IN-BETWEEN IDENTITIES: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF CULTURAL AND ETHNIC IDENTITY REPRESENTATIONS ON YOUTUBE VLOGS BY THE SECOND GENERATION OF VIETNAMESE DIASPORAS IN WESTERN COUNTRIES

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Abstract: The advent of the Internet and user-generated content (UGC) platforms such as YouTube has made it possible for users to access to online cultural products and cross-border online conversations. In YouTube video blogs (vlogs), anyone with a web access and basic video production can broadcast themselves as a virtual space for social connections, creative outlets or online journals of the users' personal lives and experiences. While there is the list of influential diasporic Vietnamese YouTubers, whose videos are favored for the narratives about their in - between identities and cultural lives, little has been studied on how Vietnamese diasporic youth use YouTube vlog to express their cultural identity. By applying textual and discourse analysis to study both the production and reception of vlogs by popular diasporic Vietnamese vloggers, this paper finds that a vlog is both an online space for cultural distinctiveness expression and a conversational hub that these vloggers and their audience discuss their collective identity as diasporic young Vietnamese in Australia, Canada, and the USA. In other words, these vlogs are their antidote to the stereotypical portrayals of being a minority in multicultural, yet Western-dominant societies. The study also discovers the repetitively lack of seriousness in these vlogs when discussing issues of their cultural identity to cope with YouTube's priority to provide entertainment and playful atmosphere. Implications from these findings will help to shed lights on the intersection between diasporic youths' agency of producing their own ethnic media and their participation in digital communication.

Keywords: Cultural identity, YouTube, vlogs, diaspora, media, communication

Introduction

After the Vietnam war (1975), there were unprecedented migratory flows of Vietnamese immigrants and refugees to Western countries that years later, they gradually resettled and became ethnic minorities in these host countries. The USA, Australia and Canada are countries with the largest number of diasporic Vietnamese, which are 2,162,610 (United States Census Bureau 2022) 334,781 (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2021) and approximately 300,000 (Statistics Canada 2022) respectively. Along with those migratory movements, the media play

a determining role that involves the preservation and construction of diaspora communities' cultural identity (Gillespie 1994, p.79; Rydin & Sjöberg 2005; Georgiou 2013). During the 2000s, gone were the days when audiences constrained to media centres' productions for cultural programs. The arrival of the Internet and social media have leveled up diasporic media and communication methods with user-generated cultural contents (Alonso & Oiarzabal 2010a; Lieu 2011). The fluid and hybrid identities of diasporic users, therefore, become more and more recognisable on digital networks (Leurs & Ponzanesi 2011; Mainsah 2011).

Emerging as a new topic trend among young diasporic Vietnamese YouTube communities, "(You know) you are Vietnamese/ Viet when..." has 1,320,000 direct search results, among which the numbers of view rates and comments vary from thousands to millions. These vlogs, while being produced with narratives about in-between identities and cultural lives of an ethnic group, are not geared towards one homogenised community or a group in one country; they have various flows across different nodes of the Vietnamese diaspora networks that form diverse content, as well as audience engagement. However, apart from a few works of Williams (2002), Lieu (2011) and Tran (2017) on digital Vietnamese diasporas' cultural identity on user-led platforms that contribute important foundation for this research area, little is known about the intersection of vlogging and ethnic youths' cultural media production. This opens a research opportunity in exploring Vietnamese diasporic youths' expression of their cultural identity in Youtube vlogs - the global videos uploading and sharing site.

Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

From the late 1980s, scholars have started to pay attention to Asian immigrants (Nguyen 2016, p.444) and the development, preservation and presentation of their ethnic identity in multicultural Western societies. The second generation is a focus of recent studies because they are considered to be the generation of transitions between the two cultures (Thomas 1997; Kobayashi 2008; Cressey 2008; Koh 2015; Ben-Moshe 2016 & Baldassar 2017) – one from the 'motherland' and the other from the hosting country that they were born and raised in. Relevant researches exploring how the second generation Vietnamese employ YouTube vlogs to express their cultural identity emerges from three polars: ethnic media and types of cultural identity formations, self-presentation in digital storytelling, and concepts of participatory culture and produsages culture in YouTube.

Ethnic media and ethnic identity formations

When talking about the relationship between ethnic media and ethnic identity, Matsaganis, Katz & Ball-Rockeach (2011) argue that ethnicity is not a fixed category, yet it is something that members of a minority group can define themselves from other groups by distinguisable values, and the ethnic media are often an imporant platform for ethnic minorities to construct and negotiatte their ethnic identity in different contexts. This is echoed in Martin & Nakayama's (2007) three- dimensional model of ethnic identity formations and other scholars' studies on second-generation diasporas and the role of ethnic media in each dimension.

Pioneering in diasporic Vietnamese media study, Australian scholars Stuart Cunningham and Tina Nguyen (2001) categorise the functions of diasporic media functions into heritage maintenance, cultural negotiation, and assertive hybridity. Upon this foundation, Nhi Thi Lieu produces the scholarly book "The American Dream in Vietnamese" (2011) – the first full-length project that investigates and highlights Vietnamese American's post-refugee expressions in everyday desires and pleasures. Central to this work is the interrogation of the multiple dimensions of tensions around the representation of "authentic" Vietnamese cultures within diasporic Vietnamese's popular culture in the United States. The Vietnamese American-produced Paris by Night (PBN) variety show and video/DVD series is analysed by Lieu as a prominent example where narratives of Vietnamese folk cultures and hybridised music performances are central to her analysis. While the former is purely in Vietnamese, the latter came from the intermixings of Chinese, French and the US popular culture to Saigonese before 1975 and diasporic Vietnamese communities afterwards (Cunningham & Nguyen 1991; Lieu 2011). In the analysis of Paris By Night, attention is drawn towards these cultural representations.

In intercultural and communication research, identities have semantic properties (Hall 1997; Hetch 2002; Roy 2012) that are embedded through symbols, meanings, and labels within specific cultural, historical, and political contexts (Mendoza et al., 2002). In both works of Cunningham & Nguyen (2001) and Lieu (2011) are the hegemonic images and structures of diasporic media and events influenced by Vietnamese-American culture, suggesting ignorance of other diasporic Vietnamese communities' localised cultures. Recognising this limitation, Tran (2017) builds up his in-depth research about digital diasporic cultures and everyday media of diasporic second-generation Vietnamese with the focus on Vietnamese Vancouverite youths. Considering the relevance between offline Vietnamese Vancouver cultural events and the organisers' everyday circulation of cultural media texts, Tran (2017) argues that there are also dynamics within second-generation Vietnamese Canadian subjectivity. By exploring these youths' consumption of digital objects such as news, posts, pictures and memes on Facebook

and Instagram Newsfeed, Tran (2017) discovers that Vietnamese Vancouverites become "digital diasporas" through these digital platforms, where they experience, share and "(re)define" cultural content on both local and transnational levels. Vice versa, Tran theorises the potential of Vietnamese Canadian identity construction being virtually influenced by algorithms that curate their cultural identity exposure. In fact, this idea has prospered since the Greek philosophers and Plato, in particular, is skeptical about the ability of human perception to reach reality with The Allegory of the Cave. Translating these ideas into media and communication process, cultural identity becomes a fluid nation, as it may vary according to each person, community and generation's perspectives of reality. Therefore, the concept of representation is fundamental (Gil 2014, p. 470; Thurlow, Lengel & Tonic 2004a, p. 95) to both cultural knowledge transmission and construction of acceptable norms.

Upon this point, there is a paradoxical reception of ethnic identity representations in the niche media produced by and for the Vietnamese diaspora. In variety shows and advertising posters, there are visuals of the new hybrid ethnic identity of diasporic Vietnamese community in North America with flashy clothes and provocative poses of performers. Yet, they are still perceived as "whitewashed" by those in the first-generation, who watch with a nostalgic mode of reminiscing and preserving their memories in contrast to the "unnatural" displays to the youngers, who grew up overseas and became loyal fans of popular American and British performers. These videos are largely consumed by Vietnamese families nevertheless (Lieu 2011, p.xii, Huang 2014; Nguyen 2015), because these media texts are the only mother-tounged entertainment sources with the remaining parts with a semblance of cultural heritage at the time (Cunningham & Nguyen 2001; Lieu 2011).

In Valverde's (2012b) work on another ethnic medium – "Defying and Redefining Vietnamese Diasporic Art and Media as Seen through Chau Huynh's Creations" - fragmented point of views in diasporic generations were analysed in the case of Nguoi Viet Daily News. For their serving the Vietnamese American community with local and trans-national news, the newspaper and their staff was subject to threats and protests when they expressed ideas that were not perceived as anticommunist enough. Here, attention must also be paid to the subject of representation, as represnations are arbitraty images of the world to be interpreted (Gil 2014, p.472), giving us particular and subjective views of different diasporic generations. Undertaking the critical work of symbolic construction, Eyerman (2004, p.161–162) explains how narratives function to produce a communal identity and ideology: A shared memory unifies a group through time and

over space by providing a narrative frame which locates individuals and their biography within it, and because it can be represented as narrative and as text, that narrative frame attains mobility.

In this way, the foundation generation utilised the shared experiences of war and post-war exile from Vietnam to generate a foundation narrative that both produced and represented the diasporic Vietnamese as a diasporic "victim" generation, following the occupation of North Vietnam of the South in 1975 (Thomas 1997; Nunn 2013). Consequently, while entertainment products of this generation are, to some extent, open to the Western cultures, their media ideology remain conservative towards cultural products and narratives from the homeland. Even though it is true that priorities of well-updated diasporic media should be elements of continuous development and experience being in between places that not necessarily of nostalgia for a homeland (Siapera 2010, p. 96), what is interesting is that members of diaspora perceive, situate themselves within, and experience 'in between places' differently (Yu 2017, p. 1313). Hence, generational differences and local culture influences appear as prominent forces to the heterogenic ethnic identity formations of second generation within Vietnamese diasporas in the US, Australia and Canada.

Recent research on migrations reveals that second-generation migrants are in search of both "roots" and "routes" made possible by technology and economic conditions in both the sending and receiving countries (Leurs & Ponzanesi 2011; Roy 2012; Valverder 2012; Koh 2015, p.202). The distinction between "roots" and "routes" as part of a complex cultural identification were originally defined by Paul Gilroy (1991;1993) as two sides of the same coin, while roots refer to the stable and continuing elements of identities, routes refer to disruption and change (p. 3 - 16) that in migrant studies, Gilroy (1991; 1993) argues for an examination of their interplay. Considering changing contexts of Vietnam after Doi Moi (Renovation) and discussions about technology advances in media communications, this paper considers that these concepts are also applicable to analyse the exploration and expressions of second generation Vietnamese diasporas' heterogenic cultural identity.

Children born in late 1980s and mid-to late-1990s, the period of time that the second generation post-war Vietnamese diasporas are usually born into, are the generation to grow up in a world where the Internet was always present, resulting in the label, the "Internet Generation" (Herring 2008, p.72). This generation socialises more online, downloads more entertainment media, and consults the web for a wider range of purposes than do present adults or young people of the previous generation (Dutton 2004; Fox & Madden 2006). In in books, Growing Up Digital: The Rise of the Net Generation, Don Tapscott's has set the grounding comparison and analysis of two sets of binary opposition, between technologies (the Internet versus televisions) and

between generations (the "Net generation" and their parents' generation). In his analytic comparisons, Tapscott points out that like the technology they now control, the values of the "TV generation" are increasingly conservative, hierarchical and inflexible. By contrast, the Net generation are creative, inquisitive, socially conscious and accepting of diversity since the Internet provides them with digital platforms to reach past the constraining influence of their elders and expose to myriads of information exchanges. Upon this rationales, Buckingham (2008) advocates of the new "digital generation" regard technology as a force of liberation for young people – a means for to create new autonomous forms of communication and community. Thus, the question which needs to be asked is what woud be the messages, or cultural content, that these youths send out over these technologically liberatory potentials.

