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Cultural Influences for College Student Language Brokers

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Abstract

Children from immigrant families often translate communication for parents, a process known as language brokering (LB). LB begins in childhood, but may continue through emerging adulthood, even when individuals are in college. We surveyed 1,222 university students with two immigrant parents and compared non-language brokers, infrequent language brokers, and frequent language brokers on a variety of ethnic, cultural, and identity measures. Significant differences emerged for cultural heritage value orientation, ethnic identity, and dimensions of acculturation with frequent language brokers scoring highest, infrequent language brokers scoring in the middle, and non-language brokers scoring the lowest on these measures. There were no significant differences on acculturative stress among these three groups. These results suggest that LB experiences may contribute to the development of psychological assets for ethnic minority, emerging adults from immigrant families.

Keywords

language broker; ethnic identity; acculturation; acculturative stress; filial piety; communalism; familial ethnic socialization

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Children often acculturate more quickly than their immigrant parents, particularly in communicating in the receiving society's language (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2001). For this reason, parents commonly ask their children to translate both written and spoken communication from English into the family's heritage language and vice versa, a process known as language brokering (LB). For the language broker, the dynamics of LB call upon a variety of skills: fluency in two languages, negotiation of power differentials between children and adults, and navigation of cultural mores—among other skills. Although several studies have suggested that LB begins early in childhood (cf. Morales & Hanson, 2005), there is no indication that LB responsibilities necessarily end. Indeed, LB responsibilities may continue as individuals enter college. The physical distance (for those who go away to college) and the devotion of time to studies likely present challenges for college students to continue language brokering for parents. Not surprisingly, Sy, Romero, and Chaves-Joy (2006) reported that LB Latina college students felt stressed to balance family obligations with collegiate studies. However, because most LB research focuses on children and younger adolescents, there is little research on emerging adults who continue to actively language broker for their parents. The present study helps to advance this line of research by investigating what cultural influences may be associated with language brokering among college students.

Acculturation and Language Brokering

For families, language brokering may serve as an acculturation strategy (Berry, 2007), specifically, as a way of encouraging both heritage-culture retention and receiving-culture acquisition in children. Bhatia and Ram (2001) noted that “immigrants’ acculturation strategies reveal the underlying psychological processes that unfold during their adaptation to new cultural contexts” (p. 4). Parents manage in the new culture by accessing their children's skills, and children gain access to situations that may hasten their understanding of the new culture and language. During LB, the underlying psychological processes are likely to include parental guidance rooted in the heritage culture, reinforcement of heritage-cultural values, and encouragement to continue integrating into the receiving culture. Orellana (2009) notes that Latino immigrant parents in the United States bring their cultural practices with them, particularly with respect to how they socialize their children about parent–child relationships, the place of children in society, beliefs about appropriate activities, and indicators of successful passage through childhood. Orellana further noted that LB, as a cultural practice, is then shaped by beliefs about intergenerational relationships and the need for cultural continuity. At the same time, the process of immigration and acculturation may reinforce a sense of obligation to the family for children of immigrant families, particularly for those from collectivist-based cultures (Fuligni, 1998). In collectivist-based cultures, aiding the family supersedes individually oriented pursuits. Moreover, among adolescents from immigrant families, assisting the family has been associated with positive well-being (Telzer & Fuligni, 2009).

Familial Ethnic Socialization and Cultural Values

During LB activities, parents are likely to discuss their heritage culture, practice traditions, and teach children about their ethnic culture—a process known as familial ethnic

socialization (Umaña-Taylor & Fine, 2004). Ethnic socialization teaches children how to get along as an ethnic minority in a diverse and a dominant culture (Huynh & Fuligni, 2008). Operationally, familial ethnic socialization practices may include providing heritage culture books having conversations about the heritage culture, and decorating the home with cultural objects (Umaña-Taylor, Alfaro, Bámaca, & Guimond, 2009). Familial ethnic socialization has been positively associated with ethnic identity (Umaña-Taylor & Fine, 2004), ethnic exploration and resolution (Supple, Ghazarian, Frabutt, Plunkett, & Sands, 2006), academic motivation (Huynh & Fuligni, 2008), and self-esteem (Hughes, Witherspoon, Rivas-Drake, & West-Bey, 2009). Through familial ethnic socialization, children of immigrants develop a sense of familial obligation, which fosters compliance with requests for LB (Fuligni, 1998). Familial ethnic socialization may provide the “training” for children of immigrant families to engage in LB and therefore, may be associated with ongoing participation in LB.

