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"Maybe the worst thing is that I speak Vietnamese with a Czech accent": Language and trajectories of young Vietnamese in the Czech Republic

Tamah Sherman & Jiří Homoláč

Czech Language Institute of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic

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"Maybe the worst thing is that I speak Vietnamese with a Czech accent": Language and trajectories of young Vietnamese in the Czech Republic

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Abstract

The Vietnamese community in the Czech Republic has recently expanded not only in numbers, but also in terms of diversity of experience over the course of events in its members' lives, intertwined with the acquisition and use of the majority language, Czech. Based on language biography interviews and new media data (e.g. Facebook), we examine the subjective experiences of trajectories (Elder et al 2003) of language acquisition and use among participants from the 1st, 1.5 and 2nd generations, key transitions within these trajectories, and differences between their presentation in various contexts and with various anticipated recipients. Through the analysis of summaries of managed language phenomena (Nekvapil 2004, Sherman & Homoláč 2014) such as language brokering and naming, we show that the presence or absence of some key transitions in the trajectories of participants from a given generation and the importance the participants assign to them results from factors such as work experience, family life or education and with the life courses of other people, e.g. relatives. The comparison of the interview with one of the participants with her TEDx talk indicates that participants' selection of key transitions within the trajectory of language acquisition and use can vary based on the communicative situation in which they produce it.

Key words: life course perspective; trajectories of language acquisition and use, transitions; Czech; Vietnamese in the Czech Republic

1. Introduction

On May 15, 2013, Thu Trang Do, a student of marketing communication, appeared as a guest at a TEDx event in Prague. In her Czech-language talk, entitled "Two cultures, one face", Do first presented the audience with the story of her life as a Vietnamese in the Czech Republic. She described her childhood in the care of Czech "grandparents", experiencing conflict upon becoming "too European", searching for her own identity and ultimately accepting the combined aspects of her life. She then tied these processes to certain aspects of her present language competence, stating that she did not speak Vietnamese well, which she exemplified by noting "I flub my words" and "I have a bad vocabulary". The description culminated in a

punchline, in which Do declared "maybe the worst thing is (that) I speak Vietnamese with a Czech accent", which was followed by anticipated, generous applause from the audience.

A single migrant's life experience, including its linguistic component, told in a manner intelligible to a majority population audience, warrants significant marketing potential for an event such as TEDx. This is all the more so in the context of European spaces, which are experiencing a growing emphasis on concepts such as multiculturalism or in which an open approach to the presence of individuals and groups of culturally different origin than the majority population, or globalization[1], by which the economically driven and technologically supported increase in movement of people, capital and processes across great distances over a relatively short period of time. In line with these tendencies, Do spoke as if her experiences were completely foreign, or even exotic, for most of the majority Czech audience. At the same time, she constructed her perspective as representative of an entire generation of young Vietnamese adults. This shared character was repeatedly emphasized, as Do remarked that her individual problems were also those of "a lot of people", stating "the [Vietnamese] girls in the audience can confirm that".

The combination of new, unprecedented, yet shared character of the narrated life of young Vietnamese in the Czech context serves as the point of departure for this study. The Vietnamese first arrived in Czechoslovakia on the basis of an international agreement in the 1950s. Following the political changes in 1989, the Czech Vietnamese community has grown in number to approximately 60 000. The community has also expanded in terms of the variation in experience, growing to include three generations (1st, 1.5 and 2nd) based on the age at which individuals arrived in the country (cf. Zhou & Bankston 1998) and thus the degree of educational and socialization processes they experienced there as well as the ways in which various language-related phenomena are managed (Nekvapil 2016). These factors make for increasingly diverse courses of events in individual life trajectories relating to family, education and work. These events are crucially intertwined with processes of acquisition of the majority language, Czech, and of the dynamic relationship to cultural practices in both countries. For young people, these processes are critical for later mobility within the transnational Vietnamese community, the majority community, and beyond.

Against this backdrop and based on language biography interviews and new media data (Facebook, YouTube), we examine the subjective experiences of the trajectories of young Vietnamese concerning language acquisition and use in order to better understand this community's internal diversity. We begin by presenting the Vietnamese in the Czech Republic in the context of the "superdiversification" of the Czech space. We then use the concept of trajectories from the life course perspective (Elder et al 2003) to explore some typical trajectories of young Vietnamese in the Czech Republic. Finally, we consider the potential influences of text types on the form of the trajectories found within them.

2. The Vietnamese in the context of Czech "superdiversity"

[1] Cf. Kymlicka 1995 and Castells 2010 for concepts of multiculturalism and globalization, respectively, in the social sciences.

Recent years have seen the emergence of the concept of superdiversity (or super-diversity), in which primarily migrant-receiving countries have witnessed a previously unseen and thus less predictable complexity among ethnicities in a given space, be it an urban center (Vertovec 2007, Meissner & Vertovec 2015) or a peri-urban or rural context (Blommaert 2015), or an entire country (Sloboda 2016). This may be understood as the perceived presence of more or different groups of migrants or of differences within migrant groups in terms of demographic categories such as age, class, profession, gender, education and the like (Vertovec 2007), which may have sociolinguistic consequences such as a changed understanding of "named" languages and their speakers (Blommaert and Rampton 2011).

