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The double-edged sword of identification. The divergent effects of identification on acculturation stress among Ukrainian immigrants in Poland

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ABSTRACT

Research on the 'social cure' points to the many positive outcomes of having strong social identifications for minority and immigrant groups. At the same time, identification is a multi-faceted psychological phenomenon, combining three dimensions: ingroup centrality, ingroup affect, and ingroup ties. The main aim of the present study was to assess the divergent effects of these three facets of social identification on acculturation stress experienced by the members of two ethnolinguistic communities of Ukrainian immigrants in Poland. The study found that ingroup centrality was related to higher levels of acculturation stress, whereas positive ingroup affect and strong ingroup ties were related to lower acculturation stress. Additionally, the immigrant community who speak Ukrainian as their mother tongue reported stronger Ukrainian identification than those declaring Russian as their mother tongue, leading to lower levels of acculturation stress among members of this community. The present study suggests that those aspects of identification that promote exclusivity (ingroup centrality) can be maladaptive in the process of acculturation, whereas the more binding ones (ingroup ties and affect) facilitate acculturation.

Introduction

"Old lady Europe is not very friendly: incomprehensible schedules, too loud people.

Besides, every hour the clock strikes you. It's time, they say, to return to your homeland."

This poem, written by Kiva (2020), a Russian-speaking Ukrainian poet who fled the war zone in Donbas, reflects the overwhelming fear and uncertainty shared by many refugees and immigrants arriving in a new and culturally distant country, after their connections to their home country were suddenly broken. Experiences of stress and anxiety are relatively common among immigrants. These feelings, stemming from discrimination and acculturation problems, are not only experienced by those who find their identity lost within the host society, but also by those who continue to strongly identify with their immigrant group. This paradox could be explained by the fact that different aspects of identification might have divergent effects on the acculturation process. The multi-faceted role of identification with the immigrant group in acculturation stress is an important topic that has so far received little empirical attention. In this study we are especially interested in the case of immigrant groups that differ in their levels of national

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identification, ranging from people who strongly identify with their ingroup due to being highly competent in their native language(s), to those whose ethnic background has never played any significant self-defining role. Our study focuses on Ukrainian immigrants living in Poland, including forced immigrants who came to Poland as a result of armed conflict in eastern Ukraine and the annexation of Crimea in 2014. Ukrainian immigrants are not a homogeneous group regarding their ethnolinguistic background. Most of them speak Ukrainian, Russian or both, depending on their region of origin. In all cases, the declared mother tongue is a key issue in the context of identification.

It is important to emphasize that the ethnic and linguistic identities and loyalties of Ukrainian immigrants stem from very complex historical, sociopolitical and sociolinguistic contexts in their country of origin, which have been highly regionalized at least since the nineteenth century. The creation of ethnolinguistic identities has been deeply embedded in the processes of state- and nation-building, as well as imposed socio-demographic and linguistic changes, such as a significant increase in the presence of the Russian language in public life during the Ukrainian Socialist Soviet Republic and its overt policy of Russification. Notably, the case of Ukrainians living in Poland provides an interesting context for studying the implications of the complex situation in their country of origin, offering new insights on the relationship between immigrants' language, ethnic identity, and the acculturation challenges they face.

The 'social cure' and the three facets of identification

People belonging to particular social groups differ in how strongly they identify with these groups. This affects the way in which they respond to disadvantage and threats to the status of the group, as well as to group successes and collective achievements (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Research on the 'social cure' hypothesis points to many positive outcomes of strong social identification for minority and immigrant groups (Jetten, Haslam, Haslam, Dingle, & Jones, 2014; Muldoon & Lowe, 2012). A number of studies have shown that minority group members, including immigrants, often distance themselves from the majority group due to perceived discrimination (e.g., Badea, Jetten, Iyer, & Er-Rafiy, 2011; Jasinskaja-Lahti, Liebkind, & Solheim, 2009; Kunst & Sam, 2014), compensating for this by constructing a stronger identification with their ingroup (Bourguignon, Seron, Yzerbyt, & Herman, 2006; Jetten, Branscombe, Schmitt, & Spears, 2001; Schmitt, Spears, & Branscombe, 2003). Such strong ingroup identification has been found to have positive effects on the psychological functioning and well-being of minority group members, providing them with social support and mitigating the negative consequences of discrimination and rejection by the outgroup (Berry, Phinney, Sam, & Vedder, 2006; Bourguignon et al., 2006; Branscombe, Schmitt, & Harvey, 1999; Branscombe, Fernández, Gómez, & Cronin, 2012; Cronin, Levin, Branscombe, van Laar, & Tropp, 2012; Heim, Hunter, & Jones, 2011; Jetten et al., 2001; Kamberi, Martinovic, & Verkuyten, 2015; Schaafsma, 2011; Schmitt et al., 2003). However, both ethnic and host national identification might be conducive to higher levels of well-being among immigrants (Bobowik, Martinovic, Basabe, Barsties, & Wachter, 2017).

