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Prior research suggests that bicultural individuals (i.e., individuals with 2 distinct sets of cultural values) shift the values they espouse depending on cues such as language. The authors examined whether the effects of language extend to a potentially less malleable domain, behavioral decisions, exploring the extent to which bilingual individuals shift the underlying strategies used to resolve choice problems. Although past research has explained language-induced shifts in terms of knowledge accessibility principles, the motivation to conform to observers' norms can also drive these shifts. This article focuses on shifts in the general strategy of avoiding losses rather than pursuing gains, which is more often exhibited by Chinese than by Westerners. Five studies of Hong Kong bicultural individuals found that language manipulation (Cantonese vs. English) increases tendencies to choose compromise options in a product decision task, endorse associated decision guidelines that advocate moderation as opposed to extreme paths, defer decision making in problems where it can be postponed, and endorse decision guidelines that advocate caution rather than decisive action. A motivational explanation of these effects was confirmed.

Cultural differences in consumer decision making are often traceable to the different ideals and values promulgated in the societies in question (e.g., Briley, Morris, & Simonson, 2000). In today's ethnically diverse urban centers, however, many consumers are bicultural; that is, they have internalized values and practices from two cultures. Hong Kong Chinese individuals, for example, are influenced by both Asian and Western cultural traditions and often respond to the social demands of each in their daily lives. Thus, a Hong Kong woman might order a glass of merlot when meeting with coworkers from the office but might have jasmine tea when seeing her Chinese college classmates later that same evening. In addition to aligning her preferences with those of her social set, she might also shift her strategy for making a decision to fit with the norms of the group at hand. So, when having dinner out she might be more likely to select a "safe" dish if she is with Chinese friends (e.g., a dish she has had many times before) but to go with something more risky if she is with Western friends (e.g., a new dish on the menu). She switches from the Chinese norm of pursuing safety to the Western norm of pursuing excitement, demonstrating a malleability that is essential to effective social interaction (Tetlock & Lerner, 1999).

Ethnographers have documented this tendency to switch between cultural frames depending on the setting. A cultural frame provides the "rules" that are associated with a particular cultural setting, and frame switching allows bicultural individuals to interpret their surroundings and determine appropriate actions as they move between contexts that are primarily associated with one culture or the other. For example, bicultural Hispanic Americans tend to exhibit prototypically Western patterns of speech and behavior to a greater extent when associating with European Americans than with members of their own ethnic group (Padilla, 1994). In addition, bicultural individuals might shift toward prototypical

decision strategies that fit with the group with which they interact. Importantly, bicultural individuals do not just blend the two ways; instead, they retain two distinct strategies that they can shift between to resolve situations or problems.

In many groups of bicultural individuals, distinct sets of behavioral tendencies become strongly associated with particular languages (Phinney, 1996). If languages and frames are indeed connected in the minds of bilingual individuals, then exposure to a particular language might bring into force the related cultural frame, along with a set of decision the strategies that are used for making behavioral decisions. This influence could occur in two different ways. First, seeing, hearing, or using a particular language might increase the cognitive accessibility of the associated cultural decision rules. This explanation has been offered by other researchers of language-related phenomena (e.g., Ross, Xun, & Wilson, 2002). Another path through which this influence could occur is motivational in nature. Bicultural individuals might seek to fit in with their social environs and could use language as an indicator of the identity of the audience that will observe their behaviors. Unlike the knowledge-activation explanation, which suggests that biculturals shift frames automatically as they cross cultural boundaries, this account emphasizes the deliberate, active role that biculturals take in interpreting social situations they encounter and selecting appropriate actions for each (cf. Chiu & Hong, 2004).

Prior studies have focused on the ways bilinguals describe themselves in one language versus another (e.g., Ross et al., 2002). In the research reported in this article, we examined whether the effects of language extend to a potentially less malleable domain: behavioral decisions. Specifically, we explored the extent to which bilingual individuals shift the underlying strategies they use to resolve choice problems, and we clarify the mechanisms through which these effects occur.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Several studies have shown that the values that Chinese Western bicultural individuals endorse are affected by whether they are responding in Chinese or English. Responding in Chinese, for example, leads to increased endorsement of traditional Chinese values (Bond, 1983; but see Bond & Cheung, 1984; Yang & Bond, 1980) and increased self-descriptions in terms of public roles and group memberships rather than private traits (Trafimow, Silverman, Fan, & Law, 1997). Particularly striking are the findings of Ross et al. (2002), who studied Chinese Canadian students' self-descriptions, self-esteem, and values. By manipulating the language in which the students communicated, Ross et al. produced the patterns that are often observed in cross-national comparisons (e.g., Heine & Lehman, 1997; Heine et al., 1999). For example, participants who responded

in Chinese rather than English exhibited more public self-descriptions and lower levels of self-esteem.

A possible explanation of these effects is suggested by cultural influences on cognition (for a review, see Morris, Menon, & Ames, 2001). Hong et al. (2000) proposed that frame switching can occur through the activation of knowledge structures acquired through culture-specific experience. If a given set of norms or behavioral dispositions has been learned in a particular situational context, then factors that are associated with this context are likely to increase the accessibility of these norms and, therefore, to increase the likelihood that they are applied in the situation at hand. For example, Americans tend to attribute causality to the individual actor, whereas Chinese individuals tend to attribute causality to the group (Morris & Peng, 1994). Analogously, Hong et al. (2000) found that when primed with images of Chinese versus American culture (i.e., the Great Wall vs. the U.S. Capitol), Hong Kong bicultural individuals switched their attribution pattern in the direction that is normative in the culture that is activated by these images. Exposing Dutch Greek bicultural individuals to iconic images of the two cultures (e.g., a windmill vs. the Acropolis) had conceptually similar effects (Verkuyten & Pouliasi, 2002).

