

THE ROLE OF PERCEIVED ETHNIC IDENTITY IN MINORITY
CATEGORIZATION OF LATINO TARGETS

By

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ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

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Research has yet to explore how engagement in cultural practices drive inferences about a target's ethnic identity. I test the hypothesis that expertise in a cultural practice, referred to as cultural fluency, leads to inferences about a target's ethnic identification, but *only* to the extent that the cultural practice is seen as requiring effort. We randomly assigned participants to two different language prime conditions in which they either (1) read an article highlighting language as an acquired skill (requiring effort) or (2) a control article. They then evaluated either a Spanish-speaking (high cultural fluency) or French-speaking (low cultural fluency) Latino candidate for a minority internship, rating the target's ethnic identification, ethnic effort, minority categorization, and appropriateness for affirmative action. Contrary to our hypothesis, the language prime did *not* moderate the effect of cultural fluency (Spanish-speaking ability) on minority categorization, and moderated the effect of cultural fluency on ethnic identity in an unexpected direction. We discuss related results, possible methodological issues, and the implications of our findings for how cultural knowledge affects perception.

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The Role of Perceived Ethnic Identity in Minority Categorization of Latino Targets

Ethnic minorities experience unequal access to opportunities and resources. Prejudice in the forms of social exclusion, stereotypes threatening their humanity, and other derogatory cultural assumptions are only a few of the difficulties ethnic minorities face in the U.S. (Allport, 1954; Devine, 1989). As a result of their minority status, they continue to experience job discrimination and prejudice in career and educational sectors (Garcia, Erskine, Hawn, & Casmay, 1981; McWhirter, 1997).

One of the first steps taken by the US government to address the issue of discrimination and unequal access for ethnic minorities was affirmative action. Signed by President Johnson during the civil rights era, the intent of affirmative action was not only to encourage employers to *avoid* hiring discrimination, but to take steps to *assure* that minority groups were treated equally (Crosby 1994). Initially vague in specifying the measures for addressing unequal treatment, affirmative action soon evolved to explicitly state that corrective measures to discrimination (e.g. the encouraged and, for some institutions, quota-driven hiring of disadvantaged groups) were necessary in hiring procedures. Over forty years since it was first approved, the practice continues to draw much controversy (Bossuyt, 1998).

Opponents of affirmative action state that there is no stable or concrete definition of the term “minority.” Some scholars have pointed out that in a number of societies, the minority actually constitutes a numerical majority, and that the status of disadvantaged groups changes over time (Crowley, 2001). In his report to the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, Bossuyt (1998) notes the difficulty of quantifying “how black” someone is for affirmative action in a multicultural and multiracial society. He

asks whether second and third generation immigrants should legally receive affirmative action, and whether children of mixed marriages should be considered minorities. These dilemmas highlight the need for research on exactly which individuals perceivers consider to be ethnic minorities and thus, who they believe should receive affirmative action benefits.

Ethnic Minority Categorization

The characteristics defining those eligible for affirmative action policies generally focus on which *groups*, rather than *individuals*, qualify as minorities. According to Wagley and Harris (1964) minority groups are primarily distinguished by experiences of discrimination and the self-consciousness of their minority categorization (i.e. knowledge that they are minorities). While some scholars debate about which groups currently fulfill that definition, in the US, the identity of these historically disadvantaged ethnic minority groups (e.g. Blacks, Latinos, etc.) are well-known (Zanden, 1983). However, there is considerable debate over how we categorize particular individuals into each of those groups (Glazer, 1978). Namely, on what basis do we categorize someone as an ethnic minority, and hence, eligible for affirmative action? Latinos may be appropriate candidates for affirmative action benefits, but how do we determine who is Latino? While much of the literature on affirmative action addresses what constitutes an ethnic minority group, little work focuses on how we categorize individuals as ethnic minority members.

Outside of affirmative action contexts, recent work suggests that there are physical and personality attributes that result in greater racial bias and discrimination, and hence may lead to categorization as a minority. For example, darker skin tone may play

an important role in person perception (Maddox, 2004; Maddox & Gray, 2002). Maddox and Gray (2002) have shown that the skin tone of a target (as dark- vs light-toned) predicts whether perceivers employ negative stereotypes regarding Blacks (e.g. aggressive). Indeed, the likelihood that minorities, themselves, report discrimination is heightened by their physical similarity to ethnic minority prototypes (Espino & Franz, 2002, Maddox 2004). Prototypical ethnic features like skin tone not only specify who is likely to experience prejudice, but may also relate to who people view as likely to experience discrimination and, in turn, who people view as ethnic minorities.

Because affirmative action is typically intended to benefit a disadvantaged minority, the presence of racial/ethnic markers (e.g. darker skin tone, knowledge of cultural practices) that indicate both minority categorization and experiences of prejudice may increase one's perceived worthiness for affirmative action. Preliminary work examining the role of cultural practices in guiding perceptions of minorities found Spanish language ability to be one indicator of the extent to which one is viewed as a minority. Sanchez and Chavez (in press) instructed participants to evaluate the resume of a Latino minority internship candidate who was either fluent in Spanish and English or in English only. They found that, controlling for differences in perceived competence, bilingual candidates were more likely to be categorized as minorities than monolingual candidates. Furthermore, minority categorization predicted how worthy the targets were for affirmative action. These findings propose that minorities who have the appropriate ethnic markers are more likely to be seen as minority group members and appropriate for affirmative action than minorities who lack these qualities.