Findings from Lieu's (2011) study reveal that there are critiques of diasporic Vietnamese niche media from the second-generation in the US and Canada. Commenting on the spectacle of entertainment and the promotion of glamour in diasporic media representations, these youths pointed out that the diasporic entertainers rarely abide by the rules of the community by following the mainstream celebrity culture set by Hollywood. Viewing themselves as peripheral and resistant to the cultural project of these niche diasporic popular media, a new generation of Internet users is questioning those top-down images they project as the prevailing dominant visual representations that they are turning to cultural media texts, such as music, produced in the homeland as the voice of authenticity for its origination from the homeland (Lieu 2011, p. 127). While these trends mark a turning point in transnational cultural flows, they also signal a challenge to the diasporic authenticity produced by "traditional" entertainment media empire by diasporic culture industry after decades of monopoly success (Cunningham & Nguyen 2001; Lieu 2011). Moreover, many young people are using cyberspace as an outlet to challenge hegemonic representations and create their own identity profiles (Alonso & Oiarzabal 2010b; Tran 2017) since today's social networking sites provide spaces for diasporic communities to maintain a deep level of connection with their cultural counterparts in their motherlands through constant checking of status updates, following popular cultural icons virtually, and conducting cultural interactions with multiple connections in different geographic nodes (Roy 2012, p. 7). From this point, virtual communities on online ethnic media may be able to fulfil a third dimension of one's identity formation – the sense of affection and belonging. According to Anderson (1996) achieving a sense of "community" is not about numbers or places, it's about activities and feelings. Taking further this line of thought, it can be hypothesised that even though online communities may not be traditional communities, they are communities

nonetheless, in which cultural texts are generated that produce these communities are of common interest, feeling and interactions.

This is also an interesting point, because even though the Internet has forged spaces for the second-generation's resistance against the now hegemonic cultural forms of the older Vietnamese diaspora, yet responses by the foundation generation demonstrate the diasporic community's anxieties about the increasingly blurring lines between itself and the homeland state (Marosi 2000). Regarding this matter of ethnic identities, Wong-Lau (2002) presents the intricacies of Asian American ethnic identities that besides traditional, conservative values that immigrants to the US often retain, there are cultured of origins continue to change, and liberalise. And in this case, there seems to be a reverse flow between the first and second-generation of diasporic Vietnamese.

In the media strategy of Vietnamese government to craft its relationships with diaspora communities, the government has combined the notions of nation and ethnicity (bloodlines) into official discourse to make nationalist claims on emigrants. Since Doi Moi, the regime has been strongly inclined to offer a more open, broadened yet inclusive at the same time, and flexible definition of overseas Vietnamese as Kieu Bao or Viet Kieu (both mean Vietnamese people coming from the same womb) to foster a sense of closeness to the Vietnamese homeland and community proliferated (Valverde 2012; Koh 2015). Alongside with these terminological innovations, the government has also widely reconfigured overseas Vietnamese as an integral and inseparable part of the national body that many of traditional idioms about consanguinity have frequently been in used in both governmental documents and cultural texts (Committee for Overseas Vietnamese 2006, P.711; Lieu 2011; Valverder 2012). As Koh (2015) argues, the use of these affective terms and themes in the contemporary state media indicates an attempt not only to overcome the negative connotations associated with overseas Vietnamese, but also to galvanize Vietnamese identity into a new "imagined community" (Anderson 1991). This is not to speculate that this community communication policing has been entirely successful; rather, it functions as a way of reaching out to the younger Vietnamese diaspora—one that is beginning to heal from the rupture of the trauma of the first generation in the first place. The messages embedded in these renovated representations might have opened up a terrain for new discourses in the formation of identities. Nevertheless, it is still unclear about the second - generation Vietnamese diasporas' perception towards the embedded messages that these metaphoric terms represent. Questioning the perception of the receivers is particularly important, in fact vital, since the findings would reflect the actual distance between reality and representation of reality (Gil 2014, p.471). Thus, analyzing the second-generation Vietnamese'

choices of representations by their culturally hybridized artifacts is a way to clarify the distance that the author imply in this study.

Self-representation and digital storytelling in digital media

The term 'digital storytelling' is first coined by Dana Atchley and Joe Lamber on an idea of giving ordinary people a voice to be heard by others as there is "an undeniable need to constantly explain our identities to each other" (Joe Lambert 2006, quoted in Lundby & Kaare 2008, p. 109). In a variety of institutional settings, people use standard digital equipment, telling self-representational stories from their own experiences and life events with self-sourced images and their own voice to present their identity (Meadow 2003; Lambert 2006; Hull&Jones 2007). These are often regarded as 'authentic' mediated identities (Scannel 2001; Tolson 2001; Lundby & Kaare 2008, p.106).

In recent years, users are equally intent on exploring and modifying their digital self-representation on user-generated content production, so that according to Hartley (2008), they have moved to active digital practices in an open innovation network. This argument is reflected in a research by Masserat Amir-Ebrahimi (2004) about Iranian young people's usage of Weblogs for their redefinition of the self and consolidation of new identities. In this social networking site (SNS), all kinds of discussion and interaction between readers and writers can take place that the availability of and access to written archives give youth greater self-awareness and the ability to reflect on their past and their relations with others. From here, Amir-Ebrahimi argues that Weblogs have become a performance space for Iranian youth to participate in the new virtual communities, in which they can consolidate their "true" identities that might have been "repressed/hidden" in the real, physical world. Other studies on second-generation migrant youths in Norway (Mainsah 2011), America (Mallapragada 2006) and Morocco (Simonsen 2012) also showed that for this reason, many users prefer digital worlds inhabited by distinctive communities where they can express and crystalise their identity that reflect Weber and Mitchell's (2004) argument upon youth's self-representation and digital production. These scholars propose labelling these sorts of cultural production as "identities-in-action" (p.27), for at least it is through the process of interacting with the technologies and virtual communities that identities are experienced, reflected and (de)constructed. Thus, digital storytelling is an on-going, creative socio-cultural practice in which participants give shape to cultural repertoires and push their boundaries of expressions through generating meanings of signs (Haraway 2006). The results may be transformative narratives and new forms of shared knowledge (Drotner, K & Nyboe, L 2008, p.170). Upon this, the combination of audiovisual

identity expressions and YouTube vlogs as mediational means have been examined and discussed by Thomas Mosebo Simonsen (2012), Christine Barareza Balance (2012) and Lei Guo & Lorin Lee (2013).

Yet, this positive scene of a democratic potential for ethnic minorities' self-produced media, as well as other scholar's case studies to demonstrate Asia American use of digital communication tools to challenge racism and stereotypes prevalent in the mainstream media (Lopez 2011; Ng 2012) is disrupted by findings from Guo and Lee's (2013) study. By applying the hyrbid vernacular discourse, the study analyses the negotiations between the vernacular and the mainstream via Ryan Higa and Kevin Jumba – the two most popular Asian American YouTubers' - vlogs content, agencies and subjectivity. Upon textual analysis, the concept of hybridity in Bhabha's (1994) work, which emphasizes the blurred, rather than fixed, bourndaries that categorise ethnic cultures, the vernacular versus the mainstream, is proven from the studied visuals and narratives. Moreover, the study finds that even though Higa's and Wu's vernacular discourses does demonstrate some revolutional potential, Mainsah's (2011) doubt on the effectiveness of SNSs and Ono and Pham (2009)'s hesitation for YouTube video as a form of medium for ethnic minorities representations is echoed. For these scholars, the potential is still largely limited due to their coping with the site's priority to provide entertainment and playful atmostphere (Ono and Pham 2009; Mainsah 2011; Guo & Lee 2013).

Participatory culture and produsage towards YouTube vlogs

Being conceptualised with expectations about the future of media in society, participatory culture is often explained as the antithesis of the passivity of the consumer in the capitalist system, and entailing a new perception of individuals as active participants in the production and reception of cultural goods (Jenkins, 2006; Green & Jenkins, 2009, p.213–225, Mueller 2014, p.5). In particular, it evokes the democratic ideals of equal access, expression, and representation by lowering the entry barriers and creating new incentives for heterogeneous groups of diversely motivated individuals (Benkler 2006, p.24) to create and publish private works independently from the traditional models of media production and monetory rewards (Jenkins 2006). A brief consideration of social media platforms such as YouTube with their user-generated content illustrates that today's individual can simultaneously act as both consumer and producer with a certain amount of audience interactions with media content (Mueller 2014, p.5-6). These consumers thus smoothly shift between being 'translators', 'culture curators,' 'pop cosmopolitans,', or 'vloggers', to name a few of the different roles assigned to them by Jenkins, Ford, and Green (2013, p.297), based on the type of content that they participate to create on the platform.

Jenkins furthermore identifies a trend towards communal reception in creativity and community knowledge, as well as an increase in collective intelligence (2006, p. 26, p.54, p.245) that he describes as a "shift from individualized media consumption toward consumption as a networked practice" (p.244). From here, participatory culture promotes the social aspects of creativity in shared learning and co-creation (Mueller 2014, p.5 -6), by which consumers take an active role in not only the production but also the evaluation and distribution of media through a process of communal, or peer-to-peer validation (Bauwens 2009; Deuze & Banks 2009). This reflects the second aspect of participatory culture on YouTube that Jenkins (2006) emphasises: the constant reworking of texts. Fundamental to this process is the practice of recreating content and publshing it in derivative formats, among which memetic videos highlight the unique traits of participatory culture on YouTube (Knobel and Lankshear 2007; Burgess 2008; Lange 2009; Shifman 2014).

Unlike viral videos – clips that spread to the masses via word-of-mouth mechanisms without any significant change in its content (Burgess 2012), memetic videos invokes a different structure of participation since it lures extensive creative users' engagement in forms of parody, mashup, remix or other derivative work (Knobel and Lankshear 2007; Burgess 2012; Lange 2009). The mechanism includes two main parts: imitation (parroting elements from a original media text) and remix (re- editing and combining parroted elements together).

Using 'meme' concept as an analytic tool in his study about memetic videos, Shifman (2014) yields six common features of this genre: a focus on ordinary people focus, flawed masculinity, humor, simplicity, repetitiveness and whimsical content. Each of these attributes, according to the findings, marks the studied video as incomplete or flawed that thereby, invoking further creative dialogue or recreation, contributing to the successful spread of the meme in the social, economic and cultural logic of participation. According to Jenkins et al. (2009) and Fiske (1987, p.83), such clips are defined as "producerly texts" – the media products in which gaps and inconsistencies invite viewers to fill in with their recreation of new meanings, or accelerate the ongoing discussions. Specifically, Balance (2012) explains the virality of Asian-American vlogs with key signifiers and hooks from "symbolic ethnicity". This reflects the global-local nexus of meanings: while some memes are globally popular, others are culturally/ethnically specific that shape actions and mindsets (Knobel and Lankshear, 2007) in both collective and personal levels. These memetic videos can, therefore, be seen as a demonstration of what Patricia Lange (2009) terms "videos of affinity" – videos that establish and enhance connections between members of a social network. In light of the social logic of participation, this would

suggest that the mimetic replication of famous videos or popular topics is relatively compatible with the age of 'networked individualism' (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2002; Wellman et al., 2003). People are expected to demonstrate their unique identity and image to actively construct their 'selves' through derivative videos, yet it is a paradox that these videos are relate to a common and widely shared video trend (Peters and Seier 2009). Burgess (2012) and Jenkins et al. (2009) suggest that we should see these as mediating ideas that are practiced within social networks and shaped by cultural norms and expectations. Moreover, if vlogs are memetic videos, their derivatives focus much more on the performative self of the represented subject (vlogger) as the uploaders become both the medium of the meme and its message: their faces, gestures and verbal communications are integral parts of these videos that represent an alterntive mode of expression (Juhasz 2009, p. 147). This chimes with Marwick and Boyd's (2011) argument that YouTube vlogs are emblems of a culture saturated with personal branding and self-representations.

