

# Language Brokering Among Mexican-Immigrant Families in the Midwest: A Multiple Case Study

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## Abstract

Language brokering (LB) is the act of translating and interpreting within immigrant families by children and adolescents for their parents, other family members, and other adults. Although LB is a common phenomenon among immigrant families in the United States, research regarding its impact on immigrant families mainly focuses on the experiences of language brokers only and not on their parents or immediate families. Thus, the purpose of this in-depth multiple qualitative case study was to understand how the demands of LB affected relationships within Mexican immigrant families living in the Midwestern United States. Six two-parent Mexican immigrant families with an identified child language broker participated in this study. Parents and child brokers were interviewed separately and participated in an LB simulation. The data were analyzed case by case through thematic analysis followed by cross-case analysis. Four themes emerged as pertinent across all cases and included family relationships, feelings about brokering, language brokering situations, and challenges of language brokering.

## Keywords

language brokering, immigrant families, qualitative research, Latinos

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Immigrants come to this country for economic, familial, and political reasons (Santiago-Rivera, Arredondo, & Gallardo-Cooper, 2002; Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2001; Suarez-Orozco, Suarez-Orozco, & Tordova, 2008; Yakushko, Backhaus, Watson, Ngaruiya, & Gonzalez, 2008; Yakushko & Chronister, 2005). Every year 10 million immigrants immigrate to this country, with the larger numbers representing Latin American countries (Hoefler, Rytina, & Baker, 2010). Latinos are the largest (15.4% of the U.S. population) and youngest (ages 18 to 34) ethnic group living in the United States (Pew Hispanic Center, 2008; Rumbaut & Komaie, 2010). In the past 10 years, certain areas in the United States have experienced demographic changes due to shifting immigration patterns. The Midwest in particular is experiencing higher proportions of Latino newcomers; Midwestern and Southeastern regions saw an increase from 120% to 416% of Latinos migrating to these areas (Kandel & Cromartie, 2004). For example, Nebraska experienced an almost 1,000% increase in the number of immigrants (Bodvarsson & Van den Berg, 2003).

These recent demographic shifts demonstrate the importance of studying Latinos across the United States and in predominantly White communities such as the Midwest. More specifically, Latino immigrant families living in Midwestern states face challenges with accessing medical services, interpreting services, employment opportunities, and higher education, as well as struggle with racism, discrimination, and health disparities as they strive to adapt in communities that have experienced little to no ethnic, racial, or cultural diversity in the past (Bodvarsson & Van den Berg, 2003). Immigrant families living in Midwestern communities find limited resources available in their native language, which presents unique challenges for these newcomers compared to those who may live in established, ethnic enclaves found in areas with a tradition of Latino immigration (Dalla, Villarruel, Cramer, & Gonzalez-Kruger, 2004). Under this resource-limited context, children from immigrant families who become acquainted with the English language often serve as translators and interpreters for their nonfluent parents and other family members. Thus, the purpose of this qualitative study was to explore language brokering (LB) among Mexican immigrant families living in a predominantly White Midwestern state.

Scholars define LB as the act of interpreting (i.e., verbal communication) and translating (i.e., written content) within immigrant families by children, adolescents, and adult children for their parents, other family members, and other adults (McQuillan & Tse, 1995). Research on LB is fairly recent and growing. Despite this common practice in immigrant families, only in the mid-1990s did studies about language brokers and/or brokering (e.g.,

McQuillan & Tse, 1995; Tse, 1995a, 1996a) appear in the social and behavioral sciences literature. Early studies investigated the prevalence of LB among children of immigrant families, especially Latinos (e.g., DeMent & Buriel, 1999; Tse, 1995a; Valenzuela, 1999). This line of empirical research provided descriptive information about this group of children and introduced instruments to measure this construct (e.g., Buriel, Perez, DeMent, Chavez, & Moran, 1998; Tse, 1996a). For example, these studies found that language brokers begin translating and interpreting soon after they arrive in the United States, as early as the age of 8 (Dement & Buriel, 1999; Valdes, Chavez, & Angelelli, 2003). Child brokers tend to be female and the oldest child regardless of gender (Buriel et al., 1998; Chao, 2002, 2006; Hall & Robinson, 1999; Valdes et al., 2003; Valenzuela, 1999; Weisskirch, 2005). They interact with professionals, such as lawyers, teachers, medical doctors, and other individuals with significant power and authority. In doing so, child brokers may develop higher cognitive and linguistic abilities that may improve their performance in standardized tests (Doner, Orellana, & Li-Grining, 2007; Halgunseth, 2003; Orellana, Doner, & Pulido, 2003; Puig, 2002; Schaafsma, Raynor, & den Berg, 2003) and are often classified as gifted students (Valdes, 2003). This body of scholarship mainly focuses on the experiences of child brokers living in Latino populated cities, such as in California and Texas, and also neglects the experience of their parents. Recent research on LB addresses psychosocial variables. For instance, studies reported that language brokers feel proud about helping the family (Hall & Sham, 1998) and see LB as another role they play in the family (Doner, Orellana, & Jimenez, 2008). Research indicates that LB can enhance the parent-child relationship. In these instances, LB allows children to understand the challenges of their parents, causing them to have a greater appreciation and level of respect for their parents (Hall & Sham, 1998). At the same time, other research suggests child brokers may also feel burdened by the demands of LB (e.g., miss school to interpret for parents or parentified), which may trigger parent-child conflict (Jones & Trickett, 2005; Mercado, 2003; Oznobishin & Kurman, 2009; Umaña-Taylor, 2003; Weisskirch, 2006). Gender differences also exist, with female brokers experiencing more of a burden compared to male brokers (Love & Buriel, 2007; Villanueva & Buriel, 2010). More recently, studies have explored what variables may mediate the relationship between LB and psychological distress (e.g., Buriel, Love, & DeMent, 2006; Martinez, McClure, & Eddy, 2009; Sy, 2006). For example, a study with Chinese language broker adolescents found that a positive Chinese orientation and positive family mediators, such as familial obligation and quality of the parent-child relationship, led to positive perceptions of brokering experiences (Wu & Kim, 2009).

LB scholars also investigate how LB affects family power dynamics. Studies have identified that LB gives a child the power to make decisions that will impact his or her parents and family, and they may feel superior to their parents because they get to control what is communicated (e.g., DeMent & Buriel, 1999; Orellana et al., 2003; Puig, 2002). For example, language brokers may choose not to interpret negative information about themselves, information they feel would dishonor (e.g., low grades) their families (DeMent & Buriel, 1999), or information that could potentially embarrass or humiliate them (Valdes et al., 2003). One can only speculate that child brokers may even not interpret critical information to protect their family, such as medical diagnostic information interpreted for a medical doctor and his or her parent(s).

