

BRIEF REPORT

You Speak English Well! Asian Americans' Reactions to an Exceptionalizing Stereotype

Alisia G. T. T. Tran
Arizona State University

Richard M. Lee
University of Minnesota

This study examined a specific type of racial microaggression known as an exceptionalizing stereotype, in which an action is framed as interpersonally complimentary but perpetuates negative stereotypical views of a racial/ethnic group. Asian American participants ($N = 68$) were assigned to 1 of 3 brief semistructured interview conditions that highlight an exceptionalizing stereotype of Asian Americans to varying degrees. In the low racially loaded condition, participants were told, "You speak English well" by a White confederate. In the high racially loaded condition, they were told, "You speak English well for an Asian." In the control condition, the confederate said, "Nice talking to you." Only participants in the high racially loaded condition rated their partner, the interaction, and future interactions less favorably than participants in the control condition. They also evaluated their partner and interaction less positively than participants in the low racial loading condition. The results suggest exceptionalizing stereotypes can be interpersonally damaging for Asian Americans.

Keywords: racial microaggressions, Asian Americans, interracial interactions, stereotype language discrimination

Although overt expressions of racial animosity have declined over the last 50 years, negative attitudes toward people of color persist through more subtle and indirect expressions (Dovidio & Gaertner, 1998; Sue, Capodilupo, et al., 2007; Utsey, Ponterotto, & Porter, 2008). The theory of racial microaggressions suggests bias can include "brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, and environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults to the target person or group" (Sue, Capodilupo, et al., 2007, p. 273). Such comments can be demeaning, express insensitivity, or negate or deny the personal experiences, thoughts, or feelings of minority individuals. Microaggressions also can include racially discriminatory messages that can be denied, justified, or rationalized because they are framed as positive or well-intentioned by the communicator, thereby leaving the recipient to decide how to interpret the messages and the messages underlying them (Tran, Miyake, Martinez-Morales, & Csizmadia, 2014). Scholars have emphasized the relevance of microaggressions to

counseling relationships, particularly as they can be unintentionally or unconsciously expressed by helping professionals (Sue, Capodilupo, et al., 2007). Research supports that microaggressions can be damaging to the client–therapist relationship (Owen et al., 2011).

Positive stereotypes are an example of microaggressions that can be characterized as well-intentioned by the communicator. Positive stereotypes are messages that assign "positive" characteristics to a person because of his or her membership in a racial/ethnic group, such as expecting an Asian American individual to be good at mathematics. Whereas positive stereotypes are framed as a positive but depersonalizing (stereotypical) view of a racial/ethnic group, other microaggressions can express a positive view of the individual but simultaneously maintain a negative view of his or her racial/ethnic group. For example, telling an Asian or Latino American, "You speak good English," or telling a racial/ethnic minority, "You are a credit to your race," insinuates that the individual is viewed as an exception to an otherwise inferior racial/ethnic group. In this article, we use the term *exceptionalizing stereotype* to describe the latter form of microaggressions in which a commentary or behavior can arguably be framed as interpersonally complimentary but communicates and perpetuates negative stereotypical views of a racial/ethnic group.

The present study employs an in vivo, laboratory-based experimental procedure to examine Asian American individuals' intrapersonal and interpersonal responses to an exceptionalizing stereotype that implies that they are a positive exception to their racial group. Specifically, the study looks at responses to a communication that the individual speaks English well, paying attention to

Alisia G. T. T. Tran, Department of Counseling and Counseling Psychology, School of Letters and Sciences, Arizona State University; Richard M. Lee, Department of Psychology, University of Minnesota.

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Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Alisia G. T. T. Tran, Counseling and Counseling Psychology, School of Letters and Sciences, Arizona State University, PO Box 870811, Tempe, AZ 85287-0811. E-mail: alisia@asu.edu

variations in responses when the communication is obvious or high in its racial basis (high racial loading: “You speak English well for an Asian”) versus when it is ambiguous, subtle, or low in its racial basis (low racial loading: “You speak English well”).



