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A Re-examination

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Abstract

This research re-examines the claim "Chinese is a sexist language" by presenting

objectively the linguistic images of Chinese men and women through a re-analysis of

four Chinese language features, including characters, words, idioms and proverbs. In

the re-analysis, the linguistic images of men are often more superior to women and

carry positive connotation. According to the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis, the three

concepts, language, thought and culture, intertwine with one another (Holmes, 2008).

Due to their less positive linguistic images, Chinese women are discriminated socially

and culturally as well. When one sex is discriminated linguistically, the language is

sexist. However, this research does not solely validate the claim by relying on its re-

analysis of the linguistic images of men and women. It also tries to provide a more

convincing validation of the claim through using two definitional approaches, which

are the consequentialist approach and the propositional approach. By combining the

two approaches, a modified definition of a sexist language is developed, which is 'an

"X" such as a language is sexist if and only if it, either expressed or unexpressed,

intends to cause the oppression of women''. This definition sets up more concrete

criteria for validating the claim and provides the same result as in the re-analysis that

"Chinese is a sexist language".

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"Chinese is a Sexist Language": A Re-examination

1. Introduction

The writing system of the Chinese language evolved from pictograms, which graphically represents reality. Essence of these graphical representations was extracted according to social needs throughout the Chinese history, forming a particular way of thinking in Chinese people. This Chinese way of thinking contributed to the development of the Chinese culture and was passed down from generations to generations. Ever since the establishment of the Zhou Dynasty, power and resources were distributed in terms of gender (Li, 2006). This distribution method means that gender becomes a significant part in the society. As one sex is born to have more power and resources than the other sex, it means that one sex is more privileged than the other. This social imbalance indicates sexism, which means one sex is discriminated. When it invades language, the language is deemed sexist (Spender, 1980). Under this historical background, previous researches investigating the relationship between the Chinese language and gender examined examples like the characters '奴' (slaves) and '嫁' (marry); words such as '貞女' (women with chastity) and '德男' (men with good morals); idioms such as '女中豪傑' (heroines) and '血性男兒' (passionate men); and proverbs such as '女大十八變' (18-year-old women change) and '男子漢頭上三把火' (three fires hover above men's heads). By

comparing the quantity of or connotation behind the linguistic items, they made the claim that "Chinese is a sexist language".

Since most previous researches selected sexist examples from Chinese characters, words, idioms or proverbs for discussion, their researches did not provide a comprehensive analysis on various language features and often skewed to studies on language about women (Shi & Zhang, 2006). Also, past researches based their conclusions to a large extent on their own analysis. They seldom referred to various theoretical approaches or explained in detail the relationship between language, thought and culture. Hence, there is a need for a re-examination of the claim by re-analyzing the Chinese language in a more comprehensive and in-depth way as well as a more convincing validation of the claim theoretically. Based on this need, the following paragraph provides a preliminary look at the contents and organization of this research.

Following this introduction, Section 2 is a literature review. After explaining the relationship between language, thought and culture, it reviews three types of literature; the first is the consequentialist approach and the propositional approach; the second is the issue of sexist language; and the third is studies on Chinese as a sexist language. This section ends by identifying the gaps in existing literature and discusses the significance of this research. Section 3 states the aims of this research and raises two

research questions about the linguistic images of Chinese men and women and whether the claim "Chinese is a sexist language" made by previous researches is valid. To answer the two questions, this section introduces the research methods used, data sources and methods of data selection. Section 4 is a re-analysis of the four language features mentioned above and provides answers for the research questions. Section 5 highlights the implications of this research and Section 6 concludes the findings of this research.

2. Literature Review

2.1 On the Relationship between Language, Thought and Culture

Before re-examining the claim "Chinese is a sexist language", we shall first explain what a language is. A language can be interpreted in terms of a linguistic sign system, which forms a semiotic triangle (Saeed, 1997). A word has meaning when it triggers a linkage between a 'form' and a 'referent' such as an idea or an object. Take the word 'pig' as an example; its 'form' is how it is written or pronounced and the real world object 'pig' is the 'referent'. 'Pig' only makes sense when both the speaker and the hearer can link it 'form' to its 'referent'. If both parties fail to link the two, it can either be said that they do not share a common linguistic sign system or the linguistic sign system simply fails to work because no meaning is derived (Saeed, 1997). It is, therefore, not the linguistic form that matters, but the semantic trigger or

linkage that matters. From this perspective, language is a shared linguistic sign system

that triggers the same semantic linkages in a group of people. In Graddol & Swann

(1989), they denote language as 'the vehicle of our internal thoughts and desires' (p.

4). Its function is 'a public resource that services a speech community and provides

for the communication between individuals needed for social maintenance' (p. 5). The

function of language as a public resource means a group of people shares the same

semantic associations in mind. These associations, when being sustained within a

community and became a habitual way of thinking, form a culture. In short, language

triggers and sustains culture. Members speaking the same language are thus bound by

the same culture.

According to Kramsch (1998), the term 'culture' is defined as 'membership in a

discourse community that shares a common social space and history, and common

imaginings' (p. 10). Also, 'its members may retain, wherever they are, a common

system of standards for perceiving, believing, evaluating, and acting' (p. 10). These

statements pinpoint the sense of belonging within members of a culture, not in terms

of their geographical locations, ethnicity or nationality. Kramsch (1998) also denotes

that 'the culture of everyday practices draws on the culture of shared history and

traditions' (p. 7). The cultural sharing is actually the semantic associations

accumulated and performed overtime by a group of people. When these semantic

associations reveal themselves linguistically, they become the language of this group of people. In short, culture affects the development of language. Therefore, the relationship between language and culture is a bi-directional influence.

Speaking of culture, the function of culture not only binds people of the same group together, but also exerts power and control over its members (Kramsch, 1998). Take the Chinese character '女' (woman) as an example; it is an image of a woman bowing slightly down, which is a gesture of lower social status (He, 2000). In fact, it is a typical case of 'cultural stereotypes', which 'are frozen signs that affect both those who use them and those whom they serve to characterize' (Kramsch, 1998, p. 22). Cultural stereotypes predict the speech and behaviors of a culture's members. Hence, language serves more than just a tool for communication or cultural preservation, but a tool for distinguishing the social status between members of a society. Since members of a culture make and interpret a linguistic sign with an aim to 'influencing people, acting upon them or even only to make sense of the world around them' (Kramsch, 1998, p. 21), any members who do not obey the shared values are easily marginalized. Therefore, learning a language also means knowing the way to secure power and status in a culture.

Although the above seems to suggest that language and culture links directly with each other, the concept of 'thought' actually serves as a medium between them.

We shall first investigate the relationship between language and thought through the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis. According to Holmes (2008), the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis has two versions: linguistic determinism and linguistic relativity. 'Linguistic determinism (strong version) means people from different cultures think differently because of the differences in their languages. Linguistic relativity (weak version) means language influences perceptions, thoughts, and behaviors' (p. 336). The strong version is considered to be too extreme, thus the weak version becomes popular among scholars. This research shall also follow suit and refer to linguistic relativity whenever the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis is mentioned. In general, the Hypothesis pinpoints that 'language sets the limits of thought and constructs a speaker's perception of both physical and social reality' (Graddol & Swann, 1989, p. 147). Under this interpretation, our thoughts are shaped by the language we speak. In Whorf's classic example, he notices that people throw cigarettes into a container of gasoline vapor when the label 'empty' is written on it, ignoring the danger of flammable gas. He believes that the semantic meaning of the word 'empty' is the main reason for people to feel safe for their action (Graddol & Swann, 1989). It is, however, vital to bear in mind that the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis does not imply solely a uni-direction of language affecting thought. Thought affects language as well. In Holmes (2008), she includes an example of the Dyirbal language, which classifies

nouns into four gender categories. If we interpret this by the uni-directional

relationship, it means that there are four sexes in Dyirbal people's minds due to their

language specification, which is obviously unreasonable. In explaining such cases,

Holmes (2008) concludes that 'it is the physical and socio-cultural environment that

influences language development. In turn, language influences people's perceptions

of reality' (p. 341). The explanation means that the society and culture of Dyirbal

people influence their language, which in turn affects their thoughts about the world.

After investigating the relationship between language and thought, we shall

move on to explore the relationship between thought and culture. With reference to

Baldwin, Longhurst, McCracken, Ogborn and Smith (1999), one of Whorf's

researches is conducted on the concept of time in the minds of Hopi people. Whereas

Americans express their concept of time in language spatially such as 'it is a *long*

time' and include past, present and future tenses, the Hopi always express their time

concept as 'a state of being' and have no tenses. According to Whorf, this contrast in

the concept of time, which is a way of thinking, is caused by the difference in culture

between the Americans and the Hopi. Whorf puts forward 'the proposition that the

world is filtered through the conceptual grids produced by language and the routine

and regular use of particular languages produces habitual thought patterns which are

culturally specific' (Baldwin et al., 1999, p. 48). From this statement, language filters

people's concepts of reality. When these concepts are constantly mentioned in language, habitual thoughts are formed. These thoughts then add together to form a culture. Overtime, culture fossilizes different thoughts and shapes the mindsets of people speaking the same language. To put simply, while thought contributes to the formation of culture and becomes part of it, culture shapes thought as well.

As a concluding remark, the relationship between the three concepts, which are language, thought and culture, intertwines with one another. In the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis, as language affects thought and thought contributes to the formation of culture, thought serves as the medium between the two concepts. In the long run, culture fossilizes people's habitual thoughts, which then affects the development of their language. Therefore, the relationship between language, thought and culture is both intertwining and bi-directional.

From the above, as language, thought and culture are closely related, the claim "Chinese is a sexist language" actually involves more than just linguistic investigation, but also cultural investigation. The relationship between the three concepts provides a foundation for later re-analysis on the link between linguistic images and cultural stereotypes.

2.2 On the Consequentialist Approach and the Propositional Approach

Apart from presenting the linguistic images of men and women, this research also validates the claim by adopting two definitional approaches discussed in Grim (as cited in Braggin, 1981), which are the consequentialist approach and the propositional approach.

Grim (as cited in Braggin, 1981) pinpoints that it is difficult to define 'sexist'. He comments on Robin Lakoff's definition of a sexist language as problematic. As Lakoff's definition 'treats linguistic sexism as a matter of what is insulting to women' (p. 35) and sexist speech 'is apparently assumed to be utterances easily re-produced on paper' (p. 35), he thinks that the adjective 'insulting' lacks scientific measurement and sexist speech may not be written on paper. He believes that a more concrete and objective definition of 'sexist' needs to be developed by combining the use of the two definitional approaches.

By adopting the consequentialist approach, Grim (as cited in Braggin, 1981), based on the popular assumption that women are the oppressed group, defines an 'X', which can be anything, is 'sexist if and only if it contributes to, encourages, causes or results in the oppression of women' (p. 36). He adds that the 'X' must be an expressed and actual doing such as a speech or action. By doing this 'X', it causes an actual effect or consequence, which is 'the oppression of women'. Hence, the

consequentialist approach is never ambiguous about 'what' is sexist because the 'what'

is the basic requirement for establishing a definition.