Language Ability and Ethnic Identification

Language ability may not merely convey a target's minority categorization, but perceivers are also likely to make inferences about targets' ethnic self-identification. While minority categorization refers to the extent to which a person is viewed as belonging to a particular category (e.g. He is Latino), scholars, like Phinney (1990), suggest that ethnic identification is more multifaceted, and indicates some degree of personal commitment to the group. Furthermore, self-categorization as Latino and attachment to other Latinos may be related to Spanish fluency (Phinney, Romero, Nava, & Huang, 2001; Sanchez & Chavez, in press; Sanchez, Chavez, & Good, under review). Cultural fluency, or expertise in a cultural practice, may therefore increase the likelihood that a perceiver will view an individual as ethnically identified with an ethnic group. For instance, a Latino who speaks Spanish may be seen as more likely to identify with other Latinos than one who does not speak Spanish. The effect of language ability on minority categorization may therefore be driven, in part, by inferences regarding the target's ethnic identification.

Language proficiency is typically seen as associated with a high degree of cultural immersion (i.e. Spanish-speaking individuals are viewed as having spent much time in Spanish-speaking contexts and with other individuals who speak Spanish). These cultural contexts are further linked with ethnic identification. For example, Latinos who associate with other Latinos are seen as more ethnically committed than Latinos who do not. Indeed, high ethnic identity is associated with immigrants who are both fluent in their native language, and live among other immigrants (Sears, Fu, Henry, & Bui, 2003). Perceivers may reason that, because language ability must be acquired, it must be both

learned and reinforced in ethnic contexts, a signifier of ethnic identification. If the quality of language ability as *acquired* is highlighted, then perceiver's assumptions about *where* it is acquired (ethnic contexts) and the resulting effects (increased ethnic identification) should be heightened. Language ability therefore only affects perceived ethnic identity to the extent that perceivers see the ability as acquired.

Current Study

The current study tested the effects of *cultural fluency* (e.g. Spanish-speaking ability) and *perceptions of language as acquired* on perceivers' evaluations of Latino targets' (1) ethnic identification (2) minority categorization, and (3) appropriateness for affirmative action. Participants read two articles on language: a control article and an acquired prime. The control article discussed language studies in twins, while the acquired prime strongly espoused language learning as acquired. Participants then judged either a Spanish & English speaking or French & English speaking bilingual Latino candidate for a minority research internship.

Current Hypotheses

We hypothesized a main effect for cultural fluency on ethnic identification and minority categorization, with perceivers rating Spanish-speaking Latinos as higher in ethnic identification and minority categorization than French-speaking Latinos. We hypothesized that minority categorization would in turn predict appropriateness for affirmative action, with those rated high in minority categorization as higher in affirmative action appropriateness. We expected to find that perceived ethnic identification mediates the relationship between cultural fluency and minority categorization, with Spanish-speaking Latinos being rated as higher in ethnic

identification, and *hence* minority categorization, than French-speaking Latinos. We also predicted that minority categorization would mediate the link between cultural fluency and appropriateness for affirmative action.

We also hypothesized a moderation, in which the language prime (article) would moderate the relationship between cultural fluency and ethnic identity, minority categorization, and appropriateness for affirmative action. We hypothesized that participants led to perceive language as an acquired skill would strongly associate Spanish-speaking ability with these variables as hypothesized above, while participants in the control condition would show a significantly weaker relationship between cultural fluency and ethnic identification.

We also included measures of perceived discrimination, perceived poverty, ethnic effort, and attitudes towards affirmative action. As minorities are typically seen as disadvantaged, perceivers may actually base the target's minority categorization on the extent to which they see them as having experienced discrimination or poverty. Ethnic effort, or the degree of effort a target is seen as expending to maintain ethnic identity, might be one correlate of ethnic identification. In fact, we hypothesized that ethnic effort mediates the relationship between cultural fluency and ethnic identity: Spanish-speakers put forth more effort in maintaining identity and hence are more identified. Finally, we included pre-test and post-test measures of participant attitudes towards affirmative action. We used the pre-test measure as a covariate when it was significantly correlated with the dependent measure. We use it as a covariate in analyses of the post-test attitudes towards affirmative action measure, in order to view changes in attitudes. Specifically, we hypothesized that exposure to an affirmative action applicant who was low in cultural

fluency (French-speaking Latino), would decrease participant's opinions about a policy aimed at helping ethnic minorities—individuals whom they assume are high in cultural fluency.

Methods

Participants

A total of 90 students from the Rutgers University research pool took part in the experiment and received research credits in exchange for their participation. Similar numbers of male ($n = 43$) and female ($n = 41$) individuals participated in the study, with six participants not specifying their gender. We collected data from White ($n = 44$), Asian ($n = 16$), Latino ($n = 7$)¹, Black ($n = 7$), and Multiracial ($n = 3$) students. Thirteen participants chose not to designate their race.

