JYVÄSKYLÄN YLIOPISTO
UNIVERSITY OF JYVÄSKYLÄ

LANGUAGE SHAMING PRACTICES ON YOUTUBE:

IDEOLOGIES OF ENGLISH IN VIETNAM

Hoa Dieu Nguyen

2 years ago

chân dài não ngắn là đây chứ đâu

👍 2.1K 👎   REPLY

"Long legs, short brain" (a pretty woman but stupid)

1 year ago

ngu như bò

"Stupid like a cow"

Hế Lô Phi Líp Piên

0:20 / 1:52
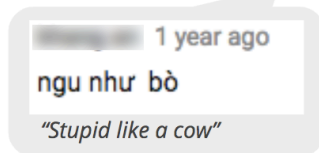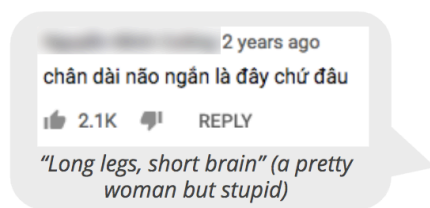
Hoa hậu ___ nói tiếng Anh khiến cả khán phòng cười ồ
1,126,580 views   👍 5.8K 👎 624   ➤ SHARE ...

"Miss Vietnam Lan Anh's English made crowd roar with laughter"

5 months ago

Mất mặt VN quá

REPLY   1   👍 👎

"What a shame for Vietnam"

1 year ago

damn, speak like a duck quack quack !!!!!!

REPLY   👍 👎
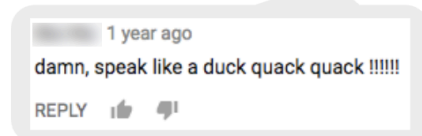
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Tiivistelmä – Abstract

As English has gradually become the global language, users of this lingua franca find themselves constantly challenged and intimidated by a new wave of linguistic attack online known as "language shaming practices on YouTube." Language shaming in general or English shaming in particular can be understood as any forms of interaction that degrade any certain ways of using language.

This study investigates English shaming in the context of Vietnam. More specifically, it aims to examine how Vietnamese YouTube users, by responding to a video of a Vietnamese beauty queen speaking in what is deemed "bad" English, articulate the existing local ideologies surrounding English in an era of globalization. Employing the theories of language ideologies and indexicality as the foci of this study's conceptual framework, I will illustrate the discursive "shaming" processes by which Vietnamese users attribute new indexical values to English. In terms of research methodology, I apply notions from New Media Sociolinguistics on a macro-level and a three-phased inductive coding on a micro-level.

Findings indicate a complex network of intertwined first and second-order indexicalities associated with the role and status of English in Vietnam. Particularly, English is not merely seen as a popular foreign language but may potentially serve as a powerful index of: 1) education and intelligence level, 2) beauty queen standard, 3) national prestige, and last but not least, 4) an imagined, superior globalness. Overall, findings from this research provide an impetus for the problematization of Western-centric globalization and mythos of a "standard" English variety.

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1. INTRODUCTION

A video of an Italian prime minister's speech in English went viral on the internet, attracting thousands of comments poking fun at his heavy accent. Another minister from Nepal met with criticisms when a video of her speech at a UN High-Level Meeting was posted on YouTube with an insulting title: "Nepali Stupid Speech at UN" (see Sharma 2014). Comparably, a call from The New York Times asking its readers to share "strange signs from abroad" gathered comments mocking how Chinese people put up signage in poorly, often amusingly, translated English. As English has gradually become the global language, users of this lingua franca find themselves constantly challenged and intimidated by a new wave of linguistic attack online, namely: English shaming.

In Vietnam, where the English fever has been spreading ever since the economic reforms in 1986, English crowd shaming or scrutinizing tends to target mainly celebrities. These are often well-known personalities who engage in the show business (singers, actors, models, and the like). It has been the trend that any big name's competency in English will make headlines: if it is "good" English, said celebrity will be bathed in praises; but if it is "bad" English that fails social expectations, it will be a fall from grace.

Piller (2017a, 2017b) especially calls attention to the phenomenon as an attempt to explore the processes of linguistic subordination. Language shaming in general or English shaming in particular, as Piller describes, is any forms of interactions that degrade any particular ways of using language. Notably, a significant impetus to its development as a widespread phenomenon is afforded by the accelerating growth of new internet technologies. Language shaming campaigns often take place in the virtual space, such as in the comment section beneath a web article or a YouTube video. Modern social media platforms are now able to garner a collective group of users from all around the world and supply them with an ideal medium to consume, express and exchange ideas, as well as to publicly ridicule and demean others.

Though not an unfamiliar phenomenon, public language shaming remains a rather new concept and has only attracted attention from research recently. As an

endeavor to shed light on this social phenomenon, I will discuss English shaming in the context of Vietnam. More concretely, I aim to examine how Vietnamese YouTube users, by responding to a video of a Vietnamese beauty queen speaking in what is deemed "bad" English, articulate their ideologies of English and its use in an age of globalization. Approaching this end, I wish to explore the indexical values which Vietnamese commenters attribute to English. These are the social meanings that a particular accent or level of English competence can signal to a population of users. In this sense, English has the potential to act as a powerful, sociocultural marker. Within the present case study, the indexical values that English carry may further echo complex discourses of (foreign language) education, human intelligence, feminine beauty, banal nationalism and Western-centeredness. Moreover, as the shaming of Miss Vietnam occurs in a YouTube comment section, the study also discusses the role of new internet technologies, of which YouTube is a prime example, in affording a potential platform for articulating as well as observing local ideologies.

The study begins with a theoretical framework (Chapter 2) which reviews the literature on language ideologies, YouTube as discursive space, and the role of English in the Vietnamese sociolinguistics. It then proceeds with a chapter on methodological framework (Chapter 3) to expatiate on the research aims, questions, data collection as well as analysis methods employed in the study. Next, Chapter 4 shifts the focus to the data analysis which delves into potential indexicalities of English as assigned by Vietnamese YouTube commenters. Chapter 5 relates the findings to the proposed research questions, piecing together a complete picture of the tacit ideologies surrounding English in Vietnam as well as the momentous force of the YouTube platform in cultivating and circulating such language ideologies. Finally, Chapter 6—Conclusion—wraps up the present study.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Previous researches have shown that foreign accents and non-standard dialects are vulnerable to stereotypes and stigmas. As soon as such an accent or a dialect is detected, opinions of the uttering stranger (e.g., possessing certain undesirable characteristics, belonging to low social status, having low education level, and so on) can be formed almost immediately despite little knowledge of the speaker's background. These opinions derive from the social images of a certain group with which identified accent or dialect is usually associated. Such linguistic discrimination prevails in professional (Wang, Arndt, Singh, Biernat, and Liu, 2013), educational settings (Horton, 2017), and other aspects of our everyday life (Lindemann, 2002; Heaton and Nygaard, 2011; Mirshahidi, 2017). Significantly, the phenomenon also occupies and thrives in virtual spaces.

Having always existed in society and now supported by new internet technologies, linguistic discrimination has recently exposed itself in the form of language shaming campaign online. Sharma (2014) investigates an incident on YouTube where transnational Nepalis respond to a speech delivered in "bad English", calling the minister's performance at the UN High-Level Meeting a "disgrace for the nation" (p. 25). A discourse analysis of these comments reveals underlying collective ideologies of English in Nepal among transnational Nepali. Accordingly, commenters associate proper use of English with a presentable national image and anything else that infringes such "standard" with shamefulness. The study also highlights the indexical value of English as a marker of social capital in Nepal.

Such a remark resonates well with the ethnographic work by Billings (2009) which illustrates how local ideologies about language use undergird the making of Tanzanian beauty queens. As a good command of English indexes one as an educated elite in Tanzania, contestants who demonstrate a good ability to speak English are more likely to succeed in local beauty pageants than ones who only speak Swahili. Notably, contestants who fail to deliver a speech in English coherently and confidently on stage also struggle with mocking laughter from the

audience. Billings (2009) argues that audience response can offer valuable insights into local ideologies of what conforms and what clashes with the norms.

It is exactly in this sense that local ideologies of English are constructed and partake in the forming of local language practices, which in turn verify and further shape these perceptions about language use. In other words, language shaming occurs because certain ideologies—beliefs and feelings—about language exist. To better understand the context from which language shaming is derived, it is crucial to first discuss and review the literature on language ideologies (Section 2.1). Additionally, the social contexts of language shaming must also be addressed. Section 2.2 then discusses YouTube as a discursive space while Section 2.3 aims to locate the role of English in the Vietnamese sociolinguistic landscape.

2.1 Language Ideologies

Traditional anthropology and linguistics in North America used to dismiss ideology, understood as rationalizations, as insignificant to a principled understanding of language and social interaction (a thorough landmark collection on language ideologies can be found in Kroskrity, Schieffelin, and Woolard, 1998).

Language ideology only started to attract more research interest after Michael Silverstein first argued for its relevance to the evolution of linguistic structure in 1979. In his seminal work titled "Language Structure and Linguistic Ideologies," Silverstein (1979) defines ideologies about language, or linguistic ideologies, as a belief system about certain language structure and use that has been rationalized or justified by a population of speakers. In this light, ideology has the potential to not only explain but also affect the linguistic structure it represents. To quote Silverstein (1979, p. 233), "...to rationalize, to 'understand' one's own linguistic usage is potentially to change it." This approach can account for the disappearance of "thou" and consequently the collapse of a formal/informal pronoun distinction in the English language. Such change in linguistic usage might have been the result of changing ideologies about social practices while orienting towards a more egalitarian society (Piller, 2015).

The publication of Silverstein's article has prompted a quest for a thorough understanding of language ideology and its potential to systematically relate

language to society. While Silverstein focuses on the influence of linguistic awareness on a language structure, Irvine (1989) adopts a more sociocultural view on language ideology. Irvine (1989) understands beliefs and feelings about language as a complex of cultural, often morally and politically charged, ideas whereby people interpret the relationships between language and society. Woolard and Schieffelin (1994) resonate well with this remark. In reviewing earlier work in several areas from multilingualism, to literacy studies, metapragmatics, linguistic structure and so on, the two authors reckon language ideology a conceptual bridge connecting linguistic and social theory. That is, it serves as a tool to relate the micro-level of language use to the macro-level of power and social inequality.

Such notion of an iconic link between linguistic differentiation and the very social relationship it indexes is especially evident in the ethnographic work of Irvine (1989). Drawing illustrations from a rural Wolof community in Senegal, she describes linguistic differentiation as processes of making sense of linguistic forms and later associating those understandings with social/group identities and categories. Likewise, Arabic and French were subject to contrasting ideologies within the Wolof community despite both being present in the local sociolinguistic landscape and equally unrelated to any form of Wolof in a linguistic sense. In the 1970s, while Arabic—the language of the community's dominant religion—was considered a familiar, Wolof-at-heart language, French—the former colonial language—was believed to be quite "alien" (p. 254). However, by 1984, French was no longer seen as an "unspeakable" foreign language, thanks to the newly reinforced political and economic relationship between Senegal and France. This example, in essence, underlines how language ideology can mediate between linguistic forms and social structures.

Irvine and Gal (2000) further propose three semiotic processes which produce and characterize language ideologies: *iconization*, *fractal recursivity*, and *erasure*. The process of iconization connects linguistic features with social images, which can be exemplified in the case of a certain accent being iconic of a certain identity. Fractal recursivity refers to when perceptions of non-linguistic opposition are imposed onto differences in language practices and vice versa. Finally, erasure entails the process

whereby any form of language use that does not conform to ideological scheme must be "either ignored or transformed" (p. 38).

By and large, existing language ideologies in a community draw a line between what is legitimate and illegitimate. A particular way of using language is never judged for what it is as a mere linguistic form, but the speaker will also be critically evaluated and equated with certain social groups with typical iconic identities and activities. In the same process, any linguistic element that fails to meet the standard norm will have to endure erasure (Irvine and Gal, 2000).

2.1.1 Indexicality.

To investigate how a language ideology comes into being entails a discussion on indexicality—a concept which bears some resemblances to the processes of iconization (Irvine and Gal, 2000). The differences between the two are rather subtle, which I will elaborate on later in the next subsection (2.1.2).

Indexicality helps instill certain language ideologies, and in return is mediated by local ideologies. According to Irvine's (1989) observations of the rural Wolof community in Senegal during the 1970s, it is safe to say Arabic and French each indexed, or marked, different perceptions within the local community. They each carried with them opposing indexical values: Arabic—familiar, French—alien. These were not just empty labels; instead, they reflected the deeply rooted socio-political and historical relationships between the village and the outside world. Arabic, which was considered Wolof-at-heart, was the language of Islam—the dominant religion in the community for generations; and French, known to be "alien" and "foreign", was the language of colonialism. As Blommaert (2005) has succinctly described the strong tie between indexical associations and ideology, indexicality is one of the intersections where social stratification crosses and permeates through our communicative behavior.

Blommaert (2005) attempts to illustrate indexicality by drawing from the use of "sir:" the word not only addresses a male individual but also indicates his perceived social standing, his social relationship with the addresser, as well as a polite attitude dedicated to the addressee. Besides the "pure" meaning that every utterance refers to on the surface, there are layers of indexical meanings hidden

beneath that evoke social norms, class, gender, ethnicity, identities, and so on. Indexicality thus entails unsaid meanings that emerge out of what is said and the social context in which it is being produced. Though only interpretative, such meanings continue to anchor our everyday communication into social and cultural patterns. It is in this fashion that language ideologies are formed and perpetuated.

Jaffe (2016) further emphasizes the significant role of indexicality in both reproducing and reworking sociolinguistic meanings. She corroborates by providing an empirical example from a discussion on the website CafeMom, where participants debated the potential interpretations of "pobrecito" (p. 90) when uttered by a Spanish-speaking grandmother to her grandchild. While the boy's non-Latina mother found it offensive as she understood the term by its literal translation of "poor baby," other commenters interpreted it as a term of endearment, some others considered it merely a superstitious verbal routine. Jaffe (2016) argues that the "pobrecito" discussion provides a brief glance at the nature of indexicality: indexical meanings are not only context-sensitive but also context-creating. First, they are highly context-sensitive (reproducing function) since indexical associations are rooted deeply in the temporal, spatial, and social context. To interpret the grandmother's use of "pobrecito" requires placing such utterance in a broader picture involving a history of relationship between the interlocutors, as well as what Ochs (1996, p. 418; as cited in Jaffe, 2016, p. 92) calls "a history of usage and cultural expectations" revolving around the term. Second, they are context-creating (reworking function) in the sense that usage of certain expressions and how they are perceived contribute a significant part to the reshaping of future contexts in which future communication is grounded. Put another way, the reproduction of indexical relations also allows potential changes in those relations to be identified and reused in subsequent interactions.

2.1.2 Orders of indexicality.

What we also learn from the CafeMom discussion is that there can exist what Silverstein (2003) calls different "indexical orders." Viewing this exchange in light of Silverstein's seminal work on indexicalization, any interpretation that links "pobrecito" to its literal meaning (expressing sympathy for a baby, or projecting a

childlike image on the young interlocutor) suggests a first (or "nth")-order indexicality. Meanwhile, a second (or "n+1-th")-order indexicality relates the utterance "pobrecito" to something essentially Hispanic, "something that Hispanic moms/grandmas just say" (as cited in Jaffe, 2016, p. 91). At this level, an utterance of "pobrecito" also induces social evaluations and stereotypes about the utterer. Silverstein (2003, p. 212) describes the second order indexicalization as a "creative" and "entailing" reconstrual of the first order. Every nth-order index is subject to undergo further ideological intervention and acquire a n+1-th value. Once established, the higher order indexicality is also available for reinterpretation, and the cycle goes on.

Many studies have employed the semiotic concept of indexical orders to unravel how regimes of social and linguistic difference are ideologically mapped onto speaker's characteristics, identity and group membership (Beaton and Washington, 2015; Büscher, D'hondt, and Meeuwis, 2013). One remarkable work among those is by Johnstone, Andrus and Danielson (2006) who investigate the evolution of Pittsburghese from an unnoticed set of linguistic features to markers of socioeconomic class and then a widely recognized regional dialect. Orders of indexicality offer a useful way to elucidate the emergence of Pittsburghese. More specifically, first-order indexicality that matches certain language usage (e.g., monophthongal /aw/) with certain demographic identities (e.g., being male, from Pittsburgh, working class) becomes available for second-order indexicality by which people start to notice the first-order correlations and use them to perform social work (e.g., avoiding using monophthongal /aw/ to sound educated or cosmopolitan, or deliberately employing it to sound like a working-class male from Pittsburgh). Likewise, a third-order indexicality emerges when people recognize the second-order markers and these indexed linguistic features get "swept up" into widely circulated, explicit lists of local speech forms (that are published as articles, folk dictionary, or printed on coffee mugs, fridge magnets, postcards, and so on). At this level, the codified set of linguistic forms have come to be increasingly equated with place, though in a context of local identity it might still be deployed to index class. This eventually completes the "enregisterment" (a term I will return to later) of a dialect now known as "Pittsburghese."

Blommaert (2010, 2005) further argues for another kind of order to indexicalities. Inspired by Foucault's work on "order of discourse," Blommaert proposes his notion of "orders of indexicality," which functions within the complex of social stratification. This order governs how some particular indexicalities are ranked higher than others, how some markers are more valued and some completely neglected. Such differentiation is influenced by the prevalent social evaluation and judgment, entrenched in a systematic regime of authority and control that favors prestige over stigma, normativity over non-normativity, membership over non-membership, and so on. To put it concisely, what underlies the difference in value between indexicalities is the difference in their indexicability. Blommaert (2005) provides an iconic example: a fluent use of slang such as Hip-Hop may be appreciated in an urban American Hip-Hop community; yet, it may also run the risk of evoking unsophistication, violence and aggression to outsiders. The same linguistic feature can index membership of one group and non-membership of another at the same time. It may carry different indexicalities that are ordered differently by different groups and communities.

On the whole, Blommaert's interpretation of indexicality orders points to a world order operated on power, social stratification and inequality. This remark is especially pertinent to the present research on language ideologies revolving around English in Vietnam. It provides an angle from which we can gain a panoramic view regarding how local perceptions of English are embedded in an enduring world order sustained by a Western-centric ideology.

2.1.3 Enregisterment.

A point of departure is that indexicalization can be encompassed within the processes of enregisterment. Let us return to the enregisterment of "Pittsburghese" (Johnstone et al., 2006) discussed above. Through three layers of indexicality, "Pittsburghese" has been enregistered as a regional dialect. The processes generate a new "Pittsburghese" register which is consisted of a stable and dictionary-like list of linguistic features, increasingly concomitant with place, and "hearable" to a wide population of Pittsburghers and non-Pittsburghers. Such a linguistic differentiation

can serve as a resource for indexing specific social personae and identities, as well as a stereotypical image of "da Burgh" and perceived "da Burghers."