As in the case of YouTube vlogging, Bruns (2008a, p.84) contends that it can be seen to form part of a wider phenomenon of produsage – the engagement of participants in a hybrid user-producer role. Interestingly, as Mark Lashley (2013) argues from his study about genres of cultural production on YouTube, even though it comprises many kinds of videos apart from vlogs, including home/music video, remix/mashup videos, and other professionally commissioned videos, none of those forms are as specific culture to the site's original slogan – "Broadcast Yourself" - as this produsage phenomenon of an individual speaking to her camera and reaching the world. These produsers - who would refer to themselves as vloggers – operated YouTube by a willingnes to present themselves to the world (Christian 2009) with a multiplicity of vlog forms to produce versions of themselves and reveal YouTube as a valuable site for cultural meaning making (Gao et al 2010). Upon the research opportunities from this context, the social, cultural and media aspects of such activities may be seen as compatible with the political role played by citizen journalism (Bruns 2005; 2006), as the satirical mashups of news media content serves to juxtapose and correct what participants consider as incorrectly displayed in the commercial media (Burgess 2012).

Methods and data collection

Even though only a minority of users actually create content in YouTube - in comparison to the total number of passive views (Simonsen 2012; Lashley 2013) - participants are actively involved with the platform's feedback mechanism (Strangelove, 2010; Shapiro 2014, p. 117; Ernst et al. 2017). It can be liking or disliking videos, commenting, directing questions to the video creators - vloggers, critiquing and replying to others' comments attuned to the vlog and/or the ideologies attached to it. Subsequently, the vloggers' discussions about an issue no longer

occurs with his, or her self-selected circles but with many members of the YouTube community (Shapiro 2014; Ernst 2017) that we will be able to crosscheck the representative value of the vlog narratives and semiotic details through the audience's responses rather than just looking at audio-visuals or transcripting words. It is therefore neccessary to examine both the vlog content and post – video discussions as a validation check to get a more complete picture of the (re)production and reception cycle of the chosen YouTube vlogs as cultural texts. In this regard, a dual methodology approach incorporating textual analysis and discourse analysis is constructed in this study to explore the intersection between diasporic young Vietnamese' ethnic media and their participation in digital communication.

Textual analysis

Due to the user-generated content and self-presentation characteristics of YouTube vlogs (Simension 2012; Lashley 2013; Guo & Lee 2013), the first research question is articulated: how do diasporic Vietnamese youths from different Western multicultural countries use YouTube vlogs to express their cultural identity (RQ1)?

Through repeated close-textual readings of vlogs, this study primarily deals with the visual and verbal (use of language) aspect of self-presentative communications. Via verbal cues (tone and language) and the vloggers' choices of visual presentations, the themes addressed by the vlogger and her expressions emerge as meaningful units to be examined for the researcher to grasp the cultural and performance intent embodied in the vlog. Besides, since visual analysis is also a means of analysing the unfolding dynamic of specific social and cultural practices (van Leeuwen & Jewitt 2001, p.3; Rose 2012), it is employed to identify semiotic trends that these youths have utilised the vlog and comment space to elaborate their discussions of their curated cultural identity. This incorporation, in fact, centres on the interplay of human agency, language, and meaning making in the process of communication (Dyer 1982, p.115; Kress 2010, p.32). As advised by Barthes (1994), Leeuwen and Kress (2005) and Caron (2017), findings from these procedures will be organised into categorised observations, such as themes, narrative developments, and languages.

Vlogs selection

First, a set of combined keywords and phrases including "you know you are Vietnamese/ Viet when...", "being a Vietnamese American/Vietnamese Australian/Vietnamese Canadian", "cultural identity", "identity" and "vlog" is applied to circulate vlogs with research potentials. However, compiling a sample of vlogs representative of cultural identity tendencies on

YouTube raise required extensive efforts, rationales and patience because the keywords generate 1,320,000 results including dozens of unrelated videos produced by community organisations, business, or other personal accounts. Therefore, using the YouTube feature of arranging resulted videos in according with their prominence (number of comments and interactions) and popularity (view rates) has proven an effective next step to sort out YouTube contents.
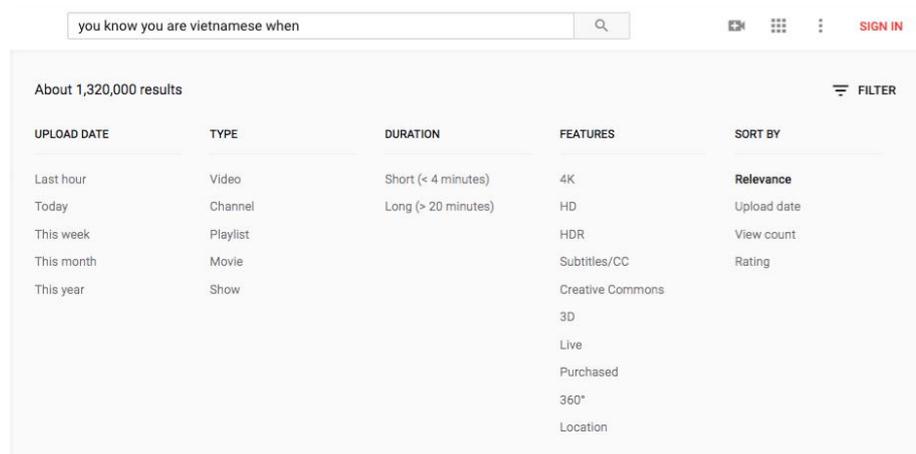
Figure 1. Retrieved through the hierarchical system of featured videos on YouTube.com in March 2023

To be included, a vlog had to meet the following criteria:

The vlog content directly mention about Vietnamese as an ethnicity, or include Vietnamese cultures;

- The media creator is over 18 years of age by the time the studied vlog is created;
- The vlogger is Vietnamese-originated, born and raised in Australia/Canada/the United States and communicates in English and Vietnamese in her/his vlogs;
- The vlog has view rates and users' comments above 10,000 and 100, respectively. This indicates two things: First, this vlog has been noticed, watched and interpreted by other YouTube users. Second, these numbers indicate a high view rate and level of audiences' interest and engagement.

A purposeful sample of 10 vlogs over the 2008 – 2021 period was finally combined. Within this sample, there are 6 male and 3 female vloggers, who are in the age between 20 and 32 years old by the time they upload the vlogs. According to the personal information provided at these vloggers' YouTube Homepage and their vlog features, their cultural identities can be defined as Vietnamese Americans (4), Vietnamese Australians (3) and Vietnamese Canadians (2). In regards of privacy and media studies ethics concern, all of the videos in this sample are publicly uploaded with thousands to millions of views and comments. This is a choice of the creators

since they are explicitly asked to define the privacy settings of their videos when uploading them.

Table 1: Overview about the ten vlogs: Their publication dates, their outreach, the number of sample of comments and the total number of user comments (last updated: 30.4.2018)

Video	Publication dates	Dislikes	Likes	Number of views	Number of sample comments	Total number of comments (30.4.2018)
Being grateful Asian style and my mum is awesome (1)	26 December 2008	678	17K	2,246,337	147	7374
The only Asian in a white Catholic school (2)	16 March 2014	684	41K	2,025,560	48	2418
You know you are Vietnamese when (3)	12 August 2013	681	25K	1,925,168	67	3334
Things Viet moms do (4)	21 November 2013	151	11K	587,473	54	2783
Vietnamese identity talk (5)	20 February 2015	68	4.3K	259,346	20	1044
What do Viets think about other Viet guys/ girls? (6)	3 March 2015	30	1.9K	136,981	12	635
Things Vietnamese parents do and say (7)	12 November 2015	12	251	14,547	11	550
Chị Kayla explains Vietnamese accents (8)	12 July 2017	248	12K	328,001	24	1211
Vietnamese Media: Why We Should Support Them (9)	26 August 2017	20	1.8K	55,285	10	500
Vietnam is my city | Jake Paul - It's everyday bro (Asian's Parody) (10)	23 August 2017	5.8K	122K	3,026,988	250	12403

Discourse analysis

Discourse analysis is the second fold of the methodology to explore culturally specific styles of communication in the vlog language, as well as the users' comments. In claiming that texts are implicated in their cultural and social contexts so that they come to shape various forms of identity and knowledge (Chouliaraki 2008, p.674), this method poses the question of understanding "from within", providing the researcher with a concrete object of investigation – the text, with the abstract meaning – its cultural meaning. On one hand, it is used to categorise patterns and frequency of occurrences of specific messages in texts. On the other hand, it is based on interpreting opinions and grounded perspectives of studied subjects (Bradley 1993) to analyse texts for their relevance, significance, and meaning (Altheide et al. 2010; Altheide & Schneider 2013, p. 5). In short, by employing discourse analysis, researchers aim to study the meanings associated with messages from the observed message variables occur. For this reason, discourse analysis has been instrumental in developing a more dynamic and critical inquiry into cultural understanding of the studied texts.

In communication research, there have been several discussions about the relationship of the mass and interpersonal communication (Gastil & Dillard 1999; Hardy & Scheufele 2005; Eveland, Morey & Hutchens 2011; Eveland & Schmitt 2015) and the YouTube video comment section as a form of social and political online participation (Weber 2014; Shapiro & Park 2015; Stroud et al. 2016; Caron 2017; Ernst et al. 2017). Motivation to comment on a media content, according to these studies, vary from expressing emotions, opinions, adding information, correcting misinformation to sharing a personal perspective. In particular, interpersonal discussion of media content may be a crucial factor to foster media effects since people who read comments are observed to possibly change their attitudes when compared to people who did not (Lee & Jang 2010; Stroud et al. 2016). Given these directions, how viewers respond to user-generated media content and representation, particularly how YouTube users comment on vlogs that express and discuss about issues of diasporic Vietnamese' identity are in focus. To account for this, two more research questions are formulated: *Which are the themes emerging from the users' comments about the vlogs (RQ2)? And which aspects of the video content do these users' comments refer to (RQ3)?*

Data for the discourse analysis is collected via the transcription software ATLAS.ti (Muhr 1991), in which both the pictorial level and verbal level of the videos are documented. Then, the YouTube Data Tool (Rieder 2018) is applied to extract the users' comments related to the audio-visual material. For all 10 videos, 643 user comments out of 32252 comments are selected (2% of total comments per video). The sampling procedure is based on the

combination of the profile-sampling method developed by Reinders (2012) for qualitative research designs and YouTube system of top comments display (Thelwal et al. 2012; Simpson 2013). The logic of this method is to minimise the overwhelming numbers of material (Macnamara 2005, p.17; Reinders 2012) while the research can still consider its diversity and complexity at the certain level of credibility confidence (Collier 2001, p.58; Rose 2001; p.73).

Finally, in terms of intertextuality and multiplication of content, the meanings produced at the interface of media discourse are the direct (textual or visual) objects of both production and reception were examined in relation to other media texts (Glapka 2014). Hence, in this approach people's consumption and participation in generating content in each vlog site is regarded as 'individuals' practices of making sense of the culture they inhabit, and, as part of that, their "self-production subjects" (Couldry 2000, p. 49).

Results and Discussion

The presentations of cultural identity in second-generation diasporic Vietnamese' vlogs

Modes of self-representation in YouTube vlogs

In terms of recording techniques, vloggers employ two modes of self-representation: self-cam (8/10 vlogs) and group vlog (2/10 vlogs). While the former is primarily a presentation of individuals in personal settings, the latter is a semi-version of a talk show or news that reflect on issues of cultural identity. Both of these modes, however, focus on the depiction of the vlogger's self and intimacy with the audience.