Microaggressions Against Asian Americans

Microaggressions have been considered for their specific relevance to Asian Americans (Sue, Bucceri, Lin, Nadal, & Torino, 2007), whose association with the “model minority” stereotype heightens the possibility of “positive” characterizations of individual Asian Americans that concurrently reiterate both positive and negative stereotypical views of their racial group. From this perspective, Asian Americans are seen as an exceptional or a “model” minority group due to a strong work ethic and cultural values that have contributed to the group’s larger academic and economic success (S. J. Lee, 1994). However, this characterization of Asian Americans, though ostensibly “positive,” has the potential to contribute to stereotypes and mask or invalidate the current and historical racial hardships experienced by Asian Americans. Indeed, research supports that Asian Americans often receive questions assuming non-American citizenship and backhanded compliments about their language fluency and achievements (Armenta et al., 2013; Cheryan & Monin, 2005; Kim, 1999; Sue, Bucceri, et al., 2007).

There has been controversy as to whether microaggressions in general represent a valid racial stressor that has potency or negative implications (see Sue, Capodilupo, et al., 2007; Thomas, 2008). Survey-based research has found that microaggressions and other forms of subtle discrimination against Asian Americans are associated with negative mental health symptoms (Armenta et al., 2013; Noh, Kaspar, & Wickrama, 2007; Ong, Burrow, Fuller-Rowell, Ja, & Sue, 2013). A small number of experimental studies have examined positive stereotypes consistent with microaggressions against Asian Americans (Cheryan & Bodenhausen, 2000; Shih, Pittinsky, & Ambady, 1999; Siy & Cheryan, 2013). A recent experimental study by Siy and Cheryan (2013), for instance, found that Asian Americans negatively appraise those who engage in positive stereotyping, such as presuming an Asian American participant has superior math abilities.

For Asian Americans, microaggressive comments like, “Where are you from?” and “You speak English well,” exemplify subtle or indirect racial slights (Sue, Bucceri, et al., 2007). These comments imply foreignness and devaluation of one’s American status but can be justified as a well-intentioned statement of interest in the Asian American individual’s cultural background. The justifiable nature of such differential treatment is a characterizing feature of many modern experiences of bias. The underlying motivation behind such statements can be ambiguous, or lack clarity in their interpretation as racially based or not (Crocker, Voelkl, Testa, & Major, 1991; Operario & Fiske, 2001; Sue, Capodilupo, et al., 2007). The ambiguity and subtlety of biased racial communications can be further heightened in cases when the communicator construes the messages as “well-intentioned” or even “positive.” Such communications nevertheless express differential treatment or negative racial views about an ethnic/racial group (Sue, Capodilupo, et al., 2007). To date, however, experimental research on Asian Americans’ experiences of ambiguous or subtle forms of racial bias, including microaggressions, has been extremely lim-

ited (Cheryan & Bodenhausen, 2000; Leets, 2003; Shih et al., 1999; Siy & Cheryan, 2013).

No in vivo experimental investigations known to the researchers have focused on exceptionalizing stereotypes directed at Asian Americans and their interpersonal impact. The present study investigates the interpersonal effects of White individuals communicating to Asian American participants that they speak English well. The “complimentary” nature of such commentary may reflect a well-intentioned view from a White speaker to deliver a positive remark, but the message communicates a negative and stereotypical view of the individual’s racial group and its presumed limited English-speaking skills (Sue, Bucceri, et al., 2007; Sue, Capodilupo, et al., 2007). Research supports that Asian American individuals endorse that others assume they have limited English-speaking abilities (Goto, Gee, & Takeuchi, 2002). Experimental research has indicated that having one’s English-speaking abilities questioned can pose a potential threat to one’s American identity and can result in heightened efforts by Asian Americans to reaffirm their American cultural knowledge and participation (Cheryan & Monin, 2005). Messages about language skills toward Asian Americans often can be couched within positive remarks to the individual, creating a situation in which the recipient of the message must decipher the racial basis of the message and must weigh their reactions against multiple possible interpretations (Sue, Bucceri, et al., 2007). The present research aims to extend the limited experimental research in this area by understanding how Asian Americans immediately appraise communications and interpersonal situations involving exceptionalizing stereotypes. The focus on the interpersonal consequences of an exceptionalizing stereotype is especially valuable for counseling because of the potential applications to understanding the relational impact of microaggressions on the client-therapist dyad.

