

I began my project as a part of my summer research internship with the McNair Scholars Program. In order to begin designing my project, I was tasked with interviewing my personal librarian, Sara Kearns, and finding a mentor to guide me during the research process. I knew that I wanted to conduct sociolinguistic research as it is a passion of mine and my intended future direction for higher education and a career. Naturally, I chose linguistics professor Dr. Mary Kohn as my mentor. When discussing potential topics for my research, Dr. Kohn asked me about my personal interests and previous research experience. This prompted me to discuss my research in the psychology department about how students mitigate loneliness with screentime and a lecture I attended by visiting scholar Dr. Monica Trieu from Purdue University. Dr. Trieu's visit was a crucial moment for me during my time at K-State because the research she presented covered the invisibility of Midwestern Asian Americans. This personally spoke to me as I am a Midwestern Asian American and Dr. Trieu conducted the kind of research that I hope to achieve one day. After considering these two key moments in my educational career, Dr. Kohn and I thought of the recently produced film *Everything Everywhere All at Once (EEAAO)* (2022). I instantly knew that analyzing this film through a sociolinguistic lens is all I wanted and more.

Once Dr. Kohn and I found out what I would be researching, our next step was to dive deep into the film, Asian American studies, and applied sociolinguistic research. To keep track of our research, Dr. Kohn and I created a shared OneDrive folder which included our meeting notes, literature, general ideas, and my notes on the script and film. My first assignment was to take notes while watching the film and then take these notes to inform my direction for the project. I was also tasked with researching Asian representations in film. I utilized the library's general search as I found it gave me a wide range of literature that aided my research. I also utilized a few databases including "MLA (Modern Language Association) International Bibliography" and "JSTOR". While the literature that Dr. Kohn provided me and my results from the library and database searches were helpful, there was a certain point where I felt I wasn't getting the kind of literature I wanted for my research. I needed more broader thematic patterns of Asian stereotypes in film regarding the model minority myth, forever foreigner, lotus blossom and dragon lady, untrustworthiness, etc. and I knew who I could turn to: my personal librarian Sara Kearns. Once I emailed Sara K. for help, I was met with her overwhelming wealth of knowledge that gave me the kind of literature I was looking for. I also asked for her professional opinion on the validity of an online version of the film's script that I was using, and she was able to help me navigate that and ultimately validate it. What was truly helpful about Sara K. was that not only did she provide me the resources I needed, but she shared her *process* of searching for them. Her sharing her process helped illustrate to me that this was something I can do on my own in the future and that she wanted me to become an even better independent researcher.

My research process and the materials I gathered would not have been nearly as fruitful as they were if I had not had Zotero. I was given a class on Zotero as a part of the McNair Scholars Program. Since having Zotero, I have become a much more efficient, organized, and strategic researcher. The software's compatibility with other programs and its ability to allow

users to store, analyze, and reference text provides me a much more improved and enjoyable research experience. Zotero has truly transformed the way I do research.

As my research process continued and transformed, Dr. Kohn and I discovered a theoretical framework that took my research to new levels. Dr. Kohn shared a 2011 article written by linguist Dr. Li Wei titled, “Moment Analysis and translanguaging space: Discursive construction of identities by multilingual Chinese youth in Britain.” Once I read this article, my research transformed into the direction that is now my focus for my future in education: creativity and connection. I found that Wei’s research was not only important, beautiful, and engaging, but reflected the elements of *EEAAO* that make it such a groundbreaking film. After reading this specific article, I began to look further into Wei’s research, through the library general search, and found a 2016 co-authored article titled, “Transnational experience, aspiration and family language policy.” This article also greatly influenced my research as it was reflective of the transnational family experience within the film. Both articles also illustrated the thirty-year shift within applied linguistics from “immigrant” identities and language barriers and deficiencies to transnational identity, translanguaging, and connection. This shift in linguistic scholarship is represented through plot and character development within the film which is what makes Wei’s research so profound and integral to my work. Wei’s focus on creativity and connection through translanguaging and diasporic identity is an area that I am truly passionate for and helped guide my research into what it is today.