While discussing their heritage cultures, parents may cultivate traditional value orientations such as familism, filial piety, and communalism (Schwartz, Zamboanga, Rodriguez, & Wang, 2007). Familism, mostly associated with Latinos, is a cultural value focusing on family loyalty and closeness, stretching beyond the family of origin to extended family members (Marín, 1993). Mostly applied to Asian-descent families, filial piety refers to a sense of benevolence, charity, and goodness directed toward parents and family to maintain a sense of social harmony (Lieber, Nihira, & Mink, 2004). Communalism has mostly been associated with African-descent individuals and refers to the notion that individuals view themselves as connected to the social milieu, placing the welfare of the community above individual needs (Boykin, Jagers, Ellison, & Albury, 1997). Although the cultural constructs of familism, filial piety, and communalism have focused within specific ethnic communities (Latino, Asian, and African American, respectively), these constructs fit into a collectivist framework that contrasts with individualist, European-descent, American cultural values (e.g., Kao & Travis, 2005). That is, these value orientations apply across minority communities given that their foundations are in traditional, collectivist values that differ from individualistic, American culture (Schwartz, Montgomery, & Briones, 2006). Language brokering may be associated with learning these cultural values—with those individuals who language broker reporting greater cultural affiliations and with more frequent LB increasing the extent to which these cultural values are acquired.

Ethnic Identity

Ethnic identity is defined as a subjective sense of belonging to one’s ethnic groups, the feelings and attitudes that accompany the affiliation, and the process of exploring what it means to be an ethnic minority within a larger culture (Phinney, Romero, Nava, & Huang, 2001; Umaña-Taylor & Fine, 2004). Language brokering places individuals into situations where they must navigate both cultures, which may foster the sense of belonging, feelings, and attitudes toward the family’s ethnic group and create opportunities for understanding the family’s ethnic minority status.

Because LB involves understanding the nuances of culture and the heritage language, language brokers may develop closer adherence to cultural values, which may be reflected in stronger ethnic identity development. Traditionally, ethnic identity achievement has been

viewed as the outcome of an exploratory, resolution, and consolidation process (Phinney, 1996). Language brokers are confronted with situations where ethnocultural differences and nuances must be navigated quickly. These structured experiences are likely to foster ethnic identity development for the individual because of the environmental pressure to operate in both cultural worlds simultaneously. Weisskirch (2005) reported that the extent of LB was associated with greater ethnic identity exploration, even after accounting for level of acculturation. Moreover, Weisskirch found that positive feelings when engaging in LB were positively associated with greater ethnic identity, ethnic identity exploration, and ethnic identity affirmation. However, in another study, adolescents in high language-brokering-demand families reported lower scores of ethnic belonging and affirmation than those in low language-brokering-demand families (Martinez, McClure, & Eddy, 2009). Thus, more research is needed to address this inconsistency regarding the link between LB and ethnic identity.

Given the positive relationship between familial ethnic socialization and ethnic identity (Umaña-Taylor, Bhanot, & Shin, 2006), the relationship of heritage-value retention and ethnic identity (e.g., Hovey, King, & Seligman, 2006), and the relationship of heritage language retention to ethnic identity (e.g., Phinney et al., 2001), frequent and infrequent language brokers will likely report high levels of ethnic identity in comparison to their coethnics who do not language broker. Moreover, because frequent language brokers may engage in more opportunities for ethnic identity development, the frequency of LB may also be associated with strength of ethnic identity.