Jaffe (2016) draws an analogy between enregisterment and iconization (to return to Irvine and Gal, 2000) while also juxtaposing the later with indexicality. Though one might argue indexicalization echoes the processes of iconization by which certain linguistic forms are associated with certain images, Jaffe (2016) begs to make a distinction between the two. Borrowing Peirce's famous trichotomy of sign modalities (consisted of symbol, index, and icon), Jaffe (2016, p. 86-7) maintains that icons are generally more "fused" with their objects than indexes. In other words, while the link between icons and what they signify is more direct and natural (or naturalized), indexes share a rather implicit connection with their signified. Indexical meanings, if retained and not erased, will be eventually naturalized and thus iconized as "registers" (Agha, 2003, 2007). Jaffe (2016, p. 87) interprets register as the product of the iconization process in which indexicalization acts as a "potential way station" leading to a subsequent erasure of the socio-politically contingent indexical links between signs and their social objects. Such understanding also likens the processes of iconization to those of enregisterment, both of which bring forth indexically laden registers.

Moreover, Agha (2007, p. 190) refers to enregisterment as the processes whereby a linguistic repertoire becomes established as a register or "differentiable within a language as a socially recognized register or forms." The product of enregisterment—a register—is thus a particular semiotic differentiation loaded with "stereotypic indexical values" and widely recognizable among a sociohistorical population (Agha, 2007, p. 81). Through these enregistering processes, a particular population of language users come to acknowledge particular ways of speaking as distinguishable from the rest of the language while assigning to them typifiable social images.

2.1.4 The enregisterment of a standard variety.

Agha (2003, 2007) explicates a classical case of an enregistered linguistic repertoire that has emerged as an index of social status, class, and level of education in British society: Received Pronunciation (RP), also known as Standard British

English. What evolved into RP was previously a southeastern English prestige sociolect spoken by a small privileged group. Primarily a set of phonolexical features, this sociolect was nominated to be a literary standard in the 16th and 17th century despite its humble number of speakers and limited recognition at the time. However, under the forces of language standardization since the eighteenth century, this regional variety has transformed into a supra-local standard register and become an enregistered emblem of social status and advancement.

This also recalls Silverstein's (2003, p. 219) remark of standard register: standard register such as RP "ideologically...constitutes the 'neutral' top-and-center of all variability that is thus around-and-below it." The ideological work underlying a standard register then converts perceived differences of linguistic forms into perceived differences of groups and categories with contrasting stereotypic social images. Consequently, once a standard register is enregistered in cultural awareness, a contrasting non-standard register is also constructed along the way.

Lippi-Green (2012) especially calls attention to the idealizing of a standard variety, which she deems a testament to a bias towards a certain linguistic form over another imposed and upheld through institutional practices. Such a linguistic discrimination has its roots in a standard language ideology to which we are all exposed during the course of our socialization processes. The ideological underpinnings beneath a standard form in turn provoke a linguistic subordination that stigmatizes and devalues other non-standard varieties. As seen in the case of Standard American English (SAE), Lippi-Green (2012, p. 68) argues that dominant institutions—such as media and school systems—play a critical role in promoting and circulating the ideology of a homogenous, standard variety of English which is exclusively "Anglo, upper middle-class, and ethnically middle-American." The rise of SAE simultaneously leads to the trivialization of other English varieties and even marginalization of their speakers (e.g., African American, Chilean or Muslim).

Beyond the context of the United States, American-sounding English has been marketed worldwide as a powerful emblem of the American culture that emanates globalness and upward mobile trajectories. Blommaert (2009) discusses the commodification of such specific English accent. He argues that the rising popularity of websites offering English courses in American accent is a manifestation of a global

ideology that indexes English—particularly the American variety with its associated imagery—as the language of globalization and upward mobility. American English in this view is being enregistered as a new global standard register that defines global success. Specifically, learners of these courses hope to acquire not just a language but rather an accent—a façade—to conceal their "foreignness" which they believe is keeping them from successful global interactions.

The enregisterment of a standard linguistic form, in reflection of the above discussion, usually involves socio-institutional processes through which speakers are exposed to dominant standard language ideologies. Vietnamese learners, too, come to recognize a standard accent of English as distinguishable from a non-standard one by attending English classes at schools (which usually promote the use of either British or American English; see Phan, 2017) or consuming popular Western media. As seen in the shaming of Miss Vietnam, her heavily accented speech is being discriminated against a particular standard form of English that has been enregistered in people's awareness. In other words, what undergirds such linguistic differentiation is none other than an entrenched standard language ideology surrounding English in Vietnam.

2.1.5 Summary.

So far, a discussion of indexicality and enregisterment has been helpful in elucidating the process of how language ideologies are constructed, negotiated and articulated. On one hand, existing language ideologies lay the groundwork for indexicality and enregisterment to perform their social functions (i.e., making socially meaningful associations between speech and images of personhood). On the other hand, language ideologies are also continually shaped and reshaped by the trajectories of such processes. It is thereby indispensable, when attempting to explore local language ideologies, to investigate the valorization of linguistic forms and the circulation of such recognizable sign-values.

One tool to explicate the enregisterment processes of regional linguistic features is the framework of indexical orders by Silverstein (2003; see Johnstone et al., 2006; Remlinger, 2009). My understanding of the dynamics between indexicality and enregisterment is partly informed by Jaffe (2016): if we look at the process of

enregisterment as a spectrum, then indexicalization may fall somewhere midpoint. However, it remains ambiguous at exactly which point, or at which n-th order, that an indexicality acquire enregisterment (cf. Squires, 2010). Perhaps it requires a certain degree of "prima facie stability that can sometimes be used for typifying or stereotyping" (Blommaert, 2010, p. 37) for an indexical meaning to become a widely recognizable register. In a manner of speaking, a register can be considered a conventionalized, more "evolved" form of an indexicality that is more firmly anchored in cultural awareness.

Returning to the study of online English shaming in Vietnam, an approach to language ideologies through indexicality and enregisterment processes is crucial. That being said, I will focus more on the indexicalization practices, namely how commenters on YouTube attribute indexical meanings to Miss Vietnam's use of English, as an attempt to cast light on the dominant ideologies about English in Vietnam. The reason being an investigation of any enregisterment processes (that ideally involve rigorous ethnographic fieldwork) would probably stretch beyond the scope of this study which will only be looking at reactions from one YouTube video. Yet, a discussion on indexical values ascribed to English by Vietnamese commenters will allow us to contemplate a potential enregisterment process of (standard) English in Vietnam.

2.2 YouTube as a Discursive Space

Founded in early 2005, YouTube has been a leading video-sharing platform with 1.8 billion monthly users all over the world (Gilbert, 2018). The website, in essence, allows its enormous community members to upload their own contents, watch and comment on those of others. While YouTube offers a great variety of videos ranging from user-generated to corporate media contents, the majority of users are lay individuals who are far from professionals in the field of media production. YouTube, therefore, provides these lay "producers" with a highly interactive, basically free of charge, transnational and open platform to simultaneously create and consume media contents. Such an online practice has been referred to as a blend of production and consumption: "prosuming" (see

Leppänen and Häkkinen, 2012). It essentially embodies the emerging internet cultures in an age of globalization.

The accelerating growth of web 2.0 technologies over the past two decades has opened up a new virtual space that gives rise to new patterns of human communication, and as a result, new social action along with new narratives and identities. That the English shaming happened in an online environment is important to keep in mind. Indeed, a significant part of what motivates the shaming campaign of Miss Vietnam's use of English is the public participatory, highly interactive, yet relatively anonymous nature[1] that social media platforms such as YouTube have to offer its end users. Notable development from web 1.0 to web 2.0 is essentially characterized by two emerging cultures: participation and convergence (Androutsopoulos, 2010; Jenkins, 2006). While the former marks the shift from user's unidirectional data consumption (i.e., read-only culture) to user's active contribution (i.e., read-write culture), the later connotes the convergence of multiple media systems across which content flows seamlessly (Jenkins, 2006). Androutsopoulos (2010) interprets the convergent nature of contemporary web environments as being multimodal, multi-layered and multi-authored, thus obscuring the boundaries between genres and participation roles.

YouTube embodies such emerging cultures on the "new" internet. It encourages active participation: YouTube users can upload, edit, subscribe, watch, share, report, comment, like, dislike, upvote, downvote, etc., as the borderline there between consumption and production has been blurred. YouTube, along with many other social networks and media-sharing websites of the new generation, provides its billion users with plenty of opportunities for fostering their creativity as well as expanding and developing new identity repertoires. Yet, it also poses certain challenges on such forms of creativity and identity work. These constraints might involve surveillance, control and censorship, which then mediate dominant ideologies of freedom and liberty on the Internet (see Varis, Wang and Du, 2011 for two specific examples from Chinese Internet subcultures). Taken together, YouTube

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[1] I reckon YouTube is "relatively anonymous" to the extent that one YouTube user may choose not to include any personal details (name, date of birth, location, etc.) in his/her public profile, which makes it fairly easy for anyone to remain unidentifiable on the website.

thus makes a potential awe-inspiring site for exploring such social identities and ideologies (Leppänen and Häkkinen, 2012; Androutsopoulos, 2010).

2.2.1 Language Ideology on YouTube.

Several previous studies have considered YouTube content, including videos (e.g., Archakis, Lampropoulou and Tsakona, 2018; Leppänen and Häkkinen, 2012) and comments (e.g., Sharma, 2014; Chun, 2013), a "valuable source of user-generated metalinguistic data" (Jones and Schieffelin, 2009, p. 1062). Concretely, a closer look at YouTube comment thread can reveal much about prevailing language ideologies that exist beyond the screen, and how such ideological beliefs are being explicitly articulated and negotiated in the cyberspace.

For instance, Jones and Schieffelin (2009) investigate emerging patterns in the commentary which YouTube users have posted on a series of American TV ads (aired between 2007 and 2008, then later recirculated on YouTube). Depicting the infamous text-speak in a comical fashion, these commercials envision a world where young people begin to use exclusively the language of text messaging in their everyday verbal speech. The "alien code" ends up baffling all the parents who are not so text-speak-savvy. One of the recurrent themes identified is how commenters negatively evaluate such bizarre language use while expressing a prescriptivist ideology that favor standard English. Another common pattern is how commenters construe the text messaging features as an identity marker, associating the speech styles with certain socio-racial or gender groups such as "preppies" and "white girls" (Jones and Schieffelin, 2009, p. 1067-1068).

That particular linguistic features are linked to particular social images is also a prevalent theme found in Sharma's (2014) study. Analyzing YouTube comments from transnational Nepalis reacting to a minister's English speech, Sharma (2014) pinpoints the indexical values attributed to standard and non-standard use of English. While the Nepali minister's "peculiar" English is equated with a national disgrace, standard English is found to be an index of national prestige, education level and social class in Nepal. These indexicalities, whereby commenters assign social meanings to the English language, illuminate the underpinning language

ideologies that differentiate what linguistic features are legitimate and necessary for a presentable national image in a global context.

"Peculiar" linguistic features that differ from a perceived norm elicit not only social identities but also ideologies of hierarchy among varieties of speech. Hachimi (2013) discusses such hierarchical relationship between two regional varieties of vernacular Arabi—Mashreqi (Middle Eastern) and Maghrebi (North African)—as it is played out through a series of comments responding to a YouTube video. The video showcases exchanges between Mashreqi and Maghrebi contestants from a popular talent-reality show called Star Academy Arab World. These interactions are described as "communication breakdown" (p. 227) and thus framed as a "mission impossible" as the title already suggests. Analysis of the 190 comments unpacks the dominant Maghreb-Mashreq language ideology that undergirds the language subordination of Maghrebi Arabic, namely its perceived unintelligibility and impurity.

Such long-standing language ideology of Arabic vernacular varieties, however, does not remain unchallenged on the YouTube platform. One of the oppositional stances expressed by Maghreb commenters capitalizes on how Moroccans have the "smoothest accent" in English while "the rest of the arabs" (implying Mashreq speakers) presumably all share a heavy English accent (p. 289). These claims of superiority in Standard English pronunciation—an emblematic social capital worldwide—can be seen as a tactic employed by Maghreb to counter linguistic mockery with linguistic mockery. That an "accent superiority" in English makes a powerful defense for Maghreb speakers insinuates that English is relevant in this local sociolinguistic hierarchy. It also points to a common language ideology that acknowledges the English language's growing power as a global power code.

The above studies are among a collective oeuvre aiming to portray how language ideologies (of English, Arabic varieties, or text-speak) are being conveyed, circulated and also challenged in a highly interactive platform such as YouTube comment board. An important remark is that these commentaries are posted in response to their respective video content, which might seem lighthearted on the surface but is indeed layered and loaded with ideologies. Value-laden video content

then triggers many of these language ideological debates in the comment section on YouTube.

2.2.2 Entextualization as part of production culture on YouTube.

Entextualization (Bauman and Briggs, 1990; Blommaert, 2005; Leppänen, Kytölä, Jousmäki, Peuronen, and Westinen, 2014) is a case in point to expound on such values-charged media content. It is a process by which textual materials are detached from their original context (i.e., decontextualized) and subsequently attached to another setting with a new meaning for a preferred reading (i.e., recontextualized). Entextualized discourse then becomes associated with its new context instead of its initial one — a procedure whereby it undergoes reinterpretation and comes out as an essentially new discourse. Therefore, entextualization inevitably entail resemiotization, that is the process of semiotic change as discourses travel across socio-cultural and modal boundaries (Leppänen et al., 2014; Leppänen and Häkkinen, 2012). Many YouTube videos are in fact products of such entextualization (and resemiotization) processes.

For instance, the videos from Sharma's (2014) study were extracted from a public speech presented at a UN high-level meeting by Nepal's State Minister of Health, then re-uploaded on YouTube by multiple users, who assigned new titles and descriptions to the same event. Sharma (2014, p. 22) especially examines two videos titled "Somebody should stop speaking English" and "Nepali stupid speech at UN", whose given descriptions ridicule the minister's idiosyncratic use of English and sneer at her lack of educational qualification. These assigned texts have framed an original speech on the status of Nepal's progress in fighting HIV/AIDS into a "stupid" and "disgraceful" English performance.

Likewise, the research by Hachimi (2013) also features a YouTube video that has undergone entextualization. Each scene from the video presents a miscommunication moment between contestants from Maghreb and Mashreq regions of the Arab world, in which the "communicative burden" (Lippi-Green, 2012) tends to rest only on the Maghreb speakers. These scenes clearly have been selected, cut and edited to accentuate the regional identity and dialect of each contestant. Concretely, they render Maghrebi Arabic as the object of stylized

mockery and their Mashreqi counterpart adulation (Hachimi, 2013, p. 281-4). Its given title "Mission: IMPOSSIBLE" also contributes to the video's perpetuation of the persistent Maghreb-Mashreq language ideology.

Entextualization and resemiotization practices on YouTube also take the form of creative subtitling and editorial commentary added onto original videos (see Androutsopoulos, 2010). Leppänen and Häkkinen (2012), for example, examine what are described as "buffalaxed" videos. The term comes from a popular YouTuber's username who mainly produces music videos of non-English songs featuring such Other figures as Bollywood/Oriental characters with "fake" English (or any language chosen by buffalaxed producers) subtitles. Notably, these surface translations are usually banked solely on what the foreign lyrics sound like and not what they actually mean. A product of entextualization, buffalaxed videos are resemiotized with mondegreen subtitling and editorial remarks to achieve a humorous, preferred reading catered to new audiences on YouTube. Leppänen and Häkkinen (2012) contend that the videos depict the Others with stereotypical and discriminatory images. The added homophonic subtitles give the Others a new voice that is not theirs: what originally was a musical performance about romantic love gets twisted into explicit, even absurd sexual references; what becomes a homoerotic love story was purely a celebration of friendship between two male characters from a Bollywood movie. Such comical portrayal of Bollywood characters and oriental pop singers reveals common ideological stances towards perceived Others, which renders certain social and cultural groups as being distinct from the hegemonic groups.

Taken together, entextualization practices are essentially ideologically driven. Through entextualization, YouTube videos acquire new meanings as well as a set of values and beliefs, which in turn precipitate many of the ideological debates in the comment thread on YouTube. The video central to this current study is also a creation of entextualization. It has been lifted out of its context-of-origin—that is an international beauty contest where Miss Vietnam Lan Anh (pseudonym used) was acting as a judge—cut, edited and recontextualized in a new interactive web environment. What initiates the shaming of Miss Vietnam's use of English in the comment section is exactly how the video entextualizes her speech with a framing

title, added subtitles and editorial remarks. Even though this study only focuses on YouTube comments and how they reflect local language ideologies of English in Vietnam, a brief discussion on entextualization practices on YouTube is regardless insightful as it offers a glimpse into how commenters—in consuming recontextualized products such as YouTube videos—are given an ideological frame to (re-)interpret certain media content.

2.2.3 Online Shaming: The dark side of social media.

I have discussed above how entextualized media content on YouTube can convey specific sets of values, which in turn can trigger ideological debates and give rise to shaming campaigns in the comment board. The English shaming of Miss Vietnam also occurs in the same fashion. This is where we encounter one of the dark sides of social media (Baccarella, Wagner, Kietzmann and McCarthy, 2018): online shaming.

Shaming is generally understood as a tactic used to publicly and deliberately draw community disapproval and hostile criticism towards an individual who has supposedly violated a commonly accepted rule or principle. Incorporating literature from criminology and law, the practice of shaming has been employed as a form of penalty, state or socially approved, to punish a wrongdoer (Cheung, 2014). For example, Kahan and Posner (1999) advocate for the institutionalization of shaming in the American Federal Sentencing Guidelines and especially propose "shaming penalties" for federal white-collar offenders. One of their arguments emphasizes that citizens view criminal punishment as not only a means of preventing crimes but also an expression of moral disapproval towards the wrongdoer's conduct. Shaming penalties, compared with imprisonment and fines, meet this punishment standard. They offer what Kahan and Posner (1999, p. 380) call an "expressive utility"—the power to convey "information about what (or whom) the community values and how much." Thus, people support and engage in public shaming of violators to defend their social norms and beliefs (Cheung, 2014). In this light, a shaming campaign can reveal to us what social meanings the public wish to secure and reinforce.

Today, the digital age has witnessed shaming penalty arising in the cyberspace as a new form of social sanction (Wall and Williams, 2007; Cheung, 2014). Online shaming first caught attention in the press when Krim (2005) covered an incident in South Korea in which a woman refused to clean up after her dog while traveling on a subway. Photos and reports of what was labelled as "Dog Poop Girl" ordeal then quickly surfaced on the Internet, gathering a wave of criticism and even provoking a witch-hunt for her identity, her parents and relatives. Humiliated in public and deeply tainted with shame, the woman ended up dropping out of college.

In investigating these phenomena in the Asian context, Skoric, Chua, Liew, Wong and Yeo (2010) find that their informants consider online shaming a way to contribute to the community. They believe it helps underline the unacceptable behavior and deter others from violating social norms and rules. Similarly, Hou, Jiang and Wang (2017) also report a positive correlation between online shaming tendency and a strong belief in a just world, emphasizing that such worldview motivates individuals to maintain a social order which they perceive to be right and ideal. Overall, online shaming can be seen as an emerging form of social control exercised by a population on the Internet to decry any misconduct that transgresses social norms.