In exploring this situation of exceptionalizing stereotyping, the current study considers cases in which the racial context is either high or low (i.e., the racial nature of the message is obvious or subtle, respectively). A high racially loaded message makes the racial overtones of the remark more obvious, whereas a low racially loaded message may add further to its ambiguity. Theories on racial microaggressions suggest that the potency of subtle, indirect, or low racially loaded messages may negatively impact well-being and interpersonal relations, but it remains largely unclear from live experimental investigations how this communication feature compares to more racially overt or direct messages (Sue, Capodilupo, et al., 2007). Previous experimental research employing hypothetical vignettes to manipulate the intensity and directness of the racial connotations of a biased message have suggested a marginally significant trend in which Asian Americans report more concern over indirect or low racially loaded messages or microaggression experiences compared to members of other racial groups (Leets, 2003). However, research also has revealed that Asian Americans report greater negative emotional intensity when they believe a microaggression is based in their racial/ethnic status (Wang, Leu, & Shoda, 2011).

For the present study, we hypothesize that both high and low racially loaded exceptionalizing stereotypes, compared to a control message, will result in negative appraisals of the communicator and interaction. We anticipate that the greatest effects would result for the high racial loading condition because it will be obvious that the communication is based in one’s racial status (i.e., the largest

effect sizes indicating negative appraisals of the communicator and interaction relative to the control condition would result for the high racial condition).

Method

Sample

Seventy participants who responded to advertisements for a “communication study” and identified in a screening survey as Asian or Asian American participated for \$10 or extra credit in psychology coursework at a large, Midwestern public university. Additional a priori inclusion criteria included (a) age restrictions (age <26 years) to reduce cohort effects and (b) arrival to the United States by at least age 12 to promote more similar familiarity with U.S. racial/ethnic dynamics. A U.S.-arrival age of 12 has been used in other research to distinguish those who have spent the majority of their lives in the United States and orient themselves to Asian ethnic and American cultures differently from those who arrived to the United States after age 12 (Tsai, Ying, & Lee, 2000). Inclusion criteria were not disclosed to neither eligible nor non-eligible respondents during the screening process.

Two participants were excluded from analyses because they reported suspicion of the study hypothesis and confederate. The final analyzed sample included 68 participants (23 men, 45 women; mean age = 19.59 years, $SD_{\text{age}} = 1.91$; 60.3% U.S.-born; mean total years in the United States = 16.43, $SD_{\text{U.S. years}} = 4.63$; 86.8% reported English was among their primary languages).

Procedure and Materials

Interested students completed a brief screening via e-mail to determine their eligibility based on the aforementioned inclusion criteria. Eligible participants came to a research lab in the campus psychology department where they were met by an experimenter. A White confederate was trained to pose as another student participant. The participant and confederate were told they would have an interaction together as part of a study on communication. They completed preinteraction questionnaire packets including a demographic questionnaire and partner and interaction appraisal items, in separate rooms to provide privacy. The interaction appraisal items included six items indexing the participants' *evaluation* of the interaction partner (e.g., “In general, how positive is your impression of this person?” premanipulation $\alpha = .80$) and three items assessing participants' *perceived acceptance* or rejection by their interaction partner using a 7-point scale (0 = *not at all* to 6 = *extremely*; e.g., “How much do you think this person will like you?” premanipulation $\alpha = .80$; Andersen & Baum, 1994; Andersen, Reznik, & Manzella, 1996). Additional single-item indices queried how *enjoyable* they believed the interaction would be and how *similar* they perceived their interaction partner to be to them (0 = *not at all*, 6 = *extremely*).

The participant and confederate then had a private 5-min structured interview that included a list of preselected questions such as, “What major are you studying or hoping to study in school?” or, “What are five things you would say to fill in the question, ‘I am . . .’?” (Kuhn & McPartland, 1954; see Appendix). As a method of experimental control, the confederate was assigned the role of first interviewer seemingly based on arrival times (instructions stated

that they would switch interviewer-interviewee roles, but this never occurred before the 5-min time limit was completed). The interview task included writing the interviewee responses to certain questions (every other question). It was explicitly stated in front of the participant that interviewers were not allowed to ask any other comments or any follow-up questions. After 5 min, the experimenter returned and directed the confederate to complete the study in a separate room for privacy. As the experimenter was standing outside of the room out of eyesight, the confederate stated aloud that he or she had forgotten a pen and returned to the room. He or she then delivered one of three randomly assigned messages to the participant: “Nice talking to you. You speak English well” (*low racial loading*); “Nice talking to you. You speak English well for an Asian” (*high racial loading*); and “Nice talking to you” (*control*). The confederate was then directed to wait for the experimenter in the other room.

