

In Translation: *A Magazine of Language and Identity*



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The Power of Passion

By Olivia Han

When you talk to someone, have you ever felt that sometimes the words just can't explain your mind well? I feel this all the time. However, art has such a wonderful ability to allow you to express yourself clearly without using any words. Zhe is a current sophomore at the University of Illinois at Chicago. Her major is studio arts. Today, you are going to know how this girl got to the point of learning art and how she uses her art work to speak out for herself. Her story is not only about the art, but also about the inspiration of dream.

Zhe grew up in China. When she was little, she was full of curiosity about any types of art. She liked singing, dancing, drawing and acting. Everyone kept saying that Zhe could be an artist. However, in China, anything about art is seemed as "empty" by some parents, which means you can't feed yourself and make money from art. Also, because Zhe was never trained in art, she was not sure if she could do it. Nobody encouraged her to learn it. Like other Chinese children, Zhe was busy with the school work every day because her parents only expected her to get a good grade at school. She didn't get a chance to learn art since she was little.

Zhe has a really traditional Chinese family. Both of her parents had their own companies. They were busy for work every day, and they only could spend very little time with Zhe. They wanted to be good parents, but they didn't have that much time to care about Zhe. The only way they could make sure that Zhe was on her right track was to "control" her. In general, Chinese parents always want their children to be practical, and they sometimes even made the prac-

tical decisions for their children without considering the kids' ideas. In her parents' opinions, art couldn't give Zhe a better life. Finally Zhe left her talent on the side.

After middle school, Zhe's whole family moved to America as immigrants. Zhe went to a public high school in Chicago. During her first two years in America, she strongly felt the big difference between the two types of educational styles in two countries. In China, you only learn how to be a "good student;" in America, you learn how to be "yourself." In Zhe's view, the strict teaching method in China did help the students to improve their academic skills; however, she preferred the more free style teaching method in America which let her discover herself. Zhe had taken some regular art classes in China before. In her impression, the teacher in China just cared about if your art work was identical to the model. In Zhe's words: "They never took care of your creation." Teachers did the total opposite in America; they talked through the ideas with the students individually and encouraged them to stick with their special ideas and styles. This gave Zhe a great inspiration. She started taking art classes for every single semester. She was so happy that she could pick up her dream, and she was thinking maybe she should step forward for art.

After getting the offer from UIC, Zhe's family was very happy and proud of her. Yet another question came out: What should Zhe major in? Her parents wanted her to study law or business because these types of majors were easier to get a job and make money. In Chinese culture, parents' opinions are always the priority. After several sleepless nights and talking with friends,

Zhe realized that this was her life, not her parents'. Zhe loved art, and she really wanted to keep learning in art. She decided to talk through this problem with her parents. Zhe came to her mother's room first. With great earnestness on her face, she said: "Mom, I am old enough to choose my own life. I am very thankful to you and my dad for what both of you have done for me in the past years. I can't rely on you forever. For the rest of my life, I want to take the responsibility on my own."

Zhe started crying while she was saying these things, and her mother cried with her too. She was surprised that her daughter had been struggling with these problems for this long time. Her tears contained too much guilt because of her carelessness towards Zhe's struggle. Then, Zhe made everything clear to her parents and hoped her parents could understand her. Luckily, from this long conversation, Zhe's parents compromised with their daughter. They were touched by Zhe's firmness and confidence of art. On the following day, Zhe went to school and changed her major to "studio arts." She described that day as her beginning of the new life.

One thing that made Zhe realize that art didn't only allow her to release interests but also had the intention to convey her feelings was the art project which she did last semester. Last year, a piece of news that happened in China was spread over on the internet. A woman who had a seven-month pregnancy was forced to have an abortion by the Chinese government to observe one-child policy. Everybody was indignant about what happened to this poor woman. Zhe was very angry when she heard about this because she really wanted to have a little brother or a little sister. The one-child policy explained why Zhe couldn't have a sibling. Also, she was upset about how the

government was this cruel to the woman for breaching this law. She put all of her emotions on the canvas.

One week later, Zhe finished her final project which was called "Only Child." It is a satirical painting: A naked women was lying on the bed with her stomach open, and someone was taking her baby away. Her mouth was covered by the black tape which really made the main point of inhumanity stand out. After she briefly described her work, many classmates got the same feelings as Zhe. They all felt angry for the inhumanity from the government and sympathy for this young mother. She was surprised by her teachers' and classmates' reactions. She didn't expect that they could get this much information from her work. The echo of this project told Zhe that art sometimes has more persuasion than words.

Looking forward to the future, Zhe wishes she can show her parents that art can lead her to get a better life as well. Art is not something "empty." Zhe hopes she could have her own gallery. She wants to create more powerful art works to mirror some society issues. As Zhe said: "I don't have the power to change the word, but I want to reflect the problems in my projects to the people who are able to make a change to the word."

When you meet Zhe on the campus, you won't see a tall and tough girl. She is quite small and tiny. But inside of this tiny body, she is full of passion of art. Her big smile always reminds me that she is happy and thankful about her decision. The art gives her more confidence; she uses art to make this world more colorful. That is the power of passion.

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Finding the Right Words to Express Me

By Henna Vohra

Language has a certain aura of power. No one knows where it comes from, neither can we define it. Language is so natural to us that deconstructing the gibberish that we value as a form of communication is nearly impossible. However, for a person like me who comes from multiple sides of the language spectrum, the power of language is even more mystifying. By the time I started school I was able to comprehend three languages: English, Gujarati, and Hindi and could read Arabic. By the time I was in college, I had added Urdu and bits of Spanish to my language credentials. However, when looking back at my development in English alone, I realized that English broke into two distinct dialects – almost two different languages. This divide only occurred in certain settings. At home and with friends, my English would sound different from when I would converse with professors or be amongst a group of strangers. To speak solely in Standard English was a conscious decision that I had to make because the language that my community taught me to speak *just wasn't gonna get me nowhere in life and I wasn't 'bout to be no bum on the streets.*

Black English Vernacular (BEV), also known as Ebonics, has constantly come into question for its seeming defiance against the Standard English. We are all taught to speak Standard English from the moment we step foot into the school system. The method that is taught attempts to standardize our usage of English. This standardization immediately rules out BEV as an accept-

able way of speaking because its rules are different. For me, this partition of English was personal. I grew up in the South Suburbs and being heavily influenced by black culture and language, I spoke in Black English Vernacular, which I consider my Natural English. It was the English that I grew up speaking and the one that reflected my identity and culture at best. However, this vernacular is seen by many as being unprofessional because of its usage of words (i.e. *ain't gonna, finna*), violation of school-taught grammar rules (double-negatives), amongst other nuances. This partition between the dialects created a rift between my identity amongst family and friends and the identity that others in society viewed. There was a time and a place for each dialect. At home or with friends I could not articulate in Standard English for fear of sounding pompous or snobby. Yet, at the same time, I could not speak in my Natural English in the classroom for fear of being viewed as not having a Standard English vernacular.

I knew that my natural dialect was scrutinized because of the connotation it held in society as well as my physical appearance creating an obvious mismatch between the black language and an Asian Indian face. Even though I felt that my Natural English was the truest expression of my raw thoughts and feelings, the social norm forced me to change my dialect into something more *appropriate* for all settings. I joined the speech team during my sophomore year in high school in order to *perfect* my English. During my three years on the speech team, I spent my entire Satur-

day offering myself up for judgment and criticism in front of complete strangers. The sheer fright of speaking in front of people propelled me achieve a stronger grasp of the Standard English; however, despite achieving my socially-driven goal, there was still a void that resided in me. This void assured me that my victory was short lasted and that I will always unconsciously gravitate to my Natural English.

