Lost in Translation: the Impacts of the Language Brokering Process on the Sociolinguistic Identities of Arabic-Speaking Immigrants and Refugees

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This project contributes to the sociolinguistic literature surrounding language brokering by examining the following research questions: how do Arabic and English-speaking immigrants and refugees construct their sociolinguistic and cultural identities? How have their experiences with language brokering influenced the formation of these identities? And what role has language brokering played in their language attitudes and experiences as immigrants and refugees? To respond to these questions, five participants—all bilingual Arabic and English-speaking immigrants and refugees—were invited to share their stories, experiences, and language attitudes via demographic surveys and interviews.

The results indicate that the language brokering process can further complicate an already-complex acculturation environment for newly arrived or recently resettled families. All five participants, having language brokered at least once for their families in the past, described nuanced, synchronous developments of their social and cultural identities as Arabs and Arab-Americans. For some participants, who already structured much of their identities around the languages they spoke, serving as a language broker effectively strengthened and validated these identities. For others, the process and its challenges prompted a great deal of self-contemplation as they endeavored to preserve their heritage cultures while coming of age in a new one. To the participants of this study, language brokering reflected a sense of pride, a family bond, a burden,

a natural reflex, a way of giving back, and an extension of the Arabic language and Arab culture from one communicative context to another.

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Preface

First and foremost, I want to thank Dr. Abdesalam Soudi—the advisor of this project, my linguistics and internship advisor, and one of my favorite professors— for all the support and guidance he has shared with me. Without him, this project would not exist. I would also like to thank my committee members: Dr. Keith Walters, professor emeritus at Portland State University, Dr. Amanda Godley, Vice Provost for Graduate Studies and professor at the University of Pittsburgh, and Dr. Karl Bezak, M.D., Clinical Assistant Professor of Medicine at the University of Pittsburgh. Thank you all for devoting your expertise and time to this project—it means the world to me.

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1.0 Introduction

لقد بنيت وطني، حتى أنني أسست دولتي - بلغتي.

-محمود درويش

I've built my homeland; I've even founded my state— in my language.

-Mahmoud Darwish

"ais'alhum ean 'iijra' mukalamat hatifiat 'iilaa almadrasa."

"She wants to know what to say when she calls my school district."

My first true exposure to language brokering was a few weeks into my first semester at the University of Pittsburgh, when I joined Facilitating Opportunities for Refugee and Development (FORGE) and began tutoring Shahar, a Syrian refugee, in English. Having just begun my Arabic learning experience, my Arabic skills were extremely limited, as were Shahar's English skills. Often, our communication was made difficult by the language barrier between us, despite our efforts to learn the other's language. I had been placed with Shahar and her family specifically because I was learning Arabic. I imagine that the in-home tutoring program coordinators figured that my beginner-level Arabic could help facilitate the tutoring process if any miscommunications arose. Luckily, the eldest of her five sons, a pre-teen boy named Azhar, was fluent in both English and Arabic. Having learned English quickly by way of immersion in the American public school system, Azhar patiently sat beside his mother for each lesson, keeping an attentive ear to the conversation in case he needed to provide a translation. I will

never forget these Sunday afternoons, where I often reflected on Azhar's role as a language broker in his mother's acculturation and language acquisition processes.

Language brokering is often a component of the migration and acculturation processes, wherein the children of immigrant families, having a greater proficiency in the dominant language of the new country, must serve as translators, interpreters, and advocates for their parents, like Azhar (Cline et al., 2011; Valenzuela, 1999).

This study is inspired by my time with Shahar and Azhar, my experiences as an Arabic learner and teaching assistant, and my academic focus on sociolinguistics and Arabic linguistics.

In this study, I seek to answer these questions: How do Arabic-speaking immigrants construct their sociolinguistic and cultural identities? How do their experiences with the sociolinguistic practice of language brokering influence the formation of these identities? And what role has language brokering played in their language attitudes and experiences immigrants and refugees?

In doing so, this study contributes to the growing collection of sociolinguistic literature on the language brokering process, specifically focusing on young Arabic speakers and their experiences within the multicultural contexts of their lives as immigrants in America.

Pursuing the study of language brokering from a narrative-based, sociolinguistic angle is critical to our understanding of language and identity in the context of immigration, acculturation, and cross-cultural communication. By focusing on the firsthand narratives and perspectives of those who served in their childhoods and continue to serve in the role of language broker, we can better understand the influences of the language brokering process on a speaker's linguistic and cultural identity, particularly as these identities are formed during and likely shaped by the brokering process (Bauer 2013; Guan et al., 2014). This study seeks to examine

Language Brokering (LB) from a cross-culturally informed perspective while considering how the LB process shapes and is shaped by the identities and experiences of the broker and their family. Much of the existing research in the language brokering genre focuses more on the impact of LB on children's cognitive development and academic performance, as well as the related "stressors" (Bauer, 2013) and less on the attitudes and identities of the brokers themselves. Moreover, Guan et al. (2015) noted that few studies work to examine the "contextual and social processes that underlie [the] outcomes" (p. 153) of LB, in addition to how various cultural and sociopolitical contexts shape language brokering, and even fewer consider LB as a practice in Arabic-speaking communities.

Thus, by using the narrative as an expressive storytelling tool, this study emphasizes participant voices and explores how language brokering and the social and cultural contexts behind it have come to shape their identities and experiences as immigrants and refugees.

2.0 Review of Literature

To better understand the current scope of sociological and linguistic research on the language brokering, I will discuss several pertinent topics to this study—the immigrant experience, the language and culture brokering processes, the implications of language brokering on adolescent development, and the influence of the language brokering process on the broker's self-image and identity.

2.1 Language, Immigration, and Acculturation in the Arab American Sociopolitical Context

To begin, it is useful to understand the sociopolitical and linguistic context of the communities that often rely on language brokering. Dorner et al. (2008) assert that the term "immigrant" tends to gloss over a wide variety of lived experiences, including but not limited to the "length of time in the United States, legal status, and social class backgrounds" (p. 522), as does "refugee," which can represent and, at times, gloss over a variety of experiences.

With respect to Arabic-speaking immigrant and refugee communities in the US, people from a "wide spectrum of economic, social, religious, and educational backgrounds" have come to Western countries "in the aftermath of fast-developing political and social unrest in the Middle East" (Guan et al., 2015, p. 152). A host country's sociopolitical context often shapes a family's acculturation process, and in doing so, the LB process as well. For instance, heritage language

use may mark language brokers as "cultural outsiders," in addition to any associated stereotypes, which may further affect those involved in brokering interactions.

To examine the complex and multifaceted relationship between language and speaker identity for Arabic speakers, it is crucial to first understand the significance of the Arabic language to the identity of its speakers, who might identify as being from a range of diverse backgrounds, including Middle Eastern, Arab, and others. Albirini (2016) notes that the Arabic language has been "the soul and the substance of identity dynamics in the Arabic-speaking world," effectively linking the Arabic language to the identities of its speakers. Moreover, the Arab League defines an Arab as "a person whose language is Arabic, who lives in an Arabic-speaking country, and who is in sympathy with the aspirations of the Arabic-speaking people" (n.p.). According to this definition, the Arabic language serves as the primary index of Arab identity. However, we know this not to be true for all Arabs, as there are non-Arabic-speaking Arabs. In fact, Albirini (2016) emphasizes the cultural plurality of the Arab world: "In the Arab context, multiple languages, ethnicities, religions, nationalities, and affiliations exist. Therefore, it is impossible to speak of identity as a monolithic concept. Arabic speakers have different forms of identity that converge, diverge, or even clash based on various factors." However, he asserts that the Arabic language "has always been at the center of identity dynamics in the Arab region" (p. 169). Albirini (2016) continues, noting that "since the dimensions of context are not uniform cross-culturally, the semiotic relationship between language and identity may be realized differently in different sociocultural contexts" (p. 123). Identities can vary greatly within a geopolitical region, in addition to varying across contexts of migration.

As for English, the language has become increasingly popular and widely-spoken in the Arab world, since the 1990s, "due to the rising political and economic prowess of the United

States," and its status as a colonial language in some Arab countries (Albirini, 2016, p. 83). Due to these changes, English is commonly taught as a second language to students in Arabic-speaking countries, often beginning in elementary school and continuing through to the university level. There is an observed growing salience of English used in Arabic discourse, particularly among educated speakers in Jordan and Saudi Arabia, and the growth of English is conditioned by broader sociocultural values, which "favor the instrumental view of language" (p. 120). However, with the increasing prominence of English in the Arab world, there is also a rising apprehension on behalf of the culture, more specifically that English may become a "facet of the Anglophone cultural hegemony that is sweeping across many parts of the world" (p. 83), in addition to the view of English as a threat to local language varieties and cultures, similar to the tension between dialectal varieties and standard Arabic (Albirini, 2016; Holes, 2004).

In the context of immigration to the US, the pressure to acquire English increases, particularly for immigrant children. Bauer (2016) notes the findings of Valenzuela (1999), in that the immigrant settlement and acculturation processes must be considered not as an exclusively adult process, but as a process that equally involves the children, who in some degree speak on behalf of, or "give voice to" their parents via the LB process, therefore facilitating the processes themselves. The Pew Research Center (2020) reports that as of 2018, among immigrants aged five and older, roughly half (53%) are proficient English speakers, "either speaking English very well (37%) or speaking only English at home (17%)" (n.p.). Albirini (2016) notes that "some Arab families seek to instill English in their children for practical purposes. From this perspective, language acquisition [of English] is motivated less by a sense of belonging and identity and more by pragmatic ends" for the family (p. 168). Yet, this acquisition is not always so cut-and-dry. In her *New York Times* essay "Racing to Learn to Speak English," Sara Rimer

(1992) poignantly describes the bittersweet reactions of immigrant parents to their children's acquisition of English. With pride and loss, they recount their immigration stories to the U.S. as motivated primarily by their children. Wanting them to learn to speak English fluently, so as to fit in and "feel at home" in the US, these parents felt a mixture of hope and fear for the possibility of their children, having acquired English as a second language, subsequently forgetting their L1s and with them, their heritage cultures. One mother, Rita Limanto, wrote to Rimer, "two more years, my children are going to forget their original language. They are going to be fluent in English." In the LB context, children often step into their role as brokers as they begin to acquire English. However, as their proficiency in English grows, there is sometimes an observed divide between children and parents—Rimer asserts that "it is a universal complaint of children that their parents don't speak their language [and] that may never be more true than it is for the children of immigrants" (p. 31). Further, in the familial context and with respect to the dynamics of independence and interdependence, Aroian et al. (2009) and Dwairy (2006) find that active coping skills for children "may be problematic for Arab youth when it occurs independently of parents," as the Arab cultural capital generally expects youth to respect authority, especially that of their parents.

In sum, the migration and acculturation processes are deeply complex and often prompt a renegotiation of identity for parents and children alike by influencing the language attitudes and dynamics of families and communities. In the current sociopolitical context of immigration in the United States, the pressure to learn English is stronger than ever (Albirini, 2016), sometimes further influencing the children of immigrant families to move further away from the heritage language as they acquire English (Rimer 1992).

2.2 What is Language Brokering?

When an immigrant family first arrives in their new country, parents are faced with numerous challenges, including securing family housing, parental employment, and education for children, in addition to navigating what is for many an unfamiliar linguistic environment. Moreover, the children of immigrant families are similarly tasked with new roles—as tutors, advocates for the family, and even "surrogate parents" in some cases. Within these roles, children find themselves interpreting and explaining, in addition to translating (Valenzuela, 1999)— thus assuming the role of a Language Broker.

