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# Transborder Testimonios of Language Learning and Socialization

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**TRANSBORDER TESTIMONIOS OF LANGUAGE LEARNING AND  
SOCIALIZATION**

**BY**

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**DISSERTATION**

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## **DEDICATION**

Dedico este trabajo a mis fuentes de inspiración, orgullo y felicidad:

Diego Guevara Beltrán y Calil Guevara Bia.

I also dedicate this dissertation to Alejandrina, Miriam and Andrea and all the women from the global south who have crossed borders seeking to improve the life chances of their families and their own, and while doing so, have made their host countries a better place.

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**ABSTRACT**

This qualitative study utilizes a Chicana/Latina feminist lens and the Latin American tradition of *Testimonio* to explore Spanish-speaking immigrants' experiences of migration, language learning and socialization, paying close attention to the ways in which the multilayered intersections of identity, race, class, gender, nationality, language, citizenship and power shape these experiences. In the context of a grassroots English as a Second Language class, *testimonios* are elicited through multimodal data collection methods, including visual, oral and written forms. Critical perspectives of second language learning and second language socialization research in bilingual contexts provide a multidisciplinary framework for this study, bridging conceptual parallels between these distinct paradigms.

Outcomes of the analysis illuminate our understandings of the complex demands adult immigrants face while learning to navigate and adopt new linguistic systems and to perform unfamiliar socially and culturally sanctioned norms and behaviors. In the midst of an increasingly anti-immigrant rhetoric and multiple sites of oppression stemming from racist social systems and institutions that permeate everyday life, *Testimonios* as personal accounts, validate knowledge constructed through lived experiences, and assist in the expression of collective marginalization as well as alternative narratives of resistance. Embedded in Chicana and Latin American decolonial feminist thought, this dissertation approaches research as social activism and transformation to interrupt the silence imposed on disenfranchised immigrants so that their stories inform and educate grassroots community organizers, educators, language scholars, and policy makers.



## Table of Contents

### CHAPTER ONE

<b>Introduction to the Study</b> .....	1
<b>Statement of the Problem</b> .....	3
Identifying the problem: from personal observations to the literature. ....	3
Identifying The Participants: Latino/A Immigrants Of Color .....	4
Locating Intersecting Sites Of Oppression In Language Learning And Socialization...	7
<b>Purpose of the Study</b> .....	9
<b>Research Question</b> .....	11
<b>Rationale and Significance of the Study</b> .....	13
<b>Theoretical and Conceptual Framework</b> .....	16
<b>Research Design Overview</b> .....	19
<b>Limitations of the Study</b> .....	20

### CHAPTER TWO

<b>Review Of The Literature</b> .....	23
<b>Tracing Migration and Immigration Studies</b> .....	23
<b>Guiding Concepts: Culture, language, Identity and Socialization</b> .....	28
Culture and Identity.....	28
Hybrid Transborder Identities.....	31
Chicana Feminist Discussions of Identity.....	32
What Does It Mean to Know a Language?.....	34
Language and Identity.....	37
<b>Two Studies on Adult Immigrant Language Learners</b> .....	39
<b>Second Language Socialization Research</b> .....	45

### CHAPTER THREE

<b>Design of the study</b> .....	48
<b>What is Testimonio?</b> .....	48
<b>Researcher’s Positionality and <i>Testimonio</i></b> .....	51
<b>Setting of the study</b> .....	53
<b>Participant Selection</b> .....	54
<b>Methods of Data Collection</b> .....	55
Language Sociogram .....	59
Pláticas Personales (Personal Interviews).....	60
Pláticas Grupales (Focus Groups).....	61
Language Practice Log .....	63
The River Of Life.....	64
Field Notes, Accounts And Observations.....	65
Researcher’s Journal.....	66
<b>Analysis</b> .....	66
<b>Establishing Trustworthiness</b> .....	75
<b>Introduction to the <i>Testimonios</i></b> .....	77
Organization of The Testimonios .....	78
 <b>CHAPTER FOUR</b>	
 <b>Alejandrina’s Testimonio</b>	
<b>Introduction</b> .....	81
Identity: <i>Now my identity is Mexican American</i> .....	81
<b>Work, Migration and Maternity</b> .....	<b>85</b>
Internal Migration: <i>like people who come here to the United States with nothing</i> .....	85
International borders: <i>Working for no pay, let’s go to Chicago</i> .....	87
First return to Mexico: <i>When I went back to Mexico, my daughter Dania was born..</i>	89
Second return to Mexico: <i>in the nineties, it got even harder to afford everything</i> .....	93
Third migration: <i>they won’t have to struggle like me</i> .....	96
Work, housing and transportation in Socorro: <i>I don’t know how I lived!</i> .....	97

Residency: <i>now I can learn English and get a job</i> .....	100
From Socorro to Albuquerque: <i>I came looking for work</i> .....	101
The hotel and the cleaning company: <i>I hurt my knee from climbing all those stairs</i> .	102
<b>Language Learning and Socialization</b> .....	<b>104</b>
Asserting the right to education: <i>When I go to the United States I have to go to school</i>	104
Obstacles to learning English: <i>I didn't have legal papers</i> .....	106
The spring factory: <i>we're only going to see the sun when we're not working</i> .....	107
The pinball factory: <i>Push line!</i> .....	108
Jobs in Socorro: <i>Open the door</i> .....	109
The hotel: <i>It's complicated when you don't understand anything</i> .....	111
The cleaning agency: <i>my partners speak Spanish everyday</i> .....	114
Strategies for language learning? <i>When I don't understand I switch to Spanish</i> .....	116
Communication Strategies: <i>all of this because I don't speak English!</i> .....	117
Motivation: <i>When I speak English I want to get a better job</i> .....	121
<b>Transnational Motherhood</b> .....	<b>122</b>
One daughter here and the other in Mexico, and I'm in the middle .....	122
Dania: <i>"just send me money to buy toys"</i> .....	124
Daisy: <i>now she says it's good that I brought her</i> .....	125
Adaptation: <i>"why did you bring me when I don't understand any English?"</i> .....	127
<i>She's gone to school, she just doesn't speak English.</i> .....	128
<i>Sometimes we don't have anything left, but we're happy</i> .....	129
<b>The River of Life</b> .....	<b>132</b>
<b>CHAPTER FIVE</b>	
<b>Miriam's Testimonio</b> .....	<b>136</b>
<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>136</b>
Mining Roots: <i>I thought I would never leave my town</i> .....	136
Internal Migration: <i>we all started to migrate to different cities in Mexico</i> .....	137
Identity, Language and Legal Status: <i>my language, my Spanish, my roots</i> .....	139
Educational goals and achievements: <i>I always wanted to be a kindergarten teacher</i>	141

<b>Economy, Employment and Migration.....</b>	<b>143</b>
<i>Unemployment and Migration: Overnight both of us lost our jobs.....</i>	143
<i>Migration, Fear and Hope: I didn't want to come to have my baby here .....</i>	145
<i>Navigating employment and family finances: But there isn't always work .....</i>	146
<i>Migration and transnational ties: God will allow us to return .....</i>	148
<b>Second language learning and socialization: A challenge for the entire family.....</b>	<b>150</b>
<i>Bilingualism at home: I'm comfortable with them speaking both languages.....</i>	150
<i>Learning English at work: I started to try to communicate .....</i>	152
<i>Learning English in school: In this country language is the main thing.....</i>	154
<i>Immersion in the Second Language: I've always noticed how they translate.....</i>	156
<i>Significant interactions: I want to learn and try to speak English .....</i>	158
<b>Adaptation and resistance to many forms of discrimination.....</b>	<b>160</b>
<i>Discrimination in school: The main obstacle was the language.....</i>	160
<i>You can feel the racism .....</i>	162
<i>It was our idea to help with the kids. ....</i>	165
<i>Racial, class and linguistic discrimination:.....</i>	166
<i>One's racial profile. ....</i>	166
<i>The language isn't going to stop me from struggling for my family's dreams. ....</i>	168
<i>Police encounters .....</i>	171
<i>Holy Mary! She's going to send me back, she's going to handcuff me. ....</i>	171
<i>You know what he called me, mom? Wet bean! .....</i>	175
<i>That's why it's safer to be well informed.....</i>	176
<b>Cultural Changes and New Ways of Belonging .....</b>	<b>178</b>
<i>Cultural changes.....</i>	178
<i>When you get here, you have to learn a lot of things, other customs. ....</i>	178
<i>They're like us but they come here and change .....</i>	179
<i>New Ways of Belonging.....</i>	180
<i>I've found the family that I left in Mexico.....</i>	180
<i>There's a part of me that says I can defend myself.....</i>	185
<i>Oh woman, first you didn't want to come and now you don't want to leave.....</i>	187

## CHAPTER SIX

<b>Andrea’s Testimonio</b> .....	<b>191</b>
<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>191</b>
Introduction and identity: <i>I’m Mexican, not Hispanic or Latina</i> .....	191
Childhood: <i>abundance and love</i> .....	192
Work in Mexico: <i>I never worked outside the home</i> .....	193
Tourist before immigrant: <i>We’d come on vacation with my husband</i> . .....	194
<b>Migration: the Many Borders</b> .....	<b>196</b>
Migration and Adversity: <i>fruit born of adversity is sweeter</i> .....	196
The Disillusion: <i>I saw your husband, with another woman</i> .....	197
First migration: <i>I decided to migrate alone</i> .....	198
Emotional migration: <i>I just wanted to put distance between us</i> .....	200
Second migration: <i>I was always dependent, first on my dad and then on my husband</i>	201
Social networks, work and housing: <i>if you come back call me and I’ll give you work</i>	203
Work Routine in the United States: <i>I am a cook, I make hamburguesas</i> .....	204
<b>Language Learning and Socialization in the Second Language</b> .....	<b>206</b>
Learning English in Mexico: <i>I studied English for four years</i> .....	206
Fear of English: <i>I used to be embarrassed to speak it</i> .....	207
English at work: <i>only one person speaks English</i> .....	209
English and a better job: <i>I want to interact with people</i> .....	210
English learning and cultural diversity: <i>I didn’t like Hindu culture</i> .....	211
Scarcity of English and the prevalence of Spanish: <i>everybody speaks Spanish</i> .....	212
Lack of Significant Interactions: <i>People aren’t available to help you</i> .....	214
Personal Development and Learning English: <i>To learn the language is to flower</i> ....	215
<b>Navigating Social Networks and Systems</b> .....	<b>216</b>
A Sister’s Support: <i>I’ve always had her support</i> .....	216
Navigating Relationships of Power at Work: <i>A time comes when they respect you</i> ...	217
Navigating the city: <i>It’s a matter of losing fear of things, like losing fear of English</i>	219
Navigating Immigration Systems and Health Care Services: <i>I feel like my hands are tied here</i> .....	220

<b>Crossing Ideological Borders and Asserting New Identities.....</b>	<b>222</b>
Ideological Changes.....	222
Religion: <i>I wasn't Catholic anymore because I started thinking</i> .....	222
Patriarchy: <i>You are the cathedral, they are the little chapels</i> .....	223
Empowerment and New Family Dynamics .....	225
<i>I'm enjoying having power</i> .....	226
<i>It opened another life for me, another horizon</i> .....	227
<i>I'm living my life as a single woman again</i> .....	229
Feet in the North and Dreams in the South: <i>I don't want to stay here forever</i> .....	230
<i>English is wherever you go</i> .....	232
<i>I feel freer, much more free</i> .....	233
 <b>CHAPTER SEVEN</b>	
<b>Findings.....</b>	<b>236</b>
<b>Second Language Learning and Second Language Socialization in Transborder Contexts .....</b>	<b>237</b>
<b>Testimonios of Transborder Subject Identities.....</b>	<b>238</b>
<b>Testimonios of Migration .....</b>	<b>252</b>
<b>Testimonios of Second Language Learning and Second Language Socialization ..</b>	<b>261</b>
<b>Second Language Learning and Socialization in the Workplace.....</b>	<b>263</b>
Work in Mexico .....	263
.....	263
Work in the United States .....	265
The Nature Of Workplace Linguistic Interactions In The U.S.....	267
<b>Barriers to Second Language Learning and Socialization (social determinants)...</b>	<b>278</b>
<b>Second Language Learning and Socialization Strategies (Resistance and Agency)298</b>	
The Practice Of English Inside And Outside The Classroom.....	299
Claiming The Right To Speak And Participate In Social Contexts.....	311
The Ongoing Emergence Of Linguistic Identities .....	323

<b>Conclusions.....</b>	<b>328</b>
-------------------------	------------

## **CHAPTER EIGHT**

<b>Conclusions &amp; Recommendations.....</b>	<b>331</b>
---	------------

Theoretical implications.....	332
-------------------------------	-----

Methodological Implications .....	337
-----------------------------------	-----

Pedagogical implications .....	338
--------------------------------	-----

<b>Final Thoughts .....</b>	<b>341</b>
-----------------------------	------------

Appendix 1. Interrelation of Data Collection Methods .....	343
--	-----

Appendix 2. Language Sociogram.....	344
-------------------------------------	-----

Appendix 3. Interview protocol .....	345
--------------------------------------	-----

Appendix 4: Language practice log .....	347
---	-----

Appendix 5. Data Analysis techniques .....	348
--	-----

References.....	349
-----------------	-----

## **List of Figures**

Figure 1. Alejandrina's River of Life.....	136
Figure 2. Miriam's River of Life.....	191
Figure 3. Andrea's River of Life.....	237



## **List of Tables**

Table 1. Data collection settings, participants and timeframes.....	57
Table 2. Data Collection Methods.....	58
Table 3. Participants' Overview.....	80

## Chapter One

### Introduction to the Study

*Hola, mi nombre es Ada<sup>1</sup> y radico en los E.U.A. Lo más difícil para mí al salir de mi México lindo fue encontrarme con otras personas de sus pensamientos diferentes a los míos, costumbres e ideas, sobre todo mi sistema de lenguaje, otro idioma como se puede decir. Al principio para mí fue muy desesperante, porque no podía encontrar trabajo, no tenía transporte, un carro, porque aquí en Estados Unidos tienes que tener un carro, si no, no eres nadie. Así me sentía yo en un lugar que no me pertenecía, pero afortunadamente con la ayuda de mi esposo salimos adelante y claro, con la ayuda de Dios.*

*Hi my name is Ada. I'm from Mexico and I live in the U.S.A. The most difficult aspect of leaving my beautiful Mexico was to meet other people, their thoughts different from mine, traditions and ideas, above all my system of language, another tongue as it can be said. At the beginning it was really despairing because I couldn't find a job, I didn't have transportation, a car, because here in the United States you have to have a car, otherwise you are nobody. That's how I felt in a place that didn't belong to me, but fortunately with the help of my husband we were able to get ahead and of course, with the help of God.*

Every day at work<sup>2</sup> I meet people like Ada who are struggling to build a new life in the United States. Josué is another case in point. He is in his early 30s and came to the United States from Honduras with his family as a young child. He works for a housekeeping company cleaning hospitals. He recently obtained a High School Equivalency Diploma and would like to attend a local community College to become a Nurse, except that, even when he can communicate fairly well in English, he lacks the language skills for college entry. Nancy, in her early 50s, is a single mother of three, and

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<sup>1</sup> All proper names used in this dissertation are pseudonyms to protect the privacy of the participants

<sup>2</sup> I work at a community based organization that provides educational and civic engagement opportunities with a focus on social justice for Latino/a immigrants.

works in elderly care in a private Spanish- speaking home. In her home country, Colombia, she was an elementary schoolteacher. She no longer holds expectations of working as a teacher in the United States, since her professional credentials are not valid in the new country and it has been hard for her to learn English. Pablo was a truck driver in Mexico. In the United States, he has not been able to obtain the proper license to continue working in his area of expertise. He moved to New Mexico from Arizona fleeing the fear of deportation and with the hope of obtaining the proper license here. In the meantime, he does a variety of odd jobs to survive, such as car mechanics, construction, yard cleaning, home maintenance and repairs, mainly for Hispanic/Latino clients, since his English proficiency is limited.

There are common threads in all these stories: all of these individuals are immigrants from Latin America who came to this country to improve their opportunities of life advancement for themselves and for their families. They have found that in order to improve their life chances, they must learn to communicate in English and thus make efforts to learn the language. However, they have limited opportunities of English language exposure and practice. Moreover, regardless of their varying levels of English proficiency, they all experience difficulties when engaging in daily interactions where the English language is the principal means of communication. The stories shared above illustrate how adult immigrants with limited English speaking proficiency find themselves in the “communication paradox” where they need to communicate in English in order to learn the language; at the same time, they need to learn English in order to communicate in this language. (Bremer, Roberts, Simonot, and Vasseur, 1996; Norton, 2013; Sarangi and Roberts, 2004).

## **Statement of the Problem**

### **Identifying The Problem: From Personal Observations to The Literature.**

Throughout my over 20-year trajectory as a language teacher in Mexico (for fourteen years) and the United States (for eleven years), as well as my own experiences as an adult migrant language learner, I have collected countless stories of Latin American immigrants in the United States that overtime became the focus of my research. I have learned that individuals come to this country to improve their opportunities of life advancement for themselves and for their families; that they face the imperative of communicating in English in social and work environments that offer limited opportunities of English language exposure and practice. With the desire of becoming active members of the host society they have immigrated into, they make efforts to gain membership in different social groups but find themselves in the midst of a complex web of inclusion and exclusion mechanisms that do not offer many possibilities of social participation outside of their kin group, making English learning more difficult.

My own experiences have allowed me to become familiar with second language learning and second language socialization processes in the context of migration from multiple locations: as a Mexican English as a Foreign Language teacher in the University context; as a second language learner and second language instructor (ESL) in the United States; as a graduate student engaged with critical theories of language and culture; and as a Mexican immigrant woman. From these subject positions, I have observed that often times, the social interactions between immigrants of color and the host society are not necessarily meaningful nor appropriate for language learning and social integration.

The Latin American immigrants in the vignettes shared above lack the type of social capital found in social connections, links and resources, a situation that most frequently spans the two sides of the border, as this underprivileged situation in their countries of origin is what impels many to migrate to the United States. Consequently, they have limited access to opportunities, knowledge, and experiences necessary to learn how to use language and conduct themselves in a way that would gain them access to mainstream society. There are countless stories of people who work, raise their families and spend a lifetime in the United States without learning much English. The ones I have met in the United States over the past 10 years feel frustrated and blame themselves for their perceived lack of ability and slow progress in language learning. This reveals a need to question the social settings and the dynamics of social power relations that frame the lives of immigrants of color. Observing the high motivation, the dedication and perseverance of these adult learners throughout the years, it is clear to me that the problem does not reside on individuals' ability, motivation, attitude or any cognitive psychological construct that predominate Second Language Acquisition theories. I contend that the problem resides in the marginalization that pervades the experiences of Latino/a immigrants of color. Thus, a critical analysis of the intersection of social, political, geographic, historical, linguistic, racial, ethnic and cultural positions that characterize undocumented Latino/a immigrants of color needs to be incorporated in the understanding of language learning and socialization processes.

### **Identifying The Participants: Latino/A Immigrants Of Color**

The stories of people like the ones in the vignettes above, differ in many ways from the stories of other Latino/as that I meet in other contexts, such as work colleagues,

University students and professors that self-define as Latinos/as. What sets them apart is the complex web of mechanisms that awards privilege and status to some people and denies it to others. While these mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion are not always tangible, they are indeed expressed in peoples' experiences, life opportunities and possibilities. *Latino/a immigrants of color*, constitute an underrepresented group by means of language, accent, legal status, citizenship, class, gender, phenotype and a myriad of ascribed social categorizations that serve to push them to the margins of society. These social categories also mark hierarchical relations that set apart established Latino/a populations and newer immigrants. As every ethnic and racial category, *Latino/a immigrant of color* is a social construction that bears political meanings, implications and complications.

Social constructions of race are the product of a racialized social system that serves the function to exercise control and power from some racial categories over others, i.e. whites over peoples of color (Bonilla Silva, 2002). *Latino/a* is a category that has been broadly used to refer to people from Mexico, Central and South America indistinctively. Guidotti-Hernández (2011) states that the term “arose in the late twentieth century to describe peoples of Latin America who have been colonized and dispersed throughout the Americas” (p. xi). Within the racial categorization of immigrants in the United States, the overgeneralization that the label Latino comprises is problematic and has long been contested. The largest hindrance of using this category is that it effaces the already racialized experiences and identities of these varied and diverse groups of people. *Latino/a*, as expressed in Guidotti- Hernández's (2011) definition presented above, unveils the historical subtext of colonized peoples. However, in contemporary contexts,

this term encompasses categories of race, ethnicity, class, language and gender. These immigrants and their descendants are placed into the panethnic category of Latino/a as if social identifiers and social positions became diluted as soon as Puerto Ricans, Mexicans, Guatemalans, Chileans, Brazilians, etc., cross the border. The construction of identity and the processes of ethnic and political affiliation are intertwined in complex ways. Not all Latino/a immigrants self-identify as people of color, nor are all of them treated as such. For instance, according to this term, once in the United States, a working class peasant from Oaxaca with visible indigenous phenotypical features is as Latino as a middle-class light-skinned professional from Argentina. Their past and present experiences, the way they are 'read' by the host society, the opportunities awarded or denied to them, however, will be very different, with a marked advantage given (in this example) to the Argentine. The main critique of the term Latino/a, Bacigalupo (2003) contends, is that, racial and ethnic categories such as Latino/a entail an assimilationist view that reduces and depoliticizes all internal hierarchical classifications, at the same time that it ignores all other important identity categories such as class, culture, ethnicity, gender, nationality, and language. To illustrate further, Bacigalupo (2003) points out, "the term 'Latina' groups all women of Hispanic descent living within the EEUU regardless of their race, national origin, class or language" (p. 38). Racial and ethnic categories are thus, not only nominal and descriptive but also eminently political since they purport, reproduce and maintain unequal relations of power. According to Vidal-Ortiz (2008), the phrase *people of color* refers to "racial and ethnic minorities" and is often found in "contemporary popular, activist, and academic debates, mostly in the United States" (p. 1037). The term challenges imposed categories such as race, ethnicity, panethnicity, and national identity.

This phrase is distinctively relational, according to Vidal-Ortiz (2008), since it overtly expresses relationships among racial and ethnic minorities. My use of the term Latino/a immigrants of color takes on this latter feature to suggest a social relationship and political identification among immigrants from Latin America who are underrepresented, experience multiple forms of oppression and are consequently pushed to the margins of society. As Murguia and Forman (2003) point out “being poor and of color in the United States can best be described as a struggle” (p. 65).

### **Locating Intersecting Sites Of Oppression In Language Learning And Socialization**

Sociocultural perspectives of language (Norton, 2013) question relations of power in the social world and their impact on the social interaction between second language learners and target language speakers. The inequitable relations of power in these interactions limit the opportunities second language learners have to practice the target language outside the classroom, where most language learning takes place. In a highly stratified, and racialized society, social positioning responds to issues of language, such as lack of or limited proficiency in English, speaking with an ‘accent’, demeanor and lack of knowledge of the cultural norms and conventions of the dominant Anglo-Saxon culture; it also responds to socioeconomic issues such as speakers’ low status occupation, their address and zip code, the car they drive, the style of clothes they wear; or to their very identity, such as their general appearance, Spanish name and surname, age, gender and nationality.

The marginalization and oppression experienced by all people of color is a result of the institutional racism that pervades influential and powerful social institutions. However, issues of legal status, language, and a state of disenfranchisement intensify the oppression of immigrants of color. The marginalization and oppression of immigrants of



color does not start in the host society; rather it is to be expected that they had experienced several forms of oppression in their places of origin, e.g. violence, poverty, unemployment, gender. For instance, undocumented immigrants are people who have been denied the resources and networks necessary to access the systems and the routes for legal migration. This is not to say that I am using the term Latino/a immigrant of color distinctively and exclusively for undocumented immigrants. Social constructions of race are based upon relations of power and racist ideologies and practices that regulate people's lives beyond legal status and nationality. What I want to emphasize with this discussion is that the marginalization of Latino/a immigrants of color should not be geographically located across the border, but should be analyzed in reference to the ubiquitous inequality.

As every ethnic and racial category, the category *Latino/a immigrant of color* is a social construction charged with political meanings and implication. Villenas (2007) questions the use of the term *immigrant* for the ahistoricism of the category and in attention to hybrid cultural practices that fracture notions of geographical boundaries and identities based upon nation states. In lieu of a better term, thus, I am using the expression *immigrant Latino/a of color* to distinguish immigrants from Latin America who constitute an underrepresented group by means of language, accent, legal status, citizenship, class, gender, phenotype and a myriad of ascribed social categorizations that serve to marginalize and oppress. I use this term as a political statement to emphasize the need for self-identification and recognition of underrepresented peoples and to make visible the racialization of people of color. I am also using the term immigrant Latino/a of color, in order to name racial categories and bring to the discussion the implications of racialization

and social stratification in the lives of transborder people before and after migration. In addition to the struggle to communicate in the dominant language, Latino/a immigrants of color try to make sense of their lives, their possibilities for the future in a very hostile environment produced by anti-immigrant rhetoric and increasingly restrictive legislation.

### **Purpose of the Study**

With this research I sought to explore the experiences of Spanish speaking immigrants in a major town of the U.S. Southwest as they learn English and become familiar with the cultural and social contexts in which the new language is used. This research will illuminate the intersection of linguistic, personal, social, and political issues framing the processes of language learning and socialization. Most importantly, I sought to understand the ways in which people positioned in the margins of society confront, acquiesce and resist the challenges inherent in language learning and socialization. By looking into the double function of language socialization, i.e. “to understand language through social experience and learning to understand social experiences through language” (Sarangi & Roberts, 2002. p. 198)”, my research adds to second language learning and second language socialization scholarship by illuminating the understandings of these processes in the context of migration. This study rests upon the assumption that the demands of language learning go beyond the acquisition of the grammatical, phonological, lexical and syntactical features of language. I agree with the language socialization research premise that meaningful interactions need to take place in order for a ‘novice’ to be able to incorporate the understandings shared by speech communities and to integrate appropriate linguistic and social behaviors in a way that makes sense for the rest of the group (Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986). My research offers understandings of the

ways in which Latino/a immigrants examine their own experiences and formulate theories around their own language learning and socialization processes as well as specific examples of the strategies they develop and employ in their daily interactions to advance such processes.

The language learners I conducted research with do not represent the ideal learner in privileged contexts often depicted in Second Language Acquisition research. For instance, being an undocumented Spanish-speaking adult with little formal educational background trying to learn English in the Southwest U.S. is a very different situation from being a Francophone learner of English in Quebec (Genesse, 1985;) or an international student in a university setting, where the dynamics of sociopolitical power awarded to the languages spoken, (English and French), and the socioeconomic and legal status of the people involved in such contexts (Anglophone and Francophone Canadians) are not so unequal. In contrast, the research participants in this study are labeled by the dominant society as ‘illegal’ immigrants, undocumented, border crossers, speakers and bearers of a language and culture that posses a contested historical locus and subordinate position in the research geographical space. In this context, the present study analyzed how these perspectives affect language learning and socialization experiences, while adult immigrants engage in social interactions and attempt to learn English. I take the position of examining the participants lives as transborder individuals, rather than (im)migrants acknowledging that their lives did not start when they crossed the border and have experienced differential marginalization and underprivileged social positions in their home countries. I hold the belief that when people cross geo-political borders, such as the border between the U.S. and Mexico, without the proper documentation, this act does not

respond to a lack of respect for laws and rules; rather is a consequence of the multiple barriers imposed by home and host countries on low income people to acquire proper travel documentation (i.e. passport and visa). Once in the new country, the types of jobs afforded for this population are mainly menial and service industry jobs, which do not require advanced levels of English and many even, involve minimal communication in any language. Often times, there are limited or no opportunities to be exposed to the use of English as people either work with other Spanish speaking partners or work alone. Given that most language learning happens outside of the confines of the classroom and given the limited opportunities that adult Latino/a of color have to interact in meaningful and purposeful ways in the midst of a hostile immigration context, the following questions arise: how do people develop healthy identities? How do they learn the language that would give them access to both symbolic and economic resources? How in doing so, do they construct a sense of self and belonging? What affordances are offered to them in the host society to gain membership into the cultural and linguistic values and norms of the groups in which they wish to interact beyond their ethnic group? How do they express agency in appropriating some elements of the new culture, discarding others or syncretizing with elements of their own culture and values? These are some of the questions that this research discusses by centering on the perspectives of transborder adult second language learners and what their *testimonios* teach us about second language learning and socialization.

### **Research Question**

My interest in second language learning and socialization processes has developed over the years of experience working with second language learners in Mexico and the

United States, as well as from my own subjectivities as both a second language learner and ESL instructor myself. The stories I've heard and learned from ESL learners (both in formal instruction and learning from daily life communication) in the United States, have led me to a more particular focus on second language learning of adult immigrants which includes the question of how people learn the cultural aspects associated with language use and how people participate (or not) in dominant social groups and establish social networks with Anglophone speech communities. As the focus became more specific, the scope became broader and the intellectual interest turned into a critical social and political concern. I began to contrast my own locus with regards to language learning: as a Mexican English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teacher in a University context and as an immigrant English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher in a community based organization. The subject positions I undertake in the United States also confronted me with a different type of second language learner. The former were mostly younger people seeking to fulfill a University requirement of English knowledge or people from the community at large engaging in the intellectual activity of adding a foreign language (albeit the most powerful of the world) to their repertoire of knowledge. The latter were socially and economically disadvantaged individuals who faced the imperative of learning English to get ahead in life. In this new context I realized that in order to understand my students' experiences as adult language learners, I had to understand how they got in the position of having to learn English to survive and what it means to them to face such social imperative. That is to say, I had to consider the processes of language learning and socialization within the context of migration and identify the sociopolitical dynamics that frame such context. In undertaking this consideration, I related my own new subject

positions of adult immigrant and second language learner myself, to my students' experiences and subjectivities, and scrutinized the ways in which the multilayered intersections of class, gender, race, nationality, language, and legal status shape the experiences and possibilities of adult immigrant language learners. The research question thus, is broad enough to allow for the incorporation of related phenomena to emerge from research participants' *testimonios* and with this broader scope in mind this study sought to answer the question:

*How do Spanish speaking adult immigrants discursively negotiate language learning, identity construction and socialization processes in their journey to adapt to a new country in the context of a grassroots English as a Second Language Class?*

### **Rationale and Significance of the Study**

The study I conducted had several layers of significance, which include significance for knowledge, for practical and policy problems and for social action. While most research within the language socialization paradigm has concentrated on monolingual societies, relatively recent research has turned the attention to multilingual societies. These settings present complexities not found in “mainstream” or in more traditional, monolingual groups (Bayley & Schechter, 2003). In order to account for such complexities in the context of immigrants' second language learning, a more appropriate perspective is that of *second* language socialization, defined as “the process by which non-native speakers of a language, ..., seek competence in the language and, typically, membership and the ability to participate in the practices of communities in which that language is spoken” (Duff, 2012 p. 564). This speaks directly to my research goals of examining the ways in which adult immigrant men and women perceive their experiences of language learning at the same

time that they engage in social practices seeking membership to new groups within a new whole society. While there is an increased interest on studies of language socialization of adults, critical studies of adult language learning in the context of migration are limited (Baquedano-López & Mangual Figueroa, 2012; Duff, Wong & Early, 2002; Norton, 2013). More absent in the literature is the inclusion of the sociopolitical dynamics of race, class, gender and legal status surrounding adult second language learning studies. My research framed in *Testimonio* and Chicana/Latina feminista lens constitutes an addition to this gap in this body of research, while also innovating in the methods and the approach employed. The Latin American tradition of *Testimonio* has been extensively used in Education, but not particularly in the fields of second language learning and second language socialization.

With respect to the significance of this research for policy, I argue that scholars, politicians and policymakers, sociologists, anthropologists and educators need to have a better understanding of immigrants' socialization and adaptation processes so as to reach a negotiated consensus of how this population will impact the areas of education, demographics, culture, politics, economy and all the corners of life in The United States. The insights that my research offers in this regards, have the potential of illuminating ways to not only deconstruct negative social and political representations of immigrants and second language learners of color, but also to disrupt the imbalances of power and to widen the opportunities awarded to these types of immigrants in contemporary U.S. society.

The need to counter negative representations and to offer undocumented immigrants a space for discursive self-interpretation is also addressed in my research, which speaks to the importance of conducting research that has the potential to impact social justice and social action. Framing my research in Chicana/Latina feminista *testimonio* is an important

avenue to offer disenfranchised people opportunities for self-expression and representation, not only to counteract the negative depictions of Latino/a immigrants, but also to discursively impact the constructions of healthy and empowered identities (Delgado Bernal, Burciaga & Flores Carmona, 2012; Cervantes-Soon, 2012; Perez- Huber and Cueva, 2012; Prieto and Villenas, 2012). These efforts are urgent in the current social and political context of an escalating anti-immigrant climate and the implementation of anti-immigrant laws and policies. Negative depictions of Latino/a immigrants plague the media, and historically, immigrants of color have been portrayed as a threat to national security and as responsible for the economic crisis of the United States. At the moment of writing this dissertation, hate speech and anti-immigrant rhetoric are common language not only in the media of this country, but it has also become a distinctive discursive feature of the current U.S. presidency. In this context, the significance of research that engages in social justice and opens avenues for dialogue and resistance becomes a social imperative. Such research should offer underrepresented people opportunities to find expression and a voice. Xenophobic, nativist and racist ideologies not only affect the discursive construction of the ‘immigrant’, but are also materialized in anti-immigrant legislation, hostile policies and practices that have a direct impact on everyone, as evidenced by the growing militarization of the U.S. – Mexico border and the inhumane separation of immigrant and refugee families to mention just a few instances (Pérez Huber, 2011).

Anti-immigrant, xenophobic and racist rhetoric is increasingly blunt and direct, specifically targeting Mexican immigrants depicting them as criminals and rapists (Ewing, Martínez, & Rumbaut, 2015). In this dismaying context, unauthorized immigrants face the beginning of a presidential administration that promises to be much worse than the previous



one, even with the legacy of massive deportations. A divided congress that has halted every opportunity for comprehensive immigration reform and an incomplete supreme justice incapable of passing the expansion of immigration relief such as the expansion of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) and Deferred Action for Parent Arrival (DAPA)<sup>3</sup> do not present good future perspectives for immigrants in this country. Beyond the tangible and material repercussions of punitive legislation on the lives of immigrants of color, the psychological and spiritual damage has yet to be assessed.

### **Theoretical and Conceptual Framework**

The theoretical framework that guides this study is inextricably linked to methodological choices. My perspective is strongly influenced by feminist postcolonial thinking (Anzaldúa, 2007; Cervantes-Soon, 2012; Mohanty, 2003; Trinidad- Galvan, 2014). I am particularly inspired by the work of Chicana and Latin American scholars who have been drawing attention to scholarship grounded in decolonial thought and that have been establishing transborder connections around the need to challenge white supremacist ideologies. Embedded in Chicana and Latin American decolonial feminist thought, this study utilizes *Testimonio*, a Latin American inquiry tradition rooted in social justice also employed by Chicana/ Latina feminist scholars in education (Cervantes-Soon, 2012; Delgado Bernal, Burciaga & Flores Carmona, 2012; Perez- Huber and Cueva, 2012; Prieto and Villenas, 2012). *Testimonio* is a personal story that represents collective experiences and nurtures cultural memory, typically foregrounding human rights struggles of underrepresented populations (Delgado Bernal et al., 2012). *Testimonio* aligns with Chicana/Latinx feminist

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<sup>3</sup> These programs, even when they do not provide a path to citizenship, would allow work permits and protection from deportation to youth and adults currently working in the US underground economy.

theories that authenticate the epistemologies of communities of color; hence, situating my research participants' narratives within the tradition of *Testimonio* is not only culturally relevant, but also methodologically sound and politically urgent in the current context of growing xenophobia and anti-immigrant rhetoric and practices in the United States. *Testimonio* is concerned with research and praxis that bring about an interpretation of social and political realities that is both personal and collective and that is conducive to social change. As Trinidad Galvan (2014) emphasizes, "Chicana and Latin American decolonial feminist work and methodologies –as not simply research endeavors- are about activism and transformation" (p.138). Delgado Bernal et al. (2012), capture the collective force of *Testimonio* stating that individual stories can be used to reflect the conditions and circumstances of a group. Understood this way, *Testimonio* assists in the expression of collective experiences of marginalization as well as alternative narratives of resistance.

I also find support in the multiple and intersecting perspectives of feminists of color who are making strong calls for a transnational solidarity in issues of power and inequities and for the need to establish bridges between feminist scholarship and political organizing (Chowdhury, 2009; Mohanty, 2003; Suarez Navaz & Hernández, 2008; Trinidad-Galvan, 2014; Villenas, 2006). Latin American scholars are also drawing attention to scholarship grounded in decolonial thinking and establishing transborder connections around the need to challenge white supremacist ideologies. In these global conversations, *Epistemología del sur* (epistemologies of the South) stands out as a proposal to build coalitions between Latin American and Iberian scholars in order to create decolonial spaces for resistance and knowledge creation in the face of hegemonic western thought (Suarez Navaz & Hernandez, 2008; Trinidad-Galvan, 2014). Gathering the work of postcolonial feminist scholars, Suarez

Navaz & Hernandez (2008) conceptualize postcolonialism as an epistemological proposal of decolonizing knowledge so as to unveil the ways in which textual representations of “the other” not only give account of a reality but that also build it in the form of discursive colonialism. The South (sur) is a metaphorical concept that refers to the political space produced by this feminist theoretical work that questions the colonial heritage in hegemonic western thought and that imagines alternative sites of knowledge as well as new analytical tools that are more in accordance to the realities of the cultural diversity within our communities. In this way a decolonial approach acknowledges the plurality of experiences and interests that impact the lives of women in the geographical and metaphorical south. In this context of dissident voices and transgressive epistemologies, I locate this *Testimonio* study to explore the experiences of Latino/a immigrants of color as they negotiate second language learning and socialization processes.

With regards to language and socialization processes, I find support in sociocultural perspectives (Hymes, 1972; Norton, 2006, 2013), which recognize linguistic practices as cultural processes and as inextricably tied to identity development. In this view, second language learning both an individual process as well as inserted in the context of collective experiences and community practices. Furthermore, I follow studies of language learning and language socialization that challenge the metaphor of the adult language learner as a *computer, a novice or an apprentice* and instead articulate a more agentic metaphor of the learner as a negotiator of meaning, identities, social positionings and worldviews (Baquedano-López & Mangual Figueroa, 2012; Bayley and Schechter, 2003; Cole & Zuengler, 2003; Duff, 2012; Kramsch, 2002). This view also emphasizes the “inherent linkage between local socialization practices and broader historical, social, and political

contexts” (Harklau, 2003, pg. 86). Additionally, I undertake socialization not only as a developmental process, but also as the set of practices (Langman, 2003) through which individuals engage with their social environment negotiating identities, and ways of being in the world. This view incorporates the assumption that cultural norms and values, and the practices that they organize (including linguistic interactions) are not fixed elements but are as fluid as the identities that are forged within them (Langman, 2003). Critical approaches that bring an ideological definition to language and discourse assist me in the examination of the “discursive spaces that regulate or reproduce relations of power” (Schaafsma and Vinz 2011, p. 28). I align to perspectives that analyze human experiences as “constructed through historical and political processes” (Rosaldo, 1993, p. 39). The views of language learning and socialization that I adhere to take into account the analysis of power and power relations that occur in linguistic social interactions (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977; Norton, 2006, 2013; Rogers, 2003) and problematize the role of language in the social construction of identity categories such as race, ethnicity, and gender. My research framework of *Testimonio* and a Chicana/Latina feminist lens adds a new turn to the studies of second language learning and second language socialization typically grounded in anthropological traditions.

### **Research Design Overview**

*Testimonio* is a Latin American tradition rooted in social justice work that has been used by Chicana/Latina feminist scholars in education. In the context of a grassroots English as a Second Language class, personal stories of migration, language learning and socialization were elicited through multimodal data collection methods, including visual, oral and written forms. Some of the data collection methods were conducted as classroom activities fulfilling both pedagogical and inquiry aims (e.g. graphic and oral representation of

migration experiences, free writing, dialogue journal); others took place outside of the classroom (e.g. interviews, focus groups, language learning logs). Purposeful sampling (Creswell, 2007) yielded three focal participants from the class.

Analysis and interpretation included open coding (Bernard & Ryan, 2010; Emerson, Fretz & Shaw, 1995; Maxwell, 2005) which leads to the identification of recurring themes, salient aspects and apparent contradictions in the data. Because the data I worked with consists of rich narratives, I engaged in a variety of data analysis and interpretation techniques that Bernard & Ryan (2010) suggest as appropriate to use with this type of data. These include the five tasks involved in text analysis: (1) discovering themes and subthemes; (2) describing the core and peripheral elements of themes; (3) building hierarchies of themes or codebooks; (4) applying themes to actual segments of text; (5) linking themes into theoretical models (p. 54). In the ongoing process of analysis, and for purpose of interpretation, I re-ordered the narratives of each participant informed by the pre-selection of significant themes from several instances of text and pieces of data. These stories were presented to participants so that they have the opportunity to correct and clarify any misrepresentation of their stories. This is consistent with Glesne's (2011) suggestion of engaging in "member checking" by involving the research participant in the interpretive process. The final products of these thematically organized stories are the *Testimonios* that I present in Chapters four, five and six. Findings are presented in Chapter seven and finally, Chapter eight discusses conclusions, implications and recommendations.

### **Limitations of the Study**

Qualitative studies are inherently delimited by their nature. My study of language learning and socialization experiences of adult Spanish speaking immigrants illuminate the

understanding of these processes and highlight the importance of foregrounding lived experiences and people's own interpretations of such experiences. However, this study does not provide a general picture of Latinos in the United States, and results and conclusions are not applicable to the entirety of this diverse population.

My research focus and choice of methodology present an apparent limitation, that I undertake as a 'delimitation' that is turned into an opportunity. Second language socialization research studies are typically conducted utilizing ethnographic methods that involve direct observation of linguistic interactions in social contexts, and the linguistic analysis of naturalistic data. The employment of *Testimonio* in a study of language learning and socialization does not incorporate the observation of such interactions in real time, and thus situations such as power dynamics in linguistic interactions are not directly observed by the researcher, but recounted by the *testimonialista* (research participant). The data in my research was comprised of the perspectives and understandings that people have of their own experiences, thus my observations of language learning and socialization were in this way, indirect. According to Garret (2004), there are three principles that define and delimit language socialization research. Language socialization research 1) is ethnographic; 2) is longitudinal; 3) relies the analysis of audiotaped, or video recorded naturalistic data. Following these tenets language socialization research has traditionally focused on analysis of interactions taking place face-to-face, in contained contexts, (e.g. mother-child interaction within the household, teacher-student interaction within the classroom) and relied on the analysis of naturalistic data collected in such interactions (Garret & Baquedano-López, 2002). Even though the study I conducted does not cover the three tenets of language socialization research outlined by Garret (2004) and Garret & Baquedano-López, 2002), (i.e.

it is not ethnographic and did not involve the collection or analysis of naturalistic data) it definitively undertook elements of this paradigm. My study focused on the analysis and interpretation of lived experiences as revealed in *testimonios* collected through multiple methods, contains elements that contribute to the field of second language socialization. Furthermore, my study is not the only non-ethnographic research that claims elements of the language socialization paradigm. For example, Lantolf and Genung (2002) draw data from journal writing and retrospective commentary of the focal research subject in their case study of a Chinese heritage language learner in a U.S. school. Another instance is the qualitative research that Duff, Wong, & Early, (2002) conducted with immigrants in ESL and Healthcare career programs, drawing data primarily from interviews and research subjects reported experiences of language learning and socialization, as opposed to naturalistic data as commonly used in language socialization research. Gonzalez (2010) critiques the apolitical nature of language socialization paradigm and the absence of issues of power and hegemony in its analysis. However, this is changing as evidenced in Garcia-Sanchez' (2012) study of social exclusion applying a language socialization perspective and incorporating elements of Van Dick's critical discourse in the analysis of racial construction of 'other'. Following in the steps of these critical studies, I intended to transform the apparent limitation or 'delimitation' described before into an opportunity to contribute to the emerging scholarship of critical studies in second language learning and second language socialization

## **Chapter Two**

### **Review Of The Literature**

In this chapter I present a review of the studies that have shaped my understanding of language learning and socialization and that will assist me in answering the research question: *How do Spanish speaking adult immigrants discursively negotiate language learning, identity construction and socialization processes in their journey to adapt to a new country in the context of a grassroots English as a Second Language Class?* The studies that I integrate in this review will also guide me in the analysis of findings and in generating conclusions. Because the study that I propose is complex and informed by multiple sources, I review research around Latino/a migration and immigration to set the socio-historical context. After that, I review the body of research that informs my views of language, identity, culture, and socialization. The review of literature I present in this chapter strengthen my view of the interrelation of all these concepts in human activity. Therefore, the concepts overlap, as it is impossible to understand one without engaging with the others, even though I present each one in separate sections for the purpose of organization.

#### **Tracing Migration and Immigration Studies**

There is a wealth of studies about immigration from Mexico to the United States that discuss the ways in which people adapt to a new life. The foci range from historical-political perspectives (Espenshade, 1995; Goldsborough, 2000; Kibbe, 1946; Leite, Angoa, & Rodríguez, 2009; Marentes & Marentes, 1996; Portes, 2006), to sociological and anthropological (Alvarez, 1995; Foley, 1990; Fomby, 2005; Stephen, 2007), to linguistic and educational ones (Benjamin, 1997; González, 2005; Valdes, 1996).



Historical-political studies document male mobilization from rural communities as the major composition of immigration, mainly associated with economic and work forces (Leite, et al., 2009; Parrado & Flippen, 2005). However, on the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the composition of migration flow has undergone an important shift consisting of more female migration (Fomby, 2005; Parrado & Flippen, 2005). Several causes are associated to this shift coming from both sides of the border. Increased population in urban concentrations in Mexico and growing participation of women in the labor force are associated with this shift on the part of Mexico. On the U.S. side, immigration policy is increasingly punitive and discouraging of undocumented migration, favoring highly skilled workers and family reunifications concentrated on mother-children relationships (Fomby, 2005; Parrado & Flippen, 2005). Portes and Rumbaut (2014) offer a classification of immigrants in four overlapping groups: 1) labor immigrants comprising immigrants who crossed the border by land; 2) professionals in highly specialized jobs who are more likely to bring their family along; 3) entrepreneurs who have prior experience in business and access to capital and opportunities to develop entrepreneurship in the United States; and 4) refugees who are given such status by the US government. The immigration patterns identified by Portes and Rumbaut (2014) include people who settle in places where there isn't a large population from their country; those who settle in locations where their ethnic group has already established into the working class; those who settle in places where there is an established entrepreneurial or professional from their group. The research participants in this study fall into Portes and Rumbaut's (2014) first category, those who have crossed the border by land and who are among the millions of unauthorized immigrants with no legal path to citizenship under US immigrant law.

With regards to the context, my research participants have settled in a place where their ethnic group has a long and contested history and an established membership into the working class.

The economy and the relationships of dependence between Mexico and the U.S. are also the central points in studies of immigration. Stark economic discrepancies between the United States and Mexico, not surprisingly, have created a long history of ongoing migration. The Migration Policy Institute (MPI) refers to this population as a Diaspora calculating that by 2015 23.2 million first and second-generation Mexican immigrants live in the United States. Baquedano-López & Mangual Figueroa (2011) define ‘diaspora’ as “the movement (whether by force or by choice) of people from one nation (or nation state) to another, and the ways in which this movement affords ideological, social, and economic links to the homeland or community of origin” (p. 537). Considering this population in terms of diaspora which includes Mexican born individuals and those reporting Mexican ancestry or Hispanic origin (Census Bureau, 2014), the number increases to “approximately 35.4 million (MPI, 2015). Contrastively, a recent shift established that the Mexican immigration is no longer the highest one, being outnumbered by China and India in 2013 (Christi & Hipsman, 2015). Despite their number, this segment of the immigrant population in the U.S. presents low percentages of naturalization, according to the MPI (25 percent of Mexican immigrants have acquired citizenship in comparison with 44 percent of total immigrant population). This phenomenon is attributed to the fact that a big proportion of immigrants from Mexico are unauthorized and to the long history of circular migration (Fernández-Kelly & Massey, 2007). An additional deterrent might be the absence of paths for legal permanent status or

citizenship for unauthorized immigrants in US immigration law (Zong and Batalova, 2016). Given these demographics and these punitive immigration laws, Mexican immigrants constitute a source of underpaid labor and a major piece in the U.S. economy. In addition to being the population that has lower citizenship acquisition, this population is “arguably the most socioeconomically disadvantaged”, has the “lowest levels of educational attainment and household income, and the second-lowest rate of employment” (MPI, 2015).

The socio-historical construction of “illegal alien” that denigrates and criminalizes undocumented immigrants has a strong negative impact on people’s possibilities of social integration. This social construction has been fueled in part by the revolving door policy whereby seasonal labor demand in the U.S. has been concomitant with selective border law enforcement. This has resulted in a long history of concomitant massive deportations and importation of Mexican migrant labor (De Genova, 2002). The concepts of the “illegal alien” built upon racialized ‘other’ discourses have become constitutive of the socio-historical construction of “Mexicans” in U.S. society. The increasing anti-immigrant sentiment materializes in punitive policies and legislation, which in turn contribute to larger societal discourses of “illegality”. As Trinidad & Guevara (2013) observe, “at the core of the debate is not the supply of labor that Mexicans provide the U.S. but the incorporation of individuals and their families into the cultural fabric of the country and the granting of citizenship rights” (p. 208). This situation makes undocumented immigrants in particular, and immigrants of color in general, the target of attacks and marginalization.

Sociological and anthropological studies, including linguistic socialization practices in the borderlands and educational issues (Gonzalez, 2005; Valdes, 1996) inform us of the relationships that are established by immigrants and how that shapes and feeds the dynamic construction of culture (Alvarez, 1995). The realization that border cultures are not defined by geography is a major contribution of these studies. For instance, Stephen (2007) focuses on narratives of indigenous transmigrant workers from the south of Mexico to several U.S. states. She discusses the larger structural forces that affect immigrants' lives and how the recreation of culture produces new notions of territory, education, language and traditions. In relation to sociolinguistic and educational issues, González' (2005) and Valdes' (1996) ethnographies of immigrant families are important contributions to the understanding of how people adapt to a new life. Valdes (1996) focuses on the relationship between school and the home and highlights the need to understand diverse linguistic, cultural and family backgrounds in order to promote the educational success of immigrant children. Similarly, Gonzalez' (2005) work with mothers and children in the borderlands constitute a major contribution on the understanding of language, culture, ideology and power. Moreover, both authors provide a thorough examination of the ways in which families navigate their new social context and how they approach learning and survival processes. The detailed portrayal of mothers and their role in all these processes of adaptation is of particular interest. These scholars push "...The traditional boundaries of language and culture" challenging traditional notions of culture as "bounded and integrated system of worldview" (González, 2005, p. xxi). Valdes and Gonzalez set their studies in the borderlands and point to the importance of understanding this region as culturally bounded rather than geopolitically defined. I find

support in these ethnographies as they place language and communication as the axis around and through which social relationships are established and understood.

### **Guiding Concepts: Culture, language, Identity and Socialization**

In the following paragraphs I review the literature that shapes my understanding of the guiding and interrelated concepts of this study: culture, language, identity and socialization. I adhere to scholars that have shaped the understanding of language with reference to its complex social meaning and not as a neutral medium of communication. (Bakhtin, 1986; Bordieu, 1977; Fairclough, 1992; Kress, 1989). I am approaching language from the perspective of critical discourse research (Wodak & Meyer, 2009) which views language as a complex composition of signs and practices that have the power to organize social existence and social reproduction and the view of language and identity as interwoven processes (Norton, 2000, 2013). Closely linked to this concept of language is the approach to socialization as the processes that create and transmit the conventions needed to interact in culturally and socially constructed ways (Fillmore, 1991a, 1996; Halliday, 1993; Ochs, 1986, 2002).

### **Culture and Identity**

A growing body of social studies acknowledge that a growing number of people belong to more than one cultural group, move across territories, speak more than one language, and self-identify with more than one ethnic and speech community (Eisenhart, 2000; Gonzalez, 1999; 2010; 2005; Kramersch, 2009; Lee, 1997; Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004; Rosaldo, 1993; Valdes, 1996). Consequently, with more people moving across territories, and expressing across languages, the unitary association of people with territory, nation, and ethnic group began to erode. It is in the scholarship produced within this evolving

social science paradigm where I find support to unravel the identities forged in similarly evolving social realities facing Latino/a immigrants of color in the United State. Previous essentialized notions viewed culture as bounded by geography, ethnicity, nationality, citizenship or race, and compartmentalized into distinct and separated units. This gave way to the reconsideration of culture as “mutable, multiple, and ever in process” (González, 1999, p. 433). Culture is not anymore conceived as a “thing” that is transmitted from generation to generation, as explained by early anthropologists (Spindler, 1997) but an abstraction viewed in its multiplicity and mobility of expressions. Conceptually evolving from reductionist views of a unifying, homogenizing category, culture began to be problematized to acknowledge difference, diversity, multiplicity and heterogeneity (González, 1999; West, 2005). These discussions emphasize the need to view culture and identity in a dialogic fashion (Eisenhart, 2000; González, 1999; Levinson, 2000; Ortner, 2000; West, 2005; Williams, 2000). A dialogic construction of culture and identity is one that posits these phenomena as “the products of human encounters, the inventories of cross-cultural appropriation and hybridity” (McCarthy, Giardina, Harewood, & Park, 2005,160). This understanding of culture is relevant in the present reality of growing migration that implies not only crossing geographical and political borders but also cultural ones. Communities are established around notions of mobility and historical, contextual associations, giving way to interculturality and hybridity (Elenes, 2006, 2011). Hall (1994) perceives a struggle in the emergence of alternative communities within every given community, as human groups previously regarded as distinct and separate establish new and unexpected alliances with each other. Hall’s assertion can be applied to immigrant people of color in the United States, who find

themselves struggling to engender alternative ways of being; who create alternative ways of establishing membership and affiliation, constructing their multiple and multifaceted identities in some kind of marginal culture striving to surface and take shape. Scholarship produced with this new understanding, builds conceptual bridges between culture and identity and reminds us of the “ordinariness” of culture (Williams, 2000). It also points to the importance of considering the “processes by which identities and cultural meanings are constantly *produced*, rather than statistically and uniformly transmitted” (Levinson, 2000, pg. 5).

Cornel West (2005) discusses a move towards ‘cultural politics of difference’ that emerged in scholarly work, the arts and cultural critique. Cultural politics of difference name and appreciate diversity, multiplicity, and heterogeneity, rejecting uniformity and homogeneity in concepts of culture. Atomistic and monochromatic views were not helpful anymore to inform theories of identity as they produced accounts of culture and identity in an incomplete and inaccurate way. For instance, Benjamin (1997) critiques the fact that researchers have treated ethnic identity as if identity development were a unified process across ethnicities. As González (1999) notices, within this framework of culture, identity has taken a central place in anthropological and educational discussions. Consequently, the whole inventory of social constructs associated with culture is reoriented in the same fashion. Along with culture and identity, notions of race, nation, state, citizenship, and so forth suggest a relative and dynamic nature as people’s responses to hegemonic constructions are legitimized and taken into account (Kramsch, 1998).

## **Hybrid Transborder Identities**

The break down of the hegemonic notions of culture and identity has allowed the intersection of diverse frames and epistemologies. The term hybridity is used to refer to the nature of this intersection of discourses, practices and the resulting identities (Gonzalez, 1999) A hybrid social, intellectual or epistemological space is a figurative image for the situation in which human groups encounter themselves as they cross metaphorical and physical borders (González, 2005). Hybridity and interculturality are part of the reality that immigrants construct in an already multicultural and hybrid society (Anzaldúa, 2007; Elenes, 2006, 2011). They cross geographical and political borders as they migrate from their home countries to the United States. As they become more cognizant of the historical, political and economic reality of their physical and political border crossing, their situatedness and self-representation becomes a different space. They cross the borders of identity and social culture as they produce culture with their daily practices.

The exploration of peoples' capabilities of constructing their reality as opposed to just reflect it, is apparent in research on minority groups (immigrants or locals) adapting to life in powerful western nation-states such as Canada, the U.S., France, and the U.K (Gibson, 2000; Ogbu, 2000; Reed-Danahay, 2000; Vélez-Ibañez & Greenberg, 2000). For example, Gibson's study (2000) on Sikh immigrants' adaptation to society and school in the U.S. shows the development of a fluid social identity as immigrant students and their families adopt an additive, rather than subtractive approach, to the negotiation of their identity. In strategic ways, Sikh immigrants in Gibson's study, merge the identities they bring with them from their society of origin, with the possibilities offered in the dominant



host society. In doing so, they find a system to accommodate to certain aspects of the culture of the dominant society, without giving up theirs in totality. In Gibson's words (2000) they engage in the strategy of "accommodation without assimilation". It is important to underline, as these authors do, that minorities construct oppositional identities as they are situated in a position of subordination with respect to the dominant group. The ways in which the Punjabi Sikh parents in Gibson's (2000) ethnography respond to these structural forces of racism, discrimination and pressures to conform to dominant social norms, suggests how cultural models work to frame individuals' identity construction. Similar to Gibson's notion of "accommodation without assimilation" is the theory of segmented assimilation (Zhou, 1997, as cited in Baquedano-López & Mangual Figueroa, 2011) that counters the conventional and mistaken assumption that all immigrants' experience linear assimilation processes. According to Baquedano-López & Mangual Figueroa (2011), this body of research posited the contrastive view of immigration processes as dynamic, swayed by multiple factors in the immigration experiences including challenges that immigrants encounter in the myriad of settings in which they interact including the workplace, educational institutions, neighborhoods, and their own community of peers. Thus, rather than following a linear path, immigrants agentively select and discard the aspects of culture from the practices, social positionings and social statuses that they have available in their encounters with the host society.

### **Chicana Feminist Discussions of Identity**

Third space feminism, mestiza consciousness, differential consciousness are concepts that Chicana feminists (Anzaldúa, 1987; Pérez Huber, 1999; Sandoval, 1999) have used to talk about the sites of negotiation of meanings and subjectivities that enable marginalized

women to enact their agency and disrupt colonial and neocolonial oppression. Anzaldúa's (2007) literal and metaphorical borderlands, encompasses "the ways in which injustices, oppressions, and violence have been perpetuated on the basis of race, gender, class, and sexuality" (Bañuelos, 2006, p. 97). Delgado Bernal (2006) describes the term 'borderlands' as "the geographical, emotional, and psychological space occupied by mestizas, and it serves as a metaphor for the condition of living, between spaces, cultures, and languages" (p. 123). Through the analytical lens of intersectionality, these systems of oppression are viewed as mutually constitutive (Collins, 1998, 2009). The framework of intersectionality and Anzaldúa's concept of mestiza consciousness allows for a deeper re-consideration not only an epistemological one, but also a re-consideration of ontological assumptions, particularly with regards to these intersections that work in tandem in the construction of social identities and representations and in the regulation of social spaces and relations afforded to immigrant women of color. A "critical awareness" or mestiza consciousness is explained by Anzaldúa (2007) as knowledge of one's historical, political, socio-cultural condition marked by a number of subjective and socially constructed locations. In the case of Latina immigrants, the major locations include gender, class, race, nationality, language variety, and immigration status. Given that my interest resides in the *Testimonios* of ordinary women who have been historically silenced and marginalized even from traditional feminist discourses and who do not relate to "high" theory or academic language, I sought theories that transgress epistemological and pedagogical norms of academia, that work outside of institutionalized education and that pays attention to "the everyday" life (Villenas & Moreno, 2001). I find support in Chicana/ Latina scholarship that believes in centering the ordinary to nurture the emergence of these

untold stories in a multiplicity of expressions (Villenas & Moreno, 2001; Trinidad Galvan, 2006).

### **What Does It Mean to Know a Language?**

A straightforward definition of language is offered by The American Speech-Language Hearing Association (ASHA) (1982), which describes language as “a complex and dynamic system of conventional symbols that is used in various modes for thought and communication.” The system of language is said to be “complex” as it cannot be reduced to a small number of fixed categories. The “dynamic” feature of language denotes its constant changing and evolving nature in concordance with the users who adjust it to the particular transformations of the contexts in which it is being used. Users of any given language share knowledge of the codes or “symbols” employed to represent and make sense of such language. These symbols are sounds or abstractions to which users arbitrarily assign meaning, constituting a separate subsystem within the whole system of language (Halliday & Hasan, 1989). Language is “conventional” in the sense that the system of meaning is shared by the speech community and is also attached to the contexts in which language is used. The various modes that language can be used for thought and communication, as the ASHA definition states, include written, spoken and signed language. These modes relate to the functions of language elucidated by Halliday (1993)

Knowledge of a language is indicated by the understanding and appropriate use of the “complex and dynamic system” I referred to above. Part of this understanding implies the ability to manipulate the interacting subsystems which account for language structure and function: morphology and lexis; phonology, syntax and semantics. Fromkin and Rodman (1983) distinguish between linguistic competence and linguistic performance.

The former refers to the knowledge of the language subsystems and the latter to the actual display of verbal behavior. However, the knowledge of the organization and the rules that govern language is not enough for communication to take place successfully. Given that language is also a purposeful social activity, and the system of meaning is contextual (Halliday, 1989), a negotiation of meaning also takes place in the process. The conventions that make up language go beyond the symbols that represent it and include a set of socially and culturally constructed behaviors and rule. Language and culture are so inextricably linked that knowing a language also includes knowing these systems of communication such as non-verbal behavior (gestures, eye-contact, body language, etc.) and paralinguistic aspects (intonation, stress, speech rate, hesitations, etc.). Knowing a language, thus, includes the ability to use it in linguistically and culturally appropriate ways. Daniels (1994) directs our attention to the different cultural discourse norms noticing that the conventions, structure, appropriateness and rules of linguistic interactions are culture specific and they vary even among speakers of the same language. This means that knowing a language also involves sharing the culture-bound norms of language use, that are acquired through socialization and interaction with others. For example, the type of language used by a teacher in a classroom will differ from that he or she uses at home with family or at a café with friends.

Critical discourse research (Wodak & Meyer, 2009; Fairclough, 1992) views language as a complex composition of signs and practices that have the power to organize social existence and social reproduction (Norton, 2000). Discourse, according to Fairclough and Wodak (1997) "...constitutes situations, objects of knowledge, and the social identities of and relationships between people and groups of people. It is

constitutive both in the sense that it helps to sustain and reproduce the social status quo, and in the sense that it contributes to transforming it” (p. 258). Through discourse, people create representation of the world, social relations and social and personal identities (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997). The acknowledgement of power relations embedded in every social interaction becomes particularly important in the understanding of the identity formation of second language learners, particularly in the experience of immigrants of color (Bourdieu, 1997; Norton, 2000, 2013; Pavlenko & Blackledge 2004). Scholars in this approach have studied language with reference to its complex social meaning and not simply as a neutral medium of communication (Bakhtin, 1986; Bourdieu, 1977; Fairclough, 1992; Kress, 1989). Relevant to this consideration is the question of how while learning the language of power and discursively shaping and building new identities, immigrants of color acquiesce, confront and/or resist the limited and subordinate social positioning awarded to them by the dominant culture (Norton, 2013). The interconnectedness between language and thought and language and social discourses is a common theme highlighted in the work of language scholars (Bakhtin, 1986; Vigotsky, 1988) that propose that the processes of language development are inextricably linked to the ways in which primary discourses are acquired and developed (Halliday, 1980). These premises set the frame to theorize language and literacy as processes embedded in the development of a worldview or worldviews (Bakhtin, 1986; Freire, 2000). This framework becomes relevant in a *Testimonio* inquiry focused on language and identity since stories of second language and literacy development can illustrate how people learn to perceive and act upon the world around them (Freire, 2000).

## Language and Identity

Gloria Anzaldúa (2007) captured the interconnectedness between language and identity in this phrase: “if you want to really hurt me, talk badly about my language. Ethnic identity is twin skin to linguistic identity- I am my language. Until I can take pride in my language, I cannot take pride in myself” (p. 81). The shift in the conceptualization of culture and identity is tied to a growing interdisciplinarity in studies of language learning recognizing the relationship between identity and language (Norton, 2006). Also, a growing number of scholars are incorporating critical theories to research on second language learning and second language research (Amin, 1997; Pennycook, 2003; Phillipson, 1992, 2001), feminist and poststructuralist perspectives (Norton, 2000; Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004; Duff, Wong and Early, 2002) and postcolonial perspectives (Canagarajah, 1999; Brutt- Gliffler, 2002) to the study of language learning. These approaches go beyond cognitive processes of language learning and are categorized under the broad umbrella of *sociocultural perspectives*. For purposes of clarification, I delimit sociocultural perspectives as used in this dissertation proposal, borrowing Zuengler and Miller’s (2006) explanation. According to these authors sociocultural perspectives refer to the “varied approaches that foreground the social and cultural contexts of learning” ... and that “view language use in real-world situations as fundamental, not ancillary, to learning” (Zuengler and Miller, 2006, p. 37). The distinction made by Lantolf (2006) with regards to the term *sociocultural* and the school of thought that it represents, is also pertinent and helpful for this purpose. Lantolf, (2006), observes that the term *sociocultural* was normally understood as the “theory of mental development and functioning formulated by Vygotsky and his colleagues” and “commonly used in the general education and

psychological literatures” (p. 68). Given the prominence of Vygotsky’s work in Second Language Acquisition research (SLA), for many scholars in this field *sociocultural theory* refers mainly to the theories derived from his very influential thought. However, as Lantolf (2006) notes, some researchers within the field have used the term to refer to “a broad set of theoretical frameworks that focus on social and cultural factors in L2 second language learning and use” (p. 68-69). Similarly, Norton (2006) refers to a “growing interest in interdisciplinarity in second language research that includes but goes beyond the sociocultural research associated exclusively with Vygotsky” (p. 1) and that addresses the relationship between identity and language learning. Norton uses three arguments to support the extension of the boundaries of sociocultural theory beyond the Vygotskian paradigm, 1) “... sociocultural relationships must be understood with respect to larger institutional practices in schools, homes, and workplaces (the social) as well as more grounded practices associated with particular groups (the cultural)”; 2) “... much contemporary research on identity and language learning shares an interest in the complex and dynamic nature of identity, co-constructed in a wide variety of sociocultural relationships, and framed within particular relations of power” (p. 4); and 3) sociocultural theory refers to the research that looks into the relationship between identity and language learning addressing both institutional and group practices. For this third argument Norton makes reference to the work of Michael Bakhtin (1981, 1984) Pierre Bourdieu (1977, 1984), Christine Weedon (1987), and Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger (1995), who have addressed such issues from a diversity of disciplinary frameworks illuminating the sociocultural conceptualization of identity. Conceptualized in this way, the primary contribution of sociocultural perspectives to the understanding of second language

development is the recognition of the interconnectedness between language, culture, and identity formation as well as the recognition of power relations in social interactions. This important realization has impacted the understanding not only of language development, but also of the processes by which linguistic minorities experience socialization into dominant cultures through linguistic interactions, social discourses and social institutions such as education, the media and the legal system, to name a few. The view of identity formation as a sociocultural construct challenges theorizations of identity as a linear construction based upon one language, one territory and one culture (Kramsh, 2009). Additionally, sociocultural theories have brought into the discussions of second language development the notion of negotiation of identities acknowledging unequal relations of power and highlighting second language learners' agency and multiple ways of resisting them. These understandings frame culture and language as guiding concepts in the understanding of identity and consequently, closer attention is paid to socialization as the processes that create and transmit the conventions needed to interact in culturally and socially constructed ways (Fillmore, 1991a, 1996; Halliday, 1993; Ochs, 1986, 2002).

### **Two Studies on Adult Immigrant Language Learners**

In the discussion that follows, I present two qualitative studies of adult immigrants language learning that have appropriated the term *sociocultural* in this latter sense: the work of Bonny Norton (2000; 2013) with immigrant women in Canada and Menard-Warwick (2009) with immigrant women in the United States. These studies have been of great support and inspiration for the work I propose to develop with adult immigrant language learners in the Southwest U.S.



Placed in Ontario, Canada, Norton's study consisted of a longitudinal qualitative research focused on five immigrant women (aged 20-44) learning English as a second language. Over the period of two years, Norton examined the ways in which learners make sense of their lived experiences and to what extent their particular historical memories intersected with their investment in language learning. Norton explores the relationship between identity and language learning, and between the individual language learner and the larger social world. Her data analysis illustrates notions of power, identity, and investment, and conceptions of race, ethnicity, gender, and class, previously absent in leading SLA theory. Her perspective offers suggestions for introducing critical ideas in the classroom with a view of enhancing second language learners' human potential. Norton's major inspiration to my work in particular, is the critical undertake of the relationships between the language learner and the social world. The author proposes a theory of identity that integrates the language learner and the language-learning context. In this theory, identity is defined as non-unitary and questions how relations of power in the social world have an impact on social interaction between second language learners and target language speakers. Norton asserts that the interactions between second language learners and target language speakers take place within inequitable relations of power that limit the opportunities second language learners have to practice the target language outside the classroom. I agree with her rejection of SLA theorists' construction of the "good language learner" in association with personality factors and psychological traits such as motivation, extroversion, uninhibitedness, and so forth. Norton argues that these are not fixed traits or permanent categories of learners' personality, but are socially constructed in inequitable relations of power, changing over time and space, and possibly

coexisting in contradictory ways in a single individual. Following educational theorists within the critical tradition (Freire, 2000; Giroux and Simon), Norton (2002) takes the position of education as a highly political practice, not a neutral one. She advocates for a notion of investment, which conceives the language learner as having a complex social history and multiple desires. Approaching language from the perspective of critical discourse researchers who have framed their work with reference to poststructuralist theories of language, such as Bakhtin, (1986), Bourdieu (1997), Fairclough (1992), and Kress (1989) among others, she takes the position that “ethnicity, gender and class are not experienced as a series of discrete background variables, but are all, in complex and interconnected ways, implicated in the construction of identity and the possibilities of speech” (p. 13). Her research suggests that “theories of communicative competence should extend beyond an understanding of the appropriate rules of use in a particular society to include an understanding of the way rules of use are socially and historically constructed to support the interest of a dominant group within a given society” (p. 16). Norton also proposes the practice of classroom based social research as a way of integrating the learners’ identities and investment into the language classroom.