Participants then completed postmanipulation partner and interaction appraisal items (postmanipulation evaluation $\alpha = .89$; postmanipulation perceived acceptance $\alpha = .85$) while the experimenter stepped out to provide the other participant (confederate) with instructions on completing the postmanipulation questionnaires. In addition to postmanipulation partner and interaction appraisal items, participants were queried on how *accurate* they believed their partner's impression of them was (0 = *very inaccurate*, 3 = *very accurate*) and how much longer they would continue the interaction with their partner compared to their interactions in general using a 5-point scale (−2 = *much less than average*, 0 = *average*, 2 = *much more than average*; *additional talk time*). Filler questions were included to discern if negative ratings from participants were attributable to a global negative view of the interaction partner (“Overall, what amount of verbal communication abilities do you think this person demonstrated?” and “How would you rate this person's intelligence level?”) using a 5-point scale (−2 = *highly below average*, 0 = *average*, 2 = *highly above average*).

At the conclusion of the study, participants were debriefed on the use of a confederate in the study and were asked to provide consent to use their data after being informed of the study procedures (all participants consented). The backside of their copy of the debriefing form included campus resources for mental health services.

Analyses and Manipulation Check

Analysis of variance (ANOVA) and analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) using pairwise comparisons and Bonferroni corrections allowed for comparison between each condition. To assess changes in the dependent variables, available premanipulation scores were entered as covariates in the respective analysis (see Dimitrov & Rumrill, 2003).

ANOVA and chi-squared tests indicated that there were no statistically significant differences in basic demographic characteristics across the three conditions—i.e., age ($\eta^2_{\text{partial}} = .01$, $p = .74$), gender ($p = .80$), number of years in the United States ($\eta^2_{\text{partial}} = .02$, $p = .50$), years speaking English ($\eta^2_{\text{partial}} = .01$, $p = .71$), English as a primary language ($p = .89$)—and available premanipulation control variables—i.e., evaluation ($\eta^2_{\text{partial}} = .05$, $p = .20$), perceived acceptance ($\eta^2_{\text{partial}} = .01$, $p = .63$), perceived

similarity to interaction partner ($\eta^2_{\text{partial}} = .07, p = .10$), expectation for enjoyableness of the interaction ($\eta^2_{\text{partial}} = .05, p = .19$).

Before and after the interaction, participants rated how important they believed their race/ethnicity would be or was to their interaction partner. Prior to the interaction, there were no significant differences across conditions in ratings of anticipated importance of race/ethnicity, $F(2, 65) = 1.52, p > .05, \eta^2_{\text{partial}} = .05$. ANCOVA results controlling for premanipulation ratings of importance revealed that participants in the high racial loading condition ($M = 3.05, SD = 1.31$) believed race/ethnicity was more important to their interaction partner relative to either of the other conditions ($M_{\text{low}} = 2.09, SD_{\text{low}} = 1.35; M_{\text{control}} = 1.78, SD_{\text{control}} = 1.48$), $F(2, 64) = 6.43, p < .005, \eta^2_{\text{partial}} = .17$. Results support that those in the high racial loading condition found the interaction to be racially laden.

Results

Consistent with expectations, participants in the high racial loading condition evaluated their partner less positively, reported lower levels of perceived acceptance from their partner, perceived themselves to be less similar to their interaction partner, felt their interaction partner had a less accurate impression of them, and rated the interaction as less enjoyable than those in the control condition (see Table 1 for descriptive statistics, effect sizes, and ANCOVA/ANOVA test results). Effect sizes ranged from medium-large to large (Cohen's $d = 0.67$ – 1.10).¹ Additional analyses on filler questions revealed no significant differences across conditions regarding ratings of the interaction partner's verbal skills or intelligence, suggesting that participants did not have a global negative view of their partners ($ps > .05$).

