

Does Ethnic Identity Predict Television Commercial Language Preference among Hispanic Audiences in the U.S.? The Moderating Role of Gender and Generation in the Host Culture

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Abstract: The growth of the U.S. Hispanic population and its increasing purchasing power over the past years has prompted marketers to examine this group's language preference for television advertising. This study focused on the dominant mass-reach medium of television and explored if ethnic identity among Hispanic audiences in the U.S. predicts their television commercial language preference and if their gender and generation in the host culture moderate the relationship. The study used a questionnaire survey to collect empirical data from 291 Hispanic college students in a large public university in the Southwestern U.S.

Although marketers often view Hispanic consumers as an undifferentiated market segment, our results show that self-identification as being bicultural, Mexican, or Anglicized predicts Hispanic audience's language preference for television commercials. The more Anglicized Hispanics are found to prefer English-language television commercials while participants' gender and generation in the host culture do not moderate the relationship between ethnic identity and language preference for television commercials. Discussion of findings and the study's limitations are presented and the implications for future research are outlined.

Keywords: Ethnic identity, advertising language preference, gender, generation in the host culture, questionnaire survey, Hispanic marketing

1. Introduction

Since Spanish-language television began to attract public attention in the United States in the mid-1970s and 1980s (La Ferle & Lee, 2005; Strategy Research Corporation, 1991), its competitive battle against the English-language networks has been primarily waged over the fastest-growing segment of the Hispanic population, the bilingual. English-language networks and their affiliates have conceded that the Spanish-only and Spanish-mostly audiences prefer Spanish-language programming and its associated Spanish-language commercial announcements. They have long claimed, however, that these stratified groups make up a small percentage of the available U.S. television market and have even attempted to discredit any value of these groups to advertisers by using market-specific quantitative research data to suggest that household incomes, education levels, and behavioral data make the so-called "Spanish-dominant" groups unworthy of overture by advertisers (Scarborough Research, 2000-

2011). For their part, the Spanish-language networks and affiliates have claimed that English-only audiences are diminishing rapidly in many markets, are being replaced by bilingual Hispanics through more rapid acculturation, and that their qualitative research indicates that the growing number of bilinguals, along with Spanish-dominant Hispanics, are, indeed, worthy of advertiser interest due to increased buying power, family size, and more active consumer behaviors (La Ferle & Lee, 2005; Roslow & Nicolls, 1996; Scarborough Research, 2000-2011).

In the United States, Hispanic purchasing power and, thus, attractiveness to marketers, has grown with the population, increasing from \$210 billion in 1990 to over \$957 billion in 2010 and estimated to reach \$1.5 trillion by 2015 (Synovate, 2010; U.S. Census Bureau, 2011). Currently, 63% of all U.S. Hispanics are of Mexican origin, representing 59% of all Hispanic buying power (Packaged Facts, 2010). Census estimates also project Mexican-origin Hispanics to represent almost 70% of all U.S. Hispanics by 2020 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011). Because of this increasing importance for advertisers and marketers, there has been a surge of Hispanic marketing and advertising research in recent years (Lee, Williams & La Ferle, 2004). However, the methodology to better target Hispanics continues to be debated among advertising and marketing researchers and practitioners (Becerra & Korgaonkar, 2010; Torres & Briggs, 2007). Scholars have cautioned against the danger of treating Hispanic consumers as a homogenous segment because the strength of identification with the Hispanic culture and their ethnic identity may differ (Becerra & Korgaonkar, 2010). Therefore, given the commercial potential of this specific demographic sub-segment within the Hispanic market, our research contributes to the understanding of this important consumer segment by focusing on Hispanics as a population of great interest to marketers, particularly in the Western and Southern regions of the country which have higher percentages than the national profile of 16 percent (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). Specifically, U.S. Census data (2010) indicates that 36% of Hispanics reside in the South, while 41% live in the West.

Fueling the debate has been the view of many advertisers and advertising agencies that the optimum way to reach Hispanics has been in Spanish (Noriega & Blair, 2008; Strategy Research Corporation, 1991; Ueltschy & Krampf, 1997). However, as the body of knowledge and research on the Hispanic market has increased, many now contend that this view is an oversimplification and point to research that strongly suggests Hispanic consumer behaviors depend on the target audience's own self-perception of ethnic identity (Ruggiero & Yang, 2005; Torres & Briggs, 2007). For example, Ruggiero and Yang (2005) found the explanatory and predictive function of ethnic identity as an independent variable to explain people's language preference in media contents. Their results suggest that identity with Mexicans or with Mexican-Americans demonstrates different media language preference. People identified with Mexican-Americans prefer English language content and programming, while those identified with Mexicans prefer Spanish language programming and contents. Acculturation variables such as ethnic identity help explain the variations in Hispanic language preference because, despite the fact that many Hispanic consumers were born in the U.S. and consider English to be their mother tongue, Spanish is often preferred in many media consumption situations (Becerra & Korgaonkar, 2010).