Children and Adolescents as Language Brokers

For children, LB can be stressful (Weisskirch & Alva, 2002). Telzer and Fuligni (2009) found that, among adolescents from immigrant families, those who reported assisting parents (i.e., translating) with official business and at their work also indicated greater psychological distress. On the other hand, children and adolescents may report that LB can be a source of pride in helping adult relatives and may be perceived as contributing to the welfare of their families (Dorner, Orellana, & Jimenez, 2008; Orellana, Dorner, & Pulido, 2003). Kaur and Mills (1993) noted that there is a sense of mutual dependency and equal power sharing among language brokers and their immigrant parents, a pattern that is atypical of adolescents and parents (Steinberg, 2001). The literature is inconsistent, however, regarding the extent to which LB may carry positive or negative personal consequences. For example, Wu and Kim (2009) found that LB Chinese American adolescents who were more Chinese-oriented than American-oriented felt a greater sense of efficacy because of the importance these adolescents placed on family obligation and on feelings of mattering to parents. The satisfaction and pride derived from LB may influence parent–child bonding and adolescent psychological outcomes (Buriel, Love, & De Ment, 2006). However, Chao (2006) noted that translating for mothers was positively related to internalizing symptoms (anxiety and depression). This apparent inconsistency may be associated with the *extent* of LB in which one engages. Accordingly, the present study is designed, in part, to elucidate factors associated with cultural value retention and ethnic identity development among language brokers by considering frequency of LB as an important factor.

Emerging Adults as Language Brokers

Emerging adulthood represents a time of identity exploration, when individuals often question the values adopted from their parents (Schwartz, Côté, & Arnett, 2005). American pressures for individuation and autonomy among emerging adults, especially for college students (Tseng, 2004), may clash with language brokering responsibilities. Individuals who juggle language brokering responsibilities along with school and social obligations may feel a greater amount of stress in comparison to those who do not have similar responsibilities. At the same time, attending college affords opportunities for emerging adults to explore their identities, including ethnic identity (Montgomery & Côté, 2003). Ongoing LB responsibilities represent a route toward strengthening cultural orientations while formalizing other aspects of one's identity. That is, frequent language brokers may endorse traditional cultural values that provide incentives to continue to broker. While these considerations are relevant in furthering our understanding of LB during emerging adulthood, the effects of LB on ethnic identity during this period have not been explored.

The Present Study

The present study investigated, among college-attending emerging adults, differences between language brokers (frequent and infrequent) and non-language brokers in terms of acculturation, familial ethnic socialization, cultural variables, and ethnic identity. First, we examined the relationships among the cultural variables under study here: acculturation, acculturative stress, familial ethnic socialization, familism, filial piety, communalism, and ethnic identity. Through factor analysis, we examined factors to group these cultural variables into meaningful constructs. Then, we made comparisons among frequent and infrequent brokers and nonbrokers to determine whether these factors of cultural variables distinguish the three LB groups.

Given that the cultural variables were designed to measure the experiences of immigrants and ethnic minorities, it is likely that they will be highly intercorrelated. Acculturation and acculturative stress are likely to be inversely correlated, given that those who are less acculturated typically experience more stress because of the multiple changes involved in immigration (Hovey & King, 1996). Also, familism, filial piety, and communalism are likely to be highly correlated given their common underpinnings in collectivistic, cultural values. Familial ethnic socialization and ethnic identity are likely to be correlated because parents' attempts to socialize children toward the heritage culture are likely to result in strong ethnic identities among the children (e.g., Umaña-Taylor, Bhanot, & Shin, 2006). In addition, familial ethnic socialization and ethnic identity will likely correlate with familism, filial piety, and communalism, given that these may be the heritage values instilled during familial ethnic socialization, and ethnic identity may indicate fidelity in maintaining heritage cultural values.

Because LB is precipitated by immigration and acculturation to a new country, we hypothesize that those emerging adults who continue to language broker frequently are likely to be less acculturated to American cultural practices compared to their counter-parts who language broker less often or not at all. Because of the need to engage with parents

frequently, even U.S.-born individuals who engage in LB frequently or infrequently may have fewer opportunities to interact with the broader U.S. culture compared with those who do not language broker. Because of their ongoing responsibilities to language broker, we anticipate that frequent language brokers will report lower orientation toward American culture, and more acculturative stress, compared with infrequent language brokers and nonbrokers.

