

2012

Language Brokering a Dynamic Phenomenon: A Qualitative Study Examining the Experiences of Latina/o Language Brokers

Adriana Esquivel
Scripps College

Recommended Citation

Esquivel, Adriana, "Language Brokering a Dynamic Phenomenon: A Qualitative Study Examining the Experiences of Latina/o Language Brokers" (2012). *Scripps Senior Theses*. Paper 52.
http://scholarship.claremont.edu/scripps_theses/52

This Open Access Senior Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Scripps Student Scholarship at Scholarship @ Claremont. It has been accepted for inclusion in Scripps Senior Theses by an authorized administrator of Scholarship @ Claremont. For more information, please contact scholarship@cuc.claremont.edu.

Language Brokering a Dynamic Phenomenon: A Qualitative Study Examining the Experiences

of Latina/o Language Brokers

Scripps College

Adriana Esquivel

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my readers Professor Sheila Walker and Professor Raymond Buriel for their support and guidance throughout the development of my thesis. I would also like to thank Professor Marjorie Faulstich Orellana for allowing me to conduct research with her over the summer at UCLA, which developed into my thesis. Additionally, I would like to thank Professor Gilda Ochoa for all the thought provoking books and discussions, which influenced my thinking. Lastly, I would like to thank Daniela de Jesús Hernández and Denise Bustamante for supporting me and helping manage my thoughts and edit my paper.

Abstract

Language brokers are children of immigrants who use their skills as bilinguals to interpret or translate for their family and/or community members. Although language brokering may begin in childhood or preadolescence, language brokering may continue until adulthood. While there are a small number of studies that have touched upon change over time, this study's primary focus is on language brokers' experiences relating to change over time. This was accomplished through semi-structured in depth retrospective interviews among Latina/o young adults attending small liberal arts colleges. Three aspects of language brokering were examined, the practice of language brokering, feeling towards language brokering, and family dynamics. Three new aspects of language brokering emerged, brokering for parent's business, brokering for the community, and brokering technology. Siblings played the role of the language broker at different points in time and to different extents. Parents' English language developed, and they were able to navigate some tasks due to their language development and their experience completing typical forms. Feelings of joy and frustration, in deed, coexist. Feelings towards language brokering also changed from embarrassment and nervousness to confidence and satisfaction. The patterns and experiences found in this study highlight the complexity and dynamic nature of language brokering.

Introduction

The literature examining the experiences of immigrants has seldom looked at child interpreters until fairly recently (Orellana, Dorner, & Pulido, 2003). Due to the lack of institutional support for immigrant parents, their children, who, through schooling, learn the English language and the culture of the United States sooner, engage in language brokering throughout their development. Given the growing number of Latinas/os in the United States and, most importantly, the growing number of foreign-born individuals in the U.S., it is imperative that language brokering be further explored because, from this, we can infer that the role of language brokers will persist and continue to develop (Percy, 2006). Therefore, it is important to analyze how one's role as a language broker may impact his/her development. This knowledge may encourage institutions, currently not supporting immigrant families; to develop support to help immigrant families navigate health care, educational, and governmental institutions, among other institutions.

Many children of immigrants engage in interpreting and translating tasks for their family, thus this phenomenon has begun to be increasingly researched. There have been several studies analyzing language brokering through different focal points. The literature has examined the practice itself (for whom, where, and what) (Tse, 1995; 1996; Orellana, 2009; Orellana et al. 2003; Orellana et al. 2003b), language brokering among peers (Morales and Aguayo, 2010; Bayley, Hansen-Thomas, & Langman 2005; Orellana et al. 2003), gender roles (Orellana, 2009; Love & Buriel, 2007; Chao 2006; Weisskirch, 2005), acculturation and academic self-efficacy (Acoach & Webb, 2004; Buriel et al. 1998), ethnic identity (Guske, 2010; Wu & Kim, 2009; Weisskirch, 2005), feelings about language brokering (Morales & Aguayo, 2010; Wu & Kim, 2009; Love & Buriel, 2007; Weisskirch, 2005; Tse, 1995;1996;1996b), and family dynamics

(Trickett et al., 2010; Guske, 2010; Orellana, 2009; Chao, 2006). More recently, however, the experiences of young adult language brokers have been examined (Weisskirch, Zamboanga, Bersamin, Kim, Schwartz, & Umaña-Taylor, 2011; Bucaria & Rossato, 2010; DeMent, Buriel, & Villanueva, 2005).

Although it appears that language brokering has been thoroughly observed, there are many aspects of language brokering that call for further exploration, in particular, within the college student population. The experiences of college student language brokers have not been thoroughly examined, there have only been two studies conducted with this population. However, this is a critical stage where adolescents transition from high school to college, leaving the home and entering young adulthood. This transition impacts the family dynamics at home, as well as the student in school; consequently, impacting the role the language broker plays. Additionally, it is important to study language brokers at this stage, because language brokers may experience pressure to manage family obligations and academics, similar to Latina students in higher education (Espinoza, 2010). Therefore, it is important to learn how language brokers, who transition to college, experience language brokering. Only then will we be able to gain a clear and nuanced understanding of the experiences of language brokers across time. This understanding may help encourage institutions to provide better services for immigrant parents and their family. Most importantly, learning what role college students' play as language brokers will help higher education educators understand their experiences as language brokers.

The present study focuses on three aspects of language brokering: feelings towards language brokering; family dynamics; and the practice itself are explored, through in-depth, retrospective, semi-structured interviews among undergraduate students. In order to better

understand the existing literature on language brokering, a review of the relevant literature is presented below.

Literature Review

The work children of immigrants do when translating and interpreting for their family and/or community members has been given different names. This work was first labeled “natural translation”; Harris and Sherwood (1978) defined natural translation as: “Translating done in everyday circumstances by people who have had no special training for it” (p. 155). They hypothesized that translation was an inherent verbal skill among bilinguals, and examined this phenomenon among multiple case studies. However, Tse (1995), who was working with a different population, described this work as “language brokering:”

“Language brokers are intermediaries between linguistically and culturally different parties. People who broker, unlike formal translators, influence the contents and the nature of the messages they convey, and ultimately affect the perceptions and decisions of agents for whom they act” (p.180).³

As Tse (1995) explains, language brokering is not simply translating word for word a sentence or conversation, as an online translator program would do; rather, language brokers have a principal role in the messages they convey to either party. Thus, language brokers influence the messages they relay because they are not objective. Other scholars prefer the term “culture brokering” (Trickett, Sorani, & Birman, 2010) because of the extent that children of immigrants interpret culture; and yet others use the term “immigrant child mediators” (ICM) (Chu, 1999) to describe children of immigrants who interpret and translate.

Additionally, Orellana et al. (2003; 2003b) pitched the term “para-phrasers.” Orellana et al. (2003; 2003b) play with the words and translation of the term “para-phraser.” They explain

that the translation of *para* from Spanish to English is “for.” Hence, “para-phrasers,” phrase things “for” others *in order to* accomplish social goals (Orellana et al. 2003; 2003b). To some extent, all these terms describe the same phenomenon. In simple terms, they all describe the work children engage in as interpreters; however, their work is not simple. None of these terms embrace all the variability within children’s work as interpreters and translators. Perhaps the reason that there are so many labels for this phenomenon is due to its complexity and perhaps no one term can describe this complex phenomenon.

The Practice

Language brokering is not unique to certain ethnic groups or regions; instead, language brokering is a practice that is common across various immigrant groups in a variety of regions, at home and abroad (Tse, 1995; 1996; Orellana, Dorner, & Pulido, 2003; Orellana, 2009; Guske, 2010; Cline, Abreu, O’Dell, & Crafter 2010). Although it is a common occurrence among immigrant groups, language brokering is unique to every child’s experience. These children facilitate their parents’ and/or family members’ everyday tasks and encounters with the host culture. Language brokers interpret at home, in school, and in public places, for instance, at post offices, hospitals, banks, stores, restaurants, work, and government offices (Tse, 1995). Furthermore, they broker for parents, extended family, teachers, friends, and community members. Most importantly, language brokers interpret conversations and a variety of documents, which include school forms, bank statements, rental agreements, immigration forms, and bills (Tse, 1995; 1996; Orellana, 2009; Orellana et al. 2003b). Additionally, language brokers employ many literacy skills when brokering, such as using the dictionary, focusing, and looking for context clues when translating letters, forms, advertisements, and fiction, among

other texts (Orellana et al. 2003). Consequently, language brokers gain and practice literacy skills while language brokering.

Language Brokering Among Peers

Interpreting is not solely a child and parent occurrence. Orellana et al. (2003) report that 45% of fifth and sixth graders reported interpreting for peers and 31% reported interpreting for younger siblings. Additionally, Morales and Aguayo (2010) observed a 12-year-old language broker whose skills were recruited by school officials to interpret for students who had recently arrived to the United States. Moreover, Bayley, Hansen-Thomas, and Langman (2005) observed a middle school science classroom where both the teacher and the recently arrived immigrants asked for translation from the language brokers. Thus, for whom the broker interprets transcends the home. Further, these studies point to the heterogeneity of language brokering and its practice, indicating that language brokers do not interpret only for their family.

Biculturalism, Self-efficacy, and Acculturation

Buriel et al. (1998) found that language brokering was associated with biculturalism, social self-efficacy, and academic performance among Latina/o adolescents. A few years later, Acoach and Webb (2004) replicated and expanded on the Buriel et al. (1998) study. They found a significant relationship between language brokering, biculturalism, and GPA among the junior high sample. Furthermore, a significant relationship was observed between language brokering, academic self-efficacy, and GPA among the high school sample. Interestingly, language brokering was connected to biculturalism for students in junior high, but not for students in high school. Although some of the results support those of Buriel et al. (1998), they did not find support for an increase in nonverbal decoding skills in the host culture. Therefore, the following

variables were found to be associated with language brokering: self-efficacy, biculturalism, bilingualism, academic performance, and GPA.

Ethnic Identity

The literature has also examined language brokers and ethnic identity. Weisskirch (2005) found that more positive feelings towards language brokering predicted stronger ethnic identity. Moreover, those with lower levels of acculturation also reported more positive feelings and obligation towards language brokering. These results support Wu and Kim's (2009) findings. They found that being more Chinese-oriented or less acculturated was associated with having a stronger sense of familial obligation. Therefore, a language broker may experience more positive feelings because they are fulfilling a familial obligation. Thus, the studies above suggest that less acculturated language brokers experience more positive feelings towards language brokering. Consequently, more positive feelings towards language brokering predict stronger ethnic identity (Weisskirch, 2005).

Gender Roles

The literature has also considered gender differences among language brokers. Buriel, Perez, DeMent, Chavez, and Moran (1998) were among the first to report a gender difference in the amount of language brokering done. They found that female adolescents language brokered more often than male adolescents. Chao (2006) found the same gender difference among Mexican and Chinese American adolescent language brokers. However, Love and Buriel (2007) observed no gender difference in language brokering among Mexican American adolescents. On the other hand, Orellana (2009) indicated a gender difference when children were close in age. Orellana (2009) also indicated that there was a relational gender difference. For instance, girls were more likely to be with their mother, and thus language brokers were more likely to broker

for their mother. Additionally, female language brokers were more likely to broker for their grandparents and younger siblings, as well as at a doctor's office (Orellana, 2009). Weisskirch (2005) also found that girls language brokered in the doctor's office and for medical forms more often than boys. These noted gender differences or not (Love & Buriel, 2007) demonstrate that language brokering may be experienced differently among female adolescents or male adolescents, especially when referring to amount of brokering and brokering in primary health care contexts. However, more studies should examine the language brokering experience through gender, due to the conflicting results.