Recent research on social identification points to the multi-faceted structure of identification (Cameron, 2004; Cameron et al., 2018; Roth, Mazzotta, & Barth, 2019). According to Cameron (2004), social identification consists of three distinct dimensions: ingroup centrality (the importance of the group to the self), ingroup affect (the value ascribed to being a member of the group) and ingroup ties (attachment to other members of the group). The correlates of these three facets have been found to be rather diverse. Research on HIV patients has found ingroup centrality to be linked with lower levels of self-efficacy and ingroup ties with higher levels of self-efficacy (Harris, Cameron, & Lang, 2011). A study looking at the Jewish minority in Poland showed that ingroup centrality was a negative predictor of community involvement, while ingroup ties were a positive predictor (Bilewicz & Wójcik, 2010). At the same time, Bombay, Matheson, and Anisman (2010) found that depressive symptoms in Aboriginal communities in Canada were positively predicted by ingroup centrality and negatively predicted by ingroup affect. Ingroup centrality has also been found to be associated with higher appraisals of threat and discrimination in intergroup relations (Bombay et al., 2013).

Together, these studies highlight the negative role of ingroup centrality, while also revealing potential benefits of emotional and relational aspects of identification for psychological well-being and activism. What remains relatively unexplored are the effects of these different facets on acculturation processes in immigrant communities.

Acculturation stress

After arriving in a new country, immigrants often experience anxiety, uncertainty, decreased self-esteem and lower well-being (Ward, 1996). This might be fueled by experiences of discrimination as well as a perceived incompatibility of cultural values and ways of living in the host and the home country (Phinney, Lochner, & Murphy, 1990). Such experiences are often referred to as acculturation stress (Berry & Annis, 1974). Research on acculturation shows that immigrants who are successful in integrating their minority identity with the host country identity achieve higher levels of adaptation, thus suffering less from acculturative stress (Berry et al., 2006; Jasinskaja-Lahti & Liebkind, 2001). Therefore, integrating one's strong immigrant identification and their strong commitment to the host country could help overcome stressful aspects of acculturation. As centrality is an exclusive aspect of social identification (i.e. high centrality of one social identity might automatically reduce centrality of other identities), it is possible that it could contribute to higher levels of acculturation stress, whereas other facets of social identification might diminish it.

Acculturation stress is a multi-faceted phenomenon (Gil, Vega, & Dimas, 1994; Mena, Padilla, & Maldonado, 1987; Miller, Kim, & Benet-Martínez, 2011). Immigrants might experience stress due to interpersonal, professional, and structural pressures, as well as discrimination. In a seminal work by Benet-Martínez and colleagues (Benet-Martínez & Haritatos, 2005; Miller et al., 2011) the following five life domains were identified as potential sources of acculturation stress: *language skills* (e.g. being misunderstood because of one's accent or low language competence), *work challenges* (e.g. having to work harder than nonimmigrant peers, feeling pressure of conforming to a negative stereotype or not being able to live up to a positive stereotype), *intercultural relations* (e.g. having

disagreements based on custom or value incompatibility), *discrimination* (e.g. being treated rudely or unfairly because of one's ethnicity), and *cultural isolation* (e.g. living in an environment that is not culturally diverse, feelings of being different in everyday situations).

Multiple studies have shown that these different facets of acculturation stress are positively related to negative health outcomes among immigrants, such as depression and anxiety (Adebayo, Nichols, Albrecht, Brijnath, & Heslop, 2020; Miller et al., 2011), as well as to partner violence and other social problems (Kim, 2019).

Language as a source of identity

The fact that native language is a key determinant of ethnic identity has been acknowledged in early social identity research (Bourhis, Giles, & Tajfel, 1973). This seems particularly true in the case of immigrant groups and ethnic minorities, whose ethno-linguistic vitality defines their group status and sense of identity (Giles, Taylor, & Bourhis, 1977). Although national and ethnic groups differ in terms of how much social power or status is ascribed to their language within a given state (Sachdev & Bourhis, 2005), there is also considerable variability within each immigrant group regarding their ethnic language use and competence. While in many contexts native language(s) can contribute to a strong identity and enhance immigrants' collective self-esteem, they can also impede collective self-esteem and lead to disidentification if the immigrant group is negatively stereotyped and targeted by prejudice (Bourhis & Maass, 2001; Giles & Johnson, 1987; Ryan, Giles, & Sebastian, 1982). In such cases, immigrants consider the use of their native language as an obstacle that makes the acculturation process more difficult.

In the case of immigrants, an ability to speak their own language could contribute to strengthening different aspects of social identification. The native language can be a social glue, binding minority or immigrant group members together, therefore contributing to stronger ingroup ties. It can also increase positive affect toward the minority identity as well as integrity, due to cultural values and habits being transmitted through the language. Finally, using one's native language makes their ethnic identity more salient and accessible. This, in turn, might increase the centrality of their immigrant identity. The importance of language in shaping one's identity and attenuating acculturation stress can be explored in the context of immigrant groups whose members differ in their native language competence.