The Hispanic audience demonstrates different preference for language in commercial television when compared with other ethnic groups in the U.S. From its sample of the top 25

Hispanic television markets, representing 73% of total U.S. Hispanic Television Households (TVHHs), Nielsen Research (2011) reports that 39% of these TVHHs are “Spanish dominant” (only or mostly Spanish) and 35% are “English dominant” (only or mostly English) (Table 1). This profile of English or Spanish-speaking fluency among U.S. Hispanics presents a viable opportunity to explore whether ethnic identity predicts TV commercial language preference and contributes to a better understanding of communication in a rapidly-evolving process of multicultural marketing.

Table 1. NHSI Estimates of U.S. Hispanic TV HHs by Language Strata, Persons age 2+

Market	Only Spanish	Mostly Spanish	Both Span and Eng	Mostly English	Only English	Spanish Dominant
Albuquerque	7,420	34,250	30,750	122,230	72,000	41,670
Atlanta	25,040	61,220	49,340	21,420	8,060	86,260
Austin	13,280	35,550	28,640	64,260	21,420	48,830
Bakersfield	11,520	14,450	31,120	27,040	10,550	25,970
Chicago	54,860	145,640	161,170	98,550	51,460	200,500
Corpus Christi	3,130	15,790	18,130	61,530	12,770	18,920
Dallas	63,080	144,100	120,010	121,260	56,160	207,180
Denver	29,400	62,910	45,270	50,260	49,440	92,310
El Paso	29,890	58,750	60,820	78,910	15,350	88,640
Fresno	36,300	47,190	61,790	74,540	34,450	83,490
Harlingen	27,590	98,220	100,240	76,220	5,780	125,810
Houston	94,800	179,310	146,090	129,650	57,440	274,110
Los Angeles	231,860	428,320	609,740	394,690	211,500	660,180
Miami	198,090	199,730	180,090	130,970	21,280	397,820
New York	223,600	386,860	388,630	257,320	88,730	610,460
Orlando	27,210	43,140	72,120	58,590	24,800	70,350
Philadelphia	28,610	47,790	77,900	61,290	16,560	76,400
Phoenix	32,420	87,540	74,860	95,890	59,740	119,960
Sacramento	39,920	59,650	67,390	58,420	56,360	99,570
San Antonio	14,970	74,040	83,910	182,430	67,510	89,010
San Diego	37,520	66,840	63,470	63,280	23,540	104,360
San Francisco	69,770	94,360	98,540	82,770	69,290	164,130
Tampa	36,400	52,390	54,660	41,210	28,930	88,790
Tucson	11,210	36,210	20,940	45,030	11,450	47,420
Wash, DC	38,460	68,560	57,650	36,670	15,130	107,020
TOTALS	1,386,350	2,542,810	2,703,270	2,434,430	1,089,700	3,929,160

Source: Nielsen Universe Estimates by Language Stratification, 2011

Given the market potential of this emerging ethnic sub-segment (Nielsen 2012), it is important for advertising researchers and practitioners to understand the language preference of the group and what best explains their language preference. The purpose of this research is two-fold. First, we aim to examine whether ethnic identity has any effects on the language preference for television commercials among Hispanic audiences. Previous studies (such as Torres & Briggs) have found self-perceived ethnic identity with Hispanics influenced the effectiveness of Hispanic-targeted advertising.

Secondly, we are interested in exploring whether there are moderating effects of gender and generation in the host culture on their preference for television commercial languages. Despite their importance, these two variables are less examined in the current literature (Becerra & Korgaonkar, 2010; Cuéllar et al., 2012). Results from our study should provide useful insights into the behaviors of Hispanic consumers.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Acculturation Theory

Acculturation is defined as “the process through which immigrants begin to understand and then adopt at least some of the norms, values, and behaviors of the host culture” (O’Guinn & Faber, 1985, p. 113). Consumer behavior researchers often define acculturation as a process by which consumers from a different cultural background learn new values, attitudes, customs, and behaviors of another culture through first-hand consumption experience (Khairullah, 1996; Ueltschy & Krampf, 1997). Marketing and advertising researchers have used acculturation theory to explain Hispanic consumer behaviors, ranging from shopping behavior (Allen & Friedman, 2005), attitude toward advertising (Chen, 2010; Torres & Briggs, 2007), languages in advertising (Hernandez & Newman, 1992; Kelly, Comello, Stanley & Gonzalez, 2010; Koslow, Shamdasani & Touchstone, 1994) and responses to different types of web advertising (Becerra & Korgaonkar, 2010).

Among many important variables in acculturation studies related to advertising and marketing, ethnic identity and consumer responses to advertising have been found to be closely related (Deshpande, Hoyer & Donthu, 1986; Greenberg, Burgoon, Burgoon & Korzenny, 1983; Hernandez & Newman, 1992; Koslow et al., 1994; Nicholls & Roslow, 1996; Roslow, 2006; Ruggiero & Yang, 2005; Torres & Briggs, 2007; Ueltschy & Krampf, 1997). Explanations of these relationships focus on Hispanic consumers’ favorable perceptions of and attitudes toward Spanish-language ads, positive impacts on the information processing of Hispanic consumers, and the favorable attitudes toward advertisers and marketers who employ Spanish in their ads (Torres & Briggs, 2007).

Koslow et al. (1994) summarized the importance of using Spanish ads and reasoned that employing the Spanish language is likely to make Hispanic consumers intuitively feel that the ad is more relevant to them, which helps advertisers and marketers to establish a positive relationship with the target audience by demonstrating a concern for the audience. Koslow et al. (1994) thus postulated, on the basis of accommodation theory, that Hispanic consumers are more likely to appreciate the advertisers’ sensitivity and respect for the Hispanic culture.