The Czech Republic is a nation-state which, between 1945 and 1989, gradually became highly ethnically and linguistically homogenous. Even in the context of this homogeneity, both national minorities and immigrants have always had certain presence. Yet, there is a very clear distinction between "old" diversity and "new" diversity. Following political and economic changes in 1989, the Czech Republic began what Sloboda (2016b) has referred to as a "transition to superdiversity". Through the superdiversity lens, the Czech Republic can be viewed as the present home to a greater number of highly mobile individuals from an unprecedented number of countries of origin, speaking many more languages and using a broader range of communication channels than ever before (Sloboda 2016b: 27). From a comparative perspective, Sloboda (2016b: 28) has described the Czech Republic as "more super-diverse than the rest of East-Central Europe but less than Western Europe". In other words, the Czech context cannot be considered prototypically superdiverse in terms of previously described concepts, but does display certain features of them.

The Vietnamese are but one of several groups that have contributed to the increase in overall numbers of foreign-born residents and Czech-born residents with non-Czech-ethnicity beginning in the 1990s, which can be interpreted (Sloboda 2016b) as one aspect of the superdiversification of the Czech space. However, their significant role in this transition stems above all from their explicit, yet safe visual foreignness, constituting the default Asians.[2] They can also be seen through their economic activity and the corresponding linguistic landscape (Dörner & Vasiljev 2010). Vietnamese entrepreneurs constitute a large part of the market on convenience and inexpensive clothing stores, nail salons and Asian eating establishments, mostly in large cities and border regions. In these locations, numbers of Vietnamese pupils in the Czech educational system have increased so much that at present, it is now common for many city-dwelling children and young adults in the Czech Republic to have had a Vietnamese classmate (Sloboda 2016b). Vietnamese as learners of Czech have also grown in numbers, which can be observed through the supply of Czech-language courses offered by non-profit organizations. Vietnamese culture appears at public events and festivals aimed at both education and entertainment. The Vietnamese media presence has also expanded, from what can be understood as the "old" media (daily newspapers, television, radio), in which it was more passive – there were almost no local Vietnamese journalists and texts and reports tended to deal with the Vietnamese community in general as opposed to

[2] Though see also Nekvapil & Sherman 2018 on the role of Koreans and their capital in contributing to this transition as well.

selected parts of it. A more active and "new" Vietnamese media presence began around 2008, with the introduction of personal blogs on local news servers. In 2013, the Vietnamese essentially bridged the gap between old and new diversity when they acquired official membership in the council for national minorities (see Sloboda 2016a for a detailed description of this case), becoming one of the first "new migrant" groups to do so. In 2014, along with other foreigners living in the country long-term, began taking advantage of newly-permitted dual citizenship.

An important aspect of superdiversity according to Vertovec is the internal complexity of communities previously categorized on the basis of ethnicity and understood as more or less homogenous in themselves. In the case of the Vietnamese in the Czech Republic, this complexity is often linked to mobility stemming from social networks, initially family networks enabling individuals to migrate to the Czech Republic, then broader ethnic networks enabling enable employment and/or business opportunities. This mobility is influenced by the changing demand for goods and services. Place of residence influences the use of and competence in Czech and other languages. In small towns in particular, there are more opportunities to make contact with members of the majority (Freidingerová 2014) and thus use Czech in everyday communication. Another phase of international mobility parallels that of the majority community. As the Czech Republic is a former Soviet Bloc country, educational and professional mobility is often desired and/or realized through studying and working in countries conceived of as "Western", such as the USA or Germany

Vietnamese are described both within the community and by experts (Freidingerová 2014, Vasiljev & Nekvapil 2012) as belonging to certain "generations", based on their age when they came to the Czech Republic, including having been born there. The differences between these generations can, in our view, be captured through the study of individual life courses, particularly the trajectories of the acquisition, use and attrition of language. In order to understand the connections between the lived experiences of individuals and questions of language and culture in the new setting, we pose the following research questions:

- How can trajectories of language acquisition and use be utilized in the description of generational and intragenerational differences?
- How are the descriptions contingent on the context in which they occur and the recipients to whom they are addressed?

The first question will be explored using the trajectories reconstructed from interview and new media data, and the second question based on the comparison of an interview with one speaker and her blog texts.

3. Data

The data were gathered over a three-year period as a part of a broader research project devoted to the questions of how and whether Vietnamese migrants in the Czech Republic learn Czech and how they talk about these processes. We aimed to collect data which prompted the Vietnamese participants to narrate and reflect upon their life courses. Language

biography interviews and follow-up interviews (a total of 45 participants, 60 interviews) were conducted[3] with two main groups of Vietnamese aged 16-35 and currently living in the Czech Republic: (1) university students or recent graduates and (2) people with an elementary or secondary school education (gained mostly in Vietnam, in a few cases partly in the Czech Republic) working in retail or the service industry.

Data were also gathered from a Facebook group entitled "Confessions of Vietnamese", in which some of our interviewees participated, and several online videos: the TEDxPrague 2013 talk given by a female Vietnamese student and other YouTube videos. The TEDx video is a platform adapted from the American context, conducted entirely in Czech.[4]The Facebook group constitutes a space where young Vietnamese and a small number of Czechs, based on their usernames, interact on an equal basis. The group's declared primary aim is not only to enlighten Czech speakers (including, but not limited to, ethnic Czechs) but also to share experiences and provide support. It is primarily in Czech with occasional posts in Vietnamese. This material allows us to gain a picture of only a few points on the trajectory – the authors are most likely secondary school students and are oriented toward problems with their parents or school.