Ethnic and linguistic identities of Ukrainian immigrants in Poland

Ukrainians form the largest group of immigrants in Poland. The scale and intensity of migration from Ukraine to Poland have changed significantly over the last two decades. In the 1990s, seasonal migration – mainly from Western Ukraine – was the predominant form of migration, with over 90 % of Ukrainians migrating from that region between 2010 and 2012. After the 2014 annexation of Crimea by the Russian Federation and the ensuing military conflict in Eastern Ukraine, the intensity of migration to Poland from Eastern and Central Ukraine increased (Brunarska, Kindler, Szulecka, & Toruńczyk-Ruiz, 2016). One of the reasons as to why this change is relevant is that it has led to a shift in the linguist profile of Ukrainian immigrants, as the ethno-linguistic situation in Ukraine differs depending on the region. Ukrainian dominates in the western part of Ukraine, whereas in the southeastern part of the country the number of native speakers of Ukrainian is rather small; it is Russian that prevails in these regions (Melnyk & Chernychko, 2010). In general, three main ethno-linguistic groups can be distinguished within the population of Ukraine: Ukrainian-speaking ethnic Ukrainians, Russian-speaking ethnic Ukrainians, and Russian-speaking ethnic Russians (Khmelko, 2004). This Ukrainian-Russian diglossia, bilingualism, and the sense of national identity strongly linked to the Ukrainian language shape linguistic behaviors as well as the social identities of Ukrainian immigrants in Poland.

The present study

The main aim of the present study was to assess the divergent effects of the three facets of social identification on acculturation stress experienced by Ukrainian immigrants in Poland. We hypothesized that ingroup centrality would be positively related to acculturation stress, whereas ingroup ties and ingroup affect would be negatively related to acculturation stress. Additionally, we wanted to test whether any potential differences in acculturation stress and identification among Ukrainian immigrants could be driven by linguistic factors. We hypothesized that participants identifying as native speakers of Ukrainian (as opposed to Russian) would express higher levels of identification on all three dimensions. In addition, we expected that these participants would describe experiencing lower acculturation stress due to stronger ingroup ties and ingroup affect, but would still be affected by some aspects of acculturation stress due to higher ingroup centrality.

Method

Participants and procedure

Eight hundred and fourteen Ukrainian immigrants currently living in Poland participated in the study, which involved an online questionnaire. Seventy-six percent of the sample ($N = 616$) indicated Ukrainian as their mother tongue, and twenty-four percent indicated Russian as their mother tongue ($N = 198$, for the purposes of this paper we will use the terms 'Russian speakers' and 'Ukrainian speakers' throughout the rest of the manuscript, although we recognize that such a classification simplifies the linguistic profile of Ukrainian immigrants, which are often much more complex). Participants' ages ranged from 18 to 66 ($M = 27.50$, $SD =$

7.91); 15 participants did not declare their age. Women accounted for 64 % ($N = 521$) and men accounted for 36 % ($N = 292$) of the sample; one person did not indicate their gender. Ukrainian and Russian speakers did not differ in terms of gender, $\chi^2 = 2.84, p = .09$. Participants evaluated their general financial situation as average ($M = 3.25$ on scale 1–5, $SD = 0.76$; Ukrainian speakers: $M = 3.26, SD = 0.73$; Russian speakers: $M = 3.24, SD = 0.84$). Seventy-two participants (37 Ukrainian speakers and 35 Russian speakers) indicated safety/politics as one of the reasons (next to education and/or work) for migration to Poland. In general, participants intended to seek permanent residence in Poland ($M = 3.64$ on scale 1–5, $SD = 1.07$; Ukrainian speakers: $M = 3.60, SD = 1.05$; Russian speakers: $M = 3.75, SD = 1.14$; Cohen's $d = 0.14$).

The questionnaire was available in Ukrainian and Russian, allowing participants to complete it in their preferred language. Information at the beginning of the survey was presented in both languages. Ukrainian was the questionnaire's default language¹. Participants were recruited through snowball sampling and by advertising the study on social media channels popular among Ukrainian immigrants in Poland. All participants who completed the survey received a gift voucher to thank them for their time. No outliers were excluded from any of the analyses performed, in line with the highest standards of research transparency (Bakker & Wicherts, 2014).

Measures

National identification was measured using Cameron's (2004) 12-item social identification scale ($\alpha = .85$). The scale consists of items measuring centrality, ingroup affect, and ingroup ties. Items were phrased in terms of Ukrainian national identification. Centrality items referred to the subjective importance of Ukrainian identity (e.g., *I often think about the fact that I am a Ukrainian*; $\alpha = .69$). Ingroup affect items referred to positive emotions derived from being Ukrainian (e.g., *In general, I'm glad to be a Ukrainian*; $\alpha = .80$). Ingroup ties items referred to feelings of attachment and similarity to other Ukrainians (e.g., *I have a lot in common with other Ukrainians*; $\alpha = .78$). Participants indicated their responses on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*).