Despite early progress in LB research, questions remain as to how LB not only affects those who serve as interpreters and translators, but also their parents and more importantly the dynamics of the immigrant family. Comprehending the nature of these dynamics can assist researchers and practitioners to better support immigrant children and their families during their cultural adaptation to the United States. Other issues with LB research include measurement difficulties, lack of theory, sample restrictions, limitations related to research sites, and inconsistency in defining variables of interest (Morales & Hanson, 2005). Finally, the scholarship urgently calls for studies that explore how LB operates in predominantly White communities where immigrant families are more likely to use their children as interpreters and translators and are more prone to discrimination and prejudice. In these communities, parents lack other cultural support systems usually found in ethnic enclaves to help make sense of language and cultural barriers they encounter in their environment.

### *Ecological Theoretical Model*

Ecological systems are useful in conceptualizing the complex and multiple contexts in which immigrant families experience their lives. This study was guided by Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological model. According to this model, families live within a larger ecological or environmental system, which often impose challenges as well as opportunities that families and individuals must respond to given available resources.

Bronfenbrenner ecological model is comprised of four major systems, which when applied to the study of Mexican-immigrant families can illuminate deeper dimensions of how these families experience and negotiate LB. First, the microsystem is the immediate environment of the individual, which

includes the family members, neighborhoods, and school. Analysis of the microsystem for this study considers the family structure, family conditions of immigration, acculturation, migration stressors, social support in home and host environments, and racial as well as the ethnic composition of home and host environment. Second, the mesosystem is defined by the quality of interpersonal relationships an individual has with those in the microsystem and encompasses relationships within immigrant families and with family members in different contexts, such as how language brokers negotiate translation demands within both family settings and in the host community. The exosystem is characterized by the environment and processes that affect the individual's immediate and basic needs that he or she cannot directly control. For immigrant families, this could include access to employment, available transportation, medical benefits, and immigration laws that may curtail resources and benefits (e.g., Arizona SB 1070). Finally, the macrosystem accounts for the overarching values that define societies and cultures, such as societal attitudes toward immigrant groups (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Johnson, 2007; Yakushko & Chronister, 2005).

A unique quality of Bronfenbrenner's approach to ecological systems is its attention to bidirectionality, which seeks to understand the interactions between the environment and the individual (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Chronister, McWhirther, & Kerewsky, 2004). According to Yakushko and Chronister (2005), "bidirectionality represents the influence that each ecological context exerts on the individual's development as well as the individual's power to effect change on the ecological context" (p. 293). For example, while child immigrant language brokers often experience stress as a result of parental demands for translation and interpretation, the very act of language brokering can enable them to gain benefits, such as recognition and greater trust, in relationships with their parents (Hall & Sham, 1998) or stronger influence over family affairs (DeMent & Buriel, 1999; Orellana et al., 2003; Puig, 2002). The bidirectionality aspects of Bronfenbrenner's ecological approach encourage researchers to conduct deeper and more nuanced analyses. In addition to bidirectionality, this ecological model considers the significance of multiple identities as immigrant brokers engage in different brokering situations and transverse different contexts. The ecological model finally acknowledges multiple sociocultural influences on individuals, such as societal attitudes concerning immigration and institutional policies—all of which may impact immigrant families (Cook, Heppner, & O'Brien, 2002). These aspects of Bronfenbrenner's model informed our analysis of the data in this study, whereby we sought to uncover ways in which participants negotiated their varying contexts.

This current study contributes to the literature by (a) examining the experiences of immigrant parents who rely on their children's brokering skills to communicate with English-speaking individuals and (b) examining the experiences of language brokers living in a community with limited resources and supports in their native language (e.g., the Midwest). In this study, the Mexican-immigrant family becomes a significant unit for analysis. We applied Bronfenbrenner's ecological model as a theoretical lens to gain deeper insights from the data about the role of context on the family dynamics of immigrant families in this study. In analyzing the data, we centered mostly on the interactions occurring within the microsystem, mesosystem, and exosystem of child language brokers and their families. However, our analysis is sensitive to the lack of brokering resources and other supports from an ethnic enclave for parents in Midwestern communities that may force families to rely heavily on their brokers. The limitations exist within the exosystem and macrosystem that engulf the daily experiences of our participants. To our knowledge, there are no other studies that have explored LB under these circumstances. Finally, to ensure that the voices of Mexican immigrant families are heard, we used multiple sources of data.

## **Method**

### *Multiple Case Study Approach*

Case studies are "an exploration of a 'bounded system' of a case or multiple cases over time through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information rich in context" (Creswell, 1998, p. 61). Multiple case study designs seek to understand a phenomenon across different settings and individuals. The results of a multiple case study entail using cross-case analyses, where researchers identify themes that are salient across a variety of the cases. A cross-case analysis is relatively shorter than a case-by-case analysis as the researcher summarizes the findings from the cases (Stake, 2006). The multiple case study tradition of inquiry can offer multiple perspectives from within the same family to allow researchers a more in-depth picture of the family dynamics related to LB. Additionally, the context of the Midwest would provide additional information about how LB may be manifested in Mexican immigrant families.

### *Participants*

This study used the maximum variation sampling strategy, where "the researcher maximizes differences at the beginning of the study, to increase

the likelihood that the findings will reflect differences or different perspectives” (Creswell, 2007, p. 126). To achieve maximum variation in this study, six two-parent families were selected based on two dimensions: gender and educational level of the language broker. The families included both parents and a child who was identified by the parents as the primary translator and interpreter within the family. Thus, three families were chosen where a language broker was a boy of a different education level: elementary school, middle school, and high school, respectively. Similarly, three other families were chosen where the identified brokers were girls from the aforementioned three education levels. All parents and language brokers were born in Mexico (see Table 1 for more descriptions of the families).

The families were recruited with the assistance of a gatekeeper. In research with underserved groups, gatekeepers can aid the researcher in gaining access and building trust with the participant community involved in a study (Hatch, 2002). The gatekeeper was a Mexican-immigrant middle-aged man, a respected and trusted community leader among Latino immigrants who worked with Spanish-speaking-only immigrant families through the school district where the data for this study were collected. The first author established a relationship with the gatekeeper long before the study was conducted. This long and ongoing relationship facilitated the willingness for the gatekeeper to assist with this study.

