Chinese foreign students' adjustment at the University of Windsor: a social constructionist perspective.

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Canada
CHINESE FOREIGN STUDENTS' ADJUSTMENT AT THE UNIVERSITY OF WINDSOR: A SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIONIST PERSPECTIVE

by

Lee, Keng Mun

A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research through the Department of Sociology in Partial Fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts at the University of Windsor

Windsor, Ontario, Canada

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ISBN 0-315-31997-6

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This thesis is dedicated to my parents, Mr. and Mrs. Lee Tack Kong.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to thank the following people without whom this thesis would not have been possible.

Appreciation is extended to Dr. Barry Adam (Chairperson), who provided me with the theoretical insight necessary to comprehend this social issue, and reviewed the work in process. My education would have been incomplete without the constant guidance and support from Dr. Adolf Ehrentraut (Second Reader) and Dr. Wong-Reiger (Psychology). I am grateful for having studied under these members of faculty of University of Windsor.

I would like to thank my parents for their encouragement and support. My sojourn in Canada would not have been possible without their high regard for education which enabled me to pursue my professional goal in Sociology.

I would also like to express gratitude to my best friends, Mark and Melissa Campbell. They are true friends that gave support and encouragement, and have made my stay in Canada filled with pleasant memories.

My gratitude to my girlfriend, Lori M. Graham, who shared my disappointments and successes through the period of writing this thesis.

Finally, this study would not have been possible without the help and cooperation of my fellow foreign students who devoted their time for this research.
ABSTRACT

The purpose of this thesis is to analyse the adjustment of Chinese foreign students at the University of Windsor by exposing their coping strategies and how they construct social realities from the perspectives of familiarity (prior experiences with western culture), language, and typifications. In terms of theoretical framework, this research adopts the social constructionist aspect of Phenomenology. This theory enables the researcher to analyse how subjects create, maintain, and change their subjective states while sojourning in their new social environments. The research adopts a qualitative methodology, focusing on unstructured interviews. Data were collected from forty Chinese foreign students (twenty males and females). The literature reviewed gave an extensive overview on what has been done on foreign students' adjustment from a quantitative perspective. The research highlighted the role of familiarity in developing coping strategies and also showed how subjects relied on past experiences to establish a familiar social world. The importance of a common language as a means to objectify subjective thoughts and feelings is shown. The difference between spoken and written language and how they affect interaction is shown. The research identified two major sets of coping strategies developed by subjects who perceive to having language problems. In general, the subjects typified Canadians as "well
mannered", "polite", "friendly", "sexually open", and "crazy" and "wild" in parties. The research also showed the criteria from which these typifications are made. Further, how typifications affect interaction is highlighted. Finally three types of coping strategies are generated. These are: "reject", "select", and "accept". Further, the "taken-for-granted" assumptions of Canadians in Windsor are highlighted by analysing issues that are taken-for-granted to Canadians but are questioned by the subjects.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The young people who set out to study in a foreign land will find their sojourns entail a degree of strangeness. As strangers in a new social milieu, they face new situations, a new culture and uncertainties which they may handle successfully, whereupon a new sense of competence may emerge. Conversely, they may not be able to handle these situations and become uncertain and frightened. Foreign students seek new companionship; they may not find it among the people of the host society, and spend their time with people similar to their nationality and ethnicity. Foreign students may be stimulated and challenged by what is new and different in the foreign land; some of these will be absorbed easily while some will be a puzzle to them.

In general, as identified by researchers in this field (Gewell and Davidsen, 1956; Benett, et al., 1958; Gandhi, 1972), individuals may adopt three possible types of adjustment processes. First, there are those who are more traditional, conservative, and identify strongly with the home culture. Second, there are those who are less conservative, interact more with host nationals, and identify less with their home culture as they lengthen their stay. A third possible type is an intermediate of the two extremes. Sojourners of this category adopt a more
integrative approach to the new culture. They attempt to integrate new behaviours, norms, values, and roles into the foundations of the already established home culture. It is possible that each of these processes reflects certain specific coping strategies.

There is an array of possible outcomes resulting from foreign studies. These may include:

- favourable or objective attitudes toward the host culture; an increase appreciation of the home culture ("patriotic reinforcement"); a broader worldview or perspective (e.g., international-mindedness, cultural relativism, biculturalism); a reduction of ethnocentrism, intolerance, and stereotypes; increased cognitive complexity; and greater personal self-awareness, self-esteem, confidence, and creativity (Church, 1982:557).

Foreign students’ attitudes toward the home country, their friends and families, may be affected by any of these outcomes. Further, researchers have noted that personal variables of foreign students may influence their adjustment processes (Bandura, 1978; Buss, 1977). But whatever the outcome of their sojourn, the initial exposure to the new environment may make the foreign students feel like strangers. The base of this strangeness may arise from the fact that the two group do not share a "communicative common environment", a situational environment which two (or more) persons share who are able to communicate with one another" (Schütz, 1970:31), and other possible factors such as norms, values, behaviour, self conceptions, etc..

Otto Klineberg and W. Frank Hull IV (1979) note certain adjustments made by students when they transfer
from secondary or high-school to a college or university even when they merely moved from one section of the hometown to another section. Adjustments are also necessary for students who move from a rural to a urban community.

It is also true that students leaving a relatively rural and close-knit community for a major, impersonal university located in a metropolitan area in another section of their own country will encounter adjustment difficulties and will need to establish patterns for coping and adaptation early in the transition (Klineberg and Hull IV, 1979:9).

However, adaptation processes and coping strategies undergone by those students who travel to another foreign country in search for education take a different dimension and perhaps encompass a more difficult task.

One might argue that the stakes are higher, that foreign students are risking more by entering a culture which may be full of particular customs that are unknown and unanticipated (Klineberg and Hull IV, 1979:9).

Such risks may include language facility, adapting to life in the new social milieu, culture shock, etc. Hence, the foreign students' academic success or failure may depend on how they adjust to the new environment. In short, foreign students' academic success or failure may depend on their adjustment to the environment in which they sojourn.

This study proposes to expose possible coping strategies of foreign students in their adjustment patterns at the University of Windsor. Basically, the research seeks out respondents' coping strategies during specific experiences with Canadians. These strategies reflect
recipe knowledge of respondents. They are not general means in which respondents deal with Canadians. In evaluating these strategies, the study categorized them into "reject", "select", and "accept" types inorder to recapitulate how respondents deal with Canadians in the reported experiences during the interviews. These three categories will be used to analyse coping strategies as the thesis unfolds. Besides unveiling possible coping strategies, this proposed study also attempts to analyse how foreign students construct their social realities in the society in which they sojourn. In terms of examining these coping strategies and reality construction, the proposed study will examine the following aspects from the phenomenological perspective of language, prior experiences (familiarity) with western cultures, and Chinese foreign students' perceptions (typifications) of Canadians before arrival, social interaction with Canadians after arrival and perceptions of Canadians now. By using the phenomenological perspective, the research attempts to examine the subjective mode of developing coping strategies and constructing reality in those specific encounters reported by respondents.

The category of foreign students that will be analysed is Chinese students from Hong Kong. Chinese in Hong Kong constitute the bulk of the population and exposure to other ethnic groups is minimal (Wheeler, 1982). This limited exposure may have an influence on Chinese students' experiences in encountering a different culture. Further, in Hong Kong, the English language is only used as
a medium of instruction in school while Chinese (Cantonese) is used in everyday activities such as conversations and other forms of social interaction (Young, 1965; Wheeler, 1982). Shandiz (1981) notes that both English facility and previous contacts with other cultures have significant relation to adjustment. He concluded that those foreign students who are fluent in English and have previous contacts with other cultures interact more with host nationals. Also, coming from an environment that is culturally different from the West, Chinese foreign students may come with outside images of the host society. Such images may hinder social interaction. Or they may find that outside images of the host society may no longer prove to be useful after they had arrived. They may have to reconstruct a new set of typifications, and this new reconstruction may affect social interaction. Theoretically, the extent of language use, and the understanding of symbols and meanings associated with that language; the extent of being exposed to other cultures (familiarity); and perceptions (typifications) about host nationals may have significant influence on how Chinese foreign students construct their social world, the types of coping strategies they adopt when encountering a different culture, and the decision to interact with host nationals.

In terms of generating data, the above mentioned three aspects, from which questions will be formulated during interviews, will be incorporated into specific domains
which the Chinese foreign students encounter in their sojourn. These specific domains (events) are selected because they are "contact situations" (Selltiz, et al., 1956). These "contact situations" provide opportunities for constructing social realities. For the purpose of confining the research, "contact situations" will be limited to the following events:

1. Chinese foreign students and Canadian students encounters.
   a) having a snack at the University cafeteria.
   b) talking about daily life events, campus life, etc.

2. Chinese foreign students and professors encounters.
   a) talking about courses or studies in the lecture hall, offices, etc.

It is imperative to state here that the constructed realities of the Chinese foreign students do not reflect the whole social world of Canadian society, but merely spotlight their life-world within the Windsor community; especially, within the University of Windsor.

In the process of spelling out how Chinese foreign students at the University of Windsor construct social realities, the research will attempt to examine the "taken-for-granted" everyday activities of the social world in Windsor. If the research reveals cultural differences, it will be considered as a byproduct here. Perhaps this is inevitable, as culture is one of the components in which social realities are formulated (Wagner, 1973).

The research adopts certain concepts of the social constructionist aspect of Phenomenology. Role theory is not used to analyse construction of reality for the
following reasons. First, role making occurs only when individuals are able to apprehend the general attitudes and, thereby, predict the behaviour of other members of society (Lauer and Handel, 1983). Since, the samples did not partake in the historical development of this society, therefore, such apprehension and prediction are not available. Second, according to Turner (1982:358), the main analytical thrust of role theory "is on how individuals adjust and adapt to the demands of the "script", other "actors", and the audiences" of the "play". According to the author, such analytical thrust assumes too much structure and order in the social world. Phenomenology is used in this research because it is concerned with the "folk methods" that people employ to create a "sense of social order", and not on reified notions of structure, norms, values, cultural system, and the like. Reality resides...in the "accounts" of reality, and the practices used to create these, that people employ (Turner, 1982:389-390).

In short, this research is interested in how and what ways the subjective states, such as typifications, reality constructions and coping strategies, of Chinese foreign students are created, maintained, and changed.

Outline

The following paragraphs will give the reader a tour of the purpose of each chapter.

Chapter II deals with the theoretical aspect of this research. Basically, the chapter looks at how familiarity, language and typification are handled from the phenomenological perspective. The chapter also outlines
the type of data that will be gathered and analysed in terms of the above three aspects.

Chapter III explains the methodology espoused by this research. The chapter also describes the sample, sampling and interviewing procedures, and data analysis.

Chapter IV deals with literature review. The aim is to give the reader an overview of what had been done on the subject of foreign students' adjustment. The chapter also includes findings from study on Chinese immigrants' temporary adjustment in North America.

Chapter V examines the role of familiarity in formulating coping strategies. The chapter looks at the processes through which familiarity is established. The chapter will also reveal data on the consequences of little familiarity. Then, the types of coping strategy employed are examined.

Chapter VI analyses how a common language facilitates social interaction. The chapter will describe what having a common language could achieve and what a lack of it would result in. The chapter will also look at the differences between spoken and written language, and the types of coping strategy employed in the perception of having language problems.

Chapter VII deals with typification schemes. The chapter examines how perceptions about Canadians are established before and after arrival. The chapter also examines the criteria used by subjects to formulate these
perceptions. Finally, the chapter looks at how typifications affect reality construction and social interaction.

Chapter VIII handles the examination of "taken-for-granted" assumptions of Canadians and the types of coping strategy employed by the subjects compiled from chapters V, VI, and VII.

Chapter IX draws conclusion about the research and gives suggestions about what could be done in future research in this field.

Limitation of Research

1. In the present research, findings are based on perceptions and personal experience. There is the risk of inconsistency between reported perceptions and actual perceptions. Therefore, conclusions can only be drawn with this clearly in mind that they are based on "reported" perceptions and experiences.

2. The population was limited to the University of Windsor, therefore, results cannot be generalized to other colleges and universities. Further, since every individual constructs and typifies a given social world differently, and that the data are gathered from Chinese students who could verbalize their perceptions, feelings and experiences, the findings in this research are confined to the forty subjects and could be generated to the body of Chinese foreign students at the University of Windsor.

3. This research is based on data collected at only
one time. The changes, such as coping strategies and typifications, of respondents cannot be detected. A longitudinal research would help solve this problem.

4. The research recognizes the present of both content and process types of reports in the data. Due to the nature of the methodology, it is not possible to sort out the differences. Again, a longitudinal research would be a solution to the problem.

5. Finally, the research recognizes that there perhaps exists a male/female difference in coping strategies and reality construction. However, due to the nature of the methodology, it is not possible at present to draw any conclusion on the matter.
CHAPTER II
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND ASSUMPTIONS

The theoretical approach which this study espouses centers around certain concepts from the social constructionist aspect of phenomenology. Social constructionists see society as composed of human meanings, actions, and purposes. Social reality is, therefore, a product of accumulated and individual definitions. "For constructionists, in other words, people are seen as the moulders of their own social worlds..." (Thomason, 1982:2).

The task of this theory is to analyse how these social worlds are constructed. In the words of Edward A. Tiryakian (1973:205), "Its purpose is...to reveal the a priori structures or presuppositions of consciousness in terms of which what we perceive makes sense or has meaning to us".

The a priori structures which individuals used to make sense of their everyday activities encompass a complex set of sociolinguistic and cognitive elements. Further, these structures are rooted in the processes of interactions and socializations. In other words, the a priori structures are part of the culture individuals are socialized in. Humans' interpretations of their social world are culturally based. Culture in this context refers to inferences from elements such as languages, norms, values, symbols, and the "taken-for-granted" assumptions which people use in interpreting their situations. Schutz
(1970:30) concludes:

...both the cognitive and the active aspects of everyday life in terms of individual experiences...are greatly influenced by preexisting linguistic forms and cultural orientations...

A major interest of phenomenological investigation is to unveil how individuals experience phenomena in terms of their a priori structures. This perspective seeks to explain the activities of interacting individuals as a product of how people interpret their worlds (Thomason, 1982). By adopting this theoretical approach, the study hopes to relate social phenomena to the way they are experienced by the subjects. In addition, this approach enables the study to examine subjects' comprehension of social phenomena from the interior. Hence, by espousing the social constructionist perspective of phenomenology, the research attempt(s) to describe social experiences and the way in which subjects experience and [construct] their social world, with particular emphasis on the [familiarity, language,] and typifications used to delinate the contours of that worlds...(Tiryakian, 1973:211).

Familiarity

One of the concepts which phenomenology embraces is the importance of a familiar social world. In a familiar social world, individuals recognize objects and events as similar to those they have met in previous experiences. As Alfred Schutz and Thomas Luckmann (1973:140) state:

determination of familiarity is based on the subjective acquisition of knowledge from an actually present Object of experience. Objects are more or
less familiar according to whether they are more or less agree with previous experiences.

In this familiar social world, social acts, even when they are not routinized, are based on goals which are recurringly familiar and have proven sufficiently familiar (Schutz and Luckmann, 1973). Therefore, in familiar social settings, individuals make use of, and rely upon, past experience. It is also in such familiar social worlds that social objects and events are grouped into specific types; routine procedures and reactions to social events are spelled out; ideas and images are established; social interactions are performed readily. Such experiences, according to Schutz and Luckmann (1973), build up the social stock of knowledge. This knowledge, which is characterized by familiarity, provides recipes for interpretation and interaction, and is related to cultural patterns.

Chinese foreign students, coming from a different culture and social environment may be equipped with a different social stock of knowledge. Faced with a social world that is in many ways different from the one they come from, in terms of language, values, norms, etc., they theoretically should find difficulties in social interaction. Being a newcomer, the student finds that his/her knowledge on social interaction cannot be applied.

This study makes the assumption that Chinese foreign students who have prior western experiences would be familiar with some of the basic rules of social interaction.
in North American society. Prior experiences include travel, having friends from western culture at home, and knowledge from movies and books. This study will explore the types of experiences and recipe-knowledge formed prior to arrival. Attempts will be made to analyse the content of knowledge and experiences. Further, the research will highlight the formation of typification schemes from familiarity, and the types of coping strategy developed in the absence of familiarity.

Language

In entering a strange culture, the Chinese foreign students not only experience unfamiliar cues in social interaction, they have to communicate in another language.

Language, defined as a system of vocal signs, is the most important sign system of human society (Berger and Luckmann, 1966). Language enables members of society to share everyday life experiences and it is essential to understand language if one is to understand the reality of everyday life.

Language makes everyone part of a group and allows one to form relationships with others and therefore to engage in meaningful collective actions. It enables one to understand social reality, symbols, meanings, etc. in the new environment and in turn to be understood. Further, language encompasses a larger complex of elements such as common vocabulary, gestures, expressions and deportments (Mead, 1934; Meltzer, Petras and Reynolds, 1975). As
Schutz (1970:18) notes:

If he constructs his own view of the world around him, he does so with the help of the raw materials offered to him in this constant exposure to fellow men. Both the exposure to these cultural materials and their selective and interpretative acceptance of them presupposes a common language as a means of communication between persons as well as an instrument of cognition for the individual.

Wagner (1973) concludes that it is through language that individuals cope with an objectified everyday life.

Distinction must be made between living language and written language. The former takes the form of speech and requires face-to-face communication while the latter takes the form of "frozen expressions of meanings" (Wagner, 1983:22), and requires syntactical usage and rules of grammar. Wagner (1983) argues that living language has the characteristic of having one term with several meanings and having several terms for the same object. Syntactic context which written language depends on is not enough for intended meanings. Within the context of a social situation, the speaker and listener share a special relationship whereupon, with the help of living language, intended meanings are tied to the situation. This cannot be achieved with written language.

Chinese foreign students, whose mother tongue is not English, may have limited abilities in verbal communication and, at the same time, are new members in an unfamiliar society, may have difficulties in interpreting western linguistic symbols, gestures, and expressions. They may be proficient in written language, but their limited abilities

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in verbal communication may limit their comprehension of intended meanings that are tied to social situations.

This study will attempt to find out how Chinese foreign students with language difficulties will cope with their everyday life when encountering professors and Canadian students. And how this will influence their constructions of the social world they inhibit. The study will also examine the difference between living language and written language within the context of adjustment. As mentioned in Chapter I, most Chinese students from Hong Kong utilize the written aspect of the English only in their academic work while everyday activities and conversations are dominated by the Chinese language. By looking at the extent of language usage, the study attempts to unveil the types of coping strategies developed.

**Typification**

Phenomenology also suggests the way Chinese foreign students perceive Canadians and how the former think the latter would perceive them, affect both their social constructions and interaction with Canadians. Sociologically, such perceptions denote "typificatory schemes". Typification refers not to the individual or unique qualities of things or persons, but their typical features. Typification differs from stereotyping in that the former emerges from the social stock of knowledge that governs the social construction of reality while the latter
do not. Berger and Luckmann (1966:43) conclude:

The social stock of knowledge...supplies me with the typification schemes required for the major routines of everyday life, not only the typifications of others...but typifications of all sorts of events and experiences, both social and natural.

Further, stereotyping is a set of biased generalization about a group or category of people that is unfavorable, exaggerated, and oversimplified. Negative characteristics of the group are emphasized; and preconceived beliefs are often emotionally derived and not susceptible to modifications through empirical evidence. In short, preconceptions are not tested against reality, and genuine group characteristics are not at issue. Conversely, typifications are based on individuals' behaviors and modifications could result from further experiences.

Social interaction that occurs between interactants from different cultures, for example, between a North American and a Chinese foreign student, who had no prior encounter before, draws on "typificatory schemes". These "typificatory schemes" direct the interactants in how to apprehend and deal with each other. The North American may perceive the Chinese foreign student as "a student", "a Chinese", "an obedient type", etc. Similarly, the Chinese foreign student has his/her "typificatory schemes" of North Americans. The Chinese foreign student would probably perceive him/her as "an American", "a student", "a party type", etc. This is what Berger and Luckmann (1966) mean by "typificatory schemes" are reciprocated. Such schemes will be modified as the interaction continues and as more
information is gathered about the interactants (Schutz and Luckmann, 1973; Wagner, 1983).

"Typificatory schemes" entail a certain degree of anonymity (Berger and Luckmann, 1966). That is, as the Chinese foreign student typifies the North American as a member of a group, "North American", the former will proceed to categorize the latter's conduct as member of such a group. In light of the above, it is possible to state that the process of typification deletes unique qualities while substantiates experiences that are categorized as a type. Berger and Luckmann (1966:31-32) state:

If I typify my friend Henry as a member of category X (say, as an Englishman), I ipso facto interpret at least certain aspects of his conduct as resulting from this typification- for instance, his tastes in food are typical of Englishmen, so are his manners, certain of his emotional reactions, and so on. This implies, though, that these characteristics and actions of my friend Henry appertain to anyone in the category of Englishman, that is, I apprehend these aspects of his being in anonymous terms.

Unless, both the Chinese and Canadians are "available in the plenitude of expressivity of the face-to-face situation" (Berger and Luckmann, 1966:32) and that such "typificatory schemes" dwell on some positive attitudes and perceptions, the anonymity of the "typificatory schemes" projected by both the Canadians and Chinese on each other will maintain social interaction at a superficial level. Chinese foreign students who perceive that Canadians are reacting "negatively" toward them or experience negative "typificatory schemes" projected by Canadians, or interpret.
these schemes as negative will find discomfort in interacting with Canadians. The consequences could be: contacts with Canadians in the future could be reduced, social interactions with Canadians could remain at a superficial level, interactions could center around co-nationals.

This research attempts to find out the "typificatory schemes" of Chinese foreign students before arrival, social interaction after arrival and typification now. By analysing such schemes, the research hopes to arrive at the constructive nature of Chinese foreign students from which these social realities are developed. In other words, the study attempts to unveil criteria from which typifications are formed. Social interaction employs the process of typification as one of its means to serve as a vehicle of communication. The types of social interaction this research intends to examine center around Chinese foreign students' interactions with students from the host society, faculty, and Canadian friends. Further, on the matter of typification, this study attempts to analyse Chinese foreign students' typifications of Canadian civility (acts of courtesy); typifications of Canadians' notions of "partying" (social gathering), and notions of sexuality. These are fundamental issues which Chinese foreign students encounter in their everyday activities centered around a university setting. On a micro level, these issues are related to certain aspects of interpersonal relationships.
which may influence perceptions of the social world and social interaction. Further, these issues reflect the "stock of knowledge" of the subjects.

This stock of knowledge consists not only of the typifications used in experiencing the world but also of various recipes which serve in a general way as both standard procedures for coping with daily life and programmes or techniques for understanding everyday circumstances (Thomason, 1982:66).

How Chinese foreign students interpret these issues and respond to the questions formulated during interviews, may help to shed some light on how this group of sojourners construct social realities.
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This study utilizes a qualitative methodology, focusing on unstructured interviews. Since the study adopts a phenomenological perspective, the methodology aims at understanding human behaviors from the actors' own frame of reference (Bogdan and Taylor, 1975). Perhaps the best justification for using unstructured interviews is summed up by Kenneth Plummer (1983:67):

There are many ways of getting at the phenomenology of experience, but in the end there is probably no substitute for spending many hours talking with the subject, gathering up his or her perceptions of the world...

The major concern of the interactionist is to understand social phenomena from the viewpoint of the actor. According to Plummer (1975), this concern is taken particularly seriously by phenomenological sociologists. Thus, the prime task of phenomenologists is to describe the process of meaning creation. This is done by describing the social world as it is known to those who live in it. Hence, the purpose of the interviews is to gather descriptions of the life-world of the interviewees with respect to interpretation of their meaning of social adjustment. In addition, the interviews are focused on 1) the interviewee's life-world, the purpose is to understand how the interviewee is related to it; 2) seeking to understand the phenomenon of adjustment that the interviewee experiences; 3) describing what the interviewee

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experiences and feels, and how he/she acts when encountering Canadians; 4) seeking out concrete events that lead the interviewee to formulate perceptions of Canadians (Kvale, 1983). Further, the interviews give the researcher a first-person account of all or part of the subjects’ construction of social realities.

