


A retrospective review of language brokers' coping and emotional responses

Leticia Santamaría Ciordia
Universidad de Valladolid ✉ 

<https://dx.doi.org/10.5209/estr.100804> Recibido: 7 de febrero de 2025 / Revisado: 16 de septiembre de 2025 / Aceptado: 17 de septiembre de 2025

Abstract. Child language brokering (CLB) is too varied to be portrayed as a solely positive or negative psychological experience, which provides at least a partial explanation for the mixed findings in the extant literature about the effects of CLB on bilingual children. A corpus of approximately eight hours of semi-structured interviews with thirty former child language brokers from different countries allows the author to reflect on potential stressors that could ultimately help to predict children's emotional responses, coping skills, and psychological adaptation to challenging settings.

The study revealed two parameters that may predict potentially stressful situations and negative outcomes arising from CLB: 1. awareness of the consequences of mistranslations (game vs. responsibility), and 2. language brokers' *mixed* maturity, i.e. the ability to handle exposure to cognitive situations and challenges they may lack the emotional skills for. These two variables, along with other potential stressors, such as the complexity, severity or unease with the situation, make them potentially vulnerable and might explain conflicting emotions when translating in adult situations, such as the coexistence of feelings of self-worth with feeling overburdened.

The conclusions draw attention to avoiding the premature assigning of translating responsibilities before children are emotionally or developmentally ready, an approach worth considering as many immigrant families still prefer to 'trust' their own children as linguistic mediators, even when professional interpreters may be available.

Keywords. Child language brokering (CLB), immigration, stressors, mixed maturity, coping skills.

Afrontamiento y respuestas emocionales en menores intermediadores lingüísticos: una revisión retrospectiva

Resumen. La "intermediación lingüística por parte de menores" (ILM, Vargas-Urpi y Romero 2023) es un fenómeno multidimensional que cuestiona su simple reducción a una experiencia psicológica positiva o negativa, lo que explica parcialmente la falta de consenso sobre los efectos de la ILM en los niños bilingües.

Un corpus de aproximadamente ocho horas de entrevistas semiestructuradas con treinta inmigrantes adultos que ejercieron como intermediadores lingüísticos durante su infancia lleva a la autora a reflexionar sobre posibles estresores que, en última instancia, podrían ayudar a predecir las reacciones, habilidades de afrontamiento y adaptación psicológica de los niños cuando asumen roles de adultos.

El estudio reveló dos parámetros que pueden ayudar a predecir situaciones potencialmente estresantes derivadas de la ILM: 1. Mayor o menor conciencia de las consecuencias de los errores de interpretación (juego vs. responsabilidad); y 2. El desafío de la madurez mixta (una capacidad cognitiva desarrollada que coexiste con habilidades emocionales y de gestión del estrés aún en progreso de adquisición).

Estas dos variables, junto con otros posibles factores estresantes que contempla el estudio, como la complejidad, gravedad o incomodidad de la situación, los hacen potencialmente vulnerables y podría explicar emociones contradictorias, como la coexistencia de sentimientos de autoestima y sobrecarga.

Las conclusiones sugieren la necesidad de evitar la atribución prematura de responsabilidades antes de que los menores estén preparados emocional y evolutivamente para ello, un ejercicio de concienciación y

pedagogía significativo, ya que muchas familias inmigrantes siguen prefiriendo “confiar” en sus propios hijos como mediadores lingüísticos, incluso cuando se dispone de intérpretes profesionales.

Palabras clave: Intermediación lingüística por parte de menores (ILM), inmigración, estresores, madurez mixta, habilidades de afrontamiento.

Summary: 1. Introduction. Emotional Challenges in CLB. 2. Evaluating potential stressors in language brokering. 3. Survey description and methodology. 3.1. Interviewees’ profile and data collection. 4. Analysis of the results. 4.1. Interpreting settings by age group. 4.2. Positive and negative outcomes from CLB. 4.3. Stress and coping skills. 4.4. Perceived stress and different interpreting settings. 5. Discussion. 6. Future directions.

1. Introduction. Emotional Challenges in CLB

Child language brokering (CLB) has been described as: “interpreting and translation activities carried out by bilingual children who mediate linguistically and culturally in formal and informal contexts and domains for their family and friends as well as members of the linguistic community to which they belong” (Antonini 2015: 88). Considering that children usually acquire the host-country’s language more quickly than their parents, partly due to their earlier age of arrival and likely greater immersion into mainstream language environments such as public school (Jia 2004), it is hardly surprising that over 90% of immigrant children act as language brokers, often from a very early age, reflecting “an omnipresent phenomenon in immigrant families” (Lazarevic 2017:78), and very often, “the only solution available” (Pena-Díaz 2019: 10). In addition, as Valdés points out, even when professional interpreters may be available, adults frequently elect to use their children as “trusted mediators”: “for some individuals, the use of a young family interpreter offers them a bit more confidence in their ability to survive in what is seen as a hostile world” (Valdés et al. 2008: 76).

With CLB being a common practice among immigrant communities, a debate inevitably arises about whether performing as language broker has a positive or negative effect on children’s well-being.

There is a lack of consensus about the effects that language brokering has on children’s socioemotional development and psychological well-being. Several studies provide a more positive view and have demonstrated that CLB leads to the enhancement of coping strategies (Bucaria & Rosatto 2010), and the reinforcement of self-esteem, confidence and feelings of self-worth (Noorbakhsh et al. 2010, Hall & Sham 2007). Other authors have revealed negative consequences associated with the brokering experience, such as feelings of embarrassment and unease (McQuillan & Tse 1995, Weisskirch 2013), for example when children feel they are ‘invading’ their parent’s privacy or become the unwanted focus of a conversation like in a parents-teacher meeting. They may also feel the pressure (Morales & Hanson 2005), stress or anxiety (Katz 2014, Shen et al. 2020) when trying to correctly translate complex vocabulary, especially during pre-adolescence and adolescence (Esquivel 2012, Helwig 2006, Rainey et al. 2014).