“You’re just making up sounds” Radical Creative Possibilities Through Translanguaging in
Everything Everywhere All at Once (2022)

I.a. Introduction

Linguistic choices in film can function as a tool to flesh out characters, locations, relationships, education, broader thematic aspects of the film, and more (Lippi-Green, 1997; Hodson, 2014). Language in film also serves as a way for audiences to hear portrayals of groups inaccessible to them, which can enforce harmful stereotypes (Lippi-Green, 1997; Feng, 2018). Outside of film, stereotypes can influence a listener’s perception of accentedness and trustworthiness in a speaker (Lindemann & Subtirelu, 2013; Lev-Ari & Keysar, 2010). Film makers then use these observed patterns within film to create distance, untrustworthiness, and a comedic effect between characters within the film and the audience experiencing the film. Often, characters who are phenotypically Asian and speak a language other than English and/or speak English with a perceived “foreign accent” are the target of these effects such as the Siamese Cats in *Lady and the Tramp* (1955), Mr. Yunioshi in *Breakfast at Tiffany’s* (1961), and Long Duk Dong in *Sixteen Candles* (1984). The groundbreaking 2022 film *Everything Everywhere All at Once* (EEAAO), generates a conversation on the importance of language in film as it portrays family dynamics and linguistic intricacies of a multilingual Asian American family while simultaneously subverting Asian stereotypes often depicted in U.S. film. A major through-line of the plot centers on language which moves from depicting a multilingual family’s interactions as deficient and characterized by language barriers to emphasizing the creative possibilities of multilingual spaces. Additionally, this shift in the film’s plot also reflects a shift in linguistic scholarship from immigrant identity and language deficiencies to transnational identity and translanguaging. Following methods established by Lippi-Green (1997), Hodson (2014), and

Wei (2011) I conduct an analysis of the subversion of stereotypes and radical creativity in translanguaging in *EEAAO*.

In addition, I use a modified version of Wei's 2011 Moment Analysis to analyze intrasentential switching, language choice, and metalinguistic commentary alongside character profiles to identify how language contributed to character development and plot advancement. Variables observed include the identity of the interlocutor, location in the multiverse, metacommentary on language (including corrections from other characters), power structures, and impact of language use on the scene. Results show that language choice and codeswitching correlated with interlocutor relationship, metaverse location, and topic. Translanguaging is also used continuously throughout the film to impact plot and character development as well as perform creativity. Evelyn, in particular, uses language choice to establish control, structure relationships, and create entire universes. Simultaneously, metalinguistic commentary within the film undercut dominant English and monolingual ideologies often depicted in U.S. films.

U.S. film has long perpetuated the notion that Asian characters speaking learner varieties of English are intelligent yet untrustworthy, submissive, weak, and un-American (Lippi-Green 1997; Feng 2018); however, this film actively subverts these stereotypes by centering an immigrant female Asian protagonist, Evelyn Wang (played by Michele Yeoh), as she transcends a variety of multiverses to save her family. Evelyn codeswitches throughout the film, establishing her linguistic dexterity as her multilingualism becomes a means of power, creation, and expression. Evelyn's creative use of language dismantles previous beliefs of deficiencies and untrustworthiness by utilizing her multilingualism and learner variety of English as powerful tool of control and creation while establishing herself as the hero. While Evelyn transforms emotionally and through alternate versions of herself, her language skills remain the same

throughout the film asserting that her multilingualism and learner variety of English is not a hinderance, but a strength that is integral to who she is. This analysis contributes to conversations on what roles language plays in reinforcing or subverting racialized stereotypes in film while also focusing on the creativity in multilingualism and multilingual spaces. By not focusing on language deficiencies and nationally stagnant identities, *EEAAO* is able to explore the Asian American immigrant identity and its relationship to creative possibilities through multilingual families in translanguaging spaces.