A Motivational Account

Although the preceding interpretation of language effects is plausible, an alternative interpretation is also possible. Exposure to a particular cultural context—or to cues or reminders of that context—can influence behaviors not only by increasing the accessibility of cultural rules but also increasing the motivation to behave in a way that is consistent with these rules. The effects of language on behavior may reflect motivations, particularly when the behavior is socially conspicuous. When making a behavioral decision, bilingual individuals may consider the language environment in which the request is received and interpret this as an indication of the general identity of the observing audience. To a Mexican American resident of California, a communication in Spanish signals that the audience is likely to be Mexican, whereas a communication in English signals that the audience is likely to be (non-Mexican) American. Once the audience is identified in this way, behavioral decisions might be adjusted so that they align with those considered acceptable by this group. Shaping one's actions to fit the expectations of particular constituencies elicits social approval and avoids embarrassment or shame (Keltner & Buswell, 1997).

For example, a Mexican American beer drinker might like both Heineken, a brand popular with European Americans, and Negra Modelo, a favorite among Mexicans. Her choice in any given instance might depend on whether the individuals with whom she is interacting are European Americans or Mexicans. If a situation arises in which she must indicate her beer preference without knowing observers' expectations, she might use the language in which she is addressed as an in-

dication of these expectations. The influence of these expectations might extend beyond her preference for an American versus a Mexican brand to behavior and judgments along other important dimensions.

When bicultural individuals receive a communication in a particular language, the social identity (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) associated with that language should become more salient; for example, a Mexican American often thinks of herself as Mexican in Spanish-speaking environments but often thinks only of her American identity in English-speaking environments. Under these conditions, people *self-stereotype*, or shift their behaviors to conform to the norms of the salient in-group (Turner, 1987). According to self-categorization theory, individuals construct images that detail prototypical behaviors and attitudes of their in-groups. Thus, norms for particular in-groups can be readily accessed and used as bases for everyday life decisions. Note, however, that the retrieval and review of these norms is motivated by individuals' desire to fit in with a particular in-group (Levine, Bonner, & Coleman, 2002). Levine, Higgins, and Choi (2000) conducted a demonstration of in-group influence of direct relevance to our studies: In judgments of ambiguous perceptual stimuli, individuals in three-member groups were more likely to apply promotion- versus prevention-oriented approaches if other in-group members did the same.

The cognitive accessibility account for the effects of language cannot explain "opposite direction" results. As mentioned earlier, Chinese Western bicultural individuals often give responses that align with Chinese cultural traditions when they communicate in Chinese and shift their responses toward Western cultural ideals in English (e.g., Ross et al., 2002). However, this language manipulation can sometimes have the opposite effect; that is, it can lead to response patterns that are inconsistent with the cultural norms associated with the language (Bond & Cheung, 1984; Yang & Bond, 1980). A motivational account may be better able to explain these conflicting findings.

Cultural Ideals and Decision Making: Prevention Orientation in Chinese Culture

Past research has typically investigated the influence of language on social judgments (i.e., bicultural individuals' perceptions of themselves or others). We address a phenomenon of particular interest to marketing, namely, product preferences. This research focuses on two broad frames for decision making known as *promotion focus* and *prevention focus* (Higgins, 1997). Promotion focus is generally characterized by attention to positive outcomes of one's behavior, whereas prevention focus is characterized by sensitivity to negative outcomes of one's actions.

These orientations can be partly the result of social learning. Socialization that emphasizes duty and responsibility ("oughts") inculcates a prevention focus, a chronic concern for security, protection, and avoiding losses. Socialization that emphasizes rights and accomplishments ("ideals") instills a promotion focus, a chronic concern for advancement, growth, and gain. Chinese socialization practices appear to induce a prevention orientation (Miller, 1994), an emphasis on duty- as opposed to rights-based moral teachings (Hong et al., 2001), and interdependent self-construals (Lee, Aaker, & Gardner, 2000).

The relevance of prevention frames to consumer choice has been observed in several ways. Initial studies found that individuals with varying degrees of prevention orientation made different judgments about characters in situations involving combinations of gains and losses (Aaker & Lee, 2001). Briley and Wyer (2001, 2002) found that inducement of a prevention focus increased selections of loss-minimizing options in decision situations and that measures of individual differences in prevention orientation were correlated with these choices.

The Current Studies

In this research, we used a tendency to compromise as an indication of prevention focus. We also explored other measures, such as endorsement of decision guidelines advocating moderation (Briley et al., 2000), the tendency to defer decisions when the alternatives available have negative features (Dhar, 1996, 1997), and endorsement of decision guidelines advocating caution rather than aggressive action. (The relation of these measures to prevention focus are elaborated in the context of the studies in which they are used.)