Online language shaming falls under this category. The shaming campaign of the Nepali minister's English (Sharma, 2014) is an instance of how a socio-linguistic transgression results in a public humiliation. Since an intelligible and correct use of English is widely considered an essence of Nepal's national image, any English performance—especially one on a global stage like a UN High-Level Meeting—that fails such standard is seen as a violation of social expectations and therefore deserving of public sanction.

Remarkably, language shaming is exercised not only when the linguistic features fall beneath a certain standard but also when they "exceed" a certain level of normativity. That is to say any use of language is likely to be sanctioned if it does not fit into a desired social image. Kytölä (2012) examines this very phenomenon on two Finnish football forums, where two peculiar uses of non-standard English(es) become the object of stylized mockery. Both of these voices—one is a "broken English" uttered by a (presumably) Turkish member (Altan) and the other a Scouse-

accented speech by a (reportedly) upper-middle class Finnish member (Anfield_mate)—are heavily indexical of abnormality on the forums under observation. Altan's use of non-standard English might index "otherness" (i.e., "sand niggers," being Turkish, from the Middle East; see also Leppänen and Häkkinen, 2012). In contrast, Anfield_mate's deployment of Liverpool-associated linguistic features carries negative values that go against the nationalist-patriotic undertones on these Finnish football forums. In response to such "abnormal" language behavior, users deliberately imitate the idiosyncratic linguistic features to ridicule and poke fun at the two. Both Altan and Anfield_mate have transgressed the long-established norms within said community, prompting other members to exercise social sanction through means of language mocking.

By and large, all forms of shaming campaigns share one thing in common: to instill a sense of shame in the shamee. And though online shaming might serve as a potential tool for peer surveillance and hence community empowerment, such norms-defending vigilantism schemes, without a specific lawful guideline for online vigilantes, can culminate in personal abuses, invasion of privacy, death threats and permanent traumas (Skoric et al., 2010). Indeed, "to feel shame is to feel *seen* in a painfully diminished sense," as Kaufman (1996, p. 17; italics in the original) has elaborated on the psychological damages of shame. The feelings of humiliation can amplify one's insecurity, inflict a low self-esteem and a poor self-concept, while dividing the shamee from both him-/herself and others (Kaufman, 1996). Returning to the "Dog Poop Girl" incident in South Korea, the witch-hunted and publicly-condemned woman reportedly had to quit her university after her private details had been widely circulated on the Internet. No one ever heard of her since but one might question if the severe shaming of the "Dog Poop Girl" was necessary. In fact, one netizen raised a relevant point:

> "What would I have done if I was at the scene? I would have just cleaned up the mess without saying anything. . . . [The] mess is cleaned up and the girl, embarrassed at the right level." (as cited in Krim, 2005, para. 24)

2.2.4 Summary.

In this section, I have examined YouTube as a discursive site that offers people abundant opportunities to not just consume but also actively participate in the production and circulation of media content. YouTube, along with other social media websites that represent a new generation of web 2.0, is being employed by netizens as a medium to articulate and communicate their identities, values and beliefs. Specifically, many YouTube videos are found to be a product of the entextualization processes, whereby discourse is extracted from its unique context, then transmitted and inserted in another context. These videos feature contents that have been reproduced, remixed and recontextualized within a new media environment. They now acquire new situated meanings with embedded ideologies, which spark off many of the ideological debates as well as shaming campaigns in the comment board on YouTube.

A brief discussion on online shaming helps delineate people's beliefs and motives for partaking in a public denouncement of others. Online vigilantes tend to regard their Internet-policing practices as a way to contribute to the community by deterring the "bad" from re-transgressing social expectations and maintaining the "good" social norms. However, extreme cases of unnecessarily severe online shaming can result in detrimental effects and leave the shamee with lasting psychological damages.

Such a concern is especially relevant in the English shaming of Miss Vietnam. Her viral English performance was cut out from a string of events, attached with subtitles and editorial remarks, then posted on YouTube with a telling title: "Miss Vietnam Lan Anh's English made crowd roar with laughter" (pseudonym used). It is in fact a product of entextualization that conveys a very specific set of language ideologies, which eventually incite the language shaming of her English use. Many shamers even went as far as tracking down her personal social media handle to spam belittling messages, calling her a blot upon the nation's name. Met with waves of mocking criticism, Miss Vietnam was forced to shut down her page and later issued an official apology for her deficiency in a language that is not her mother tongue.

While this current study places its emphasis on the English shaming practices and how they reflect local language ideologies in Vietnam, it is still crucial to take into account the highly potential damages of online shaming in the cyberspace—a timely issue I will later return to in Section 5.2. Furthermore, to provide a sociolinguistic setting from which English competence level has emerged as a new measure to decide whether one deserves to be condemned in public, the next section will review the historical development and overall status of English in Vietnam.

2.3 English in Vietnam: An Emerging Standard

Throughout Asia, English is increasingly becoming a core subject required at public schools, even a medium of instruction for all or certain subjects. For instance in China, English education has been made compulsory from primary 3, or as early as primary 1 in most urban areas. In Malaysia and the Philippines, first graders are learning maths and science through English. Whereas in Singapore, students have all subjects taught in English with the exception of foreign language studies (Kirkpatrick, 2011). This trend towards early introduction of English education in national curriculum has also arrived in Vietnam. The nation joins many other East and Southeast Asian countries in promoting the teaching of primary and tertiary English quite intensively.

Ever since the economic reform known as *Đổi mới* in 1986 and on the inevitable momentum of globalization, Vietnam has determined to establish economic relations with the West by initiating an open door policy. One of the outcomes is, unsurprisingly, a surging demand for English in the country. By the early 1990s, English already replaced French and Russian to become the most predominant foreign language in Vietnam, as the former lost its power of a colonial language after the French occupation ended in 1954 and the latter declined in popularity along with the Soviet Union's dissolution in 1991 (Wright, 2002; Hoang, 2010).

2.3.1 English as a measure for social capital in Vietnam.

In 2008, the Vietnamese Prime Minister announced a National Plan for "Teaching and Learning Foreign Languages in the National Formal Educational

System in the Period of 2008—2020" which allowed English instruction to begin from Grade 3 in primary school. The ambitious plan, aiming to make English a "competitive edge" for Vietnamese people in a globalized multicultural world, expected most Vietnamese students to gain full independent proficiency in English by 2020. Most recently in 2017, the Prime Minister issued another decision to reinforce the plan for the period of 2017—2025, and also include English introduction programs for preschoolers from 2020. The Vietnamese government is committed to the enhancement of its human resources in a new epoch of modernization, industrialization, and global integration.

However, it is a truism to say there is always a gap between a plan and how it is actually implemented. On one hand, the national English education policy has garnered various concerns such as teacher incompetence, lack of suitable resources and materials, inappropriate teaching methodology, large class size, poor learning experiences from student perspective (Hoang, 2010; Nguyen, 2011; Nguyen, Hamid and Renshaw, 2016). One of the major issues is the significant mismatch between rural and urban areas in teaching quality, student learning outcomes, resources and facilities (Vu and Pham, 2014). Even within urban areas, there are stark differences between students from different social class backgrounds. Given the unfortunate reality of Vietnamese public schools failing to provide students with quality English teaching, parents are sending their children to private English centers for extra English lessons, preferably with a native speaker. This is, however, not a likely option for students who come from humble, unprivileged families. Such trend is leading to the "English divide" which draws a distinction between who has access to more English education and thus more social capital (Nguyen et al., 2016). English, thereby, is not simply a popular foreign language in Vietnam. It has evolved into a social marker with loaded indexical values—the one label that everyone wants to "wear" because it is now "in fashion."

On another hand, the policy's general aim of making English education more accessible nationwide is relatively well received by public, as the majority seem to hold positive attitudes towards English as a foreign language. Recent studies have found that Vietnamese undergraduate students are highly motivated to learn English and well aware of the social benefits that a good command of English has to

offer (Tuan, 2012; Trinh, 2016). In a recent study about students' motivation to learn English in Vietnamese higher education (Ngo, 2015), it is reported that both English major and non-English major students are especially motivated to learn English because it benefits their future careers. Their motivation is also influenced by other external pressure coming from their lecturers, peers and parents (e.g., whether they find the lecturer-student relationship positive, if their peers and/or parents express positive attitude towards English). Similarly, most participants in a questionnaire survey conducted in another Vietnamese university express their strong preference for English, showing moderate to strong agreement with statements such as: "If I use English, I will be praised and approved of by my family, relatives and friends" or "If I use English, my status is raised" (Trinh, 2016). It is most likely in this sense that a system of language ideology which associates the use of appropriate English with its speaker's desirable status takes its form and continues to exist in modern day Vietnam.

2.3.2 English as an emerging feminine beauty standard.

English has not only become a mandatory subject at schools but also a requirement in popular beauty contests like Miss Universe Vietnam and Miss Vietnam. Since winners of these contests ultimately seize an opportunity to represent Vietnam in international beauty pageants, all candidates are usually expected to possess a certain satisfactory command of conversational English. This has inadvertently turned beauty pageant candidates into subjects whose English competences are always scrutinized and evaluated, not just by the judges but also a nationwide audience.

This phenomenon is redolent with the ethnographic study by Billings (2009, 2011, 2013) on how a sufficient English proficiency contributes to the making of Tanzanian beauty queens. While Tanzania is a country with immense linguistic and cultural diversity, its national beauty pageants seem to thrive within an inherent hierarchy of language competence which prioritizes a proficient use of standard English. According to Billings, contestants who can speak English have a better chance of winning Tanzanian beauty pageants than their fellow Swahili-speaking competitors. This is due to the reality that standard English is only accessible

through higher education in Tanzania, where only a tiny fraction of the population is privileged enough to pursue education beyond primary school. English is thus widely equated with the language of the elite: it is a powerful register indexical of prestigious education and upper-class membership in Tanzania. Such local language ideologies are also manifested in the country's beauty pageants. At provincial competitions, contestants are more likely to win if they demonstrate an ability to articulate in, if non-fluent and non-standard, "pure" English—a purity code in Tanzania that emphasizes on the avoidance of mixing English and Swahili. However at the national-level, successful contestants are expected to deliver a fluent speech in standard English, which becomes an index of a desirable education background (Billings 2009, 2011).

These findings are in line with Dewey's (2008) account of the Miss India pageant. Qualified contestants are required to participate in an antecedent training program where they spend at least one hour every day with a coach to refine their British-accented English. Another big chunk of the day is devoted to watching DVDs of past international beauty pageants while gauging the quintessential ingredients for a making-Miss-India-Miss-World recipe. One of Miss India's "chief weapon" to win the global title, as assessed by Indian beauty experts, is her English proficiency since "half of the girls [in Miss World pageant] can't speak English" (as cited in Dewey, 2008, p. 95). This language component is made crucial to securing a title at Miss India, where contestants are advised to "hide" their Hindi and several other Indian accents by cultivating a British-accented English. Language is highly indexical of social class in India, and British English is a powerful token of privileged status and prestigious education background.

Both Billings (2013) and Dewey (2008) contend that beauty pageants worldwide are firmly anchored in a collective national identity, which is evident in how Tanzanian contestants are often dressed in the symbolic *kanga* during dance performances and their Indian counterparts continue to walk the runway in *saris*. However, another major part of such performing-the-nation rhetoric is to also project a modern and globally-oriented image of the country to the outside world. This explains why a competence in standard English is usually expected of beauty queens who represent their nation on a highly international stage.

Despite the lack of relevant studies conducted in a Vietnamese context, the same conclusion can be drawn for the important role that English plays in Vietnam's beauty pageants. During the most recent Miss Universe Vietnam in 2017, contestants were required to deliver a short self-introduction in English while wearing national costumes. They were also tested for English conversational skills in another sub-competition by having interviews with native speakers. As a result, parodic videos mocking candidates with hilarious "Vietlish" blew up on social media whereas the one with "best English skills" grabbed the headlines on various media outlets. It is also in this procedure that the English shaming of Miss Vietnam Lan Anh has unfolded. Taken together, English is becoming not only a powerful index of education background and class status but also a new standard for feminine beauty in a globalized world.

2.3.3 Summary.

This section aims to locate English in the sociolinguistic landscape of Vietnam. In so doing, it has provided a brief review on the Vietnamese government's policy of foreign language education and its stress on making English a competitive edge for the future workforce. A gap in access to quality English education between Vietnamese rural and urban regions as well as different social and income groups is also addressed. For that reason, English is found to be laden with indexical values in Vietnam: it is a "trendy" label that everyone wishes to "wear" to appear well educated, affluent, and in "vogue."

The second part deals with English emerging as a means to evaluate feminine beauty. In particular, Billings (2009, 2011, 2013) and Dewey's (2008) ethnographic work on beauty pageants in respectively Tanzania and India are discussed to elaborate on how a competence in English contributes to the making of a national beauty queen. Since English serves as a telling marker of social capital in both societies, contestants who demonstrate a good command of standard English are believed to deserve the beauty queen title, who will also be able to deliver a positive national image in an international context such as Miss World or Miss Universe. These findings are highly applicable to the shaming of Miss Vietnam Lan Anh, who

has perceivably failed to convey an ideal representation of Vietnam on a global stage with her "disastrous" English speech.

The present section concludes this study's theoretical framework, which delves into 1) the processes of language ideologies and how these shape—and are reshaped by—indexicality and enregisterment, 2) YouTube as a discursive site where users are free to articulate their identities and (language) ideologies by participating in entextualization and online shaming practices, and 3) English as a measure for social capital and an emerging standard for feminine beauty in Vietnam. Figure 1 below encapsulates the ties between these sub-chapters; it also works as a visualization of the conceptual framework. The blue-bordered boxes especially indicate the foci of this Master's thesis. On the whole, this chapter paves the way for an in-depth analysis of YouTube comments that linguistically attack a peculiar, non-standard use of English by Miss Vietnam Lan Anh in order to unveil underlying language ideologies of English in Vietnam.
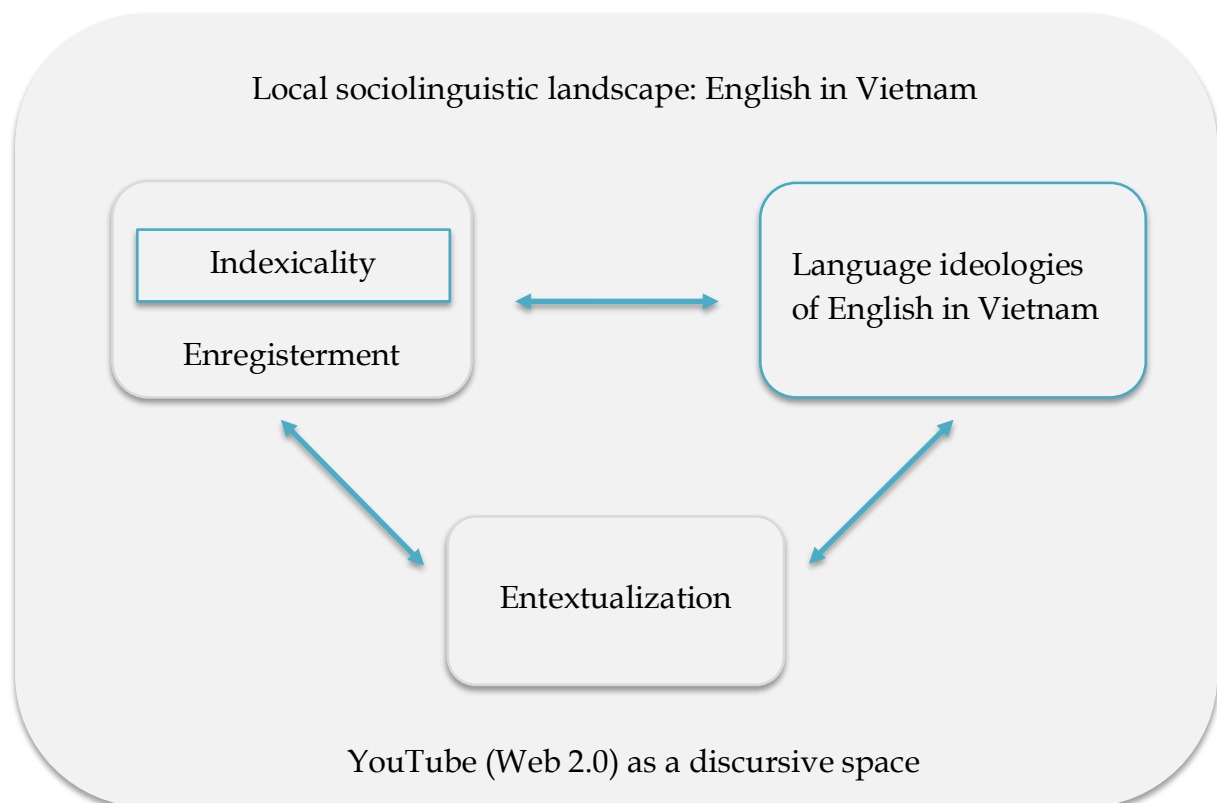
Figure 1. Conceptual framework

3. METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

The present chapter will be outlining my methodological framework. It first summarizes a specific aim for the study and the guiding research questions to achieve it (3.1). Next, it provides a review on the data collection processes (3.2), and lastly data analysis methods will also be discussed in details (3.3).

3.1 Aims and Research Questions

This study sets out to explore the phenomenon of online English shaming in Vietnam. Specifically, it examines how Vietnamese YouTube users, by commenting on a video of a Miss Vietnam speaking in what appears to be "bad" English, publicly and collectively degrade such peculiar language use. It also strives to expose the existing language ideologies of English in Vietnam that has undergirded the English shaming campaign in question. In this endeavor, I will be targeting the following research questions:

- In what ways does the English shaming of Miss Vietnam reflect the indexical values attributed to (non-standard) English in Vietnam?
    - What kind of indexicalities of any orders emerge from such practices?
- How do such processes unveil underlying local ideologies in the era of globalization?

The first question aims to explicate the social meanings that Vietnamese commenters associate with Miss Vietnam's heavily accented, non-standard use of English. Its sub-question, which focuses on the order of indexicality, will help determine the layers of such indexical associations, namely whether "bad" English simply means a lack of proficiency or is also susceptible to other negative social images. The last question envelopes this study's main purpose: it inquires into the latent local ideologies that are deeply rooted in the English shaming of Miss Vietnam. These ideologies may concern with not only how English is currently situated in the Vietnamese sociolinguistic landscape as purely a foreign language.

They can further allude to how it is being creatively recruited as a sociocultural and political marker in an epoch of globalization.

3.2 Data Collection

3.2.1 The video.

The data come from the comment board of a YouTube video titled: "Miss Vietnam Lan Anh's English made crowd roar with laughter". Details and statistics of the video are given in Table 1 below.

Title	*Miss Vietnam Lan Anh's English made crowd roar with laughter*
Type	Live Event/ Performance
Duration	1:52
Date uploaded	Jun 2016
Views	1,233,125
Comments	128
Upvotes on all comments	11,519
Likes/ Dislikes	6.7k / 677

Table 1. Video details as of February 2019

The video contains a relatively recent incident in a male beauty pageant held in Philippines, which was recorded and later published on various YouTube channels. Miss Vietnam Lan Anh, who won the first place in a Southeast Asian beauty contest in the year before, was invited to participate in this year's pageant as one of the judges. What is seen in the viral video was just a short excerpt extracted from a three-hour-long live event/performance; it was then re-posted on YouTube by various users, each of whom assign a different title and description text to the

same incident. The video chosen for this study is the most popular among all of them, with more than 1.2 million views and counting as of February 2019. It has also garnered a significant number of interactions from YouTube users, as demonstrated in the likes/dislikes as well as the comments' statistics. The video's popularity makes it a fruitful, fascinating site to study the prevalent ideologies that are being articulated in response to its content.

