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**English Language-culture and the Lifestyle of Urban Women
in Contemporary China**

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Abstract

The purpose of this research paper was study to what extent English language-culture has impacted the lifestyle of contemporary Chinese women in urban area. To be more elaborate, this research aimed at finding out how deep English and Western culture behind the language (as perceived by Chinese people) has filtered into the women's life, how large it has immersed, and how far and to which direction it is leading the women's lifestyle. In addition, this paper also tried to make clear in what way Chinese women have accepted and interpreted Western lifestyles and how the values behind lifestyles have affected the building and rebuilding of Chinese women's discourse and values of the world in a global era. Thus I focused my research questions on three aspects of Chinese women: dressing, eating and housing. Namely, I tried to answer how deep English language and Western culture has gone into Chinese women's life in the aspects of dressing culture, eating/food culture and housing culture, and what are Chinese women's versions and acceptances of English language-culture. Mainly based on some theories of language and culture, sociology and globalization, I worked out my research chiefly in a qualitative way with the help of some quantitative data. The main conclusions are: English language-culture or Western culture do have influences on the lifestyles of Chinese women; the interactions of English language-culture with Chinese women culture have resulted in different forms such as acculturation, localization/assimilation and symbiosis.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background

It is a common acknowledgement that China has experienced tremendous transformations in recent 25 years with its economic miracle and with its unprecedented political relaxed atmosphere in the party-state's history. The economic and political "earthquakes" of China have inevitably shaken Chinese society that is composed of a huge population of 1.3 billion or one quarter of the world's population. Chinese people and their lives have thus become one of the hot topics for many scholars who are interested in China and China's relations with the world in a global time (Tony Saich, Larry Diamond, Elizabeth-J-Perry...). Actually many researches have been done since 1978 to investigate different aspects of contemporary Chinese people's life. For instance, some gives an overview of Chinese people's life; some concern about various aspects of people's life, such as education, welfare and family; still some turn their eyes on different groups of Chinese people: young, old, urban, rural etc. Among all the groups of China, women, as one of the so-called weak groups have been the focus of some scholars at home or abroad and are rightly the central concern of this paper.

There are several considerations for me to pick up this seemingly much-discussed issue of Chinese women¹ and to make a close look at the urban women's lifestyles in contemporary China especially from the perspective of language and culture. In a general sense, women's condition in a society is always regarded as an important indicator to judge the society's level of development, modernity, civilization and so on, and Chinese women, accounting for one half of Chinese population and one quarter of the world women figures, are surely worth being read by sociological and humanistic scholars both for the good of Chinese women's course and for the world women's agenda. In a narrower sense, what inspired me to study Chinese women was the sharp contrast in various profiles between today's Chinese women and the women in traditional China, and this was also the reason why I concentrated my research on the lifestyle of Chinese women, for from lifestyles of a social group, one can not only be confronted with the real daily patterns and manners of a group but also pry into the spiritual keel of a group

¹ If no special reference, the term Chinese women or women in this text refers to urban women in contemporary China.

through the daily living activities. Furthermore, why I select urban woman as my research target is that women's living patterns in city can best stand for the most avant-garde lifestyles in a modern, global era, because urbanization is sometimes another name for modernity or globalization. In this way, the level of modernization or globalization in China and the developing trend of Chinese women can be well peered out.

Apart from the above the motivations, one other stimulation of my topic-choosing is the fascination of language with culture behind it. Although much has been done in the research of Chinese women regarding women's rights, women's education, women's lifestyles, women's unemployment and so on, little researches within my knowledge have been directed to women's lifestyles from a perspective of language and culture, let alone from the angle of English language-culture, which is the right beginning point for me to dig into the deeper sides of Chinese women's life. To put it more specifically, I try to approach this topic by studying the signs and marks of English language-culture in Chinese women's everyday life and vocabulary, as English is now accepted as lingua franca all over the world and is the dominant language in this globalization era. To some extent, we can say that a nation or an ethnic group of non-English speaking countries might probably be closed outside the door of development in a global world without a basic English communicable ability. In another word, the capability of communicating in English at least offers a ticket for an ethnic group to step on the global stage and also a chance for the group to have a say in today's world affairs. For this reason, an combination study of the women's life and English language/culture has special significance in understanding well the modernity degree of certain society, especially the non-English speaking developing countries in that women usually are regarded as one of the most immobile groups in a society with a patriarchal structure. This is also true when dealing with Chinese women, who have been chained more by traditional Confucian ideas that even regulated women's discourse, i. e., they were designated what should be said and what shouldn't be said for being a decent Chinese woman. Thus the direct stimulation of this particular thesis is the curiosity to find out the use and adoption of English language-culture, which stands for Yang (modern, or Western) in Chinese context, in everyday life of Chinese women, who are always expected to follow traditional rules even today.

1.2 Objectives and Research Problems

The purpose of studying English language-culture and Chinese women's lifestyle is to look at to what extent English language-culture has impacted and is impacting the lifestyle of contemporary Chinese women in urban area. Namely, based on the supposition that English language-culture has some influences on the life of Chinese women, the paper wants to find out how deep English language culture has filtered into the women's life, how large it has immersed, and how far and to which direction it is leading the women's lifestyle. In addition, this paper also tries to make clear in what way Chinese women have accepted and interpreted Western lifestyles and how the values behind lifestyles have affected the building and rebuilding of Chinese women's discourse and values of the world in a global age.

In approaching to my academic objectives, several research problems are formulated in regard to three aspects of Chinese women's life, that is, *yi*, *shi* and *zhu*, which are words often at the lips of ordinary Chinese people, and which might be approximately translated as dressing, eating and housing. These three things² have been taken as the basic activities of life by Chinese people for thousands of years and can best show the lifestyles of Chinese people, and as well as the typical lifestyles of Chinese women.

Based on the above-mentioned three aspects *yi*, *shi* and *zhu*, my research questions are as follow:

- What are the signs of English language-culture found in Chinese women's dressing culture and how do Chinese women perceive Western dressing styles in their versions?
- Are there many English/Western words and expressions of food/eating in Chinese women's daily language and how do Chinese women accept English/Western food language and culture?
- What traces of English language-culture can be found in Chinese women's housing language and how do they interpret Western style housing discourse?

In order to get more complete answers to these research questions, I arranged my thesis in the following way.

² Actually there are four things including *xing* (travelling), which I will not discuss in this paper for reasons.

1.3 Disposition

This essay is divided into 6 chapters for a smooth and clear presentation of my academic report. The first two chapters actually are given to the introduction of the whole paper: a description of the background, a statement of the purposes and research questions, an overview of the arrangement of the paper, a direction to the conceptions and theories adopted and a display of the methods used in this research. The main part, i. e., the core of my paper begins from chapter 3 with the discussion of Chinese women's dressing and English language-culture. In the following two chapters, that is, chapter 4 and chapter 5, which are also the key parts of my paper, I study the interference of English language-culture into Chinese women's food culture and housing world respectively. Then, the last chapter, chapter 6, is contributed to the conclusion of the whole research process and a prospect for further research.