### *Data Collection*

*Semistructured interviews.* Two semistructured interview protocols were developed based on a review of the LB literature and Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) ecological theoretical model. The parent protocol asked parents about their experiences with having a child who interprets and translates for them. It consisted of nine questions with a number of probes and follow-up questions (see appendix). Sample questions included: “How do you feel when your child translates or interprets for you?” “What is your relationship like with your son or daughter who is the interpreter and translator in your family?”

The child and adolescent protocol also consisted of nine questions with probes and follow-up questions and asked about the language broker’s experiences with and feelings about translating and interpreting (see appendix). Sample questions included: “How do you feel when you translate and/or interpret for your mom and dad?” “Tell me about a time when you had difficulty translating or interpreting for your parents.”

Informed consent forms, parental informed consent forms, and youth assents were provided in English and Spanish to the participants in

**Table 1.** Characteristics of the Six Mexican Immigrant Families

Family <sup>a</sup>	Father <sup>b</sup>	Mother <sup>c</sup>	Language Broker <sup>d</sup>
Rosales (6 children)	Age 46 Cook (2 restaurants) College education 8 years in U.S.	Age 44 Server Middle school education 8 years in U.S.	Age 11 5th child Born in Mexico Male 8 years in U.S.
Madera (4 children)	Age 42 Construction worker Elementary education 20 years in U.S.	Age 40 Homemaker Elementary education 10 years in U.S.	Age 10 4th child Born in Mexico Female 10 years in U.S.
Jasso (4 children)	Age 50 Construction worker Elementary education 20 years in U.S.	Age 40 Hotel maintenance Elementary education 5 years in U.S.	Age 12 4th child Born in Mexico Male 5 years in U.S.
Rodríguez (2 children)	Age 32 Construction worker High school education 2 years in U.S.	Age 27 Homemaker High school education 2 years in U.S.	Age 12 1st child Born in Mexico Female 2 years in U.S.
Santos (4 children)	Age 44 Factory worker Elementary education 10 years in U.S.	Age 40 Janitor Elementary education 5 years in U.S.	Age 16 1st child Born in Mexico Male 5 years in U.S.
Castañeda (4 children)	Age 50 Unemployed Elementary education 10 years in U.S.	Age 42 Hotel maintenance Elementary education 10 years in U.S.	Age 15 3rd child Born in Mexico Female 10 years in U.S.

a. These are the pseudonyms families used. The number of children in family is included in parentheses.

b. Father characteristics included age, occupation, education level, and how long he has lived in the United States.

c. Mother characteristics included age, occupation, education level, and how long she has lived in the United States.

d. Language broker characteristics included age birth order, place of birth, gender, and years in the United States.



accordance with IRB guidelines from the university by which this study was approved. No compensation was provided for the families who participated in this study. The audio-recorded interviews were conducted by the first author, a Mexican-immigrant, bilingual, and bicultural man, in the language (i.e., Spanish or English) of each participant's choice. All parents preferred to have their interviews in Spanish and only one of the language brokers opted to have hers in English. The language brokers and their parents were interviewed separately in the family's dining or living room with just the interviewee to retain privacy. Interviews lasted 90 to 120 minutes with the parents and 45 to 60 minutes with the language brokers.

*Language brokering simulation.* In this simulation, the parents, language broker, and the first author were present. Parents were asked to first identify a document in English (e.g., report card), and their child broker then translated it to the parents while the first author took notes. At the end, parents, child, and interviewer discussed the experience. The process lasted 20 to 25 minutes. The purpose of this simulation was to gain more information about the interpretation/translation process. Although this was a simulation and not a naturally occurring brokering situation, the process sparked a deeper discussion with participants about past experiences where parents asked their children to translate documents as well as the perspectives of the child.

In addition, the documents that the language brokers translated for their parents during the LB simulation were collected to demonstrate the variety of documents language brokers translate as well as the complexity and level of difficulty of these documents. These included three language brokers' report cards, a letter from school, a story from a book, and a letter from a dental office explaining a surgical procedure. For the purposes of data analysis, the documents were copied and identifiable information was removed. The original documents were returned to each family.

### *Data Analysis*

Before the data were analyzed, the first author transcribed all interviews, observations from the simulation, and documents. Transcriptions were done in the language in which the interview was conducted, while the other sources of data (i.e., documents) were in English. The data were not coded sentence by sentence or paragraph by paragraph, but coded for meaning and description. Thus, codes contained one, two, or more sentences (Creswell, 1998, 2007). The qualitative software Atlas.ti 4.52 program was used for data management and analysis. This study followed the multiple case study design where the data are analyzed case by case through thematic analysis

and later by cross-case analysis (Creswell, 2007; Stake, 2006). Thus, interviews and observed LB simulations were analyzed for each case. Following the case-by-case analysis, identified themes were used to conduct the cross-case analysis. Themes salient across cases were acknowledged.

For the thematic analysis, the authors followed Braun and Clarke's (2006) step-by-step guidelines: (a) familiarizing yourself with your data, (b) generating initial codes, (c) the researcher read throughout each transcript to immerse in the data, (d) reviewing themes, (e) defining and naming themes, and (f) producing the report. For this study, we prioritized merging the findings across the cases to make generalizations about and across the cases. In this procedure, the themes that emerged from each case are compared to identify any consistencies or patterns. Those themes that were salient across the six cases became part of the cross-case analyses. All the families or cases in this study had about five themes. Of those 30 themes, 4 major themes were identified from the cross-case analyses. Another unique quality of cross-case analysis is that it allows for some generalization across the cases examined in the study (Stake, 2006).

### *Validation Strategies*

Credibility and rigor for this study were achieved using four validation strategies: (a) triangulation where the interviews and LB simulation were compared for consistency of findings, (b) researcher reflexivity was achieved by the first author keeping a record of his biases throughout the study, (c) thick rich description where a detailed description of the cases and different participants' voices are provided, and (d) peer debriefing, which is an external check of the research process (Creswell & Miller, 2000).

The data were triangulated with the interviews and LB simulation. For example, when themes were developed based on interviews such as parental concerns for accuracy, the data from the LB simulation in which parents frequently remind language brokers to translate correctly verified this finding. The first author also maintained a journal where biases, assumptions, and the processes of research were recorded throughout the study to ensure researcher reflexivity. The journal allowed the first author to go back and gain more information (i.e., family dynamics) when there were questions about the data (e.g., a mother speaking less compared to the husband). According to Morrow and Smith (2000), the use of a reflective journal adds rigor to qualitative inquiry, as the investigator is able to record his or her reactions, assumptions, expectations, and biases about the research process. Presenting the participants' voices under each theme and providing detailed description about the

six families achieved thick rich description. Finally, two peer debriefers coded the data along with the first author. The two individuals were a bilingual Latina graduate student and a White male graduate student fluent in Spanish. Both of these individuals were Counseling Psychology graduate students. After the data for each case were analyzed, the first author and peer debriefers discussed codes and identified themes. When there was disagreement, members had a dialogue until consensus was reached.

