

Minh Tri Joseph Tran

Professor Lyndell O'Hara

HIS114

20 April 2023

Research & Writing #27

To view an American society where English, Spanish, and French are required by the time an adolescent transitions into adulthood, would allow for quite a utopian society. We as an American society can oftentimes be generalized as an arrogant nation in our pride as “natives” to the land, while also rejecting the very notion of sharing the land with immigrants and foreigners—those who don't speak the same language as us, those that wouldn't act like us, and those who wouldn't share the same cultures and lifestyle that we do. While this is to an extent, an over-exaggeration, it doesn't seem too far off from how others view us as a nation today. As our modern American society is growing into a more accepting society towards other cultures and their backgrounds, it isn't quite there just yet.

As a Vietnamese-American, I find myself pulled toward my Vietnamese community, specifically within the Vietnamese district, of the Alliance, in the North East region. The reason why I bring this up is because I value my culture and background as a second-generation person living in America. Growing up, being Vietnamese didn't necessarily hinder my mental health during my early childhood. But as I begin to evaluate the moments that these moments did just so happen to occur, it was most likely due to the fact that I looked different than everyone else. Being part of schools where being the only Vietnamese person made me unique, it also pinned me as I would be racially grouped with other Asian cultures.

There was, to an extent, a lack of Vietnamese identity and an affirmation of it because of

the Hispanic and Black community that I was raised in. In evaluating these moments now, it was because there was a lack of urgency to really think back to these moments in that these were not threats but passive-aggressive jokes between those that I have encountered. With that being said, I believe language is crucial within a public school setting for it allows for children of all ages to be engaged within a diverse and multicultural setting that is unique and accepting of other nations and their languages. Given that we have a hard time effectively and properly teaching language to students today within a public school setting, there is a long way to go if we want to reach a more utopian American society.

There was a 2016 film that debuted in theaters called *Now You See Me 2*, the plot of the movie was that there were a group of magicians who had been tricked into being hypnotized and “teleported” to China, from America, through a miscalculated trash vent—in their planned escape from their magic show. What really happened was the antagonist, played by Daniel Radcliffe, manipulates them into doing his dirty work, in order to steal a powerful device. The reason for bringing this up is because one of the magicians was speaking to a Chinese elder, in explaining how they’d execute this plan, but in doing so, we as the audience had come to realize that the elder did not speak English, the second time after the magician had slowly explained in English with hand gestures. While this was a humorous clip within the film, I’ve come to realize how much it also reflected American society today toward some who aren’t educated in being culturally aware of the setting, especially outside America. What makes this even more of a gag is knowing that the elder reveals to us that she knows and even speaks English, making the magician an even bigger fool.

Understanding multiple languages would allow us as an American society to grow and even become more culturally accepting towards others who aren’t familiar with our culture.

English is by far the most learned language in the world. According to *Langoly.com*, the English language is learned and spoken by over 1.452 billion individuals all over the world as of 2022 statistics! Given that the United States dominates a portion of this language in public settings, it's no surprise that our nation has a heavy focus on teaching English to the people. However, we know that in our desire to teach and facilitate learning and living through the English language, we must also know and understand that enforcing this mindset toward foreigners and immigrants is not loving in our intentions.

Cited Sources

Now You See Me 2 magic scene shop - YouTube

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W4dOZ28OCDk>

World's 33 Most Spoken Languages (2022): Facts and Figures (langoly.com)

<https://www.langoly.com/most-spoken-languages/>