2. Theoretical Framework and Methodology

2.1 Conceptions and Theories Concerned

The first and foremost group of conceptions and theories is within the sphere of linguistics and culture. One of the key conceptions in this paper is **English language-culture**, which can be sub-divided into English language and culture. I borrowed the term language-culture from Eugene A. Nida's book *Language and Culture* (Eugene A. Nida, 2001:79) and I think it is very suitable here to express my idea of looking at a culture beginning from its language. While what should be made clear at this point is that by English language-culture I don't mean only English language and its corresponding English culture but English language with the whole Western culture behind it. That I attach a wider connotation to English language-culture lies in that in Chinese context or in the eyes of Chinese people, English language with its culture almost equals to the whole Western world. "Western country" is the common phrase used to refer to English speaking countries of USA and Britain and all European countries (Marilyn Dylong 2004: 147). This view is reasonable considering that some westerners often regard Chinese language and culture as the symbol of the entire exotic eastern world. Thus the specific

meaning of English language-culture in this study should be English language and Western culture.

The theories about language-culture relations have long been established: language is a carrier of culture (Ben Rampton, 2003:74); culture can be represented by its language (Eugene A. Nida, 2001:140); “Language constitutes the most distinctive feature of a culture...it is indispensable for both the functioning and the perpetuation of the culture” ... (ibid: 140). Based on these well-accepted theories about the relation between language and culture, I set out a journey to search how far English language-culture has travelled into the central area of Chinese culture, especially Chinese women culture, and how many “travellers” of the language-culture have been stayed in the travelled land forever whether in a way of impacting the local culture or acculturating with the local culture or assimilated by the local culture.

Now we have departed a little far from language to the side of culture, knowing from the above that different cultures can have several ways of interaction with each other: acculturation, assimilation and so on. And before going further to discuss some notions of culture, it is necessary to make clear the definition of culture itself. **Culture** is a category with wide connotations. One of the most-quoted definitions of culture is Sir Edward Tylor’s: culture is “ that complex whole which includes belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society” (Tylor 1924 [orig. 1871]:1). Or in a more simply sentence, culture is “ the totality of beliefs and practices of a society.” (Nida, 2001: 78) In this research I mainly concentrated on two important aspects of culture, one is language, which I have already elaborated a little in the above, and one is lifestyle.

A lifestyle is the way of a person or a group lives, including patterns of social relations, consumption, dress and so on. It reflects an individual’s attitudes, values or worldview (Farlex: the Free Dictionary). In this thesis, I hang on three elements of Chinese women’s lifestyle, i. e. *yi*, *shi* and *zhu* to look at Chinese women’s values and attitudes.

The notions of culture and lifestyle have already walked into the sphere of sociology. Another conception of sociology in this study should be introduced here is gender, since I focus on the lifestyle of Chinese women, who constitutes one half of the

binary gender division in Chinese society. **Gender**, in spite of its biological trait of female and male sex, is more likely a term invented and constructed by society and culture, meaning “products of social and cultural processes” (McDowell 1999: 14). This gives reasons for gender scholars to describe the binary division more specifically as femininity and masculinity. Human society has been a gendered society from its very beginning and it still is and might continue to be for a long time although there have been some voices of deconstructionist feminists against “the dichotomous distinction of sexual difference as well as the mapping of gender attributes on to the bipolar division” (Ibid: 23). The structure of the gendered society is commonly regarded as a **patriarchy** one, meaning that gender is structured and falls into classes under the law of father, usually with men superior to women (Ibid: 16). It is based on these gender theories that I put Chinese women in the centre of my research.

The time and space concern for this study of Chinese women are contemporary and urban, which initiates the next group of conceptions and statements in development theories: modernity, urbanization, westernization, globalization and glocalization etc. Here I just simply outline the relations among these terms without giving further explanations, considering that these terms are familiar words for scholars and also that there isn't much space for me to pile up words in this paper. Urbanization mainly bears the meaning of modern lifestyle, so my choice is the group of Chinese women living in urban area. Westernization and globalization are words carrying almost the same significations of modernity for Eastern world; glocal or glocalization, compounded with the two words global and local, is a new conception describing the present state of globalization, which sometimes deviates unexpectedly away from the older connotation of modernization or westernization. Just like Wang Ning argued, “the globalization in culture does not merely lie in the ‘homogenization’ of culture but also in the ‘pluralization’ of different cultures ”(Wang Ning 2002: 103), for some local or Eastern or indigenous factors also meet a chance to build and reconstruct itself, to grow more visible or to interact with the global (Western) forces in this global era. It is also based on these conceptions and theories of development I started to find out to what extent English language-culture has influenced on the lifestyles of Chinese urban women.

Besides the conceptions and theories mentioned in this chapter, there are other

conceptions and theories such as dress, fashion, food, housing mode, etc. needed to be elaborated, and I will discuss them separately in the latter chapters.

2.2 Quantitative and Qualitative Research

The method I choose in doing this research is a combination of quantitative and qualitative way, or both positivist and interpretative (reflexive) ways are applied in approaching my research objectives and questions.

First in a positivistic sense and a theory-dependent deductive approach, quantity of facts or literatures are collected to testify the already widely-accepted theories, such as the language-culture theory, the lifestyle theory and glocal theory mentioned above. In detail, a questionnaire is worked out to investigate how many percentage of women adopting the Western way of living; media information in China such as women's magazines and women's websites are studied in finding out some English language-culture traces; some public places, for instance shopping mall, restaurants, café are kept in my eyesight in order to observe the frequencies of women's visiting... There are two reasons for me to use the quantitative method: one is some well-known theories in this field are suitable to be used as perspectives in illustrating my hypothesis; the other is the data collected from the quantitative or positivistic study benefits further discussions of my topic and help to build new theories of my own.

Second, more efforts have been put in a qualitative study, or in an interpretative or reflexive way to reach to some hypothesis of my own. Ethnography method is adopted to follow the daily activities of some women; interviews are arranged to some women with different background of education... Furthermore, the results are interpreted in a hermeneutic way, and gender perspective, critical theories and postmodernist principles are at hand to give an authoritative explanation of the collected data, to analyze the "asymmetries of power and special interests" (Alvesson, 2000: 110), and to have a close look at the local pictures of Chinese women. The reasons for all the above are that it is still a gendered world, that discourse and power (politics) play an important role in Chinese people's life, and that the global world is constituted with diverse local factors today. Why I stress more on the reflexive method is also because the postmodern world is filled with fragmented values and views, and even within one culture, or one lifestyle,

multi-dimensional profiles exist. Thus there isn't one theory or philosophy today that can govern the entire world, and nor is there in realizing Chinese women's life. For this, I try to see and can only see the life of Chinese women from my own perspective.