Table 2: Lists of vlogs in two modes of self-representation

The self-cam vlogs	The group vlog
Being grateful Asian style and my mom is awesome (1)	Vietnamese identity talk (5)
The only Asian in a white Catholic school (2)	What do Viets think about other guys/ girls? (6)
You know you are Vietnamese when (3)	
Things Viet moms do (4)	
Things Viet parents do and say (7)	
Chi Kayla explains Vietnamese accents (8)	
Vietnamese media – Why we should support them (9)	
Vietnam is my city | Jake Paul – It's Everyday bro (Asian's Parody) (10)	

The self-cam vlog

A prominent feature of this vlogging mode is the close-up shots of the vlogger, in which the vlogger leans closer to the screen for first-person presentation. Within this proximity, the audience can observe movements and details of the vloggers' appearances on the screen via static camera. This might give us a high-definition image quality if it is a separate camera, or a low-res one if it is an embedded laptop webcam– the most basic form of vlogging techniques (Simonsen 20212, p.113, Ng 2012). While this close distance may be inappropriate if viewers meet these vloggers in person in real life, it appears to be a standard for this mode. This can be noticed in the close-ups of most of the vlogs, especially in *brokethehabit* and Richie Le's when they emphasize on their Vietnamese appearance in their talks. They do this for a reason, as Hjarvard (2002), Hirdman (2010) argue that close-ups would bring the receiver a strong impression of intimacy and strong sense of connection to the presenter. "Being grateful Asian way and my mom is awesome" offers an interesting example of this intimacy - the feeling of being there and in a conversation. In this vlog, it is not only *communitychannel* who talks directly to the camera but also the conversations between the vlogger and her mother that happening in front of the camera lens. During the conversations, both constantly look, smile and point at the camera as *communitychannel* explicitly instructs her mother to point at the lens within the medium close-up shot: "There, to say hi to YouTube". This particular gesture also appears in the other vlog by *mychonny*, "The only Asian in a white Catholic church", featuring a scene of three students pointing to the main character, who is now on the same side with the audience since what we see from the video is the other students pointing at and gazing

into the screen. This creates a life-casting experience in which the audience can sense both the presenters' gaze and their physical movements from an intimate viewpoint.
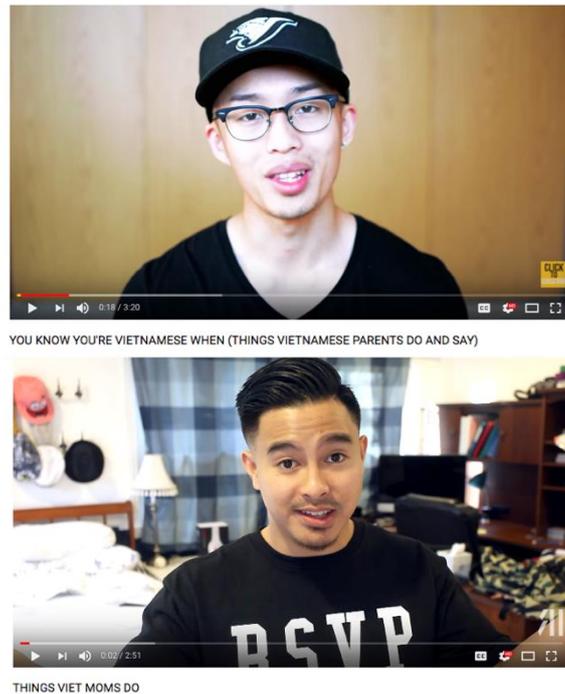
Figure 2. The self-cam vlog close-ups

Figure 3. Pointing at the camera and the audience

Another observable pattern of technical strategy is the vlogger's tendency to include other scenes with camera movements in the video that naturally record more activities of the vloggers, including their experiences and interactions with other people. A such, they can provide the audience with the same sense of directly "being there" (Dovey 2004). "You know you are Vietnamese when", "Things Viet moms do" and "The only Asian in a white Catholic

school" are personal vlogs where the point of view is constantly changes between the static and dynamic movements. Here, the camera follows the vlogger's movements and gazing directions that provide spectactors with the feeling of looking at their Vietnamese mothers during their conversations and the "Vietnamese households" while they are walking around their house. The dynamic shot in that sense extends the audience's experience from intimacy (Hjarvard 2002) to actually living that mediated reality with the vloggers, who become an "unmediated presence" (Dovey 2004) while watching the video. This is an important factor in differentiating the vlog's method of demonstrating a point of view, as well as delivering a watching experience to the audience, in contrast to TV documentary or news.
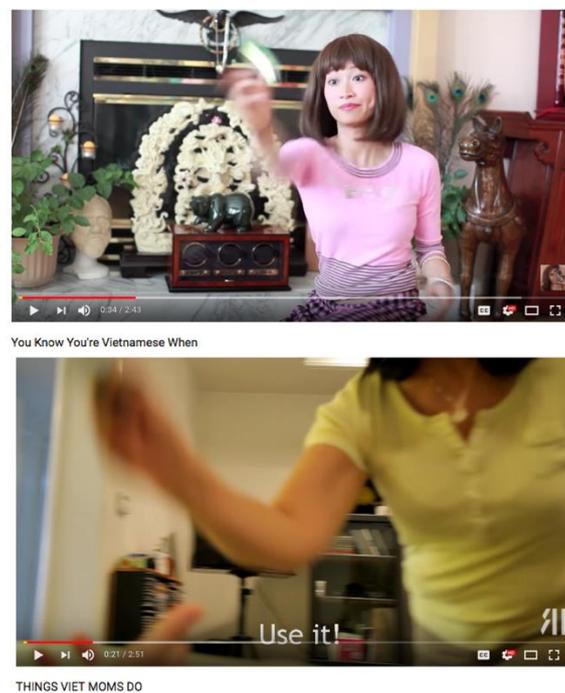
Figure 4. Living in a Vietnamese household from the first person point of view

In vlogs, the mobility of the camera dismantles the distinction of the off-screen space. The camera looks in all directions as the vlogger walks, runs and switches to the close-up shots of the vlogger's self-display and pointing at the screen. In this way, the camera gaze, which becomes the first-person point of view for the audience, authenticates the subject as transparent (Hirdman 2010, p.11; Simonsen 2012) and the cultural identity that the vloggers

represent become a life-casting experience shared between them and their audience (boyd[1] and Heer 2006).

In addition, the home movie aesthetic that Simonsen (2012) earlier identified as an element strengthening the audience impressions of the real, that what they see is the umediated reality that the vloggers' displayed self, is also echoed in this findings. 8 out of 10 vlogs in this study include similar sets of domestic households in background settings, as well as scenes of their everyday life activities with minimal editing of scene cuts and compilations. These scenes include being on the phone with their parent ("Vietnamese media and why we should support them"), doing karaoke nights, going to nail salons ("Things Viet moms do", "You know you are Vietnamese when", eating *pho* and *nuoc mam* (fish sauce) *('*You know you are Vietnamese when")*,* and even getting nagged because of bad grades ("You know you are Vietnamese when", "The only Asian in a white Catholic school"). These activities highlight the referential connection to reality and provide the vloggers with the ability to embed self-reflection to communicate transparency and consequently an authentic version of themselves. In terms of the low-grade style in projecting everyday activities in videos, James Moran describes how this mode foregrounds authenticity:

"The home mode provides an authentic, active mode of media production for representing everyday life. Because home mode practitioners are personally involved behind and in front of the camera (2002, p. 59)".

The personal vlogs can be viewed in a similar way, in that the vlogger is both behind and in front of the camera in presenting their ordinary life through the eyes of the subject, or other family members rather than through the eyes of professional film crew, that their experiences of "growing up in a Vietnamese household" (brokethehabit, Richie Le and LeendaDProductions), or "being an Asian" among social community (mychonny) should be explained by more of ordinary aspects of everyday behaviour.

The group vlog

The second mode of self-representation examined in this study is the group vlog. The similarity between the remaining two vlogs in this mode is also the key part that disinguishes it from the self- cam counterpart. In both vlogs, the vloggers' focus on the self is transformed into their roles as a talk- show host and guests ("Vietnamese identity talk"), or a presenter who

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[1] Researcher dana boyd pointed out that her name is spelled *without* capital letters. See: http://www.danah.org/name.html

discusses and reflects on various issues and in this case, Vietnamese culture and the presentations of this identity ("What do Viet thinks about other guys/girls?" with at least two more guests/vloggers. However, despite the change in self-display tactic, group vlog is still personal. First, the vloggers address the camera with direct gazes in half-body to close-up shots that creates a close distance to the audience in terms of framing. Secondly, the background settings and aesthetic direction also follow the codes of self-cam mode that signal a sense of cultural familiarity to the Vietnamese community. A Vietnamese restaurant with Vietnamese patrons chatting in the background are presented in "Vietnamese identity talk", a community *Tet* (Lunar New Year) event is the background of Richie Le's vlog, and scenes are edited with minimal video effects. Below are screenshots of the group vlogs that demonstrate these visualising techniques.

Figure 5. Self-displaying as hosts and presenters in group vlogs

Overall, all these vlogs share the visibility of identity and technical affordances that use virtual closeness and transparency with the audience in order to enhance the feeling of shared experiences (boyd and Heer 2006), or cultural practice (Ng 2012) via camera shots and low-grade aesthetic. On the other hand, the self-presentation becomes central to the vlog's visual since it visualises the vlogger's point of view, or public performance that indicate their particular cultural identity. This reflects the fact that identity needs to be visible and

performative display take an essential part in presenting one's identity on YouTube vlogs, either in self-cam or group vlogging mode.

Talking about Vietnamese identity: Emerging themes across youth-created vlogs

Except for a few independent content such as "Religion practices" and "References to other Vietnamese YouTubers", this summary of content reveals seven main topics categorised based on the similarities and relevance. Main topics are useful as they will be compared with the themes brought up in the comments afterwards to cross-check the representative values of these vlogs. Results are demonstrated in the tables below:

Table 3: The summary of content; similar and relevant core contents are marked with the same colour

Being grateful Asian style and my mum is awesome (1)	The only Asian in a white Catholic school (2)	You know you are Vietnamese when (3)	Things Viet moms (4)	Vietnamese identity talk (5)	What do Viets think about other guys/girls? (6)	Things Vietnamese parents do and say (7)	Chị Kayla explains Vietnamese accents (8)	Vietnamese media: Why we should support them (9)	Vietnam is my city | Jake Paul – It's everyday bro (Asian parody) (10)
Accents and languages	Accents and languages	Accents and languages	Accents and languages	Accents and languages	Vietnamese media products	Accents and languages	Accents and languages	The decline of Vietnamese media in the States	Accents and languages
Vietnam memories	Appearance	Vietnamese media products	Vietnamese households	Appearance	Food/cuisine	Vietnamese households	Facts about Vietnam	Vlogs as e-heritages	Asian entertainment products
Family relationships	Family relationships	Vietnamese households	Entertainment	Faces about Vietnam, the culture and diasporic community	Traditional celebrations and traditional clothes	Vietnamese media products	Family relatioships	The YouTube Vietnamese community	Biggest cities in Vietnam
Viet characteristics	Viet characteristics	Food/cuisine	Social activities	Traditional celebrations	Family relationships	Food/cuisine	Self-confirmation of Vietnamese identity	Family relationships	Vietnamese households
Vietnamese parents' education method	The importance of education	Social activities	Vietnamese beauty standard	Vietnamese beauty standard	Social relationships	Social activities	A call for audience engagement	Viet characteristics	Ties to Vietnam
Self-confirmation of Asian identity	Self-confirmation of Asian identity	Fashion	Appearance	Family relationships	Viet characteristics	Appearance		The importance of education	Self-confirmation of Vietnamese identity
A call for audience engagement	Influences from the 'white' friends	Vietnamese beauty standard	Social relationships	Viet characteristics	The ranking of Vietnamese cultre amongst	Family relationships		Vietnamese youth's support for	Stereotypes
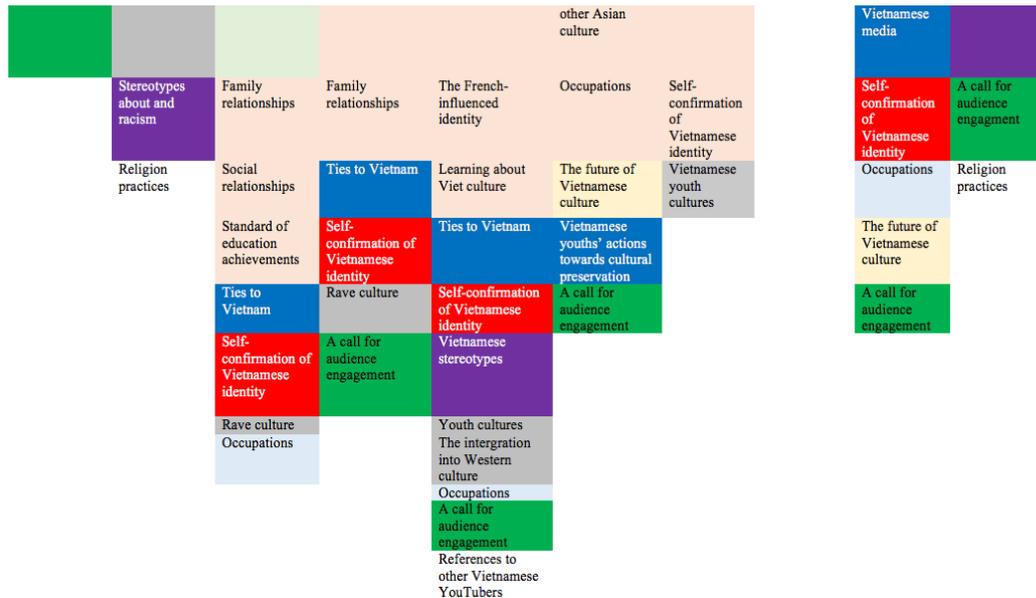
Table 4: The main topics of the vlogs with colours refer to Table 3.