To elucidate those cause-and-effect relationships, specific parameters should be applied to each brokering situation, trying to identify recurrent patterns and potential stressors that could act as emotional triggers. The recognition of these stimuli provides a starting point to predict children’s outcomes and emotional reactions and, most importantly, adapt their brokering duties accordingly.

2. Evaluating potential stressors in language brokering

For the purposes of this study, four main internal stressors, i.e. potential sources of distress arising directly from the brokering experience, have been outlined on the assumption that the combination of certain parameters may help predict and understand children’s approach to different brokering tasks in selected case scenarios:

1. the complexity of the situation, when language brokers still haven’t acquired sufficient language skills to deal with complex topics;
2. the severity of the situation, combined with the fact that they start being more aware of the consequences of mistranslations;
3. the uneasiness of the situation, for example when children must intervene in situations where they are the focus of the conversation, such as meetings at school, or that could be embarrassing for them due to gender roles in traditional families or in cultures with gender segregation, such as boys accompanying their mothers to medical consultations;
4. conflict situations, for example having to manage difficult or conflictual conversations between their family members and another adult, who is usually in a position of authority, something that “predominantly occurs in monolingual and often white public institutions” (in Crafter & Iqbal 2020:31).

Table 1 visually summarizes the four internal stressors described in the case scenarios above, compiling the main dimensions of potential distress in child language brokering (adapted from Gurung 2019).

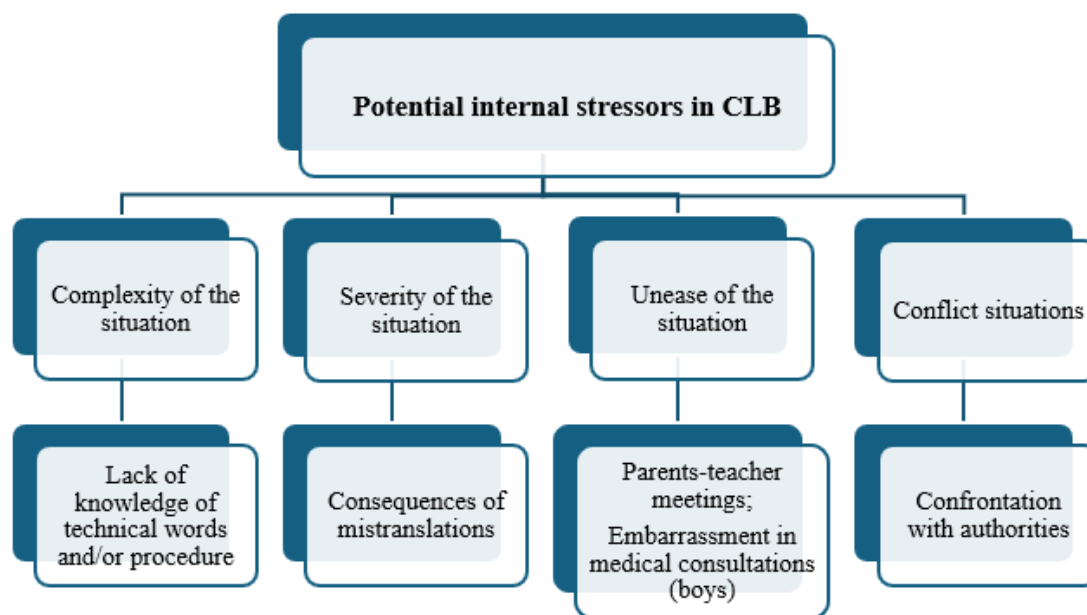


Table 1. Potential stressors in language brokering (adapted from Gurung 2019).

Once those potentially negative environment conditions have been established, children's emotional approach to CLB has been examined based on their stage of growth and development.

Indeed, psychologists have established that human development generally follows a predictable, recognizable pattern (Rao et al. 2024). Each component of development is driven by a combination of nature (i.e. genes and genetics) and nurture (the surroundings). In other words, while children may progress at different rates, some common milestones can be used to call attention to potentially challenging situations in particular stages of socioemotional development.

3. Survey description and methodology

The survey took place in 2023 in Spain, where 6.7 million people are foreign-born, representing 13.7% of the total population, according to the Spanish National Statistics Institute (INE)¹.

Data were collected through a survey distributed among 30 former language brokers (53.3% females, and 46.6% males) who grew up interpreting and translating for their families and/or other members of their community, and who voluntarily agreed to explore their retrospective childhood and adolescence memories of language brokering. Participants' countries of origin were located in Eastern Europe (Lithuania, Belarus, Croatia, Hungary, Ukraine, Bulgaria and Romania), Africa (Morocco, Mauritania, Algeria, Mali and Guinea) and China.

3.1. Interviewees' profile and data collection

To provide context for the analysis, Table 2 summarizes key sociodemographic information about the interviewees, including their country of origin, the life stage when they began language brokering, and the approximate duration of their brokering experience.

Participant ID Code	Country of origin	Period of life as CLB	Time as LB
I1_MA_F	Morocco	Middle and late adolescence	> 2 years
I2_MA_M	Morocco	Late infancy, early adolescence	2 years
I3_MA_M	Morocco	Late infancy, early adolescence	> 2 years
I4_MA_F	Morocco	Middle adolescence	2 years
I5_MR_F	Mauritania	Late adolescence	< 1 year
I6_DZ_M	Algeria	Late infancy, early adolescence	2 years
I7_DZ_M	Algeria	Early adolescence	> 2 years
I8_ML_F	Mali	Middle and late adolescence	2 years
I9_ML_F	Mali	Early and middle adolescence	2 years

¹ Continuous Population Statistics (CPS)- October 8, 2024. Available at: https://www.ine.es/dyngs/INEbase/en/operacion.htm?c=Estadistica_C&cid=1254736177095&idp=1254735572981 (last accessed December 28, 2024).

