internal causation and interpersonal proximity. Lexical concepts, in this regard, reveals the speakers' perceptual cognition.

Chapter 6 explores the Chinese embodied conceptualisation of the self. Cultural Linguistic research promotes the idea that a person's embodied conceptual anchor is conditioned by cultural contingencies. The cultural system that underlies a particular language should be studied in terms of its cultural context (Yu, 2007b, p. 77). The analysis presented in this chapter targets cultural conventions in the designated cognitive patterns in the Chinese language with numerous embodied descriptions of inner self or internal causation.

Chapter 7 departs from the Chinese speakers' process of narrating themselves and arrives at how they create and exchange symbolic information in discursive practices. In the process of communicating to their intended audience to whom aspects of an idealised migrant identity are projected, speakers draw on and exercise various normative presuppositions and cultural ethos, simultaneously perceiving, re-enacting and negotiating their conceptualisations of a migrant identity. The analysis is an attempt to capture the intertwining relationship between linguistic, conceptual and cultural knowledge in the conceptualisation of social identity.

Chapter 8 summarises the integration of cognitive linguistic and sociolinguistic analytical methods as the type of research that adds a social dimension to the cognitive enterprise. This socio-cognitive discourse approach towards interpreting the cognitive patterns of the self in Chinese extends the cognitive paradigm into the nuances of social interaction.

Self-referential pronouns in Mandarin Chinese

In Chinese interactions, conversational parties presume the existence of a social protocol that maintains face, or harmony, and acts in such a way as to protect its integrity. This chapter introduces how the examination of the participants' referential pronoun can provide a salient window into the relational aspects of self-hood that arise in social interactions in relation to the communication demands in Chinese culture.

Keywords: self-referential pronouns, discursive functions, social construction

2.1 Pronominal references in Mandarin Chinese

Linguistically speaking, one constructs a sense of self through referring to oneself. The current chapter focuses on self-referential pronouns. Linguists regard personal pronouns as a key discursive feature for they reveal how individuals perceive themselves with respect to others (e.g., Bourdieu, 1992; Grundy & Jiang, 2001; Mühlhäusler & Harré, 1990; Ochs, 1992; Wortham, 1996). The perceived relationship between the speaker and the hearer affects pronominal choice (Brown & Gilman, 1960). Pronominal choices are therefore fleeting interactional moves and are not made randomly.

Chinese self-referential pronouns include the singular form *wo* 'I' and the plural form *women* 'we' along with other inclusive or exclusive referential terms. Self-references that the participants used while talking about their experiences as Chinese immigrants in Australia are signals of representing the self in front of one another. Figure 2 illustrates the analytical framework for examining these self-references in the context of the present study.

The analysis of these self-referential pronouns first considers their positioning impact as pronominal references in conversations. In front of old and new acquaintances, each speaker makes choices between the singular and plural person references to strategically include or exclude the hearer or other non-present parties.

The Chinese collective self-referential pronoun *women* 'we' is found to denote the speaker as a member of a specified group, or as someone who is more generally



Figure 2. Narrating the self in the Chinese diaspora discourse

aligned with some unspecified individual or group. Speakers are also found to use second person singular pronoun *ni* ‘you’ in lieu of first person pronouns. In this case, *ni* ‘you’ or ‘one’ is often used as an indefinite personal pronoun which can facilitate the speaker to speak through the consciousness of others (Xiang, 2003, p. 500).

As introduced in Chapter 1, the data is based on focus group discussions among Chinese immigrants. Five groups of participants were asked to talk about their life experiences in Australia. Most of the participants did not know each other before the focus group discussion took place. It then became interesting to observe how they made themselves known to each other through revealing what they thought as the correct ways of being a Chinese individual.

The study also looks for concepts and ideas that might have shaped the participants’ stylistic ways of narrating the self in the diaspora discourse in relation to its social context. The current study places its focus on the participants’ cross-cultural experience which is a very unique circumstance itself because of the exposure to various cultural constructs. Impact of migration can be found in references to Chinese-based social groups and evaluations of their characteristics, positively or negatively. These evaluations form part and parcel of their Chinese ethnicity.

Using personal pronouns to refer to oneself is also intimately linked to identity construction, thereby contributing to identity negotiation and to the construction of a social reality in social situations (Mühlhäusler & Harré, 1990). Using collective self-reference signalling allegiances to multiple collective identities, speakers can either include their interlocutors in these allegiances to shorten the distance with

their interlocutors or exclude them by identifying with imagined co-present others thereby adding distance to their interlocutors.

In addition to discursive identity construction, analysing the personal pronoun system of a language can reveal culturally oriented discursive rules. Pronominal systems can be deemed as culture's social organisation (Lerner & Kitzinger, 2007). Studies of first person pronouns in historical Chinese communication demonstrate that speakers base the choice of pronoun on the perceived relationship between the interactants (Lee, 2006, 2012).

The collective form is said to signal modesty and/or politeness as well as neutralising conflict. In Mandarin Chinese, the choice between the first person singular and plural forms may be pragmatically manipulated to enhance power from a collectivism-oriented perspective (Huang & Lu, 2016). The blurring boundary between the two is said to be a clear example of the communal dimension of the Chinese pronominal system (Mao, 1996).

2.2 A discursive examination

The analysis of the variations of individual self-reference, collective self-reference and the use of indefinite pronouns adopts a discursive approach, examining the construction of the relational self in a range of distinguishable discourse activities. These discourse activities can be identified when participants state their opinions, namely assertion, mitigation, persuasion, and accommodation in which Chinese socio-cultural implications, such as norms and practices, are revealed and discussed.

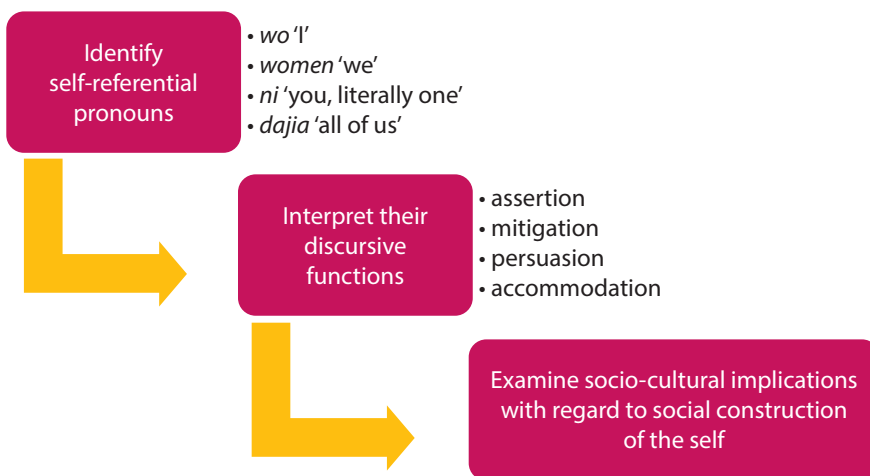


Figure 3. Discursive analysis of self-references in Chinese

2.2.1 Assertion

This subsection explores how speakers assert themselves. The I–epistemic verb construction helps to identify assertive statements, as it is a very common way for the speakers to take the floor to speak with a certain epistemic tone (Lee, 2010, p. 196). The syntactic structure is usually made up of the first person pronoun *wo* ‘I’ and a cognitive verb or a speech act verb. Cognitive verbs include *juede* ‘think’ and *ganjue* ‘feel’ while speech act verbs comprises of *xiangxin* ‘believe’, *shuo* ‘say’ and *jiang* ‘speak’.

The speaker in Example (1) uses the I–epistemic verb construction twice to maintain the floor:

- (1) a. *wo jiu juede zhiyao ziji you nengli, buguan qu nali*
 I just **think** as long as self have capability no matter go where
 ‘I just **think** as long as oneself is capable wherever one goes’
- b. *ni shi jinzi dao nali dou hui faguang dui*
one (lit you) are gold go where always will glow right
ba
 Exclamation Particle [EP]
 ‘if **one** is gold wherever one goes one always glows is that right’
- c. *wo jiu juede zhiyao shi ni ziji you nengli*
 I just **think** as long as is you self have capability
 ‘I just **think** if only one is capable’
- d. *bu manyi zhege gongzuo wo keyi qu zhao dierge*
 not satisfied this job I can go find second
 ‘if I’m not satisfied with this one I can find another job’

The overt pronoun *wo* ‘I’ as the subject is used twice with the opinion marker *juede* ‘think’, reflecting the speaker’s wish to intensify and emphasise their ownership of the statement. Within this utterance, *juede* ‘think’ is repeated to emphasise the ownership of the opinion that has been constructed in the utterance which indicates the speaker’s strong will to maintain the floor and a vigorous willingness to be responsible for the utterance that goes with it.

Even so, the speaker’s self-reference is far from being consistent. Apart from the first person pronoun *wo* ‘I’, the second person singular pronoun *ni* ‘you’, shown in Lines b and c, also witnesses numerous occurrences during the discussion. This use of an indefinite personal pronoun, *ni* ‘you’ or ‘one’ reflects a wish on the speaker’s part to extend the epistemic ground to the audience. As the speaker seeks confirmation from the audience by asking *dui ba* ‘is that right’ before moving on to the subsequent opinion. The variation of self-reference indicates the speaker’s effort to assert and construct the relational sense of self.

The next noticeable pattern of self-reference variation as a way of showing assertion in a relational interaction is that the speakers may repair from collective self-reference to individual self-reference. They select themselves, in particular, out of a relational collective. Such instances are called “extractions” (Lerner & Kitzinger, 2007, p. 540). They feature the replacement of a collective reference form with an individual one, narrowing the reference for the speaker from a relational collective.

- (2) a. *dayide biaoshi women xianzai haizai baoyuan zuoye jiao*
 freshman think we now still complain, assignment submit
jiu jiao le
 then finish Predicative Particle [PP]
 ‘as freshman we are now still complaining, simply submit the assignment’
- b. *danshi buzhidao women zai zuo shenme yinwei xianzai hai*
 but don’t know we at do what because now still
hen jichu
 very basic
 ‘but we don’t know what we are doing because it is still very basic right now’
- c. *jiu women ye buzhidao women zai xie shenme jiu xie xie*
 just we also don’t know we at write what just write
wan yihou jiao shangqu
 write finish after hand in
 ‘we just don’t know what we are writing about, so (we) just finish writing and submit’
- d. *women * wo juede ting bengkuai*
 we <sudden stop> I think very frustrated
 ‘we I think I am very frustrated’

In Example (2), the speaker initially presents herself as a member of a relational collective – first-year university students – and, excluding the rest of the audience, speaks on the collective’s behalf about their disorientation in their studies. And she does so by choosing the collective mode of self-reference (Lines a to c).

In Line d, extraction is used to narrow the speaker’s epistemic authority from that of a relational collective of which she is a member to just herself. In limiting the purview of the categorical assessment to the speaker alone, the individual self-reference sets the basis for what is later formulated as her personal experience.

This repair reflects the interpersonal facet of self-reference, which provides a solution to the problem of ascribing motives on behalf of others. This case of epistemic extraction saves her from inadvertently characterising all first year students as disliking the subject she is discussing. With the opinion marker *juede* ‘think’, the extraction also directs the audience into sympathising with her personal frustration.

Having demonstrated extraction as a way of asserting oneself, a mixture of extraction and the reverse process to extraction turns out to be a useful tactic where the speaker strategically resorts to self-reference variation to control the degree of assertiveness in constructing her personal opinion in front of others. The replacement of an individual reference, *wo* ‘I’, with a collective one, *women* ‘we’ or *zanmen* ‘we’, is called “aggregation” (Lerner & Kitzinger, 2007, p. 540). It broadens the reference from an individual to a collective.

In Example (3), the speaker starts her turn by evaluating herself using the I–epistemic verb structure *wo juede* ‘I think’. However, towards the end of her narrative, she aggregates to the collective form of self-reference in Line f:

- (3) a. *wo juede wo daoxianzai dou meiyou wanquan duli wo juede*
 I think I till now still not completely independent I think
haishi kaozhe jiali
 still rely on family
 ‘I think I am still not completely independent I think I still rely on family’
- b. *wo he wo bama de guanxi*
 I and my parents Attributive Particle [AP] relationship
yizhidou tinghaode
 always quite good
 ‘my relationship with my parents has always been good’
- c. *ranhou wo daoxianzai dou ting nian tamen jiushi juede*
 then I till now always very need them just think
haimei zhangda
 not yet grown up
 ‘I still need them up till now, thinking that (I) haven’t fully grown yet’
- d. *chuguoderen zong shuo wo hen duli dan haishi*
 people who go abroad always say I very independent but still
zai kao fumu
 at rely on parents
 ‘overseas students always say “I’m are very independent” but they still rely on parents’
- e. *ruguo meiyou fumu gei ni fu xuefei ni*
 if without parents for one (lit you) pay tuition you (lit. you)
zenme chulai
 how come out
 ‘without parents’ paying for one’s tuition fee how did one goes abroad’
- f. *women xuedaode jiu zhishi shengguo jineng zhenzheng de*
 we learnt just only living skills real AP
duli women haimei zuodao
 independency we not yet achieve
 ‘what we learnt are just living skills we haven’t become truly independence yet’

- g. *wo haishi kaozhe jiali*
 I still rely on family
 'I am still relying on family'

The repetition of the I–epistemic verb structure *wo juede* 'I think' in Line a shows that the speaker is strongly convinced that she is still dependent. The speaker in Example (3) thinks that *chuguode ren* 'people who go abroad' fail to realise that they rely on their parents' financing. Her argument is then supported by the explanation in Line e – studying abroad could not have happened without financial aide from their parents – for people who fit this category, which includes recipients who are all undergraduate students. This may be why the speaker chooses the inclusive plural form of self-reference *women* 'we' in Line f.

Extensive research has shown that speakers are flexible in taking on individual self-perceptions and collective self-perceptions depending on the discursive context. Aggregation, in general, can help avoid drawing attention to the speaker. If, however, an extraction appears after an aggregation, it shows a very conscious move on the speaker's part to extract oneself as an individual from a generic statement he or she has already produced.

At the end of Example (3), the speaker extracts herself from the relational collective (Line g). This way, she genuinely admits that she is still dependent on her family without imposing the same assertion on other student co-participants. Extracting herself from this relational collective turns out to be necessary to avoid impairing their other interlocutors' self-esteem.

Extraction can be a strategic move to distance oneself from co-participants. Similarly, in Example (4), the speaker extracts after self-repairing from singular self-reference to inclusive collective self-reference:

- (4) a. *tamen congxiao shoudao de jiaoyu jiushi nayang*
 they since young receive AP education just like that
 'they were taught that way since (they were) little'
- b. *tamen congxiao bei jiaoyu wo * women congxiao*
 they since little was taught I <sudden stop> we since little
bei jiaoyu zhiyou yige zhongguo
 were taught only one China
 'they were taught when little I we have been taught since little that there is only one China'
- c. *tamen bei jiaoyu jiushi xianggang shi yige duli de difang*
 they were taught just Hong Kong is one independent AP place
 'they were taught that Hong Kong is an independent state'
- d. *suoyi dao houlai wo jiu juede shuo geren guannian buyiyang*
 so till later I just think say everyone views different
 'so later on I think (it could be) said everyone has different views'

Unlike in Example (3), where the shifting self-reference is produced for relational and discursive reasons, self-reference features in Example (4) mark an effort to create individual epistemic authority using extraction. In Line b, the speaker aggregates to the just-referred-to relational collective which corresponds to the presumably existing “they”. The subsequent viewpoint is attributed to the inclusive “us”.

The repair from individual self-reference to a collective one takes on the interpersonal perspective by including the audience in the speaker’s reasoning process. The difference between “their” political view and “our” political view is based on the way history has been taught in different educational systems.

Previous conversational analytical studies show that conversation partners orient to their own entitlements to knowledge and experience, and to those of their co-participants (e.g., Goffman, 1974; Goodwin, 1981; Lerner & Kitzinger, 2007; Sacks, 1992; Schegloff, 1996). When the speakers perceive themselves and hearers as belonging to the same collective, extraction can especially strengthen their epistemic authority to assert their own opinions as being independent of some collective knowledge.

As for the current speaker, she extracts herself from the relational collective in Line d to format an assertive statement. The extraction not only helps to assert what she knows herself, rather than being a recipient of collective knowledge, but also establishes herself as someone who acts impartially without submitting to the collective authority.

When the assertion is made to evaluate past experiences, some speakers are found to use the collective self-reference when none of the rest of the group ever had the same experiences. It is called the “vague we” where the referential starting point does not take place locally, and no conversational partner can be regarded as an additional member of the relational collective (Kitagawa & Lehrer, 1990, p. 745). In cases where the participants are recalling some early experience, using the aggregative *women* ‘we’ seems to be a strategy that the participants employ in order to situate themselves in a generational group.

In places where they recall the past, they can choose the collective over the singular form to self-reference even though the story might be quite personal. It shows an effort to keep their personal voices out of isolation and engage their voices collectively with “the time of the past”:

- (5) a. *lai zher banian yihou diyici huiqu*
 came here half a year later first time went back
 ‘after (I) came here for half a year (I) went back for the first time’

- b. *youyidian bugan guo malu diyici lai zher yeshi bugan*
 a bit afraid cross road first time came here also afraid
guo malu
 cross road
 ‘(I was) a bit afraid to cross the road (I was) also afraid to cross the road
 when I first came here’
- c. *yinwei women zhiqian nage xiaocunzhuang meiyou honglvdeng*
 because we in the past that little village without traffic lights
che dou kaide hen kuai
 cars all drive very fast
 ‘because the little village of **ours in the past** had no traffic lights cars were
 all very fast’

In Example (5), the participant seems to be speaking on behalf of the people from her past. Especially when the current topic is intertwined with the past, there is a detectable change of lenses between the singular and the plural. The collective form *women* ‘we’ in Line c may reflect the arousal of the speaker’s nostalgic feelings when she looks back on the past.

In this respect, aggregation can also call upon due attention to the Chinese speaker’s perception of the past and emotional engagement with the subject matter. Such a past-oriented self-perception and emotional involvement might be affected by the sense of group membership, as emotion can be triggered by the social aspect of identity (Smith, 1993, p. 303).

Prominent generational groups are *women nage shihou* ‘that times of ours’, *women dushu de shihou* ‘the times when we were studying’, *women zheyidai* ‘our generation (literally this generation of ours)’, *women dusheng zinv* ‘we single children’, etc. This feature might be related to Chinese past-time orientations (Yau, 1988). It may also be rooted in the Chinese relational sense of self-construct, which presumes a meaningful existence of the individual, especially in the past, in terms of being part of larger collectives.

2.2.2 Mitigation

After examining speakers’ use of self-references and opinion markers in assertive communicative acts, this section will continue the discussion on the communicative implications of impersonal *ni* ‘one (literally you)’ and *vague we* along with zero anaphora in mitigation.

Mitigating personal opinions can achieve a very practical end, which is minimizing interpersonal disagreement. In fact, it is said to be an important pragmatic

rule within the Chinese socio-cultural context as it reflects the desire not to over-represent, as otherwise one would be subjected to potential criticism (Xiang, 2003, p. 499).

- (6) a. *danshi tamen xue na ke ganjue jiushi zhe zhongwen ke*
 but they study that subject feel just this Chinese subject
zheme jiidan
 so easy
 ‘but their (purpose) for studying this subject (I) feel mainly is because Chinese is so easy’
- b. *wo kending neng guo wo lai zher jiushi fangsong yali bla bla*
 I definitely can pass I come here just relax pressure blabla
 ‘I definitely can pass I come here to relax’ (they might think that) blabla’
- c. *juede tamen jiushi baozhe zhe yang de xintai suoyi ganjue tamen*
 think they just hold this way AP mindset so feel they
bu renzhen haishi zenyang
 not dedicated or what
 ‘(I) think they have this mindset so feel that they are not dedicated or due to other reasons’

The speaker in Example (6) states that she has chosen Chinese subjects for different reasons from other Chinese students. In Chinese, some mental verbs are often used to introduce one’s viewpoint if it is not expected to be a socially shared view (Lee, 2010). Tokens such as *ganjue* ‘feel’, *haishi zenyang* ‘or else’ help to weaken her opinion.

The opinion markers in Lines a and c do not have any subject. It is only through context that “I” can be construed as being the subject. This phenomenon is called “first-person zero-anaphor” and is used to create a less arrogant tone (Xiong, 1998).²

Creating rapport by means of minimising one’s personal involvement helps to construct a stable and shared discursive space in which all participants can feel comfortable contributing without worrying their opinions would be disputed. As previous studies have shown, zero anaphora as person references is an avoidance strategy which enables speakers to avoid explicitly defining the self and the other, and thus to minimise potentially face-threatening mistakes.

Avoiding explicit and direct references to themselves maybe because it is an act of impoliteness to set oneself too conspicuously in the foreground of what is

2. Xiong (1998) discussed in great detail the first person zero anaphor in Chinese and its pragmatic functions and cognitive implications. Due to the focus of the current analysis, which falls on self-representation, no distinction is made between reflexive pronouns and zero-anaphoric reflexive pronouns. It is nevertheless worthwhile to examine their differences in further research.

communicated (Helmbrecht, 2002, p. 41). The underlying uncertainty reflects the speakers' intent to avoid disagreement from the audience as they are expressing a very personal perspective.

Some speakers choose the impersonal *ni* 'one (literally you)' without any specific reference to themselves or to the audience in phrasing their opinions. In Example (7), the speaker uses the impersonal *ni* 'one (literally you)' throughout the entire utterance where the speaker might be thinking aloud.

- (7) a. *ruguo shi haopengyou dajia buhui zhudong tiaopi*
 if are good friends all of us won't deliberately bring up
zhejian shiqing
 this matter
 'if (we) are good friends, all of us won't deliberately bring this matter up'
- b. *erqie keneng zai mouxie fangmian renjia faner hui dui*
 also maybe at some respects others instead will to
ni you yixie gaiguan
one (lit. you) have some change
 'also maybe in some respects, others might actually change their opinion on **us/one**'
- c. *biru hui juede haoxiang zhongguo chuguode dou shi fu*
 for example may think as if Chinese go abroad all are rich
er dai
 second generation
 'for example, (people) may think Chinese overseas students are all rich second generation'
- d. *danshi ruguo ni gen ta chengwei haopengyou yihou*
 but if **one (lit. you)** and she/he become good friends later
zai taolun zhege wenti
 then discuss this issue
 'but if **we/one** became good friends with her/him, then discuss this issue'
- e. *ta keneng hui jieshou de hao yixie zhishao ta*
 he/she may will accept AP better a little at least he/she
buhui gen ni zhengbian
 won't with **one (lit you)** argue
 'he/she may accept it a bit better at least he/she won't argue with **us/one**'
- f. *dier yexu ni ziji zuode bijiaohao ta ye hui*
 secondly perhaps **one (lit. you)** self do better he/she also will
you yixie gaiguan
 have some change of opinion
 'secondly perhaps if **we/oneself** can do better he/she can change their view'

- g. *dan ni bu keneng wanquan gaibiao renjia dui*
 but **one** (lit. **you**) not possible completely change other's towards
nimen zhengge difang de kanfa
one's (lit **your**) entire region AP view
 'but **we/one** (lit. **you**) cannot possibly change others' view on **us/ones** from
 the entire region'

In Example (7), the speaker's thinking-aloud contains two conditional scenarios: they are “your best friend who knows about your financial status is unlikely to upset you by bringing up a pre-existing bias (rich second generation is poorly mannered)” (Lines b and c), and “someone who gradually becomes your good friend who would not classify you as a member of the poorly-behaved rich second generation because of the way you present yourself” (Line e).

Using impersonal references, such as *ni* ‘one’, the speaker conveys an empathetic connotation (Xiang, 2003, p. 503). Placing the interlocutor in juxtaposition to their acquaintances, the speaker emphasises the lack of control in terms of other people's opinions which might well have negative connotations.

In Chinese culture, *yueren* ‘pleasing others’ and *yueji* ‘pleasing oneself’ are mutually shaping and mutually enhancing. Typically, deliberately neglecting other people's opinions can make one appear to be self-centred and arrogant. In this context, the collocation of *ziji* ‘self’ and the hesitation marker *keneng* ‘maybe’ enables the speaker to continue the interlocutors' perspective without resulting in some kind of interactional discomfort on the part of the interlocutors.

The speakers are found to aggregate to the *vague we* to reduce the assertiveness of their interactive moves (Kitagawa & Lehrer, 1990, p. 745).

- (8) a. *xianzai xiangqilai wo qishi hen xingyun*
 now thinking of I in fact am very lucky
 ‘now thinking in retrospect I am in fact very lucky’
 b. *xiang women zhezhong yi biye jiu zhaodao gongzuo de*
 like us this kind as soon as graduate found job AP
hen shao
 very few
 ‘people like us who found a job immediately upon graduation are rare’
 (9) a. S1 *youshihou kan tamen nage dajiyuan shibao wo jiu juede xiang*
 sometimes read their that Epoch Times I just think like
shi chuiniu
 is exaggeration
 ‘(I) sometimes read their Epoch Times³ I think (it) seems to be too
 much exaggerated’

3. The *Epoch Times* is an international broadsheet paper, known for its support to politically persecuted *Falungong* believers in China and Anti Chinese Communist Party editorial stance.

- b. *wo juede shuode bu zhengque ranhou wo juede zhexie dongxi*
 I think said not correct then I think these things
ke xing ke buxing
 can believe can disbelieve
 ‘I think (what it) says is incorrect I think believing or not (won’t matter)’
- c. *dui wo jiu juede bijiao yuan dui wo jiu juede haoxiang*
 right I just think rather remote right I just think like
yingxiang budao wo de shenghuo
 affect not my AP life
 ‘I think it is rather remote from me I think it cannot affect my life’
- d. S2 *nage tai jiduan*
 that too extreme
 ‘that is too extreme’
- e. *jiu gen women de shenghuo bijiao yuan women nage level*
 just to our AP life rather remote we that level
hai mei dao
 not yet reach
 ‘too remotd from our life we haven’t reached that (political) level’
- f. *yinwei women benlai jiushi putong dazhong*
 because we actually just ordinary people
 ‘because we are actually just ordinary people’

The speakers in Example (8) and Example (9) are inconsistent in their choice of self-reference. Both of them start with individual self-reference and end on collective notes, which could be taken as aggregation. In Example (8), aggregation marks a strategic move from the individual to a collective with unspecified others, placing the speaker as one of a group of people able to find a job immediately upon graduation (Line a).

The collective form is also said to signal politeness (Mao, 1996). With aggregation, the speaker avoids drawing attention to herself, which would otherwise be seen as an act of boasting. Instead, she moderately embeds herself in a vague collective, which she regards as the “lucky ones”.

Speaker 2 in Example (9) responds to her precursor’s previous turn in the collective form, which might include herself as well as other recipients in Line e. Without explicitly specifying her own political stance, Speaker 2 finds a way to agree with Speaker 1 in Line e implying that as long as it does not affect her life, she does not care which side is correct. She does so by aligning herself with a vague collective.

In the end, Speaker 3 expands this vague collective to an even more generic one – ordinary people (Line f) – thereby further reducing the epistemic force. The participants’ indifference to politics and the fact that they avoid discussing it can also be related to their education and experience in Communist China.

Minimising interpersonal disagreement in an interaction reveals a key aspect of the speakers’ relational self-construction, i.e., speakers resort to these actions to appeal to the audience. The underlying uncertainty reflects the speakers’ intent to avoid disagreement from the audience. Speakers are always anticipating the possible reactions from the audience. Without over-representing the relational collective, the speaker draws the audience’s attention to understanding their personal impression from the perspective of the speaker.

2.2.3 Persuasion

Persuasiveness in communication helps to establish a relational sense of self characterised by the enactments of situational identities and high levels of affection. The participants’ persuasive social practices reflect aspects of the social construction of the relational self. The alternation of the first person pronoun and the impersonal second person pronoun also appears to be a way of making the speakers’ opinions more convincing as it opens up the possibility for the audience to align with any newly constructed social identities.

As explained with regard to Examples (1) and (7), in addition to the first person pronouns, the speaker can choose to use the second person pronoun impersonally, which not only emphasises their interlocutor’s perspective but also corresponds to several imagined recipients beyond the immediate interactional cohort. The speaker is able to tailor their personal arguments to these imagined recipients through the use of the impersonal second person pronoun *ni* ‘one (literally you)’:

- (10) a. *cong wo xianzai de zhege shijianduan xiang wo juede*
 from my now AP this period of time think I **think**
 ‘from my current period of time I **think**’
- b. *ruguo ta neng bang wo chengwei yige genghao de ren na wo*
 if it can help I become one better AP person then I
yinggai jiu hui xiangxin ta
 should just will believe it
 ‘if it can help me become a better person then I should just believe it’
- c. *wo juede nage zongjiao dou you ta zhengque de dian*
 I **think** that religion always has it correct AP point
 ‘I **think** any religion always makes some sense’
- d. *ni juede xin fojiao de ren kending juede*
one (lit. you) believe Buddhism AM people definitely think
fojiao wanquan zhengque
 Buddhism utterly correct
 ‘**one thinks** Buddhism believers definitely think Buddhism is utterly correct’

- e. *buguan ni xin shenme ta neng bang ni*
 no matter **one** (lit. you) believe what it can help **one** (lit. you)
chengwei genghao de ren
 become better AP person
 ‘no matter what **one** believes it helps to make **one** a better person’
- f. *baituo yixie ni juede ni hen kanbuqi ta*
 get rid of **one** (lit. you) think one very despises it
 ‘while getting rid of some things that **one** despises’
- g. *ni juede jiuji zai qizhong hen bianniu de shiqing*
one (lit. you) think entangled in amidst very awkward AP thing
 ‘(things that make) **one** thinks (or make) one feel very uncomfortably involved’

Within this short narrative, *wo* ‘I’ acts as the primary storyteller while *ni* ‘one (literally you)’ corresponds to several imagined recipients who can be those who are not religious, those who believe in other religions and those who believe in the same religion.

Speakers and listeners also inhabit interactional roles in conversation (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005; Ochs & Taylor, 1995), interactional roles are situational identities in their own right, serving to socially position speakers and hearers (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005, p. 608). In Example (10), the speaker changes from the first person self-reference to the impersonal *ni* ‘one (literally you)’. This repair indicates an attempt to create situational identities to turn one’s personal opinion into common ground, hoping that it can be shared with the aforementioned imagined recipients. The situational identity that has been enacted in Lines d to g is one that can encompass all the religious believers.

Other co-present participants can then selectively align themselves with these groups of recipients. The impersonal *ni* ‘one (literally you)’, without specifying any target recipient, consolidates the positioning of speakers and others interpersonally, which ultimately makes the speakers’ speech more convincing.

If it is too subtle to impart their opinion via invoking situational identities through the impersonal second person pronoun *ni* ‘one (literally you)’, invoking group identities through the first person plural *women* ‘we’ is the more obvious way forward for the speaker to arouse the audience’s emotional resonance in order to persuade the latter into agreeing with them.

For instance, the speaker in Example (11) chooses to use the collective self-reference, *women* ‘we’, and the collective other-reference, *tamen* ‘they’, to enforce the affective orientation of her opinion:

- (11) a. *wo juede wo juede xinfang caishi niuqu zhongguo de*
 I think I think the West actually distort China PP
 ‘I think I think the West is actually (the one that) distorted China’

- b. *women nage shihou yinwei xinjiang fasheng qiwu shijian*
 we that time because Xinjiang happen July 5th riots
de shihou
 AP time
 ‘we (knew) at the time when the July 5th riots happened in Xinjiang’⁴
- c. *women zhidao weizuren sha hanzuren danshi xifangren tamen wo*
 we know Uighurs kill Han people but the West they I
kan meiti shang
 saw media on
 ‘we knew Uighurs killed Han people but I saw on the media that those Westerners’
- d. *tamen ba nage han * weizuren tou*
 they preposition[prep] that Han <sudden stop> Uighurs’ head
an dao hanzuren shen shang
 place onto Han people body on
 ‘they photoshopped Uighur people’s heads onto Han people’s bodies’
- e. *shuo shi hanzuren sha weizuren xifang caishi caishi tamen*
 say are Han people kill Uighurs the West actually actually they
caishi niuqu zhongguo ma
 actually distort China EP
 ‘saying Han people killed Uighur people the West they actually distorted China’

According to previous studies of pronoun use and social categorisation, distribution of singular and collective pronominal forms is also used as a distancing strategy across various imagined collectives, with *they* on the furthest end (Maitland & Wilson, 1987). Taking the perspective of a group that has the potential to include both speakers and hearers, the opinion can be more appealing to the audience emotionally. In light of interpersonal engagement, potential receivers are invited to join this relational collective and share opinions that concern the relational collective.

In Example (12), Speaker 3 also invokes a group identity by using collective self-reference to increase the persuasive power of her opinion. Speaker 3 was 44 at the time when the data was collected while other participants were between 26 and 30 years of age. It is interesting to note that throughout her turn, Speaker 3 stays consistent with the use of the collective form of self-reference, meaning her individuality remains hidden.

4. On July 5th, 2009, large scale riots broke out between Uighurs and Han Chinese in Urumqi, capital city of Xinjiang province.

- (12) a. S1 *wo na shihou ye xuanguo yimen ke* <E international law E>
I that time also chose one subject international law
'at that time I chose the subject of international law'
- b. *namen ke mei ba wo zhengsi quanbu doushi*
that subject nearly prep I kill completely all
<E local E> *xuesheng*
local students
'it nearly killed me (because) all the students were local students'
- c. S2 *dui quanshi* <E local E> *xuesheng ke jiu tebie*
right all local students subject then extremely
youyali shi shi
stressful right right
'right all (were) local students the class becomes very stressful right right'
- d. S3 *xiang zhezhong* <E communication E> *hen shi hen zhongyao*
like this kind communication very is very important
'communication is also the key'
- e. *aozhou xuesheng gen laoshi guanxi jiushi* <E friend E>
Australian students and teachers relationship just friend
jingchang <E visit E>
often visit
'the student-teacher relationship is like friendship (students) often visit (teachers)'
- f. *na women huaren xuesheng dou buhui qu*
then we ethnic Chinese students all won't go
'but we ethnic Chinese students wouldn't go to'
- g. *tamen zhezhong* <E build up E> *wen laoshi wenti jiu gen*
they this kind build up ask teachers question just with
ta <E talking E>
him talk
'they build up (the relationship by) asking teachers questions or just by talking to him'
- h. *women* * *yeshi women de wenti women*
we <sudden stop> also our AP problem our
wenhua buyiyang
culture different
'we (it is) also our problem our culture is different'
- i. S2 *women yiban buhui qu de*
we normally won't go PP
'we normally wouldn't do that'

Employing collective self-reference despite the age difference between her and the other participants, Speaker 3 successfully inserts herself as one of the audience members and shortens the distance between them. Her opinions would become easier for the audience to accept, which turns out to be the case when Speaker 2 echoes the collective reference to show alignment.

Affective and epistemic utterances may serve as central meaning components not only of momentary social acts but also of more enduring social constructs such as social identities (Du Bois & Kärkkäinen, 2012; Ochs & Capps, 2001). It can then be argued that what is embedded in a speaker’s evoking affective resonance is not only the desire to persuade the interlocutor but also to construct aspects of the relational sense of self that exists in the perceived social context.

Having said that, the persuasiveness of the speaker’s utterances relies even more so on the affective environment of the discourse. Aggregation turns out to be a preferred strategy to persuade the audience to accept one’s collectively oriented opinion. In Examples (13) and (14), both speakers aggregate to their collective identity, which they assume to share with the rest of the audience being one of Chinese expats or students studying in a foreign country:

- (13) a. S1 *wo juede shuo shihua hui zhongshi danshi zunzhong jiu*
I think speak truth will value but respect then
bu yiding
not necessarily
'I think honestly speaking (non-Chinese) may pay attention but probably not respect (Chinese)'
- b. S2 *yinwei youdeshihou zhongguoren chuqu zuo de*
because sometimes Chinese people go abroad do AP
xingwei rang ren zunzhong buqilai
behaviours make people respect not able
'because sometimes Chinese people’s behaviours in foreign countries are not worthy of respect'
- c. S3 *wo juede zhe qujueyu women xianzai zai zhebian dai de liuxia*
I think this up to us now at here live AP stay
de ren nuli
AP people effort
'I think it is up to us the ones that stay here to make efforts (to change the bad impression)'

- (14) a. *wo juede chuguo shi ge weicheng guonei*
 I think go abroad is one fortress besieged within the country
xiaohuoban tebie xiang
 mates very want
 ‘I think going abroad is fortress besieged⁵ mates within the country want to get out very much’
- b. *danshi wanquan bu zhidao zan xinsuan ba*
 but completely not know **our** bitterness EP
 ‘but have no knowledge of **our** bitterness at all’

Aggregation, as seen in these two examples is indeed a tactic to constitute a relational collective that can subsequently be referred to collectively. In this particular case, the locus for the construction of this relational collective is the empathy the speaker and the audience might have for one another.