During my senior year, the speech team helped me discover something pretty profound; as long as I spoke properly in front of the judges and wrote in proper English for assignments, I could still speak in my Natural English in other areas. That became the plan for the rest of my high school years. I would slowly, but efficiently display my ideas and arguments in class and during tournaments in Standard English, but the second I stepped out of the room I continued to converse with friends in my Natural English. The transition became such a natural habit that I did not realize when I changed between the two. This method was my way of preserving my identity through Natural English and still having the ability to converse in Standard English. I was able to hold onto both of these identities that were exclusive to their respective setting and to me. This technique proved to be effective until college placed me in a setting that was unfamiliar with an Asian Indian American speaking in BEV; as a result, it again compelled me to restrict myself solely to Standard English on campus.

Through this experiment of language and identity that I have inadvertently conducted, I've found that language plays a huge role in how we are able to view ourselves as a part of a greater population or community. The standardization of English distanced me from my Natural Language, but at the same time provided me with lan-

guage that allowed me to converse without feeling scrutinized or negatively judged. When I spoke in my Natural English I felt more connected to my language and the individuals whom I spoke to. This vernacular held more meaning since it provided me with an avenue to articulate my opinions in their purest form. In contrast, when I spoke in Standard English I felt as if my words were being censored. This belief of censorship made me extremely cautious, which resulted in my slow and steady pace during speech tournaments and class presentations.

My aim is not to show how one is better than the other, but rather to shed light on the existence of different dialects of English even within native English speakers. I am by no means an expert on this issue and my personal quest of deconstructing these two distinct languages and identifying when to use the right word will continue. However, I can attest that our language not only provides us with a form of communication, but also a sense of community through the way we choose to articulate our most natural thoughts, feelings, and ideas.

Henna Vohra is a junior at UIC majoring in English (Media, Rhetoric, and Cultural Studies) and Psychology as well as minoring in Asian American Studies. Through the experiences gained from living in her hometown of Harvey, IL and from attending UIC, she is motivated to research the influence of one's race and socioeconomic status on the usage of "standard" language. When she's not engaged in conversations on the importance of understanding one's identity or rebounding from an all-nighter, she is often found watching or discussing Chicago sports with her fellow sports enthusiasts.

"I can have red or blue" : Growing up bilingual and bicultural

By Lydia Saravia

He opens the refrigerator, turns to me and says, "¿Nena, Qué quieres vos?" "Nada," I tell him. He brings me a can of Coke.

On November 25, 2009, my nephew, Wolf, was born. Today, he is a lively, independent, free-spirited two-year-old. Curious about the function and purpose of everything, it is no wonder that he is becoming fluent in two languages, English and Spanish. Wolf has two favorite questions: "¿Qué es eso?" and "What's that?" Depending to whom he is talking, he will choose one of these two questions to ask. Wolf, at two, is a bilingual speaker.

This essay, however, is as much my brother Julio's story as it is my nephew's. My brother (and I) was born to immigrant parents at a time when Spanish was not widely spoken in public. Chicago did not house many tiendas as it does today. Supermarkets had not yet developed the "ethnic" aisles. My nephew's situation is slightly different. His parents are not immigrant parents. His father is Guatemalan-American. His mother is White-American. But my brother, like my nephew, grew up bilingually. The difference is that my brother and I are first generation Guatemalan-American and Wolf is a second generation Guatemalan-American. While twice removed from Guatemala, Wolf is learning to speak Spanish as well as English.

Wolf's mother is a monolingual English speaker and his father is a bilingual English and Spanish speaker. His mother speaks to him primarily in English and his father fluc-

tuates between using English and Spanish. Wolf spends most of his weekdays with my parents, his paternal grandparents, and my aunt who speak to him in Spanish and only in Spanish. His paternal grandmother and my aunt are monolingual Spanish speakers. While Wolf's paternal grandfather is a bilingual English and Spanish speaker, he has opted to speak to Wolf only in Spanish. Because Wolf seems to be more exposed to Spanish, as he began to acquire language, he was primarily using Spanish. For example, on May 31, 2010, his first word was captured on video. Over and over he repeats the word, "Agua." As he is becoming more comfortable with language and language use, however, he seems to comfortably go back and forth between English and Spanish. However, Wolf is not growing up to be a Spanglish speaker (only time will tell whether or not he will become a Spanglish speaker or forget Spanish altogether); rather, he is using bilingualism as code (Zentella, 2002).

Language Use

Baez (2002) argues that language gives us meaning. Zentella (2002) argues that language is the medium through which to examine the different ways in which Latin@s speak to folks of different groups. And, further, Mendoza Denton (1999) examines the ways in which "Spanish and English evoke different cultural, national, and ideological orientations" (p.41), ultimately arguing that language is not neutral. And while some authors (Rodriguez, 1982; Baez, 2002) have chosen to forget Spanish and use (socially,

publicly and privately) English, others (Anzaldúa, 1987) have chosen to operate (socially and academically) in Spanglish. Ramsdell (2004) argues that "language is identity and identity is political" (p.166). The act of speaking and using Spanish in a dominant English speaking country is, therefore, a political act.

It is too early to know whether Wolf will feel pressured to forget Spanish. It is too early to know whether Wolf will continue to be a bilingual as code speaker or whether he will become a Spanglish speaker. At the beginning of this investigation, I had hoped to simply learn how and when Wolf engages in the use of English and in the use of Spanish. My questions were: how is Wolf using language? does he understand the difference between English and Spanish? and to what extend does he know when to use each language? However, as my observations continued and as my interview and talks with my brother, Julio, and sister-in-law, Jessica, continued, I soon realized I had to shift my questions to include questions about how Julio, specifically, and Jessica view language and identity. Wolf's parents' views on language and identity are what is helping Wolf become bilingual and bicultural. Whether or not Wolf will continue to be bilingual or see himself as bicultural is yet to be known, but for now, Wolf is growing up bilingual, bi-literate and bicultural. The question is, why?

Method

While I had originally thought about only observing Wolf and his interactions with his parents and his paternal grandparents, the difficulties became apparent. Upon documenting the observations (via use of video or audio recorder), as soon as Wolf saw the camera or the digital voice recorder, he wanted to play with it. Despite

this difficulty, I was able to record his interactions with his grandparents and my aunt twice; I recorded his interactions with me once; and his father recorded his interaction with his mother once. However, Wolf's parents have been documenting Wolf since he was born, so viewing many of the youtube clips from when he was months to a one-year-old proved to be helpful. I was able to notice the language the adults have used to engage with Wolf. In addition to these formal documented observations, I took note of what became informal observations. For example, the two lines at the beginning of this essay came from a random moment between Wolf and me in my parents' kitchen.

Because Wolf is so young, interviewing his parents was vital. Wolf is not making any "active" decisions in regard to language use or identity formation. In essence, the adults in his life are making these decisions for him. He is not a bilingual or a monolingual adding a language. Rather, the desired targeted languages are English and Spanish, and the acquisition of both is important to his parents. Here, the learner, Wolf, we can assume, did not have the desire or the intention to accumulate a second language. The learner is part of two social spheres: one where English is spoken and one where Spanish is spoken. At times, both languages are used in the same social sphere. My interview with my brother Julio and my sister-in-law Jessica involved talking about their views on language. I also conducted one follow-up telephone call to clarify points on identity negotiations.

As I was investigating why Julio and Jessica want Wolf to learn English and Spanish, it became clear that Julio is still negotiating his identity, and, as such, it is important for him that his son identify with the part of his, Julio's, identity that has remained a constant, Guatemalan.