However, Grim (as cited in Braggin, 1981) raises a question about the treatment

of unexpressed doings such as thoughts or beliefs. Although unexpressed doings may

not cause an actual consequence, it is reality that even implied doings can possibly

embody 'sexist' effect or consequence. To lessen the effect of such shortcoming in the

consequentialist approach, a complementary use of the propositional approach is

suggested, which defines unexpressed doings like 'attitudes, beliefs, and things

sayable or said' 'as sexist purely in terms of their content' (p. 38). The interpretation

of this statement would be that an 'X' is sexist if it, which may be unexpressed,

discriminates one sex purely because of his biological characteristics. Grim (as cited

in Braggin, 1981) also denotes that this approach has the implication that if the

unexpressed doing becomes expressed, it will definitely cause an actual sexist

consequence.

From the above, the propositional approach looks at the motivation or attitude

behind an action, instead of accusing anything as sexist as long as it causes a sexist

consequence. However, as unexpressed doings are difficult to detect or even require

'some imagined inferiority of women' (Grim, as cited in Braggin, 1981, p. 38), it has

a problem of ambiguity over 'what' is sexist, which is a shortcoming that can actually

be set off by the consequentialist approach. Therefore, Grim (as cited in Braggin, 1981) suggests the two approaches be complementarily used when setting up the criteria for defining a sexist language.

All in all, as the consequentialist approach and the propositional approach are useful in defining what a sexist language is, this research shall combine the two to form a modified definition for a sexist language in order to validate the claim "Chinese is a sexist language".

2.3 On the Sociolinguistic Meaning of a Sexist Language

The above literature review on both consequentialist and propositional approaches mainly focuses on the theoretical definition of a sexist language. We shall now move on to the sociolinguistic meaning of a sexist language, which relates to the social problem of sexism and its invasion into language.

To start with, Frye (as cited in Braggin, 1981) defines sexism as anything that 'creates, constitutes, promotes or exploits' one sex (p. 8). It can present itself socially, economically and many other ways. When it presents itself linguistically, it becomes a sexist language. Hence, a sexist language is 'only part of sexism in any society' (Shute, as cited in Braggin, 1981, p. 31). As language affects what we think, the collective use of a sexist language affects our culture, where sexism is reinforced and sustained. Sexism, in this sense, becomes part of culture. Most importantly, language

itself is not sexist. It is merely reflecting sexism in the society, not the culprit of sexism. Sexism actually feeds on people's attitudes and values towards different sexes and uses language as a tool for its manifestation.

Holmes (2008) states that a language is sexist when it 'discriminates against either men or women' and that 'the study of sexist language is to study the way language expresses both positive and negative stereotypes of men and women' (p. 317). In Braggin (1981), Graddol & Swann (1989), Holmes (2008), Spender (1980) and Wardhaugh (2010), they all believe that a sexist language often convey discrimination against women. In view of this, Robin Lakoff, a renowned feminist, believes that the discrimination against women ought to be changed because it is unfair to women and poses an ethical problem (Graddol & Swann, 1989). However, the road to eliminating or at least diminishing the use of a sexist language is still long, as stated in Holmes (2008) that 'even legislation requiring people to use non-sexist language certainly help, but most changes take a considerable time to become established as the new norm' (p. 322). This means a sexist language lies not only on linguistic changes, but also changes in the society and people's attitudes.

2.4 On Studies on Chinese as a Sexist Language

The previous part on the sociolinguistic meaning of a sexist language is a preliminary investigation into the relationship between sexism in the society and

language. We shall now review in detail literature on the claim "Chinese is a sexist language".

According to Huang (2011), studies on Chinese as a sexist language began in the 1980s and the issue revolved around three areas. The first area focused on phonology and women's speech; The second topic focused on language about women, especially on the formation of Chinese characters; and the third area focused on the investigation on sex attitudes reflected in either the first dictionary of China, 'Shouwenjiezi' (說文解字), or dying languages in rural areas like the 'Women's Script' (女書).

As a matter of fact, other scholars (Huang, 2011; Li, 2012; Shi & Zhang, 2006; Sun, 1997; Wang & Wang, 2013; Zhang & Liang, 2014; Zhao, 2008; Zheng, 2006; Zhou & Zhao, 2009; Zu, Zhu & Liu, 2012) pointed out the relationship between the Chinese language and sexism was relatively new among all sociolinguistic issues. They believed that past researches mainly focused on explaining sexist language in relation to western theories, discussing sexist examples from the English language, comparing men and women's speeches, and translations of western studies on sexist language into Chinese. Therefore, they expressed their hopes to see more in-depth studies on Chinese as a sexist language and ideas elaborated with Chinese theories or cultural beliefs.

Given the above historical background, this research investigates language about both men and women. As this research re-examines the claim "Chinese is a sexist language" by re-analyzing four language features, including characters, words, idioms and proverbs, the paragraphs below concisely review debates on the sexist reflection in each language feature.

For character formation, it is found that researches on examining the meanings expressed by the radical '女' (woman) are comparatively easier to find than researches done on other radicals. A handful of studies on the feminine radicals were conducted by researchers like Chen (2002), Gao (2007), Gou (2003), Li (2012), Li (2015), Lu (2007), Wang (2004) and Zhang (2013). These researchers hoped to see more in-depth studies on gender differences presented in characters formed by other radicals. As most studies on the claim "Chinese is a sexist language" skewed to the analysis of women's speech or language about women, they also hoped to see more studies conducted on men's speech or language about men.

In their studies, the graphical representation of the radical '女' (woman) was a woman slightly bowing down, which implied their inferior social status. In addition to this graphical meaning, there were five other meanings found. The first meaning was Chinese surnames, which were traces of a matriarchic China. The second meaning was marriage, which showed the looting tradition of men abducting women as wives

after wars in ancient China. An example was the character '娶' (marry), which was formed by the radical '女' (woman) and the component '取' (take). The third meaning was different titles created from women's perspective due to the fact they were more status-conscious. Examples of titles showing family relationships were '姪' (nephew/niece) and '嫂' (sister-in-law). The fourth meaning was women's appearance. Many characters depicting the beauty of women were created by the radical '女' (woman) such as '婷' (beautiful and slim) and '娟' (good-looking). The fifth meaning was bad morals. Examples of characters formed by the radical '女' (woman) were '嬾' (lazy) and '奸' (cunning).

For word formation, Chen (2008) pointed out that the unmarked gender of noun words was usually male. Occupations such as doctors (醫生) and the police (警察), if unmarked, often carried a masculine meaning. It was a usual practice for people to depict women as doctors or the police by fronting the noun phrases with a gender indicator, which was the character '女' (woman). As a result, the nouns became marked as female doctors (女醫生) and policewomen (女警察). Chen (2008) indicated that this markedness found mostly in words about women actually meant that women were not the social norm.

For idioms and proverbs, researchers like Ding (2001), Jiang (2007), Li (2006), Li & Yang (2004) and Wang (2006) believed that they were products of a society's

culture, thus were precise in reflecting people's viewpoints towards the genders. They provided four reasons why women became the inferior social group. The first reason was the division of labor between men and women in ancient agricultural China. As men were stronger and could help more on farms, they became the superior gender economically. In contrast, as women were better at housework and raising children, they normally stayed at home. Therefore, women's social image was weak and less important than men. The second reason was the cultural values laid down by Confucius. As Confucius taught men and women to obey social and family orders strictly, he set the models for 'right' behaviors of men and women through his sayings, where men were supposed to fight for their careers and women should do their best at home. The third and fourth reasons were related to the physiological and psychological differences between men and women. As men were physically stronger and mentally more aggressive than women, it was easier for them to take the lead in both family and society.

As a concluding note, studies on the claim "Chinese is a sexist language" had a late development as compared to other sociolinguistic issues. More researches ought to be done on the relationship between the Chinese language and sexism. Even though scholars believed that the Chinese language was sexist towards women, most of them

based this conclusion on studies which skewed to sexist examples found in language about women only.

2.5 On the Significance of this Research

As shown in the literature review, the relationship between language, thought and culture sets the foundation for linking linguistic images to cultural stereotypes. As a sexist language involves not only linguistic investigation, but also cultural investigation, the relationship between the three concepts is vital. As most studies on Chinese as a sexist language focused on analysis of different language features, they lacked enough theoretical elaboration on the background of the linguistic images presented in their research.

On top of the theoretical insufficiency, the concept of 'sexist' and the criteria for being a sexist language were not defined properly before concluding that the Chinese language discriminated against women. As most researches already had the prejudice of women being the oppressed group, it caused a skew to studies on language about women or women's speech. This indicated less objective and convincing results from past researches.

In view of the above two gaps found in studies on Chinese as a sexist language, this research shall contribute to a more in-depth elaboration on the theoretical background behind the claim by referring to theories such as the semiotic triangle and

the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis. Also, a more concrete definition of the concept of 'sexist' is developed and discussed in this research by combining the consequentialist approach and the propositional approach. Moreover, results of the re-analysis on the four language features, including characters, words, idioms and proverbs, would be more comprehensive as language about both men and women are examined. This research would not skew to study on any sex and shall present the linguistic images of men and women more objectively. The consistent linguistic images expressed in all the four language features indicate the findings of this research as more reliable and convincing.

This research targets at people who would like to strike a social balance between the two sexes and fight against the negative impacts brought by the cultural stereotypes linguistically. It would also be enlightening for the general public who might find surprising about their sexist language use and who wants to know more about the interaction between language and culture.

3. The Present Study

3.1 Aims

Based on the gaps identified above, this research aims to raise the awareness and even sensitivity of Chinese people in detecting the sexist use of the Chinese language. Given a long history of feudal system in China, sexism has affected the

lives of both men and women. No matter which sex is being discriminated, the fact

that sexism deprives of the freedom and confines the social activities of one sex is

ethically problematic.

Furthermore, this research aims to construct a fuller picture of the sociolinguistic

side of the Chinese language and contribute to the body of knowledge under the claim

"Chinese is a sexist language" with a more objective, comprehensive and convincing

re-examination.

3.2 Research Questions

With the above two aims in mind, this research will answer the following two

research questions.

1) How are men and women presented in the Chinese language with respect to

   Chinese character formation, word formation, idioms, and proverbs?

2) Is the claim "Chinese is a sexist language" made by previous researches valid?

3.3 Research Methods

To answer the above two questions, this research adopts both quantitative and

qualitative research methods. As discussed in Wisker (2008), while the numbers or

figures derived from data collected in quantitative researches seem more reliable,

qualitative researches such as interviews or case studies often provide more in-depth

explanation and rationale behind the results. Hence, these two research methods are

often combined in use by many researchers (Wisker, 2008). As this research strives to

present more objective linguistic images of men and women, data collected are first

selected and categorized in terms of their semantic meanings.

Here, the meanings require interpretations and even historical information

from books, journal articles and dictionaries, which indicates the use of qualitative

research method. After categorization, the importance or relevance of various

semantic meanings is expressed in percentages. The higher the percentage, the more

important a particular meaning is to a gender. The use of percentages when analyzing

data indicates the use of quantitative research method. Apart from presenting the

linguistic images, this research would re-examine if the claim "Chinese is a sexist

language" is valid by using the consequentialist and propositional approaches as

specified in Grim (as cited in Braggin, 1981), which are two qualitative approaches.

3.3.1 Sources of data. In this research, four language features, including

characters, words, idioms and proverbs, are analyzed based on data collected from

online and print dictionaries. As one of the aims of this research is to raise today's

Chinese people's awareness of sexist language use, online dictionaries are useful in

reflecting the most updated versions of modern Chinese language. Some of the data

entries of words such as '快男' (a contestant of a popular Chinese talent show) found

in online dictionaries could not be found in any print dictionaries. As most of the

entries in the online dictionaries involve interpretations from different sources such as

'Kangxi Dictionary' (康熙字典) or 'Shouwenjiezi' (說文解字), online dictionaries

has a more comprehensive database. In this research, the following dictionaries are

used.