In addition, given the research on familial ethnic socialization, cultural value orientation, and ethnic identity, we hypothesize that both frequent and infrequent language brokers will report higher levels of heritage values in comparison to non-LB emerging adults from immigrant families. In terms of comparisons among the three groups, it is likely that greater frequency of language brokering provides more opportunities to engage in family ethnic socialization, cultural value acquisition, and exploration of ethnic identity. Therefore, we hypothesized that frequent language brokers would report highest levels of cultural values and ethnic identity.

Method

Participants and Procedures

We collected data online from students at 14 universities around the United States, representing large, medium, and small public and private universities. Participants were recruited from courses in human development, psychology, and family studies and received course credit for their participation. Of the students who started the questionnaire, 73% completed the entire survey. Babbie (1995) describes this response rate as “very good.”

These data were collected as part of the Multisite University Study of Identity and Culture (MUSIC), which focused on issues of culture, personal and ethnic identity, and religious practice, and other constructs of interest (total $N = 4,816$). First, because of the upper bound on the age range of emerging adults (Arnett, 2000), only students younger than 25 years of age were included in the subsequent analyses. Then, we only included participants who indicated that both of their parents were foreign-born, resulting in a sample of 1,222 participants (882 women and 340 men). By definition, then, these participants either were immigrants themselves or were the children of immigrants, which indicates a high probability of, currently or in the recent past, having language brokered. In terms of ethnicity, the sample was 15.5% African American/Black, 10% Euroamerican/White, 21% East Asian, 41.4% Latino, 9.1% South Asian, and 3% Middle Eastern. Participants' mean age was 19.78 years ($SD = 1.69$ years), and their number of years enrolled in college ranged from 1 to 7 years ($M = 2.36$ years, $SD = 1.25$). Thirty-two percent of the sample reported living at home with parents, 23% reported living on campus, 4.7% reported living in university apartments or fraternity/sorority houses, and 41.4% reported residing in off-campus houses or apartments. Sixty percent of the participants were U.S. born, and 40% were foreign born.

Measures

Language brokering.—Participants rated the item: “How often do you translate or interpret for your parents because they do not speak English or do not speak it well” on a 5-point scale from 1 = “*never*” to 5 = “*always*”. Those who indicated never LB were classified as “non-language brokers” ($n = 448$; 318 women and 130 men). Those participants who indicated LB “rarely” or “sometimes” were categorized as infrequent language brokers ($n = 527$; 359 women, 168 men) and those indicating LB “often” or “always” as frequent language brokers ($n = 247$; 205 women and 42 men). See Table 1 for detailed demographic information.

The three groups differed significantly in terms of ethnicity, $\chi^2(5) = 98.54, p < .001, \phi = .30$; gender, $\chi^2(1) = 14.48, p = .001, \phi = .11$; and nativity, $\chi^2(1) = 34.79, p < .001, \phi = .18$. There were no differences by age or by current type of residence (i.e., living with parents, in residence halls, with friends in apartments, etc.). African Americans and Whites were overrepresented as non-language brokers, East Asians overrepresented as infrequent language brokers, and Latinos were overrepresented as frequent language brokers. Males were more likely to be infrequent language brokers, and females were more likely to be frequent language brokers. The groups differed by birthplace, with non-language brokers more likely to be U.S. born, and frequent language brokers more likely to be born outside the United States.

Acculturation.—Participants completed a modified version of the Stephenson Multigroup Acculturation Scale (SMAS; Stephenson, 2000), in which they rated 32 items on a scale from 1 = “*strongly disagree*” to 5 = “*strongly agree*.” The SMAS consists of two subscales—dominant society immersion (DSI) and ethnic society immersion (ESI). Items ask participants about engaging in behaviors typical of the dominant or ethnic society such as language use, food preference, and social affiliations. In the present sample, Cronbach’s alpha for the DSI and ESI subscales were .86 and .95, respectively.