In the technical sense of the term, language brokering (LB) involves "translating or interpreting on behalf of adult family members or siblings, e.g., in conversation with officials or professionals who do not speak the family's home language" (Cline et al., 2011, p. 207). Children typically begin their brokering between the ages of eight and twelve (Morales and Hanson 2005; Tse 1995), often within one to five years of their arrival to their new country (Antonini, 2016). Most language minority speakers— speakers who speak a language other than the dominant or official language in a given sociocultural context—are thought to have brokering experience regardless of where they were born, how old they were when arriving in the U.S. if they were born elsewhere, how long they have resided in the US, and even if other members of the family are older or more capable of brokering (Antonini, 2016; Tse, 1995). Moreover, language brokering cannot be isolated from its cultural context— more specifically, the immigration experience, which begins when the child leaves the country where they were born and continues long after their arrival in the new country (Antonini, 2016). Language Brokers, in occupying such a multifaceted role, thus generally demonstrate a high degree of communicative competence, a term originally coined by Hymes (1972) as a form of complex social and

linguistic knowledge which includes a speaker's practical linguistic knowledge of grammar, syntax, and vocabulary in addition to the pragmatic skills required to use language appropriately within the given communicative context.

In brief, language brokering is often a component of the migration and acculturation processes, wherein the children of immigrant families, having greater proficiency in the dominant language of the new country, must serve as translators, interpreters, and advocates for their parents (Cline et al., 2011; Valenzuela, 1999). This process, which requires brokers to exhibit and practice highly developed levels of communicative competence (Hymes, 1972), is deeply dependent on cultural, in addition to linguistic, communication.

2.3 Language and Culture Brokering: Two Sides of the Same Coin

For every language brokering scenario, there is the persisting question of language and culture—how are they related in the language brokering process? Among a myriad of applications, Language Brokering is consistently defined as a complex, ongoing process in many migrant communities consisting of the interpretation and translation between linguistically and culturally different groups. Often, LB occurs when a child who has learned the language of the new country—frequently, this occurs with a dominant language, like English—works as a translator, or "broker," on behalf of their family members to facilitate effective, cross-cultural communication throughout verbal and written communications (Bauer, 2013; Cline et al., 2011; Hall and Sham, 2007; Tse, 1995).

When a child is brokering, they are not simply translating—in fact, brokers often, consciously or unconsciously, influence the messages being transmitted, and may even be

involved in diplomacy between parties, decision-making processes, and other intergroup decisions (Tse, 1995). While LB is commonly referred to as a type of translation, Cline et al. (2011) note that LB is distinct from exclusively professional translating in that it requires consistent and effective cultural explanation, which is often more important in LB transactions than word-for-word accuracy. In fact, LBs actively participate in the processes of "negotiating and accomplishing required social goals" while bridging the communicative and cultural gaps between "local and national worlds" (Hall and Sham, 2007).

Some social sciences researchers have taken to using a similar term, Culture Brokering (CB), which refers to the brokering process more so from a cultural perspective, thus recognizing the necessary sociocultural skills to broker for others (Bauer, 2013; Guan et al., 2015; Yohani et al., 2019). Other researchers, particularly those in linguistics, sociology, and anthropology, have taken to using the terms interchangeably, in recognition of how brokers use both linguistic and cultural information together throughout brokering interactions. Throughout the brokering process, brokers must take into consideration the frequently context-dependent cultural values and social norms which shape each interaction, in addition to the linguistic information itself (Guan et al., 2015). Moreover, CB emphasizes the connective nature of the brokering process, wherein brokers connect their local and heritage social spheres, using both linguistic and cultural information in interaction, and these competencies are frequently viewed as analogous to one another due to their subconscious nature (Bauer, 2013; Keesing, 1974). For the sake of consistency, I will primarily be referring to the process as Language Brokering; however, this includes both the linguistic and cultural aspects of the process.

Simply put, language brokering cannot exist without culture brokering, as language and culture are inextricably woven together in the cross-cultural communicative contexts of language

brokering exchanges. Cultural cues and implicit meanings are often more important to the success of a language brokering interaction than word-for-word accuracy, setting language brokering apart from professional translation (Cline et al., 2011; Hall and Sham, 2007). Thus, the term "culture brokering" acknowledges the broker's responsibility to not only provide linguistic translation, but to serve as a bridge between cultures (Hall and Sham, 2007).

2.4 Language Brokering and Adolescent Development in the Familial Context

As the language brokering process is primarily understood in familial contexts, it is valuable to consider the ways in which a broker serves their family via the brokering process, in addition to how the responsibility of the brokering process may influence the broker's social, communicative, and cultural development, as many language brokers begin the practice at a young age.

Language Brokers are oft-regarded not as children, but as newly promoted professionals who must quickly learn to navigate the complex and sometimes-treacherous contexts of language brokering while facilitating the communicative task at hand. When and how a child becomes a broker can depend on a number of factors—their gender, their age at the start of their brokering experiences, the child's level of interest in brokering as an activity, and the parents' "degree of trust" for the child (Bauer, 2013). The LB process must be regarded as a multifaceted, fluctuating practice that, by nature, includes highs and lows for the broker, all of which carry critical implications for their development.

Dixon and Wu (2014) reference Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory, wherein the "microsystems" of the home and school "have a direct impact on the child, as does the mesosystem created by the interaction of home and school." Within the macrosystem of society, which includes "societal attitudes and policies toward immigrants," a child's development, as well as their understanding of how their home culture and practices are regarded, respective to the observed societal practices around them, are greatly influenced (Dixon and Wu, 2014, p. 216).

Over time, as a child grows older, their brokering responsibilities grow alongside them—for example, Antonini (2016) notes that primary-school-aged children generally express happy and carefree attitudes towards the LB process, which may relate to how they have yet to be involved in "complex and emotionally burdensome situations" of LB. However, these attitudes differ among brokering contexts, and in studying children in more challenging situations and brokering contexts wherein sensitive, difficult subjects are more likely to be addressed, brokers are more likely to report negative sentiments particularly "the fear of the consequences of mistranslating or misunderstanding what is being said [...] they translate for [...] people they love and have to deal with sensitive issues [...] from which children are generally shielded" (Antonini, 2016, p. 721).

Much of the research in the brokering field focuses on the burdens placed on youth by the brokering process. However, Bauer (2013) and Orellana et al. (2009) note that we can also learn a great deal from the benefits—whether they be cognitive, social, cultural, or linguistic—they gain through the practice. Depending on this paradigm and how LB is regarded in the developmental context, it can be seen as a burden that exploits youth, or alternatively, a means

for young people to engage with the communities around them while aiding in their families' acculturation processes.

For instance, Rainey et al. (2014) suggest that brokers are at risk for developing anxiety disorders and depression into their adulthoods, more so than their non-brokering, bilingual counterparts. Moreover, anxiety—particularly Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD)—was more present in those who began brokering at a young age (Rainey et al., 2014), and acculturation stress was experienced by those who perceived brokering as a burden (Kam et al., 2014). On the other hand, LB as a practice can be aligned with social and emotional development, as brokering is an "inherently social" practice wherein brokers gain awareness of their own and others' cultural backgrounds and identities (Guan et al., 2014). Nonetheless, the most realistic way to consider LB is how it exists in practice—as an activity wherein brokers and their families negotiate "independent and interdependent worlds" (Bauer, 2013; Orellana et al., 2009), while considering both positive and negative developmental implications for those involved.

Additionally, some language brokers must also navigate discriminatory contexts as they broker—they must decide what to translate, what to leave out, and which specific words to use if they choose to translate a discriminatory utterance. Frequently, a family's encounters with institutions of power occur in biased communicative contexts wherein stigmatization is commonplace (Bauer, 2016). In the brokering interaction, other incidences of discrimination may be heightened by a family's heritage language use, in addition to any visible religious or cultural norms. LB events such as these "can reinforce brokers' perceptions of discrimination against their ethnic group," and on a larger level, the process of brokering for families in contexts of discrimination is extremely elucidating for the brokers, who must directly confront the challenging realities of their parents' experiences as immigrants. Here, brokers must recognize

their “social realities,” contemplate why such events occur, and “actively select coping strategies that ameliorate their families’ negative experiences” (Guan et al., 2015). In doing so, brokers actively develop strategies to protect their family’s “dignity and integrity in contexts threatening humiliation or discrimination” (Bauer, 2016, p. 28). For these language brokers, there is an observed understanding, from an early age, of the role of agency, in addition to becoming “actively engaged in society” (Bauer, 2016, p. 32).

In considering the multiplicity of responsibilities that exist for language brokers, a great deal of the existing LB literature centers on the developmental implications the LB process holds over youth. For instance, around the world, interdependence is often credited as the “dominant cultural script for development,” wherein throughout the developmental processes, more value is placed on one’s relationships with others, rather than on developing their own independence. However, despite the Western view of adolescent development wherein more responsibility equals more independence, taking on more responsibility—such as in the LB process—may indicate a “process of growing interdependence,” as brokers assume more responsibility for those around them (Dorner et al., 2008).

The LB process frequently flips the script of familial dependence—under this new communicative framework, parents are now depending on their children, thus disrupting the hierarchical care model from parent to child (Bauer, 2016). Moreover, a young adult’s role as a language broker may stem from parental recognition of their growing independence (Fuligni and Pedersen, 2002). Other studies have discussed LB as a near-universal act of caring within the family unit—Bauer (2016) quotes Becker (2007), noting that “children’s informal caring roles in both developed and developing nations can be located,” which can help distinguish between children “who are involved in ‘significant, substantial or regular care’ and those children who

may be involved [...] at a level which does not have negative outcomes for the children themselves." Having considered LB in the context of caregiving, Bauer's (2016) findings often reflect Becker's (2007) concept of "'informal caregiving' on the 'care continuum'—that is, care given free of charge, often hidden and part of the private sphere of the family, founded on love, attachment, obligation and reciprocity" (26). In addition, childhood LB experiences challenge the "conventional notions of care as primarily gender-focused," in addition to the oft- "hierarchical flow of care from parents to children" (Bauer, 2016, p. 26).

In retrospective consideration of their roles as LBs, many adult speakers recognize how, as brokers, they contributed a great deal to their families, in addition to how the LB process contributed to a developed understanding and continued reflection of their parents' identities as immigrants in a new cultural context, as well as their own identities in respect to the larger society (Bauer, 2016; Guan et al., 2015). In addition, LBs understand the nuances of both heritage and new cultural norms, and "the challenges in mediating between those perspectives" (Guan et al., 2015).

As the language brokering process is frequently defined in regard to the family unit, it is crucial to understand specifically how the process influences the dependency script of the family—more specifically, how the family comes to depend on the broker, thus flipping the traditional parent-to-child flow of care (Bauer, 2016). Moreover, as many language brokers start brokering at a young age (Morales and Hanson 2005; Tse 1995), and as their brokering responsibilities grow alongside them (Antonini, 2016), it is also critical to examine the developmental effects of language brokering and its responsibilities on the broker themself as they learn to navigate their roles in society (Guan et al., 2015).

2.5 Language Brokering and Identity

In addition to understanding the influence of language brokering on brokers, their development, and their families, this study seeks to explore how a speaker's individual identity influences or is influenced by the language brokering process. Language brokers are often described in terms of a binary between the heritage and the new cultures, or having a combined perspective of heritage and new cultural norms (Guan et al., 2015), yet this leaves the question of identity and perspective unanswered. Therefore, there is great significance in recognizing how language brokers construct their identities, in addition to how the language brokering process may influence them.