For analysis on Chinese character formation, the online dictionary from the

Chinesepedia Online is used, which supports the search function either by radicals or

the Chinese Pinying system.

For analysis on word formation and idioms, the Online Chinese Dictionary and

the Online Idioms Dictionary are used respectively. Whereas the former supports the

search function either by radicals or the Chinese Pinying system, the later supports the

search function of idioms beginning or ending with any Chinese characters.

However, as the print dictionary, Chinese Proverbs Dictionary, contains a more

comprehensive database of proverbs consisting of either the character '男' (man) or

the character '女' (woman) than any online dictionaries, analysis on proverb

formation collects data from this print dictionary.

   3.3.2 Methods of selection of data. To avoid analyzing the same data twice and

to explain how data are categorized, the selection method is divided into two parts:

deletion rules and categorization rules. These rules are specified as given in Appendix

1.

4. Data Analysis and Discussion

4.1 Linguistic Images of Men and Women Presented in the Chinese Language

1) Men are responsible for family's prosperity. It is found that the lexical meaning of 'family' takes up 30% in characters formed by masculine radicals and is more than a double of that by feminine radicals. Also, another lexical meaning of 'offspring' takes up 35% in characters formed by masculine radicals and surpasses that by feminine radicals significantly by 30.9% (see Table 2 and 5 in Appendix 2). For words formed by the masculine character, the phrasal meaning of 'family' occurs more frequently and is 13.06% more than that by the feminine character (see Table 19 in Appendix 2). Similar results are also found in idiom and proverb analysis. While 'family' occupies the highest percentage of 4.35% concerning idioms about men and the second highest percentage of 5.88% concerning proverbs about men, no such meaning can be found for the feminine side (see Table 13 and 16 in Appendix 2). The data above indicates that 'family' and 'offspring' are two major concepts for men, not for women.

If the sub-categories under 'family' are examined, the sub-category 'mother/daughter' (e.g. '娘' (mother) and '嫒' (daughter)) is 7.69% less than 'other relationships' (e.g. '姊' (sister) and '姨' (aunt)) (see Table 1 and 2 in Appendix 2), but the sub-category 'father/son' (e.g. '爹' (father) and '爺' (grandfather)) is 15%

more than 'other relationships' (e.g. '孫' (grandchild) and '孥' (wife and child)) (see

Table 4 and 5 in Appendix 2). As 'mother/daughter' and 'father/son' are equivalent

semantic terms, they should outweigh 'other relationships' by similar percentages.

This contrast thus indicates that 'father/son' is more important than 'mother/daughter'

in the family. According to He (2000), the reason for this is that the Chinese culture

puts more emphasis on patriarchic relationships than matriarchic relationships.

For the sub-categories under 'offspring' in character analysis, while characters

formed by masculine radicals and by feminine radicals share the same sub-categories

– 'pregnancy' (e.g. '姙' (pregnant) and '孕' (pregnant)) and 'child' (e.g. '娃' (child)

and '孩' (child)), two other sub-categories – 'prosperity' (e.g. '孮' (many offspring)

and '㝛' (many offspring)) and 'twins' (e.g. '孖' (twins) and '孿' (twins)) – appear

only in characters formed by masculine radicals (see Table 1 and 4 in Appendix 2).

According to Zhou (2000), women were perceived as tools for men's reproduction

ever since the establishment of patriarchy in ancient China, which emphasized male

supremacy. The extra two sub-categories actually prove this statement by showing

that men have a major role in contributing to the prosperity of their family and even

the preferred gender for twins is male. On the contrary, women are not expected to

carry this responsibility and only help in birth giving and child rearing. Similar results

are also found under idiom and proverb analysis; examples are preference of male

offspring (e.g. '一索得男' (giving birth to sons)), prosperity of male family members

(e.g. '弟男子侄' (male family members)) (see Table 13 in Appendix 2) and

responsibility of male family members (e.g. '女婿有半子之勞' (sons-in-law shoulder

half of the responsibility of sons)) (see Table 16 in Appendix 2).

2) Women are subordinate to their husbands. While men shoulder the

responsibility of raising their family, women shoulder the responsibility of taking care

of their family. In character analysis, the lexical meaning of 'marriage' is found in

characters formed by feminine radicals, but no such meaning is found in characters

formed by masculine radicals (see Table 1 and 4 in Appendix 2). Though with a slight

difference, the phrasal meaning of 'marriage' found related to women takes up 0.92%

more than that related to men (see Table 8 and 11 in Appendix 2). For idioms, the

percentage of 'marriage' about women surpasses that about men by 1.43% (see Table

13 in Appendix 2). While 'marriage' can be found in proverbs about women, it does

not appear in proverbs about men (see Table 16 in Appendix 2). These data mean that

'marriage' is more important to women than men.

Furthermore, in character and word analysis, two sub-categories are found –

'women in love and marriage' (e.g. '姻' (marriage), '娶' (marry), '春女' (woman in

love) and '女妾' (concubine)) and 'women of Emperor' (e.g. '妤', '婕', '女嬖' and

'采女' (the four characters and words were different names in the ranking system for

women of the Emperor)) (see Table 1 and 7 in Appendix 2). In fact, the above two categories show clearly that women are subordinate to men. Take the character '娶' (marry) and the word '女妾' (concubine) as examples; '娶' (marry) is related to the tradition of men's looting women as wives in ancient China (Yin, 1993; Zhai, 2004) and '女妾' (concubine) is a lower rank than '妻' (wife) between women sharing the same husband. Since no equivalent characters or words depicting similar looting traditions or ranking for men are found (see Table 4 and 10 in Appendix 2), it is evident that women are subordinate to men in marriage.

Actually, women's subordinate role in marriage is vividly described in idioms and proverbs. For idioms about both genders (see Table 13 in Appendix 2), '男唱女隨' (when men sing, women follow) mean that women follow whatever their husbands do and the verb '配' (match) in '相女配夫' (match a woman to a man) means that women are selected by men, not the other way round. The idiom '鄰女詈人' found under the sub-category 'speech' means people serve their own masters. As the original story of this idiom is that women help their husbands to scold others, this suggests that women actually serve their husbands. For proverbs about women and both genders (see Table 16 in Appendix 2), the proverb '女人嫁漢，穿衣吃飯' (when women are married, they have clothes and food) means women rely solely on their husbands financially. Another proverb '男當家，女插花' (while men take up

the whole family, women decorate their houses with flowers) means that it is men who make family decisions and women are just like decorations. Also, the proverb '女大兩，黃金長; 女大三，黃金見' (gold grows when women are two years older than their husbands; gold can be seen when women are three years older than their husbands) is viewed from men's perspective and values women by their fortunes bring to a family. Some proverbs even carry derogative meanings about women such as '女人是枕頭邊的風' (women are winds besides pillows), which conveys a sense of instigation on women's opinions. All of the above idioms and proverbs show women's subordinate role in marriage.

On top of the above, when words under the sub-category 'jobs about housework' are examined, women take up housework such as weaving (e.g. '機女' (women who weave)), washing clothes (e.g. '漂女' (women who do the laundry)) and knitting (e.g. '紅女' (women who knit))) (see Table 7 in Appendix 2). The idiom '男耕女織' (men farm and women weave) and the proverb '男務耕，女務織' (men farm and women weave) (see Table 13 and 16 in Appendix 2) both indicate that men should work outside and women should stay at home. According to He (2000) and Chu (2011), they point out the cultural belief that as the harmony of a traditional Chinese family depends on women's obedience, it is the cause for their subordinate role in marriage. In the researches done by Su (1999), Tian (2006) and Zhai (2004), they discussed

Chinese characters like '如' (obedience), '安' (stability), '嫁' (marry) and '婦' (woman), which all reflected the cultural belief that women should stay at home and be housewives. The role of women being housewives means that they have to rely financially on their husbands, which inevitably result in their subordinate role.

  3) Women have a low social status. In fact, women are not only subordinate to their husbands, but also do they have a low social status as suggested by the nature of their jobs. In characters formed by feminine radicals, it is found that the lexical meaning of 'job', though having the least occurrence, takes up 4.1% (see Table 19 in Appendix 2). In contrast, in words formed by the feminine character, the phrasal meaning of 'job' occurs the most frequently and takes up 18.31% (see Table 19 in Appendix 2). When compared to the feminine side, neither is the lexical meaning of 'job' found in characters formed by masculine radicals nor does this meaning occur frequently in words formed by the masculine character (see Table 19 in Appendix 2). These may seem that 'job' is more important to women than men, but a closer look at its sub-categories shows that the nature of women's jobs usually has a low social status.

  Under character analysis, women's jobs are prostitutes (e.g. '妓' (prostitutes) and '娼' (prostitutes)), slaves (e.g. '婢' (maids) and '奴' (slaves)). The teaching job '娙' (female teachers) is the only one that has a higher social status (see Table 1 in

Appendix 2). Under word analysis, women are entertainers (e.g. '女伎' (actresses) and '女猱' (actresses)), prostitutes (e.g. '娼女' (prostitutes) and '豔女' (strippers)), slaves (e.g. '女奚' (female slaves) and '女使' (female slaves)), clergy (e.g. '覡女' (witches) and '女冠' (nuns)), housewives (e.g. '機女' (women who weave) and '漂女' (women who do the laundry)), boatmen (e.g. '枻女' (women who sail) and '棹女' (women who sail)), and also other jobs minor in significance (e.g. '女酒' (women who help the royal family to brew wines) and '女工' (female workers)). 'Leader' (e.g. '女戶' (female family hosts) and '女將' (female generals)) is the only sub-category that has a higher social status, but it takes up only 1.16% (see Table 7 and 8 in Appendix 2).

On the contrary, men's jobs are usually higher in social status. Men can hold various feudal titles such as '男爵' (male dukes), '縣男' (dukes of a county), '鄉男' (dukes of a village), and even '散男' (dukes with no actual power). Men are also awarded with feudal lands such as '男服' and '男邦' (both are names for different types of feudal lands) found under the sub-categories of 'others'. Although men may be slaves (e.g. '男工' (male workers) and '男僕' (male maids)), clergy (i.e. '男覡' (wizards)) and farmers (i.e. '耕男' (male farmers)), these jobs are relatively less insignificant to men because they only compose a tiny percentage (see Table 10 and 11 in Appendix 2).

Besides character and word analysis, idioms and proverbs about both genders also suggest similar results. Idioms about moral values such as '男尊女卑' (males are superior than females) and '重男輕女' (males are more important than women) explicitly point out the absolute dominance of men over women in the Chinese culture (see Table 13 in Appendix 2). The proverb '男不與女鬥' (men do not argue or fight with women) has the surface meaning of men not fighting or arguing with women, but the implied meaning conveys men's sense of disdain over disputes with women (see Table 16 in Appendix 2). All these data highlight the fact that women have a much lower social status than men.

4) Women are sex objects for men. Given the fact that women have a much lower family and social status than men, they easily fall as sex objects for men. As discussed above, there is a sub-category of 'woman of Emperor' under 'marriage' in both character and word analysis; examples of characters under this category are '妃' and '嬪' and words are '秀女' and '女嬙' (the above two characters and two words are names under the ranking system for women belonging to the Emperor). The quantifier '眾' in the word '眾女' (many/all women of the Emperor) suggests the huge number of women belonging to the Emperor (see Table 1 and 7 in Appendix 2). In this sense, women are treated as trophies for men with great powers and high social status. On the contrary, the sub-category 'male concubine' under 'marriage' scarcely

involves two types of men, including '男寵' (males being favored) and '男妾' (male

concubines) (see Table 10 in Appendix 2), who have no official recognition and do

not have a ranking system similar to that of women of the Emperor. This difference

between 'woman of the Emperor' and 'male concubine' indicates that women, to a

much larger extent than men, are more commonly treated as sex objects than men.