2.3 Data Selection

Considering data selection, Nanning, Guangxi is the chief place where my case study was carried out. Nanning, the capital city of Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, began its economic development in the early 1990s, when in 1992 it was designated as one of the opening cities in the country. Located in the southeast corner of China's West³ and as the capital of one of the six ethnic autonomous regions in China, Nanning once was regarded as a remote city dragging far behind the central or eastern developed or developing cities beginning their economic development immediately after 1978. This is the main concern for me to have chosen Nanning as my case study, wondering what has been happening to the women's life here since it adopted the country's opening policy later than other regions, and since its living mode once was generally conceptualized as far away from China's modernity, needless to say English language-culture. My hypothesis is that if the signs and traces of English language could be well found in the lifestyles of Nanning women, it would be an eloquent argument that the women's lifestyles in other places of China have been even more influenced by or interacted with English language-culture or western lifestyle. Besides, another concern for me to choose Nanning to do my case study is my personal convenience. As one of Nanning women, I have been living in Nanning for 12 years and have been experiencing and witnessing the changing living styles of Nanning since its economic reformation, — this may give me advantage to do a reliable and valid study of the lifestyles of Nanning women.

In subjects choosing, the age consideration is within 20-50, which is the prime period in a woman's life. The background concerns of the subjects are various, hoping to include as many as possible women with diverse occupations, identities within my research so as to reach to more convincing conclusions.

Apart from doing case study for getting primary data, I refer to a large amount of secondary data to reinforce my study. Both English and Chinese documents including

³ The West China is regarded as the underdevelopment part of China in contrast to the developed East China.

books, academic papers, magazines relating to such topics as Chinese women lifestyle, language and culture are collected, read and studied in order to support my research.

2.4 Limitations

There are some limitations that are beyond my effort to overcome or because of some unfavourable objective conditions.

First, place limitation. Notwithstanding that I have strong reasons to choose Nanning as my case study, the choice of only one place might not be enough to illuminate the women of all the places in China, assuming that China is such a large country with different geography characters.

Second, subjects limitation. For the same reason of large and diverse regions of China, subjects chosen only in Nanning might also seem to be insufficient to have a good epitome of the lifestyle of Chinese women, who are constituted by 56 ethnic groups, each with its own typical lifestyle of women.

Third, time limitation. Six months' concentration on the somewhat bigger topic is still a little hastily for me to write an overall and profound article on the lifestyle of Chinese women, although I have tried hard to go detail in certain aspects of Chinese women described in this paper.

Fourth, data limitation. Because of time shortage, data collection might not have been enough in quantity. What's more, the lack of documents on this specific topic from the perspective of English language-culture may also add some difficulties to the research.

All in all, in spite of these limitations I stick to go as deep and overall as possible to fix my attention on the three aspects (*yi*, *shi*, and *zhu*) of women's lifestyle, which surely can contribute something meaningful and helpful to those interesting in the topic of Chinese women.

3. English Language-culture and Women's Dressing Style

3.1 Dressing in Chinese Women Culture Context

Dressing is, in basic sense, something to put on human body to protect a person from heat

or cold of the nature world. In a sociological and a gender sense, dressing of a certain group also reflects the social and gender realities. So in this paper what I mean by dressing is not only the clothing put on body but also the decorations done to body such as cosmetics, body modifications that carry rich social and gender signs.

Dressing (*yi*), put at the head of the Chinese phrase ____ (*yishizhuxing*) is not without reasons in Chinese culture context. It is not only something to shed the human body from rain and cold, under the traditional Confucianism emphasizing social ethic, it was also the first and foremost thing among the other three personal factors (*shi*, *zhu* and *xing*) for an individual to enter society and to perform social activities, because social activities or the state's affair or __ (*sheji*) was regarded by Chinese people as the biggest thing above all the private activities. In order to take part in the great social and state events, an individual should first make sure the dress he/she wore be up to his/her identity, even he/she didn't have enough to eat or a decent house to live in. Without the right dress put on him a Chinese would not like to or be allowed to go out to take part in social activities, and some even felt shameful to go out for fear of "loosing face" (*diunian*). All these might be good grounds for the order arrangement of the Chinese phrase *yi*, *shi*, *zhu* and *xing*.

The dressing affairs of Chinese women in history certainly were prescribed by social ethic norms, and more than that it was characterized by gendered criterions. It is widely known that traditional Chinese women were collectively positioned under fathers and sons, as illustrated by the saying *sanchong* (three obediences): obedient to Father before marriage, obedient to her husband after marriage and obedient to her sons if her husband died. In such a male-superior society, the dress style of Chinese women had been built and rebuilt according to different patriarchy dynasties in history. For example, during the time of Warring States, women in Chu kingdom wore tighter clothing as possible and some even died of hunger for extremely losing weight because Chu Wang (the king of Chu) preferred slim waist (Mao Xiuyue 2000:5); while in Tang dynasty women rushed to be more fat because of the emperor's most favourite concubine was a fat beauty Yang. Women in Song dynasty might be said suffered most because they were forced or willingly to bind their feet to the size of three *cun*⁴, which was appreciated by men of the

⁴ *Cun* is one of Chinese length measurement. One *cun* equals to 3.3333cm.

time and was given a beautiful name as lotus-feet. This most notorious custom about women's dressing (body modification) in patriarchy China had lasted for one thousand years till the establishment of Republic of China in 1912. Before the Republican China was the last feudalistic dynasty of China, the Qing dynasty, when the women's typical clothing *qipao* (cheongsam) not only followed the way of Manchu male's clothing (Mu Lin & others 1995: 126), but also a testimony of Manchu ethnic group's domination of Han nationality and cultural interaction with Han people.

In fact, the tradition of male-catering dressing style of women and of attaching women's dressing to the importance of state affairs has also remained through the 20th century. Women in May Fourth Movement⁵ cut short their hair in Western style and wore short coats and skirts owing chiefly to the country's new culture movement at the time, which advocated modern and Western ideas in building a strong China to get rid of the heavy oppressions of imperialism and feudalism; women in Republican China of 1930s picked up cheongsam again both guided by the state course of enlarging national style and by the Chinese males preference to *qipao*, regarding it suited well to the curvaceous body of Chinese⁶; women in People's Republic of China during Mao's time (1949-1978) could be said experienced the most unified and colorless time in dressing history of Chinese women, with women all the country wearing the blue or green jackets and trousers, following Chairman Mao's words that women were able to hold up half the sky, and that Chinese women were more handsome in soldier's uniform⁷. No wonder this period has been described by some scholars as "the erasure of gender and sexuality" (Rosemary Roberts: 2004).

Now comes the post-Mao period of economic reformation and opening-up to the world from 1978. Women's dressing styles have changed sharply in comparison with the previous Maoist time. What does women's dressing like today after 25 years of reformation and opening policy? Do the Chinese state interests and Chinese male gender still have a strong say in Chinese women's dressing? In the following I try to answer these questions through studying the words and vocabulary that today's urban women frequently use in their dressing activities.

⁵ It is a massive student movement in 1919.

⁶ At that time Qipao had been reformed to well shown the beauty of female body, and had become the national clothing of China.

⁷ This is a very popular line of Chairmen Mao's: *Zhonghua ernu duoqichi, buai hongzhuang aiwuzhang*.

