The Prevalence of English Monolingualism and Its Association with Generational Status among Hmong Americans, 2005-2009

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Abstract

Using the American Community Survey's multi-year (2005-2009) Public Use Microdata Sample, we estimate the prevalence of English monolingualism and statistically analyze the association between English monolingualism and generational status within the U.S. Hmong population. Our findings show that the odds of speaking only English among the second generation is almost three times more compared to the first generation. Data from the 2009 ACS PUMS further indicate that there is a linear and positive relationship between generational status and English speaking ability. We discuss how English monolingualism, when reinforced by Hmong's age structure and immigration pattern, could impact Hmong Americans' rate of household linguistic isolation and their maintenance of oral tradition.

Keywords: Hmong Americans, Generational Status, English Monolingualism, Assimilation, American Community Survey

The Prevalence of English Monolingualism and Its Association with Generational Status among Hmong Americans, 2005-2009[1]

> "(H)mong oral tradition has been for centuries the unwritten charter of
> their common culture, its only support for their collective memory,
> the treasured legacy of the successive generations"
> — (Lemoine 2008: 14).

In the above excerpt, Jacques Lemoine, a scholar who, for at least the last 40 years, has studied Hmong and other ethnic minorities subsumed under the China-specific Miao nationality, shares invaluable insights about Hmong oral tradition. In the same essay, Lemoine (2008) expresses, among other things, his concern about the potential loss of oral tradition ("poetry, music, and prose") among the younger generation of Hmong, and how such a loss could lead to the loss of Hmong's expressive, functional rituals of life and death. Given the centrality of oral tradition and oral history in Hmong social life, the loss of Hmong language skills could spell challenges for Hmong society in more ways than just individuals' inability to communicate in their native language.

To begin to understand the extent of the decline in Hmong native language use, in this study, we use nationally representative data to estimate the prevalence of English monolingualism and statistically analyze the association between English monolingualism and generational status within the U.S. Hmong population.[2] We hypothesize that generational status is positively related to English monolingualism. That is, we expect that individuals in the second generation would be more likely to speak only English at home compared to individuals in the first generation. We begin by briefly reviewing recent literature on English monolingualism among immigrants. Next, we describe our data and analysis. We then present the results followed by a discussion on the implications of English monolingualism for Hmong Americans'

rate of household linguistic isolation and maintenance of oral tradition. We conclude with some comments on the limitations of the data and suggestions for future research.

Literature Review

Research shows that although bilingualism is not uncommon among immigrants, a large and growing proportion of them, especially the second and third generations tend to speak only English at home (Alba, Logan, Lutz and Stults 2002; Alba 2004). For example, according to the 2000 U.S. Census, among Hmong children ages 6 to 15, 2.8 percent of the first generation reported speaking only English compared to 5.9 percent of the second generation (Alba 2004: 4). Within the context of the United States, assimilation into American English is commonplace. The pressure for immigrant and foreigners to assimilate into American English is linked to broader assimilative forces and nationalist along with nativist and racist sentiments within U.S. society (Portes and Rumbaut 2001: 113-5). Historically, white dominant groups within U.S. society demanded that immigrants, including southern and eastern European immigrants, adopt and learn to speak unaccented American English. This was and still is considered a necessary process both for instrumental reasons and for symbolic reasons, such as to demonstrate individuals' and groups' exclusive loyalty to the United States (2001: 113-5). Given this cultural and political context, it is not surprising that foreign language proficiency among many children of immigrants has declined. In their study of the second-generation children of Latin and Asian immigrants in Miami and San Diego during the mid-1990s, Portes and Rumbaut found that individuals' "knowledge of English is near universal [over 98 percent], and [that] the use and preference for English increases consistently over time" (2001: 118) even as, among some groups, the preference for and average fluency in foreign language declined (2001:119-20).