Bailey (2000) defines "identity" as a socially constructed entity constructed by "socially counting [oneself as] 'the same' as others or counting [oneself as] 'different' from others" (p. 256). Therefore, our understanding of identity comes from how and why individuals identify with specific groups. The significance of language as a tool we use to define our identities is dynamic and cannot exist independently of the social dimension, and is context-dependent (Bauer, 2013). And, language seldom explicitly encodes social identity (Ochs, 1993).

Ochs (1993), by way of a social-constructivist paradigm, "illuminates cross-cultural similarities and differences in the production and interpretation of social identity (Gumperz, 1982)" (p. 86), in describing how speakers negotiate and express their identities through language—more specifically, the performance of social acts and stance-taking. Here, speakers, as members of communities, employ various acts or stances as a means of constructing themselves and others as "variably within some particular social status or social relationship" (p. 80). The rapport between language and social identity is not direct, rather it is "mediated by the interlocutors' understandings of conventions for doing particular social acts and stancing" in

addition to their understanding of how these tools function as "resources for structuring social identities" in group contexts (Ochs 1993, p. 289).

One narrative shared by many multilingual speakers, particularly those who grew up in multicultural contexts, is the "odd feeling of belonging nowhere," which sometimes can even inspire the sentiment of having a new, third culture, borne from the cultural contact and feelings of isolation (Paulston, 1978). The LB experience may intensify these feelings, as brokers must engage with all cultures at once in a productive, understandable way to their interlocutors. Bauer (2013) finds that LB participants placed themselves in multiple "hybrid and layered identities," which are informed by their bilingualism and LB experiences. Further, these experiences and identities served as a means of informing their senses of selves in the multicultural context of their brokering practices. In fact, LB may reinforce both heritage and American cultural orientations, as ethnic identity is "malleable and influenced by context" (Guan et al., 2015; Jaber et al. 2003; Nagel 1994).

In their study on LB and immigrant adolescents, Dorner et al. (2008) consider the response of a participant who describes:

> That's the thing, that I can't say what I feel in Spanish. I have to say it in English. And that's why [my mom] gets mad, because I can't say what I feel in Spanish to her, and I say everything in English. And then she thinks I'm making it up, but then I'm not. I don't know; it's just 'cause sometimes I like to say stuff [in English]. Like, right now, I couldn't say what I'm saying right now in Spanish, because it's different. I can express myself better in English. (p. 536)

Expressive capabilities often go hand-in-hand with speaker attitudes towards the languages they speak—when a speaker is more fluent or has the tools necessary to fully express themselves in a

language, they feel more connected to that language (Dorner et al. 2008). These feelings can be particularly amplified in cross-cultural contexts, such as that of the immigration context, resulting in the sentiment of having a lack of belonging.

In the immigration context, Guan et al. (2015) describe that, for their participants, the LB experience often prompted "reflection on social and cultural processes that then shaped how the children of immigrants saw themselves, their families, and the larger society. The young adults in this study displayed a nuanced understanding of both heritage and host cultural norms and of the challenges in mediating between those perspectives" (p. 155). In regard to the bilingual and bicultural contexts of the LB experience, brokers learn a great deal from their unique position, about the immigrant experience as a whole, in addition to themselves as individuals in the larger societal context of their brokering interactions. Additionally, participants in Bauer (2016) noted having a sense of freedom and power from an early age, rooted in their ability to "control the flow of conversations" and making "independent decisions about how much information to pass on" in brokering interactions (p. 31), contributing to a stronger sense of self, in addition to awareness of one's role in the societal context. LBs also demonstrate a high degree of emotional intelligence, stemming from their active work as interpreters for the experiences and perspectives of others, as well as their transcultural perspective-taking skills (Guan et al., 2014), both of which require the LB to possess a great degree of empathy for others. Given an LB's positioning between cultures and languages, in addition to their identity as immigrants or first-generation immigrants, they often develop a "meta-cultural" competence, which can facilitate their abilities to understand how the beliefs and actions of others are shaped by their respective cultural norms (Guan et al., 2014).

Additionally, in brokering contexts, it is invariably important to also recognize language and culture brokers as heritage speakers of the family's language. Heritage speakers were raised while speaking their parents' language and most often later shifted to speaking another, more societally dominant language as they were exposed to it, often in an educational setting (Albirini and Chakrani, 2016; Visonà and Plonsky, 2020). Often, a linguistic trajectory can be approximated wherein speakers are consistently exposed to the heritage language (HL) in the domestic setting throughout their childhoods, then come to use English or another dominant language in school, ultimately "losing" their HL with age (Albirini, 2016).

Because of this learning pattern, heritage speakers tend to demonstrate greater fluency in listening and speaking, while sometimes lacking in literacy skills. Others can understand spoken language, but struggle or are unable to respond in that language, a linguistic competence sometimes referred to as passive or receptive bilingualism (Baker, 2011). Beyond the linguistic plane, another significant aspect of HLs is the recovery or rediscovery of the speaker's heritage and identity (Heisler, 2020), which is often facilitated by HL acquisition or, in our case, the LB process, where speakers are continually crafting their realities, weaving between the newer language and the HL. In specifically considering Arabic as a HL, heritage speakers use the same colloquial Arabic dialect of their parents (Albirini, 2016).

In summary, the language brokering process often elucidates a great deal of factors for the language broker—how they see themselves and their families, their emotional intelligence skills, and their relationship to their heritage language and culture.

3.0 Methods

This study surveyed five Arabic and English bilingual speakers, all within my academic community at the University of Pittsburgh. Participants were recruited via networking within the department of Linguistics at the University of Pittsburgh, advertising, and snowball sampling. Having known the participants prior to the study enabled me to maintain a comfortable and conversational interview style, which was crucial to maintaining the qualitative, personal nature of the interviews, an important feature in much of the existing LB research. Bauer (2013) notes that the interview process enables participants and researchers to assemble and facilitate a dialogue between one's past and one's present. At the beginning of their interview, each participant selected their own pseudonym, which will be used to maintain their privacy and anonymity while discussing the data.

The study consisted of a brief, online demographic survey via Qualtrics, in addition to an in-depth and semi-structured virtual, recorded interview on Zoom. Each participant completed a survey and an interview, resulting in five completed surveys and five interviews, which were digitally recorded. The interviews ranged from 50 minutes to an hour in length. The demographic survey included some optional and open-ended questions, to allow participants a greater deal of self-expression. These questions touched on participants' ethnic and religious identities, in addition to participant age and initial location of arrival in the United States, for participants born in other countries. Other questions surveyed participants' first languages, other languages spoken, the highest level of education completed by the participant, the highest level of education completed by participants' parent(s) or guardian(s), and if the participant's parent(s) or guardian(s) is/are literate in their first language. Lastly, the required question "Have you ever

translated for family members?" was used to sort brokering participants from non-brokering participants.

Interviews were conducted on a one-on-one basis, between myself and a participant. I sought to conduct semi-structured interviews with questions organized by topics, inspired by Guan et al. (2015) and Bauer (2013), both of which used narrative interviews to collect much of their data. In expressing identity, the narrative emerges as a powerful social act and expressive tool. For this project, I wanted to emphasize the narrative as it focuses on the voices and perspectives of participants while also reaching levels of personalized inquiry far beyond the demographic survey. Bauer (2013) suggests that individuals construct and negotiate our identities through narrative accounts, quoting Hall's (1990) idea of giving names to "the different ways we are positioned by, and position ourselves within the narratives of the past" (p. 208). Speakers are constantly producing and positioning themselves and others through the active construction and reconstruction of narratives. With narratives, I was able to encourage participants to actively engage with and reflect on their previous and current language experiences.

At the beginning of each interview, participants chose pseudonyms that I will use to refer to them by, for privacy reasons. Participants were first asked to talk about their families and their immigration stories. From there, more questions followed up on the participants' language brokering experiences, in addition to questions about the participants' language attitudes and identities as bilingual Arabic-English speakers and immigrants or refugees, to explore themes relevant to the study's aims.

As is frequently practiced in LB data analysis (Guan et al. 2015; Antonini, 2016), participant narratives were coded for several themes, including moving to a new country,

familial responsibility, language brokering experiences, language attitudes, cultural pride, and personal identity. In addition, survey responses were coded to analyze patterns in participant demographic information, such as ethnic identities, parental educational backgrounds, and family literacy. In using a qualitative approach, I ensured that the analysis was guided more so by the content of the data itself, rather than by anticipated outcomes.

All demographic survey and narrative interview questions are listed in the appendix.

4.0 Results

4.1 Survey Results

Before examining the interview data, it is valuable to first consider the demographic survey's results, to better contextualize the participants and their narratives.

Of the five participants, four were female and one was male, and all participants were over the age of 18 upon their completion of the survey. One participant was born in the US; the other four were born in Egypt, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, and Syria, respectively. Of these participants, one came to the U.S. at the age of two, one came at age 11, and two came at age 17. Participants ethnically identified with the following responses: Arab, Lebanese American, Middle Eastern, Middle Eastern (Iraqi), and White. Three of the five participants reported Arabic as their L1, and two reported English as their L1. The participants who listed English as their L1 also marked that they did not have the same L1 as their parents or guardians. All participants, per the recruitment requirements of the study, reported speaking English or Arabic as their L2s, in addition to other languages including Spanish, French, and Turkish.

All five participants reported having previously translated for a family member— one initially marked "no" on the survey question, however, during the interview realized that her experiences qualified as language brokering and amended her previous response. Throughout the recruitment process, each participant I interacted with had LB experience. This was not a surprise to me, given the findings of Antonini (2016) and Tse (1995), in that most language

minority speakers are thought to have brokering experience, regardless of where they were born or their age of arrival to the US.

Survey responses indicated that for all participants, their parents or guardians are literate to varying degrees in their L1s, and have a wide variety of education levels, from having had no schooling, to some high school, to associate's and doctorate degrees.

Overall, the demographic survey results indicated that participants came from diverse backgrounds, which are summarized in the table below.

Table 1 — Demographic Survey Results

Gender:	female	male	female	female	female
L1:	English	Arabic	Arabic	English	Arabic
Country of Origin:	U.S.	Egypt	Iraq	Saudi Arabia	Syria
Age of Arrival (if born outside the US):	n/a	17 years	11 years	2 years	17 years
Have translated for a family member:	yes	yes	yes	no	yes

4.2 Narrative Interview Results and Analysis

To further explore their sociolinguistic experiences and identities, I conducted narrative interviews that provided participants with an opportunity to tell their stories and reflect on the language experiences they have had. Considering the study's research questions, which inquire specifically how Arabic and English bilingual immigrants and refugees construct their

sociolinguistic identities, and how their experiences with language brokering have accordingly influenced the construction of said identities, I analyzed interviews by first coding for several recurring themes. Respecting the topics included in the interviews, the following analysis is sorted, respectively, by themes—coming to the United States, family dynamics and responsibility, language brokering experiences, language attitudes, and identity. However, within these themes lie several other secondary motifs—responsibility, pressure, empathy, heritage, connection, duality—all of which, as reported by the participants, were a part of their lived experiences as language brokers, immigrants, refugees, multilinguals, students, daughters, sons, and friends.

4.2.1 Coming to the United States and the Acculturation Process

To fully understand the language brokering experiences of the participants, I first had to understand their backgrounds. At the beginning of each interview, I asked participants to tell me about their familial background—where they and their parents are from, how old they were when they came to the U.S. and what their first memories of the country were, what language(s) they speak at home or with their families, and more. From there, some participants described their experiences with the immigration or refugee processes, and others, their first moments of culture shock.