However, whether this strategy will work really depends on Hispanic acculturation patterns and the differences in acculturation between Hispanic women and men (Gopalan & Snipes, 2001). For example, Deshpande et al. (1986) found that a strong Hispanic identifier (a concept referring to the strength of ethnic identification) predicted frequent use of Spanish language media. Ordoñez (2005) also found that bilingual Hispanic youths prefer code-switched content (like Spanglish) in mass media. The readability of Spanish ads becomes less effective when Hispanic participants' use of English increases with their acculturation. Similarly, once participants' level of acculturation increases, linguistic variations in ads do not lead to advertising effectiveness (Kelly et al., 2010).

2.2. Ethnic Identity and Language Preference for Television Commercials

Among many acculturation variables to predict advertising effectiveness, ethnic identity has been widely researched in advertising literature. Torres and Briggs (2007) found 21 empirical articles that examined the predictive and explanatory role of ethnicity in advertising. Ethnic identity, defined as the positive identification with indigenous cultural roots and with use of the native tongue(s), represents the degree to which one feels a part of one's ethnic group connectivity (Phinney, 1990; Reich, Ramos & Jaipal, 2000). Ethnic identity refers to "that part of an individual's self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership in a social group (or groups) together with the perceived value and positive emotional significance attached to that membership" (Tajfel, 1981, p. 255). Although this theoretical construct is often studied as a consumer attribute, research has increasingly explored various dimensions of this term. For example, Deshpande et al. (1986) employed "Hispanic identifier" to refer to the strength of Hispanic ethnic identity. Similarly, "Latinidad" was proposed to refer to "shared language, socio-economic conditions, experiences, religion, country of origin, marginization" of "Latino experience" (Montero, 2011). Becerra and Korgaonkar (2010) best summarized the evolution of this concept by ethnic identity/identification going beyond the concept of ethnicity to "reflect a person's beliefs about his or her cultural reality" (Romero, 2004, cited in Becerra & Korgaonkar, 2010, p. 282).

Often employed as an independent variable, ethnic identity has been used to predict how ethnic consumers will respond to advertising. Koslow et al. (1994) examined if Spanish-language ads were preferred by Hispanic consumers and would generate more favorable consumer attitudes toward the ad. Other scholars advanced this line of research and studied the persuasiveness of the language used in minority-targeting ads, finding that Hispanic consumers are more persuaded by Spanish language commercials than by English-language commercials in Spanish-language television programs (Roslow & Nicholls, 1996). As to the effectiveness of minority targeted ads, Torres and Gelb (2002) found, on the basis of their analysis of actual sales data, that advertising specifically targeting Hispanic consumers often generated more sales and revenues than general-market advertising. Therefore, the relationship between ethnic identity and language preference deserves further exploration.

Language preference and use of various media contents are an area of great interest to advertising and marketing researchers (Torres & Briggs, 2007). Previous acculturation research often treats language preference as a dependent variable, contingent on consumers' acculturation

level, ethnic identity, and other consumer characteristics. Past research has often found that Hispanic consumers prefer Spanish-language ads or those congruent with Spanish-language traditions and culture (see Becerra & Korgaonkar, 2010 for an overview). Past advertising studies concluded that, regardless of media type, the level of acculturation has been found to explain attitudes toward and preference for language in advertising (see Ueltschy & Krampf, 1997 for an overview). Highly-acculturated Hispanics prefer English, while Hispanics with low acculturation prefer Spanish. Because ethnic identity is considered an important dimension of acculturation, we speculate that ethnic identity will affect Hispanic consumers' language preference for television commercials.

Intuitively, ethnic identity with Hispanics predicts preference for Spanish language media contents. Ruggiero and Yang (2005) found that self-identification as Mexican-American or Mexican explained their preference for English or Spanish language media contents. Factors such as media type, product involvement, subjective norms, behavioral control, consumer characteristics, etc. are likely, therefore, to affect the relationship between ethnic identity and language preference. Given the complexity of these relationships, our study explored the relationship between ethnic identity and language preference while taking into consideration gender and generation in the host culture as covariates.

In our study, we chose ethnic identity as an independent variable not only because ethnic identity has been commonly used in acculturation research, but also because ample research has found that ethnic identity, as an independent variable, predicted the dependent variable, language preference, in media contents among Hispanic consumers (Becerra & Korgaonkar, 2010; Greenberg et al., 1983; O'Guinn & Meyer, 1984; Ruggiero & Yang, 2005; Ueltschy & Krampf, 1997). On the basis of the literature review, therefore, the following research hypotheses were proposed:

RH1: Ethnic identity predicts a Hispanic audience's preference for television commercial language.

RH1-1: Hispanics who self-identify as more Anglicized are likely to prefer English more than Mexican-identified Hispanics.

RH1-2: Hispanics who self-identify as more Mexican are likely to prefer Spanish more than Anglicized Hispanics.