Materials

Pre-test Attitudes towards Affirmative Action (pre-ATAA; Parra, 1991) was used to measure participants' approval of affirmative action in general and was measured prior to participation in the study to all participants. This pre-test measure contained 9 statements such as "Affirmative action is a way of getting jobs for unqualified people" which participants must indicate their level of agreement with on a scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). This scale had high reliability ($\alpha = .89$).

Language Prime was administered via an article (see Appendix A) ostensibly from the *Journal of Psycholinguistics*, which either emphasized the nature of language ability as an acquired skill (Acquired condition) or discussed language in the context of twin studies (Control condition). Pilot testing established that pretest participants perceived language as an acquired skill significantly more after reading the "acquired" article ($M = 5.06$) than after reading the "control" article ($M = 3.86$), $t(97) = 8.66$, $p <$

¹ Excluding Latino participants (who share their ethnicity with the target) had no effect on the significance of our results, hence they were included in the analyses.

.001. Furthermore, each article was rated equally on believability, interest, and difficulty of understanding.

Cultural Fluency was manipulated by presenting the resume of a Latino applicant for a research internship who listed his fluency in languages. In the Spanish-speaking condition, the candidate listed English and Spanish as his spoken languages. In the French-speaking condition, the candidate listed English and French. Both candidates were bilingual to minimize the effect of increased competence as attributed to speaking two, rather than one, language² (Sanchez & Chavez, in press).

Minority Categorization was measured by asking participants to rate their level of agreement with 6 statements from 1(*strongly disagree*) to 7(*strongly agree*). Statements measuring minority categorization included “This candidate is an ethnic minority,” and “This candidate should be considered an ethnic minority.” The scale was reliable ($\alpha = .92$).

Ethnic identification of the targets was assessed with a 7 item scale where participants indicated their level of agreement with statements from 1(*strongly disagree*) to 7(*strongly agree*). Example statements include, “This candidate seems very identified with his ethnicity,” and “This candidate values his racial identity.” The scale had high reliability ($\alpha = .90$).

² To ensure that findings were not driven by the language chosen (French) for the non-Spanish speaking condition, we also included a monolingual, English-speaking Latino condition. Analyses conducted with the monolingual Latino who was described as speaking English alone paralleled the findings presented here and did not shed any additional light on the phenomenon. Thus, we did not include these analyses in the present paper.

Ethnic Effort is the extent to which candidates were perceived as investing energy in connecting with their ethnic group, and was measured with 4 statements for which participants rated their level of agreement on a 1(*strongly disagree*) to 7(*strongly agree*) scale. Each item was composed of a statement similar to, “This candidate makes an effort to be an active member of his ethnic community.” This scale was also highly reliable ($\alpha = .93$).

Perceived poverty of the target was measured with a 3 item scale, where participants indicated their level of agreement, from 1(*strongly disagree*) to 7(*strongly agree*), with statements such as “This candidate likely comes from a poor background” and “This candidate likely does not have a lot of financial resources in his household.” This scale was reliable ($\alpha = .89$).

Perceived discrimination of the target was measured with a 5 item scale, where participants answered from 1(*strongly disagree*) to 7(*strongly agree*), a series of statements like, “This candidate likely encounters a lot of racial/ethnic prejudice,” and “This candidate has been denied opportunities because of his race/ethnicity.” This scale was reliable ($\alpha = .86$).

Appropriateness for Affirmative Action was measured with 5 items on a scale from 1(*strongly disagree*) to 7(*strongly agree*). Before participants responded to these items, they were told that affirmative action refers to “a policy aimed at a disadvantaged group (typically minority men or women of all racial groups) intended to promote their access to education or employment.” Sample items from the scale include, “I believe this candidate deserves affirmative action,” and “I believe this candidate needs affirmative action.” The scale was adequately reliable ($\alpha = .88$).

Post-test Attitudes Towards Affirmative Action (post-ATAA; Parra, 1991) was measured at the end of the study to assess changes in attitudes towards affirmative action policies and benefits. The scale consisted of 18 statements such as, “The goals of affirmative action are good” and “All in all I oppose affirmative action plans in industry for minorities (R).” Participants indicated their level of agreement with each statement on a scale from 1(*strongly disagree*) to 7(*strongly agree*). The scale was reliable ($\alpha = .89$).

Results

ANOVA Analyses

Correlations between the observed variables are shown in Table 1³. The pre-ATAA measure included in the prescreening survey was significantly correlated with the ethnic effort, appropriateness for affirmative action variables, and post-ATAA. Therefore, in order to control for the effect of pre-ATAA in analysis of variance with ethnic effort and appropriateness for affirmative action, pre-ATAA was included as a covariate. To examine changes in ATAA scores as a result of the manipulation, pre-ATAA was included as a covariate when analyzing post-ATAA. Our main hypothesis was that perceiving language as acquired (language prime) would exaggerate the effect of Spanish-speaking ability (cultural fluency) on ethnic identification: a moderation hypothesis we tested with analysis of variance (ANOVA). For the following series of analyses, we conducted 2 (Cultural fluency: Spanish/English, French/English) x 2 (Language prime: acquired prime, control prime) ANOVAs for minority categorization and ethnic identification, and ANCOVAs for ethnic effort, appropriateness for affirmative action, and post-ATAA. Means and standard deviations for all variables in the analyses are presented in Table 2.