Feelings Towards Brokering

A great deal of attention has been given to feelings towards language brokering, perhaps because they have been contradictory. Tse (1995;1996;1996b) found that more than half of language brokers reported feeling proud of their brokering skills and a few students reported feeling embarrassed or burdened by language brokering. Additionally, Weisskirch (2005) found that, in general, language brokers reported more positive than negative feelings towards language brokering. Wu and Kim (2009) tried to explain these opposing feelings quantitatively by examining the potential reasons for language brokers reporting a sense of efficacy or a sense of burden and vice versa, among Chinese Americans. They examined whether being more Chinese-oriented would indicate having a stronger sense of familial obligations and therefore feeling positive towards language brokering. They found that those who were more Chinese-oriented had a greater sense of self-efficacy as a language broker. This indicated they were more likely to feel a sense of family obligation and therefore fulfilling their role as a language broker was not burdensome.

The aforementioned studies were quantitative in nature, hence, positive and negative feelings were examined as dichotomies. However, qualitative research that uses case studies and interviews to examine this phenomenon indicate that language brokers experience both feelings of frustration and joy (Morales & Aguayo, 2010). Additionally, Bucaria and Rossato (2010) examined the experiences of former language brokers. The participants expressed both frustration and acknowledgement of the benefits language brokering brought. They also expressed pride, while at the same time perceiving language brokering as a normalized activity. This supports my claim that brokers can possess both positive and negative feelings towards language brokering.

Important to highlight is that language brokers may feel differently towards language brokering at different stages in their lives. One participant reflected on her experience as a language broker at the age of 27; she explained that there were two periods where she felt differently about language brokering. As an adolescent, she felt irritated, while at the time of the interview, she felt proud of her work as a language broker. In this instance, her feeling towards language brokering changed over time. Her feelings towards language brokering were not static. These feelings may change, depending on the context in which the participant is brokering. Moreover, in a quantitative study, whether a participant recently had a positive or negative experience will influence the answer they select on a questionnaire. In an interview, these circumstances may be uncovered. In this study, I argue that it is possible and likely to feel both positive and negative about language brokering because it is such a complex phenomenon.

Family Dynamics

Trickett et al. (2010) reviewed the impact of language brokering on family dynamics and explained that some studies have reported role reversal, parentification, and adultification, while

others have reported that no role reversal exists because brokering involves an interdependent relationship. A good example of the interdependency can be found in Orellana's (2009) work. She describes that while children interpret for their parents, usually the broker and his/her parents will be working together to extract meaning from a document. She explains that the language broker does not work alone, and at times, other siblings step in to help the family understand the meaning of an item. This observation supports the idea that language brokering entails an interdependent relationship between the broker and his/her parents/family. However, Guske (2010) examined how the presumed role reversal may impact the self-development of the language broker. Guske (2010) found that language brokers desired more parental involvement in order to aid them in their bicultural development. Participants expressed that they did not desire this adult role. Participants also reported frustration when parents criticized them for minor mistakes, which caused tension in their relationship. Furthermore, Guske (2010) reported that parents did not understand the amount of pressure the language broker was under. The aforementioned study reported tension between the language broker and her/his parents, but it did not report role reversal.

Others have investigated the consequences for parent-child relationship in terms of respect. Chao (2006) had a sample of Mexican (463), Chinese (581), and Korean American (557) students who had immigrant parents. Chao (2006) found that Mexican American youth had higher levels of respect for both their mother and father, due to language brokering, whereas Chinese American youth had higher levels of respect only for their mother, and Korean American youth only for their father. Chao (2006) suggests that the latter observation may be due to the traditional Korean fathers' distant role becoming more intimate due to language brokering. Although tensions may arise in parent-child relationships, (Guske, 2010) at the same

time, increase in respect towards parents may also develop (Chao, 2006). Again, these varying results highlight the variability within language brokering and family dynamics. Just as there may be brokers who experience both positive and negative feelings towards language brokering, the family dynamics may also undergo interdependency and tension at times. However, the practice, family dynamics, and feelings have rarely been examined in terms of change over time, which I examine here, retrospectively.

Although the literature on language brokering is growing, more research should be conducted to build upon each area of concentration, such as language brokering among peers and their recruitment in schools, as well as ethnic identity and acculturation. Additionally, in order to have a clearer understanding of some of the inconsistent results, research should further explore gender roles, biculturalism, academic self-efficacy, feelings towards language brokering, and family dynamics among language brokers. Moreover, the role of parents and their experiences have not been explored fully and should be taken into consideration when examining the experiences of language brokers and their development. Language brokers do not broker in a vacuum, thus the context in which they broker and the context in which they develop should also be taken into consideration when analyzing their experiences. Most importantly, new aspects of language brokering should be explored, such as examining language brokers as adults and their development through time to observe how language brokering may change over time.

Given, the growing number of foreign-born individuals in the U.S., it is imperative that language brokering be further explored because we can infer that the role of language brokers will persist and continue to develop (Percy, 2006). Therefore, it is important to analyze how one's role as a language broker may impact his/her development. Moreover, it is essential to further examine feelings towards language brokering, family dynamics, and the practice itself

across time, since it has hardly been done. The present study tries to do just that, focusing on the experiences of language brokers over time, through in-depth, retrospective, semi-structured interviews among undergraduate students.

Language Brokers in Young Adulthood

Most of the aforementioned studies have examined language brokering in stages, either at the childhood stage or preadolescent stage. There are fewer and more recent studies examining language brokers in adulthood. Weisskirch, Zamboanga, Bersamin, Kim, Schwartz, and Umaña-Taylor (2011) are among the few, in addition to Bucaria and Rossato (2010) and DeMent, Buriel, and Villanueva (2005), who have studied young adult language brokers. As Weisskirch et al. (2011) explain, there is no sign that language brokering ends in college, and there may be added stress as college students manage both college obligations and family obligations. Weisskirch et al. (2011) conclude that language brokers continue to broker into young adulthood because they may have strong traditional cultural values or perhaps language brokering may help maintain these strong cultural values. Yet, because Weisskirch et al. (2011) examined college students' experiences quantitatively, the nuances that exist in the language brokering experience were not addressed, which is what I hope to do in this study. Additionally, DeMent et al. (2005) were among the first to explore language brokering qualitatively in young adulthood. DeMent et al. (2005) led focus groups among college students and found that language brokers discussed their relationships with their parents, their academic and social self-efficacy, and their biculturalism. They found that students thought that their language brokering helped them in academics and engendered feelings of self-efficacy. Additionally, consistent with Bucaria and Rossato (2010), students expressed both feelings of frustration and willingness to help their parents. The aforementioned scholarship demonstrates that the practice of language brokering continues until

adulthood. Although the previously mentioned studies examine language brokers in adulthood, they did not focus on change over time or explore the development of language brokering from childhood to young adulthood. Much of the scholarship lacks this analysis except for qualitative work, such as Orellana's (2009), who has been able to observe the practice at different stages in children's lives. In the present study, I try to gain an understanding of these different stages qualitatively, through retrospective interviews.

Theoretical Framework

A qualitative approach is used instead of a quantitative one because the goal of this study is to gain an in-depth understanding of the experiences of young adult language brokers. The purpose of this study is not to make large generalizations; instead, it is to gain a deeper understanding of the changing nature of language brokering and the differing experiences of young adults attending college. This goal is achieved through open-ended semi-structured.

My theoretical framework and approach to this study was largely influenced by Dolores Delgado Bernal's (1998) "cultural intuition" approach within a Chicana feminist epistemology. Delgado Bernal (1998) pitches the term "cultural intuition" to expand on the notion of theoretical sensitivity. She explains that many Chicana scholars have unique perspectives and that these unique perspectives allow us to analyze our data with the influence of personal experience, existing literature, professional experience, and analytical research progress (Delgado Bernal, 1998). Moreover, Delgado Bernal differentiates cultural intuition from theoretical sensitivity because within personal experience she includes the collective community. Most importantly, she explains that cultural intuition engages participants in the analysis of the data. She says:

"A Chicana researcher's cultural intuition is achieved and can be nurtured through out personal experiences (which are influenced by ancestral wisdom, community

memory, and intuition), the literature on and about Chicanas, our professional experiences, and the analytical process we engage in when we are in a central position of our research and our analysis” (p.568)

My position as a Chicana language broker and a student at a small liberal arts college places me within the concept of “cultural intuition.” I draw upon my own experience as a language broker in childhood, adolescence, and young adulthood, as well as on the literature that exists on language brokering and Chicanas/os to help guide my research questions, interviews, and analysis. While reading the existing literature on language brokering, I was able to engender this cultural intuition by comparing my own experience, and that of other relatives, to that of the data in the scholarship. At times I questioned and at times I saw my own experience being reflected in the data. This cultural intuition and personal experience helped me create my research questions and bring in my own experience while interviewing participants. In terms of my professional experience, I am a student attending similar institutions as my participants. My four years at a liberal arts college have made me very aware of the type of environment these students are also experiencing, giving me an insight into their experiences as language brokers currently in college. These insights also influence the way I engaged with the analytical research process. However, I was unable to include my participants in the analysis of their own data/transcripts because of time constraints. Although my position as a language broker attending a liberal arts college places me in a similar position as my participants, this does not mean our experiences are all the same. As I interviewed the participants, I noted that, although there were some emerging themes and expected themes, their experiences were unique. However, since I am aware of my insider position and cultural intuition, I was careful to not make assumptions that were not supported by the data.

Present Study

The literature on the practice of language brokering is large; however, the practice has not been examined across time, which is what I focus on, retrospectively. The research questions include:

1. How do language brokers' experiences develop across time, as they move from childhood into adolescence and into young adulthood?
2. What do these experiences reveal about change over time, in terms of the practice of language brokering, feelings towards language brokering, and family dynamics?

Therefore, I hypothesize that language brokering is not static and that change over time will impact the language brokers' perceptions and practice, due to the transition from adolescence to young adulthood, and the transition from, high school to college. Further, the literature has reported positive or negative feelings towards language brokering, while others have reported a combination of feelings. I argue that feelings of joy and frustration may coexist and may change over time from negative to positive. Feelings may change as young adults reflect on their experience and are able to analyze their position in society. The practice itself will change in regards to for whom, where, and what is brokered because of the transitions in life. Since college students may leave their home, I predict that the amount of language brokering will decrease. Finally, the literature on family dynamics has opposing views, that is, that language brokering causes role reversal, while others argue it is an interdependent relationship. However, studies have not focused on the changing dynamics in the family, that is, siblings' role and parents' role in the language brokering process. I predict that family dynamics will change over time when

referring to who in the family brokers and parents' role in the language brokering process. I predict that siblings who were not the primary language broker will eventually take up this role to some extent and that parents will need less brokering from their children as time progresses and they develop their own skills. Therefore, in this study, I focus on change over time in regards to the practice of language brokering, feelings towards language brokering, and family dynamics on a newly studied population, young adults.

Thus, the purpose of this research is to learn how language brokering may develop and change over time by interviewing undergraduate students and having them reflect on their experiences in childhood, adolescence, and, currently, in young adulthood, while focusing on three aspects of language brokering: feelings, family dynamics, and the practice itself.