To investigate language as a signal for bicultural individuals to switch between Chinese and Western decision frames, we studied Hong Kong Chinese, whose lives traverse both contexts that are traditionally Chinese and those that are very Westernized. Hong Kong's Chinese community absorbed many Western values during a century of British rule (Bond, 1993), and these values have been perpetuated by the presence of large British and American expatriate communities. Nevertheless, the Chinese community has retained a strong sense of Chinese identity and values (Ho, 1986). English and Cantonese are both official languages in Hong Kong, and both are taught in the education system from an early age. Participants in our studies were Chinese undergraduates at a major Hong Kong university where all courses are taught in English. Students in this population are fluent in both Chinese and English and have substantial exposure to both Western (Bond & Cheung, 1981) and Chinese (Hong et al., 1999) cultural influences. (For other bicultural research on Hong Kong university students, see Bond, 1983; Bond & Yang, 1982; Hong et al., 1997, 2000, 2001; Trafimow et al., 1997.)

Four experiments are reported. The first showed that instructing Hong Kong participants in Chinese versus English led to a greater endorsement of decision guidelines that emphasized moderation and a greater tendency to compromise in a product choice task. A second study showed that the lan-

guage in which the experiment was conducted influenced the tendency to avoid making a product selection when a choice might have negative consequences. The last two experiments tested alternative explanations for these effects.

STUDY 1: COMPROMISE DECISION GUIDELINES AND CHOICES

Consumers are often confronted with a choice between a product with a very favorable value along one attribute dimension and a very unfavorable value along a second dimension and a product with moderate values along both dimensions. When both attribute dimensions are similar in importance, the latter is sometimes particularly attractive to individuals who seek to avoid the feeling of a large loss on any dimension (Kahneman, Knetsch, & Thaler, 1991). Loss aversion often outweighs excitement about the potential large gain offered by extreme alternatives and leads people to select compromise options (Simonson & Tversky, 1992; Tversky & Simonson, 1993). People are often drawn to compromise options because they like to minimize the dissatisfaction that might arise from a poor choice; compromise options are relatively safe alternatives.

Before examining choice behaviors (Study 1B), we explored whether endorsement of decision guidelines related to this choice bias (Study 1A) might be affected by the language in which the study is conducted.

Study 1A: Compromise-Related Decision Guidelines

A cross-cultural comparison conducted by Briley et al. (2000, Study 4) associated the endorsement of proverbs advocating moderation (vs. extremeness) with compromise-oriented decisions. They found that the relative attractiveness of extreme-versus moderation-oriented proverbs was stronger among North American individuals than among Chinese individuals. We sought to replicate this pattern within a single, bicultural group, using a language manipulation.

Method.   Seventy-two Hong Kong Chinese undergraduates participated for course credit. They were told that they would see proverbs or sayings from different cultures and would be asked to evaluate each. They were presented with a list of proverbs, each of which appeared with a brief explanation that conveyed its meaning. Four proverbs encouraged moderation and compromising behaviors, and four encouraged taking extreme measures to achieve one's goals. These eight key proverbs, which were of Chinese origin, were taken from Briley et al. (2000, Study 4). Examples of moderation proverbs and their meaning are "If you cannot catch fish, catch shrimp" (It's all right not to get what you really want, because you can get something else), and "He who hurries cannot walk with dignity" (It is better not to hurry so as to ap-

pear dignified and respectable). Examples of extremity-oriented proverbs and explanations are "If you don't climb the high mountain, you can't see the plain" (If you don't take the extreme challenges, you won't have exciting discoveries) and "To go yourself is better than to send others; to do it yourself is better than to call upon others" (If you want something done right, it is better to accomplish it yourself than through others).

About half of the participants received an English version of the questionnaire, and the others received a Chinese version. These materials were developed in English and translated into Chinese by Hong Kong Chinese bilingual individuals. After translators proofread and corrected their work, the questionnaires were translated back into English by another Hong Kong Chinese bilingual individual. The original English and back-translated versions were then compared, and few inconsistencies were found. Either the English or Chinese version was corrected to remove discrepancies, and all translators had to agree on the change. Three translators were involved. All were born in Hong Kong; have spent substantial time in a Western, English-speaking country; and were unaware of the experimental hypotheses. (This translation procedure was used for all studies reported in this article.)

Participants, after reading each proverb, indicated how much they liked the idea communicated in the proverb, how much they would rely on it as a decision guide, and the extent to which they would draw on it as a basis for giving advice. The judgments were reported along a scale that ranged from 1 (*not at all*) to 7 (*very much*) and were averaged to give an overall indicator of each proverb's usefulness to participants. Participants did not put their names on the questionnaires and were assured that their responses would remain anonymous.

Results and discussion.   Proverbs were generally endorsed more strongly if they advocated extremity ($M = 4.40$) than if they advocated moderation ($M = 3.77$), $F(1, 69) = 77.08$, $p < .01$. However, this difference was significantly greater when the experiment was conducted in English (4.56 vs. 3.78) than when it was conducted in Chinese (4.25 vs. 3.76), $F(1, 69) = 4.06$, $p < .05$. Planned comparisons indicated that extreme decision guidelines were seen as more useful to participants who were presented with proverbs written in English ($M = 4.56$) rather than Chinese ($M = 4.25$), $F(1, 69) = 8.83$, $p < .025$, whereas guidelines favoring moderation were viewed as similarly useful regardless of language (Ms = 3.78 vs. 3.76 for English vs. Chinese, respectively, $F < 1$).