Immigration raids took place at the time data were collected for this study. Member checking (i.e., participants are solicited about the credibility of findings) would have provided stronger support to the findings. Unfortunately, none of the families who participated in the study agreed to engage in member checking and were hesitant to know the findings of the study, even after the first author explained that their perspectives on the findings would help the study.

## **Findings**

The cross-case analysis revealed four themes that were salient across the six cases. The themes included: family relationships, feelings about language brokering, language brokering situations, and challenges of language brokering. Each theme is described as experienced by the families and examples are given to provide explanation and context. Some quotes are presented in Spanish followed by an English translation to allow the individual's voice to be heard in his or her native language (Morales & Green, 2007), and cultural nuances and folk sayings are often difficult to translate (Ojeda, Flores, Rosales, & Morales, 2009). Quotes were not edited for grammar, as this would prevent the participants' true voices from being heard.

### ***Family Relationships***

Families discussed how LB plays a role in their relationships with each other. As expected, parents varied in their perceptions: some of them described their relationship with their children as equal and as not having preferences toward brokers. Parents also described their relationship with their child brokers as intimate, trusting, and approachable. Most of them indicated having good communication with their child brokers. For example, a mother of a high school female language broker described her relationship with her daughter as that of "two sisters." Thus, LB can facilitate the development of a strong parent-child relationship. One parent's quote exemplifies these benefits:

Con él [hijo que traduce] platico más, convivo más. Siempre a todas horas esta conmigo ... es más abierto, más accesible. Él esta más apegado a nosotros y siempre anda con nosotros.

With him [language broker], I talk more; I spend more time with him. He is always with me at all hours ... he is more open, more accessible. He is closer to us and he is always with us.

For parents, language brokers were available when they needed them to help them translate or interpret, in contrast to paid interpreters or other adult help. This connectedness resulted in stronger family bonds.

However, parents experienced tensions, especially with brokers who were adolescents. This dynamic was evident in some of the LB simulations; parents kept reminding their language brokers to not make mistakes and to pay attention to the document they were translating. In one session, a father told his daughter to pay attention to the document when she struggled to translate certain words. In response, the child broker expressed frustration, claiming that she was paying attention and did not know the Spanish translation for the word. Thus, tension over accuracy arose in the LB simulation. Considering the developmental stage of the brokers, disagreements between parents and children are expected. For example, the father of a middle school female language broker stated how their relationship is different compared to that with his son:

A veces estamos bien y en veces de mal. A veces no se le puede ni hablar a ella [adolescente en secundaria], a veces hasta ella no me habla o sea la relación entre ella y yo siempre a sido así. ¿Cómo se dice? A veces le puedo pedir bien las cosas o se las pido de mala manera ... en ocasiones me pongo mas estricto con ella que con el niño.

Sometimes, we are fine and sometimes not. There are times you cannot even talk to her [middle school female language broker] and sometimes she doesn't even talk to me. The relationship between her and me has always been like that. How can I say it? Sometimes, I can ask her to do things in a good way or I ask her in a bad way ... on occasions I am more strict with her than with the boy.

Here, the father described the strains in his relationship with his child broker. As the child distances herself from parents, the father felt compelled to use his power to force her to comply. Not having positive LB experiences or

feeling overburdened by LB caused the broker to rebel against her father, increasing the tension between them.

Language brokers varied in their perceptions of their family relationships. A number of them echoed having a close relationship with parents and feeling comfortable about discussing any topic with their parents without fear of being judged. A number of them indicated that they enjoyed doing activities with their parents, typically their mothers, outside brokering, such as watching movies, playing board games, and shopping. For example, the mother of a male middle school language broker mentioned that they would watch movies together, and he would translate for her. Others described their relationship with their parents as different from those they could observe between their parents and their siblings. In the words of one female high school broker:

It's like I know more than my brothers and sisters. So my relationship with my parents is stronger than my siblings.

For the adolescent here, brokering allowed her to be more attuned to the daily life stressors of her family. As a result, her relationship with her parents developed a stronger bond and closeness than that of her other siblings.

Overall, family relationships were marked by moments of closeness as well as with tension. LB experiences often facilitated stronger family bonds between parents and child brokers. Within the microsystem, positive family relationships emerged as parents communicated appreciation for their broker's assistance in navigating the demands of their environment. As a result, child brokers often felt a sense of self-worth. In addition, intimacy between parents and children increased as brokers learned more about their familial situations and as parents grew in their trust of their children. These positive outcomes occur when both parent and child work together to meet the needs of the family.

However, family conflict arises when child brokers' assistance for the family does not meet the expectations of the parents. Within the exosystem, where parents negotiate various contexts to meet the immediate basic needs of the family, parents can place significant burden on their children to translate and interpret accurately. This burden can cause children to be frustrated and angry toward their parents. While parents concern themselves with satisfying immediate needs for the family, children struggle with the constant demands to translate and interpret, straining the parent-child relationship. Thus, tensions in the family relationships (microsystems) occur when parents and children react to the expectations and the demands of navigating the exosystem. These tensions exist within a larger macrosystem, whereby limited

resources for Latino immigrants impose responsibility of brokers in the family to meet basic needs.

### *Feelings About Language Brokering*

Pride, support, happiness, and confidence were illustrations of positive expressions of parents when their children translated and interpreted for them. For example, a mother of a high school female language broker shared:

[Yo me siento] Muy orgullosa. Se siente como un pavo real. Se siente muy grande. Se siente ... ¿Cómo le dijera? ... Muy importante. Yo pienso que es una chica importante porque sabe traducir.

[I feel] Very proud. She feels like a peacock. She feels very big. She feels ... how can I tell you? Very important. I think she is an important young girl because she knows how to translate.

The parent here connected LB with her child's positive self-esteem and confidence. The mother also vocalized her sense of pride in having a daughter who was unique due to her interpreting and translating skills.

The mother of a male middle school language broker stated that she would be silenced if her son did not translate or interpret for her:

Pues para mi es una gran ayuda porque si el [adolescente en secundaria] no estuviera conmigo yo me sentiría muda seria muda en este país.

Well for me it's a great help because if he [adolescent in middle school] wasn't here, I would feel silenced, I will be silenced in this country.