Acculturation stress was measured using the Riverside Acculturation Stress Inventory (Miller et al., 2011) adapted to the context of Ukrainian immigrants in Poland. The scale consists of five dimensions of acculturation stress: discrimination (e.g. *I have been treated rudely or unfairly because I am Ukrainian*; $\alpha = .81$), intercultural relations (e.g. *I have had disagreements with Poles for liking Ukrainian customs or ways of doing things*; $\alpha = .70$), cultural isolation (e.g. *I feel that there are not enough Ukrainian people in my living environment*; $\alpha = .59$), language skills (e.g. *It bothers me that I have an accent in Polish*; $\alpha = .71$), and work challenges (e.g. *In looking for a job, I sometimes feel that being Ukrainian is a limitation*; $\alpha = .67$). Participants indicated their responses on a 5-item scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*).

Results

In order to examine differences in national identification and acculturation stress between participants who indicated Ukrainian vs. Russian as their mother tongue, a series of t -tests were conducted (see Table 1). Participants who declared Ukrainian as their mother tongue presented a higher level of national identification than those who declared Russian as their mother tongue. When comparing the different facets of acculturation stress, we found three significant differences between the groups. The Ukrainian speakers reported lower stress related to their Polish language competency and their accent than the Russian speakers. They also reported lower levels of work challenges and cultural isolation from other Ukrainians than the self-declared Russian speakers.

In order to test the relationship between national identification and the specific sources of acculturation stress, we conducted a linear regression analysis for each language group (Ukrainian speakers see Table 2; Russian speakers see Table 3) with the three factors of national identification as predictors and the five facets of acculturation stress as dependent variables.

Among the Ukrainian speakers, ingroup centrality was a significant positive predictor of acculturation stress related to discrimination, intercultural relations, cultural isolation, language skills and work challenges. In contrast, ingroup affect was a significant negative predictor of acculturation stress related to discrimination, intercultural relations, language skills and work challenges, and a marginally significant negative predictor of acculturation stressed caused by cultural isolation. Finally, ingroup ties were a significant negative predictor of acculturation stress related to discrimination, intercultural relations, and work challenges (see Table 2).

The pattern of results observed among immigrants who declared Russian as their mother tongue was fairly similar: ingroup centrality was a significant positive predictor of acculturation stress related to discrimination, intercultural relations, language skills, and work challenges, and a marginally significant positive predictor of acculturation stress caused by cultural isolation. Ingroup affect and ingroup ties were significant negative predictors of acculturation stress related to discrimination and intercultural relations (see Table 3).

Looking at the above, one can notice the difference between the Ukrainian and Russian speakers regarding the role that the three identification factors play in their experiences of acculturation stress. Among the Ukrainian speakers, centrality of Ukrainian identification was a positive predictor of stress related to cultural isolation, but among the Russian speakers this association was non-significant. Ingroup affect was a significant predictor of acculturation stress related to language skills and work challenges for the

¹ Of the 616 participants who indicated Ukrainian as their mother tongue, 537 chose Ukrainian as the language of the questionnaire and 79 chose Russian as the questionnaire's language. Of 198 participants who indicated Russian as their mother tongue, 154 chose Russian as the language of the questionnaire and 44 chose (or did not change the default language) Ukrainian as the questionnaire's language. This pattern of choice illustrates the complexity of ethnic and linguistic identity of (generally bilingual) Ukrainians as well as their language choices.

Table 1

Mean Differences between the Immigrants Declaring Ukrainian as Their Mother Tongue vs. Immigrants Declaring Russian as Their Mother Tongue in Identification and Acculturation Stress.

Participants' mother tongue	Ukrainian		Russian		<i>t</i> (814)	<i>p</i>	Cohen's <i>d</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			
Identification							
National identification	3.64	0.76	3.15	0.74	8.13	<.001	.66
Centrality subscale	3.39	0.96	2.77	0.96	7.99	<.001	.65
Ingroup affect subscale	3.91	0.94	3.47	0.98	5.50	<.001	.45
Ingroup ties subscale	3.62	0.91	3.21	0.93	5.51	<.001	.45
Acculturation stress							
Discrimination	2.54	1.07	2.59	1.14	−0.43	.52	.05
Intercultural relations	1.96	0.90	2.00	0.88	−0.53	.60	.04
Cultural isolation	2.01	0.85	2.28	0.84	−3.47	<.001	.32
Language skills	2.08	0.90	2.51	1.03	−5.19	<.001	.45
Work challenges	2.90	1.05	3.07	1.08	−1.89	.046	.17

Ukrainian-mother tongue sample. Finally, ingroup ties were a negative predictor of work challenges only among Ukrainian speakers.