4. Methodological framework

Our approach is inspired by research that has attempted to construct the language biographies of selected interviewees. In narrative interviews geared toward this construction, known as language biography interviews (Nekvapil 2004, Sherman & Homoláč 2014), the participants talk about their life, up until the present, with an interviewer-prompted focus on its linguistic and communicative aspects. The interviewer proceeds chronologically, asking about certain presumed points, such as the interviewee's arrival in the Czech Republic, thus determining his or her life story. The interview enables the observation of events characteristic for some groups or the importance participants assign to them as individuals and as members of individual generations. The language biography approach is reflected not only via the method of conducting interviews, but also in the fact that it differentiates between various "realities" represented in the material: the "reality" of narrators' lives, of their subjective experience, and of the texts they produce (Denzin 1989, Gubrium and Holstein 1997).

Our analysis is also inspired by the life course perspective (Elder 1985, 1994, Elder et al 2003, Wingens et al 2011, Peters and Wink 2016 as applied to migrants). Several key concepts from this perspective are relevant. The various points at which a life takes various twists and turns are known as transitions or "changes in state that are more or less abrupt" (Elder 1985: 31f, cited in Wingens et al 2011: 13). A typical example of a transition is beginning formal education. Series or sequences of transitions are known as trajectories (Elder 1985: 31, cited in Wingens et al 2011: 14). An individual's life course consists of multiple, intertwined trajectories, each corresponding to a different area of life, e.g. family, education, or health.

[3] In Czech, by the authors (SHE and HOM in the transcripts) and occasionally, upon participant request, with the help of an interpreter. Excerpts used in this text have been translated into English by the authors.
[4] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DOV2UrTx_0U

We use the concepts of trajectories and transitions to examine whether our participants conform to the division of the Vietnamese community into generations as they appear in earlier literature on Vietnamese communities in other parts of the world (Bankston & Zhou 1995, Zhou 1997, Zhou & Bankston 1998) and sociologically oriented studies on the Vietnamese in the Czech Republic, which also make use of this literature (Freidingerová 2014, Souralová 2015). In general discussions of migration (Rumbaut 2012) the first generation is understood as those who arrived in the new country as adults, the 1.5 generation as those who arrived during their childhood and the second generation as those born in the given country.[5]

In order to show that this division may not sufficiently reflect the internal differentiation of the community, we attempt to describe the typical trajectories of the participants' acquisition, use and eventually, loss of languages.

5. Trajectories of language acquisition and use

In the interviews and media texts, participants provide accounts of the following life events that can serve as transitions in trajectories of language acquisition and use. The individual events are assigned varying importance and status by different speakers. Those events that were not mentioned by all three generations of our participants are in italics.

1) *The participant is born and spends a period of his or her life in the Czech Republic*.
2) *The participant arrives in the Czech Republic*.
3) The participant begins to acquire Czech.
4) *The participant acquires a Czech name.*
5) *The participant begins elementary education in the Czech context.*
6) *The participant makes decisions regarding and begins secondary school education in the Czech context.*
7) *The participant begins interpreting for family members and acquaintances*.
8) *The participant "loses" and later "regains" Vietnamese*.
9) *The participant makes decisions regarding and begins university education in the Czech context.*
10) The participant finds work or changes jobs in the Czech Republic.
11) The participant finds friends and/or a partner.
12) *The participant starts a family, has children.*
13) *The participant returns to Vietnam for shorter or longer periods.*

[5] The respondents themselves typically define generations based on the year in which people were born.

14) The participant acquires and/or changes legal status in the Czech Republic.

This inventory provides a basis for the description of the typical trajectories of language acquisition and use of members of all three generations and the differences between them. Some events serve as transitions only in some of the trajectories: the ways that the members of the individual generations behaved at a given point may differ, or the given point may be of varying importance from the perspective of the entire trajectory.

In the following sections, we will use the example of one member of each generation to demonstrate the individual trajectories. The trajectories have been constructed from the language management summaries (Nekvapil 2004, Sherman & Homoláč 2014). The three participants, Hung, Cai and Trang, provide a solid basis for comparison because they were approximately the same age (mid- to late twenties) at the time of the interviews. We will then present each generation's trajectories more generally.

5.1 First generation trajectories

5.1.1 Hung[6]

At the time of the interview, Hung had been in the Czech Republic for nearly six years, having arrived around age twenty from northern Vietnam. After high school, she attended book-keeping classes at a community college for a year and a half. She originally came to work, having followed a friend who told her there were better jobs and living conditions in the Czech Republic. While still in Vietnam, Hung sought out Czech language courses, but could only find a Slovak language course, so she gave up. She had learned English and French in school, but claimed that she had forgotten everything.