Thus, when we communicated with participants in English rather than Chinese, they became more likely to view extreme, all-or-nothing actions as good general solutions to decision problems. It is interesting that language had no effect on participants' view of moderate actions, the approach most

consistent with Chinese norms. We consider this result further in the General Discussion.

Study 1B: Compromise Choices

Method.   Ninety bilingual Hong Kong Chinese undergraduates participated for course credit. They completed a choice task similar to that used by Simonson (1989); specifically, they were told that we wished to examine the choices that people make after they have narrowed potential selections down to a few alternatives that differ along two primary dimensions. They were told to assume that the available alternatives were similar on all dimensions except the two on which the products were described.

Participants were given two shopping scenarios: one involving cameras and the other involving stereo receivers. The order in which these scenarios were presented was counterbalanced, and order of presentation did not affect the results. Each scenario contained a short description of the category, offered three alternatives, and described the features of each. The features varied in such a way that participants were faced with a decision between two extreme options (i.e., options with a high value along one attribute dimension and a low value along a second dimension) and a compromise alternative (i.e., an option with moderate values along both dimensions). The camera scenario, for example, described three digital models as follows:

	Reliability Rating of Expert Panel	*Maximum Autofocus Range*
Typical range	40–70	12–28 m
Option A	45	25 m
Option B	55	20 m
Option C	65	15 m

Thus, a consumer who wishes to minimize losses should select Option B, which offers a small loss on both dimensions. In contrast, an individual who desires to maximize gains, or positive outcomes, should select either Option A or C, as these two alternatives allow the shopper to get a big gain on one dimension or the other.

Approximately half of the participants were exposed to an English language environment, and the remaining participants experienced a Chinese language environment. This manipulation was further refined in this study, and the new protocol was used for the remaining studies as well. The study administrator, a Hong Kong Chinese bilingual individual who was unaware of the study's purpose and predictions, conducted each session in a single language. In the English (Chinese) environment sessions, he greeted participants at the laboratory, gave them instructions, and answered any questions in English (Chinese). Also, the sign-in sheets for these sessions and all questionnaire materials were in English (Chinese). The translation procedure described in Study 1A was used in this study as well.

Results and discussion.   First, we checked whether participants were receptive to our language environment manipulation by observing the language in which they spoke during the study and debriefing. Participants could ask questions in a group environment during the study, and they met individually with the study administrator afterward to be debriefed and receive their pay. During the study, participants' questions were all asked in the targeted language and, after being addressed in the debriefing (in the target language), all participants responded in the same language. These observations suggest that our participants were comfortable operating in both language environments.

We predicted that Hong Kong participants who experienced a Chinese language environment would be more likely to select compromise options than those who experienced an English environment. This was the case for the proportion of compromises selected in both the camera (.77 vs. .53; $z = 2.47$, $p < .05$) and stereo receiver (.46 vs. .23; $z = 2.50$, $p < .05$) product categories. Those in the Chinese communication condition, compared with their counterparts in the English communication condition, were more likely to select the compromise alternative, an action that minimized the potential losses they could incur from their decision.

STUDY 2: CHOICE DEFERRAL

In addition to compromising, decision makers can stave off the experience of regret by deferring their choice (Dhar, 1996, 1997). For example, an individual might be considering the purchase of a new television to replace an older model that still serves its purpose. In situations of this sort, consumers can either choose among the new models for sale or decide to purchase none of them, staying with the status quo rather than running the risk of buying a new product that they ultimately find to be unsatisfying. In Study 2, we examined whether bicultural individuals who are exposed to Chinese versus English become more or less likely to take this option.

In addition to a choice deferral task, participants were also presented a proverb endorsement task. The task was similar to the one used in Study 1A, except that proverbs were selected to address the contrast between injunctions to be cautious and deliberate, on the one hand, or to take dramatic action to seize the moment, on the other hand. Thus, the decision ideals examined in this study are more clearly related to the promotion–prevention distinction than those examined in Study 1A. A second refinement was a memory measure: After a filler task, we asked participants to recall as many of these proverbs as they could. Memory of proverbs should be an implicit measure of one's affinity for them. Proverbs that one genuinely likes and finds useful should be salient and, therefore, more easily recalled in the future.

Thus, we expected that results for the memory measure would parallel those for participants' endorsements; that is, one's memory of prevention relative to promotion guidelines should be stronger in a Chinese language environment than in an English one.

Method

Sixty-one Hong Kong Chinese undergraduates participated for HK $60 (U.S. $7.70). They completed our choice task, a filler task, a proverb endorsement task, a second filler task, and finally a recall task in which they listed as many proverbs from the endorsement task as possible. They participated in groups of 8 to 10. The same language environment manipulation and translation procedure used in the previous study were used in the present one.

Choices.   Participants were reminded that after shoppers have narrowed the available alternatives to a few that they like, they sometimes decide not to make a purchase in order to think more about what they want, to learn more about the options available, or to search for new ones. On this pretext, they were asked to consider four choice scenarios (personal computers, mobile phones, restaurants, and vacation destinations).

