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This paper investigates the ways in which multilingualism manifests in the daily life of Tony, a multilingual individual and a first-generation Vietnamese American living in South Philadelphia. It examines how Tony navigates different linguistic resources that are available to him and how he conceptualizes his own multilingualism. As millions of other multilinguals, he is situated in the set of different, evolving and interacting languages present in his life, primarily Vietnamese, English and Cantonese but also to a certain level Spanish and Khmer: these languages provide him with affordances as well as tensions. In turn, Tony makes decisions of how to make use of these linguistic resources in the interactions with other people and when and where to make use of which resources, influenced by factors in his linguistic environment and influencing other inhabitants of this linguistic environment. Using observations, interviews and photoethnography, I attempt to seek answers to the following research questions: (1) How does the participant conceptualize different languages in his *linguistic repertoires* (Gumperz, 1964)? How does he perceive the concepts of "to own", "to know", "to learn" and "to be good at" a language? and (2) How does the participant, drawing from resources in his linguistic repertoires and other resources to make language-related decisions, construct his own action space? How does this individual action space interact with its surrounding social landscape?

This paper investigates the ways in which multilingualism manifests in the daily life of Tony, a multilingual individual and a first-generation Vietnamese American living in South Philadelphia. Made an orphan at the age of eight after several bombings by the US army in his hometown, he dropped out of school soon after and "went out into the society" to do different jobs. He came to the United States 28 years ago as an "economic refugee," as he puts it, and has had a variety of jobs, including a casino dealer, a truck driver, a restaurant helper and later a manager. From a penniless boat person, he is now the owner of a small clinic of traditional medicine in South Philadelphia and lives with his wife, a nail salon owner, and their son, a junior at Central High School. From a Vietnamese monolingual, he is now also an effective communicator in English and Cantonese.

I examine how Tony navigates different linguistic resources that are available to him and how he conceptualizes his own multilingualism. As millions of other multilinguals, he is situated in the complex set of different, evolving and interacting languages present in his life, primarily Vietnamese, English and Cantonese but also to a certain level Spanish and Khmer: these languages provide him with affordances as well as tensions. In turn, he makes decisions of how to make use

of these linguistic resources in the interactions with other people and when and where to make use of which resource(s). His decision making is influenced by factors in his linguistic environment and influences other inhabitants of this linguistic environment. The choices that he makes when languaging are driven by complex emotions and instrumental motivations embedded within a personal language ideology. The space for such choices to be made can be called his "action space," or "languaging space." In the words of House and Rehbein (2004), "a language serves not only as a means and a medium of communication, it is also a highly complex system which enters into a relationship with other languages and imprints its own dynamics upon those human beings involved in interaction by structuring their 'action spaces'" (p. 2).   Action space or languaging space is thus the space in which an individual makes his own language-related decisions, which are driven by a variety of factors such as emotions, instrumental motivations and language ideology. Such action space can involve different languages and allows this individual to influence others.

With the view of exploring the ways in which languages shape and are shaped by an individual language user, I attempt to seek answers to the following research questions: (1) How does the participant conceptualize different languages in his linguistic repertoires[1]? How does he perceive the concepts of "to own," "to know," "to learn" and "to be good at" a language? and (2) How does the participant, drawing from resources in his linguistic repertoires and other resources to make language-related decisions, construct his own languaging space?[2] How does this individual action space interact with its surrounding social landscape?

As Dewaele (2007) comments, the body of research in multilingualism is largely dominated by studies in early bi- and multilingualism, while researchers interested in adult multilingualism have been less visible. In addition, Dewaele points out the need for an emic perspective in late bi- and multilingualism research to make heard the voices of those who become bi- or multilingual later in life:

> There are strong arguments for including an emic perspective in our research on bi- and multilingualism as it can provide an excellent complement to quantitative empirical analysis. Researchers adopting, or adding, this perspective view participants not merely as passive objects, a 'bunch of variables', but also as active subjects, capable of meta-linguistic insights on their bi- and multilingualism. This emic perspective allows bi- and multilinguals' voices and opinions to be "heard on a par with those of the researchers" (Pavlenko 2002a, p. 297), at least in domains where they can help complement a global picture. (p. 107)

Furthermore, the paper investigates the ways in which the dynamics of multilingualism function as a resource in a person's life-world, as opposed to the commonly held view of multilingualism as a problem at either the individual or nation-state level. Auer and Li (2007) note that the *monolingualism ideology* remains dominant in many spheres of society and public life. Massey (1995, cited in Akresh, 2007) also points out that the immigrants in the United States have brought about

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[1] According to Durranti (1997), the concept of *linguistic repertoire* was first introduced by Gumperz (1964) to refer to "the totality of linguistic forms regular employed in the course of socially significant interactions" (p. 71). This concept can be applied either groups or individuals.

[2] This is related to the term *action space* (House & Rebein, 2004, p. 2).

not only concerns about the economic and social welfare effects caused by waves of immigration but also concerns of linguistic fragmentation. Massey argues that these concerns come from

> lower average education levels of many of the source countries and to the greater propensity of several of these ethnic groups to be geographically clustered… Further, it is thought that residence in ethnically concentrated neighborhoods will lower the probability of learning English by reducing the costs of a lack of proficiency. (p. 932)

With the view to speeding up the integration and incorporation of the Vietnamese refugees into mainstream society, American federal officers decided to disperse and resettle this population over the 50 states (Juan, 2003). Also with this view, a lot of research has been dedicated to investigating the determinants of English proficiency in adult immigrants (Akresh, 2007). Auer and Li (2007) point out that people who blame multilingualism for society's problems fail to see that the monolingualism ideology creates "restrictions, barriers and conflicts for us all" (p. 11). In the case of Tony, a Vietnamese immigrant with low-level literacy even in his mother tongue, he has been undervalued by many people, including members of the Vietnamese American community, because of his lack of English literacy. However, as will be shown in this paper, although he has never attended any language class, he possesses rich linguistic repertoires for oral communication. This paper seeks to highlight the value of any individual's multilingualism and challenge the deficient view towards the languaging among immigrants from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Literature Review

Common Misconceptions in Multilingualism Research

With the world turning into a global village, multilingualism has never been more prevalent. In fact, "the increased opportunities for individuals to become bilingual and multilingual are one of the most significant social changes in the last two decades" (Auer & Wei, 2007, p.12). Although it has never been easier to encounter the phenomenon of bi- or multilingualism (henceforth multilingualism), the nature of the phenomenon itself can be easily misunderstood. I have synthesized three common misconceptions revolving around the term "multilingualism."