Contrary to the hypotheses, there were no significant differences between the low racial loading and control conditions (see Table 1). Additionally, as expected, effect sizes were greatest for the high racial loading condition. Of note, there were two significant differences between the high racial loading condition and the low racial loading condition. Specifically, those in the high racial loading condition evaluated their partner less positively (Cohen's $d = 0.60$) and felt their partner had a less accurate impression of them (Cohen's $d = 0.93$) than those in the low racial loading condition.

When asked how much more they would continue the interaction (i.e., *additional talk time*), participants in the high racial loading condition indicated that the amount they would continue the interaction was significantly less than that of control participants (Cohen's $d = 0.95$). Post hoc one-sample t tests revealed that the time allotted for further conversation by both the low ($M = -0.39, SD = 0.66$) and high ($M = -0.82, SD = 0.91$) racial loading conditions was significantly lower than participants' "average" (or an expected zero value based on the $-2 = \text{highly below average}$, $0 = \text{average}$, and $2 = \text{highly above average}$ scaling) length of typical conversations.

Discussion

This study finds that a common exceptionalizing racial stereotype—specifically compliments about English language abilities—can take a toll on interpersonal relationships for Asian American young adults. Results add to the small but growing literature that

highlights the negative effects of microaggressions against Asian Americans (e.g., Cheryan & Monin, 2005; Crocker et al., 1991; Leets, 2003; Siy & Cheryan, 2013; Wang et al., 2011). A strength of the current study is its use of an in vivo experimental design to capture the immediate interpersonal effects of exceptionalizing stereotypes.

In examining exceptionalizing stereotypes, the study provides additional insights into how microaggressions and subtle messages of racial bias affect Asian American individuals' appraisals of present and future social interactions, finding that the effects can vary by the extent to which the racialized context is obvious or subtle. We found negative appraisals of an interracial interaction and White interaction partner were consistently and almost exclusively found in the condition in which the racial evaluation was highly racially loaded or overt—specifically, when a White confederate explicitly stated to Asian American participants that they spoke English well for an Asian. The effects were the greatest for those in the high racial loading conditions, and there were statistically significant findings that those in the high racial loading condition evaluated their interaction partners more negatively and felt their partner had a less accurate view of them compared to the low racial loading condition. Moreover, those in the high racial loading condition expressed significantly less desire to continue interacting with their interaction partner. It also is notable that participants in the high racial loading condition did not ascribe globally negative attributions to their partners, suggesting that their appraisals of the interaction were not likely based in a generally negative view of the interaction partner and were more likely based in the stereotyping experience.

Interestingly, participants in the condition in which racial evaluation was low or subtle (no mention of race was made in reference to English-speaking abilities) generally did not appraise the interaction partner or experience negatively. It is possible that the comment "You speak English well" was racially ambiguous enough for Asian American participants to give the communicator the benefit of the doubt (Crocker et al., 1991). Nevertheless, post hoc analyses suggest participants still allotted less future time to the interaction compared to their interactions more generally. This finding suggests less willingness to commit behaviorally to continuing the interaction. In other words, it is possible that Asian American participants had some unexpressed or unconscious neg-

¹ The interview question, "What are five things you would say to fill in the question, 'I am . . .?'" represents a modified version of the Twenty Statement Test and was used as a premanipulation index of racial/ethnic identification (Kim-Ju & Liem, 2003; Kuhn & McPartland, 1954). The interviewer was instructed to record interviewee (participant) responses. Participant responses were dichotomously coded for whether participants identified racially/ethnically. There was not a statistically significant difference across conditions in the distribution of racial/ethnic identifications, $\chi^2(2) = 5.28, p > .05$. Examining the subset of participants who did not identify racially/ethnically on this measure ($N = 45$), the original omnibus ANOVA and ANCOVA test results were replicated. The effect sizes for pairwise comparisons between the high racial loading condition relative to the control condition (Cohen's d range: 0.81 – 1.15) continued to be larger than the low racial loading-control effect sizes, which is consistent with hypotheses. Additionally, controlling for ethnic identification on the adapted Twenty Statements Test in ANCOVAs similarly yielded significant omnibus tests, again with the effect size of the high racial loading-control comparisons producing the larger effect sizes for each dependent variable (Cohen's d range: 0.67 – 1.10).