What factors influence the likelihood of speaking only English at home? Recent work by Alba et al. 2002) helps shed light on this question. Using data from the five percent Integrated

Public Use Microdata Sample of the 1990 Census, Alba et al. (2002) examined the likelihood of speaking only English at home among the second and third generations of Mexican, Cuban, and Chinese immigrants. Some the factors that they examined were parental average education, generational status, intermarriage, ethnic niche employment, the language that non-parent adults in the home speak, the presence of preschool children or other non-English speakers, and the proximity to group residential concentration. They found that English monolingualism was dominant across all three ethnic immigrant groups but especially among children of the third generation. For instance, among the third generation, the percentage who spoke only English at home was extremely high among Asian children (90 to 97 percent), very high among Cuban children (78 percent), and high among Mexican children (52 to 64 percent) (Alba et al. 2002: 472-73).

Alba et al. (2002) argue that three factors, which they conceptualize as comprising "family situation" and "community contexts," have the greatest influence on the probability of a person being monolingual or bilingual: 1) whether the parents of the person are married exogamously or endogamously; 2) whether other adults or relatives present in the home speak the child's native language or another language; and 3) the child's parents' average level of educational attainment (p. 477-78). Children are more likely to speak only English at home when parents and other adults in the home speak a non-native language, when parents intermarry with others outside of the ethnic or racial group especially groups associated with a different mother tongue, and when their parents have higher average educational attainment. Conversely, the more that family situation and community contexts support a native tongue, the more likely that the children will be bilingual (Alba et al. 2002: 477-79). Alba et al. (2002) found that other factors such as parental self-employment, residence in a central city, and the presence of a preschooler had insignificant or inconsistent effects on the dependent variable. They also found

that, especially among Chinese of the later generations, generational status has a strong positive influence on the likelihood of English monolingualism (2002: 478-79).

Method

We use data from the Public Use Microdata Samples (PUMS), which is a subsample of the American Community Survey (ACS). Our primary dataset is the five-year (2005-2009) ACS PUMS. For the purpose of our study, this combined dataset provides sufficient cases for statistical analysis and more stable estimates compared to single-year datasets. Throughout this paper, we use the terms "ACS data/dataset" or simply "ACS" to refer to this five-year dataset. When we analyze results from other ACS single-year datasets, we will specify them separately. Detailed information about the content, design, and accuracy of the ACS has been described elsewhere (Herman 2008; U.S. Census Bureau 2008, 2009a, 2009c).

Our sample includes only those individuals who self-reported as "Hmong" on the ACS question, "What is this person's race?" (U.S. Census Bureau 2009e: 2).[3] The 2005-2009 ACS contains 7,639 cases representing individuals who identified themselves as "Hmong" alone on the race question.[4] When weighted, this sample represents a total of 195,614 Hmong.

The dependent variable in our analysis is whether a person speaks only English at home. This variable was derived from the ACS question, "Does this person speak a language other than English at home?" A "yes" response means that the person "sometimes or always speaks a language other than English at home," while a "no" response indicates that the person "speaks only English, or if a non-English language is spoken [it is spoken] only at school or is limited to a few expressions or slang" (US Census Bureau 2009d: 9). The main independent variable is generational status. Using the variable for nativity, we coded the foreign born as the first generation and the native U.S.-born as the second generation. Sex is a controlled variable.

The ACS data are complex survey data collected through two phases, with each phase containing a two-stage stratified-sampling process (U.S. Census Bureau 2009a). Given this complex sampling design, the use of standard statistical analyses that assume simple random sampling may lead to biased estimates of standard errors and, therefore, biased or misleading population estimates (Brogan 1998; Lee and Forthofer 2006). To produce more accurate estimates, the analysis of the data must account for the sampling design features either through stratum and/or cluster variables or replicate weights. Because the ACS publishes only replicate weights, the analysis must be conducted by one of the replication-based methods such as jackknife, balanced repeated replication, or variants of these methods (Lee and Forthofer 2006; Mukhopadhyay, An, Tobias and Watts 2008).[5]