Another sub-category 'appearance' further shows the aesthetics of women from

men's perspective. Among all descriptions of women, 'appearance' indicates its own

significance by taking up the largest percentage of 22.56% (see Table 2 in Appendix

2). Examples of characters depicting women's beauty are '娟' (good-looking women)

and '嫣' (beautiful women) and those depicting women's bodies or gestures are '婀'

(women's body shapes when walking) and '姌' (women's slim body shapes) (see

Table 1 in Appendix 2). For words related to women, 'appearance' takes up 3.78%

and examples depicting women's beauty are '美女' (beautiful women), '女媄'

(beautiful women) and '冶女' (women in sexy and beautiful clothes) (see Table 7 and

8 in Appendix 2). These detailed descriptions of women's appearance all reflect the

aesthetics of women in the eyes of men (He, 2000). According to He (2000), Zhai

(2004) and Zhou (2000), women's appearance needs to reach the beauty standard set

by men, which reveal men's playful attitude towards women.

In comparison, men's appearance is not as demanding as that of women. First, there is no specific character depicting men's beauty or gestures (see Table 4 in Appendix 2). Second, with the exception of '潮男' (trendy men), '男裝' (men's apparel) and '男飾' (men's accessories) which describe men's fashion and clothes, the rest of the words related to men all relate to men's natural beauty such as '天男' (very handsome men), '男相' (men's facial features) and '男色' (sexually seductive men) (see Table 10 in Appendix 2). Third, whereas there is only one idiom depicting men's natural beauty, which is '鬚眉男子' (men with moustache and eyebrows) (see Table 13 in Appendix 2), there are three proverbs depicting men's beauty as natural, which are '男子無醜相' (no men are ugly), '男人三十一枝花' (men are flowers when they turn thirty) and '男要俏，一身皂' (if men want to be good-looking, they dress in plain black clothes) (see Table 16 in Appendix 2). All of the above show that men's appearance is natural and does not need to live up to women's beauty standard.

5) Women are more prone to bad morals than men. While the lexical meaning of 'moral value' ranks the second highest and occurs frequently in characters formed by feminine radicals, it ranks the lowest and occurs less frequently in characters formed by masculine radicals, taking up 7.5% only (see Table 19 in Appendix 2). Although 'moral value' ranks the fourth highest in both words formed by masculine and feminine characters, it takes up 13.66% in words formed by the

feminine character and outweighs that by the masculine character by 4.46% (see Table 19 in Appendix 2). These data show that moral values are more closely related to women than men. In fact, only 3 characters '孛' (betrayal), '孜' (hardworking) and '忞' (faithful) are found under the category of 'moral value' in characters formed by masculine radicals (see Table 4 in Appendix 2). This again suggested that moral values have not much significance and are distantly related to men.

Furthermore, women are more restricted by moral values than men. In the category 'others', two phrasal meanings – 'wall' (e.g. '女牆' (short walls) and '女陴' (short walls)) and 'place for woman' (e.g. '女市' (brothel) and '女牢' (female prison)) – are found under words formed by the feminine character (see Table 7 in Appendix 2). In fact, the phrasal meaning of 'wall' borrows its meaning from the image of women slightly bending down for peeking. Words under 'place for woman' trap morally bad women such as brothels and prisons. These two phrasal meanings convey a sense of confinement for women. However, no equivalent confinement meaning was found in words formed by the masculine character (see Table 10 in Appendix 2).

While characters under good moral values (e.g. '好' (good) and '如' (obedient)) takes up 7.69%, those under bad moral values (e.g. '奸' (cunning) and '妄' (arrogant)) takes up 2.05% more (see Table 2 in Appendix 1). The opposite is found in word analysis, where words under good moral values (e.g. '烈女' (women with chastity)

and '上女' (women who are good at housework)) take up 8.72% and are 3.78% more

than those under bad moral values (see Table 8 in Appendix 1). These results may

seem contradictive. Nonetheless, as no such lexical meaning can be found in

characters formed by masculine radicals and only good moral values were found in

words formed by the masculine character (e.g. '聖男' and '男德' (both mean men

with good morals)) (see Table 4 and 10 in Appendix 2), it is obvious that not only are

men more distanced from moral values, but also are they more prone to good moral

values than women. Indeed, with reference to researches done by various scholars (He,

2000; Li, 2006; Li & Ren, 2008; Pan & Wang, 2002; Su, 1999; Yin, 1993; Zhai, 2004;

Zhou, 2000), women were found to be more prone to bad morals than men in the

Chinese language. Scholars like Pan & Wang (2002), Li & Ren (2008) and Zhou

(2000) even pointed out that women were always blamed as the scourge for a fallen

country. Their viewpoint is supported by two words found under the sub-category of

'others', i.e. '女禍' and '女憂' (both mean women are the scourge of nations) (see

Table 7 in Appendix 2).

With a closer examination on the lexical meanings found in characters formed by

feminine radicals, bad moral values are in fact not committed by women, but by men.

Examples are '奸' (cunning), '妄' (arrogant), '妒' (jealous), '姘' (sex before marriage)

and '婪' (greedy). The character '嫖' (men buying sex service from prostitutes) is

solely related to men, but a feminine radical is assigned instead (see Table 1 in Appendix 2). The characters '媮' (steal) and '媠' (lazy) can actually be written as '偷' (steal) and '惰' (lazy) respectively without the feminine radicals (Zhou, 2000).

For words, attributes of both genders with bad morals are found in words formed by the feminine character. Examples are '讒女' (women who slander), '女孽' (evil women), '毒女' (evil women), '淫女' (slut), '串女' (slut) and '惡女' (fierce women). Equivalent combinations cannot be found in words formed by the masculine character. The only two words formed by the masculine character with bad morals are '男寵' (males being favored) and '男妾' (male concubines) (see Table 10 in Appendix 2). However, considering the characters '寵' (favored) and '妾' (concubine), they carry less negative connotation than characters like '淫' (obscene) in '淫女' (slut) or '毒' (evil) in '毒女' (evil women).

For proverbs about women, the sub-category of 'relationship with mother' explicitly indicates daughters as natural traitors to their mothers when they grow up (e.g. '女大不認娘' (daughters betray their mothers when they grow up)). However, no equivalent proverbs about men are found (see Table 16 in Appendix 2). As most characters, words and proverbs about bad moral values relate to women, it means that women are more prone to bad morals than men.

6) Masculinity is more preferred than femininity. As aforementioned that there are periods of matriarchy and patriarchy, where the former denotes a society ruled by females and the latter denotes a society ruled by males. China has a longer history of patriarchic society and resources are allocated with regards to gender (Li, 2006). Under patriarchic China, the concepts of masculinity and femininity are constructed in order to outline the moral and social behaviors of men and women. Whereas masculinity is related to men's physical and mental attributes, femininity is related to those attributes of women. Masculinity is found to be more preferred than femininity in patriarchic China.

In character and word analysis, characters and words concerning women's physical attributes take up 1.54% and 3.49% respectively (see Table 2 and 8 in Appendix 2). Although there are no masculine characters related to men's physical attributes (see Table 4 in Appendix 2), words concerning this meaning take up 8.05%, which doubles those of the female side (see Table 8 and 11 in Appendix 2). This shows that physical attributes of men are actually considered more important than those of women.

Under closer examination, five lexical and phrasal meanings are found under 'physical attributes' about women, including their biological sex as female like '媪' (females) and '女性' (females), their physical characteristics like '姅' (menstruation)

and '女陰' (vagina), infertility like '石女' and '實女' (both mean women with infertility), miscarriage like '女災' (miscarriage) and virginity like '處女' (virgin) (see Table 1 and 7 in Appendix 2). On the other hand, men's physical attributes include only three phrasal meanings, including their biological sex as male like '男兒' (male) and '男方' (male), their physical characteristics like '男陰' (pennis) and '男根' (pennis) and infertility like '不男' (man with infertility) (see Table 10 in Appendix 2). Here, the extra two meanings discovered in words relevant to women only both carry negative connotation, i.e. infertility and miscarriage.

In fact, if the connotation of characters and words about either men or women are examined, it is easy to discover that women are often related to negative connotation and men are often related to positive or neutral connotation (Spender, 1980). Although the percentage of characters formed by the feminine radicals carrying positive connotation significantly outweighs that by the masculine radicals by 26.22%, the percentage of characters formed by feminine radicals with negative connotation is 3.33% more than that by masculine radicals (see Table 3 and 6 in Appendix 2). Similar results are shown in word analysis. While the percentage of words formed by the feminine character carrying positive connotation is 1.72% more than that of the masculine character, the percentage of words formed by the feminine

character carrying negative connotation is 7.23% more than that by the masculine character (Table 9 and 12 in Appendix 2).

Besides characters and words, men's physical and mental attributes as strong are consistently found in both idiom and proverb analysis. Take the idiom '血性男兒' (passionate men) and the proverb '男子漢頭上三把火' (three fires hover above men's heads) as examples; whereas the former depicts men as energetic and passionate, the later depicts men's passion and determination in life (see Table 13 and 16 in Appendix 2). Both examples carry positive connotation. Moreover, the percentages of idioms about female's attributes and those of proverbs, which carry negative connotation, are 1.45% and 7.84% respectively. On the contrary, while there is no idiom about male's attributes with negative connotation, the percentage of proverbs with negative connotation for men is only 1.96%, which is 5.88% less than that of females (Table 15 and 18 in Appendix 2).

When examining attributes of women in idiom and proverb analysis, meanings are more diverse than characters and words about women. Although women are despised as '女流之輩' (flocks of women) and '小腳女人' (narrow-minded women), they can also be '女中豪傑' (heroines) and '女中丈夫' (heroines). Although they are good at housework, i.e. '女大自巧' (women become good at housework when they grow older), this strength is juxtaposed with the analogy '狗大自咬' (dogs bite their

tails when they grow older), which conveys a sense of disdain over women. Also, they are not supposed to be educated, i.e. '女子無才便是德' (women with no education have good morals). Their speech is rude, i.e. '鄰女詈人' (women scold others for their husbands). They cannot keep secrets, i.e. '女子舌頭上沒骨頭' (women's tongues have no bones) (see Table 13 and 16 in Appendix 2). All these show that attributes of women are commonly negative. It is also important to note that idioms such as '女中堯舜', '女中豪傑' and '女中丈夫' (all mean heroines) which praise women carry an underlying meaning of masculinity, implying that it is actually women's resemblance of masculinity that is appreciated, instead of women's own feminine attributes.

7) Women used to have a higher status than men. From the above analysis, women seem to be naturally born with a low social status. However, there was actually a time where women had a high social status as shown by two meanings, 'name' and 'legend', found under the feminine side in character, word, idiom and proverb analysis. It is found that the lexical meaning of 'name' takes up 7.69%. Also, the phrasal meaning of 'legends' and the idiomatic meaning of "legends" takes up 4.62% and 15.41% respectively (see Table 2, 7 and 13 in Appendix 2). However, no such meanings appear in the data analysis related to men.