Order	Main topics	Definition
A	Non-abstract representations of Vietnamese identity	Specific indicator or tangible objects that directly relate to Vietnamese culture, i.e Vietnamese (language), food/cuisine
B	Abstract representations of Vietnamese identity	Symbolic ideas that relate to Vietnamese culture and/or Asian values, i.e family relationships, the importance of education.
C	Ties to Vietnam	The vlogger's connection with Vietnam in terms of family connections, visits, knowledge and the sense of contribution
D	Self-confirmation of Vietnamese/ Asian identity	Statements in which vloggers confirm their Vietnamese origin. They can either call themselves as simply Vietnamese or Vietnamese/Asian – Australian/American/ Canadian
E	Vietnamese/ Asian stereotypes	Discussions about the types and effects of stereotypes that they are either exposed to or suffer from everyday experiences
F	The hybridised identity of diasporic Vietnamese	The second generation's practices of and intergration into Western and other cultures, i.e Rave culture, the rap and hip-hop music
G	Occupations	Popular jobs for Vietnamese community
H	A call for audience engagement	Statements in which the vloggers call for the audience's engagement by giving 'likes', commenting their opinions, subscribing and checking out other videos on their channel.

Growing up in a Vietnamese household

In studies about diaspora, the meaning one gives his/her sentiment of belonging to a particular territory, people, cultural practices and, generally, political state (Baldassar et al. 2017; Papastergiadis 1997) is vital. In this theme, the narrative develops around two main ideas within the topic of abstract representations of Vietnamese culture: Family relationships and the importance of education.

Due to its frequency of occurrence in all of the studied vlogs, the representation of family relationships in Vietnamese households is highly evident to the link between the family and one's cultural identity. According to the study report by Kwok Bun Chan and Louis-Jacques Dorais about Vietnamese Quebecers, even though the Canadian-born respondents claim to be more Canadian than Vietnamese, the majority confirm that their roots are Vietnamese because of their families' insistence on generational continuity and worship of ancestors (1998, p. 294). Studies about Vietnamese- Australian and Vietnamese-American communities also emphasize that it is the family bond that plays an important part in shaping the second-generation's perception towards their Viet identity (Nunn 2013; Baldassar et al.2017; Tran 2017). This is evident in Richie Le and LeendaDProduction's vlogs:

> "I'm Richie Le and I'm Vietnamese...I grew up with a Vietnamese mom, and here are something Vietnamese moms do" ("Things Viet moms do").

> "You know you are Vietnamese when your mom always comments on your weight...when your cousin works in a hair salon or nail salon" ("You know you are Vietnamese when")

Furthermore, starting off with a statement about growing up in a Vietnamese household is a strategy of identification (Burke 1950) that the vloggers use to signify a a shared sense of interests, attitudes and values with their audience:

> "I am 99.9% Vietnamese and what does that mean? That means I grew up with a lot of things that other kids had to go through growing up with Vietnamese households" (brokethehabit, "Things Viet parents do and say").

Following these is the storytelling of everyday experiences where the vloggers interact with their own parents, who are strict and rarely express their soft side to their children. Central to their discipline methods are academic achievements and their children's awareness of their Vietnamese origins, so that they can "keep up the fighting spirits and Vietnamese values to overcome life circumstances" (Vietglish Fun – "Vietnamese media and why we should support them"). *Mychonny* humorously and explicitly expresses this pressure in a conversation with

his mom –who is also played by the vlogger himself – in "The only Asian in a White catholic school":

> (Johnny mimicks his mom's voice): You can play with your friend Ho Wok!

> Johnny: Who's Ho Wok? You mean HOMEWORK? F***!

After showing his challenges being "the only Asian at a white Catholic school" due to cultural differences and even racism, *mychonny* concludes that his parents' decision was fixed since "my parents thought a Catholic school would make me a better student". This validates the priority of education in Vietnamese families and indeed, it is perceived as a central element of Vietnamese self- definition (Chan & Dorais 1998, p. 303). In reality, despite the negative socio-economic indicators, the second generation Vietnamese-Australian have a higher proportions enrolled in education at higher rates than other migrant communities (Baldassar et al. 2017). In another vlog, Vietglish Fun discusses the importance of education as a response to the founding generation's struggles when settling in the host county (Foner and Dreby 2011) which, in her case, it is in America: "You know the stereotypes where Asians are pressured to do very well in school, that is true. Uhm, maybe not for everyone, but for the most part it's very common...If we didn't get the straight As, then our parents would not be as happy […]To them, education was a key to success". The frustration goes on with Vietglish Fun when she writes a song in school about that:

"I told my parents that I want to be a singer and tour the world. They said: "You have to be doctor and there's nothing left to say" ("Vietnamese media and why we should support them").

Here, the vlogger frequently uses "you", "we", "us" and "our" to resonate with her audience. On one hand, this "one of us" rhetoric is employed to portray the vlogger and parents as an ordinary Vietnamese-American family, with whom the audience can identify their own experience. By anchoring the stereotype and her parents' rationales, Vietglish Fun frames her argument: what these youth choose to pursue may not match with the family's expectation. Irony is another means vloggers employ to express their viewpoint, as in LeendaDProduction's "You know you are Vietnamese when":

> Linda: Mom, I didn't get an A+.

> Linda's mom (Linda's sister disguised as her mother): *Ui giời ơi!* Here, use this (the medical green oil) to your brain. Maybe you'll be smarter.

The irony in this conversation is presented in two ideas, which would be strange to the "outer" Western culture yet normal in a Vietnamese household: A+ is an acceptable academic achievements and the versatile usage of a traditional medicine can help to increase one's intelligence.

These expressions can indeed indicate the generational gap between the first and second generations in terms of bicultural identity and integration. As an America/Australia/Canada-born Vietnamese, their vision about life and culture is inevitably influenced by the ideology system of the society that they are living in (Nguyen 1991; Buckingham 2008, p.1; Nguyen 2016); and the family become an arena where paradoxes of one's identity are negotiated. Thus, even though the domestic sphere is assumed to be private and separated from the public (Georgiou 2014, p.87), it is a specific context in which diasporic youth use storytelling to construct and readjust their self-representations in vlogs.

In fact, cultural gaps in ethnic/diasporic families are not a new topic, with recent series examining this in mainstream media – some have been mentioned in the introduction. Yet, what create the unique YouTube vlogging style, until this point, is the combination of the discussed home- movie mode with low-grade aesthetic, the intimate and dynamic camera shots, and the personalised narratives with features of their *real parents* (mothers of Richie Le and communitychannel, Vietglish Fun's mom via her video call and mychonny's father). In addition, the inclusion of the parents and their amateurishness, or "honesty" in acting adds the authenticity of these vlogs since the "stage" and "actors" are ordinary and familiar (Guo & Lee 2013). This indicates a seemingly odd yet honest cultural codes of Vietnamese families: while parental love is not shown or verbally expressed as in the Western culture, it is displayed through their actions, such as nagging their kids to put on jackets, educating and feeding their children – typical ways of expressing the Asian's parental love (Poon 2011; Huang 2014; Phan 2016), and the vloggers appreciate it - "You can say things about me but you cannot say bad things about my mum" (communitychannel, "Being grateful Asian style and my mum is awesome").

Most importantly, their co-appearance in the vlogs indicates their family bonds and a reality check of these vlog narratives, so the audience can mirror their experiences upon. Overall, by sharing their stories in a personal way and constructing their personas as ordinary bicultural Vietnamese youths, these vloggers have turned their videos into a casual conversation that they would have with friends about this theme of their cultural identity:

family and education. From this perspective, these vlogs possess unconventional potentials in how they simultaneously initiate dialogues from the employment of "one-of-us" rhetoric while reflect and contest discourse about their Vietnamese/Asian identity in their created media.

Being Vietnamese in a Western country

In this theme, vloggers employ a list of cultural representations including both abstract concepts and particular practices that the vloggers employ to express their cultural identity as a Vietnamese in multicultural Western societies.

   a.   Ties to Vietnam:

Second generation Vietnamese are those who never experienced physical migration directly, but their cultural identities have been influenced by their families' and communities' memories and experiences of Vietnam (Vo 2003; Koh 2015, p.175; Nguyen 2016a). Here Eyerman and Turner's (1998) concept of "generational consciousness" is useful in explaining how diaspora consciousness and identity can be handed down to the second generation in the absence of their direct personal experience of the homeland. This notion is reflected in "Being grateful Asian style and my mum is awesome", when *communitychannel'*s mother educates the vlogger about gratitude by citing her time in Vietnam as an example: "When I lived in Vietnam, my parents was very poor so I looked, only looked [at the food], looked, looked..." In "Vietnamese identity talk", Richie Le also talks about the effects of this phenomenon in the context of the political crisis from the Vietnam war dividing not only the country but also the people's minds and hearts:

> "A lot of remaining southerners that were from the war were sent to re-education camps and those people don't necessarily tell their kids about, you know, what had happened, but there are some that did and I definitely see it in my comments a lot of people cat scratching get each other".

This matches with study outcomes about Vietnamese-Australian and Vietnamese-American community, which reveal that relationships between a majority of the original refugees and the homeland have been mostly strained (Thomas 1997; Baldassar et. 2017). Nevertheless, it does not mean the second generation are strangers to Vietnam. In fact, multiple connections are reflected among the vloggers. Except for *mychonny* and *communitychannel* – the two Vietnamese-Australians*,* the rest of the group (two Vietnamese-Americans, two Vietnamese-

Canadians and one Vietnamese- Australians) explicitly discusses their ties to Vietnam, including relatives living in the country ("Vietnamese identity talk", "Chị Kayla explains Vietnamese accents"), their families' visits ("Things Viet moms do", "You know you are Vietnamese when") and the Vietnamese sphere at home (listed in previous section). However, there is a difference between "Vietnam" and "being Vietnamese", according to these vloggers. In their vlogs, their parents take the initiative to visit Vietnam, and they always bring something back for the people in the country ("Things Viet moms do" and "You know you are Vietnamese when"). On the other hand, the vloggers tend to describe the country with facts (Richie Le and LeendaD in "Vietnamese identity talk", Vietglish Fun in "Chị Kayla explains Vietnamese accents"), confirming their Vietnamese identity with ethnic statements and cultural practices. Most importantly, they express their concerns about Vietnamese youth's responsibilities in preserving the culture:

> "Keep this community strong. It would be a shame if we lost this rich culture but remember that you are as an individual also make up this culture...I realise that the Viet community is growing that everyone has a different story as I've read all the comments from the Vietnamese accents video" (Vietglish Fun, "Vietnamese Media and why we should support them).