We used WesVar (Version 5.1; Westat, Rockville, MD) to conduct the final analyses. Specifically, we employed Fay's method of variance replication with a correction value of 0.5 using the full sample weight and the 80 replicate weights provided with the ACS PUMS dataset. This method and the correction value are identical to the ones suggested for use with the Current Population Survey-ASEC data, which used successive difference replication (U.S. Census 2009b: 6). To check that the estimates in WesVar are sensible and consistent, we used another statistical software, SAS (Version 9.2; SAS Institute Inc., Cary, NC), to run the same analyses.[6] Our cross check showed that SAS 9.2 and WesVar 5.1 produced very similar and consistent coefficients and standard errors. Finally, to check that both WesVar and SAS are indeed generating correct estimates and standard errors, we employed the same replication method using sub-samples of the full U.S. ACS 05-09 dataset and then compared our estimates and standard errors to those contained in the "PUMS Estimates for User Verification" provided by the U.S. Census Bureau.[7] The matching figures at this stage gave us confidence that the replication method we used provides accurate estimates and standard errors.[8]

Results

General Profile of Hmong in the American Community Survey

Table 1 shows the basic demographic characteristics of the Hmong population while Figure 1 shows its age distribution by sex in 2005-2009. Hmong Americans are a relatively young population with 46 percent under 18 years of age. Only three percent are 64 years or over. The Hmong median age is 19 years compared to the general American population's 36.5 years.[9] About 45 percent of Hmong are foreign-born and about 80 percent are U.S. citizens either by birth in the U.S., birth abroad to U.S.-citizen parents, or through naturalization. These figures are fairly similar across the three states with the greatest concentrations of Hmong (Table 1).

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Hmong Americans, ACS 2005-2009[1]

	Average Total Population	Percent Female	Mean Age	Percent under 18 years	Percent 65 years and over	Percent Married	Percent Never Married or Under 15	Percent Foreign Born	Percent with U.S. Citizenship
California	66,846	50.7	23.2	45.9	3.3	26.4	67.5	43.2	78.3
Minnesota	48,949	48.7	22.8	47.4	2.3	29.0	64.7	49.0	76.5
Wisconsin	40,672	47.7	23.2	44.1	3.1	31.1	63.1	45.5	82.7
All Other States	39,147	50.5	23.2	43.8	2.3	32.9	62.4	41.3	80.7
Hmong in the U.S.	195,614	49.5	23.1	45.5	2.8	29.3	64.9	44.7	79.2

[1] Weighted estimates.
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2005-2009 American Community Survey PUMS.

Figure 1. Population Pyramid of Hmong Americans 2005-09
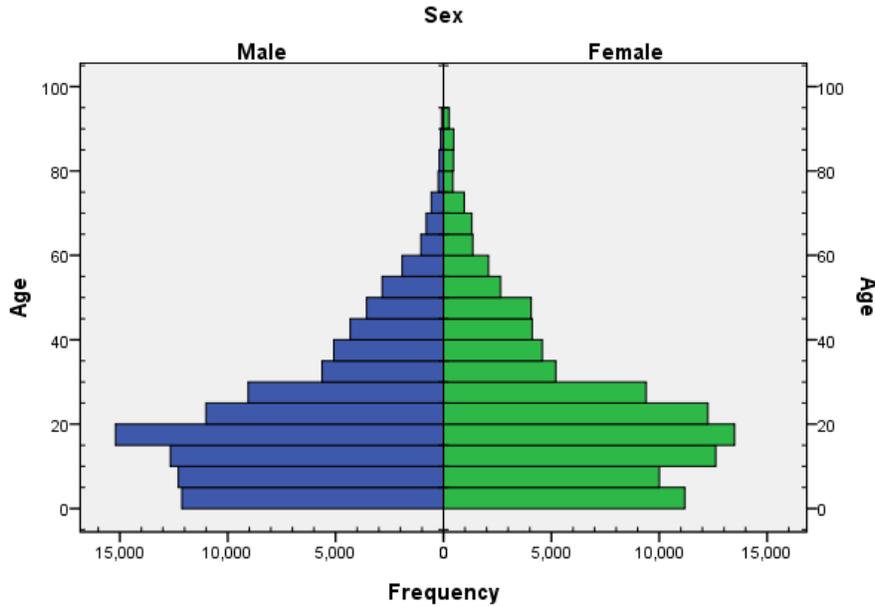
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2005-2009 American Community Survey PUMS.

