

Developing a research-based children's book to help Latina/o immigrant children overcome and resist acculturative stressors

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Background

Latina/o immigrants face unique challenges when immigrating to the United States. Encountering a new language, cultural norms, and leaving family are but a few of the obstacles that many Latina/o immigrants face. These unique obstacles can be a source of acculturative stressors. While both adults and children can experience acculturative stressors, facilitating a child's immigration experience is especially important given that childhood is a critical developmental stage.

Bibliothreapy can help Latina/o immigrant children with the immigration experience. Currently, many children's books exist that reflect the unique challenges that Latina/o immigrant children face (e.g., see Gomm (2012) for a list of 50 picture books for Latina/o immigrant children). However, to my knowledge, no children's books incorporate empirical findings on acculturative stressors into the story's narrative. Developing a children's that incorporates the research on acculturative stressors is important for two key reasons. One, such a book can help Latina/o immigrant children overcome and resist acculturative stressors. Two, such a book can raise a child's awareness on acculturative stressors and provide them a platform to discuss these issues with family, teachers, and other caregivers.

Objective & Method

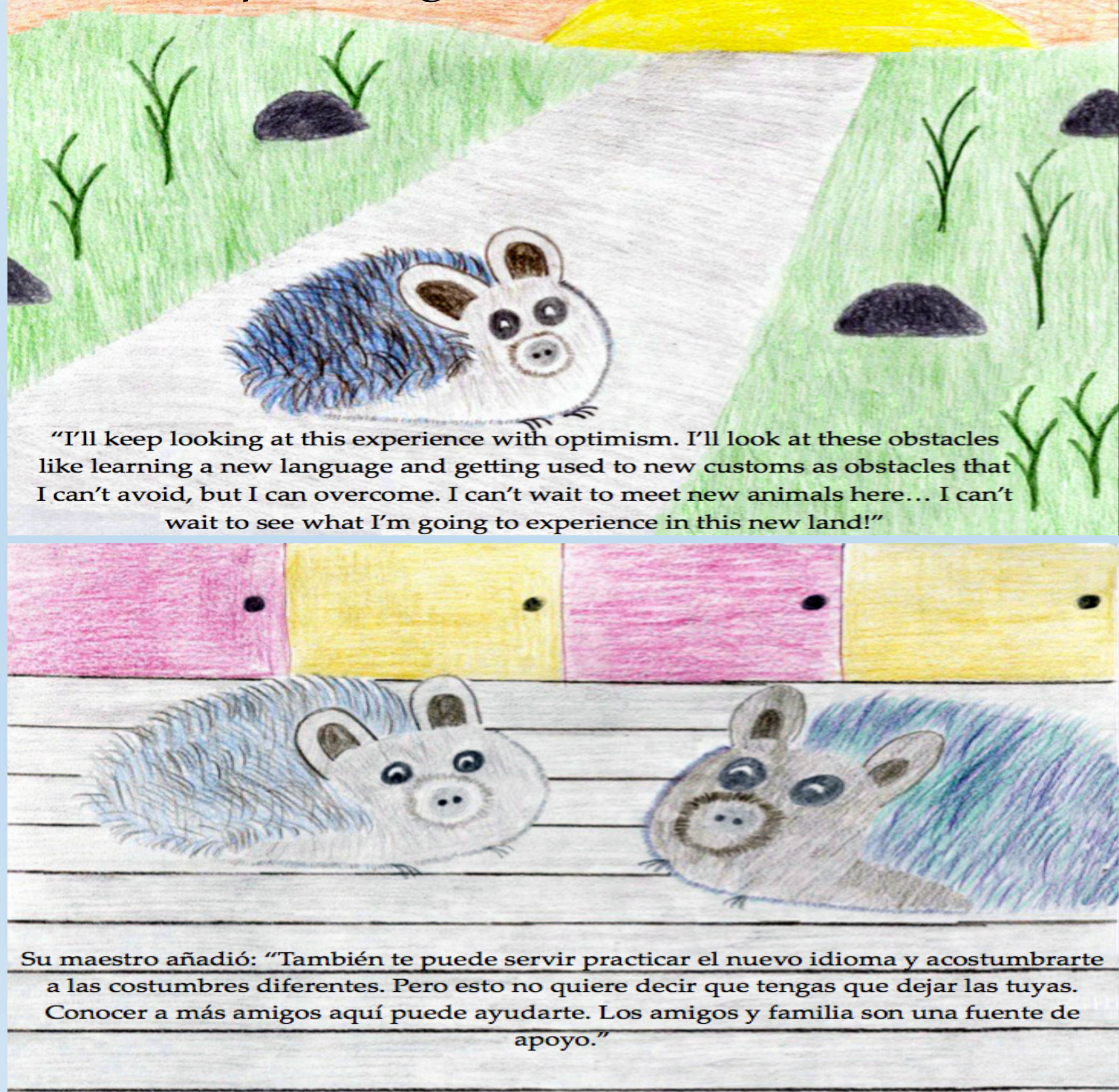
- Objective: develop a children's book that integrates the empirical findings from the literature on acculturative stressors to help Latina/o immigrant children overcome and resist acculturative stressors
- Method
 1. Conduct a critical review on the empirical literature on overcoming and resisting acculturative stressors as a Latina/o immigrant child
 2. Explore children's books that address acculturative stressors
 3. Integrate my knowledge from exploring the empirical literature, children's books, and taking the course "HD FS 240: Literature for Children" to develop a research-based children's book in English and Spanish that aims to help Latina/o immigrant children overcome and resist acculturative stressors

9 Variables that Mediate Acculturative Stress

1. The way that one perceives the immigration experience (i.e., seeing obstacles as opportunities, having optimism, and holding positive expectations for the future)
2. Adapting to the host culture's language, social norms, and social system
3. Social support within and outside the family
4. *Familismo*, emotional support, and family intactness
5. Active (vs. avoidant) coping
6. Socioeconomic status
7. Self-esteem
8. High involvement in the immigration process prior to leaving native country
9. Perceived discrimination

Results

Incorporating the narrative with acculturative stress variables



The hedgehog perceives the acculturative experience with optimism, views learning a new language and adapting to a new culture as an unavoidable (but surmountable) obstacle, and holds positive expectations for the future (bullet point 1).

The teacher mentions that becoming more proficient in the host culture's language and learning the new cultural norms can help reduce stress (bullet point 2). The teacher also adds that family and friends are a great source of support (bullet point 3), which incorporates the notion of *familismo* (bullet point 4), a strong commitment toward family.

Conclusion, Future Directions, & Acknowledgements

- Conducting the critical review, reviewing children's books that address acculturative stressors, and taking the course "HD FS 240: Literature for Children" allowed me to develop a children's book in English and Spanish that aims to help Latina/o immigrant children overcome and resist acculturative stressors.
- Research should test if such a book helps Latina/o immigrant children overcome and resist acculturative stress.
- I would like to sincerely thank Dr. Carolyn Cutrona, Dr. Loreto Prieto, and professor Eugenio Matibag. Dr. Cutrona supervised my project and provided valuable feedback. Dr. Prieto provided valuable insights into the Latina/o experience and recommended articles. Dr. Cutrona and Dr. Prieto met with me to discuss the project as a group. Professor Matibag supervised my project for USLS credit and reviewed my Spanish translations.
- I would also like to sincerely thank my friends Brooklyn Fenchel, Maria Larrazabal, Kevin I Muñoz, and Juanjo Gil. Brooklyn digitally enhanced the images. Maria back translated the story's text from Spanish to English to ensure translation quality. Kevin and Juanjo provided valuable feedback on the Spanish translations.