Zan ‘we’ is a typical inclusive collective pronoun in Chinese, more so than *women* ‘we’, as *zan* ‘we’ engages the listener more (Huang & Lu, 2016). The collective cover in Line b of Example (14) might reflect a collective-orientation (Lerner & Kitzinger, 2007, p. 550). The main concern for choosing the collective self-reference over the individual one by these two speakers in Examples (13) and (14) might be maintaining group interest.

Group-oriented engagement plays a very important role in self-referential choice. When using *women* ‘we’ and *zan* ‘we’, speakers conform to a socially shared value. These values are also highly affective as they trigger a sense of obligation among the audience members who are subsequently invited affectively by the speaker to share those strong feelings about their group membership. The participant might be calling on all the other participants to have positive regard for their Chinese identity and act well in the cross-cultural context.⁶

2.2.4 Accommodation

In addition to the types of discourse context discussed so far, the ways speakers announce agreements or disagreements can also be very revealing in terms of their roles in the relational construction of the self. This subsection explores the discourse

5. Fortress Besieged is a Chinese satiric novel written by Qian Zhongshu (1947). This humorous tale about middle-class Chinese society in the late 1930s is very well-known among Chinese people.

6. Chapter 4 will continue the discussion of using collective self-reference to invoke collective identities with regard to the construction of cultural exemplar identity.

situation of accommodation where speakers react to other speakers’ utterances. As explained at the start of this chapter, the participants converse to construct a real-time discourse community with others, which forms the basis for each of them to construct appropriate relational self-representations interpersonally with other co-participants. Accommodating other co-participants’ utterances is key to this joint effort.

First, with regard to positive or convergent accommodation, the use of impersonal pronouns, such as *ren* ‘people’ or ‘one’, *dajia* ‘all of us’, is a noticeable feature. Statements granting these pronouns as the subject tend to grant a general conclusion that applies to a much wider scope than the immediate deictic context. That is, the conclusion not only applies to the speaker and the addressees, but also to many other people. While these deductive conclusions are often presented as impersonal truths, some are depicted as personal resonances.

- (15) a. S1 *lai zher jiu guang zhuzhong zher de buhao*
 come here then only notice here AP bad
 ‘(while staying) here simply paying attention to the bad things here’
- b. *ranhou lao xiang nabian de hao*
 then often miss there AP good
 ‘often missing the good things over there’
- c. *danshi huiqu yihou keneng jiu kandao nabian de buhao*
 but go back after probably then see there AP bad
tandewuyan ba
 greedy EP
 ‘but if (I) were to go back perhaps would see the bad things there being too greedy’
- d. S2 *zan*
 like
 ‘like’
- e. S3 *wo tongyi ren doushi hen tanyu jiushi guang dingzhe*
 I agree **people are all** very greedy just only watch
muqian buhao de fangmian
 present bad AP aspects
 ‘I agree **people are all** greedy and always fix eyes on things that are presently bad’

Speaker 2 agrees with Speaker 1’s remark, using the impersonal pronoun *ren* ‘people or one’, and states what should have been supposedly a matter of her own personal opinion. The speaker then moves away from the immediate deictic context and enters the sphere of a universally applicable “life drama script” (Kitagawa & Lehrer, 1990, p. 752).

One discourse effect of the impersonal pronouns is that both the speaker and the addressee(s) can be viewed as *dramatis personae* in the world of generalised and abstract discourse (Kitagawa & Lehrer, 1990, p. 752). Avoiding concrete linguistic references to any individuals, impersonal constructions can downplay individual involvement of both the speakers and the intended interlocutors by referring to a general reality (Budwig, 2000).

Having said that, Speaker 2, must have had a similar reflection on her own attitude to agree – being greedy and wanting the upsides – this impersonal move seems to be unnecessary. A possible explanation might be that this speaker feels the need to approximate universal values to find more comfort for everyone in the current cohort who shares the same thought.

A sense of sharedness reinforces acquaintanceship and familiarity. Accommodating the previous utterance by highlighting the sharedness helps to make it a fully-fledged engagement whereby discourse participants can commit to a common ground. The data shows that first person pronouns can be replaced by the indefinite pronoun *dajia* ‘all of us’, which is more pragmatically effective by making the discursive action hearer-friendly and polite. It helps the speaker to homogenise and develop shared values among the participants.

When using indefinite pronouns such as *dajia* ‘all of us’, the boundary between the speaker and the conversation partner is obscured. For instance, in Example (16), the speaker describes herself as a non-religious person. Rather than state the difference between being non-religious and being religious, she brings everyone, religious and non-religious, to the same generic level of having different beliefs. *Dajia* ‘all of us’ in Line f helps to build rapport among all conversational partners (one participant has claimed to be religious).

- (16) a. *ye mei you xinyang danshi wo bushi yige tebie xiwang ziji you*
also not have faith but I not one very hope self have
xinyang de ren
 faith AP person
 ‘(I) **also** don’t have a faith but I don’t mind self having no faith’
- b. *wo juede meiyou xinyang ye mei shemme guanxi*
 I think not have faith also not any matter
 ‘I think not having a religion makes no big difference (to my life)’
- c. *dui zhebian mei shenme ganjue fanzheng zhouwei you xin*
 for here not any feeling anyway around have believe
de pengyou
 AP friends
 ‘having not much bearing on life here there are friends around who believe this’

- d. *buhui shuo yinwei tamen xin jiu liangzhe tamen buyao*
 won't say because they believe then ignore them don't
qiangpo wo jiu xing
 force me then ok
 '(I) won't ignore them because they believe this provided (they) don't force me to join'
- e. *wo juede wo zhegeren hai ting baorong jiu juede shenbianren*
 I think I this person still very tolerant then think people around
douyou chabie
 all have difference
 'I think this person of mine is tolerant (I think) people are not much different'
- f. *dajia xinyang butong wo ye juede mei shenme*
 all of us faith different I also think not any
 'all of us have different belief which I think is not a big deal'

After agreeing with the previous speaker by stating that she does not have a religious faith either (Line a), the current speaker expands on her view. She does not perceive religion as alienating her from others (Lines d and e). Although she considers friends who follow a religion as “they”, she wraps up the utterance using *dajia* ‘all of us’.

Both individual and group distinctions are minimised using this indefinite pronoun. Separation and differences, which would otherwise be obvious, are immediately replaced by multiplicity. *Dajia* ‘all of us’ incorporates all the co-participants as well as the group they might identify with to emphasise commonality (Line f). This step into multiplicity neutralises the implication of negative insensitivity that otherwise may have been implied to the hearers.

- (17) a. *jiu xiang zhiqian ni jiang de youyixie fenqi bijing hui you*
 just think before you said PP some disputes after all will have
yixie butong ma
 some difference EP
 'like what you said about having disputes there are always some differences'
- b. *ren haoxiang doushi zheyangzi ba dajia dou xiang zhaodao*
 people may all this kind EP all of us all want find
guishugan
 sense of belonging
 'people are all like this all of us want to find a sense of belonging'

After hearing the previous turn-taker's dilemma about wanting to belong to the Christian community and disliking some beliefs found in Christianity, the speaker in Example (17) speaks of her view regarding both aspects. The use of *dajia* ‘all of

us' indicates the speaker's intention to take the previous turn-taker into her own perspective. She believes that finding a sense of belonging is a universally shared quality among all human beings that motivates them to either join a church or to find a faith (Line b).

It then becomes visible that the discursive function of *dajia* 'all of us' is to presuppose agreement in the interactive context through which the speaker can position all the interlocutors in an imagined relational collective constructed on the basis of having a common understanding.

When negative accommodations do occur, participants often feature a non-personal mediator or public consciousness through which negative comments are fashioned in a non-face-threatening manner. Example (18) illustrates a speaker contesting the previous utterance through an impersonal voice expressed in terms of *dahuanjing* 'bigger environment':

- (18) a. S1 *jiu shi zhebian shi shenghuo nabian shi shengcun*
just is this is living there is surviving
'(we are) living here (people) over there are surviving'
- b. S2 *wo ye bu juede wo juede xianzai de aozhou yuelaiyue*
I also not think I think now AP Australia increasingly
kaojin shengcun
near surviving
'I don't think so I think life in Australian has increasingly become surviving'
- c. *dahuanjing laishuo xianzai aozhou gen yiqian*
bigger environment speaking now Australia with past
biqilai mei name rongyi
compare not that easy
'speaking of **the bigger environment** it is harder to live in Australia now than before'
- d. *bieshuo women wailai de yimin*
not to mention us outside comer
'not to mention we immigrants from the outside'
- e. *xianzai bendi de xuesheng biye ye nan zhao gongzuo*
now local AP students graduate also hard find job
'local students nowadays also find it hard to get a job'

Speaker 2 works on building *dahuanjing* 'bigger environment' as a generic collective that shapes his personal view. He stresses the universality of his perspective to make the negative comment impersonal. The scope of *dahuanjing* 'bigger environment' is so broad it absorbs members of the immigrant community and the locals (Line e), thereby implying they all share the same perspective. So long as

dahuanjing ‘bigger environment’ is held responsible for absorbing the disputed personal views, the speakers who bring these contested viewpoints into the interactional frame can keep away from their “referential property associated with the immediate speech act domain” while still maintaining “his/her locus as ‘the zero-point of the spatio-temporal co-ordinates’ of ‘the deictic context’” (Kitagawa & Lehrer, 1990, p. 752).

Negative opinions are difficult to express in public if the comments are concerned with other people, which, according to Xiang (2003, p. 505) is characteristic of Chinese culture. It might have led to the speakers using public consciousness as a mediator. A generic collective can minimise the individual selves under which condition the interlocutors need not come into direct contact with each other. This means that nobody would lose “face” when the opinion is disapproved of when the public consciousness is held accountable.

2.3 Summary

This chapter discusses ways in which self-referential pronouns are used in several communicative acts through assertion, persuasion, mitigation and accommodation whereby speakers construct a sense of self through establishing social relations with their interlocutors. Aggregation, extraction and other self-initiated repairs demonstrate that the speaker’s sense of self can only be constructed in a situation-bound manner with other co-participants and within given socio-cultural contexts.

Conversational partners make strategic choices between the singular self-reference *wo* ‘we’ and plural self-reference *women* ‘we’ to include or exclude the hearer or other non-existing parties. Inclusive collective self-references take hearers into a speakers’ perspective in a subtle way. A sense of obligation can be triggered through aggregation in which case the audience are subsequently invited affectively by the speaker to conform to a socially shared value associated with their shared group membership. Extraction is a strategic move to strengthen the speaker’s epistemic authority to assert what they already know rather than being a recipient of collective knowledge.

The variation of self-reference needs to be examined together with other discourse markers, such as opinion markers and hesitation markers. Despite the need to present themselves as someone who is certain about what they say and is not a passive receiver of collective knowledge, a relational interaction imposes pressure on the speaker to deliver their assertions without representing themselves as being too self-assured through linguistic constructions that form an impression of uncertainty.

The analysis also found that speakers can adopt the interlocutors' perspective without resulting in some kind of interactional discomfort on the part of the interlocutors by using the impersonal *ni* 'one (literally you)' and placing the interlocutors in juxtaposition. Embedding one's identity in a vague collective helps to avoid drawing the attention to oneself thereby reducing the assertiveness of the interactive stances of the speakers in that vague collective. The avoidance might be conditioned by the socio-cultural norms.

Impersonal constructions are prominent in accommodating utterances. Speakers are found to minimise their own personal involvement in convergent accommodations, using zero anaphora, indefinite pronouns and other impersonal constructions. Without explicit reference to the speakers and the interlocutors, impersonal constructions provide grounds for a general conclusion that applies to a much wider scope. Going beyond the immediate deictic context, a general conclusion presupposes agreement in the interactive context through which a discursive space for a sense of shared self is being constructed. The current cohort of Chinese speakers tends to use public consciousness as a mediator to express negative comments in a non-face-threatening manner. The aforementioned ways of avoiding direct references to the listeners reflect the speaker's intention to minimise individual selves and build a sense of shared self which can be extended to other individuals.

CHAPTER 3

Performing identities

Presenting the flawed self

Chapter 3 examines lexicons of the self which mark the target aspects of the individual self. Self-markers include *ziji* ‘self’, the reflexive pronoun *wo ziji* ‘myself’ that combines singular self-referential pronoun *wo* ‘I’ and *ziji* ‘self’, the reflexive pronoun *ni ziji* ‘oneself’ which contains the impersonal self-reference using the second person singular *ni* ‘one’. These self-markers indicate the ways in which speakers position themselves with regard to others. This chapter starts off with an discursive analysis of self-evaluative remarks where self-markers are deployed. Then it goes on discussing the interviewed Chinese immigrants’ unique way of reflecting upon independence and individuality through constructing the flawed self. The flawed self liberates the speakers in a sense that it allows people to communicate private thoughts to the public without worrying about any potential breach of socio-cultural norms.

Keywords: self-markers, *wo* ‘I’, *ziji* ‘self’, *ni* ‘one’, the flawed self

Modern Western self-understanding is often seen to be premised on rational consciousness and tending towards subjective autonomy. In Chinese-speaking societies, the modern notion of self has similarities with Western self-understanding. But self and self-awareness in the Chinese language is formulated and expressed in a different way. In terms of indexing Chinese people’s self-understanding in communication, people use *ziji* and *ji*, both meaning ‘self’, in statements about their private needs and “real” feelings and thoughts. With regard to the current cohort, the word *ziji* ‘self’ is frequently used to express a sense of self-reliance and these occurrences account for more than half of the possessive adjectives.

When *ziji* ‘self’ is used as an adjective, it means ‘of one’s own’ or ‘being close to oneself’, for example *zijiren* ‘own people’ refers to people who are most intimately related to the speaker. *Ziji* ‘self’ also appears to modify epistemic nouns, such as *yi yuan* ‘will’, *xiangfa* ‘idea’, *guandian* ‘view’, *yijian* ‘opinion’, *shengyin* ‘voice’, *jia-zhiguan* ‘value’, and *xingge* ‘character’. Of all the 39 occurrences of *zijide* ‘one’s own’, 24 are used in a sense that establishes an independent and self-reliant individual self-representation, whereas those that signify ownership or possession tend to suggest private and exclusive self-representation.

The participants' use of *ziji* and *ji*, both meaning 'self', is generally targeting their private needs, personal principles, and true feelings and thoughts in order to differentiate a flawed self from an ideal self. It is interesting to see that most of the participants seem to have gone through a process of self-reflection. Self-reflection requires one to act as the evaluating subject while also seeing oneself as the object of self-evaluation. These self-evaluations either transit the modern and premodern postulations of personhood or reflect a re-interpretation of some “old” ideals.

3.1 Performing identities

Many linguists and sociologists agree that the self is constructed through narration and interaction (e.g., Bucholtz & Hall, 2005; Gergen, 2011; Giddens, 1984). The close relationship between the experience of selfhood and language use has been a well-researched area of study. In the field of linguistics, analytical frameworks have been proposed to analyse the co-construction of discursive identities (e.g., Bucholtz & Hall, 2005; De Fina, 2013; Ochs, 2012).

The notions of performance and positioning are particularly relevant to this study in terms of informing methods applied to data analysis. Discursive identities, in the context of the present study, are the building blocks of self. They are embedded in communicative activities. With the notion of performance, each communicative act entails social positioning. With each position, the positioning subject turns a private thought to a public evaluative action. Utterances containing self-markers are identified and analysed. The evaluative use of self-markers indicates which voice is speaking and subsequently which self is being represented.

As far as the construction of self is concerned, the object for each speaker is to enact identities. Taking performance as a meta-communicative frame also relies on the assumption of responsibility to an audience for achieving communicative purposes. The act of speaking to an audience opens the speaker up to scrutiny for the way it manipulates distances with interlocutors in the course of performing social identities.

The next subsection will apply the above mentioned framework to examining the narrative accounts that the participants have made as they take the speaking opportunity to forge a “correct” sense of self in front of others. These accounts suggest an indealsed self-representation which reveals the speakers' opinions about their social responsibilities, practical ethical principles, and ideals of the good (Barresi & Martin, 2011).

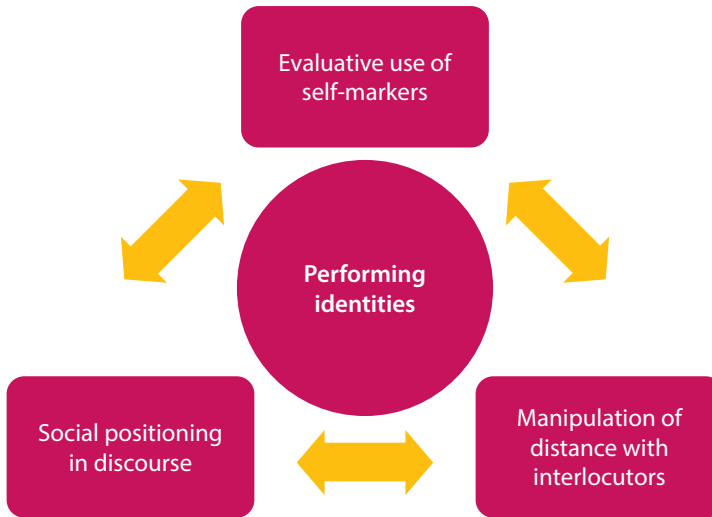


Figure 4. Performing identities

3.2 Idealised self-representation

In view of a performative approach, the analysis is conducted on the premise that speakers choose different identities for the purpose of creating favourable representations of themselves. The fulfilment of such objective requires the speaker speak about different selves. It is a public act where speakers evaluate different selves and set some of them as object of reflection. These selves, in interactional linguistic terms, are discursive identities which are enacted to keep diversified social distances from the discourse and/or audience.

The enactment of these discursive identities, in the context of the present study, often unveils the speakers' effects to establish a sense of correctness. The differentiation of a flawed self, for instance, may serve the purpose for accentuating a publicly acceptable self. Contrasting a flawed self that situates in the past, the present self can be portrayed as close to an ideal self. While amplifying the role of any external conditions, the real self which is devoid of any internal motivations can be described as being free of egoism. The analytic results show that individual self-representation is realised in a way in which all the discursive identities put on a joint performance to construct a favourable self-representation.

The focus of this analysis is on three aspects of the individual sense of self that the participants construct in front of one another in a context that is built around who they are here-and-now as a person in contrast to other people at the round table discussion. These first generation Chinese-Australian immigrants were encouraged to discuss their experiences in Australia and compare those experiences

with their expectations prior to their migration from mainland China during the focus group interview. It is, therefore, important to bear in mind that the participants made their contributions in the presence of, and aimed at, an audience with similar life experiences.

3.2.1 Evaluating the private self

A number of Chinese linguists who study Chinese talk-in-interaction and classical texts argue that *wo* ‘I’ often helps to express a public sense of self (e.g., Jia, 1981; Lee, 2012; Liu, 2005; Zeng, 2005). In contrast, *ziji* ‘self’ is found to refer to the private self. While the public self is said to relate the self to others or to emphasise the differences between the speaker and others, the private self, indicated by *ziji* ‘self’, sets one’s individual awareness from the public. The co-existence of the two sets of selves results from the speaker’s positioning strategies whereby people choose between these two different voices with an anticipation of potential agreement or disagreement from the audience.

When an agreement or at least a neutral opinion is expected from the audience, setting a contrast between the private and the public self seems to be a more effect way of grabbing the audience attention. Examples (1) and (2) are such instances where the speakers engage the audience with the topic through putting forward the public self.

In Example (1), a private and a public self are both at play. The use of *ziji* ‘self’ and the impersonal second person singular *ni* ‘one’ as well as their combination at subject or object positions has made the two selves quite distinguishable.⁷ As far as self-reflection is concerned, the private self stands as the object for evaluation.

- (1) a. *tongshi hen youhao danshi ni jiu haipa*
 colleagues very nice but one (lit. you) will fear
ni ziji shuode bieren ting bu dong
 oneself (lit. yourself) said others listen not understand
 ‘colleagues are very nice but one worries others don’t understand what oneself has said’

In Example (1), we could say that *ni ziji* ‘oneself’ in the present utterance signifies a private sense of self, contrasting *ni* ‘one’ which expresses the public self. Applying the concept of performance, the private self and the public self have different roles to play in an interaction. In Example (1), the voice of the public self raises the issue of language barrier, engaging other participants to discuss the topic of challenges

7. For definitions of impersonal uses of *ni*, see Biq, 1991

at work. It is then followed by an attitudinal predicate. A mental verb *haipa* ‘fear’ is used, denoting an attitudinal concern expressed by the private self. The voice that addresses a private and not-known self contrasts that of a publicly oriented self. Seeing the contrast, the hearers are more likely to give the topic that the speaker has thrown into discussion more thoughts.

Example (2) also shows the contrast between the private self and the public self, but the speaker’s intention for bringing the audience into her own perspective seems to be more subtle than that of the speaker in Example (1):

- (2) a. *dushu zhetiao lu jiu fangqi le jiu cheng le zuo zhe*
 studying this path then abandon PP then become PP do VP
ziji bu aizuo de gongzuo
 I (literally ‘self’) not enjoy AP job
 ‘(I) gave up studying (I) then end up working on jobs that I do not enjoy’
- b. *weile qian danshi ni ziji xiang de dongxi you*
 for money but I/one (lit. yourself) want AP things again
fang zai houmian
 leave at behind
 ‘(do these) for money’s sake but things I wanted are left behind’

In Example (2), no first person pronoun is used, instead, *ziji* ‘self’ appears twice, once without an antecedent and once with the impersonal second person singular *ni* ‘one’, both of which refer to the private self. The utterance stresses the fact that the private self is not happy with life at this point for what it has to put up with.

The self that is describing the situation and the one that has to make do with the current status is then presumably the public self. A sense of self-doubt is expressed through contradicting the two selves, i.e. the private self has an intention that is at odds with that of the public one. The dilemma ends in sacrificing the needs of the private self, which is supposedly what a Chinese person should be doing.

In communication, should disagreements be anticipated, previous studies have shown that the public self can keep the private self away from the audience if its proposition entails a breach of social norms (Harris, 2002; Hill & Zepeda, 1993). The private and the public self work together to seek positive feedback from the audience, as shown in Example (3):

- (3) a. S1 *na ni haishi zhunbei ba ta song dao sixiao*
 then you still prepared prep him send to private schools
tongshi ni yao guanshu ta yizhong xiangfa
 same you will instil him one idea
 ‘you still want to send him to a private school meanwhile you want to instil one idea’

- (3) b. *jiushi ta zhangda da le yihou yao huibao wo dangnian de*
 just he grow big PP after want repay I past AP
touru ma
 investment Interrogative Particle [IP]
 ‘just like (you’re thinking once) grown up he has to pay back the investment I made’
- c. S2 *wo buhui wo buhui shuo jiushi zhijie zhe yang gen ta shuo*
 I won’t I won’t say just like directly this way to him talk
 ‘I won’t I won’t tell him in such a straight forward manner’
- d. *danshi wo hui meitian xiangchu de shijian li gen ta*
 but I will everyday accompany AP time within to him
manman guanshu zhezhong sixiang
 slowly instil this idea
 ‘but during the time I spend with him day after day (I) will instil the idea into him gradually’
- e. S1 <@@> *na ni bu jiushi zhege sixiang*
 <laughing quality> then you not just like this idea
 ‘then (isn’t) that’s still exactly what you think’
- f. S2 *danshi wo buhui qiangzhi ta wo hui ziji*
 but I won’t force him I will I (literally ‘self’)
yishenzuoze
 modal
 ‘but I won’t force him because I myself will set as an example’
- g. *wo hui dui wo fumu xiaoshun rang ta manman ganshoudao*
 I will to my parents filial make him slowly feel
wo shi zhe yang zuo
 I am this way do
 ‘I’ll be filial to my parents let him know gradually that this is what I have been doing’
- h. *bushi shuo wo shi weile wo ziji*
 not say I am for myself
 ‘(I) am not doing it for my own sake’

The use of *ziji* ‘self’ in Line f indexes the private self which hosts the speaker’s moral commitment. The speaker believes in *yishenzuoze* ‘set an example using oneself’. The logical subject of the last utterance is the public self, who announces this personal belief and at the same time orientes to the audience by stressing that it is modelling rather than selfishness that validates the speaker’s teaching of her child to repay her.

In ancient Chinese moral teachings, such as those of Confucius, as well as in modern communist propaganda, altruism takes precedence over individual needs.

As a response to Speaker 1's criticism over Speaker 2's motivation behind teaching her children filial piety, Speaker 2 feels the need to clarify that she is not a self-interested person. A self-interested private self to which *wo ziji* 'myself' refer in Line h is completely and utterly condemned.

In addition to producing the private self and denouncing it, the speaker has also chosen the public self to communicate her own affective values. In the interactional frame, the speaker anticipates possible reactions from the audience. Publicly communicating the speaker's individual's beliefs, the speaker positions the audience as potentially in favour of the moral values that he or she advocates, namely *yishen-zuoze* 'set an example using oneself' is good and selfishness is bad. In this way, the speaker not only survives the criticism for being selfish, but also successfully portrays herself as a role model.

At times when the speaker might risk being socially unacceptable, the public self negotiates with the audience as well as further distancing the private self from the audience. Example (4) shows that the public self can step in the interaction when the speaker's private thoughts entail a breach of social norms.

- (4) a. *wo shi shuo wo xianzai youdian lengxue jiu dui henduo*
 I am saying I now a bit cold-blooded just to many
shiqing youqi dui jiaren
 things especially to family
 'I am saying that I am a bit **cold-blooded** now toward a lot of things especially family'
- b. *ruguo nage jiating chengyuan dui wo buhao wo genben kan*
 if that family member to me bad I completely visit
doubukan ta wo guonei de qinqi
 not him I Chinese AP relatives
 'if a relative in China does not treat me well I will ignore that family member completely'
- c. *ruguo huan cheng yiqian jiaru wo xianzai hai zai guonei*
 if change to past if I now still in China
 'had it been in the past or if I were still in China'
- d. *wo hui juede jiusuan ta zai huai ta haishi wo jiaren wo hui kan*
 I will think despite he how bad he still my family I will visit
ta gen ta shuo jiju hua
 him to him speak some words
 'I'd think despite how bad a person he is he is still my family I would visit him and talk to him'

- e. *dan xianzai wo jieshou le nazhong kanfa ta bu gei wo mianzi*
 but now I accept PP that opinion he not to me face
wo weishenme yao kan ta lianse
 I why want see his look
 ‘but now I’ve accepted that opinion why should I put up with him if he shows no respect to me’
- f. *na keneng shi wo ziji geren wenti*
 that probably is myself personal issue
 ‘that is probably just my own personal issue’

The public self, indexed by *wo* ‘I’, comments on the cool nature of the private self by using the word *lengxue* ‘cold-blooded’ (Line a), creating suspense and laying the groundwork for a potential divergence between the public self and the private self.

In addition, the public voice demonstrates that the protagonist has undergone a change because of their migration to Australia. In Line e, the speaker expresses that the acceptance to *nazhong kanfa* ‘that opinion’ happens in the here-and-now context. The speaker’s cold-bloodedness which is now open for scrutiny is described as conditioned by the Australian socio-cultural context.

It is expected in the Chinese family-based value system that one should always be tolerant and forgiving of their closest relatives. To be “cold” or unfriendly to family members, therefore, seems like a taboo. It becomes a necessary tactic for the public self to negotiate with the audience as well as further distancing the private self from the audience (Line f). In this way, the public self assists the audience in understanding and accepting the private one’s imperfection (Harrison, 2011). Through the joint performance of the public self and the private self, the speaker’s violation of the norm does not appear to be too sharp.

3.2.2 Reflecting upon independence

After examining utterances containing evaluations of the private sense of self, which can be flawed and imperfect, this section focuses on how speakers perform their individual sense of self by reflecting upon independence. Apart from the private self, the independent self is also found to be evidently indexed by *ziji* ‘self’, as shown in Examples (5) and (6):

- (5) a. *danshi yao zhende shuodao ziji yigeren chuli luanqibazao*
 but if really speaking of self by oneself deal with random
de shi
 AP things
 ‘but when (I) really deal with random chores by myself’

- b. *kending haishi you tiaozhan dan ruguo dajia huxiang*
 definitely still have challenge but if all of us each other
bangzhu ye jiu guoqu le
 help also just pass PP
 ‘it will definitely be challenging but if all of us helps each other then (hardships) went past’
- (6) a. *ni ziji yigeren chulai shi lingyizhong*
 one self individually (lit. by yourself) go abroad is another
yali keneng bushi xueyeshang shi shenghuo de
 pressure perhaps not academically is day-to-day PP
 ‘one individually being abroad bears another kind of pressure not academically but in daily life’
- b. *tamen jiu lijie budao zheyidian ranhou deng tamen*
 they just understand not this aspect then till they
luluxuxu you gengduoren chuguo le
 gradually have more people go abroad PP
 ‘they couldn’t understand this and after more people they gradually went abroad’
- c. *tamen cai manman gongtong huati duoqilai ranhou cai you*
 they finally slowly common topic get more then finally again
huidao dajia nage quanzi limian
 return all of us that circle inside
 ‘they began to have more in common finally return to the social circle that all of us were in’

The sense of self-reliance can be intensified by *yigeren* ‘individually’.

Examples (5) and (6) portrait an image of a self-reliant international student using *ziji yigeren* ‘self individually’ or ‘of one’s own person’ when speaking of actions that the self has undertaken independently, whether it is dealing with random chores or coping with stress.

However, such self-reliance is significantly downgraded by modal verbs in the same evaluations, such as *kending haishi* ‘definitely will be’ in Line b of (5) and *keneng bushi* ‘might not be’ in Line a of (6). These modal verbs indicate the speaker’s intention of negotiating with the audience over the conditions of self-reliance.

On the other hand, *ziji yigeren* ‘of one’s own person’ contrasts a group of others, inclusive (e.g. *dajia* ‘all of us’ in Line b of (5) and Line c of (6)) or exclusive of the self (e.g. *tamen* ‘they’ in Lines b and c of (6)). Both examples show that an independent self does not exist on its own, but in relation to others. Reflection on self-reliance draws on targeting *ziji* ‘self’ as the object for self-evaluation, such as in Examples (5) and (6).

Examples (7) and (8) will show how such reflection is done across different time frames, in which case, the examiner is commenting on the examinee with the specification of the current timeline:

- (7) a. *yinwei tamen yanzhong shi women gang chuguo shihou*
 because they see were we recently go abroad when
de yangzi
 AP appearance
 ‘because what they see is the way we were when we just left China’
- b. *shijian jiu le ni ziji zhangda le kan de*
 time more PP **one (lit. you yourself)** grow up PP see AP
dongxi buyiyang le
 things different PP
 ‘after a long time when **one** has grown up and have started to see things differently’
- (8) a. *jiushi jiazhiguan zhilei de ni yijing duli le*
 just value as such AP **one (lit. your)** already independent PP
 ‘in terms of value views as such, **one** is already independent’
- b. *ni ziji jianli de sixiang guannian he jiazhiguan yijing*
one (lit. yourself) build AP idea concept and value already
he fumu de buyiyang le
 to parents AP different PP
 ‘the ideas and values **oneself** build are already different from those of your parents’

The independent self is described as having gone through the process of growing mature in (7) and as constructing a new value system in (8). It is the identity that the speaker holds now. This independent self stands in contrast with a dependent one that existed in the past.

In Example (9), the speaker reflects upon independence in relation to understanding parents and the concept of family across time:

- (9) a. *wo geng lijie fumu yinwei yiqian chenjin zai jiali*
 I more understand parents because past immerse at family
bei baohu
 prep protect
 ‘I understand parents better because I used to be immersed in the family and being protected’
- b. *dang ziji likai shou weiqu le cai hui mingbai yuanlai ziji*
 when self left feel wronged PP finally will realise in fact self
shi duome xingfu
 was so happy
 ‘after self have left and felt being wronged would (I) realise self used to be so happy’

- c. *ranhou xianzai henduo shiqing yao ni yigeren miandui*
 then now a lot of things need to one (lit. you) individually face
 ‘then now there are lots of things that one needs to face **individually**’
- d. *dan ni huijia zhihou bu yong ziji yigeren miandui*
 but one (lit. you) go home after no need self **individually** face
ni zongshi bei baohu de hen duo
 one (lit. you) always prep protect PP very much
 ‘but one doesn’t need to face **individually** when going home one is always well protected’
- e. *zai yige kandao fumu bianlao le ziji zeren bianda le ziji*
 another one see parents age PP self responsible bigger PP self
yuelaiyue da le
 more and more old PP
 ‘further seeing parents aging self is experiencing more responsibility as self grows older’
- f. *you gengduo de zeren qu chengdan gengduo manman ziji*
 have more AP responsibility go bear more slowly self
jiehun you xiaohaizi
 marry have children
 ‘having more responsibility to bear gradually self will get married and have children’
- g. *shang you lao xia you xiao*
 up have old down have young
 ‘(when one has) the young and the old at the same time (to look after)’
- h. *jia zai cengjing ziji shi xiaohaizi kanzhe fumu de nage*
 get caught in in the past self is child seeing parents AP that
jieduan de shenghuo
 period AP life
 ‘get caught in the situation when self used to be a child seeing that period of life parents lived’
- i. *nage shihou shi bukeneng lijie de*
 that time is impossible understand PP
 ‘back then (one) could not have understood (what parents had been through)’
- j. *dan ziji dao zhege nianji de shihou jiu hui faxian dangchu*
 but self arrive this age AP time just will find past
fumu duome burongyi
 parents so difficult
 ‘but when self comes to this age (one) will realise how difficult it would have been for parents’

It is interesting to see that *ziji* ‘self’ is used throughout the rest of the utterance substituting a personal pronoun. Researchers of impersonal pronouns argue that impersonal pronouns enable the speaker to let the hearer enter into the speaker’s world view, implying that the hearer also shares the same perspective (Kitagawa & Lehrer, 1990, p. 752).

Using *ziji* ‘self’ and the impersonal second person *ni* ‘one’ as the self-referential pronouns achieves a pragmatic function. This independent self of the speakers is very common among the present cohort. It is one that the speaker can resonate with that of the audience’s. Unlike the flawed dependent self that situates in the past, the present independent self is close to an ideal self with whom a grateful and thoughtful child, like everyone in the discussion, can sympathise.

3.2.3 Assessing the real me

This section will interpret the third most noticeable form of self-reflection: assessing the real self. Participants tend to expose their own shortcomings as a truthful and sincere self-examination. The process of self-examination enables them to find their real self. Syntactic structures such as *wo juede ziji* ‘I think myself’ and *wo zhege ren* ‘this person like me’ help to determine utterances where speakers identify oneself as the object for evaluation and conduct a search for the inner truth about oneself. Most of these statements embody an assertive attitude to self-assessments or self-evaluations where the use of the opinion marker *juede* ‘think’ is dense.⁸ These constructions are quite effective in establishing the authenticity of the evaluation which could never have been achieved by anybody else.

In Examples (10), (11) and (12), the three speakers all describe characteristics of the real self in negative terms, using the opinion marker *juede* ‘think’:

- (10) a. *dui wo juede wo ziji shi shuyu nazhong suanle de ren*
 yes I think I self am belong to those give in AP people
 ‘yes I think I myself am one of those who gives in easily’
- (11) a. *jiu juede ziji haishi you henduo buru bieren de difang jiu*
 just think self still have many not as good others AP things just
faxian ziji you tingduo buzhu de
 find self have many defects PP
 ‘(I) think self still has many that are not as good as others found self has
 a lot of shortcomings’

8. See Section 2.2.1 in Chapter 2 for a detailed analysis of assertive statements.

- (12) a. *dagai you ge yinxiang danshi wo juede ziji kan ziji haishi*
 general have one idea but I think self see self still
quedian bi youdian duo
 shortcoming compare merit more
 ‘have a general idea but I think self would see more shortcomings than merits in self’
- b. *yue xiangchu yue juede ziji zenme bian zhe yang*
 more get along more think self how become this way
 ‘the more time passes the more (I) think how did self end up like this’

Previous studies on Mandarin epistemic phrases show that epistemic structures make evident of the speaker’s “assessment of the certainty of the proposition [...] and] an indication of the source of the knowledge” (Biber et al., 1999, p. 648). According to the so-called “principle of responsibility” (Tao, 1996, p. 63), the speaker takes full ownership or responsibility for information given to the recipient. In other words, epistemic structure helps to position oneself as the origin of the information.

Many researchers have also discussed the significance of mental verbs or cognitive verbs in expressing a speaker’s emphasis on their upcoming speech (Biq, 1991; S. Huang, 2003; Lee, 2010; Liu, 1986). The token of *juede* ‘think’ in these examples reflects the speakers’ certainty in their upcoming self-assessments.

Within Examples (10), (11) and (12), *juede* ‘think’ forms a reoccurring construction with *ziji* ‘self’ which makes the object of evaluation very clear: participants’ own characteristics. Each speaker expresses a genuine self-impression, as either easily giving up, being not as good as others, or having more shortcomings than strengths. Since all of these utterances stand alone as a single turn and none of the speakers show any attempt to restore their self-image or to end on a positive note, it could be said that they do not try to appeal to their audience. These self-evaluations are nevertheless very firmly made.