Misconception 1: Multilingualism equals trouble.

This perspective is influenced by a monolingual bias, especially in Europe. Due to this ideological bias, multilingual studies used to play a marginal role in the study of languages (Auer & Li, 2007). Along the same line, Dewaele (2007) opines that until now, the term *bilingualism* (or similarly, multilingualism) retains negative connotations outside the circle of language professionals and that there is still "a deep-seated and widespread fear of bilingualism" as well as "a tendency to couple the notion of 'problems' to that of bilingualism, a connotation that never comes to mind in discussions on unilingualism" (Baetens Beardsmore 2003, as

cited in Dewaele, 2007). Auer and Li (2007) argue that the negative connotations associated with multilingualism should be discarded and that multilingualism brings new opportunities for individuals and societies.

Misconception 2: Multilingualism equals perfect competence of each language.

Research in multilingualism used to view multilinguals as people who speak different languages perfectly well or with a native-like control of the languages (Dewaele, 2007). Nowadays, multilingualism has taken on a new meaning: the ideal of a perfect, balanced multilingual has been abandoned and instead a person with any level of proficiency in a second, third, etc. can be considered as a multilingual. It should be noted that the multilinguals themselves might hold a different view from language researchers and undervalue their own multilingualism. The purist and idealistic view of balanced multilingualism derives from a standard language ideology, a positivist view of an abstract and absolute language competence. According to Kroskrity (2004), the standard language ideology is no longer held by scholars in applied linguistics; nevertheless, it still prevails in laypeople's beliefs.

Misconception 3: Multilingualism is a state of mind.

The third commonly held misconception of multilingualism relates to the product-oriented view of multilingualism, while it is essential to view this phenomenon as a dynamic process. In order to avoid the tendency of viewing language and multingualism as an established psychological state, scholars have proposed a much more process-oriented term: *languaging.* Li (2011) looks into the psycholinguistic notion of languaging in the literature, defining it as "the process of using language to gain knowledge, to make sense, to articulate one's thought and to communicate using language" (p. 1223). The problem with researchers interested in multilingualism, according to Djite (2009), is that they frequently ask the question of "what?" when they define, describe and analyze the phenomenon of multilingualism, failing to ask the questions of "how?" and "why?" the facts are as they are or how the present circumstances are brought about and can be changed. He argues that multilingualism is an ever-changing process, not a static state, with new language combinations within individual language repertoires (Djite, 2009, p. 1). Djite argues that the patterns of language combinations in an individual's language repertories are on-going and ever-changing. In the same vein, Pietikainen *et al*. (2008) advocate Becker's use of the term languaging, turning language from an object to a process. Different languages in a multilingual's repertoires cooperate and compete with each other; this interaction occurs with relevance to the values of each language in the societal *linguistic market* (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 654) and within the multilingual's action space.

The term *multilanguaging*, instead of multilingualism, is therefore used in this paper to echo Becker's notion of languaging, which highlights the dynamics of language use in specific contexts (Becker, 1991). Multilanguaging helps elucidate the dynamic mechanisms of language use and reduce any possible association of multilingualism with an accomplished and perfectionist state. The deliberate deviation from using multilingualism and the use of its substitute multilanguaging is also chosen by Li (2011).

The multilingual individual in reality does not only make use of languages but also conceptualizes languages. To tap into the personal point of view towards multilingualism is to examine the multilingual individual's conceptualization of their multilanguaging, or what Pietikainen *et al.* (2008) term *metalanguaging* –the way in which languages and languaging are talked about, not to evaluate the appropriateness of one's metalanguaging, but to suggest ways of empowering their languaging. As Kroskrity (2004) points out, language practices are constructed and construct language ideologies, or beliefs about language, at the individual level. Furthermore, it would be inaccurate to assume that language ideologies are homogeneous within a group. Kroskrity goes on to specify that language ideologies are individually held beliefs about the superiority/inferiority between different languages, beliefs about linguistic adequacy of different varieties of a language, beliefs about how languages are learned, and beliefs about languages in contact and multilingualism (e.g. borrowing words and codeswitching[3]).

Micro-level Multilingualism and the Social Landscape

Multilingualism is a phenomenon that pervades different social and cultural levels but is manifested in the everyday life of multilingual individuals (Pietikainen *et al.*, 2008). A small-scale research on multilingualism has to look beyond language issues in individual's action space to the "social landscapes in which they occur" (Djite, 2007, p. 4). Blommaert, Collins, and Slembrouck (2005) hold a related view that multilingualism is not what individuals have and do not have, but what the environment, as structured determination and interactional emergence, enables and disables. Bourdieu's (1977) concepts of linguistic market, language as an embodied capital and of symbolic power associated with language are very influential in applied linguistic research. Bourdieu's analogy of the power struggles among different languages or language varieties is helpful to multilingualism, since the linguistic repertoires of the multilingual individual can be seen as commodities of unequal values in a linguistic market-- a market that transcends the personal border but manifests in the personal life-world.

Given that there is no language *per se* – language that exists in a vacuum devoid of social, cultural or political matters-- the discussion of languages and languages in use should take into consideration the factors that position the individual's multilanguaging. On the other hand, the agency of the individual in purposefully selecting the resources from the social setting and exerting influence on people and practices within his action space, e.g. his family members, should not be ignored.

In examining the participant's multilanguaging, I also find useful the concept of language maintenance as Tony's mother tongue is Vietnamese in an American society very much dominated by the English language. The term language maintenance is used to describe "a situation in which a speaker, a group of speakers, or a speech community continue to use their language in some or all spheres of life despite competition with the dominant or majority language to become the main/sole language in these spheres" (Pauwels, 2004, p. 719). As this study shows, a significant portion of Tony's languaging reflects his personal efforts to maintain the usage of the Vietnamese language.

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[3] A working definition of codeswitching is found in Woolard (2004), where she defines codeswitching as an individual's use of two or more language varieties in the same speech event or exchange.