Mena-Warwick’s ethnography (2009) examines the interrelation of gender, class, ethnicity and immigration status of Latin American language learners in California, U.S. Utilizing a participatory observation approach the author echoes the voices of seven women and one man in the context of an English as a Second Language (ESL) family literacy program. This work is grounded in the recognition of gender differences in the experiences of immigrant men and women, and in the premise that these differences are rooted in the inequalities produced within patriarchal social systems. Menard-Warwick,

following Piller and Pavlenko (2001, as cited in Menard-Warwick, 2009) posits that gender is embedded in social relations and discursive practices and thus foregrounds “gender as a structuring factor in immigration and second-language (L2) learning” (p.2). Drawing from the theoretical perspective of language socialization she states that “language learning is best conceptualized as occurring through participation in speech and literacy events within a (gendered) sociohistorical context” (p. 2). Based in this premise, the historical and economic context of migration from Latino-America to the U.S amidst capitalist globalization is also drawn into the analysis of L2. The author expresses her research aims as follows:

...this book explores the gendered participation of Latin American immigrant adults in both the English-language classroom and in the education of their children ... with the central concern ... to understand adult learners’ varied perspectives on their educational and language learning experiences and to examine in what ways ESL classroom activities were congruent with their multiple identities and goals (p. 23).

With gender as the focal variable of immigrant language learning, this ethnography incorporates multiple related social frameworks in the analysis, including theories of identity, notions of investment and subjectivity (Norton, 2000); Discourse and literacy (Gee, 1996); intertextuality (Kristeva, 1986; Fairclough, 1999); social positioning (Davies and Harré, 1990); Performativity (Austin, 1962); and interdiscursivity (Bakhtin, 1981; 1986). Her analysis of life-history narratives reveals that gender ideologies can be adopted or resisted and emphasizes immigrant men and women’s agency in their possibilities to appropriate ESL classroom practices for their own purposes and open avenues for respect

within traditional gender roles. I find much inspiration with this work and identify multiple areas of affinity with my research interest, particularly the examination of second language learning experiences of Latin-American immigrants as expressed in their own narratives juxtaposed with the socio-historical and political context of immigration.

Both pieces of research reviewed above (Norton, 2000, 2013; Menard-Warwick, 2009) emphasize the role of identity in language learning. I conceive identity adhering to the five characteristics suggested by Pavlenko and Blackledge (2004). According to these authors, identities are located “within particular discourses and ideologies of language”; are embedded “within the relations of power”; are multiple, fragmented and hybrid; new identities are of an imagined nature; and are located “within particular narratives” (p. 14). This suggests a connection between conceptions of self and identity, and a relationship with concepts of mind, awareness of self and consciousness which are in turn linked with processes of learning used in the development and practice of language and literacy (Freire, 2000). Similarly, Norton (2000) relates identity to the way people construct a notion of their situatedness and relationships to the world around them, generating an understanding of their future possibilities. She uses the term identity to refer to how a person understands his or her relationship to the world and how that relationship is constructed across time and space. Following Heller (1987), Norton contends that language is constitutive of and constituted by identity and that

it is through language that a person negotiates a sense of self within and across different sites at different points in time, and it is through language that a person gains access to- or is denied access to powerful social networks that give learners the opportunity to speak. (p. 5)

Norton (2000) calls for a theory that conceives identity in relation to the construction and reproduction of inequitable social structures in daily interactions. Language this way is conceived as Bakhtin (1986) contends, in relation to its social meaning and not as a neutral tool for social communication. Similarly, Moje (2000) argues that people are identified and positioned as a result of their literate practices. Reflecting on pedagogical practices, McCarthy and Moje (2002, pg. 230), relate identity to the practice of labeling people and point to the importance of looking at identity as social constructions susceptible to change and conflict as a result of social interactions people engage in. Writing from the field of literacy pedagogy these authors represent postmodern traditions, particularly the tradition of constructivism, that have departed from the construction of identity as a unified, cohesive feature of an individual, to approach one that is flexible, multiple, fragmentary and even contradictory (McCarthy and Moje, 2002). Wenger (1998) offers the following elaboration on theories of identity: “Theories of identity are concerned with the social formation of the person, the cultural interpretation of the body, and the creation and use of markers of membership such as rites of passage and social categories” (p.13). Theories of identity as interpreted by Wenger (1998) are in line with the aforementioned discussions of culture and identity providing a guiding framework to understand the ways in which a literate identity is forged both at the individual and collective levels in association with the categories of race, class, gender, sexuality, age, and so forth. Wegner (1998) offers a dialectical –not dichotomized- explanation of identity where the individual and the collective are not opposites but interrelated spheres of the self. In this definition people find out who they are as human beings as they participate –in silent or active ways- in “communities of

practice” and negotiate their relationships, their positions and their activities within those communities.

### **Second Language Socialization Research**

Closely related to the processes of language learning are the processes of *language socialization*. Language socialization is a linguistic anthropological paradigm originated in the 1980s primarily with the work of Elinor Ochs and Bambi Schieffelin (Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986, 1999). Foregrounding the interconnectedness of language and cultural development, this line of research has the two-fold concern of “*socialization through the use of language* and *socialization to use language*” (Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986, p. 163). Drawing from this line of research, Garret and Baquedano-López (2002) define socialization as the interrelated processes “through which a child or other novice acquires the knowledge, orientations and practices that enable him or her to participate effectively and appropriately in the social life of a particular community” (p. 339). The processes, by which people are socialized into a given culture, whether in their first or second language, are conducted through social interactions that are constantly shaping the formation of identities. Paraphrasing Ochs (2002), both first and second language users become “speakers of culture” through language use and social interaction. Even though most early studies in this paradigm focused on young children’s integration to their social groups and culture (Schieffelin and Ochs, 1986), these researchers have recognized language socialization as a lifetime process. As Ochs (1999) states “language socialization research examines how language practices organize the life span process of becoming an active, competent participant in one or more communities” (p. 230). Socialization is viewed as an interactive process where the “novice” (either the child or the adult language learner) “is

not a passive recipient of sociocultural knowledge but rather an active contributor to the meaning and outcome of interaction with other members of a social group” and a “selective and active participant in the process of constructing social worlds” (p. 165). Considering that every social interaction is characterized by an asymmetry of knowledge and power, the implications of language socialization in adult immigrant language learners are multifold. As Garcia Sanchez (2012) observes, the sense of belonging to particular social groups is contingent largely to the manner in which the members of the group treat the novice in public domains of social life. In the case of marginalized immigrants attempting to learn the language of the host society and become active members of society, multiple systems of exclusion may operate, influencing the possibilities they have to develop social identities that are sanctioned by the aspired social group or groups.

Relatively recent research within the language socialization paradigm has turned the attention to multilingual societies, which present complexities not found in “mainstream” or in more traditional, monolingual settings (Bayley and Schecter, 2003). In this context, Duff (2012) defines second language socialization as “the process by which non-native speakers of a language, or people returning to a language they may have once understood or spoken but have since lost proficiency in, seek competence in the language and, typically, membership and the ability to participate in the practices of communities in which that language is spoken” (p. 564). This speaks directly to my research goals of examining the way in which adult immigrant men and women perceive their experiences of language learning at the same time that they engage in social practices seeking membership to new groups within a new whole society. Studies of language socialization of adults in the context of immigration are

limited, but the interest is growing (Duff, Wong & Early, 2002; Baquedano-López & Mangual Figueroa, 2012). Furthermore, I adhere to studies of language learning and language socialization that detach themselves from the view of the learner as a *computer* or an *apprentice* and undertake the more agentive view of the learner as a negotiator of meaning, identities, social positionings and worldviews (Bayley and Schechter, 2003; Kramsch, 2012; Baquedano-López & Mangual Figueroa, 2012; Duff, 2012; Cole & Zuengler, 2003) and that emphasize the “inherent linkage between local socialization practices and broader historical, social, and political contexts” (Harklau, p. 86, 2003). Additionally, I agree with Langman (2003) in undertaking socialization not only as a developmental process, but also as practice, or set of practices in which individuals engage with their social environment negotiating identities, and ways of being in the world. This view incorporates the assumption that cultural norms and values, and the practices that they organize (including linguistic interactions) are not fixed elements but are as fluid as the identities that are forged within them (Langman, 2003).



## **Chapter Three**

### **Design of the study**

In this chapter I describe *Testimonio* as research approach and methodology and explain its relevance and usefulness to study language learning and socialization experiences of Latino/a immigrants of color. With the research question in mind, I will reflect on my positionality as a researcher and how this supports the choice of *Testimonio* as a culturally relevant tool framed in decolonial feminist thought and third world feminism. Finally, I will give an account of the methodology detailing participant selection, and the methods of data collection and analysis.

### **What is Testimonio?**

*Testimonio* is a Latin American tradition rooted in social justice work that has been used by Chicana/Latina feminist scholars in education as a methodological, pedagogical and activist tool to understand the educational experiences of underrepresented groups (Cervantes-Soon, 2012; Delgado Bernal et. al, 2012; Perez- Huber and Cueva, 2012; Prieto and Villenas, 2012). *Testimonio* is a personal story that represents collective experience and nurtures cultural memory, typically foregrounding human rights struggles of underrepresented populations. Delgado Bernal, et. al (2012) define *testimonio* as:

..an approach that incorporates political, social, historical, and cultural histories that accompany one's life experiences as a means to bring about change through consciousness-raising. In bridging individuals with collective histories of oppression, a story of marginalization is re-centered to elicit social change (p. 364).

*Testimonio* is connected with feminist theories that authenticate the epistemologies of communities of color and validate lived experiences as sites of knowledge construction as Prieto and Villenas (2012) state: “Women of color have long made the case that theory and the production of knowledge cannot be disassociated from people’s lived experiences” (p. 414). *Testimonio* is concerned with research and praxis that bring about an interpretation of social and political realities that is both personal and collective and that is conducive to social change. Delgado Bernal et al. (2012), capture the collective force of *Testimonio* stating that individual stories can be used to reflect the conditions and circumstances of a group. Understood this way, *Testimonio* assists in the expression of collective experiences of marginalization as well as alternative narratives of resistance.

It is important to distinguish *Testimonio* from other forms of narrative in research (e.g. oral history or autobiography) (Delgado Bernal et. al. 2012). A major distinction is that *Testimonio* conduces to critical reflection around the sociopolitical realities that the narrative exposes. Ashamwi, Sanchez, & Carmona, (2018) distinguish the qualities of *testimonio* in contrast with storytelling or narrative, underscoring the explicit political intent of sharing one’s story to break the silence imposed by oppressive social systems and to stimulate critical reflection and social action. By establishing bridges of solidarity between the individual and the collective experiences of oppression and marginalization, *testimonio* raises sociopolitical consciousness and ultimately leads to act upon the oppressive forces to bring about change (Delgado Bernal, et al, 2012). According to Blackmer Reyes & Curry Rodríguez (2012) “the construction of a discourse of solidarity” is central to the exercise of sharing *testimonios* (p. 526). *Testimonio* involves not only the *testimonialista* who voices his or her individual experiences, but it also engages the collective experience of those who can relate to the

sociopolitical realities that the *testimonio* reveals. *Testimonio* requires intimacy, care, trust and respect as speakers place themselves in the vulnerable position of opening up their very identities, their emotions, fears and joys in the act of claiming these as sites of knowledge. Delgado Bernal et. al (2012) encapsulate the collective force of *testimonio* as well as its pedagogical nature in this statement: “In listening to the story of one, we learn about the conditions of many” (pg. 368). The authors also emphasize the active role of the listeners by engaging with individual account to learn about collective stories. A dynamic relationship between the individual and the collective is then built by addressing shared experiences of social inequities and systemic oppression generating possibilities for transformation of the self and society. This relationship rests upon the solidarity that *testimonio* engenders in a relationship of empathy and shared understandings. However, the power of *testimonio* for social transformation resides also in its potential to go beyond the affiliations created among listeners who recognize their truths and see their own identities and struggles reflected on somebody else’s *testimonio*. *Testimonio* also has the transformative potential of reaching across different affiliations and subject positions, be it socioeconomic, political, ethnic, linguistic or racial. This mutual solidarity also establishes bridges that connect social groups across time and space (Delgado Bernal, et. al. 2012). For these reasons, framing my research in the tradition of *testimonio* is not only culturally relevant, but also methodologically sound and politically urgent in the current context of growing xenophobia and anti-immigrant rhetoric and practices in the United States where people of color have limited options to voice their experiences and establish links of solidarity among themselves and other oppressed groups.

Immigrant men and women striving to survive and advance their families in a hostile

environment that equates immigrants with criminals and depicts them as the worst of their home countries, are survivors and display a very powerful agency to change those discourses. Mohanty (2003) reminds us of the political urgency to change the discourses that posit women of color as victims; I intend to do the same for immigrants of color. For these reasons, a Chicana feminist framework and the practice of *testimonio* are helpful tools to bring to light the narratives of immigrants of color, and to validate their everyday pedagogies and lives, finding the “mundane in the ordinary” as Trinidad Galvan (2001) suggests. The foundation of *testimonio* further assists in revealing the powerful counter discourses of immigrants of color in their journeys towards language learning and socialization. In alignment with my research focus and researcher ideology, this approach guides my research questions and assists in the search for answers.

### **Researcher’s Positionality and *Testimonio***

A goal of *testimonio* is to provide a space for marginalized and oppressed voices to express their experiences of struggle and resistance. In this study, Alejandrina, Miriam and Andrea take the role of *testimonialistas*, as they share their stories and are the legitimate interpreters of their realities. My role is to facilitate the platform for their knowledge and experiences to be heard (Ashamwi et. al, 2018). In this setting, I take the role of ‘outsider ally’ (Delgado Bernal et al, 2012) which includes the tasks of eliciting the stories, recording them and organizing them as a readable text to give shape of the *testimonios*. In this role I respond to the “methodological concerns of *testimonio*” which “are often around giving voice to silences, representing the other, reclaiming authority to narrate, and disentangling questions surrounding legitimate truth” (Delgado Bernal et al, 2012).

A central goal of this study is to look at the interplay of language learning, identity

formation and socialization processes. My research aims to contribute to the scholarly conversations about immigrants of color, and the way they constantly negotiate new forms of being in the world. Like Norton (2000), I study the negotiation of identities of immigrant people as they learn a new language. Like Anzaldúa (2007), Behar (2003), González (2005), Stephen (2007) and Valdes (1996) I study women and men of Mexican descent and the multiple subjectivities and social practices that emerge from border crossing experiences. Being a Mexican immigrant and language learner myself who immigrated and learned a second language in adulthood, I will provide my research with important insider knowledge. However, regardless of all the parallels I find between my own stories and those of my research participants, and my well intentioned and well informed personal and academic attempts to narrow the distance between researcher and researched, and to balance power relations embedded in research, I understand that my position is that of insider-outsider (Creswell, 2007). Yet, my historical, cultural, and linguistic identities are important assets that inform my ideological and political positionality and will certainly impact my ability to bring a muted voice to scholarly discussions.

Ashamwi et. al (2018) help to explain my position in relation to my research participants:

The *testimonialista* is asked not only to share her stories, but also to make meaning from them, to theorize about their significance, and to use them to reflect deeply about how she wants to advocate for social justice considering what she has learned through her *testimonio*. The listener is asked to bear witness to what has been shared, and to enact solidarity, become an ally to the *testimonialista* in advocating for social justice (pg. 71).

Embracing the tenets of *testimonio* research, and using music as an analogy, the voices of Alejandrina, Miriam and Andrea carry the leading melody; my voice as a researcher only attempts to introduce the harmony in the background.

### **Setting of the study**

The context of the study was a grassroots English as a second language class that took place in a community based educational organization that specifically offers educational and civic engagement opportunities for Latino/a immigrants of color. The educational model of this organization is inspired by Freire's pedagogy and embraces the concept of popular education and conscientization. Education is conceived as a political undertaking that goes beyond the learning of content and skills to address individuals and communities' development of a critical understanding of their social reality through reflection and action. This involves examining and acting on the root causes of oppression as experienced by class participants in their real world.

My role in this organization is that of director of education and I participated in the study as a co-teacher and participant observer in the ESL class where the study initially took place. As Director of Education I had access to the classes and had an established relationship with the teachers, which significantly eased my entry to the research site. The class was chosen based on the convenience of time (as data collection was conducted while attending my full time work responsibilities) and the teachers' flexibility to allow my presence as participant observer and co-teacher to conduct the some in-classroom data collection activities. The class met twice per week in a semester academic calendar, accumulating 5 hours of direct contact per week from January to May, although I started data collection in March. After the class was over in May, my home became the setting of

the meetings since we continued the ESL class there with Alejandrina and Andrea attending regularly from May to July 2017. After that, I recruited Miriam and we worked from August to December in the main building of the adult education organization, where Miriam was studying ESL. I explain more about this process in the following sections of participant selection and data collection methods.

### **Participant Selection**

I conducted a purposeful sampling of participants in the ESL class. Purposeful sampling means the selection of individuals who can “purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem and central phenomenon in the study” (Creswell, 2007, p. 125). The criteria for participant selection included: a) participants who are Spanish speakers; b) are over 21 years of age (the age of this organization’s participants ranges from 30 to over 65 years); c) self-identify as immigrants; d) migrated in adulthood in the last 10 years; e) were willing to commit to a semester long study. With the intention to inform the purpose of the research project and encourage participation, I conducted an activity in the classroom which prompted the exploration of opportunities that class participants have to learn or practice English in their daily activities (see appendix 3. *Language Sociogram*). The outcome of the activity is a graphic representation of the spaces that individuals more frequently occupy in their daily lives as they go about their routine activities (e.g. the home, the grocery store, church, children’s schools, workplaces, and the like). After choosing the most common places, students then think of the language(s) most frequently used in such places (both by themselves and other people). This activity revealed that most of the learners had little contact with Anglophone dominant spaces and most of the times their participation in social spaces where English is

used was passive (such as reading signs in grocery stores). The reflection activity then conduced to the presentation of my study proposal and my invitation to participate in it. In this initial participant recruitment, five class participants accepted to be part of the study, but only two, Alejandrina and Andrea remain engaged in the whole process. The other three found it difficult to meet outside of class and had time constraints to complete out of class activities (such as the language learning log). After I concluded data collection with Alejandrina and Andrea, I recruited one more participant from another class, Miriam to allow for the comparison and contrasting of data. Data collection with Miriam took place in the fall of 2017 (more detail in the following paragraphs).

### **Methods of Data Collection**

“Because *testimonios* can take various forms, including written, oral, and digital” (Delgado Bernal et al, 2012, pg. 368) I employed a variety of interrelated data collection methods to prompt the telling of stories and allow participants to use multiple communicative modes. (See Appendix 1: *Interrelation of Data Collection Methods*). Some of the methods that I employed were devised as classroom activities as they fulfilled both pedagogical and inquiry aims. Employing data collection methods as class activities was envisioned as a way to eliminate possible differences between study participants and the rest of the class.

In the negotiation of mutual expectations, one benefit I was able to offer to participants is the practice and learning of English and the exploration and development of strategies more conducive to reach this goal. The ESL class met for two hours twice per week and it lasted from January to May 2017. However, due to IRB constrains, I started data collection in March, which allowed me to join the class for a period of three months.



After the ESL class was over in May, Alejandrina and Andrea (and other class participants) expressed their desire to continue studying English as a group. I accepted their request and since the organization that sponsored the ESL class does not offer classes in the summer, we ended up creating a study group in my house throughout the months of June and July. We continued meeting in the same schedule of the class for two hours twice per week. Again, only Alejandrina and Andrea participated consistently and this setting generated more opportunities for data collection. Data collection with Miriam took place in the fall of 2017, while she also attended her ESL class. In the case of Miriam, I did not do participant observation or co-teaching in her ESL class. Rather, we met twice weekly for 1 hour after her class in one of the available classrooms. All data collection activities were employed in my meetings with Miriam, except *pláticas grupales*, since all the meetings were just the two of us. It is hard to gauge the implications on data collection in the different setting with Miriam (in comparison of with Alejandrina and Andrea). Nonetheless, given that some of the major purposes of *testimonio* as an approach are to generate reflection and raise consciousness of ones' situation within social contexts and to reflect on collective realities, Andrea and Alejandrina benefited from the group discussions and conversations that naturally occurred in class. While Alejandrina and Andrea must have influenced each other, Miriam didn't have that opportunity. I don't believe that working with Miriam on our own (without engaging with other participants) had a negative effect in data collection, but it might have affected the potential gains in Miriam's participation since she didn't have the exposure to other participant's stories and reflections.

The following table summarizes the data collection settings and timeframes with the three participants

Table 1. Data collection settings, participants and timeframes

Timeframe	Setting	Participant
March-May, 2017	Spring ESL class, offered by Encuentro at a community school  Individual out of class meetings at Alejandrina's home and my home	Alejandrina, Andrea
May –July, 2007	Summer ESL class (My house)	Alejandrina, Andrea
August-December, 2017	Individual meetings at Encuentro's main site (in a private classroom)	Miriam

Spanish, the participants' mother tongue was used in all stages of the research, along with English, as we saw fit, throughout the process of data collection and construction of stories. I paid special consideration to the fact that communicative styles vary across individuals and might be influenced by personal variables such as age, gender, literacy levels and so forth, but also shaped by culture. For this reason, I was very attentive to such personal preferences and skills as well as cultural practices. The implications of this in data collection methods consisted in that the participants and I co-identified the methods or narrative modes (e.g. oral, written, visual) that worked best for them. For example, dialogue journals were devised as classroom practice and data collection, but I made the decision to eliminate this tool since participants didn't show enthusiasm in engaging with it. In any case, some of following methods of data collection were used in tandem, and in an organic way. The multilayered strategies of data collection and analysis ensured triangulation of data, which consists in utilizing a variety of data collection methods (Maxwell, 2005).

The table below presents an overview of the methods that were used and in subsequent paragraphs I explain each method and include more detail regarding how they were actually used.

Table 2. Data Collection Methods

Data collection method	Mode	Participants	Number and timeframe	Location	Type of data
Language Sociogram	Visual written Oral	Participants individually, then group sharing and discussion	Once at the beginning of the study.	In class	Data on physical and social spaces; language use; type of interactions; Speech communities; socialization experiences.
Pláticas personales	Oral Face to Face	Researcher and individual participants	Alejandrina: 8 pláticas March- July Andrea: 5 pláticas May – July Miriam: 7 pláticas August - Dec	Alejandrina: In her home/ my home Andrea: in my home  Miriam: in a classroom/ At school	The study design contemplated three <i>pláticas personales</i> , which were carefully planned and scheduled. The rest of the <i>pláticas</i> happened spontaneously.
Pláticas grupales	Oral face to face; pairs or groups	Researcher-participants	Alejandrina & Andrea: four  Miriam: none	In class	There was one <i>plática grupal</i> in the spring ESL class and three in the summer class. Discussion of group lived experiences as they emerge in other data collection events.
Language practice log	Written oral	Individual participants, then group sharing	Once per week participants shared one entry in their logs.	In class/ homework	Support data provided in the sociogram; illustrate participants' language use and expansion of social spaces, genres and socialization experiences. Alejandrina and Miriam were very consistent. Andrea was less consistent in filling out the chart, but was ready to share experiences orally after listening to Alejandrina.
The river of life	Visual oral written	Participants group work	Once in the study	In class	Use the river as a metaphor to illustrate transmigration stories. Alejandrina and Andrea presented to each other in the summer class at my home. Miriam presented to me in our weekly meetings at her school.
Field notes, accounts and observations	Written	Researcher	Ongoing	Anywhere	Detailed description; observation; reflection; audit trail; support credibility; support data triangulation.
Researcher Journal	Written	Researcher	At least one entry per week	Anywhere	Support reflection, credibility; guide analysis and decision making; audit trail.

## **Language Sociogram**

I adopted the name from a socio metric procedure used in sociology to measure the social networks and relationship structures within a group (See Appendix 2 for a sample sociogram). Besides serving the purpose of introducing my study to the students, my adaptation was devised as a classroom activity with the purpose of creating a graphic representation of the physical spaces that language learners occupy, the type of social relationships they engage in, as well as the language used in such spaces and relationships. Some places that participants included in their graphic were the home, the children's school, the grocery store, the church, and so on. The graphic also indicates what language is primarily used in each of the spaces that they have included in their sociogram (English, Spanish or both) and in what ways they interacted with such languages (for instance, it is possible to read in and listen to English at a grocery store without the need to speak it). They also represented graphically the type of communication and relationships they engaged in as transborder individuals since transborder experiences include communication and relationships with family and other people in their countries of origin or in other US states where social networks have been established. In this sense, the social spaces that participants inhabit do not only refer to the physical or geographical spaces they occupy presently, but included other spatial and temporal locations that are constructed and maintained through social and familiar relationships and networks across territories and across time.

Among other things, this exercise revealed the level of bilingualism of the participants, the speech communities they participate in and their actual or potential access

to meaningful interactions in English. Since this activity took place at the beginning of the data collection phase, Alejandrina and Andrea had the opportunity to share individual sociograms in class as a group and participated in the reflection and discussion about language use and opportunities to use English in students' daily lives. In the case of Miriam, she only shared her sociogram and reflections with me. Even though the intention was originally to use this activity twice to establish a baseline of comparison across time, we ended up doing it only once. The reason is that the data I intended to collect with the second sociogram emerged in other activities such as *pláticas individuales* and *pláticas grupales*, as well as in the language practice logs.

### **Pláticas Personales (Personal Interviews)**

(See Appendix 3: *Interview Protocol*). I refer to the series of individual interviews as *pláticas personales*. As the Spanish word *plática* suggests, these are unstructured, informal and friendly conversations. This structure aligns with *testimonio* research in that the hierarchical role typically found in more traditional relationships between interviewee and interviewer (mirroring the hierarchical relationships between researcher and participant) are diluted to establish a relationship of mutual respect and trust in the inquiry process where the participant is committed to the process of reflection and interpretation of her own experiences and the researcher is committed to facilitating such reflections as *testimonios* are prompted and facilitated. At the initial stages of study design three interviews were devised to be conducted individually with each participant at different stages in the research, outside of the classroom. The first *plática* had the purpose of gathering or confirming demographic and basic personal information. The second aimed at gaining more knowledge on participants' personal stories and reasons for migrating.

The third *plática* focused on the processes of adaptation to life in the US and experiences of language learning in their daily contexts. I anticipated that topics may overlap in the planned interviews and I was prepared to be flexible and attentive to the narrators' flow of stories. After I completed the first three planned interviews with the participants, following the previously designed interview protocols (not as rigid scripts but as general guidelines), more opportunities emerged for one on one conversation. In the case of Alejandrina and Andrea, by the time we started the ESL class in my house they were the only two attending regularly. This generated spontaneous instances of conversations that I was able to record and use as *pláticas personales*. For instance, most often Alejandrina would arrive punctually and would show up more consistently than Andrea, which enabled private conversations between us. For this reason, I collected more *pláticas individuales* with Alejandrina than with Andrea. These more naturally occurring *pláticas* yielded rich narratives that, together with the River of Life became the backbone of the *testimonios* presented in Chapters four, five and six.

### **Pláticas Grupales (Focus Groups).**

The variety of data collection methods employed in the study provided rich data from which I selected topics or issues that required further conversation. For this purpose, relevant topics that emerged in other group activities informed more intentional conversations that took the form of focus groups. The themes or topics were related to language learning and socialization processes and I used them as a frame for informal but purposeful conversations to further explore these emerging or recurrent points. I had initially intended to conduct the *pláticas grupales* outside of the classroom. However, this turned out to be a challenge due to participants' busy and conflicting schedules. For this

reason only two “formal” *pláticas grupales* were conducted and they took place during classroom time. By formal I mean strategically planned and guided by me. The first one was conducted in the timeframe of the spring ESL class with other class participants (who initially were part of the study but drop off after the ESL class ended in may). Since this first *plática grupal* took place in the ESL classroom, all class participants (five in total) engaged in the activity, since all of them were initially participating in the study as well. The portions of the three participants that drop out of the study were not transcribed. This *plática grupal* had the purpose of furthering participants’ social spaces and the language used in them, as transpired in the earlier activity of language sociogram. The second *plática grupal* took place in my house when we were meeting there to continue the ESL class. By this time, only Alejandrina and Andrea were participating. Given that the ESL classes at my house over the summer felt more like friendly gatherings than actual classes, the space became very conducive to naturally occurring conversations. Whenever Alejandrina and Andrea engaged in these type of conversations, as we went about the ESL class, I recorded them, as I did with the *pláticas personales*. From all the recorded group conversations, four resulted as important data. Besides the two already mentioned, there were two more significant ones between Alejandrina and Andrea, where they shared *testimonios* about work experiences, motherhood and relationships with men. Both the individual and group conversations were taped and sections were strategically chosen for transcription to be used in the final write up of the *testimonios*. In using both tools, personal and group conversations, I intended to follow the exploratory technique that suggests to begin with “normative/cultural questions” and then proceed with “individual/ personal questions” and finalize with “episodic questions” (Bernard and Ryan

(2010, p. 45). In the process of trying these techniques, what actually happened, particularly in group conversations was that I allowed the participants to lead the course of the conversation. Even though this presented a challenge in the production of data (there was plenty of material to be sorted) it allowed for important themes to emerge that I might have not identified if it weren't for the flow of naturally occurring conversations. For example, Andrea only spoke about oppressive experiences at work after listening to Alejandrina share her stories in such topic. Miriam on the other hand, did not have the opportunity to participate in group conversations.

### **Language Practice Log**

(See Appendix 4: *Language practice log*). Participants kept a record of at least one opportunity per week where they used English outside the classroom. This activity involved filling out a format that I provided and had two main purposes: a) a pedagogical purpose to help participants notice and expand the opportunities they have to practice English in natural settings; and b) the research purpose to get an understanding of whether these opportunities existed in research participants daily lives and to generate opportunities to explore these experiences. The format provided is a chart that asks students to record where English is used including the context of the event, the purpose, the people involved, the mode of language used (listening, speaking, reading or writing), and the role the study participant took in the event. We reviewed these forms weekly and in the case of Andrea and Alejandrina, they were able to learn from each other and discuss the strategies they employ and the experiences they have had.

The significance of this practice for research purposes is that it illuminated the processes of second language socialization by allowing me to understand whether people



have opportunities to practice English in more natural settings, and to gather data regarding the nature of these exchanges. This activity also allowed participants to intentionally and strategically think of ways to increase these opportunities. In the ten years that I have lived in this region of the country, and the seven years that I have worked with adult Spanish speaking immigrants, I have observed that this group of people can organize their lives without using or needing much English given that Spanish is widely spoken in the research context, and a variety of services are offered in this language (health, education, shopping, etc.). At the same time, I have also observed (and experienced myself) that adult language learners face micro-aggressions in social encounters that curtail their confidence to use English in social encounters outside of the classroom. The language practice log was very helpful in exploring these opportunities (or the lack of them) and was also helpful in bringing up stories revealing how people experienced such practices.

#### **The River Of Life<sup>4</sup>.**

I first came across this activity through a work colleague who used it in his adult HSE (High School Equivalency, formerly GED) preparation and ESL (English as a second language) classes to reflect on and share people's migration experiences. The river is used as a metaphor to represent the "ups and downs" of life with features of a river. For example, a waterfall or rapids could be used to represent difficult events in the process of migration and features such as calm waters can represent episodes of good times. The river of life activity focused on drawing, rather than producing text, and oral interpretation

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<sup>4</sup> The following link provides some more information on this activity  
<http://www.kstoolkit.org/River+of+Life>

of the picture each student produced. This activity was actually very helpful in producing *testimonios* and ended up being one of the major sources of data for this research. This process involved the learners creating their images (in their own time), which they presented to each other in class. Alejandrina and Miriam presented to each other, and later Miriam presented her illustration to me. I recorded the participants' oral interpretation of their River of Life pictures and later transcribed for the analysis.

### **Field Notes, Accounts And Observations.**

My position as an ESL teacher in the research process, allowed me to engage as a participant observer in a variety of activities and conversations where participants took part, which included but were not limited to the English class. As the research progressed the classroom became less important as a context per se and turned out to be a good entry point into the participant selection and building a relationship. As a participant observer, I wrote field notes before, during and after every class or data collection event. In making this methodological decision, I found support in Maxwell (2005) who asserts: "In planning your research methods, you should always include whatever informal data-gathering strategies are feasible, including 'hanging out', casual conversations, and incidental observations" (p. 79). The observations focused on student's spontaneous accounts of experiences that further illustrated the socialization processes that take place in every social encounter people have with English speakers. My experience over the past 5 years teaching at this community-based organization is that students use the classroom not only as a space for language learning but also as a place to socialize, build community and disrupt the social and linguistic isolation that marginalized immigrants experience. This leads to the exchange of common experiences that help people collectively make

sense of their lives, which on the one hand, shape their evolving identities, and on the other, shape their understandings of social rules. Usually, in the class, as well as in the group meetings we had outside of the classroom, interesting conversations emerged that provided rich data.

### **Researcher's Journal.**

In addition to the observations, which were more descriptive, I kept a journal where I engaged in constant reflection about several aspects of the research process. A researcher's journal is a place to situate oneself along the research process and generate self-awareness of assumptions, positions and tensions (Glesne, 2011). The following questions were helpful for me in self-observation "1) what surprised you? (helps track assumptions); 2) what intrigues you? (helps track personal interests and positions); 3) what disturbs you? (helps track tensions and possibly stereotypes and prejudices" (Chiseri-Strater, 2002 in Glesne, 2010, p. 77). Glesne (2010) further states that a journal or research diary is a place to reflect on the relationship between research participants and researcher, to think about research as a co-creation process between researcher and participants and to identify and reflect upon power dynamics along the way.

### **Analysis**

"*Testimonio* as a methodology provides modes of analysis that are collaborative and attentive to myriad ways of knowing and learning in our communities" Delgado Bernal et al, 2012, p 364. In adherence to this statement, the process of analysis included collaboration with several actors in the research, in several ways and at different stages. With regards to the participants' contribution in data analysis and interpretation, I agree with Menard- Warwick (2009) reflection concerning the fact that participants choose the "selves" that they want to

present in establishing the relationship with me as a researcher. Thus, the initial process and major agents of analysis were the research participants themselves as they reflected and interpreted the stories and the selves that they chose to share. My discussion of such interpretation of experiences, become a second tier of interpretation further removed from ‘real experience’. This is based on the assumption that sharing stories involves elements of reflection and interpretation of lived experiences by both the *testimonialista* and the listener/reader (Ashamwi et. al, 2018). This collaborative endeavor was also informed by the discussions I had with my research advisor and some graduate student peers since sharing progress of the research naturally involved reflection and interpretation at the same time that I benefited from their comments and insights. In the process of translating the *testimonios* to English, another unanticipated layer of analysis emerged as the individual who assisted with the translation posed questions and offered suggestions that allowed for a nuanced and culturally relevant interpretation of language. (I explain this process in more detail later).

Data collection and analysis are not considered separate phases in the research process but rather interrelated ones. Maxwell (2005) states that “the experienced qualitative researcher begins data analysis immediately after finishing the first interview or observation, and continues to analyze data as long as he or she is working on the research, stopping briefly to write reports and papers” (p. 95). Therefore, I begun the analysis as I collected data and engaged in repeated and intensive listening to audiotapes and thorough reading of written data. This first layer of analysis resulted in the pre-selection of pieces of recorded data that were deemed significant and needed to be transcribed, which produced the first round of open coding. Open coding involves the identification of recurring themes, salient aspects and apparent contradictions in the data (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995).

“The act of discovering themes is what grounded theorists call open coding” (Bernard and Ryan, 2015, p.56). Maxwell refers to coding as “the main categorizing strategy in qualitative research”. According to this author, the purpose of coding is to “fracture ... the data and rearrange them into categories that facilitate comparison between things in the same category and that aid in the development of theoretical concepts” (p. 96).

Bernard and Ryan (2010) define themes as the “limited number of dynamic affirmations ... which control behavior or stimulate activity” (p.54). I followed the five tasks involved in text analysis according to Bernard and Ryan (2010): (1) discovering themes and subthemes; (2) describing the core and peripheral elements of themes; (3) building hierarchies of themes or codebooks; (4) applying themes to actual segments of text; (5) linking themes into theoretical models (p. 54). In theme discovery, I followed both inductive (emerging from data) and a priori (deriving from the features of the phenomena under study) theme processes (Bernard & Ryan, 2010). Given that I share the language, the culture and nationality of my research participants, this insider knowledge will assist me in utilizing a priori themes. I find support in Chicana/ Latina feminist research epistemology that privileges the perspectives of Chicana/Latina researchers’ intuitions and cultural sensitivity as unique research tools (Delgado Bernal, Elenes, Godinez, & Villenas, 2006).

The data analyzed consisted on extensive and rich narratives. Therefore, I engaged in a variety of data analysis techniques that Bernard and Ryan (2015) suggest as appropriate to use with rich narratives (See Attachment 7: Data Analysis Techniques). An early technique of theme discovery that I employed was identifying repetitions and metaphors. Repetitions are important because re-occurrence of ideas or concepts in text

can signal important themes. For example, Miriam's events of linguistic discrimination were recurrent in several instances and modes of data collection, suggesting the impact these events have had in her lived experiences. The significance of identifying metaphors is that "natural human speech is full of metaphors" (Bernard and Ryan, 2015, p. 58), and people represent experiences and cultural beliefs with them. After this initial identification, I conducted cutting and sorting, a technique that involves the manipulation of texts, where identified quotes or expressions (exemplars) are arranged into categories (Bernard and Ryan, 2010). For example, the testimonios presented in chapters four, five and six, reflect this technique, as exemplars were utilized as subheadings in the thematic organization of the narratives. Later in the analysis, I looked for indigenous typologies and linguistic connectors. Indigenous typologies refer to the use of local words or expressions that express meanings shared by speech communities. The fact that I share the participants' language and culture, even specific to certain regions of Mexico, allowed me to better identify these singular expressions. Most of the translator's questions were in fact with regards to examples of indigenous typologies. For instance, Andrea's expression "*tú eres la cathedral ellas son las capillitas*" (you are the Cathedral, they are the little chapels), refers to patriarchal discourses and practices justifying male infidelity, by awarding the wife the privilege position of the cathedral while the mistresses are the little chapels. I was able to understand this because given my cultural and linguistic insider knowledge. Some of these local expressions were difficult to express in English and required a footnote to explain the culture and local specific meaning intended by the participant. Linguistic connectors involve a careful search for "words and phrases that indicate attributes and various kinds of causal or conditional relations" (Bernard and

Ryan, 2010, p. 60). For example, words like “because” or its variations might indicate causal relations, whereas words like “if” or “then” could reveal conditional relations. The questioning technique served several purposes such as becoming familiar with the data, probing, and outlining initial descriptions and explanations (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Some of these techniques required a high understanding of language and culture of the research participants, and once again, I capitalized on that. I applied the analytical tools described above so as to bring about the interactivity among the components of research that Maxwell (2005) suggests. Questioning and developing provisional answers led to the comparison of key pieces of data, which in turn will create the need for further data collection activities in a spiral fashion.

Not every piece in the lengthy stories was included in the final analysis in this dissertation, yet, I believe every paragraph provides the reader with a more comprehensive depiction of the pieces that did get to be examined and permitted the creation of a holistic and dignified portrait of the women sharing their stories. In order to avoid the risk of further reproducing language marginalization (Delgado Bernal et al, 2012) the *testimonios* are presented in their original language, Spanish, alongside the English translation. The narratives, the words, the expressions, the tone and the final decision of what sections to include or leave out, belong to Alejandrina, Miriam and Andrea; Yet, I intervened in the thematic organization and minimal edition of the versions presented in chapters four, five and six (for instance, the elimination of repetitions or redundancy typical of oral speech). After the three *testimonios* were written and approved by Alejandrina, Miriam and Andrea respectively, they were translated into English. The exercise of translation was carefully conducted, paying attention to conceptual interpretation, rather than literal translation,

attending to cultural nuances and local meanings (Delgado Bernal et. al, 2012). As Flores Carmona (2014) adeptly advises, the difficulties of translation should not be underestimated given that “we are not simply translating language but cultural specificities” (p. 119). I was fortunate to have the assistance of a dear friend who not only is a professional interpreter in English and Spanish, but who is also a ‘balanced’ bilingual and multicultural individual with experiential knowledge of both the Mexican and US culture. Our process was that she translated into English the full *testimonios* that I had organized and written in its original language, Spanish. In this process, she posed questions or suggestions regarding the actual meaning and suggested intention of the participants, which in turn required me to go back to the actual raw data (either listening to the audiotape or its Spanish transcription, or a piece of participants’ written text). A couple of times, I consulted directly with the participants, to make sure we were interpreting their stories accurately and respectfully. This process turned out to be an unexpected, but relevant tool in the analysis, as it forced me to go deeper into the interpretation of data.

The outcome of having only female participants in this research study was not intentional yet highly predictable given that it reflects the gender composition of the context chosen for participant selection. Nonetheless, it wasn’t until I began a deeper analysis that I came to understand gender surfacing as an important axis around which all other issues surrounding women’s experiences of transmigration, language learning and socialization intersect. It became also necessary to include a feminist transborder approach, particularly because *testimonio* research provides a unique opportunity to undertake a comprehensive



analysis of lived experiences, which revealed the unfolding of hybrid transborder identities (Elenes, 2006). (This will be discussed in more depth in Chapter seven).

I subscribe to the claims of the possibilities for social change and validation of marginal epistemologies that reside in the creation and sharing of transformative *testimonios*. In conducting inquiry framed as *testimonio*, I intended to address the imperative of research that questions reality and stimulates social transformation. I believe that this approach has the potential to bring forward discussions about different types of social inequity experienced by immigrants of color, and allows for the foregrounding of silenced voices as well as individual and collective experiences of multiple forms of oppression (Delgado Bernal, 2012). Schaafsma and Vinz (2011), present narrative researchers with a challenging query that is worth pondering in any approach that intends to re-center marginal voices: “Can alternative narratives counteract the effects of hegemony, resist power dynamics, cultivate civic democracy, or open conversations about important social issues?” (p. 26). It is precisely my belief in the power of stories, the personal and collective nature of *testimonios* to resist multiple forms of oppression and challenge hegemonic epistemologies the compelling and guiding force underlying my choice of approach and methodology.

A word of caution is important here since all along the interconnected processes of data collection and data analysis, I had to be aware of and attentive to the fact that memories are always interwoven with overlapping layers of imagination. Furthermore, memories are manipulated by an unconscious selectivity with regards to what and how to remember and what to leave buried inside the impenetrable corners of our minds. Memories are also part of our subjectivity as they are contingent to our very personal

choice of the tones and shades we use to depict and portray the people, the events and the places rescued in the effort of remembering. In this process, I integrated Menard-Warwick (2009) disclosure:

it is important to emphasize that neither my written accounts of observed events nor participants' audiotaped comments and narratives can be considered direct representations of 'real experience'. Rather, they are *interpretations* of experience, shaped by my positionality in the setting as well as the positionality of my participants." (p.23)

In a similar fashion, I am aware that Alejandrina, Miriam and Andrea's *testimonios* are a reflection of the 'selves' that they chose to present to me as well as the product of their own interpretation of experiences. In this process, my analyses of the *testimonios* become a second tier of interpretation further removed from 'real experience'.

As mentioned before, not every aspect of Alejandrina, Miriam and Andrea's stories, regardless of how rich and interesting they are, can be analyzed in detail in this dissertation. Thus the segments selected to illustrate the discussion of findings in chapter seven are not meant to be all encompassing of their experiences but rather instances that help in the pursuit of getting a closer appreciation into people's stories, their backgrounds, their past and present, life's adversities and fulfillments in their own words. This overall consideration of a person's life trajectory is helpful for an in-depth understanding of the ways they make sense of their experiences of L2 learning and L2 socialization in the context of migration. I find support in research that has highlighted the importance of foregrounding the socio political and historical contexts that non English-speaking immigrants navigate. For instance, in her study with L2 learner immigrant women in

Canada, Norton (2013) observed: “the multiple meanings of immigrant must be understood with reference to the reasons why people immigrate to Canada, the experiences they have had before coming to Canada and the conditions under which they live in Canada” (p. 80). Menard-Warwick (2009) in her research of Latino adult immigrant language learners in California undertakes a similar comprehensive analysis by also delving into the socio political contexts of immigrants’ places of origin and its relation with U.S. immigration. Following in the steps of these two influential pieces of research with adult immigrant language learners, I have set the context of identity formation and migration trajectories of my research participants as a backdrop to their L2 learning and L2 socialization experiences. However, a basic tenet of *testimonio* is the importance of centering marginalized epistemologies by creating spaces of self-expression of seldom heard voices and validating lived experiences as worthy knowledge constructions. Therefore, contextualization begins at the bottom, emerging from the recounting of personal experiences to then relate these to their corresponding ethnic, cultural, social, political, historical, economic and geographical collective referent. Both Norton (2013) and Menard- Warwick (2009) situated their research participants within the larger sociopolitical contexts, taking a top down approach. That is, they first analyzed the larger context to later juxtapose the individualities of immigrant language learners against the backdrop of such larger frameworks. The approach followed by Norton and Warwick is pertinent to their methodologies, i.e. case study and ethnography correspondingly. *Testimonio* as methodology and approach, turns the process around and starts by learning the ways in which individuals locate themselves in these complex borderlands, and the ways in which they make sense of the changing environments around them, while they

transform their world views in the face of the multiple and intersecting issues that frame their transborder subjectivities. *Testimonio* allows us to localize personal circumstances within structural determinants and understand them in relation to the resulting subject positions and subjectivities available for immigrant language learners. At the same time, through the power of self-representation, *testimonio* allows us to identify the spaces that people create for exercising agency and the dynamic relationship they establish with their environment so that, while they are impacted by the social determinants around them, they also have an active role in impacting the social worlds that they co-construct. Alejandrina, Miriam and Andrea's *testimonios* help us to recognize and appreciate the ways in which transborder women navigate language learning and language socialization processes. They also spark reflection and thought around the basic assumptions of L2 learning and L2 socialization research.

### **Establishing Trustworthiness**

In qualitative research, trustworthiness involves issues of: a) credibility- the certainty of the findings; 2) transferability- to what extent the findings apply to other contexts; 3) dependability- the consistency and repeatability of the findings; and, 4) confirmability-the extent to which researcher bias did not influence findings and remained neutral (Creswell, 2007; Glesne, 2011; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Glesne (2011) lists the techniques to ensure trustworthiness in all of these areas, recommending that it is not necessary to meet all of them to establish trustworthiness. The techniques that I followed to establish trustworthiness include: member checking, peer debriefing, researcher reflexivity, and methodological triangulation. Member checking is embedded in the research design. I shared portions of my writing of narratives with research participants along the process, with the purpose of

establishing credibility in my findings. Once the *testimonios* were fully written (the thematic organization of participants' stories) I shared a draft with them to corroborate accuracy of information, but also to make the final decisions of what parts of their stories they wanted to include in this final text. The relevance of this practice resided in that *testimonio* is not only a research approach and methodology, but also a product, (Delgado Bernal et al., 2012) as are the three *testimonios* shared in chapters five, four and six. As such, this research method entails the sharing of the data, almost in raw fashion, with the readers. Trustworthiness then is established by allowing the research participants as *testimonialistas* to make the final decisions regarding what aspects of their stories should be shared. Peer review and debriefing refers to external reflection in the research process. I shared my ongoing work with my research advisor so as to have her input and feedback all along the processes of data collection and data analysis. My research advisor has established the practice of having regular meetings with doctoral advisees to socialize and share our work. I tapped into this resource to increase the opportunities of external feedback, particularly with peer graduate students who share my research interests. Researcher reflexivity is also an important strategy that closely interrelates with the method of keeping a researcher journal that I referred to above (see the section "Researcher's journal"). Journal writing allowed me to reflect all along the research process in order to stimulate self-awareness, question issues of bias, assumptions, and positionality at several stages of the process (Glesne, 2011). Finally, methodological triangulation assisted in establishing trustworthiness as it addresses issues of credibility and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This also, is a technique that is embedded in my research design, as detailed before (see section "Methods of Data Collection" above) by utilizing a variety of interrelated methods (see also Appendix 1:

Interrelation of Data Collection Methods)

### **Introduction to the *Testimonios***

“...if every woman could tell her life story and be heard, we could have changed the world.”

*Ruth Behar, 2003, pg. xix. Translated Woman”*

Dear reader:

Before you jump right into reading these *testimonios*, I want to invite you to undress from your academic gown and regalia and put on your most comfortable dress, that one that makes you feel very “you”. I want to ask you to take off your work shoes and put on your most comfortable *chanclas* or *huaraches* or, if you prefer, stay on your bare feet. I also want to lure you into finding the most cozy and cherished space around you; grab a cup of tea, a glass of wine, a home made horchata or whatever drink of your preference. Then, engage in this reading as if you were to part take a *plática entre comadres*. As if you were to join Alejandrina, Miriam, Andrea and I around a kitchen table, or around a *fogata* in an unassuming Mexican home patio. Join us as if we were to share stories among equals, not as an evaluating listener/reader and a subordinated teller/writer. While you read their stories, I hope you enjoy meeting these amazing women as much as I did. As Delgado Bernal, Burciaga & Flores Carmona (2012) state: “*testimonio* is pragmatic in that it engages the reader to understand and establish a sense of solidarity as a first step toward social change” (p. 364). Then, with the solidarity engendered in the act of intimate reading let us return to our academic endeavors and take the gift of these *testimonios* to illuminate our understandings of a number of issues. Delgado Bernal et al (2012) come to my assistance to remind you that “as a listener, another’s *testimonio* is much like a gift—the listener unwraps the *testimonio* to reveal the heart of the matter” (pg. 368). Our appreciation of women as they cross

geographical, emotional and epistemological borders; their meaning making of second language learning; the strategies they employ to create opportunities of social participation; the construction of their ongoing and fluid identities; their defiance of multiple oppressions; and most importantly the way they educate us/ourselves about these complex aspects of human existence.

As I convey Alejandrina, Miriam and Andrea's stories it is my hope for you, the reader, to get to know these amazing women intimately, to enjoy their laughter and empathize with their tears. To embrace the humanity embedded in every sentence that they confide with us. To receive the fragments of life incarnated in each paragraph. To sense the multidimensional features of human experience captured in the mono-dimensional spectrum of paper and ink. To flow, together with the narrators, into the parallel realms of memory and story telling where pieces sometimes merge as they penetrate through the thin edges that separate the real and the imagined, the lived and the dreamt, the grasped and the yearned. And, in doing so, establish links of solidarity with those living similarly marginalized lives as "the main feature of the testimonial text is the construction of a discourse of solidarity" (Blackmer Reyes & Curry Rodríguez, 2012, p. 526). May this discourse of solidarity allow us to appreciate with an open-heart the three lives candidly put into words and generously offered as gifts. Only after this, the academic, social, and political pursuits of this dissertation will ensue.

### **Organization of The Testimonios**

The three chapters that follow (four, five and six) correspond to Alejandrina, Miriam and Andrea's *testimonios* respectively. The three stories are organized in a similar fashion. There are five sections in each *testimonio*, where the first three are issues that the three women have

in common, and the last two are unique in each woman. The introduction gives us background information of the participants and how they make sense of who they are. The second section of the *testimonios* comprises the context of migration, the incentives, the underlying structural determinants as well as the local and personal conditions of migration in each of the women. Language learning and socialization stories come in the third section, where we learn about the opportunities for group membership, access to meaningful linguistic interactions and chances to learn the language and culture of power. Subsequent sections cover stories that are unique in each woman's life trajectory. Section four in Alejandrina's *testimonio* is about how her life has elapsed around her single mother identity and her crafting and enacting of new ways of being a mother in a transnational setting. Section five, is about her metaphorical version of the river of life, activity which deserved to be treated as a section per se in her *testimonio* for the creative and unique way in which Alejandrina undertook it. Miriam's story is one of robust resilience, and section four in her *testimonio* tells us of the ways in which she has dealt with multiple forms of oppression and discrimination. Section five in Miriam's story comprises her negotiation of membership in different groups and how she generated her contrasting yet complimentary subjectivities as a community organizer and social rights activist alongside the more traditional roles of mother and housewife. Section 4 in Andrea's *testimonio* reveals how she learns to navigate social systems as a recently arrived immigrant. Section 5 is devoted to her soliloquies around profound issues of human nature such as religion, patriarchy, financial independence, motherhood and emotional detachment, where we can appreciate her ideological transformations. As I make decisions on the organization and arrangement of the narratives, I am well aware that my intervention is not neutral but loaded with my own personal



assumptions as well as my predispositions, interests and interrogations in my role of researcher. As Menard-Warwick (2009) reminds us: “the researcher herself is necessarily a focal participant in her own research” (p. 15).

The table below provides an overview of the participants. Their lives and their stories are much more interesting and complex, but this helps as a reference to the complete *testimonios*.

Table 3. Participants’ Overview

	<b>Alejandrina (age 56)</b>	<b>Miriam (age 50)</b>	<b>Andrea (age 49)</b>
Place, date of birth	Durango- 1957	Chihuahua- 1967	Sinaloa- 1968
Marital status	Single mother	Married	Separated
Educational Background	Secondary school, 2 yrs of art school	Internal combustion Technician (mines)	2 years High School
Family composition	Transnational motherhood: 1 Mexican born daughter, 1 U.S born daughter, 1 U.S born granddaughter	Mixed status family: 2 Mexican-born children, 2 US born children	Transnational family. 2 Mexican born adult children
Household composition	Lives w/ younger US- born daughter. Older Mexican born daughter and US-born granddaughter have always lived in Mexico	Lives with husband and 3 younger children. Older son lives on his own	Lives with young adult daughter. Older son is married, lives in Mexico.
Migration circumstances	Migrated alone- network of brothers and relatives in the U.S.- father was a bracero Third migration with younger US born daughter	Migrated with two children, pregnant. Husband migrated 1 year before	Migrated alone. Daughter joined her 1 year later on the second migration
Migration places, time	Multiple migrations- California, Chicago, Back to Mexico Socorro NM Albuquerque NM 1970s, 80s, 90s	Chihuahua-ABQ 2004	Sinaloa-ABQ 2015 Back to Sinaloa Sinaloa-ABQ 2016
Migration Incentives	Economy-employment	Economy – employment- violence- reunite with husband	Marriage breakup
Occupations in the US	House cleaning, yard sale, ranch, chicken farm, hotel housekeeping, HHA	Office cleaning, home maker, school volunteer, community organizer	House cleaning, fast food restaurant

<sup>5</sup> Age as of time of data collection in 2017.

## Chapter Four

### Alejandrina's Testimonio

*"A mí me encantan, yo estoy enamorada de las mariposas monarcas porque ellas son libres, pueden caminar desde al norte que es Canadá y luego se regresan hasta el sur y nadie las detiene, son libres. Y yo así quisiera ser para ir de allá para acá"- Ana María Alejandrina*

#### **Introducción**

#### **Identidad: Ahora mi identidad es México-americanana**

Mi nombre es Ana María Alejandrina, me puede decir Alejandrina, más corto. Nací en Durango, Durango en 1957. Yo soy una mamá soltera que siempre he estado soltera y nunca me he casado. Es un poco difícil para uno navegar la vida, y con las niñas, porque tengo dos, la más chica tiene 24 años y la más grande tiene 30. Ella tuvo una niña, pero el novio se le murió y ahorita está con la niña nomás. Como allá en Durango, con lo que ganaba no podía yo sostenerme, me vine a buscar un trabajo diferente a Los Estados Unidos. Yo fui y vine tres veces, pero dos veces ya con los papeles bien. Fueron como lapsos de 5 años y ya esta vez que me vine a Nuevo México en el 2003 han sido 14 años. Contando desde que me dieron la primera

*"I adore them, I'm in love with monarch butterflies because they're free, they can fly from Canada in the north and come back to the south and no one stops them, they're free. I wish I were like them so I could come and go like that"- Ana María Alejandrina*

#### **Introduction**

#### **Identity: Now my identity is Mexican American**

My name is Ana María Alejandrina, but you can call me Alejandrina, it's shorter. I was born in Durango, Durango in 1957. I'm a single mother who has always been single and never married. It's kind of hard to navigate life, and with my girls, because I have two, the youngest is 24 years old and the oldest is 30. She had a baby girl but her boyfriend died, and now she's alone with her daughter. Since I wasn't able to support myself with what I earned over in Durango, I came to the United States to find different work. I left and came back three times, but twice with my papers in order. There were lapses of like 5 years and this last time I came to New Mexico in 2003, so it's been 14 years. Counting from when I got my first visa – without counting the first time that I came

<p>visa –sin contar la primera vez que vine más joven sin permiso- ya son como 24 años<sup>6</sup> que he vivido en Estados Unidos y ahora mi identidad es México-Americana.</p> <p>En mi casa éramos 9 hijos, tengo 4 hermanos y 4 hermanas. Yo soy la tercera. Mi papá mucho tiempo no estaba con nosotros, era bracero. Él decía que les pagaban creo 9 centavos, y dice que nomás regresó a México con 60 dólares y había trabajado como un burro. Dijo: “yo no quiero que anden ustedes allá.” Y que yo me vengo pa’ cá, y luego me regreso y luego otra vez, veinte años ¡Fíjese! Pero le digo a mi papá: “de todas maneras tenemos que trabajar y ahora hay fábricas.” Y yo me fui a Chicago y cuando regresaba, mi papá siempre me decía: “¿Para qué te vas allá a Estados Unidos? Hay mucha discriminación.” Cada vez que voy a México siempre me dice lo mismo, que me quede allá porque aquí hay mucha discriminación. Y todavía hay ¿veda’? Después mi papá tuvo una ladrillería y hacía ladrillos, ahora solo lo renta, porque ya está muy viejito y ya no puede trabajar. Mi mamá, pues estaba con mi papá pero pues haga de cuenta como que no estaba mi papá porque nomás mi mamá estaba con lo que le daban en la familia. Mi</p>	<p>without papers when I was younger – it’s already been like 24 years<sup>1</sup> that I’ve lived in the United States and now my identity is Mexican American.</p> <p>There were 9 children in my home, I have 4 brothers and 4 sisters. I’m number three. My dad didn’t spend much time with us, he was a bracero. He said they paid him, I think it was 9 cents, and that he came back to Mexico with just 60 dollars and he’d worked like a dog. He said, “I don’t want you guys to go over there.” And then I came over here, and I went back, and I came again, twenty years, imagine! But I told my dad, “no matter what we have to work and now there are factories.” And I went to Chicago and when I came back, my dad always told me, “Why do you go over to the United States? There’s so much discrimination.” Every time I go to Mexico, he always tells me the same thing that I should stay there because there is too much discrimination here. And there still is, right? Later my dad had a brickmaking business and sold bricks, now he just rents it out, because he’s really old now and can’t work anymore. My mom, well she was with my dad but it’s almost like my dad wasn’t there because my mom made do with what</p>
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<sup>6</sup> Los datos de esta investigación fueron colectados en el 2017/ *The data for this research was collected in 2017*

abuelito tenía tierra y de lo que sembraban, de ahí le daban a mi mamá. También tenía tías que trabajaban la tierra. Una de ellas, cuando murió, me dejó unas tierras, pero de ella sólo tengo el nombre y los bonitos recuerdos, porque mis primos, me pelearon esas tierras. Pero a mí eso ya no me importa, yo no me voy a pelear por un pedazo de tierra. Yo lo que tengo, que es poquito, me lo he ganado sola, trabajando muy duro, y así estoy mejor. Desde los 14 o más chiquilla creo, ya andaba yo limpiando aquí y allá. Nos ponían a raspar el maíz en las mazorcas primero. Y luego, una tía nos ponía a hacer latas de chiles. Pero no nos daba nada, nomás nos daba de comer, no nos daba dinero, por eso 'pos no era trabajo. Mi primer trabajo, que era más como un trabajo porque ya me pagaron ahí, fue en un restaurant en la central camionera, tenía como 16 años.

Allá en Durango, cuando yo salí de la secundaria, me metí a la escuela de la universidad para estudiar pintura, escultura y artesanía. Aprendí dibujo constructivo, dibujo natural y dibujo grabado. Y me gustó, yo quería aprender todo, el grabado, el modelado ese que lo hace con barro y figuras ¿'veda? Un día nos dijo el maestro: "Vamos a tener una exposición para las fiestas de la ciudad y van a escoger a uno de ustedes para que presenten sus obras y sus dibujos".

she got from her family. My granddad had land and they grew crops and they gave some to my mom. I also had aunts who worked the land. One of them, when she died, left me some land, but all I have left from her is my name and lovely memories, because my cousins fought to get the land from me. But I don't care about that, I'm not going to fight over a piece of land. I don't have much, but I've earned it on my own, working really hard, and I'm better off that way. Since I was 14, or younger I think, I was already cleaning here and there. First, they had us scraping the corn off cobs. Later, an aunt had us help can chiles. She didn't give us anything except food to eat, she didn't pay us money, so that wasn't really work. My first job, which was more like a job because they paid me, was in a restaurant at the bus station, I was about 16 years old.

Over in Durango, when I got out of middle school, I enrolled in the school run by the university to study painting, sculpture and folk arts. I learned constructive drawing, natural drawing and engraving. I liked it, I wanted to learn everything, engraving, the modeling you do with clay and figures, right? One day the teacher told us, "We're going to have an exhibit for the city's festival and one of you will be chosen to present your work and your drawings." Then the teacher told

<p>Entonces me dice el maestro: “¿Sabes que escogimos cuatro de tus pinturas para la exposición del año?” No, pues ahí no hice caso ni nada, pero ya cuando volvimos al año que entra me dice el maestro: “todas tus pinturas se vendieron.” Quién sabe quién las tiene, pero las tienen allá en Durango. Eran cinco años para salir de maestra de arte. Pero yo nomás hice dos años. Vi que en mi casa no me iban a dar nada para que me pusiera a estudiar entonces tenía que trabajar. Y el maestro quería que yo siguiera pero le digo: “maestro es que ya no tengo dinero para comprar los colores” ... “Yo te doy, tu nomás ven y pinta” me dijo. Entonces fui y pinté otro año. Trabajaba en una tienda desde las 6 de la mañana hasta las 3 de la tarde y pues no tenía tiempo de ir a mi casa para comer o algo, ‘pos me iba directo a la escuela de pintura. Allí empezaba la clase a las 4, salía a las 8 de la noche y ahí voy corriendo a mi casa y otro día a las 6 de la mañana a trabajar. Pues como que se me cargó. Fue cuando mi prima me invitó a irnos a Guadalajara. Y ya le dije al maestro: “deje que vaya y si consigo buen trabajo y tengo dinero pues entro otro año para así terminar año con año la pintura.” “¡No, no dejes de pintar, no dejes de dibujar!” me decía el maestro. Y sí hice dos, tres cuadros, pero los tengo en papel así nada más, los quiero</p>	<p>me, “Do you know that we chose four of your paintings for the yearly exhibit?” So well, I didn’t pay that much attention to it, but when we came back the next year the teacher told me, “all your paintings sold.” I don’t know who has them, but somebody in Durango does. To become an art teacher you had to study five years. But I only stayed for two years. At home they weren’t going to give me anything to keep studying, so I had to work. My teacher wanted me to keep studying but I told him, “the thing is, I don’t have any more money to buy the paints.” He told me, “I’ll provide them, you just come and paint.” So I did, and I painted for another year. I worked at a store from 6 a.m. until 3 p.m. and I didn’t have time to go home to eat or anything, so I went straight to the painting school. Class started at 4, and I got out at 8 p.m., and then I would run home and the next day start work again at 6 a.m. And well, it got to be a real burden. Around then, my cousin invited me to go to Guadalajara with her. I told my teacher, “let me go and if I get a good job and have money, then I’ll come back for another year that way, one year at a time, I could finish painting...” “No, don’t stop painting, don’t stop drawing!” the teacher told me. I have completed two or three paintings, but just on paper, I’d like to frame them and I’d like to</p>
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enmarcar y quiero hacer más, pero no, tengo que trabajar para darle de comer a mis hijas, ‘pos ni modo ¿veda’?

### **Empleo, Migración Y Maternidad**

**Migración interna: como las personas que se vienen acá a Estados Unidos que no tienen nada**

Yo tenía como 16 años, en el ‘73, y estaba empezando a conseguir trabajos para ver si podía ganar más. Una prima mía me dijo: “Ámonos a Guadalajara, allá sí encontramos trabajo.” En Durango era más difícil porque si usted no tenía la escuela de comercio, no le daban en ninguna tienda trabajo. Yo terminé la secundaria en Durango, pero no tenía comercio. Entonces nos fuimos a Guadalajara, así como tontas puede decirse, no sabíamos con quién llegar, ni a dónde ir, no sabíamos ni qué. Haga de cuenta que nos fuimos como las personas que se vienen acá a Estados Unidos que no tienen nada. Le pregunté a mi prima: “¡Oye! ¿Y dónde vamos a conseguir trabajo? ¿Dónde vamos a dormir?” Allí en la central camionera nos quedamos hasta que amaneció, que ya se viera el sol y entonces me dijo mi prima: “Tú no te preocupes, vente, vamos a agarrar el periódico y ahí van a venir trabajos”. Luego dice mi prima: “¡Mira! Aquí dice ‘cuidar niña, quédese de noche’, ahí te vas tú.” Ella

do more, but no, I have to work to feed my daughters, right?

### **Work, Migration and Maternity**

**Internal Migration: like people who come here to the United States with nothing**

I was about 16 years old, in ‘73, and I was starting to get jobs to see if I could make a bit more money. A cousin said to me, “Let’s go to Guadalajara, we can find work there.” It was harder in Durango because if you hadn’t gone to secretarial school, they wouldn’t hire you to work in a store. I finished my middle school in Durango, but I hadn’t studied secretarial school. So we went to Guadalajara, I guess you might say we were dumb, we didn’t know where to land, where to go, we didn’t know anything. We were like people who come here to the United States with nothing. I asked my cousin, “Hey, so where are we going to get work? Where are we going to sleep?” We stayed at the bus station until dawn. Once we could see the sun, then my cousin told me, “Don’t you worry, come with me, we’ll get a newspaper and there will be jobs in it.” Then she says, “Look, here it says, ‘care for child, stay at night’, you go there.” She already had another one that said, “Care for elderly man, stay at night.” “We barely have the money

ya tenía otro que dice: “Cuidar anciano, quédese de noche”. “Apenas tenemos dinero para el taxi -- dice -- te dejo a ti y yo miro dónde estás, tomo la dirección y ya me voy a buscar el otro trabajo.” Entonces llegamos y los señores nos preguntan si traemos carta de recomendación. “Pos no, venimos de allá de Durango, y apenas llegamos y no conocemos a nadie”. Y luego dice: “¿Y cuál es tu maleta?” No, pues traía una bolsa de plástico con mi ropa, bien jovencilla, ¿veda’?, 16 años. Era un europeo, maestro de la universidad de allí de Guadalajara y ella maestra también, de Checoslovaquia la señora. Ellos muy blancos como tipo americano. Y luego me ven y me dicen: “me caes bien, te vamos a dejar.” Y ahí me quedé en un cuartito en el techo con baño y cama. Les gustó mucho como yo cuidaba a la niña, y dice: “es muy importante que le enseñes el español”. Ellos hablaban puro inglés en su casa y yo escuchaba, pero no, no entendía nada. Duré como seis meses con ellos. Ya estaba preocupada mi mamá y que no le escribía y que ni me acordaba. Entonces mi mamá fue a buscarme: “¿Por qué no nos habías dicho dónde estás?” Y luego ya miró la casa que era grande, bonita, y me dice: “¿Cómo estás? ¿te tratan bien?” Como trabajan para las Naciones Unidas, ellos dijeron que se van a estar un año más y

for the taxi,” she said, “I’ll drop you off and see where you are, write down the address, and I’ll go find the other job.” So we got there and the people asked us if we had letters of recommendation. “Well, no, we came here from Durango and we just got here and we don’t know anybody.” And they said, “so where’s your suitcase?” But all I had was a plastic bag with my clothes in it. I was very young, right? 16 years old. The man was European, he taught at the university in Guadalajara, and she was also a teacher, the lady was from Czechoslovakia. They were very white and had an American look to them. They looked at me and said, “we like you, we’re going to hire you.” So I stayed there in a little room on the roof that had a bathroom and a bed. They really liked how I cared for their daughter, and said, “It’s very important that you teach her Spanish.” They only spoke English at home and I would hear it, but I didn’t understand anything. I stayed with them for about six months. My mom was worried, and I didn’t write her and I didn’t even think about it. So my mom went to find me, “Why didn’t you tell us where you were?” And then she saw that it was a big, pretty house and she asked me, “How are you? Do they treat you well?” They worked for the United Nations and said they were going to be there for another year

entonces me dijeron: “¿te quieres ir con nosotros? Nos vamos a ir a China, a Paris.” Regresé yo a mi casa, a Durango, y empezaron a llegarme las postales. Y entonces mi mamá me dice: “¡ay, ya viste! ¿por qué no te fuiste con ellos?” Porque necesitaba pasaporte, visa y pues yo no tenía nada de eso. Pero fijese dónde está el impulso ¿verdad? Cuando yo regresé a Durango, entonces yo trabajé, junté dinero y saqué mi pasaporte. Y con ese pasaporte me vine a la frontera.