Four of the interviewed participants—Nelly, May, Sam, and Fatemah—reported having been born outside of the US, and one participant, Nancy, was born in the United States to Lebanese parents. Nancy identifies as a first-generation, Lebanese American. Nelly and her family were all born in Baghdad, Iraq, then moved to Syria in 2007, where they lived for a few years. They left around 2013-2014 and came to the US, where they currently reside. May and her parents are from Syria, and she reports coming to the U.S. in 2016 as a refugee. Sam and his

family are Egyptian, but he was raised in Saudi Arabia, where he went to school before coming to the U.S. as an international university student in 2017. Sam had previously visited a few times as a tourist but moving here for college was the first time he lived in the United States. Fatemah and her family are from Saudi Arabia. After she was born, her parents came to the U.S. to pursue medical treatments for her, then stayed to earn their MA and Ph.D. degrees before returning to Saudi Arabia. Since then, Fatemah has essentially lived in the U.S. her whole life, and often travels to visit her family in Saudi Arabia: "that's where my roots are," she explained.

In analyzing the participants' roles in the acculturation processes of their families, it is valuable to consider their initial immigration processes to the U.S. The four participants born outside the U.S. (May, Nelly, Sam, and Fatemah) had a variety of first impressions and memories from when they arrived— for example, May, who came to the U.S. when she was 17, remembers noticing the cultural difference of shaking hands with members of the opposite sex when a man held his hand out to her, wanting to shake her hand. She remembers feeling embarrassed and apologizing for saying "no," but in retrospect she liked how he respected her beliefs. Having grown up in Syria, May told me about her experiences in elementary and middle school, where "everything was separated by gender." Attending a co-ed high school in the states "wasn't easy," she explained, further noting that she would only befriend other girls, as she was "not used to talking to guys at all."

Another participant, Nelly, came to the U.S. when she was 11. She recalls first arriving in New York, then in Chicago, and how safe it felt because of how busy the cities were, even late at night—"It was really nice, it felt really safe [...] people are out at night in this place, this is normal." Nelly remembers feeling culture shock on her first day of school as a fifth grader— for instance, when her teacher entered the room, she stood up from her desk as a show of respect,

something she had done each day at the schools she attended in the Middle East. But no one else stood up, and the teacher signaled her to sit back down. Nelly recalled feeling confused at that moment, concluding in retrospect that "respect has a lot of different definitions." When she first came to the U.S., Nelly spoke no English, but learned it very quickly.

Unlike May and Nelly, Sam had visited the U.S. previously and knew much about American culture and what to expect, crediting Disney Channel for this cultural knowledge, in addition to much of his English acquisition. Yet, he still "took some time to adapt" after moving here for his studies as a college student. "I knew what to expect to an extent... just [...] food, and language, and stuff like that. But I think it was more detailed stuff about how [...] people feel, being here, that [...] was a bit different, that I didn't expect." By the time he came to the U.S., Sam spoke English fluently.

Fatemah, having come to the U.S. around the age of three, has very few concrete memories of this time. With this, she told me:

> I think one of the earliest memories I remember was one night, after [...] one of my surgeries... I think I was about three at that time. My parents had gone out for some reason, and I had to, like, get up [...] couldn't get up myself because I had [...] a procedure done so I had to [...] call the nurse. And that was like, the first, kind of memory I have of myself talking in English and having to communicate with someone.

Fatemah associates Arabic and English bilingualism with her first memories in the U.S., which she used to advocate for herself in a medical setting at a very young age.

By discussing their family backgrounds and immigration stories, participants laid the foundation for their language brokering narratives, all of which occurred post-immigration.

4.2.2 Family Dynamics

In examining the participants' roles as language brokers in their respective family settings, I sought to get a better understanding of the linguistic contexts of their brokering experiences, so I asked participants what language(s) they speak with their families.

Nelly, who speaks exclusively Iraqi Arabic at home, told me that she "has a rule" with her family to speak only Arabic together: "It's a rule that my mom made, because she thinks that it's really easy to become too American in America, so at home, we speak Arabic." Later on in our conversation, Nelly told me that over the years, her mom has chosen not to learn English.

> I went to a school that had a lot of Arabs, so I know [...] a lot of people who [language brokered] for their families. [...] Most of them that I knew [...] also came later in their life [...] but most of them [...] had parents that chose to learn English [...] I think it's different for mine, because I have a parent that chooses not to learn English, and [...] she refuses to. [...] It was different because I think most of them don't translate to their parents anymore. [...] Because I have [...] a best friend who teaches, who used to translate to her mom, but at some point, she was [...] teaching her English, and so she doesn't translate to her mom anymore. But I still do, because my mom doesn't wanna learn English. [...] She feels like she shouldn't have to [learn English]. She [...] feels so strongly against it and thinks that it's so unfair. And she also never wanted to leave the Middle East, it was a situation of we had to, so she just feels very strongly about learning English and is really against it.

Nelly clarifies that because of how they came to the U.S. legally via the immigration process, she and her family are technically immigrants. However, they lived in Syria during the war, and ultimately had to leave because of it. Nelly has eight siblings; "most of them are older than me,"

but she told me it was mainly the younger siblings who had to language broker for the parents. Nelly also notes her experiences having the responsibility of translating official documents as a stressor: “I [...] feel like I shouldn’t have to [translate], if there was an option for documents [...] I don’t mind translating for my mom while we’re [...] in public, but I feel like official documents should have the option of being in another language, like I remember being young, and it being very frustrating that I’m doing the translating, and the document not coming in Arabic for a household that [the government] know[s] only speaks Arabic.”

May speaks Shaami, or Levantine, Arabic with her family, as does Nancy, although she notes that her Levantine Arabic is specifically the Lebanese variety. May reported that she only speaks Arabic with her parents and has translated a great deal for them, but sometimes uses English with her sibling, who is a translator.

Nancy also speaks some English with her parents, and occasionally code-switches between the two, but notes that since she began studying Arabic, she speaks it more often than before. She also told me that when she talks to her grandmother, who does not know any English, she uses exclusively Lebanese Arabic. Nancy told me that she language brokers for her grandmother as well—“Obviously, for my grandmother, who doesn’t speak English, if we’re at a restaurant, or we’re out somewhere where the server is talking to her, she’ll tell me her order and I’ll tell the server.”

Sam speaks English with his family sometimes but uses Egyptian Arabic more frequently. He has translated for his father and extended family, and notes that his sister has as well: “I feel like she did a lot more [language brokering] than I did.” Although he speaks English, Sam’s father has relied on him for language brokering, in addition to a few other members of his extended family.

Fatemah speaks a lot of English with her parents, as well as some Saudi Hijazi Arabic, a dialect from the Western part of Saudi Arabia. She came to use Arabic more often with them as she grew older and got better at speaking Arabic and uses it "especially when I don't want anyone [else] to know what I'm saying... it's a nice little thing to have." Given her parents' proficiency in English, Fatemah does not language broker for them; however she has previously translated for extended family members.

Several of the participants expressed habitually assuming a sizable amount of familial responsibility through their language brokering. For example, Nancy noted, "I [translate] on a daily basis [...] I've always had to." Similarly, May told me, "I kinda feel like [language brokering] is more of a job for me," adding that it sometimes overwhelms her because she does it so often and it can affect her relationships with family members.

In sum, regardless of the language(s) they speak at home with their families, all five participants have reported engaging in language brokering at some point within their immediate and/or extended family units. For some participants, language brokering is a habitual responsibility, and for others, it occurs occasionally during family visits.

4.2.3 Language Brokering Experiences

Given their family settings and languages used with family members, participants reported having a wide range of language brokering experiences. These varied by communicative contexts, duration and frequency in their lives, and the recipients of their translations. Some participants, like Nancy, Nelly, and May, report frequently serving as language brokers for their families, who speak English at various proficiency levels. The other

participants, Sam and Fatemah, who live in the U.S. while their respective families live in Saudi Arabia, report brokering less frequently and mostly in situations with extended family members.

Wanting to go back to the beginning, I asked participants to tell me about their first memories of language brokering, if they remembered them. I asked them how old they were at the time, what their English level was like, and what purpose the brokering interaction served. From there, we discussed more recent language brokering experiences and how their roles as language brokers have changed over time.

May told me that her first time as a language broker occurred as she and her family were arriving in the U.S., at the airport. She remembers trying to find the right gate, and her father wanting her to ask for help at the service desk. At the time, May was 17 years old and spoke very little English—"it was kind of hard, like the beginning," she adds— but the customer service agent understood what she was trying to ask. She describes another early experience and one of her first successes in language brokering:

> When we came here, we used to go to the dentist with a translator. But the first time I decided to go without a translator and just be on my own and try to translate myself, I had the whole vocabulary that I might use at the dentist just printed out, and [I started to] memorize it. It was embarrassing [...] I think at the time, I wasn't going myself, it was for my mom, and the translator [wasn't able to go] so I was like, *"well, I'll just go, I'll try,"* [...] and it went well, and I was able to translate... but it was, I don't know, stressful [...] I didn't wanna mess up and say anything wrong, or not be able to translate [...] I didn't wanna be there and not able to speak English [with the doctor].

Years later, May still translates for her family on a weekly basis— "not only for interviews or doctor appointments, [my parents] want me to translate [...] letters or anything they get in the

mail," she specifies. Most recently, she recalls: "We were transferring primary care doctors, so I had to talk to the insurance and [schedule] appointments." But she notes that over time, she has come to translate somewhat less for her family, "I would say less, because [...] sometimes they can rely on themselves [because] they got used to the language, like if it's basic language, they can just do it themselves, but if it's like doctors, or [...] not the usual letters, I would translate it."

Now, as she reflects on what she has learned from her language brokering experiences, May describes that "I learn more [Arabic and English] when I'm translating," and that "I feel proud, because if I hadn't done [language brokering], I wouldn't be able to speak English [...] that's how I learned English, just by being put on the spot, or speaking up, or being on my own."

Like May, Nelly began language brokering very early on in her English acquisition, having spoken little to no English when she first arrived in the U.S. The first time Nelly recalls language brokering, she was 11 years old.

> I was 11, it was like three months after we came to the U.S., and I was translating official documents for my parents. Because when we first moved in [...] all of the mail that arrived to our home, one of the younger kids had to translate it, and it was mostly me, because I was really embedded into school, and I was learning English really fast. So it was either me or Google, but Google didn't do too well.

She continues, "it was a lot of official documents, like immigration services and stuff like that, but it was really serious papers, so I remember it being really stressful [like] I'm gonna mess up on something." At the time, Nelly's family relied on her language brokering skills on a daily basis, and since she was exposed to English each day at school, she immediately began to language broker.

Now, several years later, Nelly explained, “it’s just my mom now, that I translate for [....] I became better at it, so there’s that! But at first, it was like my older siblings and my dad and my mom, but now I just translate for my mom, because everyone [else] learned [English].”

Nelly also told me about some of the more difficult language brokering interactions she facilitated:

> On those official documents, I might have translated a thing or two wrong, when I was like 12 years old, and then my parents found out that I translated something wrong, and they were a little bit mad, like “*You were supposed to know better! You were supposed to help us!*”

She continues:

> I also translate to my parents when we’re in public together, like at the grocery store [...] and we’ve had cashiers get mad at us, as I turn to my mom and ask her for something in Arabic, [then] I turn to the cashier and I talk to the cashier [in English] [...] You could see people getting mad, sometimes [...] I think it’s just the fact that they don’t know what we’re saying, and sometimes unfamiliarity makes people afraid, I guess [...] Maybe they thought we were [saying] bad things about them? I don’t know, but I was just asking my mom where her credit card is, that’s all I was saying.