Method

Participants

Fourteen college students who language brokered in childhood, adolescence, and young adulthood were recruited to participate in this research study. All participants were of Latina/o descent and all participants were recruited from small liberal arts colleges in Southern California. The majority of the participants were of Mexican descent (N=9), with one of Guatemalan descent, one of Salvadorian descent, one of Honduran descent, and two multiracial participants, both with a Mexican mother. Moreover, female (N=9) language brokers outnumbered male (N=5) language brokers. Most participants were between the ages of 18 and 24, except for one participant who was a non-traditional college student and was 35 years old at the time of the interview. All participants were bilingual and spoke both English and Spanish. There were first year students, sophomores, juniors, and seniors.

Table 1
Participant Demographic and Language Brokering

Participant	Ethnic Background	Sex: Male or Female	Generation living in the United States	First-Generation College Student	Sibling Birth Order	Raised/living With Two Parents	Primary Language Broker
Belen	Mexican American	Female	Second	Yes	Youngest	Yes	Yes
Rosa	Mexican American	Female	Third	No	Youngest	Yes	Yes
Dolores	Multiracial: Mexican mother	Female	Second	Yes	Youngest	--	Yes, older sister is recruited for emergencies.
Lily	Mexican American	Female	Second	Yes	Youngest	Yes	Yes
Diana	Guatemalan American	Female	Second	Yes	Middle Child	Yes	No, older sister is recruited.
Sandra	Mexican American	Female	Second	Yes	Oldest	Yes	Yes
Ana	Honduran American	Female	1.5	Yes	Oldest	Yes	Yes
Patricia	Mexican American	Female	Second	Yes	Oldest	Yes	Yes
Nora	Mexican American	Female	Second	Yes	Only Child	Yes	Yes
Juan	Mexican American	Male	1.5	Yes	Middle Child	Yes, Mother and Stepfather	Yes, however now that he is in college his younger brother is helping.
Bryan	Multiracial Mexican mother Argentinian father	Male	Second	Yes	Middle Child	Yes	No, older sister living at home is recruited more often.
Julian	Mexican American	Male	Second	Yes	Middle Child	Yes	No, older sister is recruited and younger sister is beginning to pick it up because she is home.
Gabriel	Salvadoran American	Male	Second	Yes	Oldest	Yes	Yes
Carlos	Mexican American	Male	Second	Yes	Oldest	Yes	Yes, but younger brother is beginning to pick it up.

Note. The table above demonstrates participant demographics.

Materials and Procedures

In the present study, individual, in-depth, open-ended, semi-structured interviews were conducted in order to examine how language brokering changed over time through the college students' recollections and recent experiences. Semi-structured interviews were conducted and audiotaped for later transcription and analysis. The interviews lasted from forty minutes to an hour and a half long. Participants were recruited through email and word of mouth. The email included a description of the desired participant pool. Interviews took place in a location most accessible to the students.

The interview protocol was designed to examine the many dimensions of language brokering, such as the brokers' background, their experiences as language brokers, change over time, feelings, and family dynamics. The interview began with questions about the broker's and his/her family's background, followed by questions about the participant's experience as a language broker, for instance, "Tell me about your experience as a language broker," and probing questions such as, "when it began, how often, for whom typically." Other questions included "In general how do you feel about language brokering?" and "Did your siblings ever help you when brokering as a child/adolescent?" The reader should see Appendix A for the full set of interview questions. Audiotapes were transcribed and later analyzed and coded for patterns and for disconfirming evidence. Pseudonyms were given to the participants to protect their identity.

During the interviews, the number of questions asked varied from participant to participant. Most of the participants often touched on the questions in the interview protocol without being asked about certain issues, and participants also recalled other aspects of language

brokerling that were not part of the interview protocol, but were generated by the reflections on their language brokerling experience.

Coding

After the interviews were transcribed, the interview transcripts were coded. The transcripts were coded according to themes that were expected, because they were part of the interview protocol, and themes that emerged. Therefore, expected coding categories included: family background, family dynamics LB (language brokerling), practice LB, change LB, and feelings LB. Transcripts were coded by hand and after coding, patterns were written down on a table to better compare the participants' experiences within each theme.

Results

The tables and accounts presented below depict the themes that were expected and that emerged from the participant responses. The results are broken down into themes and subthemes, starting with the practice and the respective subthemes. Followed by family dynamics and the respective subthemes. Finally, we end the results section with feelings towards language brokerling and the respective subthemes. Tables reporting patterns and frequencies are presented; followed by a report on the given topic.

The Practice

The brokers in the present study recalled brokerling at home (N=14), health care facilities (N=9), school (N=6), store (N=5), and restaurants (N=5). Within these categories fell, brokerling in the pharmacy, police station, supermarket, mall, fast food restaurants, and during doctor visitations. These patterns are consistent with the literature examining the practice of language brokerling (Tse, 1995; 1996; Orellana, 2009; Orellana et al. 2003b). What participants reported language brokerling fell under three categories, documents (N=14), government documents

(N=6) and conversations (N=14). They reported brokering documents that typically came home, such as, school forms (i.e. field trip slips and emergency cards), bank statements, bills, mortgage, insurance, medical, legal, tax, and business forms (see Table 2.1).

Participants	Home	School	Store	Restaurants	Health Care
Belen
Rosa	.		.		.
Dolores	.			.	
Lily
Diana	.	.			.
Sandra
Ana	.				.
Patricia	.	.			.
Nora	.				
Juan	.	.			.
Bryan
Julian	.		.	.	
Gabriel	.			.	
Carlos	.				
Total	14	6	5	5	9
Percentage %	100	42.8	35.7	35.7	64.2

Note. Table 2 demonstrates where participants' said they language brokered.

Participants	Documents: Bank statements; bills; mortgage; insurance; medical; legal; business forms.	Government Documents: Food stamp; proprietor; tax; employee paperwork. Citizenship test.	Conversations: Face to face encounters; Conferences; over the phone; store; restaurant.
Belen	.		.
Rosa	.		.
Dolores	.	.	.
Lily	.		.
Diana	.		.
Sandra	.	.	.
Ana	.		.
Patricia	.	.	.
Nora	.	.	.
Juan	.		.
Bryan	.		.
Julian	.	.	.
Gabriel	.	.	.
Carlos	.		.
Total	14	6	14
Percentage %	100	42.8	100

Note. Table 2.1 demonstrates what participants' reported that they language brokered.

Participants	Parents	Extended Family/ Family Friends	Community Members
Belen	.	.	
Rosa		.	
Dolores	.	.	.
Lily	.		
Diana	.		
Sandra	.	.	
Ana	.		
Patricia	.		.
Nora	.	.	
Juan	.	.	.
Bryan	.		.
Julian	.		.
Gabriel	.		.
Carlos	.		.
Total	13	6	7
Percentage %	92.8	42.8	50

Note. Table 2.2 depicts for whom language brokers translated and interpreted.

Additionally, they translated and interpreted government documents, including, but not limited to, food stamp, proprietor, and employee paperwork (See Table 2.1). In terms of conversations being language brokered, participants reported face to face encounters, parent-teacher conferences, over the phone, and at the store or restaurant (See Table 2.1). In school, they brokered at parent-teacher conferences and were recruited by teachers or volunteered themselves to broker for other families during parent-teacher conference night. Moreover, one student spoke about filling out employee applications for her parents' friends. Participants also wrote checks for parents, and one student explained that he wrote letters, in Spanish, because his parents were not able to write in Spanish. Another participant spoke about writing love letters in English for her Spanish-dominant friend who wanted to write romantic letters. Another salient experience was brokering over the phone, and most brokers expressed frustration when brokering over the phone because, as one student explains, she felt pressure to make the phone calls short. For whom the students brokered were their parents (N=13), except for Rosa, who brokered for her

grandmother. They occasionally brokered for extended family and friends (N=6), and in the case of Sandra, she brokered for her mother, father, and grandparents. Finally, participants reported brokering community members (N=7), such as neighbors and strangers (see Table 2.2).

Therefore, where, what, and for whom students brokered, in general, are consistent with the literature on language brokering. However, the present study adds to the literature because there were situations in which the students reported brokering that have not been documented in the literature. For instance, two students mentioned brokering for their family members with citizenship forms. One student stated that, currently, as a young adult, he brokered for his parents while purchasing a car, and another student explained that she helped her father figure out the transmission manual for a car. However, there were three new aspects of language brokering that were salient in a couple of language brokers' experience (see Table 2.3). These three new aspects of language brokering include, brokering in the community (N=6), brokering for parents' business (N=3), and brokering technology (N=5). Below, these aspects are further explored.

Participants	Community	Parents' Business	Technology
Belen	.		
Rosa			
Dolores	.		
Lily			
Diana			.
Sandra			
Ana			.
Patricia	.	.	
Nora		.	.
Juan	.		
Bryan	.		.
Julian	.		
Gabriel		.	.
Carlos	.		
Total	7	3	5
Percentage %	50	21.4	35.7

Note. Table 2.3 demonstrates new aspects of language brokering, in terms of the practice.

Language Brokering for Parents' Business

A few of the language brokers helped their parents as children, adolescents, and young adults run their business, using their language brokering skills. The study by DeMent et al. (2005) is one of the few to document this occurrence among language brokers. Dement et al. (2005) wrote briefly about a language broker who helped her father in his gardening business and acquainted herself with the self-employment laws. In the present study, a number of language brokers spoke about their experience language brokering for their parents' business.

Some language brokers were not only helping their family navigate the culture and daily life in the United States by interpreting and translating school documents, bills, doctors forms, writing checks, among other things, they were also helping their family run their own business. Three language brokers' salient experiences language brokering revolved around their family's business. Gabriel, for instance, was very involved in his father's belt manufacturing business. Although his father obtained a GED and had conversational skills in English, his writing skills in English were not the same. Gabriel wrote letters of recommendation for his father's employees:

We had a business and we still have a business, a belt manufacturing business, and sometimes people would ask him for letters of recommendations. I was eight through ten. I was writing letters of recommendation for people because that's when computers were becoming more popular so I would be there typing to whom it may concern and at ten years old so that was pretty fun, it was fun, at that point I felt like a little business man.

Gabriel demonstrates feelings of joy when speaking about his involvement in his father's business. As a child language broker, he was writing letters of recommendation for his parents' employees. He was able to express himself and speak on behalf of his father on his employees' qualities. He was a central part of his father's business and, consequently, was contributing to his family's economic well-being.

Patricia also describes her involvement in her parents' furniture and electronics business. She explains that her role as a language broker was essential in running her parents' business. Patricia would also go around neighborhoods with her mother selling clothing. In the following piece, Patricia describes some of her responsibilities involving her parents' business:

So because of their business, I had to do translating when it came to paperwork and my father because he did finish high school and he did go to some community college classes in English he's able to do transactions with his vendors and stuff like that [...] But when it came [to] taxes and stuff like that, it was in my mom's name, and that's where I came in [...]. They [parents] had to pay quarterly taxes and not just yearly. And with quarterly taxes you have to go to an office in Riverside and fill out this paperwork. If you don't know how to fill it out they'll help you. So the first couple of times, my mom didn't know how to fill it out, [...] so we went and I didn't know what to do, I was about seven, a little older about eight, and they got mad at her and they yelled at her, "You've been in this country for so long and you don't speak English?" And I understood, I was already an older kid and they went and got a Spanish person to help her and I saw how the Spanish person did the taxes and I was like, I can do that. So I've been doing my parents quarterly taxes for a long time now.