During the interviews, a tape recorder was used. Subjects did not show any discomfort by its presence. Questioning during the interviews followed a general list and format (see Data Analysis section). This list provided a general direction, specific questions varied with each interview and experience. Data collected were interpreted and themes developed. This would allow the researcher to comprehend the actors’ "definition of the situation" by uncovering the actors' premises which guide their actions (Pilotta, 1983:48). Only by interpreting the conduct of the Chinese foreign students and describing how they conceptualize their social worlds can one understand what it means to be a Chinese foreign student (Weigert, 1981). Since the researcher is also a foreign student and has past experiences that could be associated with some Chinese foreign students, rapport was established readily with the subjects. Further, with these past experiences, understanding and interpreting the specific meaning of statements were achieved with minimum complications. In addition, such past experiences enable the researcher to obtain a relevant aspect of the subjects' everyday life experiences.
A knowledge of that life on the part of the interviewer can facilitate discussions and stimulate questions on areas that might otherwise have been ignored (Bogdan and Taylor, 1975:108).

Since the researcher is a foreign student, such knowledge would have to be drawn from general similarities in order to prevent the reconstruction of realities from an "insider" viewpoint (Schwartz and Jocabs, 1979).

Standards have to be arrived at constructing social realities of the subjects. Since this study attempts to interpret subjects' construction of social realities, the findings in the study are constructed on what the subjects have constructed in their social scene. This, according to Alfred Schutz, is called the second order constructs (Schutz, 1973:59). By this method, the study could explore the general principle from which the subjects interpret and construct their social world.

Sample

By "Chinese foreign student", this study refers to those Chinese students who are not citizens or permanent residents of Canada and are holding student authorizations or student visas in order to pursue higher education at the University of Windsor. For the purpose of this study, investigations are carried out on both male and female Chinese foreign students from Hong Kong who are registered for the Fall/Winter semester of 1985-86 academic year at the University of Windsor. The number of Chinese students from Hong Kong registered for the Fall/Winter semester of
1985-86 total 530. The breakdown between males and females is as follows: 403 males and 127 females. From these, twenty subjects were drawn from each male and female populations.

**Sampling Procedures**

Before starting the project, the researcher disclosed the project to key members of the Chinese Student Association (CSA). They showed a great deal of support for the project. The project was advertised in the Association’s monthly newsletter to its members. The Association also gave a one-minute time slot in its regular radio program with the campus radio station (CJAM-fm) to broadcast the nature of the project to its listeners. Further, the Association allocated certain slots on their notice boards where statements of purpose of the project were posted. The researcher’s home telephone number was included in all these media of contacting with the samples. The assistance of the Association was greatly appreciated. Within a month after the Association announced the purpose of the project, the researcher had come into contact with twenty-five subjects of which twenty-one were interviewed. Besides capitalizing on the assistance of the Chinese Student Association, the researcher also used the University of Windsor’s Student Directory of 1985-86, obtained through the Students’ Administrative Council (SAC), to contact the subjects. A total of twenty-five subjects were obtained with the
assistance of the Chinese Student Association. In each case, the subjects called the researcher. Fifteen subjects were obtained through the University of Windsor’s Student Directory. The researcher selected the subjects and briefly explained the nature of the call and purpose of the study to the subjects. If the subject expressed interest in the study, an arrangement was made to meet and further explanation of the study was given. If the subject agreed to be interviewed, the interview could commence immediately or another time was arranged, depending on the schedule of the subject. Within three months (February to April), all forty interviews were done. Subjects were chosen on the ground of their ability and willingness to verbalize their past and present experiences and feelings in the new social milieu. Since the goal of the study is to unveil how Chinese foreign students construct social realities through analysing their experiences, it is of utmost importance that the above criterion be met.

Interviewing Procedures
The purpose of the project was first explained to the subjects, giving them a fair chance to think over the project and ask questions regarding the motive of the research. Upon agreeing to be interviewed, the subjects were given two documents, *Statement of Purpose* and *Statement of Consent* (See Appendix A and B). The former spells out the purpose of the research and also where to contact the researcher if the subject chooses to review the
transcribed information. The latter statement gives the researcher the consent to use the information solely for the purpose of this study. The subjects were asked to sign these statements. Further, the subjects were guaranteed anonymity. The subjects were given a choice to do the interview in, Cantonese or English. Thirty-seven subjects chose Cantonese while three preferred to be interviewed in English. The researcher is proficient in both English and Cantonese. Thirty-six interviews were conducted in researcher's study carrel, in the Leddy Library, University of Windsor, and four were done in the homes of the subjects. During the interviews, subjects were asked questions that shed light on specific themes (familiarity, language, and typification) that are related to their adjustment processes. Specifically, the interviews are "comprehensive topical personal document" that are centered around special themes (Plummer, 1983).

Data Analysis

The data were transcribed into English with special attention given on describing experiences of the subjects. Data were then analysed by interpretation. By this method, limited life history of adjustment of the subjects will be followed by a theoretical interpretation (Plummer, 1983). With this method, the study attempts to comprehend how subjects construct their social realities. By analysing the perceptions and content of the experiences of the subjects' experiences that had led the subjects to come to
a certain conclusion about Canadians and their society, the
study "seeks to understand the meaning of the social world
for the actor" (Adam, 1978:4). "We then try to understand
him in that doing and feeling, and the state of mind which
induced to adopt specific attitudes toward his social
environment" (Schutz, 1973:269). Further, to make sure
that such attitudes and perceptions of the Chinese foreign
students' established through interacting with Canadians
are not their "taken for granted" way of constructing
social realities, Chinese foreign students were asked to
verbalize their behaviour, feelings, attitudes, and
perceptions when interacting with co-nationals. To verify
the study's interpretations of the subjects' constructions
of realities, subjects were told that they could review the
interpreted data. These interpreted data have to be
referable to subjects' meanings of actions and
comprehensible by subjects in terms of reflecting their own
interpretations of everyday life (Schutz, 1973:269).

The following questions and subject areas provided a
general direction during the interviews and a temporary
interpretative map to analysis subjects' constructions of
social realities.

1. How do Chinese foreign students rate their abilities in
   written English and how do they interpret these abilities
   as affecting their encounters with professors and Canadian
   students?

2. How do Chinese foreign students rate their abilities in
   understanding discussions and how do they interpret these
   abilities as affecting their encounters with professors and
   Canadian students?

3. How do Chinese foreign students rate their abilities in
understanding lectures and how do they interpret these abilities as affecting their encounters with professors?

4. How do Chinese foreign students rate their abilities in understanding casual conversations and do they interpret these abilities as affecting their encounters with professors and Canadian students?

5. How do Chinese foreign students rate their abilities in talking to Canadian and how do they interpret these abilities as affecting their encounters with professors and Canadian students?

6. To what degree do Chinese foreign students perceive that their language problems and unfamiliarity with the new culture have isolated them from talking to professors and Canadian students?

7. To what degree do Chinese foreign students believe that their prior experiences with western cultures have affected their typifications of professors and Canadian students?

8. How do Chinese foreign students typify Canadian civility when encountering professors and Canadian students in comparison with their own before and after arrival (that is, how do they believe their own typifications have changed)?

9. How do Chinese foreign students typify Canadians' conceptions of sexuality when encountering Canadian students in comparison with their own before and after arrival (that is, how do they believe their own typifications have changed)?

10. How do Chinese foreign students typify Canadians' conceptions of "partying" when encountering Canadian students in comparison with their own before and after arrival (that is, how do they believe their own typifications have changed)?

11. How do Chinese foreign students typify Canadians' conceptions of independence when encountering Canadian students in comparison with their own before and after arrival (that is, how do they believe their own typifications have changed)?

12. How do Chinese foreign students typify Canadian women's feminist attitudes when encountering Canadian students in comparison with their own before and after arrival (that is, how do they believe their own typifications have changed)?

13. How do Chinese foreign students typify Canadian males' "nacho" attitudes when encountering Canadian students in comparison with their own before and after arrival (that
Is, how do they believe their own typifications have changed?
CHAPTER IV

LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this chapter is to provide an overview of the knowledge concerning foreign students' adjustment. This review deals with the adjustment of foreign students to the host society where permanent settlement is not the purpose of their sojourn and temporary adaptations of Chinese immigrants. Insofar as adjustments of Chinese foreign students are concerned, the temporary adjustments of Chinese immigrants in North America, their first few years in their new environment, are no different from some aspects of Chinese foreign students' experiences. This chapter will also review the coping mechanisms of such immigrants in a new society.

The problems of foreign students are extensive, especially for those who came from a culture that is different from that of the host society (Klineberg and Hull IV, 1979). Differences in the frame of reference, in values and in norms, made the foreign student feels like a stranger in the midst of a new social milieu. Oberg (1960) in his article, Culture shock: Adjustment to new cultural environment, states that people who are introduced suddenly to a culture that is different from theirs, generally suffer culture shock. "Culture shock is precipitated by the anxiety that results from losing all familiar signs and symbols of social interaction" (Oberg, 1960:177).
Familiar social signs and cues that encompass customs, gestures, facial expressions, language, etc., are part of an individual's social arsenal for interaction, and are acquired through the course of socializing in a particular environment. Individuals in a new social environment may lose these familiar social signs and cues of interaction. Such loss may cause misunderstandings and even conflict, and may result in embarrassment as a consequence of failing to recognize the meaning of emotional and interpersonal reactions. One possible strategy to avoid conflicts, misunderstandings, embarrassment, and even culture shock is to take refuge among the colony of one's own kind.

Oberg (1960) emphasized that there are four stages of adjustment sojourners have to go through in the new social milieu. Stage one, called the honeymoon, is characterized by fascination and optimism about the new environment, and its members. This stage also shows increased knowledge and facility, and improved attitudes toward the people of the host society. Finally, stage four emerges when the sojourner accepts and enjoys the new custom. However, the flaws of Oberg's approach seem to evolve from the order of failure to answer the following questions: Is the order of
stages invariant? Must all stages be passed through or can some be avoided by some individuals?

Various studies have emphasized the importance of language in the processes of social interaction (Deutsch and Won, 1963; Smalley, 1963).

Deutsch and Won (1963) in their research of Some Factors in the Adjustment of Foreign Nationals in the United States view adjustment as a subjective phenomenon, "a personal reaction to the social-cultural environment" (Deutsch and Won, 1963:116). Data are obtained from 94 foreign trainees from 29 different countries, based on self-administered questionnaires. The research shows that there is a positive correlation between language proficiency and the level of adjustment. The authors emphasize that the ability to communicate is an important factor in the extent of social interaction. This research shows language facility is an important factor in influencing the satisfaction of both the trainees social and training experiences.

Smalley (1963) in his study, Culture shock, language shock, and the shock of self-discovery, examines the importance of language in adjusting to a new culture. This study emphasizes that language is the centre for all processes of social interactions. As such, language shock is one of the basic elements of culture shock. Sojourners with language problems are stripped of their primary means of interacting with other people.
The effect of national status on foreign students' adjustment was investigated by Richard Morris (1960) in his study *The Two Way Mirror*. In his study of 318 foreign students at the University of California, Los Angeles, Morris hypothesizes that how Americans judge the national status of the foreign students would significantly affect the adjustment processes. The study did not verify this hypothesis. However, it did confirm that the volume of contacts of foreign students depend on how Americans view the national status of these foreign students. According to Morris, the volume of contact depends on:

1. race (white foreign students spend more time with Americans than do non-white).
2. foreign travel (those who have traveled before spend more time with Americans).
3. Language problems (those with language problems spend less time with Americans than those without such problems).

With regards to the language variable, this study shows that there is a positive relationship between language proficiency and the amount of social interaction with host nationals. However, the study failed to show whether increased social interaction with host nationals will improve language proficiency.

In relation to involvement with student organizations and the amount of social interaction with host nationals, Ibrahim Saad's (1970) study of 414 Arab students shows that those who are less involved in their ethnic student organizations apparently interact more with host nationals.
than those who are involved in such organizations. Such association with one's own ethnic organization is one possible resolution for foreign students who suffer culture shock. Such withdrawal into a subculture of co-nationals provides a safe and familiar environment, hence, making interaction more comfortable and more predictable. Though this subculture protects the sojourners from unfamiliar encounters and uncertainties, it also prevents them from adjusting into the host society. Kuo and Lin (1977) in their study of assimilation of Chinese immigrants in Washington D.C found that the greater the amount of co-ethnic interaction (such as participation in a Chinese organization), the greater the enforcement Chinese culture and preservation of traditional values.

Sewell and Davidsen (1961) in their study of 40 Scandinavian students at the University of Wisconsin observe that there is a change in social behaviour over time. They suggest that all the students in their sample become very selective in their choice of associations and activities as time goes on. They outline seven variables that are believed to be important to the students' adjustment. These are: (1) background characteristics, such as, age, socio-economic status, English language facility, etc; (2) political orientation; (3) plans for study; (4) preconceptions and expectations; (5) arrival impressions; (6) length of sojourn; and (7) attitude towards American culture. Further, their study also
suggest that personal variable plays an important role in the adjustment process. They categorize four types of personalities. These are:

(1) enthusiastic participants (students whose behaviours are characterized by outward assimilation and extensive interaction with host nationals).

(2) settlers (students who are not attached to their home country, would welcome new customs, and could be absorbed into the host culture easily).

(3) promoters (students who act like ambassador of their home country; that is, to convince host nationals that Scandinavia is a great place).

(4) detached observers (students whose primarily interests are to get trained, and then leave; and those who never seem to lose their cultural identity).

Selltiz, Christ, Havel, and Cooks (1963), in their studies, Attitudes and Social Relations of Foreign Students in the United States, of 532 foreign students from 59 countries cite that foreign students' personal adjustment depend on the time variable. That is, the longer the stay, the greater the level of adjustment. The study also emphasizes that "foreign students who had experience with people from different countries, (prior to their sojourn), would readily establish relations with Americans during their stay in this country" (Selltiz, et al., 1963:74). The authors find that prior experience is not an important factor in influencing European students' interactions with Americans. However, among the Asian students, those with
previous foreign experiences interact more with Americans. These findings are also supported in Morris' (1960) study. Selltiz, et al. also show evidence that environmental conditions have an important influence on the development of social relations. "Small colleges in small towns provide the greatest opportunity and the most interaction, large metropolitan universities the least" (Selltiz, et al., 1963:109). The authors also emphasize the importance of living arrangement. Foreign students who lived with an American roommate and in buildings predominantly occupied by Americans are found to interact more with Americans.

Tamar Becker's (1967) study, Patterns of Attitudes Changes among Foreign Students, of 27 Indians, 25 Israelis, and 25 Europeans, formulates an interesting hypothesis. Becker put forth the "anticipatory adjustment" hypothesis. This hypothesis "denotes a process of their utility in easing the individual's adjustment to anticipated imminent and drastic changes in his environment" (Becker, 1968:435).

The study concludes that the pattern of attitudinal and behaviour changes depend on where the foreign student originates, that is, whether he/she is from a developed or underdeveloped country is crucial.

Compared with students from underdeveloped countries, the attitudes of students from developed countries to the home country would be less defensive and less nationalistic throughout the sojourn—that they would associate more extensively with non-compatriots and expose themselves to a wider range of communication (Becker, 1968:434-435).
Further, the study emphasizes that the greater the cultural difference between the home society and the host society, the greater are the difficulties of adjustment to the new environment.

Another study by Tamar Becker (1971) on 187 foreign students at the University of California, Los Angeles, finds that nationalistic commitments toward the home country deteriorate as the foreign students prolong their sojourn. This is due to, according to the author, new commitments to other activities in the host country. The major contribution of this study probes not into the probability of the individual sojourner's return or non-return to his home country but rather, and perhaps more significantly, the likelihood of his becoming irrevocably a "marginal man", unable to become an integral part of any society, home or host (Becker, 1971:480).

A study of 19 students from India, Pakistan and Ceylon by Lambert and Bressler (1956) finds that the patterns of interaction of these students change over time. The study notes that the students in their first year have a desire to meet host nationals but they rely considerably on the University to make such contacts. In their second year, they rely less on the University's services, and expand their interactions to general students' activities. Finally, in their third year, the students are very selective and restrict their interactions to only a few host nationals. According to the authors, the students play specific roles in each of the above mentioned stages. In the first stage, the students play the roles of
students. In stage two, they play the roles of tourists. In stage three, they play the roles of unofficial ambassadors. The study notes that cultural differences have significant influence on the process of adjustment. The greater the cultural difference between the home country and the host country, the greater are the difficulties of adjustment to the new social milieu. Later, Becker's (1968) findings parallel this contention.

An article, *Some features of Foreign Student Adjustment*, by M. Brewster Smith (1955) outlines certain major problems of foreign students. The article stresses that problems of foreign students perhaps could be grouped under such topics as communicating, learning the cultural maze, gaining acceptance, balancing loyalties, maintaining personal integrity and self esteem, and achieving academic goals (Brewster Smith, 1955:232-233).

The article stresses the essence of communication abilities. The base of such abilities is the efficient use of language. "Communication is fundamental. Until the foreign student is able to communicate, he/she cannot be reached. Imperfect communication means learning that is wrongly focused, off-key" (Brewster Smith, 1955:237). The article emphasizes that difference in value perspective between foreign students and host nationals lead to different perceptions.

An American may extend a casual invitation to a Japanese student in the spirit of open friendliness. But the Japanese, bringing with him a way of life involving the etiquette of a hierarchical society organized around delicately balanced obligations, may see at first not the opportunity for informal friendship, but rather the danger of
incurring social debts that he may not be in a position to repay (Brewster Smith, 1955:233).

The article cites that the wider the gap between cultures, the greater the differences in perceptions.

Further, the article highlights that there are three stages that foreign students go through in their adjustment processes. The first stage emerges upon arrival where students play the role of spectators. Here is where the students feel excited and overwhelmed by the new social environment. However, such feelings lack concreteness because the students have yet to commit themselves to the pursuit of real goals in their new environment. Stage two, the adjustment stage, takes place during some weeks or months of the sojourn. This stage witnesses the students taking a trial and error approach towards acquiring new ways or thinking and acting in the new environment. It is during this stage that the students will develop attitudes toward the host society; skills for interactions with host nationals; and knowledge about the host society. The final stage approaches as the time of return draws near. This stage is characterized by the students wondering about the readjustment processes, and how could their trainings and experiences be used in their home country. The longer the sojourn, and the more changes in their thinking and acting, the more uneasy the students may feel during this stage. The article recognizes that the rate the students go through these stages, and how they feel and react during these stages are individual matters. Results will depend
on personal and situational factors.

In relation to Chinese foreign students' adjustment, Young, Tse Chi (1965) analyzed the adjustment processes of 120 Hong Kong students in Canadian universities and colleges. The study hypothesizes that the success of adjusting of these students depend on their reactions to Canadian life and campus activities. The study finds that most of the sample of 120 students experienced difficulties in oral English, and that such difficulties are inevitable.

The relative order of difficulty is to be expected. In Hong Kong, though English is the language of instruction [in some school], it is largely the "in school" since Chinese (Cantonese) is used in conversation with other students and almost certainly in the home (Young, 1965:70-71).

The study highlights the fact that there exist a great difference between the Chinese and English language in terms of structure, grammars, choice of words and manner of expressions. The difference in language and the degree of proficiency in English affect the social life of Chinese students.

It could well be that whether a [Chinese] student likes to mix with Canadians, to join clubs, to enter discussions depend to a great extent upon his[her] proficiency with English language (Young, 1965:74).

The study attempts to compare Chinese customs and values with those of Canadians'. In doing so, the study derives at reasons in explaining the seclusive behaviours of Chinese students.

A study by Yeh and Chu (1974) at the University of Wisconsin demonstrates the interaction patterns of Chinese foreign students. The study identifies three
characteristics. First, Chinese foreign students tend to associate mostly with their own nationals. This, according to the study, is because intimate and personal contacts are found exclusively within the confines of the co-national group. Second, relations with host nationals rarely go beyond superficial pleasantries level. Third, they are discouraged by their peers to capitalize opportunities to develop cross cultural friendships.

In a study of 170 Chinese foreign students' adjustment at the University of Minnesota, Tai S. Kang (1971) found that Chinese foreign students who anglicized their names socialized more with the host society than those who did not. Those students who anglicized their names are likely to display a life pattern that is closer to those of the host society. The basic theory of this study is:

A person's name is a symbolic representation of his social identity....A name also implies the patterns of social interaction between the bearer and others....Change of name is a symbolic representation of the bearer's identity change....the change would be impelled and compelled to remodel his patterns of social behavior and make them consistent with the changed structure of his new identity (Tai, 1971:403-404).

The following are some of the findings derived from the study:

1) Changers associate more with Americans than non-changers.

2) Changers are more likely to have Americans as roommates than non-changers.

3) Changers read fewer Chinese publications than non-
4) Changers are more familiar with American magazines than non-changers.

5) Changers are better adapted to the cultural tastes of the host society than non-changers.

However, the study reveals that there is no significant difference between changers and non-changers in economic adjustment, that is, patterns of consumption and possession of material goods.

In another study by Tai S. Kang (1972) of 118 Chinese foreign students at the University of Minnesota, Chinese foreign students are found to form an ethnic enclave of their own and operate very much like a first generation immigrant group. Such, according to the study, is a solution to rejections and alienations Chinese foreign students faced in the host society. These rejections and alienations are results of difference in physical characteristic, language, symbols and culture. Hence, Chinese foreign students tend to seek out one another to work out common problems of adjustment and to find refuge in their own colony in the face of rejections. This has led to the formulation of 

highly in-group oriented ethnic enclave [that provides] an array of institutionalized solutions to the common problems which these Chinese foreign students face while residing in an alien community (Tai, 1972:72).

In terms of analysing how Chinese Immigrants adjust to Canadian society, Lawrence Lam (1983) examined the constructions of realities and experiences of Chinese
immigrants, and unveiled coping strategies. The study was based on in-depth interviews with forty Chinese living in Timmins. Data were gathered from first generation Chinese immigrants; second generation Canadian Chinese, and post-war Chinese immigrants. This study takes a micro-level, through the experiences of immigrants and their families, to analyse ethnic relations in Canada. Interviews with first generation Chinese still residing in Timmins indicate that they faced much hostilities during the early days. For example:

Whites are whites. They think Canada is their place. I dared not walk on the streets alone at that time. They just throw things at you anytime they pleased. You know, I like winter, because I could wrap myself up in a bundle and hide my face... (Lam, 1983:18).

Another first generation Chinese remembers:

In restaurants, the whites always gave us troubles. They ate and did not pay because they said it's a Chinky restaurant. When we caught them, they would say: "Chink, you want money, come outside and fight, and get the money." I remember and after one incident: when a white man came to the restaurant and after his dinner, he didn't pay. When he walked by the counter, he took some candies and cigarettes. We got him and fought with him for the money he owed us. When the police finally came, we knew that he was a teacher. So, you see, even teacher could make trouble for us Chinese... (Lam, 1983:19-20).

The study suggests that these hostile confrontations between the whites and the Chinese indicated the structural and social constraints imposed upon the Chinese in the pioneer days. This resulted in additional difficulties that Chinese settlers have to cope with in addition to adjustment difficulties. The perception of Canadian society as hostile and unfriendly had led the Chinese to
develop coping strategies in the midst of a new social milieu. Lam emphasized:

Confronted with hostilities, they retreated to their compatriots for companionship, comfort and support. They considered themselves to be in the same situation in that they were all unwanted and unwelcome intruders in a white man's land. They formed their own community, the Chinese Community Centre in Timmins, in an effort to ease strain and stress during their "sojourning" years in an unfriendly, if not an utterly hostile environment (Lam, 1983:22).

Such coping strategy is also employed by Chinese foreign students, as emphasized by Tai S. Kang (1972).

With the change of immigration policies after World War II, the first generation Chinese could sponsor their kin and relatives to come to Canada. Many of these post war immigrants assumed control of their fathers' established laundry or restaurant operations. Lam suggested that this group did not experience the blunt discrimination encountered by their fathers. They have opportunities to interact with other members of society and they were able to define their places in the community. Their perceptions of Canadian society differ from those held by first generation Chinese. A respondent who came to Timmins in 1965 explains:

...things are not the same [when I came]. We have our own family and we work and hope to earn money for our children. The whites respect our efforts of working hard to put our children to university. They admire us and they like what we are doing for our family. Why didn't they realize earlier? (Lam, 1983:38).