Another time, she recalls brokering in a medical context:

> I was the translator at all of my mom’s doctor’s appointments, and sometimes they’d ask very embarrassing questions that I didn’t want to ask my mom, but I had to ask my mom, because I was a translator [...] I think I just [...] lucked out with a very understanding mom [who] was okay with me asking her embarrassing questions, just because she just

> saw me as the translator at that time. Like, it wasn't her daughter asking her the embarrassing questions, it was the translator.

Despite having to occasionally translate difficult or uncomfortable conversations, Nelly found that the positives of language brokering outweighed the negatives:

> I loved [language brokering], I felt like I had a superpower that nobody else had! [...] I think knowing that, for some reason, I felt like it would have been embarrassing for my parents to ask someone outside of the family for help, so it was really rewarding to know that someone in the household learned English that fast and was able to help. I felt like I could be there for them, it felt really good.

She reflected on her favorite language brokering memory, a parent-teacher conference at school:

> One of my favorite times, [where] I felt really, really smart, was [...] parent-teacher conferences at school. And this was like, in fifth grade, and I remember my teacher and my dad meeting, and I was just sitting there, complimenting myself to my dad, as the teacher complimented me, but she was complimenting me in English, so I had to say it in Arabic.

In her language brokering experiences, Nelly recalls experiencing satisfaction and pride, for her linguistic and communicative abilities, for the service she provided her family, and for the praise she received and had to translate, in the case of the latter narrative.

Nancy remembers her first language brokering experience occurring in Lebanon, where she was visiting with family members.

> [I was] eight years old. [...] I think it was [...] one of the first times me and my family went to Lebanon. And I was talking to, like, my distant cousins who were more like best friends [to me] about [...] something in America, and trying to [...] explain it to them, in

> Arabic and English, because [...] in Lebanon, the kids are taught English, French, and Arabic. [...] I think that was the first time I ever had to explain something, or translate something.

Today, Nancy still language brokers—"it's almost a daily occurrence [...] it's more often than I think"—for her family. She explained, "it can be something as easy as me saying, '*oh, I'm doing this at work today*,' and then explaining," or, "it can be long segments [ranging] from a 15-minute conversation to a couple of hours." She chuckles, telling me that a simple brokering interaction of "*this is what I'm doing, this is what it means*" can become a whole conversation. To Nancy, language brokering plays a big role in her family bonds.

> My ability to translate for them has affected our relationship, just from the responsibility standpoint, they know I have this skill, I know I have this skill, so I step up when needed. And especially now that I'm the last child left in the house, there's that responsibility on me to keep up with what's going on, and [...] that opens up why I'm almost constantly translating, like on a daily basis. [...] Just being that constant bridge, that constant broker [...] especially with my grandma, and even with my parents, knowing Arabic, and understanding the depth of the language, is a game-changer and it's a part of the relationship that's just deepening as time goes on.

Nancy has primarily positive attitudes towards language brokering:

> I think [language brokering] is awesome! I feel very grateful that I can, and have been, because out of my extended family, as far as the first-gen kids go, me and my siblings are the most skilled in Arabic. And that's kind of problematic to me, it makes me nervous about the future of Arabic in our family. So, I'm definitely really grateful that I get to be that kind of model for the rest of my cousins, to be like, "*Well, you can do it! [Because] I*

> *grew up here, you just have to be consistent*," and then I encourage them, if they want to talk to me about Arabic [or] if they want to start learning some basic things.

Nancy's gratitude for her Arabic proficiency and kindness to others wanting to learn the language extends beyond her family.

> I'm helping my best friend's brother, who's also [...] Lebanese American, learn [Arabic], even though he's 19 and hasn't really learned before. But he's getting the basic stuff down really quickly! [...] I'm just happy to be that resource for people, especially [...] helping my family, it's a joy of mine, so that's also why I'm working to be a translator, even if it's like a side gig [...] just to help more people.

She concludes:

> The most rewarding [thing] is being [...] that link to two completely different worlds of language and being that bridge that can connect them. Especially [...] whenever my church has its festivals, and I'm one of the only younger people that speak Arabic, so these older Lebanese men will start asking [questions] and I'll be the only one to respond, in Arabic to them.

To Nancy, language brokering serves as a means of connection—for herself, her family, and her community.

Unlike the other participants, who recall having language brokered at a young age, Sam's first language brokering experience happened much more recently, only about two years before our interview, when he was 17 years old:

> We were at the beach, and it was me, my cousin, and my uncle, and we kept [...] drifting a little bit further into the [...] ocean, and then the lifeguard walked [over] and said *"oh,*

> *you guys better come back*," and then [...] we had him repeat it a couple of times, but then when I heard him, I translated it [for my cousin and uncle].

Since then, Sam has translated a few more times in similar contexts. When I asked him how often his family relies on him for language brokering, Sam told me:

> I'd say a good amount [...] My father is English-speaking, and he's [...] a doctor and he has a lot of [...] public speaking occasions when he has to speak [English], but [...] most of the stuff he's saying are scientific terms, so he doesn't worry too much about it. But [...] whenever it's like life interactions, he has me go do it. For example, if I have to talk to a hotel receptionist or something like that, he has me do it. Like if I need to make a call, I have to do that stuff.

Another time, Sam remembers his dad coming to visit:

> And again, my dad speaks English, he understands it. But because he has an accent, he gets a little shy from speaking it, so I never know when he actually isn't [understanding] something because someone has a very thick American accent, or [if] he is just too shy to speak. So, I tend to [translate] automatically, like that one time he came to visit, it was me, him, and a couple of friends. We went out to dinner, so I was constantly translating.

In this example, Sam emphasizes the use of his language brokering to make his father feel more comfortable in unfamiliar social settings.

Sam notes that he is needed to language broker "mostly whenever I need to be in America with my parents," who do not normally live in the states. When I asked him if his language brokering experiences have influenced his relationship with his family, he replied, "No, not at all [...] it's very neutral [...] because most of the translation I do for my family is

translating someone else's [words], so what I'm translating is not my own words, it's mostly like someone else speaking [...] and I'm just a messenger, and [my family] know[s] that."

With this, he adds that:

> I like [language brokering] because a lot of miscommunication[s] can happen, and I appreciate doing that, so I can make sure everything is clear on both ends [for] the people I'm translating to [...] [the most rewarding aspect is] just helping someone in need, someone who's unable to [...] communicate something, or someone who's unable to understand [...] I feel bad when someone can't understand. That's why, if there's ever one person who doesn't speak a language, I make sure that everybody's speaking their language, or I translate, but I would [sooner] resort to everyone speaking the one language that someone understands than to translating.

To Sam, language brokering functions as a useful tool in communication between linguistically diverse parties, both for preventing misunderstandings and for including others by ensuring their comprehension of the conversation at hand.

Unlike the other four participants, when Fatemah first filled out her participant demographic survey prior to her interview, she answered "no" to the question asking if she had previously translated for a family member. During our interview, I asked her about this, and she explained:

> I said no, just [because] I wasn't sure if family members meant specifically like, parents... I never really had to [language broker] for my parents, just because [...] they did do their [...] Ph.D. and [...] Master's, and [...] my dad is in the engineering and communications field, and my mom's [...] a nurse, so they're both in fields that require English, even in Saudi Arabia [...] I never had to [translate] for them, but [...] there were

> occasions growing up where my grandpa visited or [...] stayed with us for half the year and sometimes, I did have to [...] translate for him, because [...] he knew English, but there were, there are some words that you forget, or some words that you don't [know], that you're like, "*what is this?*," so it's just like simple words.

With this in mind, Fatemah actually has served as a language broker for her brother and her extended family members. Yet, she initially discounted her experiences, explaining that her experiences did not reflect those of language brokering that she was familiar with. After telling me about having brokered for her grandfather, she adds, "I've never had to translate in the sense of, '*my parents or my family are filling out this legal document and I have to tell them everything that's on here*.'"

Later in our conversation, Fatemah recalled her first memory of language brokering, which was for her younger brother, who had learning difficulties and only spoke English for a long time.

> Whenever we'd go and visit my grandparents in the summer, he sometimes wouldn't know what to say to them, and he had extremely basic Arabic skills, so I had to try and translate for him [...] I had to kind of be that bridge [...]The first memory I have [of language brokering] was with my brother [...] My grandma was watching us, and he was trying to tell her that he was hungry [...] and I don't remember what she had made for him, but he didn't want to eat it, because he was a picky child, and I [...] came down and I was like, "*why is there kind of like an argument going on?*" and I had to be like *"oh, grandma, he says he wants to eat this, and not what you made."*

Since then, Fatemah's language brokering services for her family members have generally increased in frequency. Looking back, she remarks:

> I think [my language brokering] definitely increased over time [...] I think my confidence in my Arabic skills have increased, I've been more okay to do this. Before, I would kinda just look at someone else and be like, "*you do it.*"

She concludes:

> I think [language brokering] is a really good skill to have, and honestly, I never even thought about it like this until you're asking me these questions now [...] It was always kinda second-nature to me [...] Even when I'd be talking to my parents and hanging out with my friends, my parents would say something and talk to me in Arabic, and then they'd want me to ask my friends something, and I would just do it. It's kinda like, automatic.

Fatemah also remembers times when language brokering experiences were difficult, and the people she was speaking with underestimated her communicative competence in the language:

> For a while, especially when I was in [...] early high school, late middle school, I wasn't as confident in myself as I would say I am now, and I would have distinct moments where my uncle or someone would be talking to me, in Arabic, and I would be fine [...] in the conversation, I just had a brain buffer [...] and then I would have my dad be like, "*oh, talk to her in English,"* like, *"she doesn't understand Arabic*." And that used to be frustrating, because […] I do understand, but I don't think you understand that what you go through, when you speak English, is the same thing I go through, but no one's telling you that you don't know the language. It's just the fact that you need a minute to process it, and sometimes people who are native speakers don't understand that. I wouldn't say that I'm not a native speaker, but people who grew up with the language, or think they're

> better than you [...] they're like, "*oh, you just don't know it [...] don't bother*," and I think that's the most frustrating part of it.

Fatemah does not think her language brokering has affected her familial relationships much, aside from occasions like these, where she learned to advocate for herself and her Arabic proficiency.

Some participants, in addition to language brokering for their families, also reported translating for acquaintances and strangers in public. May told me:

> I don't only translate for my parents [...] sometimes, like I used to work at Walmart this summer, and sometimes [...] when we get Arab families and they don't speak English and they have an issue or something, I would translate. Or sometimes, if we have a [...] neighbor or someone who needs to go to the doctor and they don't have a translator, I would [...] volunteer and go.

Later, she reflects on this type of experiences: "At the beginning, like when we came here, we needed a translator for everything, you know? [...] so helping or volunteering to translate for people makes me feel better, because I'm trying to give back to the community." Similarly, Nancy remembers brokering for non-family members in public spaces.

> A non-family example is [...] I'll be at the supermarket sometimes, and I'll, like, overhear a mother speaking in Arabic to her [...] obviously first-generation American child, like, "*oh, what is this*?," like, "*what is that*?" Or sometimes they'll be by themselves, and then I'll [...] greet them and start talking to them in Arabic and [...] try to help them with whatever. So, it can be random sometimes [...] it's a tendency.