Prevalence of Speaking Only English and Another Language

The data indicate that about 93 percent of Hmong ages 5 and older speak a language other than English at home (Table 2). Within this group, nearly all (97.8 percent) reported speaking Hmong, followed by Lao (1.0 percent), and then by Thai (0.3 percent) (table not shown). In contrast, 7.3 percent (about 12,500) of Hmong speak only English at home. As expected, the prevalence of English monolingualism varies significantly across generational status. Among the second generation, 10.6 percent speak only English at home compared to 3.9 percent for the first generation.

Table 2: Population 5 Years and Older Prevalence of Speaking Non-English or English Only Language at Home by Generational Status, 2005-2009

Characteristic	n	Weighted n	Percent of Language Use at Home[1]		
			Non-English	Only English	S.E.[2]
Hmong in the U.S.	6,803	172,306	92.7	7.3	0.61
Sex					
Male	3,434	86,604	93.3	6.7	0.67
Female	3,369	85,702	92.2	7.8	0.73
Generational Status					
First Generation	3,471	86,335	96.1*	3.9*	0.95
Second Generation	3,332	85,971	89.4*	10.6*	0.50

* p < .001

[1] Weighted estimates.

[2] Standard errors calculated based on replicate weights in the ACS, using Fay's method in WesVar 5.1.
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2005-2009 American Community Survey PUMS.

Precisely, to what extent does generational status predict English monolingualism? For the second generation, the odds of speaking only English is 2.96 times more than that of the first generation (Table 3), holding sex consistent. Sex is not a significant predictor. Overall, this finding is consistent with that of Alba and his associates (2002) that generational status has a strong positive influence on English monolingualism.

Table 3: Odds for Use of Only English at Home by Generational Status and Sex

Variables	Model 1		Model 2	
	Odds Ratio	95% C.I.	Odds Ratio	95% C.I.
Generational Status				
Second Generation	2.94*	2.26-3.82	2.96*	2.27-3.84
Sex				
Female			1.22	0.99-1.50
Weighted N	172,306		172,306	

* p < .001

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2005-2009 American Community Survey PUMS.

English Speaking Proficiency

Next, we explore the possibility of a linear relationship between generational status and self-reported English speaking ability among those (ages five and older) who reported that they speak another language at home besides English. For this part of our analysis, we used the latest single-year ACS data (2009 ACS PUMS). Unlike the multi-year ACS datasets, this one-year dataset allows for the construction of more than two categories of generational status: the first generation, the one-and-a-half generation, and the second generation.[10] Consistent with the recent sociological literature on the new immigration, we define the first generation as those individuals who entered the U.S. at age 12 or older; the 1.5 generation as those who entered the U.S. before age 12; and the second generation as consisting of those who were born in the U.S. with at least one foreign born parent (Portes and Zhou 1993: 75; Zhou 1997: 65; Rumbaut and Portes 2001: 11; Rumbaut 2004: 1162, 1165; Waldinger, Lim and Cort 2007: 9; Rumbaut 2008: 209; Kasinitz, Mollenkopf, Waters and Holdaway 2008: 2).[11]

Table 4 shows that 51.8 percent of Hmong (ages 5 and older who speak another language at home besides English) reported speaking English "very well." Within this group alone, 9.0 percent, 58.0 percent, and 74.0 percent are from the first generation, 1.5 generation, and second

generation, respectively. In contrast, among those who reported speaking English "not well," the percentage decreased from 41.9 percent for the first generation to 12.6 percent for the 1.5 generation, and 4.5 percent for the second generation. The results from our multiple regression analysis indicate that generational status is indeed a significant predictor of English ability (table not shown). Specifically, for every one unit increase in generational status, there is a 1.43 unit increase in improvement of English ability (R-square = 0.40, p < .0001). Together, these pieces of evidence provide support for the existence of a linear and positive relationship between generational status and English speaking ability.