The same I-epistemic structure is found in Example (13):

- (13) a. *wo juede laile zhebian yihou meigeren de jingli buyiyang*
 I think came here after everyone AP experience different
dutexing cai zai
 uniqueness finally shows up
 ‘I think upon coming here as everyone’s experiences are different uniqueness finally shows up’
- b. *yinwei wo juede dajia dou buzhengchang dajia dou gen*
 because I think all of us all unusual all of us all with
wo buyiyang
 me different
 ‘because I think all of us are unusual and all of us are different from me’

- c. *wo cai neng yishi dao wo shi zuowei yige wo zheme ge cunzai*
 I finally can realise I am as one I this one existence
 ‘until then I finally realised I am existing as (who) I am’
- d. *buxiang chugaozhong wo shi yi di shui rongru dahai*
 not like secondary school I was one drop water melt sea
nazhong ganjue
that kind feeling
 ‘unlike **that kind of feeling** I had when I was in secondary school: I was a drop of water in the sea’
- e. *guonei nazhong yali kezhende bushigaide*
 in China that kind pressure really enormous
 ‘the kind of pressure in China is enormous’
- f. *wo dangshi chuzhong de shihou jiushi an quanban*
 I at that time junior high AP time just like according to whole class
zongchengji pai ming
 scoring arrange rank
 ‘when I was in junior high school (our seats) were arranged according to exam grades’
- g. *ni dingzhe qian yi ming de hounaoshao zai shangke*
 you stare ahead one rank AP back of head at class
 ‘you would stare at the back of a person’s head who was one rank higher than you in class’
- h. *wo juede zhe yang xinli dou hui buzhengchang ba*
 I think this way psychologically will abnormal EP
 ‘I think such (an arrangement) would (drive everyone) insane’
- i. *erqie ting qiguai wo zhidao lai zhebian yihou wo cai*
 also rather strange I know come here after I finally
renshidao wo shi yige zhongguoren
 realise I am a Chinese person
 ‘also what (I) found strange is that I only felt like I was a Chinese when I came out here’
- j. *jiu nazhong ganjue cai chulai*
 then **that kind feeling** finally come out
 ‘**that kind of feeling** (until then) finally came out’
- k. *yinwei zai guonei dajia dou yiyang lai zhebian hou*
 because in China all of us all the same come here after
an tamen de jiaodu kan zhongguo
 according to their AP perspective see China
 ‘because all of us are the same in China after coming here (I) take on their perspective on China’

- l. *zhan zai wo dangshi zijide jiaodu qu kan zhongguo shi*
 stand at I back then one's own perspective go see China is
wanquan buyiyang de
 completely different PP
 'in comparison to my own perspective on China (I) can see completely differently'
- m. *suoyi ziji hai ting you shouhuo de*
 so self still very have gain PP
 'so self has actually gained a lot'

In addition to the repeated use of *wo juede* 'I think', the speaker announces her attempt to reveal her real self by attributing it to a *yishi* 'awareness' in Line c. Since both the subject and object of 'awareness' align with the speaker herself, who is then able to secure complete ownership of the epistemic value embedded in the stance.

Then, the audience's attention is drawn back to a time in the past. The real self, which is the object of evaluation, has undergone changes across different time frames. Finding the real self has been a matter of self-discovery.

As the narrative keeps developing, story-telling and evaluations are happening concurrently. As part of the story-telling, the speaker describes the feeling of being more aware of their ethnicity after coming to Australia. *Nazhong ganjue* 'that kind of feeling' (Line j) reminds the audience to recognise the real self which remains unnoticed even by the speaker herself until that very moment.

The speaker's real self, as far as the past self is concerned, remained secondary to what *dajia* 'all of us' tend to believe (Line k) until the present self is no longer part of *dajia* 'all of us' in the Australian context.

At the end of this small piece of narration, the speaker concludes that she finally realises the significance of her Chinese identity in defining who she really is. She is finally able to see who she really is when everyone else is different. That is to say, her Chineseness becomes a defining characteristic of her real self, which is what she used to lack. Gaining such awareness is therefore educational (Line m). Such a positioning demonstrates the speaker's effort to construct the real self as something that is evolving and is constantly being perfected. Chapter 4 will discuss the collective sense of self in greater details.

In Example (14), the speaker's selves both exist in the here-and-now time frame:

- (14) a. *zhege hua qishi haishi buyao jiang hui bei ren da*
 this words in fact probably not say will prep people hit
 'in fact (I) should probably not say this and if (I) say it (I) will get attacked'

- b. *youdeshihou ni keneng bu jieshou dan ni*
 sometimes **one (lit. you)** probably not accept but **one (lit. you)**
bing bu fandui ta
 but not object it
 ‘sometimes **one** probably doesn’t accept without objecting to it’
- c. *qishi ni yao tanchulai jiang zhege hua shi*
 in fact if **one (lit. you)** talk openly about this idea is
jiangdetong de
 making sense PP
 ‘in fact if **one** talk openly about this idea (of not supporting parents financially) it makes sense’
- d. *danshi ni zuowei zhongguoren ni hen nan*
 but **one (lit. you)** as Chinese **one (lit. you)** very hard
lixingshang jieshou bu shanyang fumu
 reason accept not support parents
 ‘but **one** being a Chinese **one** finds it hard to reason into accepting it’
- e. *yinwei fumu yinggai you zeren ba ni*
 because parents should have responsibility prep **one (lit. you)**
yang da
 bring up
 ‘because parents should be responsible for bringing **one** up’
- f. *danshi ni qishi bing meiyou zeren qu yang*
 but **one (lit. you)** in fact but not have responsibility go support
nide fumu
one’s (lit. yours) parents
 ‘but **one** in fact does not have the responsibility to support **their** parents’
- g. *wo shi zhe yang xiang de bu daibiao wo ziji bu yang*
 I am this way think PP not means **myself** not support
wode fumu
 my parents
 ‘this is what I think doesn’t mean **myself** do not support my parents’
- h. *wo zhishi biaoda zhege guandian bing bushi wo ziji jiushi*
 I simply express this opinion but not **myself** just like
zhege ren
 this person
 ‘I am only expressing the opinion but it doesn’t mean that **myself** is such a person’

The main body of the argument features the use of the impersonal second person singular (Lines b to f) until the speaker’s opinion is stated: you actually do not bear the responsibility to support your parents, a view which is a taboo in Chinese

culture. This could be the reason why the speaker handles his true belief with great care as it may contradict the opinion that is tailored for the public.

For fearing that the audience might not like what he is about to say, he puts forward the public self in the interactional frame. The objective is to engage the audience (Lines g and h) into accepting the difference between one's opinions and true beliefs. The ambiguous impersonal pronoun *ni* 'one' embodies the public self who has an opinion. It contrasts with the real self, the identity that is characterised by one's true belief, which is represented by *ziji* 'self'. In this way, the speaker creates space between the two so that the audience can be guided into accepting the potential inconsistency. Even though the opinion of not supporting parents at old age may be deemed incorrect, it still has certain merits whereby the speaker's argument still holds water. The process of self-analysis leads the speaker into claiming that the true filial self will never ignore the duty of supporting one's parents (Line g).

Rather than highlight one's subjectivity, some participants choose to minimise the role of one's own subjectivity by giving more attention to external conditions in making life-changing decisions. Some even attempt to portray the real self as devoid of any internal motivations when recalling personal choices and diction.

When asked about what motivated them to come to Australia, the participants give diversified responses, Example (15) is an extract from a participant's response in which she explains the truth of the matter:

- (15) a. *qishi wo zai chuguo qian yizhi dui chuguo wo ziji*
 in fact I at go abroad before always regarding go abroad **myself**
shi mei you shenme gainian de
 am not have any concept PP
 'in fact I before going abroad I had no idea about why would go abroad
myself
- b. *zhe dou shi wo xiang shi wo ba ta yige pengyou de nver*
 this all is I think is my dad his one friend AP daughter
haoxiang du lianhe banxue
 maybe study joint program
 'this was all because of my dad his friend's daughter seemed to be studying
 in a joint program'
- c. *ranhou ta chuguo le ranhou keneng ta ba gen wo ba*
 then she go abroad PP then perhaps her dad and my dad
jingchang jiang zhexie shiqing
 often talk these thing
 'then she went abroad then perhaps her dad told my dad (they) often talked
 about these things'

- d. *wo ba ye juede o wo ye yao ba wo nver song chuqu*
 my dad also think o I also want prep my daughter send out
jiu zhe yang huhututu bei ta song le chulai
 just this way bewilderedly prep him sent out
 ‘my dad also thought “I also want to send my daughter out” (I) was bewil-
 deredly sent abroad by him’
- e. *qishi wo ziji wo dou bushi wo ziji yuanyi de*
 in fact myself I all not myself willing PP
 ‘in fact I myself was not I myself (was not) willing’

The speaker in Example (15) takes the floor and begins telling her own story regarding what made her come to Australia. Similar to the tactic used in Example (13), the speaker in Example (15) creates two sets of time frames to establish the contrast between the past and the present. Having done so in Line a, the speaker specifies that the real self is embedded in the past (Line b). From Line b to Line d, the speaker further contextualises the condition wherein the speaker was sent abroad by her father who was influenced by a friend whose daughter had gone abroad first. The final remark reinstates that the decision of going abroad did not come from the true self.

Later on in the discussion, the present participant even goes on to speaking of *mingyun anpai* ‘arrangement of fate’ where the role of one’s own subjectivity is further downplayed. The real self is portrayed as devoid of any internal motivations. Many other participants, when speaking of coming to Australia, also made attributions to destiny. In Chinese socio-communicative activities, the avoidance of a working egoistic centre in evaluating personal choices and diction indicates that self-interested tendencies are bad.

3.3 From flawed to ideal

So far, we have unpacked various linguistic constructions in performative utterances in relation to the process by which participants express their individual sense of self. Common to these constructions is the narrative process in which the speakers involve as they speak. Narrating the self is a meaning-making process that bases on taking oneself as an object of reflection (Sparrowe, 2005, p. 429). The analysis, accordingly, has revealed the dynamic mechanism for the speakers to narrate their selves in front of other individuals. Drawing on comments from the current participants, it can be said that evaluating the individual awareness, negotiating the conditions of self-reliance, searching for the inner truth about oneself important aspects of their identity construction.

Linguistically, *ziji* ‘self’ is often used as a stand-alone pronoun when the participants seek to engage in self-evaluation. Their reflections included admissions of personal faults and shortcomings. In light of the present analysis, the participants’ self-assessing performances are analysed from the perspective of how they are discursively accomplished in social interactions.

In the participants’ belief, if they acted “well” and corrected “bad habits”, other people in the discussion group would show them more respect. Such a belief carries the influence of the premodern conception of self-cultivation among contemporary Chinese people in their ways of viewing themselves and others. Some connections can be drawn between them and several popular ideas in Confucianism. Confucianism can be described as a set of ethical perspectives.

Self-cultivation, a key moral teaching in the Confucian school of thought, is the only way for a person to become a morally superior being. In Confucianism, the idea of self-cultivation places exclusive emphasis on the improvement of the individual self to serve the family, the country and ultimately the emperor. It is a process in which a person becomes an exemplary individual worthy of respect. It turns out to be a value still held by many Chinese immigrants.

According to the Confucian canonical text *Lunyu* ‘Analects’, *xiuji yi jing* ‘cultivat[ing] in yourself respectful attentiveness’ is undertaken so that one can *xiuji yi anren* ‘give ease to all other people’ (Lunyu: Xianwen, 1993).⁹ The implication is that the cultivated personality would help to ensure peace and order within society.

Although participants stress the need for being aware of the imperfect private self, the conditional independent self, the real self that is yet to be identified or one that had not been able to make decisions, they do not fully conceptualise their self-refinement in the original Confucian sense. Instead, the process of narrating the self in which participants engage, bears similarities to discussions about the moral value of selfhood in early twentieth-century China. In the mid-1910s and 1920s, China witnessed the May Fourth Movement, also called Chinese Enlightenment. A group of liberal intellectuals and scholars led this cultural movement.

These similarities are indicative of the ongoing influence of the latter on the present-day discourse of self-perception. The process that the pioneering May Fourth intellectuals engaged in while reflecting upon and debating individuality as a form of moral rectitude is just as self-assertive as it is self-reflective.

May Fourth intellectuals exercised self-reflection while debating individuality, which helped to promote a belief in the importance of self-conviction. This self-conviction is linked to moral conviction. In an effort to embrace *gexing jiefang* ‘emancipation of individuality’, the May Fourth thinkers advocated self-awakening

9. For the complete translation, see Yang & Pan (1993).

in order to assert the authority of *ziwo* ‘self’. For many who promoted this cause, the autonomy of the individual was brought into the discussion as a modern personality trait.

Liberal thinkers linked selfhood to the idea of *zijue* ‘self-awakening’, an awakening to the rightness of Western democracy, science, individual freedom, and the emancipation of women and youth. The May Fourth idea of self-awakening gives rise to discussions around Western-inspired values such as liberty, equality, fraternity and human rights.

Reflecting upon and debating individuality as a form of moral rectitude results in an emphasis being placed on realising one’s full potential. Admitting flaws forms part of the vocabulary with which the participants chose to present a favourable self-image. This is a Chinese social construction. Moral qualities of the self have been a key concept in both premodern and modern Chinese thinking.

In some other comments that the participants make, being completely driven by one’s own desires is dangerous or wrong. Together with the participants’ way of evaluating their personal choices and diction, their avoidance of a working egoistic centre indicates that the self should be restricted, in which case the self or ego contains negative instincts that one cannot govern.

It is a Chinese cultural belief that a person’s instinctive impulses are immoral and needing regulation by social norms. Xunzi (314–217 BC), a well-known Confucian thinker, claimed it is natural for people to indulge in their natural instincts. In the historical context of modern China, prominent political reformist of late Qing and early Republican China often used self-governance as an anchor point for debating Chinese national politics and the imagination of modern Chinese individuality. Liang Qichao’s Social Darwinistic conception of *guomin* ‘national people’ for instance is a re-imagination of Xunzi’s negative view on human nature. The belief in the importance of *zili ziqiang* ‘striving for self-improvement’ continues to influence ideologies held by the present-day Chinese immigrants while contrasting their individual endeavours with any preconceptions of the Chinese as a people from their Western counterparts.

3.4 Conclusion

The participants’ sense of self emerges from the reflexive process of social judgments in conversation. The enactments of various normative presuppositions are being negotiated between the speaker and the audience, which constitute the act of narrating the self, an important meaning-making process in talk-in-interactions. In terms of contemporary Chinese people’s understanding of themselves in relation to

others, the discussions of the moral meanings of the self can be traced to premodern Confucian teachings, which have been reinterpreted in the twentieth century.

As all the participants are first-generation Chinese immigrants in Australia, their shared experiences probably allow them to co-construct a more complex underpinning of their individual identities. The re-imagination of “old” values related to selfhood is best understood as conditioned by the participants’ exposure to the socio-cultural landscape of contemporary China and the liberal socio-cultural environment of Australia.

CHAPTER 4

Becoming Chinese

A discursive exploration

Chapter 4 explores the participants' conceptions of the collective sense of self. The investigation addresses category-bound features that are tied to the participants' references to Chinese cultural groups. Chinese immigrants' perception of being Chinese is indicative of their recognition of the knowledge and values, positive or negative, attached to various Chinese cultural groups. In the contemporary Chinese diaspora discourse, conceptions of collective identities, such as being a Chinese national, Chinese immigrant or Chinese person living overseas, are most prominent instances of situational and emergent constructs which are subject to negotiation in social encounters. The scrutiny of the interactional and conceptual resources reveals how the participants negotiate the meanings of Chineseness in the context of various socio-cultural collectives in the reflexive activities of social exchange.

Keywords: collective self, Chineseness, cultural identity, cross-cultural context

China, against the greater socioeconomic background of globalisation, has witnessed deepening interrelated social and cultural changes four decades since implementing an open-door policy. Chinese people have benefitted tremendously from increased global interaction and rapid economic development. These social changes have also arguably transformed their value system and their worldviews. In the new cultural discourse, discussions around being a Chinese person have become further diversified and individualised. Findings drawn from the naturally occurring data on the representation and negotiation of the collective sense of self among Mandarin Chinese speakers serve as an empirical ground to support the view that the self is conceptualised in culturally specific ways.

For the current generation of the newly immigrated Chinese in Australia, 'Chinese' could be a given heritage that they carry in their lives. It could also be an individualised culture they choose to live by. The participants negotiate their Chinese ethnicity and construct Chineseness through various de-nationalised and non-ideological-driven collectives. These imaginations accommodate various collectively shared values and beliefs. They are analysed as social performances that emerge from the various communicative activities centring upon China

and Chinese people. Through these performative utterances, the participants self-represent as members of the Australian-Chinese community to demonstrate their unique cultural identity.

4.1 Defining Chineseness in the global context

This subsection selects a few pieces of the participants’ narratives of their perceptions of China and Chinese people in the global context. The participants exchanged their opinions about China and China-related issues in the global context, much of which reflect a cross-cultural comparative perspective. These Chinese speakers constantly refer to a number of cultural collectives, which is dependent on the cross-cultural context, references to which are therefore indexical. In the meantime, the indexical use of these references shows their approval or disapproval to the associated socio-cultural values. The enlisted cultural collectives as well as the collective self and other references serve as prompts for an imagined audience. The evaluative accounts that each speaker makes constitute socially oriented acts to channel these approval or disapproval to an imagined audience who presumably share the same collective identity as the speakers. Jointly, the speakers and their imagined audience construct Chineseness with fluid representations through narrative acts.

4.1.1 Where is *zhongguo* ‘China’

Most references to China in the data sit in the international/regional context where China either represents a country in the world or the geographic area of the country. According to the data, the word, *zhongguo* ‘China’ conflates two sets of imaginations, the geographical area and the linguistic area each of which corresponds to different imagined audiences.

For example, participants from group two talked about language maintenance among the various tribes of Chinese descendants in the world where the term *zhongguo* ‘China’ is found to be used to refer to the areas outside the People’s Republic of China:

- (1) a. *zhongguoren youqishi taiwanren zhuande gengjia man yidian*
Chinese people especially Taiwanese transfer even slow a little
 ‘**Chinese people** especially Taiwanese transfer even slower’
- b. *taiwanren jiu baochizhe shuo zhongwen de xiguan zhishao zai jiali*
 Taiwanese still maintain speak Chinese AP habit at least at home
 ‘Taiwanese still maintain the habit of speaking Chinese at least at home’

- c. *dan zhongguo haoxiang dalu de jiu cha yidian xiang*
 but China maybe Mainland AP then bad a little like
guangdongren zhuande zuikuai
 Cantonese people transfer fastest
 'but China maybe Mainland is not as good for example Cantonese transfer
 the fastest'

Speaking of Example (1), this person uses *zhongguo* 'China' at the beginning of their utterance, implying they believe the people of Taiwan should be included in the Chinese speaking community. However, he then repairs from *zhongguo* 'China' to *dalu* 'Mainland' to set the contrast with *taiwan* 'Taiwan', in which case *zhongguo* 'China', the unifying term, seems to be inaccurate. It can then be said that *zhongguo* 'China' is the equivalent of the geographic area of Mainland China and occasionally the larger linguistic area which goes beyond Mainland China.

In terms of the collective of Chinese languages spoken across the globe, *zhongguohua* 'Chinese speech' and *huawen* 'ethnic Chinese language' are used. Speaker 1 in Example (2) imagines the early migrants to Southeast Asia as a member of *women zhongguo* 'we Chinese', as they speak the same language, but Speaker 2 refers to the Chinese language being taught in Southeast Asia as *huawen* 'ethnic Chinese language':

- (2) a. S1 *xiang women zhongguo birushuo zaoqi yimin dao*
 like **our China** for example early migrants to
dongnanya de tamen benshen yijing henduo dai
 Southeast Asia they original already many generations
 'like (from) **our China** for example early migrants to Southeast Asia
 have been many generations'
- b. *tamen haishi shuo tamende yuyan kejiahua fujianhua*
 they still speak their language Hokka Hokkien
guangdonghua chaozhouhua
 Cantonese Teochew
 'they are still speaking their languages like Hokka or Hokkien Can-
 tonese and Teochew'
- c. *xiang women zheshi dierdai mashang zhongguohua*
 like our this is second generation quickly **Chinese**
dou buhui shuo le
 already can't speak PP
 'like the second generation of ours almost cannot speak **Chinese**'

- d. S2 *er zhongguo dalu chuantong de dongxi yinwei*
 rather **China** **Mainland** tradition AP things because
zhanluan yijing bu baocun le
 war already not preserve PP
 ‘traditional things in **Mainland China** are no longer preserved because of warfare’
- e. *dongnanya jiaozuo lijuzhe yizhuzhe tamen faner*
 Southeast Asia called sojourners expatriates they but preserve
baohude henhao yindu hai jiao huawen
 very well India still teach **Chinese**
 ‘called sojourners or expatriates in Southeast Asia they protect better **Chinese** is taught in India’

As far as the immediate group is concerned, the second speaker agrees with the first speaker that the speaker and their immediate audience originate from *zhongguo dalu* ‘Mainland China’. This is exemplified in Line d. People who come from *zhongguo* ‘China’ are *daluren* ‘Mainland people’, contrasting those from Taiwan and Hong Kong.

The latter ones do come under China in the global context. Having said so, *zhongguo* ‘China’ is still used as the highest collective made up of superordinate categories of various geographic regions. This includes the disputed areas such as Tibet and Xinjiang, in which case China is a multi-ethnic concept:

- (3) a. *ruguo qita zhongguo * xinjiangren zai de hua*
 if other **Chinese** <sudden stop> Xinjiang people present if
 ‘if there are other **Chinese** Xinjiang people (who are) present’
- b. *ni shuo shenme xinjiangren zuode weiwuerren zuode renjia*
 you say something Xinjiang people did Uighurs did others
hui shengqi de
 will get angry PP
 ‘you say something Xinjiang people did Uighurs did others will get angry’
- c. *yinwei women doushi xinjiangren weiwuerzu ye you haode*
 because we all are **Xinjiang people** Uighurs also have good
ni zhineng shuo shi kongbufenzi
 you only say are terrorist
 ‘because we are all **Xinjiang people** some Uighurs are good you can only say terrorists (did)’

In these two examples, the participants’ self-positions as members of different collective groups fall under a provincial or an ethnic category. The speaker in Example (3), in Line c, self-repairs to position herself as well as other innocent Uighur people in the same group, in the name of the geographic origin of their

hometown. Although *xinjiangren* ‘Xinjiang people’ is often narrowly understood as a reference to the Uighur people, she believes it should be a multi-ethnic identity shared by Han Chinese and Uighur Chinese.

4.1.2 Who are Chinese people

The participants in this study have used a great many forms of demographic categories for Chinese people, all with different connotations. The Chinese groups are mostly referred to as *zhongguoren* ‘Chinese people’, *guoneiren* ‘people from within the country’ and *daluren* ‘Mainland people’. These terms are based on the national geographic distinctions. The de-nationalised term *huaren* ‘ethnic Chinese people’ is also frequently used to refer to all Chinese immigrants and descendants, irrespective of their nationalities, and is inclusive of all those who are culturally Chinese. ABC (Australian born Chinese) refers to the ethnic Chinese in Australia who are the descendants of *diyidai yimin* ‘first generation Chinese’.

Huaren ‘ethnic Chinese people’ who represent a group with distinctive cultural characteristics are the building blocks of the multi-ethnic and multi-cultural Australian society. The participants use *huaren* ‘ethnic Chinese people’ as a comparison to other ethnic groups. *Huaren* ‘ethnic Chinese people’, in these scenarios, is an imagined collective that exists in the Australian multi-cultural context. This term very well represents an imagined culturally affective community of Chinese immigrants in Australia:

- (4) a. *zhebian de yige zhongguo shequ tamen baoliu wenhua*
 here AP one Chinese community they preserve culture is
bi guonei zuodehao
 within China do better
 ‘the Chinese community here does better than within China in preserving their culture’
- b. *tamen youxie dou disan dai huaren le*
 they some already third generation ethnic Chinese PP
jiushuo guonei hen shao wulongwushi
 speaking of China rare dragon lion dance
 ‘some of them are third generation ethnic Chinese dragon lion dance is rarely seen in China’
- c. *zhebian haoduo zhuanye wulongwushi wo hui bei*
 here many professional dragon and lion dance I will prep
tamen biaoyan zhenhan
 their performances astound
 ‘lots of professional dragon and lion dance (teams) here I am astounded by their performances’

- d. *tamen naxie keneng bensen buhui shuo zhongwen dan naxie*
 they those probably themselves can't speak Chinese but those
huaren de xiaohaizi
 ethnic Chinese children
 'they probably cannot speak Chinese themselves but those **ethnic Chinese children**'
- e. *tamen you xingqu jicheng zhe yang de yichan wenhua yichan*
 they have interest inherit this way AP inheritance culture heritage
suoyi feichang hao ma
 so very good EP
 'they are keen on inheriting this cultural inheritance it is very good'
- (5) a. *xiang zhongguo* huaren*
 like Chinese <sudden stop> ethnic Chinese people
 'like Chinese ethnic Chinese people'
- b. *you jige shi zai dianshitai gongzuo de you jige*
 have how many are at TV station work PP have how many
newspaper li de meiyou
 <E newspaperE> in PP none
 'how many (Chinese get to) work at TV stations or newspaper none'

The speaker of Example (4) first uses the national term *zhongguo* 'China' in Line a, but changes to the de-nationalised form *huaren* 'ethnic Chinese people' in Line b to refer to the Chinese expats in Australia while referring to the Chinese in China as *guoneiren* 'people from within the country'. The co-existence of *huaren* 'ethnic Chinese people' and *guoneiren* 'people from within the country' shows a discrepancy between the speaker's positioning outside China, as *guonei* 'within the country' refers to the Chinese from 'within the country', which is often not the place where the participants would locate themselves.

Similarly, the speaker in Example (6) self-repairs from people from *zhongguo* 'China' to *huaren* 'ethnic Chinese people' as the collective term for the entire Chinese-Australian population. If discrimination is inevitable, the pressure is on the entire group. *Huaren* 'Ethnic Chinese people' represents a cultural community shared by Chinese from different parts of the world. It is also reflected in a participant's comment on hierarchy as a Chinese characteristic:

- (6) a. *wo diyifen gongzuo shi xiangangren zuo shenme shi dou*
 I first job was Hong Kong person do whatever thing all
fengfenghuohuo
 in a rush
 'my first job was (working for) a Hong Kong person (I) had to rush to do everything'

- b. *keneng gen guonei* *laoban buyiyang*
 perhaps to Chinese (lit. within the country) boss different
 ‘it’s perhaps different from a boss who is Chinese (lit. within the country)’
- c. *jiu ziji keneng jiushi huaren laoban ranhou ziji you shi*
 just self maybe just ethnic Chinese boss then self also am
huaren
ethnic Chinese
 ‘maybe he himself is an ethnic Chinese boss (my)self is also ethnic Chinese’
- d. *dajia dou zhidao nazhong dengji xinli tebie bu shufu*
 all of us all know that kind hierarchy in mind very not comfortable
 ‘all of us all know about that kind of hierarchy (I) feel very uncomfortable’

The speaker in Example (6) indicates that she felt uncomfortable because her boss treated her without due respect. Taking an evaluative stance by aligning with another interlocutor (Line c), she convinces herself and the rest of the group that her mistreatment is because of this cultural characteristic that the *huaren* ‘ethnic Chinese people’ have, including her boss who is from Hong Kong (Line a) and herself who is from Mainland China or *guonei* ‘within the country’ (Line b).

4.1.3 Representing the non-Chinese

References for non-Chinese groups are just as numerous, among them *guilao* ‘foreign devil’, *laowai* ‘foreigner (literally old outsider)’, *aozhouren* ‘Australian people’, *yangren* ‘ocean people’, *waiguoren* ‘foreigner (literally outside country people)’, *xifangren* ‘Westerner’ and *ben/dangdiren* ‘local people’. Westerners have long been depicted as foreign aggressors by Chinese people since the Opium Wars (1840–1860) and in Maoist China. Derogatory terms, such as *guilao* ‘foreign devil’, and terms denoting alienation, such as *laowai* ‘foreigner (literally old foreigner)’, remain in use in contemporary China.

Key to interpreting the instances of these references is that the participants imply a collision of ideas between the imagined “them” and an imagined “us”. Example (7) is a short piece of comment on the Western media’s distorted news report. Participant 8 assigns the plural form of other-reference *tamen* ‘they/them’ (Line c) to *xifangren* ‘Westerner’. In terms of the distance between various imagined collectives, “they” stand at the furthest point on the spectrum away from “us” (Maitland & Wilson, 1987; Rees, 1983).

- (7) a. *wo juede wo juede xinfang caishi niuqu zhongguo de*
 I think I think the West actually distort China PP
 ‘I think I think the West is actually (the one that) distorted China’

- b. *women nage shihou yinwei xinjiang fasheng qiwu shijian*
 we that time because Xinjiang happen July 5th riots
de shihou
 AP time
 ‘we (knew) at the time when the July 5th riots happened in Xinjiang’¹⁰
- c. *women zhidao weizuren sha hanzuren danshi xifangren tamen wo*
 we know Uighurs kill Han people but the West they I
kan meiti shang
 saw media on
 ‘we knew Uighurs killed Han people but I saw on the media that those Westerners’
- d. *tamen ba nage han * weizuren tou an*
 they prep that Han <sudden stop> Uighurs’ head place
dao hanzuren shen shang
 onto Han people body on
 ‘they photoshopped Uighur people’s heads onto Han people’s bodies’
- e. *shuo shi hanzuren sha weizuren xifang caishi caishi tamen*
 say are Han people kill Uighurs the West actually actually they
caishi niuqu zhongguo ma
 actually distort China EP
 ‘saying Han people killed Uighur people the West they actually distorted China’

Some participants albeit noticing the lack of knowledge about contemporary China among non-Chinese people choose to downplay any ideological differences. For example, people’s ideological bias, as suggested by the speaker in Example (7), may come from mass media, implying that he does not blame the non-Chinese for having these misunderstandings or biases. In this way, he tries to present a neutral outlook on disparity. However, he uses a term called *bendide laowai* ‘local foreigner’ which gives his true thoughts away. The term *laowai* ‘foreigner (literally old outsider)’ is used as if the interlocutors are in China and can refer to foreigners as ‘outsiders’. The term *bendi* ‘local’ evokes the country of origin, whereby it excludes the speaker:

- (8) a. *yinwei zhebian buhui zhengmian xuanchuan zhongguo tebieshi*
 because here won’t positively publicise China especially
zhuliu meiti
 mainstream mediad
 ‘because especially the mainstream media here won’t give positive publicity about China’

10. On July 5th, 2009, large scale riots broke out between Uighurs and Han Chinese in Urumqi, the capital city of Xinjiang province.

- b. *ta buhui xuanchuan zhongguo shi yige xinxing guojia yijing*
 it won't publicise China is one emerging country already
chengwei dier da jingjiti
 become second large economy
 'it won't report China as an emerging country which is already the second largest economy'
- c. *suoyi henduo laobaixing xiangxiang dangzhong haishi henjiuyiqian*
 so many folk imagine within still a long time ago
pojiude ji bu minzhude
 broken very non-democratic
 'so for lots of folks's imagination China is still like what it was broken very non-democratic'
- d. *keneng women xianzai women liaojie zhongguo hen fengsuo danshi ta*
 probably we now we know China very closed but it
bijing yijing kaihua
 after all already open
 'probably we now we know China was very closed but she has already opened up after all'
- e. *danshi bendide laowai tamen hui juede zhongguo geng fengsuo*
 but local foreigner they will think Chinese more closed
huozhe gengjia chenjiu
 or more outdated
 'but local foreigners they would still think China is more closed or more outdated'
- f. *zhishi youyixie kehu yinwei gen women zuo shengyi budebu*
 only some customers because with us do business have to
qu zhongguo kan yixie chanpin
 go China see some products
 'only a few customers due to doing business with us have to go to China to see products'
- g. *tamen cai zhidao qishi zhongguo yijing hen fada le bushi*
 they finally realise in fact China already very developed PP not
tamen xinli xiangxiang de na yang
 they in mind imagine AP that way
 'they finally realised that China is already very developed it is not what they had imagined'

From the perspective of identity construction in discourse, the combination of *bendide laowai* 'local foreigner' reinforces the social dis-alignment between 'us' and 'them'. In this way, the speaker categorises people who are perceived as biased against China as an out- group. It should be noted that the two uses of the inclusive 'we' are vague in meaning. They are vague as others who are involved in the

collective remain unspecified (Kitagawa & Lehrer, 1990, p. 745). The “vague we” has a rhetorical force that is in contrast to the “vague they” (Kitagawa & Lehrer, 1990, p. 745). In this case, it represents those who keep their eyes closed to the recent advancements that China has made (Line e).

Variation in the use of the self and other referencing pronouns by the same speakers reveals social positioning. From an analytical point of view, collective representations in a social encounter are idealised representations in the mind of the individual. One, consciously or not, is constantly framing meaningful ways of being by indexing and presupposing particular representations for the imagined and idealised audience. In this respect, the speaker chooses the collective positioning to evoke their collective identity as well as that of the rest of the audience. Collective positioning creates a clear group boundary that separates the collective with which the speakers aligns themselves as well as the idealised audience to the imagined other.

These positioning acts constitute a system that gives enduring social meanings to linguistic forms in a given socio-cultural context. Take the collective pronoun *women* ‘we’ as an example, the speaker assumes to share with the audience a collective identity which gains contextual value in the here-and-now discursive activity. It is a newly formed global identity of Chinese who have a good knowledge of the misunderstandings on the part of non-Chinese.

This act constitutes an indexical claim which can either invoke a pre-existing value or stake a claim to a new one (Eckert, 2008, p. 464). It could be said that the indexical value of *women* ‘we’, used by a Chinese immigrant living in Australia, is likely to be associated with a sense of loyalty to the patriotism education back in China.

Aware of what they were taught, the speakers bring a pre-existing value into the moment-to-moment interaction with other Chinese immigrants. Since the audience in these discourse situations are imagined to be someone sharing the same collective identity, these positions are reflective of the speakers’ own interpretations of this collective identity and have the potential to constitute an imagined field of meanings associated with this collective cultural property.

The speaker in Example (8), for instance, strategically utilises a pre-existing value to suggest a new one for other Chinese people in Australia. The pre-existing value refers to the same education people receive back home, and the new value could be that one’s political opinion is shaped by education; therefore; one should neither be too one-sided nor be easily swayed by the other side.

This idealised audience can be detected from utterances that contain collective other-references, such as *bieren* ‘other people’, *tamen* ‘they/them’ and so on. Usually, their referents are not specific, but these other references can exclude others from the imagined audience who presumably share the same collective identity as the speakers.

- (9) a. *jiushi ganjue zai guowai mingxian hui ganjue zhuzhong*
 just like feel at abroad obviously will feel conscious
yixie ziji
 somewhat self
 ‘(I) feel the need to **be more self-conscious** (when I am) abroad’
- b. *yinwei bieren kending buhui jiang ni zhegeren zenmeyang hui*
 because others definitely won’t say you this person how will
shuo nage zhongguoren zenmeyang
 say that Chinese how
 ‘because **others** definitely won’t comment on you as a person but will judge you as a Chinese’
- c. *suoyi xiangdui eryan hui zhuyi yixie*
 so comparatively speaking will pay attention some
 ‘therefore (I) would pay more attention’

With an imagined affective audience with whom speakers share the same Chinese cultural identity in mind, the speakers might have felt obliged to convey their individual value as a collective state of affairs. For example, the speaker in Example (9) says that she feels the need to behave in a more self-conscious way in Australia as she feels that she carries a collective image of the Chinese people, which is the target of other people’s potential judgement, and that she cannot let that happen as a result of her own individual behaviour.

It cannot be said that all the other participants share the same collectivist thinking of “one individual is not only representing themselves, but also the collective image of the Chinese people”. However, the participants from other group discussions also indicated that they were self-aware of how others viewed themselves. The speaker converges her self-awareness with an awareness of a collective identity, which has added indexical value to the notion of self-awareness as a collective value, assuming an imagined audience who would agree with her that one should be conscious of living in a foreign country.

Being self-conscious has always been a well-regarded personal trait among the Chinese as it embodies an awareness of self-improvement. As reviewed in Chapter 3, the moral value of self-improvement has been stressed by traditional schools of thought in China such as Confucianism. The belief in the importance of *ziliziqiang* ‘striving for self-improvement’ also dominated the Republican China. For instance, the intellectuals at the time who engaged in while reflecting upon and debating about individuality as a form of moral rectitude in modern China described it as the process of conscious self-improvement.

Liang Qichao’s used *guomin* ‘national people’ to promote a life outlook based on the “survival of the fittest” by means of natural selection. Attributes such as dynamism, aggressiveness, self-assertion, and the realisation of capacities became values

that were particularly prominent in the historical context of the early twentieth century in China. The belief in *ziliziqiang* ‘striving for self-improvement’ also continued to influence ideologies in the nation-building discourse of modern China and beyond.