Language Negotiation

Lydia: Why do you use Spanish with Wolf

Julio: Because I want him to learn Spanish.

Lydia: And what have you noticed about Wolf's use of English and Spanish?

Julio: Umm...he uses both at the same time. Like, he uses, I think he chooses when to speak English and Spanish, right?

Jessica: Yeah, he knows. He mostly speaks English to me and not...

Julio: Yeah, he'll speak Spanish to me.

Jessica: He speaks English to you, too. He speaks both to you, but, ah, he'll mostly speak English to me. I mean he'll say things in Spanish to me occasionally, but, um...

Julio: Yeah, I think he knows that I know Spanish so that's why he uses Spanish 12 with me, but, umm...

Jessica: I think he mostly speaks English around here ((In the background Wolf says, "Hey, dad, move your patuts"))

Baker (2006) argues that "codeswitching is a valuable linguistic tool" (p.109), one that allows the speaker to use the full range of resources to communicate with a given speaker. In the passage above, Julio and Jessica reveal that Wolf understands who knows and speaks each language. With Jessica, a monolingual English speaker, Wolf prefers to speak English with and to her. With Julio, however, a bilingual English and Spanish speaker, Wolf chooses and knows he can speak both and, therefore, uses both to communicate with his father. In several observations of Wolf, it is clear that he does this with several listeners. In one clip, as he interacts with my aunt, he only interacts with her in Spanish. My aunt talks to Wolf in Spanish and he responds to her in Spanish. In another audio recording, he is speaking to me in Spanish. He says, "Chela no venga,"

meaning that he wants my dog, Chela, not to come near him. A few seconds later, he begins to speak to Ben, my husband Max's cousin who is a monolingual English speaker, and asks Ben, "Are you working?" He shifts language to accommodate and to be able to communicate with each listener.

Wolf takes his cues from the listener. If the listener is an English speaker, as with Jessica and Ben, he proceeds to speak in English. If the listener is a Spanish speaker, as with my aunt, he proceeds to speak in Spanish. If he does not know whether a speaker is an English or a Spanish speaker, he finds out. For example, in an informal observation, Wolf is playing with my husband's nephew, Joseph, who is a two-year-old monolingual English speaker. Joseph was holding a piece of a toy, and Wolf proceeds to tell Joseph, "es del avión", meaning that the piece belonged to a toy airplane. Joseph just stares at Wolf, so Wolf repeats the phrase, again in Spanish. After no response, Wolf says, "the plane," and Joseph responds, "oh, the plane," and Wolf says, "yeah." They continue their play date in English. Critically analyzing the situation, Wolf chooses the language that will help him communicate with each listener. But as mentioned earlier, Wolf is using bilingualism as code. He does not mix the languages--partly because the speakers he has encountered are either monolingual speakers (either only English or only Spanish) and the speakers who are bilingual speakers are also code speakers themselves. My brothers (Julio and Daniel), my father nor I mix the languages in one sentence, for example. So mixing the two languages is not part of Wolf's linguistic exposure.

In the following two excerpts, Julio explains his own language comfort and negotiations.

Excerpt 1:

Julio: I think growing up we used more Spanish, right? Because that's how we spoke at home and it's not like I went out. Ever. ((Wolf in the background says, "hey don't eat my fries!")) So I just used Spanish even though my Spanish isn't that great and then grammar school...I only used English after grammar school

Lydia: Did you use Spanish and English in grammar school or did you feel like you used mostly just Spanish in grammar school since you're saying that you used English after grammar school?

Julio: I feel like we used a lot of Spanish in class. But then like when we were at 10 recess I would use English.

Excerpt 2:

Lydia: Which [language] do you think you're most comfortable with in general?

Julio: It depends on who I'm talking to. If I'm talking to Spanish natives, I feel very uncomfortable speaking Spanish. But if I'm...

Jessica: What do you mean Spanish natives?

Julio: Like if I'm speaking to you (Jess) in Spanish, I feel great because you don't know Spanish. But if I'm speaking to people who speak Spanish all their lives, are from Spanish speaking countries, like, I feel very uncomfortable because my Spanish is broken, my Spanish, my Spanish is combined with Puerto Rican, Mexican, Cuban, and who knows what else, Guatemalan obviously.

Lydia: Can you explain why you think your Spanish is Puerto Rican, Cuban?

Julio: Because of school.

Lydia: Can you elaborate on that?

Julio: Yeah, well I had Cuban teachers. I had Cuban teachers, and then, but when I went to Guatemala they made fun of me

because I speak proper

Spanish. Not like the sla--the every day use Spanish. I use, but I

Jessica: But you don't feel like you speak proper Spanish because that's what you're saying...

Julio: Yeah I feel like I don't. I feel, I probably speak proper Spanish but it's broken. And then there's some words that get mixed up with like, with

other nationalities and stuff because of school. Like Cuban teachers, Puerto Rican... but then also friends, right? Puerto Rican friends, Mexican friends, and they use different words. Like I remember our neighbor. Who was our neighbor that was Mexican? And, um, I was using "tu" a lot instead of "vos" and my mom yelled at me for using "tu" (laughs) cause she said that doesn't sound right, but it sounds right to Mexicans just not Guatemalans.

Here, in the first excerpt, Julio reveals why he might be a bilingual as code speaker. On the one hand, he used Spanish at home and at school (he attended Inter-American Magnet School, a dual-language immersion program), but at recess, in a social setting with just friends, he spoke primarily in English. Here we see Potwoski's (2004) argument that the dominance of English, found outside of the school building, finds itself in the interactions among peers. Further, in the second excerpt Julio reveals that as English and Spanish had their place, so did the different kinds of Spanishes to which he was exposed. On the one hand, he feels that his Spanish might be "broken" due to all the different influences on his Spanish. The use of the word "broken" reveals that Julio was taught, and believes, that there is a right way to speak Spanish and a wrong way. Julio, like most Latinos, cannot escape being labeled, regardless of language spoken,

as language deficient (Zentella, 2002). On the other hand, there are several language values at play: English as social language, the "proper" Spanish and the Guatemalan Spanish. As he navigated (and continues to navigate) between English and Spanish and between the different Spanishes, he polices himself. The policing, stemming from being "made fun of" and being "yelled" at, determines his sense of comfort with Spanish.

Julio's experience shapes the way Wolf is being exposed to language as well. Later in the interview, Julio says, "I'd like to think that I'm teaching him whatever, the proper Spanish, whatever that means. But, he's probably picking up whatever Guatemalan Spanish my parents and Ester (my aunt) are teaching him more than anything because they speak to him in Spanish all the time." Is it enough that Wolf is learning Spanish? Or, does Wolf need to speak properly in Spanish and in English? What is for certain, Wolf's use of "chuchos" for dogs, "vos" instead of "tu" and understanding that "patojo" (Guatemalan for kid) refers to him reveals that his Spanish is marked by Guatemalan Spanish. It is yet to be determined whether this Spanish will make him feel as an outsider as he moves to interact with other Latinos. Will he feel uncomfortable with other native Spanish speakers as his father does?

Identity Negotiation

Interestingly enough, while Julio grew up in a Spanish speaking home, and even though Julio attended a dual language grammar school (pre-school through eighth grade), he feels the same insecurity with Spanish use as the second and third generation mothers in Gonzalez's (2001) study. Despite this insecurity, though, he does not gravitate toward English only, and with his son, he engages in Spanish, as well as in English. And despite anti-immigrant senti-

ments (laws in Arizona and Alabama, for example), Julio self-identifies as Guatemalan and would like Wolf to also identify as Guatemalan. In the following excerpt, Julio and Jessica talk about how they hope Wolf will self-identify.