**Fronteras internacionales: *Trabajando y no te dan nada, vámonos a Chicago***

Cuando regresé de Guadalajara me dice mi hermana: “en Monterrey está mejor.” Pues me fui a Monterrey. Pero no es cierto, entonces me regreso a Durango. Y luego me dice mi hermano: “no, allá en California está bien suave”, que fue y que vino. En eso, una prima me dice: “yo me voy a California tal día si te quieres ir.” Pero yo nomás tenía mi pasaporte, entonces cuando yo llegué a Juárez pues, como dicen, una bien tonta no sabe qué onda, yo no sabía que tenía que tener visa, ni que tenía que pedir un permiso. Entonces yo nomás escuché: “tu di que vas a las tiendas.” Entonces pasé y le dije al oficial: “¿me das permiso de ir a la tienda? Y se rió como diciendo: “¡Ay muchachas!” Esa mentira dije, y ‘pos pasé y ahí voy corre y

and they asked me, “Do you want to go with us? We’re going to China, and Paris.” I went back to my home in Durango, and I started to get postcards. And then my mom said, “Oh, see that? Why didn’t you go with them?” Because I needed a passport, visa, and I didn’t have any of those things. But it’s interesting what drives you, right? When I got back to Durango, I worked and saved money, and got a passport. I came to the border with that passport.

**International borders: *Working for no pay, let’s go to Chicago***

When I came back from Guadalajara, my sister says to me, “It’s better in Monterrey.” So I went to Monterrey. But it wasn’t true, so I went back to Durango. Then my brother says, “no, it’s real cool over in California,” and all that. So then, a cousin tells me, “I’m going to California on such and such a day, if you want to go.” All I had was my passport, so when I got to Juárez well, you could say I was clueless, I didn’t know I needed a visa, or that I had to ask for a permit. But I heard people say “just say you’re going shopping.” Then I went and asked the officer, “will you give me permission to go to the store?” And he laughed saying, “Oh, you girls!” I told that lie, and well, I crossed over and then went running to find my relatives who were catching a bus. My cousin says, “You got the



corre a buscar a mis parientes que ya estaban agarrando el camión. Me dice mi prima: “¿Te dieron permiso?” – “Bueno, si me dio permiso el señor, pero nada más para ir a comprar algo, pero no permiso de pasaporte.” O sea, por ignorancia yo pasé y nada más así me subí al camión. Y me dijo mi prima: “¡Qué suerte la de la nopaluda ésta!” Pues mira, suerte de las que no se bañan, llegué hasta California como dicen, con la bendición de Dios, ni siquiera hubo retén, nunca paró el camión. Pero ¿ve? estaba chavalilla, en esos tiempos no había mucho problema en el puente.

Allá en California llegué con mi prima y me llevaba a limpiar casas con ella. Resulta que, pues yo veía que le daban su cheque, pero ella no me estaba pagando nada. En eso, que me entero que allá está un hermano mío y me dijo: “¿qué estás haciendo aquí? Trabajando y no te dan nada, vámonos a Chicago.” Mi hermano tenía a unos conocidos que nos iban a conseguir un trabajo. Yo pensaba que era como en México que llegas y trabajas en algún lado y ya ¿verdad? Pero mi hermano me llevó a una oficina y de allí nos mandaban a las fábricas. Y así empecé a trabajar en la fábrica de resortes. Mi hermano vivía con otras gentes del rancho de allá donde él era. Hasta que no se viniera su esposa, nos íbamos a cambiar. Y me dijo mi

permit?” – “Well, yeah, the man said I had permission but just to go buy something, not passport permit.” So really I got in out of ignorance, and I just got onto the bus. And my cousin told me, “Check out how lucky this country bumpkin is!” Well, honestly, I guess it was beginners’ luck, I got all the way to California, as they say, with God’s blessing, there wasn’t even a checkpoint, the bus never stopped. But, you know? I was a kid, back then it wasn’t hard to cross the bridge.

Over in California I landed with my cousin and she took me to clean houses with her. And I saw them giving her a check, but she wasn’t paying me anything. And then I found out that one of my brothers was over there and he said, “What’re you doing here? Working for no pay, let’s go to Chicago.” My brother knew some people who were going to get us jobs. I thought it was like in Mexico that you get there and you work somewhere and that’s it, right? But my brother took me to an office and from there they sent us to factories. And that’s how I started working in a spring factory. My brother lived with some people from the town where he was from. We weren’t going to find another place until his wife came over. So my brother told me, I’ll take you to

hermano: “te voy a llevar con unas gentes a ver si te puedes acomodar, para que te quedes allí, porque yo estoy también, así como decir arrimado.” Como eran departamentos chiquitos de un cuartito, yo tenía que dormir debajo de la mesa de la cocina, porque ya la sala estaba ocupada, había gente, y estaba el pedacito así chiquito, entonces yo tenía que dormirme acá abajo de la cocina, ¿ve?

**Primer regreso a México: Cuando me regresé a México, nació mi hija Dania**

A los cuatro años de trabajar en la fábrica de resortes me regresé a Durango porque se puso mala mi mamá y ella me decía que me regresara, que no estaba a gusto, porque era la primera vez que yo salía. Cuando me regresé a México, nació mi hija Dania, en 1985. Yo trabajaba en la farmacia y el gobierno empezó a dar casas en pagos, para los trabajadores y esa es la casita que tengo ahora en México. Es una casita chiquita, parecen pajareras, pero digo, es lo que podemos lograr nada más. Dije yo, pues está bien para mí y para la niña y eso es lo que tengo allá. Cuando trabajaba en la farmacia ahí en Durango, ya veía la diferencia del trabajo en Estados Unidos. En aquel entonces, fijate, en la farmacia, nos pagaban 60 pesos, que equivalían lo que es ahorita seis dólares. ¡Seis dólares por quincena,

meet some people to see if you can stay there, because I’m just crashing with these folks.” They were little, one-room apartments, I had to sleep under the kitchen table because the living room was already full of people, and there wasn’t much room, so I had to sleep under there in the kitchen, right?

**First return to Mexico: When I went back to Mexico, my daughter Dania was born**

After working in the spring factory for four years, I went back to Durango because my mom got sick and asked me to come home. She said she missed me because it was the first time I had been away. When I went back to Mexico, my daughter Dania was born, in 1985. I worked at a pharmacy and the government started offering houses on installment plans for workers; that’s the little house in Mexico I have today. It’s a small house, they look like bird cages, but you know, that’s all we’re able to get. I figured, it’s fine for me and my daughter, so that’s what I have there. When I worked at the pharmacy in Durango, I noticed the difference from work in the United States. At that time, you know, in the pharmacy they paid us 60 pesos, which would be equivalent now to six dollars. Six dollars every two

fijate! Y luego, me descontaban mucho del cheque, nos quitaban lo de la casa, lo de la aseguranza, y bueno, todo lo que quitan del cheque, y pues no quedaba nada. Entonces, pues yo no podía ayudar a mi mamá nada con ese dinero. Y le dije a mi mamá: “oiga, ya no me queda nada y luego pa’ la niña ¿cómo le voy a hacer?” Y el papá, bien gracias. También ese se desapareció. Como era maestro y lo mandaban así a los ranchos, pues ya no lo veía, ya no supe de él. Y ya cuando él regresó, la niña ya estaba grandecita, se me hace que tenía como tres años. Y ‘pos yo me enojé, le dije: “¿’pos cómo? Usted se fue y ya no volvió. ¿Ya desde cuándo no mira a su niña?”. Y yo ya no quise absolutamente nada con ese señor. Le dije: “no, porque a mí me dejó sola con todo el compromiso y usted se desapareció y a mí no me gusta eso”. De ese entonces ya no lo volví a mirar. Entonces, ya no podía con los gastos, ni para pagar mi casa, ni para ayudar a mi mamá y por eso fue que en 1991 yo junté dinero para arreglar los pagos de la casa directo que tenía en México. La niña, se la dejé a mi mamá, le dije que me la cuidara y me fui a Chicago. Uno de mujer yo creo que Dios nos da la conciencia para abrimos camino, y más cuando tiene uno hijos, se pone uno a pensar ¿’pos qué les voy a dar de comer?

weeks, just imagine! Then, they deducted a lot from the check, the payment for the house, for insurance, and you know, all those things they deduct from a check, and not much was left. So, I wasn’t able to help my mom at all with that money. I told my mom, “listen, I don’t have any money left and then there’s my daughter, how can I manage?” And her dad, well he was nowhere around. He disappeared. He was a teacher and he would be sent out to small communities, so I didn’t see him anymore, and never heard from him again. And when he got back, my daughter was getting bigger, I think she was like three years old. And, you know, I got mad. I told him, “what do you think? You left and didn’t come back. How long has it been since you’ve seen your daughter?” And I didn’t want anything to do with him. I said, “No, you left me alone with this responsibility and you disappeared, and I don’t like that.” I never saw him again. But I couldn’t make ends meet, I couldn’t pay for my house or help my mom. So in 1991 I got money together to make payments directly on the house I had in Mexico. I asked my mom to care for my daughter and left her, and I went to Chicago. I think God gives women the awareness to make our own paths, especially when we have children. You start thinking, how am I going to feed

**Segunda migración a Chicago: *Ahí duré todo el tiempo hasta que tuve a la otra niña.***

Ya cuando me regresé ya sabía cómo pasar. Ya escuchaba yo a las personas allá en Chicago, que tenían uno que conseguir la visa, que tenían que pasar y pedir un permiso especial y ya dije, a la otra la hago bien, porque a mí no me gustaba andar así, pero ‘pos yo fui abriéndome camino según como yo iba aprendiendo. Y entonces yo dije: ¿‘pos cómo y a dónde a quién le pregunto? ‘Pos ahí mismo los primos que ya habían ido y venido. ‘Pos que hay que ir a Monterrey, son 12 horas, pues a comprar el boleto, me costaba 890. Yo trabajé y juntaba mi dinero hasta que ya tuve para el pasaporte, y luego ir a sacar la visa. Y empezaba a juntar. Y luego que llego al consulado americano y me dicen: “oh, que te falta esto, tienes que regresar”. ¡A la torre, otra vez a juntar! Y ahí estoy yo que hacía gordas, que hacía tamales y ya no hallaba ni qué más hacer. Así fue como yo conseguí la primera visa. Como ya sabía yo que en Chicago podía conseguir trabajo, me fui para allá, pero ya no regresé a la misma fábrica, sino que trabajé en una fábrica de hacer maquinas. Dos hermanos míos ya estaban allá, uno de ellos ya murió y el otro sigue viviendo allá. Aunque estuviera encerrada todo el tiempo, que no veía ni el

them?

**Second migration to Chicago: *I stayed there the whole time until I had my other daughter.***

When I came back I knew how to cross over. I had talked to people in Chicago and they said you had to get a visa, you had to cross over and ask for a special permit. I thought, next time I’ll do it right, because I didn’t like to go on like that, so as I learned, I made my own path. Then I thought, how and where do I do that, and who do I ask? Obviously, my cousins who had already come back and forth. So you have to go to Monterrey, which is 12 hours away, and buy a ticket, which cost me 890. I worked and saved my money until I had money for the passport and then to go get the visa. And I started saving. Then I went to the American consulate and they tell me, “Oh, you’re missing this, you have to go back.” Dang! I had to start saving again! And I was there making *gordas* [stuffed tortilla], making tamales, and I didn’t know what else I could do. So that was how I got my first visa. I knew I could get work in Chicago, so I went there, but I didn’t go back to the same factory, instead I worked in a factory that made [pinball] machines. Two of my brothers were there, one of them has died since and the other still lives there. Even if I was inside all the time and didn’t see the sun,

sol, que me la pasaba encerrada trabajando, al menos cuando trabajé en la fábrica en Chicago pude mandar algo de dinero a mi mamá y estuvo mejor. Y ahí duré todo el tiempo hasta que tuve a la otra niña, Daisy, en el '93. Ahí en la compañía me dieron seguro, y por medio de la aseguranza pagaron ellos el 90% de mi embarazo y yo pagaba el 10% y yo vine pagando como 900 dólares en pagos. El papá de mi hija, cuando él me conquistó -porque él fue el que me conquistó, ¿verdad? - yo pensé que era un hombre bueno, agradable y pues se me hacía muy chistoso, y que vamos para acá y vamos para allá. Pero ya nomás pensó él que me tenía segura, nomás porque me embaracé, y empezó a andar de coscolino y a tome y tome. A mí nunca me llamó la atención casarme con alguien así porque siempre he buscado mi tranquilidad primero. Ya ve que hay mucho fraude de personas que se casan nomás para arreglar ¿verdad? Y luego ya le dije: “creo que yo no voy a poder soportar estar con una persona que no viene en toda la noche.” O alguien que esté tomando más seguido y que escucho a sus hermanos que dicen que anda con otra fulana. ¿'Pos qué le pasa a este señor? Yo pienso que yo no voy a soportar a una persona así. Cuando me separé del papá de mi hija, la niña tenía como un año y medio. Entonces yo allá estaba en

I was always inside working, at least when I worked at the factory in Chicago I was able to send some money to my mom and that was better. And I stayed there the whole time until I had my other daughter Daisy, in '93. In the company they gave me insurance, and the insurance covered 90% of my pregnancy and I paid 10%. I ended up paying like \$900 in payments. The father of my daughter, when he won me over – because he was the one that got me, right? I thought he was a good man, he was pleasant and seemed funny to me, and would ask me to go here or there with him. But, as soon as he thought he had me for sure, just because I got pregnant, he started being a ladies' man and drinking all the time. I never thought of marrying somebody like that because I've always valued my peace of mind above all. You know lots of people commit fraud and get married just to get papers, right? But I told him, “I don't think I can put up with being with a person who doesn't come home at night.” Or someone who's drinking more frequently and I hear his brothers say that he's running around with another gal. I mean, what's up with this man? I don't think I can stand a person like that. When I separated from my daughter's father, she was about a year and half old. So then I was over in Chicago by myself and with my daughter

Chicago sola y mi hija de un año y no tengo quien me la cuide, no conocía a nadie. Los primeros meses me la cuidaba la abuelita, pero a los seis meses se regresó ella para su rancho. Entonces una vez me dice una muchacha de ahí de los departamentos: “Yo te la cuido.” Y se la dejé. Cuando yo regresé de mi trabajo vi la puerta abierta, la niña en el suelo, sola ¿y dónde está la muchacha? – “oh, es que nada más fui a la tienda” ¿’Pos cómo cree que me quedé? A mi hasta chorrillo me quiso dar y ahí voy con mi criatura. ¡Imagínese! ¡Qué dolor para mi ver a la Daisy ahí en el suelo y sola! Al día siguiente se la dejo bien temprano a las 5 de la mañana porque entraba a las 7. Y en la tarde llego por la niña y estaba un borrachito ahí, cerca de la cama, mirando a la niña así nomás. Ni me oyó el borrachito, nomás me movía la cabeza. Pues agarré a mi hija y ahí voy a llore y llore ‘pa mi casa. Pues me tuve que regresar a México, yo no tenía quién me cuidara a mi hija, ¿cómo iba a trabajar así? Digo, yo no podía hacer eso, ya no hubo otra solución más que regresarme para Durango. Ya de ahí me dijo mi mamá: “yo te la cuido” y mi hermano también.

**Segundo regreso a México: *en los noventas, cada vez estaba más difícil pagar todo***

Regresé a México en 1995, con mi segunda

who was a year old, and I didn’t have anyone to take care of her, and I didn’t know anyone. Her grandmother took care of her for the first months, but after six months, she went back to her village. So one day a girl from the apartments told me, “I’ll take care of her.” And I left her with the girl. When I got back from work, the door was open and my daughter was alone on the floor. Where was the girl? “Oh, I just went to the store.” Just imagine how I felt, I thought I was going to have diarrhea, so I just grabbed my baby. Just imagine that! It was so painful to see my Daisy on the floor all alone! The next day I left her there really early, at 5 in the morning because I started work at 7. And in the afternoon I went to pick up my daughter and there was a drunk there, near the bed, just looking at my daughter. The drunk couldn’t even hear me, he just nodded his head. So I grabbed my daughter and went home crying. So I had to go back to Mexico because I didn’t have anyone to care for my daughter. How could I go to work like that? I mean, I couldn’t do that, and there was no other solution except going back to Durango. And then my mom said, “I’ll take care of her for you” and so did my brother.

**Second return to Mexico: *in the nineties, it got even harder to afford everything***

I went back to Mexico in 1995, when my

niña chiquita. Con el dinero que pude ahorrar en la fábrica de maquinitas en Chicago, puse una tiendita de abarrotes en mi casa, la que yo había comprado en Durango. Así para cuidarlas ahí a las dos niñas y llevarlas a la escuela. Entonces por ahí en los noventas, cada vez estaba más difícil para pagar todo. Yo pagaba 200 de luz y de repente 400, y luego de repente 700, y luego de repente 1000. Yo fui y reclamé que no era justo, yo no saco para eso. Y dijeron: “tú tienes negocio y tienes que pagar o te cortamos la luz.” Y cada vez se hacía más, más difícil y pues ya no pude sostenerme. Entonces pensaba: “cuando ya la niña esté grande, pues a lo mejor me animo y otra vez me regreso a Estados Unidos ¿’veda?, pero si me va bien con la tiendita y el poco dinero que llevaba pues a lo mejor me quedo”. Pero pues, con la tiendita no me iba nada bien. ¡No, iba de mal en peor! Y si no me ponía abusada, hasta los mismos repartidores me dejaban menos mercancía, entonces yo tenía que estar cuenta y cuenta y cuenta todos los días la mercancía. No me salían las cuentas, vendía cajas yo, vendía 20, 30, 40, 50, y no me daba nada de ganancia. Yo decía ¿cómo le hacen los que tienen tienda? Y todavía no me puedo explicar cómo le hacen. Y ya casi no hay estas tienditas, los mataron porque entró el *Walmart*, entraron las demás

second daughter was small. With the money I was able to save from the pinball factory in Chicago, I set up a vegetable store in the house I’d bought in Durango. That way I was able to take care of both girls and take them to school. But in the nineties, it was getting even harder to afford everything. I paid 200 for electricity, and suddenly it was 400, and then 700, and suddenly it was 1000. I went to complain that it wasn’t fair, I couldn’t pay for that. And they told me, “you have your business and you have to pay or we’ll cut off your electricity.” And it kept getting more and more difficult, and I couldn’t support myself. I thought, “when my daughter is grown, I might I’ll try to go back to the United States again, right? But if things go well for me with the store and the little bit of money I got, then maybe I’ll stay.” But, the store wasn’t doing well at all. No, it was actually going from bad to worse! And if I wasn’t careful, the distributors would short me on merchandise, so I had to count and re-count the merchandise every day. The numbers didn’t add up, I would sell boxes, sell 20, 30, 40, 50, I wasn’t making any profit. And I thought, how do storekeepers do it? I still don’t understand how they do it. And hardly any of those little stores are left any more, they were killed when *Walmart* came in, and the other companies, like the

compañías, los *Oxxo*<sup>7</sup> y ya se desaparecieron las tienditas.

Mi mamá ya estaba muy mala y me la pasaba llevándola al hospital y corría y le hacía a ella algo, y corría a mi tiendita y así me navegaba. Y luego yo corriendo ahí voy con mis criaturas y dejaba mi changarro cerrado, los proveedores que iban y me llevaban el huevo, ‘pos no me hallaban. Y ahí voy a llevar a mi mamá al hospital, y a pagar taxi. Ya le hablaba a mi hermana: “oye, ven por mis criaturas ahí están solas afuera del hospital.” Nomás por las niñas lo hacían y yo toda la noche cuidando a mi mamá, y eso me fue mermando, mermando... y ‘pos yo sola. Mis hermanas no ayudaban mucho, ni por la mamá enferma y eso me estresaba. Fíjese, nos turnábamos una noche yo, una noche mi hermano, ya no la dejaban salir del hospital a mi mamá. Y las otras tres hermanas bien conchudas, que no podían dejar al marido solo en la noche. Bueno ‘pos sea por Dios tengo que cumplir con mi mamá. Una vez le dije a una vecina que si me ayudaba a cuidar a mi mamá y nadie me quiso ayudar a pagarle a la señora, entonces también eso salió de la tienda y pues la tienda al fin se vino abajo y así se fue acabando el dinero. Y decía yo: “Pues no es posible que un negocio

*Oxxo*<sup>2</sup>, then all the little stores disappeared. My mom was doing really bad and I was always taking her to the hospital. I would run and cook something for her and run back to my store, and that’s what I did. I would go running with my kids and leave the store closed, the suppliers would come to deliver eggs, and well, I wasn’t there. I’d have to take my mom to the hospital, and pay for a taxi. And I would call my sister, “Hey, come get my kids, they’re alone outside the hospital.” They just did it for my daughters; I would spend the night caring for my mom, and that was wearing me down, wearing me down... and I was alone. My sisters didn’t help much, even though their mom was sick; that stressed me out. Just imagine, we would take turns, one night me, one night my brother. They wouldn’t let mom out of the hospital. My other three sisters were all cheeky, saying they couldn’t leave their husbands alone at night. Well, whatever, it’s God’s will that I took care of my mom. Once I asked a neighbor to help me care for mom, and no one else wanted to help pay her, so that also came from the store and in the end the store went downhill; money was running out. I said, “Well, it’s not right for a business to be going down instead of up.” But if it’s

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<sup>7</sup> *Oxxo* es la cadena mexicana mas grande de tiendas de conveniencia.  
*Oxxo is the largest Mexican convenience store chain.*



en lugar de ir pa' arriba, va pa' abajo." Pero si no está bien cuidado, tengo que estar en todo, y luego las niñas. Y pues ya no completaba para los pagos y ni para pagar la casa. Hasta que ya de plano dije: no, ya no puedo sobrevivir, yo no puedo continuar así y darle estudio a estas niñas. Y allá cobran todo, usted sabe. ¿Pues cómo voy a darle yo sola educación a mis hijas? Dije: "pues ni modo, me voy otra vez a Estados Unidos a trabajar porque no completo para darle carrera a la de allá y sacar adelante a la de acá."

**Tercera migración: *ellas tendrían un mejor futuro y no andarían batallando como yo***

Cuando murió mi mamá, vendieron su casa y me dieron un dinero. Con eso compré el pasaporte y la visa. Estuve hablando con mi hija la mayor, que quería entrar a la escuela normal: "Mire m'ija, usted ya va a salir de la prepa y luego ¿a dónde va a entrar? Se me hace que la voy a dejar con una de mis hermanas, porque ya no tenemos dinero para pagarte la escuela." Entonces ya dijo que sí, que la dejara y que me trajera a Daisy. Pues ya lo último que hice por ella fue esperar una colononona toda la noche para ver si quedaba en la escuela normal de la universidad, porque se inscriben dos mil y nomás entran como 60 u 80. Ahí estoy, como se dice, bajándome a todos los santos y "hazme el

not well cared for, and I had to do everything, and watch the girls. I wasn't making ends meet to pay bills or the house. So finally, I just said, no, I can't survive, I can't go on like this and educate my girls. And they charge you for everything there, right? So how can I educate my daughters on my own? I said, "There's no other choice, I'll go back to the U.S. to work because I can't afford to give a career for the one over there, and get ahead with the one from here."

***Third migration: they would have a better future and won't have to struggle like me***

When my mother died, they sold her house and gave me some money. I used it to buy the passport and visa. I was talking to my older daughter, who wanted to go to teaching school, "Look, honey, you're going to get out of high school and then, where are you going? I think I'm going to leave you with one of my sisters, because we don't have money to pay for your school." So she agreed that I should leave her and take Daisy. So the last thing I did for her was to wait in a huge line all night long to see if she had made it into the teaching college at the university, because two thousand apply and only like 60 or 80 make it in. So I was there, pretty much calling on all the saints, "please give me the enormous miracle so my daughter can get

grandísimo milagro de que esta niña quede en la escuela, si no, ¿qué voy a hacer?” Y fue aceptada, estábamos bien contentas. Ella iba a estar estudiando y nosotras íbamos a mandarle [dinero] para que estudiara y así fue. Y fue cuando me traje a Daisy a Socorro, Nuevo México. Ella ya iba a cumplir 10 años y dije, pues ya ella me avisa, me va a decir si está bien, si no está bien. Qué tristeza que mi hija el día de mañana no pueda estudiar o no tenga carrera, o no tenga yo dinero para que ella siga adelante. Y ese fue el motivo por el cual yo me vine para poderle dar educación a la de allá y que la de aquí empezara la escuela aquí. Así ya ellas tendrían un mejor futuro y no andarían batallando como yo.

#### **Trabajo, vivienda y transporte en**

#### **Socorro: ¡No se cómo vivía!**

Llegué con una sobrina que estaba ahí en Socorro, pero como ella estaba viviendo por el *housing*, yo no podía estar con ella ¿verdad? Pero como dicen, Dios abre las puertas. La señora que le estaba rentando vivía ahí cerca. Entonces una vez yo salí afuera a tender ropa, o a barrer, no sé a qué, y me vio: “¿Qué estás haciendo tu allí en la casa de Sonia?”. Le dije: “discúlpame, acabo de llegar, tengo apenas ocho días”. Entonces que me dice: “Oye, ¿tu no conoces a alguien que me quiera cuidar a mi papá?” Entonces

into the school, if not, what will I do?” And she was accepted and we were really happy. She would be studying and we would send [money] so she could study, and that’s what happened. And that was when I brought Daisy to Socorro, New Mexico. She was almost 10 years old and I thought she could let me know if she was doing well or not. It would be so sad if in the future my daughter couldn’t go to school or have a profession, or if I didn’t have money to help her get ahead. And that was the reason why I came here, to give an education to the one over there, and so the one from here could start school here. This way they would have a better future and won’t have to struggle like me.

#### **Work, housing and transportation in Socorro: *I don’t know how I lived!***

I landed with a niece who was there in Socorro, but since she was living in *housing*, I wasn’t able to stay with her, right? But, like they say, God opens doors. The woman who rented to her lived nearby. Once I went out to hang up some laundry, or to sweep, or something and she saw me: “What are you doing there in Sonia’s house?” I told her, “I’m sorry, I just arrived, I’ve only been here a week.” So she tells me, “Hey do you know anybody who might want to help care for my dad?” I told her I was looking for work and if I can find a house nearby, I’d help her. She

le digo que yo estoy buscando trabajo y si encuentro casa cerca yo le ayudo. Dice riendo: “aquí mi papá tiene unos cuartos y te los puede rentar.” Y mire, luego, luego, a las dos semanas me cambié con la niña.

De las nueve de la mañana hasta las cinco de la tarde estaba cuidando al señor y me daban 25 dólares por todo el día ¡Fíjese! Lo llevaba a la cama, al baño y lo sacaba a caminar, porque él ya casi no podía. Él era un hijo de mexicanos y era güerito, güerito el señor. Muy curioso, me daba mucha risa con él, tenía 96 años, ya estaba grandecito, y siempre decía “ándale m’ijita.” Dice: “tu niña está muy bonita, cuídala mucho y llévala a la escuela”. “Ella ya se va en el camión” le decía yo. A veces hablaba la hermana que le tocaba el turno, a las cinco de la tarde que ya se suponía que salía yo, y me decía: “Oh, no puedo ir ¿Te puedes quedar mientras llega mi otro hermano?” Y allá a las cansadas, a las ocho, nueve de la noche, llegaba el hermano. Y ‘pos nomás me daban 25 dólares y me estaba todo el día con el señor. Y ellos cobraban yo creo al programa ¿ve? Pero como uno no sabe. Bueno, de 25 en 25 ya junté pa’ la comida de la semana. Después el señor se puso muy malo y dijeron que en el hospital lo iban a atender y que tenía que buscar yo otro lugar donde vivir.

laughed, “my dad has some rooms here and he can rent them to you.” And just like that, right away my daughter and I moved in two weeks.

From nine in the morning to five in the evening I was taking care of that man, and they paid me 25 dollars for the whole day. Imagine that! I put him in bed, took him to the bathroom, took him for walks, because he couldn’t do much. His parents were Mexican, and he was very, very light-skinned. It’s funny, he would make me laugh. He was 96 years old, pretty old, and he’d always say, “Come on, honey”. He’d say, “your daughter is very pretty, take good care of her and take her to school.” “She already goes in a bus,” I’d tell him. Sometimes the sister who had the shift at 5 pm, when I was supposed to get off, would call me and say: “Oh, I can’t go. Can you stay until my other brother arrives?” And there I was, worn out, and the brother would arrive at 8 or 9 pm. And, well, they only paid me 25 dollars and I was with the man all day long. And I think they charged the program, you know? But you don’t know any better. So, 25 by 25 I got money together for food every week. Then he got really sick and they said he would be cared for at the hospital and that I had to find another place to live.

My niece told me to go ask for work at the

<p>Mi sobrina me dijo que fuera a pedir trabajo a la pollera y me dieron trabajo luego, luego. Dos años trabajé ahí. Pero estaba ¡uy! muy, muy lejos y me daba <i>raid</i> [aventón] una señora ahí de la pollera. Entonces me dijo, “mira, por qué no hablas con el dueño de la pollera que tiene una casa allá, que te la rente”. Entonces fuimos y aplicamos por el <i>housing</i>, con el seguro<sup>8</sup> de la hija, y a los tres meses me dijeron que sí. Y le dije al señor que si me la rentaba por el <i>housing</i> porque no tenía ni para pagarle. Él quería 480 al mes y en la pollera me estaba pagando a veces 80 dólares a la semana. ¡No se cómo vivía! Así yo tenía que pagar 100 dólares al mes ¿verdad? por mí, porque la ayuda es nomás para la niña. Está bien, yo pagué mi porcentaje. Después yo escuché que el dueño de la pollera conocía a un señor que tenía un rancho y estaban necesitando una persona para trabajar. Pues yo le dije a una pareja que trabajaba ahí en la pollera que si me podían dar <i>raid</i> al rancho para ir a preguntar si me daban el trabajo. Luego ya le dije al trabajador que andaba ahí que si me podía dar <i>raid</i> porque estaba muy lejos ese rancho. Por quincena me cobraba 50 dólares y eso le pagaba para poder trabajar en ese rancho y duré como diez años trabajando ahí.</p>	<p>poultry plant and they gave me a job right away. I worked there for two years, but it was, Man! Really, really far and a lady from the plant gave me a <i>ride</i>. And she said, “look, why don’t you speak to the owner of the poultry plant, he has a house over there, maybe he’ll rent it to you. So we went and applied for the <i>housing</i>, with my daughter’s social security number, and after three months they told me yes. And I asked the man if he would rent it to me through <i>housing</i> because I didn’t have money to pay him. He wanted 480 a month and I was getting paid 80 dollars a week at the poultry plant. I don’t know how I lived! So I had to pay 100 dollars a month, right, for me, because the aid was just for my daughter. It’s okay, I paid my percentage. Later I heard that the owner of the plant knew a man who had a ranch and they needed someone to work there. I asked a couple who worked at the plant to give me a <i>ride</i> to the ranch to go ask about the job. Then I asked a worker who was there if he could give me a <i>ride</i>, because that ranch was far away. Every two weeks he would charge me 50 dollars and I paid him that to be able to work on that ranch, and I worked there for about ten years.</p>
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<sup>8</sup> Número de Seguro social /*Social Security Number*

**La residencia: Por eso ahora puedo aprender inglés y conseguir trabajo**

Cuando Daisy cumplió 21 años, luego, luego vinimos a Servicios Católicos y metimos la aplicación para la residencia. Traía mi pasaporte, mi visa y mi permiso y cuando fui a la oficina me dijeron: “como si entraste legalmente a los Estados Unidos, podemos arreglarte más rápido”. Y que nada más juntara el dinero que tenía que pagar. Y luego ya me pidieron que una persona que pudiera ganar más de 19 mil, que pudiera ser como mi patrocinadora. Entonces como mi hija ya conocía a varias personas aquí, le pidió a una compañera de su organización que si le podía dar la firma y ella dijo que sí. Y gracias a esa maestra, ya arreglé, ya tengo mi *green card* desde hace dos años. Por eso ahora puedo aprender inglés y conseguir trabajo. Me dicen que a los cinco años ya puedo pedir la ciudadanía, entonces tengo que estudiar mucho el inglés.

Para la residencia, le pedí dinero a mi patrón del rancho y para comprar el carro también. Y luego ya le fui pagando. ‘tons, ¿cómo le pagaba? Pues yo trabaja aquí con él y los sábados y domingos limpiaba casas.

Anteriormente limpiaba un restaurant los domingos y limpiaba dos casas y los sábados limpiaba una oficina también. Entonces todo el tiempo trabajaba yo para poder pagar el

**Residency: That’s why now I can learn English and get a job**

When Daisy turned 21 years old, right away we went over to Catholic Services and put in an application for my residency. I had my passport and my visa and my permit and when I went to the office they told me, “since you entered the United States legally, we can get your papers more quickly.” I just had to save up the money for the fees I needed to pay. Then they asked me to get a sponsor, a person who made more than \$19 thousand dollars a year. So since my daughter already knew several people here, she asked a friend from her organization if she could sign for me and she said yes. And thanks to that teacher, I was able to get papers, now I have had my *green card* for the past two years.

That’s why now I can learn English and get a job. They say that after five years I can request citizenship, so I need to really study English.

I asked my boss at the ranch for money for the residency and to buy a car. And then I was paying him back. So, how did I pay him? Well I worked here with him and on Saturdays and Sundays I cleaned houses. I used to clean a restaurant on Sundays, and cleaned two houses and on Saturdays I also cleaned an office. So I was working all the

préstamo sobre préstamo. También vendía cosas. De las ventas, a veces sacaba de 200 a 400, esa era la meta. Yo me salía los fines de semana tempranito antes de trabajar a buscar cosas en los *yard sales*, y luego cuando ya tenía bastante yo arrancaba para acá para vender. Todo lo que me caía yo lo ofrecía. A las vecinas también, les decía: “¿cómo esta señora? Mire, yo tengo esto.” Y era el modo en que les ofrecía y me compraban. Bueno, varias veces en mi casa puse una yarda. Y pues ese era el modo que yo estaba juntando dinero para poder pagar el préstamo que yo pedí para hacer lo de migración, para arreglar los papeles, y también para pagar la aseguranza de los carros, bueno, los gastos que tenía. Pues tenía que darle vuelta al dinero. Ahora aquí no puedo hacer eso porque ya mis hijas no me dejan, hasta me regañan, me salgo y dicen: “¿A dónde vas?” – “Voy a clases” les digo y me da risa.

**De Socorro a Albuquerque: *llegué buscando trabajo***

Cuando Daisy salió de la *high school*, se vino a estudiar a Albuquerque y consiguió becas para pagar todas sus clases y vivir en la universidad el primer año. Pero después había amiguitas que la dejaban sola con la renta. Y le dije: “pos mejor yo me voy y consigo trabajo en Albuquerque y te ayudo con la renta.” En el 2015 me vine de Socorro

time so I could pay off the loans on the loans. I also sold things. From sales, sometimes I would make 200 to 400, that was the goal. I’d go out on weekends really early before work and look for things at *yard sales*, and then when I had enough I’d head over here to sell. I would sell anything I found. And to neighbors, too. I’d say, “How are you ma’am? Look, I’m selling this.” That’s how I offered things, and they would buy things. And, several times, I had yard sales at my house. And so that was the way that I saved to be able to pay off the loan I’d taken out to pay for immigration, to get my papers, and also to pay for the insurance on the cars, you know, the expenses I had. I mean, I had to move the money. I can’t do that here anymore because my daughters don’t let me, they scold me, when I go out they say, “Where are you going?” – I tell them “I’m going to class” and it makes me laugh.

**From Socorro to Albuquerque: *I came looking for work***

When Daisy got out of *high school*, she came to study in Albuquerque and got scholarships to pay for all her classes and to live at the university for the first year. But after that she had friends who left her paying all the rent. I told her, “I think it’s better if I go there and get a job in Albuquerque and I can help you

y llegué buscando trabajo. Me enfoqué en hoteles porque es la forma más rápida de conseguir trabajo, porque sé que ahí siempre han necesitado trabajadores. Pregunté y me dijeron que solamente por internet podía aplicar y entonces le pedí a mi hija que metiera mi currículum en internet. Fuimos y el señor puro inglés pero mi hija me sirvió de intérprete. Pasé la prueba esa antidrogas, y luego cuando estoy ahí, el señor por teléfono le pidió a otra persona que me dijera lo que tenía que hacer yo en el hotel. Luego ya me dijeron que si entendía algo de inglés, les dije que sí, yo entiendo poquito inglés pero no lo puedo hablar, que es mi problema de la pronunciación y escribir. A la semana y media empecé a trabajar de *housekeeping* [limpieza]. Entonces me empezaron a mandar con la manager y ella me dijo en inglés que tenía que limpiar aquí, acá y allá y pues yo solamente sé que es *clean the kitchen, clean the bedroom, change the cama* y todo eso y pues yo lo supe con la práctica y así estuve trabajando casi más de un año y medio.

**El hotel y la compañía de limpieza: *en eso de tanto subir escaleras me dañé la rodilla***

Este hotel tiene como casitas y departamentos amueblados. Y para limpiar tiene uno que subir las escaleras con todos los líquidos, con la aspiradora, con las

with the rent.” In 2015 I moved here from Socorro and I came looking for work. I focused on hotels because that’s the quickest way to get a job, because I know they’ve always needed workers. I asked and they told me that I could only apply through the internet and so I asked my daughter to put my résumé on the internet. We went and the man only spoke English but my daughter interpreted for me. I passed the drug test, and then when I was there the man used the phone to ask someone else to tell me what I had to do in the hotel. Then they asked me if I understood any English, and I said yes, I understand a little English but I can’t speak it, my problem is with pronunciation and writing. A week and a half later, I started working in *housekeeping*. Then they started sending me to the manager and she told me in English that I had to clean here, there and over there and well. All I knew was *clean the kitchen, clean the bedroom, change the bed* and all that. With practice, I understood all that, and so I worked like that for over a year and a half.

**The hotel and the cleaning company: *I hurt my knee from climbing all those stairs***

This hotel has like little houses and furnished apartments. To clean you have to climb the

toallas, con las colchas, va uno todo cargado y sube y baja. Aparte, en el segundo piso los departamentos ¿cómo se llaman? *pent-house* o *master*? todavía tienen otra escalera arriba, entonces son dos baños, y dos cuartos. Es como limpiar una casa y en eso de tanto subir escaleras me dañé la rodilla. Después de la primera cirugía todavía le dije a la manager: “lo siento mucho yo no puedo hacerte el trabajo arriba.” Y luego la manager me dijo: “tienes que hacer el trabajo completo, yo no puedo dar exclusividad.” Entonces quise subir a un cuarto y me volví a dañar y ya no pude caminar. Y le dije: “voy a ir otra vez al hospital por tu culpa”, yo se lo dije en español. Y todavía me volvieron a hablar y que nada más me iban a dar en el piso de abajo. Y volví, pero me empezaron a dar dobles, en lugar de darme los 10 cuartos como a todas, me estaban dando más. Y les dije: ¿Por qué me das de más? ¿Nomás porque no puedo subir para arriba? Quise poner queja, pero el manager nunca estaba, que no estaba y que no estaba. Todavía ando mala de la rodilla y ahora ando bien agüitada porque me mandan cobrar 3 mil dólares del hospital por la cirugía. Dicen que la compañía de trabajo pagó un porcentaje, pero yo tengo que pagar el otro porcentaje ¿es verdad eso? Supuestamente es un accidente de trabajo y todavía estoy dañada de mi

stairs with all the liquids, with the vacuum cleaner, with the towels, with the blankets, so you're all loaded down and going up and down. Aside from that, in the second floor apartments, what are they called? *Pent-house* or *master*? They have another staircase going up, so there are two bathrooms and two bedrooms. It's like cleaning a house, and I hurt my knee from climbing all those stairs. After the first surgery, I told the manager, “I'm sorry but I can't do the work for you upstairs.” Then the manager said, “you have to do the whole job, I can't give you exclusivity.” I was trying to go up to a room and I hurt myself again, and I couldn't walk anymore. I told her, “I'm going to the hospital again and it's your fault.” I said that in Spanish. But they still called me to come work, and said they would only give me the first floor. I went back, but they started giving me doubles, instead of 10 rooms like everyone else, they gave me more. I said, Why am I getting more? Just because I can't go upstairs? I wanted to complain, but the manager was never there, wasn't there, wasn't there. My knee is still messed up and now I'm pretty bummed out because they sent me a bill for \$3,000 from the hospital for the surgery. They say the company at work paid a percentage, but that I have to pay the other percentage, is that true? Supposedly, it



pierna. Bueno, ya camino, ya hago mi trabajo otro que tengo. Pero por eso me salí de ahí. Ahora estoy en la compañía que se llama limpieza autorizada, *Clean Authority*. Ahí tengo un libro, que los ponen en las tiendas porque andaba buscando trabajo y miré que ahí decía que se necesitaba trabajadoras y entonces le dije a mi hija: “búscame la dirección.” Está medio reburujadito pero lo encontré, hablan español e inglés, los dos. Empecé hace dos semanas, estoy con dos compañeras que supuestamente son las entrenadoras. Ahí en la oficina nos dan todo, recogemos la libreta de las instrucciones, firmamos, y luego ya pasamos a otro cuartito donde tienen todos los materiales, que es la aspiradora, los líquidos, los trapos, el trapeador y el plumero, todo eso. Nos piden que tengamos carro, pero ellos pagan las millas.

### **Aprendizaje del idioma y Socialización**

**Afirmando el derecho a la educación:**  
***Cuando voy a Estados Unidos yo tengo que ir a la escuela***

¡Mire lo que tuve que esperar para ir a la escuela! Porque allá en Socorro, no hay escuela para adultos. Y yo que pensaba: “cuando vaya a Estados Unidos yo tengo que ir a la escuela.” Pero allí en Socorro siempre

was a work accident and my leg is still messed up. Well, I can walk now, and I do the other job I have. But that’s why I left that one. Now I’m in a company called authorized cleaning, *Clean Authority*. I have a book that they put in stores because I was looking for a job and I saw that they needed workers, so I told my daughter, “find me the address.” It’s kind of confusing, but I found it and they speak Spanish and English, both of them. I started working there two weeks ago. I’m with two women who are supposedly the trainers. There at the office they give us everything, we pick up the instruction book, we sign in, and then we go to another little room where they have all the materials, these are the vacuum cleaner, the different liquids, the rags, the mop, the feather duster, and all that. They ask that we have a car, but they pay us for mileage.

### **Language Learning and Socialization**

**Asserting the right to education: *When I go to the United States I have to go to school***

Look how long I had to wait to go to school! Because, over in Socorro, there was no school for adults. And I had thought, “when I go to the United States I have to go to school.” But in Socorro, I was working all

<p>estaba trabajando. Mi hija pronto aprendió el inglés porque ella estuvo en el grado quinto y en el grado sexto y fue cuando yo empecé a escuchar con ella, con Daisy, que <i>what is your name?</i> [ríe] y cosas así, aunque no sé bien todavía, porque yo no estudié inglés. Antes, como le digo, en Socorro no tenía mucha chanza de estudiar, ni de aprender, ni de practicar, ni de escuchar gente hablar inglés. ¡Y en Chicago menos! En Albuquerque es donde he tenido más chanza de aprender inglés. Fui a CNM<sup>9</sup> pero me dijeron que no había lugar. Me fui a inscribir a servicios católicos<sup>10</sup> pero se me hacía muy lejos y ahí me dijeron que en Jackson<sup>11</sup> iban a dar la clase de matemáticas. Entonces cuando llegué allá le pregunté a un señor: ¿usted viene a clases de matemáticas? Dijo: “no, yo vengo a clases de inglés.” Y dije yo: ¿Cómo que también dan clases de inglés aquí? -Sí. Fue cuando me metí al salón de ustedes y le dije: “no me voy a mover de aquí yo quiero aprender [ríe] ya perdí mucho tiempo de mi vida” ¿Se acuerda? Y eso es lo que yo quería, aprender inglés. Por eso, porque toda mi vida me la he pasado así, ¿ve? Por eso esa vez yo le dije: “no, yo me quedo aquí.” ¿Se acuerda? Usted me dijo que</p>	<p>the time. My daughter learned English very quickly because she was in fifth grade and in sixth grade and that’s when I started hearing with her, with Daisy, like <i>what is your name?</i> [laughs] and things like that, even though I still don’t know it very well, because I didn’t study English. Before, I mean in Socorro, I didn’t have much chance to study, or to learn, or to practice, or to hear people speak English. It was even worse in Chicago! In Albuquerque is where I’ve had the chance to learn some English. I went to CNM<sup>4</sup> but they told me they were full. I went to register at Catholic Services<sup>5</sup>, but it was far away and they told me they were going to give math classes at Jackson<sup>6</sup>. So when I got there I asked a man, are you here for math class? And he said, “no, I’m here for English class.” And I said, What? They have English classes here, too? -- Yes. So that’s when I went into your classroom and said, “I’m not leaving here, I want to learn [laughs] I’ve already wasted too much time in my life.” Remember that? And that’s what I wanted, to learn English. And the reason why is because my whole life I’ve been like this, right? That’s why that day I told you, “no, I’m not going anywhere.” Remember? You told me there</p>
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<sup>9</sup> La Universidad local/ The *local community college*

<sup>10</sup> Organización de servicios públicos basada en la fe católica / *Catholic public service organization*

<sup>11</sup> Escuela primaria local, nombre ficticio / *Local elementary school, the name is fictitious*

ya no había lugar en la clase de inglés, que ya me había inscrito tarde, que el grupo tenía que ser pequeño para poder aprender, que quién sabe qué, pero [ríe con ganas] mire, ¡yo sí quiero aprender inglés! ¡Yo quiero aprender inglés! Por eso me paré así en la pared y le dije: “yo aquí me quedo, aquí paradita, no ocupo espacio, ni doy lata, ni pregunto nada, pero yo me quedo a aprender inglés, que le hace que no me inscriban, que le hace que ya no hay cupo en la clase.” Si yo hubiera tenido la oportunidad antes, ‘pos yo pienso que sí lo hubiera hablado más pronto, ¿veda’? Pero ‘pos ahora que estoy viejita es cuando tengo la chanza, le digo, pos tengo que aprovechar. Y mire, ya estoy en el segundo nivel de inglés. Si quiero seguir viviendo aquí, yo quiero aprender inglés. Cuando la maestra nos habla en inglés, ‘pos yo trato de que se me graben las palabras para poderlo practicar y entender. Le digo a mi hija: “es que sí soy de reacción retardada ¿veda’?” Sí estoy muy lenta a lo mejor por mi edad, pero yo trato, si vuelvo a escuchar una palabra, yo *practice practice!* Ya llevo como dos años estudiando inglés. Yo me preocupo, yo estoy apurada, yo quiero aprender.

**Barreras para aprender inglés: *Yo no tenía documento legales***

Cuando estaba joven allá a Chicago,

wasn't any room in the English class, that I had signed up too late, and that it had to be a small group to be able to learn, and this and that, but [laughs heartily] look, I really want to learn English! I want to learn English! That's why I stood there by the wall and told you: "I'm staying here, standing right here, I don't take up room, and I'm not going to be a bother, or ask anything, but I'm staying here to learn English, I don't care if you don't register me, I don't care if there's no room left in the class." If I had had the opportunity before that, well, I think I would have spoken it earlier, right? But, now I'm elderly and I have the chance, well, I have to make the best of it. And look, I'm already in the second level of English. If I want to keep living here I want to learn English. When the teacher talks to us in English, well, I try to record the words in my mind so I can practice them and understand. I tell my daughter, "The thing is I have delayed reaction, right?" Maybe I'm so slow because of my age, but I try, and if I hear the word again, I'm like *practice practice!* I've been studying English now for two years. I'm concerned with it, I'm in a rush, I want to learn.

**Obstacles to learning English: *I didn't have legal papers***

When I was young over in Chicago, working

trabajando en los resortes, dijeron que iban a dar clases de inglés y yo fui a pedir me dijo una señora que estaba recibiendo las “*aydis*?” [ID, identificación en inglés] las credenciales, me dijo que yo no podía porque yo no tenía documentos legales, que no era de allá y que era Mexicana y pues no podía, así me dijo. Y bueno pues, ni modo, aparte de que estaba muy lejos la escuela donde iban a dar inglés, y yo no tenía carro, no tenía *raid*, y luego ir hasta allá a Chicago, eran dos horas. Y por ese motivo nunca estudié inglés. Aparte de que tenía que trabajar para las niñas. Y ahora que ya están grandes y que ya puedo disponer más de mi tiempo, ya me quiero dedicar un poquito más a estudiar inglés. Hay que estudiar mucho el inglés, por eso yo le dije que tengo ganas de aprender.

**La fábrica de resortes: *nomás vamos a mirar el sol cuando no trabajamos***

En la fábrica de resortes no hablaban inglés. Nadie nos enseñaba inglés, nadie. Y tampoco hablábamos mucho entre nosotras en el trabajo. Había un señor que hablaba el inglés pero a nosotros nos hablaba en español y nos decía: “mire usted tiene que hacer así y así y así ¿sí? Y la máquina tiene que hacer los resortes así” y es todo. Nada más nos ponían en una máquina y a doblar los resortes, los metíamos, los sacábamos, los metíamos; terminábamos y vámonos. Llegábamos y otra

making springs, they said they were going to give English classes and I went to ask and a woman said they were taking the “*Aydees*”? [IDs] the credentials. She said I couldn’t take classes because I didn’t have legal papers, I wasn’t from there and I was Mexican and so, I couldn’t, that’s what she told me. So, what could I do? Anyway the school where they were going to give English classes was really far away and I didn’t have a car, I didn’t have a *ride*, and to go all the way to Chicago was like two hours. That’s why I never studied English. Besides having to work for my daughters. And now that they’re grown and I have more time available, I want to devote some of it to learning English. You have to study English a lot, that’s why I told you that I really wanted to learn it.

**The spring factory: *we’re only going to see the sun when we’re not working***

In the spring factory they didn’t speak English. Nobody taught us English, nobody. And also, we didn’t really talk to each other much at work. There was a man who spoke English but he spoke to us in Spanish and would say: “look, you have to do this and this and this, right? And the machine has to make the springs like this”, and that was all. They would just put us on a machine and we were bending springs, we’d put them in, take them out; we’d finish and we’d leave. Then

vez igual lo mismo: trabajo, trabajo, trabajo y nadie hablaba inglés. En ese trabajo, nos salíamos cuando estaba oscuro. Era a las 5 de la mañana y nos caminábamos una hora para llegar a donde era el trabajo. Y pues yo no me fijaba qué calles, ni dónde... Yo nomás, llegábamos al trabajo, nos metíamos y salíamos, y a oscuras. Y regresábamos a dormir y a comer, y luego a otro día igual. Y le digo:

- “oh aquí no se mira”

- “no, nomás vamos a mirar el sol los sábados y los domingos cuando no trabajamos”.

Y es para lavar y alzar la cocina, la casa, ir a comprar la comida y ya, es todo lo que se hacía.

**La fábrica de maquinitas: *Push line!***

En las dos fábricas en Chicago, era lo mismo, era el mismo trabajo y nada de práctica de inglés. La segunda vez que yo vine a Chicago fue cuando fui a la fábrica donde hacían las maquinitas de esas de *pinball* que juegan los niños, que salen bolas así. Y las voltea usted y son los cables y las piezas para que se muevan lo que soldé durante los cuatro años que trabajé en esa fábrica. Tengo mis recuerdos, mire mis quemaduras de soldadura. Ahí nomás entrábamos a la fábrica y luego, luego nos ponían en la línea y solamente decían: “*push line, push line,*

we’d come back again and do the same thing: work, work, work and nobody spoke English. At that job, we didn’t get out until it was dark. It started at 5 a.m. and we walked for an hour to get to that job. And I didn’t really even notice what streets or where... I just, we’d get to work, go in and leave, in the dark. Then we’d get back to sleep and eat, and then the next day, the same thing all over again. And I said:

-- “oh, you can’t see things here”

-- “no, we’re only going to see the sun on Saturdays and Sundays when we don’t work.”

And that’s the time to wash and clean up the kitchen, the house, go buy food and yeah, that’s all we did.

***The pinball factory: Push line!***

In the two factories in Chicago, it was the same. It was the same, all work and no practicing English. The second time I came to Chicago was when I went to the factory where they made those little *pinball* machines that kids play, the ones where the balls come out. And if you turn them over, there are cables and the pieces so they’ll move, and that’s what I soldered for four years when I worked at that factory. I have souvenirs, look at my soldering burns. There we would just go into the factory and then, they’d put us on the line and they would just

*push line!*” Ya nomás decían *push line* y era que teníamos que *push* y era mover la tabla y otra vez “*push line!*” Haga de cuenta esta tablota así de larga. La manager pasaba y nos decía que ahora tienen que hacer los cables completos, o nada más ciertos cables, y que ahora nada más van a ser tantas máquinas, tantas tablas y a *push line* ¡Órale! Nada más decía *push line* y ya sabíamos que iba a empezar la línea, el trabajo, y eso era todo el día. Era lo único que aprendí porque en cuatro años nada más eso decían cuando ya terminábamos de soldar. Si la primera terminaba, decía “*push line!*” y ya y todas tenían que mover y seguíamos trabajando. “*Push line!*” y seguíamos trabajando, y es todo lo que escuchábamos. Nada más *push line!* Y cuatro años, y *push line!* Pues yo embarazada y todavía *push line!* Y cuando nació la niña, nació con una bola en la panza de tanto que puchaba yo creo.

#### **Trabajos en Socorro: *Open the door***

Allá en Socorro, como en los otros lugares donde yo fui, tampoco había clases de inglés. En la pollera pues nada de inglés, puro español y español y español. Me iba tres días o dos a trabajar a la pollera en la tarde, y los otros tres días cuidaba al señor. Ya cuando me vine aquí a rentar con el viejito, platicaba todo el día con él: “*open the door*, que abras

say, “*push line, push line, push line!*” They would just say *push line* and that meant we had to *push* and that was to move the board along and then it was “*push line!*” again. That board was like this long. The manager would come by and tell us that now you have to do all the wires, or just certain wires, and today it’s going to be so many machines, so many boards, then *push line!* Alright! They would just say *push line* and we knew that the line was going to start, the work, and that was all day long. That was the only thing I learned because in four years that was all they said when we finished soldering. If the first one finished, she’d say “*push line!*” and then all of us had to move and we kept working. “*Push line!*” and we kept working, and that’s all we heard. Just *push line!* It was four years of *push line!* I was pregnant and it was still *push line!* And after my daughter was born, she was born with a bump on her belly I think it was from me doing all that pushing.

#### **Jobs in Socorro: *Open the door***

Over in Socorro, like in other places that I went, there weren’t any English classes, either. At the poultry plant there was no English, it was all Spanish, Spanish, Spanish. I would go three days or two days to work at the poultry plant in the afternoon, and the other three days I took care of the elderly

la puerta te estoy diciendo, ¿eh? Apréndetelo, apréndetelo, *open the door*". Y luego ya sabía yo que me decía "*open the door*" y ya corría y le abría la puerta. Le gustaba mirar pa' fuera. Y luego dice: "guare, guare' guare", ponle agua al gatito. Y ya, "guare, guare, guare", ok, le ponemos agüita. Por eso yo ya ve que apenas si entiendo, puedo oír, escuchar, pero no sé bien escribir nada.

Luego en el rancho duré como 10 años, pero nada de inglés, puro rancho allá, para ir a limpiar la casa grande del señor. Y la gente con la que trabajaba todos hablaban español. Mis patrones hablaban poquito español, pero como la secretaria es la que se encarga de ahí del rancho, con ella era la comunicación.

Cuando había algo que hacer me dice: "Alejandrina... necesitamos que limpies las casitas porque van a llegar visitas." Pero ella me lo dice en español todo el tiempo. Y cuando los patrones llegaban pues a veces la patrona sí me hablaba inglés y cuando yo no entendía 'pos yo le hablaba a Bety: "oiga, dígame que me repita porque no entendí".

Bueno, en el rancho en Socorro, si escuchaba cosas y trataba de aprendérmelas, como *good morning* y así, *sometimes* o *whatever* y *nine*, *tomorrow* y *today*, ¿veda'? Aprendí algunas cosas por mis patrones que me decían que *tomorrow you need to clean the here*, o en

man. When I came over here to rent with the old man, I talked to him all day, he'd say "*open the door*, I'm telling you to open the door, okay? Learn that, learn that, *open the door*." And then I knew what he was saying "*open the door*" and I would run and open the door for him. He liked to look outside. And then he'd say "wata, wata, wata", give water to the cat. And then, "wata, wata, wata," ok, I'll put out water. This is why, see, I barely understand, I can listen, hear, but I don't know how to write well at all.

Then, I worked at the ranch for 10 years, but there was no English there, it was all ranch, going to clean the man's big house. And people who worked there all spoke Spanish. My bosses spoke a little Spanish, but the secretary was the one in charge of the ranch, and she's the one I'd communicate with.

When there was something to do, she'd say, "Alejandrina... we need you to clean the little houses because visitors are coming." But she'd always tell me in Spanish. And when the bosses got there, well, sometimes the boss lady would speak to me in English and when I didn't understand, I'd call Bety, "hey, tell her to say it again because I didn't understand her." So, at the ranch in Socorro, I did hear things and try to learn them, like *good morning* and, *sometimes* or *whatever* and *nine*, *tomorrow* and *today*, right? I

*restroom, or the living room.* Y ya así yo miraba y aprendía. Un día mi patrona me dice : “¿Dónde está mi camisa?” –“Usted la puso ahí y yo la puse en la lavadora” –“¡no! es para planchar”, dice. Y luego me dice: “*You fired? ...You hired?*” ¿Cómo se dice? “*You’re fired!*” Y como yo miraba el show de Donald Trump que era el aprendiz, y cuando despedía a alguien decía: *You fired*, entonces yo dije: “*Oh! I understand fired*, yo me voy, adiós.” Y luego dice: “¡No, no! ¡Vente!” Y ya me llevó con la secretaria que nos traducía y muy apurada dice: “no, no, no! No te vayas” – “No, usted dijo *you fired.*” Y no estaba bromeando, pues lo dijo enojada, ¿veda? Bueno es que ella no me explicó nada de su camisa, es que ella tiene que poner lo que va a planchar, allá en donde hay un canasto, cuélguelo y yo ya sé que tengo que planchar eso. Ok, desde entonces jamás me volvió a dejar nada allí.

**El hotel: *Es complicado no entender nada***

La manager del hotel no habla español, pero sí le entiendo, me dice: “ahora tienes que ehh... *move the couch and every bedroom*” y pues ya me lo aprendí y así me estuve aprendiendo cosa por cosa. Y luego me decía: “Alejandrina *in da.. refrigerio you need clean daaa...* ¿los cajones? o arriba o abajo.” Y cuando *I no understand*, me dicen

learned some things from my bosses who would say *tomorrow you need to clean here*, or in *restroom, or the living room.* And that’s how I watched and learned. One day the boss lady asked me, “Where’s my shirt?” – “You put it over there and I put it in the washing machine” – “No! It’s to iron,” she says. And then she tells me, “*You fired?... You hired?*” How do you say it? “*You’re fired!*” And since I watched the Donald Trump show which was The Apprentice, and when he fired someone he said *You fired*, so I said, “*Oh, I understand fired*, I’m leaving, bye.” And then she said, “No, no! Come here!” And she took me to the secretary who translated for us and in a rush she said, “no, no, no! Don’t leave.” – “No, you said, *you fired.*” And she wasn’t joking, because she said it mad, right? And the thing is, she didn’t explain anything about her shirt to me, and she has to put the ironing over where there’s a basket, hanging up and then I know I have to iron it. Okay, after that she never left anything there again.

**The hotel: *It’s complicated when you don’t understand anything***

The hotel manager didn’t speak Spanish, but I could understand her, and she says, “now you have to uhh, *move the couch and every bedroom*” and so I learned that and I was learning item by item. And then she would



<p>varias veces ya me voy acordando. Y me fijo cómo me dicen: “<i>ok, you need the brush, broom, mop, vacun and ...</i> este ya no me acuerdo como se dice... ¡ah! <i>Tows? [towels] da jantaws [hand towels], wash taws, [washcloths] big taws... and... bueno... y... soap, windes [Windex].</i> . Y así me dicen: “tú necesitas aquí <i>for the wash</i> el líquido púrpura; y por el <i>toilet</i> y por <i>da sink</i> el líquido <i>pink</i>, rosa, y por <i>the mirror, for da glases, windes [Windex].</i> Y así yo ya todo eso le entendía, la cama, <i>da bed, [cama] da cheets, [sábanas]</i> pues <i>da pilo.</i> ¡Ah! y la cocina es ahí donde le entendía de todo, <i>for el micro, da refrigerio, el estove, el sink,</i> el ese mentado ¿cómo se llama? <i>for coffee, da ware,</i> porque <i> everytime needs da wáter for the kitchen,</i> y así muchos nombres me sé. Y <i>need da clean da estove inside y outside,</i> y todo eso me lo fui aprendiendo poco a poquito. Hay unos que no me sé todavía y hay otros que nomás me sé el nombre, no los se escribir, pero si los miro sí sé que es. Es complicado no entender nada, pero cuando ya se va uno acostumbrando a que le dicen: “tienes que poner las toallas para, vamos a suponer, 10 cuartos.” Pero cuando le dicen a usted en inglés pues no entiende uno nada, pero ya se va haciendo uno la idea y al día siguiente que le dicen: “¿oh tu sabes cuántas toallas necesitas?” Entonces uno piensa</p>	<p>say, “Alejandrina <i>in da... refrigerator you need clean daaa...the drawers? Or up or down.</i>” And when I’d say, <i>I no understand,</i> they’d repeat it and then I start remembering. I noticed how they say “<i>Ok you need the brush, broom, mop vacun and... uhm, I don’t remember how to say it...oh! Tows? [towels] da hantaws [the hand towels], wash taws [washcloths], big taws [big towels]... and... well... and... soap, windes [Windex].</i> And they say, “here <i>for the wash</i> you need the purple liquid; and for the <i>toilet</i> and for <i>da sink</i> the <i>pink pink</i> liquid, and for <i>the mirror, for da glases, windes [Windex].</i> Then I understood all that, the bed, <i>da bed, da cheets [sheets], and da pilo [pillow].</i> Oh! And the kitchen is where I understood everything, <i>for the micro, da refrigerio, the estove, the sink,</i> and what’s it called? <i>For coffee, da wada,</i> because <i> everytime needs da wáter for the kitchen,</i> and yeah, I know lots of names. And <i>need da clean da estove inside and outside,</i> and I learned all that bit by bit. I still don’t know some words. Others I just know the names and don’t know how to write them; but if I see them I know what they are. It’s complicated when you don’t understand anything, but you start getting used to people saying, “you have to put out towels for, let’s say, 10 rooms.” But when they say it to you in English, you don’t understand anything,</p>
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<p>pues.... 20, pero ¿cómo le digo que 20? Entonces ahí es el problema ¿veda? Yo no me sentía ni cohibida, ni nerviosa, sino me sentía con necesidad de entender y de prestar atención. Cuando me decían alguna palabra, yo me la traía grabada, o si tenía tiempo la anotaba y venía con mi hija: “¿Qué me dijeron aquí oye? [ríe] y así yo fui aprendiendo. Había una señora que a veces yo le preguntaba, porque había juntas y empezaban a hablar y yo me sentaba junto de ella y le decía ¿qué dijeron, que dijeron? No entendí nada. Y ella me explicaba. Porque esas juntas era todo en inglés sobre el porcentaje del hotel y cómo iba el hotel. A veces había clientes que me pedían que fuera a hacerles el servicio y yo volteaba y nomás los veía y pensaban que yo les entendía, pero yo no les entendía nada, nomás les decía: “<i>sorry maybe you go for the other lady</i>”, les digo, “<i>you go for there</i>” [ríe] Pero porque yo así escuchaba que le decían los demás, pues yo también decía eso, ¿me entiende? Yo escuchaba que decían: “<i>hey you finish?</i>” Y luego: “<i>ai dan</i>” [are you done?] y luego otro contestaba “<i>not yet</i>”. Y luego a la próxima que me preguntaban a mi pues les decía “<i>not yet</i>” [ríe con ganas] y luego venía con mi hija: “oye ¿y que es <i>not yet</i>? Pues que todavía no, ah bueno pues ya me la sé. Y así fui yo aprendiendo ¿ve? Yo escucho, pues yo</p>	<p>but then you start catching on and the next day when they tell you, “oh, you know how many towels you need? Then you think well... 20, but, how do I say 20? That’s the problem, right? I didn’t feel embarrassed or nervous, but I felt the need to understand and to pay attention. When they would say some word to me, I would record it in my mind, or if I had time, I would write it down and ask my daughter, “hey, what did they tell me here? [laughs] and that’s how I started learning. I would ask sometimes one lady, and I would sit next to her in the meetings. People would start talking and I would say, What did they say? What did they say? I didn’t understand a thing. And she would explain. Those meetings were all in English about the percentage of the hotel and how the hotel was doing. Sometimes clients who would ask me to do service in their rooms and I would just turn and look at them. They thought I understood them, but I didn’t, and I would just say, “<i>sorry maybe you go for the other lady</i>”, I’d say, “<i>you go for there</i>” [laughs]. But it was because I heard others saying that so I said it, too, you know? I heard them say, “<i>hey you finish?</i>” and then “<i>ah ya don</i>” [are you done] and then the other would answer, “<i>not yet</i>”. And then the next time they would ask me I would say “<i>Not yet</i>” [hearty laughter] and then I’d ask</p>
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repito. Así como decir “good morning, good morning” ¿veda’?

**La agencia de limpieza: *mis partners speak Spanish everyday***

Ahora en Albuquerque, en la agencia de limpieza de casas nos dan entrenamiento de cómo tenemos que limpiar las casas. Ahí nos ponen en las hojas que nos dan en inglés, nos dicen qué es lo que tenemos que hacer, cómo se tiene que tallar la cocina, cómo se deben dejar las marcas de la aspiradora en la alfombra, y así. Nos dan una libreta donde viene las casas que vamos a hacer y ahí nos ponen la dirección, el tiempo y lo que tenemos que hacer en cada casa, todo viene en inglés. Tengo una lista bien grande de palabras en inglés que no he aprendido, porque hay cosas que sí entiendo y cosas que no, pero cuando es importante la cosa sí lo ponen en español, ahí abajito o en un lado. Yo ando con una entrenadora que habla español y ella me está marcando mi entrenamiento, porque si no paso la prueba no me suben a 10.70. Ahorita me están pagando el entrenamiento a 8 y me dan un bono de 50 dólares por haber pasado el test. Las compañeras con las que limpio todas hablan español. Una habla poquito inglés, no muy bien, de esas personas que dicen que

my daughter, “hey, what does *not yet* mean?” And she says, not yet, oh, okay, I learned that. And that’s how I learned, right. I listen, I repeat, like saying “good morning, good morning,” right?