Table 4: Population 5 Years and Older English Speaking Ability by Generational Status, 2009

Characteristic	n	Weighted n	English Speaking Ability (in percentage)[1]				Total %
			Not at All	Not well	Well	Very Well	
Hmong in the U.S.	1,397	177,014	**7.1**	**17.0**	**24.1**	**51.8**	100.0
Generational Status[2]							
First Generation	393	50,424	23.2	41.9	25.9	9.0	100.0
1.5 Generation	338	40,419	1.3	12.6	28.1	58.0	100.0
Second Generation	665	86,171	0.3	4.5	21.1	74.0	100.0

[1] Weighted estimates.

[2] First generation: >=12 years old when entered the U.S.; 1.5 Generation: < 12 years old when entered the U.S.; Second generation: U.S. born.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2009 American Community Survey PUMS.

Discussion

In 2005-2009, about seven percent of Hmong in the U.S. reported speaking only English at home. As expected, English monolingualism is significantly more prevalent among the second generation where approximately 10.6 percent speak only English at home compared to 3.9 percent of the first generation who do so. The data from the 2009 ACS further indicate that among individuals who reported speaking a non-English language at home, generational status is positively correlated with English ability. What implications might these findings have on

Hmong American communities and social actors in them? We consider the implications of English monolingualism for two issues: (1) household linguistic isolation as formally defined by the U.S. government and (2) Hmong oral tradition.

As Siegel, Martin and Bruno (2007) point out, it was not until the 1980 Census that the U.S. government developed language questions in the census surveys in "an effort to respond to the necessity to know about current language use and limited English proficiency" (p. 1). This effort, they implicitly suggest, was driven by the need to comply with legal precedents such as the 1964 Civil Rights Act, the 1965 Voting Rights Act, and the 1968 Bilingual Education Act. In any case, the government recognized that "an entire household's inability to communicate in English can be even more of a barrier than an individual's inability," and that "linguistic isolation may also serve as a barrier to receipt of medical and social services" (Siegel, Martin and Bruno 2007: 2).

Nationally, the proportion of linguistically isolated Hmong households declined dramatically from 60 percent in 1990 to 35 percent in 2000 (Pfeifer and Lee 2004: 7).[12] Our calculations using the 2009 ACS data show that the percentage of linguistically isolated Hmong households has further declined to 22 percent. Given that ACS 1-year data and Census decennial data are comparable on this variable, these figures indicate that, on average, Hmong Americans' household linguistic isolation has declined by about two percentage points per year since 1990. Currently, the percentage of linguistically isolated Hmong households (22 percent) is comparable to those of other non-English speaking households, such as Spanish households (26 percent), Indo-European households (17 percent), and Asian and Pacific Islander households (28 percent).[13] Nevertheless, the increasing prevalence of English monolingualism combined with two other factors may accelerate the decline in the proportion of linguistically isolated Hmong households in the years to come. These factors are age structure and immigration.

We know, based on the 2005-09 ACS, that Hmong are a relatively young population with about 65 percent under the age of 15 or never married (see table 1). About 18 percent of those between age 6 and 15 reported that they speak only English at home. As members of this cohort age and have families of their own, their population will likely contribute to an increase in the general Hmong population who speak only English. Hence, we expect a decrease in the proportion of those families who are classified as linguistically isolated.