II.a. Everything Everywhere All at Once and breaking barriers

Everything Everywhere All at Once is an absurdist film about a middle-aged Chinese American immigrant who transcends the multiverse to save her daughter and the universe. Traveling through universes, laundry, martial arts, and taxes, the protagonist, Evelyn, must connect with the lives she could have led to save her family and humanity. The film was released on March 11th, 2022, by directing duo Daniel Kwan and Daniel Scheinert, collectively named the Daniels. The film stars Michele Yeoh (Evelyn Wang), Ke Huy Quan (Waymond Wang, Alpha Waymond), Stephanie Hsu (Joy Wang/Jobu Tupaki), James Hong (Gong Gong/Alpha Gong Gong), and Jaime Lee Curtis (Deidre). According to Box Office Mojo, *EEAAO* became A24's highest grossing film with a gross income of \$143,412,671 million worldwide and won seven out of eleven Oscar nominations ("*Everything Everywhere All at Once*"). Michele Yeoh became the first, and so far only, Asian woman to win an Oscar for "Best Actress" and both Michele Yeoh and Ke Huy Quan were the first actors to win an Oscar for a Mandarin and Cantonese speaking role. Yeoh's character, Evelyn, is multilingual and speaks with a learner variety of English which

deviates from the traditional American hero in mainstream U.S. films. The Daniels purposefully form their protagonist to inhabit these characteristics as their film is not only a captivating heroic story but an exploration of Asian American immigrant identity. In an interview with Theresa Lacson for *The Beat*, Daniel Kwan talks about this exploration of identity as something he truly enjoys about the movie:

it's about taking our preconceived ideas of things and exploding them, turning them upside down, and showing the depth and the multitudes that every one of us contains. Especially when I'm talking about Asian American immigrants, whatever. Looking beyond that, I just see untapped potential that is finally fully revealed. (Lacson, 2022).

EEAAO is undoubtedly commercially successful, but beyond that it breaks barriers of maintained language attitudes and ideologies within Hollywood while also serving as an opportunity to bring Asian American immigrant identity to the forefront of popular media.

II.b. Learner varieties of English and untrustworthiness

Previous research has shown that listeners will attribute a speaker's level of credibility to their level of accentendness (Lev-Ari & Keysar, 2010). Additionally, preconceived perceptions of speakers (such as presumed foreignness) influence a listener's expectations of a L2 speaker and often result in a listener being less likely to comprehend a speaker (Lindermann & Subtirelu, 2013; Rubin 1992). The notion that phenotypically Asian speakers are often deemed untrustworthy, as established by the previously stated research, is a long held highly racist belief stemming from the "yellow peril" of the 19th and 20th century. The yellow peril signified a collective fear of Asian immigration and the foreign bodies and cultures that "threatened" the

white race and the economic, political, and military areas of the West (Kawai, 2005; Lee, 1999). Racist ideologies stemming from the yellow peril continues to prevail today and combines with influenced perceptions of Asian speakers. Film makers then use this combination of racial and linguistic ideologies to code for distance, untrustworthiness, evilness, and exoticism for racialized Asian characters. A popular example of this is the Siamese Cats in the 1955 Disney film, *Lady and the Tramp*. These racialized characters are “quasi-Chinese-accented” and are recognized as “mischievous, deceitful”, unlikeable characters as they describe their behaviors in ungrammatical sentences such as, “Maybe we could reaching in and make it drown” (*Lady and the Tramp*, 1955). Their speech style is not grammatical in Chinese English or any other language varieties but aim to depict the characters, and Chinese English speakers in general, as “shifty and their speech as a disordered form of English” (Bayley & Villareal, 2018). Disney contributes to the racist “yellow peril” fear stemming from the 19th and 20th century, giving it voice and repackaging it as a colorful animation. Nagini (Claudia Kim) from *Fantastic Beasts: The Crimes of Grindelwald* (2018), a woman with a “blood curse” that transforms her into a snake, exemplifies the lingering pattern of depicting Asian characters as shifty, untrustworthy, and exotic in film. Adorned with dark features, placed in a cage for audience entertainment, and presented as a “beast” yet “so desirable”, the U.S. film industry continues to pose Asian characters as the exotically untrustworthy “other”.

