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Abstract: We contend in this paper that language shapes as well as reflects social reality, thought patterns, and value/belief systems of a culture. We substantiate our claim by closely examining Chinese family value orientations and their relationships with language expressions. The linguistic features and cultural implications of the value orientations are explicated. We further investigate the impact of changes in the use of language on the social reality and thought patterns of Chinese culture. We conclude that language and culture are intertwined. The interplay between language and culture creates infinite discursive possibilities and multi-dimensional and ever changing human experiences. [China Media Research. 2011; 7(3): 56-63]

Language Change and Value Orientations in Chinese Culture

The study of culture and communication has been approached from diverse perspectives by anthropologists, linguists, and communication scholars. One of the shared notions of culture is that culture is dynamic and ever changing. As McDaniel, Samovar, and Porter (2006) indicate, "Despite its historical nature, culture is by no means static" (p. 11). According to Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck (1961), the basic change of a culture is often "the result of interplay of internal variations and external force" (p. 43). In their study of cultural change in China, Chu and Ju (1993) state that change is an inherent characteristic of any culture, "It [culture] must be adaptive to changes in the external environment and internal conditions. A culture that fails to adapt to these changes will run the risk of extinction" (p. 8). While the causes for culture change are often attributed to factors such as social, economic, technological transformation or ideological and political shifts taking place within a culture or influenced by other cultures, the obvious and dynamic interrelation–ship between language and culture as impulse for culture change has not been given a sufficient attention.

Hoijer (1964) indicates that change in culture is faithfully reflected in language. It follows naturally that the study of linguistic changes will offer insights to our understanding and explication of culture change. Unfortunately, according to Hoijer (1964), "Such contributions have not been made, results in part from the linguist's extreme concentration on language along and his [her] neglect of the problem of determining the role of language in the total culture" (p. 457). Although intercultural communication scholars are very much aware of the inseparable relationship between language and culture, they tend to emphasize the pragmatic elements of language or the interpretation of symbolic meanings in different cultural contexts (e.g., Carbaugh, 1990; Ting-Toomey & Korzenny, 1993). Few studies have been devoted to how language change reflects, facilitates, and perpetuates culture change. We contend in this study that language communicates culture as well as creates culture. Linguistic change not only reflects culture change, but also is responsible for cultural change. More importantly, the change in language and culture renews and creates infinite discursive possibilities as well as multi-dimensional human experiences. We will substantiate our argument in this paper by examining Chinese cultural value change in relation to language change from traditional Chinese culture to contemporary Chinese culture. The analysis is divided into four parts: (1) a review of scholarship on the relationship between language and culture, (2) language and traditional Chinese values, (3) language change in contemporary China, and (4) conclusion and implications.

Relationship between Language and Culture

The relationship between language and culture is considered interrelated and overlapping (e.g., Bright 1976; Gao, 2005; Goodenough 1956; Hymes 1962; Hudson 1980). Culture is shaped and transmitted through language. Language at the same time reflects culture. The familiar "Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis" indicates that language is a guide to culture and social reality (Sapir 1931; Whorf 1959). Such connection can be exemplified through the correspondence between linguistic features and cultural orientations. By examining Navaho language, for example, Hoijer (1994) postulates that there is a close correspondence between the verb usage in Navaho language and Navaho religious practice and world view. Wierzbicka (1986) concludes in her study of Australian English that "linguistic phenomena such as expressive derivations, elocutionary devices, and speech act verbs are related to the literature on the Australian society, national character, history, and culture" (p. 349). Cultural attributions and value orientations of a particular

cultural group can be described, recognized, and predicted through the use of language. Studies of this nature are both linguistically intriguing and culturally revealing.

Needless to say, language plays an important role in cultural expressions, yet, the function of language far exceeds the mere reflection of the culture. Language also plays a role of constructing culture and social reality (Berger & Luckmann, 1967; Chen & Starosta, 2005; Kress & Hodge, 1979). As Whorf (1952) states, "the linguistic system of each language is not merely a reproducing instrument for voicing ideas but rather is itself the shaper of ideas" (p. 5). As language embodies one's ever changing experience of the phenomena of the world, the speaker of a language will constantly reshape his/her cognitive systems and worldview through new categories of a discourse.