In the YouTube video, Miss Vietnam—acting as a judge of the pageant—was reading out her question in English to a candidate. Below is the transcript of this incident. Phonetic symbols are added in the brackets to illustrate the actual pronunciation of Miss Vietnam and another judge. Words in UPPERCASE demonstrate where extra stress is placed. Use of double parentheses and italic words is to showcase non-verbal cues. Pseudonym is also used.

Excerpt 1:

MC = Master of ceremonies; MV = Miss Vietnam;
J = another Judge sitting next to Miss Vietnam.

001 MC1: And lastly we call...Korea

002 *((Candidate from Korea steps up and draws a random envelope))*

003 MC2: *((To the candidate, reading result from the draw))* Your judge, Ms.

004 Lan Anh

005 MV: Hello...first have...Hello Philippines!

006 *((Audience claps. MV turns her head to wave at audience))*

007 MV: Yea. I have question for you. Umm…

008 *((MV looks down to read from a paper))*

009 What do you think is the essence of the winner of this

     [tʰɪŋ] [ˈɪlən] [ʊɪNə]

010 pageant?

  [ˈbɛgən]

011 *((Audience laughs. Candidate, Korean interpreter, and MC all look confused))*

012 MC2: Can you please repeat the question ma'am?

013 MV: Yea, *((looks down to read again))*

014		what do you THINK is the essence of…
		[tʰɪŋ] [ˈɪlən]
015	J:	*((whispering in MV's ear))* essence
		[ˈesəns]
016	MV:	…essence of the winner this pageant?
		[ˈɪzən] [ʊɪNə] [ˈbɛɪgən]
017		*((Audience laughs. Candidate, translator, and MC still look confused))*
018	J:	*((jumps in with "standard" English))*
019		Her question is: what do you think is the essence of winning this
020		pageant?
021		*((Audience laughs and claps loudly. The two MCs look at each other,*
022		*nodding and smiling. MC1 gives a cue to Korean interpreter to start*
023		*translating the question for the Korea candidate. The video ends right*
024		*after the candidate has finished answering.))*

Miss Vietnam's English was loaded with a heavy Vietnamese accent. For example, she replaced the usual /θ/ sound in "think" with the Vietnamese dental consonant /tʰ/. Some other peculiar pronunciation include "pageant" as [ˈbɛgən], "essence" as [ˈɪlən] and later [ˈɪzən]. Moreover, Lan Anh was speaking English with a Vietnamese intonation as she did not stress on important key words in a sentence like a native-speaker would probably do (e.g.: line 011, stress was randomly put on "think" instead of "essence" or "pageant"). Another unconventionality lies in the way she neglects or misuses articles (e.g.: line 007, indefinite article "a" is missing). All of these "errors" not only bewildered the people on stage but also evoked waves of laughter from the audience. To account for why nobody present at the event could comprehend her utterances, it might have been because the crowd was made up of an international group with the majority of them hailing from the host country—the Philippines. In a nation where English endures as one of the official languages like the Philippines, there are perhaps not many people who are familiar with "Vietlish" (typical English spoken by Vietnamese), and hence the amused laughter from the audience.

The incident is then recontextualized within a new media environment where it is given new Vietnamese titles and descriptions in catering to new audience. This specific video—posted and became viral six months after the original event—has attracted many Vietnamese YouTube users to the comment section, and eventually turned Miss Vietnam into the victim of an online English shaming campaign.

3.2.2 The comments.

This study aims to investigate how Vietnamese YouTube users express their language ideologies in response to Miss Vietnam's use of English, and thus it will focus on analyzing the comments left below the YouTube video. As discussed above in Section 2.2.1, YouTube comment thread has made a valuable resource in offering intriguing insights into prevailing ideologies and how they are being constructed and reconstructed in the virtual space. Moreover, that YouTube platform makes it possible to remain anonymous while using the site has allowed space for "a wide array of voices" (Jones and Schieffelin, 2009, p. 1062) to be heard without a risk. A closer look at these comments will yield us a fascinating view into how Vietnamese people are associating a non-standard use of English with iconic social images.

As of February 2019, the video has gathered a total of 128 comments. It might appear to be a humble number compared to the total views, but that would mean neglecting the large number of interactive upvotes/downvotes each comment can get (Table 1). YouTube users can interact with a video in multiple ways: they can like/dislike the content, they may leave a written commentary, and they can also upvote a comment that they like or downvote one that they disagree with. In fact, many written comments on the video have a decent number of upvotes: the most popular one has been thumbed up for 2.1 thousand times, which means 2.1 thousand other users are likely to share the same view. If we take into account this form of interaction, there is a total of 11.5 thousand upvotes on 128 comments. This notion is especially beneficial for the process of collecting and analyzing data, which comprises only 128 pieces of written commentary but represents a wealth of information from almost 12 thousand users. While this is a small number compared to Vietnam's 95-million population, it nevertheless adds more weight to the findings of this study.

In summary, all 128 comments are studied closely, then sorted into relevant themes using inductive coding; the detailed process will be elaborated in the next section (3.3). The purpose is to identify the common patterns that emerge in the way YouTube users assign indexical values to a certain way of speaking English.

3.2.3 Ethical considerations.

While the development of the internet and social media platforms has afforded an ever-growing pool of highly accessible online data, it has posed ethical challenges concerning privacy rights, informed consent and anonymity (Townsend and Wallace, 2016; Legewie and Nassauer, 2018). Such concerns also apply to the present study, which deploys online data from YouTube.

One of the biggest ethical challenges is whether the researched data can be regarded as private or public. A common argument is that if the data has been set to be accessible to the public, then said data can be seen as "public." Furthermore, according to the American Sociological Association's code of ethics, data can be labeled as "private" if an involved individual has a valid reason to demand that it will not be publicized with his/her identity being identifiable (as cited in Legewie and Nassauer, 2018). In the case of this research, the public YouTube video itself is extracted from a popular event, which was an international beauty pageant. All participants depicted in the video, including Miss Vietnam who was serving as a judge, were naturally aware of the fact that they were being recorded and their performance would be broadcasted to the public. As for the researched comment section, anyone who stumbles upon the video will be able to view these written thoughts in their entirety. Even though login is required to leave a comment, YouTube's platform is rather lenient with anonymity, making it easy to hide behind a random screen name and an empty homepage. In this sense, YouTube comments can be considered open to everyone, including researchers who wish to study them closely.

However, one can easily argue individuals depicted in a video—despite being aware of their public exposure—may not be informed about their "participation" in a study. In a similar manner, YouTube commenters may not give permission for their texts to be used and scrutinized by researchers. This is where we encounter the

ethical challenge of earning informed consent for social media-based studies (Townsend and Wallace, 2016; Legewie and Nassauer, 2018). It is often impossible to obtain consent from all participants when a research deals with online data collected from hundreds of unidentifiable internet users. Yet, other measures can be taken to minimize potential harm and risk for the study objects.

Concretely, I have anonymized all individuals involved in this research: I have given a pseudonym to Miss Vietnam[2] and derived all the screen names from the comment texts. References to background of commenters—such as specific location, age, gender, and so on—will not be mentioned. The provided video title, translated into English with Miss Vietnam's name replaced by a new pseudonym, also assures the video itself is unidentifiable to readers. Moreover, I also refrain from disclosing too much information on the beauty pageants associated with Miss Vietnam Lan Anh to avoid risking de-anonymization.

Despite the lack of informed consent and the danger of de-anonymization, online video and social media based research still affords unique opportunities to explore intriguing phenomena. English shaming on YouTube is one among those. One might have not partaken in the public sanction of Miss Vietnam if the incident had not taken place in a virtual space where anonymity is easily acquired and tolerated.

3.3 Data Analysis Methods

3.3.1 New media sociolinguistics.

On a macro-level, this study fits under the umbrella of new media sociolinguistics (Thurlow and Mroczek, 2011)—a body of work that aims to bridge computer-mediated communication (CMC) (see Androutsopoulos, 2006) and computer-mediated discourse (CMD) (see Herring, 2004) studies with sociolinguistic topics and concerns.

The "first wave" of language-centered CMC research, as Androutsopoulos (2006) has pointed out, underscores technological determinism (e.g., focus on

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[2] The use of 'Miss Vietnam' here generally refers to any Vietnamese beauty queen who has won a beauty contest where she was representing Vietnam; it is certainly not meant to designate any specific individual or pageant franchise

internet-specific language and features, the impact of new media on language), while neglecting the socio-cultural situatedness of the observed linguistic phenomenon (see also Georgakopoulou, 2006). The "second wave" marks a concerted effort to move away from "medium-related" to "user-related" approach (Androutsopoulos 2006, p. 421). One of the pioneers for this paradigm shift is Herring (2004) who has integrated insights from language-focused disciplines—such as interactional sociolinguistics, critical discourse analysis, pragmatics, etc.—into computer-mediated *communication* (CMC) studies and proposed a further step towards computer-mediated *discourse* (CMD). In particular, CMD approach emphasizes the significance of socio-cultural and contextual factors, whether originated from offline communication or generated within online environments (Herring, 2004; Herring and Androutsopoulos, 2015). This notion has provided a groundwork for sociolinguistic methods to be incorporated in CMC—a field previously occupied with descriptive linguistics (Androutsopoulos, 2006). As a result, the underway "third wave" shows interests in the dynamics between online discourse and offline social activities (see Androutsopoulos, 2008 for an introduction of discourse-centered online ethnography) as well as the convergent, participatory and heteroglossic nature of the new web 2.0 (Androutsopoulos, 2010; Herring, 2013).

In response to the growing diversity and complexity of the internet, Thurlow and Mroczek (2011) put forward the four interrelated central tenets that delineate the sociolinguistics of new media—namely, *discourse*, *technology*, *multimodality* and *ideology*. This approach is also termed "Digital Discourse," which emphasizes the deployment of discourse—or, the situated language practices—as its pivot instead of the abstract language of linguistics. In this sense, it intersects with the approach of Androutsopoulos (2013) to CMD from a lens that sees discourse as a social practice. Both concern with issues of metalinguistic discourse and language ideology in the contemporary new media, particularly seeking to expose the instrumental role of language in (re-)producing "categories of difference, relations of inequality, or at the very least, the social norms by which we all feel obliged to live our lives" (Thurlow and Mroczek, 2011, p. xxvii).

In sum, I will borrow the new media sociolinguistics framework from Thurlow and Mroczek (2011) to interpret and discuss the findings of the present

study. Within the confines and practicalities of this master thesis, I will mainly concentrate on the two organizing principles of discourse and ideology, which directly correspond to my two research questions: the indexically loaded discourse of English shaming and its underlying language ideologies in Vietnam. In so doing, I hope to uncover how Vietnamese commenters are exploiting English as a meaningful sociopolitical marker.

3.3.2 Grounded theory and inductive coding.

On a micro-level, I draw on Thornberg and Charmaz's (2014) notion of constructivist grounded theory to interpret the collected data, which comprises 128 YouTube comments evaluating Miss Vietnam's non-standard use of English. It is a qualitative approach in which the two phases of data collection and analysis are conducted simultaneously. That way, each component informs and enlightens the other, both working towards the construction of a grounded-in-data theory that best explains the phenomenon under study.

Specifically, I applied three-phased inductive coding—a method central to grounded theory approach—on all written comments collected from the YouTube video. In the first stage of *initial coding*, "fragments of data—words, lines, segments and incidents" (Charmaz, 2006, p. 42) were closely scrutinized, openly interpreted and broadly arranged into relevant groups. Following the guideline provided by Thornberg and Charmaz (2014), I labelled the codes in a flexible manner, using descriptive gerunds such as "mocking Miss Vietnam's accent" or "expressing secondhand embarrassment." At this stage, there were many potential directions that arose from a free reading of the collected data but a clearer trajectory would take its shape during the next phase of *focused coding*.

In the second stage, the most frequent and salient labels were identified and constructed as focused codes. These codes essentially captured and constituted the emerging themes in the comment thread. Additionally, this procedure required seeking to conceptualize the focused groups and understand the relationships between them. All the while, it also necessitated constant comparisons among different codes and different emerging patterns in order to create and refine a complete set of categories (Charmaz, 2006; Thornberg and Charmaz, 2014).

During the last phase of *theoretical coding*, previously generated codes and categories were analyzed in terms of how they might relate to one another and together form a reasonable network of hypotheses. The building of these codes is often inspired by pre-existing theories and conceptual frameworks, which would allow the researcher to "tell an analytic story that has coherence" (Charmaz, 2006, p. 63). Moreover, the underlying logic of this coding phase is also the same one that undergirds grounded theory as a whole: such approach relies on not only mere induction but also abduction. Abduction here denotes entertaining all potential hypotheses before arriving at the most feasible and comprehensive picture that best depicts an observed phenomenon.

Guided by the grounded theory approach, I was able to center my analysis on the recurring patterns in the comment thread that are pertinent to my research questions—indexical values attributed to English and ideologies of English in Vietnam. This, however, could be a limitation of this research method, by which I might have left out other unrelated yet meaningful insights the data set has to offer. Nevertheless, after three phases of inductive coding and constant comparison as well as revision, I have identified five major themes in which Miss Vietnam's bad English is associated with: (1) language incompetence, (2) low education and intelligence level, (3) failure to meet beauty queen standard, (4) national disgrace and (5) national inferiority complex. All of these will be discussed in detail in Chapter 4.

3.4 Summary

This chapter has outlined the methodological framework of this study. It first presents a brief review of the research's aim and guiding questions, which revolve around how Vietnamese YouTube users attribute indexical values to Miss Vietnam's non-standard English and how such phenomenon unveils local ideologies of English in Vietnam.

The second section deals with data collection methods, describing the YouTube video under observation and, more importantly, its comment thread. Since public opinion is central to this study, the findings will draw mostly from the written comments and not the video itselfs. Additionally, ethical challenges and

considerations regarding online data are also addressed. To minimize the harm and risks for all involved individuals, including Miss Vietnam and the YouTube users, I have attempted to anonymize their identities and disclose as little as possible all related information.

Last but not least, data analysis methods are encapsulated in the third section. On a micro-level, three-phased inductive coding, a method borrowed from grounded theory, is applied to identify the emerging themes from the comment thread, which will help illustrate what kinds of indexical meanings English is equated with in Vietnam. On a macro-level, insights from new media sociolinguistics lay the groundwork for the interpretation and discussion of these findings, guiding the researcher to trace the embedded ideologies of English in Vietnam. Last but not least, it is also important to acknowledge the researcher positionality as an insider of the language community in question. The present study outputs and interpretations, to a certain extent, are thus informed by my emic knowledge and perspective.

4. ANALYSIS

The purpose of this chapter is to present the main findings from the data analysis process. In so doing, I will set forth the inductively coded themes emerged from the English-shaming comment thread along with their descriptive analysis.

To commence, I shall provide a brief quantitative report to showcase the result from the three coding phases. Table 2 below demonstrates the identified categories in relation to the shaming campaign as well as their corresponding frequency of occurrence. As this study revolves around language ideologies of English in Vietnam, I make a distinction between the indexically loaded comments in which users *explicitly* attach a non-standard use of English to a lack of language competence (first-order indexicality) and particular social images (second-order indexicality) as well as the ones in which no such association is articulated.

Categories charged with indexicalities include: 1) lack of English competence (1.3%), 2) lower education/ intelligence level (19.1%), 3) failure to meet beauty queen standard (22.6%), 4) national disgrace (40.5%), and 5) national inferiority complex (0.4%). Among these categories, only the first one "lack of English competence" refers to a first-order indexicality whereas the rest can be considered second-order (Johnstone et al. 2006). Other non-indexical themes involve: 1) parodic mocking (9.7%), 2) emotion/ reaction (4.7%), 3) critique of the language shaming (1.5%), and 4) unrelated topics (0.2%). "Unrelated topics" contain comments that are deemed relevant to neither the YouTube video nor the overarching theme of the comment thread, which mainly centers around Miss Vietnam's particular use of English. Since there are several comments that contain more than one category, I have deliberately counted all the identifiable patterns within a comment in lieu of only considering one overarching theme.

The following sections are dedicated to the in-depth analysis of each category. I will first discuss the indexically loaded themes, followed by an overview of the non-indexical patterns that also arise in the English-shaming comment board. Before diving into these topics, it is crucial to note that all translations of the comments written in Vietnamese are my own. I especially strive to convey a transliteration in hope of retaining all nuances from the original texts.

Emerging themes		Comments	Upvotes	Frequency
Indexically loaded	Lack of English competence	5	175	180 (=1.3%)
	Lower education/intelligence level	12	2594	2606 (=19.1%)
	Failure to meet beauty queen standard	17	3061	3078 (=22.6%)
	National disgrace	30	5495	5525 (=40.5%)
	National inferiority complex	7	50	57 (=0.4%)
Others	Parodic mocking	18	1300	1318 (=9.7%)
	Emotion/ Reaction	27	613	640 (=4.7%)
	Critique of the language shaming	10	192	202 (=1.5%)
	Unrelated	9	13	22 (=0.2%)
Total		135[3]	13493[4]	13628 (=100%)

Table 2. Frequency of emerging themes identified in the comment thread

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[3] There are several comments that contain more than one categories; hence the total here is greater than the number of actual comments which is only 128.

[4] Upvotes on a comment with more than one category are counted twice for each respective category; therefore, the upvotes total represented in this table is also greater than the actual upvotes given by YouTube users, which round up to 11500.

4.1 "It already sounds wrong from her 'hello':" English as merely a foreign language

There are in total 5 comments which impute Miss Vietnam Lan Anh's "bad" English to, simply, a lack of language competency.

Excerpt 2:

2 years ago

cô ấy là ai vậy, nói tiếng anh kinh thế.

👍 4 👎 REPLY

who's that, her english is horrible/ disgusting. (4 upvotes)

Excerpt 3:

1 year ago

lúc bả ns hello nghe đã dở rồi

👍 👎 REPLY

it already sounds wrong/bad from her "hello"

Excerpt 4:

2 years ago

nếu nói tiếng anh dở, thì cứ nói bình thường tách rời từng chữ, đây là cái tội bày đặt luyến chứ, nối chữ.

👍 142 👎 REPLY

if your English pronunciation is bad, you should just separate each word when speaking, [her] mistake lies in the way she [unnecessarily] contrives to slur the words. (142 upvotes)

For instance, in Excerpt 2 above, a commenter evaluates Miss Vietnam's English as "horrible"—a comparative translation from the Vietnamese expression "kinh" which can also be literally interpreted as "disgusting". Another commenter (Excerpt 3) assesses her English performance to be problematic from the start, implying that Miss Vietnam failed to deliver with standard pronunciation even a basic greeting like "hello." Remarkably, commenter 4 assumes Lan Anh has made a mistake by "[contriving] to slur the words" instead of enunciating each of them clearly and distinctly, which might help spare her the ordeal. Such evaluation seems to echo a popular opinion as it has been upvoted 142 times.