2.3. Moderating Variables

Commonly used variables in ethnic consumer research situated within the acculturation framework are generally divided into two broad categories: demographic and socioeconomic characteristics (e.g., age, gender and income) and psychological characteristics (e.g., personality and motivation) (Stayman & Deshpande, 1989). Most early studies on acculturation relied mainly on the effects of demographics (e.g., age, gender, education, and household income) and a variety of acculturation indicators (e.g., years of residency, country of origin, and language preference for multiple media) to identify the profile of these consumers. For example, Spanish-language media users were found to be lower in acculturation and socioeconomic status than those who preferred English-language media (Dunn, 1975; Guernica & Kasperuk, 1982). O'Guinn and Meyer (1984) found that Hispanics who preferred to watch English-language

television and to speak English were younger, better educated, and more acculturated.

As a variable, gender has been shown to influence the behavioral adaptation of Mexican immigrants upon arrival in a new country (Hill & Wong, 2005). However, gender has been less studied in the advertising literature. Guernica and Kasperuk (1982) found that female, older, and lower income Hispanics are more likely to watch Spanish-language television. Gender was found to predict participants' attitude toward banner advertising (Becerra & Korgaonkar, 2010). Gopalan and Snipes' (2001) study examined gender differences in acculturation patterns. However, the overall lack of sufficient research does not warrant the formulation of a research hypothesis for the present study. Therefore, we instead proposed a research question to explore the moderating role of gender.

RQ1: Will gender moderate the relationship between ethnic identity and language preference for television commercials?

Another moderating variable in this study is generation in the host culture, which has been examined as a sub-dimension of acculturation (Orozco & Thompson, 1993). Telles and Ortiz (2008) claimed that generation in the host culture is likely to affect third- or fourth-generation Hispanic Americans in losing their ethnic identity, i.e., self-identification with Hispanic culture and tradition. This process will subsequently influence how they respond to advertising (Villarreal & Peterson, 2008). Kao (2007) suggested that different generations in the host culture that an immigrant belongs to will affect their assimilation process into the host culture. Compared with the first-generation immigrants, third-generation immigrants were found to be fully assimilated into the host culture and less bicultural (Buriel, 1993, cited in Kao, 2007, p. 34). However, scholars have speculated that generation in the host culture does not necessarily mean that Hispanic consumers will be fully assimilated into the host culture. Becerra and Korgaonkar (2010) reasoned that Hispanic Americans can choose to maintain their own culture completely or partially while accepting or rejecting the U.S. culture. Given the inconclusive findings in the literature as to the relationship between generation in the host culture, ethnic identity, and language preference, we proposed the second research question:

RQ2: Will generation in the host culture moderate the relationship between ethnic identity and language preference for television commercials?

3. Methodology

Acculturation research often employs a questionnaire survey for data collection to establish correlations among acculturation and consumer behavior variables (Hernandez & Newman, 1992; Ueltschy & Krampf, 1997). Some advertising researchers used experimental methods to establish causal relationship between execution elements in targeted ads and communication effectiveness (Kelly et al., 2010). Our study was based on a large scale study that included other variables in the dataset. Similar to previous studies in this area (Hernandez & Newman, 1992; Ueltschy & Krampf, 1997), our focus is to examine the correlational, not causal, relationships among Hispanics' ethnic identity, language preference, gender, and generation in the host culture in the present study.

3.1. Instrumentation

The survey questionnaire included seven sections, from which we selected three sections to screen whether participants are of Mexican descent, to measure ethnic identity, and to assess their language preference for television commercials. In the past, ethnic identity was measured by nominal scales such as “ethnic identification of self,” “ethnic identification of father,” and “ethnic identification of mother” in Acculturation Rating Scale for Mexican Americans (henceforth, ARSMA) (20 items); generation, mother’s ethnic background, and father’s ethnic background in The Los Angeles Epidemiologic Catchment Area (*LAECA*) *Acculturation* Scale (26 items); and identification of father as “Mexicano,” identification of mother as “Mexicana,” and self-identity in ARSMA-II (26 items). In this research, we adapted from these existing acculturation scales in Acculturation Rating Scale for Mexican Americans-II (ARSMA-II) (Cuéllar, Arnold & Maldonado, 1995) and relied on nominal scales to measure ethnic identity by asking “How would you characterize yourself?” Participants responded by indicating whether they identified as “Very Mexican, Mostly Mexican, Bicultural, Mostly Anglicized, or Very Anglicized.”

The second part of the questionnaire survey measured participants’ preference for language in television commercials. We adapted from Wells’ (1964) 12-item “emotional quotient” scale to measure preference for advertising language. Six items were developed using 5-point Likert statements to measure Hispanic audience’s preference for television commercial language (e.g., “In general, I really like TV commercials in Spanish (English),” “In general, I find TV commercials in Spanish (English) to be good,” “In general, I truly enjoy TV commercials in Spanish (English)”. Participants were asked to choose from one of the five options, i.e., “Strongly Disagree” (1), “Disagree” (2), “Neither Agree or Disagree” (3), “Agree” (4), and “Strongly Agree” (5).

Operationally defined, generation in the host culture was ascertained by a 5-point nominal scale characterizing nearest generation to the respondent born in Mexico as “self,” “one or both parents,” “one or both grandparents,” “one or both great-grandparents,” and “other.” The scale was adapted from Cuéllar, Arnold, and Maldonado (1995) whose ARSMA-II scale measures 1st generation, 2nd generation, 3rd generation, 4th generation, and 5th generation.