Acculturative stress.—The Multidimensional Acculturative Stress Inventory (Rodriguez, Myers, Mira, Flores, & Garcia-Hernandez, 2002) assesses pressures to adhere to practices from the heritage or receiving cultural contexts. For this study, items specifying Spanish or Latino culture were reworded as “heritage language/culture” to apply to a broader population. Participants rated the 25 items on a 5-point scale from 1 = “*strongly disagree*” to 5 = “*strongly agree*.” The measure yields four subscales: heritage language competency pressures ($\alpha = .88$), English language competency pressures ($\alpha = .94$), pressure to acculturate ($\alpha = .88$), and pressure against acculturation ($\alpha = .91$).

Familial ethnic socialization.—A revised version of the Familial Ethnic Socialization Measure (Umaña-Taylor, 2001) assessed participants’ perceptions that their families educated them with respect to their ethnicity. The 12 items (e.g., “My family teaches me about our family’s ethnic/cultural background” and “Our home is decorated with things that reflect my ethnic/cultural background”) were rated on a 5-point, Likert-type scale from 1 = “*not at all true*” to 5 = “*very much*” for some items, and 1 = “*not at all*” and 5 = “*very often*” for other items. In the present sample, Cronbach’s alpha was .94.

Familism.—We used Lugo Steidel and Contreras's (2003) Attitudinal Familism Scale to measure familistic beliefs (i.e., use of family as a referent and prioritizing the needs of the family over one's own personal needs). The measure consists of 18 items that participants rated on a 5-point scale from 1 = "*strongly disagree*" to 5 = "*strongly agree*." An example of an item is "A person should live near his or her parents and spend time with them on a regular basis." In the present sample, Cronbach's alpha on this measure was .87.

Filial piety.—Participants rated 13 items on a scale from 1 = "*strongly disagree*" to 5 = "*strongly agree*" measuring deference to parents, provision of support to parents, and avoidance of family disgracing behavior (Unger et al., 2002). Some examples of items are "I must obey my parents, whether I agree with them or not" and "I try to avoid dangerous things because I don't want my parents to worry." Cronbach's alpha for scores on this scale was .90.

Communalism.—Communal attitude (communalism) was measured by a 31-item scale (Boykin et al., 1997), assessing individuals' degree of orientation toward social obligation and interdependence. Participants responded to each item using a 5-point, Likert-type scale ranging from 1 = "*strongly disagree*" to 5 = "*strongly agree*." A sample item includes "I place great value on social relations among people." Cronbach's alpha for this measure was .87.

Ethnic identity.—The Ethnic Identity Scale (EIS; Umaña-Taylor, Yazedjian, & Bámaca-Gómez, 2004) is a 17-item measure assessing ethnic identity exploration, resolution, and affirmation. Participants rated each item on a scale ranging from 1 = "*does not describe me at all*" to 4 = "*describes me very well*." Examples of items include "I have attended events that have helped me learn more about my ethnicity" (exploration), "I am clear about what my ethnicity means to me" (affirmation), and "I wish I were a different ethnicity" (resolution/reverse scored). Cronbach's alphas on these subscales in the present sample were .84 for affirmation, .84 for exploration, and .89 for resolution.

Results

Relationships Among the Cultural Variables

First, as a descriptive analysis, we explored the relationships among the cultural variables by computing a correlation matrix among the acculturative stress subscales, familism, filial piety, communalism, familial ethnic socialization, and the ethnic identity subscales. Many of these indices were significantly correlated with one another (Table 2). As a consequence, we conducted a principal components factor analysis with varimax rotation to ascertain if these variables would cluster into interpretable latent constructs.

Four factors emerged from the analyses, accounting for 70.46% of variability. The first factor included variables that relate to acculturative stress (pressure for heritage language competency, pressure for English language competency, pressure to acculturate, and pressure against acculturation and lack of ethnic identity affirmation). The second factor included heritage cultural values and socialization (familism, filial piety, communalism, and familial ethnic socialization). The third factor included variables related to ethnic identity (familial

ethnic socialization, ethnic identity exploration, and ethnic identity resolution). The fourth factor related to the dimensions of acculturation (ethnic society immersion and lack of dominant society immersion). These results suggest that, for these immigrants and children of immigrants, acculturative stress includes language competency pressures, pressures about acculturation, and not feeling affirmation from one's ethnic group. This factor may indicate an ongoing struggle in becoming bicultural. The second factor suggests the presence of a common underlying factor representing traditional cultural values and familial socialization toward these values. It may be that, despite the cultural diversity within the sample, these heritage values share common core characteristics, such as prioritizing one's family above oneself and making sacrifices for the good of the family. The ethnic identity factor, which is associated with exploration and resolution, as well as with familial ethnic socialization, may indicate how instrumental the family is in helping emerging adult college students explore and resolve their ethnic identities. The acculturation factor may indicate an underlying polarity between those individuals (likely frequent language brokers) who are heavily immersed in their heritage cultures and those (likely non-language brokers) who are more heavily Americanized (Table 3 for details).