The lack of resources for immigrant parents in their native language silences their voice, as noted by this mother. Through the child's brokering, the mother was able to see and communicate with the English-speaking world. Thus, in limited-resource areas, such as the Midwest, child brokers are often the bridge immigrant parents have to interact with their host communities.

Some parents expressed feeling useless, embarrassed, impotent, and ashamed. The feelings were often mentioned in the context of parents' ambivalence or apprehension regarding their children serving as translators and interpreters. A mother of a female middle school language broker said:

[Yo me siento] Un poco bochornosa. Me siento impotente porque no sé el idioma.

[I feel] A little embarrassed. I feel impotent because I don't know the language.

Here, the parent struggled with the demands of cultural adaptation and language skills, which can affect the roles that she plays in her family. For example, her ability to communicate with teachers about her children's performance (a typical parental role) was taken away by her inability to speak English. Not knowing the language restricted her access to meso- and exosystems and caused feelings of impotence and powerlessness.

Child brokers also reported a variety of emotional reactions to LB. Some expressed feeling happy, proud, and confident, especially when they perceived their help as beneficial to their parents. Conversely, others felt nervous, obligated, frustrated, and angry as they played their roles of interpreters and translators for their parents. For example, according to a female high school language broker:

Well, sometimes it [interpreting] does kind of get on my nerves. I get a little frustrated because I am tired of going back and forth between languages. There are times that I kind of feel that there is anger inside because sometimes people don't do anything to help other people interpret. Sometimes, I feel sad and it's just like a bunch of feelings inside me.

The constant code switching involved in LB may cause the child to feel conflicted about what is happening internally and externally, as explained by the female high school language broker. The process of LB may leave children feeling frustrated, sad, angry, or other negative emotional states.

Most parents believed that LB positively influenced their children's emotional and psychological development. They felt that these experiences enhanced child brokers' self-esteem and confidence in translating and interpreting. Furthermore, parents saw brokers as a bridge to the English-speaking world. Within the microsystem, Latino immigrant parents exhibited pride for their children's translating and interpreting skills, which fostered brokers' confidence. In the exosystem, child brokers served as bridges to their parents and mainstream U.S. society.

Even though Latino immigrant parents acknowledged the positive aspects of brokering for their children, they also voiced concerns. Parents worried about their inability to speak English and being unable to perform their perceived roles in the family, which created tensions in microsystem relationships. Likewise, when interpreting and translating in the mesosystem, children

experienced frustration and an emotional burden due to their parents' lack of communication skills with English speakers, also adding to tension in the family. As children frequently code-switched between two languages to help parents meet basic needs, they shared in their parents' responsibility to provide for the family. Both positive and negative influences of LB on Latino immigrant parents and their brokers exist in relation to the larger society, or macrosystem, where families face limited resources in their language.

### *Language Brokering Situations*

Child brokers who participated in this study interpreted frequently, most often as the result of being asked by their parents. They brokered in supermarkets, department stores, doctors' and dentists' offices, schools, hospitals, banks, car junkyards, and while watching television shows. A middle school male child broker was his parents' interpreter when they were looking for a home. He would go with his parents to seminars on first-time house buyers, meetings with the realtor, and when they signed papers to buy their first home. Here is an example described by a father of an elementary school male language broker who asked his son to interpret when they were involved in a serious car accident:

Pues, yo en ese momento yo no sabia nada que hacer, especialmente por los nervios. Entonces lo único que le [hijo que traduce] dije, "dile al señor que sí le pegue pero él fue el culpable." Entonces, él [hijo que traduce] se lo dijo al policía. Entonces el policía tomo nota de lo que había pasado. Él dijo que iba a estudiar el caso y que iba a decir quién tuvo la culpa.

Well, at that moment I did not know what to do, especially because of I was nervous. So the only thing I told him [child broker], "tell the man that I did hit him but that it was his fault." Then, he [child broker] told the police officer. Then the police officer took note of what had happened. He said he was going study the case and would decide who was guilty.

Not knowing English as well as the lack of resources in Spanish caused this parent to rely on his child broker in a stressful situation, such as a car accident. This situation demanded negotiation at a developmental level beyond the typical expectations of a child. When children take on adult roles, possible tension may occur in the ways in which children define themselves and their relationship with their parents.



For the LB simulation, families provided a variety of documents that varied in level of complexity, which included three report cards, a letter from school, a story from a book, and a letter from a dental office explaining a surgical procedure. Other documents child brokers had translated were letters from school, bank statements, car insurance statements, letters from medical professionals, and immigration documents. A male middle school language broker stated that he translates anything that is “delivered in the mailbox at home.” The father of a female high school language broker described how she translates his prescriptions and their potential side effects as well as interprets in visits with the heart specialist:

Ella [hija que traduce] me traduce la medicina que tomo, cuantas veces me las tomo y que síntomas puedo sentir. Los efectos que me hacen o cómo me siento yo del corazón. Si me siento mareado o me siento cansado, cosas de esas que me pregunta el doctor cuándo tengo cita, ella me ayuda.

She [child broker] interprets for me the medications that I take, how often I have to take them, and what kind of symptoms I could feel. The side effects or how my heart feels. If I feel dizzy or tired, questions that the doctor asks me when I have an appointment with him, she helps me.

In this example, it is clear the advanced vocabulary that brokers were expected to be familiar with in assisting parents in complex situations. This expectation imposed tremendous responsibility on brokers once they start translating and interpreting for their non-English-speaking parents. With these added stressors, children LBs often assume roles subscribed to adults that may not be appropriate given their age.

In this study, parents expected their child brokers to assist them in adult situations (e.g., interpret with a police officer after a car accident). Brokers often felt pressure to interpret and translate accurately from parents and also English-only speakers in the mesosystem. As a result, brokers take on greater responsibility for the outcomes of their parents' communication, increasing the intensity of the brokering situation even when these experiences may not be age appropriate for children. Due to the intensity of these circumstances and demands from parents, child brokers are susceptible to feel pressured and responsible to have a positive outcome. A disruption in the exosystem is possible as child brokers engage in conditions that are not appropriate and are beyond their developmental level. In the macrosystem, Midwestern communities with limited resources for Spanish-speakers and negative views on

immigration increase brokers' encounters with stressful situations and their feelings of responsibility.