Excerpt 5:

Chê nói tiếng Anh dở là không công bằng với em nó. Em nó chỉ đọc tiếng Anh không chuẩn thôi.

👍 👎   REPLY

To disparage her speaking English is unfair for her. She's only bad at reading it.

Comment 5 above may seem to fall under the category of "language shaming critique" at first glance, since the author claims that it is "unfair" to ridicule her English speaking ability. Yet, the second part indicates Miss Vietnam's only shortcoming lies in her reading skills. Though it is not a direct mockery, such a remark can bear a sarcastic undertone, implying that the Vietnamese beauty queen could not even read one simple sentence in English properly, let alone speaking the language. It may also be a reference to the fact that Miss Vietnam, acting as a judge member, was merely reading the question from a piece of paper instead of communicating with the contestant—a point made to further disqualify Lan Anh's basic conversational skills in English.

Furthermore, one may detect the notable use of "em nó," which functions as a Vietnamese personal pronoun referring to someone inferior to the utterer in terms of age, social ranking and status. To address a Miss Vietnam as an "em nó" is to potentially mark her as being young, even immature and unsophisticated. Thus, such choice of diction can evoke either a pitiful sentiment or a mocking attitude. This multi-layered comment has been a difficult one to code: on one hand, it clearly criticizes Lan Anh's linguistic as well as conversational skills (first-order indexicality); on the other hand, it seems to be also suggesting a certain social image unfit for a beauty queen's title (second-order indexicality). An interpretation of such a commentary may also differ among readers. I have therefore acknowledged both of the potential indexicalities alluded to in comment 5 and placed it under two corresponding categories (see also Section 4.3 for an analysis of the other category which concerns with a higher-order indexical association between English competence and social image of a beauty queen).

Overall, this present category constitutes a first-order of indexicality explicitly articulated by Vietnamese commenters, by which Miss Vietnam's "horrible" English performance is construed as simply what it is: a lack of language competence. A first-order association can be described as "scientific" (Silverstein, 2003, p. 205) in the

sense that its usage is transparent and observable to a cultural outsider (e.g., a sociolinguist; see also Johnstone and Kiesling, 2008). Likewise, a first-order correlation indexes English as merely a popular foreign language taught at many Vietnamese schools nowadays. Failure to communicate in basic coherent English, at this indexical order, will yield negative judgment on one's language proficiency without conjuring up any stereotypical images (as a higher-order indexicality would do). However, comment 5 above has challenged the clear cut between first-order and higher-order indexicalities. Beneath a mere criticism of one's language competence could be a "lurking"evaluation of one's social personae.

Nevertheless, a straightforward first-order indexicality does not seem to be too popular among Vietnamese users. Its frequency only accounts for 1.3% of all identified themes. This pattern may hint at a reality whereby users not only draw on a first-order index to make sense of certain English registers (e.g., Miss Vietnam's "horrible" English with a heavy accent) but more often employ it to perform further social work (e.g., ascribing her English use to negative social values). In other words, a first-order indexicality, under the right circumstances, may serve as an ingredient to breed an indexicality of a higher order which re-construes the initial association and attaches new meanings as well as usage contexts to the indexed linguistic form (Johnstone et al., 2006; Johnstone and Kiesling, 2008; Büscher et al., 2013). The following sections will elaborate on these second-order indexicalities by which "bad" English is no more merely equal to a lack of language competence.

4.2 "Go back to 1st grade:" English as an index of education and intelligence level

One of the recurring patterns found in the comment board is how users make assumptions about Miss Vietnam's education and intelligence level based solely on her two-minute long English speech. This category makes up 19.1% of all coded themes and contains 12 instances along with a total of almost 2600 upvotes. It features texts in which Lan Anh's educational background and intellectual capacity are explicitly evaluated, as exemplified below.

1 year ago

Học lại lớp 1 đi má

👍 👎 REPLY

Go back to 1st grade

2 years ago

hahaha!!! poor ms south east Asia , you should go back to PRI school and learn to speak English!

👍 1 👎 REPLY

2 years ago

Omg her English is terrible other clips I heard she said her English is ok not that bad my goodness with the way her pronunciation had no idea what the heck she said and how can she said she had grade12 English such shameful   Go take English class and specially if you don't know how to speak English should read out the question in vn and let them translate tor you

👍 448 👎 REPLY

(448 upvotes)

For instance, commenter 6 demands that Miss Vietnam goes back to 1st grade. In the same manner, commenter 7 "advises" her to return to primary school and relearn English while showing pity towards "Ms. Southeast Asia." Another user (Excerpt 8) also doubts whether Lan Anh has "had grade 12 English" because her English pronunciation is too "terrible" to be at that level. Similar to Excerpt 6 and 7, this user recommends Miss Vietnam to take more English classes. It is perhaps pertinent to note that Excerpt 7 and 8 are both written in English by non-Vietnamese commenters (based on the screen names and location information found on their profiles, these two authors are most likely to come from other Southeast Asian countries). Remarkably, the user in Excerpt 7 refers to the Vietnamese beauty queen as "Ms. Southeast Asia," which potentially hints at the fact that Miss Vietnam was representing not only her nation but also a larger socio-political region of which Vietnam is a member.

These YouTube comments all bracket Lan Anh's "terrible" English performance with not just an insufficiency of language skills but rather a lack of adequate education. The indexical correlation between English improficiency and a

lower education background may stem from a reality in which English as a foreign language has become a compulsory subject at many Southeast Asian as well as Vietnamese primary schools (Kirkpatrick, 2011). The Vietnamese authorities have especially passed a National Plan for the period of 2008−2020 (recently extended to 2025) which allows for English instruction since Grade 3 or even earlier. It is thus theoretically expected that a Vietnamese high school graduate would possess fundamental skills in communicative English and be ready to enter an ever-more-competitive workforce (see Section 2.3.1). Given such position in the Vietnamese sociolinguistic landscape, English has acquired an indexical value that signals education level. Indeed, its role as an index of educational background is evident in the way commenters impute Miss Vietnam's non-standard use of English to a "humble" educational background coupled with an urgent need to "go back to 1st grade" to "learn to speak English" properly.

Not only does it index a certain level of formal education but English competence is also associated with a certain level of intellectual capacity.

Excerpt 9:

1 year ago
Đầu con này nó to mà não như quả nho
Ngu tiếng anh vl

👍 👎   REPLY

Her head is big but [her] brain is small like a grape
Fucking stupid at English.

Excerpt 10:

1 year ago
Tương mình ngu nhất quả đất nay gặp đc cao nhân rồi 👏👏👏

👍 👎   REPLY

Thought I was the dumbest ever but now I've found my master [there's someone who is even dumber] 👏👏👏

Commenter 9 immediately calls Miss Vietnam "fucking stupid", comparing the size of her brain with a tiny grape. In another instance, her brainpower is analogized to that of a cow as a user decries: "stupid as a cow." Excerpt 10 contains a

somewhat excitement in discovering a "master" in the art of being dimwitted. In fact, *ngu*—a common Vietnamese expression to say "stupid," or "dumb"—is one of the keywords that occurs rather often in the comment thread (mentioned 6 times in 6 different texts). It expresses a negative evaluation on Miss Vietnam's intelligence while connoting a denigratory attitude towards the beauty queen. Such degrading judgments of Miss Vietnam's intellect are not grounded in her actual academic performance but instead based solely on her short English speech.

Here we encounter another indexical association of the second order through which an exhibited English competence becomes a potential measure for one's intelligence level. This "creative" indexicalization (Silverstein, 2003) may have its roots in the Confucian values that have endured even in modern Vietnamese society. Since the philosophy of Confucius acclaims self-refinement and educational attainment, an educated person is generally deemed to be more intelligent than someone bereft of formal schooling (Cocodia, 2014). In view of such Confucius influences, Miss Vietnam who is perceivably "uneducated" can also be seen as "stupid" or "dumb". The second-order indexical link between English proficiency and intelligence level is interrelated with the very association between language ideologies of English and discourses of formal (English) education in Vietnam.

Moreover, Excerpt 10 above embodies another major trend that emerged within this category whereby viewers start to compare their own mental capacity as well as English skills to those of Miss Vietnam. This pattern is found in many other written commentaries as shown below.

Excerpt 11:

2 years ago

Đến cả mình lớp 7 phát âm còn chuẩn hơn cổ

👍 1.2K 👎   REPLY

Even a 7th grader like myself can speak [English] with better pronunciation than her (1200 upvotes)

Excerpt 12:

Tính ra mình còn giỏi hơn bà hoa hậu :)

👍 3 👎   REPLY

Even I am better/ more proficient/ more clever than this beauty queen :) (3 upvotes)

Commenter 11 confidently claims that Lan Anh's English pronunciation is not even on par with a 7th grader like him-/herself. Such a remark is also a scoff at her formal education, implying Miss Vietnam is inferior to even a 7th grader. Similarly, commenter 12 professes to be "better" than the beauty queen. The Vietnamese word *giỏi* used in the comment can be understood as being generally gifted, clever, or being proficient in certain skills. Regardless of which sense of *giỏi* the author was trying to convey, he/she still positions him-/herself—a "normal" person—as superior to Miss Vietnam—someone who carries the prestigious title of a beauty queen representing her own nation. The practice of self-comparison here may point to an ideal social image typically expected of a Vietnamese beauty queen: an ability to articulate herself gracefully in English. The next section will discuss in detail such social expectations for Miss Vietnam in terms of language competence as well as the global role of English in constructing local beauty queen standard.

4.3 "Long legs, short brain:" English as an index of beauty queen standard

As the saying "beauty times brains equals a constant" goes, many Vietnamese commenters allude to the longstanding yet often misleading dichotomy of "pretty" versus "brainy" upon reacting to Miss Vietnam's English performance. Whereas the last section discusses how commenters relate her peculiar way of speaking English to a lower level of education and intellect, this section will look into how they also place such association side by side a prevalent discourse of feminine beauty.

Excerpt 13:

chân dài não ngắn là đây chứ đâu

👍 2.1K 👎   REPLY

this is exactly 'long legs short brain' (a pretty woman but stupid) (2100 upvotes)

Excerpt 14:

Người đẹp cong vài chỗ còn não thì phẳng
:[]

👍 1   👎   REPLY

She has some nice curves but her brain is flat :[] (1 upvote)

    Excerpt 15:

Sắc đẹp tỉ lệ nghịch vs sự thông minh :Vv

👍   👎   REPLY

[Her] beauty is inversely proportional to [her] intelligence :Vv

       The above comments are redolent with a common "myth" that beauty and intelligence are mutually exclusive. In particular, Excerpt 13 recites the Vietnamese saying "long legs short brain" to describe Lan Anh as a pretty yet stupid beauty queen. Comment 14 expresses the same idea with contrasting metaphors: a "curvy body" that symbolizes feminine beauty and a "flat brain" that represents ignorance. Comment 15 summarizes an "inversely proportional equation" to assess Miss Vietnam's intelligence banked on the mere fact that she's a *beauty* queen. All of these comments denote an enduring beauty-brain divide entrenched in stereotypes of conventional femininity and often portrayed on popular film and television (see D'Amore, 2014 for a thorough review of how women's intellect is being depicted on screen). They too invoke an inherent standard for a Vietnamese beauty queen: a deserving Miss Vietnam, besides an attractive appearance, needs to be "intelligent," and in order to be conceived of as such in the new epoch of globalization she needs to excel at the global language.

    Excerpt 16:

Hoa hậu??? Nghe hình như ko xứng nhỉ??

👍 2   👎   REPLY

A beauty queen??? She doesn't seem to deserve [such title]?? (2 upvotes)

    Excerpt 17:

ko biet thi nge cho do nhuc . khong the chap nhan mot hoa hau ma ko biet doc tieng anh

👍 4   👎   REPLY

if [she] doesn't know [English], [she] should just listen to avoid such a shame. [I] can't tolerate a beauty queen who does not know how to read English (4 upvotes)

Excerpt 18:

Nhục cho đấy nước Việt Nam quá. Ôi! 1 đứa hoa hậu ngu đần thế mà cug trở thành hoa hậu đc

👍 825 👎   REPLY

What a shame for Vietnam. Oh lord! [How come] such a stupid/ ignorant girl can become a beauty queen (825 upvotes)

Excerpt 16 exemplifies a group of comments that vocally articulate the social expectations for a Miss Vietnam. These specific criteria require the beauty queen to be conversant with the English language (or at least "know how to read English" like comment 17 suggests). Above all, as a popular comment 18 with 825 upvotes has implied, the weight of the beauty crown also demands a socially satisfactory level of intellect and educational background that contributes to the projection of an ideal national image in a global sphere. This criterion is closely linked to a sufficient competence of English since 1) English has undeniably gained currency as a global code used in most international events around the world and 2) it serves as a potential index of education and intelligence level in Vietnam (see previous Section 4.2). That said, what makes Lan Anh the target of an online social sanction is less a consequence of a disastrous, unintelligible English performance than a failure to adhere to the beauty queen standards and deliver a presentable image of Vietnam to worldwide audience. The sentiment of a national "shame" mentioned in comment 17 and 18 is reiterated in several other comments, which will be discussed in the next Section 4.4.

In rendering Lan Anh as unworthy of the beauty queen title, a group of netizens even speculate that she must have bribed the judges into crowning her as a beauty pageant winner.

Excerpt 19:

Chắc là con ông cháu cha hoặc mua chức mua hoa rồi.
Nhờ vậy mới lộ chân tướng hết đường chối cãi

👍 82 👎   REPLY

[She] must have been born with a silver spoon in her mouth and bought off her beauty queen title. Thanks to this [incident] the truth has come to light and there's no way she can deny it. (82 upvotes)

Excerpt 20:

Dam giam khao chac nhan bi thu tien nen cho con nay la hoa hau

👍 👎   REPLY

The judges must have received bribe money, that's why they let this girl become a beauty queen

It is interesting to note that the above comments point to an age-old culture of nepotism and corruption that continues to exist in different sectors—government, corporation, religion, even education system—in Vietnamese society. The beauty pageant industry is no exception. There have been many occasions when a Vietnamese beauty queen is suspected of "buying off" her own crown (e.g., Vietnamnet, 2019), which at times cause the public to turn skeptical about certain pageants and their winners (Lao Dong, 2018).

Return to the commentaries from Excerpt 19 and 20, they do not directly refer to the "English disaster" incident depicted in the YouTube video. Instead, they proclaim their disapproval of such a performance by inferring she must have used bribery to earn her crown and "the truth has come to light" (Excerpt 19) only when she was caught speaking in unintelligible English. In a manner of speaking, Lan Anh's insufficient English competence is exactly what dismisses her as undeserving of the beauty queen title. English here is no longer merely a foreign language in Vietnam. Its position in the Vietnamese sociolinguistic landscape has been reconstructed and its meanings reconstrued as a measure of intellect and hence an index of beauty queen standard.

Taken together, discourses emerging from this category recruit English mastery as a major beauty queen criterion. This finding, to some extent, is reminiscent of the ethnographic descriptions by Billings (2011) when she discusses how particular ways of speaking English can readily mark Tanzanian beauty contestants as either lower or higher-educated, socially sophisticated or unsophisticated. The different indexical values that each English register carries then affect a contestant's chance of succeeding in the Tanzanian pageants. In this study,

Miss Vietnam's incoherent and heavy accented English speech is found indexical of not only a sub-par education and intellectual capacity (Section 4.2) but also a sub-standard beauty. Such association is tantamount to a second-order indexicality whereby English acquires a unique function of indexing beauty queen standard. This is mainly due to its role as shibboleth for signaling one's intelligence and educational background, creating a network of interrelated indexicalities and multilayered language ideologies concerning English in Vietnam.

4.4 "What a shame for Vietnam:" English as an index of national prestige

The most popular theme, which constitutes up to 40.5% of all identified patterns, emerged from the present analysis is the recurring discourses of honor and disgrace. Concretely, this finding shows that Vietnamese commenters collectively link Miss Vietnam's English performance to a national disgrace.

Excerpt 21:

qua nhuc nha

👍 110   👎   REPLY

what a humiliation (110 upvotes)

Excerpt 22:

Nhuc cho 1 dat nuoc.

👍 9   👎   REPLY

Such a disgrace for a nation. (9 upvotes)

Excerpt 23:

Chắc đội quần về chứ nhụt k chịu nổi :((

👍   👎   REPLY

I should probably wear pants on my head now because I can't bear this shame anymore :((

Excerpt 24:

Tao xem tao còn cảm thấy nhục nữa là. Chắc nó dell biết nhục

👍 1 👎   REPLY

Even I feel ashamed watching [this]. She probably doesn't freaking feel ashamed (1 upvote)

The sentiments of shame, humiliation, and disgrace are reverberated throughout the comment thread. One of the most frequently found predicate in the data corpus is the Vietnamese term *nhục* (17 occurrences; its synonym *xấu hổ* contributes another 3 occurrences), which expresses a painful feeling of shame usually caused by a loss of honor. Failure to deliver an intelligible English speech in an international context is then labelled with *nhục* (see comments in Excerpts 21-24), even a shame for Vietnam (Excerpt 18). Excerpts 21-24 above especially invoke a second-order indexicality that associates Miss Vietnam's inability in speaking "good" English with a disgrace for the nation and its people.

Comments 23 and 24 represent a large number of Vietnamese users who also relate her poor English performance to their personal shame, indicating they themselves feel humiliated watching the whole incident. In Excerpt 23, we may detect an emotionally charged Vietnamese expression of "wearing pants on one's head," which conveys a shame so immense one has to cover his/her face in fear of getting recognized. This allusion to a lost "face" is also echoed in several other commentaries.

Excerpt 25:

thật mất mặt,thật xấu hổ hết biết

👍 819 👎   REPLY

such a loss of face, an utmost shame (819 upvotes)

Excerpt 26:

mất mặt VN

👍 👎   REPLY

such a loss of face for VN

Excerpt 27:

MC đơ như cây cơ kháng giả thì cười ỗ!!! đẹp mặt =)))

👍 1.9K   👎| REPLY

The MC was totally dumbfounded and the audience cracked up laughing!!! nice face =)))
(1900 upvotes)

The author of 25 brackets Miss Vietnam's disastrous performance with "a loss of face." Commenter 26 adds that it is indeed not just Miss Vietnam but the nation itself who has lost "face." Commenter 27 makes a sarcastic remark stating that Miss Vietnam pulled off such a "nice" face work that she managed to leave the MCs "dumbfounded" and the audience highly amused.

The concept of "face" has been defined by Goffman (1967, p. 5) as "an image of self delineated in terms of approved social attributes." In other words, face is a public, ideal presentation of self built upon social values and expectations; it is carried by an individual or shared among a collective group. Accordingly, one would make a "good showing" for his group if he manages to maintain a good face for himself (Goffman, 1967, p. 5-6). Furthermore, the face culture in Vietnam is heavily influenced by the core teachings of Confucius, which stress on social roles and the obligations to fulfill their attached duties (Pham, 2007, 2014; Nguyen, 2015). The Vietnamese face is usually constituted by such consciousness of social roles as well as the roles-driven positive qualities and competences (Pham, 2007). An individual will then lose face, and consequently cause his associated group to also lose face, if he fails to project the ideal image required by his perceived social position.