**The cleaning agency: *my partners speak Spanish everyday***

Now in Albuquerque, the housecleaning agency provides us with training on how we are supposed to clean houses. They put us on the forms they give us in English, they tell us what we have to do, how to scrub the kitchen, how to leave the vacuum marks on the carpet, things like that. They give us a notebook with the houses we’re going to clean, and they give us the address, the time we have and what we are supposed to do in each house, it’s all in English. I have a really long list of words in English that I haven’t learned, because there are things that I do understand, and others I don’t. But when it’s something important, they put it in Spanish, down below or to the side. I am with a trainer who speaks Spanish and she’s taking notes on my training, because if I don’t pass the test they won’t give me a raise to 10.70. Right now they’re paying me 8 for training, and they’ll give me a \$50 bonus for passing the test. The women I clean with speak Spanish. One speaks a little English, not very well, she’s one of those people who say that

<p>hablan el inglés y hablan con el nopalote ¿veda?, que tienen el acentote bien mexicano y digo: “¡ay diosito, por eso quiero aprender!” Todos los clientes que hemos ido, hablan puro inglés. Las compañeras se ríen de mí porque a mí se me olvida decir “<i>clean authority</i>” y dije “<i>good morning house keepi</i>” como si estuviera en el hotel, [ríe] pero somos <i>housekipi</i> ¿veda? Si estamos en una casa y el señor o la señora quiere decirnos algo y no entendemos, entonces llamamos a la oficina con el teléfono abierto y el cliente está diciendo y los de la oficina nos están respondiendo en español, porque en la oficina sí hablan inglés muy bien las secretarias. Pero ¿cómo voy a practicar el inglés si mis compañeras -se dice <i>my partner</i>, ¿veda? mis <i>partners speak Spanish everyday? Only for the</i> ¿cómo se dice las clientas? ¿Las <i>ladies</i>? Las <i>ladies house</i> es cuando hablamos inglés, como cuando llegamos en la mañana -<i>hi, how are you? - Good! - thank you for come -y ya</i> entendemos que nos está diciendo que bienvenidas y gracias por ir a su casa. Y al final nos dice, <i>oh thank you for your job, good job</i>, nos dice, <i>beautiful the clean</i> ¿Y qué más nos dice? Y que tengan un buen día, nos dice, <i>happy you?... nice day? good day? - Sí, happy nice day</i>, nos dice, entonces están diciendo que tenga buen día. ‘Pos yo nada</p>	<p>they speak English but they talk all messed up. They have a strong Mexican accent and I think, “My God, this is why I want to learn it right!” All the customers where we’ve gone only speak English. My co-workers laugh at me because I forget to say “<i>clean authority</i>” and I said, “<i>good morning, house keepi</i>” like I was in the hotel [laughs], but we are <i>housekeepee</i>, right? If we’re at a house and the man or the lady wants to tell us something and we don’t understand, we call the office on speaker and the client is talking, and the office staff are answering us in Spanish, because in the office the secretaries speak English very well. But, how am I supposed to practice English when my co-workers – you call them <i>my partner</i>, right? <i>My partners speak Spanish everyday? Only for the</i>, how do you say customers? The <i>ladies</i>? The <i>ladies house</i> is when we speak English, like when we arrive in the morning – <i>hi, how are you? - Good! - thank you for come</i> – and we understand that she’s saying welcome and thanks for coming to her house. And at the end she says, <i>oh thank you for your good job, good job</i>, she says, <i>beautiful the clean</i>. And what else does she say? Have a good day, she says, <i>happy you?... nice day? good day?</i> – Yes, <i>happy nice day</i>, she says, so they’re telling us to have a good day. And I just say, <i>Thank you!</i> I say, <i>bye-bye</i>. But I</p>
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nomás le digo *Thank you!* Le digo, *bye-bye*.  
Pero tengo que practicarlo más.

**Estrategias de aprendizaje de idiomas:**  
***cuando no entiendo yo le cambio al español***

Este libro lo traigo para aprender inglés. Mi hija fue a la biblioteca y dijo que pensó en su mamá, escogió un libro para niños para que yo practicara la lectura. Me dice mi hija que lo tengo que leer en 15 minutos, pero yo pienso que yo como que en dos días lo leo. No sé bien leer inglés pero yo quiero aprender, porque tengo que aprender inglés, ¿ve? Entonces, aparte de que voy a la clase de inglés, a veces leo en inglés y veo la televisión en inglés. Cuando estaba en Socorro también veía la televisión a veces en inglés y a veces en español. Pero yo no le pongo atención, sino lo que yo que hacía era ponerme a trabajar, a tejer. Nomás a las noticias, si le ponía atención un poco porque sí me gustan las noticias y a veces las pongo en inglés. Pero ahora le digo a Daisy, cuando no entiendo yo le cambio al español, que al cabo lo repiten, eso es lo que hago. En clase, entiendo lo que la maestra nos ha explicado y de vez en cuando escucho que *–she will- The ... ¿cómo se dice? the tomorrow*, entonces sé que están hablando en mañana ¿sí? Pero cuando dice *she was weekend* están hablando de pasado. Y cuando oigo que dicen *I am hungry, I need eat*, están hablando de un

have to practice it more.

**Strategies for language learning: *When I don't understand I switch to Spanish***

I've got this book here, and it's to learn English. My daughter went to the library and said she thought of her mom and chose a children's book so I could practice my reading. My daughter says that I have to read it in 15 minutes, but I think I'm going to read it in like two days. I don't know how to read English very well, but I want to learn, because I really need to learn English, right? So, aside from going to English class, sometimes I read in English and watch television in English. When I was in Socorro, I also watched television, sometimes in English and sometimes in Spanish. But I wasn't really paying attention to it, I would just start working or knitting. Just the news, I would pay more attention to that because I like the news and sometimes I put it on in English. But now I tell Daisy, when I don't understand I switch to Spanish, because in the end, they repeat it, that's what I do. In class, I understand what the teacher is explaining to us and sometimes when I hear *–she will- The... how do you say it? The tomorrow*, so then I know they're talking about tomorrow, right? But when she says, *she was weekend*, they're talking in the past.

presente. Y eso es lo que estoy captando en la televisión también cuando están hablando en tiempo pasado, en tiempo presente y en tiempo futuro. Los fines de semana Daisy y yo siempre rentamos una o dos películas y ahí sí le pongo las letras para leer lo que están diciendo. Entonces cuando el *the men* dice *ah you wuached me?* Entonces yo sé que está diciendo, *oh tú me estás mirando a mí, ¿veda?* Y luego dice ahí en las letras –*I watch you me*, entonces yo pienso que tú me estás mirando, y así es como estoy también captando las conversaciones que dicen. La última película que rentamos es *The beautiful and best* ¿O se dice *the beauty and best?* *Sometime... sometime* se dice ¿verdad? Oh, a veces es *sometime*. *Sometime is* rentar en *Friday*, para mirar en *Saturday* o en *Sunday* y regresar o *returning* en *Sunday*. Y mire lo que aprendí viendo películas. En las letras yo estaba mirando *the movies, the alien*, pero *alien* de *monster*. Y todo el tiempo que veo “*alien*” pienso en un monstruo. Hasta ahora que estoy en clase de inglés y cuando hice mis papeles de la residencia, aprendí que es “extranjero” y pues ahí está el detalle cómo va uno aprendiendo.

**Estrategias de comunicación: ¡ay todo por no saber inglés!**

Yo ahora uso mucho el teléfono con mi hija para que me ayude. Por ejemplo, fui a un

When I hear them say, *I am hungry, I need eat*, they’re speaking in the present. That’s what I’m picking up on, also on television when they’re speaking in past tense, in present tense and in future tense. On weekends, Daisy and I always rent one or two movies and, and I put on the words to read what they’re saying. So when *the men* say *ah you wuached me?* Then I know they’re saying, oh, you are watching me, right? And then the words there say – *I watch you me*, so I think that you are watching me, and this is how I’m also picking up the conversations they say. The last movie we rented was *The beautiful and best* or do you say *the beauty and best?* *Sometime... sometime* you say, right? O *sometime is sometime*. *Sometime is* rent on *Friday*, to watch on *Saturday* or on *Sunday* and return or *returning* on *Sunday*. And look what I learned watching movies. In the words I was watching *the movies, the alien* but *alien* like *monster*. And whenever I see “*alien*” I think about a monster. Now that I’m in English class and when I did my residency papers, I learned that it’s “foreigner” and, those are the details about how you start learning.

**Communication Strategies: all of this because I don’t speak English!**

Now I use the phone a lot with my daughter so she can help me. For example, I went to a

mecánico y le dije: “*good morning, you espeak spanish?*” Y dijo: “*No, only English.*” - “*Ok, guani minu.*” [espere un momento] Y ya le marqué a mi hija: “oye Daisy yo le quiero decir esto al señor, díselo en inglés.” Y luego ya me dice: “dice el señor que eso no lo puede hacer él, que tienes que ir por ejemplo al Walmart.” Otro día fui, y les dije que quería dos llantas, pero el señor no hablaba nada español, no me podía explicar. Entonces ahí ando buscando por todo Walmar y que no hallaba quién me explicara en español. Y luego vengo a maltratar a mi hija “y ya ves por no haber ido conmigo, sonza, y luego no me contestabas el teléfono, y ese señor no me supo decir nada”. Ya mejor me voy a ir allá con los mexicanos por allá en el sur. Llego y les digo: “*hey men you espeak spanish?*” Y me contesta: “yes”. –“¿Y por qué me estás hablando inglés y me contestas en español? [ríe con ganas] –“Pa que me puedas entender”, dice. Y allá compré las llantas y me las ponen y todo bien. Entonces pues ahí está.

Otro día fui a la tienda y que un señor me dijo que no era la línea para muchas piezas. Era un güerito y luego me dice: “*hey lady,* que no miras que nada más dice ahí que para 15 piezas y llevas el carro lleno?” Y luego

mechanic and I said, “*good morning, you espeak spanish?*” He said, “*No, only English.*” – “*Ok, wada mini.*” [wait a minute] And then I called my daughter, “hey, Daisy, I want to tell this guy such and such, tell him in English.” Then she says, “the man says he can’t do that, that you have to go to, for example, Walmart.” The other day I went and I told them I wanted two tires, but the man didn’t speak Spanish, I couldn’t explain myself. So there I was looking all over Walmart and I couldn’t find anyone to explain in Spanish. And then I take it out on my daughter, “just because you didn’t go with me, dummy, and then you don’t answer the phone, and that man couldn’t tell me anything.” I’m better off going where there are Mexicans, in the south. I ask them: “*hey men you espeak spanish?*” and they answer “*Yes.*” – “Then why are you answering me in English instead of Spanish?” [hearty laugh] – “So you can understand me,” he says. And I bought the tires over there and they put them on and everything was fine. So that’s it. Another day I went to the store and a man told me it wasn’t the line for so many items. He was a white guy and then he says, “*hey lady,* can’t you see that it says for just 15 items and you have a cart full?” So then I turned around and saw him and turned to see the cashier and I said, “*hey lady* is it *ok da...*

<p>volteé y lo vi a él, y voltié a ver a la cajera y le dije: “<i>hey lady es ok da... da it?</i>” nomás le hice así, señalando el carrito y luego dijo ella, “<i>is ok, no problema.</i>” Entonces ya voltié a él y le dije: “<i>she say no problema.</i>” [ríe con ganas] ¿Estuvo correcto? Y él se fue para otro lado enojado. La cajera fue más amable. Como que yo no me cohíbo cuando me hablan así que me dicen cosas, yo nomás les hago como que les entiendo bien. Y cuando no entiendo absolutamente nada, si les digo: “<i>I’m sorry, I no understand, nada.</i>”</p> <p>Otro ejemplo cuando me accidenté de la rodilla que fui al hospital, esa vez sí me acompañó mi hija porque yo no aguantaba el dolor. Pero... llegaba el doctor y preguntaba y decía mil cosas, que sobre el dolor o la inflamación, no entendía absolutamente nada y pues uno no sabe ni qué contestarle.</p> <p>Póngale, ahí estaba mi hija, sí, pero de todas maneras, no, no, será que está uno con el dolor y no sabe qué decir. Y luego llega uno y lo mandan quién sabe a dónde. Por ejemplo, que lo mandan a recoger la orden para la medicina ¿verdad? Entonces esta niña se fue por el carro mientras yo iba por la orden. Entonces me acerqué con el muchacho que parecía un <i>paramedical</i>, uno de esos que andan en las ambulancias, y no sabía cómo decirle que iba por la orden de la medicina. Y luego le digo: “<i>my name is</i></p>	<p><i>da it?</i>” and I just pointed at the cart and then she said, “<i>is ok, no problema.</i>” So then I turned to him and I said, “<i>she say no problema.</i>” [laughs heartily] Was I right? He was mad and went somewhere else. The cashier was very nice. It’s like I don’t get embarrassed when they talk to me like that or say things, I just pretend like I understand them fine. And when I don’t understand absolutely anything, I say: “<i>I’m sorry, I no understand, nothing.</i>”</p> <p>Another example is when I hurt my knee and went to the hospital, that time my daughter went with me because I couldn’t stand the pain. But... the doctor would come and ask and say a thousand things, like about the pain and the inflammation, and I didn’t understand anything and I didn’t know what to answer. Maybe my daughter was over there, but in any case, no, no, maybe it’s because I was in pain and didn’t know what to say. Later you go there and they send you who knows where. For example, they send you to pick up the order for the medicine, right? So, my daughter went for the car while I went for the order. I went up to a young man who looked like a <i>paramedical</i>, one of those ambulance guys, and I didn’t know how to ask if the medicine was ready. And I just say, “<i>my name is Alejandrina.</i>” Then he turned and laughed and said “ok, thanks.” In</p>
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*Alejandrina.*” Luego voltió y se rió y dice: “ok gracias.” ¡En español! Y yo, como diciendo, “¿¿pos este?!” Y luego ya dijo en inglés: “Yo no tengo nada de ti, pero puedes esperar allá.” No supe si nomás eso fue lo único que me dijo. ¿Cómo le digo que vengo por la receta, por la forma que me van a dar para la medicina? Entonces ya tuve que esperarme hasta que llegara mi hija para que le fuera a decir el muchacho y es ahí donde digo ¡Ay! tengo que aprender inglés! tampoco ellos trataron de ayudar, o hacer nada, nomás me dijo: “ok gracias” en español y ya me alegó quién sabe qué en inglés. Y es por eso que dice uno ¡ay! ¿Cómo le digo? ¿Por qué me dice “ok gracias”? ¿Porque me ve nopaluda?, nomás porque me ve mexicanota y le dicen a uno cualquier palabra que saben? ¡Pero no me resolvió el problema! Entonces, eso nunca se le olvida a uno. ¿Y este qué? Ahí es cuando yo digo: ¡ay todo por no saber inglés! Y es lo que también me dice mi hija: “Mamá, tienes que aprender inglés pa’ que te puedas defender.” Y ese es problema y por eso yo cuando fui allá con usted le insistí: “¡Yo tengo que aprender inglés, no, yo tengo que aprender inglés! ¡ A mí no me gusta que me anden dejando así como en el hospital! ¡No, Olvídelo! Yo en español me defiendo muy bien, solo me falta poder hacerlo en inglés.

Spanish! And I was like thinking, “and this dude?” And then he said in English, “I don’t have anything for you but you can wait there.” I didn’t know if that’s all he said. How do I say I came for my prescription, for the paper they’re going to give me for the medicine? So then I had to wait until my daughter got there to tell the young man, and that’s why I say, Oh! I have to learn English. They didn’t try to help or anything either, he just said, “ok, thanks” in Spanish and then told me who knows what in English. That’s why I say, Oh! How do I say it? Why is he saying “Ok, thanks?” Because he thinks I’m a country bumpkin? Just because he sees that I’m all Mexican and so he says any word he knows? But he didn’t solve my problem! So you never forget that. What’s up with him? And that’s when I say, oh, all of this because I don’t speak English! And that’s also what my daughter says: “Mom, you have to learn English so you can defend yourself.” And that’s the problem, and that’s why when I went to see you I insisted, “I have to learn English, no, I have to learn English! I don’t like for them to treat me like that in the hospital! No, forget about it! In Spanish I can defend myself fine, I just need to learn to do that in English.

**Motivación: Cuando hable inglés yo quiero tener un mejor trabajo**

Para mí es importante aprender inglés porque estoy cada vez más viejita, más grande y pienso que me debo de preparar por si el día de mañana, vamos a suponer que en 3 o 5 años yo ya no puedo trabajar, ¿veda'? No sé cuánto tiempo yo podré. Mi meta es que yo ya sepa hablar inglés y pueda hacer otra cosa diferente. Porque si hablo inglés, me puedo dedicar a algo diferente. Vamos a suponer, como le digo, a mí me gusta el comercio, aunque mis hijas no me dejen. Yo en cinco años estoy *speaking English*, hablando inglés [ríe]. Es mi meta y quiero un mejor trabajo, porque el que tengo, lo tengo porque no sé bien inglés. Por ejemplo, fui a la oficina esa del empleo a conseguir trabajo. No, pues no me atendieron porque no había nadie que hablara español. Yo llegué y dije: "*you speak Spanish?*" – "No, espérate, siéntate allá." Me dijo el señor y me dejó media hora ahí sentada. Dije, mejor me voy. Pero yo quiero tener un trabajo más ligerito, porque ahorita con eso de la limpieza de las casas es muy pesado. Tenemos que limpiar todos los zoclos abajo, imagínese tallando así. Entonces anoche estaba: "ay ya no aguanto el hombro". Y pues se supone que si hablo inglés, puedo aplicar en otro lugar. Por ejemplo, en una tienda acomodando ropa yo

**Motivation: When I speak English I want to get a better job**

For me it's important to learn English because I'm getting more elderly, older and I think that I should prepare for the future, let's say maybe in 3 or 5 years I can't work anymore, right? I don't know how much longer I can. My goal is to be able to speak English, and to do something else then. Because if I speak English, I can do another kind of work. Let's say, you know, I like selling things, even if my daughters don't let me. In five years I'm *speaking English*, speaking English [laughs]. That's my goal and I want a better job, because the one I have, I have it because I don't speak English well. For example, I went to the employment office to get a job. Well, they didn't help me because there was no one there who spoke Spanish. I went there and said, "*you speak Spanish?*" – "No, wait here, sit there." The man told me and he left me there for half an hour. I said, I'm going to leave. But I want to have an easier job, because right now housecleaning is pretty tough. We have to clean all the baseboards, imagine scrubbing like that. So last night I was like, "oh, oh, my shoulder hurts so much." And well, supposedly if I speak English, I can apply for a job somewhere else. For example, at a store folding clothes, I don't think that would be so

pienso que no es tan pesado, es más ligero para una persona mayor, ¿no? Porque yo ya estoy grande y ya no puedo hacer lo mismo que las muchachas. Pero se necesita el *speakinglish*. Hoy me mandaron con dos compañeras y una tiene como 24 años y la otra tiene como 30. Ellas corren, van y vienen, limpian aquí y allá, y yo no. Ahí ando detrás de ellas corriendo, pero pues trapean, luego agarran la *vacuum* y yo ya no trapeo tan rápido como ellas. Y ese es el punto, por eso necesito hablar inglés.

### **Maternidad transnacional**

#### ***Una hija aquí y la otra en México y yo en medio***

*My life in Albuquerque is good... better?*  
¿Cómo se dice? Mi vida en Albuquerque es mejor. Bueno, ¿cómo se dice? *fifty-fifty?*  
*More or less?* Cuando mi hija se vino a estudiar aquí la Universidad y yo estaba sola allá en Socorro ‘pos yo no estaba a gusto. Sí, porque ¿para qué estaba yo allá sola? Yo venía y la miraba los fines de semana si tenía dinero ¿veda’? si no, pues no venía. Es muy difícil cuando tiene una hija aquí y la otra hija en México y yo en medio. Por eso es que yo me cambié para Albuquerque. Y a Dania yo le digo: “¿para qué estas allá, sola?” Y nosotras acá. Nunca se quiso venir para acá

hard, it’s light work for an older person, right? Because I’m getting older and I can’t do the same things that girls do. But you need the *speakinglish*. Today they sent me out with two partners who are like 24 and the other is like 30. They run, come and go, clean here, clean there, but not me. I’m running behind them, but you know, they mop and then they grab the *vacuum* and now I can’t mop as fast as they do. And that’s the point, this is why I need to speak English.

### **Transnational Motherhood**

#### ***One daughter here and the other in Mexico, and I’m in the middle***

*My life in Albuquerque is good... better?*  
How do you say it? My life in Albuquerque is better. Okay, how do you say, *fifty-fifty?*  
*More or less?* When my daughter came to study here at the University and I was alone in Socorro, and I wasn’t very happy. Yeah, because, why was I there alone? I used to come see her on weekends if I had money, right? If not, well, I wouldn’t come. It’s really tough when you have one daughter here and the other in Mexico, and I’m in the middle. That’s why I moved to Albuquerque. I tell Dania, we’re here, “why are you alone there?” She never wanted to come up here [to the U.S.] with me, first because she was

conmigo, primero porque estaba estudiando para maestra y luego estaba muy emocionada con el novio. Se casó con el novio, tuvieron una hija, pero a los 6 meses él murió y ella se quedó sola con su niña. Cuando ella terminó su carrera yo le dije: “vente para acá para que ya busques trabajo aquí y aprendas el inglés”. Pero ella quería su plaza de maestra y está allá trabajando en Durango. Dice que ahí se hacen intercambios de los maestros para venir a Estados Unidos y ese es el plan que ella tiene porque les dan permiso de trabajo, y así ya puede ir y venir. Pero quieren que sepa inglés y entonces por eso le digo: “vente a aprender inglés”. Así que haremos este sacrificio de esperarnos y si quiero verla pues tengo que ir a darles la vuelta yo. ¡Yo quiero que ella se decida a venirse! Porque quiero que su niña aprenda también aquí. Y luego cuando vino para acá Dania se alivió aquí, nació ahí en Socorro la niña. Y pues si ya se murió el muchacho y están allá solas... Daisy quiere hacer carrera aquí y todavía ella quiere seguir estudiando, entonces la que necesita ayuda ahora es Daisy, porque ella no completa para todos los gastos. Entonces yo le digo a Dania: “mira, Daisy está ganando \$400 a la quincena, pero pagamos \$645 de renta, \$140 de teléfono, \$112 de aseguranza, y \$70 de luz y del cable son \$65 creo.” Y le digo: “¿Cómo va a pagar todo eso? Nomás

studying to be a teacher and then she was all in love with her boyfriend. She married the boyfriend and they had a daughter, but 6 months later he died and she was left alone with her baby. When she finished her degree, I told her, “come up here so you can find a job and learn English.” But she wanted her teaching position and she works there in Durango. She says there are teacher exchanges to come to the United States and that’s her plan because they give them a work permit, and she could come and go. But she needs to speak English and so that’s why I tell her, “come and learn English.” So we have to sacrifice and wait and if I want to see her I have to go there. I want her to decide to come up here! I also want her daughter to go to school here. When Dania did come up here for a visit, she had her baby here in Socorro. But then the young man died, and they’re alone there... Daisy wants to become a professional here and she wants to keep studying, so the one who needs help now is Daisy because she can’t cover all her expenses. So I tell Dania, “look, Daisy is earning \$400 every two weeks, but we pay \$645 in rent, \$140 for phone, \$112 for insurance, and \$70 for electricity, and I think cable is \$65. And I tell her, “How can she pay all that? She only makes \$400 because she’s in school, they only give her part time.”

gana \$400 porque como estudia, nomás le dan medio tiempo.” Daisy trabaja en unas oficinas ahí en UNM. Yo lo que estoy haciendo es ayudarle a pagar todos los gastos entre las dos. Y por eso le digo a Dania, yo no la puedo dejar sola. Y si me voy a México ¿A qué me voy? Si ya no me van a dar trabajo porque ya estoy viejita. Allá todos los trabajos dicen “de 18 a 25 años.” ¡Pues chulas! Y a uno de viejo ya no le dan trabajo. Entonces ¿poner otra vez la tiendita? le digo a Dania, ¿para qué me jueguen otra vez lo mismo? Está difícil. Entonces por ese motivo yo sigo trabajando aquí.

**Dania: “nomás me mandas dinero para comprar juguetes”**

Dania desde chiquita estuvo en casa de mi mamá, cuando nació ella, yo tenía que irme a trabajar a la farmacia, entonces se acostumbró a estar ahí con mi mamá. Cuando yo pedí la casa de Infonavit<sup>12</sup>, le decía: “vámonos a la casita”, y ella decía: “no, aquí es mi casa. ¿Allá con quién juego?”. Entonces yo me tenía que quedar ahí con mi mamá por la niña. Yo miré que mi hija estaba muy apegada con mi mamá por eso le dije a mi mamá: “mire, ya no acomplete los pagos ni de la casa, ni de la colegiatura de la niña,

Daisy works in some offices there at UNM. What I’m doing is helping her by splitting the expenses. That’s why I tell Dania, I can’t leave her alone. If I go to Mexico, what would I do there? They won’t give me work because I’m an old lady. There, the job announcements say, “from 18 to 25 years old.” Well, the pretty ones! Once you’re old, they won’t hire you anymore. What’s left, to set up the little store again? I tell Dania, so they would just do the same crap to me again? It’s tough. So this is why I keep working here.

**Dania: “just send me money to buy toys”**

Ever since she was little Dania lived at my mom’s house, when she was born I had to go to work at the pharmacy, so she got used to being with my mom. When I asked for the house from Infonavit<sup>7</sup>, I said to her: “Let’s go to the little house,” and she would say, “no, this is my house. Who would I play with there?” So I had to stay with my mom for my daughter. I could see that my daughter was very attached to my mom and that’s why I told my mom, “look, I can’t afford to pay for the house or for my daughter’s school, what do you think about me going back to Chicago and leaving Dania with you? And even my

<sup>12</sup> Instituto del Fondo Nacional de la Vivienda para los Trabajadores/*National Worker’s Housing Fund Institute in Mexico*

¿qué le parece si me voy otra vez a Chicago y le dejo a Dania? Y la misma niña me decía: “sí, nomás me mandas dinero para comprar juguetes” [ríe]. Ella siempre estuvo contenta que yo le mandara dinero nomás. No, ya era cuestión que hasta me corría, cuando me quedaba dormida iba y me despertaba: “mamá ya vete a trabajar para que me compres mis zapatos, ándale vete a trabajar” [ríe]. O sea, yo vi eso como una ganancia ¿ve? Por eso yo le dije: “oye, pues me voy a ir, pero te voy a hablar por teléfono ¿eh?” Y me dijo: “pero me vas a mandar dinero ¿verdad? Y desde entonces hasta la fecha todavía pide dinero la canija [ríe]. La casita que compré de joven, yo se la regalé a mi hija la grande cuando tenía su novio, porque yo no sé si ya Daisy y yo podamos hacer vida allá. “Pues ya es tu casa”, le dije. La que no se quiso ir de chiquita para allá, ahora es la que vive ahí. Mis dos hijas se comunican muy bien, se hablan así por la televisión, ya ve que se miran en la pantalla. Entonces están ahí platicando y luego la niña me estaba viendo y la vemos lo que está haciendo, qué comen y así, ellas también platican.

**Daisy: ella ahora dice que qué bueno que me la traje**

Cuando me separé del papá de Daisy, la niña tenía como un año y medio. Después de

daughter said, “yes, just send me money to buy toys” [laughter]. She was always happy if I would just send her money. I mean it was almost like she’d run me off, when I slept in she’d go and wake me up, “Mom, go to work so you can buy me shoes, get up and go to work” [laughter]. I mean, I had that in my favor, right, so that’s why I told her, “hey, I’m going to go, but I’ll call you on the phone, okay?” And she said, “but you’re going to send me money, right? To this date that rascal asks me for money! [laughs] So that little house I bought when I was young? I gave it to my older daughter when she was with her boyfriend, because I don’t know if Daisy and I could live there now. “It’s your house now,” I told her. She didn’t want to move there when she was little, and now she’s the one who lives there. My two daughters get along very well, they talk to each other on the television, you know, they see each other on the screen. So they are chatting there and the little girl was watching me and we see what she’s doing, what they eat, and they talk to each other, too.

**Daisy: now she says it’s good that I brought her**

When I separated from Daisy’s dad, she was about a year and a half old. After all these years, I thank God, because that failure led

muchos años, doy gracias a Dios, porque por aquel fracaso estoy donde estoy. O sea, todo tiene un porqué. Si él no me hubiera hecho lo que me hizo, yo no me hubiera regresado a México. Y luego las necesidades que tuve en México, me hicieron venirme otra vez con mi niña para acá. Y ella ahora dice, que qué bueno que me la traje. Entonces ahí están los cambios y mira, son buenos los brincos, para mi han sido como motivaciones. Cuando yo me regresé a Estados Unidos con mi niña de 10 años, me decía una pariente: “oye Alejandrina porqué tu nunca pediste *child support* [manutención para menores]? Ahí en Socorro pregunté si podía pedir *child support* y les di todos los datos del señor. Y ya me dicen: “vamos a investigar primero para estar seguros de que sí es hija de él y a ver si te podemos ayudar”. Entonces pasaron como 6 meses y después se hizo un año y fui y pregunté y dicen: “tienes que esperar”. Y pasó otro año y fui y pregunté y dicen: “a nosotros no se nos ha informado nada de ese caso, pero ven tal fecha.” Y así pasó el tiempo y ya la niña cumplió 18 años. Y luego me decían: “agarra un abogado y demándalo.” Pero nunca lo quise hacer porque yo sabía que esta persona es muy grosera y como yo estaba sin papeles, lo primero que iba a hacer es mandarme a migración, porque ya lo conozco. Y aunque

me to where I am today. I mean, there’s a reason for everything. If he hadn’t done what he did to me, I wouldn’t have gone back to Mexico. And then, all the suffering I went through in Mexico made me come back here with my daughter. And now she says it’s good that I brought her. Those are the changes, you know, and it turns out they were good leaps, for me they were motivators. When I came back to the United States with my 10 year old daughter, a relative told me, “hey Alejandrina, why don’t you ask for *child support*? In Socorro I asked if I could ask for *child support* and I gave them all the man’s information. And they told me, “we’re going to investigate first to make sure she’s his daughter and to see if we can help you.” So about 6 months passed, and then a year, and I went to ask and they said, “you have to wait.” Another year went by and I went to ask and they said, “we haven’t been informed anything about that case, but come on such a date.” And time went by and then my daughter turned 18 years old. Then they told me, “get a lawyer and sue him.” But I never wanted to do that because I know he’s a really nasty person and since I didn’t have papers, the first thing he would have done is send immigration for me, because I know him. Even though lots of people told me that I was stupid, that I should

mucha gente me dijo: “pues fuiste muy tonta, debiste haberle sacado el *child support* de la niña” pues no, yo preferí trabajar y trabajar. Incluso, ese es otro punto que tengo, yo mejor quiero estar tranquila, yo no quiero estar con una persona que a mí me esté insultando, diciendo cosas, que me esté mortificando y por ese motivo yo mejor me he mantenido sola.

**Adaptación: “¿para qué me trajiste si yo no entiendo nada inglés?”**

Cuando vivía en Socorro, yo iba y venía del rancho ¿y quién me cuidaba a Daisy? Pues como ya tenía diez años, al principio el camión llegaba acá a una cuadra y mi sobrina la recogía. Pero después ya llegaba cerca de nosotras y como las vecinas eran las mismas compañeras de ella, ahí se quedaba mientras yo llegaba y así le estuve haciendo. Mi niña lloraba mucho, me decía: “¿para qué me trajiste si yo no entiendo nada inglés?”. Y luego como no tenía yo dinero para ponerle el cable, ‘pos nomás teníamos dos canales y en inglés, ahí lo que alcanzábamos a captar con la antenita. Y yo queriéndola animar: “mira el doctor *House*.” Era un show que es de doctores. Le digo: “Mira, yo te quiero ver así” y luego me dice mi hija: “yo no entiendo nada ¿por qué me traes aquí?” Y ahora lo pone, dice que sí le gusta ese show y hasta quiere ir a la escuela de medicina. Y ahora

have gotten *child support* from him for my daughter, no, I thought it was better to just work and work harder. And, that’s another point I have, I’d rather have peace of mind, I don’t want to be with a person who is insulting me, saying things, making my life impossible, and that’s why I’ve stayed single.

**Adaptation: “why did you bring me when I don’t understand any English?”**

When I lived in Socorro, I would go to the ranch and come back, so who would care for Daisy? Well, since she was already ten years old, at first the bus would stop about a block away and my niece would pick her up. But later it stopped closer to us and since the neighbors were also her classmates, she’d stay with them until I got home, and that’s how I did it. My daughter cried a lot, she would say, “why did you bring me when I don’t understand any English?” And since I didn’t have money for cable we only had two channels in English, whatever we could catch with the little antenna. I would try to cheer her up, “look, watch doctor *House*.” It was a show about doctors. I’d tell her, “Look, I want you to be like that” and then my daughter tells me, “I don’t understand anything why did you bring me here?” But now she turns it on and says she likes that show and she wants to go to medical school.



me dice mi hija “por un lado te admiro porque tuviste mucha paciencia”. Pues sí tiene que tener uno mucha paciencia. Ella llore y llore y yo: “ánde le m’ija mire cuando me paguen le voy a comprar un pantalón.” Y luego íbamos a Walmart y que costaba 32 dólares. ¡Ay no lo completé! Llevaba 17 dólares, pero le dije: “yo creo que para la otra semana los van a poner en oferta”. Dios es grande porque lo agarré en 18 dólares y se lo regalé para el día de los reyes magos. Pero así me lo navegaba. Y era muy duro porque iba yo a las tiendas de segunda y le compraba ropa, ‘pos ahí de a diez centavos. Y ella iba muy contenta a la escuela con su ropa y que llegando una compañera le dijo: “¿y tú porqué traes mi camisa si yo la deje ahí en la segunda?” Y ahí va otra vez llore y llore a la casa: “¡viste lo que hiciste!” Y yo le dije: “no seas tonta, defiéndete, le hubieras dicho que hay muchas iguales.” Y así yo siempre le buscaba la manera.

***Ella sí tiene su escuela, lo que pasa es que no sabe inglés***

Yo quería que Daisy empezara su escuela acá y cuando llegamos a Socorro fui y la inscribí en la escuela. Entonces cuando apenas teníamos dos semanas de llegar, me mandaron a hablar de la escuela. Cuando yo entré ya me estaban esperando como diez maestros, de aquel lado y de este lado así un

My daughter tells me, “on one hand I admire you because you were very patient.” Well, you have to be really patient. She would cry and cry and I was like, “come on, honey, when I get paid I’ll buy you some pants.” And then we’d go to Walmart and they cost 32 dollars. I didn’t have enough! I had 17 dollars, but I told her, “I think next week they’re going to be on sale.” God is great because I was able to get them for 18 dollars and give them to her for three kings day. But that’s how I managed. It was really tough because I’d go to the second hand store and buy her clothes, you know for ten cents. And she went to school very happy with her clothes and then a friend told her, “why are you wearing my shirt that I took to the second hand store?” And then she was crying again all over, “see what you did!” And I told her, “don’t be silly, defend yourself, you should have said lots of shirts that are the same.” I was always trying to figure things out.

***She’s gone to school, she just doesn’t speak English.***

I wanted Daisy to start her schooling here and when we got to Socorro I registered her at school. We had only been here for about two weeks when I got a call from the school. I went in and there were like ten teachers waiting on that side, and on this side a bunch

<p>montón de gente, la directora, los maestros, la psicóloga y no sé cuántas gentes más. Y luego que me ponen a mi como la acusada, me hicieron sentir como cucaracha, dije: “ay Dios mío ‘pos qué hice?” Que me dicen que porqué esa niña ya teniendo 10 años no había ido a la escuela ¿Por qué la niña no sabe nada de nada de Socorro ni de Albuquerque, ni de aquí de Nuevo México? Según ellos la Daisy no sabía nada. Les dije: “discúlpenme mucho pero mi niña sí estuvo en la escuela”. Y yo les expliqué, es que acabamos de llegar... y mi hija no sabe hablar inglés, ni sabe nada de historia de aquí, porque ella fue a la escuela de México, y yo me la traje apenas en este año. Yo traía los papeles de la escuela de México y les dije: “mira, aquí está todo, ella estuvo desde los cuatro años en la escuela en México y cuando ya iba a entrar al quinto grado entonces fue cuando me la traje para acá.” ¿Cómo vamos a saber esas cosas? ¡Ni yo sabía qué era el símbolo ese así!<sup>13</sup>. Denle tiempo, denle un año y si gustan dennos los libros para estudiarlos. ‘Pos que lo estudiara nos dijeron y también yo junto con ella.</p> <p><b><i>No nos queda nada a veces, pero estamos contentas ahí</i></b></p> <p>Daisy y yo estábamos queriendo abrir una</p>	<p>of people, the principle, the teachers, the psychologist and I don’t know who else. It was like I was being accused, they made me feel like a cockroach, I said, “Oh my God, what did I do wrong?” And they ask me why my daughter was 10 years old and hadn’t gone to school before. Why didn’t she know anything about Socorro or about Albuquerque, or anything about New Mexico. They thought Daisy didn’t know anything. I told them, “excuse me, but my daughter was in school.” And I explained to them that we had just arrived... and my daughter doesn’t speak English, she doesn’t know about history here because she went to school in Mexico, and I just brought her this year. I had papers from her school in Mexico, and I told them, “look, it’s all here, she went to school as of age 4 in Mexico and I brought her here when she was going to start fifth grade.” How are we supposed to know those things? I didn’t even know what that symbol meant!<sup>8</sup> Give her time, give her a year and if you want give us the books, we can study them. Well, they said she should study them and that I should study them with her.</p> <p><b><i>Sometimes we don’t have anything left, but we’re happy</i></b></p> <p>Daisy and I had wanted to open a savings</p>
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<sup>13</sup> Delinea con las manos el símbolo Zia, adoptado como emblema del estado de Nuevo México./With her hands draws the Zia sun symbol, adopted as the emblem of the state of New Mexico.

cuenta de ahorros en el banco Senda, y siempre que voy y meto cien dólares, al rato voy y los saco ¿verdad? Y así estoy. Nos da risa porque no nos queda nada a veces, pero estamos contentas ahí, riéndonos. Ella es como yo, así optimista. Le digo: “oye Daisy, ¿te pagaron esta semana?” Porque le pagan un viernes sí y un viernes no. Y me dice: “No, a ti ya te toca la renta, y no voy a completar desde ahorita te digo”. Y nos reímos. Pues ya ahorita fui y escondí 100 dólares en ahorros para tenerlos ahí guardados por si no completa ella, pues tengo que completarlo yo. Tenemos cuenta en dos bancos para ir juntando. En el Senda, para supuestamente hacer un crédito y en el otro para pagar las cuentas. Queremos hacer un crédito, pero pues le digo, que voy y meto 100 dólares y al rato voy y los saco, ¡¿pos no! ¡Quiero hacer un ahorro y no puedo! Cuando me llegan las *taxaciones* [devolución de impuestos] voy y los guardo también. Pero como fui a México cuando se puso malo mi papá, pues me gasté lo del ahorro que tenía. Pues sí, ni cómo le hacía. Yo siempre procuro que tengamos el dinero para pagar las deudas, los *biles* [bills, cuentas en inglés] que le llama uno, porque no me gusta estar sin tener el dinero para pagar la renta o para pagar la luz o el cable. Entonces yo siempre me mido de que el trabajo que tengo pueda

account in the Senda bank, and I always go and put in one hundred dollars then I go later and take it back out, right? That’s how it is. We laugh because sometimes we don’t have anything left, but we’re happy and we laugh. She’s like me, very optimistic. I tell her, “hey Daisy, did they pay you this week?” Because she gets paid every other Friday. And she says, “No, you have to pay the rent because I’m not going to have enough, I already know that.” And we laugh. So I went and hid 100 dollars in savings to have it there, in case she doesn’t have enough, then I can make it up. We have an account in two banks so we can save. At Senda, supposedly to build credit and in the other one to pay the bills. We want to build credit, but like I say, I go and put in 100 dollars and then I take it out a little later, so, it hasn’t worked! I want to save but I can’t! When I get the *taxaciones* [tax returns] I go and put them in savings, too. But then I spent all my savings because I went to Mexico when my dad got sick. So yeah, it’s hard for me to do. I always try to be sure we have money to pay our debts, and the *bils* [bills], whatever you call them, because I don’t like not having the money to pay rent or electricity or cable. So I always make sure that what I earn at work can cover that. Let’s say that right now I’m earning 250, 260, and I get paid that every week. It’s not really

cubrir eso. Vamos a suponer que ahorita estoy ganando 250, 260 , me están dando por semana. Para mí es poquito, porque si pagamos 645, eche la cuenta, en tres semanas nada más completo la renta y con una semana ¿qué voy a pagar? Lo bueno es que mi hija paga una parte y yo pago otra parte porque para mí sola no podía yo cubrir todo. Entonces por eso es que a veces yo me salía, como le digo, a hacer una *yarda* o a buscarle la manera de conseguir o limpiar otra casa. Por ejemplo, ahorita que no se trabaja sábado y domingo le digo a mi hija que voy a buscar otra manera de sacar dinero, pero ella me dice que no: “mejor descansa, lo bueno es que no te enfermes, porque también si trabajas mucho, te estresas.” Y así estamos, y yo le digo: “no, pero mira, es que me falta.” Y me dice: “Calmada, tranquila, mejor descansa.” Y pues ahí estoy descansando y le digo: “¿y el día que no complete?” –“Bueno, déjame ver, ahora yo voy a comprar el mandado.” Y ella se sale y compra el mandado. Lo bueno es que tiene buenos pensamientos ¿ve? Y no me deja sola. “Hazle caso a la doctora de la familia”, me dice. Aunque de repente me está también diciendo: “ándale, ponte a escribir, ponte a leer”. –“¡Cómo molestas! ¡Déjame descansar me duele la cabeza!” Le digo, y ya nomás me ve que estoy escribe y escribe, o

enough for me because we’re paying 645, do the numbers, in three weeks I’d just have enough money to pay the rent and with what I make the other week, what can I pay? The good thing is that my daughter pays part and I pay part, because on my own, I wouldn’t be able to pay for everything. So that’s why sometimes I’d go out, like I said, to do a yard sale or find some way to find or to clean another house. For example, right now I don’t work on Saturdays and Sundays, and I tell my daughter, I’m going to find another way to get money, but she says no, that I shouldn’t. She tells me, “you should rest, so you can stay healthy, if you work too much you’ll get stressed out.” And that’s where we are, and I tell her, “no, but look, I don’t have enough.” And she says, “take it easy, calm, just rest.” So maybe I’m resting and I tell her, “but what if one day we don’t have enough?” – Well, let me see, I’m going to buy the groceries now.” And she goes and buys the groceries. The good thing is she has kind thoughts, you know? And she doesn’t leave me alone. She says, “pay attention to the doctor in the family.” But sometimes she also says, “alright, get to writing, get to reading.” – I tell her, “Stop bothering me! Let me rest, I have a headache!” But then when she sees me writing and writing, or if I’m reading, or on the computer, then she leaves me in

que estoy leyendo o estoy en la computadora, ya me deja en paz.

### **El río de la vida**

*In this picture*, tengo mi barco en medio del río, porque representa buscar dónde voy a vivir, para poder llegar con una esperanza en algo que yo pueda hacer. Y esto es si Dios me lo permite, es *God Willing*, una familia, y mi casa. Acá en la barca estamos yo con mis hijas. En el frente tengo a mi hija la más chica porque es la que me traje y atrás es mi hija la que dejé en México. Yo soy la que está remando y significa que yo soy la única que he sostenido mi familia, soy la que lleva el barco avanzando, aunque tenga dificultades. Las dificultades son estas piedras, porque hay muchos problemas, como el dinero. Y el tamaño de las rocas representa qué tan grande es la dificultad. La roca del idioma es más grande porque es muy difícil para mí el lenguaje. Mire, por ejemplo, ahorita le dije a mi hija: “voy a ir a una oficina de desempleo”. Pero no sé hablar inglés ¿Cómo me van a atender? ¿Cómo voy a ir a pedir trabajo a una tienda si no sé hablar inglés? ¿Ve? es muy grande el lenguaje, para mí sí, yo lo miro así. Y esta otra roca, *place* yo pienso que es un lugar, está chiquita porque buscar un lugar donde vivir no es tan difícil porque hay departamentos chiquitos y usted lo puede

peace.

### **The River of Life**

*In this picture*, I have my boat in the middle of the river, because it represents looking for the place to live, to be able to arrive with hope about something I can do. And this is if God allows it, it's *God Willing*, a family, and my home. I'm in the boat with my daughters. In front is my younger daughter because she's the one I brought with me, and behind is my daughter who I left in Mexico. I'm the one who's rowing and that means that I'm the only one who has supported the family, I'm the one moving the boat forward, even thru hardship. The difficulties are these rocks, because there are many problems, like money. The size of the rocks represents how big the difficulties are. The rock of language is the biggest one, because language is very difficult for me. Look, for example, I just told my daughter, “I'm going to an unemployment office.” But I don't speak English. How are they going to help me? How can I ask for a job at a store when I don't speak English? See? Language is really big for me, that's how I see it. And this other rock, *place*, I think it's a place, it's small because looking for a place to live isn't that hard because there are little apartments and you can solve that easily. But, how to go to school? Where to live? *Where to live* is

<p>solucionar más fácil. Pero ¿Cómo ir a la escuela? ¿Dónde vivir? <i>where to live</i> es complicado. <i>When and how to go to school?</i> También es complicado. En el lugar donde yo estaba antes en Socorro, no había dónde, ni cuándo, ni con quién ir a la escuela para mí. Yo sé que para las niñas no había esa dificultad, pero para mí sí para aprender el inglés. Pasé como 12 años y yo quería aprender inglés. Hasta que me vine aquí a Albuquerque empecé a buscar un lugar dónde aprender inglés. La montaña atrás significa las dificultades que dejé. Yo pienso que allá en México, el lenguaje no era dificultad porque era el español. El trabajo sí un poquito complicado porque ya no aceptan a personas mayores allá en México, es más difícil que aquí. Todavía aquí puede uno conseguir con más facilidad dónde trabajar. Allá es muy poco lo que les pagan. Acá por una hora es el pago de un día completo allá. El río es muy angosto aquí, por eso lo puse muy chico, pero la línea es derecha hacia una casa. Este camino significa, ¿cómo qué le diré? Algo que usted quiere ...pues es un camino por el cual no se puede pasar tampoco porque hay espinas. Yo siento así como un suelo muy inseguro que no puede uno caminar. Por eso marqué el camino de donde está la barca hasta donde puede uno ir, es más azul. Ese es el camino que hay que</p>	<p>complicated. <i>When and how to go to school?</i> That's also complicated. Where I used to live in Socorro, there was no place or time for me to go to school, or anyone to go to school with. I know that my girls didn't have that problem, but it was for me to learn English. I spent 12 years and I wanted to learn English. It wasn't until I came to Albuquerque that I started looking for a place to learn English. The mountain in the background represents the difficulties I left behind. I think that over in Mexico, language was not a problem because it was Spanish. Work was a little complicated because they don't accept older people in Mexico, it's harder there than here. Here it's still easier to find a place to work. Over there, they still don't pay much. What you make here in an hour is what they pay there for a full day. The river is very narrow here, that's why I made it small, but the line is straight towards a house. This road means, how can I explain? Something that you want... but it's a road that you can't walk down either because there are thorns. I feel like that, like I'm on unstable ground where you can't walk. That's why I drew as more blue the road from where the boat is up to where you can go. That's the road to follow, not here, because look, there are lots of thorns and it's not safe to go forward over here; you can here, but it's very difficult, and</p>
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<p>seguir y acá no, mire, hay muchas espinas y no es seguro avanzar por acá; por acá sí pero es muy difícil y acá pues imposible está todo tapado. La seguridad significa que yo me siento segura, que allí es un lugar que puedo estar tranquila ¿veda'?, para avanzar. Por ejemplo, mi hija, yo le dije: “vamos a buscar un departamento más barato, mira allá para el sur hay departamentos muy baratos.” Dice: “Mamá, fijate el lugar”. Que allá no vamos a sentirnos seguras dice, por eso estamos allí, porque dice ella que allí se siente segura. Yo le decía porque era más barato allá por la <i>Coors</i>. Yo le dije: “Mira acá hay <i>trailas</i> [casas de remolque] y la podemos pagar con trescientos al mes.” “Pero mira mamá ¿en qué lugar vamos a vivir?” Y ya no he buscado <i>trailas</i>, mi hija dice que <i>trailer</i> ya no quiere. Por eso yo estoy donde estoy, aunque esté más caro. El árbol representa la esperanza. La esperanza y pues los frutos que yo pueda dar. Me gustó mi árbol porque yo tengo mucha esperanza de que allá donde yo viva tenga un árbol grande. Ya cuando menos pensé ya lo había hecho hasta gordo [ríe]. Pero yo pienso que eso es como me siento y lo que yo espero.</p>	<p>over here it's impossible because it's all blocked. Safety means that I feel safe, that it's a place where I can be calm, right? To move forward. For example, I told my daughter, “let's go find a cheaper apartment, over in the south there are really cheap apartments.” She says, “Mom, look at the place.” Over there we're not going to feel safe, she says, that's why we're there, because she says that she feels safe. I was saying that because it's cheaper over by <i>Coors</i>. I told her, “Look, there are <i>trailers</i> here and we can pay it with three hundred a month.” “But look, mom, in what place are we going to live?” So I haven't looked for more <i>trailers</i> because my daughter says she doesn't want to live in a <i>trailer</i>. That's why I am where I am, even though it's more expensive. The tree represents hope. Hope, and well, the fruit I can give. I like my tree because I have a lot of hope that where I live I will have a big tree. Without really thinking about it, I had made it really fat [laughs]. But I think that's how I feel, and what I hope for.</p>
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Alejandrina's River of Life (Figure 1)





## Chapter Five

### Miriam's Testimonio

<b>Introducción</b>	<b>Introduction</b>
<p><b>Raíces mineras: <i>pensé que nunca iba a salir de mi pueblo</i></b></p> <p>Hola mi nombre es Miriam, yo nací en el año 1967 en el estado de Chihuahua, México. Soy de Santa Clara<sup>14</sup> Chihuahua, un pueblo minero. Mi transcurso de la vida siguió adelante, hice mi educación de kínder a primaria, y toda la secundaria en Santa Clara. Luego hice una carrera de educación técnica en máquinas de combustión interna relacionadas al pueblo donde yo vivía. De Santa Clara íbamos a Parral Chihuahua al CONALEP<sup>15</sup>. Pensé que yo nunca iba a salir de mi pueblo y estudié esa carrera para trabajar en las minas. Esa fue mi educación. En mi familia, somos dos hermanos y dos hermanas. Mi mamá se murió de leucemia. Yo tenía cinco años, apenas si me acuerdo que la veía nomas en la cama. Nos quedamos con mis abuelos, mi papá murió como un año después, también estaba enfermo no sé de qué. Murió y nos criamos con mi abuela. Pero como dos años después también mi</p>	<p><b>Mining Roots: <i>I thought I would never leave my town</i></b></p> <p>Hi, my name is Miriam; I was born in 1967 in the State of Chihuahua, Mexico. I'm from Santa Clara<sup>1</sup>, Chihuahua, a mining town. That's where my life went forward, I received my education from kindergarten to elementary and all my middle school in Santa Clara. Later I studied and received a vocational degree in internal combustion engines, a subject related to the town where I lived. From Santa Clara, we would go to Parral, Chihuahua, to CONALEP<sup>2</sup>. I thought I would never leave my town and I studied that degree so I could work in the mines. That was my education. There are two brothers and two sisters in my family. My mother died of leukemia. I was five years old; I barely remember that she was always in bed when I saw her. We stayed with my grandparents; my father died a year later, he also got sick with something. He died and we lived with my grandmother.</p>

<sup>14</sup> El nombre de los pueblos es ficticio para proteger la identidad de las participantes/ Names of towns are fictitious to protect the identity of the participants

<sup>15</sup> CONALEP Consejo Nacional de Educación Profesional Técnica, una preparatoria técnica /*The National Technical Professional Education School is a vocational high school.*

abuela se murió y fue cuando fuimos a vivir con esos tíos, era una hermana de mi mamá. Yo me crie con esos tíos después de que nos quedamos huérfanos desde chiquitos. Mi tía tenía cuatro hijos ya también. Estaba separada, y se casó con mi tío Juan que tenía cuatro hijos, y entre el matrimonio de mi tío y mi tía tuvieron ocho hijos y luego éramos como 16, 18 en la familia. Mi tío se fue a trabajar a Hornos, Sonora para estarle mandando dinero a mi tía pa' mantenernos a todos. Haga de cuenta que la casa era como un hospital. Yo me acuerdo de un cuarto largo, largo, con tanta cama, literas, ahí nos acostábamos todos. Tantos que éramos, bendito Dios, todos sacamos la secundaria. Y 'pos los grandes, si estudiaron una carrera, no había dinero para que todos estudiáramos. Mi hermana y yo las dos queríamos ser maestras y dijeron mis tíos: "no podemos darles estudio a las dos, o una o la otra." Y dije yo: "bueno, pues ella". Por eso mi hermana si estudió para maestra, pero yo no, y ya hasta se jubiló.

**Migración interna: todos empezamos a migrar a varias ciudades de México**

Tuvimos un accidente y mi tío se murió. Íbamos a Hornos a encontrarnos con mi tío, nos fuimos de Chihuahua a Agua Prieta y de ahí nos recogieron en una camioneta. Mi tío nos estaba esperando ahí y nos volteamos en

However, about two years later, my grandmother also died and that's when we went to live with our aunt and uncle, she was my mom's sister. They raised me after we were orphaned at a young age. My aunt already had four children by then, too. She was separated, and she married my uncle who had four children, and so between my uncle and my aunt they had eight children, and then there were like 16, 18 of us in the family. My uncle went to work in Hornos, Sonora, to be able to send money to my aunt to support all of us. The house was like a hospital. I remember a long, long room with many beds and cots where we all slept. Even though there were so many of us, thanks to God, we all finished middle school. The older ones even studied professions. There wasn't money for all of us to go to school. My sister and I both wanted to be teachers and my aunt and uncle said, "we can't pay for school for both of you, one or the other." I said, "okay, her then." That's why my sister studied to become a teacher and I didn't, and she already retired.

**Internal Migration: we all started to migrate to different cities in Mexico**

We had an accident and my uncle died. We were going to Hornos to meet up with my uncle, we went from Chihuahua to Agua Prieta and there we got into a pickup truck.

<p>la camioneta. Yo tenía 18 años, muy chavala. Fue cuando me abrí la cabeza, aquí tengo la cicatriz, son veintidós centímetros, toda, estaba partida en dos la cabeza. Yo iba al lado del tanque de la gasolina y me quemé todo este hombro y parte del pecho. Y ‘pos yo no sabía que mi tío se había muerto en ese mismo accidente, sino que la familia mía se fue, se llevaron el cuerpo para Chihuahua ¿veda’? y yo me quedé sola en el hospital. Nomás cuando desperté, me acuerdo que preguntaba por mi tía y mi tía. Pues mi tía se había regresado por que se había muerto mi tío. Me acuerdo mucho que el hospital era de unas monjas y las monjas me jalaban bien fuerte las vendas, así la carne viva y les decía yo “¡aaay me duele!” “No, no estás, no te quejes”, me decían. Me quedó una cicatriz, como manchado así más moreno en la piel. Las enfermeras me decían que no sabían cómo había vivido. Decían “todo se te veía por dentro”.</p> <p>Pues total, estuve unos días ahí en el hospital y ya veníamos, ya me iban a regresar y ‘pos nada, que ahí me traen en el camino, y ande, que ya mero chocamos con un tráiler grande ‘pos nomás frenamos y que yo de la camilla me caí. O sea, ¡ay Dios mío! Pues ahí vamos otra vez al hospital. Dije ¡Jesús bendito! Yo ya ni quería entrar, pero pues otra vez me</p>	<p>My uncle was waiting for us there and the truck rolled over. I was 18 years old, quite young. That was when I broke open my head, I have the scar here, it’s twenty-two centimeters long, the whole thing, my head was split in two. It turns out I was next to the gas tank, and this whole shoulder and part of my chest were burned. At the time, I didn’t know that my uncle had died in that same accident; my family took his body to Chihuahua, right? I was left alone at the hospital. I just remember that when I came to, I kept asking for my aunty, for my aunty. Of course, my aunt had returned because my uncle had died. I remember very well that some nuns ran the hospital, and the nuns tightened up my bandages really tight, and my skin was raw, and I would tell them, “Ooouch that hurts!” “Don’t do that, don’t complain,” they would say. I have the scar, it’s as if my skin is stained darker there. The nurses told me they didn’t know how I had survived. They said, “we could see all your insides.”</p> <p>So, in the end, I spent a few days there in the hospital and then we came back, they were going to take me back and can you believe it, on the way we almost hit a big truck and we braked hard, and I fell off the stretcher. I mean, oh my God! So, we went back to the hospital. I said, Blessed Jesus! I didn’t want</p>
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<p>tuvieron otros días hospitalizada. Y cuando regresé a Hornos una prima mía ya me estaba esperando [y me avisó sobre la muerte de mi tío]. Pero, ¡ay Dios mío! decía yo, no puede ser. Si Dios me permitió vivir una vez, la otra no sé, dije yo, por algo Dios me dejó vivir. Dos meses exactamente después de que se murió mi tío, mi tía murió. Después de la muerte de mis tíos, nos quedamos solos todos los primos y los hermanos y todos empezamos a migrar a varias ciudades de México. Yo me quedé viviendo sola en Santa Clara un rato, pero ya después mi hermano, el mayor, dijo: “no puedes estar sola.” Tenía 18 o 19 años cuando emigré a Chihuahua, la capital, a vivir con mi hermano que ya estaba casado. Y así fue, a raíz de que se murieron mis tíos y todo eso, que tuve que venirme a vivir a Chihuahua.</p>	<p>to go back in, but I had to spend a few more days hospitalized. When I went back to Hornos, a cousin was already waiting for me [and told me about my uncle’s death]. Oh my God! I said, it can’t be true. If God allowed me to live once, I don’t know if I can do it again, I said, for some reason God let me live. Exactly two months after my uncle died, my aunt died. When my uncle and aunt died, all of the cousins and the siblings were left on our own and we started to migrate to different cities in Mexico. For a while, I stayed living on my own in Santa Clara, but later my oldest brother said, “you can’t be alone.” I was 18 or 19 years old when I emigrated to Chihuahua, the capital, to live with my brother who was already married. That’s what I did, after my uncle and aunt died, and all that happened, I had to go live in Chihuahua.</p>
<p><b>Identidad, lenguaje y estatus legal: <i>mi lengua, mi español, mis raíces</i></b></p> <p>Yo soy madre y estudio parte del tiempo en Encuentro<sup>16</sup>. En mi persona siempre he sido alguien que quiero salir adelante, me gusta luchar, aprender cada día. Soy una persona responsable, siempre trato de tener presente</p>	<p><b>Identity, Language and Legal Status: <i>my language, my Spanish, my roots</i></b></p> <p>I am a mother and I study part time at Encuentro<sup>3</sup>. Personally, I’ve always tried to get ahead, I like to fight, and to learn more every day. I am a responsible person; I</p>

<sup>16</sup> Organización de base comunitaria que ofrece oportunidades educativas con un enfoque en la justicia social, para adultos inmigrantes de habla hispana. Esta organización sirvió como el contexto para el presente estudio. / *Grassroots community organization that offers educational opportunities with a social justice lens for Spanish-speaking adult immigrants. This study took place within this organization.*

<p>los valores, que no se me olvide quién soy, de dónde vengo, y lo que quiero seguir logrando. Siempre me he considerado ser una persona muy ¿cómo te diré? un poco seria ¿veda'? Pero doy todo lo que pueda. Ahora que estoy en este país, si me preguntan cuál es mi identidad, yo respondo que soy hispana cien por ciento, no tengo otras raíces más que hispana. Me identifico por mi lengua, mi español, mis raíces, pues como dicen, a lo mejor también por mi color de piel. Para mí eso es ser hispana.</p> <p>Mi esposo también nació en Chihuahua, y allá nos conocimos. Ahora vivimos en el <i>Southwest</i>, allá en la 96 de la Principal<sup>17</sup>. La mayor parte de la gente que vive por ahí habla español, la mayor parte es hispana. En ese barrio yo me siento bien, como si estuviera en México, o sea porque la gente, como le digo, en la mayor parte hablamos español, platicamos de todo, de nuestra tierra, se siente como si estuviera en un barrio en México. En mi familia ahora somos mi esposo y mis tres hijas. Tengo una joven de 19 años, otra de 12 años y 7 años la más chiquita. Tengo también un hijo de 26 años aquí en Albuquerque, pero no vive con nosotros. Trabaja en la misma compañía con mi esposo. Mi hija mayor está ahorita en su</p>	<p>always try to live according to my values, not to forget who I am and where I come from, and what I want to keep achieving. I have always considered myself to be, how can I say it, kind of a serious person, right? I give all I've got. Now I'm in this country, and if you ask me what my identity is, I would answer that I'm one hundred percent Hispanic, I don't have other roots besides Hispanic. I identify myself through my language, my Spanish, my roots, as they say, and maybe also with my skin color. To me, that is what it means to be Hispanic.</p> <p>My husband was also born in Chihuahua, and that's where we met. Now we live in the <i>Southwest</i>, over at 96<sup>th</sup> and Main<sup>4</sup>. Most people who live over there speak Spanish, most of them are Hispanic. I feel comfortable in that neighborhood, as if I were in Mexico, I mean, because the people, like I said, most of us speak Spanish. We talk about everything, about our homeland, and you feel as if you were in a neighborhood in Mexico. My family now includes my husband and my three daughters. I have one who is 19, one who is 12 and the little one is 7 years old. I also have a 26-year-old son here in Albuquerque, but he doesn't live with us. He works for the same company where my</p>
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<sup>17</sup> Una calle conocida, nombre ficticio./ A well known street, fictitious name.

<p>segundo año de la universidad estudiando Salud Pública. También trabaja en un programa sobre salud, va al <i>senior center</i>, les ayuda con el programa de señores mayores, les da pa' que aprendan computación. Entonces van así también a clínicas de salud para aprender y para saber dónde hay un recurso para ayudar a la gente. Mi hija la de 12 años, está en el grado siete en la <i>PACS</i><sup>18</sup>. A ella le encanta la música, el arte, el teatro, todo eso. Y la de siete años está en el segundo grado de la primaria. Somos una familia mixta<sup>19</sup>, tengo dos y dos. Mi hijo y mi hija, los mayores, nacieron en Chihuahua, y las dos más chicas, aquí.</p> <p><b>Metas y Logros Educativos: <i>siempre quise ser maestra de kínder</i></b></p> <p>Siempre tuve el deseo y una meta y Dios me preste vida para lograrlo. Desde que yo terminé mi secundaria siempre quise ser maestra de kínder, pero pues a veces las situaciones económicas o familiares pues no</p>	<p>husband works. My oldest daughter is now in her second year of university studying Public Health. She also works at a health program, she goes to the <i>senior center</i> and helps with programs for the elderly, and teaches them about computers. They also go to the health clinics to learn and to find out about resources to help people out. My 12-year-old daughter is in seventh grade at <i>PACS</i><sup>5</sup>. She loves music, art, theater, all that. The seven-year-old is in second grade at the elementary school. We are a mixed family<sup>6</sup>, I have two and two. My older son and daughter were born in Chihuahua, and the two youngest were born here.</p> <p><b>Educational goals and achievements: <i>I always wanted to be a kindergarten teacher</i></b></p> <p>I always had the desire and a goal; may God grant me life to achieve it. Ever since I finished middle school, I have wanted to be a kindergarten teacher, but sometimes</p>
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<sup>18</sup> PACS siglas en inglés *Performing Arts Charter High School*. Escuela local que integra las Artes Escénicas en el currículo de Escuela Preparatoria. El nombre es ficticio para proteger la identidad de la participante. / *Acronym for Performing Arts Charter High School, a local school that integrates performing arts into the high school curriculum. The name is fictitious to protect the participant's identity.*

<sup>19</sup> Familia Mixta se refiere a las familias en las que hay personas con diferente estatus legal. En el caso de Miriam, los padres y los dos hijos mayores que nacieron en México tienen el estatus de inmigrantes indocumentados y las dos menores nacidas en los Estados Unidos son ciudadanas. Al tiempo de las entrevistas, la segunda hija nacida en México estaba bajo el estatus temporal de D.A.C.A. / *A mixed family refers to families including people with different legal status. In Miriam's case, the parents and two older children who were born in Mexico are undocumented immigrants, and the two younger daughters who were born in the U.S. are U.S. citizens. At the time of the interviews, the second daughter born in Mexico had temporary status under D.A.C.A.*

<p> permitían que lograra un estudio. Siempre me ha gustado la educación de los niños y más poder ayudar a niños deshabilitados, con algún problema. No he tenido la oportunidad de realizarlo, tengo una educación muy básica, pero sigo tratando. En las escuelas de mis hijos en Albuquerque, daban información sobre lugares donde apoyan inmigrantes. A partir de ahí, me involucré con el Centro de Igualdad y ahí conocí a Encuentro también, que dan educación para adultos. Pues de ahí yo me involucré y empecé a estudiar inglés. Yo sé que me falta mucho aprender, pero me siento feliz y orgullosa que he logrado salir adelante. Ya estudié también el GED<sup>20</sup> en Encuentro. Me llevó un año estudiar para ese diploma, pero ya lo tengo desde el 2013. Después estudié computación uno y dos, ‘pos como dicen, ahorita la tecnología está avanzada ¿veda’? entonces estoy tratando de educarme más. También logré hacer en el CNM<sup>21</sup> un curso, se llama la carrera de las 45 horas para cuidado de niños, y tomé el curso de CPR<sup>22</sup> de primeros auxilios. Como le digo, siempre he querido cuidar niños, trabajar en </p>	<p> economic or family circumstances don’t allow one to study. I’ve always liked education for children and particularly, to help disabled children, those who have some kind of problem. I haven’t had the opportunity to fulfill this dream, I have a very basic education, but I keep on trying. In my children’s schools in Albuquerque, they gave information about places that support immigrants. Based on that, I became involved in El Centro de Igualdad, and that’s how I found out about Encuentro and that they give adult education classes. I started getting involved and studying English. I know I still have a lot to learn, but I am happy and proud that I have been able to move forward. I studied the GED<sup>7</sup> at Encuentro. I had to study a whole year to get that diploma, but I have had it since 2013. Later I took computer classes, level I and II, because you know, technology has really advanced now, right? I’m doing my best to keep educating myself. I was able to take a course at CNM<sup>8</sup>, it’s a 45-hour class in childcare, and I took the CPR<sup>9</sup> course, or first aid. Like I said, I’ve always wanted to care </p>
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<sup>20</sup> GED: *General Educational Development*, siglas en inglés para Desarrollo Educacional General, que ahora se conoce como *HSE*, siglas en inglés para Equivalente de Preparatoria. /*GED: General Educational Development, now known as HSE, High School Equivalency.*

<sup>21</sup> CNM: *Central New Mexico Community College*, Colegio Comunitario Local./*Local community college*

<sup>22</sup> CPR siglas en inglés para *Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation*; en español, RCP, reanimación cardiopulmonar.

guardería, o tener mi propio negocio de cuidar a los niños, y pues he buscado oportunidades así de educarme un poquito más con los niños.

**Economía, Empleo Y Migración**  
**Desempleo y Migración: *De un día para otro los dos perdimos el trabajo***

En Chihuahua, como le digo, había estudiado para máquinas de combustión. En lo que yo estudiaba, un maestro nos llevaba a trabajar. Allá le llaman refaccionarias, es como una tienda, como para ir conociendo las partes de los carros, las cosas de electricidad, o sea todo. De ahí estuve yo trabajando en las minas. Después trabajé en San Pablo de la Plata, en una mina, y luego ya me fui a Santa Clara a trabajar. En la mina yo surtía el material que necesitaban los trabajadores, por ejemplo, si iban a perforar una parte, que les daba los bombillos, los cables y eso.

Entonces lo que yo hacía era operar esa máquina que bajaba y subía el bote. Y también tenía que aprender cómo arreglar las máquinas ¿veda? Pero no mucho. Estuve como dos o tres años ahí.

En el año de 1997, un 14 de febrero, yo me casé con mi esposo. Fue un día muy especial ¿veda? de tener uno el papelito firmado.

Cuando me casé, seguí trabajando.

Prácticamente siempre trabajé, tuve a mis

for children, to work at a childcare center, or to have my own childcare business, and so I've sought out opportunities to educate myself a bit more about children.

**Economy, Employment and Migration**  
***Unemployment and Migration: Overnight both of us lost our jobs***

In Chihuahua, like I said, I had studied internal combustion engines. While I was studying, a teacher took us to work. They call it an auto parts store, it's like a store so we could become familiar with all the car parts, the electrical systems, everything. After that, I was working in the mines. Later I worked San Pablo de la Plata, a mine, and then I went to work at Santa Clara. In the mines I sorted materials that the workers needed, for example, if they were going to drill an area, I would give them the light bulbs, the wires, and all that. Then what I did was operate the machinery that lowered and raised the bucket. I also had to learn how to fix the machines, right? But I didn't do that very much. I worked there for like two or three years.