I10_CN_F	China	Late adolescence	> 2 years
I11_CN_M	China	Early adolescence	> 2 years
I12_CN_F	China	Middle and late adolescence	>2 years
I13_BF_M	Guinea	Early adolescence	1 year
I14_SY_F	Guinea	Early and middle adolescence	2 years
I15_SY_M	Lithuania	Late infancy, early adolescence	2 years
I16_LT_M	Lithuania	Late infancy	< 1 year
I17_LT_F	Lithuania	Late adolescence	< 1 year
I18_BY_M	Belarus	Late infancy, early adolescence	2 years
I19_HR_F	Croatia	Early adolescence	1 year
I20_HR_F	Croatia	Late infancy	1 year
I21_HU_M	Hungary	Early adolescence	1 year
I22_UA_F	Ukraine	Middle adolescence	1 year
I23_UA_M	Ukraine	Middle adolescence	1 year
I24_UA_M	Ukraine	Middle adolescence	1 year
I25_UA_F	Ukraine	Late adolescence	1 year
I26_UA_F	Ukraine	Early adolescence	1 year
I27_BG_M	Bulgaria	Early adolescence	1 year
I28_BG_F	Bulgaria	Middle adolescence	1 year
I29_BG_F	Bulgaria	Early adolescence	1 year

Table 2. Sociodemographic characteristics of interview participants.

Each participant was given an ID Code following this structure: *Interpreter number, country abbreviation (ISO standard), male/female*. For example, the label *I1_MA_F* corresponds to interpreter number one, a female former language broker from Morocco.

The research methodology was a combination of quantitative survey questions and personal interviews about the participants' CLB experiences. The latter was aimed enriching the data by allowing them to qualify and expand on their answers, as well as delving into aspects that might not have been specifically asked for in the survey. This resulted in a data corpus of approximately eight hours of recorded interviews with reflections on childhood reactions to different stressors arising directly from the brokering experience, alongside effects on children's development and emotional wellbeing.

The qualitative data analysis (QDA) was conducted through NVivo, which made it easier to access and retrieve specific data therefore allowing us to gather focused and systematic descriptive information.

In some cases, the results summarised in this paper are supported by fragments of the testimonies, translated from Spanish to English by the author, that are meant to illustrate and complete the answers obtained in the questionnaire.

4. Analysis of the results

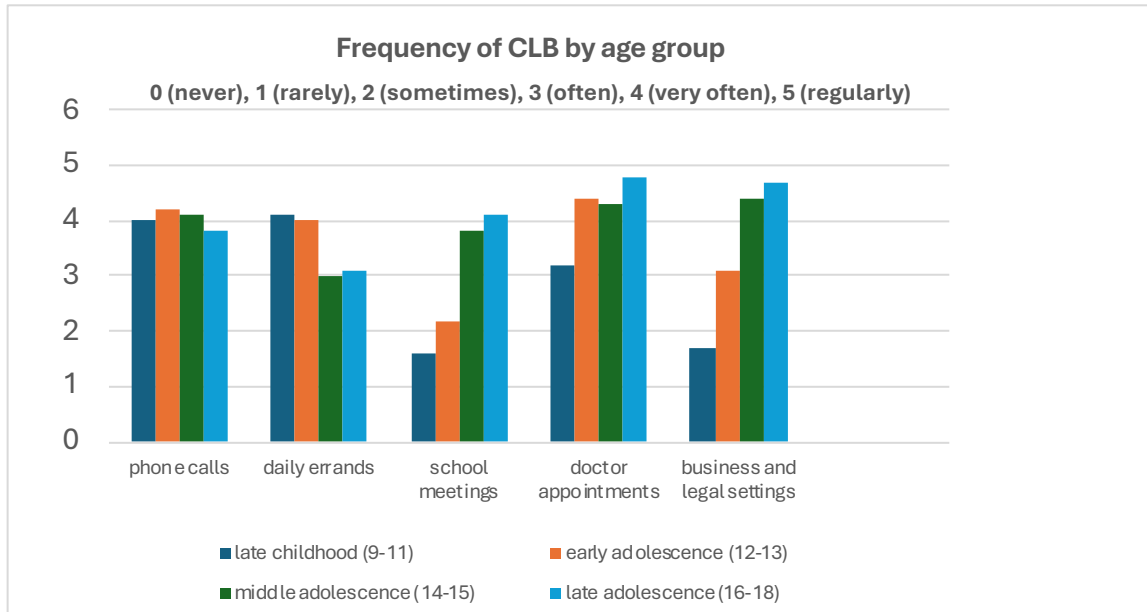
The research covered the following stages of children's growth and development: late childhood (9-11 years old, 20% of the sample); early adolescence (12-13, 50% of the sample); middle adolescence (14-15, 33.3%); late adolescence (16-18, 23.3%). For the purposes of this study, the most significant results obtained for each age range have been organized by four subjects:

- most frequent brokering tasks (graph 1);
- outcomes from CLB (graph 2);
- overall stress levels and stress resilience (graphs 3a and 3b);
- perceived stress at different interpreting settings (graph 4).

4.1. Interpreting settings by age group

Graph 1 illustrates the distribution of the most common brokering tasks across age groups, offering a concise view of how interpreting settings evolve as children grow older.

Graph 1. Most frequent brokering tasks.