Such a notion applies well in the case of Miss Vietnam: her unintelligible English speech on an international stage has disappointed the social expectations for a Vietnamese beauty queen (see Section 4.3) and disqualified Lan Anh from her social role as a Miss Vietnam. This finding is in line with Sharma's (2014) observation of the Nepali minister's peculiar English use associated with a national shame. The fact that Miss Vietnam and Nepal's health minister are acting and "performing" in front of a large audience in a high-stakes global context obliges them to curate an immaculate representation of their home country. Failure to meet with such social expectations ultimately ends in a face loss that is not only an

individual but also a collective shame. Consequently, the "transgressor" becomes a "national disgrace" in the public eye.

Notably, there are 3 comments that appear to be blaming the Vietnamese education system for Miss Vietnam's humiliating use of English. Excerpts 28-29 below capture some of those narratives.

Excerpt 28:

nói tiếng anh không được không ai trách, nhưng khi đại diện cho nước vn thì một câu tiếng Anh phải soạn trước tập đọc trước. nhưng đây không làm là biểu diện cái ngu và mang rơ được dạy dô ở vn tại thời buổi bây giờ

👍 734 👎 REPLY

nobody will blame you if you can't speak English. but if you were to represent Vietnam [in an international event], you should have at least prepared the English sentence and practiced reading/speaking it beforehand. but she [clearly] did not, which is the manifestation of the ignorance and barbarism [culture] taught in VN these days (734 upvotes)

Excerpt 29:

sao nhục quá cho cái nền giáo dục nhồi sọ này.

👍 1K 👎 REPLY

such a shame on this brain-stuffing education. (1000 upvotes)

While commenter 28 condemns the Vietnamese teachings of "ignorance and barbarism" as the culprit behind the disastrous English performance, commenter 29 laments the "brain-stuffing education" in Vietnam. Both narratives express a bitter and degrading attitudes towards the Vietnamese education system, which has been long criticized for its strong focus on passive learning and teacher-centered classrooms. This especially holds true when it comes to Vietnamese foreign language classrooms, where the Confucian ideologies still linger and the grammar-translation teaching method still prevails (Ngo, 2015). As a result, most Vietnamese learners of English are more often exposed to passive learning through which they have to memorize "factual information" such as vocabulary or grammatical structures. A more active approach which allows ample room for conversational practices and knowledge co-construction remains scarce. Miss Vietnam is then considered a "victim" of such traditional approach to English education in Vietnam. As these comments suggest, the shame is not only on the Vietnamese beauty queen but also on the national education system.

To sum up, the YouTube comments from this category locate a discourse of national disgrace. They equate Miss Vietnam's peculiar use of English before a large international audience to a shameful taint on the nation's name—an absolute face loss for Vietnam as well as its national education system. In this light, Vietnamese users have assigned a new social meaning to the English language. English is not simply a popular foreign (global) language taught in schools anymore. In an international environment, the ability to communicate fluently in English can save face for the affiliated group of the utterer and ultimately serve as a second-order indexicality of national prestige. This creative reconfiguration of English for performing and understanding new social works operates beyond the established first-order association. It largely follows an emerging ideology of English in Vietnam, which views standard English as an appropriate instrument required for the emblematic portrayal of the nation on a global stage.

4.5 "That's why Vietnam is always behind:" English as an index of globalness

As we have seen from the previous section, it is predominantly the Vietnamese users who inflict the shame on themselves and their collective group (see Excerpts 21-24). This pattern hints at an implicit self-marginalization (Piller, 2016, p. 193-7), by which Vietnamese commenters, who are non-native speakers of English, perceive their "localness" to be inferior and peripheral to the "globalness" of the Anglophone world. In fact, such discourse of a national inferiority complex is found in a number of comments responding to Miss Vietnam's English use.

Excerpt 30:

Ôi địtme, xem ng nước ngoài họ coi rồi comment mà mắc nhục Haizz chán

👍 👎   REPLY

Oh motherfucker, I'm so ashamed reading other foreigners' comments here Haizz this sucks

The author in Excerpt 30 claims to be "ashamed" after reading the comments from other foreigner-commenters, which is a reference to the two texts written in English (Excerpts 7-8) above. It is intriguing to note that what makes Miss Vietnam's English speech a disgrace is not simply because of the heavily-accented utterance per

se, but more because of how the English-speaking foreigners ridicule the whole incident. This sentiment is also detectable in comments that expresses utter humiliation after witnessing the audience's mocking laughter right after Lan Anh's utterance (e.g., Excerpt 27). Since the event took place in an international beauty pageant held in Philippines (whose one of the two national languages is English), its audience's reaction to Miss Vietnam's language use may represent a "global" opinion that carries much weight in deciding which register of English is legitimate and which is laughable.

Blommaert (2010) especially reminds us that the legitimacy of a semiotic resource such as language skills is anchored in complex scalar processes. That means a form of English regarded as acceptable on a local scale-level can be disqualified as such, or even laughed at, on a global scale-level. Such scalar phenomena are intertwined with Blommaertian orders of indexicality that operate on social stratification and hierarchies of power (Blommaert, 2005, 2010; also see Section 2.1.2). Returning to the present study, Miss Vietnam's non-standard form of English was treated as an illegitimate linguistic resource on a global stage by an assembly of audience who embodies "globalness." As a consequence, the incident caused her affiliated group to lose "face" not only because her English skills was evaluated as inadequate but also because it evokes among Vietnamese viewers sentiments of being seen as "inferior" to an international standard.

The following excerpts further elucidate the manifestation of a national inferiority complex induced by Miss Vietnam's English performance.

Excerpt 31:

bình thường thôi. ở vn này kiếm người giỏi anh ngữ quá khó, người như con hoa hậu, hoa bông gì đó có mà đầy. việt nam nghèo miết là vậy. thua xa lào và cam pu chia nhiều.

👍 👎   REPLY

No surprise. There are indeed not many people who can speak good English in Vietnam, while there are plenty others like this so-called 'beauty queen'. That's why Vietnam is always poor, and way behind Laos and Cambodia.

Excerpt 32:

[replying to a comment that points out Japanese people are also bad at English, thus there is no point in overreacting over Miss Vietnam's performance]

bạn nghĩ gì mà lại đi so sánh ng việt vs người nhật thế bạn??? Ng Nhật hơn ta rất nhiều về ý thức và văn hoá con người, chưa kể về trình độ hiểu biết và trí thông minh mk cx k thể sánh bằng vs nhật (…)

Why would you ever compare Vietnamese to Japanese??? Japanese are so much better than us in terms of social consciousness and culture, not to mention our knowledge and intelligence [intellectual achievements) are no way comparable to theirs (…)

    Excerpt 33:

thử hỏi mấy ai trong cmt này phát âm chuẩn, tao dám cá nhiều đứa còn đéo biết tiếng anh nữa chứ bày đặt :)). toàn lũ trẻ trâu. gặp bọn tây hỏi tụi bay thì nín địt cả lũ (…)

I bet most of the commenters here can't even speak any English, let alone having a perfect/ standard pronunciation :)). [You're] all posers. Y'all go fucking tongue-tied when talking to Westerners (…) (7 upvotes)

These written texts construct an iconic link between the discerned standing of Vietnam in a global ranking and the ability of its people to communicate in Vietnam. In Excerpt 31, Vietnam is placed below Laos and Cambodia—its neighboring countries—in terms of prosperity; in Excerpt 32, Vietnam is considered far behind Japan in various aspects ranging from social consciousness to intellectual achievements. Commenters tend to translate Miss Vietnam's individual language skills into a collective ineptitude of a large Vietnamese population who are "illiterate" in the global language. For instance, commenter 33 maintains that most shamers are just "posers" who themselves lack an adequate proficiency in English and will "go tongue-tied" in the presence of Westerners. Such a remark is also to undervalue Vietnamese's capability as inferior to that of Westerners while downplaying Vietnam's position on a Western-centric global ranking. It also reveals that certain linguistic forms point to a certain world order perpetuated by an entrenched ideology: the worldview which centers on Western civilization (Babaii, 2010; Piller, 2016).

On the whole, findings from this category pinpoint a second-order indexicality articulated by Vietnamese commenters. Concretely, users connect Miss Vietnam's use of non-standard English on a global stage to a national inferiority complex by which they perceive the nation's ranking and its people's capability as

being subordinate to an imagined globalness. Vietnamese commenters specifically picture the "global" here as their neighboring countries within the Southeast Asian region, highly developed nations (e.g., Japan), and more often, the Western world which is usually associated with the English language.

Even though this category only accounts for a rather small component of all identified themes in the data analysis (only 0.4%), it still deserves further attention. First of all, the sentiments of inferiority are not only detectable in comments from this category but also subtly conveyed in the discourses of Miss Vietnam's English utterance and a national face loss (see Section 4.4). The Vietnamese concept of face always involves a certain external force—the public judgment (Pham, 2014; Nguyen 2015). Put another way, a Vietnamese person does not simply lose face to himself but rather to others, in whose presence he may feel humbled. The others here include an immediate observer of the face-threatening acts (e.g., audience present at the beauty pageant, viewers watching the incident on YouTube) as well as a higher-level, non-immediate audience that Bakhtin has termed a presumed "superaddressee"—the ultimate judge whom any social actor orients to during social interaction (Blommaert, 2005, p. 73). In this case, the "superaddressees" pictured by the majority of Vietnamese commenters are the "foreigners" and the "Westerners" who are supposedly native speakers of English and who perfectly epitomize a superior "globalness."

Secondly, findings from this category point to a significant emerging indexical value of the English language in Vietnam. The long-existing first-order indexicality of English as merely a world-popular foreign language has been creatively reconfigured in ways that capture a snapshot of the current local sociolinguistic circumstances as well as the prevailing language ideologies. English, widely believed to be a global language, has now transformed into a powerful index of globalness in Vietnam. Evidently, local people are employing competence in using English to gauge the nation's standing in an ever more globally oriented world. A similar pattern is also identified in Sharma's (2014) study where transnational Nepali commenters link English proficiency level to their country's power and sovereignty in relation to its most "dangerous" neighboring country India.

Overall, this section has concluded the indexicality loaded themes detected in the comments responding to Miss Vietnam's English performance: English is found to be an index of 1) simply a popular foreign language taught in Vietnamese schools, 2) education and intelligence level, 3) beauty queen standard, 4) national prestige, and last but not least, 5) an imagined globalness. A brief overview of these first and second-order indexicalities is provided in Table 3 below. The following sections will briefly tackle the remaining themes from the data analysis that are non-indexically charged but not completely free of values.

Emerging themes	Lack of English competence	Lower education/ intelligence level	Failure to meet beauty queen standard	National disgrace	National inferiority complex
Example comment	*"Who's that? Her English is horrible/ disgusting."*	*"Her head is big but [her] brain is small like a grape. Fucking stupid at English."*	*"Oh lord! [How come] such a stupid/ ignorant girl can become a beauty queen."*	*"Such a disgrace for a nation."*	*"That's why Vietnam is always poor, and way behind Laos and Cambodia."*
Order of indexicality	First-order	Second-order	Second-order	Second-order	Second-order
Indexical values of English in Vietnam	English as merely a foreign language	English as an index of education and intelligence level	English as an index of beauty queen standard	English as an index of national prestige	English as an index of globalness
		High competence in English is associated with high level of education/ intelligence.	The construction of Vietnamese feminine beauty is partially shaped by local ideologies of English.	A satisfying English performance in global media saves the nation from "losing face." English is increasingly associated with prestigious values.	English competency indexes the nation's standing in an ever more globally oriented world.

Table 3. Overview of the indexical values of English in Vietnam

4.6 Other non-indexically loaded themes

This section is dedicated to the analysis of the non-indexically loaded themes that emerge in the English shaming comment thread. Though this study lays its stress on the indexical values as well as the underpinning ideologies of English in Vietnam, it is still pertinent to elaborate on how some commenters respond to Miss Vietnam's English performance through means of: 1) parodic mocking, 2) expression of emotion, and 3) critique of the language shaming.

4.6.1 Parodic mocking and the recontextualization of Miss Vietnam's English.

Before diving into the analysis of the comments, it is important to first discuss the YouTube video itself and how it renders Miss Vietnam's English utterance as a particular linguistic form with particular characteristics. As I have noted above (Section 2.2.2), the YouTube video in question is not purely an excerpt from a longer event; it is indeed a product of entextualization with a framing title, added subtitles and editorial remarks which all contribute a significant part to the provoking of the shaming campaign. Notably, even though everyone featured in the video was speaking English (except for the Korean candidate who was later answering his/her question in his/her mother tongue), the added subtitles make a clear distinction between the English uttered by Miss Vietnam and that by other fluent/native speakers. While the speech from the two MCs and another judge is subtitled with standard English (Image 1a below), the one from Miss Vietnam is differentiated and ultimately exoticized by using Vietnamese subtitles with phonetically approximate translation of her English utterance (Image 1b below). Since this re-uploaded video is catered to Vietnamese audience, such use of subtitle has translated Lan Anh's English into a sort of "Vietnamese English." Moreover, the choice of subtitling and editorial commentary in media has powerful impact for it can label the Other (e.g., Leppänen and Häkkinen, 2012; Piller, 2016). This YouTube video's use of subtitles serves as a visual cue to render Miss Vietnam as such an Other whose incoherent, "horrible" English was portrayed as ridiculous and inferior to the standard linguistic resources employed by a fluent/native speaker.

Image 1a. Subtitle for the MC's English

Image 1b. Subtitle for Miss Vietnam's English utterance "Hello Philippines"

Many commenters are able to pick up on the strategic subtitling in the video as they playfully recontextualize Miss Vietnam's peculiar way of using English through means of parodic imitation. For instance, the excerpt below demonstrates how Vietnamese users mimic her speech by implementing a "Vietnamese English" voice in their own written texts.

Excerpt 34:

34a

what the fuck are you doing :)) (1000 upvotes)
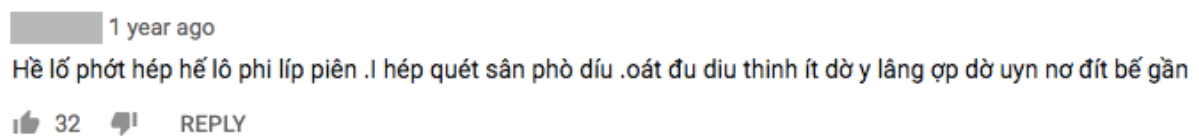
34b [replying to comment 34a]

[It] should be what the hell are you doing. (48 upvotes)

As a Vietnamese speaker can easily tell, both authors 34a and 34b draw on the exact same style of subtitling used in the YouTube video to formulate their responses. The comments contain two popular English expressions yet written entirely in Vietnamese phonetics, which together produce a "Vietlish" effect if read out loud. Content-wise, commenter 34a seems to find this type of English with heavy Vietnamese accent rather amusing, as he includes a laugh-out-loud emoticon at the

end of his text. His use of the English colloquial "what the fuck are you doing" (especially when coupled with a ":))" emoticon) further expresses a shock mixed with amusement. The similar expression "what the hell are you doing" used in comment 34b as a reply to 34a is likely to communicate the same reaction.

Meanwhile, some other Vietnamese netizens choose to recontextualize Miss Vietnam's English in a somewhat less original way: they simply extract parts of the video's subtitles to compose their comments. Excerpt 35 below provides an example for this pattern.

Excerpt 35:

1 year ago

Hề lố phớt hép hế lô phi líp piên .I hép quét sân phò díu .oát đu diu thinh ít dờ y lâng ợp dờ uyn nơ đít bế gần

👍 32 👎   REPLY

Hello first have hello Philippines. I have question for you. What do you think is the essence of the winner of this pageant?
(32 upvotes)

Though comment 35 does not indicate any explicit attitudes towards the incident, its alignment with the video's ironic choice of subtitles subtly hints at a sarcastic overtone. This employment of "deliberately non-standard English" to mock someone's peculiar ways of speaking is also reported in a study by Kytölä (2012). Kytölä (2012) shows that members on a Finnish football forum strategically imitate elements of a Turkish member's English speech to ridicule and satirize his "broken" English. The very same tactic is deployed by Vietnamese users to mock Miss Vietnam's English performance.

It is perhaps relevant to also mention that while the indexically loaded language shaming in the previous Sections 4.2-4.5 carries a heavily demeaning tone, the language mocking in this data subset appears to be more lighthearted and playful. These commenters are probably more amused than ashamed by the beauty queen's English performance. That being said, humor on YouTube is not always black and white but filled with gray areas (e.g., Leppänen and Häkkinen, 2012). What is counted as normal and what is deemed laughable can point to dominant social orders and norms. What renders Lan Anh's English as ridiculous and "funny" is the long-established and naturalized linguistic differentiation between standard

versus non-standard, native versus non-native. On that account, these commentaries are not completely free of cultural values as they can be argued to be gearing towards a language ideology that views standard English as the norm and other non-standard uses as incongruous transgression.

### 4.6.2 Expression of emotion.

Humor is indeed one of the most recurring themes throughout the comment section. Many commenters make use of the space to share their immediate emotion and reaction upon watching Miss Vietnam's English performance, which seems to induce a great sense of entertainment. In particular, various users insert *only* emojis to encapsulate their thoughts and feelings towards the YouTube video. Excerpt 36 below puts together an array of viewers' reactions: from mouth wide open in shock, to laughing with tears of joy, and looking very concerned and nervous in a cold sweat.

Excerpt 36 [containing comments from 3 different users]:

2 years ago	2 years ago	2 years ago
😮😮😮😮	😂😂😂😂	😰
👍 👎 REPLY	👍 👎 REPLY	👍 👎 REPLY
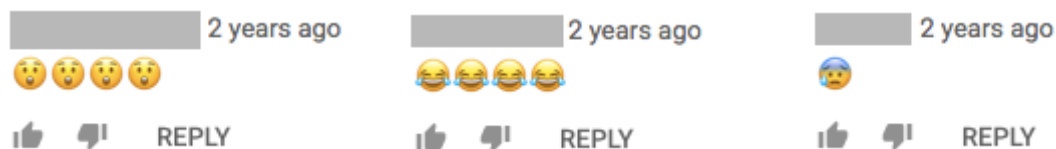
A large number of viewers find the whole incident particularly funny, as exemplified in Excerpts 37-38 below.

Excerpt 37:

2 years ago

Cười ko nhặt đc mồm:)))))))))

👍 23 👎 REPLY
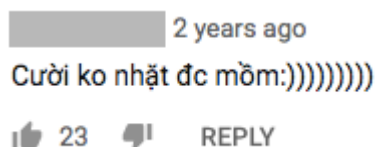
[I] laugh so hard I can't even pick up my mouth :))))))))) (23 upvotes)

Excerpt 38:

2 years ago

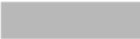tải video về có j buồn đem ra xem vui vãi

👍 438 👎 REPLY

[I'll] download this video so that when [I'm] sad [I] can rewatch it to friggin' entertain [my]self (438 upvotes)

While some may consider Miss Vietnam's English rather amusing, others

especially think the reactions of the people on-stage (such as the two MCs and the Korean interpreter) are hilarious. Excerpts 39-40 demonstrate this trend.