Much of the literature in multilingualism either explores different aspects of the phenomenon as discussed above among members of a group, or compares different groups in terms of the aspect in question. In this paper, I look at the functions and processes of how everyday multilingual phenomena are discernible in one individual's life; hopefully this different vantage point will yield interesting findings and contribute to the body of multilingualism research.

Research Methodology, Design and Data Analysis

I first met Tony in September, 2009 at his *tiệm*, a clinic he owns and manages as a practitioner of Asian traditional medicine, specializing in acupuncture and chiropractic medecine. Before the first time we met, I had known of him through an article in *Bóng đá*, a daily sports newspaper, and *An ninh Thế giới Cuối tháng*, a biweekly magazine, both published in Vietnam. Each had an article about his successful treatment for Sir Alex Ferguson, the famous soccer coach of Manchester United FC, United Kingdom. Though I and Anh, my co-researcher, only knew the approximate location of his clinic, we noticed a small sign that said *Total Natural Healings*, followed by a Chinese name we could not understand[4], and the Vietnamese phrase *Tế dân đường thiết đả*. To us, two people who only knew the name of the avenue where his clinic was and the fact that it was near a 7-Eleven, the Vietnamese phrase on this sign was the determinant clue that ended our searching. At our first encounter, we greeted him in Vietnamese and he responded in Vietnamese. I also greeted an Asian elderly woman who was sitting on the couch in Vietnamese, but Tony turned to talk to her in English. Just as the sign of the clinic talked to his patients in different languages, Tony -- its owner -- used more than one language to communicate to different people.

I then made weekly visits to this clinic, first to establish rapport by talking with him about everything that came up in our conversations, then to experiment with informal pilot interview questions interspersed with random gossip, and finally to formally interview him. Most of our interactions occurred between his sessions with patients, mostly while his patients were receiving acupuncture since they had to wait for approximately 30-45 minutes for the treatment to take effect. First he talked to me rather formally but openly, using the pronoun *tôi*, a Vietnamese neutral pronoun for *I*. Gradually he switched from *tôi* to *anh*, a more intimate form of *I*. I believe I and Anh, my co-researcher and also his patient, successfully built a good relationship with him because in early November, he began to explicitly talk about how he liked us, offered us to rent the second floor of his house right above the clinic at a very low price, and even took us to a Vietnamese restaurant when he overheard that it was Anh's birthday.

The fact that we came from the north of Vietnam and spoke the same Vietnamese variety also eased our entrée into his personal life-world. He had had some unpleasant experience with other Vietnamese people associated with the South regime, which is similar to my sense of the invisible barrier between myself (a northern Vietnamese person) and Vietnamese Americans coming from South Vietnam (probably because of memories of the war in the 1970s). Because we shared the same variety of Vietnamese and came from the same region of the country, it

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[4] A reviewer of this paper helped in pointing out that it read 濟民堂(金失)打, which literally means "helping people office of acupuncture"

was natural that we chatted and interviewed primarily in Vietnamese, although many times he code-switched between English and Vietnamese, and sometimes I used some English words to talk to him. In addition to these conversations, at times when he was busy with his patients, I sat in the waiting room and observed the signs, testimonials and other artifacts around. When his patients came in or left, I observed their interactions and took notes.

This paper examines multilingualism through the case of Tony, not as an individualistic and isolated phenomenon, but as a nexus of multilingualism at a larger level by linking the participant's multilanguaging with that of his community, with national and transnational language policies and the issues of power hierarchy between different languages in different settings. Multilingualism, as viewed by Pietikainen *et al.* (2008) can be researched "at the macro-sociological level, where political and ideological issues are at stake" or at the level of an individual's life-world, "paying attention to his/her personal experiences of the language situation in question and exploring how he/she sees the possibilities opened up by languages, the constraints that may exist and finally, the choices that can be made" (p. 80). Pietikainen *et al.* (2008) chose Ante, the young Sami boy living in the multilingual north of Finland, as the "spotlight" of their analysis, but argue that "Ante's personal multilingualism is *not* seen as idiosyncratic and 'individualistic', but contingent upon the general situation: with the social and cultural norms, the habitual language practices and the potentially asymmetrical power relationships between linguistic resources" (p. 80).

Duff (2008) brings to notice the potentials of conducting case studies as a form of qualitative study in applied linguistics. She notices a new strand of case study research by applied linguists who are influenced by postmodernism, poststructuralism and critical theory. Although only one participant is the focus of a case study, complex information can be revealed, such as his or her changing social identity, social networks and sense of power and agency. Such a case study must include discussions of the participant's personal experience embedded within the social and political contexts, of the gains and losses in his life associated with immigration and learning English, and of how he constructs his sense of "self."

Following Pietikainen *et al.* (2008) and Duff (2008), I conducted this case study of Tony's multilingualism with constant considerations of his social setting, the multiple identities he takes in relation to different sites of his language and the language power struggle pervading the social context and exemplified in his individualized languaging and ideologies. My methodology is informed by Pietikainen *et al.* (2008)'s use of multimodal data, which included two drawings by Ante of himself as the learner of different languages, an interview, a sentence completion task and ethnographic observations in Ante's home, school and home region as well as his informal talks with his mother and his teachers. Duff (2008) elaborates that "those investigating issues of a psychological or linguistic nature typically undertake the detailed description and analysis of an individual subject (i.e., research participant) from whom observations, interviews, and family or life histories and other narratives provide the primary database" (p. 32). In a case study of such complex issues as language use and ideologies with only one participant, multimodal data offer a richer description of the issues at hand. Hence in this pilot research, I employed three main data collection strategies:

- Observations: These were conducted mostly at Tony's clinic, where he interacts with his patients and friends, once at lunch with his nephew and his two friends, all Vietnamese Americans. Since I took fieldnotes each time, some of his patients may have noticed me doing so, I made sure to always sit in the "waiting area" of the clinic and they may have thought that I was simply waiting for my appointment.

- Interviews: I conducted two formal interviews with Tony to ask him for information I could not get from ethnographic observations, such as his life history, how he got his English name and how he chose the name for his son, how he 'learned' the languages in his repertoire, his attitudes towards different languages, his use of language at home, etc. These interviews not only provided information about his language usage at the sites that I did not observe but also the underlying motivations and ideologies of his language behavior.