Halliday (1978) further defines language as having an experiential or ideational function. In Halliday's opinion, "The speaker can see through and around the settings of his [her] semantic system; but [s]he is aware that, in doing so, [s]he is seeing reality in a new light, like Alice in looking-glass house" (p. 333). Language serves to establish the system of ideas, creates new categories, and crystallizes a new sense of social reality. As culture is dynamic and ever changing, language is the mirror that reflects the change. In fact, language does not only reflect change, but also facilitates and creates change. The change in language, as Whorf (1959) puts it, "can transform our appreciation of the Cosmos" (p. vii).

A language may change in sound, structure, and meaning. According to Pateman (1987), "The most obvious cases of purposive actions changing a language state are lexical innovations and their acceptance" (p. 31). Hudson (1980) has identified two kinds of lexical change in a language. One is "by introducing a new form to carry the desired meanings," and the other is by using "the existing resources of the language that can be used to 'unpack' the meaning to be expressed" (p. 85). By doing so, new sets of values and social reality are constructed. Once new values, perceptions, and ideas are fixed in language, language begins to play the role of facilitating the cultural change. Following the change in language and new meanings humans attached to it, what was previously considered tolerable may become intolerable and unacceptable. For example, the term *xiaojie* (Miss) was used in China's past to address young women with high social status. During the Chinese Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), it means "the class enemy from the bourgeois class;" and in contemporary China, the term means "prostitute." In Fowler's (1986) words, "Language does not just provide words for already existing concepts; it crystallizes and stabilizes ideas" (p. 18). In this example the word *xiaojie* has crystallized its meaning in each time period

of Chinese history, signaling the change of Chinese cultural value orientation from respect for hierarchy to belligerent human relationships, to openness to market economy.

Trudgill (1974) has identified three aspects of change in a culture that is reflected and facilitated by lexicon change in a language: (1) the physical environment, (2) the social environment, and (3) the values of a society. China has experienced a dramatic social transformation in all these aspects in the past centuries, moving from a feudalized society ruled by emperors to a Republic governed by the Nationalist Party, then to a communist state under the leadership of Mao Zedong in 1949. During the communist regime, China adopted Marxist-Maoist ideology in its first 30 years and then shifted to a market economy with its door open to the West. Western influence came to China and facilitated the culture change in China at the turn of the 20th century; it was condemned during Mao's era, but came back again after Mao's death with the launch of economic reform and open-door policy in the early 1980s. In this paper we focus on the change of value systems as reflected and facilitated by the change in vocabulary inventory from conveying traditional values to establishing contemporary ideas in the Chinese culture.

Language and Traditional Chinese Values

Values were defined as "what we hold important in life and include such qualities as morality, ethics, and aesthetics" (McDaniel, Samovor, & Porter, 2006 p. 12) and "patterned principles" (Kluckhohn & Strodbeck, 1961, p. 4). Cultural values are the implicit and explicit principles in guiding and controlling the behaviors of people in a particular culture. Cultural values are rooted in a culture's philosophical, religious, and ideological traditions and are called upon by the social need and context of a culture.

The Chinese traditional cultural values have been introduced and studied in great length (Bond, 1986; Chan, 1963; Chen, 1991, 2006, 2010; Cheng, 1978; Fung, 1952, He, Zhu, & Peng, 2002; Lin, 1939; Moore, 1967; Yum, 1988). Moore (1967), for example, has synthesized twenty-one Chinese cultural value orientations. Among them are ethical consciousness, spirituality, filial piety, harmony, tolerance, and great love for learning. These traditional values are rooted in Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism. The doctrines of Confucianism, in particular, have influenced Chinese thoughts and behaviors for over 2,000 years. Our first part of the analysis is focused on three aspects of traditional Chinese value orientations as reflected and shaped by the use of vocabulary, sayings, proverbs, and epigrams (aphorisms) derived from Chinese classics and antiquities: (1) ethical idealism, (2) hierarchy in family relationship, and (3) kinship system.

Ethical Idealism

A prominent traditional Chinese cultural value is ethical idealism which was summarized by "Five Principles" derived from Confucian doctrines: "*ren*" (benevolence), "*yi*" (righteousness), "*li*" (propriety), "*zhi*" (wisdom), and "*xin*" (trustworthiness). These terms prescribe the ethical standards and proper social behaviors for the Chinese. They were not only used in the Confucian books, but also frequently appear in Chinese official language and interpersonal discourse, and are further employed in arts and literature for over 2,000 years.