A test sample of fourteen university graduate students was recruited to test the ease and comprehension of survey questions and structure, and to elicit feedback from participants to eliminate any problems or obstacles before mass distribution. Because we recruited college students from an English-speaking university, the questionnaire was written in English only. Copies of the survey were distributed to all pretest participants and the researcher briefly explained the purpose of the investigation. After completion of the survey instrument, a brief question-and-answer period produced a number of comments and suggestions from respondents that resulted in several changes to the wording of some questions, the order of question presentation, and the graphical structure of a number of the survey scales. These incorporated changes produced a shorter survey instrument that was easier to comprehend and complete while still providing the objective data necessary to answer the research questions presented in the study.

Cronbach’s α was used to assess the reliability of the Likert scales to measure participants’

language preference. α coefficients range in value from zero to one and should usually be greater than 0.70 in order to provide good support for reliability (Wrench, Thomas-Maddox, Richmond & McCroskey, 2008). Reliability coefficient for the 3-item English-language preference scale was 0.88, while that of the 3-item Spanish-language preference scale was 0.93. Two composite scores were computed for later statistical analysis.

Construct validity of ethnic identity and language preference was assessed through both convergent and discriminant validity (Trochim, 2006). As demonstrated in the correlation coefficient patterns, items that measured preference for English television commercials converged well with the same construct by showing relatively high coefficients (0.66-0.78), while the discriminant correlations are low with the other construct (i.e., preference for Spanish television commercials) (-0.01-0.11). The correlation matrix demonstrated a distinctive pattern of convergent and discriminant validity of two constructs in our study (Refer to Table 2).

Table 2. Convergent and Discriminant Validity to Establish Construct Validity

	In general, I really like TV commercials in English.	In general, I find TV commercials in English to be good.	In general, I truly enjoy TV commercials in English.	In general, I really like TV commercials in Spanish.	In general, I find TV commercials in Spanish to be good.	In general, I truly enjoy TV commercials in Spanish.
In general, I really like TV commercials in English.	1	.66	.74	-.11	-.08	-.11
In general, I find TV commercials in English to be good.	.66	1	.78	-.01	-.11	-.05
In general, I truly enjoy TV commercials in English.	.74	.78	1	-.09	-.01	-.01
In general, I really like TV commercials in Spanish.	-.11	-.01	-.09	1	.78	.85
In general, I find TV commercials in Spanish to be good.	-.08	.11	-.01	.78	1	.82
In general, I truly enjoy TV commercials in Spanish.	-.11	.05	-.01	.85	.82	1

3.2. Sampling Methods

The study used a combination of convenience sampling and snowball sampling methods to recruit 351 participants from a population of undergraduate and graduate students enrolled in a large state university located on the Texas – Mexico border. Extra credits and the opportunity to enter into a raffle to win a \$50 dollar gift card were used to recruit participants. We selected only participants who indicated their primary ethnic identity as Hispanic or Latina/o for this study (N=291).

3.3. Sample Characteristics

The characteristics of the sample (N=291) are as follows: Average age of the sample was 25.33 (SD=8.23) with the majority of students falling between 18 and 29 years old (83.9%). Fifty participants were above 30 years old. Gender division was 42.8% male (N=124) and 57.2% female (N=166). 16.4% of the sample (N=47) self-described as first generation in the U.S. and the largest percentage (55.1%) indicated second generation (N=158). 42.2% of the sample (N=122) self-characterized as mostly to very Mexican, 46.4% (N=134) characterized as bicultural, and 11.4% (N=33) characterized as mostly to very Anglicized.

3.4. Findings

To examine whether Hispanic audience's ethnic identity predicts their preference for television commercial language, we ran MANOVA to examine the main effect of ethnic identity on their language preference. MANOVA was selected to run multiple tests on variance in two dependent variables simultaneously and to avoid Type I error of falsely rejecting a null hypothesis. The overall MANOVA statistics indicate that the main effect of ethnic identity did exist. Results of the first MANOVA test with ethnic identity as an independent variable indicated that Wilks' Lambda ($F=18.06$, $p<.001$) significantly predicted whether the participants will prefer English-language or Spanish-language television commercials (Refer to Table 3).

Table 3. MANOVA

Effect		Value	F	df	Error df	p-value	Observed Power
Ethnic Identity	Pillai's Trace	.22	17.31	4	570	.00	1.0
	Wilks' Lambda	.79	18.06	4	568	.00	1.0
	Hotelling's Trace	.27	18.81	4	566	.00	1.0
	Roy's Largest Root	.25	35.15	2	285	.00	1.0

One-Way ANOVA demonstrated that participants' ethnic identity predicted their preference for either English-language ($F=3.39$, $p<.05$) or Spanish-language television commercials ($F=34.60$, $p<.001$) (Refer to Table 4). The overall MANOVA and the ANOVA clearly show that, depending on how Hispanic consumers characterize themselves as "Very Mexican," "Mostly Mexican," "Bicultural," "Mostly Anglicized," or "Very Anglicized," their preference for language in television commercials differ significantly.