Each scenario contained descriptions of two products, each of which consisted of two favorable features and two unfavorable ones. In each scenario, the same two favorable features were shared by both of the available options. But the unfavorable features were unique to the options they described. By making unfavorable attributes unique and therefore salient, we expected decision makers to focus on losses and potential regret from their decision. The restaurant scenario, for example, offered the following options:

Option A	*Option B*
Long wait (45 min)	Good variety of foods on the menu
Good variety of foods on the menu	Staff is not particularly friendly
High quality food (4 stars)	View is not very attractive
Service is very slow	High quality of food (4 stars)

In each scenario, participants were told they could select one of two available options, or choose neither. The order in which the scenarios were presented was counterbalanced, and order did not affect the results.

Endorsement of decision guidelines.   The procedure used for this task was similar to that used in Study 1A. Participants were presented with a list of proverbs, each of which appeared with a short explanation, and indicated their endorsement of each. In this case, 10 key proverbs were presented, each encouraging either promotion- or prevention-focused solutions to problems. Five of these key proverbs were promotion oriented, emphasizing boldly tak-

ing action to take advantage of life's opportunities, and 5 of them were prevention oriented, emphasizing a cautious approach to ensure security. Examples of caution-oriented proverbs and meanings are "Ponder your faults and you will avert misfortune" (To avoid problems, one should focus on his failings) and "Going beyond is as bad as falling short" (Actions that take one beyond one's goal are as bad as inaction that leave one short of the goal). Examples of action-oriented proverbs and meanings are "Try any doctor when critically ill" (Try any action in a desperate situation) and "If you want to cross the river, you must first build a bridge" (Necessary actions must be taken to achieve one's goals).

Participants indicated how much they liked the idea communicated in the proverb, how much they would rely on it as a decision guide, and the extent to which they would draw on it as a basis for giving advice. These judgments, each reported on a scale that ranged from 1 (*not at all*) to 7 (*very much*), were averaged for each proverb to give an overall indication of the usefulness of each proverb. After indicating their endorsement of proverbs, the participants handed in the proverb questionnaires and completed a 10-min filler task. Then they were asked to list as many of the proverbs from the previous task as they could, and they were told to be as accurate as possible.

Results

As in Study 1B, we checked whether participants were receptive to our language environment manipulation by observing the language in which they spoke during the study and debriefing. All conformed to the target language during the study and debriefing.

Choice deferral.   The proportion of deferrals made by each participant was computed and analyzed as a function of the language environment (Chinese vs. English). As expected, participants deferred more often when the language of communication was Chinese ($M = .44$) than when it was English ($M = .29$), $F(1, 59) = 5.52$, $p < .025$.

Decision guidelines.   The mean endorsement of action-enjoining proverbs and the mean endorsement of caution-enjoining proverbs were correlated $-.54$ ($p < .01$). Analyses of these endorsements indicated that although participants endorsed action-oriented proverbs more strongly than caution-oriented ones (4.95 vs. 4.54), $F(1, 59) = 23.64$, $p < .001$, this difference was significantly greater when the experiment was conducted in English (5.11 vs. 4.46) than when it was conducted in Chinese (4.79 vs. 4.61), $F(1, 59) = 7.11$, $p < .01$. Proverbs that advocated action were endorsed more strongly in an English language environment ($M = 5.11$) than in a Chinese environment ($M = 4.79$), $F(1, 59) = 5.48$, $p < .025$; however, language had little influence on the

endorsement of caution-oriented proverbs (4.46 vs. 4.61, $F < 1$).

Recall data are also of interest. Participants recalled a greater proportion of both types of proverbs when the experiment was in Chinese than when it was in English (.22 vs. .16), $F(1, 59) = 17.81$, $p < .001$. This is not surprising as the proverbs are of Chinese origin and are likely to be more easily encoded and retrieved in Chinese than English. More important, however, is that language interacted significantly with proverb content, $F(1, 59) = 5.02$, $p < .05$. Participants recalled a larger proportion of action than caution proverbs when the experiment was in English (.18 vs. .04), $t(27) = 2.40$, $p < .01$, but recalled similar proportions of action and caution proverbs when the experiment was in Chinese (.26 vs. .29), $t(32) < 1$.

Correlation between deferrals and proverb endorsements.   If choice deferrals and proverb endorsements reflect a common mechanism (a general prevention frame), they should be correlated. This was the case. The overall tendency to defer decisions was correlated .25 with endorsements of caution-oriented proverbs and −.27 with endorsements of action-oriented proverbs ($p < .05$ in each case).

Discussion

These results suggest that the language environment that bilingual individuals encounter affects not only the types of choices they make (compromise vs. extreme) but also whether they make a selection at all. Participants' use of general decision rules favoring action versus caution is influenced as well. This influence is reflected not only in their explicit endorsements of proverbs advocating these strategies but also in their recall of these proverbs. Consistent with the findings of Study 1A, endorsements of promotion-related (action-oriented) proverbs were affected by language, although endorsements of prevention-related (caution-oriented) proverbs were not. We discuss this pattern in the General Discussion.

STUDY 3: DIRECT MANIPULATION OF AUDIENCE NATIONALITY

Our first two studies established a robust pattern: Chinese versus English language environments are associated with a more cautious approach to decision making. In Studies 3 and 4 we explored whether these shifts in decision frames are due to direct links between language and cognitions or to more active efforts on the part of bicultural individuals to address self-presentation concerns. If language triggers frame switching by prompting different sets of presentational concerns, then a direct manipulation of such concerns should have similar effects. We tested this idea in Study 3 by manipulating the nationality of the audience who would ostensibly have access to participants' responses. Participants were given a choice scenario similar to that used in Study 2, where they had the option of choosing none of the available alternatives. Decisions were made in either a Chinese or English language environment, and participants expected that these decisions would be observed by either a group of Chinese or Western college students from another university, or did not expect any observers.