- Photoethnography: I took pictures inside and outside of his clinic to supplement my fieldnotes. The purpose of these pictures is to capture visual image of language use, manifested in signage, advertisement, newspapers and magazines, testimonials, and picture labels.

For my study's findings, I collected different modes of data, or "multimodal data" (Pietikainen et. al., 2008, p. 80), namely fieldnotes obtained from observations, recordings of interactions, interviews and photographs. Although I regret not having a chance to observe his language use at home and to interview his family members, I compensated for it by asking questions about his home language use both in formal interviews and informal chatting to ensure the consistency of the data. Also, I investigated this case from different related theoretical perspectives – multilingualism research, sociolinguistics, linguistic anthropology, linguistic landscape, environmental psychology and migration studies. Discussing the benefit of the triangulation of theory or seeing one same phenomenon through different theoretical lens, Stake (2000, as cited in Duff, 2008) confirms that "seen from different worldviews and in different situations, the 'same' case is different" (p. 143).

Furthermore, I performed on-going data analysis to make adjustments to research design and render previously collected data to better inform the subsequent data collection and analysis, while at the same time reviewing literature in different fields. I followed Maxwell's (2005) suggestion of not letting field notes and transcripts pile up; instead I analyzed data right after each observation and interview. As a result, the set of questions from the first interview was informed by previous observations and the set of questions for the second interview was based on analyzing transcripts of the first interview. Many times in the field when I had a hunch of some interpretation of the data, I tested it by including question(s) in the following interaction with the participant to verify my inference from previous data. For example, when I sensed that he considered himself an American citizen, yet his ethnic identity remained Vietnamese, I asked him: "Do you consider yourself American?"; the answer was positive. I then asked "Do you consider yourself Vietnamese?"; the answer was again "yes". However, he continued to explain these two conflicting answers by saying that "I am only an American

citizen, but I am a Vietnamese person." During this project, the two research questions evolved as I engaged more with the participant while simultaneously reading relevant literature. Coding for themes concurred with literature review and was attained inductively by reading my fieldnotes, interview transcripts and pictures / videos of the setting (following Creswell, 2007). Finally, I try to represent the participant's voice when deciding categories to be included in the final analysis by using his emic language whenever possible.

Findings and Implications

The two themes that emerged from my data are: (i) the dichotomy in the participant's conceptualization of his own languaging and what it should be, and (ii) subordinating and resisting a linguistic power hierarchy. Discussions of the first theme provide answers to my first research question while analysis of the second theme leads to findings regarding the second research questions. This parallel correlation between research questions and themes emerging from the data stems from the interactive research process (Maxwell, 2005) where I was engaged simultaneously in data analysis and rethinking research design.

Standards vs. Imperfection: [My] Vietnamese Is Imperfect – [My] English Is Certainly Worse

My observations show that Tony is very confident in communicating in Vietnamese and English (unfortunately, I have never had a chance to observe his interaction with a patient using Cantonese, Khmer or Spanish). The American patients who came to his clinic seemed to have no problem understanding his spoken English; he conversed comfortably in English although the grammar and vocabulary were not highly complex. We also talked in Vietnamese with great ease and I never failed to understand what he said in Vietnamese[5]. Therefore I did not notice that he has a deficiency lens towards his own languaging until much later, after reviewing different pieces of data. The first time I met him at his clinic I asked him: "What languages can you speak?" and he answered assertively "Just Vietnamese and English." A month later, I asked him how he learned English, and I was bewildered to hear him say "*chưa bao giờ học một ngày một giờ*" [I have never learned it even for a day or an hour]. To me the fact that he has oral proficiency in English implies the acquisition of knowledge of this language, intentionally or unintentionally, or both. The rest of his answer revealed that in Tony's mind, learning English meant attending an English language class. He explained that he had never been to such a class before and only watched American TV. In the second interview, I repeated this question ("How did you learn English?"), and his answer was consistent: "*tiếng Anh thì anh chưa có đi học bao giờ cả*" [English, I have never learned it before] and again explained that watching television was all he did. He labeled his speaking English to be "*thực ra là nói bồi*" [in fact speaking a pidgin English] and said that he wanted to "*am hiểu về tiếng Anh nhiều hơn*" [understand

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[5] In our conversations and interviews which were conducted primarily in Vietnamese, he did make some errors in word choice; however, the erroneous words are academic words and I could still tell which word he actually wanted to use. For the words that he substituted with English words, I could not decide if it was because he forgot the Vietnamese equivalents or he was code-switching as a habitual practice.

more about English]. His command of English is not as high as he wishes and in his opinion prevents him from communicating effectively. He even projected a scenario of a possible future English speaking daughter-in-law "*Mình bảo là ok làm sao thì làm chứ đừng có bê mấy bà Mỹ về nhá (cười). Mày có lấy vợ thì làm ơn lấy vợ người Việt ý, chứ bố là không biết tiếng Anh nhiều đâu nên bố không thích nói tiếng Anh*" [I told him (his son): Ok whatever you do, don't bring home some American wife (laughing). When you get married, choose a Vietnamese wife, because I don't know much English so I don't like speaking it]. In the interview, he expressed his irritation when he cannot think of the English words when he wishes to use them: "*nhiều khi mình bực bội vì có những cái từ mà mình muốn dùng nhưng không dùng được*" [many times I am annoyed because there are words that I want to use but I can't]. He said, as if to justify what he considers a far from perfect proficiency of the English language, that "*…mình đâu có phải giỏi tiếng Anh đâu … vì tiếng Anh nó khó lắm… tiếng Anh thì lại không đánh vần được. Nhiều khi nó viết cái âm nó ra gần giống nhau mà viết nó hoàn toàn khác nhau. Nhiều cái nó khó lắm.* [I am not very good at English…because the English language is very difficult…I can't tell the spelling of a word from its sound. Often two words sound similar, but the spelling is totally different. English is so hard]. It can be inferred from this answer that if one is not able to write English well, then he or she will not have a desirable command of the language. This agrees with his negation of "learning" English due to never having attended an English class before. He regards English classes as a place where the written form of the English language would have been taught properly. Learning the second language, in his opinion, should be through formal instruction without which the product can only be a "pidgin" form of the standard target language.