In 1997, on February 14<sup>th</sup>, I married my husband. It was a very special day, you know? To have that paper signed like that. I kept working after I got married. I've pretty much always worked, I had my kids and I



<p>hijos y seguí trabajando. Cuando me vine de Santa Clara, tomé como un curso para cuidado infantil. Estuve trabajando también en Chihuahua en guardería, ya no era lo que yo había estudiado, ya me había venido del pueblo, dije pues ya no, aquí no hay minas. Pero cerraron la guardería y entonces ya cuando me casé yo, me metí a trabajar en las maquilas, en las maquiladoras de Chihuahua. Ahí mi río, el río de mi vida<sup>23</sup>, todavía estaba con las aguas tranquilas, calmadas. De ahí en el 2002, pues ya las aguas del río de mi vida empezaron a alborotarse, por decir así, porque empezó una recesión de trabajo, muchas maquiladoras empezaron a cerrar y mi esposo y yo perdimos el trabajo. Se perdieron muchos trabajos por maquilas, cerraron la maquila que yo trabajaba, no teníamos... fue muy duro ¿veda'? porque de un día para otro los dos perdimos el trabajo. Teníamos nuestros dos hijos y empezamos a buscar oportunidades a ver qué podíamos hacer y pues, fue muy triste del 2002 al 2004 que no conseguimos nada. Porque la situación es que ya en México no hay oportunidades para personas por decir de más de treinta años, no tiene uno oportunidades de trabajo. Entonces fue en el año 2004 cuando mi esposo decidió emigrar aquí a los</p>	<p>kept working. When I went to Santa Clara, I took a course about childcare. I was also working in Chihuahua in a childcare center, it was not in the field that I had studied, I had already left my town, and I said okay well, there are no mines here. However, they closed the childcare center and then when I got married, I started working at the maquilas, in the maquiladoras [assembly plants] in Chihuahua. Then my river, the river of my life<sup>10</sup>, still had tranquil, calm waters. After that in 2002, the waters of the river of my life started getting stirred up, you could say, because a recession started that affected work, and many maquiladoras started closing and both my husband and I lost our jobs. Many maquila jobs were lost, they closed the maquila where I worked, we didn't have... it was really tough, you know? Because overnight both of us lost our jobs. We had two kids and we started looking for opportunities to see what we could do and, well, it was a very sad time from 2002 to 2004 when we couldn't find anything. Because the situation is that in Mexico there are not opportunities for people who are like over thirty years old, you don't get job opportunities. So, it was in the year 2004 that my husband decided to emigrate here, to the</p>
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<sup>23</sup> Se refiere a su ilustración Rio de la Vida, ver figura 2/ *Refers to the River of Life illustration, figure 2*

<p>Estados Unidos. Fue una situación muy difícil, muy triste, muy triste fue que se viniera ¿veda? Pero no había otra manera, no teníamos trabajo. Este caminito<sup>24</sup>, este autobús, estas rayas significan cuando mi esposo se subió al camión para venirse, o sea, fue cuando yo... pues me sentía muy feo verlo venirse y yo quedarme allá sola. Yo me quedé sola en Chihuahua con mis dos hijos, y yo estaba embarazada.</p> <p><b>Migración, temor y esperanza: <i>yo no me quería venir a aliviar aquí</i></b></p> <p>En el 2004 empezó a ponerse muy feo la situación ahí en Chihuahua, muy triste, muy feo todo. Empezó mucho eso de los vándalos, cholos, todo eso, las drogas, esa temporada fea que empezaron los barrios a pelearse. A mi hijo unos chavalos ahí le perforaron todo el cuerpo por violencia callejera. Dijo el doctor: “pues si el niño vomita en la operación ahí se va a quedar.” Me acuerdo y ... ¡ay no!<sup>25</sup> Lo apuñalaron nomás unos chavalos de esos vándalos. Entonces pues ya fue más difícil la situación. Sola, embarazada, sin trabajo, con el hijo en el hospital, era un caos, o sea, estábamos todos desesperados no sabíamos ni qué hacer. Mi hijo tenía 14 años, y la niña tenía seis años. Entonces ya dijo mi esposo: “no</p>	<p>United States. It was a situation that was very tough, very sad, very sad, that led him to come over here, right? But we didn't see any other options, we didn't have work. This little road<sup>11</sup>, this bus here, and these lines, they represent when my husband got on the bus to come here, I mean, that was when I... I felt so bad watching him leave and staying there all alone. I stayed by myself in Chihuahua with my two kids, and I was pregnant.</p> <p><b>Migration, Fear and Hope: <i>I didn't want to come to have my baby here</i></b></p> <p>In 2004, the situation over in Chihuahua started to get really nasty; everything was very sad and very nasty. There started being lots of vandals, cholos, all that, drugs, it was a bad time and there was fighting between neighborhoods. My son's whole body was stabbed by some kids there; it was street violence. The doctor said, “well if the boy vomits during the operation, he's not going to make it.” I remember that and... oh, no!<sup>12</sup> Some of those bad kids just stabbed him. That was the worse situation of all. I was alone, pregnant, unemployed, with my son in the hospital, it was chaotic, I mean we were all desperate and we didn't even know what to do. My son was 14 years old, my daughter</p>
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<sup>24</sup> idem

<sup>25</sup> Miriam llora al recordar este evento./ *Miriam cries remembering this event.*

<p>podemos estar así, vente.” Y yo no me quería venir aquí, se me hacía muy difícil. ¿qué voy a hacer? digo yo. “No”, dice, “que no podemos mujer, no hay trabajo, no hay nada” dice. Ya le digo, en Chihuahua yo lloraba, todos los días lloraba, porque aparte, yo no me quería venir a aliviar<sup>26</sup> aquí. Tanto que le decían a uno que si era niño, que se lo quitaba el gobierno, que los mandaban a la guerra cuando crecían. ¡Ay no! ¿Y si tengo un niño? ¿Si vienen por el? Pensaba yo tantas cosas, y luego ya decía, no, es que también hay mucha ayuda y esto y lo otro. ¡Ay no! ¡Me daba miedo y me daba miedo! Pero entonces fue cuando mi hijo tuvo el accidente y yo embarazada y luego mi esposo sin trabajo y sin nada, y el acá solo y yo allá sola, no pues no, ¡vámonos! dije. Por eso fue que decidí venirme cuando ya tenía como ocho meses de embarazo. Mabel nació aquí en el 2005. Fue un año que estuve sola sin mi esposo, por eso están estas espinas en mi río de la vida<sup>27</sup>. Agradezco a Dios, aunque con mucho dolor, muchas espinas, pero estamos juntos, no estamos separados.</p> <p><b>Navegando el empleo y las finanzas familiares: <i>Pero no siempre hay trabajo</i></b></p>	<p>was six. So, my husband said, “we can’t go on like this, come here.” I didn’t want to come here, it seemed like it was going to be too hard, what would I do? I thought. “No,” he said, “we can’t manage, there’s no work, there’s nothing there,” he said. I was in Chihuahua and was crying every day because I didn’t want to come have my baby here. You heard so many things, like if you had a boy the government would take him from you and send him to war when he got bigger. Oh, no! What if I have a boy? What if they take him? I thought so many things, but then I also thought, there are lots of benefits there, too. Oh, no! I was so afraid, so afraid! But then, when my son had the accident and I was pregnant, and my husband unemployed, we had nothing, and he was here alone and I was there alone... no, no. I said, let’s go! That’s how I decided to come here when I was eight months pregnant. Mabel was born here in 2005. I spent a year alone without my husband, those are these thorns in my river of life<sup>14</sup>. I thank God that in spite of the pain and thorns, we’re together, we’re not separated.</p> <p><b>Navigating employment and family finances: <i>But there isn’t always work</i></b></p>
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<sup>26</sup> “Aliviar” es una forma común de decir “parir”

<sup>27</sup> Se refiere a la ilustración “El Río de la Vida.” Ver figura 2/ *In reference to the River of Life illustration, figure 2*

<p>Un hermano de mi esposo que ya vivía aquí en Albuquerque, le dijo: “pues vente, yo te ayudo, a ver cómo le hacemos.” Ahora los dos trabajan en una compañía de plomería. Mi esposo ha trabajado en lo que es la construcción de casas, sabe poner <i>tayel</i><sup>28</sup>, sabe pintar, sabe muchas cosas ¿veda’? pero no siempre hay trabajo. Como dicen diciembre y enero por la nieve, la lluvia y todo eso, pues sí baja mucho el trabajo ¿veda’? y los descansan. Pero le digo, en este tiempo mi esposo empieza a moverse, con los contactos viejos, amistades, conocidos, les llama a ver si no tienen algo, lo que sea, ¿me entiendes? Hasta el mismo patrón le daba trabajitos, para sacar los gastos de la casa, aunque sea a limpiarle la yarda con tal de ayudarle. Por eso le digo, mi esposo ahí junta lo que puede del trabajo. También junta el cobre, el fierro, las latas de soda, pa’ venderlo. Antes las latas se les dábamos a un viejito y ahora las dejamos para el fin de año, para reciclarlas y venderlas. Mi hija la grande pues ve estas cosas y se preocupa. Por ejemplo, ahorita está preocupada por los permisos de los de DACA<sup>29</sup> ¿veda’?, porque</p>	<p>One of my husband’s brothers already lived here in Albuquerque and told him, “come here, I’ll help you, we can manage.” Now both of them work for a plumbing company. My husband has worked doing construction on houses, he knows how to lay tile, to paint, he knows lots of things, right? But there isn’t always work. You know, in December and January because of the snow and rain and all that, work gets slow, right? They get laid off. But during that time my husband starts moving, he starts getting in touch with old contacts, friends, acquaintances, to see if they have work, or whatever, you know? Even his boss gives him little jobs, to be able to pay the house expenses even if it is just cleaning the yard, just to help him. Like I said, my husband earns what he can from work. He also collects copper, iron, soda cans, to sell. We used to give our cans to an old man and now we collect them for the end of the year, to recycle them and sell them. My older daughter, she sees these things and is concerned. For example, right now she’s worried about the DACA<sup>16</sup> permits, right, because she only has a one-year permit and</p>
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<sup>28</sup> *Tile, piso*

<sup>29</sup> Acción Diferida para los Llegados en la Infancia (DACA por sus siglas en inglés) eferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, una categoría migratoria que concede permisos de trabajo y protección de deportación a ciertos jóvenes indocumentados en los Estados Unidos. / *Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), a type of immigration relief that allows work permits and protection from deportation for some undocumented youth in the U.S.*

<p>ella nomás tiene un año de permiso ya, pero gracias a Dios tiene un trabajito y a veces dice: “mamá cuando me paguen, aunque sea te doy 20 dólares para que pagues un <i>bill</i> o para la gasolina.” “No” le digo, “m’ija, ese es tu dinero, guárdalo” le digo, “no sabemos cómo se ponga la situación o qué becas puedas tú aplicar, qué dinero puedas agarrar” le digo. “Tú sabes que yo a veces sí trabajo, a veces no”, le dije, “y tu papá también.” Es lo que dice mi esposo: “no m’ija, usted sabe que yo me la parto, yo donde quiera voy y le rasguño, consigo”, dice. “No”, dice mi hija, “usted no se preocupe, usted sabe que yo le rasco hasta lo que no, si ya no puede usted trabajar, yo voy a sacar para la escuela como sea.”</p> <p><b>Migración y lazos transnacionales: Dios nos va a permitir regresar</b></p> <p>Siempre se extraña una hermana, pero, sí la tengo, sí hay gente que puede ayudarme. Mi hermana no tiene visa, nunca la arregló, no ha podido venir y es muy poca la comunicación que tengo con ella ¿veda’?</p> <p>Tuvimos una situación que nos ha distanciado, y fue que yo dejé una casa de Infonavit<sup>30</sup> en Chihuahua. Pues nos venimos y dejé de pagarla porque ¿que mi esposo</p>	<p>that’s it, but thank God she has a little job and sometime she says, “mom, when I get paid, I’ll give you 20 dollars so you can pay a bill, or for gasoline.” I say, “no, honey, that’s your money, you save it.” I tell her, “we don’t know how the situation will be or what scholarships you can apply for, what money you can get. You know that sometimes I have work, and sometimes I don’t, and the same with your dad.” That’s what my husband says, “no, honey, you know that I break my back working, I go wherever, and I’ll find work.” My daughter says, “no, you don’t worry, you know that I also scrimp and save as long as I can, if you can’t work, I’ll make money for school somehow.”</p> <p><b>Migration and transnational ties: God will allow us to return</b></p> <p>You always miss a sister; I do have one, I have people who can help me. My sister doesn’t have a visa, she never got papers, she hasn’t been able to come and I don’t have regular communication with her, right? We became distanced by a situation. What happened is that I left an Infonavit<sup>17</sup> house in Chihuahua. We came up here and I stopped paying for it because when my husband came up, did he get money to send me? No, he</p>
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<sup>30</sup> Instituto del Fondo Nacional de la Vivienda para los Trabajadores (por sus siglas en español). Instituto que otorga préstamos de interés social con subsidio gubernamental para vivienda a trabajadores de escasos recursos./National Workers Housing Fund Institute, which grants government subsidized loans for low income worker housing.

<p>cuando se vino agarrara dinero para mandarme? No, no tenía. Y luego nos venimos todos y menos teníamos para pagarla. “Ahí te están mandando decir del Infonavit que, si no pagas te van a quitar la casa”, me decía mi hermana. “No puedo Lola, ¿de dónde voy a mandar cinco mil pesos?” Y ya dijo mi esposo: “no, ‘pos a ver cómo le hacemos mujer, pero no podemos perder la casa.” Dijo: “¿qué pasa si nos vamos de aquí, adónde vamos a llegar?” Pues empecé a mandarle a mi hermana 3 mil 300<sup>31</sup> por mes para pagar lo atrasado. Yo nada más tenía a ella y a otro hermano para pedir ayuda y le hablé a ella. Así estuve tres años, mandando dinero a mi hermana para que me pagara la casa y nunca me la pagó. Tres años fijese, haciendo mi esposo el esfuerzo. No sé por qué una vez le pedí un <i>bill</i> de la casa, que me mandara los recibos, de esas veces que siente uno corazonada, y nada. Y total que marqué yo al Infonavit y me dijo la abogada: “no, esa casa está en demanda porque que no has pagado y te la van a quitar.” “No”, le dije, “yo hice un convenio, mi hermana lo firmó.” Resulta que nunca, nunca mandó ni un pago y de ahí fueron como 75,000<sup>32</sup> pesos. “Lola, ya no me mientas más, no me</p>	<p>didn’t have it. Then we all came, and we really couldn’t pay it. My sister said, “you’re getting notices from Infonavit that if you don’t pay they’re going to take your house.” I told her, “I can’t do it, Lola, where am I going to get five thousand pesos to send?” But my husband said, “no, see how we manage, honey, we can’t lose the house.” He said, “what happens if we leave here, where would we go?” So, I started sending my sister 3,300<sup>18</sup> pesos a month to pay the debt. She was the only one I could ask for help, and another brother, so I called her. For three years I was sending my sister money to pay my house, and she never paid it. Just imagine, three years, my husband scraping the money together. I don’t know why, but once I asked her for a bill for the house, to send me the receipts, I must have had an intuition, you know. Then I called Infonavit and the lawyer told me, “no, there’s a lawsuit on that house because you haven’t paid it and they’re going to take it from you.” “No,” I said, “I made an agreement, my sister signed it.” And it turns out that she never ever sent a payment, and that added up to like 75,000<sup>19</sup> pesos. I told her, “Lola, don’t lie to me anymore, don’t lie.” I told her, “that is my</p>
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<sup>31</sup> 3,300 pesos mexicanos, equivale aproximadamente a 180 dólares Americanos./*Equivalent to approximately \$180 U.S. dollars.*

<sup>32</sup> Aproximadamente 4,400 dólares Americanos (17 pesos por un dólar Americano)/*Approximately \$4,400 U.S. dollars (17 pesos/dollar)*

mientas” le dije. “Si esa casa es de mis hijos”, le dije, “porque yo no sé qué pueda pasar aquí mañana” le dije, “Lola, yo voy a volver,” le digo. Porque mi esposo dice: “Dios nos va a permitir regresar, porque vamos a regresar con bien.” Y ‘pos ellos allá, como siempre, piensan que aquí agarra uno los dólares a manos llenas, piensan que aquí la vida es muy fácil. Pero como yo le he dicho a mi hermana, desde que llegué aquí, trabajé un tiempo, pero me enfermé y ya mi esposo no quiso que trabajara. Y le digo: “Lola, no pienses que mi esposo gana miles de dólares. Es muy difícil aquí, si no tienes un permiso de trabajo, no agarras buen dinero”. ‘Pos yo cometí el error ¿veda? de confiar en ella, pues es mi familia dije yo. Y ahora a la que le mando el dinero es a una hermana de mi esposo y con ella cada mes no me falta el recibo.

**Aprendizaje Y Socialización En Un Segundo Idioma: Un Reto Para Toda La Familia**

**Bilingüismo en el hogar: *Yo estoy cómoda con que hablen los dos idiomas***

En mi casa se hablan los dos idiomas. Mi esposo y yo hablamos español. Mis hijas, bueno, entre ellas hablan mucho inglés, entonces pues yo ya me pongo “¿excuse me?

children’s house, because who knows what’s going to happen here in the future,” I told her. “Lola, I’m going to come back,” I said. Because my husband says, “God will allow us to return, and in good shape.” And well, you know people there think that we’re making fistfuls of money here; they think life is easy here. But I’ve told my sister that I worked for a while when I got here, but then I got sick and my husband didn’t want me to work. I told her, “Lola, don’t think that my husband earns thousands of dollars. It’s tough here, if you don’t have a work permit, you can’t make good money.” Anyway, I made the mistake of trusting her because she’s family, you know? Now I’m sending the money to my husband’s sister and every month she sends me a receipt.

**Second Language Learning And Socialization: A Challenge For The Entire Family**

**Bilingualism at home: *I’m comfortable with them speaking both languages***

In my house, we speak both languages. My husband and I speak Spanish. My daughters, well, among themselves they speak mostly English, so I’m like, “Excuse me? Let’s see, what are you saying?” And they start

<p>A ver, ¿qué están diciendo?” Y ya ellas empiezan a hablar inglés y ya lo que les entiendo yo, pues trato de contestarles y ellas también me <i>forzan</i> o me dicen cómo pronunciar algo. Pero, pues sí, entre ellas es más comunicación en inglés y cuando me hablan a mí, pues más español. Yo estoy cómoda con que hablen los dos idiomas, si ellas se sienten bien. Pero la mediana, Mabel, ya habla muy mocho, no me pronuncia muchas palabras, muchas cosas que no sabe cómo se pronuncia, no, no, o sea, el <i>EspanGLISH</i> que mezcla. “¿Qué? ¿Qué estás diciendo?” Me mandan cartas o documentos de su escuela y no me lo sabe traducir, tenemos que esperar a mi hija la mayor y preguntarle ¿Qué tanto dice aquí? Porque Mabel no está pensando mucho en español. A pesar de que yo siempre les ando acarreando libros en español, en inglés, yo la veo a ella que no, que batalla con el español. Cuando me vine a Albuquerque, el niño grande tenía 15 años, la segunda, que ahora está en la universidad tenía seis y medio. Mabel ya nació acá, y la chiquita también. Entonces mi hijo y la niña mayor hablan bien el español. La chiquita, pues más o menos, sí habla mucho en inglés, pero hasta ahorita, todo lo que me habla en español, ella me lo dice bien. Las dos desde chiquillas fueron al pre kínder a escuelas bilingües. Ahorita</p>	<p>speaking in English and when I understand what they say, I try to answer them. They also push me, or tell me how to pronounce something. But, yeah, among themselves they mostly communicate in English, and when they talk to me, it’s more in Spanish. I’m comfortable with them speaking both languages, if they feel good. However, the middle one, Mabel, she doesn’t speak very well, she doesn’t pronounce the words right, I mean, she mixes it up, <i>Spanglish</i>. “What? What are you saying?” I get letters or documents from her school and she doesn’t know how to translate them, we have to wait for my older daughter to ask her, what does it say here? Because Mabel isn’t thinking in Spanish very much. In spite of the fact that I’m always bringing them books in Spanish, in English, she seems to struggle with the Spanish.</p> <p>When I came to Albuquerque my older son was 15 years old and the second child, who is in university now, she was six and half. Mabel was born here, and so was the youngest. My son and the first daughter speak Spanish well. The little one is so-so, she does speak a lot in English, but up to now, what she speaks in Spanish, she speaks well. Both of them, since they were very little, went to pre kinder in bilingual schools. Now Mabel is at PACS, but everything is in</p>
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<p>Mabel está en la <i>PACS</i>, pero ahí es puro inglés, y le digo, muchas palabras no las sabe pronunciar [en español], siempre la estoy corrigiendo, a veces se molesta, le digo: “Mabel, así no se dice”. Pero yo no quiero que pierdan su lengua. Mi hija la grande, me dice: “Mamá díles que hablen español.” Pues sí un ratito me hablan español y al rato ahí están las dos puro inglés, hasta cuando se están peleando les digo: “¡ay, las estoy escuchando! ¡No crean que no!” Y luego les digo: “¿Pueden hablar español?” Y ya se quedan muy serias. Por eso yo le digo a Mabel, yo la voy a poner en una escuela que sea bilingüe para mejorar su español y a ver si logra el sello bilingüe<sup>33</sup>. A mi esposo sí le hablan puro español. Él no ha aprendido inglés, menos que yo. Tiene acá como catorce años, un año y cacho más que yo. Yo si he aprendido mucho, lo entiendo más, a la mejor no hago una oración completa, pero trato de responder a la persona, o unas palabras a la mejor sí me doy a entender y sí puedo hacer algunas preguntas.</p> <p><b>Aprendizaje de inglés en el trabajo:</b> <i>Empecé a tratar de comunicarme</i></p>	<p>English there, and she doesn’t know how to pronounce lots of words [in Spanish]. I’m always correcting her and sometimes she gets upset. I say, “Mabel, that’s not how you say it.” But, I don’t want them to lose their language. My older daughter says, “Mom, tell them to speak Spanish.” And they’ll speak to me for a while in Spanish but then they switch to all English, even when they argue, and I say, “I, I’m listening to you, don’t think I’m not!” And then I say, “Can you speak in Spanish?” Then they get all serious. That’s why I tell Mabel I’m going to put her in a bilingual school to improve her Spanish to see if she can get the bilingual seal.<sup>20</sup> They do speak only Spanish to their father. He has learned less English than me. He’s been here for like fourteen years, a year and a bit more than me. I’ve learned a lot, I understand more, I might not say a full sentence but I try to answer people, say some words, get my meaning across, and I can also ask some questions.</p> <p><b>Learning English at work: <i>I started to try to communicate</i></b></p> <p>When I came here, I didn’t go to work right</p>
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<sup>33</sup> El sello bilingüe es un premio concedido por escuela, distrito o el estado en reconocimiento de los estudiantes que han estudiado y logrado fluidez en dos o más idiomas al recibirse de la preparatoria. -/ “*The Seal of Biliteracy (in New Mexico is called Bilingual Seal) is an award given by a school, district, or state in recognition of students who have studied and attained proficiency in two or more languages by high school graduation.*”  
From: <https://sealofbiliteracy.org>

<p>Cuando me vine acá no trabajé luego, luego, y cuando empecé, duré como menos de un año porque me enfermé y ya no podía. Estaba trabajando en la limpieza de un <i>diler</i><sup>34</sup> de la Chevrolet. Me empleaba a mi otra persona, él venía también de México, hablaba los dos idiomas, inglés y español. Así que con él no hablaba inglés, pero con las personas donde yo hacía limpieza, las oficinas, los señores, si hablaban puro inglés. Y pues sí, le digo, empecé a tratar de comunicarme, era muy difícil. Lo único que hacía yo era que llegaba y “excuse me”, nomás con señas que si podía pasar, o le enseñaba la aspiradora porque no sabía cómo se decía. Puras señas, puros movimientos, porque yo no sabía nada, como se decía, ¿veda? Mi esposo por el trabajo, no ha podido estudiar inglés. Compramos una vez unos libros, videos, ahí en el correo, pero no, fue un rato nomás que lo estaba viendo y ya después no, dejó de verlos. Pero a veces sí trata, les pregunta a mis hijas: “oye m’ija, cómo se dice así o así.” Él sabe, porque a veces se pone el patrón a hablarles “y yo sé de lo que están hablando”, dice “pero no les sé contestar”. Mi hija le puso en el teléfono el traductor, también sí busca, sí trata, pero pues por el trabajo, pues no ha tenido la</p>	<p>away and then when I started, I worked for less than a year because then I got sick and wasn’t able to. I was working doing cleaning at a Chevrolet <i>dealer</i>. Another person employed me; he was also from Mexico and spoke both languages, English and Spanish. I didn’t speak to him in English, but I did speak only English with the people where I cleaned, in the offices, the men. And so, yes, I mean I started to try to communicate, and it was very hard. The only thing I did was go there and say, “excuse me”, and use sign language to ask if I could go in, or I would show them the vacuum cleaner, because I didn’t know what to call it. I would just use sign language, movements, because I didn’t know how to say anything, right? Because of his work, my husband hasn’t been able to study English. Once we bought some books, videos, in the mail, but he only looked at them for a while and then he stopped. But sometimes he tries, he asks my daughters, “hey honey, do you say this or that?” He knows, because sometimes the boss talks to them, “and I know what they’re talking about,” he says, “but I don’t know how to answer.” My daughter put a translator on his phone, he looks, he tries, but because of work he hasn’t had the opportunity.</p>
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<sup>34</sup> Dealer

<p>oportunidad.</p> <p><b>Aprendizaje de inglés en la escuela: <i>En este país el idioma es lo principal</i></b></p> <p>En México aprendí lo básico de inglés porque en secundaria eran las clases básicas, no nos enseñaban tantas palabras, no era mucha conversación. A mi si me gustaba el inglés en la escuela, pues siempre fui buena estudiante. Actualmente estoy estudiando el inglés dos<sup>35</sup> pues para seguir adelante ¿veda'? porque en este país el idioma es lo principal, es una barrera que sí me ha afectado a mí, por eso aquí<sup>36</sup> tengo una carita de enojo, de tristeza, de lágrimas. Estudié inglés en el 2008, como un semestre más o menos, y luego otra vez en el 2016 me metí al curso de inglés uno<sup>37</sup>. Y ahora pues, en la escuela ya está más fluido ¿veda'? porque con Miss Liz<sup>38</sup> y los voluntarios<sup>39</sup> fue muchísima ayuda, mucha corrección, mucho vocabulario. Hay un voluntario que me ayuda mucho. Por ejemplo, me dice: “<i>how are you today?</i>” Me le quedé viendo y luego ya me dice: “<i>how are you today?</i>” y luego ya le repito. Y luego me dice: “se contesta <i>I’m</i></p>	<p><b>Learning English in school: <i>In this country language is the main thing</i></b></p> <p>In Mexico, I learned the basics of English because in middle school they were basic classes, they didn’t teach us many words or much conversation. I liked English in school, and I was always a good student. Currently I’m studying English Two<sup>22</sup> so I can keep improving, right? Because in this country language is the main thing, it is an obstacle that has affected me, that’s why here<sup>23</sup> I have an angry face, a sad face, tears. I studied English in 2008, for about a semester, and then again, in 2016 I enrolled in English One<sup>24</sup>. Now, well, in school my English is more fluent, right? Because with Miss Liz<sup>25</sup> and the volunteers<sup>26</sup>, that really helped a lot, we got a lot of corrections and a lot of vocabulary. One volunteer has helped me very much. For example, he says, “<i>how are you today?</i>” I just looked at him, then he says to me, “<i>how are you today?</i>”, and then I repeat him. Then he says, “you answer, <i>I’m fine</i> or <i>good</i>.” Then he says, “Okay, you say <i>I’m fine</i>.” He tells me in English and he</p>
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<sup>35</sup> Se refiere al nivel de la clase/ *Referring to class level*

<sup>36</sup> Se refiere a una parte del dibujo del Rio de la Vida/ *Referring to part of the drawing of the River of Life figure 2*

<sup>37</sup> Se refiere al nivel de la clase / *Referring to class level*

<sup>38</sup> La maestra de inglés del nivel uno. /*The teacher from English level one*

<sup>39</sup> Un grupo de voluntarios visitan la clase de la Maestra Liz, una vez por semana, para practicar conversación en inglés con los estudiantes. /*A group of volunteers visit the class of Miss Liz once a week, to practice conversation in English with the students.*

*fine*, o *good*.” Y luego me dice: “A ver dime tu *I’m fine*.” Él me dice en inglés y me repite para que yo lo pronuncie y lo que debo de contestarle, y dice: “*oh, very good!*” Pero si, palabritas como lo básico, para que yo pronuncie más, porque en sí no sabe uno pronunciar, pero el me recalca más la pronunciación. Le digo: “pues eso es lo que escribí.” Entonces ahí va uno poco a poco. Las clases me ayudan cómo hacer una pregunta, por ejemplo, con una cita médica qué quiero preguntarle yo al doctor. Si la clase no me la enseñó, en la conversación con los voluntarios salen preguntas que uno tiene y ellos se la dicen a uno. Entonces muchas veces los voluntarios me decían “¿sabes qué? Pregúntale así, así se hace.” O con el doctor, o por ejemplo de... ‘pos yo saqué también preguntas del cáncer y conversaciones, y aquí mismo en el cuaderno las pongo, y ya después me pongo a ver “¡ah! así esto”, para estarse acordando. Por eso le digo, me falta más conversación, como con miss Liz, con los voluntarios y también aquí con Jerry<sup>40</sup>. Porque ellos mismos pronuncian mucho, o ya si yo le estoy hablando en español, Miss Liz me decía cómo decirlo en inglés. Con Jerry ya no practicamos tanto, nada más lo que es las hojas de las tareas,

repeats it so I will pronounce it and I need to answer him, and he says, “*oh, very good!*” So yeah, little words like the basics, so that I pronounce more because really, we don’t know how to pronounce, but he emphasizes the pronunciation. I tell him, “well, this is what I wrote.” You advance bit by bit. The classes help me know how to ask a question, for example, with a medical appointment, what I want to ask the doctor. If I didn’t learn it in class, questions come up in the conversation with volunteers and they tell you. Many times the volunteers say, “you know what? Ask it like this, this is how.” Or with the doctor, or for example maybe... I also had questions about cancer and conversations, and I write them here in my notebook, and later I look at them “oh, like this,” to remind yourself. That’s why I say, I need more conversation like with Miss Liz, with the volunteers, and also here with Jerry<sup>27</sup>. Because they pronounce things a lot, and if I’m speaking in Spanish Miss Liz would tell me how to say it in English. We don’t practice as much with Jerry anymore, just what’s in the homework sheets; we read the question and then the answer. Or, in the writing when he dictates sentences to us, so then you go and write them.

<sup>40</sup> El maestro de ingles del nivel dos. / *Teacher from Level two.*

leemos la pregunta y luego la respuesta. O así la escritura cuando nos dicta las oraciones, pues ya viene uno y las escribe.

**Inmersión en el segundo idioma: *Siempre me he estado fijando cómo se van traduciendo***

Entre el 2008 y el 2016 casi toda mi práctica ha sido pues en la escuela de mis hijas, casi la mayor parte los maestros hablan puro inglés. Y mis hijas también desde la chiquilla a la más grande hablan en puro inglés. Yo muchas cosas no las entendía, pero poco a poco empecé a ver que repetían lo mismo, o sea, hablaban así lo mismo, y yo le preguntaba a mi hija: “¿qué están diciendo Mabel?” Y pues ya me decía ella, entonces ya captaba una palabra, una cosa, y así. O la maestra nos decía que tenía yo que leerle también a mi hija libros de la escuela, que le encargaban lectura diaria, como están en programa bilingüe, ella pone una semana que sea en español y una semana en inglés. Pues no, tampoco no sé pronunciar mucho para leer en inglés, ni traducirlo. Pero pues leíamos y conforme también a las imágenes y las palabras, yo me daba una idea. O también siempre les preguntaba a mis hijas: “¿qué es esto? ¿qué dice aquí?” Y ya ellas me decían. O la misma Mabel iba traduciendo, entonces yo asimilaba la palabra lo que iba leyendo y así una que otra iba captando ¿veda’? O por

**Immersion in the Second Language: *I’ve always noticed how they translate***

Between 2008 and 2016, almost all my practice has been in my daughters’ school, because most of the teachers only speak English. My daughters also, from the little one to the oldest, just speak English. I didn’t understand lots of things they would say but little by little I started hearing them repeat the same things, I mean, they spoke the same, and I would ask my daughter, “what are they saying Mabel?” She would tell me, so I would catch a word, a thing, like that. Or maybe the teacher would tell us that I also had to read my daughter her schoolbooks, she had daily reading, and since they’re in a bilingual program, one week would be in Spanish and one week in English. Well, I can’t, I don’t know how to pronounce well to read in English, or to translate it. So we used to read along with the images and the words; I would get the gist of it. I would always ask my daughters, “what is this? What does it say here?” And they would tell me. Sometimes Mabel would translate it, so then I would assimilate the word that I was reading, and would understand a few of them, right? Or, for example, you know when you go to Walmart, they have signs, like, tools in English and in Spanish, gardening in English and in Spanish, or baby things. I’ve always

<p>ejemplo, ya ve que va uno a las tiendas en <i>Walmart</i> que tienen que, por ejemplo, herramientas en inglés y en español, jardinería en español y en inglés, o cosas de bebés. Siempre me he estado fijando cómo se van traduciendo o que se me vaya aprendiendo, pues yo siempre estoy viendo cosas. O a veces que en la caja también la cajera: “<i>don’t forget ice</i>”, decía, ¿qué es? Hasta que le dije a mi hija: “¿qué quiere decir?” “Mamá, <i>don’t forget</i>: no se te olvide; <i>the ice</i>: el hielo.” Porque a veces lo paga uno y sale sin la bolsa de hielo por eso ponen ellos ahí <i>don’t forget</i> que no se te olvide, ¡ah! ya no se me va a olvidar. Pero siempre he tratado así de estarles preguntando algo. Un día se me queda una palabra y ahí poco a poquito. Me falta mucho para hacer oraciones completas, pero con unas palabritas que voy aprendiendo, ahí la llevo. Todo ese tiempo que ya no pude ir a clases, trataba de estar escuchando, estar viendo las palabras, anuncios, o las calles que dicen <i>one way</i>. Aunque no pronunciaba bien, mi hijo se burla mucho y me dice: “<i>what?</i>” y “<i>what?</i> Dime, dime,” me dice, nomás para estarse riendo. Y ya me dice: “mamá <i>one way</i> es un solo sentido no te vas a meter p’ acá, no te vayas p’ allá, fíjate que dice esto.” “Ah bueno, ‘pos ya sé”, le digo. Pero, pues, con ellos es con los que he estado conociendo</p>	<p>noticed how they translate things so I can start to learn them, because I’m always looking at things. Sometimes at the cash register, the cashier will say, “<i>don’t forget ice</i>,” and I would be like, what is that? Until I asked my daughter, “what does that mean?” “Mom, <i>don’t forget</i>, don’t forget, <i>the ice</i>, the ice.” Because sometimes you pay for it, you leave without the bag, and that’s why they say <i>don’t forget</i> so you don’t forget it. Oh! I won’t forget that. But I always try to ask them something. One day I learn one word, and that’s how it is, bit by bit. I have a way to go before I can say full sentences, but with the few words I’m learning, I’m okay. All that time that I wasn’t able to go to classes, I would try to be listening, to be looking at words, advertisements, or the streets that say <i>one way</i>. Even if I couldn’t pronounce it well, my son teases me a lot and says, “<i>What?</i>” “<i>What?</i> Tell me, tell me,” he says, just to laugh at me. Then he says, “mom, <i>one way</i> means in one direction and don’t go in that way, don’t go that way, look at what it says.” “Oh, okay, now I know,” I tell him. But, you know, it’s with them that I have learned more vocabulary.</p>
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más el vocabulario.

**Interacciones significativas: *quiero aprender y trato de hablar el inglés***

Si voy a la tienda yo siempre ando preguntándoles que si hablan español, “*sorry no, no*”, porque si necesito alguna cosa que ando buscando “¡ay! ¿cómo pregunto y dónde estará?” También me pasa en las tiendas que llega uno “*excuse me*” y quiero preguntar por algo y sienten ellos que estoy batallando con mi inglés y me hablan español. Y luego mis hijas dicen “ay mamá”, tu echándote tu inglés y hablan español”. Bueno, ¿pero yo cómo voy a saber que sí hablan español? Trato de preguntar porque quiero aprender y trato de hablar el inglés y “¿así se dice”? Bueno, pues ni modo ya supe. Y el domingo que fui al mandado estaba en la línea ahí en el *Walmart*, y llevaba la cajota de aguas de 35 y le dije al cajero: “*guan ware*<sup>41</sup>”, y luego entonces me dijo: “*excusé me?*” y luego le dije: “*guan ware.*” “Ah! Ok”. Luego dijo “*what?*” y me hizo repetir como ellos lo pronuncian. Y luego ya me dijo que hablaba español y “¿cuánto tienes aquí?” me dijo. “No, pues tengo tantos años, *sorry I practice my English.*” “No”, dice, “*is good*, estás haciéndolo bien.” Luego me platicó que hay

**Significant interactions: *I want to learn and try to speak English***

If I go to a store, I’m always asking people if they speak Spanish, “*sorry, no, no,*” because if I need something that I’m looking for, “Oh! How do I ask and where could it be?” What also happens to me in stores is that you go there and say, “*excuse me*”, *I want to ask about something, they hear me struggling with my English*, and they speak to me in Spanish. Then my daughters say, “oh, mom, you’re trying in English and they speak Spanish.” How am I supposed to know if they speak Spanish? I try to ask because I want to learn and try to speak English, and “is this how you say it?” That’s how I can learn. On Sunday I went grocery shopping. I was in the line at Walmart and I had a great big box of 35 waters and I told the cashier, “*wan wata*”<sup>28</sup> and then he said, “*excuse me?*” Then I said, “*wan wata*”. “Oh, ok.” Then he said, “*what?*” and he made me repeat it like they pronounce it. Then he told me that he spoke Spanish and “how long have you been here?” he asked. “No, well I’ve been her for this long and, *sorry I practice my English.*” “No,” he said, “*is good* you are doing it well.” He told me that there is another woman who’s lived here for

<sup>41</sup> Un agua/ One water

<p>otra señora que tiene como 22 años de vivir aquí y que llega ahí con él y se ponen a platicar. Dice: “la señora ya me está hablando más inglés.” “Ah, pues voy a venir aquí con usted todos los días”, le digo, “para que me enseñe más inglés.” “No”, dice, “tú pásale cuando quieras.” “Si”, le digo, “para que me ayude a pronunciar porque yo pronuncio muy mocho.” “No”, dice, “pero si aprendes poco a poquito, vas a hacerlo.” Y ya pues me fui bien contenta a la casa. Mire, le digo, este señor pues qué amable me está corrigiendo y todo, qué suave que uno encuentre personas así ¿verdad? porque digo, a veces que la pronunciación de uno... sabe... se quedan así<sup>42</sup>... [los interlocutores]. Si mis hijas andan conmigo, pues ya ellas me ayudan, o si ya me da vergüenza, “m’ija dile tú, pregúntale.” Pero es lo que tratan mis hijas, primero quieren que yo me esfuerce a pronunciar para que poco a poquito me vayan saliendo las palabras. Pero sí, a ellas les da risa que de repente me hablan español “ay”, le digo, “como es malo, ¿habla español?” “Si, señora hablo español.” “¿Ya ve?”, le digo, “yo aquí echándome mi inglés.” Me ha tocado muchas veces que no me entienden, “ay sorry, sorry” pero a echarle las ganas. Cuando estoy sola, sin las</p>	<p>like 22 years, she goes to him, and they talk. He said, “that lady is already speaking to me in better English.” “Oh, well I’ll come see you every day,” I said, “so you can teach me English.” “No,” he said, “you come by whenever you want.” “Yes,” I said, “so you can help me pronounce because I pronounced pretty badly.” “No,” he said, “but if you learn little by little, you can do it.” That made me go home happy. Look, I said, this guy was so kind and was correcting me and everything, how cool is it to find people like that, right? Because I tell you, sometimes our pronunciation... you know... people just go like this...<sup>29</sup> If my daughters are with me, they help me out, or if I’m embarrassed, “honey you tell him, you ask.” That’s what my daughters try to do, first they want me to make the effort to pronounce so slowly the words will come out. But yes, sometimes they laugh when people talk to me in Spanish. “Oh,” I say, “you are bad, you speak Spanish?” “Yes, ma’am, I speak Spanish.” “See?” I say, “and here I am trying in English.” Many times, I’ve had the experience that they don’t understand me. “Oh, <i>sorry, sorry</i>” but I keep trying. When I’m alone, without the girls and when they don’t understand me, they say, <i>Sorry</i> that</p>
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<sup>42</sup> Hace una expresión facial de confusión/ She makes a confused facial expression.



niñas y cuando ya no me entienden, me dicen ellos: “*sorry que no understand,*” dicen que no saben. “*Sorry*” le digo, “*excuse me.*” Ellos me dicen: “*no problem*”, y yo les digo: “*sorry I no speak English.*” Pero entiendo más ahora que cuando llegué. Por eso le digo, voy a las tiendas y si me preguntan: “*can I help you?*” o esto, yo les contesto: “Vengo a pagar” por ejemplo, “es un apartado”, yo les digo que un pago, o en ofertas, así cositas pregunto. No todo completo, pero si me entienden poquito más.

**Adaptación Y Resistencia A Múltiples  
Formas De Discriminación**

**Discriminación en la escuela: *La principal barrera fue el idioma.***

Emigrar a los Estados Unidos fue una situación muy difícil para mí, para mis hijos, dejar a mi familia, mis costumbres, mis raíces, mi idioma. Llegar con mis hijos, uno de 14 y otra de seis años fue muy, muy difícil. Llegar aquí a Estados Unidos, la principal barrera fue el idioma. El llegar a inscribirse a una escuela, pues fue muy, muy difícil porque pues no sabe uno cómo comunicarse, cómo hablar con los maestros. Llegar y empezar a hacer tareas, a traducir. Fue una situación muy difícil, que hay maestros que pide uno ayuda y pues que no le dan nada a uno. Porque hay escuelas que

they *don't understand.*” They say they don't know. “*Sorry,*” I say, “*excuse me.*” They say, “*no problem,*” and I say, “*sorry I no speak English.*” Now I understand more than when I got here. That's why I say, I go to the store and if they say, “*can I help you?*” then I answer, “I'm here to pay,” for example, “it's a layaway,” I tell them it is a payment or on sale, I ask little things like that. Not full sentences, but they can understand me a little more.

**Adaptation And Resistance To Many  
Forms Of Discrimination**

**Discrimination in school: *The main obstacle was the language.***

Emigration to the United States was a very difficult situation for me, for my kids, to leave family, customs, my roots, my language. Arriving with my kids, one was 14, and the other six and that was very, very difficult. Coming here to the U.S., the main obstacle was the language. To go to register at a school was very, very hard because you don't know how to communicate, how to speak to the teachers. To get home and try to do the homework, to translate. It was a very difficult situation, because some teachers don't help you out even when you ask them. Some schools don't have a bilingual

no tienen un programa bilingüe, que no le pueden ayudar para nada a uno, entonces tiene uno que buscar la manera cómo apoyar a los hijos en la educación. Para mis hijos era un cambio muy difícil. La niña lloraba mucho, no quería ir a la escuela, decía que su maestra era una bruja, perdón la palabra, pero todos los días lloraba. Llegaba y se encerraba en el cuarto y en la escuela no hablaba para nada y la maestra la mandó con el consejero. Pues el cambio a la educación en México sí tiene sus diferencias. Pero pues poco a poco empezamos a estudiar, compramos un traductor para empezar a conocer el idioma. Mi hijo también en la secundaria, estuvo batallando mucho, pero gracias a Dios que sí hubo maestros que trataron de ayudarlo.

Aprender a navegarse uno aquí, fue mucho, muy difícil, venir a la tienda, las comidas, pagar los *biles*, hacer todo, todo era difícil. Y luego pues teníamos un carro nada más y mi esposo se iba a trabajar en el carro y yo batallaba mucho para moverme al principio porque no conoce uno la ruta de los camiones, no sabe uno ni ‘pa dónde ¿veda’? Bien tempranito, desde las cinco, seis de la mañana en los camiones para dejar a una a la escuela y luego al otro que se fuera a la *high school*, y yo irme a la primaria y cargar con la carriola, con Mabel y... o sea... llegar a un

program, and they can't help you at all, so then you have to find the way to support your kids in their education. It was a really tough change for my kids. My daughter cried a lot, she didn't want to go to school, she said her teacher was a witch, sorry for saying that, but she cried every day. She'd get home and go lock herself in her room and at school she wouldn't talk at all and the teacher sent her to a counselor. It was a big change from education in Mexico, it was really different. However, slowly, we started to study, we bought a translator to start to get to know the language. My son who was in middle school was also struggling a lot, but thank God there were teachers who tried to help him out.

It was really, really difficult to learn to get around here, go to the store, the meals, pay the bills, do everything, it was all difficult. Then, well we just had one car and my husband went to work in the car and I struggled a lot to get around. At first, because I didn't know the bus routes, you don't even know where to go, right? Very early, like at five or six in the morning, I was on the bus to drop one off at school and then the other one, at *high school*, and I would go to the elementary school, and have the stroller with Mabel and... I mean... to come to a country that isn't ours, it's always a difficult

país que no es el nuestro, siempre es una situación difícil, pues no conocía nada pero con el tiempo uno se va acostumbrando, ves que hay muchas costumbres que deja uno en México. Yo tengo un cactus aquí<sup>43</sup> porque son muchas espinas que estar aquí en Estados Unidos me ha provocado. Cada espina es un dolor muy fuerte<sup>44</sup>, es un torbellino, que las aguas están revueltas, gente que a veces no te ayuda, que la desprecian a uno. Esa barrera, ese racismo que existe, que no le ayudan a uno para nada, que me ha causado mucho, mucho dolor, mucha incertidumbre. Pero he salido adelante, a pesar de que tengo este cactus con mucha espina, esta rosa que está aquí significa que tengo a mi familia junta, a pesar de que hemos sufrido mucho, que no conocíamos esta ciudad, estamos unidos, no estamos separados, estamos viviendo juntos.

***Se siente el racismo***

Ha sido frecuente que me hacen sentir como que no soy de aquí. En la escuela de mi hija, la chiquilla, todavía se vive esa diferencia, ese racismo. La principal<sup>45</sup>, no nos quiere, o sea, ella quiere ver siempre su escuela 100 % que sea inglés. Con ella peleamos mucho para que siguieran los programas bilingües, que no nos quitara las clases que daban ahí

situation, because I wasn't familiar with anything, but over time you start adjusting, you see that there are lots of customs that you leave behind in Mexico. I put a cactus here<sup>29</sup> because being here in the United States has caused me many thorns. Each thorn is a deep pain<sup>30</sup>, it's a whirlpool, the waters are all stirred up, and sometimes people don't help you, and look down on you. That obstacle, that racism that exists, which is so damaging to us, which has caused me very, very much pain, so much uncertainty. But I've moved forward, in spite of having the spiny cactus, this rose here shows that I have my family together, in spite of the fact that we have suffered so much, that we weren't familiar with this city, we are together, we're not separated, we are living together.

***You can feel the racism***

Frequently I'm made to feel that I'm not from here. At my daughter's school, the youngest, you still experience that difference, that racism. The principal doesn't like us, I mean, she would like her school to always be 100% English. We argue with her a lot to continue with the bilingual program, so they wouldn't take away the classes they provided

<sup>43</sup> Se refiere a su ilustración del río de la vida figura 2 / Refers to River of Life illustration. Figure 2

<sup>44</sup> Miriam llora en esta parte del relato. / Miriam cries during this part of the testimony

<sup>45</sup> Directora/principal

<p>en la escuela, los apoyos. Pero ella no, dijo que no, y no. Se fue cerrando el salón de padres, corrieron a la maestra que nos apoyaba, y no, en las oficinas se habla muy poco el español. O sea, ahí... este... no, no, está muy mal .... si entra usted, no se siente bienvenido, no es cómodo, no sabe usted cómo va a responderle la secretaria. Porque varias hemos tenido conflictos ahí, le digo, hemos andado buscando, peleando en APS<sup>46</sup> y buscando apoyo de otras personas y sigue la principal ahí. Y se siente el racismo, se siente luego, luego que no somos bienvenidos ahí. Pero le digo, es muy triste ¿veda'? que muy buenos maestros que apoyaban el programa bilingüe, por la misma actitud de la principal, mejor se retiraron de esa escuela. La maestra de la niña hablaba español y ella me empezó a traducir y me ayudó mucho. Ya ve que agarran familias para que les regalen a los niños juguetitos, pues ella me apuntó en eso como dos años. Me ayudaba con despensas, nos daba vales para uniformes, muy buena maestra y todavía hasta la fecha tenemos convivencia. Fue cuando fui al salón de padres y pues ahí conocí más padres, más mamás y todo y nos involucramos ahí para ser voluntarias en las escuelas. Esa maestra era la que llevaba así</p>	<p>there at the school, the support. But she says no, and no, and no. The parents' room was closed down, they fired the teacher who supported us and no, very little Spanish is spoken at the offices. I mean there... uhm... no, no, it's really bad... if you go in there you don't feel welcome, it's not comfortable, you don't know how the secretary is going to answer you. Because several of us have had conflicts there, I mean, we have been seeking and fighting at APS<sup>33</sup> and seeking support of other people, but the principal is still there. And you can feel the racism; you can feel it right away that we are not welcome there. But I tell you, it's very sad, right? There were very good teachers who supported the bilingual program and because of the principal's attitude, they have left the school. My daughter's teacher spoke Spanish and she started to translate for me and helped me a lot. You know they got families to give toys to the children, and she signed me up for that for like two years. She would help me with the food bank, she'd give us vouchers for uniforms, she was a really good teacher and we still keep in touch with her. When I went to the parents' room, and met more parents, the moms and all, and we got involved to be volunteers there at the schools. That teacher</p>
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<sup>46</sup> Siglas en inglés para Escuelas Públicas de Albuquerque/ *Albuquerque Public Schools*.

<p>organizaciones que daban clases, talleres educativos, por ejemplo, <i>De Comadre a Comadre</i><sup>47</sup>, <i>Centro de Igualdad</i><sup>48</sup>, llevaba clases de nutrición, hacíamos tejido, empezó a darnos también clases de inglés. Pero al último le quitaron todo eso, la directora le empezó a quitar muchas clases, muchas cosas que ella nos ayudaba. A esa maestra la corrieron por lo mismo, porque estaba muy involucrada con nosotros los hispanos y a la principal no le parecía que estuviéramos ahí, no sé, y hasta que al final la corrieron. Ya nomás la chiquita está en esa escuela ahora, pero pues todas han pasado por ahí, Mabel, todas han pasado por esas escuelas y sigue la presión. Pero pues la niña está ahí porque es el área donde ella tiene que acudir. Y yo no las muevo porque muchas veces un carro no lo tiene uno seguro, no sabe uno cuándo pueda fallar, a veces para uno transportarse es un problema ¿vedá'?, y yo por eso siempre he tratado que estén en la escuela que les corresponde. Y no podemos pedir <i>transfer</i> y usar el camión de la escuela porque yo he escuchado que usted tiene que buscar los medios de transporte para llevarlos si no hay autobús. Pero si no puedo ¿cómo la</p>	<p>is the one who took organizations there to give classes, educational workshops, for example, from <i>Comadre to Comadre</i><sup>34</sup>, <i>Centro de Igualdad</i><sup>35</sup>; she organized nutrition classes, we would knit, she started giving us English classes, too. However, in the end, they took all that away, lots of ways she used to help us. That teacher was fired because of that, because she was very involved with us Hispanics and the principal didn't like us all being there, I don't know, and in the end, she was fired. Now just the little one is still in that school, but all of them went through there, Mabel, all of them went through those schools and the pressure continues. But the little one's there because by area it's where she has to go. I don't move them because we can't always count on the car, it might not be working, and sometimes transportation is a problem, right? That's why I've always wanted them to be in the school where they're assigned. We can't ask for a <i>transfer</i> and use the school bus because I've heard that you have to find your own means of transportation to take them if there's no school bus. If it's hard for me, how am I going to take her? If I don't have a car, what</p>
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<sup>47</sup> Grupo local que se dedica a informar y educar a la comunidad sobre prevención de cáncer de mama. / *Local group that educates the community about breast cancer prevention.*

<sup>48</sup> Organización local sin fines de lucro dedicada a promover la organización comunitaria y los derechos de los inmigrantes. / *Local non-profit that promotes community organizing and immigrant rights.*

muevo? Porque si no tengo carro ¿pues qué hago? Y luego para andar navegando en el camión, ya lo hice ¿veda'? cuando recién llegamos, se te va todo el día. Por eso le digo, me he estado, como se dice, aguantándome, soportando ahí, a ver qué sigue.

***Ayudar con los niños fue idea de nosotras.***

A la escuela de mis hijas voy todos los días porque dejo a la niña, la chiquilla, en la línea donde esperan a la maestra. Pero como la maestra está dirigiendo el *drive* donde salen y entran los carros, ya llega tarde y pues está frío ya ahorita. Entonces eso de ayudar con los niños fue idea de nosotras, las mamás, porque veíamos que daban el timbre y no llegaba a recogerlos la maestra. Y ya fue cuando nosotros le dijimos: “maestra, nosotros que estamos aquí le podemos llevar a los niños al salón ¿qué le parece?” Y es lo que hacemos todos los días. A otros maestros no les parece, se molestan. El otro día iba yo con los niños y ya íbamos a entrar y una maestra, me paró. “No puedes hacer eso”, me dijo. Y en eso iba llegando otra maestra y le dijo en inglés que yo y las mamás habíamos quedado de acuerdo con la maestra. “No, eso no está bien”, dijo. “Tienes que esperar a la maestra.” “¿Porqué?” le dije, “¿tiene algún problema? ¿Quiere que yo vaya con la principal y le diga que puedo hacer esto?” Y

can I do? Then getting around on the bus, I’ve done that before, right? When we first arrived here, your whole day is eaten up by that. That’s why I say, I’ve been, you know, putting up with it, to see what comes next.

***It was our idea to help with the kids.***

I go to my daughters’ school every day because I drop of my youngest daughter in the line where they wait for the teacher. But since the teacher is directing the *drive* where the cars go in and out, she arrives late and you know it’s cold out right now. It was our idea to help with the kids, the moms, because we noticed that the bell was ringing and the teacher wasn’t there to pick them up. That’s when we told her, “teacher, we’re here, and we can take the kids to the classroom, what do you think?” So that’s what we do every day. The other teachers don’t like it, they are bothered by it. The other day I was walking with the children and we were about to go in and a teacher stopped me, “You can’t do that,” she said. But right then another teacher got there and she told her in English that the other moms and I had arranged it with the teacher. “No, that’s not right,” she said, “you have to wait for the teacher.” “Why?” I said, “is there a problem? Do you want me to go to the principal and ask her if I can do this?” And she dug in her heels. She’s also a

<p>aferrada, aferrada la maestra. Es maestra bilingüe también, o sea ella tiene niños bilingües. Y ya enojada me dijo: “<i>it's ok, pásale!</i>” Y me pasé con los niños, que estaban oyendo todo eso. ¡Pero molesta esa maestra porque nos los llevamos al salón! Ahora lo que hace todos los días esa maestra es que se para arriba en unos escalones que hay para subir al salón así<sup>49</sup> muy retardora para que no pasemos. Hay varias mamás voluntarias que venimos con todos los niños ¿veda?-, pero todas las mamás dijimos: “¿y ahora qué trae esa maestra?” Otras mamás comentan ‘pos que envidia, o coraje, o porque ella no tendrá apoyo de los padres o ‘pos maestra amargada, todas empezaron ahí a comentar que qué fea, pero sí esos fueron los comentarios, que vieja amargada, que payasa. Pero ya no le hacemos caso.</p> <p><b>Discriminación racial, de clase y lingüística:</b></p> <p><i>El perfil racial de uno.</i></p> <p>Hay gente que yo siento y veo que sí saben los dos idiomas, pero que ya no les gusta el idioma español. Porque nos ha tocado que hemos estado así preguntándoles y dicen que no entienden o que no hablan el idioma español, y luego nos vamos o hacemos otra cosa y de repente lo escucho, yo doy la</p>	<p>bilingual teacher, I mean she has bilingual kids. She told me, all mad, “<i>It's ok, come in!</i>” I went in with the kids, who were listening to all this. But that teacher was upset because we took them to the classroom! Now what that teacher does every day is she goes to the top of some stairs that lead up to the classroom like this<sup>36</sup>, like challenging us not to go by. Several volunteer moms walk in with all the kids, right? All the moms said, “now what’s wrong with that teacher?” Other moms say, maybe she’s jealous, or upset because the parents don’t support her, or she’s just bitter. We all started commenting how nasty that was, and commenting to each other that she was a bitter old lady, a fool. Now we just don’t pay attention to her.</p> <p><b>Racial, class and linguistic discrimination:</b></p> <p><i>One’s racial profile.</i></p> <p>There are people who I hear or see can speak both languages, but it’s like they don’t like Spanish any more. Because there have been situations when we’ve asked them questions and they say they don’t understand or don’t speak Spanish, and then we go do something else and suddenly I hear them, I turn around</p>
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<sup>49</sup> Miriam se pone los brazos en la cintura para demostrar el gesto retardador de la maestra. / *Miriam puts her hands on her hips to show the teacher’s challenging posture.*

<p>vuelta y ahí está con otras personas hablando español. O sea, a la mejor también como dicen, el perfil de uno, no sé cómo lo vean a uno, a la mejor eso también afecta. Me ha pasado varias veces, al principio en <i>Walmart</i>, llegábamos y yo le preguntaba a la señora “<i>excuse me, do you speak Spanish?</i>” “No, no.” Y ya me daba la media vuelta y en otro momento ya estaba ayudando a otra señora en español. “¿Por qué es así?” decía yo, me daba tristeza. O como dicen el perfil racial de uno, luego lo hacen a un lado a uno. No sé qué vio diferente entre esa señora y yo. Porque le digo, si me veo mi persona y la veo a ella yo todavía la veo como uno, no que tuviera... que fuera más blanca que yo, que tuviera, como dicen, los ojos azules, pero yo la veo que somos iguales, yo no sé en qué yo soy diferente. Por eso le digo, porque yo la escuché. Que, si vi a otra, ¿preguntarle y que me diga no también? Dije, mejor ya ni les pregunta uno, mejor ahí anda uno buscando las cosas sola. Pero pues yo he visto que nieguen la ayuda a uno, sí, no sé a qué se deba, o sea, no entiendo, le digo, no sé. En cambio, hay otras que me han visto que estoy batallando en pronunciar el inglés y luego, luego me hablan en español para que no me 167iles. Y luego me dicen “¿buscaba esto, necesitaba esto señora?” “¡Oh!” le digo, “habla español.” Y luego como aquel</p>	<p>and they are speaking Spanish with someone else. I mean, maybe it’s also because of one’s profile, I don’t know how they see us, but maybe that’s also impacting things. It’s happened to me several times, at first in <i>Walmart</i>, we’d go there and ask the lady, “<i>excuse me, do you speak Spanish?</i>” “No, no.” And I’d turn around and then here she’s helping someone else in Spanish. “Why is that?” I would think, it made me sad. I mean, it’s one’s racial profile, as they say, they push you aside. I don’t know what she saw different between that lady and me. Because I mean, I look at myself and I see her and she seems like me, it’s not like... like she was whiter than me, or that she had, like, blue eyes, I see her and she seems the same as me, I don’t know what makes me different. That’s why I asked her, because I heard her. When I saw someone else, to ask her and have her tell me no? I thought, I guess I won’t even ask, it’s better just to wander around looking for things on my own. Because I’ve seen people refuse to help you, yeah, I don’t know what the reason is, or what, I don’t understand, I don’t know. Then there are others who see me struggling with English and right away they speak to me in Spanish so I don’t have trouble. They say, “were you looking for this, did you need this, ma’am?” I say, “Oh, you speak Spanish!”</p>
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<p><i>Walmart</i> es chiquito y la mayor parte de nosotros de aquel lado somos hispanos, lo bueno que pensaron que era una comunidad latina para allá ¿veda'?, que la mayor parte hablamos español. Pero le digo, la diferencia ¿veda'?, o sea, yo no sé qué verán en uno, qué me distingue a mí de un americano, un mexicano. A lo mejor, como dicen ellos, su piel blanca, sus ojos, su pelo, pero ¿cuántos americanos hay también de tez morena, de piel oscura? Pues para ellos siempre nos van a tener así, como señalándonos, eres de México, eres de allá y pues aquí seguimos luchando.</p> <p><b><i>El idioma no me va a impedir seguir luchando por los sueños de mi familia.</i></b></p> <p>Hay una experiencia que siempre me ha lastimado mucho y toda la vida lo voy a sentir<sup>50</sup>. Aquí<sup>51</sup> mi río de la vida pues está bastante alborotado, con ondas, con remolinos, con lagos, una víbora, una piraña. En este año, 2015, yo tuve una situación muy difícil y eso fue por no saber el idioma. Mi hija Mabel, ya ve que a ella le gusta mucho el teatro, el arte la música. Andábamos en la fiesta del 5 de mayo y estaban dando los papelitos para audicionar niños de tales</p>	<p>And since that Walmart is small, and most of us over there are Hispanic, the good thing is that they thought it was a Latina community there, right? That most of us speak Spanish. But I mean, look at the difference, right? I don't know how they see me, or what distinguishes me from an American, a Mexican. Maybe, like they say, their white skin, their eyes, their hair, but look how many Americans have brown skin, dark skin! They are always going to treat us like that, like pointing us out, you're from Mexico, you're from there, and here we're still fighting.</p> <p><b><i>The language isn't going to stop me from struggling for my family's dreams.</i></b></p> <p>One experience has always hurt me a lot, and I'll feel it my whole life<sup>37</sup>. Here<sup>38</sup> my river of life was very stirred up, with waves and whirlpools, with lakes, a snake, a piranha. That year, 2015, I had a very tough experience and it was because I didn't know the language. My daughter Mabel, she really likes theater, art and music. We were at a Cinco de Mayo party and they were handing out fliers to audition children of certain ages who wanted to participate in movies and</p>
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<sup>50</sup> Aquí Miriam rompe en llanto y cuenta toda la historia llorando y sollozando. Hay mucho dolor en el tono de su voz./ *Here Miriam breaks into tears and tells the whole story crying and sobbing. Her tone of voice expresses much pain.*

<sup>51</sup> Se refiere a su ilustración El Río de la Vida, ver figura 2/ *Refers to her River of Life illustration, see figure 2*

<p>edades que querían participar para películas o cosas así. Y ya me dijo Mabel de lo que se trataba y todo. Y luego ya, la señora me pidió mis datos, mi correo y Mabel me traducía. Después le dijeron que estudiara un comercial de los <i>eskiros</i><sup>52</sup>, unos dulces así, y que nomás iba a decirlo en la cámara para que ellos la grabaran, y que llevara una foto para tenerla en la aplicación. Y sí Mabel hizo todo y en su solicitud puso pues que era bilingüe, que hablaba los dos idiomas, y todo lo que ha participado en las escuelas, lo que hacía, lo que buscaba, total llenó todo. Hicimos la cita, llenamos todos los papeles, y cuando llegamos con la señora que estaba recogiendo las solicitudes, le dijo a mi hija: “¿tú eres Mabel? <i>Your mom?</i>” y ya le dijo Mabel que yo era su mamá. Me hizo una pregunta la señora a mí en inglés, pero yo no le pude contestar. Entonces mi hija la grande dijo: “ella no habla inglés. Yo le voy a traducir.” Y luego dijo la señora: “¡No, pues no! Si no me contesta ella ¡no! Tú no puedes contestar.” Le dijo mi hija: “Pero yo sí se inglés” Agarró los papeles la señora y la foto y me los aventó. Yo no entendía que pasaba y le dije a mi hija: “¿qué pasó?” “No, pues dice que no porque necesita hablar contigo y tú no le sabes contestar en inglés.” “Pero,</p>	<p>things like that. Mabel told me what it was about and everything. Then the lady asked for my information, my email, and Mabel translated for me. Later they told her to practice a <i>eskiros</i><sup>39</sup> commercial, the candy, and that she just had to say it into the camera so they could record it, and to take a picture for her application. Mabel did everything she was supposed to do and in her application, she said she was bilingual, spoke two languages. She put everything she’s done at school, what she did, what she wanted, she filled it all out. We made the appointment, filled out all the papers, and when we got to where the lady was collecting applications, she asked my daughter, “Are you Mabel? <i>Your mom?</i>” and Mabel said I was her mom. The lady asked me a question in English, but I wasn’t able to answer. Then my older daughter said, “she doesn’t speak English. I can translate.” And the lady said, “Oh, well no! Not if she doesn’t answer! You can’t answer.” My daughter told her, “But I speak English.” The lady grabbed the papers and the photo and threw them at me. I didn’t understand what was going on and I asked my daughter, “what happened?” Well, she says no because she needs to talk to you and you can’t answer in</p>
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<sup>52</sup> Skittles

<p>¿yo qué? Si la que va es la niña, yo nomás estoy aquí por ser su mamá. ¡Dile!” ¡Y yo insistía! “¡dile m’ija y dile!” “No quiere mamá, ya no quiere nada.” Y yo toda angustiada: “¿Por qué?” Yo siento que mi hija ya no quiso seguir preguntando por la manera que ella nos respondía, así: “¡no, no!” Su voz también le hizo sentir que hasta ahí era y nada más.</p> <p>Me dio mucha tristeza ese día y le dije a mi hija: “¡Ay perdóname m’ija! Me da mucha lástima, ¡perdóname! ¡fue mi culpa!” Dijo mi hija: “No mamá, no te preocupes, la vieja payasa esa que no quiso.” Ese fue uno de los momentos que yo me sentía así bien mal porque mi hija iba con la ilusión ¿veda’? Yo sé que eran miles de niños, pero para ella era algo que siempre ha querido. Me sentí mal por lo mismo, porque mi hija quería ir a esa audición, y la persona de ahí no le dio la oportunidad por el hecho nomás de que yo no hablaba inglés. Y ya, Mabel también lloró y dijo: “ni modo.” Y yo le dije: “M’ija, ¡perdóname! M’ija, te prometo voy a tratar de aprender”, le dije, “lo más que yo pueda.” Yo le pedí perdón a mi hija por haber perdido esa oportunidad, pues porque no avanzó por mi culpa, nomás por el idioma. Mis hijas siempre, pues, me han comprendido ¿veda’? Saben la situación, pues yo he tratado lo más que puedo de</p>	<p>English.” “But, why me? The one who’s going is my daughter, I’m just here as her mom. Tell her!” I kept insisting, “tell her, honey, tell her!” “She doesn’t want to, mom, she says no.” I was so upset, “Why?” I think my daughter didn’t want to keep asking because of the way she answered us, “No, no!” You could tell from her voice that she wasn’t going to budge.</p> <p>That made me so sad that day and I told my daughter, “Oh, honey, I’m sorry. I’m so sorry, forgive me! It was my fault!” My daughter said, “No, mom, don’t worry, that old clown is the one who didn’t want to.” That was one of the moments that I felt very bad because my daughter was all excited, right? I know that there were thousands of kids, but it was something she had always wanted. I felt bad because of that, because my daughter wanted to go to that audition and that person didn’t give her the chance just because I didn’t speak English. Mabel cried, too, and said, “oh well.” I told her, “honey, forgive me! Honey, I promise I’ll try to learn as best I can,” I said. I apologized to my daughter for having lost that opportunity, because it was my fault she didn’t move forward, just because of the language. My daughters have always understood me, you know? They know what the situation is, that I have tried to learn English as much as</p>
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aprender el inglés, pero pues sí batallo. Y por eso en ese año fue que me sentí realmente mal, por esa persona que me discriminó nomás por hablar español, que no le dio la oportunidad a mi hija. No lo he entendido, no entiendo por qué el idioma hace la diferencia. Están mis hijas aquí por una educación, un bienestar mejor, no estoy aquí para quitarle nada a nadie. Estamos luchando por salir adelante, o sea, no entiendo la desigualdad. Que esa persona que me haya discriminado nomás por no poderle contestar en inglés. Pero pues sigo tratando de estudiar ¿veda'? de lograr lo más que pueda yo de aprender inglés. Ojalá y el día de mañana yo pueda volver y demostrarle que el idioma no me va impedir seguir luchando por los sueños de mi familia, que ojalá y haiga oportunidades para seguir saliendo adelante, que esa persona, no se ¿veda'? piense un poquito, que no estamos aquí por nada malo. Ojalá más adelante mis aguas estén más tranquilas. Pero a pesar de esas espinas que tanto dolor que me han causado, al final haiga una recompensa.

#### **Encuentros con la policía**

*¡María purísima!, ya me va a regresar, me va a esposar.*

Al llegar aquí nos tocó vivir cosas que no esperábamos. Para empezar, cuando la policía me paró. ¡Ay Dios mío! Ahí vengo yo

possible, but that it is a struggle for me.

That's why I felt so bad that year, because of that person who discriminated against me for speaking Spanish, who didn't give my daughter an opportunity. I still don't understand that. I don't understand why language makes a difference. My daughters are here for an education, for a better wellbeing, I'm not here to take anything from anybody. We're struggling to get ahead, I mean, I don't understand inequality. For that person to discriminate against me just because I couldn't answer in English.

However, I keep trying to study, right? I do what I can to learn English. I hope that tomorrow I can go back and show her that the language isn't going to stop me from fighting for my family's dreams; I hope there are opportunities to keep moving forward. I hope that person thinks about it a little, that we're not here to do anything bad. I hope that later on my waters will be calmer. But, in spite of all those thorns and all the pain that they have caused, there will be a reward in the end.