Table 1
Condition Descriptive Statistics, ANCOVA/ANOVA Results, and Effect Sizes

Dependent variable	High racial loading (<i>n</i> = 23)		Low racial loading (<i>n</i> = 22)		Control (<i>n</i> = 23)		Omnibus test	η^2_{partial}	Cohen's <i>d</i> (absolute values)		
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			High vs. control	Low vs. control	High vs. low
Evaluation	3.22	1.27	3.84	0.72	4.27	0.77	$F(2, 64) = 9.72^{***}$	.23	0.99***	0.57	0.60**
Perceived acceptance	3.05	1.05	3.57	0.78	3.81	1.02	$F(2, 64) = 4.59^*$	.13	0.74*	0.27	0.56
Enjoyable	2.59	1.44	3.30	1.11	4.09	1.28	$F(2, 64) = 6.50^{**}$	.17	1.10**	0.66	0.56
Similar	1.59	1.14	2.17	1.03	2.43	1.36	$F(2, 62) = 3.81^*$	.11	0.67*	0.21	0.54
Accurate ^a	1.18	0.80	1.83	0.58	1.76	0.56	$F(2, 65) = 6.64^{**}$	.17	0.84*	0.11	0.93**
Additional talk time ^a	-0.82	0.91	-0.39	0.66	-0.04	0.71	$F(2, 64) = 5.73^{**}$	.15	0.95**	0.51	0.54

Note. ANOVA = analysis of variance; ANCOVA = analysis of covariance.

^a No premanipulation measurement.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

ative feelings toward the experience. While the current research is focused on explicit personal perceptions of exceptionalizing stereotypes, it would also be valuable to know through additional research about how these stereotypes affect personal experiences in less conscious ways, for instance, physiological emotional reactions or avoidant nonverbal behaviors.

The results of the current study point to the reality that microaggressions such as exceptionalizing stereotypes can be interpersonally damaging, even when bias is delivered in a way that arguably holds the individual in higher esteem. The negative interpersonal costs of exceptionalizing stereotypes found in this study are concerning because these may contribute to negative racial attitudes, interracial conflict, or reduced desire for further interracial contact that may negatively impact both parties of a cross-racial or cross-ethnic dyad. Research consistently supports that intergroup contact can benefit interracial attitudes (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006), but the nature and quality of the contact appears to be an important factor in shaping racial attitudes and interpretations of interracial experiences (Dixon et al., 2010). In turn, minorities' negative racial attitudes toward White individuals have been found to be associated with more negative ratings of the quality and quantity of intergroup interactions (Shelton & Richeson, 2006).

These findings have important counseling implications. Survey research has found a link between racial microaggressions more broadly and poorer mental health (e.g., Nadal, Griffin, Wong, Hamit, & Rasmus, 2014). Our findings support the possibility that exceptionalizing stereotypes may contribute to interpersonal stress, which may mediate the association with poorer mental health. From the perspective of the client-therapist interaction, the negative interpersonal consequences of the given exceptionalizing stereotypes found in the present study parallels survey findings that microaggressions may negatively impact the therapeutic alliance (Owen et al., 2011). These results are especially meaningful in light of the finding that working alliance mediates the link between microaggressions in the clinical relationship and poorer therapy outcomes (Owen et al., 2011). Furthermore, the current finding that those in the low racial loading condition allotted less time to future conversation with the interaction partner than they would typically suggests the need for future longitudinal research on duration of participation in therapy following microaggressions.

This project represents one of the few experimental investigations of microaggressions against Asian Americans and the only

one known to the authors to examine an exceptionalizing stereotype. There is evidence that individuals' predictions of behavioral responses to hypothetical racial events do not accurately predict actual behavioral responses when the event is experienced live (Kawakami, Dunn, Karmali, & Dovidio, 2009). Given this evidence that individuals mispredict their responses to racial stimuli, a strength of the current study is its use of vis-à-vis experimental laboratory procedures. Moreover, the use of the interview in the interaction added a degree of experimental control but also yields some similarities to initial interview experiences within various clinical relationships.