He is also discontent, although at a different level, with his Vietnamese. "*Tiếng Việt bây giờ nhiều từ anh nghe anh cũng không hiểu đâu nhé.. mà người bắc nói đó.*" [Even in Vietnamese, now there are many words I can't understand…and I'm talking about Northern Vietnamese speakers]. Multilingualism and migration, hence living "*xa quê hương*" [far away from motherland], has benefited him but also posed linguistic challenges. When I asked him in the second interview how he evaluated his proficiency in Vietnamese and English, he replied: "*tiếng Việt thì có thể mình chưa được hoàn chỉnh vì mình xa quê hương quá lâu rồi mà tiếng Anh thì nhất định là kém hơn là tiếng Việt rồi.*" [(My) Vietnamese is probably imperfect because I have been away from motherland for too long, and (my) English is certainly worse than Vietnamese]. This is consistent with a previous conversation about codeswitching about three weeks before the interview: "*Bây giờ mình qua Mỹ thành ra tiếng gì cũng dở*" [Now that I have come to the U.S. any language (that I speak) is bad].

However, judging the imperfection of the languages he speaks, he seems to feel less guilty about English imperfection. "*Nhưng mà thôi thì dù sao nó là ngôn ngữ thứ hai nên chẳng ai trách mình nó là ngôn ngữ thứ hai nên chẳng ai trách mình*" [But anyway, it is the second language so no one can blame me]. He finds acceptable his level of English proficiency based on the secondary role of this language, reasoning that other people are not likely to hold him accountable for this "imperfection." Although he does not hold himself accountable to use his second language perfectly, this does not protect him from experiencing the tension between other people's tolerance and the need for a better English proficiency. He is highly conscious that his "pidgin English" is not the English that he "should be good at." He argued that

"*mình sống ở Mỹ nên mình cần phải giỏi tiếng Anh*" [because I live in the US, I need to be good at English]. Hearing *cần phải* in his answer (which means both 'need' and 'must' in Vietnamese), I asked him for clarification. He rephrased *cần phải* as *nên giỏi tiếng Anh* [should]. Again he confirmed the importance of formal language instruction: "*Anh muốn là có ngày anh sẽ đi học tiếng Anh*" [I hope that someday I'll go to an English class].

In contrast to these contradictory attitudes towards his English proficiency, he expressed stronger criticism of his own code-switching when he spoke Vietnamese. I asked him about his use of English words when he spoke Vietnamese, both in our informal conversations and the semi-formal interviews, and he answered consistently with the same phrase: "*lỡ pha*" [mix (languages) subconsciously, not on purpose] When I first asked to interview him for a class that I am taking, I explained that I chose him because he could speak both Vietnamese and English. He interpreted "speak both Vietnamese and English" as "mixing Vietnamese and English" (code-switching) and immediately gave an excuse: "*Nhiều khi nó bị lỡ pha vào chứ có phải mình cố tình đâu*" [Many times I mix (the languages) by accident – I didn't do it on purpose]. The word *bị* in Vietnamese renders a negative connotation for the whole sentence, implicating his negative view towards not being able to keep his mother tongue English-free. It should be noted that I had avoided commenting on his language use and it was the first time that we mentioned "mixing" in our conversation. He seems to be so fixated with this guilt of contaminating the mother tongue that all incidents of code-switching discussion were brought up by Tony himself. I did not even have to ask separate questions about code-switching in both interviews because he explained this habit several times on his own. In our conversations, we never used the term "code-switching," rather I agreed with his usage of "mixing". For example, when we talked about how he taught his son Vietnamese at home, he said that he had to use English to explain words that his son had difficulty with. "*Chỉ có câu nào không hiểu thì mình phải cố giải nghĩa bằng Tiếng Anh là bắt buộc. Chính vì chỗ đó mà mình bị pha khi mình nói tiếng Việt pha tiếng Anh là như vậy.*" [I had to explain in English the meaning of the sentences he (the son) doesn't understand. That's why I mix Vietnamese with English when I speak]. Another time when he mentioned "mixing" is in response to my question: "Do you want to use Vietnamese or English to talk to me, a Vietnamese speaker?" He said: "*Mình thích dùng tiếng Việt. Thỉnh thoảng có lỡ thì pha vào thôi chứ.*" [I like using Vietnamese. Sometimes I slipped and mixed (the two languages) by accident only].

Tony attributed the frequency of using English words within a Vietnamese sentence (*intrasentential codeswitching*) to forgetting some words in Vietnamese and having to substitute them with the English words. Nevertheless, he sometimes included simple English words, such as "*Dạo này busy quá*" [I've been so busy lately]. He used the Vietnamese equivalent of busy elsewhere in the conversation (*bận*); therefore it is unlikely that he forgot the term. It seems that he is now using a mixture of Vietnamese and English subconsciously and such mixing has become a new code. Woolard (2004) points out that what looks like frequent intrasentential codeswitching could be seen with ''a *monolectal view*,'' i.e. speakers do not switch between two distinct varieties but instead use a single code of mixed origins (Meeuwis & Blommaert, 1998). Tony disapproves of this hybrid code, suggesting his strong belief that the mother tongue should be kept English-free. Furthermore,

this hybridity derives from a long process of languaging in both codes and the degree of hybridity in his mixed code must have changed over time.

The greater emotionality regarding his self-assessed "bad" [*dở*] habitual "mixing" [*pha*] of the mother tongue probably derives from a strong sense of ownership and emotional attachment with Vietnamese. Only when referring to Vietnamese did Tony use the possessive form "*của mình*" [belonging to me] e.g. "*tiếng Việt của mình*" [my/our Vietnamese language], "*tiếng của mình, ngôn ngữ của mình*" [my/our language]. He used this possessive form often, emphasizing his closeness and emotional attachment to his mother tongue. He said:

> "*Mình thích dùng tiếng Việt . Thỉnh thoảng có lỡ thì pha vào thôi chứ. Còn thực tế là mình thích dùng chính cái ngôn ngữ của mình, tiếng mẹ đẻ mà thì hay hơn. Nó có tình cảm hơn. Chứ còn tiếng Anh cứ "you" với "me" chỉ bất đắc dĩ thôi, với người ngoại quốc họ không thể dùng tiếng của mình thôi thì mình bắt buộc phải nói tiếng Anh.*" [I like using Vietnamese. Sometimes I slipped and mixed (the two languages) by accident only. But in fact I like using my language, it's my mother tongue, it's better to speak it. It's also more emotional. The English language with "you" and "me" is only involuntary. With foreigners who can't use our language I am forced to use English]. (Interview, Nov. 20, 2009)

