PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS ON A
“MIGRANT VIETNAMESE”

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Today there are nearly three million Vietnamese living in more than 90 countries and territories the world over. However, this does not mean that these people speak all the languages of the countries of their residence. Like any other migrant community, the Vietnamese diasporas maintain their culture via their mother tongue. Due to different language ecology factors, the Vietnamese language used by these people can be called “a migrant Vietnamese”. The paper aims to give out initial observations made on the nature of phonological, lexical and structural borrowings, integration as well as transferences of the Vietnamese used in Australia.

1. Historical background
The existence of the Vietnamese overseas can be dated back, firstly, from early the 8th Century, when Prince Ly Long Tuong, the second son of King Ly Anh Tong, took refuge in Korea or later when the Ming dynasty invaded Vietnam and brought back with them a number of monks, and workers to China (Tran, p. 19-21). In Japan, early in the Seventeenth Century, Princess Ngoc Van of the Nguyen Dynasty, called Anio, was married to Araki Sotaro and lived in Nagasaki since then. In the Eighteenth Century, a number of Catholic disciples from Vietnam migrated to Thailand. From the second half of the Nineteenth Century to 1954, a number of Vietnamese immigrants arrived in France and other French colonies Tahiti and New Zealand. However, it could be said that a remarkable number of Vietnamese immigrants was seen in Southeast Asian countries in late the Nineteenth and early in Twentieth Centuries, the most noteworthy was from such Patriotic Movements headed by Phan Boi Chau (in Japan, and China in 1904), Tang Ban Ho (in Japan, China, Thailand 1904- 1911), Pham Hong Thai (in China, 1918). This could be said as the second turning point of Vietnamese overseas immigration. The third turning point was that, a number of youngsters who sought ways for national salvation by going to study overseas. Typical of this trend was Phan Chu Trinh (in France 1911- 1925), King Ham Nghi (Algeria, 1888-1947), both King Thanh Thai (1915-1947), King Duy Tan (1916-1945) in La Reunion, Africa. However, the formation of the Vietnamese diaspora was resulted from such events in between 1940s- 1950s during the Second Indochina War (Tran, 1997 & Carruthers, 2004) in Laos, Thailand, Cambodia, France, Japan, and the American War (1954 -1975) in Western nations, USA, Australia, France, Canada and in some Eastern Bloc countries. Statistically speaking, the number of Vietnam-born in the US, Australian and Canada are the most significant: 1,122,528 (2000 census), 154, 830 (2001 census (136,810 (1996 census) in the US, Australia, and Canada respectively.

Numerous studies have investigated the factors and institutions promoting the maintenance of community language other than English (CLOTEs) (Clyne, 1967, 1970; Haugen 1971, 1979; Clyne 1967, 1985; Klager, 1976, Smolincz and Harris 1976) stressing on the wholesomeness for the human environment of the maintenance and

development of multilingualism. According to sociologists (Fishman 1965; Cooper 1969; and Greenfield 1970), the domain of code selection of bilinguals and multilinguals depends largely on interlocutors and such variables as ethnic ascription, situation of speaking, topic, style, role-relationship, venue, interaction type and medium (Sandkoff 1971). While in many families, English foreigner talk replaces the ethnic language as the second generation children’s code of communication (Clyne 1985, p. 58), CLOTEs have been used as a main vehicle for maintaining cultures, and the sole means of communication for the first generation as well as for the monolingual groups in most urban diasporas. In their turns, these ethnic languages used in these diasporas bear quite a lot of linguistic borrowings (Haugen 1950; Myers-Scotton 1977, 1988; Poplack and Vanniaraajah 1990 and Myers-Scotton and Jake 2000). In Australia, as pointed out by Clyne (1985: 94), there are as many varieties of “migrant languages” as there are speakers, since the nature and degree of English influence and general adaptation of the base language to the Australian context will largely depend on the individual speakers’ activities and the life style as well as his or her experience in both languages. This study presents the characteristics of the Vietnamese being used in Australia culled from more the conversations of Vietnamese/Australian bilinguals and monolinguals in Sydney, Melbourne and ACT and a number of prints available within the Vietnamese communities.

2. Methodology
The data collected in this study was from 37 conversations recorded on 26 Vietnamese adults (of 1.5 generation) aged between 22-62, 17 males, and 9 females. They are of different professions, IT engineers, dentists, doctors, professors, writers, catering services, take-away servers, bakers and housewives etc. Among the 26 speakers, only 4 of them were fluent bilinguals. All the participants have at least 5 years living in Australia.

The topics of the conversations are all about daily activities and ways of life. All the interactions before and after the recordings were in Vietnamese. The conversations could be described as free-flowing descriptions, discussions or culture-specific craft explanations. In order to minimize the social distance between the field worker and the informants, I took part in the conversation from time to time. The geographical areas of data collection were Mt. Pritchard (NSW), Springvale (VIC) and Belconnen (ACT). For each data, I transcribed all the instances of thee substantives uttered which includes nouns, adjectives, verbs, interjections or any item which functions as significant linguistic units. Besides, about more than 50 texts, including short stories, articles, news of various lengths were investigated. Both lexical and structural traits were major points of focus.