This goal of *ziliziqiang* ‘striving for self-improvement’ embodies a new set of cultural rules by embracing a sense of self-consciousness and constantly looking for intellectual legitimacy to be an emotional and mentally strong self. The speaker in Example (9) and many other participants have distinguished themselves as *women zhongguoren* ‘we Chinese’ in a foreign country, seeing themselves as contributing to a collective identity of a shared cultural entity. Such term represents an idealised identity which hinges on the importance of self-improvement in Chinese understandings of the self. This identity can be seen as having developed out of early modern Chinese concepts such as Liang Qichao’s *guomin* ‘national people’.

In sum, when imagined and idealised as someone sharing the same collective identity as the speaker does, the audience plays an active role in each positioning act. While the speakers index a collective identity that they share with this idealised audience, the idealised audience is positioned as being intimately connected to the collective as well as being understanding and loyal to the associated socio-cultural beliefs and values.

By evoking this discursive collective identity, the speaker and the audience jointly produce norms that comply with this newly established discursive identity. Indexical uses of collective self-references and other cultural collectives to refer to this identity are part and parcel of the construction of their Chinese ethnicity in the global context. The next subsection will explain in detail how a contemporary Chinese immigrant identity emerges from interaction.

4.2 The emerging contemporary Chinese immigrant identity

Many of the participants speak about how living in Australia heightened their awareness of being Chinese, with some indicating that this is a positive thing and others viewing it negatively. This subsection focuses on their collective imaginations by examining the indexical use of demographic categories. The diversified categorical naming of various groups and the construction of their meanings in interaction is indicative of a dynamic and fluid process of negotiating cultural identity in the Australian context.

Speakers are found to form a number of collective cultural imaginations, based on different discourse situations. These collective cultural imaginations are social performances where social actors are constantly creating meanings to being a member of these collectives in front of other interlocutors and negotiating these meanings with them.

4.2.1 The *Huaren* ‘ethnic Chinese people’

Huaren ‘ethnic Chinese people’ presumably embodies the entire pan-Chinese population of Australia. Examples (10) and (11) demonstrate two imagined cultural characteristics that the participants believe are embodied by *huaren* ‘ethnic Chinese people’ in comparison to *guilao* ‘Westerner’, a term which originally meant the ‘foreigner devil’ and is now a normal reference to non-Asian Australians used by some participants:

- (10) a. *birushuo women gongsi you huaren ye you*
 for instance our company has ethnic Chinese also has
guilao guimei
 Western men Western girls
 ‘for instance there are ethnic Chinese Western men and Western girls in our company’
- b. *guimei zai gongsi li ganjue bi laoban jiazi hai*
 Western girls at company in feel compare boss posture even
da danshi huaren jiu buyiyang
 big but ethnic Chinese just different
 ‘Western girls seem to be more important than the boss but ethnic Chinese are different’
- c. *wenhua keneng buyiyang tiansheng jiu juede yige jiebie yige jiebie ta*
 culture perhaps different naturally just think one rank one rank he
shi laoban
 is boss
 ‘culture is different (Chinese) think naturally rank after rank he is the boss’
- (11) a. S1 *henduo dou bu mai fangzi mai fang de dou shi*
 many all not buy house buy house AP all are
huaren <@@> yali name da
 ethnic Chinese <laughing quality> pressure that big
 many (Westerners) don’t buy houses home buyers are all ethnic
 Chinese with too much pressure’
- b. S2 *danshi you fangzi de ye shuyu nazhong bijiao you*
 but have house AP also belong that kind rather have
shangjinxin de guilao ye bijiao shao
 ambition AP Westerners also rather few
 ‘but those (Westerners) who have houses are the few ambitious ones’

The speaker in (10) believes that having a strict sense of hierarchy is a Chinese cultural feature, which he has gathered from working for a Chinese boss and working with Chinese colleagues. The interactants in Example (11) also jointly made the evaluation that the *huaren* ‘ethnic Chinese people’ are more ambitious than

Westerners. Supposing Chinese are more ambitious than Westerners is a highly personalised impression, but even a highly personalised impression, good or bad, can be reinforced and even generalised by interacting with the imagined and idealised group members.

The participants are found to homogenise the rest of the audience as the affective parties. Using a collective self-reference to include the hearers in the interaction, the speakers seek affective resonance from the rest of the group by assimilating all the other discourse participants to this imagined cultural collective, such as in Examples (12) and (13).

- (12) a. *aozhou xuesheng gen laoshi guanxi jiushi <E friend E>*
 Australian students and teachers relationship just friend
jingchang <E visit E>
 often visit
 ‘the Australian student-teacher relationship is like friendship (students) often visit (teachers)’
- b. *na women huaren xuesheng dou buhui qu*
 then we ethnic Chinese students all won’t go
 ‘but we ethnic Chinese students wouldn’t go to’
- c. *tamen zhezhong <E build up E> wen laoshi wenti jiu gen*
 they this kind build up ask teachers question just with
ta <E talking E>
 him talk
 ‘they build up (the relationship by) asking teachers questions or just by talking to him’
- d. **women yeshi women de wenti women wenhua buyiyang*
 we <sudden stop> also our AP problem our culture different
 ‘we (it is) also our problem our culture is different’
- (13) a. *wo juede jiushi yinshi fangmian ye you henduo buyiyang de*
 I think just like eating aspects also has many difference AP
 <@@>
 <laughing quality>
 ‘I think there are lots of differences in terms of food’
- b. *xiang bifangshuo heshui xiang women huaren bijiao xihuan*
 like for example drinking like we ethnic Chinese rather like
he wenshui huo hecha zhexie
 drink warm water or tea these
 ‘take drinking as an example we ethnic Chinese like drinking warm water or tea these things’

- c. *tamen jiu xihuan he nage bingshui ranhou wo jiu*
 they just like drink that icy water then I just
gaobudong nage
 can't understand that
 '(but) they like drinking icy water and I can't understand'

The collective positioning has a very strong emotional appeal that channels an ardent emotional attachment to that collective. *Women huaren* 'we ethnic Chinese' in the present study is found at various places to contrast the cultural behaviours between Chinese and non-Chinese. As explained previously, people even use the demeaning term of *guilao* 'Westerner (literally foreigner devil)' to refer to the latter group. The collective positioning using *women huaren* 'we ethnic Chinese' is, therefore, an indexical act since it excludes the non-Chinese, which indicates disapproval of the features of the non-Chinese, in contrast to what is perceived as "ours".

It could be said that in naming the Chinese people *huaren* 'ethnic Chinese people' in the Australian context, the participants create a pan-Chinese cultural space. However, this pan-Chinese cultural imagination is not very stable, and one can either move up to a superordinate cultural imagination – the Asian cultural group – or down to a subordinate cultural imagination – the Mainland Chinese cultural group – depending on the indexical context. In other words, the indexical use of these demographic categories are highly dependent on the discourse situation, and the imagination of cultural collectives has a discursive basis.

4.2.2 Australian born Chinese

An examination of the indexical naming of other Chinese groups with which the participants do not identify also reveals the same fluid basis for the imagination of cultural collectives. The participants negotiate and create relevant meanings by setting themselves away from the locally born Chinese Australians, also called the ABCs (Australian born Chinese), *dierdai huaren* 'second generation Chinese' or Chinese offspring, i.e. *zhongguo haizi* 'Chinese children'. These notions are used with different connotations.

- (14) a. S1 *weishenme zai xuexiao li zhongguo haizi doushi gen zhongguo*
 why at school in Chinese children all with Chinese
haizi zaiyiqi
 children together
 'why is it at school Chinese children are always together with Chinese children'

- b. *tamen hen shao jiu bijiao shao gen naxie yangren haizi*
 they very little just relatively little with those Western children
 ‘they very rarely or relatively not as much (mix) with those Western children’
- c. S2 *wenhua haishi biyiyang*
 culture still different
 ‘culture is still different’
- d. S3 *qishi wo ye buyuanyi rang wo erzi gen guilao zaiyiqi*
 in fact I also reluctant let my son with Westerner together
 ‘in fact I am reluctant to let me son mix with Westerners’
- e. S4 *ABC gen ABC zaiyikuai yangren gen yangren zaiyikuai*
 ABC with ABC together Westerners with Westerner together
 ‘ABC mixing with ABC Westerners mixing with Westerners’

In Example (14), one participant calls the second generation Chinese *zhongguo haizi* ‘Chinese children’ while the other participants call them ABCs. The disparity is evidence of “acts of identity” which involve perceptions of individuals (Eckert, 2008; Le Page & Tabouret-Keller, 1985). Speaker 1 is simply stating his own observations without asserting any pre-existing values. However, the subsequent speaker re-evaluates and stakes a claim to a nuance that hints at marginality. The fourth speaker’s choice of ABCs implies potential cynicism: ABCs are born in Australia and are a marginalised group in the Australian population.

In all the cases where ‘ABCs’ is used in the data, they are portrayed as an “other” to the cohort and connoted with negative meanings. For instance, they embrace some non-Chinese ways of living, which their first generation parents are not necessarily ready to take on, e.g. Line c in Example (15):

- (15) a. *zhebianderen congxiaodaoda dou wuyouwulv shenme dou bu zuo*
 people here from little to big all carefree whatever all not do
ye e bu si
 also starve not die
 ‘people here live a carefree life all their lives won’t starve to death even not doing anything’
- b. *suoyi ta hen nan lijie ni cong yazhou*
 so he very hard understand one (lit you) from Asian
beijing guolai de zhezhong youhuan yishi nalilai de
 background come AP this worry aware where PP
 ‘so he finds it hard to understand Asian’s the awareness of potential danger’

- c. *chufei dier dai disan dai women de zinv naxie*
 unless second generation third generation our AP children those
ABC tamen keneng cai hui na yang
 ABC they maybe finally will that way
 ‘our children those second generation or third generation ABC would probably become like that’

They have shown various ways of highlighting the fact that the ways and means that the first generation have are not transferable to the second generation. But the fundamental difference that the participants see between their own group and the so-called ‘ABCs’ is that the Australian-born Chinese cannot speak Chinese as fluently as “us”, e.g. Line c in Example (16):

- (16) a. *wo you yige xuesheng ta jiu shi ABC de nanhaizi tamen jia*
 I have one student he just is ABC AP boy their family
zhu beijing
 live Beijing
 ‘I have a student who is an ABC boy he and his family live in Beijing’
- b. *ni jiu kan ta qishi ta jiushi yige chun ABC zai zhebian*
 you just look him in fact he just is one pure ABC at here
chusheng zhangda
 born grow up
 ‘(if) you look at him (you will see) in fact he is a pure ABC who was born here and grew up here’
- c. *zhongwen shuode ye jiu gen jialiren goutong*
 Chinese speaking also just with family communicate
nazhong chengfu
 that kind degree
 ‘(his) spoken Chinese is only (good enough) to communicate with family’

Words can absorb connotations through association with aspects of the context in which they are used (Eckert, 2008, p. 464). While the term ‘ABC’ implies contrasts between first generation Chinese immigrants and second generation Chinese immigrants.

Some participants’ have used *di’erdai huaren* ‘second generation Chinese’, which draws upon similarities, and use it to make positive evaluations because of that. Examples (17) and (18) are two of these instances.

- (17) a. *wo ye kandao henduo cong huaren jiating li zhangda de*
 I also see many from ethnic Chinese family in grow up AP
haizi ye hen xiaoshun fumu
 children also very filial parents
 ‘I can see a lot of **children who grew up in ethnic Chinese families** are also filial to their parents’
- (18) a. *tamen youxie dou disan dai huaren le*
 they some already **third generation ethnic Chinese** PP
jiushuo guonei hen shao wulongwushi
 speaking of China rare dragon lion dance
 ‘some of them are **third generation ethnic Chinese** dragon lion dance is rarely seen in China’
- b. *zhebian haoduo zhuanye wulongwushi wo hui bei*
 here many professional dragon and lion dance I will prep
tamen biao yan zhenhan
 their performances astound
 ‘lots of professional dragon and lion dance (teams) here I am astounded by their performances’
- c. *tamen naxie keneng bensen buhui shuo zhongwen dan naxie*
 they those probably themselves can’t speak Chinese but those
huaren de xiaohaizi
ethnic Chinese children
 ‘they probably cannot speak Chinese themselves but those **ethnic Chinese children**’
- d. *tamen you xingqu jicheng zhe yang de yichan wenhua*
 they have interest inherit this way AP inheritance culture
yichan suoyi feichang hao ma
 heritage so very good EP
 ‘they are keen on inheriting this cultural inheritance it is very good’

Both the first generation and the locally born Chinese share the same cultural heritage and form a larger cultural imagination. Keeping this alive requires all the members to sustain their shared values and traditions, such as filial piety and the Chinese New Year performance.

As mentioned earlier, *huaren* ‘ethnic Chinese people’ constitutes an imagined collective that is produced and constructed in the Australian context with contextually constructed socio-cultural value. Cultural continuity is something that first generation Chinese and Australian Chinese have in common, which is therefore an essential part of a meaningful representation of *huaren* ‘ethnic Chinese people’. Speakers can collectively position themselves among *huaren* ‘ethnic Chinese people’ or indicate *huaren* ‘ethnic Chinese people’ as embodying values and traits

they appreciate. With either act, the speakers represent characters related to this collective identity and construct meanings for such an imagined collective with those who imaginarily belong to this imagined collective identity.

4.2.3 The *guoneiren* ‘people from within the country’

Throughout most of the discussion, participants talked about their perceptions of the cross-cultural differences between *aozhou* ‘Australia’ and *zhongguo* ‘China’. Sometimes, *aozhouren* ‘Australian people’ was also substituted with *zhebian* ‘here’ and *dangdiren* ‘locals’, and *guoneiren* ‘people from within the country’ also appears frequently in the comparative evaluations of Australians and the Chinese in Australia.

The distinction between Australian Chinese and Mainland Chinese using the reference *guoneiren* ‘people from within the country’ is clear. The referent of *guoneiren* ‘people from within the country’ is an out-group that embodies characteristics the participants regard as drastically different from those of their Australian counterparts. The term itself is self-explanatory in the sense that the physical locations in and out of the country embody a sense of contrast between both sides. These comparative evaluations of Chinese groups in the intercultural and cross-cultural context, some of which include the participants themselves, constitute a fluid identity construction.

Participants from a number of groups criticised materialism in China, for it has led to newly formed biases. They suggest there is a new stereotype in Australia and across the globe of Chinese people as *nouveau riche*. Drawing on the participants’ comments, their perception of Sinophobia includes the destructive impact of money worship on Chinese people’s moral values, the negative effect of Chinese people’s purchase of Australian real estate and consumer products, and the dumping of poorly manufactured Chinese products in Australia. The cross-cultural experience has gradually turned into knowledge upon which they can build their unique sense of collective identity: they are a group of people who can see more critically and clearly than the people in China.

These characteristics do not necessarily represent what the participants perceive as the typical Chinese or Australian value or life-style. They are brought up by speakers who position their co-present partners in an online collective identity. Since both the speakers and the interlocutors, in the mind of the speaker, are intimately connected to this online identity, the speakers feel confident about framing their own beliefs or observations in these cross-cultural scenarios and generalise their individual opinions.

The speaker in Example (19) endeavours to construct meaning for this online collective identity as the newly immigrated by adopting a critical attitude towards class differentiations in China where the labouring class is positioned at the bottom of the social hierarchy:

- (19) a. *zhebian nazhong gai fangzi de duo zhuanqian a lanling*
 here that kind build house AP very profitable EP blue collar
xinshu dou hen gao ma
 salary all very high EP
 ‘those who build the houses here are making a lot of money blue-collar workers are very well paid’
- b. *guonei jiu buyiyang le zhuande shi zuidi*
China (lit. within the country) then different PP making is lowest
xin erqie bu bei ren zuizhong
 salary also not prep people respect
 ‘it is different in **China** they receive the lowest income and are still not respected’
- c. *fuwuyuan zhilei de doushi shehui diceng dajia dou*
 waiting servants as such AP all society bottom everyone all
bei tuoqi de
 prep despised PP
 ‘like waiting servants are all at the bottom of the society are all being despised’

Although the speaker has not elaborated on how much respect their Australian counterparts receive, this cross-cultural perspective was portrayed as a source of insight. From a cross-cultural perspective, these acts can be interpreted as some participants’ approval of the Australian way of life and of the ability to respect the individual. In this regard, they are individuals who happen to be born and raised in China.

The participants in Example (20), on the other hand, align and dis-align with the so-called Australian individualistic socio-cultural value:

- (20) a. S1 *zai guonei dajia dou xiang shenme*
 at **China (lit. within the country)** everyone all think something
aiguo zhuyi zhexie bijiao da de
 patriotism these rather big AP
 ‘people **in China** all think about things like patriotism or other grand concepts’
- b. *danshi wo juede zhebianderen keneng geng jiaotashidi yidian*
 but I think **people here** probably more down to earth a little
 ‘but I think **people here** are probably a little more down to earth’

- c. *ba ziji shenghuo guohao jiu suan shi wei guojia*
 make self live spend well just count is for country
zuo gongxian
 do contribute
 ‘making good livings oneself is making contributions to the country’
- d. S2 *dui zhebianderen ziwo dui bijiao ziwo yidian*
 yes **people here** selfish yes comparatively selfish a little
 ‘yes **people here** are more self-centred’
- e. S3 *henduo de shi ziji*
 many AP is self
 ‘many is about self’
- f. S1 *shuode shi zisi danshi wo juede zheli de zhege zisi bushi*
 called is selfish but I think **here** AP this **selfish** not
bianyici
 derogatory term
 ‘it is called selfishness but I think **selfishness here** is not a derogatory term’
- g. S3 *buguo tamen jiaoyu ye shi bifangshuo jingcha*
 but they educate also is for example police
 ‘but they are taught this way for example as a police officer’
- h. *guonei jiaoyu keneng shi ni*
China (lit. within the country) education maybe is you
yidingyao wei renmin fuwu xianshen zhilei
 must for people serve sacrifice as such
 ‘education in **China** requires that you will have to serve the people and make sacrifices’
- i. *zai zhebian ni jiu yao xian ba ziji baohu hao women*
 at **here** you just need first make self protect well we
hushi ye shi zhe yang
 nurse also are this way
 ‘but **here** you/as have to protect yourself first we nurses are (taught) in this way’
- j. *ruguo ni yudao huozai zhilei de ni dei xian rang ziji*
 if you encounter fire as such AP you must first let self
anquan zai qu zhuanyi bieren
 safe then go transfer others
 ‘if you are caught in a fire or such you have to make sure yourself is safe then you transfer others’

This example reveals that the notion of individualism is still debatable among Chinese people. While Speaker 1 regards individualism as being practical (Line b) and selfishness as not necessarily a derogatory term (Line f), others, such as Speakers 2 and 3 classify *zhebianderen* ‘people here’ as being self-centred (Lines b and d). Even though being self-interested is no longer conceptualised as a taboo for a Chinese person, *ziwo* ‘self’ (Line d), when used as an attributive, connotes a sense of self-absorption (Line d).

Due to their prolonged exposure to Australian culture, some participants may have formed new understandings of individualism. It could be said that their experience of the values widely held by the majority of Australians have facilitated this process. According to Speaker 3 in the excerpt above, Australian schools and work places teach self-protection more than anything else, which makes it more important to prioritise oneself over others (Lines i and j).

In terms of the speakers’ positioning, all the participants either use the impersonal reference or individual self-reference to discuss their observations of Australian culture or the difference between Australia and China without explicitly positioning themselves in any cultural collectives. Chinese culture is referred to as *guonei* ‘within the country’ (Line h) as opposed to that of *zhebian* ‘people here’ (Line i).

These speakers do not seem to assimilate with either side, that is the speakers neither belong to the group metaphorically represented as one that is “over there in China”, nor the people in Australia are referred to as an “other”. Speaker 3, in particular, regards education “here” as something “they” practice, distancing herself from it. Therefore, it cannot be said that she agrees with such values herself. Unlike Speaker 1, who remains silent after publicly expressing her disagreement, Speaker 3 might just want to show her understanding of the term in the Australian context, which is a highly situational construct.

In the context of intra-cultural comparative discussions, the interlocutors establish and co-construct the meaning for various cultural groups. These turn into an imagined social space that can absorb individual members’ own beliefs, assumptions, and observations that they believe are collectively held. These personal cross-cultural views are gained through insider perceptions and interactions with other group members. The cross-cultural experience has gradually turned into knowledge upon which they can build their unique sense of collective identity.

4.3 Summary

This chapter explores the participants' negotiated and constructed memberships of Chinese cultural groups at various scales through narrative and interaction. Chinese ethnicity in the cross-cultural context has adopted new meanings in the course of its construction and reconstruction in social interactions situated in context. Chineseness and being Chinese are both seen as fluid constructions.

Collective categories and demographic terms are hints for identity construction. They are indexed through claims about things that are characteristic for an imagined collective collectively referred to as "us" as opposed to some identified "them". These claims are made in the interactional frame, which explicitly or implicitly positions other co-participants as members of the same community. By naming Chinese people and evaluating them in the cross-cultural context, speakers are able to (dis-)align with different cultural ideologies.

This finding reflects the indirect relationship of linguistic variables and social identities. The use of self-reference and demographic categories constitutes a fluid field of socio-culturally embedded meanings. These indexical meanings manifest the multiplicity of the participants' sense of 'Being Chinese', which is part and parcel of the construction of their Chinese ethnicity in the global and cross-cultural contexts.

The results also contribute to the study of discursive positioning. The audience can be imagined and idealised in performances. The speakers imaginably position other partners as part of an imagined and idealised audience and intimately connect them to an imagined collective. When the speakers evoke a collective identity that they share with imagined and idealised audiences, these audiences are positioned as understanding and loyal to the associated socio-cultural beliefs and values.

The participants developed a variety of categories for various groups and constructed their meanings through interaction. The process is indicative of a dynamic collective identity-in-construction. These performances are reflective of the speakers' own interpretations of this identity. It is also a practical way of invoking shared values that emanate from this shared imagined collective. The audiences in these discourse situations are imagined as someone sharing an online collective identity. The construction of an online collective identity constitutes an imagined social space, which can absorb the speakers' own beliefs, assumptions, and observations that they think are collectively held and/or as generalisable knowledge.

Chinese conceptualisations of personhood

Informed by previous cognitive linguistic studies on the conceptualisation of self among English speakers, Chapter 5 analyses a variety of linguistic constructions in Mandarin Chinese that reflect the conceptual structures of the self. The conversational data collected for the present study discloses some basic cognitive structures. Speakers associate abstract concepts with a number of conceptual domains, such as space, object possession, and exertion of physical force. This chapter adopts a conceptual approach in unpacking inner self and relationship metaphors through the lens of metaphorical mapping, metonymies or image schemas.

Keywords: inners self metaphors, relationship metaphors, Chinese, conceptual structure

The current data reveals a number of conceptual metaphors, conceptual metonymies and image-schematic representations for conceptualising experiences as an individual in Chinese. These conceptual constructs of the self reflect the cognitive processes that underly the linguistic conventions of different types of symbolic information. In the context of the present study, these constructs of the self are called self metaphors. Common to the participants of the present study, they are mainly found in utterances about self-reflection and self-motivation. For each metaphor, metonymy and image schema, its cognitive semantic structure is explored on the basis of how they relate to the physically grounded projection of the self in the abstract realm.

Speaking to the intended audience, which can also be seen as reaching for a discursive goal, could not take place if certain cultural conventions did not have a shared cognitive basis among the interlocutors. These cultural conventions also facilitate the process of enacting favourable representations of the individual self. Therefore, cultural conventions inevitably have a role to play in the aforementioned cognitive process.

Metaphors depicting inner self and relationship are complex metaphors which combine primary metaphors, metonymies, image-schematic cognitive models to cultural beliefs (Yu, 2007b, p. 31). Metaphorical and metonymic mappings and entailments as well as the conceptual blending of many cultural models form the semantic basis of the Chinese metaphorical expressions under investigation. The use of these designated expressions in discourse reflects the joint production of an idealised Chinese migrant identity.

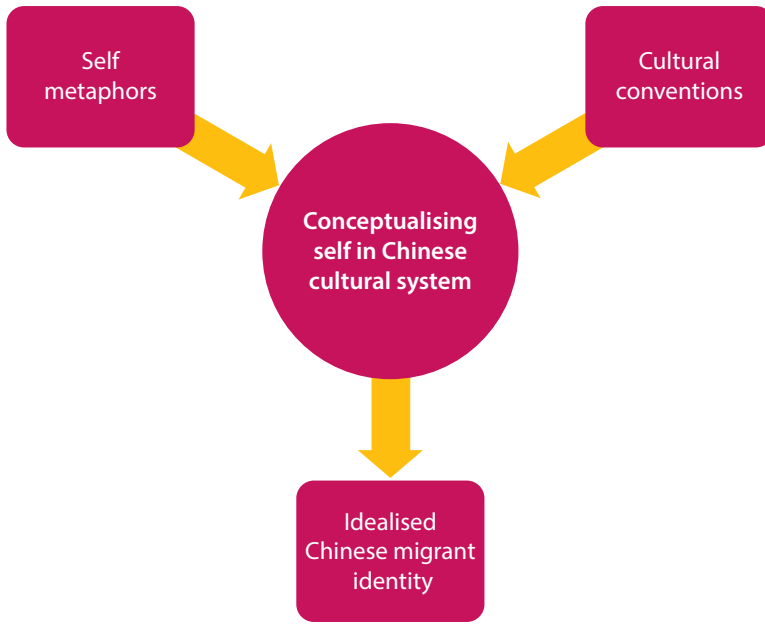


Figure 5. Conceptualising the self in the Chinese cultural system

With regard to metaphorical expressions of the inner self and internal causation in Chinese, some can be organised into the **PHYSICAL OBJECT SELF**¹¹ as it is informed by the **SPLIT SELF** (Lakoff, 1996; Lakoff & Johnson, 1999). Some encapsulate cultural conceptualisations of self-evaluation in positive or negative terms which are distinctively characterised by three dyads of image schemas. Those dyads are: **DEEP/SHALLOW**, **CONGRUENCE/INCONGRUENCE** and **BALANCE/IMBALANCE**. Relationship metaphors can be classified in terms of motion in space and proximity.

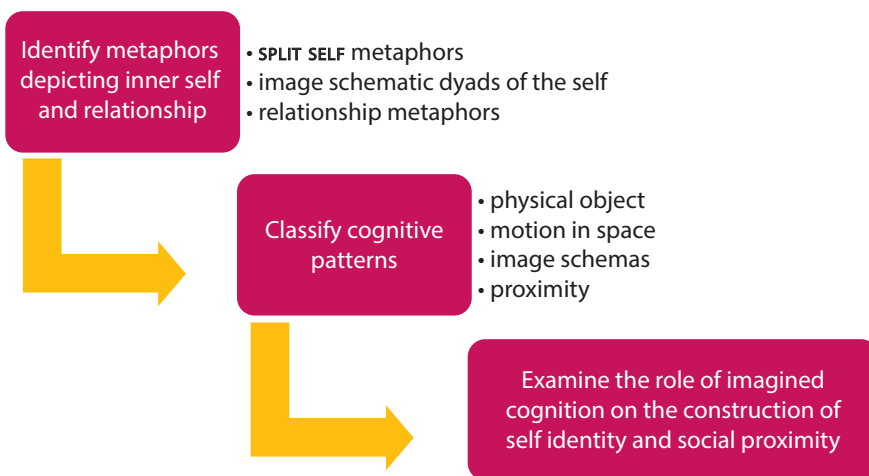


Figure 6. Conceptual analysis of the inner self and relationship metaphors in Chinese

11. Throughout the analysis, references to conceptual metaphors will appear in the form of small caps.

5.1 The SPLIT SELF

As mentioned in the previous chapters, self-reflection is common in utterances where the participants reflect upon themselves using the I–epistemic verb construction preceding *ziji* ‘self’ in which case *ziji* ‘self’ appears in the object position as the bearer of the subject’s action. When the object *ziji* ‘self’ and the subject are connected by actions verbs, these constructions entail conceptual metaphors.

In utterances where the speaker talks about self-protection in terms of *baohu woziji* ‘protecting myself’, it can be regarded as a conceptual metaphor where the speaker’s conscious mind takes it upon itself to protect the self whereas it is the speaker’s private needs or interests that are subject to protection.

According to Lakoff’s analytic results, the conceptualisation of self as revealed in the metaphorical relationship between one’s conscious mind and private needs reflects a fundamental split between a SUBJECT and a SELF (Lakoff, 1996, pp. 93–96). In this split, the SELF is conceptualised as a physical object upon which certain constraints can be imposed while the SUBJECT acts as the locus of an individual’s reasons, perceptions and judgements. In this regard, a sense of internal causation is conceptualised as metaphorical connections, with the SUBJECT as the cause and the SELF as the affected party.

5.1.1 The CONTROLLING SUBJECT

The CONTROLLING SUBJECT deals with the SUBJECT’s agency. If we were to draw the physical relationship between the SUBJECT and the SELF, CAUSES ARE FORCES sets the basis for understanding the SUBJECT’s control over the SELF through physical force (Lakoff, 1996, pp. 93–96).

Expressions about self-protection in Chinese bear similarity to those in English in terms of the conceptual basis. Chinese immigrants often talk about self-protection as part of the moral lesson they have learnt living in a foreign country. The SELF embodies the individual’s interests, personality or privacy, and the SUBJECT is responsible for to exercising a certain amount of physical strength to guard it from potential danger.

- (1) a. ***ba ziji baohu hao... rang ziji anquan***
 make self protect well... make self safe
 ‘**protect self¹² well keep self safe**’

12. The metaphors in examples are in bold type.

- (2) a. *zhongguoren bijiao xiang yang... jiu bu hu baohu ziji*
 Chinese people more like sheep... just not can protect self
 ‘Chinese people are more like sheep (Chinese people) don’t know how to protect oneself’
- (3) a. *zhe shi dui ziji de yi zhong baohu*
 this is to self AP one kind protect
 ‘this is one way of protecting the self’

In the utterances in Examples (1), (2) and (3), it seems that the SELF is vulnerable and can easily get hurt. The SUBJECT, on the other hand, provides shelter. The strength of the SUBJECT determines whether its control over of the SELF is successful or not. A successful application of control leads to a positive evaluation of its deeds. The participants regard the enhanced ability to self-protect as a result of their experience of living overseas. Having the awareness of self-protection in the Chinese context, helps to bring positive regard (cf. Chapter 3). The underlying prerequisite is the proactive SUBJECT.

Apart from self-protection, the SUBJECT’s agency is also manifested in examining oneself and discovering oneself, all of which are oriented towards self-improvement:

- (4) a. *dagai you ge yinxiang danshi wo juede ziji kan ziji haishi*
 general have one idea but I think self see self still
quedian bi youdian duo
 shortcoming compare merit more
 ‘have a general idea but I think self would see more shortcomings than merits in self’
- b. *yue xiangchu yue juede ziji zenme bian zhe yang*
 more get along more think self how become this way
 ‘the more time passes the more (I) think how did self end up like this’
- (5) a. *gengjia liaojie wo ziji wo cai yuanyi qu gen ta chao*
 more understand I self I would willing go with him argue
 ‘(only if it makes me) get to know myself better then I would be willing to argue with him’
- (6) a. *women zhege nianling haishi zai xunzhao ziji de nianling jiu hai*
 our this age still at find self AP age just still
meiyou dingxing de nianling
 not settle AP age
 ‘the age of ours is still the age of searching for self which is an age that is not yet settled’

The metaphorical models found in Examples (4), (5) and (6) treat the SUBJECT as the one who sets the standards for the SELF. The internal causation is always uni-directional, that is, either the SUBJECT successfully applies its force on the SELF or the SUBJECT fails to do so. The SUBJECT suffers a sense of guilt when the SELF does not act accordingly. This negativity is the result of the discrepancy between the standards set by the SUBJECT and the actual deeds of the SELF.

If the SUBJECT successfully takes control of the SELF, it leads to a positive evaluation on the part of the individual, otherwise the participants could be deemed to have failed to self-improve from the experience of living overseas. Example (7) shows a positive attitude that underlies self-discipline or metaphorically taking better control:

- (7) a. *birushuo wo tai lan le qima rang ziji zilv*
 for instance I too lazy PP at least **make self self-disciplined**
yidianer ba
 a little EP
 ‘for instance I am too lazy at least **make self self-disciplined** a bit more’

The underlying prerequisite for one to make a positive evaluation of self-discipline is that the SUBJECT sets the standard. It is noticeable that the SUBJECT’s successful control over the SELF presupposes that the SELF has negative, socially unacceptable qualities.¹³ If the SUBJECT is able to keep control of the SELF, it is regarded as a merit in a person; failing to do so might be deemed as a defect.

The underlying socio-cultural value of the CONTROLLING SUBJECT is that the SUBJECT should always strive to watch out for the imperfect SELF. As a typical characteristic of this model, the SUBJECT is the centre of agency. The metaphorical controlling effect is charged with a sense of moral bedrock. In the Chinese meritocracy, self-discipline has always been regarded as an essential part of self-cultivation. Self-cultivation, a key moral teaching in the Confucian school of thought, is the only way for a person to become a morally superior being.

Given a specific cultural context, when the SELF successfully acts in accordance with the high standards that the SUBJECT has set out, it constitutes an exemplary action. Chapter 7 will discuss the collective conceptualisation of being a cultural exemplar as revealed by the discussions that the participating Chinese immigrants had.

13. For the moral qualities of the self within in the context of modern Chinese and premodern Chinese discourse, see Section 3.5 of Chapter 3.

5.1.2 The UNBOUNDED SELF

The UNBOUNDED SELF addresses the reactions of the SELF in the absence of a CONTROLLING SUBJECT. With respect to the Chinese cultural belief that the ego contains negative instincts that one may not be able to govern, or desires that one has yet to satisfy, the UNBOUNDED SELF reveals the Chinese cultural conceptualisation of self in relation to others, which metaphorically manifests in the SELF being at the mercy of external forces and coercion.

From the comments made by the participants, a lack of will power can be detected when they make known that they are not on top of things:

- (8) a. *zai jiali dehua jiu juede tai xianzhi le*
 at home if then feel too limit (lit. confine) PP
 ‘if (returning) home (I) feel (my freedom) is limited’
- (9) a. *naxie suoshi ba ni chanzhe le rang ni mei fa xuexi*
 those trivial matters make you trapped PP make you not able study
 ‘those trivial matters stopped you from making you unable to study’

In these two examples, the role of the SUBJECT has been downplayed. In Examples (8) and (9), we can see that the needs of the SELF is at odds with external factors, such as family responsibility and expectations, or daily chores and activities. Both statements imply a complaint which is SELF’s action is driven by external factors, rather than by the determination of a conscious SUBJECT. The SELF, in these situations, suffers from incapacity.

It should be noted that the participants who made these comments accepted the unhappiness as it was and showed no intention of making any changes. The avoidance of a working egoistic centre could be related to the cultural beliefs and ethos in Chinese socio-communicative activities. When asked about how they made the decision to come to Australia or the decision to stay, many participants speak of *mingyun anpai* ‘arrangement of fate’, or they put it as *bushi wode xuanze* ‘not my choice’. Metaphorically speaking, it also implies the absence of a CONTROLLING SUBJECT.

There might be a possibility that the SELF might break away or become uncontrollable. In Examples (10) and (11), moral principles are described as something that is given to one to restrict the SELF.

- (10) a. *buguan ni xin shenme jiao ta dui ren de xingwei*
 no matter you believe what religion it to people AP behaviour
shi hui you yueshu
 is can have bound up
 ‘no matter what religion one (lit. you) believes in they all restrict people’s behaviours’

- (11) a. *ta zai kaolv liyi de tongshi ta jiu wangji le daode*
 he at consider benefit PP same time he just forget PP morality
de yueshu
 AP restriction
 ‘but as he pursued benefits he would forget the **restriction put down by morality**’

Example (12) shows that fate or Karma can impose restriction on the SELF:

- (12) a. *ni bixu yao xiangxin zhege shijie shang shi you*
 you (lit. you) must need believe this world in is have
shenmedongxi keyi kongzhi ni
 something can control you
 ‘one must believe something in this world that can **take control of you**’
 b. *suoyi ren buneng weisuoyuwei hui zao baoying de*
 so people cannot do whatever they want will get Karma PP
 ‘so people cannot do whatever they want (one) would be punished by Karma’

With regard to the UNBOUNDED SELF, as mentioned previously, it exists independent of a conscious SUBJECT, the loss of control is metaphorically mapped onto an image where an object breaks away from a confined space or trying to break away from it.

Examples (10), (11) and (12) show that other larger-than-self institutions, such as religion, morality or Karma, can impose restrictions on the UNBOUNDED SELF. If acting recklessly, the consequences for violating the rules set by external factors can be very serious. Therefore, the UNBOUNDED SELF, in the context of disobeying authorities, is always subject to causes that are independent of a person’s will, which depends a lot on cultural beliefs and ethos.