Table 4. One-Way ANOVA

Source	Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p-value	Observed Power
Ethnic Identity	English-Language Preference	4.44	2	2.22	3.39	.04	.64
	Spanish-Language Preference	55.00	2	27.50	34.60	.00	1.00

The descriptive statistics showed that more Anglicized Hispanics preferred English-language television commercials (Mean=4.26, SD=.84) when compared with Mexican (Mean=4.00, SD=.74) and bicultural Hispanics (Mean=3.86, SD=.86). In terms of preference for Spanish-language television commercials, Mexican Hispanics (Mean=3.66, SD=.85) prefer Spanish more than bicultural (Mean=3.14, SD=.91) and Anglicized Hispanics (Mean=2.25, SD=.96) (Refer to Table 5). As a result, RH1, RH1-1, and RH1-2 were supported by our data. These findings confirmed that the ethnic identity of Hispanic consumers consistently predicts their preference for language in television commercials. The more Anglicized Hispanic consumers characterize their ethnic identity, the more likely they prefer English television commercials. On the other hand, the more Mexican Hispanic consumers characterize their ethnic identity, the more likely they prefer Spanish television commercials. Similar to Ordoñez (2005), Hispanics who identify themselves as bicultural prefer neither Spanish nor English in television commercials and are more likely to prefer code-switched commercials.

Table 5. Descriptive Statistics

Dependent Variable		Mean	S.D.	N
English-Language Preference	Most Anglicized to Very Anglicized	4.26	.84	33
	Bicultural	3.86	.86	134
	Very Mexican to Mostly Mexican	4.00	.74	121
Spanish-Language Preference	Most Anglicized to Very Anglicized	2.25	.96	33
	Bicultural	3.14	.91	134
	Very Mexican to Mostly Mexican	3.66	.85	121

Secondly, we investigated whether Hispanic participants' gender and generation in host culture moderated the above relationship. Each of the MANCOVA analyses showed that overall statistics were not significant to support that moderating effects exist. Our empirical findings from MANCOVA did not support that participants' gender affected their preference for English and Spanish television commercials (Wilks' Lambda=1, $F=.28$, $p>.05$). (Refer to Table 6) Therefore, RQ1 was not supported.

Similarly, generation in the host culture did not predict their preference for English and Spanish television commercials (Wilks' Lambda=1, $F=.56$, $p>.05$) (Refer to Table 7).

Therefore, RQ2 was not supported. Nevertheless, in both MANCOVA models, ethnic identity continues to predict language preference for television commercials.

Table 6. MANCOVA Model

Effect		Value	F	df	Error df	p-value	Observed Power
Ethnic Identity	Pillai's Trace	.21	16.66	4	562	.00	1
	Wilks' Lambda	.79	17.30	4	560	.00	1
	Hotelling's Trace	.26	17.94	4	558	.00	1
	Roy's Largest Root	.24	33.02	2	281	.00	1
Gender	Pillai's Trace	.00	.28	2	280	.76	.09
	Wilks' Lambda	1.00	.28	2	280	.76	.09
	Hotelling's Trace	.00	.28	2	280	.76	.09
	Roy's Largest Root	.00	.28	2	280	.76	.09
Ethnic Identity * Gender	Pillai's Trace	.01	.67	4	562	.61	.22
	Wilks' Lambda	.99	.68	4	560	.02	.22
	Hotelling's Trace	.10	.67	4	558	.02	.22
	Roy's Largest Root	0.01	.97	2	287	.38	.22

Table 7. MANCOVA Model

Effect		Value	F	df	Error df	Sig.	Observed Power
Ethnic Identity	Pillai's Trace	.006	4.36	4	558	.00	.93
	Wilks' Lambda	.994	4.40	4	556	.00	.94
	Hotelling's Trace	.006	4.44	4	554	.00	.94
	Roy's Largest Root	.006	.8.52	4	279	.00	.97
Generation in the Host Culture	Pillai's Trace	.00	0.56	2	278	.57	.14
	Wilks' Lambda	1.00	0.56	2	278	.57	.14
	Hotelling's Trace	.00	0.56	2	278	.57	.14
	Roy's Largest Root	.00	0.56	2	278	.57	.14
Ethnic Identity * Generation in the Host Culture	Pillai's Trace	.00	.06	4	558	.94	.06
	Wilks' Lambda	1.00	.06	4	558	.99	.06
	Hotelling's Trace	.00	.06	4	558	.99	.06
	Roy's Largest Root	.00	.10	2	279	.91	.07

4. Discussion

The study attempted to explore the relationship between ethnic identity and language preference in television commercials, and moderating demographic variables (i.e., generation in the host culture and gender) among Hispanic audiences. The research hypotheses and questions were structured to provide empirical data for these possible relationships. Discussion of findings based on the study's empirical data follows the structure of the research hypotheses (section 4.1) and research questions (section 4.2).