The "Five Principles" have a great impact on the Chinese mentality of ethical idealism and spiritual values. Spiritual values, according to Tang (1967), consists of moral and religious activities, artistic and intellectual activities, and social values. In particular, they involve activities such as moral teaching, rituals, folk music, and ancestor worship. In ancient China, Chinese people learn the Confucian sayings from an early age in schools and are being reinforced by their parents, teachers, and friends. In contrast to Greek philosophical writings in which language style is characterized by logic and abstraction such as Aristotle's works, language style in most writings of Chinese philosophy is value-laden and in the forms of proverbs, witty sayings, and metaphors which are easy to comprehend and remember.

While the "Five Principles" express enduring values and ethical ideals, the means to achieve them is "exercising the body and cultivating the mind" through behaving in the manner such as "moderation," "honesty", "thrifty," "reciprocity" and "self-content." One is supposed to live a spiritually fulfilled and morally uplifted life. It is the Confucian belief that money and profit will corrupt morality as he said "Gentleman values justice, a base person values money" (Confucius, 4:16). Thus, sayings like "Gentleman is content with poverty;" "Poverty brings carefree life;" "Wealth only brings worries;" "Gentleman does not talk about money" became accepted value orientation for the educated Chinese in relation to money. They are guided by the popular saying that a person should "look at money as trash, but benevolence and righteousness as gold." As a result, the traditional Chinese value orientations despise profits and materialism.

The emphasis on ethical idealism from the Confucian tradition continued in the form of ideological conversion in Mao's era (Chu, 1977). The Chinese mentality of ethical idealism and contempt for materialism were reinforced by Mao's dogmatic adherence to communist ideology. Slogans such as "We'd rather want socialist weed than capitalist grass," "Wealthy people were bourgeois, capitalist running dogs, and exploiting other people" perpetuated the traditional belief that poverty can bring out goodness in people while wealth can lead to evil thoughts and action. The material disadvantaged people, "proletarians," are the ruling class of the nation. Thus, one should be proud of being poor as long as one is politically correct or "red." Consequently, China in Mao's era had wearied itself out in the ideological battles and had fallen behind in economic construction. Although overseas Chinese are well known for their success in doing business, the mainland Chinese did not have much of the material desire and economic consciousness until early 1980s.

Hierarchy in Family Relationship

It is a shared belief that one of the Chinese cultural characteristics is hierarchical relationship (Chen & Chung, 1994, Cheng, 1987; Liu, 1987; Wen, 1989). This culture characteristic is supposed to be the means to maintain "harmony" which is the key cultural value for the smooth function of Chinese social and family systems (Huang, 2000). It is believed that "Harmony is the first virtue." Harmony of a family and society is maintained by the hierarchical relationship demonstrated in the "Three Cardinals," including "Wives follow the order of husbands," "Ministers follow the order of the king," and " Son follows the order of fathers." We will examine the linguistic expressions of the two levels of family relationship: husband and wife, and parents and children.

Husband and Wife. Sayings like "Follow the man you marry, be he a fool or a crook" and "The husband sings, the wife accompanies" show the typical relationship between a husband and wife in the traditional Chinese family. The wife's status is subordinate to her husband. Ideally, the most important duty for the wife is to bear children for the family in order to "extend the generations." In a marriage, for example, a man is described to "marry" a woman, but a woman is "being married to" a man. After marriage the husband names his wife the "inside person" and the wife names his husband the "outside man."

The female subordination further develops a set of linguistic expressions that devalue the status of women in the Chinese society, including, for example, "wicked" (*jian*), "slave" (*nu*), "ignorant" (*wang*), "prostitute" (*ji*), "jealousy" (*du*), "hinder" (*fang*), "adultery" (*jian*), "greedy" (*lan*), "flattering" (*mei*), "detesting" (*xian*), and "envious" (*ji*). These vocabularies, all structured by the word "*nu*" (women), portray and perpetuate the negative image of Chinese women.

Parents and Children. Within the collectivistic family system of China, one becomes a member of a family in which one must learn to restrain oneself and to subdue one's individuality in order to maintain the harmony in the family (Hofstede & Bond, 1988). The Western concepts of "individualism" and "privacy" do not exist in the Chinese linguistic expression. Traditionally, Chinese parents had the freedom to

decide their children's future. The communication between Chinese parents and children was one way - from parents to children. The children were said to "have ears but no mouth." An interruption in an adult's conversation usually brought upon the children a severe punishment. Children were expected to fulfill their "filial piety" which required an unconditional sacrifice to their parents in any situation. Therefore, "Filial piety is the chief of the hundred virtues " and "Parents are always right" reflect the absolute respect children had to pay to their parents. Showing no reverence for parents is a "rebel against sacred custom." Moreover, according to Hsieh (1967), "The substantiation of benevolence begins with service to one's parents" (p. 172). Some elements of the traditional Chinese culture still form the basic fabrics of the modern Chinese society. A study by the Chinese Cultural Connection (1987) demonstrates that the Chinese in Hong Kong rank filial piety at the top and wealth the last one out of forty value orientations.