In terms of managing mutual respect, various forms of physical force can be found in the data. These forces correspond to the manners whereby two or more people involved in social encounters treat each other and the UNBOUNDED SELF is at the mercy of interpersonal forces. Uneven socio-cultural statuses can compromise one’s individuality and make each person within the relationship feel unconformable, as if they were constrained by some physical force.

For instance, some participants have talked their relationships at work and in life which inadvertently reveals their acceptance to inequality.:

- (13) a. *tongshi liaotian dajia hui mei shenme yueshu*
 colleagues chat all of us can not any restriction (lit. bound up)
de shuohua
 PP talk
 ‘all of the colleagues can chat easily without feeling **being restricted**’

In the comments some participants make, imposing an opinion on other people is metaphorically described as exerting excessive force, which is socially not desirable. For instance, to have an influence on other people by *zuoyou* ‘turn[ing] left or right’ or *jiayu* ‘manipulat[ing] (literally driving)’ can cause a loss of individuality on the affected party, which can then be a sign of disrespect, as shown in the exchange of opinions between the two speakers in Example (14).

- (14) a. S1 *hui zuo yige cankao dan buhui bei tamen*
 will make one reference but won’t prep them
zuoyou ba
direct (lit. left or right) EP
 ‘(I) will accept the advice without them **directing me what to do**’
- (14) b. S2 *erqie wo juede zhebianren yiban bu hui*
 also I think people here generally not will
jiayu bieren
manipulate (lit. drive) others
 ‘also I think people here in general won’t **manipulate others**’

If the force is applied appropriately, however, it fosters mutual respect. From the participants’ description of how to give support to one another, respectfulness and trustworthiness can be conceptualised in terms of load-bearing:

- (15) a. *dajia chulai yihou jiushi yao huixiang bangzhu huxiang*
 all of us go out after just like want mutual help mutual
zhicheng
support (lit. support from underneath)
 ‘all of us after coming abroad should help each other and **support each other**’
- (16) a. *shibushi keyi tuofu*
 whether or not can entrust (lit. be supported from below)
de pengyou
 AP friend
 ‘whether or not a friend that (one) can **entrust**’

In Chinese, both *cheng* and *tuo* mean ‘support from underneath’ without which a structure would fall apart. The direction of the force, therefore, is charged with socio-cultural meanings. As in (15) and (16), the purpose of the social interaction between two friends is to gain respect and trust from one another, being manifested metaphorically in the vertical application of force.

According to other participants’ comments, one party can exert influence more proactively on another, such as *zhuai* ‘pull’ which metaphorically refers to saving someone from danger and *tai* ‘lift’ which can mean giving someone compliments,

both of which can be visualised in the form of exerting force to bring an object from a lower place to a higher place.

While these sporadic instances may not account for an apparent Chinese cultural conceptualisation of interpersonal trust in terms of vertical movements in space, the following section will give a more detailed account for integrity using the analytical scope informed by image schema.

5.2 Image-schematic dyads

Up to this point, the *SPLIT SELF* has guided the investigation into the metaphorical roles of the *SUBJECT* and the *SELF* in relation to unpacking the meaningful aspects of personhood in Chinese. While previous metaphors are found to embody the idealised representation of the individual self through object manipulation, this part of the analysis addresses metaphors found in self-evaluations which make references to occupying dyadic locations in space.

The study has found several image-schematic dyads which are quite different from the space-oriented cognitive model in English. According to Lakoff and Johnson (1999, p. 274), the space-oriented cognitive model in English is used to conceptualise self-control as being in a normal location. Based on this, the *SUBJECT*'s loss of control can be conceptualised as being out side of a normal location. Instead, the Chinese utterances regarding the individual's conceptualisation of self-integrity reveal three pairs of spatial image-schemas dyads. These dyads turn out to be recurring patterns in the participants' negative and positive evaluations of (im)moral behaviours.

5.2.1 Deep-shallow

Examples found in the current data show *DEEP-SHALLOW* as the core spatial orientation in the Chinese expressions about a person's inner morals. In the Chinese dyad of *DEEP-SHALLOW*, the most potent self-control is when the *SELF* is lying deep, and a retrieval of that control comes by way of reaching vertically downwards. Both the young professionals and the students expressed the need to maintain integrity by keeping the *dixian* 'bottom line'. This term is roughly equivalent to "fundamental principles" in English.

- (17) a. *dei you ge dixian*
 must have one fundamental principles (lit. bottom line)
 'have to have fundamental principles'

- b. *ruguo guole dixian* *jiu meide*
 if violate principles (lit. crossed over bottom line) then nothing
jiang le
 discuss PP
 ‘when violating fundamental principles there will be no room for further discussion’
- (18) a. *ta chupengle wo dixian*
 he challenged my principles (lit. reached bottom line)
 ‘he challenged my fundamental principles’

This so-called *dixian* ‘bottom line’ is the person’s fundamental principle, and violating it in the metaphorical sense of touching it is deemed the ultimate form of losing dignity. In all of these examples, crossing the *dixian* ‘bottom line’ is indicated as symbolically disrespectful to the person, which therefore reflects the LOCATION FOR ACTIVITY metonymy. The metaphorical correspondence between a deep-lying location and a higher degree of importance is an instance of the conceptual metaphor DEPTH IS POTENCY.

To understand the spatial projection DEEP IS POTENT and what it implies, it is necessary to understand an imagery of water in representing meanings for Chinese cosmological notions. In the famous ancient Chinese text on Daoist cosmology, the *Dao De Jing* ‘Book of the Way and the Virtue’, the ontological nature of the creating force in the cosmos is depicted as *shenbukeshi* ‘too deep to be understood’ (Ames & Hall, 2010). This depth activates our perceptual experience of looking at a pool of water. The deeper the water is, the harder it is for us to see the bottom. Corresponding to the cosmology which is unfathomable, the most admired conduct in Chinese culture is being like “still water” that “runs deep” (Lu, 2012).

In such cases, one’s subjective standards for moral conduct is framed verticality. Metaphorically, the deeper it goes, the closer it is to one’s fundamental values. Insofar as the application of self-control, the deeper the SELF dwells in the metaphorical sense, the more obligated the speaking person is to adhere to one’s values, and the more reliable they appear in front of others people.

The correlation between a sense of depth and potency can also be found in the current data set in the descriptions of one’s strongly-held belief as *genshendigu* ‘deeply rooted’, and firmly-kept impression as *shendeyingxiang* ‘deep’ or *shenkede ganjue* ‘deeply carved’. These beliefs and impressions, as expressed by the participants, are the last ones to be altered or transformed.

5.2.2 INTERIOR-EXTERIOR

INTERIOR-EXTERIOR is another image-schematic cognitive model found in metaphorical expressions that the participants use to refer to the moral value of acting in consistence with one's true beliefs. It seems to be a matter of great importance for the interviewed Chinese immigrants especially because they think remaining authentic with oneself and others help them face challenges and pressures better in the cross-cultural context. The conceptualisation of the individual is at the mercy of various social constituencies. INTERIOR-EXTERIOR metaphors create personalised referential frames to reason about one's stands on social judgements.

It seems to be widely agreed by the young professionals recruited for this study that etiquette, manners and other socially oriented pragmatics that a person employs exhibit only the superficial-external character of that person, implying that there are two sets of SELVES.

- (19) a. *wo juede ta biaomianshang zunzhong le ni ta cong*
 I think he at appearance respect PP you he from
lingyifangmian meiyou
 another side not
 'I think he respects you at appearance but from the other side he does not'
- (20) a. *tamen keneng beihou yifu xianqi de yangzi biaomianshang*
 they maybe behind the back one dislike AP way at appearance
kan buchulai
 see not able
 'they probably dislike behind the back which one (lit. you) cannot tell at appearance'
- (21) a. *tamen nice shi zai biaomian danshi ni yidan jiechu*
 they <E nice E> is at surface but you once associate
 'they are nice on the surface but as soon as you associate (more)'
 b. *ni hui faxian qishi jiushi wenhua ta bu lijie ni*
 you will find in fact actually culture he not understand you
 'you would realise he does not actually understand you culturally'

Based on the participants' comments, the external SELF is easily seen while the inner SELF is hardly visible. As mentioned in Chapter 4, the embodied conceptualisation of self in Chinese culture is influenced by traditional Chinese medicine where internal organs, particularly the heart, are said to be responsible for governing one's true thoughts and feelings.¹⁴ The participants seem to agree that one's inner SELF

14. Chapter 6 will give a more detailed account of the use of body organs in metaphorical expression in relation to embodied conceptualisation of self.

is often incompatible with what one appears to be. The inconsistency between the external presentation and the essence sets a contrast between one’s behaviours and thoughts, which renders one’s behaviours as insincere, deceptive and irreputable.

It is for this reason that the noun *bianmian* ‘appearance’ can also be used as an adjective which means ‘one being obviously insincere’. One participant from group one comments on insincere social etiquettes such as *hen bianmian qishi* ‘very superficial actually’. Some Chinese proverbs that describe a person’s moral integrity also imply CONGRUENCE IS AUTHENTICITY, such as *bianliruyi* ‘outside inside like one’, which means a person being honourable, and its opposite, i.e. INCONGRUENCE, for instance *biaolibuyi* ‘outside inside not like one’ means a person lacking integrity. Drawing from these examples, it can be said that keeping one’s appearance compatible with one’s inner reality, in the Chinese cultural context, is a moral commitment. The participants’ expressions are consistent with these idioms in terms of the moral implications of CONGRUENCE and INCONGRUENCE.

As for why INCONGRUENCE is perceived as a negative representation, we need to discuss the relevant culturally entrenched meanings of the concept of *xin* ‘integrity’, as INCONGRUENCE reflects untrustworthiness, which translates into *wuxin* ‘having no integrity’ in Chinese.

In the Chinese context, *xin* ‘integrity’, one of the *Wuchang* ‘Five Constant Virtues’ of Confucian ethics, provides a meaningful foundation for interpretation. Being a responsible and reliable person means that one should *yanxingyizhi* ‘act in accordance with one’s words’, the prerequisite for which is to hold one’s standards consistent. On the other hand, the very existence of an outside SELF and an inside SELF suggests a sense of contradiction and uncertainty, which acts as an impediment to personal integrity.

There are several Chinese idioms that reflect this conceptualisation. When someone’s reality is found to have contradicted their public appearance, they can lose their reputation; if they are found to be *xinkoubuyi* ‘speak[ing] one way and think[ing] another’, then they are no longer worthy of trust. In a similar vein, if someone’s exterior is too exaggerated while their interior is not enriched enough, they can be criticised as being *mingbufushi* ‘the reality does not live up to the name’ or that they *xuyouqibiao* ‘look impressive but lack real worth’.

In the social arena, however, the meaning of THE INCONGRUENT SELF can get complicated by the fleeting discursive contingency. The following extract is part of an intriguing discussion about the interior and exterior of a Chinese person:

- (22) a. S1 *zhongguoren bijiao xiang yang... jiu buhui baohu ziji*
 Chinese people more like sheep... just not can protect self
 ‘Chinese people are more like sheep (Chinese people) don’t know how
 to protect oneself’

- b. S2 *women shi pizhe yangpi de lang*
 we are wearing sheep skin AP wolf
 ‘we (overseas Chinese) are wolves in the disguise of sheep skin’
- c. S3 *ni yao shengcun xialai yihuier yao zuo yang yihuier*
 you want survive continue a while need become sheep a while
yao zuo lang
 need become wolf
 ‘if you want to survive you need to act like a sheep at times and act as a wolf at other times’
- d. S4 *wo shi pizhe langpi de yang jiushi biaomian xiahu*
 I am wearing wolf skin AP sheep just at appearance fear
renjia qishi hen rongyi bei qifu
 others in fact very easily get hurt
 ‘I am sheep in the disguise of a wolf only frighten people at appearance in fact very vulnerable’

In this extract, the consistency principle implied in the previously discussed integrity schema is overridden by the flexibility principle. Speaker 1 criticises Chinese people as being weak and lacking self-protection skills, calling “we” – the Chinese immigrants in Australia – weak on the surface but tough on the inside. The utterance “we are wolves in the disguise of sheep skin” (Line b) suggests two sets of selves: the weak one and the tough one. In this scenario, the weak SELF is the façade and the tough SELF is the essence. For Speaker 2, the tough SELF turns out to be the main character. In contrast, Speaker 4 confesses that the weak SELF turns out to be the dominant SELF for her. Since the choice between the weak SELF and the tough SELF is made individually, it needs to be interpreted based on the communicative purpose (Line d). Speaker 3 expresses that the weak SELF and the tough SELF are equally important, as the primary concern for an immigrant is to survive (Line c), which extends to the social orientation of the self.

5.2.3 BALANCE-IMBALANCE

As many of the participants indicate, another important personal trait lies in the ability to strike a balance. In fact, the experience of balance is pervasive and basic for a coherent causation of ourselves (Johnson, 1987, p. 74). We should reflect on the interaction between the cognitive pattern of BALANCE and the meaning-making process of one’s pursuit of internal equilibrium. The following discussion examines the conceptual patterns of the BALANCE/IMBALANCE dyad and how they gain socio-cultural meanings in communication.

As mentioned earlier, a person’s needs, desires, purposes and ambitions can be conflicting and self-contradicting. The BALANCE schema organises the reasoning process when people face a complex situation. The speakers of the utterances in Examples (23) and (24) use either the Chinese word *pingheng* ‘balance’ or code-switch to the English word “balance” to talk about their reconciliation:

- (23) a. *buguan shenme dou you quedian you youqian ziji*
 no matter what all have down sides have up sides self
pingheng dian ba
 balance a little EP
 ‘everything has up sides and down sides let self find the balance’
- (24) a. *yizhi doushi zai balance suoyou a nide yisheng*
 always am at <E balance E> all EP your whole life
qishi zai balance gefangmian
 in face at <E balance E> all respect
 ‘(I’m) always trying to balance everything life in fact is just about balancing all respects’
- b. *jiuxiang women liuzai zhebian juede zhebian hao*
 just like we stay here think here good
 ‘like we who stay here think it is better here’
- c. *dan women jiu buneng huiguo zhaogu fumu you*
 but we just can’t go back to China look after parents have
xixiangzhiqing sinian fumu
 homesickness miss parents
 ‘but we cannot go back to China to look after parents also miss hometown and parents’
- d. *yizhi doushi zai chuyu yige balance rensheng jiushi*
 always am at in the state of one <E balance E> life just
zhe yang
 this way
 ‘(I’m) always in the state of striking a balancing this is life’

As the speaker in Example (24) suggests, a Chinese expat has multiple needs, such as living an Australian life, looking after their parents, keeping in touch with people in their hometown, or maintaining a close relationship with their parents. All of these needs cannot be satisfied simultaneously. If the person is able to strike a BALANCE, it means that the SELF has made a reasonable decision. On the other hand, the IMBALANCE schema suggests a sense of indecisiveness as one cannot make the best choice if there is no one choice that can be deemed the best.

BALANCE, from the perspective of perceptual cognition, features a visual gestalt where all physical weights or forces are in balance, the schematic structure

of which entails a sense of stability. In the mind of a Chinese person, if such stability is lost, one can be considered irrational and prone to misjudgement. The internal equilibrium only comes with the full knowledge of the pros-and-cons of each decision that the SELF has to make. A comprehensive understanding makes them equally important, and such an understanding provides an epistemological basis for establishing BALANCE as being apprehension and confusion free. In this light, finding balance metaphorically represents one's reasoning process of finding equilibrium.

5.3 Relationship metaphors in Mandarin Chinese

The previous section discussed several alternative cognitive patterns in Mandarin Chinese which organise the social experience of being a person or of evaluating interpersonal behaviours in the cognitive-semantic realm. The cognitive patterns of the inner self and self-related mental and emotional activities do not form a coherent unit, but feature multiplicity. The conceptualisation of one's individual sense of being a person can be projected onto object manipulation or choice of location in space. Producing these cognitive and conceptual patterns of self in communication is based upon their shared cultural understandings and ethos as well as knowledge about the discursive conventions in a given speech community.

During social interactions, the selection of various cognitive models to reveal aspects of oneself to the best capacity is a dynamic process. The current section examines the conceptual models that are activated and negotiated in constructing accounts of situational selves in relation to other people in social interactions. These situational representations reveal the ways in which these Chinese immigrants conceptualise relationships.

5.3.1 The interpersonal PATH

A person's navigation in the social world often corresponds to physical movements in space. The participants often describe their friendships with others as a linear movement. The first noticeable cognitive structure of interpersonal relationship in Chinese can be summarised by the PATH metaphor. It bears similarity to the one that English speaker people often use, namely the JOURNEY metaphor (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). It can be said that both metaphors are derived directly from experiential correlations, or "conflations in everyday experience" (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999, p. 49). The discussion here will focus on the inherent social orientation within the PATH structure, as the PATH metaphor in Chinese is very much socially oriented.

In the participants’ group discussions, the PATH metaphor is frequently evoked to refer to sustainable interpersonal relationships. Their different metaphorical entailments are evoked flexibly and pragmatically, depending on the context. In these examples, PATH signifies developing interpersonal relationships.

Peer competition can be conceptualised in terms of speed in Example (25):

- (25) a. *yexu ni zou de bi bieren geng kuai dan zhege jiushi*
 maybe you walk PP compare others more fast but this just like
jinqi he changqi de
 short term and long term PP
 ‘perhaps you walk faster than others in the long run or in the short terms’

Friendships correspond to having companions on paths, good companions are characterised as covering long distances, as in Example (26):

- (26) a. *zai zhebian ni neng chengwei pengyou de jibenshang jiushi*
 at here you can become friend AP basically are
reliable neng zou hen yuan de
 <E reliable E> can walk very far PP
 ‘those who become friends here basically are reliable with whom (you) can walk a long way’

The two person who form the friendship, having the same interest and aspiration, are sharing the same destination, as in Example (27):

- (27) a. *zhitongdaohe de pengyou*
 the same aspiration (lit. towards the same destination AP friends
 along the same path)
 ‘friends that share the same aspiration’

On a temporal-spatial scale, different features of the PATH signify different results. Corresponding to the PATH metaphor, the successful development of interpersonal relationships can be mapped onto the physical action of moving forward. Conversely, if the relationship fails to develop, it remains in the past:

- (28) a. *youdeshihou wo hai ting shiluo de weishenme hui zai guoqu*
 sometimes I quite very disappoint PP why will at past
cai neng ganshoudao zhedian youyi
 actually can feel this friendship
 ‘sometimes I am quite disappointed why could I only feel this friendship by living in the past’

- b. *wo xiwang hai neng jixu xiaqu danshi womende*
 I wish still can **continue down the track** but our
youyi zhi tingliu zai guoqu
 friendship only **stop at past**
 ‘I wish I can still **keep developing** our friendship which seems to **have stopped in the past**’

From Example (28), friendship is conceptualised as an object heading towards a destination along a path, continuity can be regarded as a cognitive model for having successfully maintained interpersonal communication.

5.3.2 Interpersonal PROXIMITY

Distance in spatial terms is another common source concept for conceptualising interpersonal familiarity. The participants use spatial terms to define the context of interpersonal interactions as *bici zhijian* ‘space between one and other’ and *renyuren zhijian* ‘space between people’, or to define more specific interpersonal encounters as *guoren zhijian* ‘space between fellow Chinese’ and *guojisheng zhijian* ‘space between internationals’ in a given cultural context. Finally, *pengyou zhijian* ‘space between friends’ and *qinqi zhijian* ‘space between relatives’ can be used to specify the social context.

This subsection will discuss the second most common metaphorical correlation regarding interpersonal relationship in Chinese which is PROXIMITY FOR INTIMACY. Two types of visual perceptions of the PROXIMITY model will be explained. The first one concerns the relationship between two individuals, and the second one describes the relationship between one individual and a group of other people.

The first visual representation of the intimacy between two people involved in a relationship and/or the affective bond between those two people draws on the experience of physically manipulating STRAIGHT LINE DISTANCE.

In Chinese, the metaphorical term *qinjin* ‘intimate close’ describes the intimacy of the interrelated persons. If the intimacy grows stronger, the two person will feel closer to each other, which is mapped on the shortened distance between two objects. To move closer is to increase intimacy, thereby developing interpersonal ties.

Example (29) shows that if the person is willing to develop the relationship, he or she can choose to make more effort, which corresponds to the purposeful action of moving across the space to be closer to the object:

- (29) a. *xihuan de jiu zoude jin yidian*
 like AP just **become (lit. walk) close a little**
 ‘become closer to people (I) like’

Conversely, *shuyuan* ‘estrangle (literally stay away)’ is a symbolic gesture of estrangement:

- (30) a. *yiban de pengyou faner gen ni juli la*
 ordinary AP friend on the contrary with you distance pull
yuan le
 apart PP
 ‘ordinary friends on the contrary is **pulling way from you**’
- (31) a. *dang ni faxian tade jiazhiguan gen ni buyiyang*
 when I (lit. you) find his value with me (lit. you) different
 ‘when I finds out that his values are not the same (as mine)’
 b. *ni jiu hui biande bu renting zhe ren jiu hui gen*
 you just will become not identity this person just will with
ta shuyuan
 him distance
 ‘I (lit. you) would become unable to identify with this person **distance him**’

The increased physical distance is symbolic of one’s unwillingness to further develop a relationship. In all groups, the participants talk about distancing as an interpersonal strategy if one gets too involved with people they do not like.

From a cultural perspective, the spatial perception self and other is influenced a lot by Confucianism, which prescribes society to be a configuration of interdependent relational selves. Personhood becomes meaningless if separated from relations with others; failing to maintain relationships would put one’s personhood in danger. This cultural belief in an interdependent relational existence might have formed a modern Chinese person’s conceptualisation of his or her own person in relation to others.

The Chinese blurry line between self and other is also conducive to the participants’ assessment of their interpersonal relationship maintenance (Sun, 1991, p. 29). Two participants reflect upon their estrangement from their parents and produce the utterance in Example (32). They lament the loss of closeness with friends and parents at home.

- (32) a. S1 *bijing bushi lao zai fumu shenbian suoyi ganjue*
 after all not always at parents beside so feel
keneng buyiyang
 maybe different
 ‘after all not always by parents’ side (one) probably would feel differently’
 b. *gen ni xiangxiang zhong de youxie butong*
 with you imagine within AP some different
 ‘it is different from what one/I (lit. you) has imagined’

- c. *yinwei shijian yizhi zai bian jiushi shuyuan*
 because time always at change just **getting distanced**
de ganjue
 AP feeling
 ‘because time is passing it is the feeling of **getting distanced**’
- d. S2 *jiushi jiazhiguan zhilei de ni yijing*
 just value as such AP one (lit. your) already
duli
 independent
 ‘in terms of value views as such one is already independent’
- e. *ni ziji jianli de sixiang guannian he jiazhiguan yijing he*
 yourself build AP idea concept and value already to
fumu de buyiyang le
 parents AP different PP
 ‘the ideas and values oneself build are already different from those of your parents’
- f. S1 *erque wo juede wo bama he wo xiangxiang zhong de bama*
 also I think my parents and I imagine within AP parents
buyiyang le dou youkeneng
 different PP all possible
 ‘also I think it is also possible that my parents are different from the parents I had imagined’
- g. *dan gengduo shi yinwei wo zai guowai wo jieshou wode gaibian*
 but mostly is because I at broad I accept my change
duo yidian tamen bianhua geng shao
 more a little they change even less
 ‘but mostly because I accept more of my change since I have been abroad but they change less’
- h. *suoyi wo juede tamen keneng gen zhebian de buyiyang wo jiu*
 so I think they maybe with here AP different I just
juede hen jingya
 think very surprised
 ‘so I think they are probably different from people here I was surprised’

Because of this blurred sense of self, a Chinese person might be more likely to see their own identity as something “mirrored” in the opinions of others. The increasing distance between themselves and their old contacts in China, friends and family, reflects their change of identity, which no longer builds on the opinions of the original significant others. As both speakers contend, they have established a different set of values for themselves very different from their parents’, and that has led to their estrangement.

The second visual representation is found in the participants’ descriptions of their relationship with other associates. Distance, as an important conceptual vehicle for conveying our self-directing and culturally shaped meanings of being a person situated in a network of interpersonal relationships, can also be represented by the CENTRE–PERIPHERY model. The participants in the study call their immediate associates *zhouweiren* ‘people around’, which reflects the structure of a CENTRE–PERIPHERY image schema. The metonymic relationship between the self and other associates in the social world is represented by RADIUS DISTANCE.

CENTRE–PERIPHERY image schema is a cognitive schematic structure constantly operating in our spatial perception (Johnson, 1987, p. 124). As Johnson explains, from our central vantage point we define a domain of macroscopic objects that reside at varying distances from us. The social world radiates out from the self as the perceptual centre. The self occupies a central position and others are distributed on the outskirts with a varying degree of distance from the core depending on the familiarity with the self.

We have better knowledge about people that *zhouwei* ‘surround’. They are the ones the speakers associate with on a frequent basis, people whose opinions can be more important. The participants suggest that they are more emotionally engaged with these people:

- (33) a. *wo xiang zuo yijian shi zhouweiren wo bijiao qinjin de ren*
 I want do one thing people around I more close AP people
nenggou zhichi
 can support
 ‘(If) I want to do one thing (I’d hope that) **people around** those to whom I am close can support me’
- (34) a. *wo lai zhiqian wo zhouwei tongxue gen wo de*
 I come before I around classmate with I AP
beijing chabuduo
 background similar
 ‘before I came my **classmates around** and myself were of the similar background’
- b. *wo lai zhebian zhihou wo faxian zhouweiren gen wo xiang de*
 I came here after I find people around with I think AP
dou buyiyang
 all different
 ‘after I came here I found **people around** are all thinking differently from me’
- c. *nage shihou jiuji le hen jiu*
 that time disturb PP very long
 ‘(I) was disturbed for a long time during that time’

Familiarity is mapped onto distance. Greater familiarity also offers more emotional assurance. The speaker in (33) says he values support from those closer to him much more than others. However, if someone is not completely understood by people around them, as in (34), they can be very distressed. Feeling a sense of belonging to other people can be motivational. For example, the speaker in Example (35) regards having a concentrated social network essential to her social being:

- (35) a. *guanxi hui geng qinjin ganjue dajia zai yiqi zhezhong*
 relationship will **more close** feel all of us at together this kind
ningjuli huidao dabenyinying
concentration return base camp
 ‘the relationships **get closer** feels like all of us **concentrated** together return-
 ing to base camp’
- b. *zhezhong qinqing ningju zai yiukuaier de ganjue shi zai zhebian*
 this kind kinship **concentre at one place** AP feeling is at here
meifa tihui dao de
 unable feel PP
 ‘that kinship **that gathers everyone together** is what is missing here’

Another expression that reflects the conceptualisation of one’s social world and the structure of social radiation is *jiaoji* ‘intersection of two radiations’. Intersection is used to conceptualise interrelated relationships. The spatial area of that intersection refers to common associates. Given that interrelated people would have more opportunities to acquaint with one another, they are more likely to have things in common or are willing to share their common ground. Examples (36) and (37) both contain this expression to refer to mutual friends:

- (36) a. *ni hui juede shi qishi ma haishi juede ta zhishi buxiang*
 you will think is discrimination IP or think he simply not
gen ni you jiaoji
 want with you **associate (lit. have intersection)**
 ‘do you think (it is) discrimination or just think he simply does not want
 to **associate** with you’
- (37) a. *yixie jiaoji dou meiyou dehua*
 some **common associate (lit. intersection)** all not have if
qishi nimen mei you shenme fazhan le
 in fact you not have what develop PP
 ‘**having no common associate** in fact you don’t really have any possibilities
 to develop (friendship)’

People’s social radiation is going through constant fluid transformation as some people can develop into familiar acquaintances and some cannot.

In the CENTRE–PERIPHERY model, the periphery position manifests a reduced degree of intimacy, which in spatial terms is characterised by being remote from the perceptual centre. If others force themselves into one’s established degree of familiarity, it can lead to distress. Then, the action of increasing or reducing familiarity can be conceptualised on the scale of distance to oneself, as one can keep a stranger at the edge of the circle. It is up to the individual to set a boundary to stop interpersonal relationships from developing.

5.3.3 The social CONTAINER

In light of cross-cultural comparisons, one participant mentioned that she felt a greater need to maintain interpersonal relationships in the Chinese context rather than in the Australian context. She said she would be at liberty to maintain contact or cut off contact with others in Australia but not in China. Cultural constraints or the cultural atmosphere, as revealed by the current data set, reflects a CONTAINER structure. The CONTAINER is found to be a common conceptual vehicle that conveys our imagined positions within relationships.

Firstly, maintaining interpersonal relationships can be conceptualised as situating within an enclosed CONTAINER. The participants often talk about their associates as *quanzi* ‘circle’. If someone is to be estranged from a group of people, i.e., to exit the *quanzi* ‘circle’; if they can regain common ground with a group of people, they are able to *huidao* ‘come back’ to the social circle. In this case, the CONTAINER forms the basis of the construal for a group of people that the individual can come INTO OR OUT OF CONTACT WITH. In other cases where the group is not specified, the CONTAINER forms a comfort zone.

- (38) a. *birushuo wo you ziji yige quanzi ruguo shi wailaide*
 for instance I have self one circle if is from outside
 ‘for instance I have a circle myself when there is someone who comes from outside’
- b. *buneng paichi ba jiu xuanze buyao tai jiejin*
 can’t reject EP just choose not too close
 ‘(I) cannot reject (that person) but (I) can choose not become too close (to that person)’
- (39) a. *jiusuan ni lia zai hao yezhiyou zhege fanwei*
 even if you two rather good only this limit (lit bounded area)
 ‘even if the two of you are very good there is a limit (to how friendly you can be)’
- b. *meiyou qita shiqing neng rang ni lia geng jin*
 not other thing can make you two more close
 ‘there are no other things that can bring the two of you any closer’

These participants would prefer certain people to stay OUT OF that comfort zone. Beyond the familiar and unfamiliar there exists the unknown. The ENCLOSED structure of the CONTAINER implies that the conceptualisation of a social circle features restriction and separation. A lack of familiarity between people WITHIN and WITHOUT the circle can be so great it causes separation. As referred to as separated by a barrier, some participants see themselves along with others abroad as a group of people within a besieged fortress. Example (40) describes the meaning of this besieged fortress that separates the two camps:

- (40) a. *weicheng ma jiushi limian de ren xiang chuqu*
fortress besieged¹⁵ EP just **inside** AP people want **get out**
waimian de ren xiang jinlai
outside AP people want **get in**
 ‘fortress besieged people inside want to **get out** and people outside want to **go in**’
- b. *ni de jingli bieren bu dong ranhou bieren xianmu nide*
 you AP experience others not know then others envy your
dongxi ni ye bu zihao
 thing you also not proud
 ‘people cannot understand your experience you’re not proud of things that people are envious about you’

This participant describes the experience of going abroad as a besieged fortress where both people who remain in China and those who have gone overseas cannot sympathise with one another or even mistake the other’s misfortune for happiness. And seeking understanding of the unknown can be described as travelling to the other side of the wall.

Similarly, the participants in Examples (41), (42) and (43) all refer to the action of seeking wider social contact or dismissing existing social contact in terms of jumping out of the *quanzi* ‘circle’:

- (41) a. *na yang de shenghuo wo bu xiangyao wo jiu xiangyao tiao*
 that wang AP life I not want I just want **jump**
chuqu you shenme banfa ne/
out have what solution IP <rising tone>
 ‘that is not the life I want I just want to **jump out** but how do I do it’
- (42) a. *cong nage quan li chulai tiao dao lingyige quan*
 from that **circle inside** **come out** **just into** another circle
 ‘**jump out of** that circle and **into** another one’

15. Refer to footnote 5.

- (43) a. *wo shi juede xiang rongru* *zhege shehui*
 I do think want **become part of** (lit. merge into) this society
 ‘I want to **become part of** this society’
- b. *buneng zongshi hun zai zhongguoren de quanzi li*
 shouldn’t always mingle at Chinese people AP **circle inside**
 ‘I want to **merge into** this society (one) cannot just always stay **within** the Chinese **circle**’

They have also explained why they want to break away from the circle they are used to. Many of them speak of the notion of *huanjing zaoren* ‘the milieu creates the people’, which can be found frequently in the participants’ comments. *Huanjing* ‘environment’ or ‘milieu’ refers to the larger social environment in which a person dwells, or one’s surrounding culture. The participants seem to believe that the ways people act and behave are shaped by it. Example (44) demonstrates this idea of *huanjing zaoren* ‘the milieu creates the people’, implying that we can easily be influenced by our social surroundings.

- (44) a. S1 *wo juede huanjing xiangdang zhongyao huanjing*
 I think environment rather important **environment**
zaoren zhende
creates people true
 ‘I think environment is rather important “**environment creates the people**” is true’
- b. S2 *dui nide quanzi ni zhouwei de quanzi shi shenme yang*
 yes your **circle** you **around** AP circle is what way
de ren
 AP people
 ‘yes one’s (lit. your) **circle** the **circle** one (lit. you) has around (oneself)’
- c. S3 *ni jiu hui cheng shenme yang de ren*
 you just will become what way AP people
 ‘(determines) whom one (lit. you) will become’

It is interesting to see that these two participants both believe the condition of the social environment that a person is exposed to has a direct impact on that person. Following this train of thought, if a person cannot change the environment, the least they can do is to choose the circle they mix with.

The participants considering educational methods for their children stress the importance of fostering a good *chengzhang huanjing* ‘growing milieu’ and *ji-aoyu huanjing* ‘educational milieu’, as one’s interpersonal environment at home and school can shape one’s personality. Cross-culturally, the participants speak of *shenghuo huanjing* ‘living milieu’ and most of them appear to be quite critical of some of their fellow Chinese nationals’ behaviours that reflect a different set of values and concerns from those of the Australian people:

- (45) a. *yinwei tamen nabian shenghuo de huanjing bei xuanran le*
 because they there living AP environment prep affect PP
 ‘because they are infected by the **living environment** there’
- b. *jiu juede rensheng hundao zhe ge nianling yinggai you zhe ge*
 just think life up to this one age should have this one
you na ge
 have that one
 ‘(people) thinks that if one has come to this age of one’s life one should have this and that’

Materialism in China is said to characterise the contemporary Chinese populace. A person would be inevitably influenced by this social trend if they came from that *shenghuo huanjing* ‘living milieu’. The milieu in which a group of people lives in then becomes synonyms with the collective characteristics of the people. As mentioned previously, Chinese people tend to de-emphasise the distinctiveness of personal existence as there is no clear-cut boundary between one’s own self and others. It is probably due to the fact that Chinese tend to find meaning in their collective characteristics of the people rather than finding meaning in the autonomous self. As the participants talk about their observations of Chinese people, they assume the generic framework of *huanjing* ‘milieu’ in their discussion. Talking about this socio-cultural generic space that each person contributes to is just as realistic as talking about the people themselves.

Contrasting that of the CENTRE-PERIPHERY conceptualisation that takes the form of an egocentric self at the centre of a radiation, the socio-cultural space in which the self and other dwell in the CONTAINER model is devoid of any concentric self. This model for person and society denies the person’s position as holding the imagined centre. Instead, its locus is the primacy of situation over person.

The second conceptualisation of social fusion or association with other people, exemplified in the notions that come out of participants’ discussion, depends heavily on the imagery of water. The participants use verbs that associate with the fluidity of liquid to refer to the efforts they make to socialise, such as *rong* ‘melt’. The choice for using these verbs draws on the FLUID-INSIDE-CONTAINER metaphor.

The data that has been collected for the present study contain Chinese expressions showing that the metaphorical correlation with the fluidity of liquid can form the conceptual basis of understanding several social activities. *Rongru* ‘melt[ing] into’ means being acculturated to the mainstream society. *Ronghe* ‘fus[ing]’ means ethnic assimilation and *rongqia* ‘well blended’ can be used to describe having harmonious interpersonal relations with family members. In the Chinese cultural settings, the imagery of water can be interpreted as carrying rich symbolic meanings, which can encapsulate various age-old philosophical principles that are drawn from the interactions between the natural and human worlds (Allan, 1997; Lu, 2012).

As far as social interaction is concerned, while the person can be embodied as a container of personal beliefs and propositions (see analysis in Chapter 6), negotiations of opinions as a result of communication can also be conceptualised in terms of outpouring or mixing liquid-like substances. For instance, the metaphorical term *guanshu* ‘instil’ in Chinese means the teaching of moral values which suggests that negotiation of opinions is directional.

The participants use *guanshu* ‘instil’ to talk about teaching the younger generation filial piety and their responsibilities towards senior family members as well as their Chinese identity. *Guanshu* ‘instil’ evokes the metaphorical image of pouring water into a container which correlates with the successful reception of knowledge as having the container filled up with water. The transmission of knowledge can take two modes, efflux in terms of *jiang chulai* ‘speak[ing] out’ or influx in terms of *ting jinqu* ‘listen[ing] into’.