#### **Police encounters**

*Holy Mary! She's going to send me back, she's going to handcuff me.*

When we got here, we went through things we didn't expect. To start off, when the police stopped me. Oh my God! I'm driving

<p>manejando y luego ¡las luces! Yo me quedé parada, no me orillé ni nada, pero ya cuando me pitan, “ah pues sí soy yo, es a mi” dije, entonces ya me paré. Yo me quedé quieta, fue cuando ella me hablaba y me hablaba y me decía cosas en inglés: “<i>Caman</i><sup>53</sup>!” y “<i>caman!</i>” Y yo toda asustada para nada entendía. Yo decía, ¿pues qué quiere esta? Ya me va a mandar pa’ fuera. Teníamos poquito que habíamos llegado y ya me va a regresar a México, decía yo. Estaba enojada, muy agresiva la mujer esa, no sé si a la mejor también le haya hecho molestar a ella que yo no le hacía caso, pero yo... no sabía qué hacer, en México nunca me habían parado, nunca, es la primera vez que me paraba un policía de tránsito. Dije, me va arrestar, me va a echar, y ella seguía hablándome en inglés “<i>caman, caman!</i>” Y yo pues ¿qué quiere decir eso? “No, es que no entiendo,” toda asustada le decía yo, “no entiendo.” Pues aferrada hasta que se molestó ella, me abrió la puerta del carro y cuando me hizo “<i>caman</i>” así con la mano, “quiere que me baje, que me salga” pensé yo. Me hizo que me bajara y que me pide los papeles. Llevaba yo a la niña chiquita atrás, se quedó calladita. Caminó hasta atrás del carro y fue cuando me señaló el <i>esticker</i><sup>54</sup> de la placa que estaba</p>	<p>and then, the lights! I stopped right there, I didn’t even pull over, but then when someone honked at me, “oh well it’s me, it’s for me,” I said, so I stopped. I stayed quiet, and she was talking and talking to me in English, “<i>Cumon</i><sup>40</sup>” [Come on] and “<i>cumon!</i>” I was all frightened and didn’t understand at all. I thought, what does she want? She’s going to send me back. We hadn’t been here very long and I thought she was going to send me back to Mexico. That woman was mad, very aggressive, I don’t know if maybe she got upset because I wasn’t responding to her, but I... I didn’t know what to do. In Mexico I’d never been stopped, never. It’s the first time the traffic police have stopped me. I thought, they’re going to arrest me, kick me out, and she kept talking to me in English, “<i>Cumon, cumon!</i>” And I’m like, what does that mean? “No, I don’t understand,” I said, all scared, “I don’t understand.” I just froze there until she got upset, she opened my car door and when she said “<i>cumon</i>” to me, gesturing with her hand, I thought, “she wants me to get out, to get out.” She gestured for me to get out and asked me for my papers. I had my little girl in the backseat, she was very quiet. She walked toward the back of the car and that’s</p>
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<sup>53</sup> *Come on!* Expresión en inglés que significa “¡vamos!” “¡venga!” “¡ándale!” “¡date prisa!”

<sup>54</sup> *Sticker*, en español calcomanía.

<p>vencido. Y luego ‘pos yo nomás le decía con las manos la expresión de que yo no sabía nada ¿veda’? Y luego me dijo: “<i>your name!</i>” ‘Pos ni cómo comunicarme, ¿qué le digo? En ese momento yo no sabía que quería mis datos, no sabía que quería mi nombre, mi dirección. Y luego que ni me acordaba tampoco ni dónde vivíamos, de la dirección. ¡Ay!, decía, ¿si será este número? Vivíamos allá en unas <i>trailas</i>, y andaba cambiándome aquí en los departamentos de los Cinco Puntos. Y entonces me dio todo el papeleo y ya le entendí el nombre y la dirección, y luego nomás me encerró ahí donde tenía que ir, y ‘pos después investigué yo qué era eso y ya me dijeron que a la corte y todo eso. Yo en México nunca había tenido que ir a la corte, para nada, no. Y aquí, no sabía ni cómo llegar, yo no tenía ni carro para saber dónde están esas oficinas. Y sola me fui a investigar, me fui en el camión, me bajé mucho antes porque yo no sabía ni pa’ dónde este camión más me llevé, y yo no sabía ni cómo preguntar. ¿Y si no hay ni quien hable español? Total, que caminé no sé cuánto, pero di con la oficina donde estaba lo de los <i>tickets</i> y lo de las licencias. ¡Y qué diferencia cuando yo llegué a la corte! Estaba un señor que hablaba español y él fue el que me dijo: “pues yo te recomiendo que si te vas a quedar a vivir aquí en Nuevo México vayas y</p>	<p>when she showed me the <i>sticker</i><sup>41</sup> on the license plate that was expired. And, well, I just made gestures with my hands that I didn’t know anything, right? And then she asked me, “<i>your name!</i>” I didn’t have any way to communicate, what do I say? I didn’t know she wanted my information, my name or address. And right then I honestly couldn’t even remember where we lived, the address. Oh! I thought, is this the right number? We lived over in some <i>trailers</i> and I was moving over here to some apartments in Five Points. Then handed me all the paperwork and then I understood there was a name and address; she just circled where I had to go. Later on, I investigated what that was and they told me it was for court and all that. In Mexico, I had never had to go to court for any reason, no. I didn’t even know how to get there, I didn’t have a car to know where those offices were. I went on my own to investigate, I took a bus, I got off way too early because I didn’t know where that bus was going, and I didn’t know how to ask the way. What if there’s no one who speaks Spanish? I don’t know how far I walked but eventually I found the office for the tickets and the licenses. And what a difference when I got to court! There was a man there who spoke Spanish and he told me, “well I recommend that if you’re going to stay living</p>
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saques tu licencia.” Y ya pues, investigué para ver qué necesitaba y en el 2006 saqué yo la licencia, luego, luego, le digo que acababa de llegar en el 2005.

Lo que más me intimidó fue cuando le prenden a uno las luces, luego que llega y se para así en la ventana y con la mano aquí en la pistola muy... una pose así... y era un miedo porque la expresión de ella era... ¡hijuela! me acuerdo y digo: “!María purísima!, ya me va a regresar, me va a esposar” yo ya me veía así atrás del carro con esposas ¡Qué miedo! Sí imponen siempre las personas esas, era de esas mujeres altas, así toscas, güera, de esas güeras macizonas. Pero le digo, ¡fue un susto! Y fijese que hasta del miedo se me olvidó que yo traía la licencia mexicana. Yo le hubiera enseñado a la policía mis datos ¿veda? que era lo que ella yo creo estaba esperando ver. Pero el miedo nunca se me pasó, se queda uno paralizada, no reacciona. Ahora si me para alguien ¿cómo se dice? Ahora investigo, sé cuándo dicen que la placa ya se venció, el *esticker*, o sea ¿me entiende? Ahora ya sé más cómo interactuar con la policía, ‘pos ya ve que ahora sí con todos los talleres y todo que le dicen a uno. Bueno, pues se está uno en paz, llega ella, y uno le pregunta ¿por qué me paró? Ahora si ella me pide, me dice

here in New Mexico that you go and get your license.” So, I looked into what I needed to do and I got my license in 2006, right away, I mean I had only arrived here in 2005.

What was most intimidating was when they turn the lights on at you, then they come up and stand here by the window, with the hand on the gun, very... a pose like... it was frightening because her expression was, Man-oh-man! I remember and think, “Holy Mary, she’s going to send me back, she’s going to handcuff me.” I could already see myself behind the car handcuffed. What a fright! Those people impose themselves; she was a tall, gruff, blond woman, a big woman. But I tell you, it was a fright! Just imagine, I was so scared I forgot that I had a Mexican license. I could have showed the police officer my information, right? That’s what she wanted to see. But I didn’t get over the fear, you freeze, and don’t react. Now if someone stops me, you know, now I investigate. I know when they say the license is expired, the *sticker*, I mean, you know? Now I have a better idea of how to interact with the police, you know with all the workshops and what you hear from people. So that makes you calmer, she comes up, and you ask, why did you stop me? Now if she asks me, if she says *anchuren* [insurance] she’s asking for my insurance, my *driver*

<p><i>anchuren</i><sup>55</sup> de que mi aseguranza, mi <i>driver</i> licencia, mi licencia de manejar, mi registraci3n o sea si esas palabras me las dice, ‘pos yo le entiendo ahora. Saco mis documentos y se los entrego y ya de ah3 ya no tengo m3s que estarle diciendo. Si me pregunta: “¿Tu n3mero de seguro social?” no le contesto. Yo digo, muchas veces, aunque ande uno bien, aunque ya conozco m3s mis derechos, si me da pendiente, me dan nervios, miedo pues, dejar mi familia ¿no? Porque ya ve que pasa que llaman luego, luego a migraci3n o algo y a veces no tiene uno oportunidad, que en un ratito hacen el proceso y sale uno. Entonces ese es mi miedo, dejar a mis hijas solas, dejarlas sin... ¡ay no!</p> <p><b>¿Sabes c3mo me llam3, mamá? ¡Frijol mojado!”</b></p> <p>A mi hijo tambi3n lo detuvieron reci3n cuando llegamos. Una vez sali3 mi hijo con un amigo a recoger al pap3 de su amigo y otro se3or, andaban tomados los dos se3ores y fueron los muchachos de choferes voluntarios, pero en ese momento no tra3a mi hijo ni una identificaci3n porque se salieron as3 nom3s. Los pararon y lo tuvo como dos horas y media sentado all3 en la banqueta. Y dice mi hijo: “no me dejaba hacer llamadas y</p>	<p>license, my driver’s license, my registration, I mean if she says those words, now I understand. I take out my papers and give them to her and I don’t have to say anything else. But if she asks me, “your social security number?” I don’t answer. I mean, often, even if I’m doing the right thing and I know my rights, it still worries me, makes me nervous, frightened, to leave my family, right? Because it happens you know that they call immigration right away or something and sometimes you don’t have the chance, they process you fast and you’re out. So that’s my fear, to leave my daughters alone, leave them without... oh, no!</p> <p><b><i>You know what he called me, mom? Wet bean!</i></b></p> <p>Shortly after we got here, my son was stopped too. Once my son went out with a friend to pick up his friend’s father and another man, they two men had been drinking and the boys volunteered to drive them, but at that time my son didn’t even have an ID because they just went out like that. They were stopped and they had him sitting on the curb for like two and a half hours. And my son says, “they wouldn’t let me make calls and were calling me insults,</p>
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<sup>55</sup> *Insurance, seguro*



<p>diciéndome palabras ofensivas, pero pues yo no le contestaba nada. ¿Sabes cómo me llamó, mamá? ¡Frijol mojado!”, dice mi hijo. Pero no le hicieron la prueba de que él no venía borracho nomás le dijo el policía que como traía al señor borracho y traía cervezas el señor abiertas en el carro, a mi hijo le echaron la responsabilidad por venir manejando. Mi hijo apenas tenía 17 años, estaba en la prepa, ya entendía inglés, aunque hablaba poco. “Pero esas palabras que me dijo mamá, para todo me decía frijol mojado” así me dijo mi hijo. Y luego no podemos ni quejarnos de eso, porque no hacen nada. Pues al final le dio el <i>ticket</i> y lo mandó a escuela de manejo. También lo mandaron a corte y vino y alegó en la corte, “es que yo no venía tomado, yo fui a recoger a la persona que venía tomada” dijo. “¿Le hubiera parecido que esa persona causara un accidente más feo?” Y pues me dolió ¿veda’? porque la discriminación que lo detalla, así como frijol mojado, pues era triste ¿veda’? Pero mi hijo cumplió con el reglamento, pagó la multa y tuvo que ir a esa escuela para borrachos y salió todo bien.</p> <p><b><i>Por eso es más seguridad estar bien informado.</i></b></p> <p>En otra ocasión estábamos en la iglesia, mi hijo tenía los grupos de oración y le quisieron robar el carro. Y fue el policía y todo, y le</p>	<p>but I wouldn’t answer anything. You know what he called me, mom? Wet bean!” my son said. But they didn’t do a test to show that he wasn’t drunk, the police officer just told him why was he bringing that drunk man and the man had open beers in the car, and my son was blamed because he was driving. My son was just 17 years old, he was in high school, he already understood English, but he didn’t speak much. “But those words he called me, mom, he kept calling me wet bean,” that’s what my son told me. Later we couldn’t even complain about that, because they wouldn’t have done anything. In the end, they gave him a <i>ticket</i> and they sent him to driving school. They also sent him to court and he went and argued in the court, “I wasn’t drinking, I went to pick up the person who had been drinking,” he said. “Would you have wanted that person to cause a bad accident?” And that was painful for me, right? Because the discrimination against him, like wet bean, I mean, that’s, right? But my son fulfilled the requirements, he paid the fine and had to go to that school for drunk people, and everything turned out fine.</p> <p><b><i>That’s why it’s safer to be well informed.</i></b></p> <p>Another time we were at church, my son had prayer group, and someone tried to steal his car. He went to the police and everything and they asked for my son’s social security</p>
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pidió el número de seguro social a mi hijo y como no lo tenía, no lo pudo dar, entonces dijo el policía que a ver si procedía su reporte, y ya nunca jamás procedió, no hicieron nada. Con todo lo que le hicieron al carro, lo destruyeron y nomás porque no teníamos seguro no procedió la demanda, ni la investigación. Mi hijo iba y hablaba y según el policía le dio la tarjetita para que lo llamara y le diera seguimiento a su caso, pero nunca, nunca hizo nada, nunca procedió nada. Por eso es más seguridad estar bien informado. A mis hijos, y a mi esposo también, lo que he aprendido aquí yo lo he tratado de llevar a ellos. Yo le digo: “y los papelitos, los folletos léanlos y léanlos” les digo, “para que aprendan lo que tiene uno que decir y lo que no.” Como ese policía que preguntó por el seguro social. Es que recién llegamos, no sabe uno defenderse de nada, y a veces cuando sabes también pues te intimidan y no estás preparado, es difícil, tener la sangre fría y decir, “ah ya sé lo que digo y lo que no debo decir”, no es tan fácil. Por eso le digo esas personas que tienen una complexión o el rostro así de que... ¡ay con este no se puede! A veces es difícil.

number, and since he didn't have one, he couldn't give it, then the police officer said they'd see if they moved forward with his report, and they never did, they didn't do anything. And they had really damaged his car, they destroyed it, but the case died, there was no investigation, just because he didn't have a social security number. My son would go and talk to them, and he said the police officer gave him his card to call him and follow up on the case, but they never ever did anything, they never proceeded. That's why it's safer to be well informed. I've tried to share what I've learned here with my kids, and also with my husband. I tell them, “read this, read these pamphlets,” I say, “so you know what you should and what you shouldn't say.” Like that police officer who asked for his social security number. We had just arrived, and you don't know how to defend yourself, and sometimes even when you do, they intimidate you and you're caught off guard. It's hard to be calm and collected and say, “oh, I know what to say and what not to say,” it's not easy. That's why those people who have a complexion or the expression like... oh, I can't deal with him! Sometimes it's really tough.

<p align="center"><b>Cambios Culturales y Nuevas Formas de Pertenencia</b></p>	<p align="center"><b>Cultural Changes and New Ways of Belonging</b></p>
<p><b>Cambios culturales</b>  <b><i>Cuando llega uno tiene que aprender muchas cosas, otras costumbres.</i></b></p> <p>Cuando llegué yo aquí, que emigré, lavé la ropa, saqué mis lazos, ya ve que tiene uno sus lazos, su tendadero, ‘pos aquí no había lazos, pero pues estaba el porchecito. Claro que yo saqué la ropa de mis hijas y la tendí ahí afuera del porche en la <i>trailer</i>.<sup>56</sup> Y el dueño vio toda la ropa tendida y pues llegó en la tarde mi esposo y le dijo: “¿sabe qué? Dígale a su esposa que no puede hacer eso.” Me dijo mi esposo: “¡tú estás loca no andes haciendo eso ya! ¡Ya no estás en el rancho! Si no, se molestan y nos corren.” Pues sí había secadora y lavadora en la <i>trailer</i>, pero ‘pos allá yo puro en el lavadero y la ropa tenderla en el sol. “Es que aquí no es lo mismo que allá”, me dijo mi esposo. Pero él ya tenía un año de aprender cosas que yo no había aprendido. Él nunca me dijo nada, no puedes hacer esto, o lo otro, por decir así, que la música fuerte, nada me dijo. “Pos ya sabes”, me dijo, “si, ya sé” le dije, “a echar la ropa a las mugres esas ¡ay se me va a quemar mi ropa!” Y a veces quisiera lavar a mano,</p>	<p><b>Cultural changes</b>  <b>When you get here, you have to learn a lot of things, other customs.</b></p> <p>When I got here, when I emigrated, I washed clothes, I strung my rope, you know, a clothesline, because there were no ropes here, but I had a little porch. I took out my daughters’ clothes and hung them out there on the porch of the <i>trailer</i>. The owner saw all the clothes hanging and when my husband came home, he told him, “you know what? Tell your wife she can’t do that.” My husband said, “are you crazy, don’t do that anymore. You’re not in the country anymore! They might get mad and kick us out.” I mean, there was a dryer and a washer in the <i>trailer</i> but I was washing by hand and hanging them to dry in the sun. My husband told me, “it’s not the same here as it is there.” But he’d been here for a year learning things that I hadn’t learned yet. He never told me I couldn’t do this or that, you know, like playing music loud, he didn’t tell me anything. “Well now you know,” he said. “Yes, now I know,” I said, “to throw the clothes in that crap, my clothes are going to</p>

<sup>56</sup> Anglicismo para referirse a las casas prefabricadas; del inglés *trailer home*.

tender al sol, todavía hasta la fecha me desespero. Me acordé ahorita de esta anécdota, cuando llega uno tiene que aprender muchas cosas, otras costumbres.

***Son como uno y llegan aquí y cambian.*** A mi concuña, nunca le gustó que su esposo ayudara a su hermano. El día que me pararon a mí la policía, ella sabía que el *esticker* ya estaba vencido, pero nunca nos dijo “hay que cambiarlo, hay que hacer esto”, no nos aconsejó. Pero esa concuña también, vino igual que uno, igualito, pero a ella no le gusta ayudar pues, que se ayuden entre familia, no. Por eso se enojó mucho mi esposo cuando me pararon por lo del *esticker*. Le digo es que hasta que la policía me señaló, que estaba vencido, fue cuando yo le entendí. Ya ve que le mandan a uno cartas, de que ya es hora que se le va a cambiar. Si ella sabía ¿¿por qué no nos dijo?! ‘Pos yo no sé, no entiendo por qué si son gentes que son como uno y llegan aquí y cambian. Porque le digo, no le quitábamos nada, mi esposo le daba bastante dinero porque él llegó a vivir ahí con ellos. Además de pagarle cada semana por estar en la casa, le pagaba un *bil*<sup>57</sup>, le compraba mi esposo mandado, todo. Así son, no entiendo, me da mucha tristeza.

burn!” Sometimes I would like to wash by hand, hang it in the sun, it still makes me crazy. I just now remembered that story, when you get here, you have to learn a lot of things, other customs.

***They’re like us but they come here and change.*** My brother in law’s wife? She doesn’t like her husband to help his brother. The day I was stopped by the police, she knew the sticker was expired, but she never told us, “you have to change it, do this.” She didn’t give us advice. But that sister-in-law, she came here just like we did, exactly the same, but she doesn’t like to help the family, no. That’s why my husband got really mad when I was stopped for the sticker. I mean, I didn’t understand anything until the police officer pointed out to me that it was expired. You know they send letters telling you it’s time to change them. She knew but, why didn’t she tell us? I don’t know, I don’t understand because they’re like us but they get here and change. I tell you, we weren’t taking anything from her, my husband gave them enough money because when he got here, he lived with them. Besides paying them every week for staying at the house, he also paid a bill, my husband bought groceries, everything.

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<sup>57</sup> *Bill*, cuenta.

## **Nuevas Formas de Pertenencia**

### ***He encontrado la familia que yo dejé en***

***México.*** Cuando yo empecé a involucrarme en la escuela de mis hijas, hubo una señora que me dijo: “vaya al salón de padres ahí la van a ayudar.” Pues fui, ¿no? Era cuando mi hija lloraba mucho y no quería ir a la escuela. Ahí conocí bastantes padres de familia, mamás ya son como ocho, nueve años que los conozco y todavía seguimos teniendo amistad. Nos quedamos en un grupo en el *face de 180iles180ger*, somos como unas veinte familias que estamos todavía en contacto. Que si alguien necesita, no sé, que vacunas pa’ los perros, que quién me da un *raite* para Río Bravo, que va a haber despensas, que va haber del *flu...* o sea, estamos en comunicación todavía. Pero le digo, son como un segundo matrimonio para mí porque han estado en las buenas y en las malas, como en la enfermedad, en la salud, digo, siempre el apoyo. Por ejemplo, cuando me hicieron la cirugía del pre-cáncer, que yo no podía manejar, luego, luego se ofrecieron. Y para que mi esposo se fuera al trabajo me decían: “nosotros la llevamos a las quimioterapias.” Yo a veces pienso, pues no tengo familia aquí y sí hay malas gentes que la discriminan a uno, pero Dios pone buena gente también. Porque dejé a mi familia, acá

*That’s how they are, I don’t get it, it makes me sad.*

## **New Ways of Belonging**

### ***I’ve found the family that I left in Mexico.***

When I started getting involved in my daughters’ school, a lady told me, “go to the parents’ room and they’ll help you there.” So, I went, right? That was when my daughter was crying a lot and didn’t want to go to school. I met many parents there, mothers who I’ve known for eight or nine years now, and we’re still friends. We have a group on *Facebook messenger*; there are about twenty families who are still in touch. If someone needs say, I don’t know, vaccinations for their dogs, or who can give me a *ride* to Rio Bravo, there’s going to be a food bank, or shots for *flu...* I mean, we’re still in communication. I tell you, they’re like a second marriage for me because they’ve been there through thick and thin, like in sickness and in health, I mean, always supporting. For example, when I had surgery for pre-cancer and wasn’t able to drive, right away people offered to help. They said, “we’ll take you to chemotherapy” so my husband could go to work. Sometimes I think, well that I don’t have family here and there are bad people who discriminate against you, but God also gives us good people. Because I left my family behind, and

<p>estoy sola, mi esposo sí tiene dos hermanos aquí y primas, pero le digo, sí encontré una familia, aunque no son de sangre, yo sé que en una emergencia sí me ayudan. Porque le digo, lo hemos hecho, en ese grupo nos hemos ayudado mucho todas, ‘pos si la mayoría venimos de fuera y digo, he encontrado la familia que yo dejé en México, pues sí, la he encontrado aquí.</p> <p><b><i>Porque la comunidad tiene mucho poder.</i></b></p> <p>Con el tiempo, me he involucrado en muchas organizaciones, me mantengo ocupada porque siempre quiero seguir aprendiendo. Mis hijos ya saben. “Si no me encuentran,” les digo, “me esperan hasta que llegue de la calle.” Y luego dicen: “ay no, si ya sé que usted no se mantiene en la casa.” Le digo, “m’ija, es que tengo muchas cosas que hacer.” Pero ‘pos si, le digo, me conocen como ando. Dice mi esposo: “patas pa’ arriba ¿y ahora adónde vas?” Gracias a Dios que es muy buen marido. Yo mientras le deje la comida hecha o haya algo que comer, solo llega y se calienta. “No te preocupes, vete,” me dice.</p> <p>Estuvimos un tiempo por contrato con <i>Juntos</i><sup>58</sup> ahí estuvimos tocando puertas <i>one o one</i><sup>59</sup> que le llaman, preguntando a la gente.</p>	<p>I’m alone here. My husband has two brothers and cousins here, but it’s like I found a family even if they’re not my blood. I know they will help me out in an emergency. Because, I tell you, we’ve done it, in this group we’ve all helped out a lot, most of us are from somewhere else and I tell you, I’ve found the family that I left in Mexico, yes, I’ve found it here.</p> <p><b><i>Because the community has a lot of power.</i></b></p> <p>Over time, I’ve gotten involved in lots of organizations. I stay busy because I always want to keep learning. My kids already know that. I tell them, “if I’m not here, wait until I get home.” And then they say, “Oh no, I know that you are never here at the house.” I tell them, “honey, the thing is, I have lots of things to do.” Well yeah, I tell you, they know what I am like. My husband says, “upside down, where are you going now?” Thank God he’s a good husband. As long as I leave him food cooked, or there’s food to eat, he just gets home and heats it up. “Don’t worry, go ahead,” he says.</p> <p>For a while we had a contract with <i>Juntos</i><sup>45</sup>, and we were knocking on doors <i>one on one</i><sup>46</sup> as they say, asking people. So sometimes I work more, sometimes less, it’s not set hours,</p>
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<sup>58</sup> *Juntos, our water, our air*, organización sin fines de lucro que educa a la comunidad Latina a abogar por un medio ambiente limpio./ *Non profit community organization that educations the latino community to advocate for a clean environment.*

<sup>59</sup> *One on one*, uno a uno.

<p>Entonces yo a veces trabajo más, a veces menos, no es seguro, pero ya de perdida que le den a uno pa' pagar los <i>182iles</i><sup>60</sup> ya es una ayuda. Con <i>Juntos</i> hubo temporadas que tuvieron fondos para la gente, así para que les ayudaran a hacer campañas esas que traen y nos estuvieron pagando el año pasado y este año, pero ahorita ya se detuvieron. A veces me hablan para ayudarles, que van a ir al parqueadero donde yo vivo a levantar encuestas, y les digo "no 'pos yo estoy en la clase de inglés." Si tengo la oportunidad pues voy, pero así cuando yo tenía compromisos, les digo "no puedo."</p> <p>También estoy en el programa de <i>efayay (FII)</i><sup>61</sup> y en mi grupo somos mamás de las escuelas donde estaban nuestras hijas. De hecho, le estaba diciendo yo ahorita a esta Francisca<sup>62</sup> que apliquen, le digo, es una oportunidad, sí logra uno metas, se propone uno cosas, le dije, y sí las logra. Yo siempre les he dicho a mis compañeras de clase que es una organización ¿veda'? que son sin fines de lucro, pero esa organización siempre ha tratado de ayudarnos a salir a nosotros de un nivel de, pues ya no de mal, de pobreza, porque dicen que se oye muy feo esa palabra,</p>	<p>but at least it gives you some money to pay the <i>bills</i> and that helps. For a while there <i>Juntos</i> had money for people to pay them to help out with the campaigns they have. They were paying us last year and this year, but now they stopped doing paying. Sometimes they call me to help them, and say that they're going to a parking lot where I live to do a survey, and I tell them, "no, I have English class." If I have the time, I'll go, but if I have another commitment, I tell them, "I can't."</p> <p>I'm also in the <i>FII</i> program<sup>48</sup> and in my group we are mothers from the schools where our girls studied. In fact, I was just telling Francisca<sup>49</sup> that she should apply. I told her, it's an opportunity, you can achieve goals, set out ideas, I said, and then achieve them. I have always told my classmates about it. It's a non-profit organization, you know, but its goal is to try to help us get out of a level well of, well not like it's something bad, of poverty, because they say that word sounds really ugly, but to get out of being lower income, right? But it is to try to increase our income a bit by making connections with</p>
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<sup>60</sup> *Bills*, cuentas.

<sup>61</sup> *Family Independence Initiative*, organización que promueve compartir recursos entre familias para romper el ciclo de pobreza./ *Organization that promotes sharing resources among families to break the cycle of poverty.*

<sup>62</sup> Seudónimo de una compañera de clase./ *Pseudonym for a classmate.*

<p>sino salir de nuestros bajos ingresos ¿veda’? aumentar un poco nuestros ingresos, haciendo conexiones con la gente porque la comunidad tiene mucho poder, o sea, conoce bastante, pero muchas veces nos quedamos con eso y no lo compartimos con la demás gente. Entonces si ya una persona sabe cómo adquirir una casa sin seguro<sup>63</sup>, varias veces nos han dado esa plática, esa persona nos puede compartir esa información. Por ejemplo, yo como siempre pongo mi muestra, yo estuve buscando y buscando ayuda para dentistas, pero al fin lo logré, era una de mis metas, porque ‘pos dije siempre se siente uno un poco ¿veda’? mal<sup>64</sup>, pero <i>efayay</i> (FII) me dio la oportunidad también de hacer conexiones y conocer varias familias y me ha ayudado mucho también en aplicar en becas que ellos tienen. Como muchos piensan “me las van a cobrar” pues no, no me las cobran porque me las está dando, me está ayudando a mí y a mi familia. Me hizo también tratar de llevar un ahorro, o sea tener conciencia que a veces gasta uno en lo que no tiene caso ¿veda’? Hasta si un dólar que guarde uno, un dólar pues le ayuda. Sería una manera de platicarles qué es una organización que está tratando de ayudar de</p>	<p>people. Because, the thing is that the community has a lot of power, I mean, people have a lot of knowledge, but often it just gets stuck there and we don’t share it with the rest of the people. So, say if one person knows how to get a house without a social<sup>50</sup>, several people have talked to us about that. So that person can share that information with others. I always give my example that I was looking and looking for aid for dentists, but I finally achieved it, it as one of my goals, because I mean, you always feel like a little bit bad, right?<sup>51</sup>, but FII also gave me the opportunity to make connections and get to know several families. They have also helped me a lot in applying for the grants that they have. Lots of people think, “they’re going to charge me,” but it’s not like that. They don’t charge me because they’re giving them to me, they’re helping me and my family out. It also made me start saving, I mean to be aware that sometimes we spend money on things that don’t make sense, right? Maybe it’s just a dollar that you can put aside, even a dollar can help. This is a way to talk to people and tell them that this is an organization that is trying to help us get out of our level of poverty, to fulfill goals,</p>
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<sup>63</sup> Número de Seguridad Social / *Social Security Number*

<sup>64</sup> A Miriam le faltaban todos los dientes frontales y estaba muy contenta de habérselos arreglado./ *Miriam had been missing all her front teeth and she was very happy to have fixed them.*



que salgamos nosotros de nuestro nivel de pobreza, cumpliendo metas, haciendo conexiones con las familias, ayudándonos todas y que todas tenemos el poder de salir, no sé, de ese nivel, de ese ¿cómo le digo?, en el que siempre estamos, que no pensamos, que si yo tengo en mi mente un proyecto, que sí hay organizaciones, que sí hay personas que me pueden ayudar a lograr esa meta que yo tengo. O si quiero un negocio, buscar las conexiones, que puedo lograrlo y que hay apoyo económico también que me pueden dar para iniciar un negocio. Porque préstamos a veces hasta con cero intereses o con bajo interés, pues realmente ahorita ¿quién me lo va a dar? O, por ejemplo, yo les platico que cuando estaba en la organización, tuve la oportunidad de ahorrar un dinero de dos mil dólares y dos mil dólares más que me dio *efayay* para que mi hija tuviera la oportunidad de tener un carro, para que ella se pudiera mover más fácilmente ¿si me entiende? Para que yo tuviera más tiempo con mis hijas, o tuviera tiempo de ir a la escuela. O si llegara a salir algún trabajito o algo, yo pudiera irme sin el pendiente que ahí viene mi hija, no tiene en que moverse, o ya es muy noche, cosas así. O sea, logra uno muchas cosas estando ahí en la organización y pues ya ve que también le dan computadora para que inicie uno pues a aprender, a todo,

and make connections with families. It's all of us helping each other out, and that all of us have the power to get out, I don't know, of that level – how can I say it – where we always are and that that we don't think about. Like if I have a project in my mind, that there are organizations, there are people who can help me achieve the goal I have. Or if I want a business, to seek connections, that I can achieve that, and there's also financial support they can give me to start a business. Because really, who is going to give me a loan with zero percent or really low interest rates? Or, for example, I tell them that when I was in the organization, I had the chance to save some money, two thousand dollars, and then FII gave me two thousand other dollars so my daughter would have the opportunity to get a car, so she could get around easier, you know what I mean? I could have more time with my daughters, or time to go to school. Or if some kind of job or something came up, I could go without worrying about my daughter not having a way to get around or that it was late at night, you know, things like that. So, you can achieve a lot of things there in that organization and they also will give you a computer so you can start learning all kinds of things, lots and lots of things, I tell you.

<p>muchas, muchas cosas le digo.</p> <p><b><i>Tengo una parte en mí que dice que me puedo defender.</i></b></p> <p>Con mi esposo ya hemos platicado sobre el plan de emergencia familiar<sup>65</sup> en caso de una deportación. ¿Se van ellas también? Me pregunta. Le dije, “no, las niñas se quedan, como sea.” Hay oportunidades que ellas no se deben perder, por ejemplo, como ahorita que mi hija está estudiando en la universidad, y ella misma dice: “yo no me quiero ir mamá.” Tengo una amiga y siempre ella nos ha dicho, “lo que se les ofrezca yo los ayudo” y todo. Si ella nos puede ayudar y los pocos bienes que tengamos o lo que logremos juntar, que lo tramite ella, le dije a mi esposo, y nos vamos. En las escuelas de mis hijos, en el 2008, tuve la oportunidad de que iban organizaciones a dar talleres, clases educativas. Ahí fue cuando yo me informé de que había el Centro de Igualdad, que daban clases para conocer los derechos de los inmigrantes, y fue cuando me interesó y quise venir a informarme más ¿veda’? Daban entrenamientos, qué podía hacer uno cuando la paraba la policía, informarme a mí para</p>	<p><b><i>There’s a part of me that says I can defend myself.</i></b></p> <p>I’ve talked with my husband about the family emergency plan<sup>52</sup> in case there’s a deportation. Are the girls going, too? he asks me. I tell him, “no, the girls stay here, no matter what.” They have opportunities here that they shouldn’t lose, for example, right now my daughter is studying in the university, and she says, “I don’t want to go, mom.” I have a friend who has always told us, “whatever you need, I’ll help you out” and everything. If she can help us and with the few things we own or that we can get together, if she can handle them, I told my husband, and we’ll go. In my kids’ schools, in 2008, organizations went to give workshops, educational classes, and I had the opportunity to attend them. That was when I found out that there was a Centro de Igualdad, that they gave classes about knowing your rights as an immigrant, and that’s when I got interested and came here to find out more information, right? They had training, like about what you could do if the</p>
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<sup>65</sup> El plan de emergencia familiar consiste en una serie de pasos que las familias indocumentadas o de estatus legal mixto pueden tomar para estar preparados en caso de detención o deportación, que incluye aspectos como el cuidado de los hijos, bienes y responsabilidades financieras, entre otros./ *A family emergency plan is a series of steps that undocumented families or families with mixed legal status can take to be prepared in the case of detention or deportation. This includes things like childcare, goods and financial responsibilities, among others.*

<p>poder informar a mi familia, porque pues en ese tiempo había mucha discriminación, mucho racismo mucho. La policía hacía muchas redadas. En esos talleres también aprendí lo del plan de emergencia familiar. Ahora ya estoy más tranquila porque, le digo, yo sé, o tengo una parte en mí que dice que me puedo defender. Antes era muy seguido el miedo, antes estaba completamente así que nomás se veía la patrulla por atrás y hay que bajarle la velocidad, o ir a lo que es. Y a veces comentaban cosas en Radio Lobo como que en los Cinco Puntos que le llaman, que están los limones verdes, que no pasen por ahí. Ah bueno, pues a rodearle. Pero antes sí era mucho miedo. Tengo una cuñada que, esa nomás ve las camionetas blancas y habla y me dice: “¡Ay que en El Mezquite está migración!” No es cierto, le digo, confunden con los camiones esos de la ciudad, de las perreras y todo eso, las camionetas, y luego le digo: “no es cierto.” Yo ya estoy identificando más, ya sé reconocerlas. Tenemos un grupo, somos como 22 familias de las escuelas, que estamos todavía en contacto y luego empiezan también a poner mensajes que “en el banco tal está migración” y otro dice: “yo estoy saliendo del banco de Albuquerque y aquí no hay nada.” Digo, todo eso también la pone a uno así como asustada, eso de</p>	<p>police stopped you, I educated myself so I could educate my family, because at that time there was a lot of discrimination, a lot of racism. The police were doing lots of raids. These workshops also taught me about the family emergency plan. Now I’m calmer because, I know, there’s a part of me that says I can defend myself. In the past, the fear was always there; before, I was completely like, if I saw a police car in back and you have to lower your speed, or go the speed limit. Sometimes they would talk about things on Radio Lobo like saying that in Five Points they’d say, there are green limes, so don’t go over there. Oh, okay, so we take the long route around. But it was really frightening before. I have a sister-in-law who, as soon as she sees white trucks, she calls and tells me “Oh, immigration is at El Mezquite!” It’s not true, I told her, you’re getting confused with the city trucks, the dog catchers, and all that, those trucks, and I tell her, “that’s not true.” I’m better at identifying them, I know how to recognize them now. We have a group, we’re like 22 families from the schools who have stayed in touch and sometimes there are also messages like, “immigration is at the bank,” and somebody else says, “I’m leaving the Bank of Albuquerque and there’s nothing here.” I mean, all that also frightens you, and that</p>
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empezar a contagiarse a la demás gente. Digo, bueno ya no siento el miedo que sentía antes y si vengo manejando y si una patrulla va atrás de mí, pero yo sé que estoy bien, pues estoy más tranquila. O al menos que a él se le ocurra nomás pararme por pararme, bueno, entonces 'pos a ver porqué, el motivo y todo ¿veda? Buscarle la opción, pero ya no es el mismo miedo a los *sheriff* como antes a pesar de que todavía siguen que esto, que las redadas, yo me siento más segura. Primero Dios que no me salga nada malo, solo el de arriba me va a decir, pero le digo, ya no es el mismo miedo a los *sheriff* como antes.

Hemos pasado por muchas cosas, pero no, yo sigo adelante. Conoce uno más sus derechos, entonces vamos a ponerlas en práctica, a ver qué sale.

***Ay mujer, primero no te quieres venir y ahora ya no te quieres ir.***

Yo ya no me quiero regresar a México, pero a veces platicamos de regresar. Tenemos una casita allá, que seguimos pagando desde acá. Está muy difícil la situación aquí, pero también allá. Dice mi esposo, y luego si llevas dinero a México y pones un negocio van a que les pagues la cuota los narcos y las bandas esas que andan pidiendo dinero por proteger a los negocios. Nos han dicho de personas que las amenazan si no les dan dinero. Va uno, no hay trabajo, y si va uno a

starts catching to other people. I mean, now I don't feel the same fear I felt before and if I am driving along and a police car is behind me, but I know I'm not doing anything wrong, well I'm pretty calm. Or at least as long as he doesn't decide to stop me for no reason, then I'll ask what the reason is and everything, right? Try to find the option, but it's not the same fear of the *sheriff* that I had before. Even though things still keep happening, there are still raids, I feel safer. God willing, nothing bad will happen to me, only the one up there can tell me. But in any case, I'm not as afraid of the sheriff as I used to be. We've been through a lot of things, but I'm still moving forward. We know our rights better now, so we're going to put them into practice, and just see what happens.

***Oh woman, first you didn't want to come and now you don't want to leave.***

I don't want to go back to Mexico anymore, but sometimes we talk about going back. We have a little house there, that we've been paying off from here. The situation here is really hard, but it's also hard there. My husband says, if you take money to Mexico and set up a business, later the narcos come and demand a quota and those gangs are asking for money to protect the business. We've heard about the threats if you don't pay. You go, there's no work, and if you try

poner algo, como un negocio, lo va a perder con esos viejos. ¿Qué puede hacer uno? Estaba diciendo mi esposo también que si vamos a pagar más *taxes* aquí también, no vamos a completar entonces con los gastos, nos vamos a tener que ir. ¿Irnos a qué? Le digo, ¿a perder lo que uno gana? ¿Allá qué vamos a ganar? Nada. Y me dice: “ay mujer, primero no te quieres venir y ahora ya no te quieres ir.” Yo le digo que no, que yo voy a seguir hasta que de plano no se pueda. No voy a sacar a mis hijas de la escuela, le dije, no voy a perder la oportunidad que Celia está teniendo en la universidad. Va en su segundo año, tan rápido, bendito Dios no hemos pagado nada. Si vamos allá a Chihuahua ¿Allá dónde le vamos a pagar la universidad? Ojalá salga pronto este señor<sup>66</sup>, que no lo vuelvan a poner, que lo saquen rápido, a ver si hay otro arreglo pronto para los inmigrantes. Vamos a darle hasta que Dios nos diga: ¡hasta aquí!

***Quisiera una balanza con igualdad para todos.***

Pues siguiendo con mi río de la vida, con mi agua más tranquila, en el 2016 y en el 2017 pues sigo en la escuela, sigo estudiando. Para el futuro en mi río de la vida, aquí<sup>67</sup> veo este

to set something up like a business, you're going to lose it with those guys. What can you do? My husband was also saying that if we're going to pay more *taxes* here, too, we're not going to be able to make ends meet, and then we're going to have to go. Go to what? I say, to lose what you earn? What are we going to earn there? Nothing. And he tells me, “oh, woman, first you didn't want to come and now you don't want to leave.” I tell him that's not it, that I'm going to stick at it until I really can't anymore. I'm not taking my daughters out of school, I said, I'm not going to miss the opportunity that Celia has at the university. She's in her second year, so quickly, and thank God we haven't had to pay anything. How could we pay for her university in Chihuahua? I hope this guy gets out soon<sup>53</sup>, that he doesn't get put back in, that they get him out quickly, to see if there's another solution soon for immigrants. We'll keep at it until God says, that's it!

***I'd like a balance with equality for all.***

Following my river of life, with my more calm waters, in 2016 and 2017 I continued in school, I'm still studying. For the future in my river of life, here<sup>54</sup>, I see this figure of a graduate who represents my kids, I hope that

<sup>66</sup> El presidente actual de los Estados Unidos/ The current president of the United States

<sup>67</sup> Se refiere a su ilustración El Río de la Vida, ver figura 2 /Reference to River of Life illustration, figure 2

<p>monito graduado que son mis hijos, espero en un futuro estén graduados y ojalá yo también llegar a graduarme de maestra. Quisiera ser maestra y poder ayudar más a los niños deshabilitados o de kínder. Ese sería mi sueño que siempre he tenido, graduarme, pero lo que más quisiera es que esta balanza siempre tuviera igualdad para todos. Ojalá, quisiera ver en mi futuro ese puente que crucemos todos libremente, que haiga un barco en estas turbulencias o en esta agua pacíficas que todos naveguemos tranquilamente, que haiga amor, paz, quisiera una balanza con igualdad para todos, respeto. Eso es lo que más quisiera.</p>	<p>in the future they graduate and I hope that I can also graduate and become a teacher. I would like to be a teacher and be able to help disabled children, or kindergarten students. That is the dream that I've always had, to graduate, but what I most want is that this balance would always provide equality for all. I hope, I would like to see in my future, that bridge that we all cross freely, that there would be a boat during these troubled times or in these peaceful waters that we can all navigate serenely, that there be love, peace, and a balance with equality for all, respect. That's what I would like most of all.</p>
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Miriam's River of Life (figure 2)



## Chapter Six

### Andrea's Testimonio

Introducción	Introduction
<p><b>Introducción e identidad: <i>soy mexicana, no hispana ni latina</i></b></p> <p><i>My name is Andrea, I'm from Las Cañas, México, I was born in Las Cañas. He vivido la mayor parte de mi vida en Las Cañas, Sinaloa. Cuando me casé también viví en Ciudad Obregón y en Hermosillo, Sonora. Ahora estoy viviendo aquí, en Albuquerque, Nuevo México. Tengo nueve meses viviendo aquí. Vivo con mi hija. Yo llegué en agosto del 2016 y mi hija llegó en octubre. Mi hija tiene veintidós años y estamos viviendo en un departamento pequeño. Tengo también un hijo mayor, él tiene veintisiete años y vive en Guadalajara, México. También está Verito, la hija de mi esposo, que no vivió conmigo, pero más o menos siempre estaba con nosotros. Cloe y Roberto son los únicos que tengo. Entre nosotras, mi hija y yo hablamos español. Ella habla bien el inglés y a veces hablamos así una que otra cosa en inglés, vemos televisión en inglés, o películas así en inglés, pero ella y yo normalmente sí hablamos español. Ahora que estoy en los Estados Unidos me sigo identificando como</i></p>	<p><b>Introduction and identity: <i>I'm Mexican, not Hispanic or Latina</i></b></p> <p><i>My name is Andrea, I'm from Las Cañas, Mexico, I was born in Las Cañas. I have lived most of my life in Las Cañas, Sinaloa. When I got married, I also lived in Ciudad Obregon and Hermosillo, Sonora. Now I'm living here in Albuquerque, New Mexico. I have lived here for nine months. I live with my daughter. I arrived in August 2016 and my daughter arrived in October. My daughter is 22 years old and we're living in a small apartment. I also have an older son; he is 26 and lives in Guadalajara, Mexico. There's also Verito, my husband's daughter, who didn't live with me, but she spent a lot of time with us, pretty much. Cloe and Roberto are the only two I have. My daughter and I speak Spanish to each other. She speaks English well, and sometimes we talk about a few things in English, or we watch television in English, or see a movie in English, but she and I usually speak in Spanish. Now that I'm in the United States I still identify as Mexican. They may say I'm Latino, but</i></p>



mexicana. Que me digan que soy latina, pues es raro, porque tengo poco viviendo aquí y más bien yo digo que soy mexicana, no hispana ni latina, sino mexicana.

**Infancia: abundancia y amor**

Yo, desde que tengo uso de razón, fui una niña bien contenta, bien feliz. Yo vivía con mi mamá mi papá, una familia normal para mí, tuve muchos hermanos, muchas hermanas. Fui de las más chicas. Fui la penúltima, tuve un hermanito menor nada más, pero yo fui la más chica de las hermanas. Me encantan los árboles, me gustan mucho los árboles, y aquí<sup>68</sup> para mí el árbol significa fortaleza, abundancia, y eso yo lo viví, abundancia y amor. Abundancia de cosas buenas, bonitas, las viví en mi casa con mi mamá. Cuando yo me caso -aquí<sup>69</sup> estamos mi esposo y yo- tengo mis hijos y aquí se ve tranquilo el río, estamos con florecitas porque fue algo muy bonito. Viví veinticinco, veintiséis años en un matrimonio feliz, contenta también, con un marido muy consentidor, siempre estuve a gusto, feliz. Mi mamá siempre me consintió mucho. Y cuando ella ya estaba grande, ya viejita, tuvo un problema de glaucoma y dejó de ver, como cuando se te adelanta la vejez, y a ella

that's strange, because I haven't even lived here very long, and personally I say I'm Mexican, not Hispanic or Latina, but Mexican.

**Childhood: abundance and love**

As long as I can remember, I was a content and happy girl. I lived with my mom and my dad, it was a normal family for me, I had a bunch of brothers and many sisters. I was one of the younger ones. I was second to the last; I only had one younger brother, but I was the youngest of the sisters. I love trees, I like lots of trees and the tree here<sup>1</sup> for me means strength, abundance, and that's what I lived, abundance and love. An abundance of good, beautiful things, that's what I experienced at home with my mom. When I got married here,<sup>2</sup> it's my husband and me and I have my children, and here the river looks calm, we have little flowers because it was beautiful. I lived for twenty-five, twenty-six years in a happy marriage, very content, with a very loving husband; I was always well, happy. My mother always treated me well. When she was elderly, getting older, she had a problem with glaucoma and lost her sight, as if old age started early for her, and I was always there for her. That's one of

<sup>68</sup> Vea figura 3, el Rio de Vida de Andrea/ See figure 3, Andrea's River of Life.

<sup>69</sup> Idem

se le adelantó, y yo siempre estuve ahí. Y esa es una de las cosas por las que yo no le podría tener coraje a mi esposo porque fue algo que él hizo, ayudarme a cuidar a mi mamá. Porque de dinero, yo siempre traía las chequeras del negocio, yo podía hacer lo que se me diera la gana... O sea, yo sí trabajaba en la oficina y le ayudaba en bancos y esto y aquello, pero realmente lo que yo necesitara y que fuera de mi mamá, nunca jamás el me impidió. Nos la llevábamos de vacaciones a mi mamá. O sea, que hay que llevarla al seguro, mi mamá me hablaba: “¡Andrea! Tengo que ir al seguro mañana” por decir así... y ya yo: “Eduardo, no cuentes conmigo mañana porque tengo que llevar a mi mamá al seguro.” “Ah, está bien, no te preocupes.” Me decía: “¿Necesitas dinero? ¿Necesitas algo?” A veces que yo no podía ir y él le daba raite a mi mamá, o sea ... no podría tenerle coraje... ¡Y menos ahora que gracias a lo que pasó estoy haciendo lo que estoy haciendo!

**Trabajo en México: *nunca trabajé fuera de la casa***

Cuando estaba en Cañas con mi esposo, nunca trabajé fuera de la casa. Él tiene un negocio de aires acondicionados y yo siempre lo apoyé en la oficina, pero, o sea, era ahí con él, en el negocio que era nuestro, no de que yo anduviera en otras partes

the reasons why I could never be angry at my husband because that was something he did, helping me care for my mom. Because regarding money, I always had the checkbooks for the business, I could do whatever I wanted to do... I mean, I did work in the office and helped him out with banks and this and that, but really, whatever I needed for my mom, he never placed obstacles for that. We took my mom on vacations with us. I mean, if she had to go to clinic, my mom would call, “Andrea! I have to go to the clinic tomorrow,” for example... and I was like, “Eduardo, I can’t help you tomorrow because I have to take my mom to the clinic.” “Oh, that’s fine, don’t worry,” he would say. “Do you need money? Do you need anything?” Sometimes if I couldn’t go, he would give my mom a ride, I mean... I couldn’t be angry at him... Much less now, because thanks to what happened, now I’m doing what I’m doing!

**Work in Mexico: *I never worked outside the home***

When I was in Cañas with my husband, I never worked outside the home. He had an air conditioning business and I always supported him in the office. I mean, I was there with him, in our business, it’s not like I was out going other places because the office

<p>porque la oficina está en la casa de su mamá, afuera se hizo una oficina y ahí trabajábamos. Había una secretaria, había personal, personas que ponen los aires, que dan mantenimiento, o sea todo ese servicio que daba él. Y le trabajábamos a <i>Home Depot</i>, a <i>Coppel</i><sup>70</sup>, a <i>Walmart</i>, todos los equipos de aire acondicionado que ellos tenían nosotros se los instalábamos. En la oficina yo me encargaba de las cuentas de banco, de lo que entraba, lo que salía de dinero, o sea, así como administrarle la oficina. En las mañanas yo llegaba temprano con mi esposo y hacíamos las órdenes que teníamos, y mandábamos a los muchachos a trabajar. Ya después de eso me iba al banco, a ver estados de cuenta y esa era mi chamba. Y ya nos íbamos por los niños a la escuela a las dos de la tarde, y a veces en la tarde venía a la oficina, y a veces me quedaba con ellos en la casa. Ya ves cómo hay ocupaciones, el inglés, las tareas, la niña quería bailar, o sea, no falta y así fue por muchos años. Esa fue mi experiencia de trabajo, aparte de estar en la casa con los niños.</p>	<p>is at his mother's house, we built an office on the outside and that's where we worked. We had a secretary, employees, people who installed the air conditioners, who did maintenance, all the services he provided. We worked for <i>Home Depot</i>, for <i>Coppel</i><sup>3</sup>, for <i>Walmart</i>, we would install all the kinds of air conditioners that they carried. In the office, I was in charge of the bank accounts, income, cash expenses, I mean, I was basically administering the office. In the mornings, I'd get there early with my husband and we'd go over the orders that had come in, and we'd send the guys out to work. After that, I'd go to the bank, to check on the bank statements, and that was my job. And then we'd go to pick up the kids from school at two in the afternoon, and I'd go to the office in the afternoon, or sometimes I'd stay home with the kids. You know how there are always things to do, English, homework, my daughter wanted to dance, so, that's how things were for many years. That was my employment experience, aside from being at home with the kids.</p>
<p><b>Antes de inmigrante, turista: <i>Veníamos con mi esposo de vacaciones</i></b> Es la segunda vez que nosotros, Cloe y yo,</p>	<p><b>Tourist before immigrant: <i>We'd come on vacation with my husband.</i></b> It's the second time that Cloe and I have</p>

<sup>70</sup> Cadena Mexicana de tiendas departamentales /*Mexican department store chain*

<p>renovamos el pasaporte, la visa, y fíjate que nosotros veníamos muy seguido a Estados Unidos. Veníamos con mi esposo, de vacaciones, dos tres veces al año, siempre sacábamos permiso porque, o veníamos a Las Vegas, o a Los Ángeles, así, sólo de vacaciones. Nunca regresamos el permiso y nunca nos lo pidieron y ahora sí como que están muy con eso. Yo me acuerdo que tenía los permisos amontonados en la casa, no le dábamos importancia. Una vez ahí en Nogales -haz de cuenta que entrábamos por Tijuana, Mexicali o por Nogales-, y una de las veces le dijeron a mi esposo: “pero si ya entraste, acabas de pasar por esta otra entrada.” “Si, voy por unas cosas que compro para el trabajo.” “Ah... pero también tienes estas entradas” y así lo cuestionaban, pero no pasaba nada. Me acuerdo que veníamos con unas maletoonas, porque veníamos de viaje, nos quedábamos mucho, él tenía familia en Los Ángeles, en Las Vegas y en Tucón, y nos recorríamos todo y veníamos con unas maletonas, ¿qué nos importaba?</p>	<p>renewed our passports, our visas, and you know we used to come to the United States quite regularly. We’d come on vacation with my husband two or three times a year, we would always get a permit because, we’d either go to Las Vegas or Los Angeles, you know, just on vacation. We never returned the permit, they never asked us for it, and now they’re really on top of that. I remember that I had the permits piled up at the house, we didn’t even think about it. Once over in Nogales – usually we entered through Tijuana, Mexicali or Nogales – and once they told my husband, “but you already came in, you recently entered through this other port.” “Yeah, I’m going to get a few things I buy for work.” “Oh, but you’ve also entered these times” and they would question us like that, but nothing came of it. I remember because we’d bring some really big suitcases because we were travelling, and we’d stay a while, he had family in Los Angeles, in Las Vegas and in Tucson, and we would go everywhere with those great big old suitcases, what did we care?</p>
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<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Migración: Las Múltiples Fronteras</b></p> <p><b>Migración y adversidad: <i>es más dulce el fruto que nace en la adversidad</i></b></p> <p>Estas piedras en el río de mi vida<sup>71</sup> significan, pues... adversidad. Resulta que ya aquí fue donde se rompió... lo que fue... pues, mi matrimonio. Se rompió, todavía no hay divorcio, pero hay separación. Aquí tuve una caída emocional, me desvaloricé, caí. Y por eso aquí dice [ríe] “es más dulce el fruto que nace en la adversidad.” Por eso están estas piedras y estas flores porque sí es cierto, o sea, fue una caída, pero me he estado levantando. Este árbol para mí significa como si fuera yo, porque me siento fuerte. En la migración no hubo adversidad para mí, más bien la adversidad vino antes y eso fue justamente lo que me motivó a migrar. Porque en cuanto llegué encontré trabajo, tenía donde quedarme, luego, la segunda vez que migré me traje a mi hija, entonces... no fue tan difícil. Bueno, la migración para mí, estar acá, obviamente sí fue difícil estar lejos de mi papá, de mis hermanos de todo eso, pero pues gracias a que estoy sola, ha sido algo que me ayuda a superarme, a tener visión. No es mi intención quedarme permanentemente aquí, me</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Migration: the Many Borders</b></p> <p><b><i>Migration and Adversity: fruit born of adversity is sweeter</i></b></p> <p>These rocks in the river of my life<sup>4</sup> symbolize, well... adversity. It was here when what I had... well, my marriage... broke. It broke, there's still no divorce, but we are separated. Here I had an emotional fall, I undervalued myself, I fell. And that's why here it says [laughs] “fruit born of adversity is sweeter.” That's why these rocks and these flowers are here because that's true, I mean, it was a fall, but I've been rising up. For me, this tree is who I am, because I feel strong. Migration did not mean adversity for me, because the adversity happened before that, and in fact was my motivation for migrating. Because as soon as I got here, I found work, and a place to stay. Then the second time I migrated I brought my daughter with me so... it wasn't that difficult. Well, migrating for me, being here, I mean clearly it was difficult to be far from my dad, from my siblings and all that. But thanks to the fact that I'm alone, this has helped me get ahead and to have a vision. My intention is not to stay here permanently. I would very much like to return to Mexico, maybe not to the same city, but to Mexico</p>
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<sup>71</sup> Todo este párrafo es en referencia a la gráfica del Río de la vida, ver figura 3 /*This entire paragraph refers to the graphic of the River of Life, see figure 3*

gustaría mucho regresar a México, quizás no a la misma ciudad, pero sí a México y... y seguir, seguir con mi vida, hacer algo conmigo, hacer algo con mi vida, eso me gustaría.

**El desengaño: *vi a tu marido, traía a otra mujer***

Mi esposo y yo, ya más o menos sabíamos cómo andábamos, como andaban las cosas. Yo no quería broncas con él, yo no quería nada. Yo ya tenía la cola parada pa' venirme [ríe]. Y sacatona<sup>72</sup>, porque no lo quise enfrentar. Pero a veces hay que decir la verdad, como mi hermana, la que está en Alemania, ella es muy directa. Un ejemplo así... simplemente, cuando yo me iba a separar de mi esposo, unos días antes, mi hermana se quedó en mi casa. En esa semana, vio a mi esposo en la camioneta con otra mujer. Entonces, al día siguiente me dijo: "Pues vi a tu marido, traía a otra mujer en la camioneta y no eras tú. Y yo: "¿Qué quieres que te diga?", le digo. Y estando en mi casa enfrentó a mi esposo: "¿Cómo estás cuñado? Oye, te vi en la tarde y llevabas a una mujer, y no era mi hermana." ¡Y el otro se quedó...! "no, es que era una compañera de trabajo", le dijo. "Nooo"... le dijo mi hermana, "si te vi por allá, si no andabas por

and... and to move, to move forward with my life, make something of myself, do something with my life, I'd like that.

**The Disillusion: *I saw your husband, with another woman***

My husband and I, we pretty much knew what was up, what the situation was. I didn't want to fight with him, I didn't want anything. I was already set to come here [laughs]. And maybe I was a coward, because I didn't want to confront him. But sometimes you have to say the truth, like my sister, the one in Germany, she's really direct. For example, just, when I was about to separate from my husband, a few days before, my sister stayed at my house. That week she saw my husband in a truck with another woman. So, the next day she told me, "I saw your husband, he was in the truck with another woman and it wasn't you." I'm like, "What can I say?" At the house she confronted my husband, "how are you, brother-in-law? Hey, I saw you this afternoon and you were with a woman who wasn't my sister." And he froze...! "No, that was a coworker," he said. "Nooo," my sister said, "I saw you over there, and you weren't there working, you were on such and such

<sup>72</sup> Lenguaje coloquial que significa miedosa o cobarde

tu trabajo, andabas por no sé qué calle, pero bueno...” Yo... mira... no supe qué hacer, me metí al baño. Mi hermana agarró sus cosas y me dijo: “¿Sabes qué? Yo ya me voy ¡No lo soporto!” Pues bueno, la llevé con mi papá. Y pues si... [risa] lo vio y se lo dijo en su cara.

**Primera migración: *Yo decidí migrar sola***

La primera vez que yo llegué aquí, llegué con mucho miedo y... nunca había salido yo sola, ni jamás había trabajado aparte o sola. Yo me casé a los veintiuno, veintidós años y siempre estuve con mi esposo. Nunca hice nada aparte de estar con él y la familia. O sea, venirme fue muy difícil. Y según yo, venía por un tiempito nada más, yo pensaba regresarme y volver a estar con mi esposo. Y me estuve aquí como ocho meses más o menos. Pero tenía mucho miedo, no conoces la ciudad, no conoces mucha gente. Cuando yo me vine para acá, mis hijos ya no estaban en la casa, mi hija estaba estudiando en Tijuana y mi hijo estaba trabajando en San Diego. Haz de cuenta que yo estaba también en Tijuana con mi hija, y mi esposo estaba solo en Cañas. Pero yo le decía: “yo dejo a mi hija en Tijuana y me regreso contigo a Cañas”. Y él me decía: “no, quédate con la niña, ¿cómo la vas a dejar sola?” Y esto y aquello, y ya me quedaba yo con la Cloe en Tijuana, y él estaba solo allá. Entonces

street, but whatever...” I... I didn’t know what to do, I went into the bathroom. My sister grabbed her things and told me, “You know? I’m leaving. I can’t stand this!” So, I took her to my dad’s. And well, yeah...[laugh] she saw him and told him to his face.

**First migration: *I decided to migrate alone***

The first time I came here, I arrived quite frightened and... I had never left on my own, and I had never worked independently and alone. I got married at age 21 and I was always with my husband. I never did anything separate from him and the family. I mean, leaving was very difficult. I thought I was just coming for a little while, I thought I would go back and go back to my husband. I spent about eight months here. But I was quite frightened, you’re not familiar with the city, you don’t know many people. When I came here, my children were no longer at home. My daughter was studying in Tijuana and my son was working in San Diego. I was pretty much in Tijuana with my daughter and my husband was alone in Cañas. But I told him, “I’ll leave my daughter in Tijuana and come back to be with you in Cañas.” And he said, “no, stay with her, how can you leave her alone?” and so on, and so I stayed in Tijuana with Cloe, and he was alone there.

<p>fuimos la Cloe y yo de Tijuana a Cañas a pasar Navidad ahí, pero Cloe se tenía que regresar a seguir estudiando y yo me quedé en Cañas con mi esposo. Y fue cuando ya pues... te das cuenta de muchas cosas<sup>73</sup>... y ya dices, no quiero estar aquí. Pero tampoco me voy a regresar a Tijuana, porque estando ahí, el seguía teniendo control de mí y de mi hija. Obviamente él tiene el control porque yo se lo permito ¿verdad? Pero yo ya no me quise regresar a Tijuana porque yo ya tenía año y medio allá y no había podido encontrar un trabajo para que mi hija y yo nos sostuviéramos ahí. Entonces dije yo: “bueno, me voy para Albuquerque, trabajo acá”, y dije, “a lo mejor hay más oportunidad acá de traerme a mi hija.” Y fue así.</p> <p>Yo decidí migrar sola. [Suspira] Sí... lo decidí yo sola. Yo tuve problemas fuertes con mi esposo y lo último que quería era estar con él y cuando vi la oportunidad de venirme, la tomé. Yo no conocía Albuquerque, yo no sabía nada de acá, pero vi una opción de salirme de mi casa y de no estar cerca de mi esposo y fue cuando dije: “me voy, me voy y me voy.” Aquí en Albuquerque estaba una sobrina, tenía muy poquito tiempo ella aquí, pero ahí llegué con</p>	<p>Then Cloe and I left Tijuana for Cañas to spend Christmas, but Cloe had to go back to continue her studies and I stayed in Cañas with my husband. And that’s when, well... you realize a lot of things<sup>6</sup>... and you say, no, I don’t want to be here. But I wasn’t going to go back to Tijuana either, because when I was there, he continued to have control over me and my daughter. Obviously, he had control because I allowed him to, right? But I didn’t want to go back to Tijuana because I’d already been there for a year and a half and I hadn’t been able to find a job to support myself and my daughter there. I said, “well, I’ll go to Albuquerque and work here.” I thought, “maybe there are more opportunities here to bring my daughter with me.” And that’s what happened.</p> <p>I decided to migrate alone. [Sighs] Yes...I decided on my own. I had serious problems with my husband and the last thing I wanted was to be with him. When I saw the chance of leaving, I took it. I’d never been to Albuquerque, I didn’t know anything about it, but I saw it as an alternative to get out of my house and away from my husband, and I said, “I’m going, I’m going, I’m going.” I had a niece here in Albuquerque, she hadn’t been here long, but I landed with her.</p>
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<sup>73</sup> Se refiere a la infidelidad de su esposo, pero Andrea parece batallar para nombrar el problema. *In reference to husband’s infidelity, but Andrea seems to have trouble naming the problem.*



<p>ella. A veces es muy difícil llegar con tus mismos familiares y estuve un tiempo con ella, pero desgraciadamente hubo conflictos. Como a los tres meses de haber llegado, le hablé a mi hermana, la que vive en Alemania, y le dije: “¿sabes qué? pasa esto y esto otro, pero no me quiero regresar a Cañas”. “No te regreses”, me dijo, yo voy para allá. Y ella se vino y se estuvo seis meses conmigo. Fue cuando las dos trabajamos juntas. Luego a mi hermana se le acabó su permiso y tenía que regresar a Alemania, porque le habían dado permiso por tres meses y luego pidió otros tres. A mí me dio mucho miedo quedarme sola, entonces yo le rogaba a mi hija que estaba en Tijuana: “vente, vente para que las dos aquí estemos y trabajemos.” Pero la convenció su papá, y se fue a Cañas en vez de venirse para acá conmigo. Y ya fue cuando me dijo mi hermana: “¿qué quieres hacer? ¿Te vas a quedar o te vas a ir?... “Pues me voy a regresar”... Y por miedo de estar sola me regresé a Cañas.</p> <p><b>Migración emocional: quería más bien poner tierra de por medio</b></p> <p>Yo me vine a Albuquerque porque me quería alejar y ser independiente. Pude haberme ido a Obregón o quedarme en Tijuana con mi hija. Pero no era tanto eso ¿sabes? quería más bien poner tierra de por medio. Claro que mi</p>	<p>Sometimes it’s hard to land with family, and I spent some time with her, but unfortunately, we had conflicts. About three months after arriving, I called my sister who lives in Germany, and I said, “you know what, such and such is happening, but I don’t want to go back to Cañas.” “Don’t go back,” she said, I’ll come there. And she came and spent six months with me. That was when the two of us worked together. Then my sister’s permit expired and she had to go back to Germany, because they gave her three months and she asked for three more. I was afraid to stay here alone, so I begged my daughter who was in Tijuana, “come up, come up so we can both be here and work.” But her dad talked to her and convinced her to go to Cañas instead of coming here with me. That’s when my sister asked me, “What do you want to do? Are you going to stay or leave?” “Well, I’m going to go back.” ... And out of fear of being alone, I went back to Cañas.</p> <p><b>Emotional migration: I just wanted to put distance between us</b></p> <p>I came to Albuquerque because I wanted to get some distance and be independent. I could have gone to Obregon, or stayed in Tijuana with my daughter. But it wasn’t that, you know? I just wanted to put distance between us. Of course, my husband can</p>
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<p>esposo puede venir cuando le dé la gana, porque él también tiene visa, tiene todo para poder venir a Estados Unidos. Pero desde que me vine yo le dije: “no te quiero aquí, por favor. Respeta, no te quiero aquí.” Y como está muy lejos, de alguna manera no está tan fácil. Entonces, si me hubiese ido a Tijuana, al siguiente día me cae allá. Luego él tiene familia allá, Obregón igual, Hermosillo igual, toda esa gente es familia de él. Entonces yo me vine aquí con mi familia. Y así ya no fue tan fácil para él. Y luego me vine con esta sobrina que él apreciaba mucho, se apreciaban los dos mucho, pero tuvieron problemas por lo mismo, porque ella se enteró de todo lo que pasó con mi esposo<sup>74</sup> y ella fue la primera que me dijo a mí, y pues menos iba a llegar aquí con esta sobrina.</p> <p><b>Segunda migración: <i>Siempre dependí, de mi papá y después de mi esposo</i></b></p> <p>Esta es mi segunda vez que yo vengo a quedarme en Albuquerque. Como te dije, en el 2015 estuve aquí de enero a agosto. Volví a Cañas con mi esposo, vivimos un año ahí, pero no funcionamos, o sea, no, no quise, no quise, y ya, me volví a venir a Albuquerque en agosto del 2016. Yo quería ser autosuficiente, yo quería hacerlo sola y me vine por segunda vez, y esta vez estuve un</p>	<p>come whenever he wants, because he also has a visa, he has everything he needs to be able to come to the United States. But ever since I came, I told him, “I don’t want you to be here, please. Respect that, I don’t want you here.” Since he’s far away, it’s not that easy. So, if I had gone to Tijuana, he would have been there the next day. He has family there, also in Obregon and Hermosillo, they’re all his relatives. This way it wasn’t as easy for him. I came here and stayed with my niece who he really liked, both of them liked each other, but they also had issues, because she found out about everything that happened with my husband<sup>7</sup>, and she’s the first one who told me, and so he wasn’t about to stay with that niece.</p> <p><b>Second migration: <i>I was always dependent, first on my dad and then on my husband</i></b></p> <p>This is the second time I’ve come to stay in Albuquerque. Like I said, in 2015 I was here from January to August. I went back with my husband in Cañas, and we lived there for a year, but the relationship didn’t work. I mean, I didn’t, I didn’t want that and so I came back to Albuquerque in August 2016. I wanted to be self-sufficient, I wanted to do it</p>
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<sup>74</sup> Se refiere a la infidelidad del esposo/*Se refiere a la infidelidad del marido.*

<p>tiempo viviendo con una amiga que conocí la primera vez que vine. Mi esposo me hablaba por teléfono y me decía: “te mando dinero para que rentes un departamento.” Y yo le decía: “no, no quiero que me mandes dinero, no quiero que me des ni un cinco, yo voy a salir adelante, yo lo voy hacer sola y me voy a traer a mi hija”, le dije. “Si, pero yo te puedo apoyar”, me decía. “No quiero tu apoyo, no quiero absolutamente nada, y no te tengo coraje, no es porque esté enojada, simplemente es algo que yo quiero hacer, yo voy a salir adelante y lo voy hacer.” Siempre dependí, primero de mi papá y después de mi esposo, y yo ya no quería estar así, yo ya quería hacer algo por mí. Y se siente bien padre, se siente bien bonito, algo que nunca había vivido y que lo estoy viviendo ahora y estoy muy contenta. Me traje a mi hija y lo hice todo yo sola.</p> <p>Cuando me vine esta segunda vez, yo ya había hecho una amiga aquí y ella me ayudó. Desde antes de salir yo le hablo y me dice: “yo voy a estar trabajando, pero voy a mandar para que vayan por ti a la central.”</p> <p>Todo el camino estuvimos hablando por teléfono: “cómo estas, dónde vienes, que esto y que aquello” ... yo me vine de Las Cañas a Phoenix, y de Phoenix a Albuquerque. Todo</p>	<p>on my own and I came back the second time. This time I lived for a while with a friend who I’d met the first time I came. My husband would call me on the phone and say, “I’ll send you money so you can rent an apartment.” And I told him, “no, I don’t want you to send me money, I don’t want you to give me a penny, I’ll get ahead, I’m going to do it on my own, and I’m going to bring my daughter,” I told him. “Yes, but I can support you,” he said. “I don’t want your support, I don’t want anything at all, and I’m not angry at you, it’s not because I’m mad, it’s just something I want to do, I’ll get ahead and I’ll do it.” I was always dependent, first on my dad and then on my husband, and I didn’t want it to be like that anymore, I wanted to do something myself. And it feels really good, it feels nice, something I had never experienced before and I’m really happy. I brought my daughter up, and I did it on my own.</p> <p>When I came this second time, I had already made a friend here and she helped me. Even before I left, I called and she said, “I’m going to be working, but I’ll send someone to pick you up at the station.” The whole way here we were talking on the phone, “how are you, where are you, this and that.” ... I came from</p>
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<p>el tramo viajé en camión. Bien cansado, bien cansado el viaje ¡imagínate tantas horas<sup>75</sup>! Y de una central pasarme a la otra, y con miedo, ¡tenía miedo! Ahí con el taxista en Phoenix, medio inglés, medio español, medio me entendía, ¡<i>Spanglish</i> más bien como le llaman! Y él ya me llevó a la central para venirme a Albuquerque. Y ya en cuanto llegué mi amiga mandó a otra persona que me llevó a su departamento. Súper bien, y en la noche que llega ella, ya nos fuimos a cenar y esto y aquello.</p> <p><b>Redes sociales, empleo y vivienda: si vuelves háblame y yo te doy trabajo</b></p> <p>La primera vez que yo vine aquí a Albuquerque conocí a la señora Alicia con la que trabajé limpiando casas y pues ya hice algunos contactos, más o menos. Cuando yo le dije que me iba a regresar a Cañas, la señora me dijo: “si vuelves algún día háblame y yo te doy trabajo”. Y sí, en cuanto regresé le hablé, inmediatamente empecé a trabajar con ella. La amiga con la que llegué aquí en Albuquerque trabaja en <i>Burger King</i> y antes de que yo llegara, ya le había dicho a su jefa de que si me daba trabajo y le dijo que sí. Al poco tiempo ya trabajaba también sábado y domingo en <i>Burger King</i>, además</p>	<p>Las Cañas to Phoenix, and from Phoenix to Albuquerque. The whole way in bus. Really exhausting, an exhausting trip, imagine how long it took!<sup>8</sup> And from one station I had to go to the other station, and I was afraid, I was afraid! I took a taxi in Phoenix and spoke half English and half Spanish to the driver, but he kind of understood. They call it <i>Spanglish</i>! And he took me to the station to come to Albuquerque. And as soon as I got here my friend sent someone else to take me to her apartment. Awesome, and that night she got home and we went out to eat and everything.</p> <p><b>Social networks, work and housing: if you come back call me and I'll give you work</b></p> <p>The first time I came here to Albuquerque I met Mrs. Alicia who I worked with cleaning houses and I made a few contacts, more or less. When I told her I was going back to Cañas, she said, “If you come back some day call me and I'll give you work.” And so, when I got back, I called her and started working with her right away. The friend who I came to stay with in Albuquerque works at <i>Burger King</i> and before I arrived, she had already asked her boss to give me a job and she said yes. So pretty soon I was also</p>
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<sup>75</sup> Aproximadamente 23 horas en camión, sin contar tiempo de paradas/*Approximately 23 hours by bus, not counting stops.*

de limpiar casas con la señora. Ahora trabajo nada más en el *Burger* cinco días y descanso dos. Cuando ya tenía trabajo, empecé a planear la venida de mi hija y para entonces se desocupa uno de los departamentos de ahí donde vivía con mi amiga. Cuando llegó la Cloe, yo ya estaba casi instalada por completo. Está chiquito el departamento, pero lo equipamos rapidito. O sea, todo esto fue como en menos de dos meses, muy rápido. Hubo mucha gente que me apoyó cuando yo llegué aquí. Sobre todo, una prima de mi amiga, que se fue a Phoenix y no se quería llevar todas las cosas. Me vendió algunas cosas, pero otras muchas me regaló.