To make it more objective and persuasive to the audience, in "What do Viets think about other guys/girls?", Richie Le interviews his peers to collect ideas in a Vietnamese community's public event in Seattle:

> "Get the culture out there, bring more awaress to who we are as people" (Interviewee 1)

> "Reaching out to the youth more as a lot of us are kinda losing our culture, becoming more Americanised and it's great to see more youth more involved in their culture...wherever their parents are from" (Interviewee 2)

From these findings, it can be concluded that different generation have diverse perceptions of identity and homeland engagement. More specifically, towards the second-generation Vietnamese, Vietnam is their motherland while Vietnamese is more of an ethnic identity that "being Vietnamese" makes up a half of these youth's hybridised identity (Nguyen 1991; Chan & Dorais 1998, p. 297; Koh 2015; Nguyen 2016; Nguyen 2016b).

b. The hybridised identity:

It is LeendaDProductions' statement in "Vietnamese identity talk" that confirms this hybridity: "For me, I'm more Western so I' more kind of a chill for family customs and traditions". Linking this back to her vlogs about growing up in a Vietnamese household, in half of her speech she indicates that her experiences are influenced by her mother: "You know you are Vietnamese when your mom...". Richie Le shares this approach with a humorous situation in which *nước mắm* (fish sauce) signifies a generational difference: While Richie is looking for ketchup for fish and chips, his mother suggests having it with *nước mắm,* the only kind of sauce her kitchen has. Here, Richie Le depicts the younger Vietnamse-American generation, who is familiar with both the traditional Vietnamese sauce and the Western dish that he is able to separate them while his mother is on the other end.

*Communitychannel'*s sharing about generational perspectives of gratitude is a convincing demonstration of tensions between conventional and hybridised ideologies in everyday experience. In the video, the vlogger expresses her concern with an advertisement, implying that it represents the Western point of view by her comparison:

> "Now I'm just saying if your kids were Asians, they wouldn't complain because if I can complain in my household about *something really simple and natural like not being hungry*, it'd go down like this with mom..."(communitychannel, "Being grateful Asian style and my mum is awesome").

It turns out that it is not the advertisement's content that concerns *communitychannel*. By emphasising on "something really simple and natural", the vlogger points out that she is trapped between two layers: the "white" media text versus how she is educated in an Asian way at home and what she would consider normal in accordance with the Australian society versus her mother's definition of gratefulness. The younger generation in these vlogs neither completely move away from Vietnamese/Asian culture nor fully assimilate into the Western practices; rather, they keep themselves open to other "identity layers" in the new "home" (Le Espiritu & Chan 2002; Canagarajah & Silberstein 2012, p.83; Angouri 2012).

Hip-hop is one particular aspect where cultural integration occurs. In "Things Vietnamese parents do and say", *brokethehabit* asserts: "And when it comes to youth in our music, you know exactly who Thai Viet G is" and from the vlogger's hand gestures and clothes, we can also say which music genre this Vietnamese-Canadian vlogger is a fan of. Within the Vietnamese youth community, especially Vietnamese-American, Vietnamese rap and hip-hop have been one of the most popular subculture since Khanh Nho (Oregon, USA) with his

'Vietnamese Gang' became known as the first Viet rapper in Viet diasporic community in 1997 (Vietnamnet 2005; Pham 2012; Thanh Nien News 2013). With this "swag vibe" of rap, *aznromeo* brings it to the next level of vlogging by making a rap speech about the Vietnamese identity – "Vietnam is my city". The irony in this video is that it not only is a parody from an unpopular "white" rap song but also derides racism by remixing fragments of mainstream portrayals of Vietnamese stereotypes. In terms of unconventionality, this is an illustrative example of the process of cultural hybridity, from which the vloggers have utilised the contrasting pictures of generational perspectives to give rises to a negotiation of meaning and ethnic representations and also art (Chow 1990; Hall & Bhabha 1990).

c. Food:

In the discourse of relationships between food and cultural identity, Linda Brown and Kay Mussell have observed that foodways seem to be frequently served as a factor in identifying sub-culture groups. The usage of the traditional dishes and ingredients binds individuals together, distinguishing the in-groups from the out-groups and being served as a medium for intergroup communications (1984, p.5).

Food, therefore, is an ethnic sign and it is not a surprise to see particular Vietnamese cuisine represented as parts of the Vietnamese-identification formula. In "What do Viets think about other guys/ girls?", three out of four male interviewees have no hesitation to say that the first thing they like about Vietnamese girls is their ability to cook Vietnamese dishes. An implication is that to these young males, it is the ability to eat and make Vietnamese dishes with the original ingredients that indicates the authentic 'Vietnamese-ness'. As a significant representation, *phở* appears as a top of mind cuisine:

> "You know you're Vietnamese when you have *phở*, or pho, for breakfast, lunch and dinner. Thanks mom." (LeendaDProductions, "You know you are Vietnamese when")

Within the zoom-in shot, the audience can observe the way Viets (the vlogger and her mom) eat *phở* with the right utensils - chopsticks and big bowls. In this context, it is not only the food but also the way to eat *phở* that demonstrates meaning. Besides the eating gestures, the parental love is depicted in this scene. In these Vietnamese families, affection can only be expressed non-verbally when the mother always overfeeds her children, including Richie Le's, *communitychannel*'s and even LeendaDProduction's despite her comments on her daughter's weights. Considering these family bonds, the presentation of food is inextricably linked to an endless enactment of family relationship, an indicator of Vietnamese' values.

In the discourse of multiculturalism in societies like America, Australia and Canada, minority subjects are clearly valued for the cultural wealth they bring (Ang 1995; Hage 1997, p.136). Putting this into the context of these vlogs, it is more logical to view the presentations of *phở* in the former, as well as a symbolic part of the cultural traits (Martini & Wong 1994) that vloggers strategically communicate to their audience.

Nước mắm (fish sauce) is another Vietnamese food brought into the vlogs. When compared with *phở, nước mắm* is more sophisticated in a way that if a person can neither cope with its smell nor understand its taste, to use it would be challenging. Therefore, while *phở* connects the ethnic with 'the orherness', *nước mắm* is an ethnic code that signifies the Vietnamese uniqueness. Even though food/cuisine may be considered as superficial ethnic representation, the analysis has proven the opposite. First, by showcasing the *phở* phenomenon, it signifies a reality is that the ethnic food, as well as members of ethnic communities in the West also needs to be acknowledged as "integral parts of the multicultural contexts they inhabit" (Narayan 1997, p.183) . Second, by incorporating into other values, including a mode of cultural affirmation, a medium to express family affection, a signifier of the ethnic uniqueness as well as a means to integrate into the multiculturalism of food culture, the vloggers are able to express their ethnic identity using a new approach.

Language and diasporic humour

    a. "Can we switch the language?":

Studies of online ethnic identity (Androutsopoulos 2006; Childs & Mallinson 2006; Dorleijn & Nortier 2009; Birnie-Smith 2016) have shown that the Internet is one medium through which members of ethnic or diaspora groups can 'negotiate their dual identity' through the use of their multilingualism. In the vlogs, features of Vietnamese range from a few words to half of the verbal content. The language is mostly used for indicators of Vietnamese culture, such as *dầu xanh* (medical green oil), *phở* and *nước mắm (*the fish sauce), and especially when the vloggers' parents are talking to them with different Vietnamese accents. This depicts the fact that the language is used within the Viet communities in America, Australia and Canada, starting from the domestic sphere to wider social connections (Peterson 1997; Chan & Dorais 1998; Koh 2015; Baldassar et al 2017). The capacity to speak the language seems to be filling different functional roles in clearly defined cultural texts, as in Linda (LeendaDProductions) and Richie Le's example in "Vietnamese identity talk":

Linda: The last one would be, uhm, *chào bác* (hello sir/madam), which means the greetings for elder people.

Fung bros: So anyone who is dating a Vietnamese person and meet their parents, *chào bác.* Richie Le: and if you bow a little bit, you're in there, the circle.

or *Vietglish Fun*'s sharing about motivation to start the channel: "...I'm pretty sure that eventually people that are born in this country (read: America) are gonna forget this language. That's why I had to start something, that's why I started Vietglish Fun...so that I can make sure that my kids will remember this language" ("Vietnamese media and why we should support them").

Within this group, *Vietglish Fun* appears to have the most proficient knowledge about the language. Unlike others, this Vietnamese-American vlogger always has Vietnamese subtitles in her videos for the audience to follow her speech and it becomes particularly useful when she is explaining different Vietnamese accents by comparing them to their English equivalents. According to *Vietglish Fun,* while her Southern Californian accent equals to the southern Vietnamese accent, the Indian-lish is equivalent to the central Vietnam's and the posh British English is like the northern Vietnamese'(Hanoian) accent. Here, accent becomes another important indicator of one's ethnic and cultural identity: if one can understand the accent, it signifies her Vietnamese identity; if one can speak the accent, it distinguishes her as a Vietnamese from other ethnicities in multicultural societies. This explains for the vloggers' tendency to switch to Vietnamese or demonstrate their parents' accent as it is a way to express their cultural origins.

Figure 6. Vietglish Fun explaining different Vietnamese accents with subtitles

On the other hand, the state of being in between identities whilst using English as their main language affects the vloggers' Vietnamese competency. This is reflected in *aznromeo*'s switch

to Vietnamese in the later half of his parody. Even though this switch is to express his capacity of speaking Vietnamese, the expressions are made up from basic vocabularies and grammar structures. Contrastingly, his skilul use of English puns and rhymes reveals his familiarity with the language:

"You know it D Nguyen and it's me whose "winning"[2]

This is team a-z-n b*, who the f* are yu?"[3] (*aznromeo*, "Vietnam is my city | Jake Paul's It's everyday bro (Asian's parody version)")

In overall, employing Vietnamese is a compulsory code in these vlogs. Trinh Thi Minh Ha's rhetoric about hyphenated identity is a suitable explanation to this translanguaging act of these Viet youths: "[The hyphenated identity] affirms itself as a transient and constant state; one is born over and over again as hyphen rather than as fixed entity thereby refusing to settle down in one (tubicolous) world or another. The hyphenated condition certainly does not limit itself to a duality between two cultural heritages' (1991, p.159)". Linking it back to the vlog's dynamic nature of user- generated content, it understandably becomes a space for identity negotiation: this is where these vloggers can choose from both English and Vietnamese to construct their ethnic identities online, with English for communicative efficiency and Vietnamese as a badge for their cultural distinctiveness.

b. Irony towards Asian/ Vietnamese stereotypes:

The negotiation of intercultural tensions to construct an identity statement seems to lead to gaining a voice potentially representative of the community. In anzromeo's "Vietnamese is my city | Jake Paul's It's everyday bro (Asian's parody) and mychonny's "The only white Asian in a white Catholic school", this is directed to engage with Asian/Vietnamese stereotypical portrayals as an opportunity to challenge the public perceptions. While *aznromeo* employs ironic expressions his rap-vlog to address stereotypical portrayals of Vietnamese-Australian, mychonny incorporates this strategy with humour to give different perspective where the vlogger, as a minority, observes "the othering white Australians".

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[2] This is pun since Nguyen is pronounced as N-win

[3] This i a pun since a(y)-z(ee)-n is similarly promounced as Asian

In his vlog, aznromeo turns the stereotypes about Vietnamese into provocative rap verse with his exaggerating Vietnamese-English accent. In his lyrics, *aznromeo* uses irony and a tongue-in-cheek style of rapping to confront the stereotypical portrayals of Asians and Vietnamese. He does not refute them; he subverts them with irony and this is striking in how these stereotypes would come across as much more aggressive and threatening than reality. For this Vietnamese-Australian vlogger, this ironic humour is a mechanism of dealing with being misjudged, or being different in multicultural Australia as I have marked out alongside the lyrics.