Kinship System

The traditional Chinese culture was shaped and created mainly by its rich vocabularies in kinship system. A complete Chinese kinship system is comprised of four categories: "*Ben-jia*" (one's own family), "*wai-xing*" (relatives outside the household), "*nei-xi*" (wife's relatives), and "*qin-xi*" (relatives of different surnames).

The kinship structure shows a complex but orderly communication system in which a clear terminology is attached to each positional role, and each role is assigned to perform a set of appropriate behaviors. The age hierarchy, for example, is shown in the relationship among siblings. The Chinese language has different terms distinguishing between an "elder brother" and a "younger brother," an "elder sister" and a "younger sister." In addition, numbers are used to indicate the order of age that in turn distinguishes each person's obligation in the family system. The kinship system also functions as a network of support and bonding. The notion "Blood is thicker than water" is definitely implied in the kinship system epitomized in the saying "Blood-related brothers beat the tiger together; father and son fight together in a battle." These phrases are very much culture bound, and it is difficult to find equivalent concepts in other language systems. The examples discussed above indicate the close relationship between cultural value orientations and language in the traditional Chinese society.

Language Change in Contemporary China

The traditional Chinese culture started to show inevitable signs of erosion since the mid-19th century. The major culture change took place in mainland China after 1949 when the Communists came to power and adopted Marxist ideology. Another obvious value orientation shift took place since the economic reform in the 1980s. We will examine some examples of lexical change and its impact on the change of Chinese cultural value orientation. The examples being examined are the combination of official language imposed by the government and language invented by common people. Three categories of value orientation shift were examined: (1) from ethical idealism to materialism, (2) from hierarchy to equality in family relationship, and (3) from kinship to "*guanxi*" (social network).

From Ethical Idealism to Materialism

Since the economic reform in the 1980s, the traditional value of living a plain life with few material comforts has been challenged. Language attached with the traditional ethical idealism has lost its moral appeal and persuasive power. Since the early 1980s, the ethos of China are "make money and become rich," "reform and open the door (to the West)," "material civilization," "profit and efficiency;" "fair competition," and "material stimulation." These are official expressions employed by the government-controlled media as a new form of propaganda. The use of such language also indicates a shift in China's value orientation. Link (1992) points out that "The widespread use of official language, coupled with the continuing assumption that it ought to relate to a vital ideology even though it does not, raised important problems of Chinese 'identity'" (p. 177).

Indeed, when this type of official language first appeared, it caused uncertainty and dilemma among the Chinese. As Chu and Hsu (1979) have observed, "The Chinese, like any other people, have sought to fulfill their material needs. The pursuit of material gains as a primary if not ultimate goal of life, however, appears to have been alien to most Chinese under the Confucian influence" (p. 398). However, it did not take much time for the Chinese to adjust themselves to the new language and new cultural values as they are endorsed and promoted by the government. Moreover, a group of metaphors was created by common people to vividly describe and label the change. Words such as "*da kuan*" (big money carrier), "*xia hai*" (going to the sea), a term used to refer to changing once prestigious professions such as teachers to business men or business women, and "*te huo*" (very fire), referring to making big money. Greetings like "wishing you rich and wealth," "wishing your life filled with money" are common among people. While the government language defined the Chinese economic reform as "unique Chinese socialism," a popular ditty spread out by common people described the dilemma as "confusing socialism, bashful capitalism, and deep-rooted feudalism."

At any rate, the impact of language in reshaping and creating a new Chinese culture is obvious. A survey conducted by a Chinese social science committee

showed that since the economic reform, Chinese cultural values have changed in ten aspects: (1) the concept of becoming rich has been widely accepted, (2) people are more psychologically prepared for the market economy, (3) competition is much valued, (4) private enterprisers enjoy a good reputation, (5) about 80% of college graduates choose to do business or work in business-related companies, (6) many party officials and intellectuals want to have a second job, (7) the ideological crisis is replaced by a frantic pursuit of materialism, (8) people begin to recognize the significance of resources, (9) people desire for change and begin to rationalize the process of economic reform, and (10) psychological pressure and survival consciousness have increased (Press Freedom Guardian, 1992).