First, a 2 x 2 ANOVA with minority categorization as the dependent variable yielded no significant main effect for either cultural fluency, $F(1, 84) = .86, p = .36$, or language prime, $F(1, 84) = .80, p = .37$. We also found no significant interaction between cultural fluency and language prime, $F(1, 84) = .24$.

³ We found no significant effects in 2 (language prime) x 2 (cultural fluency) analyses with the dependent variables: perceived poverty or perceived discrimination. Therefore, we no longer discuss these variables. Research conducted without the use of language primes has shown that Spanish speaking Latinos are viewed as more disadvantaged than non-Spanish speaking Latinos (Sanchez, Chavez, & Good, in press).

A 2 x 2 ANOVA with ethnic identification as the dependent variable revealed no main effect for the language prime, $F(1, 85) = .92, p = .34$. As expected, there was a main effect for cultural fluency, such that Spanish-speaking Latinos ($M = 4.39$) were rated as significantly more ethnically identified than French-speaking Latinos ($M = 3.53$), $F(1, 85) = 23.26, p < .001$. Furthermore, we also observed an interaction between language prime and cultural fluency, $F(1, 85) = 4.83, p = .03$ (see Figure 1). Follow-up *t*-tests showed that ratings of the French-speaking Latinos did not vary by condition, $t(42) = .87, p = .39, ns$. Contrary to our hypothesis, participants rated Spanish-speaking Latinos as significantly less ethnically identified in the acquired prime ($M = 4.11$) compared to the control prime condition ($M = 4.68$), $t(43) = -2.25, p = .03$.

We then conducted a 2 x 2 ANCOVA with perceptions of ethnic effort as the dependent variable, entering pre-test attitudes towards affirmative action (pre-ATAA) as the covariate. Pre-ATAA was indeed a significant predictor of ethnic effort, $F(1, 79) = 6.97, p = .01$. The analysis also revealed a significant main effect of cultural fluency, $F(1, 79) = 16.66, p < .001$. Specifically, participants rated Spanish-speaking Latinos as higher in ethnic effort ($M = 3.98$) than French-speaking candidates ($M = 3.21$). The language prime, $F(1, 79) = 1.35$ and the interaction were not significant, $F(1, 79) = .04, p = .85, ns$.

We ran a 2 x 2 ANCOVA with appropriateness for affirmative action as the dependent variable with pre-ATAA as the covariate. This analysis indicated that pre-ATAA was a significant predictor of ratings of the target's appropriateness for affirmative action, $F(1, 77) = 9.27, p = .003$. We found no significant main effects for either cultural fluency, $F(1, 77) = .10$, or the language prime, $F(1, 77) = .04 (p = .75$ and

.83, respectively). We did find an interaction between cultural fluency and the language prime on appropriateness for affirmative action scores, $F(1, 77) = 4.40, p = .04$ (see Figure 2). Simple effects tests show that in the acquired prime condition, there was a non-significant trend for Spanish-speaking ($M = 3.33$) Latinos to be viewed as less appropriate for affirmative action than French-speaking Latinos ($M = 3.82$), $F(1, 38) = 1.61, p = .21$. This pattern was reversed in the control condition. In the control prime condition, there was a non-significant trend for Spanish-speaking Latinos ($M = 3.83$) to be viewed as more affirmative action appropriate than French-speaking Latinos ($M = 3.24$), $F(1, 38) = 2.67, p = .11$. Because of the reversed pattern of effects across prime conditions, French-speakers in the acquired condition ($M = 3.82$) were viewed as slightly more appropriate for affirmative action than French-speakers in the control conditions ($M = 3.24$), $F(1, 39) = 3.35, p = .08$. This pattern suggests that the typical effect of being viewed as more appropriate for affirmative action when Latinos speak Spanish was reversed after reading the acquired prime (i.e. Spanish-speakers were seen as *less* appropriate for AA), although simple effects did not reach statistical significance.

We conducted a 2 x 2 ANCOVA with post-ATAA as a dependent variable, entering pre-ATAA as the covariate. Pre-ATAA was a significant predictor of post-ATAA scores, $F(1, 71) = 35.43, p < .001$. There was no main effect for cultural fluency, $F(1, 71) = .11, p = .74$. We found a significant main effect for the language prime, such that participants shown the acquired prime espoused higher post-ATAA scores ($M = 4.61$) than participants shown the control prime ($M = 4.05$), $F(1, 71) = 4.11, p = .04$. There was a marginally significant interaction effect, $F(1, 71) = 2.95, p = .09$ (see Figure 3). We conducted simple effects analyses to clarify the suggested pattern of differences.