At the same time, the lack of renewal immigration among Hmong means the inevitable decrease in the size of the first generation whose members are more likely than members from later generations to speak Hmong. After 1997, the immigration of Hmong refugees (officially considered refugees of Laos), to the U.S. virtually stopped. To illustrate, the Office of Immigration Statistics of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (2006) reported that in fiscal years 1996, 1997, 1998, and 1999, the number of admitted refugees from Laos was 2,201, 939, 0, and 19, respectively (p. 55). It was not until 2004 that Hmong refugees arrived in significant numbers again (from Wat Tham Krabok of Saraburi Province, Thailand). The Office of Immigration Statistics reported that in fiscal years 2004, 2005, 2006, and 2007, the number of refugees from Laos who arrived in the U.S. was 6,005, 8,517, 830, and 117, respectively (U.S. Department of Homeland Security 2009: 40). Currently, there is no basis to expect that future Hmong immigration will occur in any great number. Hence, we can expect a steady decrease in the proportion of the first generation. Given these demographic and immigration conditions, we suspect that there will be a rapid decline in the proportion of linguistically isolated Hmong households.

We return, finally, to Jacques Lemoine's concerns (and probably the concerns of tens of thousands of Hmong adults and elders), about the fate of Hmong oral tradition. In his essay, "To Tell the Truth," Lemoine (2008) discusses, among other things, several detailed graphical

representations of Hmong's social structure, of the shamanic logic of mind and soul analysis during the diagnosis of illnesses, and of the "Hmong shaman's symbolic sphere of power" (p. 23). In doing so, Lemoine invites his readers to visualize and appreciate Hmong's "unique and beautiful (...) rituals of life and death" (p. 18). These rituals, whose *accurate* meanings or "images that convey meanings" (p. 18) can be accessed usually only through an informed understanding of Hmong oral tradition ("poetry, music, and prose"), are being endangered. This is the case, Lemoine suggests, because Hmong oral tradition suffers from a decline in its number of practitioners as well as a lack of a "logical picture of their traditions" that could instill "general understanding" (p. 24) and pride among the younger generations of Hmong.

We suspect that both the decline in the number of practitioners and the lack of a general understanding among Hmong about their oral tradition are intricately linked to the loss of native language skills, both oral and written. Given the centrality of oral tradition in Hmong social life, the loss of native language skills could spell challenges for Hmong society in more ways than just individual miscommunication. For one thing, the loss of native language ability could hinder an individual from accessing certain collective ideas and memories or nuanced cultural meanings that his/her forbears have left behind. This gap in mutual understanding could, in turn, make the tracing of "*ethnic* origin" or co-ethnic linkages based on linguistic affinity extremely difficult or, worst, futile. In our view, this long-term consequence, which often is expressed only implicitly, underlies Hmong elders' anxieties when they criticize Hmong youth with "*nej tsis paub lus Hmoob lawm*" (you no longer comprehend Hmong language).[14]

We acknowledge that language or linguistic affinity, especially in an increasingly connected, multi-lingual world, is not the only criteria that matters for ethnic identification or membership. Nevertheless, language is often used by social actors as a crucial marker of ethnicity. Our observations in some Hmong American communities suggest that, especially in

recent years, many Hmong American tourists take linguistic affinity (similarity with respect to vocabulary and syntax usage), to be an especially important marker—and, informally, a key determinant—of ethnic affinity when they meet other people abroad, especially in places such as Vietnam and China. Other things such as cultural practices, religious rituals, healing ceremonies, etc., appear to come second to language. Even when two speakers do not speak the same *Hmong* dialect, or with the same accent, or with very little mutual intelligibility at all, the very mutual acknowledgement that they are *speaking Hmong* seems crucial for their sense of common origin and destiny as co-ethnics of an imagined Hmong nation.

Nevertheless, our findings should not be interpreted as suggesting a straight-line or zero-sum process of Hmong language adaptation. Language adaptation is a multifaceted process and shifts and changes in individuals' linguistic styles are more complex and context-dependent than can be captured by quantitative data alone. Based on our experiences interacting with Hmong individuals, from elementary school students to professionals, the majority of Hmong continue to speak a concoction of hybrid languages and dialects. Furthermore, individuals' choice of language or dialect is situational rather than constant across all contexts. For instance, when they are among their co-ethnics, Hmong young people regularly speak American English alongside one of two Hmong dialects or a mixture of Hmong Der with the Mong Leng dialect while also using fragments of Lao and Thai. When they are at school or at work, however, they tend to use whatever language is predominant at these places.