Given the small body of literature on microaggressions, survey, experimental, and qualitative research should continue to examine Asian American experiences of microaggressions, including assumptions of foreign or alien status, invisibility, or denial of racial hardships or realities (Sue, Capodilupo, et al., 2007). Future research should consider the factors that moderate the social and psychological effects of exceptionalizing stereotypes and other microaggressions in Asian Americans. Racial/ethnic identity is often considered in discrimination processes. However, research has yielded inconsistent results, particularly for Asian Americans, as to whether racial/ethnic identity is a protective, exacerbating, or nonmoderating factor in responses to bias (R. M. Lee, 2005; Pascoe & Smart Richman, 2009). It remains unclear how racial/ethnic identity may interact specifically in microaggression processes, thus highlighting the need for further research.

It is also important to note that a limitation of this study is its purposeful focus on a relatively acculturated sample of Asian Americans. The results may not translate to more recent Asian migrants to the United States, such as international students, who have been found to experience discrimination based on language ability but often of a different nature than exceptionalizing stereotypes (Wei, Wang, & Ku, 2012). There is evidence suggesting that U.S.-born Asian Americans experience racial microaggressions more negatively than Asian-born Americans (Armenta et al., 2013; Siy & Cheryan, 2013). More research on the differences in experiences of racial microaggressions of U.S.-born and Asian-born Asian Americans is especially important, as the Asian immigrant population is growing rapidly (Pew Research Center, 2013).

As another caveat, it is notable that some effect sizes for comparisons between the low racial loading and control conditions

fell in the medium-large range so it is possible that the null significance testing findings understate the true effect. Although the sample sizes of this study are consistent with other experimental studies of this nature (e.g., Cheryan & Monin, 2005), and the omnibus tests were sufficiently powered (average power = 0.83), it is possible that a larger sample size may increase the power to detect the specific effects for more subtle communications of racism.

Conclusion

This study adds evidence to the potency of racial microaggressions against Asian Americans. The overall results reveal that exceptionalizing stereotypes that are complimentary to the individual but communicate a derogatory view of their racial/ethnic group have a negative impact on interpersonal interactions, particularly when the racial nature of the comment is obvious. Glick and Fiske (2001) stated that, "affect toward minority groups is often ambivalent, but subjectively positive stereotypes are not necessarily benign" (p. 109). The present study adds to this picture that exceptionalizing stereotypes also are not necessarily benign.

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Appendix

Interview Sheet and Manipulations

Interview Sheet

Instructions: Below is a list of questions for the assigned interviewer to ask the interviewee. You are ONLY to read the questions on the list. Please do not make any other comments or ask any follow-up questions. Please read the questions in the order they are listed. Every other question has a star by it, which is a symbol for you to jot some notes down on the interviewee's responses. The interviewee should answer the questions naturally and feel free to elaborate. Please do not worry about completing the interview—most groups do not finish their first interview, and we ask that you just focus on having a natural conversation. If you complete the interview, switch roles and follow the same directions. If you finish early, please sit quietly and wait for the experimenter to return.

- What major are you studying or hoping to study in school?
 - What are classes in those major(s) like for you?
- * What are 5 things you would say to fill in the statement, "I am . . ." [record partner's response]
- What was the last non-school related book you read and what was it about?
- * What kind of music do you listen to? [record partner's response]
- How do you prepare or study for an upcoming test?
- * What is your favorite season of the year and why? [record partner's response]
- What was your favorite TV show, movie, or book when you were in elementary school?
 - What do you remember from it?
- * What is your favorite sport to play and when did you start playing it? [record partner's response]

- What kind of animal would you be if you could be any animal and why?
- * What is your favorite color and how long has it been your favorite color? [record partner's response]
- What classes are you taking now?
 - Which class do you enjoy the most and why?
 - Which class do you enjoy the least and why?
- * What super power would you want to have if you could have any and why? [record partner's response]
- What state would you like to visit one day and why?
- * Where do you spend most of your time on campus and what do you do there? [record partner's response]
- What professor have you most enjoyed in college and why?
- * What kind of elective courses did you take in high school or college? [record partner's response]
- If you could be an "artist," what kind of artist would you be or what kind of art form would you do?
- * What is your favorite motto, expression, or saying? [record partner's response]
- What time was the earliest class you ever had in college?

Manipulations/Conditions

- A. It was nice talking to you; you speak English well. (*Low racial loading*)
- B. It was nice talking to you; you speak English well for an Asian. (*High racial loading*)
- C. It was nice talking to you. (*Control*)

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