Similarly, the participants use action verbs that evoke this water imagery creatively to describe their interaction with the people around them. According to the participants, if you manage to befriend local Australians, you can *gen tamen huncheng yipian* ‘blend into one pond with them’. If you have difficulty staying within a social group, you might be *hunbu xiaqu* ‘unable to continue blending’. If several people stick together, they can be said to be *hunzai yiqi* ‘mixed up together’. The verb *hun* ‘blend in liquid’ is the key term among all these expressions used by the participants.

Chenjin ‘immerse’ and *pao* ‘infuse’ are two terms which are highly metaphorical, referring to the action of spending a long time with other people:

- (46) a. *wo geng lijie fumu yinwei yiqian chenjin zai jiali*
I more understand parents because past **immerse** at family
‘I understand parents better because I used to be **immersed** in the family’
- (47) a. *du uni jingchang yibangren*
study <E uni E> often a group of people
pao zaiyiqi
hang out (lit. infuse) together
‘when studying at university there was often a group of people **stay together**’
- b. *ranhou nabangren you renzhi ling yibangren*
then that group of people again meet another group of people
jingchang paozhe paozhe jiu hui shuqilai
often **hang out hang out** just will familiar
‘then that group would meet another group as we were **hanging out longer** everyone became familiar’

From the use of these metaphorical expressions that reflect the conceptualisation of interpersonal relationships in Chinese, it can be said that connectedness and

interdependence have a cognitive basis when you think about your social counterparts. With regard to the conceptualisation of self and others in social relations in the Chinese milieu, the interdependent relationship between the self and other is very well represented by the dynamic nature that water enjoys. It is fluid as much as it is interdependent:

- (48) a. *zhebian pengyou quanzi liudongxing bijiao da ni jiao pengyou*
 here friend circle flow relatively big you make friend
de jihui hui geng duo
 AP chance will more big
 ‘friend circle here is flowing very fast you have more chances of meeting new friends’

People move freely in and out of the established friends’ *quanzi* ‘circle’. Example (48) shows that the establishment of friendship is metaphorically referred to as “flowing into” a circle. A shared social space is being built between people who belong together, its ever-changing dynamics can be metaphorically attributed to the fluid flowing INTO or OUT OF the CONTAINER. The fluidity model suggests that both the self and others are subject to changes in terms of either being on the “inside” the *quanzi* ‘circle’ or on the “outside”.

5.4 Conclusion

A person amidst the interwoven social relations, from the perspective of socio-cultural cognition, co-constructs the society with other relating people. The conceptual analysis of personhood in Chinese describes cognitive patterns found in the conceptualisation of experiences of being an individual and of evaluations of our interpersonal behaviours within relationships.

In light of conceptual metaphorical and conceptual metonymic analysis, the SPLIT SELF together with other image schemas are effective in organising experiences of self-evaluation. Social proximity can be conceptualised in terms of having a spatial distance between one and another or occupying a position within one’s social CONTAINER. The production of these cognitive and conceptual patterns of the self is closely related to Chinese socio-cultural rules. Particularly in social interactions, people evoke and negotiate their meanings based upon their shared cultural understandings, ethos and knowledge about the discursive conventions in a given speech community.

Many of the conceptual patterns are reflective of cultural conceptualisations. They are cultural conceptualisations which arguably have been passed down through generations and are shared by people from the same cultural group (Sharifian, 2011,

2017). The DEEP-SHALLOW dyad draws on LOCATION FOR ACTIVITY metonymy and conceptual metaphor DEPTH IS POTENCY and the philosophical meanings of which can be traced back to classic Chinese teachings. Likewise, the conceptualisation of INTERIOR-EXTERIOR selves draws on the embodied view of selfhood in Chinese which necessarily echoes traditional Chinese medicine. The INTERIOR-EXTERIOR image-schematic dyad is often used to describe a person's moral integrity in which case CONGRUENCE IS AUTHENTICITY represents an individual's the moral commitment which can be seen as originated from the Confucian concept of *xin* 'integrity'.

Some transmits a cultural-specific mentality or myth. For instance, the analysis of the reasoning process in the mind of a Chinese person reveals an emphasis on internal equilibrium. According to the BALANCE schema, if stability is lost, one can be considered irrational and prone to misjudgement in Chinese culture. The Chinese UNBOUNDED SELF metaphor, on the other hand, reveals a myth that some Chinese people hold in the context of disobeying authorities, where a person is always subject to causes that are independent of their will.

In addition, Chinese expressions relating to building personal networks or associating with other people also reflect an imagery of water. FLUID-INSIDE-CONTAINER metaphor underscores these expressions. They should also be treated as cultural conceptualisations. The source domain concept, water, which often appears in classic texts depicting the interpersonal relationships, triggers many cultural specific imaginations which are arguably handed down across generations and are shared by people from the same cultural group. The conceptualisation of the social space in terms of a CONTAINER de-emphasises the distinctiveness of personal existence, which speaks to the cognitive reality that there is no clear-cut boundary between the individual and others in Chinese.

The socio-cultural context shapes the understanding of personhood in Chinese. An examination of their mapping mechanism and metaphorical entailments reveals diversity rather than unity. In the social arena, the discursive contingencies of their applications might have shaped the flexibility of these conceptualisations. The analysis of relationship metaphors and image-schematic representations of self-integrity reveals metaphorical entailments which are evoked flexibly and pragmatically in social interaction, depending on the context. Cognitive models are conceptual vehicles to convey our self-directing and culturally shaped meanings of being a person who positions themselves and others in a network of interpersonal relationships.

CHAPTER 6

The self within

On the Chinese embodied self

This chapter discusses the Chinese embodied view of selfhood by examining body parts that constitute an important source of self-related conceptual schemes and cognitive categories in Chinese. Body parts are found to be prominent as the seat of the self or one's essential being in the Chinese conceptual system. The ways in which they are used by contemporary Chinese immigrants in the articulation of selfhood not only reflect the indigenous conceptions of the embodied selfhood in the Chinese conceptual system, but also reveal some age-old cultural premises which are historically-transmitted and ideologically formed.

Keywords: the embodied self, body parts, mental processes, emotional being, cultural ethos

6.1 The embodied view of self

Expressions for the self and person in contemporary Chinese vocabulary often contain *shen* 'body', such as, *zishen*, literally 'self body' and *benshen*, literally 'root person'. The Chinese idiom *shenbuyouji*, which literally translates as 'body beyond control of self', stands for going against one's will. Another term that also takes on a somatised image is *buyouzizhu* which literally means 'beyond one's own mastery', signifying a spontaneous overflow of emotive sentiment. In the comments the participants make in relation to their private thoughts, the word *ganjue* 'feeling' can refer to premature yet authentic ideas or firmly-kept impressions. This has shown some indication for the convergence of feeling and thinking in Chinese. The legacy of the unity of mind/body is evident in a range of references to an embodied conception of the self that appears in the participants' conversations.

The aforementioned Chinese expressions reveal a unified concept of body and mind. The unity implies a body/self that is thinking and sensing, and interacting with the surrounding world. For example, the Confucian school of thought emphasises the process in which a person seeks conscious self-development. As discussed in Chapter 3, such process is called self-cultivation, or *xiushen*. *Shen*, literally meaning 'body', denotes the whole person/body and mind. Self-development is the refinement of the whole person.

In Chinese, the mind does not constitute a separate entity from the sensing body. Modern Chinese expressions about being unable to restrain one's own emotions are short of a self-aware subject, such as *qingbuzijin* 'being overwhelmed by emotion'. This expression draws upon a conceptual metaphor in which bodily feelings are the object of control. Losing control of them is called *zhenqingliulu* 'overflow of authentic emotions', which constitutes an authentic representation of embodied affective experience. Equivalent terms in English include "I couldn't help myself" or "I was overtaken by a powerful emotion". In Chinese, the difference is that the mind/body is at the locus of self-control, rather than a conscious subject.

This language phenomenon is inherited from the premodern Chinese habit of thinking of a person as an embodied being. It can be said to derive from a holistic straightforward connection between personhood and nature in premodern Chinese philosophical texts and traditional Chinese medicine. Based on this, Ning Yu's extensive research into the philosophical and medical discourse of Chinese culture and civilisation has shown connections between embodied metaphors that express thinking and sensing in Chinese (Yu, 2007b, 2009).

Other researchers also found evidence of the embodied nature of emotions in Chinese. For instance, one distinctive feature of the Chinese metaphor for anger is that it is concerned with *qi* 'vital energy'. *Qi* 'vital energy' is a notion that is deeply embedded in Chinese philosophy and medicine. It is the substance of the body (Kirkland, 2004). It is, therefore, a vital part of self-cultivation that revolves around improving a person's *qi* 'vital energy' to allow that person to function well in both the natural and the human world.

Particularly in Daoism, the human body is one of the organic manifestations of the *dao* 'cosmos' or 'the way' (Hansen, 2000; Morris, 1994). This way to understand the self goes beyond the notion of ego, which involves the vital participation of human beings. To fulfil such a process, one is to live in an effort to harmonise the microcosm of a person with the fundamental laws of nature. The integrity of individuals lies in the discovery of the vital rhythms of organic life (Morris, 1994, p. 110).

In Daoist cosmology, disciplining the spiritual aspects of the self to prevent the blocking of *qi* while enhancing the health qualities of the body, is to make it work towards the Daoist ideal of self-cultivation "within a cosmos comprised of subtly linked forces" (Kirkland, 2004, p. 192). In practice, instructions are listed in the Daoist text *Zhuangzi* for achieving integration of the whole person with *dao*, including the balancing of diet and moderation in physical activity, achieving calmness or equilibrium in both the body and mind.

The same assumption is also reflected in the participants' repeated references to balance and sincerity. In the minds of these contemporary Chinese immigrants, if a person is imbalanced internally, they can be considered irrational and prone to misjudgement. Finding balance represents one's reasoning process of finding

equilibrium. Sincerity, on the other hand, tests the compatibility or incompatibility of one's inner being and appearance. They claim it is of primary importance to have a *zhenxin* 'true heart' or 'sincere intention' that is valued more than etiquette and good manners which are deemed to only exhibit a person's superficial/external character. The inconsistency between the external presentation and the essence sets a contrast between one's behaviours and true thoughts, which renders one's behaviours insincere, deceptive and irreputable.

From a linguistic perspective, it is also important to note that the modern Chinese language is abundant in references to the heart and other bodily organs for expressing a person's ideas and thoughts or for describing one's mental activities, such as *xinzhushenming* 'heart is the mastery of mind'. Not only are these embodied metaphors a clear indication that the Chinese language is rich in expressions that treat body parts as thinking and feeling organs, they also reveal the emotive nature of Chinese reasoning (e.g., Sun, 1991; Yu, 2009). From the perspective of cognitive linguistics, the embodied metaphors found in the Chinese language, along with the organic formation of personhood opens up a window to examine the structure of self-related mental processes in the Chinese conceptual system.

6.2 The EMBODIED SELF metaphor

Human beings tend to conceive of delineated, vague, or abstract experiences in more concrete terms with the help of metaphors. Approaching the metaphorical language in Chinese from a cognitive linguistic perspective, Conceptual Metaphor Theory establishes the basis for interpreting the meanings of metaphors in the form of cross-domain mapping.

In light of cognitive linguistics, the way human beings understand and conceptualise the world departs from encyclopaedic knowledge and arrives at an organisation of concepts in the form of "Idealised Cognitive Models" or ICMs (Lakoff, 1987, 1988). ICMs are the result of an idealisation process of reality or experience. As a result of this idealisation process, metaphors structure human thought and set up the correspondence between the constituent elements of the metaphorical source and the target.

As for the different functions that metaphors play in the thinking process, there are three ways in which conceptual metaphors function. They inform the three categories of conceptual metaphors, namely structural, ontological and orientational (Kövecses, 2005, p. 30). The current chapter reports the embodied metaphors found in the participants' speech which states their state of mind, inner being and internal causation metaphorically as objects, substances or containers (Kövecses, 2005, p. 38). They belong to the category of ontological metaphors.

Ontological metaphors provide a basis for us to comprehend events, actions, activities by giving a new ontological status to general categories of an abstract target concept. That is to say, speakers can refer, quantify or identify aspects of the delineated experiences through ontological metaphors. For instance, the analytical results show that body parts are frequently drawn upon in metaphorical expressions of one’s inner being and internal causation, namely *xin* ‘heart’, *du* ‘belly’, *nao* ‘brain’, *gu* ‘bone’ and *yan* ‘eye’. According to the analytical results, speakers use references to body parts to represent the self to others. The numerous co-occurrences of body parts and mental verbs show that internal organs in Chinese play an important role in representing self-evaluation and other mental processes for gaining self-knowledge through metaphors.

With regard to previous studies on embodied metaphors in Chinese, these metaphors form a comprehensive body-based linguistic system to structure mental processes in the Chinese conceptual system (Pritzker, 2007; Slingerland, 2004; Yu, 1998, 2003, 2007a). This section will focus on metaphorical expressions that describe the individualised self with respect to different body parts.

6.2.1 The metonymy of the INNER HEART

Numerous expressions containing the heart show that the INNER HEART corresponds to the private sense of self. Participants across the different age groups all expressed their ideal friendship in terms of *jiaoxin de pengyou* ‘friends with whom one can open the heart’ and *taoxin de pengyou* ‘friends with whom one can reach out to the bottom of the heart’. Based on the CONTAINER FOR CONTAINED and the HEART FOR PERSON metonymies, *jiaoxin* ‘open heart’ and *taoxin* ‘reach out to the bottom of heart’ defines this ideal status of interpersonal communication and relationship (Yu, 2009, p. 183). Common to these metonymic expressions is that the HEART is construed as the locus of their private self. This is consistent with previous studies on the Chinese HEART as the centre of thought in Chinese culture (Yu, 2009, p. 208).

In the social dimension, the HEART seems to be a popular seat for a person’s inner being, as opposed to a public one. When the public SELF is found to be in sharp contrast with the private SELF, the person can appear to be pretentious, insincere, distanced, and defensive:

- (1) a. *danshi ni kan buchulai tamen neixin*
 but you tell unable to they in private (lit. inner heart)
xiang shenme
 think what
 ‘but you cannot tell what their think in private’

- (2) a. *suoyi tamen hui neixin* *bijiao fangbei*
 so they will in private (lit. inner heart) quite defensive
 ‘so they would be quite defensive in private’

Communication is most effective if the words said and heard come from the HEART. That is to say, both parties have the mutual knowledge that these thoughts and ideas could not have been said and heard in public. Understanding of each other’s heartfelt sentiments provides the basis on which an intimate interpersonal relationship is built.

Given the Chinese people’s belief in the existence of such an ideal status of interpersonal communication and relationship, two people’s HEARTS can create a shared space where the contents of the two HEARTS can meet. It would be ideal if people shared the same or similar thoughts, often expressed as people having the same heart:

- (3) a. *zhaodao yige gen ni shi yitiaoxin* *de*
 find one with you is of one mind (lit. has one heart) AP
xianghu bangzhu de nazhong ren
 mutually help AP that kind people
 ‘finding the kind of person who is one mind and whom you can mutually help out’

In Example (3), *yitiaoxin* ‘of one mind (lit. has one heart)’ is an example for the HEART FOR PERSON metonymy. The HEART, or its line of thought, is sometimes conceptualised as a long and narrow (or thin) object so that *tiao* ‘classifier of long and thin object’ is used when the emphasis is on the function of the HEART as thinking and sensing (Yu, 2009, p. 168). If two people share the same line of thought, they are likely to share the same standards and needs, and likely to think and act for their common welfare which could be the ideal situation.

What can also happen, however, is that one’s one-sided expression of sincerity can turn out not to be reciprocated:

- (4) a. *huozhe shi wenhua ba women juede zhiyao women xin*
 or is culture EP we think know we sincere
dao le jiu OK le
 (lit. heart reach) PP just <E OKE> PP
 ‘probably is cultural (difference) we think as long as we are sincere it is ok’
 b. *danshi tamen tihui* *bu liao*
 but they feel (lit. body understand) not able
 ‘but they cannot feel it’

- (5) a. *zhidao ni youmeiyou na ge xin*
 know your **whether or not have** that one **sincerity (lit. heart)**
de shihou
 AP time
 ‘knowing **whether** you are **sincere** or not’
- b. *keneng shuo chulai ji shuyu bijiao zhijie de keneng*
 maybe **speak out** just belong rather direct PP maybe
tihui bu dao
feel (lit. body understand) not able
 ‘maybe **put into words** in a direct way (others) may not be able to **feel** it.’

For the participants, the private self, represented by the HEART, carries more weight. The words transporting politeness can be easily *shuo chulai* ‘put into words’, while the truth is delivered by the HEART and is hard to *tihui* ‘feel’. Communication will not be successful if the HEART, the more valuable information, is not understood properly.

6.2.2 THE HEART STORES THOUGHTS

Private thoughts and true beliefs are seated in the HEART. THE HEART STORES THOUGHTS AND INTUITIONS is the predominant conceptual metaphor found after examining the word *xin* ‘heart’ and its collocation with mental verbs. Participants speak of their thoughts and intuitions as if they were kept INSIDE the HEART:

- (6) a. *yao jiaodao zhenzheng neng gen ni shuo xinli*
 want make true can with you tell **heartfelt (lit. inside heart)**
hua de pengyou ting nan de
 words AP friend very hard PP
 ‘to find (friends who) truly can tell you **heartfelt** words is hard’
- (7) a. *meigeren xinlimian dou you yige ganjue keyi*
 everyone **in mind (lit. inside heart)** all have one intuition can
jixu wang xia shen jiao xiaqu
 continue to under deep develop down
 ‘everyone has a intuition **in mind** (someone with whom I) can keep developing (a friendship)’

Communicating thoughts or words coming from the HEART means taking actions to build more intimate interpersonal relationships. One needs to reveal the true SELF to be sincere, which shall be highly appreciated interpersonally. True friends are expected to communicate deep thoughts or words coming from the HEART.

People hope, wish, desire, and expect with their HEARTS (Yu, 2009, p. 209). The hopes and wishes that come from the HEART represent a person's most authentic and truthful resolutions. When narrating one's own thinking or deliberation, one feels fully committed to the thoughts coming from the HEART:

- (8) a. *wo xinli* *jiu xiangzhe wo juede wo zhe yang zuo*
 I in mind (lit. inside heart) just thinking I think I this way do
kending budui
 definitely wrong
 'I was thinking in my mind I thought what I did was definitely wrong'
- (9) a. *wo xinli* *jiu juede yihou zuiqima*
 I in mind (lit. inside heart) just think after at least
huaishier buneng rang ta zhidao
 embarrassing things can't let her know
 'I thought in my mind at least embarrassing things cannot be revealed to her in the future'

In defining the HEART as the origin of some thoughts, this bodily organ is portrayed as a container. The heart, hidden inside the body, can be used to conceptualise knowledge not supposed to be shared publicly. The INTERIOR of the HEART prevents these thoughts from public disclosure.

The HEART represents one's true SELF. Having alternative opinion in the metaphorical form of keeping thoughts INSIDE the HEART means the individuals are concealing their true thoughts. A group of participants have discussed a few of their cultural shocks when they first arrived (in Australia). They believed politeness and manners only manifested in the public which stands in contrast to the ESSENCE:

- (10) a. *bushi zhende xinlimian* *haoxiang keqi*
 not truly in private (lit. inside heart) seemingly polite
 'not truly polite in private'

INSIDE the HEART, one can feel comfortable evaluating peers in bad terms as these evaluations are only made privately, and are therefore harmless:

- (11) a. *wo keyi fang zai xinlimian* *wo buyiding*
 I can keep at in secret thoughts (lit. inside heart) I not necessarily
yao zhe yang
 need this way
 'I can keep it in secret thoughts I don't need to be like this'

Similarly, one can think to oneself in response to disagreement. In this way, the HEART creates a private space for the TRUE SELF to hold on to thoughts that might not be completely acceptable to other people due to the perceived disagreement. At times, these thoughts should only be kept INSIDE the HEART, as expressing them outwardly would be regarded as inappropriate:

- (12) a. *ta gen wo shuo ta yiqian qu guo zhongguo wan tebie tebie zang*
 he to me say he past go already China travel very very dirty
 ‘he said to me he had travelled to China and (found China) very very dirty’
- b. *qishi wo xinxiang ta jiushi zhe yang ye*
 in fact I privately think (lit. heart think) he even this way still
buyao gen wo jiang a
 not to me tell EP
 ‘in fact I privately thought even if he (thought) this way (he should) not tell me’
- c. *biru wo buhui shuo helanren dou hen zhongzuoqishi wo*
 for example I won’t say Dutch people all very racist I
buhui shuo
 won’t say
 ‘for example I would not say Dutch people are all very racist I wouldn’t say that’
- d. *jiusuan wo xinlin juede buhao wo*
 even if I in my mind (lit. inside heart) think bad I
buhui shuo
 won’t say
 ‘even if I think in my mind something is not right I wouldn’t say it’

From these examples, we can see that reserving personal opinions in the Chinese socio-cultural context gives rise to different self-representations, which depends on the speaker’s anticipation of the possible response from the hearer.

6.2.3 THE HEART ACCOMMODATES FEELINGS

The HEART is also found to be used in conjunction with emotional feelings. The following discussion will turn to the role of the HEART as the locus of a person’s emotional life. One participant complains of frustration in terms of *nexinshang de shangkou* ‘having a wound on the inner heart’. As much as words can be deeply imprinted on the HEART, emotional marks on it might also stay forever. The WOUNDED HEART metaphor can express feelings of mistreatment.

The participants produced these sentiments of unfair treatment:

- (13) a. *nong de xinli* *hen bushufu*
 make PP **feel (lit. inside heart)** very uncomfortable
 ‘making (me) **feel very uncomfortable in my heart**’
- (14) a. *dan wo xinli* *haishi bufuqi*
 but I **feel (lit. inside heart)** still not convinced
 ‘but I still do not **feel convinced in my heart**’
- (15) a. *wo jiu juede xinli* *hen bukaixin*
 I just **feel (lit. feel inside heart)** very unhappy
 ‘I just **feel very unhappy in my heart**’
- (16) a. *wo xinli juede* *ting nanshou*
 I **feel (lit. inside heart feel)** very disturbed
 ‘I **feel rather disturbed in my heart**’
- (17) a. *xinlimian* *hui yayi*
feel (lit. inside heart) will depressed
 ‘(people) would **feel depressed in heart**’

In these utterances, all negative sentiments are metaphorically located in the heart. It is not a coincidence that the HEART is sensitive to these highly personalised negative emotions. Previous studies have explained that there could be an embodied connection between negative emotions and the damage they inflict on the internal organs (Yu, 2009, p. 241). However, since none of these words from the semantic domain of emotion involves metaphorical references to physical force, the expression *xinli* ‘inside heart’ is primarily metonymic. *Xinli* ‘inside heart’ is a metaphorical representation of the private self. It goes without saying that no one wants to appear unhappy all the time. Therefore, there is a belief that these negative feelings should be hidden from the public.

The private self here can be regarded as the Chinese indigenous conception of the ego which contains negative instincts that one cannot govern. Avoiding negativity also forms part of the vocabulary with which the participants chose to present a favourable self-image. The “bias” towards the private SELF or *si* ‘self or selfishness’, will be discussed in the discussion section.

A number of embodied expressions used by the participants seem to depict a situation where one is in conflict with oneself – the HEART takes precedence over other cognitive faculties:

- (18) a. *jiu ziji keneng jiushi huaren laoban ranhou ziji you shi*
 just self maybe just **ethnic Chinese** boss then self also am
huaren
ethnic Chinese
 ‘maybe he himself is an **ethnic Chinese** boss (my)self is also **ethnic Chinese**’
- b. *dajia dou zhidao nazhong dengji suoyi hen nan shuo nao*
 all of us all know that kind **hierarchy** so very hard say fight
 ‘all of us know about that kind of **hierarchy** therefore it is difficult to fight
 back’
- c. *ranhou zuo le yihou xinli you tebie bushufu*
 then do PP after **feel (lit. inside heart)** again very uncomfortable
 ‘then (I) **felt** very uncomfortable **in my heart** after doing (what I was told)’
- (19) a. *wo qu jiao ge fakuan dou taidu hen hao tamen*
 I go pay one fine all attitude very good they
 ‘I went to pay fines their attitude was very good’
- b. *ganjue fa le qian wo xinli ganjue hai ting*
 feel fine PP money I **feel (lit. inside heart feel)** still very
shufu de
 comfortable PP
 ‘(I) felt even though I was fined I **felt comfortable in my heart**’
- c. *zhishao tamen hen reqing*
 at least they very friendly
 ‘at least they were friendly’

The speaker in Example (18) is unhappy with their condescending boss. At first the speaker makes an open statement to the audience that hierarchy can be incapacitating at work. Due to the common understanding about the inequality between employers and employees, the speaker seems to have come to terms with it, especially when hierarchy is known to be a traditional Chinese cultural character.

However, the voice from the HEART gives away the true feeling. The speaker actually feels hurt because of it. The reason might be that the speaker expects the boss who is an ethnic Chinese to show more understanding towards someone who comes from the same cultural background.

In Example (19), the speaker is talking about the experience of paying a fine, which should not be a “happy” experience. The overall emotional experience, however, concludes on a positive note because the HEART feels comfortable. The speaker was satisfied after receiving friendly service because the matter was handled with respectfulness. Both the speakers have their feelings conveyed through the HEART which in both utterances turns out to be the dominant voice.

In Examples (20), (21) and (22), each of the speakers expresses their emotional distress, which is related to apprehension or guilt about what they should or should not do. Without exception, these feelings are tagged as heart felt:

- (20) a. *xiang wo qunian meige xingqitian shangwu dou hui qu jiaotang*
like I last year every Sunday morning all will go church
'take me as an example I went to church every Sunday morning last year'
- b. *danshi wo xianzai zhende shi meibanfa yinwei zuoye tai*
but I now really am no way because homework too
duo le
many PP
'but I truly cannot (go) now because of too much homework'
- c. *wo jiu dasuan yihou dou bu qu le wo xinlimian*
I then decide after all not go PP I feel (lit. inside heart)
hui youdian kuijiu
will a little guilty
'I then decided not to go thereafter I feel a bit guilty in my heart'

This student cannot keep attending church services because of academic pressure. Irregular attendance has caused her emotional distress and become a source of guilt. The HEART is the seat for harbouring this feeling of guilt.

- (21) a. *ruguo shi zuowei dongli dehua jiushi xinyang de zhicheng ba*
if is as motivation if just faith AP support EP
'in terms of motivation it is due to the support from having a faith'
- b. *bu xue xinli jiu bu'an*
not study feel (lit. inside heart) then disturbed
'if (I do) not study (I) would feel disturbed in my heart'
- c. *dudu shengjing shenme hai ting guanyong de*
ready Bible something actually very useful PP
'reading the Bible or something can be quite helpful'

The current participant in Example (21) does not have the motivation to study. From Examples (20) and (21), we can see that motivation and feelings are addressed with different subjects. On the one hand, the speaker expresses a genuine lack of motivation; on the other, the HEART is feeling disturbed or even guilty. The speaker in Example (21) chooses to read the Bible to put her HEART at ease, which is a necessary step towards finding the motivation to continue studying.

We can be at war with ourselves through the projection of ourselves onto other people and only one can win (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999). Examples (20) and (21) show that one's reason or will power might not necessarily win the battle. If you

were to convince yourself, you would have to start from examining heart felt feelings. In a similar vein, the speaker in Example (22) talks about the emotional distress she encountered after moving to Australia. She admits she used to watch a lot of TV after work. This young professional expresses the guilt she felt from living an unproductive life.

- (22) a. *ruguo shuo ni rang wo ba xialeban de suoyou shijian yong*
 if say you ask me prep after work AP all time spend
lai kan dianshi dehua
 to watch TV if
 ‘if you ask me to spend all the time on TV after work’
- b. *wo xinli juede* guilty *na yang de shenghuo*
 I feel (lit. inside heart feel) <E guilty E> that way AP life
wo bu xiangyao
 I not want
 ‘I (would) feel guilty in my heart that is not the life I want’
- c. *wo jiu xiangyao tiao chuqu you shenme banfa ne/*
 I just want jump out have what solution IP <rising tone>
yi shi huan gongzuo
 one is change job
 ‘I just want to jump out how to do so one way is to change the job’
- d. *ranhou er jiushi zhao nanpengyou you yige ren*
 then second just find boy friend have one person
fenxiang yixia
 share a little
 ‘then second way is to find a boyfriend to have someone to share’

That sense of guilt comes from her INNER HEART. This emotional feeling could be so strong it could motivate her to change the way she lives (Lines c and d). In fact, guilt and shame are often expressed in terms of a heart felt feeling in Chinese, e.g., *wenxinyoukui* ‘heart has a guilty conscience’ and *kuixinshi* ‘guilty hearted things’. An observable interaction of a person’s emotions and feelings seated in the HEART and one’s self-representation in social interaction seems to suggest a socially oriented cognition of emotion through this bodily organ. The HEART, as an embodied and culturally enriched source concept, helps to involve and engage the listener or the audience in the speaker’s inner world, which thereby increases the effectiveness of communication in discursive transactions.

Cognitive scientists believe that each individual interacts with the world under the guidance of cognitive models. Body parts are an important source domain for various self-related conceptual schemes and cognitive categories, which are not static repertoires located in the mind of each individual thinker. The discursive practice that the individual engages in also shapes the application of cognitive categories. The

exchange of these embodied metaphors in social interactions “incorporates both a conceptual repertoire and a location for persons within the structure of rights for those who use that repertoire” (Davies & Harré, 1991, p. 46). The following subsection compares the heart with the other body parts that the participants use to refer to different subjective impressions with varied discursive purposes.

6.2.4 THE HEART BRAIN BONE EYES

When studying expressions of self-related thinking and feeling experiences in Chinese, a number of body parts constitute a set of embodied source domain concepts. They are heart, brain, belly, bone and eyes. Departing from a cognitive-pragmatic-discursive perspective, the selection of different body parts to represent the self is treated as ways in which speakers portray themselves as a thinking and feeling individual. It is found that the speakers’ references to the EMBODIED SELF reflect a culture-specific cognitive environment, the evoking of which depends on communication-sensitive contextual information.

It is found in the data that body parts are used in metaphorical expressions about one’s personal opinions. These opinions can be assumptions that are not tested, or views taken from a biased perspective.

- (23) a. *shijishang dajia dou*
 in reality all of as already
xinzhiduming
 know without saying anything openly (lit. heart knows belly is clear)
 ‘in reality all of us already know but we saying nothing openly’

Apart from the heart, the *du* ‘belly’ in Example (23) is another body part to be the source of inner thoughts. The belly and the heart, both hidden inside the body, are used to conceptualise biased viewpoints that are not supposed to be shared publicly. Due to its rare occurrence in the data, the metaphorical use of the belly will not be discussed in comparison to those of the heart.

The speakers used various different body parts to address different opinions, such as eyes:

- (24) a. *dei zhidao bieren dui ni de kanfa shi shenme*
 must know others toward me (lit. you) AP opinions are what
 ‘(I) must know what opinions other people have of me (lit. you)’
 b. *cong bieren yanli ye neng kandao ziji kan budao de dongxi*
 from others’ inside eyes also can see self see unable AP things
 ‘also things seen through other people’s eyes are not perceivable from one’s own’

- (25) a. *yinwei tamen yanzhong shi women gang chuguo*
 because they **know** (lit. inside eyes) were we recently go abroad
shihou de yangzi
 when AP appearance
 ‘because what they **know** is the way we were when we just left China’
- b. *shijian jiu le ni ziji zhangda le kan de dongxi*
 time more PP I (lit. yourself) grow up PP see AP things
buyiyang le
 different PP
 ‘after a long time when I have grown up and have started to see things differently’

First of all, we need to understand KNOWING IS SEEING which is one of the primary conceptual metaphors for thinking (Kövecses, 2005). In this metaphor, the validity of a viewpoint is dependent on the viewing perspective. In Example (24), the participant believes that one should take someone else’s perspective to gain true knowledge as, metaphorically speaking, everyone sees things with different eyes. In other words, any opinion a person has is a result of their own way of thinking and reasoning.

To be aware of individual differences and limitations is a crucial social imperative. For the same reason, we should always show understanding and compassion for other people, as our viewpoint can be difficult to alter, as Example (25) indicates. As the participant grows older, her mental maturity also increases, enabling her to take on a fresh viewpoint.

- (26) a. *bushi tamen xinli xiangxiang de nayang danshi*
 not they in mind (lit. inside heart) imagine AP that way but
henduo ren bu zhidao
 many people not know
 ‘it is not what they had **imagined in their mind** but it is unknown to many people’
- (27) a. *dang ni faxian zhe ren gen ni*
 when I (lit. you) find this person with me (lit. you)
xinmuzhong de buyiyang
in my mind (lit. in mind’s eyes) AP different
 ‘when I realises that this person is different from what I had **in my mind**’
- b. *dang ni faxian tade jiazhiguan gen ni buyiyang*
 when I (lit. you) find his value with me (lit. you) different
 ‘when I finds out that his values are not the same (as mine)’
- c. *ni jiu hui biande bu renting zhe ren*
 you just will become not identity this person
 ‘I (lit. you) would become unable to identify with this person’

A subjective impression can be an imagination in the HEART as in Example (26) or something seen in one's *xinmu* 'mind's eye' (literally heart eye)' as in Example (27). These two examples are a more complex extension of the KNOWING IS SEEING metaphor. It may involve conceptual blending (Fauconnier, 1997; Fauconnier & Turner, 1998). Blending the HEART STORES THOUGHTS metaphor with the KNOWING IS SEEING metaphor, to have an impression is to have a VISION in the HEART.

EYES FOR SEEING is a very common conceptual metonymy in the Chinese language.¹⁶ The heart, being the key source domain concept in Chinese, is conceptualised as an entity in relation to mental activities (Yu, 2009, p. 146). The HEART FOR PERSON metonymy blends with the KNOWING IS SEEING and forms the metaphorical representation of the SEEING AND KNOWING HEART.

Since both participants emphasise the contrast between one's impression in the HEART and an externally existing reality, it can be inferred that this mental impression generated by the HEART constitutes one's private evaluation. A reasonable and smart individual should be aware that their subjective evaluation can portray a distorted image, and thus they should always try to seek the reality.

If the previously discussed mental impressions are flexible and can be altered when circumstances change, the impressions one makes within the BRAIN *naohai* 'brain sea' are likely to be permanently biased. In the present data set, the BRAIN *naohai* 'brain sea' appears to be a seat of stereotypes, as shown in Examples (28), (29) and (30).

- (28) a. *tamende naohai dangzhong* *haishi henjiu*
 their fixed impression (lit. brain sea amidst) still a while ago
yiqian de zhongguo
 past AP China
 'within their fixed impression it is still the China from a long time ago'
- b. *yinwei zhebian buhui zhengmian xuanchuan*
 because here won't positively publicise
 'because the media here won't give positive publicity about China'
- (29) a. *ni ding le yige mubiao naohaili* *sheding*
 you set PP one objective in mind (lit. within brain sea) install
wo xiang liu zai zheer
 I want stay at here
 'I (lit. you) set the objective in my mind which is "I want to stay here"'
- b. *zai naohaili* *sheding le liangge tiaojian*
 at in mind (lit. within brain sea) install PP two condition
ranhou zai wang nage difang zhengqu
 then again towards that place strive
 'I (lit. you) set two conditions in my mind then (I) strive to reach that goal'

16. For more examples, see Yu (2004)

- (30) a. *wo juede chuguo de ren dui ziwo baohu nengli dou bijiao*
 I think go abroad AP people to self protect ability all comparably
yijing dingxing le
 already fixed PP
 ‘I think people who go abroad have an already-fixed sense of self-protection’
- b. *yijing zai naozi limian haoxiang wo dei*
 already at **within the impression (lit. inside brain)** like I must
he bieren jiaowang de shihou xiaoxin
 with others associate AP time careful
 ‘(I’ve) already **had the impression in my mind** I have to be careful when associating with others’

Although this result cannot be generalised to support the binary hypothesis where the BRAIN thinks and the HEART feels, it is worthwhile discussing the choice of brain over heart by these participants. It seems that having a biased opinion might not be one’s own choice.

In Example (28), the participant seems to hold the belief that, if provided the wrong information, one can establish a prejudgement which is nothing personal, and therefore forgivable. However, if this prejudgement comes from the HEART, it is more likely to be corrupted by personal resentment.

When an idea is fixed or *shedding* ‘installed’ in one’s mind, such as in Examples (29) and (30), the BRAIN can act as a CPU that runs the program as a separate part of one’s internal mental activity. The Chinese word for computer is *diannao* literally means electric brain.

In Examples (29) and (30), the BRAIN is somewhat programmed with either a goal or a principle. The mental activities it houses seem to exist parallel to what the person is experiencing, either trying to achieve the goal or to make friends.