Patricia learned how to file the quarterly taxes for her parents' business by observing the way the tax preparer filled out the tax forms. Although she was a child, she was able to copy the tax preparer and figure out how to fill out the tax forms. She was confident she could do it. She explains later that as soon as she learned how to file the quarterly taxes, she would take the paperwork already completed, so that the tax consultants did not ridicule her or her mother. She says:

But when I was a kid I just remember thinking that I didn't want my mom to feel that way again. I just have to be a step ahead. If I'm a step ahead, when I get to the tax place, we're just gonna' pay the taxes, we don't have to fill it out, we'll be ahead of the game. They don't have to help out. So once I paid attention to how the form was and that it actually tells you how to do everything, I did it so that next time, the same lady, she was the same lady that would see us, she'd be like, they don't need help anymore? We would go every three months and drop money in their laps. [...] I was like a pre-teen now, it felt satisfying, "hey, we don't speak your language but here's your money."

Patricia was very conscious early on, as a child, of the institutional discrimination that her parents endured because of their status as immigrants and particularly because they did not speak English. For that reason, she took the initiative to complete the forms before they got to the tax preparers office. She gained satisfaction out of demonstrating that they were capable of running their own business, although they did not speak English. Her parents did not need to speak English to navigate this system because Patricia was able to facilitate this process for them. As a language broker, Patricia, served as a buffer against racism and discrimination that was aimed at her parents.

Nora, a first year student in college, had been helping her father since she was eight years old in his ornamental iron fence business. She was extremely involved in her father's business. She became familiar with her father's business when she went to the factory, where her father worked, daily because she did not have a babysitter. She began reading the manuals at the factory because there were no other books. Nora became an expert in ornamental iron vocabulary and was able to help her father develop his own business.

That's when I had to help my dad with his own business and transcribing a lot of documents and even like voting sheets, anything basically, order forms. Before I was just in my community and everything was in Spanish and I didn't need to translate anything. [Then her father's business expanded] My dad started his own website and I wrote the website. [...] he would always ask me to go and check over the invoices. Yeah, that was when it was a lot and then it became emails. [...] Senior year and junior year in high school, he would just say things in Spanish and I would just translate them into the email, I would write the emails all nice and stuff. But that was more at home. From eight through eleven I was basically with my dad the whole afternoon, afterschool. So it was a lot of stuff.

Nora was her father's "business partner," as she says it herself. She played a key role in the development of her father's business and she was very involved, as she describes above. She was also involved in her father's stock investments. This, however, was an emotionally draining

experience because they ended up losing money. As a first year students in college and living on-campus, she is no longer as involved in her father's business.

The literature on language brokering has infrequently documented the involvement of language brokers in their parents' business. However, their language brokering goes beyond brokering forms that arrive at home. They help their family in navigating the business world and ultimately contribute to their family's economic standing and survival. Nonetheless, both Nora and Patricia's dedication and involvement in their family's economic investments began to impact them emotionally. Nora explains that when her father lost money in the stock market, because she was invested in this process as much as her father was, it was a devastating moment in her life. This was especially hurtful because the day they lost money, it was her eighth grade graduation and her father was unable to make it. While she was describing this experience, Nora began to cry. Nora was an adolescent when she was helping her father in the stock market. However, she expressed feelings of joy when describing her language brokering, and took this experience as a lesson demonstrating the resilience and positive outlook in her character. Moreover, Nora describes how she and her father reacted to this; she says:

We knew it was over. We're not going to do this anymore. We both huddled in and we were in this together. And that's what you get you know? You get to be on a different level.

Although this was a difficult experience, Nora and her father developed an interdependent relationship; they were a team in terms of language brokering in the business and economic sphere. This is what Nora describes as being on a "different level" when language brokering for her father. Their relationship was a partnership when it came to business, and Nora enjoyed this.

Patricia also describes how her role as the language broker and her added responsibilities as the surrogate mother impacted her family when she left for college. Patricia lived on campus,

but decided to stay close to home, due to her family obligations. Her institution was only about twenty minutes away from her home; however, the responsibilities of a college student did not allow her to continue all her responsibilities as a language broker and surrogate parental figure and vice versa. Consequently, Patricia had to take a leave if absence. Patricia describes her reasons for having to leave college:

The family started kind of fragmenting because I wasn't always there; I was trying to do school. Well, I was doing school. I had my own set of goals that I was trying to follow.

Moreover, she describes that the difficulties that faced her family, while she was a student in college, ultimately impacted her academics. Due to that reason, Patricia decided to take a year off:

So the time that I was away from college, I was just trying to put the pieces together. Feeling that I was the older one that always had my mom's right hand because of the language.

She returned home and began helping her family again, especially her younger brother who was born with Down Syndrome and was diagnosed as deaf. She explains that this was ultimately the best choice because she was able to reflect on her experience and help her brother by learning sign language. She explains that she has developed a special bond with her brother and that this only supports her decision for taking a leave of absence. Currently, Patricia is back at the same institution and is doing better at managing her responsibilities at home and in school. Although her role as a language broker influenced her academic decline and leave of absence, she still explains that her role as her mother's right hand is very important to her. She values this role and is happy that she is able to use her language skills to help her family.

Thus, language brokers take on many responsibilities. They are children, adolescents, young adults, students, daughters, sons, brothers, sisters, and they are language brokers, which is

an added responsibility they must learn to manage while in school. However, many school professionals are not aware of these responsibilities or may not understand them, especially in the college setting. Patricia recalls her professor's comments over her family responsibilities:

I had a professor tell me that it was time to cut the umbilical cord when I was a freshman and I cried after he told me that, because I was offended. But had he known how important I am to my family, he would have understood that I can never really cut the umbilical cord. I am myself, but I still am kind of a life line. It's not that I need the umbilical cord, or maybe I do? But it works both ways.

Patricia's professor was not able to, perhaps, relate to her experience as a language broker and, thus encouraged her to distance herself from her family and her responsibilities. Although the professor might have been well intentioned, this does not detract from the fact that his language hurt Patricia and even alienated her from further seeking advice. Again, language brokers take on many responsibilities, including school responsibilities, and school officials may not be aware of this or able to understand, thus alienating students like Patricia. However, Patricia values her family obligations because she belief it is a reciprocal understanding between herself and her family and she may never be able to cut this umbilical cord, but that is fine.

Brokering in the Community

A number of students (N=6) explained that employed their translating and interpreting skills in a new as aspect of language brokering, in the community. Many students reported brokering at admissions offices, college fairs, and organizations. One student brokered for her uncle, who was a special education teacher, who had to take a yearly exam. Yet, others contribute to society and their community, as in the case of Juan, who interned in a law firm. At the time of the interview, Juan had interned in an immigration law firm in his hometown for two years. He also translated at parent-teacher conferences. He explains his role as a language broker in a law firm and in school:

Well, I guess the most prominent part as a language broker, has been working at a law firm. I've actually interned for two years now, every summer, and they're my primary purposes of translating documents like Spanish affidavits to English. It's an immigration law firm. So they give the affidavits primarily to Hispanics. And so I have to translate them to English, so the judges can understand their stories. So it's basically me telling other people's stories that they're telling me in Spanish. And that's the main way that I've experienced that. But like, I form part of organizations in my high school and either when there were parent meetings, or when teachers needed some sort of translation, 'cause the school that I went to was predominately Hispanic, most of the parents that went to the meetings, they didn't speak English and so I would translate what the parents were saying to the teachers or vice versa.

Juan helped facilitate the communication between the lawyers and his community members who were unable to tell their stories and position in English. He was helping his community members navigate the immigration legal system was recruiting his skills as a language broker.

Bryan, a senior in college, language brokered at the admissions office in his respective institution:

Well, like here, I work at the admissions office and we get a lot of parents who don't speak English, so I'll just talk to them in Spanish. [...] Last year during one of our diversity programs we did a workshop for the Spanish-speaking parents, so one of the people from financial aid would tell me what to say and I would say it to them in Spanish. So, like, it was definitely a big one because we were helping families fill out the FAFSA, the CSS Profile, important financial information.

Bryan was helping first-generation college students and their parents navigate the college application process, in particular, financial aid application documents. Many of the language brokers mentioned how this process was a very stressful time in their college application experience. Most of the language brokers, as first-generation college students (N=13), had never been exposed to the college application process. In addition, their parents were not familiar with the financial aid application process and were apprehensive about giving out their personal information, such as social security numbers and income taxes. Bryan and Carlos used their

bilingualism and language brokering skills to help the admission office provide this resource for Latina/o parents and first-generation college students.

Moreover, Dolores worked at a community center and also employed her skills as a language broker to help community members navigate the social services and institutions:

One of the jobs I had one summer was at the Big Band Community Action Center and it's just a really small office with, like, four people in there. And they help the community, so I would help them if they brought in health documents. I would translate for them. They help people on Medicaid, or elder[ly] people, [and provide] transportation to doctors' offices through LULAC.

These language brokers were and are very active members of their community and use their language brokering not only in the home to help their family, but they are actively helping the entire community and, arguably, society as a whole. These brokers were translating citizenship forms for their family; they were helping their parents run a business; and they were helping the admissions office when recruiting students and talking to parents. They are using their skills as language brokers to help the Spanish monolingual community members, and thus are helping their community navigate the resources available to them.

Brokering Technology

A few students (N= 5) recalled brokering technology for their parents. Since everything is becoming more technological (i.e. smart phones, iPads, tablets) and many companies are becoming more online-based, older generations, in particular those who did not have access to these forms of technology, are not familiar with these systems. Therefore, younger generations, such as this generation, have grown up with these technological advances and have learned to navigate and acquaint themselves with the new technology. Consequently, many of the language brokers in this study reflected on their technological brokering. They brokered how to navigate the internet, email, cell phones, computers, and even how to pay online bills. As mentioned

earlier, Nora built a website for her father's ornamental iron business. This is becoming an increasingly brokered field. Little literature has touched upon this topic, and future research should examine this aspect of brokering. Clearly, these language brokers contribute to their family's survival in an increasingly technologically run society.

Change Over Time

Most of the time, students did not directly state that their language brokering had changed over time. Only a few students, like Rosa, described how the practice of language brokering changed over time. Rosa, a junior in college, describes how her language brokering shifted across time:

I feel, like, when I was younger, like, really young, like 7-ish, it was a lot more in grocery stores and things that were pretty miniscule, like telling them how much things costs and how much she owes the cashier and talking to the cashier and asking questions, things that were very miniscule and not a big deal, and then as I got older, I was able to, like, deal with more important issues and that's when I started to go to, like, doctor's appointments and take care of my grandma's health. It has changed to more responsibility as I've gotten older.

Other language brokers also described that as their family noticed that their bilingualism developed, they began asking them to broker more important documents, like the mortgage.

Diana, a senior in college explains:

I remember since, like, a pretty young age, I had to translate things for my mom and for my dad. In the school setting, just like meeting with teachers, you know how there's teacher-parent conferences, I would have to basically translate everything that my teacher was telling them, telling my mom. [...] I think later on it became a different type of translation. As I grew older, it was more like any paperwork that was sent home, like forms x, y, and z. The bank or like the mortgage, whatever. I would have to translate it and I still do it to some extent, not as much because I am living here.

Diana describes that her language brokering began with conversations and at parent-teacher conferences. Later, however, the things she was asked to translate or interpret were denser, such as the mortgage. As time progresses, so do the things students are asked to language broker.

Parents take note that because their children's' bilingualism develops; they are able to broker more complicated paperwork. Similarly, as time progresses parents may buy a car or a home and, therefore, students are asked to broker more complicated paperwork. Thus, the practice of language brokering does not occur in a vacuum, and it changes over time due to changes in the family and environment.