According to the study, occupational mobility is perceived as the reason for the acceptance of Chinese by the whites and a necessary coping strategy that prevents Chinese from
becoming victims of discrimination. A waiter who came to Timmins in 1952 explains:

My father died during the building of railroad in Vancouver. My uncle brought me here so that I could work and support my family.... I know my father suffered a lot during those days when the whites just treated us like dirt.... Things began to change in the late 1960's. as far as I'd say, attaining a highly respected professional job by the Chinese has made this change. Sure, a job is a job. But, a waiter is a waiter, and a doctor is a doctor. The difference is simple, but very important. A waiter has no education and every person can be a waiter; a doctor implies that he is highly educated and not everyone who wants to become a doctor can become a doctor even though he is in fact a bad doctor. For example, they call a waiter by name, yet, a doctor will always be addressed to as a doctor. You cannot expect the whites to respect you if all the Chinese are just cooks and waiters.... (Lam, 1983:44-45).

According to Lam, the children of Chinese immigrants have no personal experience of hardship and overt discrimination, when compared to the first generation Chinese, from their interactions with the whites. This second generation of Chinese, according to the study, see themselves as equals, and are not prepared to take insults.

A sixteen year old explains:

I heard the discriminatory incidents against the Chinese in the past from my parents and other relatives. But, I wouldn't be bothered. Why should I? Because I am not living in the past. We are pretty friendly to one another in school. Sure, we call names. Someone may be called "shorty, fatso, foureyes, etc." It is just part of the school game or fun. This is the way how I see it, and, I believe this is exactly what it is. We cannot ignore the fun in school. In this way, even if someone calls me a "chink or chinaman" and if it doesn't have the malicious intent as in the old days, I couldn't care less. Besides, we are not dumb-bells because we know we can use foul words and make them understand that enough is enough. We don't hesitate to challenge them. We are equals and we don't take insults lightly (Lam, 1983:39-40).
It is apparent that the coping strategy of these young Chinese is to fight back when provoked as opposed to their forefathers who retreated into their ethnic enclave when challenged.

In light of the above literature, it could be concluded that the findings from the studies on foreign students' adjustment and attitudes are very diverse. Perhaps such diversities are due to the differences in (1) characteristics of the students studied, (2) the time periods covered in each study, and (3) the methods used in each study. It is apparent from the above revision that adjustment is a complex phenomenon and it is greatly influence by both personal and environmental variables. The above materials explore only the various coping strategies adopted by foreign students in their encounters with strange cultures in a new social milieu. Most coping strategies are resolutions for strangers who suffer from culture shock. This could be applied to first generation Chinese immigrants in North America. Coping strategies such as associating with one's own ethnic organisation are common to both foreign students and first generation Chinese immigrants. Such associations provide a safe and familiar environment where social interactions are more predictable and comfortable. Though such coping strategies protect the sojourners from unfamiliar encounters, uncertainties, and even hostilities, they also prevent the sojourners from integrating into the host society.
This chapter relied on "quantitative" literature on foreign students' adjustments. The following chapters will not be build on these established literature, but will take a subjective account of adjustment from the perspective of the subjects. The reason for this transition is due to the inavailability of "qualitative" research on the subject area. Further, the quantitative literature reviewed do not deal with the process of reality construction, typifications, and coping strategies employed. These will be dealt with in the following chapters.
CHAPTER V
FAMILIARITY

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the role of familiarity in developing coping strategies. The chapter looks at some of the processes through which respondents establish a measure of familiarity about Canadian society. This is done by first describing how subjects rely on the stock of knowledge and the typifications developed through past experience and images from media, with the aim of throwing light on the importance of prior knowledge in creating a familiar social world that facilitate social interaction. Second, by examining how subjects formulate new perceptions about Canadians after they had arrived. The chapter also examines the consequences of little familiarity. Finally, the chapter looks at the types of coping strategies deployed by respondents in the event of familiarity and unfamiliarity.

Familiarity is when individuals experience an object, and they attempt to relate its determination to other objects that have been experienced and perceived as similar. If such relations coincide with past experiences, "the content of the original [object] is extended" (Rogers, 1983:26). Through this continuous process of assigning experiences from old objects to new objects, individuals broaden their experiences and create a familiar social world. The following quotes show how respondents attempt to relate new to old.
A male respondent remarks:

I was born in India and I went to Hong Kong when I was 3. I speak English with my Mom and Cantonese with my Dad. My Mom has relatives in England, Australia, and India. My Dad has a brother in New York City. I have relatives around the world, so from that perspective I am very comfortable with foreigners. I have been to England and Australia....Hong Kong is so close, so many people, and so crowded. Over there, it is so open. The buildings, you hardly see any tall buildings over there. You know, it is so nice and quiet. Something like in Canada. People over there are very nice. They are polite....When I came over here, I found Canadians are very nice people. I found that Canadians are quite similar to the British....I liked talking to Canadians. They are polite, just like the British....I found that I could get along with Canadians, just as with the British when I was in England...

A female respondent who has experienced western culture before coming to Canada comments:

I was in England before I came over to Canada, and I was doing my GCE "O" and "A" levels there. I find the British are polite and well mannered....I learned one important thing about the British, and that is to have patience. I find that they are slow and I learn to tolerate them. I have to learn to wait for my turn. Their system is very slow. For example, in the subway, the train is never on time. They are very slow. I find Canadians too are slow. This is not new to me. I kind of got used to it. For example, in the bank, especially on a Friday, you could be in line for half an hour just to withdraw some money.

In each case, respondents have some prior experiences with western society and upon coming to Canada, certain lifestyles were deemed similar to those they have experienced before. Hence, prior experiences provide opportunities to establish familiarity and broaden respondents' new experiences.

Further, familiarity provides the interpretative scheme for individuals to assign meanings to the new or
unfamiliar. It is a continuous process of synthesizing the old (the already experienced) with the new (the yet to be experienced). It is recognized that although every new experience may encompass some degree of uniqueness, however, "the individual suppresses [such virtue] in generating familiarity" (Rogers, 1983:40). An example, a male respondent replies:

When I was in Hong Kong, I worked for three summers at my father's office. My father is a stock broker. And have to deal with many westerners. I learned to talk with them, for example, talking about the stock market, which stock is strong and which is weak. But never have we talked about other things...When I came over here, I tried to talk to Canadians just as I would with westerners when I was at my father's office. I told myself that there shouldn't be much difference. And it works. In the beginning I was a bit of nervous, I don't know what to say...you know how to carry on a conversation. But I am okay now...

As Alfred Schutz and Thomas Luckmann (1973:146) state:

Familiarity is thus characterized by the fact that new experiences can be determined with the help of a type constituted in prior experiences, and this determination holds good in the mastery of the situation.

Familiarity enables some subjects to rely on past experiences, and build a stock of knowledge about their new social milieu. This will be discussed in the next two sections.

Relying on Past Experiences

Respondents who claimed to be familiar with western society relied on past experiences when interacting with Canadians. In attempt to make their new social world familiar, they fall back on past experiences. They attempt to use their prior experiences to adjust into the new
social world. A male respondent comments:

...another thing that I learned when I was in England were certain eating rules. For example, I know that Canadians use serving spoons at the dinner table. They don’t use their forks and spoons to pick food up from the dishes. Also, they pass the dishes around. Chinese don’t do that. Chinese just pick the food from the dishes and put it right into the mouth...So, when Canadians invite me for dinner, I know what to do so I won’t embarrass myself.

Another male respondent comments:

After I came over, whenever I tried to make friends with Canadians, I felt that the initial contact was the most important. The first image that you give to the other person is important. Through experiences in Hong Kong, I have some ideas what they like to hear. What sort of topic they like to talk. You see, in Hong Kong, most of my neighbors are Europeans. And almost everyday I will meet them and we will have some small talk. For example, when I was in High School, I was in Hamilton, and I was living with an Italian family. Whenever we have the time to talk, I found that I was entertaining them and they liked to talk to me. Also when I was in Hong Kong, I found that westerners were very polite, and I tried to be polite as well. You know, saying "Thank You", "Have a nice day", things like that. And it helps when I want to make friends.

A female, respondent recalls how past experiences have helped her.

When I was back in Hong Kong I remembered once I was in a western restaurant having lunch. I accidentally spilled some food on my skirt. I asked the waiter for something to clean my skirt. He commented that I should have used the napkin on the table in the first place. I felt kind of embarrassed, I didn’t know what that was for. Now I know that it is to be placed on the lap and used to clean the area around the mouth. And it is not meant to blow your nose, and you have to fold it after you have done your meal. So, ...now whenever I eat in Canadian restaurants (western food), I know what to do with the napkin, and the various utensils.

Another female confirms the usefulness of past experiences.

When I was in Hong Kong I had a high school teacher who was from Canada. She told us that Canadians are very polite and friendly. This bit of information she
told me about manners has helped a lot. I became more conscious about my manners and I always keep in mind to say, "thank you", "you're welcome" whenever others do something for me. For example, when I was in Toronto, I was in an elevator, I pressed the bottom for another lady. She said "Thank you". At that time, I had just came to Canada, and I haven't got used to the politeness over here. I didn't reply to her. When I looked at her again, I got a feeling that she wanted me to say something. I guess she felt surprised when I didn't respond to her "thank you". I thought for a moment, "why is she looking at me like that?" Then I remembered, I have forgotten to say, "you're welcome". I said it and she gave me a smile.

From the above examples, respondents expressed that they rely on past experiences, such as having some ideas what Canadians like to hear because of past encounters with westerners, using table manners learned from the past, relying on information gathered from other westerners, etc., when they encounter host nationals. It is clear that past experiences play an important role in helping respondents to smooth out social interactions with Canadians. It could be concluded that strangers to a new social environment will inevitably fall back on past experiences to draw familiar cues so that social interactions could be enhanced.

Building a Social Stock of Knowledge

Such past experiences could result in the building up of a stock of knowledge about westerners. The stock of knowledge is like a map planted in the human's mind. It provides necessary information to handle everyday life with which the individual must deal. It also provides general information on areas with which the individual is less familiar, such as living in a foreign
environment. This knowledge is characterized by familiarity. A male respondent comments:

I have an uncle in Australia and before I came over, he paid us a visit in Hong Kong. He told me about university life in Australia. I was interested about what he told me...he told me that the westerners are very polite. He told me not to be shy when I talked to them. It is all right if strangers come up to talk to me. It is all right to give others hugs and kisses on the cheeks. He said that it is part of the western culture. So when I came over, I was not surprised to see people kissing on the streets. In fact I kind of expected it, after what my uncle had told me. And in high school, I wasn’t shy when I made friend with Canadians. In fact I made an effort to make friends with them. For example, initiating conversations. I know my English isn’t the greatest, but it didn’t stop me...

A female respondent recalls how her high school teacher familiarized her with western manners, and how it has become a part of her stock of knowledge.

Westerners, I find, are very courteous. Often my English teacher, who was British, in Hong Kong always told us that we have to be polite to others. From then I knew that westerners are very polite. Knowing that has helped me when I came over here...For example, when I was in high school in Belleville, I was staying with a Canadian family. They said that I am a very quiet and polite girl. I always made sure that I thanked them whenever they did something for me. And another thing, over here I learned to say "You’re welcome". In Hong Kong I didn’t know this. Now I know that when others say, "thank you", I must respond by saying, "You’re welcome".

Another female confirms how her high school teacher had been a valuable source for her, from which she had built a stock of knowledge about westerners:

....I had a British teacher who taught me in high school...I remembered she told me that when she first came over to this school, it was natural for her to greet other teachers on the hallway, like, as she would do when she was in England. But over here (Hong Kong), when she did that, other teachers didn’t reply to her greetings. Instead they looked at her. She
said that maybe in Hong Kong, one has to be a friend
or at least know each other before such common
greetings could take place. She said, in England it's
natural to greet other people even though they may be
strangers. And it's expected to do so. So from that,
I had an idea that politeness and friendliness is
important to westerners. And when I came to do my
high school in Canada, I found that what my teacher
had said was true. And I tried to be polite and
friendly too.

Some have the good fortune of living in a foreign
country before their sojourn to Canada. Their stay there
had familiarized them to certain western manners and
behaviours. A female respondent with such good fortune
recalls:

When I came over, I found that the Canadian lifestyle
and behaviours are exactly what I thought about
western lifestyle before. Maybe I have lived in
another foreign country before, that is why I didn't
anything different that I haven't experienced before.
I was in West Africa before and there are many
westerners there. So I have many western friends. I
learned how to interact with them. I know that they
are very polite and I have to act polite too. Also I
am more daring to talk to westerners, and I wouldn't
feel shy. I find that my stay in West Africa has
helped me to understand westerners better. I realized
that westerners are very open even they have just met
you. They could spend hours talking to you and not
know your name. I remembered at the airport in West
Africa, we were waiting for our flight and this older
lady sat next to me and she started asking me, where
I am from, what I am doing here. We ended up
talking for an hour. And she didn't even ask my name
when she left. I find that it is easy to make friends
with westerners. When I came here, I realized that
Canadians too are easy to get along with. And I don't
feel shy or afraid when people come up to talk to me.

A female recollects how her elder sister, who was already
in Canada, familiarized her to Canadian manners:

When I was vacationing here, my elder sister, who was
studying here, would tell me, "Remember to say thank
you when some one help you". So she taught me all
these behaviours. Also, always greet people, and put
on a smile, she said. So when I came over for high
school, I was in the Arts program, and there were
very few Chinese in that program. I interacted mostly with Canadian students. Applying those things my sister had taught didn't make me feel like a fool. In fact I felt very comfortable with Canadians and fitted in very well. If my sister hadn't taught me those things, Canadians would say that I was rude and impolite, and I would have had a hard time making friends.

These respondents have direct experiences with westerners that have left them with a deep impression of westerners. This has led them to develop a stock of knowledge about westerners that has proved to be useful when they sojourn to Canada. For instance, respondents claimed that they know Canadians are "polite" and "friendly", and after they had arrived, they attempt to be "polite" and "friendly" when interacting with Canadians. Indeed, as Schutz and Luckmann (1973:140) state, "the degree of familiarity is constituted in the circumstance of the acquisition of [a stock of] knowledge". Hence, the elements of the stock of knowledge are made up of a composite of past experiences, and this knowledge provides recipes for interpretation and interaction. Further, it could be concluded that prior experiences helped Chinese foreign students to comprehend some basic rules of social interaction of westerners that assisted them to adjust into their new social environment. In addition, such direct prior experiences gave subjects detailed constructions of social reality of the western world. These were not mere images but tested realities within the confines of their own world. For comprehension of basic rules to take place, direct encounters and experiences are necessary. Indirect experiences only leave images. The following
section further explains.

Familiarity through Media

It is also through familiarity that images and ideas of the unknown are established. Such familiarity may take the form of actual experiences or, in a less vivid manner, of media. A female respondent comments:

I don't have specific experiences but from television and movies, I got quite a general image about westerners' lifestyles and behaviours. From the movies, it seems very "country style". For example, I imagined that there was a lot of farms. I find that they are very sexually open, and they have equality. Also when males and females get together, they interact closely, like touching each other, even though they are just casual friends.

A female respondent relies:

From television and movies, I didn't have a very good impression about their male actors, actors like "Charles Bronson". They gave a very macho image but western males... They always have the solution to problems and always break societal norms. The females have their own ideas... The movies portray the females as independent and self-reliant... (also) from the movies, wives would argue with their husbands and the wives would fight back. They are not passive. In my own family, I never see my parents argue, and if they do, my father always wins.

Another female with images about westerners from the movies.

From the movies, I find that westerners have better manners. For example, males would open doors for ladies. They have gentleman images. Also I find that their dressings are very simple. And I find that their relationships with their parents are not deep. For example, from the movies, when the children are older, they don't stay with their parents any more. I feel that since the parents look after us and bring us into this world, we should look after them when they grow old. I pity those parents who don't have their children to care for them.

A female respondent talks about her familiarity with table
manners:

I thought westerners are very friendly. For instance, from the movies, they are very polite and well mannered. For example, their table manners are better than Chinese. Chinese eat out of the serving dish and we wouldn't wait for others or take time to enjoy dinner. Even in public, for example, in a wedding dinner, everyone eats in a very hurried manner. The westerners would pass the food round the table and wait for everyone to have their share before eating.

Another source for images in which Chinese foreign students from Hong Kong establish familiarity with westerners is by observing them. A female respondent comments:

I have very general images about westerners. For example, sometimes in Hong Kong I could see westerners at the seaside. They seem rich to me and they are very polite. I remembered my friends and I were in a shopping center, one of my friends walked into a western lady, and the lady apologized first.

A male recalls his experience with westerners:

The westerners that I know in Hong Kong are usually from a higher class. They are in business or working with the government. So I guess they were educated and intelligent. I find that they were well mannered. My father works in a West German company and his boss is from West Germany. I remembered once we were invited to his home. I think he is a pretty good guy. You know the way he talks and his manners. For instance, when he was sitting down talking, his posture was good. You know, he sat up straight. May be that was the first time I encounter a westerner, I find that their behaviors were better than Chinese.

Another female recalls her observation of westerners in Hong Kong that led her to develop her perceptions about them.

Before I came over, I find that Westerners are gentle people. And their public manners are better than Chinese. Their public courtesy is good and they are very concerned about others. They are also very friendly. For example, in Hong Kong, there are
westerners and when they take the public transport, buses and the subway, they are very courteous. They let ladies go first. You will never find Hong Kong people doing that. And I find that they take things very easy. For instance, they are very slow. I remembered once in a grocery shop in Hong Kong, I saw a westerner lady putting her groceries in a bag. She did it so gently, making sure that things were placed properly into the bag and were not smashed. Chinese would just throw everything into the bag and hurry away.

However, not everyone has positive images about westerners. A male respondent comments:

In Hong Kong, I find that westerners have very bad manners. They treat Chinese very rudely. Maybe these westerners are colonists (British). For example, they expect Chinese to serve them. I remembered in a Chinese restaurant in Hong Kong I saw a westerner male scolding a Chinese waiter because the waiter had forgot his drink. I don't think it was the waiter's fault. It was lunch time and the place was crowded. And the waiter was busy. Another experience was with western students. Friends and I were having a picnic and we came across some western students. We were minding our business but they came by with their bicycle and yelled foul languages at us. In Hong Kong, I only encountered bad experience with westerners. So they didn't give me a very good image.

Images about westerners are also created from letters sent from kin or friends who are studying abroad. A female respondent comments about the images she had from the letters send by her sisters when they were studying in Canada:

When I was in Hong Kong, I had sisters studying in Canada and they would write and tell me about Canadians. They told me that Canadians are friendly, have better manners when compared to people from Hong Kong, and when they party, they become very playful. For example, in games and sports, in Hong Kong, people play more gentle games, for instance badminton while Canadians play football. When they play, they get very dirty. Chinese people wouldn't do that, play till your body is covered with dirt. That is what my sisters meant by playful. Their manners are better. I remembered my sister wrote and told me once she was taking the subway, and she accidentally kicked over
another passenger's bag which was sitting on the floor. My sister apologized, she apologized too, for putting the bag in my sister's way. In Hong Kong, you will probably be scolded.

Such images did not enable them to comprehend basic rules of social interaction with westerners but they are vivid enough to let subjects create typifications about the western world. Such realities may not be true but they provide guidelines for strangers to an unfamiliar land.

-Typifications-

Through familiarity, typifications are developed. These typifications are formed before and after arrival from both direct and indirect experiences. Westerners are perceived as "straight forward" or "frank". A male respondent comments:

...I feel that westerners are more straight forward. For example, when they are discussing deals and contracts, western customers would tell us what they want and there are no hidden motives behind it. With the Chinese, we have to take a long time to understand what they really want. Westerners are "frank", they tell you up front what they need and how they want it to be done. Chinese are unsure of what they want. For example, I was working for my father, and I have dealt with both western and Chinese customers. I remembered a Chinese customer who came in one day to make a contact to buy some stocks. The next day, he came back and changed the contract, and later that afternoon, he called and wanted to change again. He didn't know what he wanted. I have never experienced this with westerners before.

A female respondent confirms the "frankness" of westerners when she was studying in Hong Kong University:

I met some westerners who were studying Russian. They were very frank.....spoke their minds. They didn't keep opinions to themselves...And if they didn't like what you said, they would come up and tell you. I remembered once I was reading a Russian poem, and this German guy said I have pronounced a word wrongly and
in front of the group, he corrected me. I felt so embarrassed. Chinese wouldn’t do that. They will, if they are your friends, correct you later after the discussion. Or they will talk behind your back. They will never come up front and tell you your mistake.

Westerners are also perceived to be "friendly". A male respondent recalls:

The first time I came to this country, in Vancouver, there was a gentleman sitting next to me. He tried to initiate a conversation and tried to talk something about communism. He thought that Hong Kong is part of China. We started a conversation. Whenever he didn’t understand, he will ask questions without feeling shy. He acted as if he knew me. He was very friendly, offering me cigarettes and coffee. I was very surprised—that he was so friendly. For the Chinese, they are never so friendly and straightforward, asking you all kinds of questions. In Hong Kong, when some strangers asked so many questions, they must have some ulterior motives behind them, like trying to cheat you or something.

A female also recalls the "friendliness" of westerners and how people in Hong Kong would see such "friendliness" if it is practiced there:

I know that westerners are very friendly and they would initiate conversations with strangers, for instance, talking to someone at the bus stop while waiting for the bus. I know because I came to see my sisters when they were going to school here. If I were to start a conversation with a stranger at the bus stop in Hong Kong, he/she will probably think that I was crazy or I was from a mental institution. In Hong Kong if you initiate a conversation with a stranger on a street, he/she will think that you want something from them...

"Friendliness" is not only perceived to occur between strangers but also in more structured situations, such as in the classroom. A female respondent recalls the interaction between teacher and students:

I did my high school here. I find that teachers here are very friendly with their students. They share jokes in class and sometimes they even play together. For example, my form teacher, he plays in the class
baseball team. They act and talk like they are friends. In Hong Kong, you never see so close a relation between the teachers and students. You never joke with the teachers. Teachers are seen as on a higher level than students. And we have to call our teachers "Sir" or "Madam".

Further, westerners are perceived to lead a "boring" lifestyle. A female respondent recollects the letters her friends wrote to her about lifestyle in North America:

I had friends in North America when I was still in North America... they wrote and told me that... the lifestyle here is boring. They are inactive. Unlike in Hong Kong where everyone goes for movies and shopping on weekends... My friends said that here stores are closed on weekends, and they stay at home and watch T.V. In Hong Kong everyone is on the streets on the weekends. Also they told me that by 1 a.m. everything is closed. In Hong Kong, some entertainment places open till 4 or 5 in the morning.

Westerners are also perceived to be "helpful". A female respondent recalls her experience in Hong Kong University with both westerners and Chinese in this respect:

When I was in University,... I found that westerners are not selfish but very helpful. They are willing to help you, share knowledge and ideas with you. For example, I belonged to a study group and we have both Chinese and westerners in that group. The westerners would help you, they give you references and they would share notes. Not the Chinese students. They are more selfish. I remembered a Chinese student in the group who made two sets of notes. One set which was more detailed, he kept, while the other set which was less detailed, he shared with the group. I don't know, may be the competitive nature in Hong Kong made them like that.

Also, westerners are perceived to be more "considerate" and "courteous" when compared to the Chinese from Hong Kong. A male respondent comments:

The only image about westerners came from television and movies. I find that they are courteous and more "considerate"... they care for and think of others.
People in Hong Kong are selfish. They only care for themselves. For example, taking the bus, Chinese in Hong Kong don't care about the older people. They would still push them aside and try to get up first. I remembered once in Hong Kong I saw a westerner letting an older woman to go up the bus first. You never see Chinese people doing that.

From the above data, westerners are perceived to be "friendly", "considerate", "courteous", and "frank". The "frank" perception of westerners could be interpreted as a "polite" way in which the Chinese foreign students perceive Canadians as "rude".