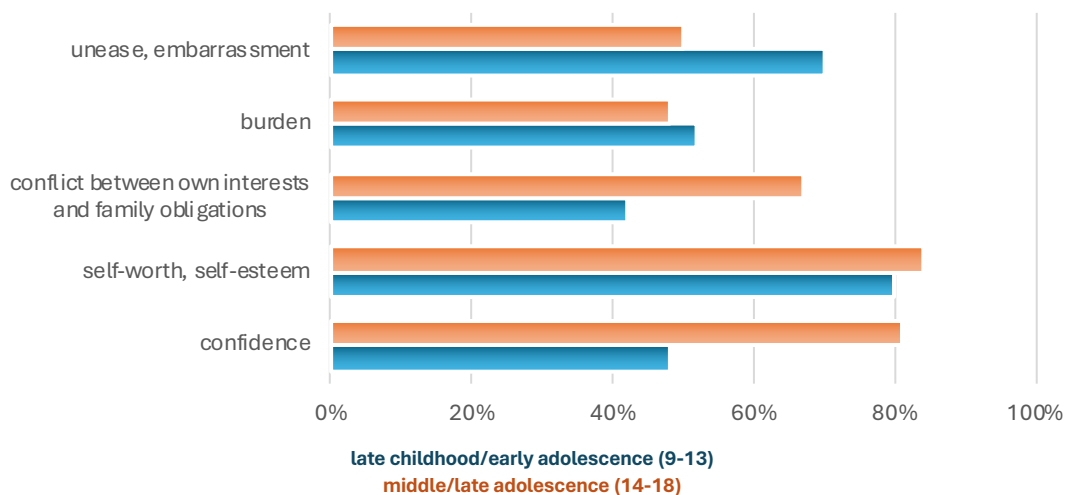


Using a gradation scale from 0 to 5, participants were asked to rate their average frequency of interpreting at five of the most common settings (Morales & Hanson 2005). The answers showed that older brokers (middle and late adolescents) tended to assume more brokering responsibilities in potentially higher-stakes contexts, such as healthcare, business and legal settings, while younger children were assigned to more informal settings and daily activities, such as answering phone calls or accompanying their parents (mostly stay-at-home mothers) to the grocery store, which has been recalled as a “very often” brokering situation by those brokering at a younger age (8-11 years old). The results also highlighted that child language brokers would tend to progressively assume greater responsibilities over time.

4.2. Positive and negative outcomes from CLB

Graph 2 presents a synthesis of the main positive and negative outcomes reported by participants, highlighting the range of feelings associated with their language-brokering experiences.

Graph 2. Outcomes from CLB.



Participants were asked to choose among several outcomes that described their experience as language brokers. The results from several studies about the most frequent feelings associated with CLB (see section 1) were used to draw up the list of options. Since part of the survey is specifically devoted to stress and coping (see graphs 3 and 4), outcomes were not included in this list and were analysed separately.

To improve the reliability of the results, the number of items that could be selected from multiple-choice questions were not limited, and participants were also given the possibility of adding different ones, if they so wished, although none elected to do so.

Although most participants (82%) agreed that CLB contributed to developing feelings of self-worth, almost half of younger brokers up to 13 years old (49%) admitted to not feeling fully sure of themselves and their abilities when confronted by complex tasks. In contrast, self-confidence increased among brokers aged

14 and above, (81%). A former language broker from Ukraine who interpreted for their parents during her adolescence put it this way:

I learned Spanish pretty fast, so I managed quite well, and I became more self-confident with time. I remember feeling proud of myself for helping my parents in circumstances they couldn't have solved by themselves (I25_UA_F).

In most cases, these positive outcomes coexist with others, such as embarrassment and unease, especially among younger language brokers (70%), although they decreased with time (50%). A Chinese former language broker described this adaptation process in the following terms:

I was shy as a child, so it was quite embarrassing to me, being the focus of attention in all those adult-like conversations was quite embarrassing to me, especially at the beginning. It was all pretty new to me and it wasn't really my choice. Anyway, then I got used to it with time, gained confidence and somehow, I could shake that feeling (I11_CN_M).

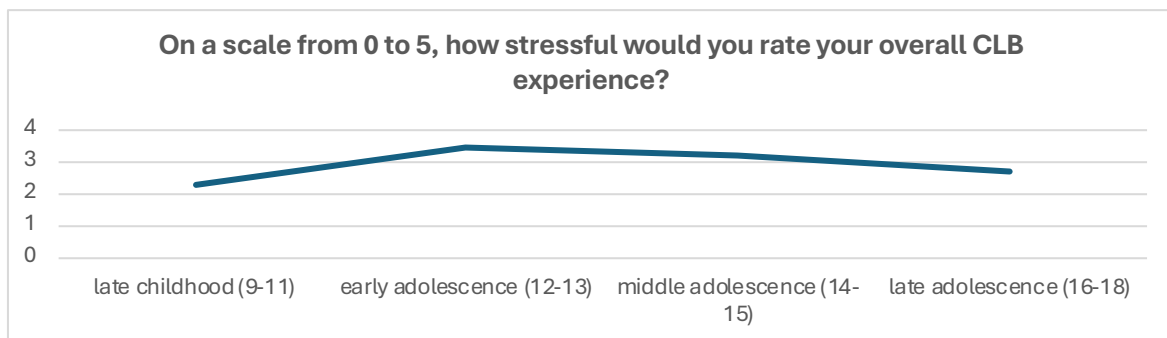
Around half of the participants, regardless of their age at the time, admitted having sometimes felt burdened by their CLB tasks (52% and 48% of younger and older brokers, respectively). However, both subgroups differed noticeably from each other when they were asked whether CLB became a source of conflict at some point between their own interests and family obligations, a feeling more present among older brokers (67%) than their younger peers (42%). A former language broker from Romania, who assisted his family during part of his late adolescence, admitted this conflict between his personal life and commitment to his family:

Of course I was happy to help, and I'm glad I did, it shaped my personality. On the other hand, commitment to family is not easy. It means putting your family first, and I couldn't be around all the time, I had my own stuff to deal with. At some point I felt fenced in (I30_RO_M).