4.1. Does Participants' Ethnic Identity Account for Hispanics' Preference for Language in Television Commercials?

Previous research clearly suggests that language is an integral construct in acculturation theory and the most commonly used variable in multidimensional measures (Burnam et al., 1987; Cuéllar, Harris & Jasso, 1980; Cuellar et al., 1995; Mainous, 1989; Ueltschy & Krampf, 1997). Advertising researchers have approached the selection of advertisement language from the perspective of either information processing or cultural accommodation (Kelly et al., 2010). According to information process theory, the choice of language in advertising is important to ensure that advertising messages will be effectively processed to generate intended ad recall, comprehension, and subsequent attitudinal and behavioral changes (Kelly et al., 2010). Therefore, advertisements targeting Hispanic consumers who strongly identify with their Mexican identity will work more effectively if created in the Spanish language. On the other hand, English-language television commercials will be more effective if advertisers and marketers are targeting highly acculturated Hispanics who identify more with Anglicized/English-language culture.

Although the above relationship between ethnic identity and advertising language preference seems intuitive and expected, our study provides some insights into how bicultural Hispanic consumers will respond to television commercials. The understanding of the emerging bicultural Hispanic consumers carries practical and theoretical importance. According to cultural accommodation theory (refer to Kelly et al., 2010), the bicultural and bilingual young Hispanic consumers are likely to prefer code-switched commercials in which a foreign word or expression is inserted into a sentence to create a mixed language message (such as Spanglish). In our empirical findings, those who characterize themselves as bicultural do not show clear preference for either Spanish or English. This supports Kelly et al.'s (2010) argument that Spanglish advertising is likely to be favored by the bicultural Hispanics, given the increasing bilingualism. Future research that explores the preference for code-switched advertising contents is likely to reshape the current debates on whether English or Spanish advertising should be used to target Hispanic consumers who are intuitively homogeneous, but need to be marketed by considering sub-segment variations.

Past advertising research has consistently found the relationship between acculturation level and media language preference (Hernandez & Newman, 1992). A consensus seems to indicate that Hispanic consumers low in acculturation often favor Spanish and Spanish-language media. On the other hand, highly acculturated Hispanic consumers often favor English

and English-language media. Empirical data from the current survey of Hispanics concur with these observations and indicate that an individual's ethnic identity as Mexican, Anglicized, or bicultural influences his/her preference for both English and Spanish language television commercials. This would seem to support previous research on the acculturation influence, showing that the level of acculturation affects preference for advertising language. However, our results seem to reveal what previous studies have not found. While more Mexican Hispanics were found to prefer both English-language (Mean=4.00, SD=.74) and Spanish-language commercials (Mean=3.66, SD=.85), more Anglicized Hispanics prefer English-language more (Mean=4.26, SD=.84), and dislike Spanish-language in television commercials (Mean=2.25, SD=.96). In terms of Spanish-language preference for television commercials, the great discrepancy among Anglicized Hispanics seems to suggest that a high level of acculturation could lead to the dislike of Spanish. On the other hand, Mexican and bicultural Hispanics seem to prefer both English and Spanish television commercials equally. Future research should explore why Anglicized Hispanics dislike Spanish television commercials.

As Cartagena (2005) pointed out, the effective selection of language to use in ads targeting Hispanics is controversial and uncertain. It is likely that the effective use of advertising language to target Hispanic audiences needs to take into consideration many other factors. For example, how Hispanic consumers embrace pride in their ethnic identity (i.e., ethnic pride) is likely to be a factor (Deshpande et al., 1986). Given that the large and growing Hispanic market is composed of consumers from different countries, we also found that Hispanic consumers should not be treated as a homogeneous group. Different levels of acculturation (as demonstrated in ethnic identity) are likely to predict their preference for television commercial language. Our current study of Hispanics of Mexican descent was the first step to explore country-specific Hispanic consumer segments. As such, when it comes to targeting Hispanic audiences, an in-depth understanding of their consumer behavior is a prerequisite for a successful advertising campaign.

4.2. Do Gender and Generation in the Host Culture Moderate the Relationship between Ethnic Identity and Preference for Television Commercial Language?

In our study, gender and generation in the host culture did not have any moderating effects on the relationship between ethnic identity and language preference. It is likely that in order for the moderating effects to be observed, other demographic variables (such as age, educational level, income, residence status, etc.) (Duran & Monroe, 1977; Guernica & Kasperuk, 1982) could play a role as well. Previous advertising research that attempts to incorporate demographics into the analytical model continues to show inconclusive and sometimes contradictory results. Guernica and Kasperuk (1982) studied Hispanic television consumption and found that female, older and lower income Hispanics were more likely than other Hispanics to watch Spanish TV programming. Similarly, O'Guinn and Meyer (1984) confirmed a similar limitation of demographic variables in acculturation research. They found that preference for Spanish-language radio programming was not only related to age and education, but also to other factors such as marital status, a preference for Spanish language use at home and while watching TV, as well as consumer behaviors such as the purchase of phonograph records, tapes and

soft drinks. While many studies found that ethnic groups responded more favorably to media programming and content presented in their native language (Brill, 1994; Feinberg, 1988; Roslow & Roslow, 1980), other research failed to find any significant differences in preference for English or Spanish (Newton, 1986). The lack of moderating effects of gender in our study may also be attributed to the characteristics of the study's convenience sample of young university students who have not yet fully developed consumer attitudes and media behaviors significantly affected by gender differentiation or by interaction with other variables. Carroll and Luna (2011) also found that gender had no main or interactive effect on ad evaluations. It is also possible that college students in our sample did not create the variations in age, educational level and socio-economic status to better capture a diversity of acculturation patterns to shed light on the moderating effects of these two covariates.