The use of diasporic humour has long been a progressive phenomenon among communities such as the Jewish diasporas in their cultural texts, which are often drawn from daily life that indicates a critical accuracy of observation of the host country, themselves and their places in it (Ziv 1998; Roeh & Nir 1998; Gruen 2002). This produces the constructed characters and reality that are "both worse than us and exactly like us" (Shershow 1986, p.12), meaning that this type of humour functions as a reflection of how ethnic groups perceive themselves and are seen by others. Another technique is remxing images and scenes in between his close-ups to visualise his verbal expressions. *Aznromeo* includes video scenes about Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi, the biggest cities in Vietnam; other images are popular Internet memes, in which Asians are projected with "slanty eye" look, or as a nerdy math teacher. However, the vlogger twists the associated meaning of this meme by inserting a headshot of Jake Paul[4] before it with the caption upon: "and I ain't no drop out", indicating that it is better being a "nerdy" Asian than a dropped out (white) YouTuber with the 3rd most disliked YouTube video of all time (YouTube 2018) and a toxic prank culture (Williams 2017; Wakabayashi 2018).

Arun Mukherjee, a Canadian critic argues that "migrant" writers (who in this case is *aznromeo* as a vlogger and a content creator) "may possess that double vision which comes only with alienation from the dominant group" (1986, p.85). Similarly, in his vlog, *aznromeo* employs the Asian pop culture (the Yugio Deck game, the Pokemon and Super Saiyan manga and

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[4] Jake Paul is an American actor and YouTube personality. The YouTuber was initially known for bringing up "pranks" and self-recorded videos on the now defunct video application Vine before starting to upload his vlogs and his debut music video "It's Everyday Bro" on YouTube. In the beginning of 2018, Jake Paul was heavily criticised by the public because of his videos featuring him laughing next to dead bodies in a Japanese forest and tasering dead animals. In response to the audience outrage, YouTube has stopped ads on the vlogger's channel and removes him from Google Preferred.

anime, and Disney), as well as Vietnamese signatures such as biggest cities in Vietnam and *phở* to firstly signal his resistence against cultural assimilation and secondly, express his ethnic pride. However, with *phở, aznromeo* also makes a random link between *phở gà (*chicken noodle) with an American celebrity John Cena due to the rhymes to reflect the similar absurdity of linking any random Vietnamese to a set of stereotypes: "Every day I eat *phở gà* – Like John Cena". Last but not least, *aznromeo* asserts: "just release my music sample and it's selling like a budda temple". Here, the vlogger voices his sarcasm to mock the act of commercialising Buddhism – one of the prominent Asian religions. With *aznromeo*, we can see that the representation of an individual identity shifts to represent the community when the vloggers include irony to self-reflections of stereotypes and through us- versus-them rhetoric to contest pop culture.

Also with the humour approach, *mychonny* narrates his experiences in a way that forwards the convergence of Asian (Vietnamese) and Australian where these two identities and experiences are contested. Within this context, a series of *mychonny*'s experiences in a new school is presented with irony in many ways in "The only Asian in a white Catholic school". First, he's a Buddhist child going to a Catholic school. This results in his indifference during that seminary classes that triggered the seminary teacher to excalimed "Oh, Satan's child!" and this is where the humour comes in with his reply: "No! I'm an Asian child". Second, there are so many times when *mychonny* is ostracized because of his Asian appearance. Third, it is blunt racism when not only the other white kids but also the teachers mimic Chinese accent to *mychonny* even though he is Vietnamese. This is not a pessimistic story, however, since the vlogger narrates with a comedic twist: "White kids are crazy, but it was easy to outsmart them".

An important feature of irony is how authors/ content creators and their audience achieve it together. In other words, it is a code that can only be perceived by those who shares the experiences or perspectives. Sneja Gunew notes that "the mainstream is extraordinarily reluctant to recognise the existence of irony among the marginal; irony is apparently reserved for a dominant or privileged group" (1992, p.40). *Mychonny* then reverses this "privilege of irony" by giving a visual image and a voice to his Asian audience to show them how it feels like to be on the other side of power. When the white kid is asking about his appearance, the kid is slurping Milo and when it runs all over his nose and white shirt, *mychonny* has to help the kid "wash his face off". Sarcasm is implied. In another scene, when being threatened to be "smashed", the vlogger replies with another implied meaning to scare the bullies away:

"Smash my ass? I'm gay!" Above all, it is the vlogger and his friends' exaggerating acting that except for *mychonny* – the Asian-raised kid - all of the other characters are projected as always being loud, a stereotype of Australians (Robertson 2014; Saleh 2016; Leggatt 2017).

By adding a comedic twist in this video, he is able to captivate his viewers to watch his video. This twist arguably contains the capacity for ambiguity, juxtaposition, and irony (Lipsitz 1986) that *mychonny* is able to cultivate after a being marginalised in a unfamiliar cultural sphere, as George Lipsitz points out, the "minority group culture reflects the decentred and fragmented nature of contemporary human experience" in a multicultural society" (p.159). By developing the narratives based on his own experiences, *mychonny* is able to represent his Asian (Vietnamese) - Australian identities to the online community instead of using pop culture and conventional representations. This is what makes the video worth watching to the minority audience and the second-generation Asians/Vietnamese in particular as a form of shared experience and a chance to be heard.

1. The comment section, where vlogs are validated

The emergence of user-generated content media has resulted in a cultural shift where media consumption becomes an active social process, in which the audience not only evaluate but also contribute to the development of a cultural text (Bruns 2013, p.70). In this study, the necessity of audience engagement is demonstrated with the vloggers calling for the audience's opinions in eight out of ten videos. To answer Research Questions 2 and 3 (*which are the themes emerging from the users' comments about the vlogs (RQ2)? And which aspects of the video content do these users' comments refer to (RQ3)?*), the following discusses the themes brought up in the users' comments, as well as the relevance between these comments and the vlog content. In this discussion, the audience's reception and representative value of the studied vlogs will also be assessed.

2.1 Prominent themes of the user comments

Based on the collected data, users discuss 62 topics in their comments. These topics are divided into three tiers, among which the highest topic frequency is in 101 different comments. The first tier includes nine topics, each of which is mentioned in at least 33 different comments. The second tier includes topics applicable to at least ten different comments, and the remaining ones are applicable to less than ten. Since the purpose of this part is to examine the prominent themes brought forward by user comments, the first tier is central to analysis.

The nine topics in this tier are as below in descending order:

Table 5: The top eight prominent topics of the user comments

Topics	Examples
Self-confirmation of Vietnamese identity Definition: Comments in which users clearly state that they are Vietnamese or grew up within a Vietnamese household and absorbed Vietnamese culture. Theme group: I	Example 1: I'm Vietnamese to bro this is the best song Example 2: "WHERE THE VIETNAMESE SQUAD AT?! Edit: is it just me or the Vietnamese population is the best 😌😌" Example 3: Now I don't really know how Vietnamese Americans are over there, as I'm from Norway. I get the feeling that some families over there are in a way loosing their roots a bit and not learning their language properly. Like mentioned it feels like they are more americanized these days. As for me here, i'm proud to say that all my friends that are Viet are in this community called "Sinh Hoat" which i'm sure those who are from Vietnam have heard of or are a part of it. Most of the majority in this group have been a part of it all way to the age of 5 and don't leave until they have graduated High School and grow up to move away and work. So we learn a lot of things, including to write and read and also attend many events throughout the year. So i'm proud to say that we are keeping our roots big time here! <3
References to the vlogger's parent Definition: Comments about the vlogger's parent featured in the vlog. Theme group: I	Example 1: Your mum is a typical Vietnamese mum Example 2: His dad's reaction when he was dancing on top of him ^ ^". Example 3: Your mom is so great, she acts with you in your vlog
References to the vlogger Definition: Comments with direct mention to the vlogger. Theme group: I	Example 1: I really like that Richie knows some Vietnamese history and it's influences. he definitely knows what he is talking about in regards to Vietnam. Such as the beef with north vs. south, difference in dialect, and that Vietnamese people were trying to adapt here in America so they didn't have time to raise their children due to excessive working, so many of the children had raised themselves, thus there are ghetto asians (not just a Vietnamese thing, this is more a southeast Asian thing). He is very knowledgeable in his culture and I like that he spoke about it. Richie should do a separate video about it because I think a lot of people can relate and it helps others to understand that not all Asians are the sterotype "nerdy" or "smart" asians. The other 3, I feel are very western influence but at least they tried (:

	Example 2: I admire you very much, you're so awesome and talented. Your parents are from Vietnam. So you're Vietnamese, an't you? Example 3: You have created a meme in my school, are you proud of your creation?
Accents and languages Definition: Comments with regard to Vietnamese accents and language in general and how they are used or spoken by the second generation Vietnamese. Theme group: II	Example 1: I'm a Vietnamese born in America, and while I spoke it when I was younger, my parents usually revert to English just for convenience. It's so hard now, especially for a language like Vietnamese where some of the vowels/consonants can be hard to pronounce or distinguish from one another. Every time I hear another Vietnamese person around my age speak it fluently with that Vietnamese accent it makes me a bit jealous. I basically taught myself how to speak it a little more often and able to pronounce words from text with reasonable accuracy. But it will be hard especially if you live in an area with very little Vietnamese people. Example 2: What is with the poor pronunciations with the viet words? Example 3: Hue (center vietnam) is more likely British accent. It has royal things going on for centuries. I have thought that Northern accent is a general Vietnamese accent. Now I know that there is no "standard accent" because of the muti-accent in the country. Each region has a different accent, so Vietnamese people should learn and respect. Kayla, Thanks for your language preservation. Hope you make more videos for learning Vietnamese.
Evaluations of the vlog content Definition: Comments in which users evaluate the vlog content. Theme group: III	Example 1: This is too accurate Example 2: I'm viet and this is so trueeeeeee!!!!!!!!!!! hahaha so funny Example 3: Finally a quality parody
Family relationships Definition: Comments in which users mention, or include stories about their family members in responding to the vlog content Theme group: II	Example 1: You know your Vietnamese if your mom cares more about your other siblings😂😂😂😂 Example 2: Omg my mom and dad are like this too! Example 3: My grandma dose all of this !! PARIS BY NIGHT Is their favorite

Emotion expressions Definition: Comments in which users express their emotions in forms of emojis and texts. Theme group: III	Example 1: Lol I was laughing Example 2: +USER my heart melted too Example 3: aww I love that mum scene
Expression of interest Definition: Comments in which users express their interests in the vlog content and subscribing to the vlogger's YouTube channel. Theme group: III	Example 1: This is so good 😊 subbed instantly Example 2: Come back everyday to watch this Example 3: You're my inspiration! My sister & I were born in the US but we love to learn Vietnamese and speak Vietnamese at home. Love your channel!!
Stereotypes and racism Definition: Comments that discuss or contain racial stereotypes and (ignorant) racism towards Vietnamese and Asians. Theme group: II	Example 1: I hate when white people call all Asian peoples are "Chinese"and especially is Vietnamese. Some of the white people when they see a Korean girl, they know she is Korean, see a Japanese girls they know she's Japanese(maybe a few but usually have)but only thing when they see Vietnamese , they thought we are Chinese!!! It's doesn't mean I hate Chinese, I just hate the way they called all Asian people are Chinese. I know we have some influence from Chinese culture but we are still Vietnamese anyway. Just few month ago when we celebrate the lunar new year, have a boy in my class, he said to some of international student is "Happy Chinese New Year" and I said "why don't you say that is Lunar new year"and he said "wait,so you not Chinese...I thought you're Chinese" "no dude, I'm V and we have the same class in two years,really??" "I thought they don't have that in Vietnam"....Not really mad,just so upset.... Example 2: +USER He had asked me if it was because I ran into a wall too many times. My brother and I were the only non-whites in the school at the time, but I didn't take it as offensive...I just told him, "Yes...I ran into a wall so hard it made my face flat..." :/ Example 3: Bro you forgot about eating the dogs also 😂

From here, three prominent themes in the top tier have been identified: (I) Direct references to the vloggers (including the guest starring), (II) topics related to cultural identity, and (III) direct reactions to the vlog content. The most significant similarity between these themes is that, they all exhibit the nature of YouTube's interactive media environment (Bruns 2006; 2008a; 2008b & 2012): openness to particiapation, ad hoc meritocracy (flowing movement between produsers' (users of the comments) roles, unfinished artefacts, common property yet individually rewarded.