Julio: I want him to feel more Latino while knowing his other side. ((laughs))

Jessica: No, I mean, and that would be fine. I just, like I said, I think the sands will shift a little bit when he gets to regular ol' elementary school. I think he'll spend so much time with other middle class White English speaking kids then it's going to be a different balance, but right now I don't think it's that way.

Julio: I don't want him to be one of those "I have to know how to Salsa to be Latino" dudes. I just want him to be more, that's why even when I went to social security when I got his social security number they're like "do you want to identify his race?" They were like "it's optional, you don't have to." I was like, "make him Latino."

Jessica has a realistic view. Once Wolf enters school, Wolf will have other pressures (peer, curriculum-based) that might affect and shape and shift how he begins to negotiate his identity, especially if he enters an English-only curriculum school. At another point in our interview, Jessica says, "but, like I said, hopefully if he can go to this preschool, he'll be able to speak both languages for a long while. Then he'll (be) pretty settled into having a little bit of both-bilingual by the time he gets to school," and, maybe, even remain seeing himself as Latino, which is what Julio hopes for his son. However, Wolf's bilingual identity seems to be contingent upon the kind of school and curriculum he will enter.

For Julio, however, he wants Wolf to be Latino. He has specific notions about what

kind of Latino Wolf should be. In the following excerpt, which was a follow-up phone call to the initial interview, Julio further elaborates on how he would like Wolf to self-identify.

Lydia: You know how you said you wanted Wolf to identify as Latino?

Julio: Yeah

Lydia: Why?

Julio: Because I want him to know that side, because I think it's important for him to know he's Latino. Not so much Latino, I guess. I think it's the same thing. I want him to know he's Guatemalan. I want him to know where my parents came from.

This claim to cultural and ethnic identity stems from Julio's own identity claim and continued negotiation. When asked, on the follow-up, how he identifies, Julio says, "I always identify myself as Chicagoan because people always assume I'm Mexican. They always jump to that conclusion. So then when people are like, 'you know what I mean?' I tell them I'm Guatemalan. ... I always just say I'm Guatemalan." For Julio, his solidarity to his parents comes with an ethnic connection, despite the fact that Guatemalans, in Guatemala, "make fun" of his use of Spanish. This solidarity is what he hopes Wolf will continue. Here Julio's identity for himself and for Wolf references a desire for affiliation (Norton, 2000): to affiliate with Julio's parents.

Bilingual and bicultural

In the following excerpt, Julio explains why he wants Wolf to be bilingual, followed by a different point in the conversation where Jessica explains the importance of being bilingual.

Julio: I think that bilingual (.) I just think because my dad said that it was good for kids to know two languages because

they always think growing up they have two options. No matter what, even if some other thing came up like I can have red or blue as opposed to I can only have red.

Jessica: I mean, on the one hand, I feel like everyone should know two languages. And Spanish is a great language to learn because you have such a huge Spanish population in the United States at this point, it's, it makes perfect sense. Everyone's like "oh you should learn mandarin" or whatever cause Chinese is kind of like the wave of the future, but, for something useful that you would actually use on a regular basis I can't think of a better language to learn than Spanish. But we live in Chicago, which has a huge Hispanic population, and I think it's pretty like, Spanish speaking is pretty much like widespread and understood through out the city.

Spanish, like English, is becoming a dominant language. Not only would Spanish allow Wolf to continue to communicate with his paternal grandparents, Spanish would allow him to communicate with others. But being bilingual seems to have another role: choice. Being bilingual for Julio and for Julio's father allows the speaker to imagine choice and imagine more than one way of being. Being bilingual, and, in Wolf's case, being bicultural extends beyond linguistic choice. It is the belief of Julio and Julio's father that being bilingual means an understanding that the world is not one-dimensional, and, by extension, Wolf is not one-dimensional and has options.

It is important to note that at several points in the interview, both Julio and Jessica stress that they hope Wolf will identify with his parental grandparents as well as his maternal grandparents. From the paternal grandparents, they hope Wolf will identify culturally/ethnically and linguistically, speaking Spanish and identifying as Gua-

temalan. From the maternal grandparents, they hope Wolf will identify with the characteristics of their social class. For example, Jessica says, "There's certain things from my folks even that don't pass on to, I don't think to my brother and I. My dad's family lives extremely wealthy, like beyond-maids-and-servants-wealthy type. When he was growing up, we obviously didn't grow up that way, but it's just I think there's a completely different mind-set ... It's like, my dad, nothing was ever unattainable for my dad, like nothing was ever out of reach for him, like if he wanted to do something it was always possible. ... I want Wolf to have some of that. ... My dad's just not intimidated by lots of situations that I think can be, they're intimidating for me." From Wolf's maternal grandparents, Julio and Jessica hope Wolf learns how to access and navigate spheres of social and economic privilege.

For Julio and Jessica, speaking Spanish and English, having access to his parental grandparents cultural capital and access to his maternal grandparents social (class) capital will provide Wolf with a sense of power and access. Norton (2000) writes, "People who have access to a wide range of resources in a society will have access to power and privilege, which will in turn influence how they understand their relationship to the world and their possibilities for the future." On the one hand, he will have access to communities and people, and ethnic identification. On the other hand, Wolf will have access to the domains of economic privilege. Language, therefore, helps to provide this diverse access. Two languages increase the value the speaker's cultural capital (Norton, 2000).

Conclusion

The hopes of parents are success, health and prosperity for their children. For Julio

and Jessica, their hope is that Wolf will take advantage of his bicultural and bilingual upbringing. Time will tell what road Wolf will choose or be forced to choose. As he becomes of school age, and if he enters an English-dominated curriculum, will he feel the need to forget Spanish? Will he naturally, as he uses English more regularly, forget Spanish? Will he want to practice in Spanglish? Will he move from being a bilingual as code speaker to a bilingual as practice speaker (Zentella, 2002)? Will his family accept his negotiations?

While Julio and Jessica did not specifically address the political act in preferring Wolf to be bilingual, it is clear that for Julio, language is tied to identity. Political or not, both Julio and Jessica hope that Wolf will continue to engage as a bilingual speaker. However, if identity is language and language is political (Ramsdell, 2004), what political act will Wolf choose?

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Fearless Lonely Girl

By Riddhi Patel

Having a baby has always been the biggest dream anyone can imagine. But having a baby with some special qualities has not been the luck for everyone. A baby arrived to a Chinese couple, Yali and Xiangqiana, on October 4th, 1993. A beautiful girl named Zhongge Su was born. Her parents were very happy on her arrival. They got a little princess in their house to be taken care of. They both loved her very much and they started doing every possible thing for her better future.

After some time, Zhongge Su's life was changed. She had to live away from her father, which made her lack his love and affection. Her father went out of China and to the United States to earn more money. He also thought of his family and its development. If he comes to United States his family can follow him and get better opportunity here in USA. Meanwhile Zhongge Su grew up with her mother in China. She missed her father and her mother always consoled her to keep patient, she will see him soon. Her mother also taught her "to never give up and keep trying even if it is the worst situation, you will achieve your goal." Her father visited them once every couple of years. She missed him but her mom explained how it was important for him to be there. She understood how it was important. She knew how his father was sending money to feed them along with fulfilling their necessities. So she didn't argue about anything. Some day they

would have to follow her father to the United States.

Zhongge Su and her mother decided to come to the United States. After her eighth grade her and her mother came to visit her father in the United States. After coming here they had fun together as a family for a couple months. Zhongge Su was very happy as she was getting love of family, which lacked while she grew up. She was enjoying this new country and culture with her all family members. She didn't know what was to come in her life after arriving in United States. After coming to United States there was a thought going on in her parent's mind about Zhongge Su's better future and about which she was completely unaware of.