Respondents who developed images and ideas about westerners from media, observation, and letters did not have a concrete knowledge about westerners. Hence, they did not have the opportunity to build an applicable stock of knowledge about westerners. They only have general recipes that have yet to be tested out. A female respondent comments:

I have friends studying in North America and they used to write to me, telling about North American people and their behaviours. They told me that they are very friendly and polite, and that when I come over to study, I should be polite too. You know, saying "Thank you", and greeting people. Also from television, you could get an idea about their friendliness and politeness. These only give me a very general idea about westerners. In Hong Kong if I go around greeting people, they will think I am crazy. So I have an image but I never got to use it in Hong Kong. When I came over, I realized that I kept forgetting to say, "thank you". I remembered the first few months that I was here, whenever I go marketing on a Friday, some cashiers will say "have a nice weekend". At that time I didn't know how to respond. I will just pack my groceries and walk away. Now looking back, I should have said "thank you" or "you too". See, those things my friends told me about having to be polite, they were just stories. We never have a chance to use it in Hong Kong. And it is only when I came over that I got a chance to use it, and only after I kept telling myself "don't forget to say
thank you or you’re welcome”.

From the above data, one could conclude that a concrete set of typifications developed from direct and personal experience about westerners enhances the development of a social stock of knowledge that would ease tensions derived from the unfamiliar when interacting with Canadians.

Consequences of unfamiliarity

This section looks at some of the problems associated with unfamiliarity. The aim is to reflect the importance of familiarity. Coming from a different social environment and culture, Chinese foreign students are equipped with a different stock of knowledge. They face a social world that uses a different language, and has dissimilar values and norms. Social interactions prove to be difficult. A male respondent recalls a moment when he discovered a clothing norm practiced in this foreign environment:

Another thing that I found, you could wear pajamas in Hong Kong ..... and go down to the streets and buy the newspaper. Over here you can’t do that. I remembered when I first came, I was staying with my uncle in Hamilton, I was wearing my pajamas and I came downstairs for breakfast. My uncle told me that I can’t do that here. I am supposed to wait my pajamas only in my bedroom, and I have to put on proper clothing if I want to come downstairs.

A male respondent recollects an embarrassing moment:

.....when I first came, I was living in Hamilton, I experienced going for a walk after dinner in my pajamas and slippers. At that time I didn’t know that it is unacceptable to do that. People walked by me and they stared at me, I didn’t care about them. When I came back, I told my friends what happened. They told me that people here don’t do that. Now that I think back, it was an embarrassing situation. But in
Hong Kong everybody does that, they walk around the streets in their pajamas.

A female respondent recalls:

There was a problem. In Hong Kong when I am within the home area, I would wear my pajamas. But over here the norm is that you wear pajamas only when you go to bed. When you get up, you have to change. During my first year here, I was living in residence. It caused me big trouble. My habit is wearing pajamas in and around the home and not only to bed. So a lot of my floormates asked me "are you going to bed again, Irene?". I didn't want to change my habit so I always stay in my room.

A female respondent talks about footwear:

...when I first came I used to wear a pair of slippers when I went down to the streets. I didn't know that people over here don't do that. They were looking at me. I didn't know what they were staring at. You see in Hong Kong you could do that. A few days later a friend told me that Canadians don't wear slippers on the streets, they have proper shoes. They only wear slippers on the beach.

Another female respondent confirms:

...another thing is that you can't wear slippers out to do groceries or to the stores. Over here people would stare at you and they seem to say, "how could you wear that here?". Sometimes I forget and I do wear my slippers to the store and I do get people staring at me.

One of the norms here prohibits the hanging of clothings in the public. Some Chinese foreign students are unfamiliar with this. A female respondent recalls:

There was another time my roommate washed her clothes and hung them out on the veranda to dry. The water dripped down to the neighbor's veranda and wet her chair. She was very mad. She came and scolded us. She said she was going to complain to the landlord that we dry our clothings on the veranda. She said we can't do that. In Hong Kong we dry our clothings by hanging them out the windows from the apartments. Here, you can't do that. I didn't know until we had the big argument with the neighbor...

Another female confirms the unfamiliarity:
There are things that I am unfamiliar with. Like, for example, during the summer I would hang clothings out on the veranda to dry. The supervisor came up and told us to take them down. He said that it would ruin the image of the apartment. In Hong Kong, everyone hangs their clothing out to dry.

Another norm that seems to be in conflict with many Chinese foreign students is Canadians' demand for quietness after a certain time and in specific places. A female respondent recollects her arguments with her neighbor:

...I find Canadians like quietness. You can't talk too loud after 11 p.m. ...I experienced an incident where my neighbor came banging on our door to tell us to quiet down. The guy who lived below us complained that we were dancing every night. And he threatened to call the police. We were not dancing, we were just playing around, chasing each other up and down the hallway.

A male respondent compares the quietness in western and Chinese restaurants:

...also I find people from Hong Kong talk very loud on the streets. I didn't realize how loud we talk until I came over here. Now I find that people from Hong Kong talk like they are yelling. In Chinese restaurants we are very noisy when compared to western restaurants...I feel like I have to whisper in western restaurants. In the beginning when I went out for dinner with friends in a western restaurant, I had to tell myself to speak softly and many times I had to remind my friends to do the same. We never did like eating in western restaurants. First, we didn't like the food, and, second, we felt like we have to control ourselves.

Other behaviours that perceived to be unacceptable here but acceptable in Hong Kong are spitting and yawning in public. A male respondent recalls an embarrassing moment where he stumbled over such a norm:

In Hong Kong people do a lot of spitting on the streets. Overhere it is not acceptable to do that. I did it once when I was in Vancouver and someone passing by thought I was insulting him. It took me awhile to explain myself. It almost resulted in a
fight. I never spit again. It was so embarrassing.

A female respondent recalls:

...I was in high school here, and it was late in the afternoon, and I was a bit tired. I yawned in the class. The teacher saw me, she walked to me and said that the next time I do that I should have my hands over my mouth. She said that it is impolite to yawn when class is in progress. In Hong Kong teachers never care whether you yawn with your hands over your mouth or not. And sometimes you could even take a nap in class in between lessons.

There are certain values that some Chinese foreign students find difficulties adjusting to in the beginning, and have problems finding responses to them. A female respondent comments:

When I was staying with a Canadian family, I found that Canadians were very straight forward. If they disagreed...with you, they would let you know. Chinese are less open and straight forward. We always keep feelings to ourselves. At first I didn't get used to such frankness. For example, my landlady, when she was unhappy with something I did, she would tell me. They wouldn't keep it in their heart. For instance, I walked into the house once during winter with my boots on. She told me not to do it again...Chinese are not usually that open and frank. We are more indirect. Such openness was new to me. At first I was not used to it. I thought, "how dare she tell me what to do? I pay the rent, you know".

Similarly, a male respondent comments about his unfamiliarity with Canadian straightforwardness:

...I also find Canadians very straight-forward. If they are not happy with something you do, they would tell you. Unlike Chinese who would probably keep quiet about it. I remembered once watching T.V. in my landlord's living room. He came in and sat down. Then he commented that he didn't like the main character of the show. At first I felt uncomfortable about their openness. I always thought that they meant something, but now I realize that it did not necessary require a response. In Hong Kong, people keep things to themselves. Unless one is a very close friend then one would not disclose personal opinions. Here, it's common to hear Canadians disclose personal feelings toward things or other people in front of
strangers. At first I didn’t know what to do, should I respond by stating my opinions or sympathize with him? I was quite confused in the beginning...

A female recalls her unfamiliarity with the friendliness of Canadians:

...I find Canadians to be too open and friendly. I remembered in high school, the first day of school, this girl knew I was a foreigner and she was very helpful. She showed me where the registrar is, class rooms etc. I felt quite uneasy at first. I kept waiting for her to ask me a favour. In Hong Kong people do that. When strangers are nice to you, they usually have motives. But this girl didn’t ask for anything. We became good friends. I was quite surprised. Also since I am not used to strangers being so friendly on the first encounter, I didn’t know what to say to her to keep the conversation going. Don’t know what to ask or respond her...

The stranger finds "himself or herself enmeshed in a world not of his or her own creation which stands alien and limiting" (Adam, 1978:78). A female respondent comments:

...now sometimes I would have a few classes with the same Canadian girl. We would talk about the courses and things about the lectures but we never talked about things from the outside besides school. I don’t know what to ask her or talk about besides school.

Another female respondent comments:

...I wanted to interact more with Canadians but it seems that we have nothing to talk about beside schoolwork. I don’t know what to say to them beside school work... sometimes they talk about football, I just can’t get involved because I have no knowledge about it.

A female respondent comments on her lack of knowledge about Canadian culture:

Another thing, I am not familiar with some of their festivals... I remembered the first Halloween here. I was very surprised to see them all dressed up in their costumes. I wondered why there were so many celebrations? And what was the cause? Everyone goes to parties and decorations were put up.

Another major norm that some respondents are
unfamiliar with is the norm that demands quietness at a specific time and in a specific place. Such unfamiliarity has led some respondents to perceive that they are being typified as "loud." They are seen as speaking too loud in public. A male respondent comments:

In Hong Kong we could talk loudly in public places, but here I find that Canadians don't like us speaking loud. I've experienced talking with my friends in the bus in a usual way as if I was in Hong Kong. All of a sudden, I felt other passengers looking at us as if we had done something wrong. I realized that we must have talked too loud...

They decide that they are suffering from discrimination when they realize that nothing happens when other Canadians do the same. A male respondent recalls:

...talking loud, Chinese are also accused of talking loud. I find that Canadians too talk loud. But when they do, no one disapproves. For example, I was on the bus, and there was a group of us, and we were joking in Chinese. People around us turned and looked at us, and they seem to show disapproval...I take the bus to school, and sometimes I could see Canadians talking loudly and joking with each other, but no one cares.

According to Adam (1978), minority groups are often perceived as "overvisible". "The public image insists on ugliness: the black man as gorilla, the Jews as vulture, the homosexual as 'fairy' or 'diesel dyke' " (Adam, 1978:49). It is apparent that some subjects perceived that they are typified as "loud". Such charges create embarrassment within the group when its members behave overvisibly. A male respondent comments:

...when I see other Chinese students eating and talking loudly, I feel embarrassed. Because Canadians will say that all Chinese are like that, they have bad manners. They wouldn't say that that particular
Chinese is like that.

Adam (1978:97) concludes:

Overvisible behaviour among fellow members is strongly condemned, because, as the argument runs, it is the "loudmouthed" [Chinese students]...who give the rest a "bad name".

Such perceptions not only disrupt the cohesion within the group, but also create an obstacle for social interaction between group members and with host nationals.

The above data seems to confirm that respondents who perceived to be unfamiliar with Canadian norms and values have difficulties interacting with host nationals. These respondents claimed that they felt "embarrassed", "wondering why other people are looking at them"; "discriminated", etc. whenever they stumble over an unfamiliar norm. The data reveal that such difficulties have proved to be a liability to social interaction. Further, the data seems to conclude with findings by Morris (1960) and Selltiz, et al. (1963) that previous experiences have important influence on social interaction with host nationals. In other words, unfamiliarity inhibits social interaction. Respondents who claimed that they are unfamiliar with Canadian behaviours and lifestyle perceived to have difficulties interacting with Canadians.

Coping Strategies

This section looks at two sets of coping strategies. One employed by respondents who claimed to be unfamiliar and the other by respondents who claimed to be familiar with Canadian society. The following paragraphs will
first highlight some of the strategies used by the respondents who have encountered unfamiliar situations. 

A male respondent comments:

In Hong Kong one method to make friends is to go out for a meal and we become friends. Here, you talk first and become friendly then go out for a meal. I find that a problem because my spoken English is poor. I find it hard to make friends with Canadians. With the Chinese, it comes naturally, and most of my friends are Chinese...So, I mix with Chinese and interact very little with Canadians.

Interacting with their own nationals is a common strategy for strangers in a new social environment. Various researchers have identified such a strategy used by Chinese foreign students in the United States and by Chinese immigrants to Canada (Lam, 1983, and Becker, 1971). A female respondent comments on her use of such a strategy:

When I first came, it was very difficult. Everything was new to me, and I didn’t know anyone here. The only way was to ask other Chinese. I still hang around with mostly Chinese. At least with Chinese, we know what to expect from each other, such as behaviour. And there is no communication problem, and there is always something we could talk about. You know, .... what is happening in Hong Kong? Who is the hottest star...

In line with the findings of Tai (1972), subjects confided that they form their own ethnic enclave because they face rejection and alienation in the host society. Hence, they tend to seek each other to work out common problems of adjustment.

Another strategy often used is avoidance. A female respondent comments:

When I first came, I was so frightened that I avoided Canadians entirely. I had no idea how Canadians were. And my English was poor. Everytime I went out,
...to do groceries, I would have my friend come along. She spoke better English. And everytime I had to speak to Canadians, I had my friend take care of that. Even now, when I have to go to the registrar, I bring her along.

However, there are some respondents who want to interact with Canadians. These respondents report that they observe Canadians when they encounter unfamiliar situations. Through observation, these respondents began to adapt to the new and unfamiliar. A female respondent recalls:

Over here, people are very friendly. You could face a stranger and smile, he/she will smile back. But in Hong Kong, if you do that, people will think that you are crazy...In the beginning, I wondered why are they behaving like that? I was puzzled the first time when someone did that to me. I began to observe, and I found that everyone is doing that. So I guess it’s okay for me to give a smile to strangers and they wouldn’t think that I am crazy.

A male respondent recalls how he had observed Canadian table manners and adjusted to the situation:

Another thing that I don’t get used to is their table manners. Here, Canadians pass the dishes around, people then fork food onto their plates. In Hong Kong, we eat out of the serving dishes. I remembered I was living with a Canadian family during my first year and the landlord invited me for dinner. I waited for him to pass food to me. Also there were various utensils for food and desserts. I remembered I didn’t know which to use so I watched for my landlord to start eating. Observing which utensil he used, I followed. Also I found out that it is rude to cut across other people to reach for food. You have to ask others to pass it to you. See, I didn’t know all these specific rules at the dinner table, so, the best way to learn is to watch and follow them.

Referring to data on processes that establish familiarity, it is quite apparent that respondents who claimed to be familiar with Canadian society use strategies that facilitate social interaction. For example,
strategies such as selecting the appropriate topics to converse with specific Canadians, reminding oneself to be polite, friendly and courteous, initiating conversations with Canadians, etc. are used. Such strategies reflect the fact that these respondents have certain prior knowledge about Canadians society. Knowledge that characterize Canadians as "frank", "polite", "friendly", and "helpful". Such prior knowledge coupled with strategies provide opportunities for social interaction.

Hence, from the above data, Chinese foreign students made use of a wide range of coping strategies when they encountered unfamiliarities or familiarity in their new social environments. In cases where respondents claimed to be unfamiliar "reject" strategies, such as "mixing" with Chinese and interact very little with Canadians", "everytime I had to speak to Canadians, I had my friend take care of that", etc., were employed. However, these respondents also used "accept" type of strategy when they decide to interact with Canadians. For respondents who claimed to be familiar with Canadian society, an "accept" type of strategy is used. As mentioned earlier, such strategy enhance social interaction. It is important to remain the reader that there is no clear rule on what strategies to use. Their application depends on the individual and the circumstances on hand, and other influencing factors that, with the present data, could not be detected.
Summary

A familiar social world is established when individuals assign past experiences to new encounters. In other words, to create a familiar social world, individuals continuously synthesize the old (the already experienced) with the new (the yet to be experienced). Therefore, individuals are familiar with a certain object or event when "[they] know that there is "such a thing", [they] have "heard of it", and [they] have more or less unclarified ideas about it" (Schutz and Luckmann, 1973:137). Through the process of synthesizing the old with the new, individuals develop a social stock of knowledge which is the blueprint for social interaction. For example, "I learned one important thing about the British,...they are slow...I find Canadians too are slow. This is not new to me".

The data showed that relying on past experiences and building a stock of knowledge are important criteria to establish familiarity. Respondents who have past experiences with westerners claimed on that basis that they are familiar with certain Canadian lifestyles, such as "not being surprised to see people kissing on the streets", "knowing when to say "thank you"", etc. They claimed that such familiarity has helped them to build a stock of knowledge about Canadians that in turn has helped social interaction.

The data also show that familiarity comes in varying
degrees. The research identified and analysed two types. These are categorized as direct and indirect. The direct type constitutes the circumstance for acquiring a social stock of knowledge. The indirect type only generates general images and untested recipes for social interaction. However, both types lead to the formation of typification schemes. In this context, respondents typified Canadians positively in everyday mannerism. Their remarks show that types are generated from prior experiences and help the strangers to interpret new experiences, and that this interpretation helps in the mastery of unfamiliar situations. Further, subjects claimed that such positive typifications encourage social interaction. The influence of typifications on the subjects' decisions to engage in social interaction with Canadians will be discussed in Chapter VII.

The data also show that respondents are equipped with a different social stock of knowledge, and that this social stock of knowledge is grounded in the biography of the individual. In short, the social environment from which the individual emerges provides the ground for the establishment of his/her social stock of knowledge. The responses suggest that different social stock of knowledge can prove to be an obstacle for social interaction with host nationals.

Equipped with a different social stock of knowledge, and led to perceive that they are themselves are negatively typified, some of the subjects resort to coping
strategies based on avoidance, such as limiting social contact to fellow Chinese when possible, and having intermediaries in their dealing with Canadians, etc., to deal with unfamiliar phenomena they encounter. Such responses express a "reject" type of coping strategy, where avoidance is the mode. Respondents decide to employ this type of strategy when they perceive that developing relations with Canadians to be very difficult and requiring knowledge they believe themselves to be lacking.

Conversely, "accept" strategies are employed, such as making an attempt to observe and learn from Canadians, when respondents decide to interact with Canadians. Similarly, respondents who claimed to be familiar with Canadians society employ an "accept" type of coping strategy. They have reported that such strategies enhance social interaction. It is necessary to remind the reader again that these reported strategies reflect the recipe knowledge of respondents. These are strategies employed during the reported specific encounters with Canadians. They are not global strategies but rather part of a recipe knowledge that is available to respondents. Types of strategy will be further discussed in chapter VIII.

Finally, this chapter showed how subjects seemed to establish familiarity in their new social environment. By relying on past and present experiences, changing stock of knowledge, images from media, and typifications, they attempt to create a familiar social world. This was clear
from the data that respondents with familiarity claimed that they "know" what to do when interacting with Canadians and they employ an "accept" type of coping strategy that facilitates social interaction. Conversely, respondents who claimed to be unfamiliar with the norms and customs of Canadian society perceived difficulties in interacting with host nationals. These respondents seem to be associated with two types of coping strategy, a "reject" and an "accept" types of strategy. This does not mean that respondents who are familiar with Canadian society do not have other coping strategies beside an "accept" type of strategy. This reflects the existence of discrepancies but due to the limit of the data, it is not possible to detect this phenomenon. Further, the inclination to which type of strategy to employ could be shaped by the processes discussed or other possible influencing factors which could not be detected due to the limit of the present data.
CHAPTER VI
LANGUAGE

The aim of this chapter is to examine the role of a common language in facilitating social interaction. This is done by describing how a common language enables individuals to cope with their immediate sphere of life, build a stock of knowledge, and objectify their subjective thoughts and feelings. Since this research deals with subjects whose mother tongue is not English, a section is devoted to examining the differences between living (spoken) and written language. The purpose is to show that face-to-face interaction requires more than just proficiency in written language. The research then looks at the consequences of having little ability in a common language. This will involve the examination of how inadequacy in a common language affects reality construction, interpretation of western linguistic symbols, gestures and expressions, and feelings of being part of the group. Finally, the chapter looks at the types of coping strategy employed when respondents perceived to have language problem.

Language as the important sign system, enables individuals to comprehend social realities (Berger and Luckmann, 1966). It is by making the content and meaning of past experiences and the immediate objects conscious and explicit that language helps to co-
ordinate...[individual's] life in society and *fill that life with meaningful objects* (Berger and Luckmann, 1966:22). Therefore, language enables individuals to cope with objects and persons in their immediate sphere of life.

A male respondent comments:

Talking about course work with Canadian students, I have little problem comprehending. For example, a Canadian student asked me whether I had taken Commerce 205 before, and we talked about the course work. I have no problem expressing myself or understanding him.

Another male respondent comments his ability to cope with his academic sphere of life:

In lecture I have no problem understanding the professor. I understand what he is teaching and his lecture. I find that whether I prepare for class or not matters a lot. For example, if I read the chapter before class I understand more.

Through language, members of society could make sense of and relate to the social world.

However, not everyone is that fortunate. Some of the respondents claimed to have problems communicating in English. They came from Chinese medium high schools in Hong Kong while a few came from English medium high schools. And those who came from English school confined the usage of English in the classrooms. In their everyday life, Cantonese is used in conversations and all interactions. A male respondent comments on his proficiency in English:

I was very poor in English when I was in Hong Kong. I come from an English school. We have subjects like Math, History and Geography in English. But whenever the teachers have problem explaining in English, they will switch to Cantonese to explain. And sometimes when we don't understand the explanation in English,
the teacher will switch to Cantonese. Outside the class rooms and at home I talk in Cantonese. For example when my father asked me to call one of his European clients, I have to write down what I want to say on a piece of paper first. For instance, "Hello, I want to talk to so and so"... My English is so poor that I didn't even know what is an "envelope".

Poor fluency and lack of knowledge in the language have inhibited some respondents from coping with their immediate sphere of lives, both academically and socially. A female respondent recalls some problems she encountered during one of her group discussions:

In group discussions, I seldom speak up. I find that I have problems expressing myself and also understanding some of the discussions going on. For example, I remembered one of the courses had group discussion and everytime the group discussed some thing, I didn't know what was going on. I just didn't understand what the others said. I would go home and read the text and I still can't relate it to what we had discussed earlier.

Another female respondent recalls how she failed to understand her professor:

Sometimes in conversations I may not understand a certain term and this would make me not understand the whole conversation. For example, I had a question to ask a professor the other day, and when I told him the question, he said, "Oh, it's a piece of cake". When he started explaining, my mind was still wondering what does a piece of cake had to do with the problem?...

A male respondent recalls his inability to comprehend "jokes" said in class:

Yes, jokes, I don't understand their jokes. Like sometimes professors would say some jokes in class about a problem or issue. I remembered once in my Finance class, the professor said "jumping from the frying pan into the fire", everyone started laughing. I understood every word, but I didn't find it funny. I wondered what was so funny about what he had said?...

Inability in "making sense of the surrounding social world"
is also shown in their social lives. A male respondent recalls:

In Cantonese, I could use many terms with the same meaning to express myself, and I could understand the many various terms used by others. But in English, I could only use a few terms because I only know a few. And I only understand a few terms too. For example, I remembered I was talking to a Canadian student and he used a word, "converse", at that time, I didn't know that word and couldn't make any sense out of what he was saying...Sometimes in conversation, they would share a joke and I would not understand what they are laughing about. I think it is because I didn't understand some of the words they used...Sometimes they would laugh and I would feel out of place...

Another respondent, a female, recalls how she could not make sense out of the casual encounters she had with Canadian students:

In casual conversation with Canadian students, there are times where I didn't understand what they are saying. For example, they used slang. For instance, I was talking with a group of Canadian friends, and suddenly I missed what they were saying. A certain word was used and everyone seems to understand what it meant. I didn't know the word, I didn't understand the rest of the conversation. I think the word was "hyper". They were talking about some individual's behaviour...

Part of the inability to make sense out of the surrounding social world is due to the lack of a social stock of knowledge. A male respondent recalls:

....in the department we have a student meeting once a year. This kind of social gathering, we sit together and relax, and talk. Normally they talked about sports and jokes. During that time, I found that I have to understand their culture and background in order to understand what they were saying. In that sense, I am lacking in that kind of knowledge because I seldom watch T.V....

A female respondent confides her lack of knowledge about table dancing, and her failure to relate to this social phenomenon:
In the communication study class there was once where we were discussing the moral attitudes of table dancing... The professor talked about the topic, I didn’t understand what he said. But once he related it back to the technique of the course, I understood the technique when he talked about it. But when he referred back to table dancing, I was lost again.

A male respondent comments on how his lack of knowledge about football has inhibited him from making sense of the conversation:

...I remembered once I was talking football with a Canadian friend. I have no idea about the game, and he was trying to tell me about some checking strategies of the teams. I was really confused. I couldn’t make any sense out of what he had said...