Where, what, and for whom language brokers interpret is much more variable than the literature suggests. As time passes and the child becomes an adult, the practice of language brokering changes, although it also varies between language brokers' experiences. While for some, for whom and where they brokered expanded and they were brokering not only for their parents, but for an array of community members, for others, it generally stayed relatively the same. However, all students brokered less for their parents because they were away from home. As the broker moves out of the home and transitions to college, both the practice and the family dynamics change. Therefore, when examining the practice of language brokers, participants described change over time, especially when referring to their transition from living at home to living at their respective college campuses. For that reason, many students did not language broker as much for their family. Moreover, where and for whom they brokered expanded. Many students brokered for their community members and were liaisons for their community and institutions of power.

Family Dynamics

Participants	Main LB	Birth Order	Siblings' Role	Parents' Role
Belen	Yes	Youngest	Began LB when siblings moved out or were not involved in the family context. She was always with mother because she was the youngest.	Father speaks English, unable to broker for mother because he was working. Mother has picked up English at work.
Rosa	Yes	Youngest	Language responsibility fell on her when her older sibling's began to leave the home.	Both parents speak English. Language brokered for grandmother because she was always with her mother.
Dolores	Yes	Youngest	Older sister is recruited for emergencies. When her sister left home, she became the primary LB.	Does not do it as often for mother anymore.
Lily	Yes	Youngest	The responsibility of LB fell on different siblings over time, but the LB role remained her role, as the youngest.	Brokered primarily for mother. Father is able to fill out bills. Her mother's English language has not developed, but her mother is able to navigate her community because it is Spanish dominant.
Diana	No	Middle	Older sister is the primary LB. Youngest brother does not LB.	Mother tries to decipher a document before asking Diana for help.
Sandra	Yes	Oldest	Younger brother does not broker. Parents rely on her because of her Spanish skills.	Parents still rely on her although they will only recruit LB help for dense documents, while she is away.
Ana	Yes	Oldest	Still primary LB. Brother will occasionally do it. Siblings expect her to do it.	Mother and father have developed English language skills, they do things on their own, unless they do not understand.
Patricia	Yes	Oldest	Still the primary LB. Siblings expect her to do it.	Father went to Community College to learn English. Mother is beginning to do some things on her own, i.e., making doctor's appointments.
Nora	Yes	Only	--	Father has developed English language skills and runs his business on his own, while Nora is away.
Juan	Yes	Middle	Began brokering when older sisters moved out. Now that he is in college his younger brother is helping.	Mother understands some English.
Bryan	No	Middle	Picked up LB when oldest sister moved out. Older sister living at home is recruited now.	Parent's English conversational skills have developed. Mother has developed working English.
Julian	No	Middle	Older sister is primary LB and younger sister is beginning to pick the LB role because she is at home. He began brokering when his sister changed schools.	Father developed working English. Mother does not need as much LB because she has learned to navigate forms through experience and practice.
Gabriel	Yes	Oldest	Younger brother will only occasionally broker.	Father had conversational English skills, however recruited Gabriel's brokering for business and writing. Does not do it for mother.
Carlos	Yes	Oldest	Younger brother is beginning to pick up the LB role, because Carlos is not home.	Father has developed working English.

Note. Table 3 demonstrates siblings' and parents' role within language brokering.

As reported by the participants, family dynamics did not remain the same over time. There were five primary language brokers that were the oldest in the family. There were four primary language brokers that were the youngest in the family. There was only one primary language broker that was the middle child, however his younger brother was beginning to take on the role of the language broker. There were three language brokers that reported that they were not the primary language brokers at home, all of them were the middle children in their family. Please refer to table 3 for more details. Therefore, the birth order of the primary language broker remained with the first-born and the last-born.

To start, the position within the sibling order of the broker varied. The students interviewed here were not always the first-born. Instead, there were many students who were the last-born or first-born in their family, and there were a few who were middle children. However, the middle child was not the primary language broker. Those who were the youngest and the primary language broker explained that the role fell upon them because they were the closest to home. They also explained that older siblings who might have been the primary language broker left the home or were not as involved in family obligations, thus the role fell upon them. Lily was the youngest in her family and she describes, below, how the language brokering role fell upon different siblings at different points in time:

And so, growing up, the responsibility of translating for my mother, in particular, and my father kind of fell on different individuals throughout, but I think because I'm the youngest and the female, towards the end, for several years, my mother always had me translate for her, pick up the phone, and go places with her. And I continue to do it now.

Belen also explains the shifting roles of the language brokers in her family, including herself.

My sister would, too, but for some reason, I was always with my mom [be]'cause my sister, I don't know, she would get involved in school and my oldest brother was living in Vegas at the time [be]'cause he already had his family, and then my [other] brother was just a vagabond going around with his friends, so he wasn't

really around to do that stuff. He would, like, do that for, like, stuff for the car when my dad wasn't around, [and] he would go with my mom and like, get stuff fixed, but, yeah, like, my dad he wouldn't do the language brokering because he would be at work or would have to do something else.

Belen describes how her siblings, as they were growing up and becoming adults began becoming less involved in the home. Therefore, the language brokering role fell upon the youngest child, Belen, because she was closest to home and consistently there. She was also able to maintain her bilingualism, thus making her more likely to language broker as the youngest.

Many of the language brokers in this study, who were the youngest in their family, explain that the role of language brokering fell upon them because as the youngest in their family, they were always with their mother. Older siblings began moving away from the home and becoming more involved in their own lives. Consequently, the youngest in the family began to play the role of the language broker, due to their position as the youngest in the family.

The first-born who remained the primary language explained that they remained the primary language broker, because their parents', as well as their younger siblings, expected to fulfill this role. Thus, younger siblings did not feel the need to language broker because the primary language broker was expected to do so and continued to do it. Younger siblings, often did not have the same grasp of the Spanish language as the first-born, and their parents complained about this and did not rely on them for that reason. Sandra explains:

Just the fact that they kept depending on me 'cause I have a younger brother, he's only three years younger than me, I've always seen that he's just as capable as I am to, like, translate, but my parents always depended on me, like, 'till this day over the weekend my mom called me to see if I could order pizza for her I was like my brother is right there and she's still, like, they're very dependent on me and they've said it's because they think my Spanish is way better than his and so I think they see that you know you are a better option for like translating and stuff 'cause my brother he's not shy at all, you know, but I think it's interesting that they still rely on me all the time.

Although Sandra is across the country, her parents still rely on her language brokering, rather than her brother, who lives at home. She attributes this to her brother's weaker skills in Spanish and her parent's trust in her language brokering ability.

Who in the family language brokers may also depend on who is available. Julian is the middle child and has brokered for his family, primarily his mother. However, he explains that his older sister is the primary language broker and that currently, because he is away, he does not broker as often. Instead, his younger sister has begun to pick up the role of a language broker:

For me, it started after, well, my sister was the first one to do it with my mom, usually 'cause it started in school. My mom would go to the conferences, and she obviously didn't know the language, and my sister knew it more than me at the beginning, so she was the one who usually did it. Then I started doing it in elementary probably, like, third grade. When my sister was already [in] a different school, I had to do it 'cause she couldn't come, and I started doing [it]. [...] Now, my younger sister does it since she's at home with them, and I'm pretty much the last resort. I would say, they would ask my older sister first, then my younger sister 'cause she's at home, and then me. So I don't do it for my parent's as much anymore.

Julian's experience confirms that the role of the broker shifts over time and that different members of the family may play the role at different points in time. This is all dependent on the availability of the child whether they are home or not, whether they are accompanying parents' to run errands, whether they are busy with their own young adult lives, (school, family, work), whether they have a good enough grasp of the Spanish language, and lastly whether they have experience language brokering.

The child's bilingual skills may influence the parents' decision to rely on certain members of the family more than other members. For instance, in Sandra's case, and a few other language brokers expressed that their younger siblings, because their Spanish language was not as developed as their own, parents trusted the primary broker's bilingual skills and thus relied on their brokering. In the case of the last-born, who were the primary language brokers, they were

able to maintain their bilingualism, thus were recruited take on the role of the primary language broker.

In terms of the siblings' role, it may shift depending on different situational variables. However, at times, the first-born primary language broker remains the same because parents rely on their skills due to their experience, which tend to be better, although not all the time, than their other siblings'. The role of the first-born language broker may also remain the same because other members of the family expect them to do the language brokering, as we see with Juan, Sandra, Ana, Gabriel, and Patricia. However, this is not the case for every language broker. For some students the role did shift and remained in the hands of the youngest, like Lily, Belen, Rosa, and Dolores, due to their closeness to home and maintenance of bilingualism. Although the middle child brokered for their family they did not remain the primary language broker, as we see with Julian, Bryan and Diana. Or, as in the case of Dolores, although she became the primary language broker in her family, her older sister, who was approximately ten years older than Dolores, was recruited for family emergencies because, Dolores explains, she was perceived to be better equipped to deal with these situations because of her greater experience. We see this same occurrence with Diana, who explains that her older sister performs the medical language brokering because she was a medical assistant and is familiar with the terminology. Such, experiences highlight the variability within language brokering and the shifting roles of the siblings.

The majority of the students reported that their parents' language abilities and abilities to navigate a few systems, developed over time (see Table 3). Therefore, they did not have to broker the same things for them because their parents' were able to do it on their own. Julian

describes below that his mother does not require the same type or amount of language brokering because she has developed her own skills to navigate a few tasks:

I don't do the same things anymore because my mom usually can pick it up. She's kind of used to it. When we go, like my sister's fifteen [Quinceañera] is coming up so when she needs to talk to someone I usually do it. To make a doctor's appointment, I would do it. But if they're little things that she's done before she doesn't need help and maybe work related too. She doesn't need help 'cause she knows people.

As we see here, parents are able to navigate the employment system by using their social networks, like fellow employees and friends, to navigate the system. They also acquire experience, across time, to complete certain tasks that, in the past, may have been language brokered. However, although Julian's mother can manage some things on her own because of her developed familiarity with these tasks, she still recruits the help of her son or daughter for complex situations, where she might have to describe in detail what she desires, for example, things for the Quinceañera. Additionally, Carlos describes the development of his father's language abilities in the working domain:

At this point in time, my dad's working English and conversational English has gotten better, so it's come to the point where I'm off to college and he's back home, and he does what he can in the sense of communicating to someone who doesn't speak his native language, and he's been pretty successful, so far, and he hasn't asked me to specifically go home and play the role of the language broker again, during my time in college.

These experiences demonstrate that parents are not passive and do not depend on their children for everything. Over time, they have become familiar with some of the systems that exist here. In particular, in the working sphere, parents develop working English in order to provide for themselves and their family's well being. They must learn to navigate the respective working domain in order to survive. It is important to acknowledge that parents' language does not remain static and they do not completely depend on the language broker, because the dominant

anti-immigrant discourse tends to blame immigrants for not learning English or not getting ahead. However, as we see here, many immigrant parents do learn the English they need to navigate certain domains and to persist.

Thus, family dynamics do not remain static. The siblings may take on the role of the language broker at different points in time and parents' language skills develop such that they are able to handle tasks without the help of the language broker, unless the task requires a more developed English vocabulary.

Lastly, it is important to note that most language brokers translated and interpreted for their mother, except for those who brokered in the business sphere. Gabriel and Nora mentioned brokering for their father, while Patricia brokered for both. Ana and Lily recalled brokering only for their mother because their fathers' were described as proud Mexican men and did not want to rely on the help of their children. These sentiments describe some of the strict gender roles that persist in the Mexican community and ultimately impact who the broker interprets and translates for in the home.