Nonetheless, in both groups the direction of the relationships between acculturation stress and national identification components was consistent – centrality was associated with higher acculturation stress, while ingroup affect and ingroup ties were related to lower acculturation stress.

In the next step of our analysis, we examined whether the differences between the two groups of Ukrainian immigrants in acculturation stress could be attributed to differences in centrality or in ingroup affect and ingroup ties. We used a mediation analysis including those acculturation stress domains that differed between the Ukrainian and Russian speakers (i.e. language skills and cultural isolation; as the differences in work challenges between the groups were marginal, we decided not to include this factor in the analysis). The analysis was conducted using Model 4 in the Process Macro for SPSS (Hayes, 2013). The independent variable was the participants' language – it was a dummy variable where Ukrainian mother tongue declarations were coded as 1 and Russian as 0, thus the value of the variable contained declarations of native (Ukrainian) language as mother tongue. The dependent variables were the two subscales of acculturation stress and the mediating variables were the three subscales of national identification.

As Fig. 1 shows, speaking Ukrainian as a mother tongue was strongly related to all three national identification components. Ukrainian speakers reported higher levels of national identification than Russian speakers. Centrality was positively associated with stress related to cultural isolation, while ingroup affect and ingroup ties were negatively associated with stress related to cultural isolation. Most importantly, speaking Ukrainian as a mother tongue had a significant positive indirect effect on stress related to cultural isolation through centrality: $b = 0.07$, $SE = 0.03$, 95 % CI [0.03, 0.13], and a negative indirect effect through ingroup affect: $b = -0.04$, $SE = 0.02$, 95 % CI [−0.08, −0.01] and ingroup ties: $b = -0.04$, $SE = 0.02$, 95 % CI [−0.08, −0.01]. The indirect effect through centrality was significantly larger than the ones through ingroup affect ($b = 0.11$, $SE = 0.04$, 95 % CI [0.04, 0.19]) and through ingroup ties, $b = 0.12$, $SE = 0.04$, 95 % CI [0.05, 0.19]. The indirect effects through ingroup affect and through ingroup ties were of a similar size, $b = 0.004$, $SE = 0.03$, 95 % CI [−0.06, 0.07].

A slightly different pattern of results was observed regarding stress related to language skills (Fig. 2). Centrality was positively associated with acculturation stress related to language skills, whereas ingroup affect was negatively associated with such stress. However, the effect of ingroup ties was non-significant. Speaking Ukrainian as a mother tongue had a positive indirect effect on acculturation stress related to language skills through centrality, $b = 0.10$, $SE = 0.03$, 95 % CI [0.05, 0.16], and a negative indirect effect through ingroup affect, $b = -0.08$, $SE = 0.03$, 95 % CI [−0.14, −0.03]; there was no significant effect through ingroup ties, $b = -0.01$, $SE = 0.02$, 95 % CI [−0.54, 0.03]. As in the case of stress related to cultural isolation, the indirect effect through centrality was significantly larger than the indirect effects through ingroup affect ($b = 0.19$, $SE = 0.04$, 95 % CI [0.10, 0.27]) and through ingroup ties, $b = 0.11$, $SE = 0.04$, 95 % CI [0.04, 0.19]. The indirect effect through ingroup ties was significantly smaller than the effect through ingroup affect, $b = -0.08$, $SE = 0.04$, 95 % CI [−0.16, −0.001].

Discussion

The present study found that different facets of social identification have different effects on all sources of acculturation stress. Higher centrality was related to higher levels of acculturation stress associated with discrimination, intercultural relations, cultural isolation, language skills, and work challenges. At the same time, positive ingroup affect was related to lower acculturation stress in all these domains. Strong ingroup ties were predictive of lower acculturation stress related to discrimination, intercultural relations, and cultural isolation; however, they were not associated with acculturation stress related to linguistic skills and work challenges.

In line with our hypotheses, the two subgroups of immigrants differed in their levels of national identification. Those identifying Ukrainian as their mother tongue reported stronger ties to other Ukrainians, a more positive affect toward being Ukrainian, and higher centrality of Ukrainian identity than those declaring Russian as their mother tongue. The two groups also differed in terms of acculturation stress, with Ukrainian speakers reporting lower acculturation stress related to linguistic skills and cultural isolation. These differences were partly mediated by two facets of identification: ingroup affect (positive effect) and centrality (negative effect). Speaking Ukrainian was linked with a higher centrality, therefore causing greater acculturation stress – whereas it was also linked to

Table 2
Linear Regression Analysis for Participants who Declared Ukrainian as Their Mother Tongue.