For those participants shown a French-speaking Latino, perceivers who read the acquired prime had more favorable ATAA scores ($M = 4.77$) than those who read the control prime ($M = 3.89$), $F(1, 39) = 6.02$, $p = .02$. No other differences were found between conditions.

Mediation

While I hypothesized a mediation model where minority categorization ratings would mediate the relationship between cultural fluency and affirmative action appropriateness, the previous results fail to establish the necessary link between the independent variable (cultural fluency) and the dependent variable (affirmative action appropriateness). Therefore, the conditions were not met for mediation (Baron & Kenny, 1986).

Secondly, I hypothesized that ethnic identification would mediate the relationship between cultural fluency and minority categorization. However, I did not obtain a significant relationship between the independent (cultural fluency) and the dependent variable (minority categorization), and was therefore unable to establish ethnic identification as a mediator of the two.

I also proposed that ethnic effort would mediate the relationship of cultural fluency to ethnic identification (see Figure 4). The previous analyses established the relationship between cultural fluency and the dependent variable (ethnic identification). The above analyses further show that the independent variable (cultural fluency) predicts the outcome of the proposed mediator (ethnic effort). Bivariate correlations reveal that the mediator (ethnic effort) and the dependent variable (ethnic identification) were significantly positively correlated (see Table 1). I conducted a regression with both

cultural fluency and ethnic effort as predictors and ethnic identity as the dependent variable. Cultural fluency continued to predict ethnic identification, $\beta = -.18, p = .03$ but the effect was reduced. A Sobel's test confirmed significance, suggesting partial mediation, $z = -3.56, p < .001$.

General Discussion

The current research provides some evidence for the hypothesis that the effect of cultural fluency, or expertise in a cultural practice, on perceived ethnic identification is partly driven by perceived ethnic effort. Spanish-speaking Latinos are seen as more connected to other Latinos, at least in part, because they are seen as having invested energy in maintaining a Latino identity. While Spanish speaking ability did not directly predict categorization or appropriateness for affirmative action, ethnic effort and identification were tied to perceivers' minority categorization of targets as well as their perceived eligibility for affirmative action.

We received somewhat unexpected results for the moderation hypotheses. We had hypothesized that priming of language as an “acquired” skill, and hence a skill requiring effort, would increase the relationship between cultural fluency and both ethnic effort and ethnic identification. The language prime, however, only affected ethnic identification *and* in the opposite direction than that expected: When the effort and skill behind learning a language was primed, they viewed Spanish-speaking Latinos as less identified with their ethnic group compared to the control. Moreover, we found a similar trend for appropriateness for affirmative action, such that when participants were primed to think about language as more effort-based, they viewed the French-speaking Latinos as better candidates for affirmative action compared to the control. These findings suggest that the acquired prime reduces the use of Spanish fluency as an indicator of ethnic identification for Latinos and boosts the eligibility of non-Spanish speaking Latinos for affirmative action.

One possible explanation for these findings may be that race and racial identification is primarily viewed as inherited and biological (i.e., essentialist; Haslam, Rothschild, & Ernst, 2000), and seeing language as requiring effort reduces its effect as an indicator of identification. Perceivers who typically show the effect that Latinos who speak Spanish are more ethnically identified (e.g., Sanchez & Chavez, in press; Sanchez, Chavez, & Good, 2009) may view race as biological: Speaking Spanish is not something a true Latino works to master, but is something they are *born* with. Thus, language is less of a signal of ethnic identification when language requires effort. Perhaps the more participants were led to believe that Latino targets needed to *work hard* to learn a culture, the more they saw them as disconnected with *genuine* Latinos who don't need to work to be Latino. Furthermore, while we did not expect the acquired condition to lead French-speaking Latinos to be seen as more appropriate for affirmative action, this effect appeared consistent with changes in attitudes towards affirmative action as well (see Figure 3). When Latinos needed to put forth effort into learning a language, perhaps *trying* to learn Spanish made them seem more inadequate as Latinos, and *working* to learn French made them seem more capable. Perhaps a target that struggles to learn ingroup practices lowers one's opinions of policies intended to benefit that ingroup, while a target that strives to learn an outgroup practice obtains praise for his fellow ingroup members. Because these results were unexpected, future research is needed to explain these effects.

Limitations and Future Directions

We failed to obtain the expected main effect of cultural fluency on minority categorization—a problem likely attributable to our methods. Previous studies have

reliably produced the effect (e.g., Sanchez & Chavez, in press; Sanchez, Chavez, & Good, 2009). One notable deviation from those studies was the inclusion of a language prime in the form of journal articles. Each participant was told to try to keep in mind and “mentally repeat” the key points of the articles they read, in an effort to reinforce the strength of the manipulation (e.g. make participants continue to think, “language is acquired and must be worked for”). The problem with this manipulation is the likelihood that participants experience undue cognitive load, affecting their answers independent of the actual content of the prime articles. Indeed, minority categorization was not the only variable lacking the expected relation to cultural fluency, but we failed to find the previously reliable main effect on appropriateness for affirmative action. To correct this problem, it may be useful to devise a prime that is not as mentally taxing as our “mental repetition” language prime (e.g. subliminal prime, subtle “word search” priming) or, though not experimental, pretest for participants who view language as *more* acquired than other participants. On a related note, both the acquired *and* the control article primed language in some way. We believe that priming all participants with language may have also affected the usually reliable finding that Spanish-speaking Latinos are categorized as more minority.