Characters under 'name' found in the analysis includes surnames like '媯' (gui) and '姚' (yao) and last names of women like '奷' (qian) and '姍' (xian) (see Table 1 in Appendix 2). According to Gao (2007), Li (2006), Lu (2007), Yin (1993) and Zhai (2004), they believed that women used to gain much respect and were major decision makers for families and clans in primitive China. In Yin (1993), origins of surnames in ancient China such as '妘', '姒' and '姞', which are found in this reseach as well, were surnames of kings for '祝融' (Zhu Rong), '禹' (Yu) and '黃帝' (Huang Di) respectively.

For legends of women such as '女歧' (Nv Qi), '女媧' (Nv Wo), '嫦娥' (Chang E), '嫘祖' (Lei Zu) found in the analysis (see Table 7 in Appendix 2), Yin (1993) believed that '女歧' (Nv Qi) was actually a female leader of an ancient tribe called '西戎' (Xi Rong); '女媧' (Nv Wo) was the Creator; '嫦娥' (Chang E) was the Goddess of the Moon; and '嫘祖' (Lei Zu) was the Goddess of Silk. He believed that these terms all indicated the superstitious beliefs or religions of people in primitive China. Idioms under the category of 'legend' such as '女媧補天' (The Goddess, Nv Wo, fills the hole in the sky), '九天仙女' (fairies of Heaven) and '瑤池女使' (fairies serving the master of Heaven) describe legends and religious stories of women in ancient China (see Table 13 in Appendix 2). All these legends depicting women as Goddesses and leaders indicate that women used to enjoy a high social status.

All in all, the above re-analysis of characters, words, idioms and proverbs presents distinct linguistic images of Chinese men and women. In the family, men make all decisions and shoulder responsibility for their family's prosperity. If their wives cannot give birth to sons, they can legitimately and are morally allowed to marry other women in order to increase the number of their offspring. They are supposed to work outside their family and have little relation to housework. Women, on the other hand, have little influence in family decisions and are only responsible for giving births. They are properties of their family and are subordinate to their husbands. They must follow strict social and moral values and cannot marry other men due to the importance of their chastity. Their family role as a housewife requires them to stay at home and be good at chores like weaving, knitting and sweeping. In the society, men enjoy the most resources, especially the eldest son. Some even hold feudal titles and possess lands awarded by the Emperor. They work outside and careers are vital in their lives. They are also more prone to good moral values. Women, on the other hand, usually take up jobs as maids, slaves, entertainers and prostitutes. Due to their low social status and reliance on men financially, they become sex objects for men and their living depend largely on men's appreciation. They are also more prone to bad moral values. As for one's physical and mental attributes, masculinity is much preferred than femininity. While masculinity involves

attributes of males such as strength and compassion in life, femininity involves

attributes of females such as vulnerability and obedience.

From the linguistic images, it is found that huge gaps are created in both the

family status and the social status between men and women. These gaps obviously are

more favorable to men than women because men are always depicted as the superior

group. Language about women, no matter characters, words, idioms and proverbs,

confines women and depreciates their values to a large extent as if they are born to be

inferior and with fault. As women fail to enjoy as much freedom and privileges at

home or at work than men, this is sexual discrimination against women. As mentioned

in the literature review in Section 2.3 that a sexist language is part of sexism in any

society (Shute, as cited in Braggin, 1981) and that studying a sexist language is to

study the stereotypes of men and women (Holmes, 2008), a sexist language requires

not only the linguistic images, but the cultural images of both sexes.

As shown in the literature review that language, thought and culture intertwine

with one another, the linguistic images actually resemble the cultural images. This can

be proved by illustrating the relationship between the three concepts by using findings

of this research.

To begin with, language can be interpreted in terms of a linguistic sign system,

where three concepts, 'form', 'sense' and 'referent', formulate a semiotic triangle

(Saeed, 1997). In this triangle, a 'form' such as the Chinese character '女' (woman), which is a major gender indicator used for data selection in this research, has to go through 'sense' in the minds of the Chinese people before reaching the real-world 'referent' of a woman. 'Sense', here, can be interpreted as the concept of 'thought', which is how the Chinese people make sense of the world, i.e. their way of thinking. It is the Chinese way of thinking that the signature posture of a woman (女) is to slightly kneel down. This Chinese way of thinking towards women contributes to the development of the Chinese culture, which then shapes the mindsets of the following generations. As elaborated in the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis, 'language' influences 'thought'. When 'thought' becomes habitual, it becomes part of 'culture'. Therefore, 'forms' in a language affect a speaker's 'sense' and his understanding of his own culture. 'Thought' serves as the medium between 'language' and 'culture'.

As the relationship between language, thought and culture closely affects one another, linguistic images are reflection of cultural images, thus also resembling cultural images. Although this has fit the requirement of Shute (as cited in Braggin, 1981) and Holmes (2008)'s definitions of a sexist language, the claim "Chinese is a sexist language" cannot be readily validated by the linguistic images alone because the concept of 'sexist' still needs a more adequate and testable definition, which leads to the complementary adoption of the consequentialist and propositional approaches.

4.2 Validity of the Claim "Chinese is a Sexist Language" under the Modified

Definitional Approach

As given in the literature review in Section 2.2, Grim's definition of a sexist 'X',

which can be anything, holds two requirements; the first is that 'X' must be expressed

and actual and the second is the consequence of women being oppressed (as cited in

Braggin, 1981). This definition is derived solely from a consequentialist approach and

is deemed inadequate by Grim because he believes that even implied doings can bring

about a consequence (as cited in Braggin, 1981). This challenge against the

requirement of 'X' being an expressed actual doing makes Grim suggest a

complementary use of the propositional approach, which widens the scope of 'X' and

examines the intention behind 'X'. Based on Grim's ideas about the complementary

use of the consequentialist and propositional approaches and the findings of this

research as presented in Section 4.1, a modified definition of a sexist language will be

discussed and used to validate the claim "Chinese is a sexist language".

To explain how the modified definition is developed, Grim's original definition

(as cited in Braggin, 1981) needs attention here, which defines an 'X' as 'sexist if and

only if it contributes to, encourages, causes or results in the oppression of women' (p.

36). The four verb words, including 'contributes to', 'encourages', 'causes' or 'results

in', all focus on the consequence of 'X'. As denoted by Grim (as cited in Braggin,

1981), when implied doings become actual, they can definitely cause a sexist consequence. Hence, both the verb 'cause' and the consequence would be kept in the modified definition. As shown in the findings of this research, while the linguistic image of women is inferior and negative in connotation, the opposite is found on men's side. This sexual discrimination against women is akin to Grim's assumption of women being oppressed, thus the consequence in the modified definition would be the same as Grim's original one, which is 'the oppression of women'. Besides defining the consequence, the definition of 'X' needs to be more specific. As implied doings such as thoughts or cultural beliefs can also cause a consequence, a specific piece of information – 'either expressed or unexpressed' – would be added to modify 'X' in order to widen its scope. Moreover, as the intention behind 'X' is deemed vital in the propositional approach (Grim, as cited in Braggin, 1981), the verb phrase 'intends to' would also be added. Under the above modifications, the definition used in this research to validate the claim "Chinese is a sexist language" becomes 'An "X" such as a language is sexist if and only if it, either expressed or unexpressed, intends to cause the oppression of women'.

As indicated in the modified definition that the 'X' can be 'either expressed or unexpressed', findings of this research can actually be classified into expressed contents or unexpressed contents. For the expressed contents, the linguistic images of

men and women presented in the four language features can be conveyed explicitly in oral and written forms. For instance, most characters and words formed by the feminine radicals or the feminine character such as '奸' (cunning), '妼' (quarrel), '下女' (women who are bad at housework) and '女隸' (women as slaves) (see Table 1 and 7 in Appendix 2) depict women with bad morals and low social status. On the contrary, a large amount of characters and words formed by masculine radicals or the masculine character depict men as important in family and superior in society such as '孮' (many offspring), '孕' (pregnant), '子男' (a feudal title meaning dukes) and '貴男' (noble males) (see Table 4 and 10 in Appendix 2). Idioms such as '小腳女人' (narrow-minded women), '女流之輩' (flocks of women) and proverbs such as '女人頭髮長，見識短' (women with long hair are not knowledgeable) and '女子無才便是德' (women without education have good morals) have a sense of disdain over women. Again, no such equivalents are found in idioms or proverbs related to men. In fact, this big contrast in the linguistic images between men and women also indicate a similar contrast in the cultural stereotypes between the two sexes, as elaborated in Section 4.1 before. As language affects and reflects culture, the unexpressed contents are actually the cultural stereotypes of the two sexes in minds of Chinese people, where women are supposed to bend down and have an inferior status as conveyed by

the graphical image of the character '女' (woman). This shows language as the cause

for the consequence of women being oppressed.

Speaking of consequence, there is always a cause. As language is created and

used by humans, who are volitional beings having the mental ability to intent

something to happen for a purpose, the 'cause' must have an intention, which is to

secure men's administration and power in a patriarchic society. As discussed in the re-

analysis that language changes overtime to suit social needs, language reflects the

social balance between men and women during different periods. During matriarchic

China, language indicates women's dominance in the society. Surnames were formed

by the feminine radical '女' (woman). When patriarchy rose, language changed to suit

the needs of men's dominance. To devalue women, language about women began to

carry strong moral values and most were negative in connotation such as the character

'惰' (lazy) being interchangeable with the character '媠' (lazy) formed by a feminine

radical. These examples found in the Chinese language were actually created on

purpose by men, with an intention to further secure their own resources and power by

oppressing their opposite sex.

From the above, the claim "Chinese is a sexist language" is valid under the

modified definition of a sexist language because the contents of the Chinese language,

either expressed linguistic images or unexpressed cultural stereotypes, cause the

oppression of women. Most importantly, it has a clear intention to oppress women, which is to obtain more resources and power for men.

5. Implications

After providing answers for the two research questions in Section 4, this section discusses the contributions made by this research to the sociolinguistic issue of Chinese as a sexist language and limitations of this research.

As shown in the re-analysis, four types of linguistic data are selected from language about both men and women, including characters, words, idioms and proverbs. This indicates that this research does not skew to study on any sex and the linguistic images of both men and women are presented more objectively and comprehensively than previous researches. As the linguistic images are consistent in all four types of linguistic data, this research can be said to be more reliable in reflecting the whole picture of the Chinese language. Moreover, as past researches rarely used various theories in validating their claim "Chinese is a sexist language", this research has referred to different theories in order to obtain a more convincing result. Examples of theories are the semiotic triangle, the consequentialist and propositional approaches and the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis. The above contributions made by this research have filled the gaps in the Chinese sociolinguistic field mentioned in Section 2.5.

Despite the aforementioned contributions, the re-analysis of this research does not examine in detail the causes for the differences between the linguistic images of men and women. Also, even though four language features are examined, there are still many other language features such as word order and Chinese pronouns that are worthy of attention. Hence, it is our hope that more researches would be conducted on the reasons why there was a huge gap between the linguistic images of men and women and on re-examination of other Chinese language features.

For future development on Chinese as a sexist language, researches should also focus more on the effects of linguistic policies in fighting against sexism in the society. Although the elimination of a sexist language takes time even with government's intervention (Holmes, 2008), the government and media still serve as the most influential parties in raising people's awareness about sexist language use. Schools should also participate in fighting against sexual discrimination by educating students about sexist thoughts conveyed in one's language and developing students' critical thinking concerning the issue. On top of these, as pointed out explicitly by Spender (1980) that 'investing the language with one's own different and positive meanings is a priority for all oppressed groups' (p. 6), women themselves are actually the most prominent parties who should stand out and take the lead in eliminating their own adversity and promoting sexual equality in this modern era.