The implementation of Zhongge Su's parent's thought could change her life from being a dependent child to independent and responsible adult. Later her parents agreed on the thought and decided to let her go to school in the United States and later they went back to China. To give their child much more opportunities in future after she grows up. They paid her admission for the dorm of the Catholic high school. As along with that they also decided that they would go back to China and leave Zhongge Su here for her further studies. In the school people were unable to pronounce her name clearly so now she preferred people calling her Susan. In the beginning it was hard for her to manage everything on her own. Her parents leaving her alone in this big

new country startled her. As it is said, "Time teaches everything" she started learning everything quickly. She and her friends would use the kitchen in the weekends and teach each other cooking. Susan taught them Chinese food while others taught her Mexican food and all other foods. They started sharing cultures. She was not fluent in English, she had trouble with it as English was her second language. But she absorbed the basics to have conversation very quickly as she was surrounded by the English speakers all the time. Well the time passes by quickly and she graduated from high school. Her parents' transferred money to her ATM so she did not have to face financial problems. After her graduation she moved to University of Illinois at Chicago, and dormed in college. Susan was no longer dependent child she was an independent adult. Even after being an independent her life without family and relatives was very lonely.

Living without parents was hard and when you don't know anyone in the area that makes it harder. Susan was in the same situation but she did not give up. Her parents miss her but they knew that it's for her better future. Here in the United States during break time when everybody is with the family Susan stays in her dorm, if they are open. Otherwise she would go in a hotel and stay there for the break by herself. All days of the year are same for her whether it's Christmas, her birthday, or a normal day of the year. Even if she celebrates any day or event she would be alone. Sometimes friends would be there with her to celebrate her birthday, but still being with family makes the differ-

ence. Even after being in a huge crowd she is alone. In herself she knows that she has lacked love and inspiration of family when she needed it the most in her teen age. Loneliness could be seen in her eyes when she talked about how she was left in this country by herself, no one to meet with and no where to go from the dorm. Loneliness is all she has. Her loneliness was the result of her parents isolating her in the United States.

Isolation can lead a person to their best or to their worst. One might get inspired or depressed by it. Positivity in Susan took her isolation as an inspiration in her life. Her parents left her and there was nothing she could have done to bring them back and make them stay with her. Rather than being depressed and crying she started communicating with the people and making new friends. This helped improve her speaking skill and fluency along with knowing and understanding the culture of the United States. She also started learning cooking and doing laundry from her friends. Back in China they didn't have Laundry machine or microwave in their house so she learned how to operate them. Susan was learning her responsibilities and the things that might help her in future. She also learned how to manage money and how to pay bills like a phone bill or hotel bill. She also decided not to work so she can concentrate more on her studies and make her parents proud of her, and make the time she spent alone worth it. Living alone also helped her increase her wisdom.

Doing everything on her own, and Isolation, made her personality understanding and more mature compared to the people of her age. Someone else

at her place would have given up by doing something wrong but she didn't do that and continued learning and getting everything right. She was scared in the beginning but later she became very confident about herself. If anyone tried to scare her she would reply to him or her so generously and positively. Taking life positively in all situations is not everyone's cup of tea. Neither living life happily even in the worst times could be possible by everyone. Susan learned that from her life. One of her friends once tried to scare her that what if you get severe flu and no one is there to help you? Susan replied to her friend that her father was a doctor and he always told her that "you can not die in this small infections, everything will be fine don't worry." She also said that a Hospital was just 5 minutes from where she was living so she can doubtlessly go there and nurses and doctors would take care of her. She also said that she was not going to die as she had a powerful immune system. On asking her that how does she know about her immune system being powerful she answered that in China there was lot of pollution in the air, water and possibly everywhere. While in the United States everything is purer than it was in China. And if she had survived in the worst she'll probably survive in the best too. This can be a very good support of proving how understanding and mature she has become.

Zhongge Su, also called "Susan", is an example of never giving up. She kept trying harder and harder to overcome even in the worst situation. She also proved her mother right by trying and trying and now finally achieving

her goal of becoming self reliant and adjusting to completely unfamiliar culture. She is attending college and living her life happily. She is an inspiration for others who might be going through similar situations, or even if it is not similar, they should not give up trying their effort to achieve the goal or overcome certain situation.

My name is Riddhi Patel, a freshman at University of Illinois at Chicago. My major is Biological Sciences and I'm preparing for Pre-Med. Other than academic interest I like to play different type of sports like field hockey. Basket Ball, Volley Ball, Tennis and Karate (self-defence). Along with sports i like to go on adventures like camping, trekking, rock climbing, etc. Along with these enthusiastic interests I also like to go to some quite place and read story books. I like to read novels and books based on reality and sci-fiction.

L2 Pronunciation and Accent

By Saja Elshareif

Abstract

This research paper will aim to explore studies that center around pronunciation pedagogy and the perception of L2 pronunciation. The perception of pronunciation can also be referred to as an "accent" that is heard when engaging in L2 speech. A summary of each of the studies and their results will be given, then they will be followed by a comprehensive outlook on the field of pronunciation and accent in English language learning.

English Language Learning pedagogies continually change along the years, shifting emphases on different aspects of language learning. Listening, reading, writing, and speaking are the four areas of skill that an instructor can cater to when teaching a language. Although some particulars of language pedagogy such as choosing to focus class instruction on teaching for accuracy or fluency continue to change according to time, location, and student goals; one general idea has remained constant: learning to speak in the L2 is a key component of SLA. Correspondingly, it is just about impossible to divorce listening and speaking in terms of second-language acquisition. In regards to speaking in the L2, successful pronunciation and accent should be based on whether speakers are comprehensible to the listener, whether native or nonnative. With pronunciation pedagogy, debates of intelligibility versus nativeness are raised. Thus, two important questions that concern the pronunciation debate should be considered:

Is it important to sound native-like without an accent or should SLA be based on achieving comprehensible speech?

Is it possible that sounding "native" and being comprehensible are actually relative to the listener?

The fact is, nativeness, is not necessary for comprehensibility, nor is nativeness a goal that we have to strive to achieve as learners and teachers. Likewise having an accent, which is really effects of the L1 filtering the phonological development of the L2, is not something that necessarily has to inhibit learners from being intelligible speakers of English or any other language. Pronunciation can still be improved and made comprehensible even without achieving nativeness. In saying so, since there is general agreement among researchers that native speech in the L2 is almost impossible, pedagogical adjustments can and should be made to cater to the idea of comprehensibility while teaching pronunciation.

The article, "Changing Contexts and Shifting Paradigms in Pronunciation Teaching," by John M. Levis, is a good place to start when discussing pronunciation in English language learning pedagogy because it frames the ongoing conversation about whether to teach pronunciation or not. Levis presents the the debate of whether or not to teach pronunciation while introducing the viewpoints of each side. Oftentimes, teaching pronunciation is negatively associated with the audio-lingual method which encompasses repetition and exercises and is known to lack meaningful teaching. While some instructors, afraid to go near the outdated audio-lingual method, try avoiding pronunciation completely, others embrace intelligibility; focusing only on teaching students to be understandable, rather than nativeness; which involves training students to mimic native accents. In an era

where communicative teaching has become widely popular, instructors find it hard to incorporate pronunciation practice into their curriculum. Since researchers have come to a general agreement that it is near impossible to reach native-like pronunciation, instructors have no problem leaving pronunciation aside. Studies have shown; however, that certain components of pronunciation are learnable and teachable. Intonation, stress, and pitch movement are among the learnable elements that can be introduced into English language learning curricula. The most important conclusion that this article arrives at is the fact that certain types of errors made in pronunciation can make all the difference between comprehensibility. For this reason alone, assimilating pronunciation is crucial to language learning. Without being able to be comprehensible in the L2, students' negotiation of meaning, overall interaction, and motivation will all be curbed; therefore defeating real communicative learning from taking place.