Feelings Towards Language Brokering

Within feeling towards language brokering, students expressed it was a normalized activity (N=3). Diana, Ana, and Rosa expressed that they never thought about language brokering as children. They did not consider language brokering a chore; instead, it was something they did for the family. It was so ingrained in their routine that it was not perceived as an imposition. Rather, it was perceived as contributing to the family because that was part of being a daughter or son. Language brokering was an implicit expectation held by their parents. Parents did not explicitly state that they expected them to language broker.

Participant	Normalized Activity	Coexistence of Joy and Frustration	Feelings of Embarrassment	Change Over Time (Attitude and Confidence)
Belen		.	.	.
Rosa	.	.		
Dolores		.		.
Lily		.	.	.
Diana
Sandra		.		.
Ana	.	.		.
Patricia		.	.	
Nora		.		
Juan		.		
Bryan		.	.	.
Julian		.		
Gabriel		.		
Carlos		.		
Total: Frequency	3	14	5	7
Percentage %	21.4	100	35.7	50

Note. Table 4 demonstrates patterns about feelings towards language brokering.

Male	Female
0	4 (29%)

Note. Table 4.1 demonstrates frequencies between male and female students in terms of feelings of nervousness.

Language brokering simply fell under family obligations. Diana describes it below:

I never thought about it, like, as a chore or anything like that, and if anything, I felt like I was doing something for my mom, like, you know, how you always want to give back to your parents. I felt like it was one of my responsibilities as their child, and I mean, I never really, I guess when things [got] a little frustrating [...] but other than that, I like, I thought of it as helping [...]. Where like I was doing something good for them [...].

The aforementioned brokers had similar expressions to this one. They had not thought about their language brokering role until they came to college, and some not until they were participating in this research. It was part of their obligation to their family, and whether it was frustrating at times, they nevertheless expressed that they were happy they were fulfilling their obligations as daughters and sons. They were happy they were helping their parents and their family. They gained a sense satisfaction. Hence, language brokers expressed feelings of normalization towards language brokering.

Feelings of Both Joy and Frustration

Consistent with Morales and Aguayo (2010), all of the language brokers (N=14) interviewed expressed both feelings of joy and frustration. Supporting my prediction that feelings towards language brokering are not static and are not dichotomous, both feelings of frustration and happiness may coexist. Nora expresses how she felt about language brokering:

I felt like it was, like, I was one of the most important workers. It did feel really cool. I didn't really feel that I was over arching at anytime. I always wanted to do more. Sometimes I would get really frustrated, and it would be night, and I wanted to see my mom. 'Cause sometimes we would stay up really late, but I was really valuable.

Nora, as previously stated, helped her father with his ornamental iron business. She was very involved, staying up late helping her father. However, she felt that her role as a language broker in her father's business was valuable. Although at times language brokering could be a frustrating experience because of the time consumption and perhaps difficulty of the translation, she still felt as an asset to her father's business. We see this same pattern emerge with other participants in this study. They expressed a sense of joy in terms of feeling happy that they were contributing to their family and were helping them navigate the system in the United States.

Language brokers also voiced gratification when brokering for other people. Juan translated for high school conferences, and in this situation, he expressed that he enjoyed it and liked the praise he received from parents:

And even for high school parents, when I would straight up translate on the spot, it wasn't pressuring. I didn't have anxiety for that, it was just regular people. I was, like, okay I'm just going to do my best and try to tell you what he's doing to get by, what your son or daughter can do better in class, I'm just gonna' tell you exactly what he's telling me. And then they would understand. They would look at me and be, like, "oh this kid knows what he's talking about." And they would just tell me. It was fun. I enjoyed translating.

He derived satisfaction from helping facilitate communication between parents and teachers. However, he continues to explain that, at times, brokering for parents at conferences could be a bit problematic and frustrating:

I never liked it when other parents would start fussing at me just because it wasn't my fault that you're kid is doing bad. It's your problem. But, I mean, the other part [of] it was enjoyable, because when I would give them good news, they were like, "Oh thank you."

Juan describes that parents he brokered for would get upset at him and would not trust him at times. During these instances he became aggravated because he was playing the role of a language broker and was trying to be objective. He received complaints from the parents he brokered for, although he did not deserve them. Therefore, when brokering for individuals outside the family, students can become frustrated, as well, although they have less at stake when it is not their family. Yet, he describes this ability to broker as something magical. He states:

It's like magic to me, to be able to speak both languages and alternate, and other people don't have that privilege, why not share? It doesn't hurt you and it's helping someone else.

Similar to Juan, all students conveyed this back and forth feeling about language brokering. At times, they expressed feelings of frustration because they did not want to broker in public, the vocabulary was difficult, and/or they did not understand the task. Yet, at the same time, they

expressed feelings of happiness and satisfaction because they were helping their family and community members. As Juan expresses, he understood he had the privilege that came with being bilingual and having the ability to mediate communication between the immigrant community and the dominant society.

A few of the language brokers mentioned that they felt they had to grow up too quickly. As previously mentioned, Patricia and Nora were two examples of the impact this amount of responsibility can have on their emotional and academic development. However, although they both experienced stress when brokering for their family's business, they expressed satisfaction. Additionally, Patricia describes the connection she developed with her mother through her language brokering:

So, being my mother's tongue meant that I was essentially a reflection of my mother. So, it was an empowering role. [...] I'm an extension of my mom, therefore, I have all these responsibilities. And she would always say, "eres mi mano derecha" [you are my right hand]. Feeling like my mom's right hand meant doing things that she couldn't do. So, she can cook for me and clothe me, but she can't do these other things so I should do them.

Above, Patricia describes her role as her mother's tongue. She spoke on behalf of her mother and father, and this position, she claims, was empowering. She was her mother's right hand because she had the ability to help her family. Many language brokers also stated that their experience gave them an ego boost and a sense of confidence. Therefore, although language brokers experienced frustration and stress, they also derived pleasure from language brokering.

Change Over Time

Some of the participants (N=7) described how their attitude and approach towards language brokering. They expressed that, as children, they felt shy and frustrated when approaching a task. However, when asked how they felt about it currently, they expressed positive feelings towards language brokering. They explained that they language brokered

voluntarily now and that they felt confident when approaching a language brokering task.

Therefore, feelings towards language brokering changed over time because as young adults they were able to analyze their feelings and experiences. Sandra, a junior in college, demonstrates how her feelings towards language brokering changed over time. Here, she expresses how she felt when language brokering as a child:

I remember just feeling really tense, and you know, just kind of anxious. "I don't want to do it, I don't want to do it, no, please don't make me" and then if my mom, depending [on] my mom's patience, she would either tell me, "Please, I need you to do this" or she'll be like "Oh, fine, forget it. Let's go" and so sometimes, yeah, I wouldn't do it, and so then I kind of felt a little bad, I guess.

Sandra felt forced to language broker for her mother sometimes. Later, Sandra expressed that, currently, she felt more comfortable language brokering, and that her mother had even commented a few times that she noticed the change. She also stated that she now encouraged her mother to send her documents or call her when her mother needed her help. When asked why she thought she felt more comfortable now, she said:

Just because of my own personal self-confidence [...] I've noticed a significant change in the way that I act in class. I'm more active now than I was in like first year. I w[ould] always sit in the corner and be quiet, just listen to the teacher, and now it's more like "no I have questions [...] let me write this down and ask the professor" and, you know, I take more initiative now and, so I feel better about myself, more confident in myself to do those kinds of things.

Sandra explains that her change in comfort with language brokering, now as a young adult, was due to her increase in self-confidence as a student. Her developing academic and self-confidence in college influenced her self-confidence when language brokering. Whereas adolescents in high school may not be encouraged to voice themselves, college students are usually encouraged to speak out. Her voice was affirmed in college; thus, she became more comfortable voicing herself as language broker.

In addition, to gaining confidence as college students, thus, influencing the way they approach language brokering, their feelings towards language brokering also changed when reflecting on their experience. As language brokers mature and enter adulthood, their experiences influence their perspective on language brokering. Lily, a non-traditional college student, explains that her feelings towards her mother and her responsibilities as a language broker changed as she grew up and reflected on her experience. She explains:

But, I think that when you're, at least for me, now that I've had time to think about it, and look back, the things that I critique my mom about, and the things I resented her for, given her circumstances, her tools and her education, and that she came from a dysfunctional family, and a poor family in Mexico, what else can I expect? She did the best that she could given her situation. So, I have to be thankful for what she did, because there were a lot of things that she could have done wrong. So, now that I'm older, I don't see anything wrong with it.

As the youngest daughter in her family, Lily was expected to take care of her parents, in particular, her mother. Therefore, in addition to becoming the primary language broker, she also had the responsibility to care for her mother. As a child, she resented her mother, due to the fact that her mother did not learn English and relied heavily on her language brokering. She explains she criticized her mother for these reasons; however, as an adult, she was able to reflect on her mother's experiences as an immigrant woman and realized her mother had many limitations. Her own reflections growing up enabled this change of feelings towards her mother and her role as a language broker. As young adults, because they are able to reflect on their experience and see it in a different light, their perception of language brokering changes.

Feelings of Embarrassment

Many brokers (N=5) expressed feelings of embarrassment when they reflected on their language brokering experience as children and adolescents. They expressed embarrassment over

their parents' inability to speak English. Bryan, a senior in college, describes his feelings towards his parents' language abilities:

I was always embarrassed. I never told my parents, but in the back of my mind, I was like seriously you guys have been here tweety-five, plus, years and don't understand, don't know the language [...]. I feel bad about it now, there's no reason for me to feel embarrassed, my parents just don't know.

When probed to talk more about what he meant by embarrassment. He continued:

I mean, I guess it was just this whole thing you're in a different country; English is the predominant language here in the United States. I felt as if they should know it or should've known it, and you know, they didn't, and you know, they're older. I guess it was this whole authority figure that you know they weren't you know and authority 'cause they didn't have this grasp of English.

Bryan explains that he was embarrassed because his parents did not speak English and they had been here for a long time. Similar to many people in the United States, Bryan was receiving assimilationist messages that argue that immigrants should learn the English language and rid themselves of their own culture in order to be part of the United States. He internalized these messages because he was embarrassed that his parents did not know English. Similar to Lily, those feelings of embarrassment changed as he matured and reflected on his experience.

In addition to feeling embarrassed because of the internalization of assimilationist messages, students received messages from the authority figures and institutions they encountered when language brokering for their parents. Belen spoke about her experience going to the doctor to broker for her grandmother as a child, she says, "Yeah, they would just be like 'oh this is weird' [...]. so that was when I was seven or eight." Medical professionals are not accustomed to having children play a role with that much responsibility and their reactions influence the way the language broker felt.

Patricia, also, expressed feelings of shame and apprehension. She describes, in detail, situations where her mother and she experienced racism and discrimination. She says:

I got the least accepting response from Caucasian, or white individuals, who didn't feel any connection at all. I'm assuming they didn't. They were like, "Why the heck are you here?" Like, the person who, where we went to pay the taxes, she was so rude to my mom, because she didn't speak English. I had to be translating, and they'd had to get the Spanish speaking person to do the translating for the taxes, and it was just in their mind, it didn't fit, "Why is this little girl here? She doesn't need to be here?" But usually when I spoke to other people from minorit[y] [groups], now I call them minorities, they were more, like, warm and friendly, like, "Oh, how cute. This is nice." [...] and my mother would always just let me do the talking or it would be back and forth and you can see irritation in their faces.

She also describes another experience where her mother was yelled at for not speaking English.