In short, all five participants describe having a diverse array of language brokering experiences. Participants have brokered for their immediate families, extended families, and even other

members of their local communities, in a variety of settings, including at home, at restaurants and shops, at school, and at the doctor's office. Some of the participants, like Nelly, also brokered for written interactions, including paperwork and legal documents. While participants expressed having generally positive feelings toward their language brokering experiences, several of them, including Fatemah, Nelly, and May, have reported also feeling stress and pressure from the sometimes high-stakes miscommunications that arose during some of their brokering interactions.

4.2.4 Language Attitudes

In regard to the languages they broker between, participants had a variety of attitudes, feelings, and memories associated with each language, or sometimes both at once.

Nancy prefers speaking Arabic more than English— "if I didn't have to speak English, I don't know if I would as much," she explained, "because I just, like, have this love for Arabic so much." When I asked her what feelings she associates with Arabic, Nancy told me, "[speaking Arabic] is fun for me..." she laughs. She continues, touching on her experiences switching between Arabic and English:

> I guess I've been going back and forth so long, that it just feels natural. Other days, it doesn't feel as natural, like if I come back from university, from a day full of English, English, English, [...] then, it's a little difficult, and I feel that my accent's changed. Other days, if I'm, like, Arabic, Arabic, like, messaging the fam, sending voice messages on WhatsApp to my entire family in Lebanon, back and forth, it just... yeah, it feels natural. But in certain environments and certain contexts, like if I'm the only one in this [Arabic] class that understands every single thing that's going on, it's a pretty good feeling, but

> it's also like, "*I have this power... I cannot take advantage of it!*" [...] So there is an air of responsibility, with Arabic.

And for English? "I just feel normal," she grins. "English... I don't really feel anything towards English, even though you can go really complex, like really intellectual in English, at least for me. Like, I can twist words way more in English [...] than in Arabic. But English [...] is technically my first language, so it's always been normal." She concludes, "I don't know why, maybe it's a 'connected-to-the-roots' idea in my head, but I mean, English is the [original] language [for me], but in Arabic, I feel more connected to myself."

In terms of contextual associations, Nancy recognizes English for its instrumental roles in school or work, "professional things," she summarizes. On the other hand, she describes Arabic:

> Arabic is family, it's food, it's culture to me, it's heritage, it's like identity to me, honestly. It's connections, it's relationships... Arabic has a deeper, more sentimental meaning to me than English does. Because the memories I have attached to Arabic and the language, and when I speak it, [are] all connected to my core values and beliefs.

When I asked her if her language brokering experiences have influenced these associations and attitudes, Nancy reflects,

> I feel like it shapes and manifests them... because being that connection just means that can do more for the ones that I love and the ones that I care about, translating for, and it manifests this idea and belief that I have that everyone deserves to be understood in the way that they want to be understood [...] It just heightens this idea that [...] you have this ability— it's not even a talent, you have this skill— bridge this gap, because it's a big gap, so having that skill has just been a game-changer for my entire life, because I'm sure

> I was speaking in Arabic ever since I could talk, both languages were roaming around in my house.

To Nancy, language brokering serves not only as an application of her multilingual and multicultural identity, but a way to help those she cares about.

Like Nancy, Nelly told me that she prefers to speak Arabic due to the deep cultural and emotional associations she has with the language.

> 100% Arabic, any day, all day, I would love to speak Arabic in the street. It's a much more passionate language [...] it's so easy to express myself in Arabic [...] I like English because it can be so professional, but Arabic is so much more passionate, like that's the one way that I can describe Arabic—it's passionate. And I think it's more *me*, just because I can't describe my culture without using Arabic.

When I asked her to describe what she associates with each language, Nelly reflected, noting that she associates English with "calmness, education, it's like all the things [...] like college," and with Arabic, "I associate poetry, and art [...] music," concluding, "I have two parts of me, and all the passion too [...] All the things that make me human are in Arabic [...] but then in English, it's all the stability, all the education, all the learning, all the growth, the career... that's in English."

May mentions preferring Arabic, as it is her first language. She also describes the associations she has with each language, specifically for the cultures and the way she feels when she speaks them.

> I kinda associate the American culture with the language, and same for the Arabic culture and language [...] I don't feel embarrassed when I'm talking about anything in English. I feel more freedom, speaking [English], like when I'm speaking about anything.

> But in Arabic, we have limits, like we don't speak about everything [...] and it feels more restricted, I would say.

She concludes that for her, Arabic is associated with comfort, as it is her first language, whereas English is associated with expressive freedom.

Like May and Nancy, Sam prefers speaking Arabic, primarily as it is his first language and is thus more comfortable for him to use:

> I prefer speaking Arabic, because it's effortless to me... It's the language I've spoken my entire life since birth. I like speaking in English, but if it's not rehearsed, I feel like a lot of the things I say become repetitive.

Sam also speaks French fluently, as he attended a French school in Saudi Arabia. In terms of the associations he has with each language, "French is definitely academia [...] Arabic is home, that's like me. English is... I'd say, a front. That's a good way to put it." He gestures, "This is me, there's me, and then there's me speaking in English, because there's a lot of stuff to filter, and a lot of stuff to explain [...] I'd say I associate English with my social life."

When I asked if she preferred speaking one language over the other one, Fatemah responded,

> No, not really... but growing up, I used to prefer [English], like *'oh, I just want to talk in English,'* because I wasn't as confident in my ability to speak Arabic, or like my Arabic wasn't as good as it is now, but now I [have] no preference, I can [...] switch up between the two a lot more freely than I used to.

In terms of her language associations, "I think I kind of associate home with Arabic, and that's just because of the fact that all of my family is still in Saudi Arabia, and that a lot of them,

especially my grandparents, don't speak English [...] [there's] not really any association I have with English, like when I speak it or think of it."

As participants are all bilingual or multilingual speakers of English, Arabic, and sometimes other languages, the associations they have for a language can indicate the contexts in which they have used or learned that language. Nancy, Nelly, May, and Sam all prefer speaking Arabic, citing either comfortability with it as their first language, or the abstract yet comforting feelings of connectedness to their heritage and cultures. While Fatemah does not particularly prefer one language over the other, she also noted having associations of Arabic with home and heritage, much like the other four participants.

4.2.5 Language Brokering and Identity

In addition to their language attitudes, participants reported a variety of different feelings towards their identities as language brokers, bilinguals, immigrants or refugees, students, and family members, and many of these feelings were influenced by their experiences in language brokering.

Nancy reports strongly identifying with her LB experiences, in terms of how she perceives herself and her communicative abilities:

> I don't think I'd be who I am without [Language Brokering], without those experiences, without that [...] responsibility. I don't think I would've been as sharp in public speaking, or have a self-confidence that is this high when it comes to speaking in general, or [...] getting my opinions out there, or being outspoken. [...] When things need explaining, it's made me more diplomatic and understand when to speak in a certain way, like if you need to be more calm in certain situations or if you need to stand firm in other

> situations. So, it's allowed me to navigate and mature my voice from a young age. [...] I think it's definitely changed me in ways that I probably don't even notice.

For Nancy, language brokering has allowed her to find and refine her voice while advocating for herself and her family in a variety of situations.

Nelly reports having unconsciously internalized the translation process, to the point where she translates for herself, as she does for others as a language broker:

> [Language brokering] makes me a really complicated person, like even in my head. Because I not only translate to others, but I also translate to myself, like in my own brain, so it can sometimes get complicated, and I think it makes me a much more complicated person than I'd like to be, just because [...] whenever I hear something, in English, in my mind, I'm gonna make it Arabic, because it became so natural to me to [...] translate that now I translate everything I hear. I don't know why, but it just automatically happens and I can't stop it [...] In my head, I would really like it if I could just stick to one language, but I can't [...] I always have to switch.

According to Nelly, her experiences language brokering have extended into her internal monologue, prompting her to instinctively translate any linguistic input she receives, even if she is not actively language brokering for another person.

May reflects on her identity as a Syrian refugee and her experiences with language brokering. When she meets a new person, she explained:

> I don't say I'm Arab [...] I mean, I do, but sometimes, I feel offended [...] some people just ask me where I'm from just because they make an assumption that I'm not from here by [...] how I look. And to that question, I just answer that I'm from here. [...] But if that person is just asking because you know, he wants to know me, or know where I'm

> originally from [...] I would say that I'm Syrian [...] I don't say I'm a refugee but I always know I am, or I was at some point [...] When I introduce myself to non-Arab Americans, I used to use the name "B," because they don't say my name right, and it's embarrassing [...] and I don't like the way they say it, so I try to find a different name [...] When I worked at Wal-Mart, I would hide my name tag because some people would make fun of [my] name [...] in front of me.

Despite having encountered discrimination, May concludes that being a language broker has instilled a great deal of pride: "I'm a Syrian refugee [...] I know some people [...] I don't know, they look [negatively] at refugees, [...] but I feel proud of myself for being a refugee. Like, I'm a survivor, you know?"

Sam, who identifies as an immigrant and international student, shares many of May's sentiments. He explained:

> I definitely lie a lot about where I'm from, just to skip a lot of explanations [...] I never say I'm from the Middle East or anything like that, off the top. I'll give a bunch of other answers before I'll be like, 'Oh yeah [...] I'm Egyptian, or I grew up in Saudi Arabia.' [...] My go-to is that I'm from outside Philly."

He laughs, "It's [actually] like 15 hours outside Philly, by plane." When I asked him why he avoids telling others that he is from the Middle East, he explained, "Honestly, like I expect everything, and I remember, like [...] I just don't like to be in a situation where it's like, '*oh, what's that like?*' [...] and I don't wanna get [...] some ignorant comments that I don't wanna hear." He specifies, "the usual one is always like, '*oh, you're from Egypt, so like, do you live in a pyramid [and] go to school on a camel*?'" In terms of how he sees himself, Sam reflects,

> I don't entirely understand the concept of a third-culture kid, but I feel like that's like the thing that most people like me identify as [...] I feel like I'm a cultural chameleon [...] like I really blend in, wherever, you know what I mean? The other day, someone just said, "*you do not sound [like] anything not American*." People don't know anything, like people do not even doubt anything I say until I make it clear that *"oh, I'm actually not born or raised here,"* and they're like, *"wait, what?"*

Having language brokered for his family, Sam finds that "the more I translate, the more I feel like yeah, I definitely have a mix of cultures, you know, like [...] I've been in contact with several other cultures, the more I translate, and the better I get at it." He feels aware of his multilingual identity in social contexts: "If I'm in a community where [...] I'm the Arab guy amongst Americans, they're like, *'okay, he's the guy who speaks both languages,'* same thing if I'm in the Middle East [...] That's pretty much the role that I feel like the community has given me, like society has put on me." He adds, "I think I'm always thinking in both languages in parallel." For Sam, being a multilingual speaker becomes somewhat of a social identity for him.

Fatemah discusses how her language brokering experiences have contributed to her confidence, identity, and sense of self:

> I definitely think it has, because I've learned that I do have this ability to translate, I do have this ability to use the language of the place where I am from, and where my roots are from, and it kinda just boosts your confidence, to be able to do that."

Later, regarding her identity as a bilingual speaker and as an Arab, she adds:

> I think it's kinda strengthened my confidence in my Arabic, especially because I didn't grow up in Saudi Arabia, [and] I was more immersed in English than Arabic, and it just kind of helps to be like *"oh wait, so I do know what I'm saying when I'm talking in*

> *Arabic!"* Or [that] I do know Arabic, despite [...] thinking that I don't, a lot of the time [...] I think the language brokering also helped strengthen my confidence, or not my confidence, [but] my identity of being Arab.