An important study conducted by Michael D. Carey, Robert H. Mannell, and Peter K. Dunn; "Does a rater's familiarity with a candidate's pronunciation affect the rating in oral proficiency interviews?" investigated whether familiarity with a language affected perception of pronunciation in the L2. This study is crucial because it considers pronunciation, not just from the students' end, but also from the listeners' end. Also, it's important because the results of this study affect the results of many other pronunciation studies. The research relied on the hypotheses which assumes that native speakers' ratings of non-native pronunciation is based on the amount of exposure to non-native accents. Testing was based on ninety-nine International English Language Testing System examiners that were asked to rate the comprehensibility of a recorded

clip of English being spoken by English language learners from three different backgrounds: Korean, Chinese, and Indian. The examiners, geographically dispersed, were asked to fill a short survey which identified how much exposure they previously had with the three languages. Examiners' whose experience varied from having prolonged, little, and no exposure were asked to rate the speech samples based on fluency, lexical resource, grammar and accuracy, and pronunciation. As expected, results showed a high correlation between the speakers' backgrounds and center locations. Therefore, accents that were less familiar to listeners were rated as less comprehensible. As a whole, this study is valuable because many researchers and teachers monitor students' advancement in pronunciation as based on native speakers' comprehensibility. In reality, the results show that comprehensibility may be relative to location and familiarity. Furthermore, while it is accepted that a native accent is almost impossible to achieve past a certain age, these results show that being closer to native-like speech may be relative, based on the listeners' exposure to that particular accent.

The article, "Effects of Form-Focused Instruction and Corrective Feedback on L2 Pronunciation Development of /r/ by Japanese Learners of English," by Kazuya Saito and Roy Lyster, shows significant advancement in the area of teaching pronunciation. This study multi-tasked, inquiring about a number of issues at once. Overall, the analysis investigates two major queries: 1. The effect of Form-focused instruction on phonological development; 2. The value of recasts as a form of corrective feedback when used in combination with form-focused instruction. Besides exploring the effectiveness of teaching methods, this study is vital to pronunciation and pedagogy in general be-

cause it goes against the grain by applying form-focused instruction to phonological development instead of the usual application to morphosyntactic lessons.

In this study, sixty-five Japanese ELL students received a 4-hour treatment of form-focused instruction that was set up so that they would notice and practice the English /r/. This specific phoneme was chosen because it is known to be the most important and troubling phoneme for Japanese learners to acquire, which leads it to be a deciding factor of comprehensibility in speech. To accomplish the results of the study, students were split into three groups. In the first group, students only received form-focused instruction, the second group received form-focused instruction along with corrective feedback, and the last group was a control group that did not learn through form-focused instruction. Acoustic analyses tracked the formulation of /r/ and how near it was to native speech. Another way that pronunciation was tracked was through native speakers' ratings of comprehensibility of students' speech and the pronunciation of /r/ in particular. By monitoring students' improvement, Saito and Lyster were able to see whether the method of instruction proved beneficial in students' acquisition. Results showed that the form-focused activities were insufficient without corrective feedback. Since the control group that was only taught with form-focused instruction did not show improvement, this proved that students need corrective feedback in the form of negative evidence so that they can improve their pronunciation. Without corrective feedback, it's difficult for learners to judge their own interlanguage system. On a different scale, this study played a vital role in setting important standards for ELL pronunciation. Although the combination of form-focused and corrective feedback

instruction was not able to give results that showed students attaining native speaker pronunciation, they were able to achieve intelligibility. These results are absolutely necessary in determining what level of proficiency in terms of pronunciation is attainable. Furthermore, this research study allows teachers and students alike, to set goals for reaching realistic levels of pronunciation.

A particularly interesting study, "Language Learners' Perceptions of Accent," by Julie Scales, Ann Wennerstrom, Dara Richard, and Su Hui Wu, focuses on English language learners' accent perceptions. This study was unique because it addressed the fact that non-native speakers may not actually perceive the native accent in the same way that native speakers would. To test this theory, 37 English language learners and 10 American students were asked to listen to a one-minute passage that was read by four different speakers. Each of the four speakers reading the same paragraph had a different accent: American, British, Chinese, and Mexican. Participants were assigned the task of identifying the speakers' accents and stating their preferences based on comprehensibility. As expected, results showed a positive correlation between the accent voted easiest to understand and the one that was preferred by the students. Surprisingly though, nonnative speakers had difficulty distinguishing between the accents and knowing which was native. In addition, this study inquired whether English learner students favored nativeness or intelligibility more. Following the audio clip of each speaker, the students were asked to fill a survey that identified the speakers' accents and asked which they preferred. Interestingly, 73% of the participants rated the American accent as nonnative. Since the students had previously revealed that

they wanted to achieve native speech that was free from their accent, the discrepancy in being able to identify the native accent showed that the learners had developed an idealized notion of what native speech sounds like. Additionally, since the results showed a high correlation between the accent that was most comprehensible and preferability, the study also concluded that listening comprehension was a main priority among the English learners; meaning they would actually prefer to be intelligible rather than native.

The study conducted in, "Successful ELF Communications and Implications for ELT: Sequential Analysis of ELF Pronunciation Negotiation Strategies," by Yumi Matsumoto, adds a third dimension to the debate of nativeness and intelligibility. This study investigates whether accents affect intelligibility among nonnative speakers. By recording conversations that took place among graduate students living in an international student dormitory in the United States, Matsumoto analyzes whether it is possible to improve in pronunciation for the purpose of intelligibility without the need to mimic a native accent. Interestingly, the study concludes that students with accents are able to become more intelligible in pronunciation when interacting with one another. On the other hand, this study also shows that pronunciation is significant because without being comprehensible in the first place, students would not even have the chance to communicate or interact with one another.

Six international graduate students agreed to be a part of this study, allowing Matsumoto to record their interactions during the daily dormitory dinner over the course of three months. Data was also collected via interviews with the students. None of the students spoke the same na-

tive language and each of their recorded conversations were at least twenty-five minutes. The fact that none of the students had the same L1 background was very important because phonology of their English L2 was undoubtedly affected in the form of an accent. Therefore, none of the students spoke with the same accents, making them more vulnerable to incomprehensibility with one another. Interestingly, the results differed among each pair of students that were engaged in conversation. Some students engaged in repetition of the misunderstood particle of speech and waited for clarification; while others directly asked for clarification or just used context to decipher meaning. At any rate, each of the students engaged in repairing their own pronunciation when it appeared that the other student was not understanding. Within the interviews, students were asked about the difference between using the L2 in their living space versus engaging in the L2 in the classroom or with native speakers. The students came to a general consensus that they felt much more confident experimenting in the L2 within their living space because they were near in proficiency level. When speaking to one another, students felt confident to engage in negotiation of meaning, and to test out using new words they had never used in conversation before. When they appeared to be incomprehensible to the interlocutor, students realized their trouble spots in pronunciation.

This study is significant for pronunciation research because it brings a different perspective to for teachers to consider. Whereas pronunciation learning is usually associated with non-native speakers interacting with native speakers, students were able to improve their comprehensibility by interacting with each other. Improvement in phonological pronunciation was possible

through negotiation of meaning and self-made repairs in pronunciation through conscious effort to pay attention to the pronunciation of troublesome words. In addition, rather than being in an instructional environment, the student living space in which this study was conducted provides more natural and perhaps accurate results. Most importantly though, this study showed that native-speaker pronunciation is not the determining factor in comprehensibility, nor does it have to be the goal, especially in EFL settings.