While unexpected, the failure to replicate the effects of cultural fluency on minority categorization and appropriateness for affirmative action may point to the mechanisms at play in minority categorization and affirmative action evaluations based on language. For example, the use of language prime may have called attention to the language information in on the applicant’s resume. If language ability served as a subtle cue for categorization, calling attention to language may reduce its effect on

categorization. Moreover, if acquired priming can reverse the traditional effects of Spanish speaking ability on Latinos because it changes the meaning of language and identity in biological/essentialist terms, measuring essentialism may be an important next step for this research.

We must be careful when drawing conclusions about the larger population when considering research that exclusively samples from student populations. This may be especially problematic with the current study, which focuses on affirmative action contexts with young minority targets. While these contexts may be more widespread for these young populations, affirmative action-related programs are not exclusive to the student population. Equal Opportunity programs are now a staple of many institutions and it is important to consider whether findings regarding ethnic markers and minority categorization generalize to these populations. Are factors like language ability and ethnic commitment just as important in determining whether a professor gets a job as they are in determining whether a student obtains an internship? The current study does not answer this question.

Future studies should attempt to generalize these findings to other populations and contexts. While it is important to understand whether adults make the same evaluations about minority targets as students do, it is equally important to understand whether these evaluations are made outside of the affirmative action context. Our future research will look at how perceivers evaluate targets' minority categorization in non-affirmative action situations (e.g. interpersonal exchanges). This research will explore how ethnic markers and target inferences affect perceptions of minority categorization more generally.

The present studies shed some light on the role of cultural fluency in inferences of ethnic identification and effort. Consistent with hypotheses, perceivers generally view Spanish speaking ability as a marker of increased ethnic identity and effort; however, viewing language as more acquired can attenuate the effect of Spanish speaking ability on inferences of identity. This research once again reveals that Spanish speaking ability affects perceptions of Latinos. Perceivers use Spanish fluency to infer much more than just language use for Latinos. Language use indicates, for most perceivers, an individual's attachment to one's ethnic identity.

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Table 1

Correlations Among Observed Variables

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Pre-ATAA	1							
2. Minority Categorization	.11	1						
3. Ethnic Identification	.18	.27*	1					
4. Ethnic Effort	.27*	.21	.69**	1				
5. Perceived Poverty	.10	.18	.23*	.06	1			
6. Perceived Discrimination	.29**	-.10	.03	-.06	.08	1		
7. Appropriateness for Affirmative Action	.35**	.24*	.19	.12	-.04	.08	1	
8. Post-ATAA	.60**	.05	.25*	.19	.37**	.10	.15	1

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

Table 2

Means for Variables by Language Article and Cultural Fluency

	Acquired		Control	
	Spanish-Speaking Candidate (<i>N</i> = 23) <i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	French-Speaking Candidate (<i>N</i> = 23) <i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	Spanish-Speaking Candidate (<i>N</i> = 22) <i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	French- Speaking Candidate (<i>N</i> = 22) <i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)
Pre-ATAA	4.19 (.70)	4.15 (.52)	3.94 (.47)	3.78 (.91)
Minority Categorization	5.77 (.94)	5.67 (1.18)	5.67 (1.19)	5.33 (1.27)
Ethnic identification	4.11 (.75)	3.64 (.76)	4.68 (.93)	3.42 (.92)
Ethnic Effort	3.85 (.80)	3.29 (.97)	4.24 (.83)	3.20 (1.05)
Affirmative Action Appropriateness	3.33 (1.17)	3.82 (1.00)	3.83 (1.28)	3.24 (1.37)
Post-ATAA	4.40 (.79)	4.70 (.74)	4.31 (.75)	3.86 (1.04)