Regarding the first two themes, user comments tend to have a conversational style, in which users would directly address the vloggers' acting and respond to their point of view. By doing this, users have considered vlogs as an intimate conversation, in which they participate to share their opinions and personal experiences. Furthermore, "Self- confirmation of Vietnamese identity" dominates the data in these two groups with a frequency of occurence 1.5 times higher than the second most popular topic. The topic is assigned to comments in which users identify themselves as Vietnamese. The forms of expressions are variable; they can be exclamations, affirmations, and even rhetoric questions (i.e "WHERE THE VIETNAMESE SQUAD AT?!" – user's comment in *aznromeo's* vlog), which prompt responses from other users. These are the ways that the audience participate with their comments to express their online cultural identity, enhance their sense of belonging and most importantly, contribute to the expansion of the vlog content. Consequently, this audience-participation part of the vlog becomes equally interesting content to the audience that in every studied vlog, there are comments that confirm their interest in the comment section:

"I'm here for the comments" (user's comment in "Vietnamese identity talk")

"When you scroll down just to read the comments!" (user's comment in "Chị Kayla explains Vietnamese accents")

There are two reasons for this: First, by reading the comments, users can understand an overall picture of the message of identity that one community expresses via its reactions to the vlog. Second, because user comments can be constantly added and updated from the posted video, unless vloggers close this section, the timeliness value of the vlog can also be observed by comparing the created dates of the vlog to the most recent comments. For example, even though "Being grateful Asian style and my mum is awesome" and "You know you are Vietnamese when" were posted in 2008 and 2013 respectively, these videos still receive comments in 2022. This also why theme II has the highest number of popular topics, since topics related to cultural identity can trigger a lot of personal experiences from the users, such as the topics of family members and language accents. In terms of 'familiy members', the technique of mentioning another family member to demonstrate particular practices of the vloggers is also employed by the users. The finding reveals that in most of the comments relevant to this topic, users relate the vlog narratives to their own experiences with a family member, implying that there is a set of certain behaviour that is typical to Vietnamese families, and that contributes to their ethnic identity. However, in terms of 'accents and language', users not only share about their multilingualistic use of Vietnamese and English but also criticise the spelling and pronunciation mistakes spotted from both the vloggers' speech and their

subtitles. This is a reflective finding as most of the vlogs, especially Vietglish Fun's "Vietnamese media and why we should support them", emphasise on the importance of Vietnamese as a remarkable cultural heritage. Based on this result, it is reasonable to infer that the comment section functions as both the users' space for self-presentation and contribution to improve communal cultural knowledges of the younger generation of diaspora Vietnamese. An interesting point here is that, this communal cultural knowledge is also strengthened and extended by the contribution of a wider diaspora outside the the vloggers' community as in the case of the comment of a Vietnamese born in Norway in Vietglish Fun's - a Vietnamese-American – vlog. This performance of such Internet-empowered and connected network, therefore, would be impossible without the interconnected, user-generation content platform of YouTube that builds transnational social networks for these youth's online activities of cultural exchanges and understanding.

Meanwhile, in theme III, the user comments are constructed in an expressive form to demonstrate the users' instant reactions towards the video. Rather than conversational responses that ignite further discussions on a specific topic, these comments can be considered users' self- expressions to the online community (Chau 2010, p.69; Strangelove 2010). Therefore, the relevance of this group could be explained by dimensions of participatory culture, in which users, especially the younger generation, are motivated to create their own content as a form of expression and civic engagement that they believe their individual contribution matters and, in this case, are their *online presence* in the community that responds to a vlog featuring representatives of diasporic Vietnamese identity.

Overalll, the tone of voice can be divided into two ranges: from casual to lightheartedly fun and from fun to humorous. This may come from both sides' intention: For the vloggers, the more likely they can talk in their desired audience's language, the more effectively they can win audience's approval (Burke 1950, p.55). Vice versa, the audience's participation and ideas are simultaneously shaped by the cultural norms and expectations (Jenkins et al. 2009; Burgess 2012) of that environment that the vlog creates. Yet, a lack of seriousness may cause hurdles for this vlog genre to become diasporic youth's media platform to contest mainstream media racial misconstructions and ideologies, even though humor can be subversive and even powerful weapon to issues of hegemony and autonomy (Hasenauer 1988; Walke 1988).

This finding echoes previous scholars' doubts on the authenticity of popular YouTubers due to the commercial effects of YouTube business model (Burgess & Green 2009; Carpentier 2009; Verstraete 2011). With more than 1 billion users (YouTube 2018), its business model allows

the site to profit from many strategic programs that evolve around these users, yet advertising and the YouTube Partner program are two of the most popular revenue streams of YouTube (Greg 2011; Kaufman 2014). The YouTube Partner program allows the video creators to monetise their content YouTube in many ways, including advertisements, paid subscriptions and merchandise. In these revenues, YouTube usually keeps about 45% of the revenue. Thus, it is very important goal for these vloggers to win hits for their vlogs (Gijs & Nack 2008; Guo & Lee 2013; Kaufman 2014), especially mychonny, Vietglish Fun, LeendaDProductions and communitychannel and Richie Le, who have become YouTube Partners. Except for communitychannel, who joined the Partner program after the studied vlog was established, other vloggers have to comply with the site's production logic: there possibly are algorithms that filter entertainment from serious discussion of political and social issues (Tran 2017). Guo & Lee (2013) have critically pointed out that these vloggers have to be amusing and compromise their personal agendas with entertainment-oriented videos to attract audience and advertisers to maintain their "YouTube celebrities" status. These related facts and observations, therefore, provide relevant to the vlogging style that the vloggers in this study make when expressing perspectives about their cultural and ethnic identity under the shadow of this corporate culture.

On the other hand, it is for certain that the vloggers as content creators have a choice of choosing and building their own cultural texts (Hutcheon 1991). According to the analysis in 2.1, vlogging requires these young vloggers a series of decision making that includes the kind of vlogging aesthetic such as vlogging style, the home-movie modes, types of domestic backgrounds and above all, the vlogging content to communicate to the YouTube community and their followers. Such decisions, as Kress and Selander (2012, p. 267) understand, is dependent on the social and cultural context that both the sender (the vloggers) and the receiver (the audience) are located in that shapes what they produce, receive and interpret from the cultural texts. Therefore, the encoded and culturalised meanings in these vlogs can only be perceived by the minority who shares the same experiences. At this point, an overview of the vlogs' interactive parameter is conducted in this research to measure the audience's general reactions; it turns out that positive reactions outnumber the opposite. This raises a question about the audience's expectations towards these YouTube vlogs, that even if this research is successful in proving that YouTube vlog have the potential to become the next ethnic media for the younger generation, whether they want it to be and why.

Conclusion and Future Research Directions

The intersection between vlog as an user-generated content media and ethnic youth's displays of their cultural identity is the aspiration of this research. From here, the research focuses on

Vietnamese diasporic youths' expression of their cultural identity on YouTube vlogs and patterns of user particiaption that energise the creation of these cultural texts. Based on the analysis of both the production and receptions of vlogs produced by vloggers of Vietnamese descent in Australia, Canada and the United States, the research argument from the beginning is affirmed: On one hand, a youth-created vlog signifies the vlogger's distinctiveness in his, or her identity; on the other hand, it indicates both the vloggers and their audience's senses of connection to a collective identity. This cultural identity evolves around the interactive sphere between the vloggers and their audience and might not be fully and authentically featured on mainstream media.

In terms of visualisation, it is the vlogging techniques that distinguish a vlog as an authentic cultural text from other professionally produced media. In these vlogs, a majority of camera shots are the close-ups in which the vloggers' facial expressions, hand gestures, and especially direct gazes create an intimate conversation between the vloggers and their audience when talking about their cultural identity. Dynamic shots and flashback scenes - other constructive elements that have been identified in the analysis - have been strategically employed by the vloggers to construct *un*-mediated realities in the vlogs, from which the audience can be emmersed in the experiences that the vloggers are referring to. Domestic background with Vietnamese households and cultural settings is the third piece of the visualising strategy that the vloggers use to potray the authentic Vietnamese atmosphere. Above all, the aesthetic direction of these vlogs towards home-mode video completes the authentic value of the vlogs: it represents the vloggers as ordinary people who are "broadcasting" their cultural identity from the ordinariness.

Ordinariness and irony in diasporic humour are the two main approaches the Vietnamese-originated vloggers in this study develop their narratives. In the first approach, ordinariness is presented as semiotic resources of Vietnamese culture that present in all of the vloggers' everyday experiences. These elements, therefore, portray a cultural picture of the second generation Vietnamese identity, in which representations of cultural distinctiveness such as family relationships, language, as well as food and cuisine are presented as primitive colours; they are deep-rooted values of the culture with which one can identify herself as Vietnamese. Meanwhile, acknowledging their duality and hyphenated circumstances in multicultural yet Western-influenced countries like Australia, Canada and the USA, these vloggers discuss their generational cultural gaps and the hybridised identity as a way to challenge both the

conventionally ethnic group identity (Goudenhooft 2015; Brinkerhoff 2009), as well as the hegemonic Western meta-narratives (Stanley 1998, p.6).

In the second approach, diasporic humour is significantly present in the Vietnamese-Australian vloggers' rhetorics. By injecting stereotypes about Asian/Vietnamese - Australians into a fictional world where all of them were true and switching the observing perspective to the minority side, these vloggers show their audience the irony of being on the other side of power, from which humour appears as a potent strategy of resistance and survival. In this approach, the inside jokes signify the shared experiences of the second-generation Vietnamese, as irony consolidates a sense of community among the vlogger-audience cultural space with the "inside" knowledge and understanding neccesary to decipher it. This, in fact, reflects Sudesh Mishra's definition of irony: "[It is] the transmission of irony assumes a common interpretative archive, a shared way of seeing and speaking, a discursive field within which political, ethical and cultural wars are meaningfully waged" (1997, p.37).

Throughout the vloggers' display of their cultural identity, it is proven that identity is a complex, flexible and hybrid subject. Concerning diaspora, this is a sophisticated case because it is the result of a synthesised mixture of cultures and ideologies. More than anyone, these diasporic youth represent for a generation caught in an interspace that on a positive note, they consider it signs of their uniqueness that would complete their self-identification sentence: "You know you are Vietnamese when...".

By presenting their cutural identity through their personalised experiences, the vloggers are able to construct the new Viet identities that also represent the second generation community. This representation of cutural identity, therefore, requires the online community to acknowledge the vloggers as a member and a representative voice. It starts with the reflective relevance between the vlog topics and top-tier topics of user comments. Then, the resonance between the vloggers' performed characteristics and the tone of voice of the user comments is observable, which highlights the conclusion that vlogs are dialogic, conversation hub in which the vlog content is constantly developed out of its original version through vloggers – audience and audience-audience interactions. Based on these findings, the latter part of the argument at the beginning of this study is confirmed: Because of their being a part of a particuclar cultural community, the vloggers are oriented to and aligned with that community. This orientation and alignment lead them to produce the vlog content that simultaneously represent their own personal identity and serve that community's need showcase and discuss their cultural identity.

Last but not least, there remains the lack of seriousness in vlogs about cultural identity issues and the fact that the majority of the studied vlog includes entertainment content. Therefore, it is concluded that even though YouTube vlogs possess factors highly potential of becoming a new media platform for second generation Vietnamese youth to activate and perform their identity formation, the reality also lies in these young vloggers' purpose of creating their vlogs, as well as their online channel and the audience's preference of consuming and participating in YouTube. This indicates a need for further research on both the ethnic vloggers and the active audience's participation in YouTube, in which their agency to participation is central to those upcoming studies. From here, it is feasible for future studies to be developed in directions that not only deepen but also widen the focus of this study. For now, this research concludes with results that assert the interwoven relationships between one's need to express the distinctiveness of their cultural identity and the tendency to align it with a collective identity, as well as the close-knitted relevance between diasporic young Vietnamese' ethnic media and their participation in digital communication.

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