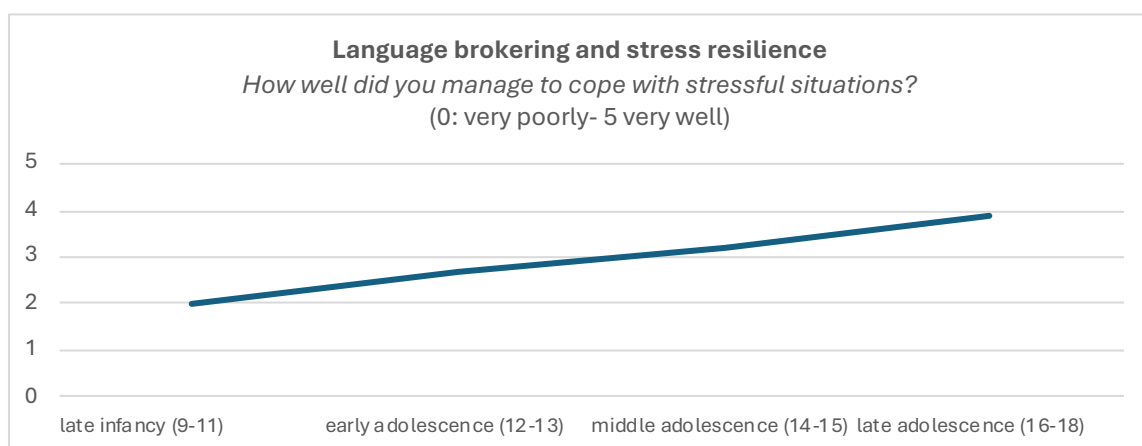
4.3. Stress and coping skills

Graphs 3a and 3b depict the overall stress levels and the coping skills developed by participants, providing a snapshot of how brokers perceived and managed stress during their interpreting tasks.

Graph 3a. Overall stress levels.



Graph 3b. Stress resilience.



Part of the survey was devoted to analysing language brokers' development of coping skills and resilience (Graphs 3a and 3b), as well as exploring the interplay between stress levels in different interpreting settings at different ages (graph 4).

Participants were first asked to rate how stressful they found their experience as language brokers on a scale from 0 (not at all) to 5 (very much) (graph 3a).

The average rating for the whole sample shows CLB as a moderately stressful experience (2.9 out of 5). The youngest group (9-11 years old) demonstrated the lowest level of CLB-related stress (2.3 out of 5). At the other end of the spectrum, early adolescents appeared to have the most stressful experience of all age categories (3.5 out of 5). A Hungarian former language broker during his early teens, expressed his feelings towards his childhood interpreting experience:

How are you supposed to interpret every detail the doctor said, or the guy at the bank...? When you are just a kid, it's a lot of pressure. I remember it made me nervous and uneasy (I21_HU_M).

Another participant from Belarus, who interpreted for their family during part of his late childhood and early adolescence, described conflicting emotions:

I was 11 when I started translating for my parents. I got used to it, I even enjoyed it sometimes, it made me feel important. On the other hand, when there are words or ideas you don't fully understand, or lots of details that are hard to recall... it is harsh. In hindsight I think it's probably too much pressure for a child, especially when discussing serious topics (I18_BY_M).

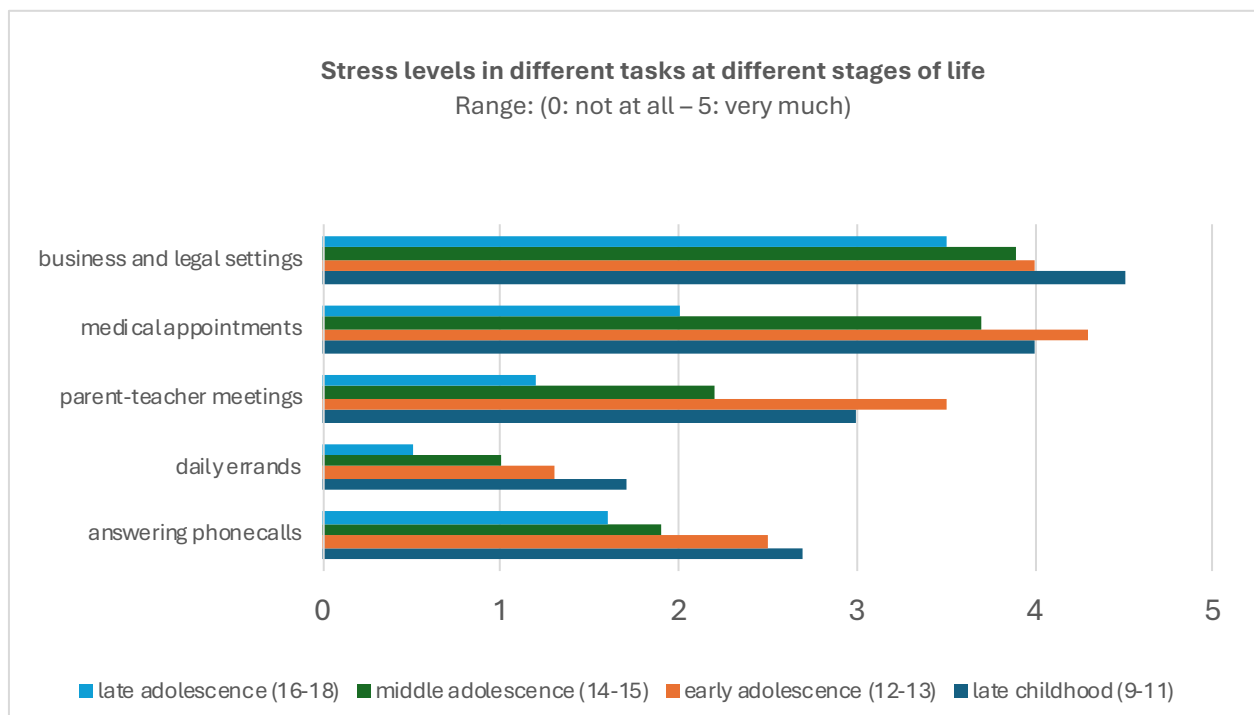
Stress levels appear to gradually decrease from early adolescence, when a progressive development of coping and resilience is observed (graph 3b). In accordance with this, late adolescence marked when language brokers began to more successfully navigate stressful situations (coping effectiveness rated 3.9, in contrast with 2.7 out of 5 during early adolescence), despite being involved in high-stakes family matters (see graph 1). A Chinese former language broker recalled acquiring more effective coping skills as she approached adulthood and gained experience:

When you grow up, you grow in every sphere of your life. You are confronted to life changing decisions about your future, you start thinking like an adult. This also involves dealing with more complex stuff and being entrusted with more responsibilities within your family. It wasn't always easy, and I felt I still had a lot to learn...but I was definitely more in control of my emotions (I12_CN_F).

4.4. Perceived stress at different interpreting settings

Finally, graph 4 shows participants' perceived stress across different interpreting settings, allowing comparison of stress levels by context and age group.

Graph 4. Perceived stress in different interpreting settings.



As Galanakis & Anastasopoulou underline, “in attempting to quantify and qualify the experienced stress level, the causality of the felt stress is of utmost importance” (2020: 499). In this sense, to reach more accurate conclusions, participants were requested to evaluate their emotional responses during some of the most frequent provided CLB settings (Graph 1).

Business and legal settings, such as bank and administrative transactions, emerged as the most stressful brokering situations (averaging 3.9 out of 5, all ages considered), and especially for language brokers in their

late childhood (4.5 out of 5). It was also singled out as the most demanding task among former language brokers in their middle and late adolescence (3.9 and 3.5 out of 5, respectively).

Healthcare was ranked second in the list of most stressful settings, with a very similar reported stress level (3.5 out of 5, all ages considered). Distinguishing between age groups, early adolescents felt particularly challenged when assisting their family during medical consultations. A former language broker from Morocco who interpreted for their parents during her middle teens recognized having felt sometimes overwhelmed by the assumption of caregiving responsibilities in scenarios she might have had the necessary knowledge for, but was probably mentally and psychologically unready for, such as disclosing a cancer diagnosis:

I wasn't struggling with translating the words, but with conveying the message and the fact that it was me telling [my mum] the bad news, not the doctor. In hindsight, it just doesn't feel right to put a kid in such a position (I4_MA_F).

Settings where language brokers themselves are the focus of the conversation, mainly appointments with teachers at school, came in third place (2.5 out of 5, all ages considered), but were more stressful for language brokers from 9 to 13 years old (3.3. out of 5). A former language broker from Algeria, described how these meetings made him feeling uneasy during his early teens:

You can only imagine, right? Being asked to translate to your parents what your teacher is telling about you... it is easier said than done. It was awkward and quite embarrassing sometimes (I7_DZ_M).

There was consensus among all age groups that daily routines, such as running errands, were the least stressful contexts (a reported stress level of 1.1 out of 5, all ages considered), whereas another frequent scenario, such as answering phone calls, was considered a much more emotionally challenging experience (2.2), particularly for children from 9 to 13 years old (2.6).

5. Discussion

Cicchetti & Rogosch (2009: 47) highlight how successful coping relies on self-esteem and self-reliance. The survey results may reveal how increased self-esteem and self-reliance, especially from middle adolescence, (see graphs 3a and 3b), would be both a cause and the consequence of the increase of positive feelings about CLB over time, as language brokers acquire the necessary intellectual and emotional maturity to feel more confident with their role.

There is also evidence that the degree of predictability involved in a scenario can reduce anxiety and uncertainty (Choi 2024). Greater predictability may bring a sense of greater control in language brokers, while familiarity arising from increasing opportunity to make decisions based on past experiences and patterns can make them more confident in their decision-making and self-efficacy. This is supported by studies which concluded that brokers in middle to late adolescence onwards experience more positive rather than negative outcomes associated with brokering (Tedford 2010). The role of predictability in stress management was highlighted in the responses about daily routines and how answering phone calls caused considerably more stress, especially in younger children, than other daily routines. Another possible aspect could be the lack of briefing and the absence of visual cues as contextualization elements, which have been identified as some of the most significant challenges of telephone interpreting (Cho 2023), while also making answering phone calls a highly unpredictable setting.

Despite these challenges, participants' retrospective childhood memories showed how CLB contributed to the development of feelings of self-worth for being entrusted with important family matters in all age groups. Furthermore, three quarters of the respondents (73%) made a positive assessment of their overall brokering experience, pointing out that it has significantly contributed to shaping their identities over time. In this sense, the results point to the fact that although the development of children's personalities is a complex process that occurs over various stages, stimulating environments such as those found in CLB can provide learning opportunities, coping mechanisms and interpersonal skills that can actively foster cognitive and emotional development.

On the other hand, it should also be noted that CLB was still found to be moderately stressful regardless of age or the interpreting setting (2.7 out of 5), despite potential stress amelioration over time. It could therefore be argued that child language brokers demonstrate *mixed* maturity, i.e., the ability to handle cognitive situations and challenges they may still lack emotional and coping skills for. This reflects their potential vulnerability and how language brokers' conflicting emotions, as feelings of self-worth and confidence exist alongside feeling embarrassed and burdened by CLB.

Further research with a bigger sample is advisable to validate and/or provide more insight into the findings, which shows an inverted-U relationship between stress levels by age group. In this sense, early adolescents (12-13 years old) revealed the most emotionally challenging CLB experience of all age ranges (3.5/5), even more than younger brokers (9-11 years old, reported stress level 2.3/5). Based on former language brokers' memories, the reason could lie in the fact that younger language brokers are likely to face less demanding tasks, but also because the younger group might not be as aware of the consequences of misconceptions and mistranslations as the early adolescents, which would sometimes turn CLB not so much like a duty as a game, as seen in the testimony of a Lithuanian former language broker referring to his late infancy:

I even recalled having fun sometimes. I considered myself like some sort of superhero (I16_LT_M).