In relation to other languages, in all of our interactions he only mentioned the name of the languages (e.g. English, Spanish, Cantonese) – no possessive form was added. Tony positions himself as the user and owner of the Vietnamese language, hence the gate-keeper of its purity. However, he does not claim ownership to English (and other languages), calling his own English a "pidgin English"; in other words, he does not regard himself a "legitimate speaker" of the language (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 650). Norton (1997) raises questions about whether English belongs to native speakers of English, to speakers of standard English, to White people, or to all of those who speak it, irrespective of their linguistic and sociocultural histories. Norton strongly advocates empowering all speakers of the English language with a sense of ownership, regardless of their backgrounds; therefore, Tony's less standard English cannot devalue his ownership of the language.

Although I think Tony's linguistic repertoires are rich, he is influenced by a standard language ideology (Lippi-Green, 1997). Lippi-Green highlights a commonly held bias toward an abstracted, idealized, homogenous spoken language that exists among most speakers of English. In Tony's case, the communicative efficiency of his English and Vietnamese is high, yet he still discriminates against himself on the basis that his languages are "imperfect." He is subjected to a widespread misconception of multilingualism, one that equates this phenomenon with a native-like command of each language. An alternative sociolinguistic perspective values the multiplicity of his linguistic resources instead of negating them. I have mentioned before that the first time we met, he said that he could speak "just English and Vietnamese." In fact, during the subsequent informal talks and interviews with him, he revealed that "*tiếng Quảng Đông mình cũng biết nhiều nhiều rồi*" [I have *known* quite a lot of Quangdong language (Cantonese)] and that he also "*biết*" [knew] a little Spanish and Khmer (which he referred to as "Cambodian") enough to carry out simple conversations with patients. When asked if he *knew* Spanish and Khmer, he said that he only *knew* so little of these

languages that it does not count as a language ["*không tính*"]. As Kroskrity (2004) points out, the standard language ideology is still prevalent among many people, disempowering themselves and preventing them from recognizing their own values. Tony did not "count" Cantonese, Spanish and Khmer as part of his linguistic resources, perhaps because he did not formally "learn" them and his level of proficiency is low. However, I would argue that these resources deserve to be counted, regardless of proficiency level. Tony could be proud of his linguistic resourcefulness, especially because (not despite the fact that) he did not "learn" them in a formal classroom but is able to use certain features of different languages in communication.

English Number One vs. Vietnamese Only: Subordinating and Resisting Linguistic Power Hierarchy

Tony's languaging is situated in a complex linguistic environment of an urban setting in the United States, where he is exposed to a range of language varieties of asymmetrical power. Edwards (2007) comments that in the United States, although there is no official language at the federal level, "English has all the *de facto* clout a language could wish for" (p. 448)[6]. Speakers of English are speakers of the national language, the language of the greatest power not just within the US borders but also at a global scale. It is probably because of the symbolic power attached to the language in the transnational linguistic market that "English speakers have a reputation as unenthusiastic language learners" (Edwards, 2004, p. 137), while speakers of other languages are much more motivated to learn English.

From nearly 30 years of living and working in the country, Tony synthesized a power hierarchy of major languages spoken in the United States: "*Ở Mỹ này thì biết tiếng Anh là nhất. Thứ nhì là biết tiếng Xì, thứ ba là biết tiếng Hoa*" [In the US, a command of English is number 1, Spanish is number 2, Mandarin is number 3]. He did not include his mother tongue even though the question I asked was "In your opinion, is it important to know Vietnamese in the United States?" It is noticeable that not only his languaging is positioned in a set of different language resources, he also has to juggle the values attached to these languages and make choices based on these asymmetrical values. Therefore, the language-related decisions he makes are "situated and purposeful" (Pietikainen *et al.*, 2008, p. 96). In this setting, languages do position Tony but at the same time he also "has agency in choosing between languages, positioning and ranking them" (Pietikainen *et al.*, 2008, p. 95) in different settings, such as home and work, his action space. In this part of the paper, I will draw on my data to prove that Tony performs his active agency navigating different resources available to him. He both accepts and challenges the power asymmetry between languages in relation to his multiple identities in different settings.

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[6] According to Siegal (2003), the United States has no official language, and neither do one-third of the other countries around the world. Neither the U.S. Constitution nor any act of Congress nor any Supreme Court decision names English as the *official* language. It *is* the official language, though, in almost half the states, including Florida and California. It is a *national* language. Census questionnaires, vital registration forms, and immigration forms are all printed in English; U.S. citizenship tests are given in English; voting forms are mostly printed in English; educational system is designed to make students proficient in English; public libraries are stocked with books almost wholly in English; and official government records—legal, executive, and judicial—are kept in English.

Tony uses English, the "number one language in the US" as he puts it, for a multitude of reasons, either to accommodate the large number of English-speaking people in the host society or to avoid discrimination; from the sociological point of view, he uses English to enhance his *social capital* (Bourdieu, 1986). When he officially became a US citizen, he changed his name from Tuấn to Tony. The reason was that the boss that he used to work for was a millionnaire that he very much admired for his diligence and wealth. He said that he changed his name to Tony "*cho tiện*" [for convenience] and "*làm ăn ở Mỹ dễ hơn*" [to do business more easily in the US]. When his son was born 17 years ago, he chose the name John for two reasons. "*Thì nó sinh trưởng ở đây rồi thì nó phải là tên Mỹ thì nó đỡ bị lạc lõng hơn*": First, he argues that because his son was born and grows up here, he has to take an American name to feel "less isolated" from the society. Second, the name will benefit him when he "*ra xã hội làm ăn thì giao tiếp với người Mỹ nhiều thì nó thuận lợi làm ăn*" [goes out into the American society, communicates with a lot of Americans and does business]. Gerhard and Hans (2009) regard naming practice as a social act, not just an idea, attitude or intention of behavior – a social act that indicates immigrants' desired sense of belonging to the societal mainstream with the view of the "profits which accrue from membership of a group" (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 246). Bourdieu's view is that material types of economic capital can present themselves in the form of cultural capital (e.g. education credentials, books, dispositions of the mind and body) or social capital (profits from the membership of a group). Gerhards and Hans (2009) in relation to Bourdieuian view discusses that while other indicators of social and cultural capital can be costly (in terms of finance or time), choosing a first name is free and available to everyone. Tony relates his own and his son's name both to doing business in the United States, i.e. he expressed the desire for maximizing their economic capital by a simple act: naming. In other words, he hopes that their names will help them integrate better into the mainstream society, hence enhance their social capital with the hope of enhancing economic capital. By affording himself and his son this social capital, he also accepts the power of popular English names and the common practice of people in his community (he said: "in fact I don't know any Vietnamese in the US who gives their children a Vietnamese name").