Another respondent, a female, comments the importance of having a stock of knowledge about the topic that is discussed:

...I am taking a psychology class and usually before class there would be a group of students outside the class talking about how the course could be applied to the community. When they talked about the theories and terms from the course I understood, no problem. But when they began talking about what the Salvation Army in Windsor has or what other social institutes have, to me they all sound like Greek. To begin, I don’t know what this society has and what its institutes offer. I understand English but not the content. So the whole conversation didn’t make any sense to me...

It is apparent that for the Chinese foreign students to make sense of the surrounding social world, and to relate it to social phenomena and communicate them to members of society, they need more than just fluency and knowledge in the language, they need a social stock of knowledge about this society before communication and making sense of the surrounding social world could be established. Respondents who claimed to be fluent in
English are able to build a social stock of knowledge about Canadian society that enhances social interaction with host nationals and objectifies their social world that could be understood by host nationals. The proceeding two sections will discuss this further.

Building a Social Stock of Knowledge

According to Berger and Luckmann (1966), one of the functions of language is to help develop a social stock of knowledge. Language as a body of facts has its function as a storehouse for experiences. As individuals learn language, they are learning much more. They are learning the social texture and content of life. A male respondent recollects how his conversation with Canadian friends helps him develop a stock of knowledge about Canadian society:

...But sometimes I find that I don't get their jokes...I remembered a friend of mine, Tony, was talking about how when he was younger he used to bring girls home and they would hide in the shed fooling around. His mother would come looking for him. You know this made the other friends laugh. I didn't find it funny...So I asked him what was so funny, and he told me that it is fun to hide from parents and do things behind their back...

A male respondent comments how his interactions with Canadians have helped him understand certain Canadian colloquialisms:

I feel that there are certain words that you have to know the knowledge before you could understand what they mean. For example, the word "Zebra", it means the marriage of a black and white couple. The first time I didn't know what it meant, I asked my Canadian friends and they told me. Another example, Chinese, Canadians call us "Chinks". First I thought the word "Chink" was alright. But now I know it is against Chinese...
A male comments on how his improvement in English has led him to understand some of the Canadian colloquialisms:

After I came over I began to improve my English. I made Canadian friends and I made an effort to speak English to them. I learned a lot of things from them. For example, I know what "Chink" means, before I didn't. Sometimes they would call me that, I know they are just fooling around, but I still don't like it. I would scold them back...by calling them "Honkies"...

A female recalls her learning experience:

...I remembered a few of us were talking casually. The Canadians were talking about a game. They were talking about how players push a rock on ice and some will use a broom to clean the ice so that they could control the speed of the rock. The rock is supposed to land in the center of a circle. At first I didn't know what they were talking about, so I asked them. I wasn't shy to ask them because I find that my English has improved since I came. They told me that it is a type of game call curling. Now I know what it is and sometimes you could see it on T.V.

From the data, one could conclude that language provides knowledge about realities and this knowledge helps explains new experiences acquired by respondents. Thus the language an individual acquires provides him/her a stock of knowledge that includes a stock of typifications and set of recipes for interpreting actions and events that may be encountered. For example, respondents claimed to understand some of the negative colloquialisms used about them and the data revealed that they have learned to deal with them. These typifications will be further discussed in Chapter VII.

Objectification

Perhaps the most important function of a common
language is to enable the user to objectify social realities. Berger and Luckmann (1966, 39-40) state:

...through language an entire world can be actualized at any moment...Through linguistic objectification, even when "talking to myself" in solitary thought, an entire world can be appresented to me at any moment. As far as social relations are concerned, language "makes present" for me not only fellowmen who are physically absent at the moment, but fellowmen in the remembered or reconstructed past, as well as fellowmen projected as imaginary figures into the future. All these "presences" are...highly meaningful,... in the ongoing reality of everyday life.

In other words, objectification refers to ability to share subjective thoughts and feelings with other fellow members of society.

Those respondents who perceived their English is good claimed that they are able to express themselves and objectify their social world. A male respondent comments on his conversation with a professor:

I have little problem with my English....I had a few courses with a professor on Japanese culture and society, and whenever we have a break, I would talk with him about the Japanese culture...I have no problem expressing my thoughts and I have no problem understanding him. Our discussions about the Japanese was very interesting...

On the social aspect, a male respondent recalls his abilities to objectify the sport world:

I always have a chance to talk to Canadian students when I am in the cafeteria. I remembered once I was having a cup of coffee with another friend and we were talking about football. We were drawing some strategies on a piece of paper. Some Canadians sitting near us got interested and they came over to talk with us. I have some knowledge about the NFL. And we have some good casual conversation about it...

Another male respondent expresses his competence in English:
I find that my English is pretty good... Most Canadians understand me perfectly and they have no doubt about what I am talking about... I talked to Canadians a lot. From there I picked up most of my English, for instance, their slang and accents. I feel very comfortable talking to them, and they understand what I say. For example, I have a few close Canadian friends, I could express anything and they would understand me. For example, we like to talk about girls and I would tell them how Hong Kong girls behave, and how they play "hard to get"...

A male respondent comments on his proficiency in the language:

My English is okay and I could talk to Canadians. For example, I am a member of a computer club and maybe once a week with have a meeting where members gather to talk about computer programming and exchange some ideas and programs. We talked about computer programs available in the market and about how we design and create our own programs. Sometimes I would talk about Hong Kong and how computers are used there, and what are the types of programs available. I have no problem expressing myself...

The ability to objectify the social world not only depends on the competence and fluency of spoken English, but also on their perceptions of the listeners. If the listeners are perceived to be "friendly" and "interested", ability to express oneself improves. A female respondent comments:

My ability to express myself depends on how I perceive the other person. If I find that he/she is friendly and is interested in talking to me, my English would be more fluent. But if he/she looks fierce and impatient, I would fumble and startle in my speech, and I will have problems expressing myself. I remembered once I was on a bus, and a Canadian lady sat next to me. She was very friendly and she asked me how do we write Chinese. She was interested in knowing. I felt very comfortable talking to her and I could express myself...

Unable to communicate in English, many Chinese foreign students fail to objectify their social world. This
inhibits their abilities to communicate their social realities. A male respondent comments:

I have problems expressing myself in English. My English is not good. I remembered once when a Canadian student who I know from one of my class asked me where Hong Kong is and how the lifestyle is there. I tried my best to explain to him but somehow he kept asking me to repeat myself. I think he didn’t understand my English...

A male respondent recalls:

There are ideas and feelings during conversations that I can’t express in English. Once I was talking with a Canadian about a movie. He asked me whether I have seen it. I said yes. He asked me what I thought of it. I paused for a moment. I had ideas in my mind but they were all in Chinese. There was no way that I could express them in English. I replied "good". I could try my best to express in English but I wouldn’t know whether I will be expressing what I actually wanted to say, and I fear that my English might come out funny and he might laugh at me. So I said good because it is the simplest and safest answer...

Most respondents did not have any problem expressing simple thoughts in surface conversations, such as “how are you?”, “how was a weekend?”, etc. But the problem exists in objectifying conversations that require detail and elaborate explanation. A female respondent explains:

In expressing myself in common surface conversations like "how are you?", "how was you test?", I have no problem. But if we were to discuss a specific topic where it requires more in depth thoughts, I will have problem expressing myself. I find that there are times where I can’t express my thoughts in English. I can’t find the term or structure the sentence to express my feelings. Sometimes we talked about culture and they would ask me, "what is Eastern culture like?" I find that I have no problem expressing my thoughts in Cantonese. But in English, I find that somehow I can’t express what I actually have in mind...

A female respondent comments:

...I find that on surface simple expressions, I have no problem but once I have to go deeper to explain
myself, I feel limited. The problem seems to be an inability to find the correct word and terms to express myself. I know many Chinese terms but I don't know how to translate them to English. Also, I have a problem structuring what I want to say. I have ideas but they are all in Chinese, but when I want to express the ideas I have problem translating my thoughts and ideas to English. So a lot of my ideas are in Chinese, and I can't express them out in English...

A female respondent recalls her inability to objectify certain aspect of Chinese customs:

In casual conversation with Canadian students we talked about very general things, like, "have you studied for the test?", "how did you do in the test?". No problem understanding them and expressing myself. Sometimes I do get into in depth conversation with them. Like talking about difference in culture between Chinese and North American. At that situation, I understood what she said but on my part I have a hard time trying to express what I want to say...Like in Hong Kong there are many traditional Chinese customs. I can't find words to explain these customs. Like the worshipping, and the festivals. At that time I remembered saying, "like people here praying to the Gods, but in another sense...". It didn't come out what I had in mind, but that was the best I can do.

Another female respondent comments on her inability to objectify feelings and emotions:

In in depth conversations such as talking about sex, Hong Kong lifestyle, families, and about my future plans, I find that I can't express fully what I want to say. I feel that they don't understand me. I find that there are certain Chinese terms that express my views of certain topic and when I express them in English, they don't come out the way I feel and many times Canadians can't understand. Especially exclamations and terms that express feelings. Also I don't know how to express such feelings and exclamations in English...It is hard to explain frustrations and anger...

A male recollects a conversation where he failed to communicate his social world:

In casual common conversations, like asking, "how was the weekend", and things like that I have no problem
expressing myself. But in in depth conversation such as talking about lifestyles in Hong Kong, I can't really express what I want to say...I remembered once my friend asked me why there are so many students from Hong Kong coming to Canada. I told him that there are only two universities in Hong Kong and it is hard to get in. He asked me how much it costs to go to school here. I told him the amount. He said why don't I keep the money and put it into the bank and by 3 or 4 years later I will be rich. I don't know how to tell him that Chinese value education and it's the wish of the parents in Hong Kong to put their children through school and if the children could go to university, the parents would see them through. I can't express these thoughts to him in English. And he asked me why did my parent waste so much money to send me to school? I can't express the answer to him. My thoughts were: education is often seen as the top in Chinese society. Educated people are respected and looked up upon in traditional Chinese society. Even in today's Hong Kong. There are Chinese tales where parents would only eat one meal a day inorder to save enough to send their son to school...I can't find the words to express my feelings.

From the data, it is clear that a common language enables individuals to objectify their subjective thoughts and feelings to other members of society. From the data, respondents who claimed to be proficient in English were able to communicate and express their thoughts to host nationals, and they perceived that Canadians have no problem understanding them. In doing so, the social world is projected and what is "real" could be shared. Conversely, a lack of a common language inhibits objectification of the subjective "world", hence, making social interaction (conversation) limiting and alienating. For instance, respondents who perceived their having little ability in English expressed that they have problems communicating their thoughts and ideas to Canadians. To avoid embarrassment, they attempt to keep conversations
short and simple.

Differences between Living and Written Languages

Living or spoken language differs from written language. The former involves the crucial aspect of face-to-face communication while the latter takes the form of "frozen expressions" (Weigert, 1981). Respondents may be proficient in written English but this proficiency may not help face-to-face interaction. Within the context of social interaction, the speaker and listener share a special relationship, whereupon, with the help of spoken language, intended meanings are tied to the situation. This cannot be achieved with written language. Further, written language relies upon syntactic rules to make sense while spoken language need not. The following are examples cited by subjects to highlight the differences between the two form of languages. A male respondent comments:

I feel that if my English is better, I would talk to them more and that would further improve my English. When I first came, my spoken living was terrible. For example, I didn't even know how to ask for directions. Before I came I thought that my English was good. I came from an English school when I was in Hong Kong. We used English in class, only writing and reading, other than that everyone speaks Cantonese. Maybe the English we learned in Hong Kong is too text oriented. I found that English used in conversation is an entirely different thing. English in conversation is not like what I write or read in a sentence...Even I was good in English in Hong Kong, there were many things during conversation that I didn't understand when I came over...

A male respondent comments on the syntactic rules of written English:

I thought spoken English is just like written English. I didn't know about past perfect tenses, grammars,
verbs, and all these rules. My high school teacher in Canada once told me that my written English sounded like spoken English. For example, I would say in speech "I want to go by bus to Tom's place". My friends would understand. But in written English it doesn't sound too right.

A female comments on the difference between spoken and written English:

...I came from an English school in Hong Kong but I only use English in class when writing and reading. I spoke Cantonese outside the class and at home. So I know how to read and write in English but speaking is a problem. I found that the words and vocabulary we learned in the classrooms are seldom used in conversations. So when I came over, I have to learn how to converse in English, and learn the Canadian type of conversation. For example, learning their slang and accents. For instance, slang like "make out with somebody" you never use this in writing in class. At first I didn't know what it means and now I know. It means having sex with someone...

Another respondent, male, highlights how spoken language is tied to the situation:

...I pay attention to slang words, you know words that you don't use in writing but in speech. For example, switching off the lights, some may say "kill the lights". At first I didn't know what it meant but after watching the man getting up and switching off the lights, I found the meaning. In academic writing, you wouldn't write like that...In Hong Kong, we only use English in school not at home.

The above examples demonstrated the difference between the rules orienting written language and less structured spoken language. The data expressed that respondents did not realize the difference between spoken and written English until social interaction began with host nationals. They found that classroom English is not applicable in casual encounters and they expressed that they have to "learn how to converse in English, and learn the Canadian type of conversation". Spoken language is tied to
situations, and developed from past events. Hence, respondents may be proficient in written English, but because they did not partake in the historical development of this society, they are unable to comprehend intended meanings which are tied to situations. Problems, such as constructing reality in a "distorted" way, difficulties in interpreting verbal cues and not being part of the group, may arise.

**Reality Construction**

The preceding three sections deal with the results of not having or having little ability in a common language. This section deals with the construction of reality of respondents who perceived themselves having poor language proficiency. From a Schutzian perspective, language helps individuals to construct their social world. Schutz (1970:18) emphasizes:

> If he constructs his own view of the world around him, he does so with the help of the raw materials offered to him in this...exposure to fellow men. Both the exposure to these cultural materials and their selective and interpretative acceptance of them, presupposes a common language as a means of communicating between as well as an instrument of cognition for the individual.

In other words, language is one of the media for the social construction of reality. A male respondent comments on how his inability to understand certain North American colloquialisms has led him to construct social reality about Canadians:

> ...in conversation with Canadians, sometimes I didn't understand what they are saying...I remembered I was
talking to some Canadians and they were talking about
"bar crawling". I thought they crawl in bars and have
fun...I thought they were crazy, just crawling in
bars. I mean, how could anyone enjoy that?...

Another male respondent recollects his perception about
Canadian during a conversation:

In conversation with Canadians, I find that my
understanding depends on what we are talking
about...if they talk about things and they use slang
words or words that I don't know, I will miss out. I
remembered once a guy used the word "fiance", I didn't
know what it meant. To me it sound like "finance".
So all the time during the conversation I thought he
must be poor and want to borrow some money from me.
Then I thought Canadians must be very daring because I
hardly know that guy and he wants to borrow money from
me...

A female respondent recollects her conversation with a
Canadian female about divorce:

...I remembered I was talking to a close Canadian
friend about divorce. She was telling me how she met
her husband and how long they were married. Now they
are getting a divorce. To me her relationship with
her husband didn't seem long. I find that she took
divorce too easily. I guess most Canadians are like
that. Easy come, easy go....

Indeed, language provides the "innumerable focl of
attention toward innumerable specific points within" the
various aspects of reality which individuals deal with on
concludes:

reality is, for us, essentially a language-made
affair: we catch it and encircle it comprehensively by
means of words. Words not only stand proxy for the
things and acts experienced; they are the vehicles
that carry all of our constructed meanings regarding
things and acts...the world of facts exists for us
only in the world of words which describe the
existences.

It is apparent that respondents who perceived themselves as
having language problems construct social realities in
their own "distorted" way. For instance, some respondents perceived that Canadians crawl in bars when they go drinking and are "poor and want to borrow...money..." Misunderstanding of meanings and situations had led them to construct their realities about Canadians. Perhaps the more important point reflected by a "distorted" construction of reality is the need of a common language.

**Difficulties in Interpretations**

This section deals with the problem of interpreting western linguistic symbols when respondents claimed to have poor language fluency. Being strangers in an unfamiliar social environment, respondents who claimed to have language problem perceived difficulties in interpreting western linguistic symbols, gestures, and expressions. They may be proficient in written English, but their limited abilities in spoken English and stock of knowledge limit their comprehension of intended meanings that are tied to social situations. A male respondent comments:

Sometimes we would engage in light conversation on sports and games. Sometimes during such conversation, they would say jokes, others would laugh but I didn’t find it funny and wondered why they are laughing...I understood the words they used, but I just didn’t find it funny...

A female respondent recalls on how she did not find jokes funny in class:

Sometimes professors joke in class. Some I understood, some I didn’t. Some I felt that it is not funny. But Canadians are always laughing at these non funny jokes...I remembered one lecture was on the purchase of bonds, the professor mentioned something about "James Bond", and the Canadians were laughing. I
didn't find it funny...

Another female recollects:

...I have a professor who likes to talk about his experience in Manitoba where he had done research. At times I don't understand what he said. That is when he used slang and colloquialisms. You can't find these words in the dictionary. I remembered he said "bucks". I didn't know what he was trying to say, everyone else seems to know, and they were laughing.

Another respondent, a female, recalls:

I remembered once, the professor was talking about Jacob crackers. He said that Jacob is a person from the bible. One day Moses brought some crackers home and offer to Jacob. Jacob said that they tasted better than Jacob crackers. Moses said, of course this is Moses'. The whole class laughed, I was wondering what was so funny.

A female recalls how her inability to comprehend Canadian linguistic expression has inhibited her understanding the situation:

...for example, the expression "take-off", some Canadians refer to going away, but I know it refers to taking things off, like taking off clothing. So, in one conversation, a Canadian was talking about his friends "taking-off" from the pub. At first I didn't understand what he was talking about because I was wondering why his friends wanted to take-off their clothing in the pub...

Another respondent, a male, recollects how he failed to understand instructions from his professor:

...I remember once we were given an assignment, and the professor said ..."don't do anything that is over your head". I didn't know what he meant...and why he said that...

The data revealed that symbols, such as "James Bond", "bucks", Moses' and Jacob crackers", "take-off", and "don't do anything that is over your head", are tied to social situations. They have superimposed meanings that are essentially private and particular to this linguistic
community as a whole, and cannot be learned by the
foreigner from a dictionary. Respondents inability to
"laugh" with the class illustrated their limited abilities
in comprehending intended meanings and their lack of
knowledge of the above linguistic symbols. Such
limitations have alienated them from the rest of the class.

Hertzler (1965:21) concludes:

The almost total bafflement and helplessness of an...individual in a foreign community where the
gestures and other symbolic signs, as well as the
spoken and written language, are so different from his
own that he does not understand them is further
evidence of the language's operational importance.

Being Part of the Group

A common language enables everyone to become part of a
group and allows one to form social relationships with
others. However, a lack of such commonality, would make
one feel alienated. This is especially so for foreign
students who are strangers in an unfamiliar social setting.
Chinese foreign students feel that inability to
communicate verbally has limited their social interactions
with both faculty and Canadian students. A female
comments:

I dare not speak up in class. For instance, the
professor would ask a question in class, and I knew
the answer but I wouldn't raise my hand to answer the
question. I feared that my poor English (spoken)
wouldn't be understood by the professor and other
Canadians. I would keep quiet...

A male respondent comments how he perceives Canadians would
perceive Chinese foreign students:

I know that my language problem has limited my
encounters with Canadians. I would talk only when spoken to. I would not initiate conversation with Canadians. I would initiate a conversation only when I found that I need information, for example, going to professors and asking Canadian students about school work. In class I rarely speak up or ask questions. I feel that others do not understand what Chinese foreign students are asking and I feel that others might think that Chinese students are stupid.

A female respondent comments about her fear of being laughed at:

I find that my spoken English is bad and I don’t talk to professors and Canadian students that much, for example, I am frightened to go see professors because I feared that they don’t understand me and might laugh at me when they hear my bad English. Also I don’t know how to ask them when I have problems...

A female respondent comments how she would feel inferior when she is unable to express herself:

...in discussion about ideas and ideologies I have problems expressing myself. I remembered one time we were discussing anorexia. After I listened to the professor’s explanation, I wanted to ask him whether the parents have something to do with it. I found that at that time I couldn’t express what I had in mind. I kept quiet and didn’t bring up the point. I thought, it would be embarrassing if I tried to express the point and he didn’t understand me...sometimes I feel inferior when talking to them...I don’t feel that I am able to talk so fluently like them.

A male respondent comments on his feelings as not being part of the group, and how Canadians treat Chinese foreign students:

I find that if I could speak better English, Canadians would respect me more. For example, I have a Canadian friend. Who told me that Canadians will be more friendly if Chinese students would speak better English. I believed him. For instance, if you are doing shopping and you were at the service desk, and if you could speak good English, and they understood you immediately, they would want to help you more. But if they didn’t understand you, they would get impatient. I remember I was doing shopping, and I saw a Chinese student at the check-out counter. He couldn’t speak English well and the clerk was quite
impatient. I could see her facial expression. I got a feeling that she thinks the Chinese are inferior. Also I found that if I could speak better English, it would be easy for me to make friends with them. For example, in a group, if you speak good English, you will be part of the group. They will share jokes with you and talk to you more. ....I have Canadian friends and they told me not to speak Chinese English. Chinese English means English with Chinese accents. I find that some Canadians will make friends with you if you speak good English.

Feeling not part of the group, such as keeping quiet in class, "talk only when spoken to", "feel that others do not understand what Chinese foreign students are asking", "feared that they don't understand me", etc. is a form of alienation generated from not having a common language and inability to interpret western linguistic symbols. Such feelings lead to the development of a negative self image.

Two respondents felt "inferior" when interacting with Canadians. One possible route to alter such perceptions is to limit interaction with host nationals and center interaction around co-nationals, which is a common coping strategy deployed by the subjects. The following section will explore this further.

**Coping Strategies**

Respondents who have language problems are inhibited from "making sense of the surrounding social world", objectifying their subjective thoughts and feelings, interpreting linguistic symbols, gestures and expressions, and "feeling as being part of the group". Further, language problems have inhibited these respondents from interacting with Canadians. In light of these problems,
they have developed coping strategies to deal with their sojourn in this unfamiliar social world. The following paragraphs reveal coping strategies practised by these respondents in the midst of language problems when encountering faculty and Canadian students. A male respondent comments on what he does before he sees a professor:

When I have problems with the professor's lecture, I would see the professor after the lecture. Before I walk into his office, I will structure questions first. I will be thinking in English. Then I will write the questions on a piece of paper. So when I walk in, all I do is just read out what I had prepared.

Similarly, another respondent, a female, resorts to the same strategy:

Sometimes I do go see the professor about some coursework. I would think over what and how I want to ask him in English. But when I walked in the office, sometime I got so frightened that I would forget the questions. So now I would write the questions down on a piece of paper so when I forget, I could read it out from the paper.

A female who said that her English has improved recalls:

In the University, I have improved my English. If I have a problem, I don't have to structure the questions outside the office. All I do is go into the office and the questions come naturally. Unless the problem is very complex and detailed, then I would have to prepare the questions before I see the professor. But sometimes, I wouldn't know how to ask these complex questions. I would mention key words relating to the problem, and hope that he would catch it. Sometimes they will understand and sometimde they don't. I remembered once I tried every key word of the problem, and I still couldn't get him to understand. I would let it pass and hope that I would understand it when I read the text. And I would try to calm myself by saying that it is not that important.

A male respondent who perceived that his English is "okay" but still resorts to "thinking in Chinese", comments:
I guess my English is okay. I usually understand the lecture...No problem asking professors questions, and I don't feel nervous when I go to see them...For tough problems, I have to think in Chinese, so I understand better,...before I go see the professor...

Those whose English is poor would resort to thinking about "how to ask professors", and "what to ask professors", in Chinese. A female respondent comments:

Often before I go see the professor, and when the problem is hard and needs a lot of questioning, I would think over what to ask the professor in Chinese. Then I would translate the questions to English. But many times when I am in their office asking questions I would discover more questions to ask...I would stop for awhile and think about it in Chinese and translate the questions to English. I guessed sometimes professors would feel that Chinese students are slow and unsure of their work. But it is not true, we are just thinking things over in Chinese, understand it and even think about questions in Chinese.

Another female respondent comments on her strategy:

I am quite poor in English, I came from a Chinese medium school...I remembered once I had to see the registrar. I was pacing outside the office wondering how should I say it in English? I was thinking in Chinese wondering how should I ask the registrar for the timetable? Then I also thought if the registrar didn't understand me, how should I make him understand? All these were thought through in Chinese, then translated to English. I was pacing out there for about 15 minutes before I finally went in.