3.2 English Language-culture in Chinese Women's Dressing World

The flourish of economy brings the prosperity of culture, including the women's dressing culture. The opening policy has not only opened doors for the foreign economic investment, but also inevitably opened a channel for foreign, mainly Western culture to flood in, which might be beyond the original design of Chinese governors. Anyhow as one element of living culture, the dressing of Chinese women has been obviously modernized or westernized so that many borrowed terms of Western origins are at the lips of ordinary Chinese women. Here I mainly refer to expressions of English origins in Chinese women's dressing vocabulary, as English is a lingua franca and regarded by Eastern people as a representation of Western culture. And dressing in this context includes fashionable clothes, cosmetics and body modification/decoration.

The English word **fashion**, or *shizhuang* (clothing of the time) in Chinese, is a word much spoken by Chinese women in recent 20 years and also a word appearing most frequently in advertisements of women's clothing. From my memories no *shizhuang* was talked about by my mother's generation or in my early girlhood of 1970s. Only from 1980s has the word *shizhuang* been confronted to the eyes and spoken by the mouths of Chinese women young and old. In fact there is no such a word found in Chinese language before 1978 when Chinese women applied the word *yifu* (clothing) to generalize all kinds of clothes put on human body. More specific names were given when referring to certain style of clothes, such as *tangzhuang* (clothes of the Tang Dynasty style), *qipao*, *zhongshanzhuang* (clothes of Sun Yet-san style) etc. Now although *tangzhuang*, *qipao* are sometimes still at the mouths of Chinese women, they are much less spoken to compared with the word *shizhuang*. By searching the words *shizhuang* and *tangzhuang* in Chinese on Internet, the results show there are 7, 590,000 items concerning the first while only 534,000 including the Chinese word *tangzhuang* (Google Searching). In Nanning, *shizhuangdian* (fashion shops) are everywhere in the shopping mall, in downtown, in streets, and even in back streets or on university campus⁸. Go shopping in *shizhuangdian* or just enjoy wandering in the shops become one of the fixed activities of Nanning women to spend spare time. My investigation shows that 80% women go to

⁸ There are three fashion shops on the campus of my university: Guangxi University for Nationalities

shizhuangdian once or twice every week, that fashion shows are held every season or even every month by fashion dealers⁹.

Then what **brands of fashion** clothes are on the models of these *shizhuangdian* and on the body of Chinese women? Browsing the women's magazines and women's websites¹⁰, you are amazed at the loud advertisements of women fashions, most of which are Western brands or English brands with some translated in Chinese. Going to the second largest department store in Nanning city, in the section of women's fashion, you can find a long catalogue of world famous brands: Triumph, Embry Form, Maniform, Valentino, Pierre Cardin, Christian Dior, Chanel, Nike... When answering the question what western brands of clothes you like, about 78% of my subjects choose Triumph, Embry Form, Maniform for underwear, and also over 80% choose Valentino, Pierre Cardin and Chanel for coats. Under the question of "Have you noticed the Western-styled clothes in Vogue magazines or advertisements, only 10% answer "No", while 30% give the answer "Yes, very much", 40% choose "Yes, sometimes" and 20% reply "Yes, I have". One interesting thing I noticed is that even some Chinese famous brands of women's *shizhuang* are given in English besides their Chinese names, For example A & B underwear (AB *neiyi*), Three Gun (*Sanqiang*), Yonger (*yageer*)...

Another fact is, because of the high price of some world brands of fashions, there are only less than 30% women in my questionnaire have bought clothes of famous world brands, although that most of the women investigated are familiar with the names of these brands. Nevertheless, women wearing Western-style clothes with names borrowed from English/Western origins are very popular in cities, and these words can be said have become important expressions in China's apparel vocabulary. The word Suit (*xifu*, or clothes of western style) is so popular in use that it also becomes business clothes for businesswomen or office women. For those who prefer casual clothes, T-shirts, jeans are in their daily wearing as my investigation shows over 90% of women have worn T-shirts and jeans. For the younger group of my women subjects (aged 20-35), except hip-exposed trousers (*loudianzhuang*) are the least choices for them, sun-top (*diaodai yiqun*), backless blouse (*loubei yiqun*), half-shirt (*louqishan*), and tank tops (belly-exposed shirt) are often on their bodies in summer, which apparently goes out of the line of Chinese

⁹ More detailed information about my investigation, questionnaire and interviews can be found in my fieldwork report.

¹⁰ A list of magazines and websites is put at the end of this paper.

traditional moral rules. By the rules a decent Chinese woman was not allowed to wear clothing exposing her body.

Besides clothes put on their bodies, how is English language-culture found in **beauty culture**? Now Chinese women talk much about hairdressing (*meirong meifa*), and you frequently encounter young and middle-aged women wandering in streets in curled or yellow/brown-dyed hairstyle. In washing and protecting their hair, such English shampoo products as Head and Shoulder, Pantene, Rejoice are within their favorite choices as illustrated by my investigation that 42% of the respondents of my questionnaire like to use Head and Shoulder, 35% like to buy Rejoice. Apart from hair caring, many urban Chinese women go to beauty parlors to entrust the beauty of their faces, eyes, brows, and skin and so on to the professional beauticians. According to my questionnaire results, 48% of women go to beauty parlors if time permitted, and 30% visit beauty parlors regularly and only 5% never set foot in the parlors. Beauty parlor or *meirongyuan* is certainly a new word in Chinese women's life after reformation and a list of English or Western names of beauty parlor is frequently at the lips of Chinese women: Balincan (France), Jungfrau (Swiss), Alisha (Britain), Avon... Accompanying with the hot trend of beautification, cosmetic products have been selling well among Chinese women. Avon, Pond's, Maybelline, Olay and others are well sold in China (60% women have tried the products), and Anna Sui, Estee Lauder, Christian Dior are no longer strange names for Chinese women (50% of my respondents know these name) when they want to buy perfume to make their bodies sweet-scented. If we go deep in beauty culture, we can find women's body itself is modified again in contemporary China. When such words as *canzu* (footbinding), *shuxiong* (breast-binding) are long on the display of Chinese women's language museum, some Western-borrowed words as *longxiong* (breast-setting), *zhengxing* (plastic operation) come into today's women language.

So many English/Western expressions of dressing have come into the daily language of Chinese women. Not only so, many Chinese local brands of fashion or names of Chinese cosmetics are given in English language or both Chinese and English. Then what messages can we get from these new words and phrases of Chinese women language in comprehending Chinese women's dressing style and the values of Chinese women behind their dressing styles?

3.3 Chinese Women's Version of English/Western Dressing Language

Language, as we know is not only a tool for communications between nations or cultures but the carrier of thinking and values of its corresponding culture. What else, when words and expressions of a source language-culture are introduced into a target language-culture, it isn't simply that all the values of the source language culture are introduced fully without any loss. Instead, most probably the target language-culture would accept and digest the newly introduced foreign words in its own ways. Then how do Chinese women accept and interpret the English/Western words and expressions in dressing sphere?