For her entire stay, she has lived in Prague. Upon her arrival, she worked in a bar. Her friend taught her the words she needed there. She also learned Czech from a textbook for local Vietnamese and was eventually able to engage in public activities by herself. Sometime later, Hung began attending a manicure course taught in Vietnamese. Afterwards, she immediately began working at a salon with mostly Czech clientele. She knew basic phrases from the Czech course, otherwise she asked her friend or customers. Upon completing the course, she worked at several other places, then in her husband's salon with predominantly Vietnamese and also young Czech clientele.

Hung signed up for a Czech course, run by a non-profit organization, after having spent several years in the country. On the one hand, she decided to take the course was because it was a preparatory course for the exam required for permanent residence in the Czech Republic. On the other hand, she wanted to learn Czech and knew she would need it when she had children. She passed and gained permanent residence. At the time of the follow-up

[6]All names have been changed to preserve anonymity, with the exception of Trang Do Thu, who is a public figure and is identified by her real name in all data excerpts with her permission.

interview, she had an 18-month-old daughter, whom she had decided to send to Czech daycare.[7]

5.1.2 Patterns in the trajectories of language acquisition and use

The first generation of Vietnamese in the Czech Republic generation is delimited by the fact that their socialization took place in Vietnam. But there is a substantial difference between those who arrived prior to 1989 for to work or study and the economic migrants arriving beginning in the mid-1990s. The first group undertook university studies or other professional training in Czech and can use it when working as retailers or interpreters. Members of the second group typically work in Vietnamese-owned businesses such as produce and clothing stores, warehouses or nail salons and do not need much Czech. The level and extent of their Czech knowledge, based largely on their investment in learning it (in the sense of Norton Peirce 1995) are also dependent on whether they were the first to arrive, or whether they could utilize the knowledge of their family or friends already in the country-and whether they have or plan to have children. Members of the first generation who arrived in the 1990s and later had, at most, attended a course organized by non-profit organizations or municipalities. Their most common motivation is the language exam required for permanent residence in the Czech Republic. Some members of this generation deal with the language handicap by finding a partner from among the second generation members or employing one in their business.

5.2 Trajectories of the 1.5 generation

5.2.1 Cai

Cai arrived in the Czech Republic at age seven. In Vietnam, she had attended first grade. She came together with her mother and sister to a medium-sized town in 1995, following her father, who had worked in a factory beginning in 1988. After the political changes in 1989, he began working as an outdoor vendor. He thus knew a bit of Czech and taught his family members some basic phrases. Before they began attending school, Cai and her infant sister spent long periods of time with a Czech nanny[8], who gave them Czech names. She began living with her parents full-time again after the birth of her brother in 1999.

Cai was the first and only foreigner in the school. She experienced both positive and negative reactions from her classmates. She learned Czech with the Czech nanny and her husband, and was also helped by a classmate. She recalled having spoken fluently in second grade and that her Czech was excellent by fifth grade. After completing elementary school, she went on to an academic secondary school, where she learned English and French. She spoke Czech with her Vietnamese friends and Vietnamese with her parents on weekends. This predominant position of Czech in Cai's own words, led to her eventual "loss" of and later "return" to Vietnamese.

[7] For more on family language policy among Vietnamese in the Czech Republic, see Sherman & Homoláč 2017.
[8] Cf. Souralová 2015.

As the older sister, Cai helped her parents in their shop. She also began engaging in language brokering for her family beginning in shopping situations, later at the doctor and in various offices. She only began performing such services for people outside the family when at the university. She chose her field of study based on whether it was "beneficial" for the Vietnamese community. Having chosen "Czech for foreigners"[9], she got to know another Vietnamese student with similar life experiences. The two of them initially spoke mostly Czech together, but, based on her classmate's initiative, gradually more Vietnamese, and together they became more familiar with the Vietnamese community and began working as interpreters and cultural mediators in a local non-profit organization.

Cai typically visited Vietnam for one month every summer, where she met her future husband, who eventually joined her in the Czech Republic. For this reason, she improved her written and spoken Vietnamese. She returned to her Vietnamese name, Cai, when at the university. She later gained dual Czech-Vietnamese citizenship.

The interview with Cai helps to demonstrate how language biographies also provide information about the lives and trajectories of others, e.g. family members[10], in particular, her younger sister. She arrived in the Czech Republic as an infant, spent time with the same Czech nanny, but when she began school, she could already speak Czech well. Since secondary school, she has been systematically preparing for a career in science, and from this perspective, neither Vietnamese, nor Vietnam, nor the local Vietnamese community appear to be of any great benefit to her. She cannot write very well in Vietnamese, speaks Czech with her siblings, and only had to interpret for her parents when Cai was not available. Unlike her older sister, she never stopped using her Czech name outside the family, and even has it listed in her passport. She has Czech citizenship, ensuring greater professional mobility.

5.2.2 Patterns in trajectories of language acquisition and use

Members of this generation arrived in the Czech Republic together with family members, typically at the age of mandatory school attendance (approximately 6-15 years old). The younger they were upon arrival, the easier the process of their Czech acquisition was. The question of Vietnamese identity appeared as a matter of choice at a given point in their lives. Some, after displaying extensive assimilation during their elementary school years, eventually "returned" to the Vietnamese language and culture during puberty or later. Around this time, they also began finding friends from among their Vietnamese peers online who had the same experiences.