In the current study, the MANCOVA showed no moderating effect of generation in the host culture (Refer to Table 7). While this variable has been widely used as a measure of an individual's level of acculturation at some point along a continuum, its use as a moderating variable in the present study of relationship showed no measure of effect. We speculate that since over half of the respondents were second-generation Hispanics with similar age and level of education, the absence of moderating effect may be attributable to a higher level of acculturation as measured by length of time spent in the host country by both respondents and previous generations.

5. Conclusion

Despite the eagerness of marketers and advertisers to pursue this emerging minority market, it must be accepted that Hispanics are not homogeneous (Lee et al., 2004). Within-group acculturation variations should be taken into consideration when planning any advertising campaigns. In addition to the emergence of multicultural Hispanics, social-economic status could also play an important role in predicting how they will respond to culturally-targeted ads (Lee et al., 2004).

Language in ads targeting Hispanic consumers is claimed to be a very controversial topic (Cartagena, 2005). Practically, what language to use in Hispanic-targeted ads still faces uncertainty and doubt because of a lack of empirical data (Cartagena, 2005; Korzenny, Valdez & McGavock, 2010). Previous studies have often led to the seemingly simple conclusion that the use of English or Spanish is more effective than the other in effectively reaching the Hispanic consumer. However, assuming all Hispanic consumers to be the same without considering their self-perceived ethnic identity as an indicator of their acculturation level is likely to confront the danger of undifferentiated advertising strategies. Hernandez and Newman (1992) pointed out that effective Hispanic-targeted advertising should use the dominant language (whether it is Spanish or English), depending on the consumers' level of acculturation. Our study confirmed the seemingly intuitive relationship between ethnic identity and language preference for television commercials. The most interesting suggestion of our study is the identification of the important emergence of bicultural Hispanic consumers, who may constitute the majority of the future Hispanic consumer segment, and who are likely to demonstrate a distinctive preference over advertising language. In the current study, the bicultural Hispanics in our sample favor

neither English nor Spanish. Our other contribution to the advertising literature is to focus on the historically dominant mass-reach medium of television and the exploration of the effects of ethnic identity as an acculturation variable on TV commercial language preference among Hispanic audiences. Our empirical results confirmed the predictive power of ethnic identity to account for Hispanics' preference for language.

Managerially, for advertisers and media and marketing professionals, the implications of this study are intended to encourage a better understanding of important factors in the successful creation and implementation of more effective television advertising campaigns directed at Hispanics. Hispanic consumers' preference for advertising language influences not only how the advertising contents will be processed (i.e., information processing theory), but how they will appreciate a company's effort to be culturally sensitive and to develop subsequent favorable company-related attitudes (Grier & Brumbaugh, 1999). Therefore, it is vital for advertisers and marketers to choose the advertising language that best matches the preference of the target audience. As media technologies and consumer choices change at a rapid pace, multicultural marketers must have insights into the array of multidimensional factors affecting consumer and media behaviors.

5.1. Limitations and Future Research Directions

This study surveyed a university student population, using a convenience, non-probability sampling method in the Southwestern part of the U.S. where Hispanic population is a minority majority. The recruitment of college students allowed the researchers to explore the important research hypotheses and questions but we acknowledge the limitations of the methodology in understanding the whole of the U.S. Hispanic population. Student populations often have different characteristics than a non-student population, in terms of their demographics, language use in different contexts, and media use and habits. Because the majority of students was between 18 and 29 years old and represented a narrow age demographic, age as a moderating variable was not included in the study. As such, future research should recruit non-student populations from different geographic regions to offer a broader range of characteristics that are more representative of the larger U.S. Hispanic television audience.

Existing acculturation literature has used a variety of measures and scale items to explore the complex multidimensional nature of the topic. The short questionnaire we used has its limitations in terms of collecting comprehensive consumer data. The anonymity of the questionnaire survey was used to prevent socially desirable responses. Researchers should use a mixed method of focus group, interview, and questionnaire to better examine the Hispanic population. A more extensive data collection process is also likely to avoid the problem that participants were guided to respond to the questionnaire in an expected manner. Future research using additional measures of ethnic interaction, ethnic pride, ethnic affiliation (Deshpande et al., 1986), country-of-origin, language competency and cultural behaviors, along with additional demographic variables of education, socioeconomic status, and age would add more dimensions to the analysis and provide a wider array of variables with which to explore possible interactions.

Finally, the study focused on the traditional and still powerful advertising medium of

television. The study asked for a general assessment of television commercials without exploring possible impacts of product type, creative strategies and appeals, use of models and characters, and the length of the ads. These variables could play important roles in determining participants' attitude toward ad language. Furthermore, while the medium of television is widely expected to maintain mass audience appeal and advertiser value for the foreseeable future, new media technologies are beginning to provide advertisers with new promotional and branding opportunities, particularly among younger consumers who are rapidly adopting the technologies into their daily lives. Online and mobile platforms, along with instant voice and text communication and social networks that thrive on their use, represent the advertising battleground of the future. And just as marketers have been competing for consumers of traditional print, electronic, and outdoor media for many years and conducting research on language use and ethnic identity to gain advantage, the battle for the bicultural in the digital world will need to find new strategies.

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