First, these English/Western words mainly are translated in two ways, one is chiefly transliteration; one is a combination of transliteration and free translation. In transliteration, the pronunciation of the original language is imitated by giving Chinese characters with the closest pronunciation with the origin and without specific meanings: *huanluntiannu* (Valentino), *pier kadan* (Pierre Cardin), *kelisiding diao* (Christian Dior) and *xianaier* (Chanel) etc. are translated in this way, purposing to attract Chinese modern women with the exotic flavours of foreign brands. In the combination method of transliteration and free translation, brands names are translated with Chinese characters having close sounding of the source language but with meanings sometimes far away from the original. In another word, the pronunciations of the translated names are seemingly the same as the source English/Western names but meanings of these names are native Chinese, and mostly are familiar and feminine expressions of Chinese women. A good example is the shampoo name Head & Shoulders, which is translated into Chinese as *Haifeisi* or ____, meaning literally as sea_fly and hair_or imaginably as hair flowing in sea. The same is true with the following groups of translation:

English/Western language	Chinese pronunciation	Chinese Character	Chinese meaning
Rejoice	<i>piaorou</i>	___	waving and soft
Pantene	<i>panting</i>	___	a name of a slim girl
Olay	<i>yulanyou</i>	___	cream of fragrant white flower
Avon	<i>yafang</i>	___	elegant and fragrant

Pond's	<i>pangshi</i>	—	a Chinese family name
Nike	<i>naike</i>	—	durable
Triumph	<i>daiianfen</i>	—	a name of Western women
Maniform	<i>mannifen</i>	—	a name of Western woman
Embry Form	<i>anlifang</i>	—	a name of Western woman

Here in translation of the English/Western brand names of fashion or cosmetics, Western and Chinese/local culture interacts. Then what are the interacting results? From the above translation examples, it is evident that the Chinese/local flavour dominates the translated English brand names. Even if sometimes Western women's names are used in translating women's underwear such as Triumph and Maniform, the corresponding translated names still hide such typical Chinese character as *fen* or *fang* (sweet and fragrant) if carefully studied, which is also true with some translations done seemingly in a whole transliteration way. For instance Valentino is pronounced in Chinese as *Hualuntiannu*, written in Mandarin as ____, meaning China, moral, sky and slave when translated word-for-word. If trying to attach some meaning to the four characters, they might imply that the clothes of this brand are so good that it is ranked No.1 quality in China and even the sky lowers itself down in slave rank¹¹.

Second, as Peter Newmark argued that “translation should ‘correct’ source material in the name of the ‘moral facts as known’” (Flotow 2004: 24), the localized translations in a way show the traditional Chinese values about women, who have been required by ethic rules of Confucianism to be tender, soft, virtuous and act in a feminine way. Thus we find __fen__, __fang__, __ya__, __rou__ in translation, all showing feminine softness, gracefulness and elegance. It's not difficult to perceive that the patriarchal and gendered society is still there to guide and direct women's life view and women themselves have been nurtured with these gendered values.

Third, not only the patriarchal and gendered order is there but the national interest exerts its guiding role in the national women's clothing style, as Perry pointed out “the image of ‘modern woman’ carries not only ideas about acceptable femininity but also of national identity (Perry 1998: 18). The sharp changing of women's clothing style itself,

¹¹ This is just my own imaginary interpretation and it doesn't mean seriously. There might be several ways to interpret these four characters.

that is from the uniformity, 'genderless' jackets and pants of Maoist time to the diverse dressing features of Post-Mao period after 1978, has verified the strong power of Chinese one-party nation state to use women in constructing its national identity, as it has always been in history. In the Maoist period the dull-colored and oneness clothing style of the previous time spoke strongly for Mao Zedong's idea that Chinese communist had realized the advanced ideal of gender equality as in Mao's saying "*shidai butonle, nannv douyiyang*" (the age is different now and the male and female are all the same) (People's Daily 1965); while today's colorful and even seemingly Western-overwhelmed clothing style of Chinese women again help set up the nation's image before the world: China now is an economically developing and opening country, and also going on the way to a free and democratic state.

However, Chinese women's version of Western-styled clothing does not stop at the point of expressing traditional culture with its gender and patriarchy traits and with its national interest, it goes on to show more or less two things at least: the imperative globalization/westernization forces and the growing self-consciousness of Chinese women. The popularity of westernized or globalized T-shirts, sun-tops, backless blouses among younger women in my case study of Nanning can be observed as a strong imposition of globalization and westernization sometimes beyond the state's control and beyond the bottom line of traditional Chinese culture, for such over-exposed clothing style was, is and will never be allowed in traditional Confucianism. Anyhow this fact indicates "the strong (First World) cultures more and more penetrate the weak (Third World) cultures" (Wang Ning 2002: 106). What's more, when asked why you like to wear body-exposed clothes, and why you go so often to beauty parlor, almost all interviewees of mine give the answer of self-preference or self-building or strengthening self-confidence rather than the reason of catering to the eyes of male or the traditional saying *fuweiyuejizherong* (a woman dresses herself for her lover). So a woman's body itself rather than a man she loves is the specific reason for her to decorate her body, to build her body, to wear fashionable clothes and to go to beauty parlors. It is a woman as human being rather than as a lover, wife or mother who is carefully concerned.

What need to be said is that although women's self-consciousness has been well established in Chinese women's ideology now, it is still a long way to go before Chinese

women really become independent in reality, which is a much complicated topic and is beyond my academic study here.

4 English Language-culture and Chinese Women's Food Flavour

4.1 Notion of Food in Chinese Women Culture

Food, things for human being to eat for the purpose of maintaining life, is put at the second place in the Chinese idiom *yi,shi,zhu* and *xing*. *Shi* (food or eating) might be regarded by Chinese ordinary people as the first important element for living as the saying *minyishi weitian* (people regard food as sky)¹², in spite that Confucian ideology put it second after ethics or the interest of the state (*sheji*). Another idiom *Buchi jueiazhishi* (Don't eat anything offered at the cost of losing your dignity even you are dying of hunger) is a good evident to show food's ranking under ethic or morality. However, it is after all the most important factor for an individual to survive, for a group to continue, and for a culture to be maintained. Thus, food and its relevant affairs are still in the centre of people's life, kings or common people as well. Food affairs or food culture in a nation or in a group are as old as a nation or an ethnic group itself. Chinese nation, as a nation of cultivation culture with the relatively steady living environment, has favourable time and places for people to cook and develop their cooking skills. Now Chinese food is world famous for its typically diverse national styles such as *Sichuan* food, *Guangdong* food and *Miao* ethnic food.