Excerpt 39:

2 years ago

nhin mat "em si" ma thay buon cuoi,khong hieu gi lun.

👍 5 👎 REPLY

the faces of the "MCs" look hilarious, [they] don't seem to understand anything at all. (5 upvotes)

Excerpt 40:

2 years ago

nhìn mặt 2mc và ông phiên dịch buồn cười chết được

👍 7 👎 REPLY

the faces of the 2 MCs and the interpreter look hysterical (7 upvotes)

Overall, humor emerges in the comment thread as a common material to describe and discuss this incident of an English "disaster." As I have noted in the previous section, the ambivalence of humor may obscure the latent social values behind a laughter. However, to laugh at an accent is to discriminate it against a standard linguistic form. In the same manner, humor can function as a potential tool in the preservation and reproduction of existing social orders and hierarchies while deprecating peripheral cultural and linguistic varieties.

4.6.3 Critique of the language shaming campaign.

Despite waves of mocking and demeaning remarks left in the comment section, a small number of Vietnamese viewers (1.5%) choose to defend Miss Vietnam's use of English. One of their most common reasoning lies in the argument that the beauty queen's English skill is not that "horrible" as lamented by others.

For instance, the author from Excerpt 41 below directs the criticism to the shamers whose English pronunciation might not be any better than that of Miss Vietnam but still partook in the shaming of her language use. He also maintains that the only problem with her speech is "simply" the speed of the utterances, which is rather trivial and not worth being picked on.

Excerpt 41:

Mấy người có dám chắc mình phát âm chuẩn không. Xin lỗi sợ cái nghĩa nhiều khi còn phải tra google rồi mới vào chê chứ đừng nói là phát âm. Chẳng qua cô ta chỉ là phát âm chậm không thể phát âm lướt các từ được
2 years ago

👍 27 👎 REPLY

Are you people sure that you have perfect/standard pronunciation[?] Excuse me but you probably have had to look it up on google before coming here and disparaging [her]. She was just simply speaking a bit too slowly and couldn't pronounce swiftly and smoothly
(27 upvotes)

The commenter from Excerpt 42 below also reiterates a similar viewpoint.

Excerpt 42:

Đừng chửi ngta ngu , ngta thuộc dạng biết tiếng anh và hiểu được họ nói j nhưng cô này lại ko biết cách phát âm chuẩn nhưng hiểu được những lời MC nói
1 year ago

👍 11 👎 REPLY

Don't belittle her as stupid, she's the type who knows English and understands what others are saying but she doesn't know how to pronounce in a standard way and she can understand what the MC said (11 upvotes)

In response to a group of netizens who impute a lower level of education and intelligence to Miss Vietnam's heavily accented speech (Section 4.2), the comment from Excerpt 42 contends that Lan Anh definitely "knows" English. According to his/her argument, what it means to "know" a language does not exclusively require speaking in "a standard way" with perfect, native-like pronunciation; the ability to listen and understand also counts. Therefore, Miss Vietnam does not deserve to be called "stupid" for she apparently could understand English, which was evident in the way she promptly reacted to the request from the MC.

While several commenters link the whole incident to a national disgrace and a painful face loss for Vietnam on a highly international stage (Section 4.4), some critics of the shaming campaign still proudly claim their Vietnamese heritage. Comment 43 delivers one of such nationalist discourses.

Excerpt 43:

chang co ji fai nhuc minh cu tu hao vi.minh la nguoi viet nam

2 years ago

👍 👎 REPLY

There's nothing to be ashamed of. [I'm/we're] still proud because [I'm/we're] Vietnamese

In a similar manner, commenter 44b in the excerpt below, upon correcting a misspelled word in comment 44a, reminds his/her fellow Vietnamese to first master his/her mother tongue before demeaning the beauty queen's English skills. The ironic remark seems to challenge the reality that English mastery is being unreasonably required of Miss Vietnam (because it is apparently not her native language).

Excerpt 44:

MC đơ như cây cơ kháng giả thì cười ồ!!! đẹp mặt =)))

2 years ago

👍 1.9K 👎 REPLY

Hide replies ⌃

khán giả. học tiếng Việt trước khi chê người ta nhé

2 years ago

👍 137 👎 REPLY

44a

The MC was totally dumbfounded and the audience cracked up laughing!!! nice face =)))

(1900 upvotes)

44b [correcting a misspelled word from comment 44a]

[It's] audience. [You'd better] learn Vietnamese before mocking/disparaging others

(137 upvotes)

It is interesting to see the arising of a nationalist discourse associated with Miss Vietnam's English utterance, whether it is to shame her language use or to defend it. Commenters on both sides have utilized YouTube as an interactive platform to debate and negotiate what it takes to represent Vietnam on a global-scale level. This remark is in line with the notion that the commenting affordances of YouTube bring together members of imagined communities to discuss aspects of

banal nationalism (e.g., White, 2015). YouTube, as well as other web 2.0 spaces, thus offers researchers a fascinating site to study situated and nuanced practices of the imagining of a nation.

All things considered, this subsection has wrapped up the analysis of the three categories which concern: 1) parodic mocking, 2) expression of emotion, and 3) critique of the language shaming. Whereas the prevalent "humor" material used in several comments from 1) and 2) may seem playful and light-hearted, it can at the same time conjure up a deep-seated hierarchy of language varieties and cultures. In response to the language shaming of Miss Vietnam, a few critics of the campaign have challenged the shamers by raising questions of what constitutes language competence and why English proficiency is desired in the representing of the nation (and the saving of the nation's face) on a global stage.

The next chapter will strive to fit all findings from this present data analysis into a complete and comprehensive picture. In so doing, it will discuss all emerging themes in relation to the research aims and questions.

5. DISCUSSION

This research sets forth to investigate the phenomenon of online English shaming that revolves around a Vietnamese beauty queen caught speaking in "bad" English. In the process, it endeavors to uncover the underpinning language ideological work beneath the English shaming campaign. The research aims and questions are crystallized as follows:

- In what ways does the English shaming of Miss Vietnam reflect the indexical values attributed to (non-standard) English in Vietnam?
    - What kind of indexicalities of any orders emerge from such practices?
- How do such processes unveil underlying local ideologies in the era of globalization?

In order to approach the research questions, I have drawn on the new media sociolinguistics' framework from Thurlow and Mroczek (2011) as an overarching concept to interpret and discuss this study's findings. Additionally, this study relies heavily on the literature of language ideologies and indexicality to realize the research aims above (see Figure 1 on page 32 for a comprehensive conceptual framework). On a micro-level, I employ the notion of constructivist grounded theory by Thornberg and Charmaz (2014) to closely examine the collected data, which is consisted of 128 YouTube comments (as of February 2019) responding to Miss Vietnam's non-standard use of English. Following the guidelines by grounded theory, I apply a three-phased coding process to identify and categorize the recurring patterns in the comment board.

The previous analysis chapter has discussed in-depth these emerging, indexically charged and non-indexically charged categories respectively. This current chapter will now put together the pieces of the puzzle. The discussion starts with a review of the findings with respect to the research questions and previous works, followed by implications and applications for concerned stakeholders. Finally, this chapter ends with an evaluation of the study's limitations and some potential directions for future research in the field.

5.1 Indexical values and ideologies of English in Vietnam

An investigation of any local language ideologies would inevitably involve a discussion on the process of indexicality. As I have delineated in Section 2.1, existing language ideologies provide the foundations for indexicality to fulfill their social functions, namely to make socially meaningful associations between linguistic features and images of personhood. Simultaneously, language ideologies are in turn defined and redefined by the trajectories of such processes. At the heart of this study is the idea of approaching local language ideologies through the valorization of linguistic forms. Particularly, in order to unveil the dominant ideas and beliefs about the English language, I set out to investigate how Vietnamese commenters—upon reacting to Miss Vietnam's disastrous performance—assign indexical values to certain forms of English. The analysis of 128 comments pinpoints one indexicality of the first-order—English as merely a foreign language—and four others of the second-order whereby English is found to serve as indices of: 1) education and intelligence level, 2) emerging beauty queen standard, 3) national prestige and 4) superior, imagined globalness. A detailed analysis of these indexical values has been provided in Chapter 4. The present section will be devoted to a discussion of their underlying ideological work.

5.1.1 English and discourses of (foreign language) education in Vietnam.

Ever since the official announcement of the National Plan for learning and teaching foreign languages in 2008, English education has been made accessible nationwide from primary 3 instead of primary 6 as before. Before that milestone, the English boom already arose in late 1986 when the Vietnamese Communist Party first opened its doors to the whole world through a historical economic reform named *Đổi mới*. By virtue of such a policy that now allowed for global integration, English became one of the most sought-after foreign languages to be taught in Vietnam, and subsequently one of the national examinations required for proceeding further with secondary and tertiary-level education (Hoang, 2010). It is thus technically expected of an average Vietnamese person to possess at least basic English skills.

When Miss Vietnam goes viral with her "horrible" English, a small number of Vietnamese commenters (1.3%) relate her performance to a lack of language

competence. A larger number of users (19.1%), however, equate her language use with a lack of adequate education. While these associations constitute indexicalities that operate on different orders, they both mirror the dynamic relationship between English ideologies and discourses of foreign language education in Vietnam.

On the first-level, the perceived role of English in the Vietnamese sociolinguistic landscape is not much complicated. The first-order indexicality views English simply as a popular foreign language, a compulsory subject taught at many Vietnamese schools from Grade 3 to higher education level nowadays. In the case of Miss Vietnam's English performance, YouTube commenters who subscribe to the first-order indexicality of English would bracket the heavily accented, non-standard use of English with merely a lack of language competence. Put another way, failure to deliver a comprehensible English utterance will result in negative judgements on one's language proficiency without suggesting any stereotypical images about the utterer. Such an indexical association is "scientific" (Silverstein, 2003, p. 205) and straightforward, that is, easily observable to an outsider such as a (socio-)linguist.

Johnstone et al. (2006) also report the existence of first-order indexicality in her longitudinal ethnographic study regarding the "Pittsburghese" dialect. At this indexical order, frequent usage of certain linguistic features (e.g., monophthongal /aw/) can be correlated with certain socio-demographic identities (e.g., being male, from Pittsburgh, belonging to working class). Another ethnographic research by Büscher et al. (2013) also locates a first-order indexical association whereby residents living in the Congolese border town Goma come to acknowledge Lingala as undoubtedly the language of the Congolese army. This is owing to the long-established history of Lingala serving as the language of internal communication and command within the national army. In a manner of speaking, a linguistic feature of the first-order indexicality would only "presuppose" (Silverstein, 2003, p. 205) "innocent" facts banked on users' pre-existing knowledge of the feature in question.

Comparably, a small number of Vietnamese users think of English as a popular foreign language simply because the nation's authorities have been promoting the teaching of primary English rather intensively (Kirkpatrick, 2011). English has been widely added to the compulsory curriculum at many Vietnamese schools across the country, especially since 2008 when the Prime Minister passed the

national plan. Given such background, it is no surprise that English is currently considered the "number one" foreign language in Vietnam.

That being said, the whole picture becomes more complex as the role of English is further interpreted and reappropriated to accomplish more "advanced" social tasks. This is where indexicalities of higher order come into view. As previous studies have shown, a nth indexicality may function as a material for the forming of a n+1-th indexicality which reconstrues the initial association and assign new social meanings to the indexed feature (Johnstone et al., 2006; Johnstone and Kiesling, 2008; Büscher et al. 2013). At a higher-order of indexicality, Vietnamese users are no longer relying on first-order association to make sense of different forms of English. Findings from this study indicate that the majority of commenters have creatively exploited second-order indexicalities of English to attribute social meanings to Miss Vietnam's language use.

At this new level, an exhibited competence of (standard) English can act as a potential measure for one's education degree as well as mental capacity. This indexical association is also exposed in Sharma's (2014) research where transnational Nepali commenters draw a connection between the Health Minister's peculiar English and her lack of adequate educational qualification. In a similar fashion, Vietnamese commenters question Lan Anh's educational background, demand her to go back to primary school (to re-learn English), and negatively compare her linguistic as well as mental capability to that of a schoolgirl. Remarkably, Miss Vietnam's level of intelligence also becomes a hotly-debated topic among viewers. The judgements of Miss Vietnam's intellect are made based on neither her actual academic performance nor the content of her speech, but rather on the specific English register she was caught speaking in—the one with a heavy "Vietnamese" accent.

To provide an account for the linkage between the cultural perceptions of education and intelligence, I have turned to the influences of Confucian values that still linger even in today's Vietnamese society. Since the Confucian teachings deem that the cultivation of the self always go hand in hand with the attainment of education, an educated individual is generally considered wiser than someone who is uneducated (Concodia, 2014). In corollary with such cultural views of human

intelligence, Miss Vietnam can be labelled as not only "uneducated" but also "ngu" (stupid, dumb). This creative second-order indexicality that equates English proficiency with intelligent level is thus mediated by the very association between language ideologies of English and discourses of formal English education in Vietnam.

However, it is important to emphasize that there has always existed a significant gap between what the National Plan envisions and how it is actually implemented. Even though English education has been made accessible across the country, there still persists a mismatch between rural and urban areas in teaching quality, resources, facilities as well as student learning experiences (Vu and Pham, 2014). That is not to exclude the stark differences among different social classes even within urban areas. In reality, Vietnamese students who are from privileged and wealthy families are gaining more access to extra English lessons with native speakers at private English centers mushrooming all over major cities. Students who come from a humble background, however, cannot afford such a "luxury" English education (Nguyen et al., 2016). Therefore, the English-uneducated in Vietnam should not be one who lacks intelligence but very likely one who is deprived of equal access to quality English education. The YouTube commenters in this case study, nevertheless, have refused to view Miss Vietnam as the latter. It appears that the language ideology underpinning the second-order association of English as an index of one's education and/or intelligence level is more prevalent among Vietnamese users.

Overall, these YouTube comments—regardless of which indexicality order they exploit—in concert echo the existing ideological associations between the English language, cultural perceptions of intelligence, and (foreign language) education in Vietnam. In particular, they allude to the role of English as a local index of education and intelligence level, which is culturally saturated with Confucian ideologies of self-cultivation and educational attainment.

5.1.2 English and discourses of Vietnamese feminine beauty.

Since English is reconfigured as a measure of education and intelligence level, it is conveniently recruited by YouTube commenters to perform another social

function: a criterion for the Vietnamese beauty queen standard. This subsection reviews how the discourses of Vietnamese feminine beauty are closely tied up with the very discourses surrounding (foreign language) education in Vietnam.

As the dichotomy of "pretty" versus "brainy" continues to prevail, many Vietnamese commenters lament how Miss Vietnam is a "pretty" yet "stupid" beauty queen. A large number of others declare Lan Anh unfit for her title as a Vietnamese beauty queen while explicitly articulating the social expectations for a Miss Vietnam's language ability. On one hand, these comments invoke the widespread "myth" that beauty and intellect are mutually exclusive, which is further promoted by the enduring portrayal of women's intellect on popular films and televisions (see D'Amore, 2014). On the other hand, they also allude to an inherent standard for those public figures who have to bear the weight of a beauty crown. Accordingly, a well-deserved Miss Vietnam should possess not only an attractive physical appearance but also an adequate level of education and intelligence, which is increasingly characterized by a satisfactory English competence in the new epoch of globalization. To sum up, there are two lines of reasoning articulated by the Vietnamese commenters for why English proficiency is required of a Vietnamese beauty queen: 1) it serves as a potential index of her intellect, and 2) English has undoubtedly gained currency as the global language necessary for international communication as well as the projecting of the nation on a global scale.

Firstly, the earlier is in some way reminiscent of traditional notions of the Vietnamese womanhood deeply entrenched in Confucius' core teachings. Influenced by his ideology, the Vietnamese feminine conduct is governed by a *Tứ Đức* (Four Virtues) rule, namely: *công* (diligence), *dung* (graceful presence), *ngôn* (proper speech), *hạnh* (moral conduct) (Schafer, 2010). Among these four virtues, the third one stresses on the carefully and gracefully choosing of one's words. Such a "virtue" is believed to reflect a woman's cultivated intellect and education. In other words, a virtuous Vietnamese woman is expected to refine her speech as it is a powerful marker of her poise and astuteness.

Such a view on womanhood is redolent with Cameron's (1996) classic notion of a "verbal hygiene" imposed on women. Exploring the dynamic relationship between language and gender ideologies in the context of advice literature, she notes

that women have long been scrutinized for the way they curate their speech. Particularly, the abundant tips on successful verbal self-presentation found in women-targeted magazines reflect not only the language ideology of how they should speak in public but also the gender ideologies of how they should express their social identities as women. This remark resonates with John Berger's analysis of the female figure in art and media, in which he discusses how we as a society always view women as a "sight" to be looked at — even "surveyed" — by the public eye (Berger, 1972). Here we confront a complex web of language and gender ideologies. As Ochs (1992) has succinctly described in her seminal work on the linguistic indexing of gender, the connection that links language and gender is defined and bolstered by the relationship between language and social constructs. Such an interrelation can also characterize the Vietnamese beauty queen standards endorsed by most Vietnamese commenters. Accordingly, the essence of an ideal national feminine beauty entails a certain intellect embodied by a refined speech, which in a highly international context should be delivered in fluent English.

Secondly, what turns Lan Anh into the target of an online shaming campaign is not simply a consequence of speaking in "disgraceful" English nor disappointing the social expectations for a virtuous Vietnamese woman. It is also because of her failure to adhere to the beauty queen standards and, perhaps most importantly, deliver a presentable image of Vietnam to worldwide audience. English is indeed increasingly seen as a fitting vehicle for the performing-the-nation rhetoric in globally oriented events such as an international beauty pageant (e.g., Dewey, 2008; Billings, 2011). In the context of Vietnam, besides its chief role in foreign language education, English has also become a requirement in popular beauty contests like Miss Universe Vietnam and Miss Vietnam. Since winners of these contests are eventually appointed as representatives of Vietnam in international pageants, all candidates are desired to exhibit a certain level of conversational English. As a consequence, English is no longer merely a foreign language in Vietnam. Its function has been creatively reappropriated to index one's education and intellect and hence whether one can meet the Vietnamese beauty queen prerequisite.

All things considered, English mastery is being reconfigured as a major beauty queen criterion in Vietnam. The incoherent English utterance of Miss

Vietnam is found indexical of not only sub-par education and intellectual capacity but also a sub-standard beauty. Such association points to a second-order indexicality by which English acquires a unique function of measuring beauty queen standard, which is mainly mediated by its role as shibboleth for marking one's intellect and education. Put another way, these linkages of the second-order are bolstered by a system of interrelated and multilayered ideologies revolving around English in Vietnam.

5.1.3 English and discourses of the nation.

Having disappointed the Vietnamese beauty standard and failed to convey a desirable national image on a global stage, Miss Vietnam and her English performance are equated with a national disgrace. The sentiments of shame and humiliation are found pervasive in the comment section. Vietnamese users draw on a second-order indexicality that appropriates English as an index of national prestige to label Miss Vietnam's performance as "such a shame for Vietnam" and its people.