The greatest source of differentiation within this generation is the transition spurred by the completion of elementary school. Some individuals went on to secondary school, requiring entrance exams in Czech. They then went on to universities as well. They use various registers of Czech on a daily basis. Others completed their education at that point and went to

[9] A study program open to individuals for whom Czech is not the only mother tongue.
[10] See the concept of "linked lives" (Wingens et al 2011:12).

work, typically in a Vietnamese-owned business. Their lack of language knowledge as well as their age prevented them from studying further -- many were 16 or older, after which it is not possible to remain in the final year of elementary school. Many were also needed in their families' businesses.

University students and graduates usually have both Czech and Vietnamese friends, use both languages and likely even both names, even switching languages when speaking to one another. Since their childhood, they interpreted for their parents and acquaintances. The participants who interpret professionally often attended courses in intercultural mediation, typically with the support of non-profit organizations. Those who arrived later and/or did not continue on to secondary school, use some Czech at work, but they do not do any interpreting. They usually do not use the Czech names they received at school.

5.3 Second generation trajectories

5.3.1 Trang

Trang arrived in the Czech Republic at almost five years old in 1994. Her father had studied in Czechoslovakia, returned to Vietnam in 1989, returned again in 1992, and the family was reunited in 1994. The family moved to a town on the border with Germany, where her parents had a stand in a marketplace. She spent seven years in a Czech family where she acquired a Czech name, and was already able to speak Czech when she entered school. She attended schools in the region. With other Vietnamese students, she spoke Czech. She took German and English in elementary school, and also Russian and Spanish in secondary school. She then completed university programs in Czech-German studies and marketing. At the time of the interview, she was employed in the internal marketing department of an international company.

She found Vietnamese friends while at secondary school via online social networks, where she communicated with them in Czech. When in Prague, she got to know other people due to her blog and through an initiative to establish a Vietnamese television station.

Trang stated that she does not know Vietnamese, though she can read and write, she has always communicated with her Vietnamese friends and classmates in Czech. Czech has also always been, according to Trang, the language used in the family, though only between she and her father, because her mother does not speak Czech and her parents speak Vietnamese together. Upon her occasional return trips to Vietnam, she has used English in certain situations. Since secondary school, she has written a blog in Czech about the Vietnamese, and is otherwise well known in the media as a Czech Vietnamese. She has Vietnamese citizenship, and, beginning in 2015, Czech citizenship.

5.3.2 Generalized trajectories of language acquisition and use

Members of this generation were born in the Czech Republic or arrived during early childhood (approximately up to age 4). If they have any recollection of Vietnam at all, it is minimal, but it appears that the opportunity to have these "memories" and to refer to them in

interviews is one of the criteria that help to differentiate between those born in the Czech Republic and those who arrived prior to attending school. They were exposed to two languages practically from the very beginning, but as they describe it, they know Czech better than Vietnamese. They have both Czech and Vietnamese friends. They usually speak Czech with their Vietnamese friends. If they do any interpreting, it is usually only for the family.[11]

Some members of this generation visit relatives in Vietnam, but in most cases, these visits do not have a major impact on their linguistic or other behavior. In recent years, some of the youngest members of this generation have been sent by their parents to Vietnam to be raised by other relatives. If they only return to the Czech Republic to begin school, they will acquire Czech via similar trajectories as those of the 1.5 generation.

5.4 Crossroads in the trajectories

In this section, we discuss the transitions in the trajectories that help to reveal the differences between generations and the differences within them. We have selected two managed language phenomenon that emerged in all types of material: language brokering and the acquisition and use of names. We first describe each generation in general, then demonstrate and discuss the differences between generations using the trajectories of our participants.

5.4.1 Language brokering

The first phenomenon which that helps us toward a more refined understanding of the generation language brokering or the provision of language-related support for relatives or acquaintances, often in the form of interpreting (see Sherman & Homoláč 2017, Orellana 2009). On the one hand, the question of whether or not the participants were required to engage in brokering depended on their language competence. On the other hand, LB practices can influence this competence. In some cases, it also impacted the participants' professional orientation.

First generation members who studied in the Czech Republic do not need translators and interpreters and occasionally do this work themselves. Other members have to pay for various brokering services or utilize their own children, relatives or acquaintances. Members of the 1.5 generation are prototypical language brokers, because they arrived in the Czech Republic during their childhood, and their resulting competence in Czech is significantly higher than that of their parents. Their Vietnamese is typically at a level sufficient for this work, and they also tend to be the oldest children in the family, who are most frequently called into this role (cf. Sherman & Homoláč 2017). Second generation members, though they may also have to broker for their parents, often evaluate their competence in Vietnamese as insufficient to do so properly. We did not observe that any of them had worked to improve their Vietnamese competence. Also, none mentioned engaging in brokering activities for anyone outside the family.

[11] These conclusions have limited validity, as this generation consists mostly of children and adolescents, i.e. those who were not the primary focus of our research.

We will now demonstrate the language brokering tendencies among our participants.

Hung never interpreted. At most, she explained the meanings of words to her husband, who spoke even less Czech than she did. Otherwise, she utilized a friend or professional interpreting services. The interpreting at the salon is done by a Vietnamese employee born in the Czech Republic. From the following example, it is apparent that she is counting on the fact that her daughter will be bilingual. It may thus be predicted that her daughter will occasionally act as an interpreter.