II.c. Translanguaging and translanguaging space

Multilingualism is a central aspect of Asian American and diasporic identities. Previous applied linguistic research focused on language shifts and barriers in communication within

multigenerational transnational families (Hua & Wei, 2016, p. 2). This difficulty in communication is seen across multiple generations within the transnational family unit, “The common recurrent pattern is that the first-generation migrants find learning the languages of the new resident country is the most important and often challenging task, whilst their local-born children face the challenge of maintaining the home/heritage language.” (Hua & Wei, 2016, p. 2). Film portrayals of multilingual individuals and families can be seen ranging from the racist portrayals mentioned above to authentic language use in diasporic familial environments. In order to bring the authentic creative potential of multilingual Asian families to the forefront, I will be utilizing Li Wei’s 2011 research on translanguaging and translanguaging space. Wei moves away from a pedagogical understanding of translanguaging and connects it to the psycholinguistic notion of “linguaging” and to A.L. Becker’s move from language as a noun to “language as a verb and ongoing process, or linguaging” (Becker, 1988; 1991, as cited in Wei, 2011). Wei’s definition of translanguaging is:

...both going between different linguistic structures and systems, including different modalities (speaking, writing, signing, listening, reading, remembering) and going beyond them. It includes the full range of linguistic performances of multilingual language users for purposes that transcend the combination of structures, the alternation between systems, the transmission of information and the representation of values, identities and relationships. The act of translanguaging then is transformative in nature; it creates a social space for the multilingual language user by bringing together different dimensions of their personal history, experience and environment, their attitude, belief and ideology, their cognitive and physical capacity into one coordinated and meaningful performance, and making it into a lived experience (2011, p. 2).

The creative linguistic transcendence of translanguaging is a rejection of structures within named languages, embracing creatively exploring identities, relationships, and possibilities. What was previously “impossible” now transforms into the lived experience of the speaker. This performance of rejecting established linguistic conventions and embracing lived experience can be seen in Wei’s conversation with the three Chinese British boys in his study in Figure 1 below.

Chris: 以后工作就当“白领狗”，给人公司打工！
 (In future (I will) work as a “white-collar dog”, working for someone's company.)
 Lawson and Roland both laugh.
 Roland: You are already bilingual!
 Lawson: Good one.
 Chris: That's what I mean.

Figure 1. Li Wei’s Moment Analysis and translanguaging space: Discursive construction of identities by multilingual Chinese youth in Britain (2011, p. 5).

The first speaker, Chris, uses his bilingualism to create the bilingual pun, “white-collar dog” (白领狗), which sounds like the English word “bilingual”. The two other speakers understand the meaning of this multilingual pun because of their shared linguistic repertoires. The making of the pun is an act of translanguaging as it expands beyond the scope of two discrete languages to create new meaning in a shared multilingual space. Wei notes this multilingual space as a “translanguaging space”; a space that contains its own transformative power and “cultural translation” that forms new identities, values, practices, and shifting boundaries that exist in the individual's mind. A focus of Wei’s concept of translanguaging is “creativity and criticality” which he personally views as “under-explored dimensions of multilingual practices.” Though criticality is a crucial aspect of translanguaging practices, I will not be using it for this research

and instead focus on creativity. He also provides his own definition of creativity within the context of translinguaging stating that is, “the ability to choose between following and flouting the rules and norms of behavior, including the use of language. It is about pushing and breaking the boundaries between the old and the new, the conventional and the original, and the acceptable and the challenging” (2011, p. 2). This breaking of boundaries can be seen in the young boys’ creative fun with names:

Other examples of the fun these three youths had with names include: the Chinese name 张龙 (Zhang Long) becomes Long John and 鲍敏 (Bao Min, reverse order = Min Bao, which sounds like the Chinese word mianbao, meaning bread) becomes Bread (2011, p. 6).

The young boys actively perform the linguistic creativity that Wei is pointing to by ignoring the rules of order, Chinese significance, the written Chinese significance, and placing emphasis on sound. Translinguaging is also an act of negotiating socio-cultural identities and values through language, a key part of transnational belonging and imagination (Hua & Wei 2016). Within the film, *EEAAO*, language creativity is one component of the film that disrupts common tropes about Asian American identities. Below, I combine previous methods of analyzing film from a sociolinguistic lens with approaches toward studying translinguaging practices to show how *EEAAO* creates space for Asian American identities in Western action films.