Respondents reported that they encounter situations where professors would share jokes in class. Those who do not understand these jokes confided that they would pretend to understand the jokes and laugh along with the class. A male respondent comments:

sometimes when professor says a joke in class I don’t understand. I remembered in a psychology class, the professor was talking about frogs, and the way they jump. Canadian students...were laughing...I didn’t find it funny ...but I followed them and laughed.
In deciding whether to approach a professor, Chinese students observe how the professor treats other students in class. A female respondent unveils her strategy:

...In deciding which professor is approachable, I always keep a note on how professors answer students' questions in class. If they show interest, I would feel that they are approachable. And I would see them after class if I had problems with the course.

However, there are those who would consult professors only as a last resort, after they have consulted other Chinese and Canadian students. A female respondent comments:

If there were things in the lecture that I don't understand, I would first ask other Chinese students. If they didn't know I would go home and check the text. And if I still don't know, then I will go see the professor.

A female respondent comments that she never goes to a professor to clarify problems:

I have never seen a professor about school work before. I guess the problem is that I don't know how to ask them. I would refer to the text or other Chinese students. Sometimes I would ask Canadian students. When I do that I would have to think over how to ask them? When I do that I would be thinking in Chinese...

Another female comments:

...I usually avoid going to professors, I feel that my English is not good enough and I am afraid that he might not understand me and may even laugh at my way of speaking English. So I usually ask other Chinese students in class. My first choice is to ask other Chinese students. If they don't know, I would ask other Canadian students. Usually Canadian students know. If they don't, they would go see the professor, and I would follow them. So when they ask the question, and they get an answer, my problem is solved.

Fear of being laughed at and not understood by professors are reasons for avoiding professors. They may not
actually experience it, but the thought inhibits them from seeking assistance from professor. A male respondent comments:

I never dare go see professors. My English is poor and I am afraid that they would not understand me and they may laugh at me for not being able to speak English properly. I usually ask other Chinese students in class when I have a problem with school work.

Other coping strategies developed to deal with academic problems are: relying on others, and making guesses. A female respondent comments on how she relies on her classmates:

... if I don't understand, I hope that there are Canadians in class who don't understand too. Because Canadians would ask and my problem would be solved... So, whenever I don't understand the lecture, I hope that other people don't understand too, so that they could do the asking.

A female respondent comments on how she depends on other Chinese students to complete her notes:

When I missed something in class I would compare my notes with other Chinese students, so that I could fill in what I have missed. It is very common to see Chinese students comparing notes and lending notes to friends.

A male respondent comments on his guessing technique:

Sometimes in lectures, professor use words that I don't understand and I would miss taking notes. Usually in these cases, I would write them down in Chinese on the side generally what he was talking about at that time. When I go home I would read what I had written in Chinese, read the beginning and the end of the paragraph, and guess what I had missed. It works most of the time.

When interacting with Canadian students casually, Chinese foreign students have another set of coping strategies. When they are interacting with closer friends,
and when they do not "make sense" of the conversation, they would ask for explanation. A female respondent comments:

...when I talk to my roommate and if I don't understand, I would ask her to explain. I remembered we were talking about her family and I didn't understand what her father's occupation was. She said he was a surveyor. I didn't know what it meant, so I asked her, and she explained to me. But if she is someone that I hardly know, I would not ...ask for an explanation. Maybe I would act like I understand what she was saying. I don't like to show other people that I don't understand, they might think that I am stupid.

A male respondent elaborates on the strategy of using group efforts:

...when talking to Canadians, I prefer talking in groups. At least I wouldn't get stuck...There were 3 Chinese and 4 Canadians. I found it difficult to respond to them. I have to think in Chinese first then translate what I wanted to say to English. I found it frustrating because there were something that I couldn't translate...At that time we were talking about lifestyle in Hong Kong. I found that there were specific Chinese terms that I couldn't translate to English. I found that I couldn't fully express what I wanted to say...I remembered at that time 4 of us took turns to explain ourselves. For example, I would explain something, then I would get stuck, and I would tell my friend to continue. He would continue and then he would get stuck, and he would tell a 3rd. friend to continue. So it takes 4 of us to explain to the Canadians about life, in Hong Kong.

In attempts to improve their interactions with Canadians and their verbal communication skills, Chinese foreign students have used the media, such as television, as a learning tool. A male respondent comments:

With jokes, I usually get the punch line. I think I get my training from watching comedy shows on T.V. For example, the David Letterman show and the Johnny Carson show. I would try to imitate their style of conversation. The ways of talking. And also learn to read gestures, so that I know when to talk. It helped me to understand the conversation gestures of Canadians. For example, when they look at you, they
kind of expect a reply. But the most important thing I learned is the speech. In what kind of situation what tone of voice is used. I also try to copy their accent.

Another male talks about how he has learned from watching the television:

"...I am beginning to understand their jokes. Maybe because I watched T.V., and I learned from there... From T.V., such as the news or soap operas. They helped a lot. They gave me an idea of how North Americans behave and their lifestyle. I watched the news, so that I could be involved in conversation.

A male respondent confirms the usefulness of the television as a learning tool:

In the beginning when I first came, my English was very poor... I dared not talk to Canadians because I didn't know what to talk to them and I didn't understand what they say. I would try to avoid them. Now I have improved. I watch more T.V., read more newspaper, and listen more to radio. I dare to talk to Canadians now. Usually when I watch T.V. or listen to the radio, I pay attention to their voice tone and accent. And how they pronounce words. Also I pay attention to slang, you know, words you can't find in the dictionary...

To avoid embarrassment, some Chinese foreign students either restrict conversation to issues they are familiar with or keep the conversation short. A male respondent comments on how he would try to restrict conversation with topics he knows:

"... also I make sure that if I start a conversation with Canadians, I will talk about something that I am familiar with. For example, topic on sports like basketball. I will not talk about football because I don't know anything about football. If they talk about a topic I don't understand, I will ask some questions so that they will think that I know something about it. So that they will not think that I am stupid.

A female respondent comments on her strategy of keeping the conversation short because of her inability to express
...and I can't express myself in English. So, when talking to Canadians, I would keep the conversation simple and short. For instance, the time I came back from Florida during Christmas break, Canadian friends asked me how my trip was. I just said "good", "okay". There was no point for me to try to tell them because I knew I couldn't express myself. I would only embarrass myself... It is not that I don't like to talk to Canadians, it's because I can't express myself.

A route frequently taken by those who perceive that their language abilities are poor is avoidance. A female recollects how she would give excuses to avoid interacting with Canadians because of her inability to express in English:

The problem is that I don't have the courage to initiate conversation with them. I find that my English is poor... I seldom talk to them. And if I do, my answers are short. Even though I have nothing to do, I will say, "Oh, I am sorry, I have a class" or "I am meeting my friend", then I will leave. I am afraid to talk to them, and if they ask me something, I am afraid that I might not know how to answer them. And my answer may be stupid and I will make a fool out of myself, and they will laugh. I feel that way, even though I haven't actually experience it before...

A male comments:

...I usually try to keep the conversation short. You know, like talking about the weather, and school work. And if I hear something during a conversation that I don't know how to answer or I feel that it requires me to explain myself, which I am not very good at, I would give an excuse to leave. Like saying, "I have to go, have a class now" or something like that.

Coping strategies revealed by the respondents encompass a wide range. The data revealed two sets of coping strategies, one used to deal with faculty, and the other with Canadian students. Within each set exists "reject", "select", and "accept" types of strategy. When
interacting with professors, respondents emphasized more detailed strategies when dealing with faculty. Such detailed strategies involve translation of thoughts in Chinese to English, and thinking the problem over in English before approaching faculty. This characterizes an “accept” type of strategy. Further, whether to approach faculty depends on how “approachable” faculty is perceived by the subjects. This spells another type of strategy, i.e. a “select” type. Fear of “being laughed at”, and “embarrassment” have led some to rely on co-nationals and making guesses on their own. These are means of avoidance and they are forms of “reject” strategy.

When interacting with Canadian students, respondents expressed using more general coping strategies. They would use “accept” type of strategy that involves asking for an explanation when in doubt or using the media as a learning tool. It appears that when conversing casually with Canadian students, subjects expressed some control over interaction. They resorted to “select” type of strategy that restrict conversation to issues they are familiar with. Finally, avoidance is another frequently used strategy when subjects perceived that their language proficiency is poor. The researcher would like to remind the reader that these are reported strategies. Whether the respondents actually act out what they say is beyond the parameters of this research. Further, which type of strategy employ depends on how respondent perceive his/her

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language ability, and other prevailing factors that are beyond the detection of the present study. With faculty or with Canadian students, which type of strategy respondents would employ depends on how respondents perceive his/her ability in English and other prevailing factors that are beyond the detection of this study. Perhaps a longitudinal study could be a solution to this matter.

Summary

The data showed that a common language enables members of society to share everyday life experiences and cope with their social realities. Respondents who perceived that their language is proficient expressed an ability to understand Canadians in their social and academic life. The data expressed that these respondents perceived that Canadians have little difficulties understanding them and that they have little difficulties understanding Canadians. Conversely, respondents who perceived to have language problems expressed an inability to understand Canadians in their immediate sphere of life in their new social environments. According to the data, these respondents perceived that they did not understand Canadians in conversation most of the time and that they had difficulties interpreting Canadian colloquialisms. This category of respondents expressed that they are not able to make sense of casual encounters with Canadians, such as "jokes" shared in class. Further, poor language proficiency inhibits them in acquiring an adequate social
stock of knowledge to deal with Canadians.

The data indicated that a common language helps individuals to objectify their subjective social world. Such objectifications allow individuals to project their subjective world which is beyond the face-to-face interaction situations. Respondents who perceived to have poor language proficiency are prevented from doing this. Their subjective feelings and thoughts could not be shared with other members of this society. Hence, as the data showed, their understanding of everyday life in this social world is limited, and social interaction with host nationals are curtailed.

The research compared the difference between written language and spoken language. The aim is to show why respondents may be proficient in written language, but because they lack proficiency in spoken language, they have problems interpreting intended meanings that are tied to ongoing social events. Hence, social interactions with host nationals are limited to superficial encounters. The data showed that some respondents indeed are proficient in written English but their limited ability in spoken English have confined their interpretations of ongoing events. These respondents have reported that such limitation is a hindrance to social interaction with host nationals.

Language helps construct social realities. According to the data, respondents with language problems construct social realities in their own "distorted" way. Their realities are based on their misinterpretations of
meanings and situations they gathered from casual encounters with Canadians. Such misconception would only establish negative images about Canadians which could be an obstacle for social interaction.

One consequent of not having a common language is not being part of the group. Respondents who perceived that their language is poor felt "inferior" when interacting with host nationals. Responses seemed to show they are alienated from participating with the group. This alienation is compensated by channelling interactions with co-nationals. This is one of the many forms of coping strategies espoused by respondents when interacting with host nationals. The data expressed that two sets of coping strategies are employed, one used to deal with faculty, and the other with Canadian students. As mention in chapter I, these strategies reflect only a means of coping with language problems during the specific experiences reported by respondents. They are not generalized strategies but rather part of a recipe knowledge of the respondents and their applications vary with respondents' perceptions. There may be discrepancies where respondent perceiving to be adequate in language ability would avoid Canadians. Due to the limit of the data and the nature of the methodology, it is not possible to pursue this matter.

The data gathered from the subjects reflect the importance of a common language in interaction processes. As mentioned above, respondents who claim to be fluent in
English are able to engage in conversation with Canadians and objectify their subjective thoughts. These respondents claim to have no difficulties in interpreting linguistic symbols and gestures, and they perceive to be "part of the group". According to the data, respondents claim that their language fluency has enhanced social interaction with host nationals. Conversely, the data showed that respondents who claim to have poor English perceive that they have difficulties interpreting linguistic symbols and gestures during conversation with Canadians, and objectifying their subjective thoughts to Canadians. With these difficulties, they perceived not to be part of the group and they limit their interactions to host nationals. The data also emphasized that social interaction may lead to the acquiring of a common language. Some respondents reported that they began to understand some Canadian colloquialisms, such as "Zebra", "Honky", "Chink", etc., after associating with Canadians. However, what criteria are used by these respondents to start interaction could not be concluded. Due to the methodology used to gather the data, a one-time interview, it is not possible to draw any conclusion at this time. Perhaps a longitudinal research could be more helpful in this matter. In general, this study substantiates the fact that language facility is an important factor in the extent of social interaction. This has been confirmed quantitatively by various researchers in this field (Morris, 1960; Deutsch and Wom, 1963; Young, 1965, and Shandiz, 1981).
CHAPTER VII

TYPIFICATION

The purpose of the present chapter is to examine the role of typification in facilitating reality construction and social interaction. The chapter first analyses some of the processes through which typifications are formulated. In this context, the chapter examines respondents' typifications of Canadians before arrival, after arrival (from face to face interaction), and criteria for typifications. Since respondents may develop a different set of typification about Canadians after they had arrived, the chapter devotes a section to examine the changing nature of typification schemes. The aim is to throw light on how change in typification schemes affect the process of adjustment, since, the latter also involves change. Finally, the chapter looks at how typification affects reality construction and social interaction.

According to Berger and Luckmann (1966), typification supplies the social stock of knowledge that enables individuals to deal with the routines of everyday life. And one such routines is social interaction. Social interaction engages the operations of typification as one of its means in the process of communication. Especially with strangers in an unfamiliar social environment, typification provides the essential foundations to social
Interaction. Through typification, interactants could, so to speak, feel each other out. This is an important criterion to orient actions and behaviours in order to establish further social interactions.

Typification is a necessity in everyday life (Rogers, 1983). The social world is an abundance of experiences and typification is essential to the organization of these experiences. Typification reduces the multiple determinations of similar objects and events. "For human beings, acts of typification mediate between an intentionality that is absolutely focused and one that approaches aimlessness" (Rogers, 1983:27). In Alfred Schutz's words (1964:285):

[Typifications allow us to]...experience the world from the outset not as a [congested and disordered form] of sensory data, or as a set of individual insulated events that could be detached from their context...Instead, we grasp the world...in its structurization according to types and typical relations of types.

In this sense, typification requires the individual to ignore the uniqueness of an object and place that object with others in the same class, trait and quality (McKinney, 1970). This class elicits people, objects, and events that have been experienced. The following paragraphs spell out how some of the respondents develop typifications of Canadian civility, sexuality, and social gathering before they began their sojourn in Canada. Civility here refers to acts of courtesy, specifically, Canadian mannerisms in everyday life activities. Some respondents perceived Canadian civility as similar to that
of all westerners. Canadians are typified as having "good manners", similar to all westerners. A male respondent comments:

The first thing I knew about Canadians was that they have good manners. I got such an image mainly from movies and T.V., and from the British when I was in England. Since most of the westerners I have encountered were well mannered, I thought Canadians must be like them too...You know, they have those "lady first" kind of manners, for example, they open doors for ladies...

A male respondent aptly comments:

From the movies and T.V., I thought westerners have better manners, so I thought Canadians must have good manners too...

Another male respondent confides how he'd developed his perceptions about Canadians' manners before he arrived in Canada:

From the movies and T.V., and sometimes I observed westerners when I went to hotels. I found that they were very gentle and well mannered. For example, in the restaurant, I saw a westerner helping his lady friend put her coat...So, I thought that Canadians must be like that too, well mannered.

From the evidences stated above, media, such as television, has a strong influence on the Chinese foreign students' perception of Canadian civility.

Further, media also influence Chinese foreign students' perceptions of Canadian sexuality. Canadians are typified as "sexually open and free", and "easy come, easy go". A male respondent comments:

From western movies, when I was in Hong Kong, I found that they are sexually open and free. For instance, if they like each other, they could have sex and some even live together. When I was in Hong Kong, I often thought that Canadians must be like that too.
Typification also came from first hand encounter. A female recalls her experience:

When I was in Hong Kong, I knew a male friend from Switzerland. He always wanted me to go out with him. So, once I asked my elder brother whether I should or not. He told me no. He said that before this guy came over to Hong Kong, he had a girlfriend in Switzerland. Now that he is here, he has stopped writing to her. My brother said that it is easy to start a relationship with westerners, and it is easy to end it too. He said it is like "easy come, easy go". So, I also thought that Canadians were like that too.

Canadian sexual behaviour is thought to be similar to American, hence, emerged the typification of Canadian behaviour towards sex. A male respondents makes the connection:

I find westerners are open with sex. They could kiss anyone and even have sex with someone who they have no intention of starting a relationship with... These are mostly American movies. I think that Canadian sexual behaviour is close to the American, since they are so close to each other...

Once again the geographical proximity of Canada to the United States and the influence of the media helped the Chinese foreign students create a perception about Canadian "partying" behaviour before they arrived. Canadians are typified as "wild" and "crazy" at parties, and as "beer drinkers". A male respondent comments:

I think the Canadians are a lot more like the Americans... I think because Canada and America are neighbors. From the American movies, Americans like to party, and they do crazy things, for example, getting drunk and getting into fights... I heard from my friends that Canadians love to drink a lot of beer. You know, shows like SCTV where they have the "McKenzie" brothers. They always have beer in their hands. Well, when my friends wrote and told me about it, my images were that Canadians were beer drinkers...
Hence, through typifications, individual can classify people, objects, and events as being essentially the same as other such things that had been experienced earlier. In such a way, typification helps to establish anticipations; anticipating similar experiences; anticipating future experiences to follow certain typified types, that had been experienced, so that knowledge about them could be applied. The above is evidence of the subjects' typifications of Canadians before they begin their sojourn in Canada.

**Typification derived from Face-to-Face Interaction**

According to Schutz (1973), our knowledge of members of society, comes in the form of typifications and the validity of these typifications derives from the direct experiences of face-to-face relations. The following paragraphs reveal knowledge about Canadian civility, notions about sexuality and "partying" derived from direct face-to-face encounters in Windsor. Therefore, the established typifications are only applicable within the confines of Windsor. In terms of civility (acts of courtesy), Canadians are perceived as "well mannered", "friendly", and "helpful". A male respondent comments on the "well mannered" behaviour of Canadians:

> When I first came, I went to school, I went through a door and I opened it and after going through, I held the door for the next person. I didn't expect him to say anything. I guess I got used to it in Hong Kong. But this guy said "thank you". I was surprised...From that first encounter on, I found Canadians have good manners...

Another male respondent comments on Canadian manners:
I find Canadians are well mannered. For example, if it is a nice day, people on the streets would comment to you like, "isn't this a nice day?" It makes you feel good. I remembered the first time I came to Windsor, I didn't know where the registrar was. I asked a Canadian girl, and instead of telling me where to go, she brought me to the office. I was surprised. In Hong Kong, people never do that.

Canadians are also typified as "friendly". A female respondent recalls:

They are very friendly,...once in Windsor... I had to take the bus and I had no change. So I approached a lady and asked for a change for $1. She only had $0.75. She gave me that $0.75 without taking my dollar.

Subjects also typified Canadians as "helpful". A female respondent recalls her experience:

When compared to people from Hong Kong, Canadians have better manners. They are very helpful too. I remembered once I was doing groceries, and my hands were carrying 4 bags of food. This man helped me to carry 2 bags, and when I went up the bus, he offered to pay for the fare first because I couldn't get to my purse.

Another respondent, male, confirms:

I find Canadians very helpful. I remembered in high school when I had to move to another apartment, my landlord came with his truck and helped us move. He didn't have to do that, after all we were moving out of his apartment. I was very kind of him to do that. In Hong Kong, they only help you if they see some gain from doing it.

With regards to typifications of sexuality, Canadians are typified as "sexually open". The following experiences cited by Chinese foreign students justify their perceptions. A male respondent comments:

I find that Canadians are open with sex. For example, my roommate, he is Canadian, sometimes he would come back with a female. And I would have to stay at a friend's place. So far, he had brought back 3 different females...
A female respondent recalls her roommate's sexual behaviour:

I find that Canadians' sexual behaviour is open. I have a Canadian girl as a roommate, and quite often she would bring her boyfriend home. They would kiss and embrace in the living room, and I felt quite uncomfortable and embarrassed when I looked at them. I wished they would do it in her room.

A male respondent comments on the sexual behaviour of Canadians after a party:

I feel that Canadians are very very open with sex. I saw it with my own eyes. For example when I was living in residence; there was at least one or two floor parties a week. All they do during such parties is drink. They drink a lot of beer. And when they are quite drunk, the guys will bring the girls to their rooms. My roommate does this quite often. And every time he brings a girl home, it is a different girl...

In "partying" situations, Canadians are perceived to be "wild" and "crazy". The following lines highlight the face-to-face encounters Chinese foreign student experienced with these situations. A male respondent recollects:

...they would go crazy in parties, they drink a lot. I remembered I knew a floormate in residence who was very hardworking and was always studying in his room. During a floor party, he got drunk and behaved so crazy. I never thought that was the same guy I knew...

A female recalls another "floor party":

I find Canadians behave wildly and crazily during floor parties: I attended a floor party before at Cody Hall. Guys were drinking a lot of beer and they danced on the tables; the girls didn't mind when they were kissed. They hardly know each other...

Another female respondent recalls:

I don't like their parties. In Laurier Hall, whenever they have a party, I would hide in my room. The next day when I came out, it was shocking to see the mess they had created. Chairs were turned over, broken beer bottles everywhere, and the whole place smelt like beer. I could imagine what must have happened
during the party. They must be wild.

A female confirms:

I find that their behaviours in this area are really out of hand. I remembered I was in Huron Hall in my first year. They have parties every weekend. They get drunk, throw bottles, and made a lot of noise...I remembered once it was 4 a.m in the morning, and someone called the police.

A male respondent recalls similar experience when he was in residence:

When I was in residence...I had a Canadian roommate. He would buy a case of beer and invite his friends over for a small party. His friends would each bring a case of beer. They would sit around and talk and drink beer...Sometimes they get drunk, and they act very crazily. For example, sleeping on the floor, and messing up the room...I dislike such drinking behaviour...

Schutz (1966:127) concludes:

The knowledge of the life-world, whether predicatively given or formulative in predicative judgements, is knowledge of the [typifications] of the objects and events in the life-world

Hence, the knowledge of Chinese foreign students on Canadian civility, sexuality, and "partying" within the social world of the University of Windsor is derived from typifications obtained through face-to-face interaction.

From the data, in terms of civility, Canadians are typified as "well mannered", "friendly", and "helpful". Respondents arrive at these typifications from their encounters of "courteous" behaviours of Canadians. For example, "[he] said thank you", I was surprised", "she gave me...$0.75 without taking my dollar", "he offered to pay for the fare", etc. Canadians are typified as "sexually open". Respondents arrive at this typification when they witnessed
Canadians "kissing and embracing in public", "guys bring girls to their rooms", etc. Canadians are typified as "wild" and "crazy" in parties because respondents see "dancing on tables", "throwing bottles and making a lot of noise...at 4 a.m", "sleeping on the floor", etc. as unacceptable. It is through such perceptions of the nature of face-to-face interactions that subjects draw criteria to establish their typifications. The data also disclose that some respondents who have negative typifications about Canadian sexual behaviours and social gatherings seem to employ a "reject" type of coping strategy. Coping strategies will be discussed further in chapter VIII. The following section analyses these criteria further.

Criteria For Typifications

Schutz (1966) points out that the knowledge about the social world derived from typifications is socially and culturally conditioned. As such, the knowledge that these typifications provide and their appropriate uses are inseparable aspects of sociocultural elements that are handed down to the individual in a group by his/her parents, teachers, grandparents, friends, etc. Further, by analysing typifications as being influenced by sociocultural elements, criteria from which these typifications are made, could be detected. This section will look at some of the criteria from which typifications of Canadian civility, sexuality, and "partying" are made.

First, looking at Canadian civility, a male respondent
I found that their civility is better than Chinese. For example, you do something small for them like lending them notes which is nothing. They show great gratitude, saying "thank you". Even a week later, they would remember your help and they would thank you again. I find that Chinese wouldn't express such gratitude. I opened the door for a Chinese, and he didn't even say "thank you".