As the participants aged (particularly early adolescents), there was greater awareness of how mistranslations could lead to difficulties managing stress and building resilience, especially in linguistically complex tasks (which require linguistic intuition, more refined vocabulary and knowledge of technical terminology and/or procedures). A former language broker from Mali who interpreted for her family circle during her early and middle adolescence provided an insight into the challenges that healthcare settings may arise for these young ad hoc interpreters:

As you grow up, you start realising the significance of health in its full sense, and how misguided translations can bring consequences... Helping my family made me feel good, but it was also stressful sometimes. I guess the point is: should such responsibility fall on a kid? (I9_ML_F).

Finally, the conclusions reached encourage an approach to CLB from the position of an adaptation process that emphasizes the importance of adjusting language brokering tasks to children's capabilities, not the opposite way, by avoiding high stakes interpreting contexts and adapting the interpreting duties to the child's emotional maturity at different stages of growth. This is especially advisable considering that promoting supportive adult guidance and increasing opportunities to take part constructively in the community has been shown to play a pivotal role for healthy transitions to adulthood (Malik & Marwaha 2022). In this sense, raising awareness among immigrant families about the importance of setting a reasonable balance between children growing independence and commitments to families' needs can provide an emotionally safe environment that encourages positive feelings based on children's confidence and self-trust, for those adults who still choose to have their children as trusted mediators.

6. Future directions

Based on the existing research, which indicates that individuals from immigrant families report language brokering starting between 8 to 10 years old on average and sometimes even sooner depending on age of arrival (Katz 2014), extending an examination to children under 9 years old could enrich this research with a more accurate perspective on how CLB develops over time.

How CLB is experienced by parents and influences family dynamics, and in turn children, is also worth exploring, as well as incorporating service providers' perspectives on how they might find CLB "problematic" due to perceived "limitations in children's linguistic and cultural sophistication" as compared with adults (Katz 2014:203). Furthermore, analysing the effectiveness of language brokers' interpreting strategies (code-switching, paraphrasing, 'getting the gist', etc.) and going further into the concept of "mediated manipulation" (making independent decisions based on their own judgement, Bauer 2017) is likely to add to the present study.

As far as sociocultural conditioners are concerned, many studies (e.g. Popa and Mullet 2014, Umaña-Taylor 2015, Kuo 2013, among others) have concluded that culture of origin can help explain individuals' attitudes, perceptions and behaviours. This study has contributed towards that by collecting experiences from former language brokers from diverse national and cultural backgrounds (13 countries in Africa, Eastern Europe and China) which have allowed us to gather enriching points of view about the distribution of culturally embedded tasks, potentially contributing to laying the groundwork for more thorough studies about the development of specific gender responsibilities, and the influence of prescriptive roles on language brokers' experiences in a range of cultures.

In particular, role distribution and gender segregation in Islamic Law were mentioned by several former male language brokers from Muslim countries when assessing their emotional responses, who recalled that interpreting for their mothers at medical consultations was "embarrassing" (I3_MA_M), "uncomfortable" (I6_DZ_M) or even "out of the question" (I7_DZ_M). Moreover, daughters mainly helping mothers with daily errands emphasizes the existence of some gender-labelling tasks, probably linked to traditional intra-family prescriptive roles, where females develop a sense of family obligation as "caretakers" (Saguy et al. 2021). It could also be worth further exploring the idea that threats to pride may discourage some male adolescents from assuming as many brokering responsibilities as their female peers (Buriel et al. 1998), especially in some cultures.

These future research areas and a larger sample could contribute to enriching this study and help achieve more consistent predictions that could identify common patterns from both internal and external stressors operating alongside the brokering experience.

References

- Antonini, Rachele (2015). Child language brokering. In Franz Pochhacker (Ed.). *Routledge Encyclopaedia of Interpreting Studies* (p. 48). Routledge.
- Bauer, Elaine (2017). Mediated manipulations, and the agency of the interpreter/translator. In Rachele Antonini, Letizia Cirillo, Linda Rossato & Ira Torresi (Eds.) *Non-professional Interpreting and Translation: State of the art and future of an emerging field of research* (pp. 359-380). John Benjamins. <https://doi.org/10.1075/btl.129.18bau>
- Bucaria, Chiara & Rossato, Linda (2010). Former child language brokers: preliminary observations on practice, attitudes and relational aspects. *MediAzioni*, 10, 239-268. <https://hdl.handle.net/10278/3726314>
- Buriel, Raymon; Pérez, William; De Ment, Tierrri; Chavez, David & Moran, Virginia (1998). The relationship of language brokering to academic performance, biculturalism, and self-efficacy among Latino adolescents. *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences*, 20(3), 283-297. <https://doi.org/10.1177/07399863980203001>