Altogether, these five articles present the wide variety of studies that have been conducted in the field of pronunciation. This field has evolved tremendously throughout the years and students are exhibiting new needs for language learning. Instructors need to take into account the importance of pronunciation and realize that comprehensibility is key to language learning. Without comprehensibility, students are not being engaged in real communicative learning because their interactions in the L2 are being limited. Thus, pronunciation should not be left out of the curriculum. In doing so, English language learning is being inhibited. At the same time, we should not go back to practicing meaningless repetition drills. There has to be a way to meaningfully incorporate and encourage pronunciation practice in and outside of the classroom.

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A Home Away From Home

By Yocelyn Moreno

As described as having stores that sell imported products or resemble the foreign-born communities of a century ago, Little Village in Chicago is the cookie-cutter example of what Vergara labels a “New Immigrant Ghetto.” Although Vergara does not state it directly, the author apparently assumes that every type of ghetto has a negative connotation; I disagree with Vergara. Little Village has a way of creating an authentic feeling of home, as well as taking care of itself by adding to the economy.

Little Village has not always been a predominately Latino community; other ethnicities previously resided in this area. During the 19th century, immigrants of Irish and European decent mainly inhabited Little Village. Then in the following century, because of the manufacturing growth, more ethnicities were drawn into this Chicago region, such as Polish immigrants. With the building of the University of Illinois at Chicago campus many Mexican residents were forced to move from Pilsen. Finally, because of the construction at UIC, around the mid-twentieth century a great amount of Latinos were added



to the Little Village community. It is the prevalent Latino population that contributes to this “Mexico of the Midwest” by staying true to its culture and producing the genuine experience of it for everyone: consumers, residents, and tourists (“Little Village”).

Amounting to 83 percent, La Villita has a majority of Latino residents (“Little Village: South Lawndale”). While I walked down one of the main streets in La Villita, la veintiséis (26th street), the first thing I came across was the bienvenidos (welcome) arch that greets all. The arch itself looks as though it was cut and paste from Mexico. It is a custom to place an arch at the entrance of a small village: many in Mexico have them, they provide a sense of pride, and they provide a warm welcome leading into the particular town. The “tile roof” of the arch is the usual styling found on many houses in Mexico. There are two Mexican flags on the arch and two large images of La Virgen de Guadalupe, a idely known religious and nationalistic symbol. The pillars, so to speak, of the arch are even painted in Mexico’s patriotic colors: green, white, and red. This paves the road for the first impression a visitor gets. Naturally, the commu-



nity upholds many of the qualities of a strong-knit family atmosphere, as this is quite typical in Mexican culture and in the Latino culture in general.

I could not resist entering one of the panaderías and purchasing some bread; the little bakery was exactly as I had expected, down to the customer service and the tastiness. As I entered the bakery, the only other customer inside was an abuelito sitting at a small table enjoying a warm drink with pan. I could hear some Spanish music playing in the back room as I grazed through the shop for my favorite bread. I grabbed a tray and began piling on the bread I planned to buy. Soon a petite woman from the back room appeared and waited patiently by the register, as I approached her she smiled and spoke to me in Spanish with such familiarity it felt as though she could be my aunt. My total was \$3.50, which was more than reasonable for the amount of bread I bought. I left the bakery with a warm feeling. Authentic Mexican bread is only found in such bakeries as the one I visited. They never

cease to recreate the feeling of family and unison with such a strong reminder of Mexico. Bakeries are only one example of the culture rich businesses that are found along la veintiséis strip.

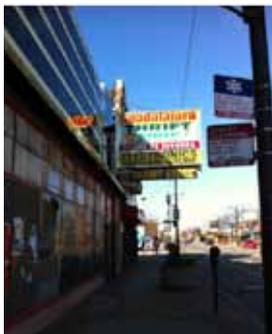
If you are on the go and do not have time to stop in and browse through a grocery store for a snack, there are street vendors at hand. Street vendors are popular businesses in Mexico, therefore, they are also found in La Villita. There are different types of street vendors; some provide a "travelling" service and others are more stationary. The churros man had a cart full of churros that he was pushing along the sidewalk. He asked every person he encountered whether or not they were interested in purchasing a churro or two, once again always in Spanish. There were two Hispanic, elderly women running a variety cart located on a street corner. This cart had aguas frescas, Mexican style chips, elotes, and fruit, plus all the condiments



that a customer could want. I stopped by and ordered an elote con mayonesa, queso, mantequilla, y poquito chile. I could not help but appreciate the fact that these women were out in the cold operating their business and making delicious, traditional food available to others. La Villita is an area that

produces specific goods and at the same time offers almost anything a consumer could want.

Little Village "had the reputation of being second only to Michigan Avenue's



Magnificent Mile in terms of retail dollars spent. . . . in all of Chicago ("Little Village Businesses").

This is undeniably because of the inexpensive, abundant: restaurants, candy stores, clothes stores, and shoe stores. There are also many commuting options to reach Little Village such as CTA and the L stops. Little Village has a lot to offer, it is a tourist destination for non-Latinos also. The community is a ". . . conscious part of the city, focused on a commitment to its residents, their families and business" (Joelen). I agree with Vergara's definition of the category he calls a "New Immigrant Ghetto." I believe it applies to Little Village because of the authentic shops and imported products. Vergara's use of the word "ghetto", however, suggests a negative implication that I do not believe is found in Little Village. Little Village is a thriving, independent community that remains true to its Mexican roots by making a living off of culture-based foods and merchandise. This region and its business have continuously made a positive impact on Chicago's economy.

In La Villita, there is an array of businesses that contribute to the Chicago economy. "The 26th Street business corridor houses more than 100 businesses . . . this is greater than the Chicago-area average . . . this density has also helped to maintain a better business economy.

. . ." these are only a few statistics that show how Little Village makes a difference in the economy ("Little Village Businesses"). Little Village is believed to have ". . . a stronger market than a lot of places. . . ." ("Little Village Businesses"). Pilsen has a similar population to Little Village; however, Little Village is suffering less troubles concerning rent and its residents are earning, on average, more annually ("Little Village"). Little Village is described as maintaining "entrepreneurial spirit" even though the overall economy in Chicago is not at its highest, new businesses are constantly opening in the community. A worker for the LVCC noticed that ". . . the densely populated ethnic neighborhood continues to have a higher buying power rate than most other Chicago communities" thus noting the correlation between the culture filled businesses and a success rate ("Little Village Businesses"). The number of middle-class families has increased in Little Village; it has increased by two times what Chicago has. Normally this region is in the news, not for its culture-filled successful businesses or for its contribution to the economy, but for negative reasons.

Upon searching for sources to strengthen my argument and knowledge of Little Village, initially all that I found were acts of violence: shootings, robberies, rapists,





gangs. However, these are the stories that the news and media chose to spotlight in order to drive people away from the area. There is an entire other side to Little Village, including a sense of self-improvement.

Many older generation business owners know little English which is not a problem considering the amount of Latinos in the area. Besides knowing English, there are other fundamental business skills that would be useful to these business owners. The Little Village ". . . Chamber of Commerce is planning a variety of workshops focused on professional development for small business owners and managers, with a particular emphasis on computer and technology skills" all this is being put in place in order to assist the success of these businesses ("Little Village Businesses"). Along with assuring success through business owners, the youth of the area is also being guided. Almost 50 percent of the population that makes up this Little Village is under the age of 25 ("Little Village Businesses"). With this in mind, Little Village has begun to implement cultural pride in a form that young people will appreciate, all this is done with the hope that the pride will be passed along for generations to come. This is crucial to the community in order

to continue their success. The inhabitants of Little Village care not only about the economy, but also for their youth. The inhabitants realize that the youth are the future; they also wish to keep their place in the economy.