	Discrimination			Intercultural relations			Cultural Isolation			Language skills			Work challenges							
	B	SE	CI	p	B	SE	CI	p	B	SE	CI	p	B	SE	CI	p				
Centrality	.18	.05	[.07, .28]	.001	.13	.05	[.04, .21]	.01	.11	.04	[.02, .20]	.01	.12	.05	[.03, .21]	.01	.27	.05	[.16, .37]	<.001
Ingroupp affect	-.21	.06	[-.31, -.10]	<.001	-.15	.05	[-.24, -.06]	.001	-.09	.05	[-.17, .003]	.06	-.19	.05	[-.28, -.10]	<.001	-.19	.05	[-.30, -.08]	.001
Ingroupp ties	-.22	.06	[-.34, -.10]	<.001	-.21	.05	[-.31, -.11]	<.001	-.08	.05	[-.18, .02]	.10	.04	.05	[-.07, .14]	.49	-.12	.06	[-.23, -.001]	.047
Model summary					Model summary				Model summary				Model summary							
	$R^2 = .073$				$R^2 = .076$				$R^2 = .020$				$R^2 = .033$				$R^2 = .057$			
	$F(3, 563) = 14.75, p < .001$				$F(3, 563) = 15.36, p < .001$				$F(3, 562) = 3.77, p = .01$				$F(3, 565) = 6.33, p < .001$				$F(3, 563) = 11.30, p < .001$			

Table 3
Linear Regression Analysis for the Participants who Declared Russian as Their Mother Tongue.

	Discrimination			Intercultural relations			Cultural Isolation			Language skills			Work challenges							
	B	SE	CI	p	B	SE	CI	p	B	SE	CI	p	B	SE	CI	p				
Centrality	.34	.09	[.15, .52]	<.001	.33	.07	[.19, .47]	<.001	.13	.07	[-.01, .27]	.07	.28	.09	[.11, .45]	.001	.27	.09	[.10, .45]	.003
Affect	-.26	.09	[-.44, -.08]	.01	-.15	.07	[-.29, -.01]	.03	-.07	.07	[-.21, .07]	.31	-.14	.09	[-.30, .03]	.11	-.14	.09	[-.31, .04]	.12
Ties	-.22	.10	[-.42, -.02]	.03	-.19	.08	[-.34, -.04]	.02	-.13	.08	[-.28, .03]	.10	-.13	.09	[-.32, .06]	.17	-.02	.10	[-.22, .17]	.83
Model summary					Model summary				Model summary				Model summary							
	$R^2 = .110$				$R^2 = .128$				$R^2 = .033$				$R^2 = .064$				$R^2 = .054$			
	$F(3, 181) = 7.46, p < .001$				$F(3, 180) = 8.81, p < .001$				$F(3, 180) = 2.04, p = .11$				$F(3, 181) = 4.09, p = .01$				$F(3, 241) = 3.46, p = .02$			

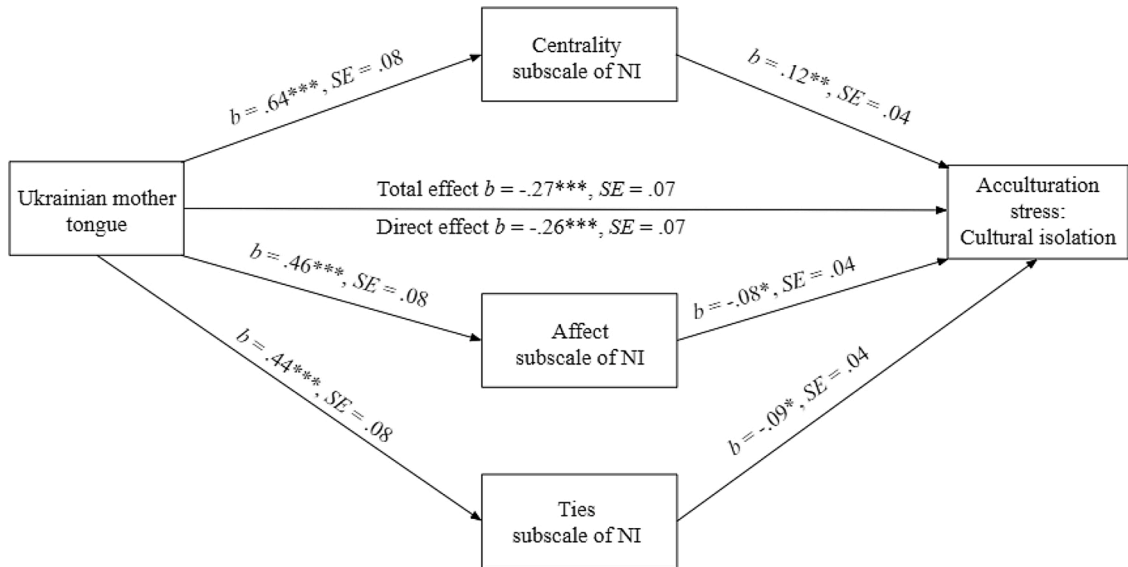


Fig. 1. Mediation Analysis of the Relationship between the Participants’ Language (Ukrainian vs. Russian as Mother Tongue) and the Cultural Isolation Aspect of Acculturation Stress with the National Identification Dimensions as Mediators.
 Note. *** $p < .001$, ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$.