The other source domain concept found in the present data is the *gu* ‘bone’ which is also a body organ. Studies on conceptual metaphors that involve the bone are rare. However, the notions of bone and bone marrow are not unfamiliar to a non-medical person in Chinese culture. *Shenru gusui* ‘bone marrow deep’ and *kegu* ‘imprinted on the bone’ are very idiomatic ways of describing a unchangeable and unforgettable belief or memory.

The participants use the BONE to describe one’s personal opinion. It can express a firmly held belief, such as a sense of hierarchy in (31) or intragroup discrimination in (32):

- (31) a. *ju ge lizi laoban keyi jieshou yige guilao guimei*
 take one example boss can accept one Western man Western girl
zheme gen ta shuohua
 this to him talk
 ‘for example the boss can accept a Western man or a Western woman talking to him like this’

- b. *ta jieshou buliao yige huaren gen ta shuohua ta*
 he accept unable one ethnic Chinese to him talk he
guzili juede you jiejicengci
 firmly (lit. inside bone) think have hierarch
 ‘he can’t accept an ethnic Chinese talking to him (disrespectfully) he believes the hierarch’
- c. *jiu xiang wo guzili juede o shi*
 just like I firmly (lit. inside bone) think EP (he) is
huaren hen zao yiqian lai de huaren
 ethnic Chinese very early past come EP Chinese
 ‘like I believe (he) is ethnic Chinese an ethnic Chinese who came a long time ago’
- d. *wo guzili juede laoban shi wo shangji yijing*
 I firmly (lit. inside bone) think boss is my superior already
qianyimohua yi zhong xinlishang xiguan
 imperceptibly one kind psychological habit
 ‘I believe the boss is my superior is has already been imperceptibly held as a psychological habit’
- (32) a. *xianggang ren shi guzi limian juede*
 Hong Kong people are firmly (lit. inside bone) think
daluren de sushi tebiedi cha
 Mainland people AP public manner very bad
 ‘Hong Kong people believe that Mainland people have very poor public manners’

The BONE metaphors in Examples (31) and (32) imply stereotypical opinions. The speaker in Example (31) is of the opinion that the sense of hierarchy is more than just a simple observation, but a psychological habit that can never be changed between the speaker and his boss. With regard to intragroup discrimination, as the speaker in Example (32) claims, it seems to be impossible for people from opposing groups to alter group prejudices.

The “Book of *Han Feizi*”, very well-known ancient Chinese text attributed to a political philosopher, records an anecdote about a famous physician named Bian Que who lived in the 5th century B. C.. Bian Que was invited to see the ill Duke Huan and make a diagnosis. The physician said to the Duke, “*si mingzhisuoshu, wunaihe ye*” ‘your sickness is in your bones which is the deified judge of life, I cannot do anything’ (Watson, 1964). If a sickness lies as deep as the bones, it means it has developed into the final stage and made the illness fatal or incurable – which makes literal sense.

The conceptualisation of bones in these comments made by the participants and Chinese expressions and proverb is that the qualities carried by the BONE are

almost impossible to change. The physical location of the BONE at the inner-most part of the body is mapped onto the vital part of the issue. It could be argued that the speaker must possess schematic representations of the self and the subjective impression one has. Some idiosyncratic schematic representations, such as BONE-DEEP FOR FIRMLY ENGRAINED, can be the result of personal meaning-construction strategies of self-representation.

6.3 Discussion and conclusion

The analytical results show that different body parts can be used to refer to different subjective impressions with varied discursive purposes. The cognitive view of metaphor recognises that each pairing of source and target domains is not a random linguistic activity, but motivated by a cognitive reality. In addition, as researchers working in Cultural Linguistics have shown in their studies across different languages, these cognitive realities also converge on cultural beliefs across generations and are shared by people within the same cultural group (Sharifian, 2017; Sharifian et al., 2008).

The most noticeable cultural belief held by the present day Chinese immigrants is the bias towards the private self. The private self here can be regarded as the Chinese indigenous conception of the ego which contains negative instincts that one cannot govern. The word *si* ‘self’, once a self-deprecatory self-reference, now means selfishness in modern Mandarin which is a negative trait of the self. Avoiding negativity also forms part of the vocabulary with which the participants chose to present a favourable self-image.

A heavy discussion about the negative connotations of the private self can be traced back to the early phase of the 1900s when the debate on individuality rose to prominence. The debate was often centring upon the tension between collective identity and individual identity over the the advocacy of a self that is capable of operating entirely as a self-driven ego or a self that has the potential of evolving into a higher form of consciousness so as to benefit the nation.

Self-interested tendencies of an individual were often set as a target for criticism. Liang Qichao criticised that the human’s selfish aims made them innately immoral (Cua, 2013, p. 388). Lu Xun, another leading writer and literary critic in Republican China, furthered this criticism by regarding the self-benefiting nature as “aggressive instincts and faults” which have the “destructive power” to devour the efforts made by the revolutionary pioneers (Sun, 1986, p. 476).

The idea that being egocentric is bad and being selfless is virtuous permeates the Chinese communist propaganda where selflessness has been promoted as a socialist value to this day. Political slogans containing the notion of *wusi* ‘selfless(ness)’,

such as *wusifengxian* ‘selfless contribution’, have always been an integral part of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) political indoctrination.

It was also particularly popular during Mao’s rule (1949–1976). Mao condemned the so-called petty bourgeois selfishness from the early days of his leadership of the CCP and praised the working class as *dagongwusi* ‘completely selfless’.¹⁷ To be *wusi* ‘selfless’ was to aspire to altruism rather than to pursue their individual needs. Participants also regard *sixin* ‘self-benefiting intent’ as a negative trait and in this regard reflect both a modern Chinese and Maoist outlook.

In fact, the discussions of the moral meanings of the self and the selfless self can be traced to premodern Confucian teachings which have been reinterpreted in the twentieth century. Evaluating the moral qualities of the self has been a reoccurring topic in premodern Chinese thinking. Two well-known Confucian thinkers, Xunzi (314–217 BC) and Mengzi, also known as Mencius (372–289 BC), have opposite ideas about human nature.

Xunzi’s statement regarding *renzhixing’e* ‘human nature is evil’ can be considered as the opposite of Mencius’ belief in *xingshan* ‘human nature is good’ (Chong, 2008, p. 94). For Mencius, every human being is born with goodness, and therefore the state of nature embodies moral resources. For Xunzi, however, it is natural for people to indulge in their natural instincts which are therefore immoral and needing regulation by social norms.

As discussed in Chapter 3, the nation-building discourse of *guomin* ‘national citizen’ and *guominxing* ‘national character’ in modern China reflects a re-interpretation of some premodern ideas about the ideal relationship between self and society. To be self-aware in that historical context includes guarding against one’s immoral instinctive impulses. The view originates from the Social Darwinistic perspective.

The doctrine of Social Darwinism enables the conceptual interaction between modern nationhood and selfhood. It can be attributed to the organic analogy. The aforementioned immoral instincts as well as other personal experience, conduct, habits and traits can then be portaited as a transmissible totality of modern selfhood. The formulation of a “transmissible” character implies that descendants can be influenced by ancestors through *yichuan* ‘heredity’.

The present-day participants have spoken about some negative traits or impressions about Chinese people. These innate negative Chinese traits or impressions are more likely to cause them emotional discomfort, such as *dengji guannian* ‘a sense of hierarchy’ in Examples (18), (31) and (32). These remarks reflects an embodied view of the self as body organs are chosen to represent either the source of true

17. For Mao’s comment, see his 1949 article “On the People’s Democratic Dictatorship” (*Lun renmin minzhu zhuanzheng*)

feelings or the originator of firmly-held thoughts. Knowing the existence of hierarchy and not being able to do anything about it can “hurt one’s heart”. Having a hierarchical view of other people is a fault that is buried deep *guzili* ‘inside the bone’.

The imagination of personal flaws in the minds of the contemporary Chinese immigrant can be influenced by the nationalistic (and Social Darwinistic) perspective that sees culture as a matter of transmissible positive and negative traits, implied in the idea of *yichuanxing* ‘heredity’ and *guominxing* ‘national character’. The negative representations of a group of people’s “character” might have been internalised in their minds along with the transmission of the nation-building ideology.

Drawing on some premodern Chinese ideas of personhood in relation to the comments made by the project’s participants, while the participants produce their own cultural and social perceptions in their discussions, the cultural ways of expressing the self reflect the re-imagination of the premodern embodied view of the self.

From the perspective of embodied cognition, the HEART, the governor of all mental or psychological activities, is the best candidate to govern these negative emotions. The expression *xinli* ‘inside heart’, as a metonymic representation of the morality-bound person, represents an individual as a reasonable member of society who is able to keep bad feelings under control. The embodied metaphors of self in Chinese enhance a cognitive-cultural perspective, showing embodied conceptualisations of personhood achieved with the transmission of cultural ethos across discourses. The influence of the nationalistic perspectives that first became popular in late nineteenth and early twentieth century China can be contributing to forming the cultural context for re-conceptualising the embodied view of the Chinese self.

CHAPTER 7

Conceptualisations of the migrant identity

Chapter 7 explores the collective conceptualisations of the migrant identity as they emerge in social interactions. As revealed and discussed in the previous chapters, the participating Chinese immigrants display a strong sense of self-awareness in the cross-cultural comparative context. Drawing on comments from the current participants, it can be said that negotiating this self-awareness has also become an important aspect of constructing their migrant identity in Australia. Some of them are of the opinion that they are able to see issues and reasons not easily seen by non-Chinese or Chinese people from China. Participants turn their cross-cultural experiences into knowledge upon which they can build their unique sense of being as a migrated individual of Chinese origin in Australia.

Keywords: self-awareness, exemplar identity, cross-cultural context, conceptualisation

In light of the discursive perspective put forward in Chapter 2 of the current volume, the speakers' own collective positioning reflects their positioning of other locutionary agents as part of their imagined and idealised audience. As discussed in Chapter 4, the speakers use collective self-reference and categorical terms to invoke imagined cultural collectives with other participants. They jointly produce and reproduce their shared socio-cultural beliefs and values. It can be said that constructing these imagined positions forms the conceptual basis for negotiating the meanings of being a Chinese immigrant and their collective cultural properties. The current chapter continues the discussion of the conceptualisations of migrant identity by exploring the cognitive processes that facilitate the present cohort's stylistic ways of constructing collective positions in discourse.

Metaphorical and image-schematic structures that underlie linguistic representations of group membership convey certain spatial cognitions or the imagination of social-cultural spaces. Through examining the cognitive aspect of the participants' membership talk, this chapter examines the participants' imagined perspectives or viewpoints embedded in their interactions. Collective person references are found to be used together with multiple affixes or modifiers, especially spatial deixis, to negotiate appropriate collective self-representations. In short, the participants' descriptions of being Chinese immigrants manifest cognitive models for such identity construction.

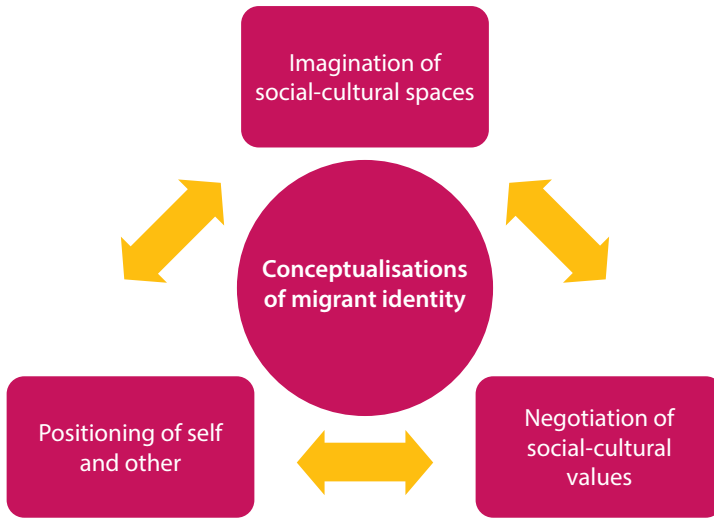


Figure 7. Conceptualisations of migrant identity

7.1 A BOUNDED AREA

The participants see themselves as people who originate from Mainland China. A great many references to the participants' migrant identity evoke a CONTAINER schematic structure. Social groups are conceptualised as occupying a bounded region in a space, and individuals are imagined to be either inside or outside this space (Chen, 2002; Martin, 1996).

7.1.1 A CULTURAL GROUP IS A BOUNDED AREA

Geographic origin is a prominent focal characteristic for an imagined collective. The terms *laowai* 'foreigner (literally old outsider)', *waiguoren* 'foreigner (literally outside country people)' and *guowairen* 'foreigner (literally country outsider)' are used 38 times in the data to describe people who do not share the same geographic origin as the speaker. In addition, the participants talk about *jinru* 'enter[ing]' a circle of people and *chulai* 'com[ing]' from a social background as if one's socio-cultural collective identity were a BOUNDED AREA.

- (1) a. *pangbian guilao a jiu gen ni meiguanxi de ren*
 nearby Westerner EP just with you nothing to do AP people
lao shuo zhongguo buhao
 always say China bad
 'Westerners people who have nothing to do with you always say China is bad'

- b. *ni jiu buai ting tebie buai ting*
 you just hate rather especially hate hear
 ‘you just hate hearing especially hate hearing’
- c. *ni meiyou cong na ge beijing chulai ni bushi*
 you not from that one background come out you not
zhongguoren ni bu liaojie
 Chinese you not know
 ‘you did not come out of that background you are not Chinese you don’t know’
- (2) a. *gen ni genben bushi yige difang de ren naxie xinjiapo*
 with you completely not same place AP people those Singapore
a huozhe malaixiya
 EP or Malaysia
 ‘(those) who are not from the same place as you those Singaporean or Malaysian’
- b. *shenzhi yixie naxie oumeiren jiu shi wenhua chayi*
 even some those Euro-American just is cultural difference
 ‘even some those Euro-American in matters of cultural differences’

The speaker in Example (1) finds that judgement of disputable issues by Western people can hurt her feelings, as if her own identity were under the threat. In light of the conceptual metaphor CULTURE GROUP IS BOUNDED AREA, a non-member’s judgment has acquired the meaning of trespassing the bounded area in the metaphorical sense. If an outsider trespasses on this zone by denouncing the characteristics of the group, it then constitutes a threatening action to this collective identity.

By contrast, another participant in the same focus group does not mind ideological and political differences among people of different geographic origin, as shown in Example (2). Two groups of people are metaphorically mapped onto two mutually excluding BOUNDED AREAS. Then people who are from a different group should normally reside in another BOUNDED AREA in which the speaker does not position themselves.

In the cross-cultural comparative context, a lot of participants represent themselves as understanding that disparities in social values are tied in closely with different social situations. Evoking group distinctions in airing one’s opinion, they seem to assume that people from different BOUNDED AREAS naturally do not share the same beliefs and values.

Some applied the CULTURE GROUP IS BOUNDED AREA metaphor to rationalise intra-group misunderstandings as a result of having different cultural backgrounds:

- (3) a. *women buhui buhui zai ta na ge wenhua fanchou limian*
 we won't won't at his that one cultural bound inside
qu kaolv
 go consider
 ‘we won't put ourselves **within** their **culturally bounded area** to consider’
- b. ... *benshen de wenhua fanwei nei you henduo ren zhe yang*
 ... self AP **cultural bound within** have many people this way
 ‘a lot of people **within** that **culturally bounded area** itself are like that’

The speaker in Example (3) recalls her initial cultural shock due to her lack of knowledge of the foreign cultural space. After gaining enough experience, she comes to the conclusion that what she did not like, namely not treating women with enough respect, is the norm in that foreign cultural space. She makes repeated reference to this **BOUNDED AREA** to convince the rest of the group that bias is a result of lacking in knowledge. Once the boundary is set, misunderstanding can be attributed to having a barrier. As far as her own imagined positioning is concerned, she has kept the host cultural space a foreign space to which she remains an observer.

7.1.2 The exclusiveness of the **BOUNDED AREA**

As discussed in the Chapter 2, speakers use inclusive collective self-references, thereby positioning themselves and the idealised audience as being part of an imagined cultural collective. From a metaphorical point of view, this collective identity which excludes non-member suggest that the idealised audience should exercise their common membership responsibility to guard the **BOUNDED AREA**. The exclusiveness of the **BOUNDED AREA** corresponds to preventing the “wrong people” from denouncing the shared membership.

The participants tend to invoke the Chinese migrant identity particularly to contrast *zhebianren* ‘people here’ which is a pervasive form of reference to the non-Chinese in Australia. From the discourse context, it can be inferred that speakers who use this reference do not fully consider themselves as part of the Australian cultural group. Even the proximal demonstratives *zhe* ‘this’ implies a sense of closeness to the deictic centre, *zhebianren* ‘people here’ is used to refer to an out-group that excludes the speaker.

This reference is found across all the group discussions, which reflects a conceptualisation of self-perceived location in space with regard to their collective identity in Australia.

- (4) a. *zhebianderen congxiaodaoda dou wuyouwulv shenme dou bu zuo*
 people here from little to big all carefree whatever all not do
ye e bu si
 also starve not die
 ‘people here live a carefree life all their lives won’t starve to death even not doing anything’
- b. *suoyi ta hen nan lijie ni cong yazhou beijing guolai*
 so he very hard understand one from Asian background come
de zhezhong youhuan yishi nalilai de
 AP this worrying aware where come
 ‘so he finds it hard to understand the awareness of potential danger people who come from Asia have’
- (5) a. *women gengduo haishi ruxiangsuisu keneng buhui*
 we more 1 ikely do what the villagers do probably won’t
keyi ba women de wenhua nong guolai
 deliberately bring our AP culture bring here
 ‘we are more likely “do what the villagers do” probably won’t deliberately bring our culture here’
- b. *zenme shuo na jiu shi tamen zenmeyang women gengduo shi*
 how say that just is they how to do we more are
shiying tamen
 adapt them
 ‘that is to say with respect to how them do we are more likely to adapt to them’

Both speakers of consider themselves to have exited one cultural space and entered another (Line b in Example (4) and Line a in Example (5)), evidenced by them saying *cong* ‘from’ and *guolai* ‘come here’. The proposition *cong* ‘from’ suggests moving away from the original deictic centre. The spatial verb *guolai* ‘come here’ encodes a social anchor in a communicative act. As previous studies have shown the spatial deictic verb *lai* ‘come’ is extensively used in coding social relationships in space in Chinese (Zhou & Fu, 1996). The term *guolai* ‘come here’ in these two examples indexes a common goal for the speaker and the addressees. Both speakers not only regard themselves as entering a foreign space but also position the rest of the audience as sharing the same experience. Therefore, the BOUNDED AREA metaphor also contributes to construct an idealised social identity for the imagined audience with whom the speaker share the same set of values and beliefs.

In addition, the collective self-reference *women* ‘we’ or ‘our’ which is used by the speaker in Example (5) can be seen to foreground a cultural space which is shared by himself and the addressees. Therefore, not only do they have the

cross-cultural experience in common, they also share an imagined cultural location within the host country. This cultural location is a result of forming imagined ties between people who have the shared value and life experience through collective self-representation – Chinese immigrants in Australia – in the context of the present study.

The conceptualisation of the Chinese identity in terms of a BOUNDED AREA excludes the non-Chinese Australians. It allows only a certain number of people to share the same collective identity and generates imagined meanings associated with this alleged collective cultural identity. Alienating Westerners from one’s imagined positioning, the Chinese in-group creates a safe zone for the Chinese participants to talk about their personal views and observations about non-Chinese. The repetitive use of the inclusive collective self-reference demonstrates an effort to build online imagined spaces that can accommodate shared values and beliefs. These spaces can create reference points for discussions around collective identities national-politically, socio-culturally, generationally and so forth.

The reference to non-Chinese, *waiguoren* ‘foreigner’, as mentioned at the beginning of this section, also reflects the speaker’s spatial conceptualisation of Chinese and non-Chinese. It should be noted that these so-called *waiguoren* ‘foreigners’ are mostly the non-Chinese Australians who are in actual fact the local people in Australia. The participants habitually call them by the terms *waiguoren* ‘foreigner’ or *laowai* ‘foreigner (literally old foreigner)’ in Australia. The underlying spatial orientation that is embedded in *laowai* ‘foreigner (literally old foreigner)’ reinforces social distance.

7.2 Viewpoints and perspectives in space

In the data, the terms and expressions that the participants use contain a mixture of viewpoints (Dancygier, 2008; Verhagen, 2005). They are expressed by *zhe* ‘this’ and *na* ‘that’ which are common Chinese demonstratives to indicate the distance of the object from the speaker.

7.2.1 The space in discourse

Zhe ‘this’ and *na* ‘that’ are found to be the typical discourse deixis for the in-group and out-group people, casting a metaphorical distance between the imagined “other” and the speakers. The distance signifies a dis-alignment with the outsiders’ socio-cultural beliefs and values.

- (6) a. *yiban nianqingren keneng mei nazhong zhongzuqishi*
 in general young people probably not **that** kind racial prejudice
 ‘in general young people probably don’t hold **that** kind of racial prejudice’
- b. *ye youkeneng nianqingren geng jieshou zhezhong duoyuanwenhua*
 also possible young people more accept **this** kind multiculturalism
 ‘it is also possible that young people are more acceptive to **this** kind of multiculturalism’
- c. *danshi naxie laonianren jiu taoyan yinduren ranhou qici*
 but **those** older people just dislike Indian then next
jiushi musilin
 just are Muslim
 ‘but **those** older people dislike Indians next is Muslims’
- (7) a. *wo juede jiushi yinshi fangmian ye you henduo buyiyang de*
 I think just like eating aspects also has many difference AP
 <@@>
 <laughing quality>
 ‘I think there are lots of differences in terms of food’
- b. *xiang bifangshuo heshui xiang women huaren bijiao xihuan*
 like for example drinking like **we ethnic Chinese** rather like
he wenshui huo hecha zhexie
 drink warm water or tea **these**
 ‘take drinking as an example **we ethnic Chinese** like drinking warm water or tea **these** things’
- c. *tamen jiu xihuan he na ge bingshui ranhou wo jiu*
they just like drink **that** one icy water then I just
gaobudong na ge
 can’t understand **that** one
 ‘(but) **they** like drinking **that** icy water and I can’t understand **that**’

Racial discrimination and tolerance in Example (6), and different drinking habits in Example (7), are prefixed by spatial deixis. The attitude the speaker disagrees with is prefixed by *na* ‘that’ and that which the speaker prefers is labelled *zhe* ‘this’. The terms *naxie* ‘those’ for plural and *na ge* ‘that one’ for singular both assume an anaphoric function in signalling discourse reference.

Spatial deixis also metaphorically encode distance based on cognitive representations of group identity. Both speakers define people who do not share their group values and habits or whose opinions are in sharp contrast to those of the locutionary co-participants as “those”, thereby placing “them” at a distance from “us”.

Deictic forms such as *zhexie* ‘these’ and *naxie* ‘those’ are highly situated in the discourse context. In a context where collective identity is invoked, their discourse value is built on the socio-culturally driven evaluation of in-groups and out-groups. For example, the use of *zhe* ‘this’ and *na* ‘that’ in (8) clearly demonstrates how the speaker marks the boundary of different groups that endorse different values:

- (8) a. *guonei* *de henduo guizhangzhidu meiyou*
China (lit. within the country) AP many rules not
zhebian de yange
here (lit. this side) AP strict
 ‘rules and regulations in **China (lit. within the country)** are not as strict as the ones **here**’
- b. *henduoren bu an guize banshi zhebian dou shi*
 many people not stick to rules do things **here (lit. this side)** all are
anzhao hen yange de guize banshi
 stick to very strict AP rules do things
 ‘lots of people (in China) don’t follow the rules (people) **here** follow strict rules’
- c. *guonei jiu meiyou zhezhong yishi*
China (lit. within the country) just not **this** kind awareness
 ‘but (people) **in China** do not have **this** kind of awareness’
- d. *erqie guonei naxie ren ye meiyou*
 also **China (lit. within the country)** those people also not
zhezhong zeren
this kind responsibility
 ‘also **those people in China (lit. within the country)** don’t have **this** sense of responsibility’

This use of spatial reference is arguably signalling an epistemic distance represented in two mental spaces. The current speaker, anchoring the deictic centre, imagines a new mental space represented by *naxie ren* ‘those people’ perceived as distant from the speaker’s viewpoint. The newly evoked mental space is then distanced epistemically.

The distance of the two mental spaces represents a difference in knowledge which allows the speaker to imagine the contrast between the people in China and those in Australia. From the speaker’s viewpoint, *naxie ren* ‘those people’ show a lack of *zhezhong yishi* ‘this awareness’ anchored to the speaker’s deictic centre. The speaker’s observation that several regulations are not followed properly by the people in China then constitutes criticism of the people in China who do not uphold law-abiding values.

Spatial deixis may also complement deictic pronouns to meet communicative demands in a culture (Zhou, 2002, p. 64). For example, the speaker of (9) embeds

herself among migrants who found work very soon in terms of *women zhezhong* ‘this kind of us’ to appear modesty:

- (9) a. *xianzai xiangqilai wo qishi hen xingyun*
 now thinking of I in fact very lucky
 ‘now thinking in retrospect I am in fact very lucky’
- b. *xiang women zhezhong yi biye jiu zhaodao gongzuo de*
 like us this kind as soon as graduate found job AP
hen shao
 very few
 ‘people like us who found a job immediately upon graduation are rare’

The particular group represented by the collective self-reference *women zhezhong* ‘this kind of us’ is unspecified. *Zhezhong* ‘this kind’ implies one of many kinds, and that the speaker happens to be in this particular group defined by “lucky”. She not only minimises her individual identity, thereby demonstrating politeness, she also extends her modesty to those in the audience who are as lucky as herself by evoking this shared space, in which case *zhezhong* ‘this kind’ does not necessarily foreground a privileged group identity.

7.2.2 Social proximity across cultural groups

The use of spatial demonstratives *zhe* ‘here’ or ‘this’ and *na* ‘there’ or ‘that’ together with demographic terms metaphorically evokes a spatial distance between imagined collectives. In this light, the deictic centre for the meanings represented by spatial demonstratives is not simply based on the speaker’s geographic location, i.e. Australia. Spatial demonstratives in fact reflect the speaker’s reading of social proximity across cultural groups:

- (10) a. *gongzuodehua qishi wo bushi hen zaihu shi wei zhongguoren*
 workwise in fact I not very care am for Chinese
dagong haishi zhebian dangdiren
 work for or here (lit. this side) local
 ‘with regard to work I don’t really care whether I’m working for Chinese or for locals here’
- b. *shenghuo yeshi wo juede bu paichi keyi duo jiao jige*
 life also I think not reject can more make a few
gegou de pengyou
 various countries AP friend
 ‘in life I also don’t mind having more friends from various countries’

- (11) a. *qishi wo ganjue pubian laishuo zhebian aozhouren*
 in fact I feel generally speaking here (lit. this side) Australia
tamen anquangan bu qiang
 they sense of security not strong
 ‘in fact I feel generally speaking **Australians here** they are lacking in a
 sense of security’
- b. *tamen paiwai ye shi yinwei haipai jinzheng gaibian*
 they reject foreigner also is because fear competition change
tamen xihuan anyi de shenghuo
 they like easy AP life
 ‘**they** reject foreigners because of the fear for competition and change **they**
 like the easy life’

Zhebian ‘here’ is used in reference to local Australians, such as in the utterances in (10) and (11), in which case the deictic reference is indicative of the speakers’ perception of the distance between the Chinese and non-Chinese communities in Australia. The speaker in (10) distinguishes Chinese bosses from local Australian bosses (Line a). Chinese bosses are also in Australia, therefore technically they should also have been classified as *zhebian* ‘here’ if the participant’s physical location functions as the deictic centre.

The absence of *zhebian* ‘here’ before the Chinese group in Australia signals a difference in terms of the degree of deviation from the deictic centre. *Zhebian* ‘here’ indicates the difference in terms of the speaker’s proximity to *zhongguoren* ‘Chinese people’ and *dangdiren* ‘local people’, in which case the speaker might consider the Chinese people as further away from the deictic centre while the non-Chinese Australians are closer.

In contrast to this subtle self-perceived distinction, the speaker in (11) is more explicit in positioning herself away from the deictic centre. The proximal use of *zhebian* ‘here’ set the deictic centre as the speaker’s location, while the repetition of the collective other-reference *tamen* ‘they’ keeps “them” separate from “us”. Therefore, it can be said that the use of this deictic expression reflects a distinction between the Chinese in Australia as one group and local Australians as another at the conceptual level. The imagined “us” is positioned as away from the deictic centre of the Australian space.

Having said that, the comments the participants make also show they do not seem to construct collective identities as a false rationale for intragroup alienation. In fact, their code-switching to the English word *local* indicates that the distinction between “local” and “non-local” is gradable, rather than that of a pair of complementary antonyms.

- (12) a. *wo cong bulisiban guolai de shihou nabian jiu hai shi*
 I from Brisbane come AP time there (lit. that side) just still is
hen <E local E> de
 very local
 ‘I was in Brisbane before I came (to Melbourne) it is still quite local over there’
- b. *wo lai le moerben lian lubiao haiyou jichang <E sign E>*
 I come PP Melbourne even street sign also airport sign
quanbu you zhongwen
 completely have Chinese
 ‘I came to Melbourne (and found that) a lot of street signs and airport signs are all in Chinese’

The speaker in (12) compares the two cities she knows quite well and concludes that Brisbane is more “local” (or less multicultural) than Melbourne. There is of course no clear boundary between being multicultural and monocultural or being “local”, the description of monocultural Brisbane reflects an impressionistic judgment of relative monoculturalism.

7.2.3 From the perspective of *women zhebian* ‘we here’

Regarding themselves as Chinese expats in Australia, the participants talked about their view on cross-cultural differences as a knowledgeable migrant. The rest of this subsection will examine the conceptualisation of this migrant identity that is anchored temporally and conceptually by *women zhebian* ‘we here’. *Women zhebian* ‘we here’ constitutes an active mental space that accommodates the participants’ immigration experience.

First, the establishment of the mental space *women zhebian* ‘we here’ is a result of conceptual integration (Fauconnier & Turner, 1998, 2002). The two input spaces are the deictic coordination space anchored by *zhebian* ‘here’ and the common identity shared by the interlocutors indexed by *women* ‘we’. Both mental spaces feature a homogenising quality. Information from the two input spaces is selectively projected onto the newly blended space, a collective imagination of *women zhebian* ‘we here’ that presupposes discourse alignment.

On the other hand, the imagination of *tamen nabian* ‘they there’ is a result of a conceptual integration that recruits dis-alignment. Examples (13) and (14) contain two opposing voices represented by *women zhebian* ‘we here’ and *tamen nabian* ‘they there’ respectively. From an imagined positioning point of view, these two examples show that the speakers are talking to an imagined audience which includes other present conversation partners.

- (13) a. *he women zhebian mai dongxi de xuqiu shi buyiyang de*
 and we here (lit. this side) buy things AP need is different AP
 ‘(when) we here (have) to purchase (our needs are) different from (their needs)’
- (13) b. *ni huiqu zhihou jiu wen mai fang le ma/*
 you go back after then ask buy house PP IP <rising tone>
 ‘(people) ask you when you go back “have you bought a house”’
- (14) a. *yinwei tamen nabian shenghuo de huanjing bei*
 because they there (lit that side) living AP environment prep
xuanran le
 affect PP
 ‘because they are infected by the living environment there’
- b. *jiu juede rensheng hundao zhe ge nianling yinggai you zhe ge*
 just think life up to this one age should have this one
you na ge
 have that one
 ‘(people) thinks that if one has come to this age of one’s life one should have this and that’

Women zhebian ‘we here’ constructs a mental space that is based on alignment with inclusive imagined audience. *Tamen nabian* ‘they there’ constructs another mental space that excludes people from another imagined cultural collective, namely the Chinese people in China. These two spaces are blended spaces. According to Conceptual Integration Theory, conceptual blending gives rise to new lines of reasoning not available in any of the input spaces alone (Dancygier, 2008, p. 168). Reflecting upon the Chinese people’s characteristics and lifestyles as an observer within the cross-cultural context can be projected as being in juxtaposition, and can now be presented as the reality and thus available as a target of criticism.

In sociolinguistic terms, discursive positioning works at two levels, namely the positioning of speakers with respect to the locally co-present audience and the positioning of the co-present audience with respect to absent audiences (Irvine, 1996; Jaffe, 2009). Drawing on these two dimensions of discursive positioning, the aforementioned variation of insider and outsider perspectives can be attributed to the speakers’ conceptualisation of cultural spaces which involve either the co-present audience or other absent audiences.

The collective imagination of *women zhebian* ‘we here’ present the speakers and the co-present audience as discerning members of this imagined collective. Mainland Chinese are then imagined as the absent audience. The activation of this spatial representation marks a socially-oriented effort on the speakers’ part to align and dis-align with certain beliefs and values. This imagined collective anchors a

migrant viewpoint for critically observing norms depicted as typical of Mainland Chinese people.

By the same principle, the participants can also imagine an Australian space (see Example (13) of this chapter). Doing so, they critique norms that supposedly originate from another absent audience, the non-Chinese Australians, to which neither the speakers nor the present audiences belong. Positioning themselves as away from the deictic centre of the Australian space, they should view what they perceive Australian values as being in sharp contrast to their own. As shown above, being away from the deictic centre can be a metaphorical way of showing a social dis-alignment or disapproval of values and beliefs that characterise that imagined cultural area.

Although the participants metaphorically describe themselves as located within the “territory” of their ethnicity, this should not be perceived as a fixed socio-psychological categorisation. Rather, the evocation of imagined collectives is part of the interactive and relative social performance. The participants put on these performances to negotiate their collective values and beliefs amongst themselves. This relative insight which may be prompted by swift perspective-taking reminds us not to over-generalise the power of space, which in many cases helps interlocutors to make intuitive sense. It may not constitute a fixed cognitive model for the imagination of cultural groups by which we operate.

7.2.4 From the perspective of “others”

The participants made some comments about the need to see from various perspectives which on the conceptual level corresponds to having different imagined viewpoints. Having these imagined viewpoints is a way to process contrasting views and opinions. The participants even exercised a great deal of moral reasoning about what they perceived as the “correct” thing to do.

One participant described the enrichment of knowledge that comes from contrasting perceptions of one’s culture and country as her motivation to study abroad; another participant says she would encourage non-Chinese who are overtly critical of China to adopt a Chinese perspective. In general, the participants uphold the principle of being *keguan* ‘objective’ which for her is the correct attitude when coming to an opinion about China.

Chapter 3 has discussed the moral reasoning for forming correct attitudes from a narrative point of view, which can be said as suggesting a process of self-reflection. Self-reflection, in this light, is an intersubjective construction of the narrative self. Forming the correct opinion amidst mixed viewpoints reflects the construal of several collectives. The current audience are idealised as belonging to the same

imagined Chinese collective who would then be regarded as ordinarily sharing the same insider perspective.

As for embracing other “viewing angle” towards China, it is presumably shared by non-Chinese people in Australia. That is, beyond the immediate audience, there lie other absent audiences namely non-Chinese people in Australia. The newly blended mental space for the absent audience is idealised as having the viewpoints that the idealised Chinese cultural space does not have. The idealisation of an absent Australian space activates the co-present audience’s immigration experience and their exposure to contrasting views and opinions. The act of comprehending the “other” viewpoint then acquires the metaphorical meaning of having novel or privileged knowledge.

It is also easier to comprehend discrimination and stereotyping from the imagined “other” by incorporating a mixture of imagined viewpoints. Some participants put forward a hypothetical situation where they could change positions with local Australians, imagining themselves in the position of locals in order to understand their perspective. On the conceptual level, this transposition might reflect an ego-centric perspective transformation, the imagined movement of one’s point of view in relation to the other object (Kozhevnikov, Motes et al., 2006). The participants’ cross-cultural experience has given them information that facilitates the construction of various imagined viewpoints.

Other participants comment on stereotyping as a universal malice, suggesting that stereotyping is a result of imagining group distinctions.

- (15) a. S1 *xianggang ren shi guzi limian jue de*
 Hong Kong people are firmly (lit. inside bone) think
daluren de sushi tebiedi cha
 Mainland people AP public manner very bad
 ‘Hong Kong people believe that Mainland people have very poor public manners’
- b. S2 *juede women xiang baofahu nazhong ganjue*
 think we resemble new money that kind feel
chushoukuochuo dan qishi doushi tuhao
 spending lavishly but in fact all are nouveau riche
 ‘(they) think that we are like new money who spend big, but are in fact all nouveau riche’
- c. S1 *yiye baofu*
 became rich overnight
 ‘became rich overnight’
- d. S3 *zhongguo ge sheng zhijian dou you zhe yang de*
 China different province between all have this way AP
 ‘it is the same across provinces in China’

- e. S2 *dui ge sheng dou hui zhe yang dou hui paiwai*
 right different province all will this way all will **reject outsider**
 right all the provinces are all this way (they) all **reject people from elsewhere**'
- f. S1 *qishi aozhou ye shi ba moerben xini*
 in fact Australia also is EP Melbourne Sydney
 'in fact it is also the case in Australia such as Melbourne and Sydney'
- g. S3 *dui dou yiyang de moerben de ren dou hen qiaobuqi*
 right all the same AP Melbourne AP people all very despise
bulisiban de ren
 Brisbane AP people
 'right (people in Australia are) the same Melbourne people all despise people from Brisbane a lot'

Due to the widespread consumerism in Mainland China, new stereotypes about Chinese people are emerging, such as *tuhao* 'nouveau riche' and *fu'erdai* 'second generation rich'. In Example (15), several imagined collectives can be detected, such as people from Hong Kong, people from Mainland China, people from different cities in China, and people from different states in Australia. According to these participants, all of these imagined groups of people are defined by regional characteristics. People can be on the offender's side or the victim's side; it only depends on which perspective one takes. Previous research into perspective-taking and spatial language has shown spatial language inevitably involving implicit or explicit perspective alignment, which can be learned or invented through linguistic negotiation (Steels & Loetzsch, 2008).