**Rutina de trabajo en Los Estados Unidos:**

***I am a cook, I make hamburguesas***

*I'm cook... I am a cook, I make*

*hamburguesas in the Burger King.* Ya tengo casi ocho meses, el Burger está en un *mall*.

El compañero de la caja y yo, que estoy en la cocina, entramos a las 9:00 y salimos a las 3:00. Los jueves entro a las 3 y me quedo hasta cerrar, y ya viernes y sábado entro de 12 a 7 de la tarde. Y el domingo trabajo todo el día, abro a las 10 de la mañana y cierro a las 6 de la tarde. Yo me dedico a sacar todo lo que es la cocina, lo que son carnes, verduras, las freidoras para las papas... o sea,

working on Saturday and Sunday at *Burger King*, in addition to cleaning houses with the other woman. Now I just work at *Burger* five days a week, and I have two days off. Once I had work, I started to plan for my daughter to come and by then one of the apartments became available where I was staying with my friend. By the time Cloe arrived, I was pretty much all set up. The apartment is very little, but we furnished it quickly. I mean, all of this took less than two months, very quickly. A lot of people supported me when I arrived here. Above all, a cousin of my friend who left for Phoenix and didn't want to take everything with her. She sold me some things, but she also gave me a lot of other things.

**Work Routine in the United States: *I am***

***a cook, I make hamburguesas***

*I'm cook... I am a cook, I make*

*hamburguesas in the Burger King.* It's been almost eight months; the Burger is at a *mall*.

The cashier guy and I, I'm in the kitchen, we start at 9:00 and get off at 5:00. On Thursdays I start at 3 and stay until it closes, and then on Friday and Saturday I work from 12 to 7 in the afternoon. And on Sunday I work all day. I open at 10 a.m. and close at 6 p.m. I take out everything for the kitchen, the meat, vegetables, potato fryers... like, connect the refrigerators, where the bread is

<p>conectar refrigeradores, donde se calienta el pan, o sea, todo lo que es cocina yo me hago cargo de eso. Y el que está enfrente pues se hace cargo también de las sodas, de las nieves, de la caja, de las bolsas, de todo lo que refiere al frente. Y a las 10 de la mañana antes de abrir pues “¿ya estás listo tú? ¿estás listo tú?” y ya, yo pongo las carnes de las hamburguesas, tengo que tener la mesa lista, preparada con todas las verduras y todo eso. Lo que es la lechuga ya nos llega en bolsas, lo único que se tiene que hacer ahí es el tomate y la cebolla, rebanarla, pero igual tienen sus aparatos que es <i>saz, saz</i>, o sea, es rapidito, no tienes que picar con cuchillo ni nada. Y luego limpiar... normalmente la que cierra en la noche te deja limpiecito todo, todo, todo... el <i>boiler</i> donde hacemos las hamburguesa, las carnes, quedan limpiecitos, y todos los trastes que se usaron en el día, se llenan las botellas de cátsup, mostaza, de todas las salsas, ya para el día que tu entras en la mañana todo está limpiecito y todo está <i>estaqueado</i><sup>76</sup> como le dicen ellos. O sea que todo está listo para servir la mesa, que es la mayonesa, la lechuga el tomate, el <i>bacon</i><sup>77</sup> y todo eso.</p>	<p>heated, I mean, everything related to the kitchen, that’s what I’m in charge of. And the guy out front, he takes care of the sodas, the ice creams, the cash register, the bags and everything that’s up front. And at 10 in the morning before we open, it’s, “are you ready? Are you ready?” and that’s it, I put the meat for the hamburgers, I have to have the table ready, all the vegetables ready and all that. We get the lettuce already in bags, all I have to prepare there are the tomatoes and the onions, slicing them, but they have machines that are <i>swish, swish!</i> I mean, it’s really fast, you don’t have to slice with a knife or anything like that. And then to clean up... usually whoever closes at night leaves things nice and clean, everything, everything, everything, everything... the <i>boiler</i> where we cook the burgers, the meats, it’s all clean and all the dishes that were used during the day, the catsup and mustard, and all the sauce bottles are filled, so that when you start in the morning everything is nice and clean and, as they say, all <i>stocked</i>. So really, everything is ready to serve the table, like the mayonnaise, lettuce, tomato, <i>bacon</i> and all of that.</p>
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<sup>76</sup> *Stocked*, abastecido.

<sup>77</sup> Tocino/ *bacon*

<p><b>Aprendizaje de Idiomas y Socialización</b></p> <p><b>Aprendizaje de inglés en México: <i>Cuatro años hice de inglés</i></b></p> <p>Mi hija es bilingüe, se desenvuelve muy bien con el inglés. Mi hijo también habla un inglés muy bueno. Más nos preocupamos su papá y yo porque ellos aprendieran bien el inglés, que nosotros aprenderlo. Pero bueno, no estuvo tan mal porque veo que ahora mi hijo está trabajando en Guadalajara en una compañía donde hablan puro inglés, de esos que son como <i>call center</i>, que están hablándole a la gente, que son técnicos, pero pues en inglés.</p> <p>Yo estudié inglés en Cañas. Mis dos hijos estuvieron en el colegio Nuevo Camino<sup>78</sup> en la mañana, y en las tardes los inscribí en el Centro de Idiomas donde estudiaban inglés. Entraban a las cuatro y salían a las cinco y yo iba todos los días y los dejaba y luego tenía que ir por ellos, y dije ¡ay no! pues mejor me meto a las clases y me inscribí. Cuatro años hice de inglés ¿tú crees? Yo por llevar a los muchachos y me quedaba... ¿y te digo una cosa? cuando yo estaba en el inglés ahí, no lo entendía muy bien, y me decían: “¡no lo analices tanto! ¡no lo pienses tanto! nada más dilo, no traduzcas” me decían las <i>teachers</i>. Batallaba, batallaba muuucho. También</p>	<p><b>Language Learning and Socialization</b></p> <p><b>Learning English in Mexico: <i>I studied English for four years</i></b></p> <p>My daughter is bilingual, she gets along really well in English. My son also speaks very good English. Their dad and I were more concerned about them learning English than about learning it ourselves. But that was okay, because now I see that my son is working in Guadalajara in a company where they only speak English, one of those places called a <i>call center</i>, where they are talking to people, the technicians, but it’s all in English. I studied English in Cañas. My two kids studied in the Nuevo Camino<sup>11</sup> school in the morning, and in the afternoons, I registered them at the Language Center where they studied English. They went at four and got out and five and I would drop them off every day and then pick them up, and I was like, oh, no! I’ll take classes, too, and I registered. I studied English for four years, can you believe it? Because I was taking the kids and I just stayed... and you know what? When I was studying English there, I didn’t understand it very well and the <i>teachers</i> would tell me, “Don’t over-analyze it! Don’t think about it so much, just say it, don’t translate.” I had a really, really hard time. I</p>
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<sup>78</sup> Nombre ficticio, colegio bilingüe particular/*Fictitious name, private bilingual school*

<p>quiere decir mucho que yo misma me decía: “es que no lo entiendo, ¡no lo capto!” Obviamente pues así tampoco ¿verdad? ... Pero nunca dejé de ir, estuve ahí los cuatro años, y me agarraba con los libros, con la gramática y todo, pero de esas veces que nomás no, no sé por qué. Pero ahora me doy cuenta que sí me quedaron muchas nociones, porque ¿te acuerdas que una vez tú me preguntaste en clase: “¿Por qué le pusiste doble <i>t</i> a esa palabra? ¿Pero sabes por qué?” Y no me acuerdo, no te lo puedo explicar, sé que lo vi, sé que va con doble <i>t</i>, pero no sé por qué. Si, pues así fue como empecé yo con el inglés.</p> <p><b>El miedo al inglés: <i>antes si me daba vergüenza hablarlo</i></b></p> <p>Cuando recién llegue aquí, tenía mucho miedo, aunque traía un poco de noción del inglés, me daba mucho miedo hablarlo, por no saber si lo pronuncias bien o no, entonces, no me atrevía a hablarlo. Si aprendí inglés, pero no te lo hablaba, y cuando lo escuchaba no lo entendía. No, porque en el Centro de Idiomas no lo hablábamos... pensé yo, deberíamos de tener más fonética, porque también hice un curso de fonética en el centro de idiomas, pero no sé, me pasaron de noche esos años que estuve ahí. Pero a lo mejor no estaba tan abierta como ahora de querer de veras aprenderlo. Ahora me</p>	<p>was also telling myself, “I just don’t understand, I don’t get it!” Obviously, that’s not the way, right?... But I never stopped going, I was there for four years, and I would study the books, and grammar and everything, but it was just like I wasn’t getting it, I don’t know why. Now I realize that lots of concepts stuck, because, remember once when you asked me in class, “Why did you put two <i>t</i>’s in that word? Do you know why?” And I don’t remember, I can’t explain it, I know I saw it and that it has two <i>t</i>’s, but I don’t know why. So that’s how I started off with English.</p> <p><b>Fear of English: <i>I used to be embarrassed to speak it</i></b></p> <p>When I first got here, I was really afraid, even though I had some ideas of English, I used to be afraid to speak it because I didn’t know if I was pronouncing it right or not, so, I didn’t dare to speak. I had learned English, but I didn’t speak it and I didn’t understand when I heard it. Because at the Language Center we didn’t speak it... I thought, we should study more phonetics, because I also took a phonetics class at the language school, but I don’t know, it’s like I didn’t get anything out of those years I was there. But maybe I wasn’t open to wanting to really learn it. Now I am interested in speaking it,</p>
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<p>interesa hablarlo, me interesa entenderlo. Si sabía el significado de muchas cosas, de hecho, me traje hasta unos libros de inglés de Cañas y cuando llegaba de trabajar con la señora<sup>79</sup> me agarraba con los libros. Y cuando practico con esta chica que está en el trabajo yo me doy cuenta que si le capto bastante, ya me estoy dando a entender con ella. También con las pronunciaciones, ya le pregunto, ella lo pronuncia y yo lo vuelvo a pronunciar. Ella me ha ayudado, no me da vergüenza hablarlo con ella. Pero antes si me daba vergüenza hablarlo, por no saber si te van a entender o no. Me preocupa la pronunciación, el saber si lo estoy pronunciando bien y que me vayan a entender. Pero es perderle el miedo al inglés. Por ejemplo, cuando estoy con la muchacha esta, siento que no me juzga cómo pronuncio, cómo hablo, cómo digo. Y si no me entiende ella, va al teléfono inmediatamente y busca y ya me dice cómo. Y ya me siento como más en confianza con ella y por eso me gusta hablar con ella. Y no es que sienta que me juzga la gente cuando hablo, más bien siento como que no, más bien creo que soy yo, no la gente. Soy yo. Como no me siento segura de pronunciar las cosas, a lo mejor y sí, no las pronuncio bien por la misma inseguridad que</p>	<p>in understanding it. I did know the meaning of lots of things, and actually I brought some of my English books from Cañas, and when I went to work with that woman,<sup>12</sup> I'd take the books. And when I practice with this girl at work, I realize that I do understand quite a bit, and I'm communicating with her. It helps with pronunciation, I can ask her and she pronounces it and then I repeat it. She's helped me, I'm not embarrassed to speak it with her. But I used to be embarrassed to speak it, because I didn't know if people would understand me. I worry about pronunciation, to know if I'm pronouncing things right and if people will understand. But it's a matter of losing the fear of English. For example, when I'm with this girl, I feel like she doesn't judge my pronunciation, how I speak, how I talk. And if she doesn't understand me, she goes to her phone and looks it up and then she tells me how to say it. So, I feel comfortable with her and I like to speak to her. It's not like I feel that other people judge me when I speak, I don't think that, it's more about me judging, not other people. I judge myself. It's like I don't feel confident pronouncing things maybe and then, I don't pronounce them right because of my own insecurity.</p>
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<sup>79</sup> Se refiere a la señora con la que trabajaba limpiando casas/*In reference to the woman she worked with cleaning houses.*

yo tengo.

**Inglés en el trabajo: *hay una sola persona que habla inglés***

Ahí en el trabajo hay una sola persona que habla inglés. Mi jefa también habla inglés, pero ella nunca se refiere a nosotros hablando inglés, ella siempre habla español. La supervisora es una persona que solo inglés, ella no habla español. Pero ella nunca está ahí. Si acaso va una vez a la semana, a veces dos, es muy raro cuando ella va. Con mi jefa interactúo todo el tiempo porque trabajamos juntas, ella se queda enfrente y yo atrás. Ella es la *estore manager*<sup>80</sup>, es la que está como cajera, y ella viene siendo la encargada de toda la tienda. A veces que ellos [los encargados] tienen que salir al baño o equis, y de repente ya está la línea de gente esperando y ellos allá, y tú no los atiendes porque no sabes, es cuando yo ya les digo a los clientes en inglés que se esperen un momentito que la encargada se fue al baño. Entonces no hablo mucho inglés ahí. Ahorita, te digo, empecé a hablar con esta niña, ella me habla en español y yo le hablo en inglés, así practica español ella y yo practico inglés. Tiene 18 años, está chiquita, pero, o sea, no hablaba nada de español. Pero cuando estamos ocupados no tenemos mucha chanza

**English at work: *only one person speaks English***

At work, only one person speaks English. My boss also speaks English, but she never talks to us in English, she always speaks Spanish. The supervisor is the person who only speaks English, she doesn't speak Spanish. But she's never there. Maybe she shows up once or twice a week, she rarely comes by. I interact with my boss all the time, because we work together, she's in front and I'm in the back. She's the *store manager*, so she's like the cashier and she is in charge of the whole store. Sometimes they [the people in charge] have to go to the bathroom or whatever, and suddenly there's a line of people waiting and they're not around, and you can't help them because you don't know how, that's when I tell the clients in English to wait just a minute, that the person in charge went to the bathroom. So, I don't speak much English there. Right now, I tell you, I have started speaking it with this girl, she speaks to me in Spanish and I speak to her in English, so she practices and so do I. She's 18 years old, quite young, but I mean, she didn't used to speak any Spanish. But when we're busy we don't have much time to practice. No, no, because she works

<sup>80</sup> *Store manager*, gerente de tienda

de practicar. No, no, porque ella va los fines de semana que es cuando estamos más ocupados y no es mucha oportunidad de que platiemos.

**El inglés y mejor empleo: *quiero interactuar con las personas***

Ayer le dije a mi jefa: “párame enfrente.” Aunque me da pavor porque tenía que hablar inglés. “¿Te animas?” me dijo. “¡Tu ponme! Y ensáñame en la caja.” Sí me gusta porque quiero aprender y quiero estar ahí, y quiero interactuar con las personas y todo eso y eso me obligaría a practicar inglés. Hay veces que no quisiera tampoco porque sé que meterme ahí es más tiempo y yo lo que quiero ya es otra cosa, otro trabajo. Ella ya me está diciendo que para diciembre, pero yo no quiero quedarme en el *Burger*, pues. Y no quiero que ella piense que ahí me voy a quedar, ya le dije que quiero otra cosa. De hecho, ahora me preguntó: “¿cuándo empiezan tus cursos?” Porque ella sabe que yo quiero estudiar el curso para cuidar niños. Y ya le dije: “el próximo sábado.” “Ah bueno, para empezar a checar horarios”, porque le renunció un manager. Pero yo no me quiero quedar ahí porque es trabajar el 25, el 24 de diciembre y todos esos días, o sea, no tienes descanso, menos esos días. Y si yo puedo agarrar antes un trabajo en una guardería donde pueda trabajar de lunes a

on weekends when we’re busiest and there’s not much chance for us to talk.

**English and a better job: *I want to interact with people***

Yesterday I told my boss, “put me in front.” Even though I’m terrified because I had to speak English. “Are you up for it?” she asked. “Put me there! And teach me the cash register.” I like that because I want to learn and I want to be there, and I want to interact with people and all that, and that would force me to practice English. Sometimes, I don’t want to because I know that if she puts me there it’ll be more time and what I really want is something else, another job. She’s telling me she will in December, but I don’t really want to stay at *Burger*. And I don’t want her to think I’m going to stay there, I’ve already told her I want something else. In fact, she asked me, “when are your classes starting?” Because she knows I want to take a class about child care. And I told her, “next Saturday.” “Oh, okay, so we can start checking the schedules,” because she had a manager quit. But I don’t want to stay there because it means working on December 25<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> and all those days, I mean, you don’t rest, much less on those days. If I can get a job at a child care center where I can work Monday to Friday and get Saturday and

viernes y descansar sábado y domingo pues...eso me gustaría hacer.

**Aprendizaje de inglés y diversidad cultural: *no me gustaba la cultura hindú***

Tengo una compañera nueva en el trabajo con la que también estoy tratando de practicar inglés, pero ella no sabe mucho, es de la India. En cuanto nos vemos, la señora me abraza y le digo: “*how are you?*” Y me dice: “*Good, good and you?*” “¡Yo también!” Y a veces que me quedo callada, “¿qué le pregunto?” Y a veces que me dice: “*Tamarra! Tamarra!*” Y yo: “*Oh my God!* ¿Qué me está diciendo?, tal vez “*tomorrow? See you tomorrow*, querrá decir?” [Ríe]. Y le digo, ¿“*how do you feel?*” y no me entendía, y decía yo: “¡Ay! ¿no me entiende o no lo estoy pronunciando bien?” Te entra esa duda. Y ya le pregunto a la chica que habla bien inglés: “*Sienna?! How do you feel?*” “*Good, good!*” me dice. ¡Ah! ¡Entonces ella es la que no me entiende! [Ríe]. Es una traba quieras o no, no parece, pero sí. Pero me divierto mucho con ella, esta señora de la India y es bien entrona, ¡bien entrona! Me dice mi hija que el destino me mandó a esta señora porque yo siempre decía que no me gustaba la cultura hindú. Ni siquiera sé por qué. Cuando estaba con mi hermana en Alemania, había muchos hindúes también allá y había como colonias y había música y

Sunday off... well I'd like to do that.

**English learning and cultural diversity: *I didn't like Hindu culture***

I have a new co-worker who I'm also trying to practice English with, but she doesn't know much, she's from India. As soon as we see each other, she hugs me and I say, “*how are you?*” and she says, “*Good, good and you?*”. “Me, too!” And sometimes I'm quiet because I don't know what to ask her. And sometimes she says, “*Tamarrah! Tamarrah!*” and I'm like, “*Oh my God!* What's she saying to me? Maybe *tomorrow?* Does she mean, *See you tomorrow?* [laughs] And I say, “*how do you feel?*” and she didn't understand, and I'd say, “Oh, she doesn't understand or am I pronouncing it wrong?” You get doubts. So, I ask the girl who speaks English well, “*Sienna?! How do you feel?*” And she says, “*Good, good.*” Oh, so it's she who doesn't understand me [Laugh]. It's an obstacle, it may not seem like it, but it is. But I have fun with her, that woman from India is really fearless, really fearless! My daughter says that destiny sent me that woman because I always said I didn't like Hindu culture. I don't even know why. When my sister was in Germany there were lots of Hindus there and they lived in neighborhoods and had music and restaurants and all. I don't

restaurantes y toda esa cosa. No sé por qué, no sé si sea una tontería mía, pero me molestaba escuchar su música, y no me gustaba la cultura. Y había casas de hindúes que íbamos a limpiar, cuando yo limpiaba casas, que tenían la musiquita esa y yo: “¡ay no lo soporto!” [Ríe]. No sé por qué, no sé qué pasaría, no me gustaba. Y mira, le digo a la Cloe, cómo es increíble que la señora me muestra a su hijo en el celular cantando de las canciones esas que nunca me gustaron, que me molestaba escucharlas y ¡wow! “*It’s good*”, le digo, “tu hijo, pues canta bonito” [Ríe]. Y yo nomás me quedé así “*My God!*” Pero ya no se me hace tan así la música, como antes, ya no me molesta escucharla, de verdad.

**Escases del Inglés y prevalencia del español: *todos hablan español***

Para conseguir trabajo no necesité el inglés. Para llenar la aplicación del departamento tampoco necesité el inglés. Bueno, el señor ahí encargado, hablaba inglés, pero estaba con mi amiga y ahí lo llené y ahí mismo se lo entregué, no necesité mucho inglés. En mi rutina diaria en realidad tampoco necesito mucho el inglés. Normalmente cuando entro a las 3 de la tarde, voy y dejo a mi hija a la guardería donde ella trabaja y me regreso a limpiar la casa y a hacer comida. No tengo relación con mucha gente, o sea, con los

know why, maybe just my silliness, but it bothered me to hear their music and I didn’t like their culture. And we would go clean at houses of Hindus, when I cleaned houses, and they’d have that music on and I was like, “Oh, I can’t stand it!” [laughs] I don’t know why, what was up, I didn’t like it. And look, I tell Cloe, it’s incredible but this woman shows me her son on the cell phone singing those songs I never liked, that bothered me and, wow! “*It’s good*,” I tell her, “your son sings beautifully,” [laughs]. And I’m just like, “*My God!*” And now that kind of music doesn’t get me like it used to, it honestly doesn’t bother me to hear it.

**Scarcity of English and the prevalence of Spanish: *everybody speaks Spanish***

I didn’t need English to get a job. I didn’t need English to fill out the application for the apartment either. Well, the buy in charge there spoke English, but I was with my friend and I filled it out and handed it to him, I didn’t need much English. In my daily routine I really don’t need much English either. Usually, when I start at 3 p.m., I drop my daughter off at the child care center where she works and I go home to clean house and cook. I don’t interact with many people, I mean, the people I have relationships with are my friends who work

mismos que tengo relación son mis amigos que trabajan en el *Burger*, y ahí viven en los mismos departamentos, pero todos igual también hablan español. Entonces con el único que a veces así: “*how are you?*”<sup>81</sup> me saluda, es el señor que nos renta los departamentos que vive ahí también y él habla inglés. O cuando vamos y le pagamos la renta, es todo, no hay mucho donde yo pueda hablar inglés. Como no voy tampoco a la iglesia y no tengo... no tengo amistades, pues no tengo muchas oportunidades. Y como somos mi hija y yo, nos ocupamos, nos gusta mucho el cine, salir a comer, pero juntas siempre, no es como que tengamos otras amistades donde pueda yo hablar el inglés más. Y cuando vamos al súper, normalmente vamos al *Smith*, a *Walmart*, o al Súper, al Mezquite de repente también... o sea... pues sí... siempre español la verdad, no hemos necesitado mucho hablar el inglés. A veces, cuando vamos a la *Burlington* a ver vestiditos, zapatos, o así, de repente, sí, pero mucho no, pero... pues, más ahí en la clase, pero pues fíjate, que son cuatro horas por semana nada más, en realidad no es mucha práctica. Ahora que mi hija se lastimó un pie anduvimos en varias clínicas y fíjate, puro español... todos. Tres clínicas visitamos y las

at *Burger*, and who live there at the same apartments, but all of them also speak Spanish. So, the only one who sometimes is like, “*How are you?*” who greets me, is the man who rents the apartment to us, who also lives there, and he speaks English. Or when we go to pay him the rent, that’s it, there’s not a lot of places where I can speak English. Because I don’t go to church and I don’t have... I don’t have friendships, well, I don’t have many opportunities. And since it’s my daughter and me, we stay busy, we like going to movies, going out to eat, but always the two of us, it’s not like we have other friends who I can speak more English to. And when we go to the supermarket, it’s usually *Smith’s* or *Walmart* or to El Súper or Mezquite... so, well, yeah, people all speak Spanish, we haven’t really needed to speak much English. Sometimes when we go to *Burlington* to see dresses, shoes, or things, sometimes, yes, but not usually, so... it’s really more in class there, but you know, that’s just four hours a week, which really isn’t much practice. Recently my daughter hurt her foot and we’ve had to go to several clinics and, you know, it’s all in Spanish... all of them. We went to three clinics and they spoke to us in Spanish in all three, even the doctor. I also

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<sup>81</sup> ¿Cómo estás? / *How are you*

<p>tres nos hablaron en español, y el doctor también. También cuando fui a que le sacaran la muela a mi hija, con ellos también hablamos todo en español. Aunque mi hija se desenvuelve, ella es bilingüe.</p> <p><b>Ausencia de interacciones significativas: <i>la gente no está disponible para ayudarte</i></b></p> <p>Me ha pasado que a veces intento comunicarme en inglés y que no lo logro. O la persona con la que estoy tratando de comunicarme no coopera. Una vez estaba trabajando en casa de una señora y le pregunté dónde tenía las bolsas de basura, y ella me decía que no me entendía, y que no me entendía. Yo le decía... ¿cómo le decía? ¿<i>bag, beg?</i> ¿<i>where is the bag, the beg?</i>... no hallaba cómo decirle, pero trataba de pronunciarle de diferentes modos y me decía que no me entendía. Yo digo, ¿qué tan difícil es entender <i>bag o beg?</i> O sea, no creo que no entienda <i>the trash</i>. o sea la basura o algo, y no, y no, y no. Ah bueno... pues no hay bolsas, dije yo. Les dije a otras dos muchachas que andaban trabajando ahí conmigo: “pues no sabe la señora lo que le estoy preguntando y yo tampoco sé cómo decirle, pues, ¿qué hacemos?” Y ya una de ellas fue y tiró una basura que estaba en una bolsa, la sacó y la tiró y ya se trajo la bolsa y esa la reusamos. Pero a veces la gente no está disponible para ayudarte... es algo que lo</p>	<p>went with my daughter to get a tooth pulled, and we also spoke to them all in Spanish. Even though my daughter gets along fine, she’s bilingual.</p> <p><b>Lack of Significant Interactions: <i>People aren’t available to help you</i></b></p> <p>It’s happened to me that sometimes I try to communicate in English and I fail. Or the person with whom I’m trying to communicate won’t cooperate. Once I was working at a woman’s house and I asked her where the trash bags were, and she said she didn’t understand me, and couldn’t understand. I said to her... what was it? <i>Bag, beg? Where is the bag, the beg?</i>... I couldn’t figure out how to tell her, but I was trying to pronounce it in different ways and she kept saying that she didn’t understand me. I mean, how difficult is it to understand <i>bag or beg?</i> I mean, I can’t believe she didn’t understand <i>the trash</i>, or trash or something, but she kept saying no, no. Oh well... so there are no bags, I said. I told the other girls who were working there with me, “the lady doesn’t know what I’m asking her and I don’t know how to tell her, so, what do we do?” And so, one of them went and threw out some trash that was in a bag, she took it out and she threw it and then she brought the bag back and we reused it. But sometimes people</p>
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<p>sientes... En cambio, a veces hay otras personas que son muy amables.</p> <p><b>Desarrollo personal y aprendizaje de inglés: <i>Florecer es estar aprendiendo el idioma</i></b></p> <p>En el río de mi vida, estas flores que están acá al final<sup>82</sup> significan que estoy floreciendo... o sea, es el árbol, tiene fruto, me siento fortalecida y estoy floreciendo, en mi trabajo, o sea estoy saliendo, estoy contenta, estoy floreciendo, y me gusta estar floreciendo. El florecer es estar a gusto en mi trabajo, que me gusta mi trabajo, es estar con mi vida, es estar aprendiendo el idioma, de alguna manera estoy con el inglés. Más con mis compañeros de trabajo que no hablan inglés. Una de ellas habla puro inglés y la otra pues es de la India y está también ella aprendiendo, entonces ahí también yo siento que estoy practicando el inglés. Ya me siento mejor con eso, inclusive yo le dije a mi jefa, acabo de hablar con ella para que me ponga donde pueda hablar más. Como ella se embarazó y va a dejar el puesto, le dije: “bueno pues enséñame, enséñame a mí, mi problema ahorita es el inglés, pero estoy estudiando”, le digo, “a lo mejor más adelante puedo, no sé, tú enséñame.” “¿De</p>	<p>aren't available to help you... that's something you feel... but other times people are very friendly.</p> <p><b>Personal Development and Learning English: <i>To learn the language is to flower</i></b></p> <p>In the river of my life, these flowers that are here at the end<sup>15</sup> mean that I am flowering... I mean, it's the tree, it has fruit, I feel strengthened and I'm flowering in my work, I mean I'm going out, I'm happy, I'm flourishing, and I like to be flowering. Flowering is to be happy in my work, to like my work, it's to be with my life, to learn the language, and somehow, I'm getting the English. Especially with my workmates who don't speak English. One only speaks English and the other one is from India, and she's also learning, so there I feel like I'm practicing English. I feel better with that now, and I've even told my boss, I just asked her if she can place me where I can speak more. Because she got pregnant and is going to leave her position, I told her, “well, teach me, teach me, my problem right now is the English, but I'm studying,” I told her, “maybe in the future I can do it, I don't know, you teach me.” “Really, do you want to?” she said. “Well let's start doing it, I</p>
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<sup>82</sup> Ver figura 3 Río de la Vida/ See figure 3 River of Life



veras, sí quieres?” me dijo, “Pues vamos haciéndolo, no te aseguro que me vaya a quedar en el puesto”, le digo, “porque pues a lo mejor no, pero tú enséñame, enséñame la caja, enséñame a hacer los inventarios y todo, hay muchas cosas que yo puedo hacer, tú dime qué y yo te ayudo... y así yo aprendo.” Y pues quién sabe mañana, a lo mejor no me quedo con ese trabajo cuando ella se vaya, pero después ¿por qué no? no veo por qué no... aprendiendo bien el idioma lo puedo hacer.

### **Navegando Redes Y Sistemas Sociales**

#### **Apoyo de la hermana: *siempre he tenido el apoyo de ella***

Mi hermana siempre me apoyó, siempre cuando estuve en Cañas, ahora que estoy acá, siempre. Por ejemplo, se me venció el pasaporte, y como yo a mi esposo no le volví a pedir ni un cinco, yo no quería que él me diera nada, entonces mi hermana me dijo: “saca tu pasaporte”, y saz, mandó dinero. O sea, todo, todo lo que es económico mi hermana me ayudó. Cuando llegue aquí la primera vez, ella estuvo conmigo y trabajó con la señora, limpiando casas, aunque ella no lo necesitaba. “No”, me dice: “salte de ahí”, me decía, “búscale en otro lado, es muy cansado, búscale”, me decía. “Metete al

can't promise I'm going to stay in this position,” I told her, “I might not, but you teach me, show me how to use the cash register, teach me to do the inventory and everything. There are lots of things I can do, you tell me what and I'll help you... and that way I'll learn.” And so, who knows, tomorrow, maybe I won't stay in that job when she leaves but later, why not? I don't see why not... if I learn the language well, I can do it.

### **Navigating Social Networks and Systems**

#### **A Sister's Support: *I've always had her support***

My sister has always supported me, always when I was in Cañas, and now that I'm here, always. For example, my passport expired, and since I haven't asked my husband for a cent again, I didn't want him to give me anything, so my sister told me, “get your passport,” and Bam! she sent the money. I mean, everything, everything financial, my sister has always helped me. When I came here the first time, she was with me and she worked with the woman, cleaning houses, even though she didn't need to. “No,” she said, “get out of there,” she said, “find something else, that's too exhausting, look

inglés también para que puedas encontrar otra cosa, otro tipo de trabajo”, me decía. Y sí, siempre he tenido el apoyo de ella. Antes de que llegara mi hija, mi hermana me envió dinero para que me comprara el carro, “para que no andes a pie”, me dijo. Porque ¡Ay, aquí es bien difícil si no tienes carro! ¡Bien difícil! Si aquí anduvimos mi hermana y yo, ¿no te digo?, el año antepasado, y en camioncito anduvimos. Nos divertimos mucho, aprendimos mucho, lloramos mucho, todo, pero no, definitivamente no podíamos andar sin carro. Obviamente que es prestado [ríe], ya le pagué parte de eso y estoy por terminarle de pagarle el carro, pero siempre me apoyó mucho, hasta la fecha. De hecho, mi hermana le compró el boleto de avión a mi hija de San Diego para acá. Ella hace todo, todo, todo, para que pueda resolver mis problemas, un apoyo increíble con ella.

**Navegando relaciones de poder en el trabajo: llega el momento que te respetan también**

Cuando llegué con la señora Alicia, te digo, te sientes como gallina que llega a corral ajeno, porque no sabes qué hacer, ni para dónde ir y te tienen que estar diciendo. Y luego cuando yo entré a trabajar al Burger, hay unas personas que no se portaron excelente, o sea, hubo más quien sí ¿verdad?

for something,” she would say. “Put effort into the English, too, so you can find something else, another kind of work,” she told me. I’ve always had her support. Before my daughter arrived, my sister sent me money so I could buy the car, “so you’re not walking everywhere,” she said. Because, oh, it’s really tough here if you don’t have a car! Really tough! I mean my sister and I did it, right? That was the year before last, and we were always taking buses. We had a good time, we learned a lot, we cried a lot, everything, but no, definitely, we couldn’t do without a car. Obviously, it’s a loan [laughs], I’ve already paid part of it and I’m about to pay for the car, but she always has supported me a lot, even today. In fact, my sister bought my daughter her plane ticket from San Diego to here. She does everything, everything, everything, to help solve my problems, she has been an incredible support.

**Navigating Relationships of Power at Work: A time comes when they respect you**

When I arrived with Mrs. Alicia, I tell you, you feel like a hen in a strange coop, you don’t know what to do, where to go and they have to tell you everything. And then, when I started working at *Burger*, there were some people who didn’t behave excellently, I mean, but there were more who did, right?

pero, dos personas que me estaban entrenando, no sé si será que son desesperados o qué, pero dices, tienes que entender que va empezando y tienes que ser paciente. Y yo cuando entre ahí, le digo a la Cloe, me sentía como gallina en corral ajeno, no sabía ni qué hacer. A veces la gente no te ayuda tanto, ya Cloe le estaba pasando lo mismo ahí donde trabajaba. Y luego llega el momento en que las personas esas que te estaban entrenando, las superas, ahorita tú les estás enseñando cosas. Una de las personas que me hacía sudar, me hacía trabajar de más, a veces hasta el trabajo de ella me ponía a hacerlo, ahorita para todo “Andrea esto, Andrea aquello.” Andrea para todo, sí, muévete, hazlo, tráeme, ponme o quítame. Pero ahora yo soy la que le está diciendo qué hacer. Pero nos llevamos bien y ella empezó a respetarme y de hecho hasta te puedo decir que nos apreciamos. Pero en su momento ¡sí me la hizo ver fea!

Ya ahorita me siento tan segura de mi trabajo, de lo que hago, que inclusive a la jefa, cada que se pone a hacer un inventario le digo: “¿por qué tardas tanto en hacer un inventario? Tú lo que tienes que hacer es hacerlo en la computadora.” Y pues yo sé de eso porque yo lo hacía en el negocio con mi esposo. O sea, reniega porque trabaja en horas que no son de ella, y ahí está, nombre

But, two people who were training me, I don’t know if it was because they were impatient or what, but you say, you have to understand that one is just starting and they have to be patient. And when I started there, I told Cloe, I felt like a hen in a strange coop, I didn’t even know what to do. Sometimes people don’t help you that much, the same thing was happening to Cloe where she worked. And then, a time comes when you surpass the people who are training you, and now you’re teaching them things. One of the people who really made me sweat, who made me work extra, who sometimes even had me doing her work, now she’s always like “Andrea this, Andrea that.” Andrea all the time, yeah, move, go, do, bring, put this, take that. But now I’m the one telling her what to do. But we get along fine, and she started to respect me, and I could even say that we appreciate each other. But in the beginning, she really gave me a hard time!

And now I feel so secure in my work, about what I do, that even my boss, whenever she’s doing inventory, I tell her, “how come it takes you so long to do the inventory? You should really be doing it on the computer.” And I know about that because I did it at my husband’s business. I mean, she complains because she works hours that she shouldn’t, and there she is, name by name and name by

<p>por nombre, y nombre por nombre. Le digo: “estás perdiendo tanto tiempo muchacha haciendo esto. Cada cuatro días llega un tráiler que trae mercancía, pones eso en el Excel y ahí te va a estar dando las cuentas de todo.” Pero bueno, no me ha hecho caso, algún día a lo mejor, si quiere me escucha, igual es su trabajo, pero bueno. Y hay otra persona en el trabajo que ella siempre era: “bien limpiecito acá, bien limpiecito allá” ... tuve muchos problemas con ella porque ella decía que al ver lo que ella hacía eso teníamos que hacer. Y por fin una vez le dije: “yo no tengo porqué trabajar como tú trabajas. Tú trabajas a tu manera y yo tengo la mía, yo voy a acomodar las cosas como yo quiera y como a mí me convenga cuando estoy trabajando.” Entonces ya tuvimos ella y yo como esa confrontación. Porque todo mundo decía: “se va a enojar ella, porque esto y por el otro” como que le tenían miedo. Y llega el momento que te respetan también, porque eso de que te agaches y estés haciendo lo que ellos quieran, ¿pues cómo? si ni siquiera es tu jefa, entonces, pues no. Pero bueno, lo vas superando, lo vas dejando atrás porque ya le agarraste el rollo al trabajo, vas, vienes y ya sabes manejar lo tuyo.</p> <p><b>Navegando la ciudad: <i>es perderle el miedo a las cosas, como perderle miedo al inglés</i></b>  ¿Cómo me empecé adaptar a la vida en</p>	<p>name. I tell her, “you’re wasting so much time by doing it that way, girl. Every four days a truck arrives with merchandise, you put that in Excel and it will do all the calculating.” But so far, she hasn’t taken my advice, maybe she will someday, if she wants to hear me, it’s her job after all, but you know. And there’s another person at work who was always saying, “clean it really well here, and there” ... I had lots of problems with her because she said that we should watch how she did things, and do them the same way. Finally, one day I told her, “I don’t have to work the way you work. You work your way and I work mine, I’m going to arrange things the way I like them, and the way that works best for me when I’m working.” So, she and I had that sort of confrontation. Because everybody said, “she’s going to get mad, she’s this and she’s that,” like they were afraid of her. And the time comes when they respect you, too, because what’s with just bending over and doing what they want? She’s not even your boss, so, no way. You get over it, you leave it behind because you figured the work out, you come, you go, and you know how to manage your own stuff.</p> <p><b>Navigating the city: <i>It’s a matter of losing fear of things, like losing fear of English</i></b>  How did I adapt to life in Albuquerque?</p>
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<p>Albuquerque? Cuando recién llegué me daba mucho miedo porque no conocía la ciudad. Pero ahora ya manejo de aquí pa' lla. Conozco varios rumbos porque la señora con la que trabajaba, nos traía por todos lados, porque ella tiene gente limpiando casas por todo Albuquerque. Hasta Tijeras fuimos a dar una vez, o sea, lejos. Entonces como que te ubicas, empiezas a conocer, a ver. A veces es difícil, pero eso me sirvió mucho a mí para ver cómo se bajaba y subía a los <i>freeways</i>. Aunque no traía carro yo trataba de ver, y ahora que empecé a manejar aquí, pues sí al principio me daba miedo, solamente me iba por la calle Cuarta y ahí dejaba el carro porque ahí nos recogía ella. Ya para irme al <i>mall</i>, pues se me hacía muy lejos y me daba miedito, pero ya vas perdiendo el miedo con la práctica. No me sé muy bien el GPS se llama ¿no? Pero ya también le estoy empezando a dar, o sea, para conocer, para moverme. Cuando anda Cloe conmigo, pues a ella le digo: “pónmelo hija”, y ya vamos a tal parte. Pero pues me aventé, es perderles el miedo a las cosas, como perderle miedo al inglés.</p> <p><b>Navegando los sistemas de migración y los servicios de salud: <i>aquí sí me siento más atada de manos</i></b></p> <p>Yo no tengo ni una ID de aquí. Yo sólo tengo licencia de manejo, pero es de Cañas, no</p>	<p>When I just got here, I was really frightened because I didn't know my way around the city. But now I drive all over. I know several different routes because the woman I used to work with would take us everywhere, because she has people cleaning houses all over Albuquerque. Once we even went as far as Tijeras, which is far. So, you start getting a feel for where you are, you get to know the place. Sometimes it's hard, but that also helped me a lot to learn how you got off and on the <i>freeways</i>. Even though I didn't have a car, I'd notice, and now that I started driving here, well sure, I was scared at first, I would just drive down Fourth street because that's where she'd pick us up. For me going to the <i>mall</i> seemed really far away and I was kind of scared, but with practice you get over the fear. I don't know how to use that thing very well, what's it called, GPS, right? But I'm starting to get used to knowing places, getting around. When Cloe is with me, I tell her to “turn it on, honey,” and we go to such and such a place. But, I mean, I dove in, you have to lose your fear of things, like losing fear of English.</p> <p><b>Navigating Immigration Systems and Health Care Services: <i>I feel like my hands are tied here</i></b></p> <p>I don't even have an ID here. All I have is a driver's license, but it's from Cañas. I don't</p>
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quiero sacar de acá. No tengo ni cuenta de banco, no, no, no quiero sacar una identificación de acá tampoco. Todavía tengo hasta el 2019 mi visa y no quiero tener conflictos. No he ido a renovar ningún permiso de visa porque la primera vez que vine, traía permiso y me regresé antes de que se venciera mi permiso. Bueno pues el año pasado me vine con permiso también, pero esta vez ya no he salido. Y la Cloe tampoco. Ella traía el permiso también, venía todo bien, pero ya no hemos salido. Con muchas ganas de ir, pero no. Hay gente que hace eso, que nomás va a México para que le renueven el permiso, pero no lo queremos hacer mucho porque tampoco quiero que me detecten. Yo no he sentido que he batallado mucho, he sentido que mi situación ha fluido... pero ¿Sabes lo que a mí sí me preocupa mucho? Lo único que me estresa mucho, me estresa mucho, mucho, que se me enferme la Cloe. ¡Ay! ahí sí me saca mucho de onda. Porque yo no me enfermo, es ella la que se enferma. Ya ves, la vez pasada la muela, luego se torció el pie, y ahora las... ¡ay no! “Cloe, no”, le digo, “ya, cámbiale de rollo, cámbiale de canal, no hija.” Y eso es lo que me preocupa, no saber qué hacer en esos casos. Allá en Cañas arrancas acá, arrancas allá, pero aquí si me siento más atada de manos ¡y de pie!

want to get one here. I don't even have a bank account, no, no, I don't want to get an ID card here either. My visa lasts until 2019 and I don't want to have any troubles. I haven't gone to renew any visa permit because the first time I came, I had a permit and I went back before my permit expired. So last year I came with a permit, too, but this time I haven't left. Neither has Cloe. She also came on a permit, she came in legally, but we haven't left. I would like to go, but I haven't. Some people do that, they just go to Mexico to renew their permit, but we don't really want to do that because we don't want to be on the radar. I don't feel like I have struggled that much, I feel like my situation has flowed... but, do you know what really does worry me? The only thing that stresses me out, and it does really stress me out a lot, a lot, is the thought that Cloe could get sick. Oh! That really makes me nervous. Because I don't get sick, she's the one who does. You know, last time it was her tooth, then she twisted her ankle, and now... oh, no! I tell her, “Cloe, switch it up, change the channel, no more, honey.” And that's what concerns me, not knowing what to do in that kind of situation. Over in Cañas, you know what to do, you go here, you go there, but here I feel like my hands are tied, and my feet, too!

<p align="center"><b>Cruzando Fronteras Ideológicas y Afirmando Nuevas Identidades</b></p>	<p align="center"><b>Crossing Ideological Borders and Asserting New Identities</b></p>
<p><b>Cambios ideológicos</b></p> <p><b>Religión:</b> <i>yo ya no era católica porque empecé a pensar</i></p> <p>La vez pasada me dio mucha vergüenza a mí con la señora Alejandrina cuando dije que yo ya no era católica porque empecé a pensar. Me sentí mal porque no sé si ofendí sus creencias. Pero... siempre seguí ese mismo patrón pues, y cuando dije ¡ya no, es ya no! ¿Por qué? Porque ya no quiero seguir pensando de esa manera, ya no quise seguir creyendo lo que creía antes. Como le digo a la Cloe, mi mamá siempre creyó en la virgen de Guadalupe y hacía rosarios. Me acuerdo que yo me enojaba cuando me ponía a rezar el rosario y yo no quería, pero ahí me tenía rece y rece y tarará, tarará, y ahí estás. Y a ella le hicieron lo mismo y atrás, a su mamá, le hicieron lo mismo. Entonces le digo a la Cloe, te pones a pensar un poquito ¿por qué creo en la virgen de Guadalupe? Porque me lo enseñó mi mamá. ¿Y por qué estuve en la iglesia? ¿Y por qué todo eso? Pero bueno, te pones a pensar un poquito y dices ¿Quién trajo a la virgen de Guadalupe? ¡Los españoles! ¿Para qué? Para controlar a la gente.</p>	<p><b>Ideological Changes</b></p> <p><b>Religion:</b> <i>I wasn't Catholic anymore because I started thinking</i></p> <p>The other day I was really embarrassed with Alejandrina when I told her that I wasn't Catholic anymore because I started thinking. I felt bad because I may have offended her beliefs. But... that's the pattern I followed, and when I said, I'm done, I was done! Why? Because I didn't want to keep thinking that way, I didn't want to keep believing in what I believed in before. Like I told Cloe, my mom always believed in the Virgin of Guadalupe and prayed rosaries. I remember I would get mad when she made me pray the rosary when I didn't want to, but she had me praying all the time and blah, blah, blah, there you are. They did the same thing to her, and before, they did the same to her mom. I tell Cloe, when you think about it a little, why do I believe in the Virgin of Guadalupe? Because my mom taught me to. And why was I at church? And why all that? But well, you start thinking a little and you say, who brought the Virgin of Guadalupe? The Spaniards! And why? To control people.</p>

**El Patriarcado: tú eres la catedral, ellas son las capillitas.**

Un conferencista que se llama Enrique Olvera<sup>83</sup> dice que es increíble que las mujeres mexicanas tengamos el síndrome del príncipe azul, que a pesar de que nos ven la cara, de que esto, de que aquello, dice -la palabra muy grosera- que estamos como pendejas otra vez de vuelta con los hombres que nos lastiman, haciéndonos de la vista gorda con ellos, aunque sabemos perfectamente que son infieles. Pero también hay mucho atrás de esto. Por ejemplo, mi esposo. Su papá siempre fue infiel; el papá de él siempre fue infiel; sus hermanos todos son infieles; él es infiel. O sea, ya ellos traen como... ¿cómo se llama? ¿el árbol de la vida? ¿el árbol genealógico? El árbol que traemos de la familia. Entonces ya es algo muy tóxico, un patrón muy fuerte, muy, muy fuerte. O sea, ya eso es muy canijo, muy difícil que lo vayas quitando. Como, por ejemplo, hay otro conferencista que comenta que cuando la gente dice: “yo no me puedo quitar los calcetines porque en cuanto me los quito me sale un fuego labial, o me duelen las anginas.” Pero, ¿por qué? “¡No sé! Siempre me ha pasado, porque mi mamá me dijo que no me quitara los calcetines.” Y así es, a su

**Patriarchy: You are the cathedral, they are the little chapels**

A speaker named Enrique Olvera<sup>83</sup> says that it’s incredible that Mexican women have the prince charming syndrome, that in spite of the fact that they see our face, and this and that, he says—a bad word – that we are dumbshits going back to men who hurt us, turning a blind eye with them, even though we know perfectly well they are unfaithful. But there’s also a lot behind that. For example, my husband. His father was always unfaithful, his father’s father was always unfaithful, his brothers are all unfaithful, and he’s unfaithful. I mean, they have like... what’s it called? The tree of life? The genealogical tree? The family trees. It’s all very toxic, a strong, strong pattern, very strong. I mean, that’s really tough, very difficult to overcome. Like, for example, there’s another speaker who says that when people say, “I can’t take off my socks because as soon as I take them off, I get cold sores, or my tonsils hurt.” But, why? “I don’t know! It’s always happened because my mom told me not to take my socks off.” And that’s the way it is, the grandmother told the mom, and so on... it goes way back! It’s programming that they put into you when

<sup>83</sup> Pseudónimo/Pseudonym



<p>mamá le dijo su mamá y así... ¡viene desde atrás! Entonces son programas que te los meten desde que estás chiquito, desde que estás en el vientre o equis. Son programas que se te van quedando y se te van quedando. Es lo que te enseñan siempre, tú eres la catedral, ellas son las capillitas<sup>84</sup>.</p> <p>Hace poquito estaba con mi jefa y ella también tiene problemas de infidelidad con su esposo, ya tiene tres hijos y se acaba de embarazar otra vez. Entonces traían de moda una canción de Jennifer López, o bueno la otra Jenny, no las conozco, la Jenny Rivera [ríe]. Ella traía una canción que se llama “La Gran Señora.” A mí nunca me gustó escuchar esas canciones, pero ahí en el Burger la ponían mucho, y yo les gritaba” “¡ahí viene la migra! ¡Quiten eso!” [ríe] “¡Quiten esas nacadas!” , les decía [ríe]. Pero bueno, estaba la canción esa de la gran señora, que no sé qué, y dice mi jefa: “Pues yo soy la gran señora.” Yo me vi imprudente y metiche también, pero le dije: “¿la gran señora de qué? ¿De un hombre que no te quiere? ¿de un hombre que anda con otras?” Pero es que, la creencia ¿no? Es que yo soy la gran señora, la madre de sus hijos. “¡Pues con más razón!” le digo, “¿qué estás haciendo?” Y le</p>	<p>you were very young, ever since the time you were in your mother’s womb or whatever. These programs stay with us and stay with us. That’s what you are always taught, you are the cathedral, they are the little chapels<sup>84</sup>.</p> <p>Recently, I was with my boss and she also has problems with her husband’s unfaithfulness, she has three children already and she just got pregnant again. There was a popular song by Jennifer Lopez, or maybe the other Jenny, I don’t know which one, Jenny Rivera [laughs]. She had a song called “The Great Lady.” I never liked listening to those songs, but they used to play it a lot at <i>Burger</i> and I would shout, “here comes the <i>migra!</i> Turn off that music!” [laughs] “Turn off that low-class crap!” I’d say [laughs]. So that song was about the great lady, whatever, and my boss says, “Well, I am the great lady.” Maybe I was indiscreet and nosy, too, but I said, “the great lady of what? Of a man who doesn’t love you? Of a man who runs around with other women?” But there’s that belief, right? That I’m a great lady, the mother of his children. “And all the more reason!” I tell her, “what are you doing? I don’t see anything good about that great</p>
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<sup>84</sup> El dicho implica que a pesar de la infidelidad masculina, una esposa tiene un papel privilegiado – el de catedral comparado con capillita. /*Saying implies that a wife has a privileged position in spite of male infidelity: the wife is the cathedral, and mistresses are the little chapels*

<p>             digo” “Yo no le veo la gracia a la gran señora. ¿La gran señora tonta, la gran señora de qué?” ¿La gran señora que está con un hombre que no quiere estar con ella?” “¡Ay qué gacho me bajaste los ánimos!” me dijo, y luego se pone así como “ah, ¡como sea! Y se fue. ¡Pero ya no volvió a poner la canción! Pero digo, bueno, qué ando haciendo yo de metichona, de habladora, pero a veces que se te sale también. Es lo que te digo pues, traemos esas creencias tan metidas así, que pues, “sí, es infiel, pero él va a regresar y él está conmigo, eres la gran señora”, y así. También tengo una comadre que tuvo un problema similar al mío y yo platico con ella y le dije: “lo primero que tienes que hacer comadre, es respetarte, quererte y valorarte. Si tú te quieres, a un lado vas hacer a tu marido, inclusive a tus hijos, porque por más que te quieran si él los manipula y los está chantajeando ¡déjalos!” Porque ellos le dicen, “si tú te vas nosotros nos quedamos.” “Pues ¡déjalos!” le digo. “Para que te valoren, vete y déjalos. ¿Cuánto tiempo van a estar sin tí? ¡Una semana! Te van hablar, y se van a ir donde tú estés. Pero si tú dices -no puedo, no, me los voy a llevar, no esto y no aquello-, obviamente que no estás decidida y no quieres hacerlo.”         </p> <p> <b>Empoderamiento y nuevas dinámicas familiares</b> </p>	<p>             lady. The great stupid lady, the great lady of what? The great lady who’s with a man who doesn’t want to be with her?” Oh, darn, now you bummed me out,” she said, and then she was like, “Oh, whatever”, and left. But she never played that song again! And I think, why am I butting in to people’s situations with my big mouth, but sometimes you can’t help it. That’s what I mean, we have those beliefs so instilled in us that we’re like, “Yeah, he’s unfaithful, but he’ll come back and he’s with me, the great lady.” I have a <i>comadre</i> who was in the same situation as me and I told her, “the first thing you have to do, <i>comadre</i>, is respect, love, and value yourself. If you love yourself, you’re going to push your husband aside, your kids, too, because even if they love you if he manipulates and blackmails them, leave ‘em!” Because they tell her, “if you leave, we’re going to stay.” “Well, leave ‘em!” I tell her. “So they’ll appreciate you, go and leave them. How long will they stay without you? A week! They’re going to call you, they’re going to go where you are. But if you say – no, I can’t, I’ll take them with me, not this not that – clearly you haven’t made up your mind and you don’t want to do it.”         </p> <p> <b>Empowerment and New Family Dynamics</b> </p>
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***Yo estoy disfrutando tener poder***

Yo a mis hijos no les hablaba mal de su padre, ni tampoco el de mi... Y ahora el comete ese “error”<sup>85</sup>... como dice él, y cree que no lo perdono. “¡Yo ya te perdoné Lalo [ríe], es que yo ya te perdoné! [Ríe] Te amo con todo mi corazón, te quiero, pero no quiero estar contigo, tienes que entenderlo, yo estoy viviendo, estoy haciendo mi vida, estoy saliendo adelante!” Le digo, pero él no lo entiende, cree que no lo perdono porque no estoy con él. El quiere que sea como antes, porque así están allá las creencias, o sea, lo perdonas y regresas y estás con él ¿por qué? Porque lo perdonaste, porque lo quieres, supuestamente. Aunque estés llena de coraje y de rencor, pero ahí estás y ahí estás. O sea, no es el caso conmigo porque yo sí lo perdoné, pero no quiero estar con él. Y lo quiero mucho, pero ¡no quiero estar con él! Porque yo estoy haciendo mi vida y estoy haciendo cosas que me gustan. Y sé que estando con él no va a ser lo mismo. De hecho, sería muy difícil que él y yo pudiéramos tener una vida juntos. Por su manera de pensar y por mi nueva manera de pensar. Y como yo ya no quiero cederle mi poder, ni mi vida, ni nada a nadie, entonces ahí ya tendríamos conflictos. ¿Por qué?

***I’m enjoying having power***

I don’t speak badly to my kids about their father, and he doesn’t speak badly about me... And now he makes that “mistake”<sup>85</sup>... as he says, and he thinks that I don’t forgive him. “I already forgave you Lalo [laughs], the thing is that I already forgave you! [laughs] I love you with my whole heart, but I don’t want to be with you, you have to understand that, I’m living, I’m making my life, I’m moving forward!” I tell him, but he doesn’t understand, he thinks I haven’t forgiven him because I’m not with him. He wants things to be like they were before, because that’s what people believe there, I mean, you forgive and you go back to him. Why? Because you forgave him, because you love him, supposedly. Even if you’re filled with anger and resentment, but you are just there. I mean, that’s not the case with me because I forgave him, but I don’t want to be with him. I love him very much, but I don’t want to be with him! Because I’m living my life and doing things I like. And I know that if I were with him it wouldn’t be the same. In fact, it would be very difficult for he and me to have a life together because of the way he thinks, and because of the new way I think. Also because I can no longer give over my

<sup>85</sup> Andrea hace señas de comillas con las manos./ *Andrea makes quotation marks with her fingers*

Porque él no ha cambiado. ¡Y tampoco quiero cambiarlo! Porque yo no soy nadie para cambiar a nadie. Si él quiere cambiar, él va a cambiar, pero pues... ¡depende de él! Entonces yo ya no puedo hacer nada. Yo lo que puedo hacer, lo puedo hacer por mí. Como yo le digo, ¡haz por ti, sal adelante tú, disfruta, haz lo que quieras hacer! Yo pues tengo que hacer lo mío... ¿Pues qué hago? No podemos ayudar a nadie ... si con trabajo podemos con nosotros. Yo estoy disfrutando tener poder ¡Claro! Si no lo había tenido nunca, siempre lo cedí, siempre lo di, siempre fui hija y luego esposa y siempre di mi poder. Y ahorita yo no lo voy a dar a nadie.

***Me abrió otra vida, otro horizonte.***

Yo con mi hijo tengo comunicación, no todos los días, pero cuando nos hablamos: “¿cómo estas mamá? te amo, te quiero, ¿te sientes bien? ¿estás bien? quiero ir a verte.” “Yo también, yo también.” O sea... y así estamos. Y él está bien, está trabajando, está con su mujer, así es que... yo tengo que ver por mí. ¿Sabes que un día mi hijo me lo dijo? “No hay mejor ejemplo que me puedas dar mamá, que lo que estás haciendo, se feliz, disfruta, ¡haz lo que quieras! Yo siempre te voy a apoyar.” Me llena mucho de orgullo que mi hijo siempre me dice, que el mejor ejemplo

power, my life, or anything to anyone anymore, so there would be conflicts. Why? Because he hasn't changed. And I don't want to change him! It's not my job to change anyone. If he wants to change, he'll change, but... that's on him! I can't do anything about it. What I can do, I can do for myself. Like I said, do your thing, get yourself ahead, enjoy, do what you want to do! And I have to do my thing... What else can I do? We can't help anyone... it's hard enough to help ourselves. I'm enjoying having power, of course! I'd never had it before, I always handed it over, I always gave it up, I was always the daughter, then wife, and always gave up my power. Now I'm not giving my power to anybody.

***It opened another life for me, another horizon***

I communicate with my son, not every day, but when we do talk, he says, “how are you mom? I love you, do you feel good? Are you well? I want to see you.” “Me, too; me, too.” I mean... that's how we are. And he's fine, he's working, he has a wife, so it's like... I need to take care of myself. Do you know what my son told me one day? “You couldn't give a better example, mom, than what you're doing, be happy, enjoy, do what you want! I'll always support you.” It makes me very proud that my son always tells me that

que yo le puedo dar a él es que yo viva mi vida y que sea feliz, que eso es lo que él admira de mí... Y con el apoyo que mi hijo me dio me siento mejor... porque él me dijo: “¿Quieres estar con mi papá?” “No” le dije... “¡Pues no estés con él! ¿Quieres irte? ¡Vete! Haz lo que tú quieras, y si eso te hace feliz, se feliz, y si estás allá y te da miedo y no te sientes a gusto y te quieres regresar, ¡regrésate! Esta es tu casa.” “Vive tu vida, sé feliz y ese es el mejor ejemplo que tú me puedes dar, porque me estas enseñando que para ser feliz tienes que ser libre y tomar decisiones y de tener tu libertad emocional y eso me enorgullece”, me dice, “y yo quiero ser como tú y hacer lo que tú haces”. Me da mucho gusto escucharlo y Cloe me lo dijo también.

Con mi esposo también hablo muy seguido, y... a veces él se me pone todavía un poquito mal, él sigue con que no se siente bien, que sufre, que esto, bueno... ¡pues ya! o sea, no puedo yo estar aquí ni estar allá. Tengo que estar bien yo y la verdad es que con mi hija aquí es lo mejor que puedo tener, que esté ella aquí conmigo. Inclusive mi esposo hace poco me dijo que estaba súper orgulloso de mí y de mi hija, y me dice: “te doy las gracias porque mi hija está ahí contigo y de alguna manera yo sé que es lo mejor, que

the best example I can give him is to live my life and be happy, that’s what he admires in me... And I feel better with my son’s support... because he asked me, “do you want to be with my dad?” “No,” I said... “Then don’t be with him! You want to go? Go! Do what you want, and if that makes you happy, be happy and if you’re over there and you’re scared or don’t feel good, and you want to come back, come back! This is your home... Live your life, be happy and that’s the best example you can give me because you’re teaching me that to be happy you have to be free and make decisions and have your emotional freedom, and that makes me proud,” he says. “I want to be like you and do what you do.” It makes me happy to hear that and Cloe has also told me the same thing.

I also talk to my husband frequently and... and sometimes he makes me feel a little bad, he keeps saying that he feels bad, that he’s suffering and this and that... enough already! I mean, I can’t be either here or there. I have to be in a good place, and honestly having my daughter here is the best thing, that she’s here with me. Even my husband told me recently that he’s super proud of me and my daughter, and he says, “I thank you because my daughter is there with you and somehow, I know that’s for the best, that you two can

pueden estar viviendo ustedes ahí juntas.”  
Les enseñé los diplomas que nos han dado y los certificados de las clases y cursos que hemos tomado. “No me gusta que siento que cada vez me necesitas menos,” me dice. “De hecho no te necesito”, le digo, “ni a ti ni a nadie para vivir”, le digo, “tengo que vivir”, le digo, “y voy a vivir lo mejor que pueda y no te necesito, pero el día que yo quisiera, por decir así, verte o estar contigo, por supuesto que así va a ser, pero en este momento no es así, no te necesito y no quiero verte”, le digo. Y me siento contenta y pues, “a lo mejor se oye feo decirlo”, le dije, “pero... el que haya pasado lo que pasó”, le dije, “de alguna manera, me abrió a mi otra vida, otro horizonte, otras cosas”, le digo, “y eso es gracias a lo que pasó, de no haber sido así pues estuviera todavía en la casa.” “¿Qué tan malo era?” me dice. “No, es que no era tan malo, pero pues, a lo mejor tenía que hacer un cambio en mi vida”, le digo, y aquí estoy y lo estoy haciendo y me gusta mucho, no tienes idea. “Pues bueno”, me dice... “pos’ ya qué, ya qué.” Pues sí, ya qué. Ahí está mi vida hasta ahora.

***Estoy viviendo mi soltería otra vez***

Esto va a sonar, así como..., no sé si esté bien que lo diga, pero le digo a la Cloe: “es que mi sueño es que estoy viviendo mi soltería otra vez”. Estoy viviendo a gusto, me

live there together.” I showed him the diplomas we’ve earned and the certificates from the classes and workshops we’ve taken. “I don’t like feeling that you need me less and less,” he says. “In fact, I don’t need you,” I tell him, “I don’t need you or anyone else to live my life,” I told him, “I have to live and I’m going to live the best I can and I don’t need you, but someday I may want to see you or to be with you, and I will, but right now I don’t, I don’t need you and I don’t want to see you,” I tell him. I feel happy and so, “maybe it sounds bad, for me to say it” I told him, “but...the fact that what happened, happened, in a way opened another life for me, another horizon, other things,” that’s what I told him. “And this is thanks to what happened; if things hadn’t been that way, I would still be at home.” He asks me, “How bad was it?” And I say, “No, it wasn’t that bad, but, I needed to make a change in my life,” and I’m here and doing things and I like it a lot, you have no idea. “Okay then,” he tells me, “so that’s it, that’s it.” Well yeah, that’s it. That’s my life up until now.

***I’m living my life as a single woman again***

This might sound, like... I don’t know if it’s alright to say it, but I tell Cloe, “my dream is that I’m living my life as a single woman again.” I’m living happily, I feel

siento independiente, quiero juntar un poco de lana... mi hermana me está invitando: “aunque sea de mochilera, pero vámonos a conocer países, culturas, comidas... a conocer todo lo que se pueda!” Y como ella ya lo ha hecho, quiere que lo haga con ella, y yo me muero por ir, le digo a la Cloe: “si no fuera por ti yo ya estuviera allá, [ríe] ... y ella dice: “pues espérate mamá! déjame que yo me establezca.” [ríe] “Ta bien, yo te espero, yo te espero”, le digo. “Pero Cloe, yo me voy a ir, yo me quiero ir, y quiero hacer eso.” Si Dios me permite vida ¿vedá?, yo me quiero ir, quiero conocer. Ya estuve allá con mi hermana en Alemania, como un mes y conocí, está bien bonito, y me gusta, ves las comidas, las cosas diferentes, los pueblitos que tienen castillos, que tienen siglos ¡ay, me encanta todo eso! Quisiera, te lo juro, aunque sea de mochilera, pero quiero conocer todo eso, me gusta mucho.

**Los pies en el norte y los sueños en el sur:**

***No quisiera quedarme aquí para siempre.***

¿Cómo veo mi río de la vida en cinco años? ¡No Se! Apenas te puedo decir más o menos en un año [ríe]. Yo pienso ¡y quiero! seguir fortaleciéndome, quiero seguir floreciendo, quiero seguir estando tranquila, para poder seguir llevándome ese río tranquilo. O sea, quiero llevarme el agua tranquila, relajada, quiero estar bien, quiero seguir aprendiendo,

independent, I want to save a little dough... my sister is inviting me, “even if we go as backpackers, let’s go visit countries, cultures, foods... to see everything we can!” And since she’s already done it, she wants me to go with her, and I’m dying to go, I tell Cloe: “if it weren’t for you, I’d already be over there [laughs]... and she says, “well, wait, mom! Let me get my feet on the ground.” [laughs] “Okay, I’ll wait for you, I’ll wait for you,” I tell her. “But, Cloe, I’m going to go, I want to go and I want to do that.” If God grants me life, right? I’d love to go and see new places. I visited my sister in Germany for about a month before, I went around there and it’s really nice, I liked it, the food and other things are different, there are little towns with castles that have been there for centuries, oh, I loved all that! I swear, I would like to, even if it is backpacking, but I want to see all those places, I love that.