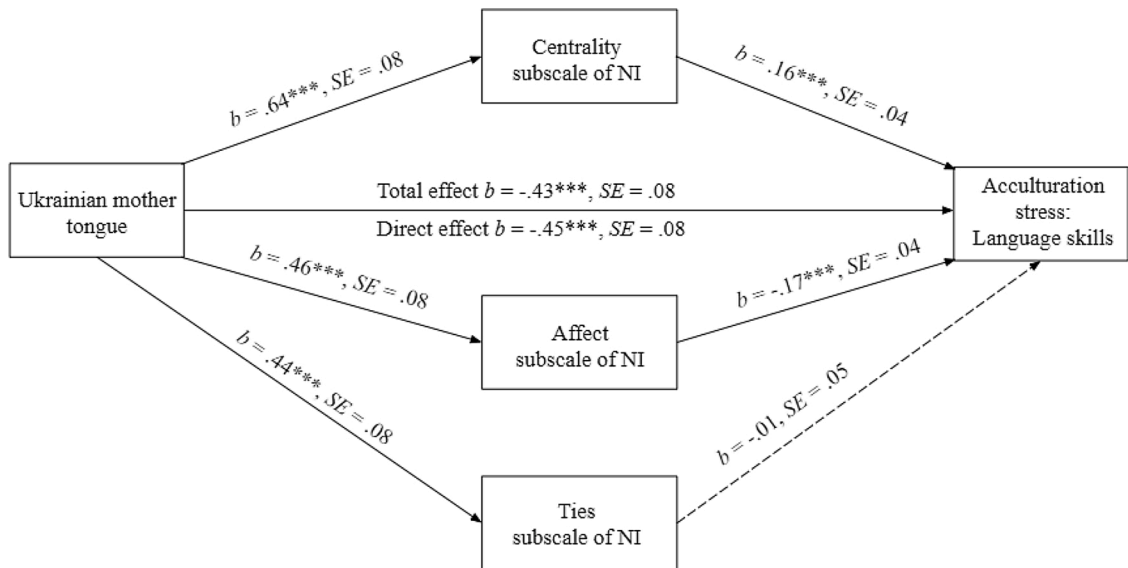


Fig. 2. Mediation Analysis of the Relationship between the Participants’ Language (Ukrainian vs. Russian as Mother Tongue) and the Language Skills Aspect of Acculturation Stress, with the National Identification Dimensions as Mediators.
 Note. *** $p < .001$.

more positive ingroup affect that led to lower acculturation stress. This suppressive pattern of indirect effects suggests that two different aspects of strong identification could have fundamentally different effects on immigrants’ acculturation.

Our research expands the body of evidence regarding the negative consequences of high ingroup centrality (Bilewicz & Wójcik, 2010; Bombay, Matheson, & Anisman, 2010, 2013; Harris et al., 2011), by showing its negative impact on different aspects of acculturation stress. Our findings are consistent with earlier observations that ingroup identification, as a central aspect of the individual’s self-concept, makes people more sensitive to threats to their ingroup and causes them to mobilize defense mechanisms (de Souza, de Lima, Maia, Fontenele, & Lins, 2019; Leach et al., 2008). In turn, this might be counterproductive to positive acculturation processes. Indeed, previous studies suggest that shifting toward the minority group identity carries the risk of being further marginalized from the mainstream; while shared ethnic identity generates efficient social support and coping resources (Haslam, Reicher, & Levine, 2012), it may also reduce opportunities that emerge from having closer links with the host or mainstream group,

increasing the perception of relations between the groups as being more hostile (Branscombe et al., 2012). The strong positive effects of ingroup centrality on acculturation stress suggest that this specific aspect of ingroup identification has an isolating potential that in turn is detrimental for minorities' and immigrants' well-being in the host society.

On the other hand, our research shows that, in line with the social cure effect (Jetten et al., 2014), other facets of identification might effectively reduce acculturation stress among immigrant groups. The study also reveals the fundamental role of the mother tongue as a factor that lowers acculturation-related anxieties among immigrants: the Ukrainian-speaking immigrants demonstrated lower levels of acculturation stress than the Russian-speaking immigrants due to more positive affect toward their ethnic identity and stronger relations with other Ukrainians.

In the case of Ukrainian immigrants in Poland, their ethnic and linguistic profiles clearly reflect the complex historical, sociopolitical and linguistic situation of the various regions of their country of origin. It is impossible to understand the connections between the 'mother tongue', the language of daily communication and identity without taking into account the broader context of the formation of both the ethnolinguistic and civic identity of Ukrainians, which is inherently related to processes of state- and nation-building.