This was her reaction:

I remember the day when the person was so rude to my mom, I felt like I had to defend my mom. It's none of your business why she doesn't know English, you don't know all the issues at hand. I was embarrassed; you do get embarrassed, because you kind of always have to defend your parents, [...]. I felt bad, because I was embarrassed. That sucks that you have to feel the shame because your parents don't speak English, and now, around that same time period, my younger brother that's four years younger than me, he started being hostile to my mom. He was a young kid. The tax lady happened when I was already a pre-teen. So, he was in elementary school and he started telling her [mother], "You've been here for so long and you still don't speak English?" You know that he was picking that up from elsewhere. It wasn't just [that] he one day thought of that himself. My mom would cry about it and get upset and say that this was so stupid. So seeing my mother cry about not knowing a language, and hearing her feel worthless, she would say, I only went to third grade, it's a miracle that I can write my name. It was just heart wrenching.

Patricia's younger brother was also internalizing assimilationist messages that the Spanish language was not valuable and that everyone had to learn English. His reaction hurt, both, Patricia and their mother. Patricia, notes that her brother was getting these ideas from somewhere else, perhaps, school, since it is in school where children are implicitly told their language is not valuable. Most importantly, children are not immune to these reactions from institutions of power, which influences the way children feel about language brokering.

Some of the language brokers (N=4), particularly female language brokers, such as Belen, Dolores, and Sandra, expressed feeling very shy and nervous when language brokering (see Table 4.1). Dolores expresses reasons for feeling nervous:

I don't think it's the same now. I'm not shy about language brokering, but I still get kind of anxious in formal settings offices, doctor's offices and not wanting to impose and take up their time. So I still feel like that, to hurry so they can be freed and get to do the rest of their job.

Dolores expressed this same feeling about brokering over the phone. She explains she disliked brokering over the phone because she felt pressured to make the phone calls short because she did not want to impose on the person on the other line. This could be due to the socialization of gender roles because no male language brokers expressed feeling nervous or anxious when language brokering. Male students did express feelings of frustration frustrating at times, but they did not express feelings of anxiousness, as the four female students did (see Table 4.1).

However, educational trajectories may also influence feelings about language brokering.

Although all students were asked to speak about their background and how they arrived at their respective liberal arts college, there were three students, in particular, that described their educational trajectories in detail because they were very significant to their language brokering: Nora, Gerardo, and Patricia. Nora, Gerardo, and Patricia's educational experiences were very salient in their experiences. Nora describes how she was reading at an advanced level in elementary school and that teachers would ask her to read aloud to the class, who were amazed at her ability to read at such an advanced level. She could also translate documents directly without stumbling. She would translate passages from the Bible to her mother. Gerardo describes being selected for a competitive preparation program that prepared him to apply to highly competitive, elite private preparatory schools. Moreover, his parents and teachers thought he was very bright, he explains. Finally, Patricia also describes being placed in advance courses since she was in

elementary school. She recalls always helping her fellow students because she was very bright. All of these students at one point or another mentioned that during their k-12 schooling they were always told they were very smart and were placed in advanced tracks. They were very confident in their academic abilities because their abilities were always affirmed. Their voices and experiences were validated by their educational trajectory. Nora, Gerardo, and Patricia did not express feelings of nervousness or anxiousness when brokering; instead, Nora described brokering as “cool” and was eager to do more; Gerardo described it as an “ego boost” and described himself as a businessman, and Patricia described it as “empowering.” Thus, the confidence they gained from their educational experience influenced the feeling they developed towards language brokering. Therefore, there are external factors that could influence the way students feel about language brokering. Consequently, language brokering does not remain static in the practice, family dynamics, or feelings towards language brokering aspects.

Discussion

Children of immigrants, who translate and interpret for their family and community members, become liaisons between the dominant society and their own family and community. They facilitate encounters between institutions of power and, thus, help their family and community members navigate systems in the United States. The role of a language broker is very significant, although not always acknowledged as such. They contribute to their family’s well-being and help the immigrant community persist through an inequitable system. Since institutions such as health care, education, and other public services in the United States operate under a system of inequality that perceives immigrants as a burden, they do not provide the adequate support for immigrant families to navigate this system. Therefore, their children, who are products of the schooling system in the United States, take on the role of the language broker.

They perform the job that is not provided to immigrants by institutions, that is of a translator and an interpreter. Language brokers are, thus, given responsibilities that other children, adolescents, and young adults do not perform. For that reason, it is important to explore the experiences of language brokers, in particular college students, because they are entering an institution that has not been explored in terms of language brokering, which is higher education. The findings presented here demonstrate the complexity of language brokering and the unique nature of many of the language brokers' experiences. Although patterns emerged, every student's experience was distinct.

In terms of the practice of language brokering, students reported translating and interpreting in many of the same places that have been documented in the literature (Tse, 1995; 1996; Orellana, 2009; Orellana et al. 2003b). For instance, the majority of the students expressed brokering in the home, school, and health care environment (see Table 2). Fewer language brokers expressed brokering in public areas, such as the store and restaurant. Further, what the students' language brokered also remained consistent with the literature. The majority of students expressed brokering documents that arrived home i.e., bank statements and bills as well as mortgage, insurance, medical, legal, and business forms (see Table 2.1). They also brokered conversations over the phone, in parent-teacher conferences, and during face-to-face encounters. Fewer language brokers expressed brokering government documents, such as food stamp, proprietor, tax, and employee paperwork (see Table 2.1). The aforementioned tasks have all been documented in the literature.

In the present study, however, there were aspects of language brokering that have not been consistently documented in the literature. Three aspects of language brokering emerged that have hardly been documented, that is brokering for their parents' business, brokering technology,

and brokering in the community. These are new characteristics of language brokering that are very central to the language broker's experience; however, this is the first time they have been reported. Three students described language brokering for their parents' business (see Table 2.3). They played a key role in developing and maintaining their parents' business and family's economic well-being. Participants also described language brokering for their community members. Students reported brokering in community outreach organizations, immigration law firms, and admissions offices. Not only were these language brokers helping their family navigate different institutions, they were also lending their skills to other members of the community. They helped members of their community navigate the public service, legal, and educational systems. Since these students were active members of their community, they were able to employ their skills as a language broker to provide a service that is typically not available to the immigrant community. Thus, their role as a language broker is more than interpreting and translating, they are demonstrating resilience and empowerment by helping the immigrant community navigate systems of inequality.

Brokering technology is another aspect of language brokering that is new to the language brokering literature. A few students described brokering online, i.e., paying bills online, booking flights online, doing research for father's medical condition online. They also reported brokering cellphone and computer technology; for instance, they taught their parents how to access email through the phone and how to navigate the computer. Nora even built her father a website for his business. As society becomes more technologically dependent, language brokers, in turn, begin to bridge the gap between their parents and technology. The present study sheds light on three aspects of language brokering that have not been previously explored; that is, brokering for parental business, brokering in the community, and brokering technology. Perhaps new aspects

of language brokering emerged due to the measures and approach used in this study in addition to the demographic background of the participants, in particular their educational attainment. A qualitative approach was used in order to understand the nuances that lie within the language brokering experience.

We are also able to gain a nuanced understanding of family dynamics within language brokering. The participants' birth order varied, indicating that language brokers were not always the first-born. The majority of primary language brokers were the oldest or youngest in the family, while the middle child performed some language brokering, but not as much as the primary language broker (see Table 3). There was only one middle child that described being the primary language broker, due to the large age difference between himself and his older sisters. However, he noted that his younger brother was already language brokering at home (see Table 3). Those who were the youngest and the primary language broker in their family, were given that role because they were closest to home and were able to maintain their bilingualism. Those who were the oldest and remained the primary language broker, were expected to play this role by their parents and their siblings. Usually, the first-born language brokers were committed to continuing their role and reported that their younger siblings did not have the same bilingual skills as they did. Thus, their parents relied on them for the language brokering. However, if the youngest in the family maintained their bilingualism, they were likely to take on the language brokering role. These results indicate that the child that takes on the role of the language broker depends on their proximity to home, as Orellana (2009) documented it in her study. However, parents also recruited different individuals for different tasks, depending on who they believed was better equipped to do so, in terms of language and experience. Consistent with what DeMent et al. (2005) suggest, parents do not randomly select children to language broker. Therefore,

parents' selection of whom in the family brokers is relational and intentional. Thus, over time different members of the family play the role of the language broker and their role differs.

The complexity and dynamic nature of language brokering supports the idea that language brokering is not static, and because of that, it is difficult to measure language brokering quantitatively without leaving behind the nuances that make this phenomenon so special. Thus, more research should be conducted examining the changing nature of language brokering. The literature on family dynamics has only focused on the parent-child relationship and has never explored the role siblings play in the language brokering experience. Hence, the present study sheds light on this aspect and calls for further exploration.

Just as siblings' participation in language brokering changed across time, parents' role also changed, although not as explicitly. Most parents were able to acquire working English in order to navigate the employment sphere, and across time learned how to do some things on their own (see Table 3); this trend contradicts the dominant discourse on immigration in the United States. Some parents would only recruit the help of the language broker on tasks they were not accustomed to reading or completing, and if the task was more dense than usual. Therefore, although language brokers continued to help their parents, the latter did not require the same amount of language brokering. Since the change over time has not been examined in terms of family dynamics, this has yet to be documented in the literature, which I examine here, retrospectively. Moreover, the literature on family dynamics focuses on the parent-child relationship, and whether this is an interdependent relationship or whether language brokering produces role reversal (Trickett et al. 2010; Guske, 2010; Orellana, 2009). Therefore, considering the nuances found in this study, more qualitative work should accompany

quantitative work, to better understand this phenomenon. In particular, parents of language brokers should be included in the study when examining this phenomenon.

The retrospective responses of the young adult language brokers, in the present study, depict the density and complexity of feelings towards language brokering. A few language brokers expressed that they had never thought about their role as a language broker. Their role was such a normalized activity that they never reflected on it, as they did during the interview (see Table 4). As I predicted, feelings of joy and frustration did coexist and this was the case for every language broker I interviewed (see Table 4). These patterns are consistent with Morales' and Aguayo's (2010) results and depiction of language brokering as something joyful and frustrating. Every language broker expressed this back and forth expression of gratification and frustration. They were glad that they could use their bilingualism to help their family, and derived satisfaction from it, but at the same time when a task became difficult, they expressed feelings of frustration. Thus, feelings towards language brokering are not simply dichotomous, there is more between the black and white binary that few quantitative questions can assess. However, the literature on language brokering has reported feelings of either burden or of joy; these quantitative studies did not assess the dynamic nature of the individual's feelings towards their role (Wu & Kim, 2009; Weisskirch, 2005; Tse, 1995; 1996; 1996b). This is due to their measures that only ask a few questions about feelings and are unable to explore this back and forth expression about language brokering.

Feelings towards language brokering also changed over time in terms of attitude and approach (see Table 4). A portion of language brokers expressed feeling more confident now, as young adults, when language brokering. One student explained that she felt more confident now because of her overall academic success. Thus, this demonstrates the impact educational

trajectories have on feelings towards language brokering. Additionally, a few language brokers expressed that as children they were resentful or felt shame and embarrassment because their parents were not able to speak English (see Table 4). However, when asked if they felt the same way now, they explained that as they matured they were able to understand their parents' positionality; consequently, they were able to acknowledge all the forces that limited their parents' ability to learn English. Through this retrospection they altered their view towards language brokering of shame and embarrassment, which turned into willingness to help and satisfaction. This is consistent with Bucaria's and Rossato's (2010) documentation of one adult language broker, who demonstrated the same pattern of retrospection and change. Language brokers realize that there are other forces influencing their shame and their parents' ability to learn English. As children they were internalizing messages from institutions of power that claim immigrants must lose their language and their culture in order to be successful.