A female respondent talks about public courtesy:

Over here, people get on the bus in an orderly manner. Everyone lines up and no one jumps the line. For example, you get off the bus, the driver may say, "have a nice day". It makes you feel so nice. In Hong Kong, you never see drivers doing that...Chinese in Hong Kong are less polite. Like taking the bus, everyone rushes for it, and no one cares about the others. They don't even care for the elderly.

A female respondent comments:

I find that Canadian manners are different from Chinese manners. When I went back to Hong Kong during the summer I found the differences to be extreme. For example, taking a bus, over here even when it's crowded, they would line up and get up the bus. In Hong Kong, there are railings at the bus stop, and people are supposed to follow the railings as they climb up the bus. Before the bus comes, they would line up, but when the bus arrives, they would rush for the entrance...I find Canadians are better mannered. Like over here if you are carrying many things, people would help you open the door or even offer to help carry the things. In Hong Kong, no one does that... Even the sales people are better. In Hong Kong, my father owns a shop, and my father told me to keep an eye on customers. The impression to the customers, is "now I know you are there, so don't try anything funny". Also in Hong Kong, sales people are less courteous. For instance, if you try a pair of shoes, and you don't like it, the sales person might scold you for taking his/her time. Over here, you could try as many as you want, and no one says anything.

Another respondent, male, comments on public civility:

Over here, you seldom see people throwing things on the street. People just don't do it. And another thing, people here don't spit on the streets. In Hong Kong, people spit everywhere, and people in Hong Kong like to litter. Even the trash can is next to them,
they are too lazy to walk a few steps to use it. They just throw it on the street. In Hong Kong there are incidents where people just dump their fridges or televisions out of their apartments. They just throw it anywhere they like. There was once where a television fell on a man’s head, and he died. The police couldn’t locate who did it.

In general, Canadian civility in common everyday activities is perceived to be "better". Chinese foreign students constantly typified Canadians as "well mannered", "friendly", "helpful", and "polite". The criteria from which these positive typifications are established reflect the unfamiliar behaviour the subjects encountered when interacting with Canadians. Behaviours such as: "saying "thank you"", "saying "have a nice day”", "helped me to carry groceries...and offered to pay for the fare", "would help you open the door or even offer to help carry things"; and "people here don’t spit on the streets". It is from such behaviours that subjects used to typify Canadians positively.

In another form of civility such as manners toward parents and teachers, Canadians are typified as "rude", and "do not respect their parents". A female respondent comments on Canadian manners in class:

Canadians have many common everyday manners, for example, they are polite, they say "thank you"...But manners toward the elders, such as whether I should voice my opinions in front of elders, I find that they are lacking in this kind of manners. For example, in class, they are very daring, they could say things without asking permission from the teachers. And they treat teachers with no respect. Playing jokes with them. In Hong Kong, we can’t do that. Teachers are respected and treated as superior.

A female respondent comments on how her Canadian friend
I find that they are not as obedient as Chinese. They don’t go according to their parents’ wishes... Chinese listen to their parents. We respect them. I remembered once I overheard a conversation between two Canadian girls in school. One of them said that her mother wanted her to put away the dishes but she was about to go out. She didn’t do what her mother had asked her, and she called her mother “that woman” in front of her friend. I was surprised to hear that. How could she call her mother that?... If their parents scolded them, they would rebut. For example, once I was at a Canadian friend’s home. We were supposed to go out. Her mother wanted her to stay at home to help her clean the house. She didn’t want to, and her mother scolded her. She rebutted “You are so free, why don’t you do it!” She picked up her jacket and went out the door.

The criteria, from which these typifications are made, reflect the "rude" behaviour the subjects perceived in witnessing Canadians treating their parents and superiors. These “rude” behaviours includes: “say things in class without the permission from the teachers”, “playing jokes with teachers”, “didn’t do what her mother had asked”, “calling her mother “that woman” in front of friends”, and “rebuttering the parents”.

With regards to sexuality, Canadians are typified as "sexually open or free". The following paragraphs will show criteria from which these typifications are derived.

A male respondent comments on the “kissing in public”:

I find Canadians treat sex very freely. For example, Canadians would kiss passionately on the streets. To them, it seems that no one was on the streets. In fact there were people walking on the streets. I wouldn’t do it. Chinese wouldn’t do it. We are strict in such behaviour. Even in Hong Kong, such behaviour is not acceptable... If Chinese see other Chinese kissing in public in Hong Kong, they would say, “Wooh, How could they do that in the streets?” But you never hear Canadians saying that... Canadians would kiss anyone, even common friends. Chinese
wouldn’t even kiss or embrace their parents.

A female respondent comments on Canadian sexual behaviour:

I find that it is easy for Canadian guys and girls to start a relationship...I know that they could have sex after knowing each other for a little while. For example, I know a Canadian girl, she told me that she met a guy in the pub, and after a week, she told me that she had spent a night with him already...Chinese...engage in sex...after they are married. And for the Chinese, to develop a relationship takes a while. For example, a guy would go out with a girl in a group. They invite their friends to come along. Then after a while, when they have known each other longer, they will go out in a smaller group. Then finally, after 6 months or so, they will go out alone...

A female comments what Chinese people would do to promiscuous individuals:

I have a Canadian male as a neighbor. He is single. I think he is a member of a band. Every weekend he would bring home a different girl. Some are very daring. They come over to borrow things, and they would have very little clothing on. You know what they have been doing...From the Chinese view, he is very sexually free. If he is in traditional China, he would be put in a cage and thrown into the river. In Hong Kong you never see males sleeping with so many different females...

A male respondent comments on the “dating ritual” of Canadians:

I find that Canadians are more open to dating. And they don’t make a big thing out of it. For instance, if a Canadian male wants to date a Canadian girl, he would approach the girl directly and ask her out. He wouldn’t think twice. Not like Chinese, who often think twice. They may seek advice from friends, and maybe even feel shy about it. And often when they do go out they would go out in a group. Maybe after a few group outings, they may have the courage to go out without their friends.

The criteria by which Canadians are typified as “sexually open or free” stem from the subjects witnessing such behaviour as: “Canadian roommate brought female friends home”, “kissing in public”, “being told that she had spend
a night with him already", and "bring home a different girl every weekend".

In terms of "partying", Canadians are typified as "crazy", "wild", and "going all the way". A female respondent comments:

Chinese wouldn't get drunk. In the CSA parties that I have been to, they will be seated around, and even when the music starts, no one will start dancing first. Everyone is waiting for someone to start. Canadians don't wait, if they want to dance, they would go to the dance floor...I find that Canadians go all the way when they are partying. They are very relaxed. It seems that there is no control. They would scream, get drunk, and really have a good time. Chinese somehow can never reach that level. We seem to have a social norm that controls such behaviour. I think this control comes from fear of what others will think. I don't think Canadians care about that so much.

A female recalls:

Sometimes in Electa Hall when they have parties, they really enjoy themselves. They behave very crazily, and they drink a lot. I noticed that in everyday behaviour they are not like that, but once they come to parties, they behave like a different person. The washrooms will be messy, they vomit all over the place...They spill beer in the elevator, and sometime they go around every room pounding on the doors. They are really crazy...Chinese at parties don't do that, we don't drink that much either. Once there was a guy who got drunk over 5 beers, and the next day everyone was talking about how unacceptable his behaviour was. Funny, to Canadians, getting drunk means having a good time, and everyone seems to accept it...

Another female respondent comments on the "social control" that exists within Chinese students:

Chinese always think what others would think of them when they drink too much or party wildly. For example, myself, I am in University now, so I should not behave like kids. It is important to keep close to what is expected of a University student. I find that Canadians lose all sense of control when they party, and they behave like they are wild, untamed. I remembered one time it was 3 in the morning, and the
neighbors had a party, I don't know what happened, then a few of them were on the parking lot wrestling, they made so much noise. And I think they broke someone's window.

From the above quote, "how others see them" appears to be an important influence on respondents' behaviours. Perhaps the fear to "lose one's face" is the unwritten social norm for dictating social behaviours and relations (Wu, 1980). Hence, any behaviour that is unacceptable present a "lose face" situation, and is condemned. To "lose face" would bring stigma to the family name.

In this case, the phenomenon of "getting drunk" has two different interpretations, one perceived to be interpreted by Canadians and the other by the some of the respondents. According to Craig MacAndrew and Robert Edgerton (1969:165):

...the way people comport themselves when they are drunk is determined not by alcohol's toxic assault upon the seat of moral judgement, conscience, or the like, but by what their society makes of and imparts to them concerning the state of drunkeness.

Some respondents thought Canadians perceive "getting drunk" as "having a good time", hence, behaviours such as "dancing on the tables", "throwing bottles and making a lot of noise", etc. are perceived to be "acceptable" by Canadians. However, to some respondents "getting drunk" is perceived as "unacceptable", and drunken behaviours are typified negatively. The criteria by which Canadians are typified as "wicked" and "crazy" in parties come from the following behaviour witnessed by the subjects: "drink a lot of beer", "dancing on the table", "threw bottles and made a lot of
noise", "screaming", "vomit all over the place", "they go
around every room pounding on the doors", and "wrestling in
the parking lot at 3 in the morning".

Cultural accounts could be used to formulate
observers' typifications. Perhaps subjects did rely on some
of these resources to formulate their typifications of
Canadians. The degree of usage is beyond the analysis of
this research. The research recognizes such influence, but
to ignore respondents' perceptions derived from witnessing
behaviours offered by Canadians during encounters is to say
that the subjects are "cultural robots", that these
individuals do not deviate, and individual variables do not
exist. Refraining from using such analysis, the research
could only reveal the criteria from which these
typifications are formed. These criteria are used by
subjects to perceive behaviours offered by Canadians.

Schutz (1970:16) concludes:

Each individual constructs his own "world". But he
does this with the help of building blocks and
methods offered to him by others.

These criteria, from which typification are made,
also reflect the ordered structure of the established
social stock of knowledge which is developed from past
experiences.

The notion of a "stock of knowledge at hand", then,
refers to an accumulation of typification and
"recipes" which the individual has for acting in, and
making sense of his social world (Thomason, 1982:66).

It is a means by which one understands the world, others
and oneself. Hence, typifications are "...those

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categories in terms of which the man in the natural standpoint understands the social world" (Schutz, 1967:140). In short, typification is the medium through which individuals structure the social world.

Criteria from which typifications are formed emerge from each different face-to-face encounter and experience. This spells the changing nature of typification, schemes which will be the focus in the next section.

The Changing Nature of Typification

Typification schemes do not remain stagnant. Such schemes modify as interaction continues, and as more information is gathered about the interactants (Schutz and Luckmann, 1973; Wagner, 1983). Individuals may typify particular people and objects as a certain category. This "knowledge" will not remain unchanged. It may be questioned, and modified by means of new experience of that particular type. Wagner (1983:137) states:

...the ensuring typifications are themselves open, that is, bound to change not only with further encounters with their object but also with the progression of experiences in the ongoing life of the individual.

The following paragraphs highlight the changes in Chinese foreign students' typifications of Canadian civility, sexuality, and "partying" as interactions take place and more information is gathered about Canadians in these social aspects. Most of the early typifications were established either when the subjects were still in Hong Kong or when they first arrived.
In terms of civility, a female respondent typifies Canadian civility as "surface", and "superficial":

Before I came to Canada, I found westerners have good manners...Like when they ask things from you, they are very polite. For example, they say, "May I have this?"...I find that the two words they use "may I" is very important, and it sounded so polite...When I came, such images were correct. Now, after four years, and having interacted with Canadians, I find that such mannerism is very surface and superficial. I wonder whether they are that sincere...for example, I know a Canadian guy. He registered in January, and I was a semester ahead of him. He was unfamiliar with the University, so I helped him pick courses, helped him register, and even sat-in courses for him. We became good friends. But after one semester, he transferred to another University. We wrote to each for awhile, then he stopped suddenly, and never replied my letters...

A female respondent finds Canadian courteous behaviour as a front, "putting up a show":

When I first came, I found that they have good manners. For example, they used to say, "How are you?", "Thank you", etc. But now, I find that they say it too easily. I find that they are putting up a show. Whether they really mean it, I don’t know. For example, when I meet them, they always say, "How are you today?", "What are you up to?"...They never stay long enough to really find out how you really are or what you are doing.

On the issue of sexuality, Canadians are still typified as "sexually open" when compared to Chinese norms but not as "open" when compared to western movies. A male respondent comments:

...I only knew it from the movies. It seems that if they like each other for a moment, they could go to bed. They don’t wait until they know each other better or let the relationship develop. Whenever there is kissing or love making scene on T.V., my parents would switch it off. Physical attraction seems like the only thing they go for. When I came over to Canada, I didn’t find Canadians having this attitude of going to bed with anyone they like. They are not as sexually open as I thought...For example, I know a Canadian girl. She is getting married soon and
she has known her boyfriend for 5 years now, and he is her first love.

Another female comments:

...from the movies in Hong Kong, I found that they don't treat sex seriously. For example, after seeing each other for a few times, they could have sex... Now in Canada, I find that Canadians are not as open as I thought. I have talked to some Canadian females, and they said that they don't believe in having sex after only knowing the male for a while. They would prefer the relationship to last longer before they have sex. And they prefer a stable relationship. For example, this Canadian girl told me that she met a guy, and she liked him. But he is the type that like "one night stand". She is very unhappy. She hoped that the relationship would last longer before she gives in.

A male respondent comments on his change in images about Canadian behaviours toward sex:

I find that Canadians are not sexually free as I thought. Some are as conservative as Chinese. For example, I have a Canadian friend who has a girlfriend, and he is about to get married. Once in conversation I asked him whether he has sex with his girlfriend. He said no. He was surprised that I asked him such a question. I said that I thought it was common here to have sex before marriage. He said no.

However, there are some subjects who perceived Canadians as more "sexually open" than they initially thought. A male respondent comments:

I heard from friends and seen from T.V. that westerners were more sexually open and free. For example, they have single bars, and they could have sex with someone they just met. Now that I am in Canada, I find that they are more sexually open and free than I thought. I know a Canadian guy who plays pool. And he is always in the pool shop. He told me that if he goes out with a girl on a date, and if by 12 a.m. they haven't started making love, he would leave. He goes out with different girl every week.

On the aspect of "partying", most obtained their images from the media, and when they arrived, their perceptions changed. A male respondent comments:
When I was in Hong Kong, I thought that all their parties were like ballroom parties. You know, they wear suits and they are very polite and well mannered. I thought all Canadian parties were like that too. When I came over, I met Canadian teenagers, and I know now that their parties are wild and crazy. It changed my whole picture of their parties. Parties over here are beers, sex, and drugs. It surprised me the amount of drugs they take over here. For example, during parties some girls and guys would go to the washroom or hide somewhere to take drugs. And sometimes, when they get high, they have sex.

Another male comment:

I thought that their parties were like those in Hong Kong. They would dress properly and smartly, and there would be dancing. Now, I find their parties are crazy and wild. They get drunk and some take drugs. I have been to one party, and I don’t like it. They drink and get drunk.

A female respondent however didn’t find Canadian parties “bad”:

The news and movies about western parties were that they were bad. Images like males cheating females, and trick them into having sex were seen in the movies about parties. So I thought that all western parties are like that. The parties over here were not as bad as I thought. I had attended a few of their gatherings, and they were not as evil as the movies said they were. Yes, they do drink a lot, and sometimes they act crazily when drunk. But they do it for fun and enjoyment.

The above data showed how typifications changed as respondents gathered more information about Canadians. In terms of civility, Canadians were typified as having “good manners” before respondents arrived. But as more information is gathered, Canadian civility is typified as “surface” and “superficial”. In terms of sexuality, as more information is gathered, some perceived Canadians as “not as sexually open” as they had thought, while other perceived Canadians as “more sexually open” than they had.
initially thought. Finally, as more information is gathered some typified Canadian parties as "crazy" and "wild", while other perceived such gatherings as "not as bad as they thought". It is important to state that the changes of these typification depend on the nature of the encounter experienced by the respondents and the criteria involved. So far, the chapter has examined some of the processes that are used to develop typification schemes, the following two sections will discuss the effects of typifications on reality construction and social interaction.

Reality Construction

Since typification is an important aspect in the process of organizing the social world in an orderly manner so that interaction could proceed fluently, it is recognized that the process of typification is part of the constructive activity of human being. Through typification, the actor creates reality, and acts toward it. John Mckinney (1970:243) emphasizes:

"Typification as a central feature of cognition is the development of a selective and persistent attitude of an actor toward his environment."

A male respondent comments on the perception about his relationship with his professor:

"They have pretty good manners...if you talk to them, they are very polite and honestly listen to what you are talking. If they don't agree with your ideas, they will bring out points and try to argue. They will never lose their manners and politeness. The argument is always calm, they always put on a smile...For example, when I talk to my supervisor about my research, and my point of view, he may have a"
different opinion, he will try to catch my intentions, and we will have a discussion... We try to get the best out of the discussion. We may be involved in a heated argument but we still remain friends. I am very happy about this, and I am amazed by it. I find that the arguments are for the sake of improvement, and not the matter of which side wins or loses.

A female respondent comments on her typification of Canadian civility, and how that perception has led her to construct images about how Canadians treat their parents:

...manners toward parents are not so good. I know from a few Canadian friends, hearing from what they say, that they treat their parents badly. For example, I know a Canadian friend, he told me that his parents get on his nerves. I don’t think that they respect their parents as much as we do. One thing for sure, I wouldn’t say to a friend that my parents get on my nerves.

In terms of the typifications of Canadian sexual behaviour, the following lines unveil social realities in this aspect created by Chinese foreign students:

Hearing from what my Canadian friends told me about Canadian girls, I don’t rate them very high. I think it is because they have sex with people too easily. If you have a wife that goes along with any men, no one likes it. If she can go to bed with anyone, forget it... I don’t respect some Canadian girls who I know that “sleep around”... I think they party a lot, drink a lot, and who knows may be they are on drugs. I don’t like to go out with them. When my friends call me up and ask me to go out, and if I know that those girls are going, I would not go.

A female respondent comments on the social realities she obtained from her friend:

I don’t have any experience with this area, but I heard from friends who lived in residence that Canadians are very sexually free and open. They told me that whenever there is a floor party, the girls would invite guys from other residence, and after the party, some of the guys would stay over night in the girls’ room. I could imagine the crazy things they do... I find this unacceptable. From what I heard, they treat sex like entertainment. I don’t think I would like to live in residence.
Typifying Canadians as "crazy", and "wild" in parties had led some subjects to typify Canadian gatherings, such as in the pub, negatively and some respondents reported that they would avoid such social events. A female respondent comments:

Canadians I know from residence are crazy, and they drink a lot during parties. I lived in residence and I have attended some of the parties. Sometimes it embarrassing to be around them when they get drunk and start acting crazily. I try to avoid going out with them. For example, going to the pub. I was invited once by a group of them, but I did not go. I thought if they are so crazy here, at the pub with loud music and more people, they must be worst. I haven't been to the pub before. But from what I heard about fights, I don't think I want to go.

These are but some social realities created by Chinese foreign students from their typifications of Canadian civility, sexuality and "partying". These have led them to create an attitude toward their social environment, from which they have used to center their actions. From the above examples, respondents seems to have negative images about Canadian sexual behaviours and social gatherings and these had led some of the respondents to avoid Canadians. It is quite clear from the data that how respondents construct reality about Canadians influences the former's decisions to interact with the latter. The next section further discusses how perceptions influence social interaction.

Typification and Interaction

Typification set up the foundation for social interaction. The following data reveal how some
respondents perceive that Canadians project negative "typification schemes", and find discomfort in interacting with Canadians. This may lead them to avoid future contacts and restrict themselves to interacting with co-nationals, resulting in a "reject" type of strategy. This will be discussed further in chapter VIII.

A female respondent comments on how she perceives professors would typify her poor fluency in English, and how that has limited her interaction with faculty:

I seldom go see professor. I know my English is poor. If I try to explain my problem, I don't think I could express what I want to, and even if I could express myself, he may not understand what I said. He might think that I am stupid and not qualify as a University student. So, to avoid embarrassment, I go to other Chinese students when I have a problem.

A male respondent perceives that Canadians do not like foreigners:

I find that Canadians don't like foreigners that much. Some of them would call us names...I experienced once, I was standing on the street, and there was a car with some teenagers in it, they drove real close to me and shouted, "Hey, you Chink", and they drove off. I hate those type of people. So, I try to avoid Canadians. It is always safe to interact with your own kind.

The decision to interaction with Canadians rests on how respondents perceived Canadian would typify them. The above data showed that if some respondents perceived that Canadians would typify them negatively, some would limit interactions with Canadians. They expressed that it is "safer" to interact with co-nationals.

Summary

Typification enables individuals to understand their
social world, by supplying them with a social stock of knowledge and by operating as a means for communication. The data described the set of typifications accumulated by respondents about Canadians before their arrival. Canadians were thought to be similar to other westerners, especially to Americans because of Canada's geographical proximity to the United States.

After arrival, typification schemes are also derived from direct experiences of face-to-face encounters, and are in turn used to deal with future face-to-face encounters. Berger and Luckmann (1966:30-31) state, "The reality of everyday life contains typificatory schemes in terms of which others are apprehended and "dealt with" in face-to-face encounters". In terms of civility, Canadians are again given positive typifications after face-to-face interaction, while negative typifications are given to both sexual behaviour and "partying". The positive or negative typifications developed by the subjects depend on how they perceive the nature of the face-to-face interaction. The findings stated here are derived from the specific reported encounters with Canadians. They are not generalized perceptions. Hence, these perceptions depend on criteria offered by Canadians and other possible factors which are beyond the scope of the present study.

The criteria used to formulate typifications reflect how the subjects construct their social world. The typifications formed depend on how subjects perceived
behaviours offered by Canadians. The data revealed some of
the criteria used by respondents to formulate perceptions
about Canadians. In general the data showed that
respondents accept Canadians' behaviours in everyday
manners but behaviours toward parents are not accepted.
Further, some behaviour in sexual relations and "partying"
are also not accepted. Such perceptions of behaviours are
part of a recipe knowledge, and vary with each different
face-to-face encounter. Hence, this shows the changing
nature of typification.

The data showed that typification schemes change as
more information are gathered. The data suggested that
respondents' positive images about Canadian civility in
everyday activities changed to negative, while some
negative images about sexual relations and "partying"
changed to positive. As mention earlier, these changes
depend on the nature of the experience, the criteria used,
and other possible influencing factors that could not be
detected with the present study.

Typification helps individuals to construct realities.
From the data, it is clear that the set of typifications
formed by the subjects seemed to have influence over their
actions and attitudes toward Canadians. The data expressed
that respondents who have negative reality about certain
Canadian social aspects, such as sex and social gathering,
seems to avoid Canadians, while those who have positive
images seems to welcome the opportunities to interact with
Canadians.
Since typifications schemes are reciprocal (Berger and Luckmann, 1966), respondents in this research replied that they perceived that Canadians typify them negatively, and this has led them to limit social interactions with Canadians and feel safer to interact with co-nationals. From the data, it is apparent that how respondents typify Canadians affect their interaction with them. For example, respondents who typify Canadians negatively would avoid Canadian parties. Conversely, respondents who typify Canadians positively would join Canadian in social events. In sum, how respondents construct reality about Canadians and how the former perceived the latter would typify Chinese affect respondents' decision to avoid or interact with host nationals. These construction of reality and perceptions are derived from specific encounters reported in the interviews. They are not generalized perceptions and thereby could not be applied to all social events. Discrepancies may exist where respondents with "positive" perceptions find it more convenient to interact with primarily with co-nationals. It is not possible at present to pursue this matter. Further, the decision whether to avoid or to interact will have bearing on the type of coping strategy employ. This will be discussed further in chapter VIII.
CHAPTER VIII
"TAKEN FOR GRANTED" ASSUMPTIONS AND TYPES

This chapter has two purposes. First, to reveal some of Canadians' taken-for-granted assumptions, then to identify types of coping strategy. The purpose of revealing some of the "taken-for-granted" assumptions of Canadians is to show that what is taken for granted or expected behaviours in this society may not be taken as such by Chinese foreign students. Hence, by uncovering some different perspectives toward certain behaviours, the chapter is able to show that subjects have different "taken-for-granted" assumptions toward certain social events and the need for coping strategies. The second half of this chapter looks at the three general types of coping strategy. In this context, the chapter examines the various attitudes, feelings and perceptions associated with the employment of each type of strategy during the specific encounters respondents had with Canadians. Finally, within the parameters of the reported data, the chapter, in the interest of adjustment, draws out the "best" type of coping strategy.