6. Conclusion

This research aims to raise the awareness and even sensitivity of Chinese people in detecting the sexist use of the Chinese language and to construct a fuller picture of the sociolinguistic side of the Chinese language by re-examining the claim "Chinese is a sexist language" with a more objective and comprehensive re-examination. To achieve these two aims, this research explains the relationships between three concepts, language, thought and culture, and highlights the fact that sexist language actually contributes to the vicious cycle of sexist thoughts in one's culture. Compared with previous studies on Chinese as a sexist language, the re-analysis in this research does not skew to discussion on language about women alone, but also language about men. It, therefore, provides a more comprehensive and more in-depth examination on the claim.

The re-analysis of this research involves investigations on the formation of four Chinese language features, which are characters, words, idioms and proverbs. Under analysis, there are distinct linguistic representations of men and women. While men have the responsibility to prosper their families, women are subordinate to their husbands and required to take care of their children and housework. While men have a superior social status and some even hold feudal titles and lands, women take up jobs with low social status such as slaves and prostitutes. As women have a low social

status and rely their living on men financially, they become properties of men and even sex objects for them. Their inferiority is enhanced even more as they are more prone to bad morals and have to follow strict moral beliefs. Men, on the other hand, are naturally born with positive attributes both physically and mentally. Although there are traces found in the re-analysis concerning a matriarchic China, their comparatively less proportions than other semantic meanings related to patriarchy are considered less significant.

As the linguistic image of men is more positive and more superior to that of women, a huge linguistic gap between the two sexes is found. The gap is unfavorable to women and women become the targeted group for discrimination. However, as sexist language is only part of sexism in the society, the claim "Chinese is a sexist language" can only be valid when the term 'sexist' is well-defined. As a result, two complementary approaches, which are the consequentialist and propositional approaches, are combined to develop a modified definition for a sexist language based on the definition given in Grim (as cited in Braggin, 1981). By using the linguistic images and cultural stereotypes found in the re-analysis, the claim "Chinese is a sexist language" is proved valid under the modified definition of a sexist language.

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Appendices

Appendix 1

Deletion Rules and Categorization Rules for Data Selection

Data selection: deletion rules

Deletion rules for characters. According to the dictionary from the Chinesepedia Online, there are two radicals expressing feminine meanings, '女' and '母', and two others expressing masculine meanings, '子' and '父'. In total, 198 characters consisting of the two feminine radicals and 44 characters consisting of the two masculine radicals are found. Below lists two deletion rules for character selection.

1. As the online dictionary shows both simplified and traditional Chinese characters in the search results, simplified Chinese characters which repeat their traditional versions are deleted (e.g. '爷' (same as '爺') and '孙' (same as '孫')).

2. As characters may have different written versions (e.g. '妊' (same as '姙') and '姍' (same as '姗')), either one of them is deleted.

Under the deletion rules, 195 characters formed by feminine radicals and 40 characters formed by masculine radicals are selected for analysis.

Deletion rules for words. According to the Online Chinese Dictionary, the number of words composed by the character '女' and the number of words composed by the character '男' are 500 and 203 respectively. Below lists four deletion rules for word selection.

1. In this research, only 2-character words (e.g. '女墙' and '女道') are analyzed. Words having 3 characters or more shown in the search results are excluded from analysis (e.g. '玉女沙' and '男低音').

2. As this report analyzes words formed by the feminine character '女' and that by the masculine character '男' separately, words containing characters that involve both genders (e.g. '男女' and '子女') are deleted.

3. As characters may have different written versions for the same meaning (e.g. '娼' in '娼女' and '倡' in '倡女'; '秀' in '秀女' and '绣' in '绣女'), only one of the words consisting of such characters is used for analysis. The others are deleted.

4. Words which differ in word order only are considered as repeated (e.g. '女禦' and '禦女'; '使女' and '女使') so one of them is deleted.

Under the deletion rules, words selected for analysis which consist of the feminine character and those of the masculine character are 344 and 87 respectively.

Deletion rules for idioms and proverbs. According to the Online Idioms Dictionary, the total number of idioms found containing either the character '男' or the character '女' is 132. According to the Chinese Proverbs Dictionary, 59 proverbs containing either the character '男' or the character '女' are found. Below lists five

deletion rules for both idiom and proverb analysis:

1. In this research, only 4-character idioms (e.g. '天女散花' and '男大当婚') and proverbs consisting of 5 or more characters (e.g. '女人肉，不中露' and '男子漢頭上三把火') are analyzed. Those which do not fit the word requirements are deleted.

2. Idioms and proverbs may involve both genders such as '男男女女' and '男女平等'. Only one of such idioms or proverbs is kept.

3. Idioms or proverbs which only differ in word order or sentence order are considered as repeated. Only one of the repeated idioms or proverbs is kept (e.g. '女織男耕' (same as '男耕女織'); '女人不穿嫁時衣，男兒不吃分時飯' (same as '男兒不吃分時飯，女人不穿嫁時衣')) .

4. Idioms may differ only in one character which has the same lexical meaning as in another idiom. Only one of such idioms is kept (e.g. '男女老小' (same as 男女老少)).

5. Proverbs may differ in characters which have the same lexical or phrasal meanings as in another proverb. Only one of such proverbs is kept (e.g. '男人要偷婦人隔重山，女子要偷男子隔層紙' (same as '女子偷郎隔重紙，男子偷女隔重山') and '男兒兩膝有黃金' (same as '男兒膝下有黃金')).

　　Under the deletion rules, 69 idioms and 51 proverbs are selected for analysis.

　　Data selection: categorization rules. After data selection, four types of linguistic data were categorized. The first type was characters formed by either feminine radicals '女' (woman/daughter) and '母' (mother) and masculine radicals '子' (man/son) and '父' (father) (see Table 1 to 6 in Appendix 2); the second type was words formed by either the feminine character '女' (woman) or the masculine character '男' (man) (see Table 7 to 12 in Appendix 2); the third type was idioms formed by either character '女' (woman), character '男' (man) or both of them (see Table 13 to 15 in Appendix 2) and the fourth type was proverbs formed by either character '女' (woman), character '男' (man) or both of them (see Table 16 to 18 in Appendix 2). As the categorization depended mainly on whether the data was masculine or feminine, categories taking up the highest percentages were considered as the most significant and relevant to a gender and the lowest percentages represented the least significance and relevance. For easier comparison, the occurrence of characters, words, idioms and proverbs were ranked from high to low. The symbol ">" indicated that the category on its left-hand side was ranked higher than the category on its right-hand side. The higher the ranking of a category, the higher its occurrence found associated to a gender. (see Table 19 in Appendix 2).

　　Categorization rules for characters and words.

1. The lexical meanings of characters and the phrasal meanings of words all follow

the definitions shown in the online dictionaries. Definitions of characters or words which are less commonly known are specified under various tables (e.g. '愚男' is a polite use of referring to one's own son, instead of referring to a silly boy).

2. As characters or words may have various lexical and phrasal meanings, only the original or most commonly used meaning is analyzed (e.g. the original meaning of '如' is obedience and its grammatical meaning for citing an example is not adopted for analysis; the most commonly used meaning of '妙' is describing something good and its other meanings such as being used as names are not adopted for analysis).

3. Some categories are sub-divided into further categories to enable more detailed analysis. For example, in character analysis, the category 'family' is sub-divided into 'mother/daughter' and 'other relationships'.

4. The category 'others' includes meanings that take up 5% or less in character and word analysis. This category is established because the proportions of these meanings are relatively tiny and do not express much significance to either gender. For example, '釜' (a cooking utensil) and '孔' (hole) are categorized under 'others', instead of creating new categories. However, this categorization rule does not apply for sub-categories. For example, even though only two words, '侄男' and '男弟', are found under the sub-category 'other relationships', they are not classified under 'others' because they contribute to an important phrasal meaning of 'family'.

4. Characters or words under 'good' moral values depict behaviors or attributes that Chinese men and women should follow according to Chinese social and cultural values (e.g. '嫻' (women who are nice and gentle) and '孜' (hardworking); '烈女' (women with chastity) and '男權' (men being influential)). Characters or words under 'bad' moral values depict behaviors or attributes of Chinese men and women who do not act according to Chinese social or cultural values (e.g. '嫌' (being annoyed) and '下女' (women who are bad at housework)).

5. The category 'names' only includes characters which are used as surnames or names only, as specified in the online dictionary (e.g. '姚' and '媯'). Other characters such as '娟' and '娉' are not categorized as surnames or names because they have other lexical meanings which are more commonly used.

6. For the connotation of the characters and words, they are classified as positive when they are used commonly in positive situations and negative when they are used commonly in negative situations. For example, '娥' and '婉' are considered positive because they describe women as beautiful and gentle respectively. Characters like '嬒' and '奸' are classified as negative because they describe women as ugly and cunning respectively.

Categorization rules for idioms and proverbs

1. The idiomatic meanings of idioms and the semantic meanings of proverbs all follow the definitions shown in the online dictionaries.

2. Idioms and proverbs are first categorized by their relation to men, women or both genders. Under each relation, idioms and proverbs are sub-categorized into various meanings such as 'marriage' and 'legends'. Unlike the analysis of characters and words, idiom and proverb analysis do not have the category 'others' because the total numbers of idioms and proverbs for analysis are comparatively smaller.

3. Idioms and proverbs are categorized under the category 'attributes' when they describe the physical and mental characteristics of men and women in the Chinese culture. For example, the idiom '女中丈夫' and the proverb '男兒非無淚，不因別離留' belong to this category.

4. Idioms are categorized under the category 'moral values' when they describe the social and moral values that men and women should follow in the Chinese culture. For example, the idioms '男耕女織' and '男尊女卑' belong to this category.

5. Proverbs are categorized under the category 'social practice' when they describe what men and women do in the society such as '男不拜月，女不祭灶'.

6. For the connotation of the idioms and proverbs, idioms and proverbs are classified as positive when they are used commonly in positive situations and negative when they are used commonly in negative situations. For example, the idiom '美女簪花' and the proverb '男子無醜相' are considered positive. For idioms like '女流之輩' and proverbs like '女大不認娘', they are classified as negative.