Method

Participants were 150 bilingual Hong Kong college students who received course credit for the study. During their time in the laboratory, they experienced either an English or Chinese language environment. The language manipulation and translation procedure were the same as that used in previous studies.

In addition, some participants were made sensitive to how others would view their choices. These participants were told that a professor from another university was conducting the study. A cover letter, ostensibly from this professor, was attached to these questionnaires. The letter's language conformed to the language manipulation. The letter indicated that participants' responses would be used as examples for a series of seminars on decision making and suggested that the seminar audience would be either American or Chinese college students. In the American audience conditions the letter was written on a California university's letterhead, signed by Prof. William Smith (a fictitious individual), and indicated that the seminar series would be held at various universities around the United States. In Chinese audience conditions the letter was written on a Beijing university's letterhead, signed by Professor Wu Yuk-shi (a fictitious individual), and indicated that the seminar series would be held at various universities around mainland China. To remind participants of the audience that would be seeing their choices, the questionnaire pages had "U.S. seminar" or "China seminar" printed at the bottom. In a third, control condition, an unsigned cover letter with no letterhead accompanied questionnaires; it simply thanked students for participating. No special labeling appeared on control condition questionnaires.

After reading the cover letter, participants completed a choice task similar to that used in Study 1B. They were shown three scenarios in which they chose among mobile phone hand sets, vacation destinations, and personal computers. Two options were presented in each set, and participants could choose one of them or take neither.

Results

The proportion of deferrals made by each participant was analyzed as a function of the language in which the study was conducted and the type of the audience they expected to review their selections (Chinese, American, or none). Cell means are summarized in Table 1. As expected, the effects of

TABLE 1
Proportion of Choice Deferrals as a Function
of Language Condition and Audience
Nationality: Study 3

Audience	Language Environment	
	English	Chinese
Chinese audience	.309[b]	.237[b]
No audience	.133[a]	.297[b]
Western audience	.184[a]	.315[b]

Note.   Means with different subscripts in the same row and column are significantly different at $p < .05$.

language on choices varied according to the audience condition, $F(2, 144) = 3.32$, $p < .05$. Among participants who did not expect an audience to view their choices, the effects of language seen is a replication of Study 2: The Chinese environment ($M = .297$) elicited more deferrals than the English environment ($M = .133$), $F(1, 144) = 7.22$, $p < .01$. When participants expected that Chinese students would see their selections, however, they were likely to defer regardless of whether their language environment was Chinese ($M = .237$) or English ($M = .309$, $F < 1$). It is interesting that participants who expected an American audience were as sensitive to language as participants in no-audience conditions; that is, the Chinese language environment elicited more deferrals ($M = .315$) than the English language environment did ($M = .184$), $F(1, 144) = 4.50$, $p < .05$.

We also conducted a supplementary analysis involving only participants who were told that an audience would observe their selections. In this analysis, the interaction of audience and language environment was highly significant, $F(1, 86) = 13.52$, $p < .001$, and indicated that participants deferred more frequently when the language environment and audience had different implications (i.e., participants reported their decisions in Chinese to a Western audience, or reported their decisions in English to a Chinese audience), than when they had similar implications (.314 vs. .213, respectively). The implications of this effect are discussed presently.

Discussion

In Study 3, the expectation of a Chinese audience overrode the effects of language, causing individuals in English language environments to defer as frequently as those in Chinese language environments. However, participants in American audience conditions were sensitive to language. The persistence of language effects here suggests that both the audience and the language in which participants were addressed were used as signals on which they relied to determine appropriate behaviors. However, signals suggesting that the audience was Chinese (vs. Western) apparently have precedence. This interpretation suggests that when inconsistent signals are encountered, Hong Kong Chinese are more

sensitive to the concerns of fellow Chinese who might observe their choices than to the concerns of Westerners.

Another possibility should be considered: Participants who made choices in an environment where the language and audience were inconsistent (e.g., Chinese language and Western audience) might have felt drawn in two different directions. Uncertainty might have resulted, leading to a cautious disposition and relatively high levels of deferral. In comparison, those who made choices in an environment where these two signals were consistent (e.g., English language and Western audience) might have felt more comfortable. Thus, as implied by the aforementioned interaction, participants deferred more frequently if they received conflicting signals than if they received consistent signals. Although this pattern was not predicted, it is nicely consistent with our primary proposition: Bicultural decision makers are sensitive to the identity of decision observers, and this identity information has important effects on choices. Furthermore, conflicting or ambiguous identity information apparently induces participants to be cautious in making choices.

A last issue should be addressed: Participants who expected that an American audience would review their choices had responses similar to participants who were not given any explicit information regarding any audience; that is, in both of these conditions participants were sensitive to the language manipulation. This similarity could suggest that the default response of these participants is to assume that a Western audience is the observer. Given that a number of marketing faculty are indeed Westerners at the university where the study was administered, this assumption is perhaps not surprising.