### *Challenges of Language Brokering*

Parents and brokers emphasized their challenges with LB. Fathers and mothers shared how their child brokers continued to have difficulty with the process of interpreting and translating even though several child participants had already lived in the United States between 5 and 10 years. Some parents discussed how verbal and nonverbal cues informed them when their child broker was experiencing difficulties interpreting. Others said how their child brokers had to miss school because they needed them to interpret. A parent of a female middle school student expressed that his child broker was obligated to play this role so the family did not need to look for an interpreter:

Traducirnos es una responsabilidad que ella [adolescente en secundaria], que traducirnos es una responsabilidad muy grande para ella ... pues por ejemplo si ella me traduce a uno un documento de gobierno, de alguna aseguranza del carro y al firmar un papel no lo estoy firmando yo, si no lo esta firmando mi hija y si lo esta haciendo ella.

Translating for us is her [adolescent in middle school] responsibility, a very big one ... well for example if she is translating me a document from the government, or from the car insurance company and at the time of signing it, I am not the one sign it, it is my daughter.

Here, the father acknowledged the responsibilities his adolescent daughter must accept because of her LB skills. In this example, the daughter carried the burden for the successful outcome of the business or legal transaction of her parents. Even though the father recognized the demands he placed on his daughter in these situations, he imposed these tasks on her in order to provide for their family in a society with limited language resources for Latino immigrant parents.

Most parents faced challenges with trying to learn English. They discussed how difficult it was for them as adults to learn the language despite their investment in English classes or audiovisual programs to aid them in language acquisition. Other parents were discouraged by the fact that they worked such heavy work shifts that they had no time to study. A mother of a male middle school language broker explained how her children tried to teach her English. During the LB simulation, the child broker reminded his

mother of words they have practiced on a previous document that he translated and asked her what the words meant in Spanish:

Si hay veces que quieren enseñarme [hijos] inglés pero no puedo. Yo estoy mas ocupada en mis quehaceres de la casa y del trabajo. No tengo tiempo para en enfocarme en aprender inglés. No es que sea difícil sino es que no le pongo la atención necesaria.

There are times that they [children] want to teach me English, but I cannot. I am busier with the chores at home and work. I don't have time to focus on learning English. It's not that it's difficult, but rather that I just don't give it the necessary attention.

Here, the mother prioritized the upkeep of her home and her work over learning to speak English. The mother defined her role as having to "keep their clothes clean, maintain the house in order, and do well at my job and bring money home." Like other Latino parents, she saw her role as a provider both in and outside the home (Falicov, 1998). Although her children tried to help her learn English, she could still function in her role with her child's assistance. However, limited time prevented her from gaining greater facility with English, which would have allowed her more independence in negotiating the mesosystem surrounding the family.

Another challenge experienced by parents involved how fathers of teenagers felt discomfort with having their child brokers translate or interpret. Fathers believed that allowing their children to serve as language brokers influenced them to feel better than their parents; they also distrusted their children to interpret correctly. Here is an example of a father of a high school male language broker:

Yo me siento mal que un niño, en el caso de mi señora ... A mí no me gusta que un niño le diga a mi señora lo que está diciendo X persona.

I feel bad that a child, in the case of my wife . . . I don't like that a child is telling my wife what X person is saying.

The father here described his disagreement with LB due to role expectations. In a subtle way, the father voiced the inappropriateness of having a child be involved in adult situations. Also, culturally fathers are expected to be providers for their family. Not having access to language, fathers may be unable to take their roles as providers in LB situations.

Language brokers also shared that they had difficulties with interpreting and translating because of their limited language skills. To ease their frustrations or the feeling of being “stuck” when brokering, these children practiced various coping strategies. For example, a middle school female language broker admitted that when she did not understand, she pretended to not be paying attention. Conversely, a high school female language broker stated that she often wrestled with understanding the medical terminology and therefore asked doctors and/or nurses to clarify some of the words that she could not understand. Others carried a Spanish-English dictionary with them when they knew that they were going to interpret. Among the most talked about challenges by brokers was how tiring it was to continuously be switching between languages. Another significant challenge mentioned was role reversals. A high school female language broker, for example, talked about how at times she felt like the parent in her family because she had to take care of her parents and siblings:

I have to go with my dad to the doctor, I have to take the kids to school, and I have to be with them in conferences. I had to go to school with my little sister. It is kind of hard because you are like being a parent. You don't have a childhood anymore, no more teenage years. You have to be more like a parent.

The many roles and expectations associated with LB are similar to those of a caregiver or parent, as expressed by this high school female student. These burdens carry a number of stressors that are not developmentally appropriate for an adolescent in high school. The potential for changes in family dynamics such as role-reversals is likely in situations where children are given this type of responsibility (Minuchin, 1974; Pardeck, 1989).

Challenges of LB were more salient in several particular situations. Two female brokers in middle and high school voiced their obstacles as translators and interpreters in their families. Both of them reported feeling pressured to interpret even in situations where the language was complicated, for example, when talking to the doctor or a salesperson. They also mentioned that they are fully responsible for the translation and interpretation in their families because their siblings were either too young or refused to perform such tasks. According to a middle school female language broker:

Pues hay veces que yo no quiero interpretarles y no les pongo mucha atención [padres] porque no me gusta traducir.

Well, there are times when I don't want to interpret for them and I don't pay that much attention to them [parents] because I do not like to translate.

In this quote, the adolescent asserted her autonomy, challenging her parents' expectations to broker. The adolescent recognized her dislike of brokering for her parents causing tension in the parent-child relationship. The conflict was counterproductive as parents depended heavily on their daughter to broker. When children engage in LB, they assist parents in negotiating the larger demands found in host communities. Children's advanced engagements in these microsystems produce added tensions on family dynamics.

In areas that lack resources for Mexican immigrant communities, families often rely on child brokers to translate and interpret information important to the survival of the family. While benefits such as stronger parent-child relationships can be associated with LB, the challenges encountered by both children and parents at times outweigh the benefits. First, children often experience frustration, stress, and pressure when being asked to serve as a broker. Serving as brokers may interfere with other activities in which the child may wish to participate, such as going to school or playing with peers. While the parent may acknowledge the burden being placed on children, the reality of having to perform communication functions across meso- and exo-systems requires parents to impose these LB tasks on their children.

In this study, parents also confronted a series of issues related to meeting their roles in the family. For example, one mother communicated feeling unable to develop her own language skills because of her desire to provide for her family by working and housekeeping. Likewise, some fathers reported difficulty with performing traditional decision-making roles within the family and deciding whether or not children should be involved in such situations. Overall, the more parents called on children to participate and take responsibility for familial decision-making—in essence, making children co-accountable for the successful outcomes of these more complex situations—the more likely tensions erupted within the microsystem of the family unit.