Example 1 (HUNG/follow-up/09122015a, 58:10-58:52)

INT[12]:…she and her husband determined that their daughter when she's living in the Czech Republic,so eh she should first eh learn Czech so they sent her to a Czech daycare and with the idea that she would learn Czech and so that she wouldn't have difficulties when she went to preschool and she's not worried about the Vietnamese because eh they'll speak only Vietnamese at home and so the daughter will always understand and when she grows up she can do whatever she wants to…

Cai began interpreting for her mother around age ten. Initially, she translated in the shops, then in state offices, at the doctor, and in similar settings. She is also responsible for the family's official written communication. As a university student, she began working as a community interpreter. Cai's husband arrived only recently and does not speak Czech, so she interprets for him.

Example 2 (CAI/follow-up /27082013a, 20:22-21:32)

CAI: ehm I've been interpreting up until now ((laughs)) with my fam- ehm with my mom I go to the doctor to interpret now that now that I have my daughter I can't do much… my sister stands in for me
SHE: uhm
CAI: eh well ((laughs)) helping my parents when I interpret for my parents I even deal with some paperwork related to the store: rental contracts so I always read them and when something seems strange to me so I ask and usually those printed documents so I handle them for my parents ah ehm I don't have to do so much for my dad my dad he's independent he can deal with it himself with his vocabulary he can manage
SHE: uhm
CAI: ehm: for my mom wherever my mom so ehm to state offices when something comes for her in the mail ehm doctors everything (somehow) I do that for her or my sister does we interpret we go places with her (somehow) she never goes anywhere by herself

[12] "INT" refers to the Czech-Vietnamese interpreter, with the assistance of whom this interview was conducted.

Trang considers her knowledge of Vietnamese very limited. She interprets for her mother at the doctor when necessary, though she considers the practice to be paraphrasing rather than proper interpreting.[13]

Example 3 (TRANG/jazbio/06112015a, 24:11-25:01)

TRA: …to translate a few eh a few sentences, or at least
the idea somehow um to repeat or to paraphrase that's
that's okay, that would still be possible now. but never
to interpret, maybe I wouldn't dare to do that. even though
it's true for example that when we go with my mom to the
doctor …so eh so I'm more the one who absorbs the
information, and somehow reacts to it, rather than translating
it word for word for my mom. that I unfortunately don't know
how to do.

5.4.2 Czech names

The second managed phenomenon, made relevant above all by the participants from the 1.5 generation, is that of names, their acquisition, transformation, and use. Members of the first generation who studied or are studying in the Czech Republic acquired their names, for example, from their Czech classmates at university. They do not use them in communication with other Vietnamese, nor do they have them in any official documents. Other first generation members usually have a Czech name only when they are in regular contact with Czechs, e.g. customers in the store, and it is used only by these Czechs to address them.

Hung received a Czech name from the Vietnamese owner of the nail studio where she worked, but now uses a different Czech name, which she got from a patron of the bar where she had worked previously. Her Vietnamese friends used her Czech name only when joking. Her daughter received a Czech name which sounds similar to her Vietnamese name from her daycare teacher.

Example 4 (HUNG/follow-up interview/09122015a, 50:12-50:49)

HUN: because eh in Vietnamese she's thu yen thu yen that's yen
the lady the teacher said that Yen was Jani- Janička[14]
SHE: uh huh yeah so when you arrived to the to the daycare so
that was right at the beginning that the ((teacher)) gave
her the name
…
HUN: uh huh
SHE: yes right at the beginning

Members of the 1.5 generation acquired their names in preschool or elementary school, typically from Czech nannies, teachers, or even Vietnamese relatives who had been living in the Czech Republic longer. The name selection was primarily intended as a solution to Czech

[13] Even the teenage members of the second generation have experience with language brokering. Cf. "I can't stand it when my parents put the phone in my hand (with the number already dialed) and start telling me what they want. Then I feel like a retard when I have to listen to both sides and keep them both "on hold" so I can pick up everything they're saying on the phone and what my parents want from me" (FB Confessions of Vietnamese).
[14] A diminutive form of a Czech name.

speakers' problems with pronouncing their names. But they used (and often continue to use) the names for many years. There is also a select group of people (such as elementary school classmates) who continue to address them using these names. Members of this generation are more inclined to understand the Czech name as a reflection of their identities. When they started using only their Vietnamese name, it was connected with ethnic self-awareness.

Cai used the Czech name up until she began her university studies. She had even considered listing it in her official documents. A part of her return to Vietnamese and to the Vietnamese community was also the return to her Vietnamese name. She chose an unofficial Czech name for her child because, as she explained in the first interview, her Vietnamese name was difficult for Czech speakers to pronounce. But in the follow-up interview, she also cited a second reason – that her daughter would most likely be assimilated because she would spend her entire life in the Czech Republic. In the following example, we can observe the motivation for her decision to use only her Vietnamese name and differences between two sisters from the same family (five years apart). Example 5 shows that Cai tends to understand the return to the Vietnamese name during early adulthood as a transition on the trajectory of a member of her own generation, the 1.5 generation, which members of her sister's generation and younger people likely do not experience, because they have been "Czechified".