The drive for commercialization and desire for a better material life in China now resembles the time period of the industrial revolution in Europe and the gold rush period in the United States. However, the Chinese version of "gold rush" is disguised by the slogan, expressed in Deng Xiaoping's coinage "building socialism with Chinese characteristics." Ironically, while Deng appears to adhere to Mao's ideology politically, the slogan itself suggests and calls for change from Mao's era to Deng's era (Lu & Simons, 2006).

From Hierarchy to Equality in Family Relationship

The traditional value of hierarchical family relationship has undergone a significant change in contemporary China. Although the relationship between husband and wife, parents and children may not resemble that in American families, it has definitely shifted from hierarchy to equality.

Husband and Wife. Since Mao Zedong's statement that "Women can hold half of the sky," Chinese women's status has made a dramatic turn in its history. "Men and women are equal," "Women's emancipation," "Women can do whatever men can do" are slogans coined and propagandized by the government in an effort to do away with traditional values that were discriminating against women. As a result, the wife is no longer treated as the inferior; her place is no longer only in the kitchen; her role is no longer just bearing children. Husband and wife are equal in the family and at work. Over the years, a large number of "female machos" or "strong woman" has emerged. According to the report by Press Freedom Guardian (1994), one-third of the private enterprises in the nation are owned by women. In the family, husbands become(s) "under the control of the wife" as the husband has to give his income to the wife who is in charge of the family finance. In fact, as Chinese sportswomen are more successful than sportsmen in international competitions, the popular saying today is "*Yin* (female) is booming while *yang* (male) is declining."

The old notion that divorce is shameful and a married woman should remain as a widow after her husband dies is regarded as old-fashioned now. "Divorcing husband" is not uncommon and a woman does not have to "marry a roast, follow the roast, marry a dog, follow the dog." Women are encouraged to "respect yourself, be independent, and be strong." The wife is not "an inside person" anymore. Chinese women today "appear frequently in public, decked in their colorful best, with fancy coiffures and scented cosmetics" (Chu & Hsu, 1979, p. 263). Married women are participative in all kinds of social activities and represented in all walks of life. More importantly, most of them receive strong support from their "model husbands," a popular phrase that was unheard of in the traditional Chinese value system.

Parents and Children. Chu and Ju's (1993) study shows that the traditional filial obedience of children to parents has been challenged. About 42.3% of the informants in the study indicated that the traditional value of "filial piety" should be discarded. During Mao's era, the relationship between parents and children was marked by "class." As Chu and Ju (1993) vividly describe, "The son had to draw a clear 'revolutionary demarcation line' between him and his class-enemy father in order not to be 'ideologically poisoned' by the father's 'counter-revolutionary' ideas. In such a case, the value of 'benevolent father and filial son' had to be put aside" (p.226). In the post-Mao era, the value of "filial piety" is challenged by the increasing sense of individualism and independence of the Chinese young people. "Deciding my own marriage" has been a well accepted slogan by young people. Although parents still have their say in spouse selection and occupation decisions, their role is more like a consultant than commander. The current picture is that parents no longer dominate and control the lives of their children. Dong's study (2002) has shown that many Chinese parents have taken a democratic approach in parenting by encouraging their children to openly express themselves and participate in family decisions.

The government policy and slogan of "one couple, one child" has also affected the relationship between parents and child (Zhong, 2002). The only child in the family is called "little emperor." The value of the "filial piety" has made a dramatic semantic and functional shift as the result. In Chinese expression "*xiao zi*" (filial son), used to describe the obedience of the son to the father, is ironically used now to describe the obedience of the father to the son. "*Xiao*", an adjective originally means "filial piety" is now used as a verb in the shift. The doer of the filial son has become the recipient of obedience and service performed by the father. In general, the traditional value of hierarchy in age, sex, and generation is being gradually melted away (Lull & Sun, 1988). The

value of equality has, to a large degree, replaced the value of hierarchy in family relationships.