Chinese women can be called the main creators and builders of Chinese food culture, owing to several social and gender reasons. Firstly according to social and gender division, housework has ever been appointed to women by the tradition patriarchy structure, and cooking food, the center of housework, certainly has always been the main work of women. Secondly female as a gender of less stronger for its biological characters such as menstruation and birth-giving has been considered more suitable to stay at home doing housework including food-cooking. Thirdly in order to meet well the physical and psychological desires of the superior male gender, the inferior female gender of Chinese women has been trained from their births to do kitchen work and learn cooking, and all

¹² *Tian* (sky), has the highest position in China, as emperors are called the sons of sky.

the way through their girlhoods, their womanhoods till their old ages in order to cater to the tastes of men. And lastly in the process of their daily learning and doing cooking, some hardworking and wise Chinese women often make new discoveries or creations in cooking, adding much to the national gastrology. In a word, “kitchen is the departure and arrival point of a woman” (Xu Kun & Wang Hongqi 2003: 48). One may argue that Chinese males have also played an important part in building Chinese food culture and the high-skilled chefs are mostly men — true it is, it is also true that this statement shows again the patriarchal authority of Chinese society, where only men have been visible even in the field of housework like cooking, and that some excellent women cooks have seldom been recorded in orthodox cuisine history.

Nevertheless Chinese women’s great contributions in cooking have been remembered and wide-spread among common people and their dishes of marvellous creations have been passed through from ancient time. The names of some well-known food or dishes are good evidences of this. Today we have *Laopuobing* (wife’s cake), *Laoganma* (Aunt Tao’s Chili Sauce), *Axiangpo* (Chili Sauce of Grandma A Xiang), *Xuetaogan* (dried beancurd of the poetess Xuetao of Tang dynasty) and *mapodoufu* (bean curd of pock-faced Grandma Chen) etc. And there are also some touching stories related to women behind some famous Chinese food, and *Guoqiao mixian* — rice noodles on the other side of the bridge, is one of them. It is a story about how a careful wife in Yunnan province found a good method to use chicken soup to keep the rice noodles warm when the wife went all the way across the bridge to put the noodles in the hands of her husband working in the field on the other side of the bridge. Anyway these food names and stories relating to women at least indicate Chinese women’s good patience in making food, their love for their family members and their wisdom in cooking. All these, the patience, the love and the wisdom help to construct some of special traits of Chinese traditional food, i. e., slow-cooking, fine-designing and health-caring.

4.2 English Food Vocabulary in Chinese Women’s Language

Refine, careful and healthy as they are, Chinese women’s language of food can no longer be confined within traditional Chinese. With the invading of Western food culture after China’s opening up to the West, Chinese women, especially women in urban China are

confronted or have to be confronted with Western food language mostly in English. Here a list of English words relating to food affairs is given together with their Chinese pronunciation, characters and translations.

English words	Chinese pronunciation	Chinese character	Chinese meaning
Coffee	<i>kafei</i>	—	_no specific meaning_
Bread	<i>mianbao</i>	—	flour cake
Hamburger	<i>hanbao(bao)</i>	—	_no specific meaning_
Sandwich	<i>sanmingzhi</i>	—	_no specific meaning_
Pizza	<i>bisa</i>	—	_no specific meaning_
Beef steak	<i>niupa_pai_</i>	—	braised beef _steak_
Salad	<i>sela</i>	—	_no specific meaning_
Chips	<i>shutiao</i>	—	potato bar
MacDonald	<i>maidanglao</i>	—	_no specific meaning_
KFC	<i>kendeji</i>	—	_no specific meaning_

The list is still extending and the group of women exposed to Western-styled food is enlarging in big cities and even in smaller cities at the county's level. About the question "Have you ever had such Western-styled fast food as hamburger, sandwich, pizza, and beefsteak?" the questionnaire result shows that over 90% women give "yes". Also over 90% of them say that they have eaten MacDonald or KFC. What's more, Western eating style has more or less changed the women's eating habit or the traditional eating contents. As I investigated out, two thirds of my respondents have milk, bread and eggs for their breakfast, which is in a quite different way from their traditional Chinese breakfast of *xifan* (porridge), *doujiang* (soybean milk), *youtiao* (fried cake) and *mantou* (steamed bread). Regarding the most favourite soft drink, my subjects of Nanning women's choices of coca-cola, coffee, and juice are equal to that of green tea. This is an unexpected result for me at first, but I feel reasonable later on finding that most of the women who like to drink cola or coffee or juice are among the ages of 20-35.

Though words and phrases from English food vocabulary and the ways of Western eating habits are also adopted by other groups of Chinese society, especially youngster groups, it has a special significance to do an investigation on the changes of women's food vocabulary and eating habits. Women, as mentioned above, have played a very

important part in constructing Chinese food culture. For this reason, their changing language and eating style inevitably lead to the change of the national food culture. But here what I want to find out is to what extent women's language and ways of eating have changed with entering of Western food culture? And how do Chinese women accept these words, phrases and food of Western style?

4.3 Chinese Women's Attitudes toward Western Food

I'll start again from the translation of English food vocabulary into Chinese. As shown by the above list of Chinese translations of English words, most of the translations are done in transliterations instead of literal and free translation for the original meanings. The reason is self-evident considering that the sharp differences between Chinese food and English food. Even if the materials for cooking sometimes are the same, their ways of cooking differ widely, the causes of which may be connected with various factors such as weather, geography, thinking modes, social ethics and so on that are beyond the sphere of this paper. Anyhow the fact is that it is almost impossible to find equivalent expressions for those food not found in Chinese traditional food list. So the easy way and best way to translate them is of course transliteration: just the sounds are pronounced in a close way without any meaning attached.

Then how do Chinese women accept the wholly new expressions of foreign translations and what are their attitudes towards the intruding of Western food culture? The acceptance and attitudes should be analyzed according to different ages and in various aspects.

Viewing from age difference, it is apparently that the younger group of 20-35 is easier to accept the new expressions of food and Western way of eating, with 90% in my investigation showing their preference for Western fast food and Western drinks (coffee especially). This in a most part owes to the advantages of younger age. The younger women in today's China were born or grew up mostly in the era of reformation, and they are confronted more with the air of globalization and Westernization than their elder sisters or former generations. Furthermore most of them have better commands of English than the elder group does, as they have learned English for over four years, — which also means they have chances to know more and to understand more about

Western culture including Western food culture, because language is a carrier of culture. So they are more open-minded and ready to accept new things of English language and Western culture, and at the same time they are less stuck to the old ways of Chinese culture including food culture and eating habits.

However generally speaking Chinese women's acceptance of Western food culture mainly stopped at language layer and at the time when their curiosities for exotic food are fulfilled. In other words, many as they know English food names and much as they go to MacDonald or Pizza Hut, they don't really or wholly take the Western food in as an inseparable part of their eating habits. This can be illustrated by the fact that although 100% of my subjects say they have been to Western style restaurants and have tasted the food, only 20% of whom really enjoy the eating. When asked why they frequently go to the Western restaurants since they do not really like the food, most of my interviewees say they go there for accompanying their children, and some reply that they just stay there for the exotic atmosphere.