The success of Little Village is made up of many elements: the Latino culture, the hardworking people, the strife for improvement, and the consideration of the future. Faced with the struggles of a negative reputation, the community persistently proves itself through causing a growing economic impact while remaining true to its roots of culture and family unity. Little Village is not a ghetto but an up and coming neighborhood.

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"Do You Like UIC?"

By Zhe Zhang

"Do you like UIC?" is a simple question, but for Jiaxue it is hard to answer. When I ask her this question, she thinks a while and answers yes. Then I ask her the same question again, because I just want to make sure that she gives me her real answer. She lower her head for a few seconds and then she lifts her head to give me the answer. The answer is no. One person, same question, two opposite answers. I am curious why she gives me opposite answer when I ask her again. So I keep asking her questions.

"What do you want to say to UIC students or friends?" I ask Jiaxue and she says "Go your own way, no matter what others say." I understand that she tells us do not care too much about what other people are thinking or saying about you, just be yourself and focus on your own way, because no one can be a substitute for you. I know that everyone wants to follow their heart, but someone have to choose whether they want to do or they have to do, and I hope that nobody regrets their choice.

"What do you like to do or what is your hobby?" This is the question that I think Jiaxue will take a long while to answer, but she just answers it immediately. Drawing is her favorite hobby and she loves art very much, ever since she was a child. When she says that she loves art, she looks so happy and vital. She told me that she likes drawing and she draws images sometimes.

"When do you draw something?" I asked her. She says that when she in bad temper or when she feels sad. Draw-

ing is a good outlet for her bad temper and sad feeling. I know that drawing is a good outlet because I have the same experience. I love art too, so I major in it and want to work with it in the future. I think that she also major in art or maybe she starts already.

"Have you been doing art for a long time? Do you want to major in it?" I want to know more about what is she going to do in her art, so I ask her these questions. She says that she loves art and wants to do something with art, but she has not done so much with it. She wants to take drawing class, but she does not take any. She also wants to choose an art major, but she can not. There are many reasons why she gives up her interest. She asked UIC Art Department questions about the drawing class and art major. She can take drawing class, but she has to wait for next semester. If she wants to major in art, she has to take the Art Foundation class first. If she passes the portfolio review of the Art Foundation, she can major in it. She has to take these classes in two semester, but she does not want to graduate one year later. So, she does not choose art major. I know time is not the only reason that she gives up her favorite major.

"Do you have some memory about why you made the decision about your major with deep impression?" I care about why she does not choose her favorite major. Then she tells me a short story about her. One day, she walks on Michigan Street, and she meets an old man who sells his painting. When she

sees the painting that the old man is selling, she stops. She appreciates his working for a few minutes and she asks the old man questions. The old man is so happy to explain what is he drawing and why he is drawing. The paintings are all about one lady dancing ballet. The lady in the painting is the old man's wife. Although his wife is passed away, he does not stop loving his wife or get married again. She likes his painting style and the background of the paintings. She likes the paintings, because she thinks that the old man's paintings are beautiful and meaningful. Jiaxue is interested in this old man and his paintings, but she feels helplessness. She told me that the old man's paintings are much better than hers. Even if his paintings are nice, there is no one to buy his paintings. The old man is not unhappy, even though nobody buy his paintings. She says if they change the position, she can not be a optimistic person. She thinks lots of things about her future, if she choose art major. She does not have enough confidence to keep going. I feel that Jiaxue has a little inferiority, and maybe she gives up many things because this reason.

"Do you have something else that you give up during school time?" my intuition tells me Jiaxue has something to cause her decision, as she gives up her favorite major. Just like I was right to think that art is not the only thing that Jiaxue gives up. She also gives up her dreamy travel plan. The travel plan is around two years, and this plan is not only for fun. She wants to see different cultures and different things in the world. However she wants to achieve her travel plan, she has to finish her col-

lege. After she finishes college, she has to find a job what her mom hopes for her future. She does not have enough time to finish the travel plan, so she gives it up.

"Are your parents or family the reason why you make these choices?" I can see the answer on Jiaxue's face, that is yes. She is a Chinese girl who is a only child to live with her mom in a single-parent family. She finished her high school in America, and when she applied for college she had to think of a lots of things. She had to listen to and follow most of her mom's opinions because that is her culture. Most Chinese girl follow their parent's saying, so am I. In Chinese culture, parents support their children until their children have their own family. When the children have their own family, they have to take care of their parents. The children have to listen to their parents most time, if some children do not listen to their parents, the others think that they are not filial or they are bad. So, she must find a better job that has fixed income. If she marries an only child, they have to support both sides parents and their children. That is not easy for Jiaxue, and she has to think about what she wants to do or what she needs to do.

"Will you regret your choice when your friends tell you not give up your favorite thing?" I am worried that she will regret her choices. "I think too much about my mom because I want to take care of her in the future just like she did to me. So, I have no choices," she answers. It is just like she said before, "Go your own way, no matter what others say." She chose the way that maybe is not her favorite one, and is really hard to

do. Now I understand why she gives me two opposite answers. Yes, because the result is suitable for her. No, because it is not her favorite dreamy choice. I think that I choose the way that Jiaxue gives up, because I am an only child who has same culture as Jiaxue, and I also love art so much. I choose Studio Art major, and I want to get a art job in the future, if I can. I choose the way what I want, and I am not regret. I do not know what is the end, maybe Jiaxue and me have the same, maybe not. I believe the butterfly effect, and I think that a little change can make the whole thing changed. At the end of our conversation, she asks me a question, "Do you like UIC?"

Do you like UIC?

My name is Zhe Zhang and I am a sophomore student who major in Studio Art. I love art so much, but I do not have nature endowment. I know that there are many people doing great in art, and one day they will become famous artists. Even if I will not become one of them, I will not give up doing art. It just likes that everyone has something they can not give up or let it go. I find it, and it changes my life. I feel happiness. I hope everyone can find what they love and enjoy it.

Programs of note:

The UIC Writing Center offers Writing Partners for English Language Learners. Participants in the Writing Partners programs meet with the same WC staff tutor on a weekly basis. If you are interested in meeting one-on-one with a tutor on a permanent basis, contact Rita Sacay at rsacay1@uic.edu. Use the heading "WC Partners" in the subject line.

The Supporting Writing of English Language Learners (SWELL) group works with and trains UIC instructors across the disciplines to work with English Language Learning students on their writing skills. For more information contact Charitianne Williams, cwilli31@uic.edu.

Faculty-led Summer ASAM Study Abroad Opportunities: AANA-

PISI supports new ASAM courses each summer. Contact Karen Su karensu@uic.edu, Asian American Studies for more information about upcoming courses.

English 160 and 161 classes designed specifically for English Language Learning and Multi-lingual students are supported by funds and personnel of the AANAPISI initiative. For more information, or to register, contact the Director of the First Year Writing Program Mark Bennett (mbenne2@uic.edu), Lecturer Jim Drown (jdrown1@uic.edu), or Senior Lecturer Charitianne Williams (cwilli31@uic.edu).

See <http://www.uic.edu/depts/aarcc/aanapisi.html> for a list of AANAPISI funded programs and opportunities.

The UIC AANAPISI Initiative

Supporting the recruitment, retention, and graduation of Asian American, Pacific Islander, and English language learner students at the University of Illinois at Chicago. Fully funded by the U.S. Department of Education's Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institutions* (AANAPISI) Program.