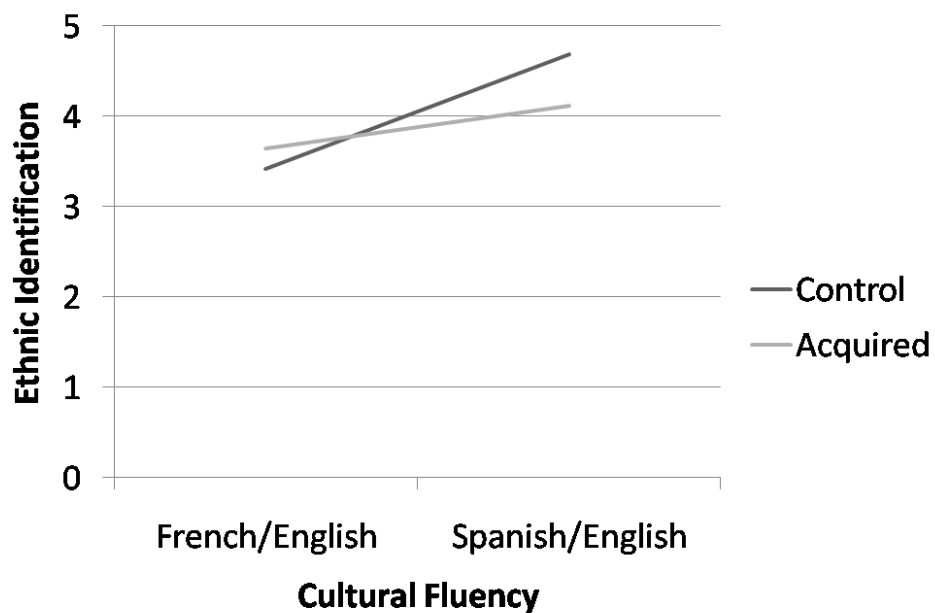


Figure 1. Effect on Ethnic Identification

Independent variable: cultural fluency (Spanish/English, French/English) x language prime (acquired, control); Dependent variable: ethnic identification. Latinos who were high in cultural fluency (Spanish-speakers) were seen as more ethnically identified than those low in cultural fluency (French-speakers) in both the acquired and control conditions. Spanish-speakers were seen as most ethnically identified in the control condition (contrary to hypotheses).

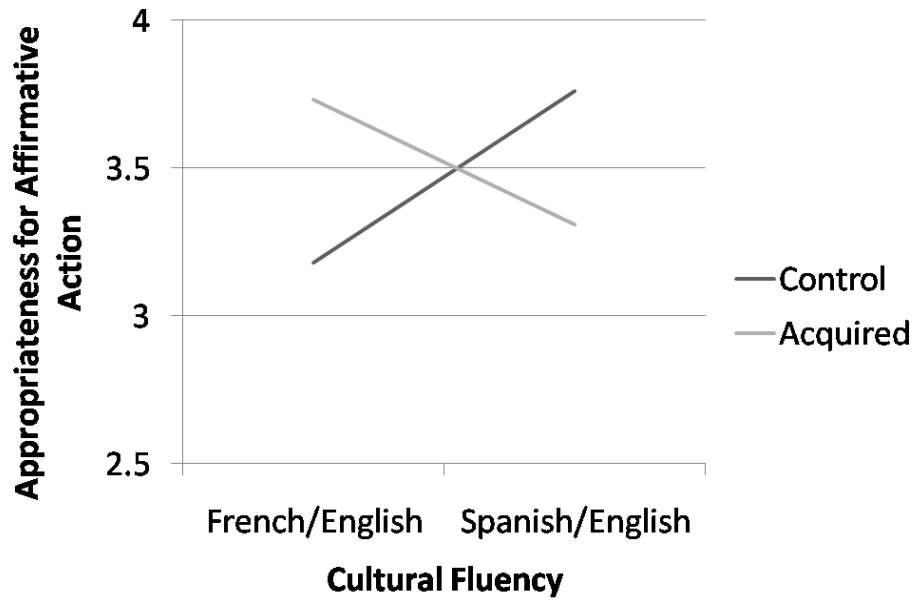


Figure 2. Effect on Appropriateness for Affirmative Action

Independent variable: cultural fluency (Spanish/English, French/English) x language prime (acquired, control); Dependent variable: appropriateness for affirmative action. There were no significant simple effects, though the means appear to be a spreading interaction.

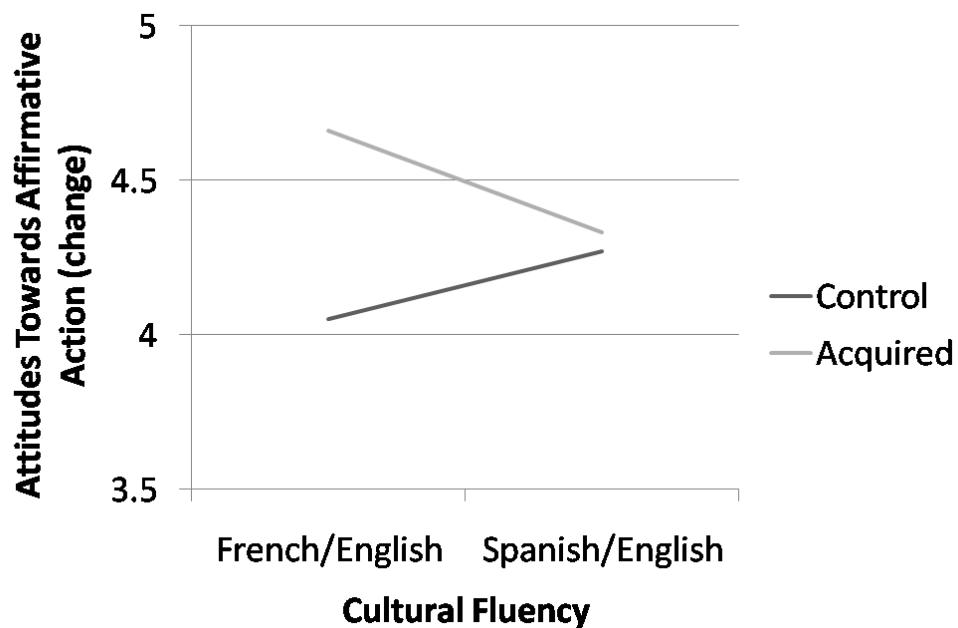


Figure 3. Effect on Attitudes Towards Affirmative Action (Change)