III.a. Methods

I utilized previously established methods by Carmen Fought and Karen Eisenhower, Jane Hodson, and Rosina Lippi-Green to conduct an analysis of *EEAAO* to create character profiles, comparing a character’s language choice and variety with their character role and behavior.

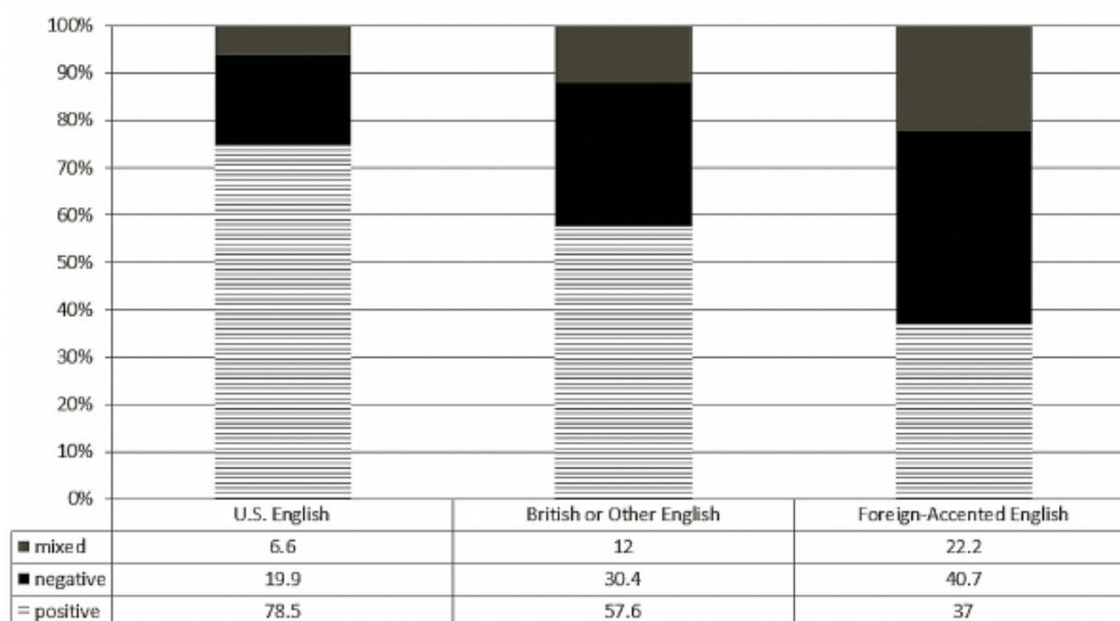


Figure 7.8 Animated characters by positive, negative, and mixed motivations by major language groups

Figure 2. Rosina Lippi-Green's *English with an Accent: Language, Ideology, and Discrimination in the United States* (pp. 119, 2011).

Lippi-Green conducted an analysis of 371 animated Disney characters and grouped them by language traits and evaluation of motivations. Her analysis looked at how accent correlates with motivations and found that the representation of “foreign”¹ accents is largely more negative compared to the representation of U.S. English and British or other English, as seen in Figure 2. Mainstream US English (MUSE) is the variety used most often for heroes to code for the type of “positive motivations” that Lippi-Green discusses. Building on Lippi-Green, I created character

¹ Lippi-Green uses the term “Foreign-Accented English” throughout her study. This is a highly criticized term due to the U.S. not having an official language and the long-held high presence of other language varieties in the U.S. (Lozano, 2018). See Rosa and Flores (2017) for more on raciolinguistic perspective and foreignness.

and language profiles for the three main characters and a profile of the two main Alpha Verse characters.