Comparison of Frequent Language Brokers, Infrequent Language Brokers, and Non-Language Brokers

Using multivariate analysis of covariance (MANCOVA), we compared the three groups (i.e., frequent language brokers, infrequent language brokers, and non-language brokers) on the four factors extracted from analysis. Because the sample was diverse with regard to gender, nativity, and ethnicity, those variables were entered as covariates. Significant group differences emerged for cultural heritage values, ethnic identity, and dimensions of acculturation, but not for acculturative stress (Table 4). Frequent language brokers scored higher on cultural heritage values, ethnic identity, and dimensions of acculturation compared with non-language brokers. In addition, there was a significant difference on ethnic identity and dimensions of acculturation between frequent and infrequent language brokers. There was a significant difference on dimensions of acculturation between infrequent language brokers and non-language brokers.

To further test the extent to which acculturative stress may be related to language brokering, a follow-up MANCOVA was conducted comparing language brokers (regardless of frequency) to non-language brokers. At the multivariate level, the difference between non-language brokers and language brokers was not statistically significant, $F(1,938) = 1.21, p = .27$.

Discussion

In the present study, we investigated associations between LB and a number of cultural variables in a sample of college-attending emerging adults. Findings indicate that acculturation, acculturative stress, heritage cultural values, and ethnic identity are particularly salient for these college students from immigrant families. What is notable is that these individuals—especially frequent language brokers—appear to be grappling with pressures to be part of both their heritage cultural world and the dominant American context.

Also, the results of our factor analyses indicate that families may play an important role in reinforcing cultural values and in shaping how the individuals identify with their ethnic minority group. Furthermore, although the present sample is quite diverse, factor analytic results indicate that heritage cultural values (i.e., communalism, familism, and filial piety) endorsed by some of these ethnic groups may share common collectivist underpinnings.

Among emerging adult college students from immigrant families, those who frequently language broker report greater retention of heritage cultural practices, values, and identifications compared to those who language broker less frequently or not at all. LB may extend the parents' familial ethnic socialization practices and reinforcement of traditional cultural values. LB activities require time in which parents and their children, in the present as well as in the past, spend time together or communicating with one another. More time together may bring about more cultural learning on the part of the child. On the other hand, we do not know the directionality involved in the relationship between cultural value acquisition and language brokering—individuals who are enculturated with stronger traditional values may continue to language broker; or, perhaps, LB facilitates the maintenance of cultural values because of the experiences with parents in the heritage language and culture. Regardless, it does appear that LB may be a conduit for cultural value retention. Longitudinal studies and diary studies would help to identify the directionality of the relationships found in the present study.

The retention of cultural practices, values, and identifications may demonstrate how LB helps to cultivate these psychological assets as emerging-adult college students develop their identities. This finding may be indicative of the tendency for immigrant emerging adults to grapple with both acculturation issues and identity concerns (Schwartz, Montgomery, & Briones, 2006). Language brokers function in both the heritage and receiving cultural worlds, which may help them to develop a coherent sense of personal *and* ethnic identity. In addition, because college is often a time for continued ethnic identity exploration and consolidation (Montgomery & Côté, 2003), language brokers may be cognizant of how loss of (or failure to acquire) heritage language skills may affect their continued identity development, their participation in college activities with coethnics, and their evolving relationships with parents. Kim and Chao (2009) and Tse (2000) have noted the positive relationship between heritage language competency and personal and ethnic identity development. The lack of language competency may prompt non-language brokers to alter their identities as children of immigrants in comparison to their coethnics who retain facility in the heritage language, potentially creating a sense of discomfort.