Independent variable: cultural fluency (Spanish/English, French/English) x language prime (acquired, control); Dependent variable: attitudes towards affirmative action (change). The means graphed represent the post-ATAA scores evaluated with the covariate pre-ATAA = 4.02. Analyses show a main effect for language prime, and marginally significant interaction.

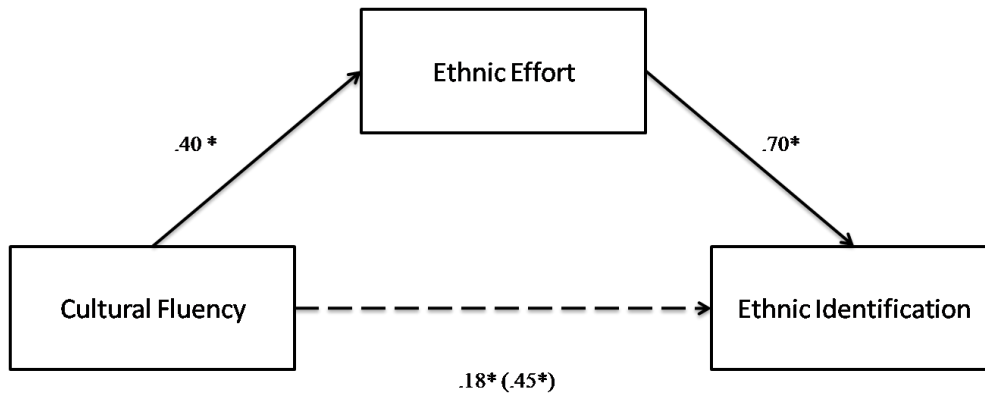


Figure 4. Mediation Model

The effect of cultural fluency on perceived ethnic identification is mediated by perceived ethnic effort. Standardized coefficients are reported, and all are significant, $p < .05$. The coefficient in parentheses (from cultural fluency to ethnic identification) is the total effect, while the one outside parentheses is the direct effect (effect controlling for mediator).

Appendix A

Academic Articles

Directions: Please read the following article in detail. You will be asked to recall information from these excerpts later on in the study.

1. Filler Article

Despite some individuals' ardent hopes for life on Mars, scientific evidence has all but ruled out the possibility that intelligent life currently exists on the planet. Studies of both the climate and geological makeup of Mars show that without the presence of water, it is highly unlikely that even simple life forms are capable of surviving in such conditions. While some scientists have not given up hope on discovering a vast underground repository of ice beneath the planet's exterior, most understand that such a finding is not probable, given the current evidence.

2. Control Article

Decades of research into autonomous languages (commonly referred to as "twin languages") definitively points to the absence of a speaking parental figure as the reason for its occurring. Autonomous/Twin languages are essentially languages that are invented by a set of twins which only they can understand. These languages typically occur in 40% of twins and disappear some months after the initial onset. The occurrence provides a source of both amusement and confusion for many parents of twins, who often discover the phenomenon after it is already fully formed. A typical setting is a play scenario, where one twin says something incomprehensible to a parent, and then the same thing to the other twin, who understands instantly, laughing with the other twin or smiling at his or her remark. These languages form because when the child lacks an adult model

from which to learn a language, they create their own imperfect language with the help of their closest counterpart (i.e. the other twin). These languages dissipate soon after their formation, however, because once the parent becomes aware of it, attention is lavished upon each twin. Therefore, the previously absent adult language suddenly becomes available, and each twin abandons the imperfect language for the more developed one.

3. Acquired Article

In the many decades of research on language learning, no evidence has ever shown that some individuals innately possess better language learning abilities than others. Expert ability in speaking a language is due almost entirely to the effort and experience of the language learner. Take, for instance, a series of studies conducted on sets of identical twins: individuals whose genetic makeup is nearly indistinguishable. In these studies, a twin raised in Chicago and a twin raised in Berlin who have never met each other, might “switch places” as part of the experiment. If language learning is genetic (as innate theories propose) we might expect that the twin moving to Berlin learns German *at the exact same rate* that the twin moving to Chicago learns English: One becomes just as good as the other at this new foreign language. After all, they should have the same “language learning” gene. *Instead*, we find that the twin moving to Chicago becomes much better at English than the other twin becomes at German. It turns out that there is a simple explanation for this: The first twin was more interested in English, obtained more English speaking friends, and generally tried harder to learn the language than his counterpart. These studies show that there *is no* language learning gene. They show as countless studies have shown before them, that if you aren’t very good at a language, it is

probably because you were either not interested, or simply weren't exposed to native speakers of the language.