The same can be said about his business name, as shown in figure 1. The English code in the sign "Total Natural Healings" occupied the first place and is most eye-catching, then the Chinese name and finally the Vietnamese translation of the Chinese name. He said that two patients picked the Chinese Mandarin and the English name for his clinic, and he only translated the Chinese Mandarin name into Vietnamese. This sign, while appealing to patients speaking different languages, is suggestive of how Tony perceives the linguistic power hierarchy of his surroundings. [7]

The testimonies and captions of pictures that Tony chose to display on his office wall are mostly in English, except for one testimony in Vietnamese. The prevalence of English writings in his office exemplifies his statement about the number one position of the language. Even the single testimony in Vietnamese is dated in English (Figure 2).

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[7] Interestingly, this character (金失) is not a standard Chinese character in either simplified or traditional character systems. The traditional Chinese character for "iron" is 鐵 (since the word "acupuncture" is composed of the characters for "iron" and "hit"), and the simplified Chinese character is 铁. The left side of this character is traditional, while right side is simplified. This hybrid character is yet another example of languaging practices on the part of his customers, then reappropriated by Tony.

Figure 1: The sign outside Tony's clinic

In his action space, Tony made several decisions to accommodate English speakers, who are important for his clinic/business to succeed, even though he does not really like speaking the language. As can be seen from figure 1, he chose to use English in the first and most prominent place of his clinic's sign. In his office, testimonies selected to display on the wall are mostly in English. It is intriguing for me to observe that one testimony written by a person from the Embassy of Vietnam in the U.S. is in English although the patient and Tony share the same mother tongue: Vietnamese (Figure 3). In addition, Tony made sure his patients know the most famous people whom he has treated and befriended by using English captions under pictures of him and these important patients (Figure 4). These decisions reaffirm Tony's perception of the linguistic hierarchy and they are also acts of social capital enhancement.

His rational belief about the importance of the English language in American society is reflected in the involuntary nature of his learning and speaking this language. In an interview in late October with me, he said: "*Với bệnh nhân người Mỹ mình toàn phải nói tiếng Mỹ, không biết cũng phải cố mà biết*" [With American patients I have to speak American (English). Even if you don't know it, you have to try to learn it]. Throughout the interviews, he mentioned "*bắt buộc phải nói tiếng Anh*" [be forced to speak English] several times. Yet he still deliberately invested in learning English by watching news and movies in English (he enthusiastically advised me to do so).

He mentioned in the interview that he is now still taking notes of words that he does not understand to ask his son later on. The benefits of "knowing English," in his opinion, are in communication, job opportunities, better legal and social knowledge as well as travelling.
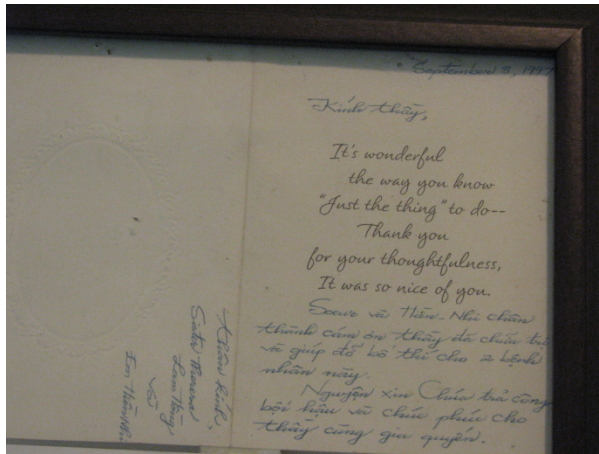
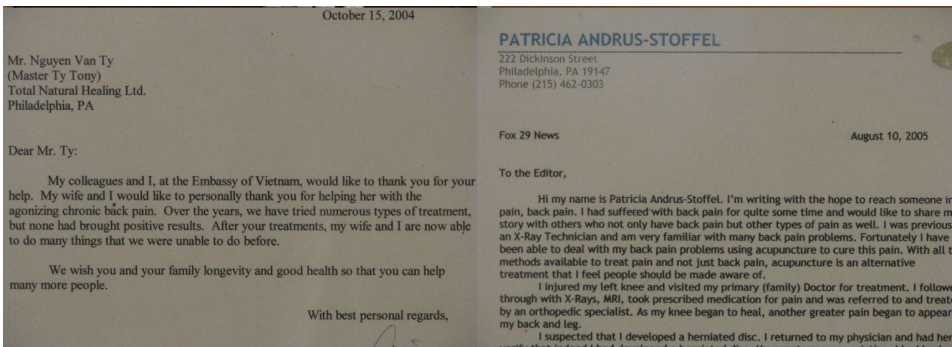*Figure 2:* The only testimony in (primarily) Vietnamese

Figure 3: Two testimonies in English, one is from a person at the Embassy of Vietnam

Similarly, he learned Cantonese, Spanish and Khmer over time to be able to communicate with his patients – but he does not invest as much effort in learning these languages as he does in English. The languages and their asymmetrical power relations in his linguistic environment influenced his multilanguaging not merely in terms of what languages he is willing to incorporate into his linguistic repertoires but also to what extent he tries to incorporate them. Tony's multilanguaging has developed and changed over time and is likely to continue changing in the future, which is another example of the dynamics of multilingualism.