From Kinship to "*Guanxi*"

The traditional system of kinship is still evident in Chinese culture. The terms used to describe the kinship relations are still applicable. However, while kinship is used to describe genetic or family connection, the notion of "*guan*xi" has been created to describe and reveal social connection and social relationship. In the kinship system, people call each other by their position roles in the family, and the purpose of addressing each other properly is to maintain hierarchy and harmony within the family. With the one child policy in China, such kinship system is being threatened. Some of the specific addresses for family members may cease to exist, such as "*jiujui*" (uncles from mother's side of the family) and "*gugu*" (aunts from father's side of the family) for the next generation.

"*Guanxi*," on the other hand, indicates the social network one is involved in or relationship with one another. In Mao's era, for example, people's relationship is "comrade *guanxi*" indicating a revolutionary bond between the two persons or belonging to the same economic class. When one is accused of being a traitor or counterrevolutionary, one immediately loses one's "comrade *guanxi*," and renders an "enemy *guanxi*." The economic reform has washed away "*guanxi*" related to revolutionary attachment and has been replaced with "money *guanxi*" with one another. The word *tongzhi* (comrade) has changed its meaning from revolutionary alliance to gay relationships.

While kinship indicates the hierarchical system of a network, "*guanxi*" implies a horizontal nature of a network in a relationship. "*Guanxi*," defined by Chang and Holt (1991) "implies a special connection between people, a connection which brings along with interactants' special rights and obligations" (p. 256). "*Guanxi*" is also "an informal, unofficial relationship utilized to get things done, from simple tasks to major life choices" (Gold, 1985, p. 661). Thus, "*guanxi*" is more important than kinship because it has an instrumental value and a utilitarian function. "*Guanxi*", unlike kinship, is not pre-existent. One has to "*gao guanxi*," (make *guanxi*), "*la guanxi*," (pull *guanxi*), and "*zhao guanxi*" (search for *guanx*i). A "*guanxi*" can be a former classmate, a former college, a relative, a friend's friend, a person from the same hometown. Once one "establishes a *guanxi*" one should be able to "manipulate *guanx*i" to one's own advantage. Because "*guanx*i" is so significant for one's success and it is permeated in every aspect of life, it is considered a field of inquiry called "the study of *guanxi*." A person good at "*guanxi*" is considered a competent communicator, a value orientation that differs but may be derived from the notion of kinship (Chen, 2001).

Conclusion and Implications

In this paper, we discussed the role of language in reflecting, communicating, and creating culture. We substantiated our claim that language change reflects and promotes cultural change by a comparative examination of language and value orientations in the traditional Chinese culture and contemporary Chinese culture. We focused our analysis in the areas of value orientation and social relationships with others. Our selected examples of language change and their impact on culture change illustrated the dynamic relationship and interplay of language and culture. Our mode of inquiry has broadened the current approaches to intercultural and international communication studies. Three implications can be generated from this study.

First, our analysis has shown that language, the lexical area in particular, is the bridge and mirror for people to learn or understand cultural value orientations. While the sound and structure of language is relatively stable, the vocabulary of language is ever changing which reflects cultural dynamics and diversified cultural experiences. By collecting, examining, and analyzing vocabulary changes in a language, our knowledge of a culture will be increased and kept up-to-date. Intercultural communication scholars should be alert to the ever changing vocabulary in a target culture. Just as a thermometer is used to tell the temperature of the weather, knowledge on the use of vocabulary can help reveal the cultural state, change, and vitality.

Second, our analysis has reinforced the shared notion that culture changes. The current labeling of cultures by their orientation types such as high-context and low-context cultures, and individual and collectivistic cultures are helpful in understanding communication and culture (Chung & Chen, 2007; Hall, 1977; Hofstede, 1980; Triandis, 1972), but these labels also tend to lead to the impression that culture is static and stable (Chen, 2009; Lu, 1998). Culture changes along with its value orientations and the change in language can be correlated to internal and external factors as well as linguistic variations. Exploring these factors in facilitating culture and language change enhances a more in-depth understanding of a culture and treats culture as a dynamic and dialectical process.

Finally, understanding a culture from the linguistic perspective can help to establish shared meanings and to minimize intercultural communication misunderstandings. Although shared meanings are not necessarily based on linguistic competence of the other culture, the knowledge of a foreign language is helpful. Symbolic meanings can also be established by an inquiry of a culture through selected linguistic features. The interplay between language and culture creates infinite discursive possibilities that will enrich human experience and expand our vision of the universe. As China is still undergoing changes in all aspects of life,

language and culture change are inevitable and will continue to be a fascinating area of study.

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