So there is a distance between Chinese women and Western food style, or the attitudes of Chinese women toward Western food culture are somewhat passive. The first and foremost reason may be the deep-rooted Chinese women's ideas (or gendered values) of food affairs: a woman's cooking skill shows her morality and wisdom. Because of this idea, women always spend time and take patience to cook a delicious dish in order to entertain men. This idea of cooking with patience and for health and enjoyment of men is obviously in contrast with the modern Western/American idea of food affairs symbolized by fast food/fried food, which in the eyes of Chinese women lacks patience, nutrition and tender feelings for their husbands or families. Besides, another important reason is the sharp or uncompromisable disparities between Chinese food custom and Western food custom. The fact that the translations of English food vocabulary is often in the way of transliteration, giving strange and foreign names instead of finding closest equivalent Chinese names, well expounds the non-amalgamation parts of the two cultures, which, unlike the localization of Western dressing style, can be called a state of symbiosis of Western and Eastern/Chinese food culture. This is the status quo in China as well as in the globalized world and may continue to be in the future.

5. Women's Housing Conceptions and English Language-culture

5.1 Women and Housing in Traditional China

Zhu (housing) is arranged after *Yi* and *shi* in the Chinese idiom *yisizhuxing*, may have more importance for Chinese women. Here, *zhu* with its connotations of a house, a home and a family is rightly the place a woman should confine herself in according to the values of the gendered and patriarchal Chinese society. The origin and image of the Chinese character *女* (*fu*, meaning woman) show well a woman's designated space in a house. As we know Chinese characters have "pictorial nature" or a "visual quality" (Mingdong Gu 2002: 102), we can perceive that the word *女* in its ancient form was composed of the image of a woman doing sweeping with a broom, so here came the meaning of the word *fu* in origin: *fu* (*funv* in modern pronunciation) is a person who should do cleaning and cooking in a house, in a home and for a family. Chinese wives are given the names as *jiatingzhufu* (the head woman of the family) or *guanjiapo* (woman who manages the housework) — this tells us the traditional binary division of labour, which ordains men should work outside and women labour at home for the benefit of the whole family; and on the other hand it shows again the importance of a house to a woman, a queen or a common woman as well.

It can be said a house was a place where a woman usually spent her lifetime and achieved her meaning of life as a woman in a Chinese traditional sense, which was in a gendered way and required a Chinese woman to follow the *Side* (Four morals), the four chief behaviour standards of Chinese women: *fude* (women's moral rules), *fuyan* (women's manners of speaking and behaviour), *furong* (women's right dressing) and *fugong* (women's labour in housework). A house, where there was a home and family for her to be responsible for, was the right place to perform her *Side*. Actually *Side* was constructed for protecting men's superior power in a house, in a home and in a family and at the same time for restraining women's self-development and for oppression of women (Helong Li 1988: 21). Following the *Side*, a woman in fact had no real life of her own, or she had been deprived of the right of being herself. As a girl, she was even circled within certain space in a house, that is, *damen buch*, *ermen bumai* (a girl shouldn't go out of the first door and better stay within the second door). As a wife, she should stay

forever in the house of her husband, in the home and family of her husband, even her husband died young, and she was oppressed any desire of remarrying or going back to her maternal house. As a grandma, although she had some place in the house/home/family, she still would not own the house for it belonged to the sons even her husband died. In a word, in traditional China, a house was very important for a woman was just in the sense that it was a place for her to fulfill her lifelong task to serve for the men in the house, so a woman had not, did not and would never have a house of her own.

Nevertheless this state began to change in th20th Century, when the May Fourth Movement with its slogans of fighting against imperialism and feudalism opened a door for Western democratic and feminist ideas to come in. At that time, many women, especially young and educated women went out of their houses to find a way for their own life aims in the society. We had such great women as Song Qinglin¹³, Song Meiling¹⁴, and Qiu Jin¹⁵ etc., who, instead of confining themselves in a house, had worked independently or hand in hand with their husbands for a better future of Chinese nation (Hellen Snow 1985: 96-194). During the Maoist period, although described by some as a time of “erasure of gender and sexuality”, women had got more equal rights with men to go out and work as they were encouraged by Chairmen Mao to “hold up half the sky”. Then came the age of reform and opening-up to the West after 1978, and also came the age the diverse values on women’s living and working space. Until now the different views about women’s living areas coexist in China, with one extreme point appealing for women’s going back home, and with another extreme point effected by Western feminism (Dai Jinhuan 1999: 36-37) calling for women’s absolute independence without being confined to a house, a home or a family. All in all, the diversity itself manifests the improved understandings of Chinese women’s housing, home and family conceptions, which are not without relations with the opening to the West.

5.2 English Language-culture and Chinese Women’s Housing culture

Compared with *yi* and *shi*, it seems that we can find less English/Western vocabulary directly used in the daily language of Chinese women in their houses, or homes or

¹³ The wife of Dr. Sun Yat-sen.

¹⁴ The wife of *Chiang Kai-Shek*.

¹⁵ The first woman revolutionist in China in the revolution of 1911.

families. Nevertheless I try to give some Western-borrowed expressions in their language and in their daily activities in a house.

The word “sofa” might be first-noted in a house. It is certainly a borrowed word from the West to be frequently referred to by Chinese men and women as well. In a traditional Chinese house there is no such a piece of furniture as “sofa” for family members to sit in or to relax themselves. What was very popular for people to sit in then was called *yizi* — a kind of armchair made of wood, with refined woodcarving arts and crafts. But now Chinese women can comfortably throw themselves in sofa after a day’s working, watching TV or talking with their family members. Then for sleeping, the word “Simmons” comes to our ears. Today over 90% Chinese urban females, no matter a girl, a single women or a wife sleep on a Simmons, which is thicker or might be softer and more comfortable than Chinese *chuangdian* (mattress) in the eyes of young and middle-aged Chinese women¹⁶. Then in a home, Colgate, Crest, and Darlie are words spoken to by most of women of my questionnaire investigation when they want to brush their teeth, and microwave oven, roaster, induction cooker are used side by side with Chinese traditional kitchenwares like iron ovens in Chinese women’s kitchen to cook food. Some of the food cooked are completely Western-styled such as bread, salad as I have discussed in the previous chapter. And besides typical Chinese chopsticks and bowls used for eating, forks, knives and plates are sometimes also put on the table. And then in a family, a newly-married young wife is not uncommon to call her bridegroom “Dear” or “My dear” although the Chinese *laogong*, an affectionate and popular appellation for husband, is also widely used by Chinese women young and old; for newly-born baby, the direct English calling “baby” was used by some young mothers besides the Chinese *xinganbaobei* (heart and precious thing), *xiaocuocuo* (little ugly thing)¹⁷ etc.

As to when and how these borrowed English/Western words came into Chinese people especially Chinese women’s housing, home and family vocabulary, I have no time and effort or space in this paper to study them, though they always arouse my interest. However it is necessary to give some words to Chinese women’s daily living activities within a house (home/family) in the aspects affected by Western living style. First, living

¹⁶ Some old women still give their preferences to *dianzhi* made of cotton or palm.

¹⁷ In Chinese custom, an ugly name may bring the child happiness and fortune in the future.

room is another place for today's women spending much time in a house/home apart from kitchens. Just as I have said above, they relax themselves in sofa in a living room, drinking tea or coffee, watching TV or having a chat. Then before they go to their Simmons bed, they often have a bath in a bathtub, cleaning their body with fragrant shower creams of American or European brands. Putting on a bath-gown in her bathed body, she may say "good night" to her children or her husband. Or if she is somewhat rich, she may have a private swimming-pool in her large open courtyard of the house, swimming in it or lying in the beachchair enjoying the sunshine...