STUDY 4: ATTENTIONAL LOAD

An important distinction between the motivational and cognitive accessibility explanations of language effects lies in the amount of deliberation or attention that is assumed; that is, a knowledge accessibility account suggests that frame switching occurs through effortless, automatic processes (cf. Uleman & Bargh, 1989). In contrast, the motivational perspective assumes that bicultural individuals attend to their social environs to understand relevant expectations and choose appropriate behaviors (cf. Chiu & Hong, 2004). The latter processes are deliberate, requiring attention.

In this study, we observed whether cognitive effort has a role in the process through which language effects obtain. As in Study 1B, participants were asked to choose from among three options, a compromise and two extremes, and the language in which the study was conducted was either English or Chinese. In addition, we manipulated the attentional resources that participants could commit to this task. Specifically, participants in one condition were asked to remember a series of numbers, limiting their attention available for

other processes. In a second, control condition, they did not have this task.

We expected that participants in control conditions, like those in Study 1B, would be more likely to select compromise alternatives in the Chinese language environment than in the English language environment. However, our competing explanations have different implications for the effects of limiting participants' attentional resources. If knowledge activation processes are primarily responsible for these effects, and these processes are relatively effortless, then cross-language differences in compromising should not be appreciably different when attentional resources are limited than when they are not (Bargh & Thein, 1985). If the effects of language are mediated by motivational, impression-management concerns, however, these effects should be reduced when participants are presented from engaging in the cognitive activity required to consider the social implications of their choices than under control conditions.

Method

Participants were 65 bilingual Hong Kong Chinese college undergraduates who took part in the study for course credit. All participants were told that the study pertained to decision behaviors and that they would be completing several unrelated tasks. The language environment manipulation and translation procedure were the same as in previous studies. In the *high processing load* condition, participants began the study with a "memory test." They were told that we were interested in testing students' memory abilities, shown an eight-digit number, and instructed that they would be asked to recall it later in the study. The number was shown on a screen for about 15 sec, and participants were explicitly instructed not to write it down. In the control condition, no memory task was included.

All participants then completed four choice scenarios similar to those described in Study 1B. In this study, the product categories were 35-mm cameras, stereo speakers, restaurants, and the timing of a job bonus. Three options were available in each scenario: a compromise and two extremes.

Results and Discussion

We examined the proportion of compromise alternatives selected by experimental condition. Consistent with the results of Study 1B, participants were more likely to compromise in Chinese ($M = .51$) than English environments ($M = .36$), $F(1, 60) = 8.40$, $p < .005$. As expected, however, this effect was contingent on processing load. Participants who were not under cognitive load chose compromise options more frequently when the experiment was in Chinese ($M = .61$) than when it was in English ($M = .25$), $F(1, 60) = 19.97$, $p < .001$. In high-load conditions, however, this difference was nonsignificantly in the opposite direction (1.65 vs. 1.89, $F <$

1). The interaction of language and processing load was quite significant, $F(1, 60) = 16.79$, $p < .001$.

Thus, the effects of language environment were evident in control conditions but disappeared when participants had little available cognitive capacity. This pattern suggests that participants expended effort to shift their choice strategies and is consistent with the impression-management explanation.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

In our studies, the language used to communicate to bicultural consumers affected their use of particular decision guidelines and, consequently, their choices. Conducting experiments in Chinese rather than in English disposed participants to adopt a prevention focus, as reflected in both their preferences for compromise alternatives and tendency to defer choices when the options run the risk of negative consequences. Although these tendencies are qualitatively different, they both arise from the motivation to avoid the experience of loss or disappointment that might result from a negative decision outcome. In addition, participants' endorsements of decision guidelines were consistent with their choices. In the Chinese context versus English context, the relative attractiveness of proverbial injunctions toward moderation (Study 1A) and caution (Study 2) increased. Furthermore, the pattern of participants' recall of proverbs in Study 2 paralleled the pattern of their proverb endorsements.

However, these effects reflect individuals' desires for social approval and acceptance in the communication situation at hand and are not simply the result of culture-related norms that might be activated by this language. We predicted that by manipulating language, we would affect bicultural individuals' perceptions of the audience that would observe their selections and that their behavior would reflect a tendency to respond in a manner of which this audience would approve. According to this perspective, bicultural individuals who receive communications in Chinese infer that Chinese individuals will observe their decisions and consequently respond in a manner that is consistent with Chinese behavioral ideals. Consequently, those who receive communications in English infer that Westerners will observe their decisions and consequently conform to Western behavioral ideals. These two cultural traditions encourage different choice strategies (Briley et al., 2000). So, bicultural consumers who seek to make a decision that is viewed favorably by onlookers shift not only the product category they favor (e.g., merlot wine vs. jasmine tea) but also the choice strategy applied (e.g., take action by selecting vs. choosing nothing).

Consistent with this interpretation, participants who had reason to believe that Chinese audiences would review their selections—either because they had been advised in the study instructions that this would be the case or because they received Chinese language communications—were more

likely to conform to Chinese ideals by displaying relatively high levels of deferral (Study 3). Those who experienced an English language environment in the study and were told that Americans might review their choices had relatively low deferral rates. These processes, which involve the identification of likely audiences and a construal of their values, require attentional resources. Therefore, when these resources are limited, as in Study 4, the effects of language are less evident.