The lack of significant differences in acculturative stress among frequent, infrequent, and “never” language brokers may indicate how individuals from immigrant families perceive LB. For many individuals, LB may just be a normal and expected part of growing up in an immigrant family. Language brokering may not add to stressors around acculturation and may instead instill critical ways of thinking that support successful living in multicultural societies.

Limitations and Future Directions

The findings of this study should be interpreted in light of some important limitations. First, the measure of LB was based on one self-reported item, which may not capture the frequency or depth of the LB experience. Prior studies have included a variety of measures that account for frequency of LB, complexity of the tasks, or parents' language fluency (e.g., Dorner, Orellana, & Li-Grining, 2007). The one item, however, did allow classification based on frequency of LB, a core variable across studies on LB. Given that this study was part of a larger project, it was not possible to include numerous items on LB. Although the present study has provided important information about LB in college students, it is important to replicate these findings with more expansive measures of LB to determine whether other aspects of LB (aside from frequency) may differentiate among types of language brokers. It is noteworthy that frequency of brokering, rather than simply whether or not one serves as a language broker, appears to represent a distinguishing factor in understanding the variability in the experience of language brokering.

The sample of college students also limits the generalizability of the results because the very fact that these individuals are attending a university implies a degree of successful acculturation and competency. The experience of noncollege-attending emerging adults with ongoing LB responsibilities may differ. Although there were no differences by current type of residence, geographic distance from parents may also have an effect. Obligations to language broker may attenuate with distance from parents, or former LB responsibilities may pass down to a sibling still residing at home (Orellana, 2009). Parents may reserve complex translations for their college student and disburse simple tasks to other children in the family. More information is needed about how parents access their college student's LB skills.

Despite these limitations, the present study is one of the first to investigate LB in a large, diverse sample of emerging-adult college students. College students who language broker must juggle their academic and social obligations with LB for parents. Ongoing LB may be the outcome of strong cultural ties and may reinforce cultural values and ethnic identity resolution. In the future, more research, using qualitative or mixed methods, would be useful to investigate how emerging adult college students feel about these continuing responsibilities and how LB experiences have shaped their identities. Nonetheless, the present findings suggest that LB may be a source of strength in reinforcing cultural values and supporting individual development (e.g., in ethnic identity formation). For children of immigrant parents, greater cultural ties may ease parent-adolescent acculturation disparities and may help to maintain healthy functioning within the family. LB may be one of the ongoing experiences that help individuals to develop their cultural identity in a multicultural society.

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Table 1

Percentages of Demographic Characteristics of the Sample

	Non-language brokers (<i>n</i> = 448)		Language brokers (<i>N</i> = 774)	
	Infrequent (<i>n</i> = 527)	Frequent (<i>n</i> = 247)	Infrequent (<i>n</i> = 527)	Frequent (<i>n</i> = 247)
Gender				
Male	29	32	17	
Female	71	68	83	
Ethnic distribution				
African American/Black	26	11	6	
Euroamerican/White	12	10	6	
East Asian	18	25	22	
Latino	30	44	58	
South Asian	4	9	7	
Middle Eastern	4	2	2	
Parental country of birth (regional)				
Africa	8.7	3.2	1.8	
Central Asia and Middle East	2.6	3.2	0.9	
South Asian (e.g., India, Pakistan, Bangladesh)	10.6	5.9	4.4	
Europe	8.7	7.5	4.0	
Mexico, Central America, Cuba, and Dominican Republic	20.9	28.5	42.0	
South America	8.0	14.9	18.1	
Caribbean	23.5	9.3	5.8	
Canada	2.8	0.2	0.4	
Far East, including Philippines	13.4	27.4	22.6	
Australia/New Zealand	1	0	0	
Participants' birthplace				
United States	68	58	45	
Foreign born	32	42	55	
Current type of residence				
With parents	29.8	31.6	38.8	
On campus	26.7	21.7	17.7	

	Language brokers (N = 774)		
	Non-language brokers (n = 448)	Infrequent (n = 527)	Frequent (n = 247)
University apartments or fraternity/sorority houses	4.5	6.1	2.6
Off-campus houses or apartments	38.8	39.9	40.5
College type			
Public university	95.9	94.9	93.3
Private university	4.1	5.1	6.7