These living modes of Chinese women in a house surely imply something more if we go deep into the discourse or values behind the living modes

5.3 Chinese Women's Housing Discourse

It is not simply that we hear Chinese women mention sofa, Simmons, or call "dear" and "baby", it is something concerning the changes of values and discourses of Chinese women behind these callings need our further discussions.

In a feminist perspective, throwing herself in sofa or staying in living rooms watching TV, or hearing music, indicates that Chinese women today have the discourse in other places in a house, in a home and in a family. In Foucault's discourse theory, they can have the power to give a say in these respects. According to Foucault, discourse refers both to a theory on the construction of power relations in a society and to a method by which to approach various 'texts' of a society (Perry Johansson 1998: 21). Foucault's discourse is constitutive, and "the subjective reality is created, or produced by human activities, especially language" (ibid: 45). As we know in traditional China, women's spaces were mainly confined in her room and kitchen rather than living room, let alone pools even it was private. They were called *zhufanpo* or *huangnianbo* by their husbands, meaning wives with their faces black with coal smoke in the kitchen. Now the sofa, the Simmons, the TV, the living room all show women's rights to foot into every corner of their houses, to use freely every facilities in a home and to talk equally with her husband, her son and her friends. So the spaces for women are enlarged. She occupies not only much more time in a comfortable bathtub, but can swim in the sun as long and free as possible. Even a husband in China now likes to give a little more space to women, as he

often says that he'd like to marry a wife who is good at cooking in kitchen and at managing socially in a living room¹⁸, where usually was a place for female genders of a family to deal with family affairs or clan affairs.

Her discourse in these respects accordingly gives her a sense of self-importance or mastership identity. In the mainstream Confucian culture, women's identity and self-worth have been defined and interpreted only in relation to others as daughter, wife and mother. This new view of herself leads to a new value of life. Now she is also the owner of the house rather than property of her husband, the protagonist of the home rather than a high-ranked lady-in-waiting and a decision-maker of the family rather than the obedient. Life seems to be more meaningful and promising, for there is an aim of her own waiting for her to realize, not just of her husband's or of her son's. Here we can say women's self-consciousness rises, and they regard themselves as individual, as independent human being instead of something belonging to her father or husband's home and family.

To go more to a extreme point, some avant garde Chinese women, like their Western sisters, choose to be single and to have a house of their own (Xu Kung & Wang Hongqi 2003: 50-51), where women have the possibility to get rid of the roles and identities imposed on her by patriarchal social structure as a wife, a mother and a grandmother. This phenomenon is not without the influence of Western feminist ideas introduced in China with the open-door police. Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own* (translated by Ma Aixin 2003), is translated and widely read among Chinese women; Semone de Bourvir's *Le deuxième Sexe* was translated and retranslated (Tao Tiezhu 2004; Shang Zhuying 1986); Luise von Flotow's *Translation and Gender* (Flotow 2004) was put on the shelves of many Chinese scholars... All these Western feminist works introduced into China help much in waking up Chinese women's self-consciousness and building their own feminist discourse in contemporary China.

Nevertheless there is still a long way for Chinese women to go in order to have an equal discourse with men in every aspect, and a long way for every Chinese woman to have a "room of her Own". Men still have a superior place in a house, in a home and a family. Compared with *yi* and *shi*, a house with a home and a family in it is a more

¹⁸ This is a popular saying of men today.

private space where there is a door to close the outside world and a roof to cover the most private and most real personalities. For these obstacles, a house might be more solid in holding the old way of living and be the last place to let in new and fresh air. Again some linguistic evidences can be good examples. Today such expressions as *neirong* (a person who stays inside house) and *jialide* (a person who is in my home) are still used to call Chinese wife and understood well by every Chinese. The closeness and conservatism also cause me to find a shorter list of English/Western words in housing vocabulary comparing with those in dressing and food vocabulary when discussing my research problems. And it is still the reason that I cannot give a clear explanation of the translation of the limited-borrowed words (sofa, Simmons etc.), most of them are done by the method of transliteration.

6. Conclusion

I have drawn a picture of Chinese women's living style represented by the three main aspects of *yi*, *shi*, and *zhu*. Generally speaking, Western culture and its living styles represented by English language-culture do have an impact on the lifestyles of contemporary Chinese urban women, but what is more important is that Western lifestyle has streamed into the three aspects with different depth and different results and Chinese women culture has accepted and interpreted this stream in different ways.

In detail, regarding to *yi* or dressing style, English language-culture goes a little deeper into Chinese women culture with many English/Western fashion brands and with a great number of Western cosmetics. To some extent, Chinese women have accepted some Western dressing style, for instance, a great majority of women acknowledged they like to wear T-shirts and jeans, and some young women choose backless shirts or belly-exposed shirts as their favorite clothes in summer. Even so, one thing should be noticed is that this stream of West after all hasn't westernized Chinese women's dressing style wholly, and Chinese women have used their own ways in interpreting these Western style, i.e., they localize most of the names of Western brands to meet their own historical, social, cultural and even psychological expectations.

As for *shi* or food culture or eating habit, the signs of English language-culture still

can be easily found in private and in public places in Chinese women's food culture. The traditional contents of Chinese women's food culture are so different from the ways of Western food that the results of the intrusion take the form of coexistence or symbiosis of the two food cultures. This state of coexistence might be an example of the acceptable and tolerant attitudes toward foreign culture in today's China, and it is also testify one aspect of globalization era, that is, instead of being westernized/globalized, some local national culture will coexist with the Western mainstream culture.

In the aspect of *zhu* or housing, I can find least directly-borrowed vocabulary compared with the other two aspects and it might be said this field is least interfered by Western culture among the three. Nevertheless, as globalization/westernization has filtered into every corner on the earth, there are still some traces of globalization/westernization found in Chinese women's housing culture, embodied by Chinese women's enlarged space occupation and rising positions in the house, the home and the family. As a result, women's discourse in this place has increased and they have more chances and spaces to develop their self-consciousness.

In conclusion, through close reading the three most important aspects of Chinese women's lifestyle *yi*, *shi* and *zhu*, we may say that English language-culture or Western culture does have an influence on or interaction with Chinese women culture in this globalized world. But the forms or results of the influence and interaction might be in several ways illustrated by the above: acceptance and localization of the Western culture; coexistence of Chinese women culture and Western culture; Chinese conservative attitudes towards the Western culture (as in women's *zhu* aspects, although some Western factors still found). Certainly these are not all and fixed results of culture globalization, there might also be such results as destruction of the local culture and assimilation of the intrusion culture, which though beyond the sphere of this paper, has inspired me to do further researches to testify or falsify them out. Anyhow, what I could say for certain is that until now in China there is no risk of its culture being absolutely westernized, and that these forms/results of cultural interaction will remain for long, and that they are also traits or theories among many other traits and theories of globalization.

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