## **Discussion**

The purpose of this in-depth multiple qualitative case study was to explore LB in six Mexican-immigrant families living in an environment without readily available resources in their native language. The findings of this study suggest that the experiences of families with language brokers are diverse and different from those families residing in ethnic enclaves where

other support systems exist. Specifically, the tensions between parents and brokers in the family relationships are clear. Child brokers are expected to translate and interpret accurately because parents want to be sure that their message with an English speaker is accurate. The constant burden of this expectation at times causes the child to rebel when he or she may not want to broker anymore. Some parents, mostly fathers of teenage LBs, wondered if the information he or she was hearing was accurate. Perhaps the lack of or limited resources in Spanish where the families of this study reside added to the tensions between parents and brokers. Parents may have to rely on their brokers more heavily to function in a society where they are expected to integrate as quickly as possible. While previous research has found that language brokers often feel a closer connection to their parents, reach an understanding of their parents' struggles, and act to protect them from any embarrassment and humiliation for not speaking English (DeMent & Buriel, 1999; Hall & Sham, 1998; Orellana et al., 2003; Valdes et al., 2003). This study illuminates the tensions involved in immigrant families caused by LB demands placed on children.

Given Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory, the pressures of adapting and functioning within the host community may be a major source of tension in the family. As parents navigate the demands of living within the host country, negotiating and overcoming barriers in their meso- and exosystems, they looked toward their children for support. LB can strengthen parent-child relationships when both act together to meet the needs of the family. In these cases, parents express pride and appreciation for child brokers, who in turn increase in confidence and self-worth. In these moments of harmony, parent and child work as partners.

However, findings from this study indicate three instances where this harmony is disrupted, specifically as children serve more and more as participants in the meso- and exosystems. Parents who immigrate in hopes of a better future for their families realize that they cannot provide this future due to their inability to communicate in English. Thus, they become forced to rely on their child brokers to survive in the host country. Children may then be expected to function in ways to assist parents in securing their family needs, thereby making them co-accountable for the successful outcomes of various broking situations. Parents pressure children to perform brokering responsibilities often and accurately. Conflicts occur when either child brokers rebel against these expectations or simply cannot meet them.

Second, limited facility with English can thwart parents in fulfilling their perceived roles within the microsystem, or family. For example, in this study, fathers felt that having their female child broker was not appropriate. The

emotional reactions of fathers and daughters demonstrate the dynamics of traditional gender roles in Mexican families. Fathers are often seen as the decision-makers of the family, while daughters traditionally take on more subservient roles. The context of limited resources in Spanish may amplify the experiences of fathers where they are no longer in charge or cannot make decisions about the family without the assistance of their daughters. These contexts, including cultural values, current language needs, role reversals, youth identity, and gender roles, all form interrelated and sometimes conflicting systems that immigrant parents and their child brokers must negotiate within their family dynamics. Clearly, increased dependence on child brokers as a result of resource-limited macrosystems can cause tensions in the family.

Finally, child brokers may experience frustration, anger, and even rebellion as they confront situations within the meso- and exosystem, which task them beyond their own developmental level. With their parents' demand for accuracy, on the one hand, and the challenge of translating or interpreting information in very complex situations, on the other hand, brokers can feel ill-equipped to manage this added responsibility. Interpreting after a car accident, translating prescriptions for heart disease, interpreting with medical specialists, serving as a cultural broker at school, and translating any document that is delivered to the family's mailbox all impose increased complexity on the lives of language brokers and their families. These complexities often create tension and conflict in the family.

The findings of this study support existing scholarship that has found language brokers interpret and translate in instances oriented toward adult needs and sometimes consider these experiences as something they do to help their family (Doner et al., 2008; Dorner et al., 2007; Orellana et al., 2003; Tse, 1995a, 1995b, 1996b; Valenzuela, 1999; Weisskirch, 2005). The findings of this study also support previous studies that found language brokers feel frustrated and embarrassed, experience distress (Jones & Trickett, 2005; Mercado, 2003; Puig, 2002), but also feel important because they are trusted by parents and involved in the family's decision-making process (Buriel et al., 2006; Hall & Sham, 1998).

Language brokers live in between worlds. They act as gatekeepers of the family and mediators for the English-speaking world. They process complex information. The content of the conversations and documents the children in this study brokered on a daily basis show their increased understanding of difficult concepts. This understanding may assist child brokers at an academic level. However, the impact on the language broker's development and the overall impact on the family can produce mixed results. While some studies on LB found that brokers tend to be fluent in English and Spanish,

confident, extroverted, good natured, have high self-esteem, and consider themselves to be useful, friendly, sociable, good listeners, detailed, and feeling-oriented (e.g., Chao, 2002; DeMent & Buriel, 1999; Valdes et al., 2003; Valenzuela, 1999; Weisskirch, 2006), this study demonstrates both complexity and difficulty of LB for child brokers and their immigrant families.

### *Implications for Practice*

Traditional methods for treating psychological disorders with culturally diverse clients are not effective because the emphasis of cultural contexts is not important (Ponterotto, Casas, Suzuki, & Alexander, 2010; Sue & Sue, 2007). Clinicians working with immigrant families ought to process the tensions between parents and child brokers and the effect on the parent-child relationship. Tensions increase the child's pressures to interpret accurately, as well as parents' vigilance about the accuracy of interpretation or translation. Role-reversals between parents and brokers are an area of further exploration in therapy. In this study, fathers felt that their role as their family's decision-makers changed due to language brokering. Similarly, language brokers may experience role-reversals causing significant disruptions in their development. Lastly, exploring psychosocial factors impacting immigrant families in communities with limited resources in their native language is important to further understand their adjustment.

### *Implications for Theory Development*

To date, there is no LB theory. Researchers have primarily used three theories: acculturation theory, family systems theories, and contextual theories of cognitive development. This study used an ecological model to further understand the interactions between the environment and the immigrant family. This study extends knowledge regarding LB's impact on the dynamics of newly arrived Mexican immigrant families in the United States, particularly in places with limited resources in their native language and support of ethnic enclaves (e.g., the Midwest). Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory fits well in understanding the tensions of LB regarding the parent-child relationship, emotional well being of brokers and parents, gender roles, and expectations that appear at the mesosystem level. Further studies may want to explore other ecological systems. For example, a study of immigrant families with language brokers in Arizona, where immigrants may be deported at any time, can provide knowledge about the exosystem. A study investigating how



permanent residents in host communities experiencing an influx of immigrants and limited diversity would provide information about the macrosystems of immigrant families. In addition, future research may focus on the bidirectional nature of Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory, exploring how child brokers and family members alter their environmental contexts and create additional resources for themselves. Finally, the findings of this study also provide knowledge to expand family systems theory in understanding Mexican immigrant families. Specifically, this study demonstrates that among Mexican immigrant families with child language brokers, the potential for role reversals and disruption of the family system exists (Minuchin, 1974; Pardeck, 1989).