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Appendix 2

Categorization and Percentages of Characters, Words, Idioms and Proverbs in terms of their Lexical or Semantic Meanings

Table 1

Categorization of Characters Formed of the Radicals '女' (woman/daughter) and '母' (mother) in terms of their Lexical Meanings

Family		Offspring		Marriage		Description of Woman					Legend	Moral Value		Others		
Mother/ Daughter	Other Relationships	Pregnancy	Child	Woman in Love and Marriage	Woman of the Emperor	Age	Appearance			Physical Attribute		Good	Bad	Job	Name	Others
母	姒	姙	娃	灼	妃	妞	姿	灯	娓	㛮	妖	好	奸	妓	奸	毌
毗	妗	娩	嬰	妠	嬪	姎	婳	妍	妊	女	妹	妙	妄	姆	灿	每
妣	姊	娠	嬰	奻	妤	妲	娿	妖		姅	姐	娿	妒	娼	㚵	毒
娘	奻	嬭		妶	婕	妮	婀	妃			嫫	孃	妨	婊	妘	奶
嫒	姝	毓		妻	嬖	姥	娥	妧			嫄	媚	奼	婢	妏	嬉
媽	姉			姻		娭	姬	怀			嫽	嬿	妬	嬙	妯	娍
	妯			娶		婆	娟	妖			嫦	如	姘	奴	妡	始
	姑			婚		媖	娉	姘			嫘	妍	姦	娶	姛	妳
	妹			媒		媼	嬋	妧			媧				妽	娛
	姐			嫁		婺	孀	妓				姈	婪		妖	娑
	姨			孀		孃	嫵	嬈				婧	婷		妮	媲
	娷					婦	媛	妼				娃	媟		姓	嬗
	娌					嫗	嬩	妼				婉	媮		姞	妢
	娣					嫩	嬅	妊				婷	婧		姚	姬
	嫛						嫣	妛				嫻	嫌		媯	她
	婿						變	斐					嫉			妗
	媳						姣	姁					嫚			嬀
	嫂						娜	妸					嫖			
	嫜						姽	姺					妖			
	嫡						姝	嬌								
	嬸						姹	姍								

Table 2

Percentages of Characters Formed of the Radicals '女' (woman/daughter) and '母' (mother) Categorized Under Different Lexical Meanings

Lexical Meanings	Family		Offspring		Marriage		Description of Woman			Legend	Moral Value		Others		
	Mother/ Daughter	Other relationships	Pregnancy	Child	Woman in Love and Marriage	Woman of the Emperor	Age	Appearance	Physical Attribute		Good	Bad	Job	Name	Others
Total Number	6	21	5	3	11	5	14	44	3	9	15	19	8	15	17
Percentage (%)	3.08	10.77	2.56	1.54	5.64	2.56	7.18	22.56	1.54	4.62	7.69	9.74	4.10	7.69	8.72
Total Number	27		8		16		61			9	34		40		
Percentage (%)	13.85		4.10		8.21		31.28			4.62	17.44		20.51		

Table 3

Categorization and Percentages of Characters Formed of the Radicals '女' (woman/daughter) and '母' (mother) Having Positive or Negative Connotations

Connotation	Characters															Total Number	Percentage (%)
Positive	姿	嫛	婀	娥	姬	娟	娉	嬋	嬧	嫵	媛	嫿	嫣	姣	娜	56	28.72
	媱	姝	姹	奵	妍	妖	妘	妚	妗	姅	妡	妭	嬈	姕	妶		
	娗	妎	婓	姁	妸	姌	嬌	娓	好	妙	嬰	嬤	媚	嬧	如		
	姸	姩	姈	婧	娃	婉	婷	嫻	娛	妩	變						
Negative	嫦	奸	妄	妒	妨	妗	妭	姘	姦	奻	婪	婳	媟	婾	婧	26	13.33
	嫌	嫉	嫚	嫖	妏	妓	娼	娭	婢	奴	毒						

Table 4

Categorization of Characters Formed of the Radicals '子' (man/son) and '父' (father) in terms of their Lexical Meanings

Family		Offspring				Moral Value		Others
Father / Son	**Other Relationships**	**Pregnancy**	**Prosperity**	**Twins**	**Child**	**Good**	**Bad**	**Others**
子	孫	孕	孮	孖	孶	孜	㝏	孓
屘	孥	孡	㝩	孿	孩	忑		斧
孟	孹	孢	孳	孿	孺			釜
孲			㝇		孾			孔
孨								存
父								學
爸								孭
爹								孼
爺								孤
								㝈
								㝅

Table 5

Percentages of Characters Formed of the Radicals '子' (man/son) and '父' (father) Categorized Under Different Lexical Meanings

Lexical Meaning	Family		Offspring				Moral Value		Others
	Father / Son	Other Relationships	Pregnancy	Prosperity	Twins	Child	Good	Bad	
Total Number	9	3	3	4	3	4	2	1	11
Percentage (%)	22.50	7.50	7.50	10.00	7.50	10.00	5.00	2.50	27.50
Total Number	12		14				3		11
Percentage (%)	30		35				7.50		27.50

Table 6

Categorization and Percentages of Characters Formed of the Radicals '子' (man/son) and '父' (father) Having Positive or Negative Connotations

Connotation	Characters	Total Number	Percentage (%)
Positive	孜	1	2.50
Negative	孽　孛　孤　孱	4	10.00

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Table 7

Categorization of Words Formed of the Character '女' (woman) in terms of their Lexical Meanings

Family		Marriage		Description of Woman			Moral Value		Legend		Job								Others				
Daughter	Other relationships	Woman in Love and Marriage	Woman of the Emperor	Physical Attribute	Age	Appearance	Good	Bad	Legend		Entertainer	Prostitute	Slave	Clergy	Housewife	Boatman	Leader	Other Jobs	Plant	Wall	Place for Woman	Others	
女花	族女	致女	女嬖	女陰	女士	逸女	正女	下女	女神	女魃	女伎	娼女	女奚	覡女	機女	杣女	女戶	女酒	女貞	女牆	女肆	女錢	戎女
嬌女	女侄	暖女	眾女	石女	僮女	靚女	女好	讒女	蕊女	越女	女猙	豔女	女使	女冠	漂女	棹女	女將	女儈	女華	女陴	女市	女曲	女禍
腹女	女甥	室女	女後	女災	少女	鳳女	聖女	弱女	甄女	女匽	女醜	妓女	女宮	女道	紅女	榜女	女主	女工	女蘿	女垣	女閭	黎女	盧女
碎女	猶女	春女	納女	妒女	女娘	美女	女德	女孽	嬴女	攸女	女腳	舞女	獠女	修女	針女		女王	吧女	待女	女堞	女牢	東女	思女
孝女	女眷	奔女	采女	不女	女人	麗女	女紀	淫女	女娥	鄭女	歌女		女口	女僧	技女		女君	女師	女臂	女頭	女監	蔡女	須女
嫡女	女妠	曠女	秀女	實女	女丁	佚女	女學	惡女	龍女	女嬌	女樂		女僕	盲女				樵女	女桑	女郭		婺女	女戒
元女	女婿	斥女	女禦	女性	女童	宋女	中女	貧女	九女	女英	女颱		宮女	女先				海女				牛女	女科
息女	侄女	送女		女身	丁女	秋女	女教	毒女	蠶女	女趫	女優		婢女					媆女				女鳥	縊女
皇女	女孫	取女		女界	鬌女	姹女	女權	女流	雲女	女夷	商女		輿女					女史				女古	女宿
遺女	女兒	鄰女		女生	筓女	冶女	烈女	寒女	妖女	鹿女	女角		侍女					蓮女				女憂	女館
閨女	從女	怨女		處女	女孩	媛女	女事	賤女	仙女	靈女	女伶		禁女					遊女				女床	女直
大女	女弟	女妻		女方	婦女	女媄	女職	串女	秦女	鮫女	女仴		宦女					女匠				女圖	女贊
二女	甥女	女妾			振女	倩女	女紅	罷女	青女	繢女			女徒									離女	女真
稚女	外女	剩女			女郎		上女	女謁	金女	天女			女奴									女褲	
溺女	宗女	老女			女子		女功	女寵	趙女	玄女			女隸									女國	
乳女	女妹	出女			季女		玉女	女色	雪女	女媧			拘女									女屍	
孤女	女叔	幽女					才女	燕女	女須	洛女												女布	
長女	孫女	女家					淑女		信女	漢女												齊女	
愛女	女伯	滕女					善女		蝦女	伏女												女貓	
誼女	女夫	餒女					賢女		王女	河女												張女	

衰女						靜女		女嫈	素女								豪女	
仕女						順女		女嫛	媯女								衒女	
帝女						貞女		毛女									村女	
養女						女表		螺女									山女	
女兒						女宗		霜女									野女	
逆女						女順		女岐									客女	
阿女						謝女		織女									女伴	
義女						碩女		卓女									門女	
行女						辯女		魔女									女戎	
小女						俠女		班女									驚女	
						虎女		虹女									內女	

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Table 8

Percentages of Words Formed of the Character '女' (woman) Categorized Under Different Lexical Meanings

Phrasal Meaning	Family		Marriage		Description of Woman			Moral Value		Legend	Job								Others			
	Daughter	Other relationships	Woman in Love and Marriage	Woman of the Emperor	Physical Attribute	Age	Appearance	Good	Bad		Entertainer	Prostitute	Slave	Clergy	Housewife	Boatman	Leader	Other Jobs	Plant	Wall	Place for Woman	Others
Total Number	30	20	20	7	12	16	13	31	17	53	12	4	16	7	5	3	5	12	6	6	5	44
Percentage (%)	8.72	5.81	5.81	2.03	3.49	4.65	3.78	9.01	4.94	15.41	3.49	1.16	4.65	2.03	1.45	0.87	1.45	3.49	1.74	1.74	1.45	12.79
Total Number	50		27		41			48		53	64								61			
Percentage (%)	14.53		7.85		11.92			13.95		15.41	18.60								17.73			

Table 9

Categorization and Percentages of Words Formed of the Character '女' (woman) Having Positive or Negative Connotations

Connotation	Words	Total Number	Percentage (%)
Positive	女花 嬌女 孝女 正女 女好 聖女 女德 烈女 上女 玉女 才女 淑女 善女 賢女 靜女 順女 貞女 女表 女宗 女順 謝女 碩女 俠女 逸女 靚女 虹女 鳳女 美女 麗女 佚女 宋女 秋女 姹女 冶女 媛女 女媄 倩女 虎女 女神 仙女 天女	41	11.92
Negative	溺女 孤女 衰女 逆女 怨女 剩女 下女 讒女 弱女 女孽 淫女 惡女 貧女 毒女 女流 寒女 賤女 串女 罷女 女謁 燕女 妖女 魔女 女醜 女仞 娼女 豔女 妓女 舞女 女奚 獠女 女僕 婢女 輿女 禁女 女徒 女奴 女隸 拘女 盲女 戎女 女禍 女憂 女戎 野女	45	13.08

Table 10

Categorization of Words Formed of the Character '男' (man) in terms of their Lexical Meanings

Family		Marriage		Description of Man			Moral Value	Job			Others			
Son	Other Relationships	Man in Marriage	Male Concubine	Age	Appearance	Physical Attribute		Feudal Title	Slave	Other jobs	Feudal Land	Plant	Gift	Others
立男	侄男	鰥男	男寵	大男	天男	男陰	聖男	佛男	男口	男覡	男服	男華	男贄	快男
次男	男弟	夫男	男妾	兒男	潮男	不男	男德	子男	男工	耕男	男邦	男青	男拜	有男
幹男		剩男		鬢男	男色	男根	男事	散男	男僕		男畿			坎男
多男		男家		少男	男相	男性	男教	男爵	蠻男		男圻			男聲
丁男				僮男	男裝	男兒	男權	縣男						男錢
小男				童男	男飾	男生	魯男	鄉男						
愚男				男孩	男風	男方								
庶男				貴男										
前男				男丁										
孝男				男士										
息男				男人										
宜男				男子										
遺男														
義男														
震男														
嗣男														
百男														
長男														
嫡男														
得男														
男花														
中男														

'愚男' is a polite use of referring to one's own son.

'魯男' is a metaphor about men who are not seduced by women's beauty.