Since the beginning of the 20th century, ethnocultural identity in Ukraine has been continuously diversifying at the regional level (Shporlyuk, 2001). During the times of the Ukrainian Socialist Soviet Republic, and especially after 1933, the presence of Russian language in public life increased significantly. While this was largely the result of the policy of Russification pursued by the Bolshevik regime, mass immigration to Ukraine from Russia and other Soviet republics also strengthened the role of Russian as the language of inter-ethnic communication, especially in those cities where most of newcomers settled (Kulyk, 2014). Nevertheless, the current position of the Ukrainian language in Ukraine is strong, as it is widely used in almost all official contexts and mass media. After Ukraine gained independence in 1991, Ukrainian was recognized as the only state language and its status is reflected in the Main Law of Ukraine (Constitution of Ukraine, art. 10). Therefore, a salient feature of the language situation in Ukraine is the massive asymmetric Ukrainian-Russian bilingualism (Masenko, 2004), sometimes taking the form of a language conflict (Kurchenko, 2016; Mayboroda & Panchuk, 2008). This asymmetry is both demographic (related to age groups) and regional. In this asymmetric linguistic arrangement, the vast majority of Ukrainians speak both languages and many tend to switch between the two. According to the All-Ukrainian Census, which took place in 2001, 67.53 % of the citizens of Ukraine consider Ukrainian as their native language, whereas 29.59 % consider Russian as their native language. Based on the census, one can also conclude that in Ukraine ethnic self-identification does not always correspond with linguistic self-identification, as 14.77 % of ethnic Ukrainians stated that they consider Russian as their mother tongue (Melnyk & Chernychko, 2010).

It should be noted that even when the declared mother tongue is Ukrainian, this does not necessarily correspond to the language of daily communication, as Russian often prevails in the private sphere, while Ukrainian is used in official spheres of communication. Nonetheless, the process of ethnic identification is often independent from daily language practices. While people's linguistic and cultural attitudes are influenced by their identification with particular language(s) - in this case Russian and Ukrainian - they may not always communicate in the language with which they identify. Even so, seeing one of the two languages as one's 'mother tongue' is a powerful predictor of people's attitudes and policy preferences concerning the 'national language', daily language choices and other socially divisive issues (Kulyk, 2011).

Limitations

The current study has several limitations. First of all, as the study was correlational in nature, directions of causality could not be established with certainty. Although the three facets of identification could affect the levels of acculturation stress experienced by participants, it is also plausible that acculturation stress enhances ingroup centrality, while weakening ingroup ties. Although the latter could be concluded from Bombay et al.'s (2013) work looking at ingroup centrality as an outcome of discrimination, the current study demonstrated that the link between centrality and acculturation stress could not be attributed solely to experiences of discrimination, as centrality was associated also with other sources of acculturation stress. Therefore, we consider the proposed direction of causality to be more likely. Nonetheless, further experimental and longitudinal studies should be conducted to test this. Such studies should also tease apart the three aspects of identification that are closely related but conceptually different. This could be achieved through experimental treatments in which the centrality of identification could be primed while keeping the relational and affective aspects of identification constant.

Furthermore, it should be considered that the differences in acculturation stress between the Ukrainian and Russian speaking immigrants observed in our study could be attributed to factors other than identity-based processes. Ukrainian shares more linguistic similarities with Polish than Russian does. This could potentially cause greater language-related acculturation stress among Russian-speaking Ukrainian immigrants. However, the observed mediational role of identification, as well as the fact that similar effects were observed in the case of another form of acculturation stress (related to cultural isolation), suggest that the differences between the Ukrainian and Russian speakers could not be caused solely by a mere similarity between Ukrainian and Polish. Yet another limitation is the fact that participants could declare only one language as their mother tongue, as the sociolinguistic profiles of Ukrainian immigrants are often much more complex; for example, bilingual Ukrainian-Russian families in which couples have different ethnic and linguistic background(s) are quite common. Further studies could apply a more complex measurement of linguistic background that captures Ukrainian-Russian diglossia in greater detail.

Conclusions

The present study contributes to the existing literature on social identification and acculturation stress by showing that for successful acculturation to occur it is not only essential that people identify with their immigrant community, but that they identify with them in a specific way. Those aspects of identification that promote exclusivity (such as high ingroup centrality) seem to facilitate acculturation stress, whereas the more inclusive ones (ingroup ties and affect) seem to reduce it. Our findings offer an explanation for the ‘double-edge sword effect’ of ethnic or national identification, that in the case of immigrants, may, on the one hand, unlock ‘social cure’ mechanisms, but on the other, lead to social disconnection with the host group, especially when combined with perceived discrimination (e.g., Haslam et al., 2018).

We believe that any integration policies should take these issues into account and aim to promote ties between immigrant group members while respecting immigrant identities; at the same time, such policies should encourage immigrants to identify with other social groups so they can build more complex and inclusive identities that are helpful in fostering positive acculturation strategies and attenuating acculturation stress.

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