Fatemah has lived most of her life in the US, thus she finds validation in her identity as an Arab and Arabic speaker through her language brokering experiences, which have strengthened her Arabic proficiency and allowed her to feel closer to her cultural heritage.

In following the topic of identity and self-perception, I also asked participants if they noticed a difference in their personalities when they speak one language or the other. One participant, Fatemah, does not notice much of a difference. When I asked her if she feels any different speaking one language or another, she replied, "No, not really [...] No, I feel like [how I act is] more related to who I'm talking to, rather than what language I'm talking in."

Conversely, the other four participants—Nancy, Nelly, May, and Sam—are very perceptive about how they speak and act in each language, which can further contribute to a sense of double identity in the immigration process.

Nancy told me, "My pitch changes... it does, my voice gets deeper in Arabic! Or, if I'm talking to like, the posh aunties, [...] it'll just get more round, the Arabic," she gestures to her cheek. "If I'm joking with my friends in Arabic, that's like a whole different personality, a whole different vocabulary." Nancy also notes feeling more connected to her faith, "100%," in Arabic—

> I love Arabic more in song, especially like church hymns and just religious hymns in general, more than English [...] because that's stuff you just can't translate into English [...] Having it all in Arabic is so deep and it just makes me nostalgic to masses back in Lebanon when we used to go every summer.

Nelly, when I asked her if she noticed a difference in her disposition in each language, affirmed enthusiastically,

> Yes, definitely. I think you would really like Arabic me [...] yeah, I think you'd love her! [...] I think that I'm completely two different people. I think of English me as the me in college, the me that's [...] going to class, the me that's studying. Arabic me is the one that's dancing at my friend's wedding, because I'm really happy for her.

May reflected on the differences between her outward personality in Arabic and in English:

> I used to be so quiet, when I'm speaking Arabic, okay? Like, I don't speak much. But now, it's kinda different [...] when I speak Arabic, [...] [I'm not] quiet, I'm not shy, like the English now. But I think [...] I don't know why [...] but I try to change my [...] personality. Like, I was a shy person, and then, I tried to change that in Arabic, and I did. But for English, I'm still trying [...] I don't know, it feels like I'm in two different [...] personalities. [...] Maybe because I'm not comfortable with [English], like I sometimes think about like maybe if I [say] the wrong word, someone will make fun of me [...] because, you know, it's not my first language.

Sam explained, laughing,

> I feel like Arabic is a little bit aggressive, there's a lot of sounds that are intense, like, for some reason, if I'm angry, the only way I can really express [myself] is in Arabic. If I get mad and I start speaking in English [...] I can't speak, I'll just try to [...] say something but I can't, and I just lose words.

Continuing, he notes that "I've been told I'm a little bit upbeat when I speak in English... Very loud, in Arabic."

To summarize, participants described their identities and personalities in a variety of ways—whether they describe themselves as Arab to others or not, if and how their language brokering experiences have influenced their senses of self, and how their personalities seem to change depending on the language they are speaking.

4.3 Summary of Narrative Results

In sum, the narrative interviews of this study provided participants with an opportunity to share their narratives while reflecting on their unique, personal language experiences and attitudes. This study's research questions inquire how Arabic and English-speaking immigrants and refugees construct their sociolinguistic and cultural identities, how their language brokering experiences have influenced the formation of these identities, and the role language brokering has played in their language attitudes and lived experiences as immigrants and refugees. As such, data from the narrative interviews addressed five specific, yet commonly-shared themes: coming to the United States, family dynamics and responsibility, language brokering experiences, language attitudes, and identity. To encapsulate the spirit of the narrative interview results, the following table includes three participant quotes from each theme.

Table 2 — Selection of Participant Quotes from Narrative Surveys

Coming to the U.S. and the Acculturation Process	Family Dynamics and Responsibility	Language Brokering Experiences	Language Attitudes	Identity
"Respect has a lot of different definitions." -Nelly	"I kinda feel like [language brokering] is more of a job for me." -May	"The most rewarding [thing] is being [...] that link to two completely different worlds of language, and being that bridge that can connect them." -Nancy	"I don't know why, maybe it's a 'connected-to-the-roots' idea in my head [...] in Arabic, I feel more connected to myself." -Nancy	"I don't entirely understand the concept of a third-culture kid, but I feel like that's […] the thing […] people like me identify as [...] I feel like I'm a cultural chameleon." -Sam
"I knew what to expect to an extent [...] food, and language, and stuff like that. But I think it was more detailed stuff about how [...] people feel, being here, that [...] was a bit different, that I didn't expect." -Sam	"[My mom] thinks that it's really easy to become too American in America, so at home, we speak Arabic." -Nelly	"I was 11, it was like three months after we came to the US, and I was translating official documents for my parents." -Nelly	"I feel more freedom, speaking [English], like when I'm speaking about anything." -May	"I think that I'm completely two different people. I think of English me as the me in college [...] Arabic me is the one that's dancing at my friend's wedding, because I'm really happy for her." -Nelly
"[Saudi Arabia] is where my roots are." -Fatemah	"I [translate] on a daily basis [...] I've always had to." -Nancy	"I feel proud […] if I hadn't done [LB], I wouldn't be able to speak English [...] that's how I learned English, just by being put on the spot, or speaking up, or being on my own." -May	"I think I kind of associate home with Arabic […] because of the fact that all of my family is still in Saudi Arabia, and that a lot of them, especially my grandparents, don't speak English." -Fatemah	"I don't think I'd be who I am without [Language Brokering]." -Nancy

5.0 Discussion

5.1 RQ1: How do Arabic and English-speaking immigrants and refugees construct their sociolinguistic and cultural identities?

The first research question of this study seeks to identify commonalities in how participants view themselves and their identities in the context of their immigration status and the languages they speak.

When I asked participants about their identities, many of them first responded with the labels they identify most with. Some participants, such as Nelly and May, strongly identified with the terms "immigrant" and "refugee," respectively. Sam, who identifies as an immigrant and international student, also used the idea of being a "third culture kid" to describe having connections to multiple countries and their respective cultures. Useem and Downie (1976) and Paulston (1978) use the term "third-culture" to describe those who have lived extensively in a culture outside that of their parents' during their developmental years or adolescence—because of this, the individual has different relationships with all the cultures they've lived in, while also sometimes experiencing a sense of detachment or alienation. Because of how brokers must actively engage with all involved cultures simultaneously during a brokering interaction, the process may intensify these feelings of isolation.

Nancy, who was born in the United States, identifies as a first-generation Lebanese American, thus describing her identity in a way that unites her two cultures. Fatemah, who has lived in the United States for most of her life, acknowledges Saudi Arabia as being where her "roots" are, as she was born there, and her family continues to live there. For the participants of

this study, the general term “immigrant” leaves a great deal unspecified, including country of origin, age, and motivations behind migrating (Dorner et al., 2008). However, departing from the cut-and-dry label of “immigrant” or “refugee,” each participant further identified themselves in a unique way.

Another recurring theme in the identities of participants is discrimination. Bauer (2016) and Dixon and Wu (2014) mention that language brokers frequently face the “social realities” of discrimination due to their position in understanding both heritage and new cultures. Through these realities, brokers come to understand how their home language and cultures are regarded. In their narrative interviews, both May and Sam discuss having encountered negative stereotypes from others for their identities. Thus, they frequently avoid telling others where they are from, or that they are Middle Eastern. Instead, both participants respond simply, saying that they are from Pennsylvania. Sam does this to avoid ignorance and jokes from others, and May acknowledges that many people have negative associations with refugees and are often quick to make assumptions about her.

Additionally, the language attitudes and associations of participants further illustrated their identities and self-perceptions—several participants, including Nancy, Nelly, and Fatemah, associated Arabic with ideas—both abstract and tangible—of home, family, comfort, roots, culture, spirituality, and heritage. As noted by Albirini (2016), Arabic, “the soul and substance of identity dynamics,” plays a significant role in the identities of Arabs around the world.

As for English, some participants, particularly Nancy, Nelly, May, and Sam, noted a strict demarcation between the realms of their Arabic associations with that of their English. A commonly mentioned association with English was academia—university, post-graduate studies, and career goals. Otherwise, for Sam, English represents a type of socially engaged mask or

"front" that he employs in social interactions, and May noted her associations of English with freedom. Contextually, these associations represent the environments where participants use English the most—at school, at work, or with friends. These four participants also noted exhibiting different personality traits, including confidence, expressiveness, and sociability, as well as different linguistic styles, including volume and pitch, all of which were respectively associated with the language being spoken. Sam describes his incapacity for expressing his anger in English, directly opposing a narrative mentioned in Dorner et al. (2008), where a participant describes only being able to describe their emotions in English, rather than their heritage language. Unlike the other four participants, Fatemah described changing her general disposition more so based on her interlocutor. In considering the social-constructivist paradigm (Ochs 1993), the participants of this study position themselves within their respective identities depending on the context, language, or social relationship. The language associations and attitudes held by each participant further indicate the contexts of their multilingual identities—when and where they use Arabic versus when and where they use English, and the unique experiences they've had using each language.

5.2 RQ2: How have their experiences with language brokering influenced the formation of these identities?

The second research question of this study investigates the role language brokering has played in the identities and self-image of participants.

As noted by Guan et al. (2015), multiple participants noted how the language brokering process has prompted them to feel somewhat divided or experiencing a type of duality between

versions of themselves, divided between Arabic and English, and their heritage cultures and U.S. culture. Like the findings of Bauer (2013) this duality can grow into a "hybrid identity" informed by a language broker's lived experiences in multiple cultures, which is well-summarized in Sam's comment, "I feel like a cultural chameleon," and Nelly's response that language brokering "makes me a really complicated person."

Nancy, May, and Fatemah reported having grown more confident in themselves and their voices in their families, communities, and larger society because of their language brokering experiences. These sentiments are similar to the those of the participants in Bauer (2016) who found empowerment in their ability to control conversations via the brokering interactions they partook in and the participants in Guan et al. (2015) who learned from and reflected on the social and cultural processes of their language brokering. In addition, Nelly's positive and empowering experiences as a language broker in the context of parent-teacher conferences at school echo the findings of Bauer (2013), wherein participants effectively constructed positive moral identities for themselves in the same context, as they are in a position of control in the conversation.

Fatemah, having grown up primarily in the U.S., finds solace and validation in her language brokering, which both improves her Arabic skills and allows her to feel more connected to her Arabic identity, her culture, and her "roots" as she describes. For Fatemah, having a way to frequently use and engage with her heritage language doubles as having a way to express herself and further discover her identity (Heisler, 2020).

Additionally, May and Nelly, who stepped into their roles as language brokers shortly after beginning to learn and acquire English, noted that the process had a positive effect on their language learning and English skills, further strengthening their self-confidence. These linguistic

gains (Bauer, 2013; Orellana et al., 2009) are commonly experienced benefits of the language brokering process.

Finally, some participants, particularly Nancy, reported that having language brokered effectively changed who they are: "I don't think I'd be who I am without [Language Brokering]," she summarizes. More specifically, Nancy credits her self-confidence, her communication skills, and her self-expression abilities to her language brokering experiences. As documented by Bauer (2013) and Orellana et al. (2009), a great deal of cognitive and social benefits can be associated with the practice of language brokering.

5.3 RQ3: What role has language brokering played in participant language attitudes and experiences as immigrants and refugees?

The third research question of this study inquires about how language brokers view their language brokering experience in the greater context of their multilingual identities and their family's immigration experiences.