Table 11

Percentages of Words Formed of the Character '男' (man) Categorized Under Different Lexical Meanings

Phrasal Meaning	Family		Marriage		Description of Man			Moral Value	Job			Others			
	Son	Other Relationships	Man in marriage	Male Concubine	Age	Appearance	Physical Attribute		Feudal Title	Slave	Other Jobs	Feudal Land	Plant	Gift	Others
Total Number	22	2	4	2	12	7	7	6	6	4	2	4	2	2	5
Percentage (%)	25.29	2.30	4.60	2.30	13.80	8.05	8.05	6.90	6.90	4.60	2.30	4.60	2.30	2.30	5.75
Total Number	24		6		26			6	12			13			
Percentage (%)	27.59		6.90		29.89			6.90	13.79			14.94			

Table 12

Categorization and Percentages of Words Formed of the Character '男' (man) Having Positive or Negative Connotations

Connotation	Words	Total Number	Percentage (%)
Positive	孝男　天男　潮男　聖男　男德　魯男　男花　貴男	8	9.20
Negative	剩男　男色　男風　男僕　蠻男	5	5.75

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Table 13

Categorization of Idioms in terms of their Idiomatic Meanings

Idioms About Men only			
Family	**Attribute**	**Marriage**	**Appearance**
弟男子侄	血性男兒	男大當婚	鬚眉男子
七男八婿			
一索得男			

Idioms About Women only					
Attribute	**Legend**	**Appearance**	**Love**	**Marriage**	**Speech**
女中堯舜	女媧補天	美女簪花	鄰女窺牆	女長當嫁	鄰女詈人
女中丈夫	九天仙女	左家嬌女	倩女離魂	女大難留	
小腳女人	天女散花	二八女郎	有女懷春		
窈窕淑女	瑤池女使				
女中豪傑	娥皇女英				
女流之輩					

Idioms About both Men and Women						
Family	**Attribute**	**Love**	**Marriage**	**Moral Value**	**Appearance**	**Speech**
賣男鬻女	郎才女貌	牛郎織女	兒女親家	男耕女織	綠女紅男	兒女子語
寸男尺女	男盜女娼	癡兒呆女	男唱女隨	男尊女卑	男扮女妝	
兒女成行	善男信女	癡男怨女	曠夫怨女	重男輕女		
拖男帶女	檀郎謝女	兒女情長	男婚女嫁	男女有別		
五男二女	飲食男女	兒女心腸	男室女家	男女平等		
攜男挈女	兒女英雄	男歡女愛	相女配夫			
一男半女	男女老少	駭女癡兒	兒女夫妻			
子女玉帛	男男女女	兒女私情				
兒女之債	童男童女					
生男育女	金童玉女					

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Table 14

Percentages of Idioms Categorized Under Different Idiomatic Meanings

Idioms About Men only					
Idiomatic Meaning	**Family**	**Attribute**	**Marriage**	**Appearance**	
Total Number	3	1	1	1	6
Percentage (%)	4.35	1.45	1.45	1.45	8.70

Idioms About Women only						
Idiomatic Meaning	**Attribute**	**Legend**	**Appearance**	**Love**	**Marriage**	**Speech**
Total Number	6	5	3	3	2	1	20
Percentage (%)	8.70	7.25	4.35	4.35	2.90	1.45	28.99

Idioms About both Men and Women							
Idiomatic Meaning	**Family**	**Attribute**	**Love**	**Marriage**	**Moral Value**	**Appearance**	**Speech**
Total Number	10	10	8	7	5	2	1	43
Percentage (%)	14.49	14.49	11.59	10.14	7.25	2.90	1.45	62.32

Table 15

Categorization and Percentages of Idioms According to their Positive or Negative Connotations

Connotation	Idioms About Men only	Total Number	Percentage (%)
Positive	血性男兒　鬚眉男子	2	2.90
Negative	/	0	0
Connotation	**Idioms About Women only**	**Total Number**	**Percentage (%)**
Positive	女中堯舜　女中丈夫　窈窕淑女　女中豪傑 美女簪花	5	7.25
Negative	女流之輩	1	1.45
Connotation	**Idioms About both Men and Women**	**Total Number**	**Percentage (%)**
Positive	郎才女貌　善男信女　檀郎謝女　兒女英雄	4	5.80
Negative	兒女之債　男盜女娼　曠夫怨女	3	4.35

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Table 16

Categorization of Proverbs in terms of their Semantic Meanings

Proverbs About Men only			
Attribute	**Appearance**	**Family**	**Career**
男子漢不毒不發	男子無醜相	男人是一層天	男兒不得便，刺頭泥裡陷
男子漢頭上三把火	男要俏，一身皂	男人能做主，是貓能逮鼠	
男子漢志在四方	男人三十一枝花	女婿有半子之勞	
男兒非無淚，不因別離留			
男兒膝下有黃金			
男兒當自強			

Proverbs About Women only			
Marriage	**Appearance**	**Attribute**	**Relationship with Mother**
女人嫁漢，穿衣吃飯	女人肉，不中露	女子無才便是德	女兒是娘的掛心鈎
女人是枕頭邊的風	女大十八變	女大自巧，狗大自咬	女兒大了不由娘
女子遲歸終吉	女人頭髮長，見識短	女人舌頭上沒骨頭	女大不認娘
女大不中留	女為悅己者容		
女大兩，黃金長; 女大三，黃金見			

Proverbs About both Men and Women						
Social Practice	**Attribute**	**Marriage**	**Love**	**Crime**	**Time**	**Appearance**
男不拜月， 女不祭灶	男要勤，女要勤， 三時茶飯不求人	男子肯聽婦人言	男子痴，一時迷;女 子痴，無藥醫	男僧寺對着 女僧寺， 沒事也有事	女愛不及席， 男歡不畢輪	女不女， 男不男
男不作媒， 女不保債	男子有德便是才， 女子無才便是德	男當家，女插花	女子偷郎隔重紙， 男子偷女隔重山			

男怕穿靴， 女怕戴帽	女為悅己容， 士為知己死	男子無妻是家無主， 婦人無夫是身無主	女忌綠郎， 男忌紅娘			
男務耕， 女務織	女無美惡，入宮見妒; 士無賢不肖，入朝見嫉	男大須婚，女長須嫁				
男子不吃分時飯， 女子不着嫁時衣	男兒無信，寸鐵無鋼; 女人無性，爛如麻糖					
男女授受不親	女子無性，亂草漫秧; 男兒無性，鈍鐵無鋼					
男不與女鬥						

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Table 17

Percentages of Proverbs Categorized Under Different Semantic Meanings

Proverbs About Men only					
Semantic Meaning	**Attribute**	**Appearance**	**Family**	**Career**	
Total Number	6	3	3	1	13
Percentage (%)	11.76	5.88	5.88	1.96	25.49

Proverbs About Women only					
Semantic Meaning	**Marriage**	**Appearance**	**Attribute**	**Relationship with Mother**	
Total Number	5	4	3	3	15
Percentage (%)	9.80	7.84	5.88	5.88	29.41

Proverbs About Both Men and Women								
Semantic Meaning	**Social Practice**	**Attribute**	**Marriage**	**Love**	**Crime**	**Time**	**Appearance**	
Total Number	7	6	4	3	1	1	1	23
Percentage (%)	13.73	11.76	7.84	5.88	1.96	1.96	1.96	45.10

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Table 18

Categorization and Percentages of Proverbs Having Positive or Negative Connotations

Connotation	Proverbs About Men only	Total Number	Percentage (%)
Positive	男兒膝下有黃金　　男子無醜相 男人三十一枝花　　男人是一層天	4	7.84
Negative	男兒不得便，刺頭泥裡陷	1	1.96
	Proverbs About Women only	**Total Number**	**Percentage (%)**
Positive	女子遲歸終吉　　女大自巧，狗大自咬 女大兩，黃金長; 女大三，黃金見	3	5.88
Negative	女人頭髮長，見識短　　女子無才便是德 女人舌頭上沒骨頭　　女大不認娘	4	7.84
	Proverbs About Both Men and Women	**Total Number**	**Percentage (%)**
Positive	/	0	0
Negative	男兒無信，寸鐵無鋼; 女人無性，爛如麻糖 女子無性，亂草漫秧; 男兒無性，鈍鐵無鋼 女子偷郎隔重紙，男子偷女隔重山	3	5.88
Positive To Men Only	男子有德便是才，女子無才便是德	1	1.96
Negative To Men Only	/	0	0
Positive To Women Only	/	0	0
Negative To Women Only	男子痴，一時迷;女子痴，無藥醫	1	1.96

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Table 19

Ranking by Occurrence in Character, Word, Idiom and Proverb Analysis

Characters Formed by:	Ranking by Occurrence
Feminine Radicals "女" and "母"	**Description of Woman (31.28%)** *(Appearance (22.56%) > Age (7.18%) > Physical Attribute (1.54%))* **> Moral Value (17.44%)** *(Bad (9.74%) > Good (7.69))* **> Family (13.85%)** *(Other Relationships (10.77%) > Mother/Daughter (3.08))* **> Marriage (8.21%)** *(Woman in Love and Marriage (5.64%) > (Woman of the Emperor (2.56%))* **> Legend (4.62%) > Offspring (4.1%)** *(Pregnancy (2.56%) > Child (1.54%))*
Masculine Radicals "子" and "父"	**Offspring (35%)** *(Prosperity (10%) / Child (10%) > Pregnancy (7.5%) / Twins (7.5%))* **> Family (30%)** *(Father/Son (22.5%) > Other Relationships (7.5%))* **> Moral Value (7.5%)** *(Good (5%) > Bad (2.5%))*
Words Formed by:	**Ranking by Occurrence**
The Feminine Character "女"	**Jobs (18.60%)** *(Slave (4.65%) > Entertainer (3.49%) / Other Jobs (3.49%) > Clergy (2.03%) > Housewife (1.45%) / Leader (1.45%) > Prostitute (1.16%) > Boatman (0.87%))* **> Legend (15.41%) > Family (14.53%)** *(Daughter (8.72%) > Other Relationships (5.81%))* **> Moral Value (13.95%)** *(Bad (4.94%) > Good (9.01%))* **> Description of Woman (11.92%)** *(Age (4.65%) > Appearance (3.78%) > Physical Attribute (3.49%))* **> Marriage (7.85%)** *(Woman in Love and Marriage (5.81%) > Woman of the Emperor (2.03%))*
The Masculine Character "男"	**Description of Man (29.89%)** *(Age (13.8%) > Appearance (8.05%) / Physical Attribute (8.05%))* **> Family (27.59%)** *(Son (25.29%) > Other Relationships (2.3%))* **> Job (13.79%)** *(Feudal Title (6.9%) > Slave (4.6%) > Other Jobs (2.3%))* **> Marriage (6.9%)** *(Man in Marriage (4.6%) > Male Concubine (2.3%))* / **Moral Value (6.9%)**
Idioms:	**Ranking by Occurrence**
About Men	Family (4.35%) > Attribute (1.45%) / Marriage (1.45%) / Appearance (1.45%)
About Women	Attribute (8. 7%) > Legend (7.25%) > Appearance (4.35%) / Love (4.35%) > Marriage (2.9%) > Speech (1.45%)
About Both Genders	Family (14.49%) / Attribute (14.49%) > Love (11.59%) > Marriage (10.14%) > Moral Value (7.25%) > Appearance (2.9%) > Speech (1.45%)
Proverbs:	**Ranking by Occurrence**
About Men	Attribute (11.76%) > Appearance (5.88%) / Family (5.88%) > Career (1.96%)
About Women	Marriage (9.8%) > Appearance (7.84%) > Attribute (5.88%) / Relationship with Mother (5.88%)
About Both Genders	Social Practice (13.73%) > Attribute (11.76%) > Marriage (7.84%) > Love (5.88) > Crime (1.96%) / Time (1.96%) / Appearance (1.96%)