I also analyzed codeswitching (CS), building on work by Chen & Liu 2023. Chen and Liu utilized Poplack's (1980) and Holmes' (2012) research to code for different types of CS and their affective functions. Chen and Liu found sixty instances of CS and five out of seven functions of CS: solidarity, topic, switching for affective functions, lexical borrowing and metaphorical switching as seen in Figure 3 below:

Table 2. Numbers of CS in *EEAAO*

Types	Numbers	Percentage
Inter-Sentential Switching	23	38%
Intra-Sentential Switching	12	20%
Extra-Sentential Switching	25	42%
Total Number	60	100%

Figure 3. Types and Functions of Code-Switching in the Film *Everything Everywhere All at Once* (Chen & Liu, 2023, p. 172).

My analysis will add qualitative approaches to the conversation by utilizing Li Wei's concept of translanguaging and translanguaging spaces. I incorporate Wei's Moment Analysis (2011) to focus on the impact, creativity, and meaning of a spontaneous momentary performance. Wei defines a moment as, "a point in or a period of time which has outstanding significance. It is characterised by its distinctiveness and impact on subsequent events or developments" (p. 3). Wei also states that Moment Analysis emphasizes the individual and "their cognitive processes surrounding the creative moment of action" (p. 3). Using these definitions, I analyzed significant moments within the film to see how language practices in these moments impacted

the plot. I also incorporated comments from the directors in interviews and analysis from viewers to proxy the self-reflective comments seen in Wei's (2011) study. Using these approaches, I examine individual characters and their significant performances of creativity in order to analyze the impact they have on other characters, the plot, and their character development.

IV.a. Character profiles and undermining stereotypes

The Wang's multilingualism is a crucial aspect of their family and the film itself. The film opens within the intimacy of the Wang's home with Evelyn and Waymond conversing in Mandarin. As blogger Punita Chan observes, "*Everything everywhere*, surprisingly enough, opens not with English, but with Mandarin. This immediately alienates the assumedly English-speaking audience, placing them in the same linguistic plight that Evelyn faces as a Chinese immigrant in America." (Chan, 2024). The film not only opens with Mandarin, but with code-switching as Evelyn and Waymond continuously mix Mandarin and English together in their conversation.

It's not until confronted with the Alpha-verse that multilingual practices recede in the film. Main speaking characters from the Alpha-verse are comprised of Alpha Waymond and Alpha Gong Gong. Both Alpha Waymond and Alpha Gong Gong only speak English throughout the entirety of the film. Their English is also never corrected by any other characters, in contrast to the main protagonist, Evelyn. Alpha Waymond and Alpha Gong Gong's speech styles contrast with their original alternates by incorporating more erudite and Latinate words that align with the characteristics of the Alpha-verse personalities. Alpha Gong Gong differs from his non-Alpha alternate in that he does not speak Cantonese, instead, favoring English.

Alpha Waymond also solely uses English but in contrast to his non-Alpha alternate, he has a more complex lexicon with more Latinate vocabulary.

The Alpha-verse characters position themselves as heroes of the film. This pattern conforms more closely to the audience's expectations of what a hero is. As seen in Lippi-Green's analysis, "Characters with strongly positive actions and motivations are overwhelmingly speakers of socially mainstream varieties of English" (1997, p. 101). As the film progresses, the Alpha-verse characters are revealed to be violent, impatient, and ultimately not the heroes. Instead, it is Evelyn who is the hero of the film. The directors take advantage of these long-held language ideologies regarding heroism. Casting Evelyn as the hero instead of Alpha Waymond or Alpha Gong Gong reverses trends in U.S. film to cast monolingual speakers as the hero and multilingual and/or non-English speaking characters as suspicious, a villain, a sidekick, etc. Instead of a hero being the traditional monolingual English-speaking male, *EEAAO* disrupts this traditional model with a multilingual Asian American immigrant woman who speaks a learner variety of English being the hero film.

V.a. Translanguaging space: Linguistic creativity

Evelyn's learner variety of English is not simply a speech style but also serves to undermine stereotypes of untrustworthiness and present the power of radical linguistic creativity through translanguaging. Throughout the film, Evelyn's variety of English is continuously commented on whether that be through her daughter's corrections, the need for a translator, or her lack of ability to correctly pronounce the name Jobu Tupaki. Evelyn's variety of English is

often vulnerable to criticism and perceived to contain “mistakes”. However, Evelyn’s linguistic “mistakes” are actually a tool used to create entire universes.