These feelings of embarrassment, as children, can be explained by the assimilationist messages they received from society, in particular the school system. Spanish dominant Latina/o children in the education system are implicitly told that their language and their parents' language is less valuable than the English language; these children are forced to lose their native language and learn English. Language brokers' feelings of shame, resentment, anxiousness, and embarrassment are all products of a society that devalues the culture and language of Latina/o immigrants. Reynolds and Orellana (2009) explain that language is ethnicized and racialized and that language brokers serve two positions: they provide their service as translators and interpreters and provide surveillance over what people in positions of power say. This argument is reflected in Patricia's experience. As explained earlier, she took it upon herself to complete tax forms before returning them to the tax preparer, in order to avoid being ridiculed. Patricia served

as a buffer against discrimination towards her parents. Encounters with dominant institutions are not in objective contexts; instead, these encounters occur in biased contexts in which racial and linguistic stigmatization are common (Reynolds & Orellana, 2009). The role that language brokers played was neither objective nor taken out of context; they were racialized and ethnicized. Eventually, this racialization impacted their feelings of shame and embarrassment towards language brokering. Nevertheless, as they matured and entered young adulthood, they became more aware of this racialization and discrimination. As they became aware of their parents' position within this society, their feelings towards language brokering and feelings of embarrassment changed. Similar to Patricia, most were glad and derived pleasure from knowing they could use their bilingualism to help their family navigate the system. Ultimately, language brokers became representatives of both their family and the institutions of power (Reynolds & Orellana, 2009).

In the present study, I found that female language brokers expressed feeling nervous while brokering. However, no male participants expressed such feeling (see Table 4.1). One student explained feeling as if she was imposing on other people when brokering. Moreover, she felt pressured to make phone calls short because she did not want to consume the other person's time. The fear of imposing on others is a product of the socialization process and conditioning of children. Girls are socialized to be quiet, passive, and taught not to interrupt, whereas boys are encouraged to assert themselves and speak out. Although the sample size of male students is too small to make a comparison, young men in this study did not express the same feelings of nervousness and diffidence. Furthermore, we can infer that children experience language brokering differently depending on whether they were socialized to be passive or active. Therefore studies that have noted a gender difference should further explore this aspect of

language brokering (Chao, 2006; Buriel et al. 1998) and should look at the impact of the socialization process on the feeling of nervousness among female language brokers.

Students also discussed feeling more confident now that they are in college. Since college students' voices and academic abilities are constantly being affirmed, some of the language brokers gained confidence in their academic ability and thus, felt confident instead of nervous when brokering. This supports the idea that academic trajectories impact feelings towards language brokering. The same pattern was observed with participants who expressed feelings of confidence due to their academic abilities constantly being affirmed throughout their k-12 educational experience. When students' voices and experiences are validated by their educational trajectory, the confidence they gain from these experiences influence the feeling they develop towards language brokering.

Similarly, language brokers who enter college also receive assimilationist messages, that is, to assimilate to the college culture. Espinoza (2010) explains that the normative notion of academics is for the pursuit of knowledge, and family is seldom talked about in academia. However, since family is so embedded in the Latina/o culture, Latina/o students have to manage school and family responsibilities at the same time. Espinoza (2010) outlines some of these family responsibilities, one of them being language brokering. She further explains that school competes with these family obligations.

College students who endorse familial values and obligations experience a lot of pressure that is never discussed in academia. Instead, students are expected to completely immerse themselves in academics and are encouraged to "cut the umbilical cord," as Patricia was told, by one of her professors. These messages cause language brokers to feel alienated and they are not able to openly speak about their family obligations because it is not part of college culture. Thus,

Patricia was alienated and did not receive the faculty support that she needed, instead she decided to take a leave of absence. For many students in this study, family obligations were a big part of their college experience. Therefore, faculty and staff should be more understanding of students who have added responsibilities, which takes place outside academia. Family obligations should not be something that is hidden from academia; instead students who are managing both academics and family obligations should be praised, awarded, and supported. Faculty support will allow many students with similar pressures to continue their pursuit for education. Similar to other institutions of power, higher education serves as an assimilating force. At times, language brokers are forced to give up familial obligations in order to navigate higher education. Language brokers' experiences, depicted above, demonstrate the complexity of this ever-evolving phenomenon.

Retrospective, in depth, semi-structured interviews were conducted among college student language brokers to gain a nuanced understanding of the language brokering experience across time. From the patterns explained above, we learn that the role of the language broker is much more complex than originally portrayed, particularly in quantitative work. We also learn that language brokers continue to broker as young adults. Language brokering is not stagnant; for that reason, longitudinal studies should be conducted to observe language brokers over time. The patterns and experiences found in this study highlight the complexity and dynamic nature of language brokering.

References

- Acoach, C. I., & Webb, L. M. (2004). The influence of language brokering on Hispanic teenagers' acculturation, academic performance, and nonverbal decoding skills: A preliminary study. *The Howard Journal Communications, 15*, 1-19.
- Bayley, R., Hansen-Thomas, H., & Langman, J. (2005). Language Brokering in a Middle School Science Class. ISB4: Proceedings of the 4th International Symposium on Bilingualism, 223-232.
- Bucaria, C. & Rosato, L. (2010). Former child language brokers: preliminary observations on practice, attitudes and relational aspects. *mediAzioni, 10*, 239-268.
- Buriel, R. (1993). Acculturation, respect for cultural differences, and biculturalism among three generations of Mexican American. *Journal of Genetic Psychology, 154*, 531-543.
- Buriel, R., Perez, W., DeMent, T. L., Chavez, D. V., & Moran, V.R. (1998). The relationship of language brokering to academic performance, biculturalism, and self-efficacy among Latino adolescents. *Hispanic Journal and Behavioral Sciences, 20*, 283-297.
- Chao, Ruth. (2006). The prevalence and consequences of adolescents' language brokering for their immigrant parents. *Acculturation and Parent-Child Relationships: Measurement and Development*. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Chu, C.M. (1999). Immigrant children mediators (ICM): Bridging the literacy gap in immigrant communities. *The New Review of Children's Literature and Librarianship, 88-93*.
- Cline, T., Abreu, G., O'Dell, L., & Crafter, S. (2010). Recent research on child language brokering in the United Kingdom. *mediAzioni, 10*, 105-124.
- Delgado, B. D. (1998). Using a Chicana feminist epistemology in educational research. *Harvard Educational Review, 68*, 555-575.

- De Ment, T.L. (2005). Children as language brokers a narrative of the recollections of college students. *Language in Multicultural Education*, 255-272.
- Espinoza, R. (2010). The good daughter dilemma: Latinas managing family and school demands. *Journal of Hispanic Higher Education*, 9, 317-330.
- Flores, G., Laws, M. B., Mayo, S. J., Zuckerman, B., Abreu, M., Medina, L., Hardt, E. J. (2003). Errors in Medical Interpretation and their potential clinical consequences in pediatric encounters. Center for the Advancement of Urban Children, American Academy of Pediatrics.
- Free, C., Green, J., Bhavnani, V., & Newman, A. (2002). Bilingual young peoples experiences of interpreting in primary care: A qualitative study. *British Journal of General Practice*, 53, 530-535.
- Guske, I. (2010). Familial and institutional dependence on bilingual and bicultural go-betweens – effects on minority children. *mediAzioni*, 10, 325-345.
- Harris, B., & Sherwood, S. (1978). Translating as an innate skill. *Language Interpretation and Communication*, 144-170.
- Love, J. A., & Buriel, R. (2007). Language brokering, autonomy, parent-child bonding, biculturalism, and depression. A study of Mexican American adolescents from immigrant families. *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences*, 29, 472-491.
- Morales, A., & Aguayo, D. (2010). Parents and children talk about their language brokering experiences: A case of a Mexican immigrant family. *mediAzioni*, 10, 215-231.
- Orellana, M. F., Reynolds, J., Dorner, L., & Meza, M. (2003) In other words: Translating or “para-phrasing” as a family literacy practice in immigrant households. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 38, 12-34.

- Orellana, M., F. Dorner, L., Pulido, L. (2003b). Accessing assets: Immigrant youth's work as family translators or para-phrasers. *Social Problems*, 50, 505-524.
- Orellana, M. F. (2009) *Translating Childhoods: Immigrant youth, language, and culture*. New Jersey. Rutgers University Press.
- Percy, M.S. (2006). Immigration changing needs and responses. *Journal for Specialist in Pediatric Nursing*, 11, 264-266.
- Reynolds, J. F., Orellana, M. F. (2009). New immigrant youth interpreting in white public space. *American Anthropologist*, 111, 211-223.
- Trickett, E. J., Sorani, S., & Birman, D. (2010). Towards an ecology of the culture broker role: Past work and future directions. *mediAzioni*, 10, 88-104.
- Tse, L. (1995). Language Brokering among Latino adolescents: Prevalence, attitudes, and school performance. *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences*, 17, 180-193.
- Tse, L. (1996). Language brokering in linguistic minority communities: The case of Chinese and Vietnamese-American students. *The Bilingual Research Journal*, 20, 485-498.
- Tse, L. (1996). Who decides?: The effects of language brokering on home-school communication. *The Journal of Educational Issues of Language Minority Students*, 16, 225-223.
- Weisskirch, R.S. (2005). The relationship of language brokering to ethnic identity for Latino early adolescents. *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences*, 27, 286-289.
- Weisskirch, R. S., Zamboanga, B. L., Bersamin, M., Kim, S. Y., Schwartz, S. J., Umaña-Taylor, A. J. (2011). Cultural influences for college student language brokers. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, 17, 43-51.

Wu, N. H., & Kim, S. Y. (2009). Chinese American adolescents' perceptions of the language brokering experience as a sense of burden and sense of efficacy. *Journal Youth Adolescence*, 38, 703-718.

Appendix A

Interview Protocol**1) Background:**

- a) Tell me about yourself, your background and your family.
- b) Probe for:
 - i) Family's migration
 - ii) Family members and extended family
 - (a) Brother or sisters?
 - iii) School (if applicable), job.
 - iv) Live at home? Why or why not?

2) Language Brokering

- a) Tell me about your experiences as a language broker, that is, interpreting and translating for your family and community members.
- b) Probe for:
 - i) When did it begin?
 - ii) How often did you do it?
 - iii) Where did you broker?
 - iv) What did you broker?
 - v) For whom did you broker?
 - vi) Are there any experiences that stand out when you think about brokering?
 - vii) Are there any recent experiences?

Change over time:

3) Feelings:

- i) In general how do you feel about language brokering?
- ii) Probe for:
 - (a) Change:
 - (b) How did you feel or do you feel when you broker?
 - (c) How did you feel as a child and adolescent?
 - (d) How do you feel now?

4) Practice:

- a) So you brokered as a child, adolescent, and now as a young adult. How do you think your language brokering has changed as you've grown up?
- b) Probe for:
 - i) When did you notice this change?
 - (a) In high school? College (if applicable)? After high school?
 - ii) Why do you think it has changed?
 - iii) Has what, where, and for whom you brokered changed?
 - iv) How have the expectations of you changed?
 - v) Has the way you approach the work or handled tasks changed?

5) Family Dynamics:

- i) In general who is the primary language broker in your family or is there only one?
- ii) Did your siblings ever help you when brokering as a child/adolescent?
- iii) Has who in the family brokered changed? Why or Why not?
- iv) Have the things you broker for your parents changed?

6) Wrap Up

- a) Let me look at my notes and see if I've covered all that I wanted to talk about today.
- b) Is there anything else you'd like to tell me?