Other interpretations of our findings should be considered. For example, because Chinese was the first language of our participants, they may have had more difficulty communicating in English than in Chinese. This could perhaps affect deferral rates; however, it would work against our findings; that is, if communications in English were less well understood than those in Chinese, the English environment should have elicited increased uncertainty and, therefore, should have increased participants' inclinations to exhibit caution in their decisions. In other words, if proficiency differences across languages played a role, then the tendency to compromise and defer choices should have been greater in English than Chinese conditions. In fact, the opposite was true.

Implications for Culture Research

Previous work has shown the effects of language-triggered frame switching on bicultural individuals' self-views, offering a knowledge accessibility explanation (e.g., Ross et al., 2002). Our research suggests that such effects extend to the goals that these individuals pursue and the decisions they make. Moreover, our evidence suggests that this influence derives from individuals' motivational concerns. It is possible that bicultural individuals' motivations have some role in the effects documented in other language-related research. However, the mechanisms that underlie the influence of language could differ across variables of interest. Impression-management motives may drive frame switching in consumer decisions, but more automatic, accessibility-driven processes may drive it in self-perceptions.

The impression-management perspective might explain conflicting findings regarding the effects of language. As shown here and in other research (Bond, 1983; Ross et al., 2002), manipulations of bicultural individuals' language environments can cause assimilation effects, where participants' responses align with the language setting. However, such manipulations have also resulted in contrast effects (Bond & Cheung, 1984; Yang & Bond, 1980), in which the opposite pattern occurs. Whether language manipulations produce assimilation or contrast effects might depend on the type of impression that bicultural individuals wish to make. Assimilation effects occur when individuals want to fit with the expectations of their audience. Contrast effects, on the other hand, might reflect one's need to assert an aspect of one's identity that distinguishes oneself from others. When do individuals seek to distinguish themselves from the others in a setting? Efforts of this sort are made by individuals in

out-group settings (Hogg & Abrams, 1988), because their cultural identities become salient under these conditions (Rhee et al., 1995). For example, when Hong Kong Chinese find themselves in an English (Western) setting, their Chinese identity may be salient to them; that is, they might feel like Chinese persons who are being scrutinized by Westerners. Under these conditions, they might engage in more typically Chinese behaviors than usual in order to affirm their Chinese identity.

The variables examined in studies of the effects of language might be useful in identifying the conditions under which these contrast effects are likely to occur. It is interesting that contrast effects often obtain for variables that have a fairly obvious relationship to culture (traditional Chinese values and beliefs), whereas assimilation effects are more evident when a relationship to culture is less obvious (dogmatism and self-concept measures). In cases where normative expectations are clear and one's group identity is salient, individuals are probably likely to express this identity (Turner et al., 1987), yielding contrast effects. When normative expectations for responses are less clear, individuals are likely to rely on more subtle processes for determining responses. In this case, the motivation to fit in might take over as internalized representations of the audience in question offer up meta-cognitive ideals that help resolve the decision problem.

In one's daily life, a great deal of effort goes into managing others' impressions (Tetlock, 1999). Our findings suggest that this effort pays off. Bicultural individuals become quite good at determining which responses will fit with the expectations of various onlookers. Even when no obvious connection exists between a response type (e.g., deferring choice) and the audience (Chinese), individuals have mechanisms that identify appropriate actions. Some methodological implications arise from these conclusions. First, the selection of language when running studies with bicultural individuals can affect results. On the other hand, participants may also use other aspects of the study environment to ascertain the audience that is likely to see their responses. For example, the national or ethnic background of the administrator chosen to run the study could shift participants' vision of who will observe their laboratory behaviors. Other, more subtle cues in the laboratory environment could also have an effect. For example, responses might depend on the choice of paper size (e.g., 8½ × 11 vs. A4), or the use of British versus American spelling conventions.

Our research contributes to the accumulating evidence that self-regulatory frames are crucial determinants of decision making (Briley & Wyer, 2001, 2002; Liberman et al., 1999; Markman & Brendl, 2000). An array of choice phenomena, including those that have been linked to loss aversion (Kahneman et al., 1991), are greatly affected by the general orientations toward prevention or promotion that decision makers bring to the problem. Factors other than cultural background might shift people in the direction of prevention versus promotion. For example, reminding people of groups, such as

their family, may increase their prevention orientation and associated security concerns (Briley & Wyer, 2002).

Finally, research on consumer choice deferral has shown that the likelihood of deferring is affected by the composition of the choice set (Dhar, 1997; Tversky & Shafir, 1992) and by whether the task provides uncertainty (Dhar, 1996), or time pressure (Dhar & Nowlis, 1999). Our work adds to this body of literature by showing that peripheral situational factors can have an influence by priming a prevention as opposed to a promotion frame.

Directions for Further Research

Although these results are decisive with regard to our immediate hypothesis, a number of issues require further investigation. One question is whether some frames are more easily manipulated than others. In our studies of proverbs, participants' endorsements of promotion-related injunctions (extremity and dramatic action) were stronger in English vs. Chinese environments. However, our language manipulation had minimal effects on participants' endorsements of prevention-oriented injunctions (moderation and caution). This may reflect something inherent about prevention frames as opposed to promotion frames. For example, prevention frames may be more consistent and stable, as this orientation is more fundamental to human existence than is a promotion focus (Higgins, 1997). Alternatively, this pattern may reflect something about the greater stability of frames associated with one's first culture versus one's second culture. Frame-switching studies using different kinds of bicultural populations might be able to sort this out.

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