Although the languages in the linguistic market (Bourdieu, 1977) position Tony's multilanguaging and the values of different linguistic commodities influence his language-related decisions, Tony also proactively makes choices, especially when it comes to his mother tongue. He takes initiative in language maintenance at home, following what Pauwels (2004) calls the "minority

Figure 4: Two pictures with English captions: the one on the left reads "Sir Alex Ferguson, Manchester United, England"; the right one reads "A. Charles Peruto, Jr. Attorney at Law"

language = home language model" (p. 731). At home where he takes on the identities as a husband and a father, he has greater agency in determining the dominant language. In the interview he revealed that there is a rule namely *"tiếng Việt only"* [Vietnamese only] in his family, and that he only uses English to explain things that his son does not understand. The power hierarchy between the languages is reversed: English, the "number one" language in the society, now is second to Vietnamese. He said:

> *Chứ tôi quen nhiều các cha mẹ sinh con ở đây mà cha mẹ không biết tiếng Anh,*
> *gọi là biết hai ba câu sơ sơ thôi nhưng mà con lại không biết tiếng Việt, cho nên*
> *không dạy được. Hỏi cái gì cũng "What?" rồi là "Hi" với "Ba", "you" với*
> *"me" chứ còn thì mình thấy không cách nào người ta có thể dạy bảo con được.*
> [I know a lot of parents who gave birth to their children here and those
> parents don't know English – well they know two or three sentences,
> which doesn't count, and the kids don't know Vietnamese, so there is no
> way they can educate their children]. (Interview, Nov. 13, 2009)

Tony reiterated the educational function of Vietnamese several times in both our informal exchanges and in interviews. The reversal of the language power is also attributed by Tony to "keeping the family tradition" and their ethnic identity.

It did not surprise me to learn that Tony also taught Vietnamese to his nephew, who accompanied him in the long migratory journey from Vietnam to the US. This young man used to be in the US Army; when he was demobilized, he forgot most of his Vietnamese, and Tony actively retaught him the language. At the birthday party where we met, Tony's nephew talked to us entirely in Vietnamese with excellent fluency and accuracy. "We are Vietnamese, we must speak the mothertongue" – Tony explained. "*Mình chỉ là công dân Mỹ thôi. Chứ còn coi thì bao giờ mình cũng coi mình là người Việt*" [I am only an American citizen. But I always consider myself a Vietnamese person]. As he shifts from being a "*công dân Mỹ*" [American citizen], a member of the American society, to being a member of his family and a member of the Vietnamese ethnic group ("*người Việt*" [Vietnamese person]), he switches on the power button of the Vietnamese language by exercising the rule "Vietnamese only" and switches off that of English (and other languages – English is not number one in his home, as Spanish and Cantonese are also deprived of their importance).

Tony's resistance to the dominant power of English in the society through maintaining Vietnamese use at home (micro-level) – his own action space – continues to be situated by the relevant policies of the US and Vietnamese governments (macro-level). One of his ways of maintaining the status of Vietnamese in the family is choosing Vietnamese media, which are not as readily available as English media. He subscribes to a satellite service that enables him to watch VTV4, which is produced by the state-managed Vietnam Television (based in Hanoi, Vietnam's capital) and Saigon TV, which is broadcast by Vietnamese Americans in California. According to Carruthers (2007), VTV4 is specially packaged for Viet Kieu communities in Asia, Europe, Australia and North America. Transnational media is considered the most feasible way of offering "homeland-friendly" language tuition materials, in an effort of the Vietnamese government to deterritorialize the nation by providing the diaspora overseas with means of maintaining the Vietnamese culture and tradition. Little Saigon TV, broadcast from Little Saigon, Orange County, California, is made possible by the US's tolerance of ethnic language media. From this perspective, part of Tony's resistance against the linguistic dominance of English is embedded within more macro-level power struggles: one initiated by the Vietnamese government to help the country's expatriates learn the Vietnamese language for fear that they may cease speaking it under the influence of another language that has more social value, and the other one by Vietnamese communities in the US to provide their ethnic group with media in Vietnamese in a society where English media prevail.

Implications

This case study illustrates the need to challenge the deficiency view of immigrants whose first language is not English, especially immigrants with seemingly low-level literacy like Tony. In fact, over time their linguistic repertoires can become admirably rich and despite their limited literacy, they can be very skillful in making use of the linguistic resources available to them in their social environments. To make the most of these resources language maintenance should be promoted as a right of immigrants. The immigrants themselves should take pride in their linguistic resourcefulness and richness, regardless of the modality of their language learning.

Although Tony learned different languages informally, he still wishes to go to a formal classroom to study English and Cantonese. Language classes for older immigrants who wish to improve their language proficiency should draw on resources that already exist in their repertoires. Their oral proficiency should also be valued so that they can overcome their bias against imperfect language. In such classrooms, critical language pedagogy, which "relates the classroom context to the wider social context and aims at social transformation" (Akbari, 2008, p. 276), would be useful. According to Kumaravadivelu (2006, as cited in Akbari, 2008), in language teaching, critical practice "is about recognizing language as ideology, not just system" (p. 277). Critical language teaching should be employed through critical discussions of language and power-related issues, such as the pros and cons of one's pursuit of a nativelike English proficiency or one's less standard English, the ownership of the English language, or the values of languages in the linguistic market.

Conclusion

To summarize, I have tried to represent Tony's emic conceptualizations of his own multilanguaging in relation to the three common misconceptions regarding multilingualism. Findings show that Tony has his own linguistic power hierarchy, which attaches different values to languages in his linguistic repertoires. He is also subjected to the commonly held standard language ideology and thus seems to undervalue his own linguistic resources. Due to this deficiency lens, Tony only has a sense of ownership towards his mother tongue and associates learning, knowing, or being good at any language with formal classroom-based learning process resulting in a perfect proficiency outcome. I have also discussed this participant's personal experiences and choices of multilanguaging in his action space that are reflective of the complexities and power asymmetries in the larger linguistic and social landscape. In his own action space, he both sanctions the dominant role of English as well as challenges it through acts of Vietnamese language maintenance, realized in the ways he languages and influences the languaging of his family members. Tony's personal language maintenance efforts are assisted by larger-scale policies from both Vietnam and the U.S.

The story of Tony's languaging does not come to an end here; his linguistic capital will continue evolving within the power dynamics in the linguistic market. Multilingualism research will look into new ways of multilanguaging of people from all walks of life, making sure that their voices are heard and their ways of learning to language and ways of languaging are valued.

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