### *Implications for Future Research*

LB research is in a nascent state. Ideas for further study include how LB alters dynamics between siblings. In addition, scholars also recommend investigating how immigrant parents' perspectives, especially those of fathers, influence the parent-child relationship when brokering is salient. Furthermore, studies with children in single-parent households and those who are the only broker in the family are needed. Future research addressing the gender socialization among female language brokers is key in ironing out how the intersections of gender, ethnic identity, and brokering roles affect this group. Similarly, cultural values impacting how female language brokers make sense of their roles is a question that remains unanswered. No studies are focusing on the perceptions of professionals (e.g., doctors, lawyers, teachers, schools administrators) who benefit from LB. Using children or family members as an interpreter is unacceptable, unethical, and is avoidable. Future studies with professionals (e.g., medical doctors) who use child brokers will explicate why this form of interpretation continues. Finally, developmental quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-methods studies with immigrant families from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds will expand LB research.

### *Limitations*

A few major limitations affect the impact of this study. First, although the researchers implemented various strategies to ensure rigor and credibility, they did not involve participants in the validation of the findings. Including participants in qualitative data analysis allows them to confirm that the findings represent their experiences and to provide feedback to the researchers

if necessary. Second, this study focused on Mexican-immigrant families, limiting our understanding of LB in other Latino subgroups or immigrant groups. As a heterogeneous group representing various ethnic categories, the experiences that Latinos have with LB affect families in unique ways. Finally, the LB simulation that was observed by the first author engaged participants in only a hypothetical translation simulation. Researching LB in its naturalistic setting provides a more holistic image of when brokers, their immigrant parents, and non-Spanish-speakers interact with each other.

## Conclusion

Social and behavioral scientists, practitioners, and policy makers have begun to examine the distinct roles child brokers perform on a regular basis. Because language brokers and their immigrant parents influence the social, political, and financial climate of the United States, immigrant families should receive sustained scholarly and practical attention. Researchers, practitioners, and policy makers must work together to meet the needs of Mexican and other immigrant families.

## Appendix

### *Parent Interview Protocol<sup>1</sup>*

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#### *Questions About the Language Brokering Experience*

1. Think of a time when your child interpreted and/or translated for you.
  - a. Describe this experience you mentioned.
  - b. What was this experience like for you?
  - c. What does your child usually translate and/or interpret for you?
    - i. Tell me about it
  - d. How often does your child translate and/or interpret for you?
    - i. Week?
    - ii. Month?
  - e. Can you recall a time that you felt your child had difficulty translating and/or interpreting?
    - i. Tell me about it.
    - ii. How did you know he/she was having a hard time?
  - f. Have any of your other children ever translated and/or interpreted for you?
    - i. Describe the situation to me.

- g. What do you do when your \_\_\_\_\_ (name of language broker) cannot translate and/or for you?
- i. Give me some examples.

### *Feelings About Language Brokering*

2. How do you feel when your child interprets and/or translates for you?
  - a. Why do you think you feel like that?
3. How do you think your child feels when he/she translates and/or interprets for you?
  - a. Positive (describe to me some examples).
  - b. Negative (describe to me some examples).

### *Language Brokering and the Family*

4. What is your relationship like with \_\_\_\_\_ (name of broker) who is the interpreter and/or translator in your family?
  - a. Is it different compared to your other children who do not broker? (Give me some examples)
  - b. Tell me a little bit more about it.

### *Qualities and Characteristics of the Language Broker*

5. Could you share some reasons why you picked \_\_\_\_\_ (name of the broker) to be the translator and/or interpreter of the family?
  - a. Give me some examples.

### *Suggestions and Recommendations About Language Brokering*

6. What are your thoughts about children like yours who translate and/or interpret for their parents?
  - a. Do you think there any benefits to being an interpreter and/or translator? (Can you give me some examples?)
  - b. Are there any disadvantages? (Can you give me some examples?)
7. What are some advice you may want to give to parents who have children who translate and/or interpret for them?
  - a. Can you give some examples?

### *Concluding Questions and Statements*

8. Is there anything else you would like to add or share about this topic that you feel is important for me to know?
  - a. Besides what we talked about?

### *Child/Adolescent Interview Protocol*

#### *Questions About the Language Brokering Experience*

1. Tell me a story about the last time you interpreted and/or translated for your mom and dad. (Describe the story to me.)
  - a. What do you usually translate and/or interpret for your parents?
    - i. Tell me about it.
  - b. How often do you translate and/or interpret for your parents?
    - i. Week?
    - ii. Month?
  - c. Can you recall a time when you felt you were having difficulty translating and/or interpreting?
    - i. Tell me about it.
    - ii. What made it so difficult?
  - d. Do your brothers and sisters translate and/or interpret for your mom and dad?
    - i. Describe the situation to me.

#### *Feelings About Language Brokering*

2. How do you feel when you translate and/or interpret for your mom and dad?
  - a. Why do you think you feel that way?
  - b. Positive (provide me with an example).
  - c. Negative (provide me with an example).
3. Think of a time where you were translating and interpreting for your parents. How do you think your parents felt when you were interpreting and/or translating for them?
  - a. Why do you think your mom and dad felt that way?

#### *Language Brokering and the Family*

4. What is your relationship like with your parents?

- a. Is it different compared to your other brothers and sisters who do not broker? (Give some examples)
- b. Has it changed since you started brokering?
- c. Tell me more about it.

### *Qualities and Characteristics of the Language Broker*

5. What do you think are some of the reasons your parents picked you to be the translator and/or interpreter of the family?
  - a. Give me some examples.

### *Suggestions and Recommendations About Language Brokering*

6. What are your thoughts about children such as yourself who translate and/or interpret for their parents?
  - a. What do you think are some good for things about being a translator and interpreter for your parents? (Give me some examples)
  - b. What do you think are some bad things about being a translator and/or interpreter for your parents? (Give me some examples)
7. What advice would you give to children like yourself who translate and/or interpret for their parents?
  - a. Give me some examples.
8. Imagine yourself as a parent with a child who interpreted and/or translated for you. What advice you may want to give to other parents with children that are interpreters and/or translators?
  - a. Give me some examples.

### *Concluding Questions and Statements*

9. Is there anything else you would like to add or share about your experience as the family's translator and interpreter that you feel is important for me to know?
    - a. Besides of what we talked about?
- 

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## Note

1. Contact the first author for the Spanish version of this protocol.

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