Conclusion

Using nationally representative data, we estimated the prevalence of English language usage between different generations among Hmong Americans. The evidence shows that for both men and women, Hmong individuals of the later generation are significantly more likely than individuals of the earlier generation to speak only English at home. However, the evidence

also shows that about 90 percent of Hmong of the second generation still speak another language other than English at home. Taken together, these findings suggest that, for most Hmong homes, bilingualism—in particular, Hmong alongside English—remains the dominant pattern. To the extent that Hmong of later generations are moving toward an English-dominant home environment, this process has been gradual rather than rapid.

The cross-sectional data we used do not enable us to calculate trends and causal analyses. Additionally, given that the ACS data are based on self-reports, issues of reliability should be taken into consideration when interpreting the data. Furthermore, because the ACS data do not provide information on native language ability, it is unknown how Hmong's native speaking ability may be correlated with generational status. Finally, the data do not enable us to investigate the family and community factors (discussed above) that may impact the prevalence of English monolingualism. Future studies that address these limitations would add to our knowledge of the issue.

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Notes

[1] We are grateful to the three anonymous reviewers of the *Hmong Studies Journal* for their valuable comments on an earlier draft of this paper. We also thank Mark Pfeifer for his editorial assistance.

[2] In this paper, when we use the phrase "English monolingualism" we mean it only in the narrow sense of speaking only English *at home*. While English monolingualism does not necessary mean a complete lack of usage of or proficiency in Hmong language, it is the best proxy of these conditions in the ACS since neither the ACS nor the Census decennial questionnaire measures native language proficiency (writing, reading or speaking). We know of no other sources of nationally representative data that do so. Moreover, the ACS does not contain any variable that distinguishes between persons who are "monolingual" and persons who are "bilingual" or "multi-lingual."

[3] Interestingly, "Hmong" was printed as the *first* example response category under the "Other Asian" option on the 2008 through 2011 ACS questionnaires (Question 6). Prior to 2008, the only Southeast Asian category printed on the ACS questionnaire was "Vietnamese." Since the 2009 ACS offers ethno-racial categories as "options," it is important to keep in mind what Rumbaut (2004) has pointed out regarding self-reported identities: "subjective self-reports chosen from a list of ethnoracial categories specified by the survey (and by the federal government) may be susceptible to changes in self-definition over time and circumstance" (p. 1171).

[4] Our decision to use race as a variable to delineate the Hmong American population is based on our perception that doing so could allow for more convenient comparisons with previous research on Hmong Americans. Like others (Carroll and Udalova 2005), we recognize the issues of census under-counting, reporting or coding errors, and the limitations in using just the race variable to delineate the Hmong American population. There is potential in using other variables, such as ancestry, alongside race to delineate the Hmong population. Our analysis of the ACS data reveals that using ancestry alongside race as a selection criterion does result in a larger Hmong sample (891 more cases), but it does not in any significant way alter the findings on language use or English ability. Moreover, we recognize that the ambiguity presented by census (and other types of) data reflect broader, more complex issues of social and political categorization. That is, they reflect social or state processes that attempt to impose neat monolithic categories on individuals whose historical backgrounds, social or kin relationships and present day experiences are anything but monolithic, homogeneous or static.

[5] The Census Bureau makes clear that the variance estimates provided in the ACS PUMS dataset have been created using the successive difference replication (SDR) method of variance estimation (U.S. Census Bureau 2009a: 12.1). The SDR method is one variant of the general balanced repeated replication method and has previously been used to create replicate weights (whose total number vary depending on dataset) for the Census 2000 long form and the Current Population Survey (U.S. Census Bureau 2009a: 12.1). Information about replicate weights in the ACS has been discussed elsewhere (Garrett and Starsinic 2008).