Table 2

Correlations Among the Variables

	DSI	ESI	PHLC	PEC	PtoA	PagaInstA	Fam	FP	Com	FES	EIS:E	EIS:A	EIS:R
DSI		-.16***	.09**	-.25***	-.28***	-.07*	.18***	.17***	.22***	.17***	.08*	.07*	.10*
ESI			-.34***	.15***	.15***	-.08**	.23***	.22***	.23***	.30***	.32***	.03	.28***
PHLC				.48**	.34***	.60***	-.06	-.04	.08**	-.12***	-.19***	-.38***	-.32***
PEC					.59***	.58***	-.02	.01	.10***	-.10**	-.13***	-.42***	-.27***
PtoA						.62***	.09**	.11***	.13***	.12***	.06	-.24***	-.09**
PagaInstA							-.07*	-.05	.04	-.08**	-.15***	-.39***	-.30***
Familism								.75***	.69***	.49***	.24***	.11**	.25***
Filial Piety									.67***	.44***	.22***	.09**	.23***
Communalism										.54***	.24***	-.03	.24**
FES											.48***	.13***	.38***
EIS: Exploration												.18***	.66***
EIS: Affirmation													.30***
EIS: Resolution													

Note. DSI = dominant society immersion; ESI = ethnic society immersion; PHLC = pressure for heritage language competency; PEC = pressure for English competency; PtoA = pressure to acculturate; PagaInstA = pressure against acculturation; FP = filial piety; Com = communalism; FES = family ethnic socialization; EIS:E = Ethnic Identity Scale: Exploration; EIS:A = Ethnic Identity Scale: Affirmation; EIS:R = Ethnic Identity Scale: Resolution.

* $p < .05$.

** $p < .01$.

*** $p < .001$.

Table 3

Rotated Factor Loadings for Cultural Variables

	Acculturative stress factor	Cultural values factor	Ethnic identity factor	Acculturation factor
Dimensions of acculturation				
Ethnic society immersion	-.026	.261	.352	.648
Dominant society immersion	-.129	.248	.161	-.750
Acculturative stress subscales				
Pressure for heritage language competency	.750	-.002	-.160	-.424
Pressure for English language competency	.800	.037	-.112	.293
Pressure to acculturate	.763	.102	.121	.304
Pressure against acculturation	.861	-.039	-.072	-.074
Familism	-.051	.893	.093	.019
Filial piety	-.028	.884	.063	-.002
Communalism	.119	.854	.176	-.048
Familial ethnic socialization	-.025	.550	.553	-.025
Ethnic identity subscales (EIS)				
EIS Ethnic Identity Exploration	-.061	.118	.892	.044
EIS Ethnic Identity Affirmation	-.580	.048	.205	.032
EIS Ethnic Identity Resolution	-.269	.124	.807	.041

Note. Bolded items indicate loadings greater than .50 and inclusion in the factor for subsequent analyses.

Multivariate Analysis of Covariance (MANCOVA) Results of Factors and Frequent Language Brokers, Infrequent Language Brokers, and Non-Language Brokers

Table 4

Factors	<i>M (SD)</i>			<i>F(df)</i>	Partial η^2
	Non-language brokers	Infrequent language brokers	Frequent language brokers		
Dimensions of acculturation	-7.18 (16.79) _a	-2.93 (15.88) _a	4.22 (14.02) _a	19.24 (2, 937) ***	.040
Acculturative stress	27.22 (20.47)	28.05 (19.83)	29.07 (21.76)	1.17 (2, 937)	.002
Cultural values	264.15 (37.26) _a	268.78 (35.03)	276.86 (36.37) _a	5.94 (2, 937) **	.013
Ethnic identity	78.64 (14.4) _a	79.27 (13.80) _b	82.95 (14.25) _{a,b}	4.47 (2, 937) *	.010

Note. Variables sharing subscripts indicate significant differences in pairwise comparisons.

* $p < .05$.

** $p < .01$.

*** $p < .001$.