Example 5 (CAI/jazbio/14022013b, 4:38-41:18)

HOM: she didn't change to a Vietnamese name?
CAI: no I think it'll happen to her when she enters ehm like I did the Vietnamese community here at the university the broader one even though I don't know how her generation will actuall- the the Vietnamese language and Vietnamese culture how ehm they'll view it… whether like I did like we my generation viewed it or if they're really Czechified… she she'll probably keep using the Czech name but her Vietnamese name is even harder to pronounce than mine she says that she ((laughs)) doesn't want to hear it butchered anymore

Members of the second generation usually acquired Czech names in the same way as members of the 1.5 generation. In the case of the youngest members, the Czech name was often chosen by their parents, at least one of whom was often a member of the 1.5 generation. Based on our data, it appears that this generation does not perceive a contradiction between the Vietnamese name, speaking Czech, and being "Czechified" in many other ways. For this reason, the abandonment of the Vietnamese name and the eventual return to it, observable among the 1.5 generation, does not appear very likely.

Trang chose a Czech name that belonged to a girl from her Czech family. She stopped using it because her Czech boyfriend wanted her to use her "real" name. Unlike Cai and the friend she talks about in the following example, Trang's return to the Vietnamese name was thus not a return to the Vietnamese community. About five years later, Trang interpreted this transition as a part of the formation of her Czech-Vietnamese identity.

Example 6 (TRANG/jazbio/06112015a, 8:24-10:34)

SHE: when did it happen. that they started calling each other by the Vietnamese names.
TRA: …I don't want to generalize but maybe it's not even possible but ehm the second generation of Vietnamese, most of them are now studying at universities, and that's where it starts to change in high school. when they start, when they start thinking about, whether they're more Czech or Vietnamese, and and I have a friend, who went back to using her Vietnamese name, ehm so ehm that had to do with a sort of inner emancipation, to to like show that she's Vietnamese. that she isn't that Czechified Anička anymore, but that now her name is ehm like that now her name is Anh for example.
SHE: hm, and and for you specifically, how was it.
TRA: for me specifically. ehm I had a Czech boyfriend, who ehm who when we met each other, so ehm I introduced myself to him as Lenka, and and he said no no no what's your real name. and then it went really organically ehm because with the friends he introduced to me, he introduced me as ehm like Trang. and there already already was an important moment, when he said that he wanted to introduce me to his friends by my real name…

6. The presentation of the life story with various aims and recipients

In the previous section, we identified events in the interviews from which the trajectories of the acquisition and use of language of Vietnamese living in the Czech Republic are composed, and demonstrated the differences in the ways in which these events are experienced and presented by participants from three generations We have thus used the data as a source of information on "the reality of life", of one of its dimensions, and of the "reality of the subject" (Denzin 1989, Nekvapil 2004). In this section, we focus on the reality of the text produced in the narrative, exemplified by the question of whether and how the trajectories of language acquisition and use differ based on the specific communicative situation in which they are narrated and on the recipients (or anticipated recipients) of the narration. The most fitting way to address these questions appears to be to compare examples in the case of Trang, whose life story was previously summarized. We compare Trang's interview with her presentation of selected transitions in her TEDx talk or in the contributions to her blog, which she wrote originally on the internet site of a large Czech daily newspaper and then on her own webpage.

In the TEDx talk, Trang constructs her life story as follows: she arrived in the Czech Republic in 1994. Her parents worked a lot, and so she spent seven years in a Czech family. She attended a Czech school, spent her free time with Czech children and "almost forgot Vietnamese". Her parents and other imagined "authentic" Vietnamese consider her too Europeanized. She feels more Czech, but adopts the positive aspects of both cultures.

This version of the Trang's life story is rather consistent with the version she provided in the two interviews with us. Most of what is included in the interviews, but not in other texts (e.g. studying at secondary school and university) are issues that we asked about directly, though not all differences can be explained as merely due to the varying length and the questions posed in the interviews. For example, the transition involving the return to the Vietnamese name would fit the TEDx talk version (being a primarily Czech speaker and having a Vietnamese name does correspond to Trang's conception of herself as a "banana shake"[15]), but the integration of this transition into the presentation of the life story would require a certain amount of interpretive work.

In the TEDx talk, Trang addresses the Czech public even more, emphasizes what she has in common with them, aims to entertain, and tries harder to make the story into a clear point. In both cases, Trang explains her insufficient knowledge of Vietnamese via the fact that she grew up in a Czech family and in the case of the LB interview, also because her father spoke Czech to her. In the TEDx talk, however, the "shortcoming" regarding Vietnamese is contextualized differently: it is presented as one aspect of "Europeanization". As mentioned in the opening example in this text, Trang provides a humorous point for the whole passage by stating that the worst thing about her Vietnamese is her Czech accent and then pauses, providing the audience with space to be entertained and to respond accordingly.