[6] In SAS (Version 9.2), we used the PROC SURVEYLOGISTIC procedure to calculate logistic regression coefficients. The replicate weights provided by ACS contain few negatives. Because this procedure (PROC SURVEYLOGISTIC) does not allow the use of negative weights, we set the negative weights to zero before running the procedure. According to Dale Garrett (mathematical statistician at the Decennial Statistical Studies Division, U.S. Census Bureau), in general, the standard errors (SE) generated by setting negative weights to zero should be very close to the SE generated by including the negative weights when there are very few negative weights. Our estimations of SE in WesVar (with negative weights) and SAS (without negative weights) confirmed this suggestion. We are grateful to Dale Garrett for his assistance with the use of the ACS replicate weights in SAS.

[7] Retrieved March 1, 2011 from http://www.census.gov/acs/www/data_documentation/pums_documentation/

[8] Descriptive statistics and figures in this paper were produced with SPSS 16 (IBM).

[9] Pfeifer and Lee (2004) reported that Hmong's median age was 16.1 years during the Census 2000 enumeration.

[10] Even as recent as 2004, Rumbaut points out that "the first and second generation…have not been uniformly defined in the literature or operationalized in research studies" (2004: 1165). The concept of one-and-a-half generation, used in many studies of contemporary immigrants, was coined by Rubén G. Rumbaut, and one of its earliest appearances was in Rumbaut and Ima (1988: 22). As Zhou (1997) points out, the 1.5 generation "is sometimes broken down into two distinct co-horts: children between 6 and 13 years of age as 1.5-generation children and those arriving as adolescents (aged 13 to 17) who are similar to first-generation children" (p. 65).

[11] Zhou and Bankston's (1998) study of Vietnamese children of immigrants include with the *second* generation group those individuals who were foreign-born but "[arrived] at preschool age (0 to 4 years)" (p. 243). The second generation technically includes all those born in the U.S. *with at least one immigrant parent*. Given that the great majority of Hmong refugees have only been in the United States for 30 or so years, Hmong children of the second generation almost always have at least one immigrant parent. This is so, because the third generation children (children born to two U.S.-born parents) are barely emerging and generally still too young to participate or appear in any significant number in national surveys. The 2009 ACS data contain only 33 cases (out of a total 1,755 cases) in which a Hmong individual was native born with both parents of native (U.S.-born) background.

[12] The clearest definition of "linguistic isolation" we could find is that by Siegel, Martin and Bruno (2001). They state: "'Linguistic isolation' is dependent on the English-speaking ability of all adults in a household. A household is linguistically isolated if all adults speak a language other than English and none speaks English 'very well.' Adult is defined as age 14 or older, which identifies household members of high school age and older" (pp. 2-3).

[13] These rounded estimates were obtained using the U.S. Census Bureau's American FactFinder online tables based on the ACS 1-year (2009) sample estimates.

[14] In this context, the Hmong phrase "*tsis paub*" can also mean "to not know, to not recognize or to misrecognize, or to not be aware of."

About the Authors

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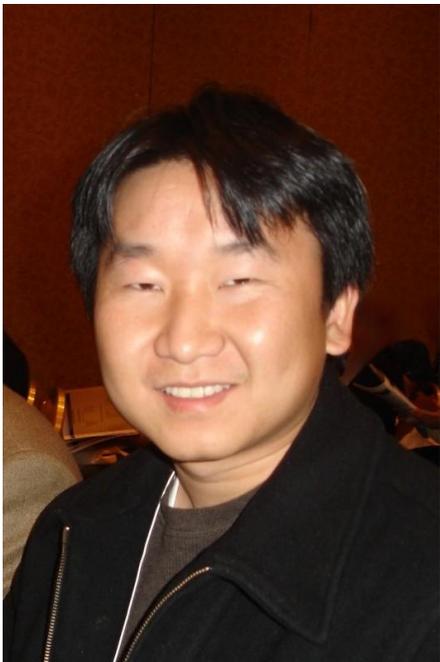
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