Evelyn’s linguistic creativity is apparent in a notable multigenerational scene where she tries to explain her experience with the multiverse and the alternate versions of everyone's lives to Joy and Waymond. Evelyn explains that these alternate versions of herself and her family members are similar to puppets. To strengthen her comparison and help Joy and Waymond understand she says, “It’s like that movie. Um... that movie. Raccacoonie!” (01:05:51). Joy begins to laugh at Evelyn asking if she means *Ratatouille*, the 2007 animated film. Here, the joke is on Evelyn for her incorrect pronunciation, a common trope in Western English dominant media. Both Joy and Waymond begin to laugh at her telling her that it’s *Ratatouille* but Evelyn refuses their correction telling them, “Everybody stop making up sounds!” (01:06:08). To Joy, Waymond, and the audience, Evelyn’s remark is ironic considering that she is the one “making up sounds” with the name “Raccacoonie”.

It is not until later that it’s revealed that Raccacoonie does exist in an alternate “Chef Universe” (01:26:10). This universe is never revealed until after Evelyn references Raccacoonie suggesting Raccacoonie only exists because Evelyn says so. More specifically, Raccacoonie only exists because of Evelyn’s perceived mistake. Before, Joy and Waymond laughed at Evelyn because the joke was on her and her lack of English fluency. Now, the joke is reversed on them and the audience. Not only are the joke’s hierarchies reversed but the film provides a lesson: Evelyn should have been trusted. Instead, because Evelyn is an Asian speaker who speaks a learner variety of English, her experience and effort to connect was perceived as a linguistic mistake and made a joke. U.S. film often utilizes language barriers and linguistic mistakes to create comedic moments in film, repeatedly making a joke out of those who speak anything but

“perfect English”. *EEAAO* rejects this form of “comedy” and flips the narrative that learner varieties of English are comedic. This reversal broadens the audience's understanding of the power of creative possibility within language. Here, language is no longer deemed deficient because of linguistic mistakes. Instead, language becomes the rejection of structures and the embracement of creative variation to fully inhabit the multitude of possibilities.

Raccacoonie’s creation not only represents Evelyn’s radical linguistic creativity, but it is also the cinematic embodiment of translanguaging space. Wei describes translanguaging space as:

...the full range of linguistic performances of multilingual language users for purposes that transcend the combination of structures... The act of translanguaging then is transformative in nature; it creates a social space for the multilingual language user by bringing together different dimensions of their personal history, experience and environment, their attitude, belief and ideology, their cognitive and physical capacity into one coordinated and meaningful performance, and making it into a lived experience (2011, p. 2).

Evelyn strategically harnesses her linguistic dexterity to create this shared translanguaging space. Bringing her personal knowledge of *Ratatouille*, her experience with the multiverse, and her desire for her family to understand her, Evelyn creates the “meaningful performance” of Raccacoonie and transforms it into a lived experience through the Chef Universe. Evelyn’s creation of the Chef Universe and Raccacoonie through her language is not only a powerful reversal of a common comedic trope but it also brings translanguaging space to the forefront of a U.S. film. More importantly, having translanguaging space as a crucial element of the film

centers the creative possibilities that are produced by and through multilingual families. Evelyn's experience as a speaker of a learner variety of English is not one of mistakes but of creation: a creation of an entire universe and a creation that should be believed in.

VI.a. Language as barrier

In the beginning of the film, Evelyn uses her multilingualism to reinforce language barriers in order to maintain control but at the expense of her personal relationships. When Evelyn's daughter, Joy, is introducing her girlfriend to her grandfather, Gong Gong, Joy struggles to effectively communicate with him in Mandarin and forgets the Mandarin word for "girlfriend". Evelyn uses this moment to take control and conceal her daughter's sexuality by telling Gong Gong that Joy's girlfriend is a "good friend" in Cantonese (00:10:26). This moment of control for Evelyn is only possible because of her multilingual skills and Joy's lack of proficiency in Mandarin. The Wangs are representative of the three-generation model often seen in transnational scholarship. The previously depicted scene portrays the "intergenerational language shift and the communicative difficulties that have been caused by such shifts" that is often a focus of transnational and multilingual families within linguistic scholarship (Wei & Hua, 2016, p. 2). The Daniels purposefully incorporated language barriers in the film not only to bar communication but to separate characters, as Daniel Kwan states, "...we realized it was a great opportunity to create another barrier between our characters because this is a movie about people living in different worlds, and different universes. That's the idea. Everyone's talking past each other" (Lacson, 2022). The strategic use of language barriers in the beginning of the film displays Evelyn's resistance to connect and also serves as an anchoring point for her character development.