"Taken For Granted" Assumptions

Typifications of respondents made after their arrival are based on the everyday activities of Canadians. To the host nationals, these everyday activities within their
social worlds are performed with the assistance of a social stock of knowledge that is both a historical and unquestioned. In short, it is, in Schutzian terminology, "taken-for-granted". Everyday life knowledge is "taken-for-granted". According to Schutz (1973), the "taken-for-granted" everyday world is the nucleus of people's reality. Members of the social world assume that everyone in it shares the same history, and the present in which every individual finds him/herself, in is the same with all individuals. Hence, the "taken-for-granted" assumption is the base from which social interaction takes root. It provides the cohesiveness that holds together the social world, without which social life would collapse. Schutz (1973:xxvi) concludes:

The taken-for-granted everyday world of living and working is the nuclear presupposition of all other strata of man's reality... The central and most cunning feature of the taken-for-granted everyday world is that it is taken for granted. As common-sense men... we tacitly assume that, of course, there is this world all of us share... Moreover, we naively assume that this world has a history... and that the rough present in which we find ourselves is... given to all normal men in much the same way.

Since the "taken-for-granted" everyday world is historical, foreigners who are not members of that social world do not share the "taken-for-granted" recipes, they may question that seems to be unquestioned to the members of the approached group. This section highlights some of the "taken-for-granted" types of everyday activities of Canadians that are questionable to some respondents. In other words, this section looks at some of the "taken-for-
granted" everyday activities of Canadians through the eyes of the Chinese foreign students. These everyday activities include: civility, sexuality, partying, Canadian independence, and Canadian feminist attitudes.

According to responses, Canadians are seen to have good civility, they are typified as "well mannered", "polite", and "friendly". They are said to "open doors for others", "having friendly talks with strangers", "help others carry things", "wish others well", "polite in conversation", etc. Perhaps, these to an average Canadian are "taken-for-granted" everyday activities. To fall short of such behaviours in certain specific situations, could be considered to be "rude" and "impolite" in this social world. For example, it is "taken-for-granted" that a sales person be polite, and offer assistance when one walks into a shop here. But to the Chinese foreign students such behaviours spell something special and out of the ordinary. According to some respondents, it is uncommon to enquire and care for the general well being of fellow members in Hong Kong. If one was to do, one could be stigmatized as "crazy".

The data showed that subjects typify Canadians as "sexually open", Canadian couples are seen to practice sex after a few outings. For Canadians, at least those encountered by some respondents, it is "taken-for-granted" to have sex after a few outings or after parties. Such practices may be common practices for some university
students, at least those witnessed in residence. A respondent comments:

I have dated Canadian girls before, and they are very friendly. You can touch them and hold them. It seems so easy. I dated this girl for a few times, we were at her apartment once, I could have done it (have sex) but I didn’t...

The data also expressed that Canadian "openness" involves kissing in the public. Some respondents see such acts as embarrassing. They expressed that such behaviour should not be done in public. To some Canadians such behaviours may be "taken-for-granted. To embrace and kiss in public is part of the Canadian culture in welcoming friends and relatives, or sending them away. To avoid such actions in certain situations could be considered to be "rude" or "impolite". Further, Canadians are typified as "daring" when it comes dating. They are perceived to be "straight forward". Some respondents reported that they had witnessed situations where mere acquaintances were asked out for a date. Such behaviours appear to be "taken-for-granted" by those Canadians respondents had encountered.

In terms of "partying", the data reflected that Canadians are typified as "drinking a lot", and behaving in "crazy" manners. Within the residence social world of the University, such behaviours appear to be "taken-for-granted". It is part of the University students' subculture. It is also "taken-for-granted" to have an establishment, such as the University pub, to cater liquor to the students. Another "taken-for-granted" behaviour that the data seemed to indicate is Canadians'
bringing liquor when invited for dinner. Such behaviour is considered to be polite and in some incidents expected. From such behaviour, some respondents typify Canadians as "loving to drink". A respondent comments:

I invited a Canadian girlfriend for dinner once, and she brought wine. I wondered why, because I don't drink. I thought she loves to drink...

The data revealed that in Canadian society, it is "taken-for-granted" that females could visit pubs and drink. Not in Hong Kong. A respondent comments:

At the pub, I was surprised at the large amount of beer they drink...And there are many females too, and they were drinking...In Hong Kong, most drinking places, girls do not go...Those who drink are usually bar girls.

Responses seemed to indicate that it is "taken-for-granted" that Canadians support themselves in higher education. The data also expressed that it is common to hear Canadian students saying that they have to work in the summer to earn money so that they could come back to school next semester. The indication from the data is that such independence is seemed to be "taken-for-granted" in Canadian social life. Further, the data also showed that in some instances, it is "taken-for-granted" that youngsters do odd jobs to earn some extra allowances. These "taken-for-granted" activities in the Canadian social world are reported to be admired by some respondents. Admiration is how they feel, but they have no knowledge why it is practiced. Their own cultural upbringing has inhibited their comprehension. A respondent comments:
I find that Canadians are very independent. For example, you kids here deliver newspaper to make an extra allowances... In Hong Kong, parents do not allow their children to go on the streets without someone looking after them... Even when they are older, Canadian students work part-time to support their education. I know people in the Economics department who work full-time in the summer so that they could pay tuition in the fall. I asked them why the parents don’t pay for the tuition? Don’t they like you going to school? They said their parents could pay but they preferred to pay their own. I don’t understand them. In Hong Kong, as long as the family has the resources to support the children, the parents would never allow the children to work to support their education... Over here, sometimes the family may be rich, the children are still expected to work to support themselves.

Another “taken-for-granted” activity in Canadian social world that is reflected in the data is the expectation to leave the family after the children have reached a certain age or are married. To some respondents, such phenomenon is not expected. A respondent comments:

I know a friend, he told me that he moved out of his parents’ home when he was 18. He said that it was time to leave the family and be independent. He didn’t have enough money to rent an apartment, so he rented a room with another Canadian family near the University. I see no reason to leave. He could stay with his parents and go to school from there... In Hong Kong, we stay with the parents until we get married. Some families are rich enough, and they have their children’s families live with them.

The data also reflected that Canadian females are typified as “mouthy”. It is “taken-for-granted” in this social world that females have equal rights and freedom as males. In Hong Kong, females “know their place”, and are not expected to voice opinions in public. A female respondent comments:

I find that Canadian females are not the type that listen and not ask questions. They always have opinions, and they are very daring, they speak out in the public. Chinese girls wouldn’t do that. Like in
Hong Kong, we are taught that girls shouldn't be "mouthy". We are taught by our parents to listen and don't question. For myself, I dare not voice my opinions in public.

The above typifications by respondents reflect some of the "taken-for-granted" everyday activities of Canadians within the social world of Windsor. The data reported that these phenomena are new to respondents and are not seen as "taken-for-granted" behaviours. By typifying certain social aspect of Canadian everyday life, the "taken-for-granted" is thrown into question by the Chinese foreign students, which in turn highlights the difference in perspectives. Hence, through this process of "bracketing" these typifications, the research indirectly reveals the need of coping strategies and that there exist a difference in perceptions in certain social behaviours between subjects and the Canadians they had encountered. One could also conclude that the difference in perspectives reflects the types of strategy employed. This will be discussed further in the next section.

TYPES OF COPING STRATEGY

This section examines the coping strategies employed by respondents during specific reported experiences at the University of Windsor. Coping strategies are categorized into types. In this context, categorizations are derived from respondents' typifications of Canadian civility, sexuality, and "partying", unfamiliarity, and language problems. The aim of this categorization is to examine possible general types of coping strategies that are
espoused by the subjects when dealing with Canadians in their reported experience, and the perceptions, feelings and attitudes associated with each type. The theory and methodology employed here limit the research from typologizing personalities. After analyzing the data, this study typologizes coping strategies in three general types: "reject", "select", and "accept". These typologies are built on reported strategies and are employed as interpretive devices; they do not represent the general attitudinal orientation of respondents. It is possible that strategies fall between these ideal types. Further, it is important to note that these reported strategies are obtained from one time interview, respondents may change coping strategies over time.

The data seemed to suggest that the "reject" type of coping strategy appears to be derived from negative typifications of Canadian civility, sexuality, and "partying". Because of such negative typifications, interactions are claimed to be centered around own co-nationals while avoiding host nationals. Further, responses showed that condemning Canadians and perceiving their own behaviours as "better" seems to be part of this type of strategy.

According to the data, the "reject" type of coping strategy typifies Canadian civility as "well mannered", and "polite" but this type perceives that Canadians "do not really mean it". In sociological terms, perhaps Canadians
are perceived to be doing “front” work. As more information is gathered, Canadian civility is typified as “overplayed”, “putting up a show”, “superficial”, and “not sincere”. Termination of social interaction when faced with unfamiliar situations, topics of discussion, and situations where they have problem expressing themselves is a frequent behaviour in this type of strategy. Excuses such as, “I am sorry, I have a class” and “I am meeting a friend”, are used. The data seemed to indicate that this type of coping strategy enhances interaction with co-nationals. The data also showed that co-national may not be perceived as “well mannered” as Canadians but once friendship is established, they proved to be more “sincere”. In the “reject” type of strategy, Canadians are perceived as “rude” and “do not show respect” to their parents and superiors, and some respondents reported that these are unacceptable behaviours.

In terms of sexuality, the data indicated that the “reject” type of coping strategy typifies Canadians as “sexually open”, “sexually easy”, and “don’t treat sex seriously”. Typifications are derived from such criteria as: “having sex after a few dates”, “guys brought girls to their rooms after parties”, “bringing different girls home”, etc. The data expressed that subjects using this type of strategy expressed discomfort when they witnessed such behaviours. “Reject” strategies such as avoiding such scene by walking away, pretending that the interactants are not present, and disassociating from women
who are perceived to have sex with different males are said to be used.

In terms of "partying", the data revealed that the "reject" type of strategy typifies Canadians as "crazy", "wild", "drinking too much", and "really out of hand". Strategies such as "when they have a party I will hide in my room, even though they have invited me" and "I seldom [join his parties], whenever his friends come over, I go to my friend's place or go to the library" are common practices deployed to deal with such unwelcome invitations. "Reject" type of strategy is employed when Canadians are perceived to behave "unacceptably" during such social gatherings. Examples of some of these "unacceptable" behaviours include "throwing bottles", "making too much noise at 4 in the morning", "dancing on tables", etc. It is necessary to inform the reader that such behaviours are perceived to be "unacceptable" in the eyes of some respondents. In addition, some respondents thought that the Canadians they had encountered perceive such behaviours as "having a good time".

The data revealed that the "reject" type of strategy could be employed by respondents who claimed to be unfamiliar with Canadian society. The data expressed that these respondents employ strategies that enable interaction with Chinese while avoiding Canadians and the usage of intermediaries when encountering Canadians. Further, the data showed that the "reject" strategies are used by
respondents who perceived themselves having language problems when dealing with faculty. These respondents would avoid professors, rely on other students for academic assistance and guess on their own if no help is available. The other set of "reject" strategy reported to be used to deal with Canadian students employed by respondents who claim to be poor in English involves making excuses to leave when they perceive that they could not be involved in a conversation with Canadians and that it would result in an embarrassing situation.

The second type of coping strategy could be classified as "select". The data showed that the "select" type of strategy could have both positive and negative typifications of Canadian civility, sexuality, and "partying". Canadians are typified positively if the new norms and behaviours are perceived to be acceptable, and could be integrated into the foundation of the home culture. Conversely, Canadians are typified negatively the new norms and behaviours are perceived to be unacceptable, and could not be integrated into the foundation of the home culture. Respondents using "select" type of coping strategy adopt more flexible coping strategies. They take a situational approach. These sojourners tend to seek the best from the new culture. The criterion for acceptability varies within individuals.

In terms of Canadian civility, the data expressed that Canadians are perceived as "well mannered", "polite", and "friendly" under the "select" type of strategy. Behaviours
such as, "saying "thank you"", "help to open door and carry things", etc. are perceived as positive. The strategy here is to learn from Canadians about public courtesy. Strategies such as, becoming more conscious about their manners in public, reminding themselves to say "thank you", to say "you're welcome", "put on a smile", etc. are used. In conversation, the "select" type of strategy enables users to select topics that they are familiar with so that they could participate. However, the data also revealed that the "select" type of strategy does not encompass avoidance when users are involved in conversations where they perceive themselves having no knowledge. Instead, this type of strategy allows the user to pretend to know the topic by asking simple questions. Similarly, as with the "reject" type of strategy, the "select" strategy typified Canadians as "rude" and "do not respect their parents" when dealing with parents and superiors.

According to the data, the "select" strategy typifies Canadians as "sexually open" but their openness, such as kissing in public, is accepted, and such public behaviour is perceived to be part of Canadian culture. Canadians are perceived as "forward" ("would approach the girl directly and ask her out") when comes to "asking a girl out". The "select" strategy accepts such dating behaviour, and sees Chinese dating behaviour as slow and conventional. Perhaps the preference reflected experiences: "It is hard to ask
Chinese girls out, they take a day or two to give you an answer."

In terms of "partying", the "select" type of strategy has the same typifications as the "reject" strategy. According to the data, Canadians are typified as "wild" and "crazy" in "partying". Such behaviours are deemed as unacceptable. The data showed that some respondents had experienced Canadian “parties”. They expressed that such gatherings enhance opportunities for "misconduct" because they had witnessed Canadians drinking excessively and taking drugs. They typify such gatherings negatively when they make comparison with parties organized by the Chinese Students Association. Responses seemed to suggest that as with the "reject" strategy, the "select" strategy also used avoidance in these situations.

In terms of the "select" strategy in the context of language problems, some users claim to keep a list of professors who are deemed as "approachable" and consult professors only as a last resort.

The last type of coping strategy can be classified as "accept". The data indicated that this type of strategy has positive typifications on Canadian civility, sexuality, and "partying". Interacting extensively with Canadians whenever a chance occurs is the prevailing motto. This type of strategy also calls for identifying with the host culture while condemning their own.

In terms of Canadian civility, the data suggested that users of this type typified Canadian as "well mannered".
"friendly", and "polite". This type of strategy allows users to identify with Canadian civility while condemning their own members as "loud". Respondents using "accept" strategy express embarrassment when members speak Cantonese in front of Canadians. With the "accept" strategy, interaction with Canadians is enhanced while co-nationals are avoided. Further, Canadian mannerisms in public is perceived to be "better", while co-nationals are perceived as "rude". By using the "accept" strategy, respondents make every attempt to learn to cope with Canadian behaviour and speech. Some of these strategies involve observing how actors behave in television, learning accent and speech from them, making an effort to talk to Canadians, etc. Further, users of the "accept" type of strategy does not consider Canadian as "rude" to their parents.

With regards to Canadian sexuality, the data expressed that this strategy typifies Canadians as "not that sexually open", and their "openness" is seen as enhancing friendship. Users of this strategy do not avoid such "openness" as "kissing in public" but condone it. Such a strategy calls for reciprocation of actions. For example, as Canadians of different sexes would touch and hold each other with no sexual implications, the strategy would be to practice such behaviours when interacting with Canadians. Users expressed that they had participated in such behaviour when dating Canadian women. Further, users of the "accept" strategy perceive nothing wrong with "scoring"
(to meet a girl and have sex later) in a party. Users of this strategy perceive that such behaviours are common in Canadian "parties".

With the "accept" type of strategy, "partying" is not perceived as "wild" or "crazy" but as an opportunity to enhance interaction with Canadians. The "accept" strategy, such as "you have to behave like [Canadians] if you want to interact with them", is used in social gatherings. Further, the "accept" strategy also sees Canadian drinking behaviour as "acceptable", and Canadian parties are perceived as more "fun" while Chinese parties are "less fun". For the "accept" type of coping strategy, condemning other Chinese behaviours and accepting host nationals' seems to be the prevailing method.

In terms of the "accept" strategy used by respondents who claim to be unfamiliar with Canadian society, the data showed that the "accept" strategy enables users to observe and learn from Canadians. For example, "I watch...my landlord...Observing which utensil he used, I followed". In respect to the context of language, the "accept" strategy would allow users to seek professors even they perceive to having language problems. The data seemed to suggest that this strategy enables users to build confidence in themselves by encouraging them think over the questions either in Chinese or English before approaching professors. Further, the "accept" strategy involves the use of television programs as a learning tool. Responses seemed to indicate that such strategy enables users to be
involved in conversation with Canadians.

In summary, the data seemed to suggest that the "reject" strategy is employed to avoid Canadians. This type of strategy is used when respondents feel "uncomfortable" with their new environment and conversing with Canadians. Such a strategy limits interaction with Canadians, and Canadian civility, "partying", and sexuality are perceived as "unacceptable". On the other extreme, the data seemed to suggest that the "accept" type of strategy creates opportunity for respondents to encounter Canadians. This type of strategy facilitates interaction with Canadians, and Canadian civility, "partying", and sexuality are perceived as "acceptable". Between the two extremes is the "select" strategy. Respondents using this type of strategy take an integrative approach. This strategy does not reject all Canadians' behaviours neither does it accept all of them. Rejection or acceptance depends on how the respondent perceives the situation. The data indicated that if the respondent perceives to gain from the experience, he/she would accept if not he/she would reject. In the interest of adjustment, the data seemed to show that the "reject" strategy does not enhance interaction with host nationals. Conversely, responses suggested that the "accept" strategy calls for total acceptance of the foreign culture, and rejection of their own. One has to bear in mind that respondents are temporary members of Canadian society. Their stay in Canada is determined by the length
of time required to complete their education. Users of the "accept" strategy may face the problem of readjustment when they return home. The data further suggested that the "select" strategy seems to allow users to interact with Canadians and at the same time maintain their ethnic identity. Ideally, in light of the reported data and within the framework of this research, the "select" strategies would be the ideal type of coping strategy to deal with unfamiliarity and language problems for some respondents at the University of Windsor.

As stated earlier, these typologies are only general patterns drawn from an aggregate of forty respondents. They are ideal types generated to evaluate the reported strategies of respondents. They represent tendencies rather than discrete reactions of individuals and they are not cross culturally tested. Further, these strategies are derived from the specific reported encounters. They could not be generalized to other social events. They are only part of a recipe of knowledge. In short, these typologies are specifically driven from the findings of this research. In addition, these typologies reflect only what the respondents report they perceive, feel and did when encountering Canadians during these specific experiences, the research is not set up to test the validity of reports through actual behavioural data.
CHAPTER IX

CONCLUSION

On the basis of the analysis of the data, the research reveals that a measure of familiarity could be established by relying on past and present experiences, stock of knowledge, typifications, and images from the media. Familiarity broadens the respondents' scope and perceptions toward unfamiliar culture and creates a familiar social world for them, in which social interaction could be facilitated. The research also reveals that familiarity takes two forms, direct and indirect. The former generates tested recipes for social interaction, while the latter does not. Coping strategies are uncovered as respondents battled with the uncertain and unfamiliar. The data indicated that familiarity enhances social interaction, while little familiarity proves to be an obstacle for social interaction. Hence, this research shows how familiarity plays an important role in social interaction.

In respect to language, the study shows that poor language facility inhibits respondents to make sense of the surrounding social world; inhibits respondents in objectifying their subjective feelings and thoughts; and makes it difficult for respondents to interpret western linguistic symbols and gestures. Poor language facility makes the respondents feel alienated and not a part of the group. The study shows that proficiency in written
language alone is inadequate for face-to-face interaction. Further, a poor language facility affects reality construction. The data indicated that two sets of coping strategy are employed by respondents who perceive language problems. One used to deal with faculty and the other with Canadian students. Within each set exists three types of strategy, namely "reject", "select" and "accept" types. This research shows that having a common language enhances social interaction, while a lack of it proves to be hindering social interaction. Those respondents who perceive to be proficient in English reported that they have no problem interacting with host nationals.

On the matter of typification, the study shows that typifications provide individuals with the guidelines to deal with the routines of everyday life. Through typifications, strangers orient their behaviours and actions in order to establish social interactions with host nationals. The data showed both negative and positive typification schemes of respondents before arrival and how they have changed after arrival. The research also shows the criteria through which respondents used to establish their typifications. In revealing these criteria, the research analyses respondents' perceptions of behaviours offered by Canadians, thereby, revealing the subjective procedures of typifications. Further, the criteria identified in the research spells out the subjects' process of constructing social realities. Finally, the study shows that typifications may have some influence on social
interaction. The data suggested that when respondents perceive that host nationals typify them negatively, they would limit their social interaction with host nationals. These typifications are drawn from the social world at the University and its surrounding communities, such as, they are applicable only within the confines of that social world.

The research identifies three types of coping strategy adopted by the subjects, these are "reject", "select" and "accept" types. From the responses, the "reject" type of strategy is seemed to be used when respondents decide to avoid Canadians, the "select" type is employed to attain the best out of a situation, and the "accept" type is used to "behave like Canadians". These are generated from the specific reported experiences and are part of a recipe knowledge. They do not represent a general approach to deal with Canadians. Discrepancies exist but are beyond the detection of this study. In addition, from the accumulated data some of the "taken-for-granted" assumptions of Canadians in Windsor are analysed through the eyes of the sojourners. This shows the differences in perspectives and in stock of knowledge.

This research took an "inside" approach in examining adjustment of the Chinese foreign students at the University of Windsor. Basically, the research deals with the perceptions, attitudes and feelings associated with familiarity, language and typifications of Chinese foreign
students. The thrust of this research, based on interviews with some forty Chinese foreign students, was to examine these internal factors, which have been construed by the respondents themselves as essential in facilitating their adjustments at the University of Windsor. With the assistance of grounded theory, the present research convey how the mechanics of social elements, such as familiarity, language, and typifications, affect the process of adjustment. The research may not show quantitatively how these elements affect Chinese foreign students' adjustments at the University of Windsor. However, by revealing the process of how respondents attain familiarity and how they use familiarity when interacting with Canadians, how respondents perceive their language fluency affects social interaction, how typification affects social interaction, and the type of strategy employed in relation to these elements, the research has highlighted the importance of these elements in the adjustment processes of these Chinese foreign students at the University of Windsor. There is also a great deal more that can be said about Chinese foreign students' familiarity, typifications, language problems, coping strategies and their impacts on the adjustment processes. For instance, it is possible that there exist a set of differences in male's and female's coping strategy and reality construction that has not been examined; discrepancies have been detected through the study that need to be examined; and the need to examine criteria that
lead respondents who perceive to fluent in English to begin interaction with host nationals. These and other questions suggest the possibility of further research in this area.

Finally, this research suggests a useful approach to the study of adjustments of foreign students in Canada. The macro aspect of adjustment such as those generated by adaptation models ignore the experiences, perceptions and feelings of foreign students. Micro-level research on adjustment could fill this gap. Perhaps the interaction of micro and macro researches in this field could assure a positive sojourn for these temporary members of Canadian society.
APPENDIX A

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

I am a graduate student conducting sociological research in partial fulfillment of my Master degree.

The purpose of this research is to find out the adjustment of Chinese foreign students at the University of Windsor.

If you consent to take part in this project, you will be interviewed. The information you give will be kept in strict confidence and will be used for this research only. A tape recorder will be used during this process. Your interview will be part of this research to learn more about the adjustment phenomenon of Chinese foreign students.

I will be glad to explain and answer any questions pertaining to this research.

Thank you.

Lee, Keng Mun
Department of Sociology
University of Windsor.
APPENDIX B

STATEMENT OF CONSENT

I am taking part in this research on my own free will. The purpose of this research has been explained to me. I am aware that all the information I provide during the interview will be kept in strict confidence and will be used for this research only.

Name:

Signature:

Date:
BIBLIOGRAPHY


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VITA AUCTORIS

Name of Author: Lee Keng Mun


In September, 1981 I came to Canada to further my education at the University of Toronto. I graduated in June, 1984 from the University of Toronto with a Bachelor of Arts degree majoring in Sociology and Economics. In September, 1984, I enrolled at the University of Windsor for Graduate work in Sociology. I was a Teaching Assistant for Introductory Sociology from September 1984 to April 1986. I completed course work requirements for the Master of Arts degree in Sociology at the University of Windsor in 1985.