3. Linguistic analysis
3.1. Forms of lexical renewal
According to Clyne, three common ways that speakers shape their vocabulary to meeting the changing needs of life (Clyne 1985: 94) are neologism, semantic expansion and transference. In this case, neologisms in the Vietnamese created in Australia are based on the existing morphological devices of the language: Eg.
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dị làm farm
tách form/ ghép form
ăn welfare, ān ticket
làm nail
làm Centerlink
dị shop, sang shop
xin council

In Vietnamese, dị làm ruong, or làm nông (working on the farm) refers farming work in general, which involves ploughing, watering, harvesting and most of the work is manual. Dị làm farm refers to fruit-picking on a seasonal base. Sometimes it refers to a cash-paid seasonal labour. Dị shop does not, however, mean “going shopping”, but refers to “going for a specific purpose, as in dị sọp tâu, dị sọp thịt, sọp cá, or shop trái cây etc. whereas in English, sọp Tâu refers to Asian Groceries, sọp thịt butchers’, sọp cá fish shop, sọp trái cây fruit shop. The word “sọp” (shop) is actually expanded semantically.

Meanwhile, neo (nail) as in làm neo, tiêm neo, tũ kéet or tũ-kết (ticket) as in ān tũ kết (got fines), Lêm (claim) as in lêm thuế bảo hiểm (tax/insurance claim) are examples of semantic expansion due to the influence of English homophones or the preference of archaisms in the migrant language (Clyne 1985). Contrary to this tendency, lexical and semantic changes in Vietnamese are found resisted against, and in some papers, or conversations, some words (no longer used in Vietnam) are being used within the diasporas, especially, in adult groups (of over 50), which forms a stabilized use of archaisms.

Trong sáng thứ Tư tuần qua, thú lành (meaning: leader, current use: lành đạo) Đăng Lao Đông Kim Beazley lên tiếng chỉ trích …
(Last Wednesday morning, Leader of The Labour Party Kim Beazley raised his criticism …)

(From Tự Do Không Tranh Cử, in Nam Úc Thời Báo online)

Khởi dị (meaning: beginning, current use: bắt đầu) từ sự thỏa thuận này, mòn tiếng Anh là môn học đầu tiên mà …
(From this agreement, English is the first subject that …)

(From Trường học trên toàn nước Úc sẽ có chương trình học tiếng nhất, in Thời Báo, issue 300, 21/7/2003)

Sang Thương Vụ (meaning: business; current use: doanh nghiệp or cơ sở làm ăn) : Ưu điểm. Cơ hội làm ăn rất tốt, không cạnh tranh, làm nhiều ăn nhiều… Cần tiền sang gấp. Xin liên lạc…
(Thời Báo-Vietnamese Community Newspaper, issue 300, 21/7/2003)
Though maintaining archaisms is most seen in the names of countries, such as, Hoa Lực, Nam Dương, Nhật Bồn, Mạc Tứ Khoa, Luận Đôn, Hoa Thịnh Dọn, Ứng Lệ, Úc Đại Lợi, the corpus also shows archaisms appear in various parts of speech: nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs etc. These words are rarely found in the diasporas due to lack of experiences or member of communication networks, especially those in home and business domains indicating daily routines. They are: khăn trương, phản kiếm, hò hoi, mạnh één, nhân thức, đăng ký, quản chúng, bao cấp, hô khẩu etc…

3.2 Forms of lexical transference
The most usual mean, as pointed out by Clyne, in “migrant languages” is through transference in English, through the idiolects of the first generation migrants in the urban “melting pot situation”(Clyne 1985). It affects practically all speakers, both bilinguals and monolinguals in various extents. Strangely, from the recordings, we found that lexical transference is not necessarily concomitant with a higher proficiency in English, but in many ways, it can be attributed to the differences in the lifestyles and preoccupations in the country of origin. Categories of lexical transference could be as follows.

a. Contextual: words particularly prevalent in English references to the work, occupations, school or home domains: shop thực, shop hoa, shop vái, shop Tậu (shop thực phẩm osate), shop nail, làm ga-dơn (garden), a-kao-töm (accountant), xen-öst-lin (Centerlink), thếò- o guè (take-away), lin nhù (cleaning), thằng boy (boy), con ga (girl), ê-döm (real estate agent), lót- kò (locker), goa ròp (wardrobe), đập bò ga ra (double garage), bò rút vo nia (brick veneer), đi bôt (going by bus), lây hồ li đê (take holidays), bây chéc (pay check), bùi-ni (business), go răn tì (warranty), in-suá răn (insurance), công trách (contract), phom (form) (diên form, khai form), sĩ tem diêu-ti (stamp duty), kao sô (council), ôt stos-dì (Aus Study), daí ot (diet), phó lét or lét (flat).

b. While nouns are the most common word class transferred (Haugen 1953: 406; Clyne 1985: 95) due to the direct link between form and content, other of parts of speech are as follows:

Verb: lin (clean), bút (book), thêt (take), rắn (run), mé nịt (manage), hen-đô (handle), diêu (deal), thêt o vô (take over), li (lease), seo (sell), ruy lét (relax), lút áp tô (look after), thêt ke (take care), ke (care), nỡ gờ shi ệt (negotiate), rin (ring/call), ko (call), phon (phone), ken sô (cancel), ngữ phát