7.3 The exemplar identity

The previous sections have discussed the spatial structures for metaphorical reasoning that underlie imagined group identification. The findings suggest that collective identities may be constructed in order to show alignment or dis-alignment with certain socio-cultural beliefs and values. Maintaining exclusiveness metaphorically corresponds to keeping the imagined non-members on the outside of the bounded area. Participants negotiate cross-cultural experiences with regard to contrasting views and opinions by construing a number of mental spaces – some imaginarily include the speakers as well as other immediate present audience members and some do not. This final part of the chapter will focus on the role of imagined positions in performances of being an appropriate member of a group.

As far as their group identity is concerned, participants accept their non-mainstream identity quite comfortably when referring to themselves as Chinese

immigrants. For example, the term *ben/dangdiren* ‘local people’ for non-Chinese Australians is used by most of the participants (4 out of 5 groups), which reveals their non-centralised position in terms of imagining their migrant identity in Australia. In other words, they see themselves as occupying the marginal position within the Australian society, away from the so-called *ben/dangdiren* ‘local people’ which represent the mainstream.

As mentioned in the previous chapters, when the participants face criticism from non-Chinese members of the Australian society, they often put forward self-respect as a counter measure which includes respecting and valuing what they perceive as making them “Chinese”. Drawing on comments from the current participants, it can be said that negotiating self-consciousness, self-cultivation and self-respect is an important aspect of their identity construction in Australia.

According to the comment one participant made, she is now more conscious of her sense of self and her Chinese identity than she ever was. The collective identity of being Chinese can emerge together with her sense of being a unique individual. Some participants claim Chinese cultural characteristics as something “of their own”. This can be seen in the following excerpts:

- (16) a. *shouxian women buneng fouding zijide wenhua buneng fouding zhe*
 first we cannot negate own culture cannot negate this
zhang zhongguo lian
 piece Chinese face
 ‘first we cannot negate one’s own culture cannot negate this Chinese face’
- b. *name ni bensen zai qu fouding bieren yiding*
 then we (lit. you) self again go negate other people definitely
hui qiaobuqi
 will despise
 ‘if we negate ourselves others will definitely look down upon us (lit. you)’
- (17) a. *erqie jiuxiang ta zhiqian jiang de keneng hui you yi zhong*
 and just like she before say PP maybe will have one kind
zerengan
 sense of responsibility
 also like what she said before (we) might have a sense of responsibility’
- b. *ni yinggai zenme gen renjia tixian women ziji guojia*
 you should how with others show our own country
de youshi
 AP strength
 ‘you should show others the strength of our own country’

The speaker in Example (16) argues that the so-called *zijide wenhua* ‘own culture’ belongs to every affective part of the imagined collective “we”, saying “no” to such

a collective enterprise is to show disrespect to the collective. In this participant's imaginations, non-Chinese can also see these "negative" cultural characteristics and might use them as a reason to disrespect Chinese people. Self-respect, in this context, stands as a counter measure which includes respecting and valuing what they perceive as making them "Chinese". The speaker presents herself as well as her hearers purposefully as authentic members of their country of origin. This positioning could be read as a means of performing her authentic membership by demonstrating qualities which cannot be easily accessible to *renjia* 'others', people who are construed as non-Chinese.

Now, let us turn to performances of the collective self-representations by speakers who position themselves and their co-present audiences against other absent audiences. Building on the viewpoint model discussed in the previous section, one implication of construing absent audiences in terms of an Australian space or a Mainland Chinese space is that the speakers present their own observation or criticism as though it came from the imagined others. Corresponding to the use of the distal *na* 'that' as a distancing strategy, the proximal *zhe* 'this' is found with references to imagined collectives that bring the speaker and hearers into the same spatio-temporal location, further defining the characteristics of their imagined collective:

- (18) a. *erqie wo xiangxin women zhe yidai dou shi dusheng zinv*
 also I believe we this generation all are single children
 'also I believe this generation of ours is mostly single-children'
- b. *henduo babamam dou zhidao tamende ernv zhangda le yihou*
 many parents all know their children grow up PP after
ye meiyou nengli qu yang tamen
 also not capably go support them
 'many parents all know that their children are not capable of supporting them when they're older'
- c. *yinwei tamen xianzai lian fangzi dou maibuqi*
 because them now even house all can't afford
 'because they can't even afford to buy houses now'

The first person inclusive pronoun *women* 'we' expresses similarity between the speaker and hearer's experiences, and proximal form *zhe* 'this' alludes to closeness between the speaker and the hearer (Tao, 1999). The newly evoked collective, namely *women zhe yidai* 'our generation (literally this generation of ours)', replaces a generic collective which otherwise does not entail the quality of any particular generation. This collective have gone through conceptual integration where the co-participants' common experiences are evoked and absorbed.

Conceptual integration gives rise to a new indexical claim that *women* 'we' takes on in the current discursive activity. An indexical claim can either invoke a

pre-existing value or stake a claim to a new one (Eckert, 2008, p. 464). The new value which is absorbed in the newly formed mental space represented by *women zhe yidai* ‘our generation’ might be a sense of responsibility to act as an exemplar of this imagined cultural-generational group. One can exercise the shared cultural norms, so long as one perceives oneself as being an appropriate member of that cultural group. These shared cultural norms are constantly negotiated by the imagined in-group members.

As discussed earlier, participants draw on their cross-cultural experience and negotiate the meaning of a Chinese immigrant identity. They have been quite sensitive to flaws that Mainland Chinese people are perceived to exhibit. The participants’ heightened self-consciousness in the cross-cultural comparative context might result from the narrative process of reflecting upon their own “pitfalls” that the imagined “them” (non-Chinese Australians) can utilise against the participants. Some actually proposed a counter strategy:

- (19) a. *yexu ni ziji zuode bijiaohao*
 perhaps one (lit. you) self do better
 ‘if we/oneself can do better’
 b. *ta ye hui you yixie gaiguan*
 he/she also will have some change of opinion
 ‘he/she can change their view’

This counter measure relies on self-perfection. The participant in Example (20) calls on all fellow Mainland Chinese immigrants to exercise the role of *cultural exemplar*.

- (20) a. *wo juede zhe qujueyu women xianzai zai zhebian dai de liuxia de*
 I think this up to us now at here live AP stay AP
ren nuli
 people effort
 ‘I think it is up to us the ones that stay here to make efforts (to change the bad impression)’
 b. *haiyou jiushi zai lai de ren suizhi shibushi*
 also just like at come AP people public manners whether
you tigao
 have improve
 ‘also depending on whether those who come whether he can improve their public manners’
 c. *women shenshang de louxi jiushi buguang liu zai*
 we on the body AP bad habits just like no matter stay at
zhebian de
 here AP
 ‘we have bad habits not only do people who stay here (have)’

- d. *haiyou jiushi yao guolai de ren he gang guolai de ren*
 and just like want come AP people and recently come AP people
nanmian dou hui you
 unavoidably all will have
 ‘people that are coming also have and people who just arrived unavoidably have (bad habits)’
- e. *rang women yanzhong de waiguoren kan de buxiguan huozhe juede*
 make our eyes in AP foreigners see PP uneasy or think
women zhende hen cha
 we really very bad
 ‘make foreigners in our eyes (find things that make them) uneasy and consider us really bad’
- f. *queshi women yao chengren you henduo women meiyou zuo de*
 indeed we need admit have many we not do PP
henhao de
 very well PP
 ‘we should indeed admit that there are lots that we haven’t done very well’
- g. *youyixie women yixie chuantong buhao de xiguan shi xuyao qu*
 some we some tradition bad AP habit are need go
gai de
 change PP
 ‘some of our traditions and bad habits need to change’

Confucian and other traditional Chinese teachings place a great deal of significance on self-cultivation, through which one can develop into a person worthy of respect. This process is called *xiushen* ‘self-cultivation’. Confucian self-cultivation is a process in which a person becomes a *junzi* ‘exemplary individual’. To become an exemplary individual is a self-directed search for one’s sense of worth (Brindley, 2009). However, there is no way that the individual could seek to achieve perfection or hope to realise their full value or cultivate their own moral self alone. Such a pursuit has to fit into the bigger picture of humanity as a whole and into the universal cultivation of individual moral behaviour according to different social roles (Brindley, 2009). These are persons of moral and cultural distinction who act as moral exemplars and fulfil their societal functions (Raphals, 2014).

This cultural value is still held by many Chinese immigrants. As mentioned earlier, they see themselves as not only responsible for their individual image, but also their contribution to a collective image. Self-image is particularly important, since by being an exemplar self, achieved from self-cultivation, one can win respect from others. As for participants’ collective positioning, it is more appropriate to say that acting as a *cultural exemplar* is integral to their collective cultural imagination.

The participant in Example (20) positions herself as a member of *women zhebian* ‘we here’ (Line a), who are able to see the flaws among different sub-groups of Chinese people, namely the new-comers, and those who are about to come to Australia (Lines c and d). As discussed previously, *women zhebian* ‘we here’ represents a newly evoked mental space. The speaker and audience members are presented as exemplars of the imagined collective. The activation of this spatial representation serves the speaker’s need for social alignment. The blending process can also give rise to new lines of reasoning, such as we are better representatives of Chinese than the people in China. The social meanings for this exemplar identity converge with the attitudes, beliefs and values that are associated with the imagined collective *women zhebian* ‘we here’. The indexical use of the inclusive *women* ‘we’ constitutes a set of shared socio-cultural values that are uniquely “ours”.

7.4 The exemplar identity and beyond

Taking into account the socio-cultural aspect of the imagined positioning of Mainland Chinese people and non-Chinese Australians as distinct groups of “other”, it is argued that social alienation carries with it elements of contemporary Chinese people’s moral reasoning which transcend the current discursive context.

The participants’ emphasis on being morally correct bears similarities to discussions about the moral value of selfhood in the early twentieth century China. These similarities are indicative of the ongoing influence of the latter on present-day discourse of self-perception. In the context of the May Fourth period, intellectuals engaged in the search for moral rectitude by engaging in the negative imagining of traditional Chinese society which implied that the future generations could have a better future provided the intellectual legacies from previous generations are kept alive. To be self-aware in this discourse is to be keenly aware of the burdens of the Chinese nation, and how it used to be humiliated by powerful foreign exploiters. An important part of the discourse for expressing self-awareness in modern China is to be aware of the shame of China as a weak and war-torn country.

The participants all received formal education in China before coming to Australia for higher education, which would not have been possible without their own academic excellence or their families’ financial wealth. Since they are tertiary-educated Chinese who consider themselves more knowledgeable than the common people in China, it can be argued that their criticism of China constitutes social positioning seeking moral rectitude. *Youguo youmin* ‘worry about the country and worry about its people’ reflects a moral attitude of Chinese intellectuals who engaged in political movements in modern and contemporary China (Cheek,

1992; G. Davies, 2007; Schwarcz, 1986; Tu, 1991). It is also a reoccurring theme in the contemporary state education.

The role of *cultural exemplar*, in this light, has a cultural heritage embedded in the discourse of fulfilling a modern Chinese individual's moral responsibility. The idea of an *exemplar* can be seen as a group-level conceptualisation, or as an instance of cultural schema (Sharifian, 2003, 2011). From the perspective of Cultural Linguistics, cultural schemas are a synthesis of the individual members' language production also displays the cultural cognition that characterises the cultural group(s) he or she identifies with.¹⁸

18. A cultural linguistic examination of the role schema of an exemplar can be found in Lu (2017).

CHAPTER 8

From perceptual to socio-cultural cognition

The final chapter summarises the integration of cognitive linguistic and sociolinguistic analytical methods as an approach that can pinpoint the conceptual patterns of the self in Chinese. This socio-cognitive discourse approach addresses the conceptualisation of the self and its designated cognitive patterns in Chinese. It is argued that these conceptual patterns form the basis for the manifestation of the self in socio-discursive acts.

Keywords: the self, socio-cultural cognition, positioning, cultural imagination

The current study explores the concept of self. In light of sociolinguistic studies of identity construction in language interaction, the present volume has applied discursive approaches found in recent identity studies related to language socialisation and has uncovered linguistic representations of the self in Chinese and other identifiers for Chinese immigrants to enact a self-image in interaction. Cognitive linguistic proposals of the embodied conceptualisation of the self inform the conceptual analysis, which explores the conceptual models corresponding to linguistic representations of identity and social relationships. In brief, the current study demonstrates that social reality arises from social interaction, and provides with linguistic analysis of the self as a constituent relational plurality, which emerges gradually out of social interactions.

Section 8.1 presents the rationale for adopting performance analysis in relation to the role of the positioning subject in the discursive production of self-representations. It also illustrates the interpretive approach for explaining socio-cultural values that are mediated through the pragmatic enactment of social identities. Section 8.2 centres the discussion of the socio-cognitive approach on establishing the reference frame in discourse. Section 8.3 raises the awareness of the complexity of self in the diaspora discourse where many viewpoints can lead linguistic investigation to different culturally oriented conceptualisation models of personhood and many other alternative realities.

8.1 The self in language and culture

In their interactions with one another, the participants draw on their cross-cultural experiences to co-construct their individual sense of self. Their stylistic ways of representing the self not only reflect their understandings of Chinese socio-cultural discursive rules, but also display socio-culturally formed constructions, unveiling socio-cognitive processes of conceptualising and reconceptualising enduring and emerging cultural beliefs. The present study has adopted the positioning approach, which takes into account the dynamic cognitive process into the reflexive process of social judgment. Conceptual models such as conceptual metaphors, conceptual metonymies and image schemas, can be activated and negotiated in construing aspects of personalised and situational self in context.

8.1.1 The self in language

The positioning of self is the foundation in one's social life. Recent developments in the domain of social psychological theorisation of self-representation shows that aspects of the self and its configurations can be brought together as sharing the same cognitive alignment and distributional basis (Gaertner et al., 2012, p. 997). People define themselves as independent social agents, interdependent partners of dyadic relationships, and interconnected members of social groups. Within this framework, socio-cultural contexts are motivational sources for the speakers to position themselves appropriately.

Agency, evaluation and perception are critical elements in the understanding of a positioning subject. With regard to agency, the cognitive mechanism of positioning can be referred to as a categorisation process. For instance, some social psychologists use the term social categorisation to define the ways in which each individual finds a place in the social world (Turner, Oakes, Haslam, & Mcgarty, 1994). In broader terms, each individual actively engages in social activities and perceives various social contexts. Individuals seek definitions of their own in terms of his or her contextual properties, the process of which subsequently produces social identities.

It is beyond the current study's scope to measure how much the speaker exhibits commitment towards a displayed social identity. Instead, the study applies the notion of performance to define the speakers' communicative acts as comprised of two dimensions, namely the judgements of the self and the perceived evaluations of others. This is because, as far as the interlocutors' are concerned, every speech event can be a private as well as a public evaluative action. As argued previously, the positioning subject is always active. That is to say every communicative evaluation takes the vantage point of one's private subjectivity.

On the other hand, each verbal evaluation should be analysed as a public event. Language use embeds socio-culturally oriented discursive rules. Chapters 3 and 4 adopt a performance-centred approach and particularly emphasise this perspective (e.g., Bamberg, 1997; Bauman, 1993; De Fina et al., 2006; Goffman, 1974, 1981; Riessman, 2003). In essence, each communicative event is a social accomplishment. Taking performance as a meta-communicative frame relies on the assumption of responsibility to an audience for a display of communicative competence (Bauman, 1993; Hymes, 1971). The act of speaking to an audience opens the speaker up to scrutiny for the way it performs social identities in a specific socio-cultural context.

The speaker's perception reflects cognitive patterns. Conceptual patterns capture cultural meanings. Chapters 5 and 6 give examples in relation to the inner self and the embodied self in Chinese. The individual representation of a split of the self anchors the Chinese speaker's subjectivity. In Chapter 5, the analysis illustrates the *SPLIT SELF* which emerges from self-reflective performances. The evaluating subject and the object for self-evaluation, which is often represented by the word *ziji* 'self' and other self-markers, are represented differently for the intended audience.

In a social sense, the individual self is built around who the speakers are here-and-now as a person in contrast to other people. Conceptually, the *SUBJECT* takes control of the *SELF*. The agentive relationship of the *SUBJECT* and the *SELF* can be projected onto the speaker's social contact with others. Given a specific cultural context, this relationship encompasses metaphorical expressions for demonstrating self-discipline, self-protection and self-conviction for others and for revealing private thoughts for other people.

In addition, the concept of viewpoint, a term used frequently by cognitive linguists to scrutinise the intersubjective conceptual coordination between speakers and addressees, offers useful insight (Langacker, 2007; Verhagen, 2005). As shown in Chapter 7, conceptual spaces are embedded in the speakers' positions. The construction of a conceptual space is a necessary component of subject positions. Personal pronoun use, as explained in Chapter 2, can be an important indicator of the intersubjective perception of self and other. Within certain positions, the current speaker perceives other speakers to be taking up certain positions themselves. These subject positions are therefore socially oriented performative acts. Performative acts can be argued as resting on the supposition that the speakers are maintaining their discourse alignment with other speakers.

From the analysis of self-reflection, self-evaluation, and self-perception, the study also found that intersubjective cognition of the speaker and the addressee is essential to self-representation. Intersubjectivity, from the perspective of embodied cognition, validates the performative nature of the subject's positioning act. In light of maintaining intersubjective conceptual coordination, speakers must estimate

their addressees' knowledge and presuppositions, and the hearers must also estimate the speakers' knowledge.

The speakers, though they do not have direct access to the interlocutors' cognitive states, are always estimating or imagining their addressees' presuppositions, knowledge and affective states while speaking to them (Sweetser, 2012, p. 6). In other words, all hearers and addressees are imagined hearers/addressees. The imagination of self-perception in social interactions is a socially orientated, therefore performative, intersubjective experience.

Chapter 2 shows that the choice between singular and plural person references reflects the speakers' attempt to bring the intended hearers over to their perspective. Including the hearer in self-reference is a very subtle way of positioning the speaker and the addressees on the same knowledge ground. The speaker's relational self-representation depends heavily on constructing a real-time discourse community with others, therefore, active co-participants play an important role in the speaker's self-perception. The construction of a discourse relationship between the speaker and other interlocutors depends on the speaker's imagined self-positions in relations and in groups. The speaker can position all the interlocutors in an imagined relational collective on the basis of having a common understanding.

Chapter 7 discusses imagination of cultural spaces in conceptualising interpersonal relationships and group memberships in Chinese and their designated cognitive patterns of linguistic representations. As group formation is unfolding in social identity construction, the idealisation of larger and more inclusive groups or smaller and more distinctive sub-groups reveals the dynamics of positioning in discourse at the conceptual level.

The imagination of cultural spaces in a discursive event works on two dimensions, namely the positioning of speakers to the locally co-present audience and the positioning of the co-present audience to absent audiences. The speakers' construal of cultural spaces, therefore, either involves a co-present audience or other absent audiences. The co-present audience are seen as the same imagined collective as the speaker. The absent audiences can also represent imagined cultural spaces that are beyond the current discursive context and exist at another level of cultural imagination.

In summary, the present study serves as an empirical ground for exploring self-representation as fluid and dynamic social and cognitive processes which involves subjective perception of the self and intersubjective imagination of the other at the conceptual level. Cognitive models provide evidence of the imagined link between the self and others. The listeners are not construed by the speaker as just the recipient of their utterance, but treated as part of the speaker's subjective world constructed intersubjectively through imagination. The self and other are co-conceptualised in the same space; the addressees can be construed by the speaker intersubjectively as belonging to an imagined collective.

8.1.2 The cultural self

Self-understanding arises from constant negotiation between the individual agent and the social environment. It is a reflexive meaning-making process in which the self is playing a subject role by reflecting on its own experience as well as being an object of reassessment and re-evaluation. Self-reflection accounts for self-identity, social responsibilities, practical ethical principles, and ideals of good. This can be seen in the comments of the participants over the life of the project.

This study also found concrete evidence to support the view that the self is conceptualised in culturally specific ways. The socio-cultural context has a significant role to play from producing socially transmitted norms and tendencies to articulating culturally constituted knowledge. The participants' narrative accounts of their individual observation and agentive application of personal moral principles, discussed in Chapters 5 and 6, involve spatial orientations, representations of depth and many other embodied imageries.

Furthermore, Chinese expressions for a person's inner world and different mental and emotional experiences frequently draw upon different body parts. These metaphorical expressions reflect culturally specific depictions of internal causation, interpersonal proximity and imagined positioning within dyadic relationships and group memberships.

Self-expression in the Chinese cultural context involves the negotiation of what it means to a person situated in a network of interpersonal relationships. As the self and other tend to form mutually entailing and interdependent correlatives in the Chinese milieu, when one comes to describe one's social counterparts, connectedness and interdependence are reflected in numerous metaphorical representations of a person's relationship with the social world. These conceptualisations can take the form of an egocentric self at the centre of a CENTRE – PERIPHERY radiation or filling up a socio-cultural generic space devoid of any concentric self.

Self-representational performances also reflect the speakers' understandings of more enduring socio-cultural values which can be reinforced or negotiated through stance performances. Chapter 3 finds that the participants differentiate themselves as unique people by finding the correct way of being through rational self-reflection. Sincerity and genuineness stand out as common values. Utterances that reflect descriptions and interpretations of dyadic relationships show that these Chinese speakers foster trustworthiness and cooperativeness by seeking discourse alignment and avoiding dis-alignment. They tend to resort to public consciousness or a generic collective as a mediator to express disagreements. As it has been discussed in Chapter 4, descriptions of social collectives and membership categories show that participants try to establish a sense of authenticity and correctness by projecting their own interpretations of certain meanings associated with imagined cultural collectives onto their addressees.

This study has offered an empirical, linguistic exploration of the concept of self as a constituent relational plurality which emerges out of social interaction. This study reaffirms the relationship between the individual and the social world as one of mutual contribution. Linguistic reality is seen as socially constructed. The socio-cognitive linguistic analytical method has proven itself to be an optimal way for examining how aspects of the self are constructed in social interactions intersubjectively. The conceptualisers choose to construe the self and portray it for expressive purposes. Thus, the chosen method has revealed the conceptual structures when meanings of selfhood are constructed in language use.

In terms of collective identities, the “us” versus “them” categorisations have always been salient in the construction of one’s sense of self. Constructing the collective sense of self is also an obvious social option for the actualisation of oneself in the world. Sociolinguistic studies have shown that personal characteristics in some scenarios comprise allegiance to social identities (De Fina, 2013). This is because parts of one’s self-construct derive from one’s knowledge of membership in a social community together with the values and emotional significance attached to that membership (Tajfel, 1981, p. 255). We could say that speakers in social interactions are under the influence of pre-existing cultural, institutional and societal/dominant discourse.

Individuals perceive themselves as belonging to social groups, and recognition of membership(s) in these social categories carries with it knowledge of the values, positive or negative, attached to these groups (Liebkind, 2010, p. 141). The examination of expressions to refer to Chinese and non-Chinese people in Chapters 4 and 7 takes into consideration the details of the interactional context and socio-cultural factors that transcend the here-and-now discursive context. Socio-cultural norms are not sets of constraints on the positioning subject’s language choice, but a meaning-making enterprise. They are tied into the dynamic construction of the multi-faceted and plural sense of the self.

8.2 Cognition of the self in discourse

Language, in the context of the current study, is a conflation of collective and cultural repertoires that constitute a source for the cognition-based creation and negotiation of socio-culturally shaped meaning of linguistic abstraction. As for the linguistic examination of the self, the social self can be analysed and interpreted with the notion of cognition in discourse. It has informed an analytical framework that incorporates methodologies that treat the ways speakers self-represent using various linguistic terms such as representations of various mental construal and social interactional constructions. The discussion focuses on the following three

principles when studying cognition in discourse, namely the representational principle, the intersubjective principle, and the emergent principle.

8.2.1 The representational principle

Within the socio-cognitive approach towards analysing the social self, the word “representation” is a preferred notion. It links the narrative process of producing selves to the symbolic values of various linguistic manifestations of different aspects of the self which are being constantly and mutually constructed in discourse. First, self-representation serves as the reference frame. It accommodates multiple, switching footings during the analysis of the discursive practice. Chapter 2 gives a detailed explanation of how personal pronouns can be used as devices for analysing how someone performs their social being and for understanding the many socio-cultural elements, especially those intimately related to their ways of being or personhood.

Second, an individual’s subjective navigation in the world, built upon a cognitive anchor, is able to project many construals of self-related social experiences, including self-identity, social relationships, group membership and so on. Our cognition serves as the ground upon which our lives are staged and performed. Experiences in sensorimotor domain such as bodily orientation, object manipulation and motion, or sense of space, and so on, can be used to conceptualise and reason about subjective experiences. Linguistic manifestations, which can be found in social interactions, reflect the speaker’s mental processes for gaining self-knowledge, such as projecting social relationships onto corresponding physical locations and imaging self-control in terms of manipulating objects in space. Linguistic constructions of identities also provide access to the cognitive strategies of the speaker (Langacker, 1990).

The qualitative interpretation of subject positions lends support to the indirect relation of language to social identity which is mediated by the interlocutors’ knowledge of linguistic conventions and their access to the conceptual repertoire for performing particular social acts. For instance, the meanings represented by the Chinese spatial demonstratives is not simply based on the speaker’s geographic location. The speakers’ choice of spatial deixis and inclusive collective self-reference in Chinese membership talk depends greatly on the collective positioning of the speaker with regard to the imagination of the idealised audience.

The evocation of imagined collectives, as revealed by the Chinese data, is part of the interlocutors’ interactive and improvisational social performance. Framing different subject positions as social performances helps to unveil the complexity of the indirect relationship between linguistic forms and more enduring

social meanings. Socio-cultural beliefs and values, which cannot be studied as stand-alone phenomena, can be examined as they emerge. So far as the present study is concerned, they are represented by the participants' stylistic way of enacting a self-image in discourse.

8.2.2 The intersubjective principle

The speakers' intersubjective positioning increases the effectiveness of communication in discursive transactions, but more importantly, it constitutes the essential part of the speakers' narrative reflexivity. Reflexivity is a property of language and a human faculty which gives us the opportunity to reflect on our past, current, and potential ways of being (Duranti, 2011). The temporal quality of our social life implies an inner life and we constantly reflect on what we now see from the point of view of what we might have been and from the point of view of what we might in fact become (Duranti, 2011, p. 15). Taking the audience into the speakers' own reasoning process is more than just a pragmatic move, but a necessary meaning-making process for the speakers themselves.

Chapters 5, 6 and 7 have shown that the self does not take the form of a unified cognitive structure locating in the individual's memory system. The representation of the self, on the conceptual level, is a matter of subjective perception of the self and intersubjective imagination of the other. Firstly, knowledge and imageries mutually shared by the interlocutors form the common ground from which mental spaces can be built up by the interlocutors' communicative use of language (Ferrari & Almeida, 2015, p. 100). Categories, metaphors and pronominal choices in discourse, for instance, from a cognitive linguistic perspective, anchor the speaker's mental-space construal in ways specific to that speaker's cognitive and perceptual access (Dancygier, 2008). Conceptually, speakers use metaphors and pronouns with imagined addressees in mind to build the individual speaker's mental-space construal specific to that individual's cognitive and perceptual access.

Secondly, with respect to the metaphorically proximal and distal use of pronouns in face-to-face interactions, speakers function as objects of their own conceptualisation as a consequence of anticipating other minds and simulating how they appear from other vantage points (Langacker, 2007, p. 184). Perspective taking is an integral part of the intersubjective cognition of the speaker and the hearer. This perspective lends support to the aforementioned performative identity construction and context-dependent identity co-construction.

8.2.3 The emergent principle

With regard to the interpretation of conceptual metaphors, image schemas and spatial deixis in discursive practice, the socio-cognitive approach takes an emergentist perspective (Cameron & Deignan, 2006). Discourse participants draw on their linguistic and cognitive resources for packaging ideas of self-representation for their interlocutors. Conceptual representations of the self can be abstracted from people's discursive interaction for the purpose of semantic analysis. The analysis is based on the premise that metaphorical representations and image-schematic orientations emerge from the discourse environment. The emergence depends on the pragmatic purposes the cognitive representations serve in the local context.

An individual performs various aspects of the self, literally and metaphorically, to articulate a wide range of forms of participation in socio-culturally oriented practices. Under the emergent principle, the study rejects the idea that metaphors used by the participants are culturally determined or that they contribute to a single and unified cultural construction of the self. Instead, the interpretation of these metaphors looks at how people strategically draw upon different linguistic resources and conceptual models in constructing their personalised and situational self in different contexts.

People selectively draw on and deliberately exercise certain normative presuppositions and cultural conventions during the process of perceiving, re-enacting and negotiating sense of self. A comprehensive and thorough investigation of self-representation needs to explore the interrelatedness of cognitive centrality and plurality of discursive performances. Social actors deploy cognitive resources, such as long-term knowledge, implicit theories, cultural beliefs, social representations, collective memories, and imagined commonalities, flexibly and pragmatically to perform aspect(s) of the self as and when appropriate in front of the intended audience. The emergence of identities, as a result of the subject's social positioning vis-à-vis others, reconstructs cultural values and emotionality in the given cultural context.

8.3 Chinese self in diaspora discourse

The interaction between cultures gives rise to a profusion of alternative modes of thinking. This study explores, through language use, how the self is conceptualised in Chinese through the discursive interaction among a group of Mainland-born Chinese immigrants in Australia. By drawing on the interplay of Chinese conceptions of personhood and Western theories of self and individuality, this book has

teased out the premodern conception of the self-cultivation and the nationalistic and ideological context for the indigenous conceptions of modern Chinese selfhood in Chapter 3. Other chapters explore the participants' perceptions of different cultural norms and behaviours in relation to understanding who they are in the Chinese-Australian cross-cultural context.

Premodern and modern Chinese ideas of personhood that are of contextual importance, from an analytical perspective, give rise to the cultural meanings of the self that have been produced in the modern Chinese language indirectly. Representations of Chinese identity and individuality in the modern era, for instance, reflect certain Chinese people's interpretation and the re-imagination of traditional Chinese values in modern Chinese discourse. Chinese immigrants of the contemporary society, following this line of thought, might very well have re-interpreted premodern and modern ideas to produce new cultural meanings.

The Chinese immigrants in Australia, a growing group of global citizens, are living in a society where multiculturalism and plural understanding of identity is celebrated. The interactions among themselves and with people from other geographic or linguistic backgrounds facilitate further development of a sense of cultural and linguistic plurality in the construction of social reality. The current study has explored factors that facilitate and shape this group's cultural imaginations and has addressed the plurality of these imaginations. The ways these immigrants jointly perform the different aspects of self create new meanings for their identities and for public imagination.

The study offers an exploration of the effects that immigration can have on one's culturally characterised ways of viewing oneself and vice versa. The Chinese immigrants in Australia who participated in this research mention immigration as an external condition which can bring about certain difficulties. For example, an immigrant sacrifices some needs of their private self because of the pressure they are facing to survive, or they find it difficult to live up to the ideal self. Under such circumstances, immigration might have motivated the participants in this study to give more thoughts to selfhood, individuality, collective identity, etc., in relation to their lifestyle in the cross-cultural context. However, these external conditions do not necessarily cause them to adapt to a way of life which never existed before. The participants instead drew on their cross-cultural experience as a body of knowledge upon which they could negotiate and consolidate meanings associated with the imagination of a Chinese immigrant identity.

The diversified categorical naming of various groups and the construction of their meanings in the participants' interactions is indicative of a dynamic process of negotiating group membership in the Australian context. In their discussion of their personal opinions and beliefs, the participants often evoke a collective image of the Chinese people living in Australia, using this image to align and dis-align

with certain beliefs and values that they perceive as group-based characteristics. The cross-cultural experience of these participants has given them information that facilitates the construction of various imagined viewpoints. Having imagined viewpoints is a way of processing contrasting views and opinions created by the cross-cultural experience. All of the participants speak positively of immigration as having equipped them with the ability to adopt different points of view or to come to an understanding from a culturally different perspective. The act of comprehending the “other” viewpoint acquires the metaphorical meaning of having novel or privileged knowledge.

The participants in this study exchange their opinions about China and China-related issues from a cross-cultural comparative perspective during focus group discussions. They exercise a great deal of moral reasoning about what they perceive as the “correct” things to do in the Australian-Chinese cross-cultural context. They can be sensitive to the flaws that Mainland Chinese people exhibit. They speak of demonstrating the correct opinions about the Chinese and China. The nationalistic and ideological context continue to be relevant to contemporary Chinese immigrants’ understanding of being Chinese in Australia.

From the study, it becomes clear that present-day well-educated Chinese immigrants are highly critical of the cultural quality of the Chinese people. Several of the study’s participants speak of themselves as having some personal responsibility for restoring the image of the Chinese people in Australia via their own appropriate actions. In this regard, they have re-purposed the modern Chinese narrative of negative Chinese *guominxing* ‘national character’ to explain their unhappiness about the behaviour of other Chinese people in Australia, and the adverse impact that those other Chinese have on how non-Chinese Australians view the participants. They worry that the non-Chinese might disrespect them or show prejudice against them because of the negative characteristics they see in their fellow Chinese.

Some participants proposed a counter measure for all fellow Mainland Chinese immigrants; exercising the role of *cultural exemplar*. *Xiushen* ‘self-cultivation’, a Confucian term, comes as an idealised cultural enterprise to offset the detrimental effect that the perceived cultural bias from the participants’ non-Chinese counterparts can have on their survival in Australia. Self-cultivation is a process in which a person becomes an exemplary individual worthy of respect. It turns out to be a value still held by many Chinese immigrants.

Acting as a *cultural exemplar* reflects a collective Chinese cultural identity. Many participants see themselves as responsible for their individual image which, in turn, contributes to the collective image. It should be noted that this collective self-awareness is also likely to be associated with a sense of loyalty to their country of birth, the People’s Republic of China, and it is suggestive of the success of the patriotic education system that was introduced in China in 1990 and which remains

in place today. However, the participants' high degree of self-consciousness about "being Chinese" is also the result of their ethnic minority status in the Australian cultural environment.

For the Chinese immigrants who have experienced both the collectivist Chinese society and the individualistic Australian society, the complexity of relation-keeping can be very apparent and even daunting. Some participants say that they value the sense of individual freedom they experience in Australia. However, an examination of the indexical value of some cross-cultural comparisons reveals that the notion of individualism is still debatable among Chinese people. Some say they feel much more relaxed in relationships with local Australian friends, some regard friendship with non-Chinese as superficial, which implies a difference in their dealings with people from different cultural backgrounds.

The participants were not asked to give a clear and explicit account of what their collective identity as Chinese meant to them. They often voluntarily took on this collective cover to convey their highly personalised conceptions of being Chinese immigrants in Australia. They also claimed they had experienced China and were being Chinese more consciously than they ever had. Being Chinese person in Australia is an identity that accommodates various collectively shared values and beliefs.

The participants' interactions with each other reveal that they share a strong view of "what being Chinese means". As previously discussed, this presumed Chinese identity reflects positioning oneself in an imagined cultural collective, which is a cultural imagination and is far from a fixed entity. Its formation is highly relative and context dependent. In cross-cultural comparisons, the positioning of one and another as "imagined" members of a larger cultural collective is a way to negotiate perspectives and viewpoints seen as unique to that cultural group, or to rationalise differences and misunderstandings in the cross-cultural context.

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This book explores socio-cultural meanings of 'self' in the Chinese language through analysing a range of conversations among Chinese immigrants to Australia qualitatively on the topics of individuality, social relationships and collective identity. If language, culture and cognition are major roads, this book is the junction that unites them by arguing that selfhood occurs at their interface. It provides an interdisciplinary approach to unpack manifestations and perceptions of 'self' in the contemporary Chinese diaspora discourse from the perspectives of Sociolinguistics, Cognitive Linguistics and the newly developed Cultural Linguistics. This book not only discusses empirical and theoretical issues on the conceptualisation and communication of social identity in a cross-cultural context, it also reveals how traditional and modern ideas in Chinese culture are interacting with those of other world cultures. Considering the power of language, enduring and emerging beliefs and stances that permeate these speakers' views on their social being and outlooks on life impart their significance in cross-cultural communication and pragmatics.

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