Notably, in articulating their emotions of "shame," a large number of commenters advert to a face loss both individually and collectively. Once again we encounter remnants of Confucian ideologies lingering in the commentaries: the concept of face in Vietnam is heavily shaped by the philosophy which accentuates an individual's social positions and her obligations to fulfill their attached duties (Pham, 2007; Pham, 2014; Nguyen, 2015). There are thus two main components that construct the Vietnamese face: an awareness of one's social roles and roles-driven, virtuous qualities as well competences. Additionally, the Vietnamese idea of face is rather dependent on external forces such as social expectations and public judgements, which is distinct from an Anglo-American perception that tends to emphasize a consciousness of intrinsic values and is rarely defined by opinions of others (Kim and Cohen, 2010). Therefore, a Vietnamese person will lose face and consequently cause her affiliated group to also lose face, if she fails to represent the ideal image demanded by her social roles.

In light of such face culture, Miss Vietnam causes a great face loss for not only herself but also for her nation and its people because she has failed to fulfill her most important responsibility acting as a Vietnamese beauty queen on a global stage: to

broadcast an immaculate representation of her home country. This observation is perfectly aligned with Sharma's (2014) account of a Nepali health minister whose peculiar English use during a UN speech is also labeled as a national shame. In both cases, the projecting of the nation in a high-stakes global context calls for a proficient use of standard English as an essential element in its portrayal. English, with its increasing currency as the global power code to tackle the challenges of transnational communication, has been creatively reconfigured by Vietnamese (as well as Nepali) YouTube commenters to effectively index national prestige and honor. That being the case, non-fulfillment of these specific social expectations for a globalized national image ultimately ends in a face loss that is both an individual and a collective shame.

However, there are still a small number of Vietnamese commenters who challenge such view. These critics of the shaming campaign proudly claim their Vietnamese identity while denying to see Miss Vietnam's English performance as a painful face loss for Vietnam. A few supporters of the beauty queen also dispute the English requirement being unreasonably imposed on Miss Vietnam whose native language is apparently Vietnamese. In any case, it is interesting to see different shapes and forms of a nationalist discourse emerging from the comment thread. Whether it is to degrade Miss Vietnam's English use or to defend it, Vietnamese users are employing YouTube as a highly interactive space to express and debate their national identities (e.g., Androutsopoulos, 2010; Leppänen and Häkkinen, 2012).

By and large, English has yet gained another "badge of honor" in Vietnam. An overwhelming number of Vietnamese commenters are attributing the index of national prestige to a proficient use of standard English, especially if successfully performed on a global stage. In accordance with this view, the ability to communicate smoothly in English can yield honor for the nation while failure to comply can end in a disastrous face loss, of which Miss Vietnam's shaming campaign counts as a relevant example. At the heart of such second-order indexicality is the bolstering ideological work that upholds standard English as an appropriate instrument necessitated for the symbolic representation of the nation in a global space.

5.1.4 English and discourses of the global.

The English shaming of Miss Vietnam, at its core, reflects the ongoing debate of global versus local. English mastery is found to be positively correlated with the nation's perceived standing in a global rank, as English serves as a capable index of an imagined globalness. This discourse is evident in the way a few commenters express shameful feelings in witnessing the foreigners' laughter at Miss Vietnam's English utterance, as well as how others bitterly relate her performance to the nation's inferior status when compared to other countries, such as: Japan, some Southeast Asian neighbors, and especially the Anglo-Western world. These written responses together elicit a sense of national inferiority complex explicitly articulated by Vietnamese commenters.

On a more implicit level, such sentiments of a national inferiority are subtly connoted in a larger subset of comments where users deliberately compare Miss Vietnam's English performance with a national face loss. Since the Vietnamese concept of face always entails public judgements, a Vietnamese person is more likely to lose face to others rather than to himself. There are two types of the "others" here: one is an immediate beholder of the face-threatening acts (e.g., audience present at the event, viewers watching the video on YouTube), the other is a higher-level observer—a non-immediate "superaddressee" who has the ultimate authority to evaluate a social performance (Blommaert, 2005, p. 73). Likewise, the pictured "superaddressees" in this case are the "foreigners" and the "Westerners," whose authority is reinforced by their perceived identities as native speakers of English. On that ground, they perfectly embody a superior "globalness" in whose presence the Vietnamese "localness" feels indeed intimidated.

In general, Vietnamese users from the comment thread construct an iconic link between Vietnam's discerned standing in a global ranking and its people's proficiency in standard English. More particularly, the comments direct to a viewpoint that casts Vietnamese's (linguistic) capability as inferior to Westerners' while downplaying Vietnam's position on a Western-centric global ranking. Such perspective also suggests a certain order of different linguistic forms with different indexical values that operate on social stratification and hierarchies of power (Blommaert, 2005, 2010). Miss Vietnam's non-standard use of English is apparently

inferior to the standard English often associated with the Anglo-Western world. This perception testifies to an existing standard English ideology (Lippi-Green, 2012) enregistered in the awareness of Vietnamese learners who uphold the American and/or British variety as the touchstone of all language performances (see Section 2.1.4). They have come to internalize the "standard English" myth under the influence of various forces. Among those are the lack of facilities, materials as well as specialized training for educators to shift to teaching English as an international language (Phan, 2017). Another reason is the popular imagery of cultural empires such as the United States along with their conceived position as "being in the forefront of globalization and of upward global mobility" (Blommaert, 2009, p. 3). On the whole, the "standard English" myth serves as a testament to a long-established world order perpetuated by an entrenched Western-centric ideology (Babaii, 2010; Piller, 2016).

Furthermore, the analysis also identifies a substantial number of Vietnamese commenters who recruit humor as the dominant element in their responses. Instead of using a heavy and demeaning tone, these users playfully mock Miss Vietnam's language use by recontextualizing her utterances or simply getting a good laugh out of the "funny" incident. Whereas the ambivalence of humor may veil the tacit social values behind a laughter, to laugh at an accent is to equally discriminate it against a "standard" linguistic form. These commentaries seem to suggest a language ideology that views standard English as the norm—the superior—and the other non-standard forms as incongruous transgression—the inferior. At the core, these seemingly lighthearted comments also advocate for a linguistic (and social) inequality upheld by the existing world order that trivializes peripheral cultural and linguistic varieties.

However, the discourse of superior global versus inferior local does not remain uncontested. As the critiques towards the shaming campaign contend, Miss Vietnam should not be condemned for her "Vietlish" accent, which is totally expected since English is not her native language. The nation and its people, too, shall not lose face for their unique ways of speaking. Such a remark is also to debunk the "standard" English accent myth endorsed by other shamers in the discussion board. These criticizing comments, though small in number, potentially resound

with a new voice that emerges amidst the hostile shaming campaign of Miss Vietnam. They may act as a challenge against a Western-centric ideology of English varieties while suggesting a more inclusive view of English as a lingua franca.

That being noted, the English language has now—for the most part—transformed into a powerful index of a superior globalness in Vietnam. English's original role as merely a world-popular foreign language has been reconfigured in creative ways that effectively delineate the current local sociolinguistic circumstances as well as the emerging language ideologies. So far, English has gained much currency in the Vietnamese market. It can potentially serve as a powerful second-order index of: 1) education and intelligence level, 2) beauty queen standard, 3) national prestige, and last but not least, 4) an imagined, superior globalness.

5.1.5 YouTube as an ideal platform for ideological debates.

It would be an oversight not to acknowledge the momentous role of the YouTube's platform in the shaming campaign of Miss Vietnam. First of all, YouTube environment makes a fertile soil for the production and circulation of entextualized media contents that are often loaded with tacit ideologies. The "English-shaming" video featured in this case study is a prime example. It is not an "innocent" extract from a longer event; it is crucially a product of entextualization (Bauman and Briggs, 1990; Leppänen et al., 2014) with a framing title, added subtitles and editorial commentaries which all hint at a concrete set of language ideologies. Vietnamese commenters—in consuming such a recontextualized YouTube video—are given an ideological scaffolding to (re-)interpret the incident. The topic and target of the ideological debate, in this fashion, had already been predetermined before it could actually manifest itself in the comment board.

Secondly, the commenting affordances of YouTube have indeed brought together members of imagined communities to articulate and negotiate their identities, ideas and beliefs on a multitude of social aspects. In the shaming of Miss Vietnam, we have witnessed the Vietnamese commenters express their ideologies of formal (foreign language) education, their cultural perceptions of human intelligence as well as the traditional Vietnamese womanhood. Furthermore, YouTube has also

been exploited as a platform for users to discuss their nationalist and political concerns. This remark is not exclusive to the context of Vietnam. White (2015), for instance, analyzes YouTube comments on videos featuring New Zealand anthems to reveal the diverse ways in which belonging to an imagined community that is a nation can be claimed, evaluated, ratified, or even contested in a virtual space. Likewise, Ivković (2013) discusses how YouTube provides an ideal forum for dominant language ideologies to be exhibited and challenged. In his corpus-based analysis of myriad YouTube comments on performances from the Eurovision Song Contest (ESC), Ivković (2013) argues the debate on language choice—whether one should perform in his/her native language or English—for the nation's presentation on a political stage such as ESC is potentially a political one. YouTube, in this sense, becomes a transnational site for users to elaborate on aspects of banal nationalism.

These are all thanks to YouTube's commenting function, leniency towards anonymity, and inherently interactive environment which altogether encourage its 1.8 billion users to actively engage in ideological debates. YouTube, along with other web 2.0 spaces, is indeed a valuable resource for observing and investigating situated and nuanced online practices in an age of globalization.

5.2 Implications and applications

First of all, the findings from this study offer us valuable insight into the English education in Vietnam. When Vietnamese commenters draw on Miss Vietnam's English competence to make assumptions about her education and intelligence level, they only touch on the National Plan's ambitious yet ostensible goal of making English education accessible nationwide. Meanwhile, they have neglected the concerning reality that not everyone in Vietnam, including young learners of English, has equal opportunities to access *quality* English education. Social inequality permeates through the English teaching and learning landscape in Vietnam, even from the primary school level. There has existed a widening gap between rural and urban areas, as well as between socioeconomic groups in terms of classroom facilities, teachers' competences, students' learning experiences and outcomes (Vu and Pham, 2014; Nguyen et al., 2016). As a by-product, the National

Plan has unintendedly promoted a national "English divide" which draws a line between who has more and less access to social resources.

Furthermore, a typical English class in Vietnam has long been characterized with a passive approach: large-sized, memorization-based, exam-oriented, and little room for conversational practices (Vu and Pham, 2014). Vietnamese students who only receive English lessons at public schools are thus less exposed to listening and speaking practices than their counterparts who can afford extra private lessons with a native speaker. Miss Lan Anh, who comes from a small town in the rural region of southern Vietnam, might have been a victim of such traditional, unequitable education system. Yet, none of the online shamers seem to take that possibility into consideration. Rather, they immediately equate her poor English performance with a lack of education and intelligence level.

On one hand, it is critical that policymakers and educators confront the social inequalities in English education as well as the outdated teaching methods that still pervade in Vietnamese public schools. Equal opportunities to quality English lessons in a highly interactive environment may promise better learning experiences and outcomes for Vietnamese students across the country, which contributes to the realization of the National Plan. On another hand, stakeholders should also address the issues of language shaming in foreign language education. While shaming is a form of social sanction exercised to penalize and prevent transgression of social norms, unnecessarily extreme humiliation in public—as seen in the "Dog Poop Girl" incident (Krim, 2005) and the language shaming of Miss Vietnam—can culminate in personal abuses as well as privacy invasion of the shamees, leaving them with scarring traumas. A specific lawful guideline for online vigilantes is therefore in urgent need to regulate online shaming and turn it into a feasible tool for peer surveillance and hence community empowerment (Skoric et al., 2010).

Moreover, the majority of demeaning comments seem to suggest that a perfect standard English accent is more valued than the speech content. The "standard" accent here often times alludes to the "Western" Englishes (such as a British or American variety) which are ubiquitous in English classrooms nationwide. I would, however, argue that a critical notion of World Englishes (e.g., Kachru and Nelson, 2006; Pennycook, 2006) should be introduced in the national curriculum.

The idea is to effectively educate Vietnamese students on the different varieties of English that have been locally adapted around the world. An understanding of World Englishes as a by-product of globalization and English will hopefully yield an appreciation for different forms of English rather than a discrimination of "misformed central English calumnies" (Pennycook, 2006, p. 20).

Central to this Master's thesis is the issue of linguistic diversity and social justice. The waves of globalization have amplified global linguistic diversity, yet at the same time giving rise to a global spread of English. This worldwide dominance of English—specifically the kind of central English within the Inner Circle made up of United Kingdom, Ireland, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and the United States (Kachru and Nelson, 2006, p. 10)—gradually becomes a key mechanism to perpetuate social inequalities. Particularly, it has generated a linguistic subordination that centers on "Western" Englishes at the expense of other peripheral varieties (see also Piller, 2016). The off-center zones include an Outer Circle—comprised of mostly former colonies and where the role of English has become indispensable in national life such as Ghana, Singapore, India, etc.—and an Expanding Circle conceived as the rest of the world where the language is still spreading.

Such a global hierarchy of English varieties has entrenched a plethora of social injustice issues in our society. Piller (2016) summarizes some of these inequities: universal English language education has inadvertently served to maintain geographic and socioeconomic stratification in access to language studies; English being increasingly equated with academic excellence causes knowledge produced in other languages to be undervalued; the global English bias is leaving non-native and peripheral speakers of English with psychological damages such as self-marginalization, self-deprecation, and self-alienation. The English shaming of Miss Vietnam also sees traces of such social inequalities. Most evidently, they manifest in the way Vietnamese commenters convey a national inferiority complex for being at the very margin of an English-centric world (see Sections 4.5 and 5.1.4). It is in this macro context that a belief system about a "standard" global language takes its shape and a culture of English shaming continues to thrive in a globally oriented Vietnam.

Overall, the discourses and practices revolving around English as the global language have given rise to a worldwide bias towards the global at the price of the local. As the "global" in reality often denotes an Anglophone world such as America or Britain, this orientation has embedded several language-related inequalities especially in education between the center and the periphery. To tackle linguistic injustices entails promoting linguistic justices. To confront the hegemony of English requires nurturing linguistic diversity. It is high time policymakers, educators and concerned stakeholders cultivated our endangered linguistic harmony and advocated linguistic rights. These rights, at the core, entitle the individual and collective to freedom of language choice as well as freedom from discrimination based on language (Piller, 2016, p. 206). In the context of Vietnam, some initial steps towards a more equitable social and linguistic arrangement may include enabling English education (including but not limited to English as a medium of instruction and English teaching in general) as an option in lieu of an obligation at public schools while withdrawing it from national high-stakes examinations.

5.3 Limitations and future directions

The present case study, at its best, only captures a small snippet of the whole picture that is the local language ideologies surrounding English in Vietnam. Within the confines of a Master's degree thesis, it covers a modest-scale dataset which contains 128 YouTube comments responding to one short video. The data itself dates back to mid-2016, meaning the analysis has perhaps not provided the most au courant representation of the online language shaming phenomena in a Vietnamese context. Future studies may consider looking into a larger and more recent dataset in a cross-cultural context to increase research generalizability, relevance as well as relativity.

Moreover, this study has only zoomed in online discourses without incorporating offline research findings. As Androutsopoulos (2008) has argued for an integrated approach of *discourse-centered online ethnography* to CMC/CMD research, it would be interesting to investigate both online discourses and offline social activities surrounding the English shaming practices. Since the YouTube platform is rather lenient with anonymity, its users may enjoy a certain 'freedom of

speech' to expose their ideas and beliefs about a linguistic form or to language-shame others without the fear of being recognized. However, the same might not hold true in an offline environment where anonymity is no longer guaranteed and the very same audacious shamer online may as well be more self-conscious and vulnerable offline.

On top of that, this research stops short of the shaming campaign itself without addressing its aftermath. Piller (2016) has especially emphasized the psychological damages of a global-and-central-English mentality, while Skoric et al. (2010) stresses on the scarring effects that a shamee endures after an online sanctioning. One possible direction for future researches then is to help make the shamee's voice heard. For instance, it would be valuable to employ an ethnographic approach in investigating the shamee's perspectives on online language shaming as well as language ideologies of global English. Such a critical inclusion of offline discourses will add more weight to CMC/CMD research findings (Androutsopoulos, 2008).

Last but not least, indexicality and enregisterment processes are both crucial to a thorough understanding of how language ideologies are constructed, negotiated and articulated. Despite this acknowledgement, I have only drawn on the indexicalization practices as an attempt to elaborate on the dominant local ideologies concerning English in Vietnam. The reason being an investigation of any enregisterment processes would probably stretch beyond the humble scope of this study. Therefore, the findings of this case study, namely the indexical values attributed to English by Vietnamese YouTube users, may serve as a midpoint on an enregisterment spectrum (see Section 2.1.5). Future studies may conduct an ethnographic fieldwork to illustrate a more complete picture of a potential enregisterment of English—including different English varieties—in Vietnam, and perhaps also explore an inquiry that still remains an ambiguity in previous researches: at exactly which point, or at which n-th order, that an indexicality acquire enregisterment?

6. CONCLUSION

This study has endeavored to investigate the phenomenon of online English shaming in the context of Vietnam, arguing that local language ideologies serve as an overarching context in its formation and perpetuation. By analyzing YouTube comments in response to Miss Vietnam's English utterance, I have elucidated the indexical values Vietnamese users attribute to English. English is found to be creatively reconfigured as an indexically loaded, sociocultural and political marker by Vietnamese YouTube users. A certain proficiency level in today's global language—which in most cases refers to the "standard" American/British English variety—may function as a powerful index of: 1) education and intelligence level, 2) beauty queen standard, 3) national prestige, and 4) a superior globalness. These indexicalities are not independent of each other but subtly interwoven to form a complex of local ideologies surrounding English in Vietnam. They echo not only the attitudes towards the English language but further shed light on intricate discourses of education, intelligence, feminine beauty, banal nationalism and Western-centrism.

Though the present case study is only a baby step to a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomena in question, it has contributed some intriguing insights to the emerging oeuvre of language shaming research. Furthermore, it speaks to a growing number of new media studies that highlight the momentous role of YouTube as well as other web 2.0 platforms as a cutting-edge public (cyber)space for observing, articulating and negotiating dominant ideologies.

In closing, I have attempted to problematize globalization and the spread of English as a global power code. Anchored beneath the highly desirable values of English and the ingrained language ideologies in Vietnam which help maintain its high status are the (almost) unstoppable waves of globalization. Whereas this worldwide orientation has incited an accelerating demand for English teaching and learning, it also reinforces a global hegemony of English and its associated Anglosphere. Such a linguistic dominance gradually becomes a key mechanism to perpetuate social inequalities, which embodies in a linguistic subordination placing "standard" English at the superior center and pushing all other varieties and languages to the periphery. It is in this macro context that a belief system about a

"standard" global language starts to form and a culture of English shaming continues to thrive in a globally oriented Vietnam. While the idea of having one common language through which everyone can communicate and engage in a global discussion is tempting, it should be promoted in a way that also allows for a peaceful coexistence with linguistic diversity as well as social equality.

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