Example 7 (Thu Trang Do at TEDxPrague, 25.5.2013, 8:40-9:45)[16]

TRA: …you're probably perhaps wondering how eh how it looks when a Vietnamese person is too Europeanized eh the main thing is you can see it in the way you look… then it's connected for example to the fact that you speak Vietnamese like an absolute idiot and which is my case for example because I speak Vietnamese really badly and I flub my words um I have a bad vocabulary and voc- vocabulary and and also maybe the worst thing ((smiles)) I speak ((smiles)) or the worst um that I speak Vietnamese with a Czech accent ((nods head))
AUD: ((intense laughter))
TRA: and
AUD: ((long applause))

The influence of the communicative situation (above all the varying audience design) on the presentation of selected transitions is also evident in the difference between the way in which Trang describes the return to her Vietnamese name in the LB interview and how she does it on her blog. In both cases, she states that she stopped using her Czech name upon the wishes of her boyfriend. But while she tries to present the return to the Vietnamese name as a part of the more general experience of her generation for the interviewers, in her blog she accents the

[15] She uses this expression (with a certain distance) to refer to the name "banana children", a common metaphor meaning white (European) on the inside and yellow (Asian) on the outside, with which some of the second generation identifies.
[16] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DOV2UrTx_0U

individual character of this transition, connecting it above all to her having discovered her Czech-Vietnamese identity.

Example 8[17]

"…At first, returning to my Vietnamese name was hard, and strange to me, even though it was what my family called me. Introducing myself to Czechs as Trang was something I couldn't get out of my mouth. Lenka was always the nerd, the good only child of Vietnamese parents who worked at the market every day. She wanted to measure up to her Czech classmates and win academic language competitions. Trang was somebody's girlfriend, in a Czech-Vietnamese relationship, having been brought up Czech-Vietnamese.
As if I could no longer hide behind my (lack of) success at school. As if I were back at the beginning of my "integration" and coming to terms with who I am and where I live. And where I come from. And whose daughter I am. But this time it had the mark of adulthood."

7. Discussion and concluding reflections

Our analysis was guided by two research questions. First, we were interested in how the application of the concept of trajectories can better enable us to understand generational and intra-generational differences. Using a life course perspective helped us to elucidate the multidimensional character of the life stories as a bundle of mutually intertwined individual or group trajectories and the relevance of certain life events for the way in which members of each generation acquire and use language. Thus, for example, getting married, which is indisputably a transition in everyone's family trajectory, is not a transition in the trajectory of language acquisition and use for first generation members who choose a partner with similarly low competence in Czech, but only for those who, after marrying Czechs or second generation Vietnamese, may eventually cease to be dependent on professional interpreters. For those who marry other Vietnamese, their linguistic and family trajectories intersect only with the birth of a child, the resulting necessity to communicate with doctors or teachers, and decisions regarding whether to send their child to a Czech nanny or a Czech daycare.

We have also demonstrated the interconnections between the trajectory of language acquisition and use and other trajectories, e.g. family life or work experience. The socioeconomic situation is key, as it influences time spent outside of school. That is, the crucial determining issue for young Vietnamese was whether or not they had to work in their family members' business, had to act as language brokers, or had extra time to pursue their own interests. The need to engage in brokering activities, for example, may have required them to improve their Vietnamese (to interpret more effectively). Conversely, they may have been permitted to Vietnamese minimally in the family and other contexts in order to spend more time on other languages such as Czech and/or foreign languages, above all English.

The use of trajectories has also enabled us to highlight the interconnections between the linguistic dimension of the life stories of our participants and the macro-level aspects of social

[17] http://asijatka.cz/2016/02/21/dnes-ma-svatek-lenka/

life, e.g. the language policy of the Czech state. Hung's decision to sign up for the free Czech course was, in spite of her undoubted attempt to learn Czech because of her child, was primarily motivated by the fact that she aspired to gain permanent residence in the Czech Republic, and one of the conditions for doing so is passing the language exam at the level of A1 of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, for which basic communicative competence is required.

We have shown that our participants' sociolinguistic trajectories are interconnected with those of other people (see the end of Cai's trajectory in section 5.2.1; Nekvapil 2004). One possible manifestation of this interconnection is the fact that members of the first generation with relatives living in the Czech Republic for a longer time practically do not need Czech in their daily lives. For members of the 1.5 and second generations, the language acquisition and use, attitudes, values and aspirations of their parents have a significant influence on their life course. These very factors, were likely at play for example in the case of a participant who arrived after elementary school, but graduated from a Czech high school and is currently a university student.

Second, as concerned methodology, we were interested in the connection between life trajectory descriptions and communicative situations, communicative goals and recipients. Questions of audience and medium, for example, have an indisputable influence on the presentation of the trajectories of language acquisition and use in the given text, i.e. on the number of events of which it is composed, or on whether a given event is presented as a transition in the life course of the text's author or a group to which she belongs. We have demonstrated this influence using differences between Trang's interviews and her TEDx talk. However, this difference would be even greater if we were to compare the interview with her short blog contributions, which, due to their length limit, typically concerned a single event.

This study has helped to elucidate the significance of individual transitions in the life courses of each generation, which can serve as a springboard for further research focusing on individual aspects of each generation's trajectory of language acquisition and use. For example, it is necessary to take a closer look at the initial attempts at learning Czech by the first generation members as well as the role of language within the process of acquiring permanent resident status and/or citizenship. In the case of the 1.5 and 2nd generations, it may be relevant to more closely examine the increasing volume of texts they produce for Czech readers in which they recreate the trajectories discussed: which transitions they present in these texts and how they present, modify and contest them.

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