Participants reported developing a larger sense of cultural awareness through their experiences in language brokering (Bauer, 2016; Guan et al., 2015), in addition to awareness of their own places in larger society as individuals with nuanced understandings of both groups of cultural norms (Guan et al., 2015). For example, Sam considers the social awareness his identity has given him, and how he can effectively "fit in" to any place due to his cultural understanding, language brokering experiences, and fluency in multiple languages.

Additionally, Nancy and May both reported having extended their language brokering services to community members outside of their family, echoing the findings of Guan et al.

(2014) and thus displaying an increased sense of cultural empathy and transcultural perspective-taking skills (Guan et al., 2014) while demonstrating an active engagement in their community (Bauer, 2016). Similarly, Sam notes feeling a heightened sense of empathy for others, which informs and is informed by his language brokering experiences. His unique position as a multilingual "third culture kid" and language broker reinforces his cultural empathy and perspective-taking skills (Guan et al., 2014) as he endeavors to prevent miscommunication while ensuring that everyone in the conversation can understand and be understood, effectively serving as the bridge between different "worlds" (Hall and Sham, 2007). These acts of community care fall under the concept of "informal caregiving" on Becker's (2007) care continuum, wherein participants offer their language brokering services for free, that are founded on the notions of love, reciprocity, and responsibility for those they care for. For these participants, language brokering exists not only as a mechanism to care for their family, but one to also care for and engage with their surrounding community.

In terms of participants' family dynamics, some participants, including Nancy, Nelly, and May, considered language brokering to have had a significant effect on their relationships to their family members. According to Bauer (2013), part of a child's language brokering is determined by the parents' "degree of trust" in the child, in addition to other factors including the child's personal interest in participating. For example, Nancy, who notes having felt a high degree of interest in language brokering, finds that knowing Arabic well and being able to translate for her family has contributed to their "deepening" relationship that grows stronger over time. In some cases, language brokering is needed to the extent where it effectively alters the dynamic of interdependence within the family unit—for example, when Nelly's family first came to the US, she language brokered for several of her family members. As time went on and

they learned more English, they became less dependent on her, as they were able to communicate for themselves. However, Nelly's mom, who chose and still chooses not to learn English for personal reasons, remains dependent on Nelly as a language broker, which "disrupts the hierarchical care model" from parent to child (Bauer, 2016).

With the responsibility of an altered dependency script, challenges can arise for language brokers. For Nelly, language brokering became stressful when she had to translate official, documents from the government, feeling the pressure of a "complex and burdensome" situation, as she was afraid of the consequences for misinterpreting or mistranslating something, as mentioned in Antonini (2016). Similarly, there was a pressure for May to translate accurately on behalf of her mother, and feelings of embarrassment for having to bring along a vocabulary list to a dentist appointment early on in her language brokering experiences. Others, like Sam, noticed less of a difference, citing that both he and his family objectively consider him to be more of a "messenger," therefore the messages he translates are not his own words, rather his translations of another's words.

6.0 Conclusion

This study further elucidates several qualitative implications of the language brokering process, as well as illustrating the value of narrative-based sociolinguistic research. The five participants interviewed in this study, in providing their narratives, demonstrated how they negotiate, construct, and express their identities in cross-cultural, multilingual settings through the languages they speak, labels and identifiers they use, and communities they belong to. Further, participants described how they have engaged with language brokering over time, and how their engagement as language brokers has influenced their self-images, language attitudes, relationships with their families, and lived experiences as Arabic- and English-speaking immigrants and refugees. For these participants, language brokering served as a conduit for responsibility and care within the family unit, empathy for others, improved communication skills, language acquisition and linguistic confidence, connection and community engagement, and the continued discovery and maintenance of personal connections to their heritage cultures. Language brokering, while a complex and challenging linguistic practice, is crucial in the acculturation processes of immigrant and refugee families. As described by the participants of this study, language brokering is more than translation—it is connecting and bridging the gap between groups and their respective backgrounds, therefore allowing families to engage with their new communities during and long after the acculturation process.

7.0 Limitations and Future Research

One limitation of this study is the participant pool—all five participants were undergraduate students that I recruited from within my academic community at the University of Pittsburgh. As students, the similarities and familiarity between myself and my participants may have allowed for a more comfortable interview environment; however, their responses to me may have been less candid or direct than they might have been with a total stranger, someone with whom nothing was at stake. Additionally, it would have been valuable to speak to more participants from other ages, communities, and recruitment backgrounds. For future studies, it may be of interest to recruit from a variety of communities, to better represent the diversity of the immigrant and refugee communities and their language experiences. With this, another limitation is the quantity of participant interviews. I chose to interview no more than five participants as I wanted to give each participant a substantial amount of attention in the data analysis, a larger subject pool would likely have provided the study with a richer, more diverse quantity of responses.

In addition to the participant pool, there are several limitations in the design of this study. For instance, it may have been more natural and less interview-like to simply prompt subjects to "tell me about a time where...," which would give them more space to tell their stories. Moreover, I did not inquire about participant socioeconomic status beyond asking for their and their families' levels of education in the demographic survey, nor did I inquire about participants' families' reasons for coming to the United States. I felt this to be unnecessary, as the study pertains less to the immigration process itself and more to the post-migration acculturation

process, yet it may have provided additional context to the participants' narratives, in addition to opportunities for participants to voice their ideas, memories, and attitudes.

As well as recruiting a larger and more diverse participant pool and exploring more specific themes, future research inspired by this study can take a variety of approaches. It would be of merit to examine language brokering experiences in specific communicative contexts, such as in patient-provider interactions in medical environments, which would allow for a cross-disciplinary exploration of sociolinguistics in the healthcare setting, or in government correspondences, which could be examined from a legal and social services perspective. These scenario-specific studies could examine not only how the context shapes the brokering interactions, but to further explore any context-specific challenges for language brokers and others involved in the communication process.

In taking more of a language acquisition standpoint, it could be enlightening to work with families over the course of their acculturation and English-learning processes. Here, it would be interesting to measure the family's reliance on language brokering over time: does it change once more family members have learned English?

In sum, I consider this study to contribute to an ongoing, long-term dedication to better understand the language brokering process and the implications it holds for those involved. As language brokering can occur in a wide variety of contexts, the topic is worth exploring to better serve and understand migrant and refugee communities in healthcare, legal, and educational settings and throughout their acculturation processes.

Appendix A : Demographic Survey Questions

1. Are you over the age of 18?
    a. Yes or No
2. What gender do you identify as?
    a. Female, Male, Non-Binary, prefer not to say, prefer to self-describe (text entry)
3. Please specify your ethnicity/ethnic identity (text entry)
4. If applicable, please specify your religion (text entry)
5. What is your first/native language? (text entry)
6. What other language(s) do you speak? (text entry)
7. Do you have the same first language as your parent(s) or guardian(s)?
    a. Yes or No
8. Is/are your parent(s) or guardian(s) literate in their first language?
    a.Yes or No
9. Have you ever translated for family members?
    a. Yes or No
10. What country were you born in? (text entry)
11. (If applicable): At what age did you come to the United States? (text entry)
12. (If applicable): Where in the United States did you first live? (text entry)
13. What US state are you currently living in? (text entry)
14. What is the highest degree or level of education you have completed?
    a. No schooling completed; Some high school, no diploma; High school graduate, diploma or equivalent (ex. GED); Trade, technical, or vocational training; Some

college, no degree; Associate's degree; Bachelor's degree; Professional degree; Doctorate degree; Prefer to self-describe (text entry)

15. What is the highest degree or level of education your parent(s) or guardian(s) has/have completed?

    a. No schooling completed; Some high school, no diploma; High school graduate, diploma or equivalent (ex. GED); Trade, technical, or vocational training; Some college, no degree; Associate's degree; Bachelor's degree; Professional degree; Doctorate degree; Prefer to self-describe (text entry)

Appendix B : Narrative Interview Questions

These questions served as a general model which guided my conversations with participants; therefore, actual questions have varied depending on participant responses. All questions asked related to the general purpose and research questions of the study.

1.Tell me about your family's background...

    0. Where are your parent(s) from?
    1. Where are you from?

2. (If born outside the US) When did you first come to the US?
    0. If you remember, what were your first memories of the US?
    1. Did you experience any culture shock?
3. What language(s) do you speak with your family?
    0. (If Arabic): What dialect of Arabic do you speak with your family?
4. What language do you use more at home—English or Arabic? Or another language?
    0. Do you think that's changed over time?
5. Do you ever code-switch or use the languages at the same time?
    0. How often do you do this?
    1. In what contexts?
    2. Do you think that's changed over time?
6. Have you ever found yourself in a position where you volunteered or had to translate for your family?

0. What is your first memory of language brokering, or translating for a family member?
    0. How old were you?

7. How often did your family rely on you for language brokering? For how long?
    0. Do you still serve as a language broker for them?
        0. If not, when did you stop?
    1. When is the last time you remember having to do this?
    2. Has that changed over time?
8. How do you feel about translating?
    0. Did you ever find It difficult or challenging?
        0. What were the most difficult aspects of the process?
    1. Did you ever find it rewarding?
        0. What were the most rewarding aspects?
9. Did you ever have any bad experiences or embarrassing situations when you were translating?
    0. Did you ever have to translate something you found uncomfortable? If so, how did you navigate the situation?
10. What do you do if you don't know the word in one of the languages?
    0. Does this tend to happen in certain situations?
    1. Do you remember a specific example of this?
11. Are there any particular aspects of the Arabic language that are difficult to translate, and why?

    0. What do you do about the invocations of God when translating from Arabic to English (*inshallah, mashallah,* etc.)?
        0. What do you do when you need to use these Arabic expressions, but in English?

12. Are there particular aspects of the English language that are difficult to translate, and why?
13. We've been talking more about aspects of the languages themselves, but what about cultural differences?
    0. Are there cultural differences between Arab and American cultures that make translating difficult?
14. Do you have any specific memories or stories of language brokering that you want to share?
    0. Looking back on them now, how do you feel about them?
15. Do you recall any specific strategies you used to translate or interpret?
16. During the time period when your language and culture brokered for your family, did you know anyone else who helped their families in this way?
    0. If so, how do you think your experiences compared to theirs?
17. Has translating for your family affected your relationships with them?
    0. If yes, how?
18. How do you describe your identity to others?
19. How do you see yourself?
20. Do you think that language brokering has influenced how you see yourself?
    0. If so, how?

21. How do you describe your own identity to someone who asks you about it?
22. How do you describe your identity to Arab-Americans and non-Arab Americans?
    0. Is there a difference?
23. Does your language brokering experience play a role in your bilingualism or your identity as a bilingual?
24. What about your identity as an individual?
25. What about your identity as a member of your communities?
26. Do you think these identities have changed over time?
27. Do you prefer speaking one of your languages more than the other?
28. How do you feel when speaking each language?
29. Do you notice a difference in personality, attitudes, how you carry yourself, etc. when speaking each language?
30. What feelings, attitudes, or experiences do you associate with each langauge?
31. Have you studied Arabic in an academic context?
    0. If so, for how long?
    1. If so, why?
32. Do you study other languages?
    0. If so, for how long?
    1. If so, why?
    2. If so, do the other languages you've studied affect your bilingual identity?
33. Do you think your experiences might have been different if you were a different gender?
34. Do you think your experiences might have been different if you were translating another language?

35. Are there any questions I forgot to ask you?
36. Do you have any other information that you want to share with me about your experiences?
37. Are there any other experiences or stories you'd like to share that I haven't asked about?

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