- Cho Jinhyun (2023). Interpreters as Translation Machines: Telephone Interpreting Challenges as Awareness Problems. *Qualitative Health Research*, 33(12), 1037-1048. <https://doi.org/10.1177/104973232311917>
- Choi, Samantha (2024). The Role of Predictability in Psychology: An Overview. In *ListenHard. Cognitive and Experimental Psychology*.
- Cicchetti, Dante & Rogosch, Fred. A. (2009). Adaptive coping under conditions of extreme stress: Multilevel influences on the determinants of resilience in maltreated children. *New directions for child and adolescent development*, 124, 47-59. <https://doi.org/10.1002/cd.242>
- Crafter, Sarah & Iqbal, Humera (2020). The Contact Zone and Dialogical Positionalities in “Non-Normative” Childhoods: How Children Who Language Broker Manage Conflict. *Review of General Psychology*, 24(1), 31-42. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1089268019896354>
- Esquivel, Adriana (2012). Language Brokering a Dynamic Phenomenon: A Qualitative Study Examining the Experiences of Latina/o Language Brokers. *Scripps Senior Theses*, 52. https://scholarship.claremont.edu/scripps_theses/52
- Galanakis, Michael & Anastasopoulou, Anna (2020). Person-Centered Psychotherapy & Adlerian Psychotherapy: Impact on Occupational Stress in Greek Women. *Psychology*, 11, 499-540. <https://doi.org/10.4236/psych.2020.113034>
- Gurung, Regan. A. R. (2019). *Health psychology: Well-being in a diverse world* (4th ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Hall, Nigel & Sham, Sylvia (2007). Language Brokering as Young People’s Work: Evidence from Chinese Adolescents in England. *Language and Education*, 21(1), 16-30. <https://doi.org/10.2167/le645.0>
- Helwig, Charles C. (2006). The development of personal autonomy throughout cultures. *Cognitive Development*, 21, 458-473. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cogdev.2006.06.009>
- Jia, G. (2004). The acquisition of English and maintenance of first language by immigrant children and adolescents in North America. In Uwe P. Gilen & Jaipaul Roopnarine (Eds.). *Childhood and adolescence: Cross-cultural Perspectives and Applications* (pp. 350-373). Praeger. <https://psycnet.apa.org/record/2004-19634-014>
- Katz, Vikki (2014). Children as Brokers of Their Immigrant Families’ Health-Care connections. *Social Problems*, 61(2), 194-215. <https://doi.org/10.1525/sp.2014.12026>
- Kuo, Ben C.H. (2013). Collectivism and coping: Current theories, evidence, and measurements of collective coping. *International Journal of Psychology*, 48(3), 374-388. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00207594.2011.640681>
- Lazarevic, Vanja (2017). Effects of culture brokering on individual wellbeing and family dynamics among immigrant youth. *Journal of Adolescence*, 55, 77-87. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.adolescence.2016.12.010>
- Malik, Fatima & Marwaha, Raman (2022). *Developmental Stages of Social Emotional Development in Children*. StatPearls Publishing. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK534819/>
- McQuillan, Jeff & Tse, Lucy (1995). Child language brokering in linguistic minority communities: Effects on cultural interaction, cognition, and literacy. *Language and Education*, 9(3), 195-215. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09500789509541413>
- Morales, Alejandro & Hanson, William E. (2005). Language brokering: An integrative review of the literature. *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences*, 27(4), 471-503. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0739986305281333>
- Noorbakhsh, Seyedeh N.; Besharat, Mohammad A. & Zarei, Jamileh (2010). Emotional intelligence and coping styles with stress. *Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 5, 818-822. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2010.07.191>
- Pena-Díaz, Carmen (2019). Child language brokering: challenges in Spanish intercultural education. *Intercultural Education*, 30(4), 368-382. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14675986.2018.1540107>
- Popa, Brindusa; Guillet, Lucette & Mullet, Etienne (2014). Cultural differences in the appraisal of stress. *Psicologica: International Journal of Methodology and Experimental Psychology*, 35, 745-760.
- Rainey, Vanessa. R.; Flores, Valerie; Morrison, Robert G.; David, EJ & Sifton, Rebecca L. (2014). Mental health risk factors associated with childhood language brokering. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 35(5), 463-478. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01434632.2013.870180>
- Rao, Nimala; Su, Yufen & Chan, Stephanie WY (2024). Reliability and validity of the East Asia-Pacific Early Child Development Scales: A longitudinal validation study in China. *Child Psychiatry & Human Development*, 55(6), 1691-1700. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10578-023-01526-9>
- Saguy, Tamar; Reifen-Tagar, Michal & Joel, Daphna (2021). The gender-binary cycle: the perpetual relations between a biological-essentialist view of gender, gender ideology, and gender-labelling and sorting. *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society, Biological Sciences*. The Royal Society Publishing. 376: 20200141. <http://doi.org/10.1098/rstb.2020.0141>
- Shen, Yishan; Seo, Eunjin; Walt, Dorothy Clare & Kim, Su Yeong (2020). Stress of Language Brokering and Mexican American Adolescents’ Adjustment: The Role of Cumulative Risk. *The Journal of Early Adolescence*, 40(3), 400-425. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0272431619847526>
- Tedford, Sara L. (2010). Language Brokering among Latino Middle School Students: Relations with Academic Achievement, Self-Efficacy, and Acculturative Stress. *UT Electronic Theses and Dissertations*. University of Texas. <http://hdl.handle.net/2152/ETD-UT-2010-05-1084>
- Umaña-Taylor, Adriana J. (2015). Ethnic identity research: How far have we come? In Carlos E. Santos & Adriana J. Umaña-Taylor (Eds.), *Studying ethnic identity: Methodological and conceptual approaches across disciplines* (pp. 11-26). American Psychological Association. <https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1037/14618-002>
- Valdés, Guadalupe; Chávez, Christina & Angelelli, Claudia V. (2008). A Performance Team: Young Interpreters and Their Parents. In Guadalupe Valdés (Ed.). *Expanding Definitions of Giftedness. The Case of*

Young Interpreters from Immigrant Communities (pp. 63-98). Lawrence Erlbaum Associates. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781410607249>

Vargas-Urpi, Mireia & Romero Moreno, Aran (2023). La intermediación lingüística por parte de menores (ILM) desde la perspectiva de los progenitores. *Papers*, 108 (4), 1-23. <https://doi.org/10.5565/rev/papers.3143>

Weisskirch, Robert S. (2013). Family relationships, self-esteem and self-efficacy among language brokering Mexican American emerging adults. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, 22(8), 1147-1155. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10826-012-9678-x>