VII.a. Translanguaging as reconciliation

Although the film begins with Evelyn's reinforcement of barriers through language, she goes through a powerful character development that transforms the way she utilizes her language. Instead of creating and reinforcing barriers, Evelyn uses translanguaging to connect and reconcile with her family. Towards the end of the film, Evelyn learns to break from her father's expectations and stands up for herself and her daughter. Evelyn does so through a multilingual speech in Cantonese, English, and Mandarin:

你可能喺佢身上睇倒你自己最大嘅恐懼。我一直都好希望佢唔會似我。 (Cantonese) But she turned out stubborn, aimless, a mess just like her mother. But now I see it's okay that she's a mess. Because just like me, 讓他在這個空間找到一位善良，有耐性又可以包容她的人。 (Mandarin)	You may see in her all of your greatest fears squeezed into one person. I spent most of her childhood praying she would not end up like me. But she turned out stubborn, aimless, a mess just like her mother. But now I see it's okay that she's a mess. Because just like me, the universe gave her someone kind, patient, and forgiving to make up for all she lacks.
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Figure 4: Evelyn's trilingual monologue in *EEAAO*

Evelyn uses the entirety of her linguistic dexterity to not only communicate with three different parties (her father, her daughter, and her husband) but to connect and strengthen their

relationship by speaking the language they primarily communicate with, thus, uniting her family in a shared linguistic space. Evelyn's multilingualism is not only used for conveying meaning, but also for reconciling and forming a meaningful connection. This strive for connection through language also reflects Evelyn's character development:

What's significant about these instances is that every time she uses her trilingual abilities against the other characters, she hinders understanding and communication amongst all the family members, which makes the scene where she finally stands up for herself, her husband, and her daughter all the more important. (Chan, 2024).

This moment of a shared linguistic space also reflects the kind of social relationship seen in translanguaging space, "It is also a social world where the individual feels a sense of connectedness with others, and that sense of connectedness has an impact on the social behaviors of the actor and the others concerned." (Wei, 2011, p. 13). Evelyn's effort to reconcile and connect with her family is possible because of her multilingual abilities. It is not until Evelyn uses the full capacity of her linguistic dexterity that her family is able to understand each other and finally begin healing. Evelyn's linguistic transition from barrier to bridge displays her willingness to change for the sake of her family; a change that does not include an alteration to her language, but a shift in her mindset.

VIII.a. Discussion and conclusion

Everything Everywhere All at Once is an absurdist film that meshes the multiverse, generational trauma, taxes, laundry, mother-daughter relationships, and more. The film broke barriers with a multilingual, mostly Asian cast, and gained huge commercial success. Not only was the film well received and economically successful, it also reexamined and reversed the stereotyped structures that U.S. film has long perpetuated regarding untrustworthiness and learner varieties of English within Asian individuals. The film focuses on a multilingual, immigrant American family, and the intricacies of their life and their language while also centering a multilingual Asian American immigrant woman who speaks a learner variety of English as the hero. Additionally, the protagonist's character development reflects a shift in linguistic scholarship from immigrant and code-switching to transnational and translanguaging, moving from barrier to connection. This transition in the film does not happen through an alteration or "correcting" of language, but through a shift in mindset that allows the protagonist to utilize her multilingualism as a heroic power of creation and reconciliation instead of a deficiency or barrier. By disrupting and deconstructing stereotypes of untrustworthiness associated with learner varieties of English, *Everything Everywhere All at Once* redefines what it means to be a hero in U.S. film.

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