**Feet in the North and Dreams in the South: *I don’t want to stay here forever***

How do I see my river of life in five years? I don’t know! I can barely tell you about a year [laugh]. I think, and I want, to keep getting stronger, to keep flowering, I want to keep being calm, to be able to ride along this tranquil river. I mean, I want to take the calm water, relaxed, I want to be well, I want to keep learning, I want to have my projects

<p>quiero tener mis proyectos como lo de la guardería, seguir con mi vida, seguir viviendo el presente. El futuro, no sé..., pero me veo tranquila y quiero seguir viéndome tranquila, con mi paz interior. ¿Cómo te digo? seguir teniendo frutos, con las cosas que hago, como seguir yendo a la escuela, seguir trabajando. Entonces mis planes son de seguir aquí por el momento, pero no quisiera quedarme aquí para siempre. No me veo una vida aquí a largo plazo con mi hija. ¿Sabes qué pasa? A lo mejor yo ya hasta me hubiera regresado a México, ¿verdad? Pero ella es la que me dice: “no me quiero ir, me quiero quedar, no me quiero ir.” Y yo: “Cloe, pero ¿qué vamos a hacer aquí?” Y ya le digo: “Cloe, ¡vámonos! Y me dice: “no, yo no me voy a ir, y tú te vas a quedar conmigo.” [ríe] “Pero ¿por qué me voy a quedar?” [ríe]. Ahora Cloe no se quiere ir. Y sí, le digo, yo sí me veo en México. Se me hace tan diferente, me gusta mucho la vida allá, de verdad. Y sí me gustaría regresarme, a lo mejor no directamente a Cañas, pero sí a otros lugares, como Cancún con mis hermanas, por ejemplo, porque una ya vive ahí, y la de Alemania tiene una casa ahí y ella me dice: “vente, mira que ponemos esto, ponemos aquello” como ideas de negocios. Entonces yo le digo a Cloe: “vamos entrándole a todo lo de la guardería y chance</p>	<p>like the child care center, go on with my life, keep living in the present. The future, I don’t know... but I see myself as calm, I want to keep seeing myself as calm, with internal peace. How can I explain it, continuing to bear fruit with the things I do, like to keep going to school, and keep working. My plans are to stay here for the time being, but I don’t want to stay here forever. I can’t imagine a life here long-term with my daughter. You know what? I might have even already gone back to Mexico, right? But she’s the one who tells me, “I don’t want to go, I want to stay here, I don’t want to leave.” And I say, “Cloe, but what are we going to do here?” I say, “Cloe, let’s go!” And she says, “no, I’m not leaving, and you’re going to stay here with me.” [laughs] “But, why am I going to stay?” [laughs] Now Cloe doesn’t want to leave. And I tell her, I can see myself in Mexico. It seems so different, but I really like life there, honestly. And I would like to go back, maybe not directly to Cañas, but to other places, like Cancún with my sisters, for example, because one of them lives there, and the one from Germany has a house there, and she tells me, “come on, we could set up this or set up that” like with business ideas. I tell Cloe, “let’s put all our efforts into the child care center, and maybe we can set it up over there.” My sister speaks three or four</p>
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la ponemos allá.” Mi hermana sabe tres o cuatro idiomas, y yo también quiero aplicarme con el inglés y poder poner algo, un negocio.

***El inglés es donde te pares***

Mis planes son aprender inglés, tal vez ahorrar, y aprender algo para poner un negocio en México, como una guardería. O sea, mi plan no es quedarme a vivir acá ni hacer vida aquí. Entonces, yo en esos planes, o esos sueños, a lo mejor ahorita son sueños ¿verdad? Pues sí veo el inglés como algo importante. Sí, sí es importante, porque el inglés lo hablan en todas partes, más que el español, el inglés es donde te pares. Si estás en Alemania y no hablas el alemán, te hablan el inglés inmediatamente. Allá casi la mayoría de la gente te habla inglés. Y en México, pues sí, también es importante, y si me serviría, si quiero, por ejemplo, como te dije, poner una escuelita o equis negocio, también te sirve mucho. O para dar clases en una escuela. Mi hija dio clases, le daba clases a gente adulta, la buscaban para que diera clases particulares en la casa, a mi hijo también, los buscaban mucho a los dos. Entonces sí veo el inglés como un plan futuro. Yo el inglés sí, quiero hablarlo y entenderlo, pero bien, bien, bien.

languages, and I also want to devote myself to English and be able to set up something, a business.

***English is wherever you go***

My plans are to learn English, maybe save and learn something to set up a business in Mexico, like a child care center. I mean, my plan is not to stay living here or to make a life here. O, with those plans, or those dreams, maybe right now they're still dreams, right? But I do consider that English is important to them. Yes, it's important, because English is spoken everywhere, more than Spanish, wherever you go it's English. If you're in Germany and you don't speak German, they'll speak to you right away in English. Over there most people speak English. And in Mexico, well, it's also important and that would help me if, for example, like I told you, I want to set up a little school or some business, it's also helpful. Or to give classes in a school. My daughter taught, she gave classes to adults, and they sought her out to give private classes at home, and my son, too, people used to seek both of them out. I do see English as a future plan. I really do want to speak and understand English very, very well.

***Me siento más libre, mucho más libre***

¿Sabes que yo me miro mejor ahora? Me miro mejor, me siento mejor. Aunque tenía, se puede decir, comodidades, todo lo que se puede decir... tú sabes cómo se vive en Cañas, todo eso, yo me siento mejor. Porque lo que estoy haciendo, lo estoy haciendo yo. Mi sueldo yo lo gano y yo decido qué hacer con él. Yo decido qué se mueve, qué no se mueve, a veces Cloe es muy trabajosa y no se deja [ríe], pero, pero... ¡lo hacemos juntas ahora! Pero lo mejor de todo es que estoy haciendo lo que quiero, como yo quiero y me siento mejor. Obviamente que hay veces que sí me acuerdo, me voy atrás, me acuerdo de mi casa, de mis cosas, pues dejé todo, me traje nomas dos maletas ¡dejé todo!  
Y...duele... cuando te acuerdas. Entonces trato de no pensar en eso, de no acordarme, de dejarlo atrás, de ir soltando poco a poco... sí te duele la casa, dejas todo pues, dejas todo... y sí duele, pero igual... aquí luego llegué y renté el departamento y compré una sala, ya usada por supuesto, me regalaron una cama, nosotras juntamos y compramos una tele, una *smart tv*, y lo estamos haciendo nosotras pues. O yo lo estoy haciendo, y me siento satisfecha, me siento a gusto ... decidimos qué hacer, si queremos ir al cine, si no queremos. O sea, decides por ti.

***I feel freer, much more free***

Do you know I see myself better now? I see myself better, I feel better. Even though I used to have, you could say, comforts, and all of that... you know how we live in Cañas, all that, but I feel better. Because what I'm doing, I'm doing myself. I earn my salary and I decide what to do with it. I decide what happens and what doesn't happen.  
Sometimes Cloe is a pain and she doesn't let me tell her what to do [laughs] but, but... we do things together now! But the best thing of all is that I'm doing what I like, how I like it, and I feel better. Obviously, sometimes I do remember, and I go back, I remember my house and the things I had, because I left it all, I just brought two suitcases with me, I left everything! And... it hurts... when you remember. So I try not to think about that, to not remember, I try to leave it behind me, and to let it go bit by bit... the house does hurt, you leave everything, you know, you leave everything... and it does hurt, but still... when I got here and rented the apartment and bought living room furniture, we got together and bought a TV, a *smart tv*, and we're doing it ourselves. Or I'm doing it, and I feel satisfied, I feel happy... we decide what to do, if we want to go to a movie, or if we don't want to. I mean, you decide things for yourself.

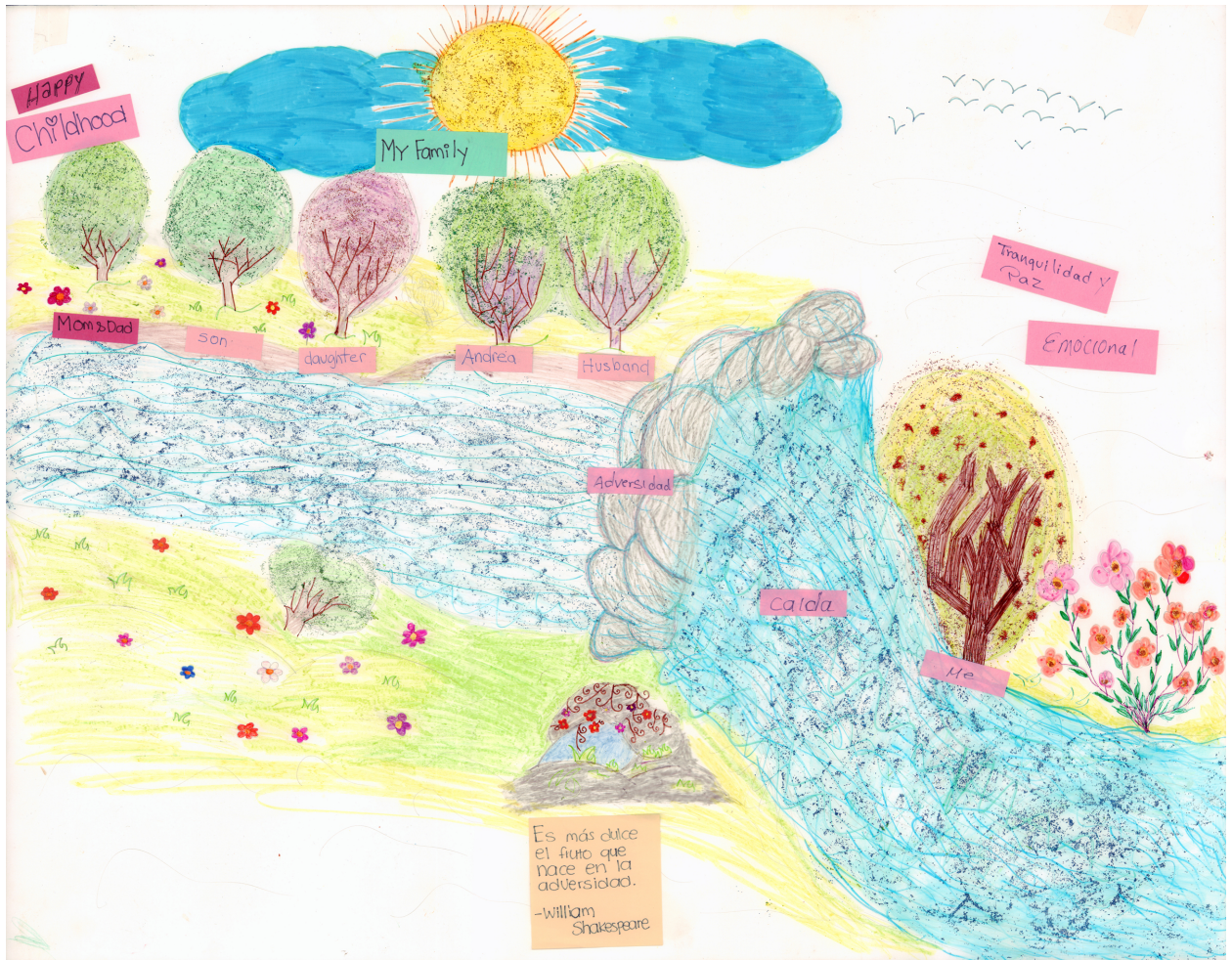
<p>Cada vez me está gustando más mi trabajo y lo siento menos difícil, más a gusto mi convivencia con mis compañeros. Venir a la clase, aquí al grupo contigo, me gusta mucho... convivir con Alejandrina<sup>86</sup>... Salgo también con mis amigos, que vamos a desayunar, a cenar, a comer o a esto o lo otro. Por ejemplo, hace poco nos fuimos a Cochiti, otro día subimos a las montañas, todo bien padre y siempre mi hija conmigo y ¡me encanta, me encanta estar con mi hija! Me encanta convivir con ella. Me encanta mi departamento, el sentir que soy independiente, que pago mi departamento, que pagamos todas las cuentas, saber que estoy saliendo adelante. Y pensar que antes tenía tanto miedo hacer eso porque no sabía que podía hacerlo. Cuando me doy cuenta de que sé hacerlo y que lo puedo hacer... es algo que no cambias por nada. Y eso de que no te dejes atrapar ya tan fácilmente por chantajes, por manipulaciones, y cosas así, como que ya tengo fortaleza para saber manejar esas emociones y esas situaciones que antes me dominaban y me encerraban, y me dolían, sufría por eso. Y ahorita ya siento que las estoy manejando de diferente manera y me siento más libre, mucho más libre. Y con mi hija, la verdad que, mucho, mucho</p>	<p>I'm liking my work more and more and it feels less difficult, I like spending time with my coworkers. Coming to class, here to the group with you, I also like that very much... spending time with Alejandrina<sup>18</sup>... I also go out with my friends, we go have breakfast or dinner, to eat or to this or that. For example, recently we went to Cochiti, another day we went up to the mountains, it's all really great and my daughter always goes with me and, I love it, I love being with my daughter! I love spending time with her. I love my apartment, feeling that I'm independent, that I pay for my apartment, that we pay all the bills, knowing that I'm getting ahead. And just to think that before I was so afraid of doing that because I didn't know that I could do it. When I realize that I do know how to do it and that I can do it... that's priceless. And not allowing yourself to be trapped so easily by blackmail, by manipulation, and things like that, it's like now I have the strength to know how to handle those emotions and those situations that used to control me or close me up, and they hurt me, I suffered because of that. And now I feel like I'm managing them in a different way and I feel freer, much more free. And with my daughter, honestly, we share so much, so</p>
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<sup>86</sup> Compañera de la clase de ESL y co-participante en este estudio./ *ESL classmate and co-participant in this study.*

<p>compartimos, porque de alguna manera hablamos el mismo idioma, porque lo que yo escucho, lo que yo veo, ella lo ve también, lo comparto con ella y ella como que lo capta, lo entiende perfectamente. Me gusta mucho que mi hija este aquí.</p> <p>Aquí en esta parte de mi río, el agua cayó<sup>87</sup>, pero ya está más tranquila, ya siento una tranquilidad, una paz, tanto interior como por fuera. Vivo a gusto, estoy contenta, estas flores son también algo bonito que está en mi vida en este momento. Estoy trabajando, estoy estudiando, y ¡me gusta mi vida! Me gusta. Gracias a esta caída, de alguna manera fue un rompimiento, pero gracias a esto estoy acá y me estoy valiendo por mí misma, estoy independiente y aun así yo no dejo de querer ¿verdad? a estas personas, son mi familia. Pero en este momento estoy fuerte, soy yo y estoy contenta con mi vida, como estoy en este momento. Me vine a Estados Unidos, estoy aprendiendo el idioma, me gusta, estoy trabajando, me gusta mi trabajo, pero... el estar emocionalmente yo bien, tranquila, eso me ayuda a tener visión para seguir superándome. Entonces, pues, aquí está el agua más tranquila y... con muchas ganas de salir adelante.</p>	<p>much, because it's like we speak the same language, because what I hear, what I see, she sees the same things, I share things with her and she understands me, she understands perfectly. I'm really happy that my daughter is here.</p> <p>In this part of my river, the water came down<sup>19</sup>, but now it is calmer, I feel a sense of tranquility, peace, both internal and external. I live happily, I'm content, these flowers are also something beautiful in my life at this time. I'm working, I'm studying, and I really love my life! I love it. Thanks to this fall, in a way it was a break with life before, but thanks to that I'm here and I'm doing things on my own, I'm independent and even though all that is true, I haven't stopped loving these people, right? They are my family. But right now, I am strong, I am myself and I am happy with my life, the way I am at this moment in time. I came here to the United States, I'm learning the language, I like it, I'm working, I like my job, but... for me to be emotionally well, calm, that helps me have a vision to keep improving myself. So, then, here waters are much more tranquil and... I have lots of interest in getting ahead.</p>
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<sup>87</sup> Ver figura 3 Río de la Vida/See figure 3 River of Life

Andrea's River of Life (figure 3)



## Chapter Seven Findings

### Second Language Learning and Second Language Socialization in Transborder

#### Contexts

Because of the holistic nature of *testimonio* analysis, there is a wealth of information and knowledge in the stories of Alejandrina, Miriam and Andrea. *Testimonio* offers the twofold function of assisting in the expression of collective experiences of marginalization and oppression but also in the articulation of alternative counter narratives of resistance. Therefore, even though the stories are from three distinct women, they provide intimate perspectives into the experiences of a larger group. *Testimonio* sets individual experiences in the larger socio historical structures of collective groups, while heightening the agentive and self reassuring potential that resides in telling one's story. This chapter discusses issues of identity, language learning and socialization as they surfaced in the *testimonios* of Alejandrina, Miriam and Andrea, with the aim to answer the research question: *How do Spanish-speaking adult immigrants discursively negotiate language learning, identity construction and socialization processes in their journey to adapt to a new country?* Answering this broad and encompassing question requires undertaking a holistic view of the research participants' lives and a comprehensive examination of the ways in which they make meaning of their experiences. *Testimonio* offers this possibility since it opens windows into the myriad of issues that frame the multi-dimensional phenomena I am trying to elucidate.

The organization of this chapter mirrors the three first sections in each of the *testimonios* of the research participants, Alejandrina, Miriam and Andrea: a) Introduction, b) migration trajectories and, c) second language and socialization experiences. In the

introduction we learned who the women are as well as some background and demographic information. In the second section we became aware of the personal circumstances around migration and the individual trajectories of each one of the women. Thirdly, we gathered an understanding of the three women's second language learning and socialization experiences. In alignment with this organization the first section of this chapter revolves around the emergence of hybrid transborder identities integrating gender as a unit of analysis within a feminist transborder subjectivity approach. This discussion is followed by an overview of the three women's migration trajectories set against the demographic trends and patterns of south-north migration in the timeframes of the three participants' biographies. Finally, I examine language learning and socialization processes as expressed and recounted in Alejandrina, Miriam and Andrea's *testimonios*. The three women's migration experiences, the geographical and ideological frontiers, the transnational spaces they inhabit and co-construct, and the ensuing identities that emerge, set the necessary background for the examination of the ways in which these women negotiate identity formation, second language learning and second language socialization (L2 learning and L2 socialization respectively, hereafter) in their venturing of new geographic landscapes and new ideological terrains.

### **Testimonios of Transborder Subject Identities**

A growing body of research in the social sciences recognizes gender as an axis from which to explain human experiences in all its facets (Pessar, 2005; Salazar Parreñas, 2015; Menard-Warwick, 2009; Trinidad Galván, 2015; Segura & Zavella, 2008). In the area of migration studies, feminist approaches with a focus on gender have reformulated the terms to discuss human movements across borders from the perspective of transmigration studies and

transborder social subjects. Gutierrez and Hondagneu-Sotelo (2008), deem transnational scholarship as an important paradigm shift in the social sciences that has moved away from previous notions of human migration as “a linear progression of people moving from one place to another” to propose a new way of “social formation” that connects transmigrants, their places of origin, and their places of destination (p. 505). Going beyond the representation of migration as a one way, one-dimensional trajectory, this approach encompasses the multiple directions that transborder social subjects undertake as well as the continuous and ongoing relational processes and connections that they enact throughout geographical, historical, cultural, ideological, emotional territories (Hondagneu-Sotelo & Avila, 1997; Pessar, 2005; Salazar Parreñas, 2015; Stephens, 2007; Trinidad Galván, 2015).

Theorizing from the perspective of transborder feminism, Salazar Parreñas (2015) asserts: “gender is a constitutive element of the larger structural forces behind migration” (p. 29). While attending to the impact of global and determinant forces in women’s migrations, Trinidad-Galván (2015) reminds us of the importance of also centering our analysis of marginal subjects in their local contexts and personal histories since “... a transborder feminist lens ... points to the numerous power relations women straddle locally and abroad” (p. 44). Trinidad- Galván (2015) also adds that given the emphasis on “First World, capitalist, and Western views, there must exist a deliberate focus on poor racialized women and other marginalized groups. “ (p. 44). Undertaking this comprehensive approach, I find support in the growing number of feminist researchers who understand the formation of unbounded and unfixed identities as a result of the synergy of forces from above and below (Segura & Zavella, 2008). Also useful in this framework is Anzaldúa’s conception of borderland, which refers to an area that is not geo-politically delineated but defined by a



hybrid culture that border crossers and border inhabitants create and recreate. Hybridity is also a characteristic of the fluctuating identities that transborder subjects craft as they retain membership of their countries of origin while they strategically embrace parts of the new one, and inevitably impact it. Within this feminist analytical framework, I will touch on the “four key dimensions of borderlands: structural, discursive, interactional, and agentic” identified by Segura and Zavella (2008), with special attention on the agentic one, which in the words of these authors “focuses on subjects' constructions of identities and expressions of agency that negotiate structural, discursive, and interactional borders or geopolitical boundaries. In these instances, borderland subjects often take extraordinary creative measures and assert their own sense of selves” (p. 539). By disregarding pre-migration experiences as important in the overall analysis, often times accounts of immigrants seem to convey that people’s lives become more important by crossing the border and entering the “first world”, or that pre-migration experiences do not have an impact on the new and evolving transborder selves. Thus, a transborder feminist approach aids in the unabridged consideration of Alejandrina, Miriam and Andrea’s *testimonios*, to avoid fragmenting their selves and conduct a respectful and dignified interpretation of marginalized adult immigrant women.

Within these frameworks, I engage in a reconnaissance of Alejandrina, Miriam and Andrea as transborder social actors in the context of transmigration and explore the ways in which they express the emergence of fluid identities in relation to their links to both their places of origin and destination. Alejandrina’s borderlands expand as she moves from Durango to Guadalajara, California, Chicago, back to Mexico and returns to the U.S. to settle in New Mexico. Her temporal and spatial ties to multiple territories shape her identities which in time evolve as neither fully Mexican nor fully of the United States, but interweaved

to the borderland she co-constructs in her multiple journeys. She sustains this idea when she confidently self-identifies as Mexican-American. Miriam's transborder trajectory materializes in spaces that constitute the cultural, linguistic, geographic and historical continuum that transborder people have made of the Chihuahua and New Mexico border, transcending its political facet. Andrea's construction of the borderlands, on the other hand, ventures into an epistemological terrain, contesting many of the ideologies and traditions of her upbringing while reformulating her own beliefs and practices around major human concerns such as love, marriage, sexuality, motherhood and religion as she moves across borders and asserts her emotional and financial independence. In their journeys from their places of origin to their places of destination, Alejandrina, Miriam and Andrea become transborder subjects traversing and inhabiting the "transnational spaces" that are "envisioned as multisited 'imagined communities' whose boundaries stretch across the borders of two or more nation-states" (Gutierrez and Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2008, p. 504). Their *testimonios* are a statement to the undeniable presence of this growing part of the population that has not only learned to become part of two (or more) nation-states, but is actively engaged in creating their own syncretic version of such lands.

The differences and similarities in the three stories also reflect the complexity and diversity within social groups despite being bound by virtue of a variety of social categories such as ethnoraciality, culture, nationality, legal status, and geography, as well as an array of identity markers such as gender, motherhood, class and language. Alejandrina, Miriam and Andrea's evolving identities are revealed as their stories become intertwined with an also evolving sense of belonging or estrangement to an adopted land. We can observe that social categories take on different meanings in the transborder context and that temporality and

geography impinge upon these components of identity as much as ethnicity, language, culture and socioeconomic status, among other classifications and identity markers. Alejandrina, Miriam and Andrea's sense making of their fluid identities reveal how racial and ethnic categories become factors only in relation to "difference." As Norton (2013) states, "Ethnicity is enacted and recreated for immigrant women whenever contact is made with members of the larger society" (p. 82). I would argue that the same applies for other socially ascribed categories such as race. Back in Mexico, Alejandrina, Miriam and Andrea did not need to identify as members of an ethnic, racial or cultural group. As they establish contact with the dominant social group in the context of migration, these externally ascribed attributes become apparent and often times even heightened as markers of otherness. While "Hispanic" and "Latino," are common pan-ethnic terms used in the United States for people of Latin American origin or Spanish heritage, the process of emergent identities need to be understood in relation to people's migration experiences and the sense of having developed symbolic or real ties with the new context at the same time that one maintains symbolic or material connections with the places or origin.

Alejandrina's self-identification as "Mexican-American" suggests that temporal association with the new land is a major factor, reflecting the amount of time she has spent in this country, and thus the opportunities to acculturate and develop a sense of hybrid belonging as a member of a hyphenated community. Alejandrina has invested (on and off) almost three decades migrating back and forth from Mexico to different cities in the United States, of which at least the last 12 years have been uninterrupted. Most importantly, Alejandrina's progeny spans the two countries, since both her younger daughter and grandchild were born in the U.S. cultivating strong roots that inevitably shape Alejandrina's

identity construction. Alejandrina sees herself as settled in New Mexico, due in great part to the possibilities this place has offered for employment and self-sufficiency for herself as well as educational opportunities for her U.S. born younger daughter. At the same time, she has strong material, cultural and symbolic roots in her place of origin, not only because of her own and her extended family's past history but also because half of her own nuclear family are Mexican and have always lived there. Her older daughter and U.S. born granddaughter symbolize Alejandrina's present and future belonging to Mexico. Alejandrina's hyphenated identity epitomizes the fluidity of borderland subjectivities for whom geographical borders are diluted before the more powerful and significant meanings of historical context and personal experiences. Alejandrina's family composition also dilutes the linear correspondence between place of birth, nationality and place of settlement.

Miriam on the other hand, reclaims symbolic representations of identity as she asserts her ethnic, cultural, and linguistic roots, while she also recognizes race as an ascribed social category: "I'm Hispanic one hundred percent, I have no other roots than Hispanic. I identify by my language, my Spanish, my roots, well, and as they say, maybe by my skin color as well." Miriam has lived 14 years in New Mexico, where the pan-ethnic label "Hispanic" is of common use, albeit not without contestation from a sector of the Hispanic population. Some New Mexican Hispanos or Hispanic choose to identify with an imagined or real higher status European ancestry regardless of the centuries-long temporal remoteness with such lineage, as a way of distancing themselves from more recent lower class Mexican immigrants, creating an inter-ethnic division. Miriam's borderland identity seems to also be influenced by her aspirations and the possibilities that the new land offers for the future. These aspirations transpire in the way Miriam organizes her life around her children's education, which she

perceives as the key to a better life. Her involvement in community-based social rights organizations revolves around the same ethos of building a better world for her children. Furthermore, similar to Alejandrina, Miriam has given birth to two children in the U.S. However, the difference is that Alejandrina's Mexican born daughter and U.S. born granddaughter always remained in Mexico. In Miriam's case, she migrated when she was pregnant and brought two Mexican born children along. Thus, she gave birth to her third child in the U.S and later had a fourth one. Miriam's family mixed status composition in the U.S. combined with her links to family, assets, and connection to her own history back in Mexico, are some of the factors in her development of fluid transborder identities.

Andrea differs from Miriam and Alejandrina in that she rejects ethnic identity labels and chooses to identify herself as "Mexican" explicitly rejecting identity descriptors that feel imposed and foreign for her such as "Latina", or "Hispanic". An important consideration is the fact that Andrea has lived for only one year in the United States and thus has not developed a sense of ethnic identity in relation to the her new context. Nationality, a deeply instilled identity category in Mexican idiosyncrasy is prominent in her sense of identity. Andrea's sense of identity is also understood in relation to her own experiences and sense of purpose in the new land. That is, her incentives to migrate were more personal and emotional than macro-structural or economic. Her purpose of coming to the United States was to heal the emotional wound of her marriage breakup. In doing so, she found an unknown sense of financial and emotional independence that was not available to her in her country of origin, which seems to be the core of her new identities. Contrary to Alejandrina and Miriam, she has not developed ties or roots, nor does she express future aspirations that attach her to the new land. She does not see herself as an immigrant, but as a transient presence in the U.S.

Class, as a marker of her pre-migration identity plays a role in her choice of distancing herself from the “immigrant” label. Andrea shares major identity markers with Alejandrina and Miriam, such as language, nationality, gender, motherhood, and her socio economic status in the U.S. is parallel to that of the two women. Notwithstanding, her refusal of ethnicity labels is not only understood with relation to temporal factors but it seems to also work to distance herself from the social imaginary of Mexican immigrants as individuals who are located at the bottom of the social scale. Even though both Andrea and her daughter have employment, have bought a car, and are renting a studio in their new city of residence, Andrea is resolute in not acquiring any official identification card or document (e.g. local drivers’ license, bank account) since doing so would imply that her self identification as a tourist with an overstayed visa, would transform into that of an unauthorized immigrant. Andrea experiences her presence in the United States as transitory and practical: she will save some money and learn English to travel the world and maybe start a small business in Mexico, aspirations that are sparked by her emerging identity as a financially independent and emotionally detached woman with the ultimate purpose of overcoming her marriage break up.

Single, unmarried, mother are nouns that Alejandrina uses to describe her primary identity in her narrative. Her expression “single, never married” is a double reassurance of her independent, self-sufficient person. It is also apparent in her narrative that motherhood is the core of her experiences, the guide of her major life choices and ultimate catalyst. Work and financial security surface as important forces in the three women’s lives. However, Alejandrina made difficult choices with the fathers of both her children, placing her “tranquility” over the presence of men who did not treat her rightfully, asserting both her

dignity and self value, even at the expense of bearing all the responsibility of raising and caring for her two daughters on her own. In a similar vein, Andrea chose to seek her financial independence, as she understood it as a means to gain emotional detachment and independence, rejecting her husband's offers for financial assistance. In the discussion of fluid identities Alejandrina and Andrea's common thread around their evolving sense of agency in relation to their emotional and financial independence is noteworthy. Alejandrina's life trajectory as a single mother is guided by her ethos of independence, dignity and self respect which she valued over any potential financial assistance from her daughters' fathers. Despite the economic hardships of raising her first daughter in the declining Mexican economy, she rejects the absent partner when he showed up when the girl was already three years old. Alejandrina states:

*I didn't want anything to do with him. I said, "No, you left me alone with this responsibility and you disappeared, and I don't like that." I never saw him again.*

Similarly with her second partner she established clear lines to guard her emotional health, despite the difficulties of finding herself alone with her second baby in Chicago. Alejandrina defies a number of stereotypes, in particular the stereotype of patriarchal societal norms in southern rural and traditional Mexican regions as well as the prevalent stereotype of poor immigrant women as defenseless victims of male-dominated relationships. Alejandrina enacts "everyday feminism" as she rejects a relationship that does not meet her expectations of respect, despite the insufferable consequences, breaking stereotypes of women as suffering inclined beings willing to endure impossible relationships for fear of being alone:

*...as soon as he thought he had me for sure, just because I got pregnant, he started being a ladies' man and drinking all the time...I've always valued my peace of mind above all. I mean, what's up with this man? I don't think I can stand a person like*

*that. You know lots of people commit fraud and get married just to get papers, right? When I separated from my daughter's father, she was about a year and half old. So then I was over in Chicago by myself and with my daughter who was a year old, and I didn't have anyone to take care of her, and I didn't know anyone.*

Dominant patriarchal discourses around gender and poverty blame women for their condition and promote derogatory stereotypes such as that of the 'welfare queen', referring to the fallacy of poor women's inclinations to game the system. Alejandrina challenged such stereotypes in a number of ways. First, she could have had access to naturalization by marrying her U.S. born daughter's father. As evident in the above passage, she chose not to, because the relationship was not satisfactory. Second, she decided against her legal right to demand child support to maintain her peace of mind as she explains in the extract below:

*Even though lots of people told me that I was stupid, that I should have gotten child support from him for my daughter, no, I thought it was better to just work and work harder. And, that's another point I have, I'd rather have peace of mind, I don't want to be with a person who is insulting me, saying things, making my life impossible, and that's why I've stayed single.*

Similarly, Andrea revealed this aspect of her identity when she decided not to put up with her husbands infidelity, also defying a number of gender stereotypes and questioning her own upbringing and previous ideologies around marriage and relationships. In contrast with Alejandrina who showed independence since her youth, Andrea had a breakthrough in adulthood and courageously confronted her fears leaving everything behind, her house, her long marriage, her country, and even her middle class position, in exchange of freedom, self sufficiency and emotional healing, finding satisfaction and joy in her own personal development in ways that she never experienced before as a married woman. Her shifting ideologies discursively challenge patriarchal dogmas underlying social patterns and



behaviors that justify male infidelity at the same time that she questions the role of women as they deliberately disregard, acquiesce or resist such ideologies. She shows awareness of the fact that she had deferred her power to the male figures in her life and expresses determination of not giving away the power that she has discovered as an outcome of her migration experience. Andrea literally and metaphorically abandoned her zones of comfort as a dependent woman and migrated alone, rejecting her husbands' offer of financial assistance. Andrea's following commentary summarizes her new independent identity:

*I was always dependent, first on my dad and then on my husband, and I didn't want it to be like that anymore, I wanted to do something myself. And it feels really good, it feels nice, something I had never experienced before and I'm really happy.*

Similar findings are expressed in Menard-Warwick's (2009) study asserting the benefits of women's migration, beyond the improvement of economic conditions, in relation to "increased individual autonomy, spatial mobility and possibilities for personal development" (p. 177). These findings in Alejandrina and Andrea *testimonios* speak to the gendered systems framing female migration.

It is also observable that both Alejandrina and Miriam disrupt essentializing depictions of poor immigrant women as de-skilled and non-educated individuals. Contrary to these unfortunate and widespread beliefs, both women have significant educational accomplishments, especially if considered that they did so, also defying the socio economic disparities of the Mexican society. Alejandrina was able to complete two years of art school and Miriam has a technical degree related to mining. Both women aspired to become educators, Alejandrina in art and Miriam in special education, but their harsh economic circumstances pushed them to prioritize employment over education. These experiences

again are reflections of the gendered systems that women have to navigate in both sides of the border.

The conceptualization of identity also plays a central role in theories of second language socialization and second language learning given that these processes are seen as inextricably interconnected particularly in the context of migration. Second language socialization is a developmental process that comprises a set of practices through which individuals engage with their social environment and through which identities and ways of being in the world are negotiated and inevitably shaped. This view holds the assumption that fluid identities are forged within linguistic interactions and other sociocultural practices are organized by cultural norms and values, which are also fluid and unfixed (Langman, 2003). The development of healthy identities is crucial for social integration of immigrant populations, but is also largely affected by the quality of the social interactions conferred to these social groups. In Alejandrina, Miriam and Andrea's daily interactions we see how multiple systems of exclusion operate, influencing the possibilities they have to develop social identities that are sanctioned by the aspired social group or groups and limiting their chances to learn the language of the host society. Considering that every social interaction is characterized by an asymmetry of knowledge and power (Norton, 2013), the implications for language socialization in adult immigrant language learners are multifold. As Garcia Sanchez (2012) states, the sense of belonging to particular social groups is contingent largely to the manner in which the members of the group treat the novice in public domains of social life. In agreement with this assumption, we see how Alejandrina, Miriam and Andrea's social positions are directly related to their enacted ethnicities. For instance, their work places, friendships, and neighborhoods are culturally and linguistically demarcated as Mexican or

Hispanic by means of language, ethnic allegiances and/or cultural practices. Alejandrina's neighborhood is an exception due to the influence of her daughter as a second generation, U.S. born Mexican American and the aspirations she upholds as a college student. All the other social spheres of the three women, nonetheless are part of the linguistic and cultural enclaves that immigrants create. Thus, their chances to interact with members of the dominant social and linguistic group are scarce to say the least.

*Testimonio* is liberatory when marginal epistemologies are centered and marginal experiences are validated as sites of knowledge construction and acts of pedagogy (Reyes & Curry Rodríguez, 2012). Learning from Alejandrina, Miriam and Andrea's *testimonios* engages everyone involved either as tellers or listeners in the liberatory act of consciousness raising by finding collective power in individual experiences. When marginalization becomes the norm in public discourse and in societal actions and social systems, it is hard to find exceptionalities, regardless of the real hardships that characterize the experiences of immigrants living in the margins. Nonetheless, despite the reality of being immersed in a web of multiple sites of oppression, Alejandrina, Miriam and Andrea do not depict themselves as oppressed victims. The portrait that each one of them offered in their *testimonio*, challenges common and often times condescending representations of immigrant women as powerless victims, confined in the gender stereotype of immigrant women as poor, suffering, defenseless beings. Instead, Alejandrina, Miriam and Andrea, reconfigure these discourses, finding strength in adversity and shaping their identities within the social resources they encounter and the rich cultural repertoires they bring with them. Like self portraits, Alejandrina, Miriam and Andrea's *testimonios*, render characters that surface as optimistic, kind, resilient, hard working, responsible and reliable, dependable, creative, resourceful,

relentless, hopeful, assertive, and very motivated to learn English, among other qualities. A useful concept to summarize Alejandrina, Miriam and Andrea's negotiation of identities in their migration experiences is that of "subjective transnationalism" which is the expression of "the range of women's activities and their sense of selves anchored in their relationships to material and discursive bases of power within and across international borders" (Segura & Zavella, 2007, p. 540). As they act upon the world around them pushing geopolitical borders, Alejandrina, Miriam and Andrea engage in subjective transnationalism which makes reference to the ways in which territories are redefined as transnational subjects transcend borders and build identities in relation to non-territorial factors that are enhanced by the experience of migration, such as race, ethnicity and gender. This results on the paradoxical situation where a sense of not belonging anywhere coexists with the development of affinity and attachment to the adopted land while strategically retaining affiliations and bonds to the one left behind. As Segura and Zavalla (2007) adeptly explain, subjective transnationalism "reflects the experience of feeling "at home" in more than one geographic location, where identity construction is deterritorialized as part of shifting race-ethnic boundaries or gendered transitions in a globalizing world. Conversely, subjective transnationalism includes feelings that one is "neither from "here" nor from "there," not at home anywhere" (p. 540).

In the discussion of identities in the context of transborder experiences, an important consideration to keep in mind is the relationship between societal structure and human agency (Norton, 2013; Pennycook, 2001) and that identities of poor brown marginal women are only fluid within the constraints of the powers that limit people's mobility such as the economy, the legal systems and language as a barrier to social participation, which also undermine the quality of people's resettlement. Yet, a transborder approach to identity helps

us to observe how the impact of migration reaches beyond the transborder subject, impinging on those left behind, those family members who migrate with them, as well as those encountered in the new destinations. As Alejandrina, Miriam and Andrea move from one place to another, they not only craft new options and possibilities for themselves but also for their families back in Mexico, their families and social networks in the United States and for the new people they connect with along the way and in their new places of settlement.

### **Testimonios of Migration**

After a long history of male dominated migration to the United States, North bound migration from Latin American countries has seen a growing number of women, predominantly from Mexico, since the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, as a response to the economic crisis on both sides of the border and the increasing demand of women in the labor force (Donato, 2010; Pessar, 2008; Sánchez Gómez & Serra Yoldi, 2013). Immigration reports point out that as of 2016 there were 11.6 million immigrants from Mexican origin, making Mexico the primary origin country of the U.S. immigrant population<sup>88</sup> (Lopez, 2018; Sánchez Gómez & Serra Yoldi, 2013). Specifically regarding the female population, Donato (2010) states that “by 2004, the number of Mexican female residents of the United States who had arrived in the past five years was 1.1 million, compared to 300,000 in 1980” (p. 79). Examinations of global patterns of migration over the centuries lead Donato and Gabaccia (2010) to assert that “women have always migrated, often in substantial numbers” (p. 1), yet it wasn’t until after 1960 that scholars began to pay more attention to the female segment of migration flows, in particular with regards to gender as a construct which organizes social

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<sup>88</sup> However, the Pew Research Center (2018) reports that immigration from Latin America, particularly from Mexico, has decreased following the great recession. More immigrants from Asia have arrived each year since 2010, than Hispanic origin immigrants.

life in all its spheres and facets and its impact on migration. Alejandrina, Miriam and Andrea's migrations are inserted in this historically and worldwide increasing movement of women across national and international borders. As a teenager, Alejandrina migrated from Durango to Guadalajara, looking for job opportunities, consistent with studies that observed the predomination of single women in internal migration in the 1960s and 70s (Pessar, 2005). While earlier migration studies held the assumption "that women (and children) migrate to accompany or to reunite with their breadwinner migrant husbands" (Pessar, 2005, pg. 2), recent studies increasingly recognize women as agentic transborder subjects who play important roles in the creation of social network systems and become the economic support of families in their settlement locations as well as family left behind by way of remittances (Donato, 2010). Contrastingly, research specific to the Mexican population, suggests that most Mexican women still migrate to reunite with their husbands, who are the main economic support of the family and who have established social networks in the place of settlement in the U.S. (Cerruti & Massey, 2003; Donato, 2010). However, according to a survey conducted in Mexico by The National Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI<sup>89</sup> for its Spanish abbreviation) in 2014, 30.6% of Mexican women migrated to the U.S. to look for employment and 34.1% migrated to reunify with family (INEGI, 2014). It seems that more research is needed to reach a consensus, but what is relevant here is that migration is a complicated phenomenon and that attention should be also paid to individual biographies and local contexts in tandem with demographic trends and patterns.

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<sup>89</sup> INEGI, Spanish abbreviation of *Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía*, is an autonomous agency of the Mexican Government dedicated to coordinate the National System of Statistical and Geographical Information of the country ([inegi.org.mx](http://inegi.org.mx)).

Prior to Alejandrina, Miriam and Andrea's own migration experiences, different degrees of familiarity with migration and the existence of transnational social networks were in place in the families of the three women. Even though the three women have carved their own social networks, and developed strategies of social integration in their own rights, facing their own particular circumstances, the influence of previous experiences with international migration of family members can't be ignored. As with the majority of immigrants, the three women's choice of places to migrate responds to two main factors: an already established social network, and the possibility of employment. The prevalence of migration in Alejandrina's family reflects the generational inequalities facing many Mexican communities (Pessar, 2005) that have incentivized migration from Mexico to the United States for years. Early exposure to migration and life abroad were present in Alejandrina's story given that her father was a Bracero and two of her older brothers were already in Chicago before she migrated to the U.S. Her first internal migration experience was also influenced by referents of a lifestyle of affluence, privilege, travel and opportunities, that sparked aspirations for herself when she worked as a housekeeper and nanny for a European couple in Guadalajara.

*I was very young, right? 16 years old. The man was European, he taught at the university in Guadalajara, and she was also a teacher, the lady was from Czechoslovakia. They were very white and had an American look to them. ... They really liked how I cared for their daughter...*

*I stayed with them for about six months. ...they asked me, "Do you want to go with us? We're going to China, and Paris." I went back to my home in Durango, and I started to get postcards. And then my mom said, "Oh, see that? Why didn't you go with them?" Because I needed a passport, visa, and I didn't have any of those things. But it's interesting what drives you, right? When I got back to Durango, I worked and saved money, and got a passport. I came to the border with that passport.*

Alejandrina also mentions several relatives that had migrated to the U.S. For instance, the first time she crossed the border she traveled with some cousins, and there were relatives living in California. When she went to Chicago for the first time, her brother's network facilitated immediate needs such as housing and employment. The second time she migrated to Chicago, she had already established her own transnational networks, developed knowledge of global work settings and been exposed to immigrant culture and livelihood. In New Mexico, Alejandrina's niece became an important source of connections with work and housing opportunities as well as other resources to which Alejandrina's U.S. born daughter was entitled, such as the housing program. By the time Alejandrina arrived to Albuquerque, she already had enough experience to navigate the employment, housing and transportations systems, even with her limited or incipient knowledge of English. Furthermore, her daughter was already a bilingual college student with connections of her own. Nonetheless, as we read in her *testimonio*, the road to gain this knowledge and experience around U.S. social systems and institutions was not easy.

Unlike Alejandrina, Miriam and Andrea did not come from families with generational histories of migration to the United States. Miriam experienced internal migration as a child with her family and later as a young adult on her own, prompted by the economy, employment and family catastrophes. Her first experience with international migration was a result of the economic plights Miriam and her husbands were experiencing in Mexico. This situation forced her husband to follow the steps of his brother who was already working in Albuquerque, and Miriam and the children reunited with him a year later. With regards to Andrea's experiences, the practice of international migration was introduced in her family through the oldest sister who migrated to Germany. Nevertheless, contrary to Andrea's



situation as an immigrant in the United States, her sister speaks German, married a German citizen, is a legal resident of the country and works as a language teacher. Andrea did not have a support system in place before she migrated to the United States. She did establish contact with one cousin the first time she migrated to New Mexico, but this relative was a recent immigrant herself and hadn't lived long enough to have a robust social network to rely on and share with Andrea.

Juxtaposing the three women's experiences, it is noticeable that while Miriam's journey fits the more traditional patterns of Mexican female migration, in the sense that she came to the United States with her children to reunite with her husband, Alejandrina and Andrea's trajectories defy such depictions since they migrated alone and established social networks of their own. While it is true that Alejandrina benefited from the social networks that her brother and other relatives had already established in California, Chicago and New Mexico, she contended with a totally different context by virtue of her gender. Yet, it is noteworthy that both Alejandrina and Andrea's incentive was not to follow a male partner, and that they established their own transborder social networks and support systems, in contrast with the before mentioned prevalent female migration trends. When Alejandrina was living, working, loving and giving birth in Chicago on her own account, in the 1980s and then in the 1990s, Mexican migration flows were male dominated and Mexican women's movements were restricted by strict patriarchal rules (Curran & Rivero-Fuentes, 2003; Donato, 2010). Another instance of defiance of patriarchal systems was Andrea's refusal to accept her husband's economic support, despite being always financially and emotionally dependent on a male authoritative figure (first the father, later the husband) pursuing her financial independence in the United States. Her first short migration to New Mexico was

enough for her to know what to do and who to contact for employment, housing and basic social support on her second trip.

Alejandrina's multiple trips back and forth spanning three decades from the 1980s to the 2000s are reflective of the earlier circular process of Mexican migration to the United States "whereby persons migrate for a temporary period, return home, and then migrate again" (Donato, 2010, p. 83). The process of circular migration, or revolving door characterized Mexican migration to the United States before the tightening of unauthorized border crossing policies and practices reduced the number of unauthorized immigrants from Mexico, given the difficulties they now face to return to the U.S. (Fernández-Kelly & Massey, 2007). The reasons behind Alejandrina's repeated migrations can be placed against the backdrop of the already declining Mexican economy of the 1980s and the subsequent devastating effects after NAFTA<sup>90</sup> (North American Free Trade Agreement). Two of the most negatively impacted sections of the Mexican population were small business owners and working class people. After saving money from her work in the factory in Chicago, she opened an *abarrote* (a small convenience store) in the house that she had bought in Durango. Unfortunately, she found herself unable to keep her small business afloat, due in part to the unfair capitalistic competition of big box businesses from the United States. Alejandrina explains this difficult decision:

*I wasn't making ends meet to pay bills or the house. So finally, I just said, no, I can't survive, I can't go on like this and educate my girls... I said, "There's no other*

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<sup>90</sup> NAFTA stands for the North American Free Trade Agreement, between the United States, Canada and Mexico that went into effect in 1994 under presidents Clinton in the U.S and Salinas de Gortari in Mexico.

choice, I'll go back to the U.S. to work because I can't afford to give a career for the one over there, and get ahead with the one from here."

As Vigna (2001) explains: "Since NAFTA came into force, millions of Mexicans have been displaced - and completely excluded - as they lost their former ways of life as part of the so-called "market externalities" of the current global economy" (p. 2)<sup>91</sup>. This adverse scenario is clearly reflected in Alejandrina's words: "*Walmart came, the other companies came, the Oxxo came, and the little stores disappeared.*" Alejandrina's hopes and diligent efforts to generate income while working from home to care for her two children and aging mother were shattered, forcing her to migrate for the third time, even at the cost of mother-child separation. In her previous migration to Chicago, as well as this third time when she came to New Mexico, Alejandrina left her older daughter in the care of the grandmother. The first time, her daughter was six years old and the second time, she was already 18.

Alejandrina's experience of leaving her daughter behind reflects a difficult decision that a growing number of women have to face (Hondagneu-Sotelo & Avila, 1997; Pessar, 2005), and one of the harshest examples of the intersections of gender, class and immigration status. Yet, despite the harsh situations that underlie Alejandrina's decision to migrate one more time, i.e. economic displacement and leaving a daughter behind for the second time, there are also great hopes and expectations for the future:

*And that was the reason why I came here, to give an education to the one over there, and so the one from here could start school here. This way they would have a better future and won't have to struggle like me.*

Similarly, Miriam's story tells of the negative consequences of NAFTA in working class families when she and her husband found themselves unable to secure employment in

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<sup>91</sup> My translation from the original text in Spanish

Mexico in the mid 2000s. The declining Mexican economy, lack of employment opportunities, and increased violence and gang activities in border towns as an upshot of the economic situation, compelled Miriam's husband to seek work opportunities across the border. The rest of the family followed a year later, in a very common practice of family staged migration. Miriam and her children were one more family in the growing demography of women and young children migrants that sprouted since the 1980s, mainly due to economic crisis in both sides of the border (Sánchez Gómez & Serra Yoldi, 2013). "In 2008, 78% of direct foreign investment destined for the border area came from the U.S. Thus, it is clear that the crisis on that side of the border will cause unprecedented unemployment" in Mexico resulting in the loss of 200 thousand jobs in the maquiladoras of the border (Vigna, 2001, p. 6).

*Many maquila jobs were lost, they closed the maquila where I worked, we didn't have... it was really tough, you know? Because overnight both of us lost our jobs. We had two kids and we started looking for opportunities to see what we could do and, well, it was a very sad time from 2002 to 2004 when we couldn't find anything.*

It is clear that the economy played an important role in Miriam's migration. Moreover, reluctant to migrate at first, Miriam's difficult decision to reunite with her husband in the United States was also a result of true despair after her teenage son was a victim of street violence.

*In 2004, the situation over in Chihuahua started to get really nasty; everything was very sad and very nasty. There started being lots of vandals, cholos, all that, drugs, it was a bad time and there was fighting between neighborhoods. My son's whole body was stabbed by some kids there; it was street violence.*

That difficult moment in her life was aggravated by the fact that she had two young children and was pregnant with a third one. Meanwhile, her husband was having a hard time to make ends meet providing for two households, one on each side of the border. Facing this situation, Miriam was hard-pressed to take her children and cross the border to reunite with her husband.

*That was the worse situation of all. I was alone, pregnant, unemployed, with my son in the hospital, it was chaotic, I mean we were all desperate and we didn't even know what to do. My son was 14 years old, my daughter was six. So, my husband said, "we can't go on like this, come here." I didn't want to come here, it seemed like it was going to be too hard, what would I do? I thought.*

Miriam and Alejandrina's experiences show up-close the economy, polity and globalization as interlocking systems of oppression, affected by gendered global and local practices, impacting the extricating realities that poor, marginalized families and in particular, women, face.

Even though the economy does not transpire as a major factor in Andrea's reasons to migrate, she did struggle to find employment when she decided to emancipate from her marriage and left to Tijuana. She aspired to be financially independent from her husband and be able to provide for herself and her daughter. Then again, the lack of employment, mainly due to the before mentioned age and gender discriminatory hiring practices impeded her to achieve that goal in Mexico. This situation eventually compelled Andrea to seek opportunities in the United States.

*I decided to migrate alone. [Sighs] Yes...I decided on my own. I had serious problems with my husband and the last thing I wanted was to be with him. When I saw the chance of leaving, I took it. I'd never been to Albuquerque, I didn't know anything*

*about it, but I saw it as an alternative to get out of my house and away from my husband, and I said, "I'm going, I'm going, I'm going."*

With regards to the impact of the global economy on Andrea's family, it transpires in her story that the family business declined reflecting the effects of NAFTA and the influx of big transnational companies to Mexico, eliminating many small family-owned businesses that simply were unable to financially compete in this new market system. While the break up of Andrea's marriage is not a focal point in this dissertation; her story could suggest a line of research that looks into the crumbling effects of neoliberal, global economic crisis on people's very private lives.

I have attempted to locate the three women's *testimonios* in the larger picture of migration flows from Mexico to the United States. However, the *testimonios* themselves offer a deeper understanding of the personal circumstances that surround the decisions to move across borders, the factors that incentivized migration and the complexities and struggles of international migration regardless of how widespread such practices are. With regards to migration stimuli Pessar's (2005) statement resonates with the three women's *testimonios*: "Economic need, reinforced by knowledge of global workplace culture, the development of work-based, transnational social networks, and exposure to first world commodities create a powerful mix of incentives" (p. 3). In summary, Alejandrina, Miriam and Andrea's personal migration incentives, the ways their stories reflected or contrasted historical migration patterns speak to the complex lives of transborder subjects and the intricate webs formed by bottom up forces of local contexts and personal biographies interweaved with the top down structural issues that frame them.

### ***Testimonios of Second Language Learning and Second Language Socialization***

The previous examinations of emerging transborder identities within specific socio historical contexts provide a more comprehensive analysis of L2 learning and L2 socialization experiences. Understanding second language learning as inextricably related to the theoretical perspective of second language socialization paradigm, a guiding assumption is that the processes of L2 learning and L2 socialization take place through participation in speech events within a socio historical context (Bayley & Schecter, 2002). To examine the three women's experiences around the processes of L2 learning and L2 socialization, I organize the discussion in three major contexts. First, I discuss L2 learning and L2 socialization practices that transpired in work settings including pre-migration work experiences, as I consider such experiences to be important factors in the ensuing identities and social positionings in the migration context. After that, I look at the major structural barriers to language learning that the three women encountered, such as marginalization, lack of opportunities, social, racial and linguistic discrimination, as they emerged in their narrations. Finally, the discussion will revolve around the three women's efforts and motivation to learn English, their own sense making and perception of the learning process and the strategies that they utilize towards this goal. This discussion also examines the opportunities that they had to immerse in the learning of English and the ways in which they acted upon the social interactions and routine transactions that require linguistic exchanges. The purpose of these three sections is primarily to organize and guide the discussion, but does not reflect a belief in the segmentation of experiences. On the contrary, I understand the issues of language learning in the work place and other areas of life as dynamic processes that inform each other. Similarly, the social determinants that limit people's access to language and social group participation and the ways in which people react and exercise

agency are also dynamic processes that can not be dissected or understood separate from each other but immersed in a complex intersectionality of a number of issues. My intention is to generate thought and reflection on how all of these experiences and processes embedded in socially and linguistically mediated interactions between individuals and the social world occur in a holistic and organic way. To expand the examination of the full *testimonios* presented in chapters four, five and six, in the three sections that follow I juxtapose segments of the *testimonios* with analytical discussions of the processes that the narratives reveal.

### **Second Language Learning and Socialization in the Workplace**

L2 learning and L2 socialization practices that transpired in work settings, including pre-migration work experiences, are important factors in the ensuing identities and social subject positions in the migration context, which in turn, impact L2 learning and L2 socialization experiences. Since adults spend most of their time at work (Mcall, 2003), and because workplace narratives were recurrent in the *testimonios*, discussing language learning and language socialization at the workplace is important. In order to get to this point I discuss the work environments that transpired in the *testimonios* including both pre and post-migration scenarios.

#### **Work in Mexico**

Alejandrina, Miriam and Andrea's pre-migration work experiences merit attention since they provide a window into Mexico's work conditions for working class women.

Alejandrina experienced unpaid child labor in the 1960s, reflecting the reality of many working class families. Later, she was unable to continue her studies as an art teacher given that her family did not have the means to support her financially. As a result of the stark socio economic inequities of the highly stratified Mexican society Alejandrina and her



**cousin** migrated to Guadalajara to look for employment in domestic service. Similarly, the inequities of socioeconomic stratification run along Miriam's testimonio. She aspired to be a teacher of young children, however, as an orphan child under the care of her aunt and uncle who also had children of their own, she yielded to her older sister who did become a teacher. The economic situation of the family did not permit all of the siblings and cousins to pursue their dreams. Instead, Miriam followed an educational path consistent with the local mining economy that did not render long time employment due to the fluctuation of the industry. As many working class people, she found herself working in a Maquiladora in the late 1990s and early 2000s, an unstable situation that eventually led to unemployment. Besides the massive unemployment caused by the maquiladora crisis, other factors playing out in Miriam's desperate unemployment situation in Mexico included the arbitrary and unfair hiring policies and practices in the neoliberal, capitalist economic system that tended to restrict employment for people above 35 years of age (and often times even younger) and gave preference to single women without family attachments (Carrillo & Hernández, 1985; Vigna, 2001).

Andrea also experienced age and gender discrimination when she was unable to find employment in Tijuana, after devoting most of her adult life to being a housewife and informally helping her husband in the family business. Her chances to become financially independent were reduced by the fact that she did not finish her High School education since she married at a young age with a man 10 years her senior. Thus, even though she did develop work skills related to managing a small business, her informal position within the business and her lack of formal educational credentials did not allow her to present a strong curriculum vitae required by hiring agencies and potential employment sites.

The type of jobs and the difficulties to secure employment and financial stability that the three women experienced are directly related to the socio-economic configuration and its intersection with class and gender within the patriarchal Mexican society. Consequently, these shared experiences are not fortuitous but a reflection of the gendered labor markets in their country of origin. Limiting gender stereotypes, deeply rooted in the Mexican society and its institutions, have persisted over generations. Discrimination based on sex and gender is thus a historical and structural problem, shaping social behaviors that are reflected daily in widespread patterns of unequal and discriminatory treatment towards women. Women, along with the elderly, the disabled, and indigenous ethnic groups have historically suffered social exclusion and discrimination in public and private spaces in Mexican society: in the family, at school, in academia, in the media, in politics, in scientific and technological activities, and even in the streets, among many other areas (CONAPRED, n.d.). One of the major problems that this gendered labor setting presents for women is that it locks them into a cycle of poverty and reduces opportunities for developing higher order skills that would enable them to find better employment and experience social mobility (Parreñas, 2015). In addition to the actual material consequences of age and gender discrimination in the Mexican labor market, the ways in which such discriminatory experiences impact women's identities should also be considered. The complex web of gender inequalities within working class households and the larger socio economic disparities have a bearing upon working class women's sense of being in relation to the social worlds that are feasible for them.

### **Work in the United States**

The testimonios of Alejandrina, Andrea and Miriam, can be illustrative of the ways in which the experiences of women in all spheres of their social and private lives are heavily

marked by the unspoken but pervasive and normalized norms of patriarchy, which spans across borders. Work opportunities for the three women in the United States continued within the confines of low wage and low skill employment, such as line assembly factory jobs, domestic care, housekeeping, and the service and fast food industries. Some of Alejandrina, Miriam and Andrea's work experiences reflect the phenomena that Salazar Parreñas (2015) refers to as the international division of reproductive labor. Expanding on Glen's (1992) concept of the racial division of reproductive labor, Salazar-Parreñas (2015) brings the discussion to the international context to reflect the interconnection between global capitalism and the systems of gender inequality that exists in both sending "developing" nations and "developed" receiving nations. This results from the transmigration of poor domestic female workers of color to perform commodified reproductive labor (e.g. home care, domestic service, cleaning, maintenance, baby sitting, and the like) for white middle and upper class, often times professional women. According to Salazar-Parreñas (2015) "this international division of labor refers to a three-tier transfer of reproductive labor" (p. 41) whereby migrant domestic workers from poorer countries, undertake reproductive labor for wealthier women in developing countries, while more disadvantaged women in the countries of origin (some times even poorer women or aging relatives) take responsibility of the reproductive labor activities for the migrant women. Alejandrina's experience mirrors this three-tier transfer of reproductive labor, as she has performed several types of domestic work in the U.S., while her aging mother was left in care of Alejandrina's child in Mexico. Alejandrina worked in domestic service in California, assembly line worker in two factories in Chicago, domestic service in a ranch and personal care attendant in Socorro, and finally, hotel housekeeper and house cleaning in

Albuquerque. Miriam worked for a short time cleaning offices. Andrea worked in domestic service and then in a fast food restaurant. The work opportunities of Alejandrina, Miriam and Andrea are reflected in the significant number of Hispanic or Latina immigrant women employed in these industries in the U.S. as reported by the Bureau of Labor Statistics in the Department of Labor. According to this report 88% of female workers are employed in the industries of housekeeping, of which 49% are Latinas. Another industry predominantly female is that of Personal Care Aids represented by 83.7% female workers, 20.7% Latinas (DOL, 2017). Pessar (2005) adeptly ponders on the ways gender and race intersect in first world countries to set the conditions under which Latin American and Caribbean women are posited as better suited than men for labor-intensive industries. The author explains that underlying this scheme are “patriarchal and racist assumptions that women can afford to work for less, do not mind dead-end jobs, and are more suited physiologically to certain kinds of detailed and routine work” (p. 3). An important dimension to add to this matrix of oppression is the vulnerability for exploitation and labor rights abuse that unauthorized workers are subjected to. The systems of oppression work to reduce their chances of acquiring an education, to gain work experience and thus work skills that would enable them better paid jobs. These systems transpired in the labor landscape in both countries, as reflected in the work opportunities awarded to women with low formal education, lack of certifications, and work skills.

### **The Nature Of Workplace Linguistic Interactions In The U.S.**

The discussions in the above paragraphs around gender and work direct our attention to the implications of work environments in adult language learning and socialization. To better illustrate the dynamics of language use in Alejandrina, Miriam and Andrea’s work

environments let us revise the following extracts where the three participants talk about language at work. In the following segment Alejandrina refers to her experience in the first factory she worked in Chicago for about four years:

*In the spring factory they didn't speak English. Nobody taught us English, nobody. And also, we didn't really talk to each other much at work. There was a man who spoke English but he spoke to us in Spanish and would say: "look, you have to do this and this and this, right? And the machine has to make the springs like this", and that was all. They would just put us on a machine and we were bending springs, we'd put them in, take them out; we'd finish and we'd leave. Then we'd come back again and do the same thing: work, work, work and nobody spoke English.*

This short excerpt of Alejandrina's *testimonio* encapsulates four long years of monotonous work routine in the second factory in Chicago:

*In the two factories in Chicago, it was the same. It was the same, all work and no practicing English. The second time I came to Chicago was when I went to the factory where they made those little pinball machines that kids play, the ones where the balls come out. And if you turn them over, there are cables and the pieces so they'll move, and that's what I soldered for four years when I worked at that factory.*

In the text below Miriam relates her work experience as an office cleaner and the communication strategies she used:

*I was working doing cleaning at a Chevrolet **dealer**. Another person employed me; he was also from Mexico and spoke both languages, English and Spanish. I didn't speak to him in English, but I did speak only English with the people where I cleaned, in the offices, the men. And so, yes, I mean I started to try to communicate, and it was very hard. The only thing I did was go there and say, "**excuse me**", and use sign language to ask if I could go in, or I would show them the vacuum cleaner, because I didn't know what to call it. I would just use sign language, movements, because I didn't know how to say anything, right?*

In this extract of her *testimonio*, Andrea describes in detail her work routine in the fast food restaurant where she has worked for approximately nine months<sup>92</sup>. She also talks about the type and frequency of linguistic interactions that take place in this work environment:

*I take out everything for the kitchen, the meat, vegetables, potato fryers... like, connect the refrigerators, where the bread is heated, I mean, everything related to the kitchen, that's what I'm in charge of. And the guy out front, he takes care of the sodas, the ice creams, the cash register, the bags and everything that's up front. And at 10 in the morning before we open, it's, "are you ready? Are you ready?" and that's it, I put the meat for the hamburgers, I have to have the table ready, all the vegetables ready and all that.*

*At work, only one person speaks English. My boss also speaks English, but she never talks to us in English, she always speaks Spanish. The supervisor is the person who only speaks English, she doesn't speak Spanish. But she's never there.*

The qualities of L2 learning and socialization experiences in the work place surface as we examine the subtext of the segments above. The layers of meaning embedded in these extracts of the narratives speak to the role of language in work settings, the negligible opportunities to engage in meaningful linguistic exchanges and the unequal power dynamics between speakers in such infrequent interactions. In addition, there are layers of meaning that expose the access and/or barriers to the dominant language and culture and the types of discourse functions and range of vocabulary that such encounters include, as well as the predominance of Spanish vis-à-vis the use of English. In the following paragraphs I will discuss these issues that reflect the nature of language in the workplace, illustrating the

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<sup>92</sup> Data was collected in the summer of 2017

analysis with segments of the *testimonios*. The nature of language in the workplace includes the socialization experiences whereby people learn the subculture of work settings and learn to navigate power dynamics, the role of language at work, and the types of linguistic discourses, functions, genres and registers that Alejandrina, Miriam and Andrea have encountered in their work experiences.

Adults who are in the labor force spend more time at work than any other activity. Immigrant adults need to devote a great deal of energy and attention learning the ropes of new jobs and workplace ethos. Even though domestic service, fast food and manufacturing work industries -where Alejandrina, Miriam and Andrea have been employed- are low-skill jobs that do not require an intensive work training, the complexity of learning the underlying subculture of social interactions, power dynamics and communication styles in new jobs while also attempting to learn the dominant language, must not be underestimated. Andrea makes precisely this point when she recounts her initial days at the workplace as a recent immigrant:

*When I started working at the Burger... , two people who were training me, I don't know if it was because they were impatient or what, but you say, you have to understand that one is just starting and they have to be patient. And when I started there, I told Cloe, I felt like a hen in a strange coop, I didn't even know what to do. Sometimes people don't help you that much, the same thing was happening to Cloe where she worked.*

The three women's work histories show predominantly menial, low skill and low wage jobs. As their *testimonios* reveal, linguistic exchanges in any language (English or Spanish) in the different jobs that they have had in the United States, are limited at its best, or non-existing as we see for instance in Miriam's extract above. The absence of language in

the workplace is also indicative of the degree of isolation typically found in the type of employment that Alejandrina, Miriam and Andrea have had: assembly line workers, domestic work, personal care attendants, housekeepers, and fast food preparation. Such isolation should be understood in relation to the limited social contact that these workers have, and the limited work-related and social networks that these sectors of employment offer.

This prompts the question: what opportunities do Alejandrina, Miriam and Andrea have to establish interactions conducive to the learning of the new language and the new culture in the context where they spend most of their time? Their *testimonios* reveal that opportunities are minimal, since marginalized workers find themselves spending years of their lives performing monotonous work routines where they are not only deprived to develop new skills and knowledge, but also deprived of basic human interaction. The mechanical and repetitive work routine and the marginal role that language is given in the work settings where Alejandrina, Miriam and Andrea have participated in the United States, hinder peer-to-peer communication in any language. Furthermore, occasional linguistic interactions that do occur display a top-down process and asymmetrical power relations among speakers. These interactions display managers, or other higher rank positions addressing workers with the sole purpose to give instructions or commands. Thus, in addition to being heavily marked by hierarchical relations, these types of interactions are also characterized by the predominance of regulatory discourse. According to Halliday (1993), this type of discourse entails unidirectional communication hierarchically distributed from top to bottom with the purpose to give instructions and directions. Since Alejandrina is the one who has the longest experience of residing and working in the United States, her



*testimonio* is useful in illustrating the pervasiveness of this type of discourse in work interactions over the years. The two excerpts below refer to her work in the ranch and provide further examples of regulatory discourse:

*I learned some things from my bosses who would say **tomorrow you need to clean here**<sup>93</sup>, or in **restroom**, or **the living room***

These two examples that follow are about Alejandrina's work as a hotel housekeeper in Albuquerque:

*Then they started sending me to the manager and she told me in English that I had to clean here, there and over there and well. All I knew was **clean the kitchen, clean the bedroom, change the bed** and all that. With practice, I understood all that, and so I worked like that for over a year and a half.*

*The hotel manager didn't speak Spanish, but I could understand her, and she says, "now you have to uhh, **move the couch and every bedroom**" and so I learned that and I was learning item by item. And then she would say, "Alejandrina **in da... refrigerator you need clean daaa...the drawers? Or up or down.**"*

This other example, also from Alejandrina, shows the use of regulatory discourse in the form of written instructions:

*Now in Albuquerque, the housecleaning agency provides us with training on how we are supposed to clean houses. They put us on the forms they give us in English, they tell us what we have to do, how to scrub the kitchen, how to leave the vacuum marks on the carpet, things like that. They give us a notebook with the houses we're going to clean, and they give us the address, the time we have and what we are supposed to do in each house, it's all in English.*

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<sup>93</sup> Bold texts indicate the phrases or words that the participants uttered in English.

In Halliday's (1973) words, the regulatory discourse function involves "the use of language to control the behavior of others; to manipulate the persons in the environment; the 'do as I tell you' function" (p. 23). Linguistic interactions of this sort present a situation of double marginalization given the subordinate position in terms of workplace hierarchy as well as the role of "learner" or "novice" in the interaction. Therefore, the imbalance of power relations is another hindrance to language learning in workplace interactions as well as a funnel to the construction of subordinate identities. Additionally, it reduces the learning of English to this limited genre and discursive style, as we see in Alejandrina's examples. All the phrases she has learned at work are commands related to cleaning.

In contrast with Alejandrina's unequal power relationships at work, Andrea's interactions with her manager are somewhat leveled by several factors.

*Right now, I tell you, I have started speaking it with this girl, she speaks to me in Spanish and I speak to her in English, so she practices and so do I. She's 18 years old, quite young, but I mean, she didn't used to speak any Spanish. But when we're busy we don't have much time to practice. No, no, because she works on weekends when we're busiest and there's not much chance for us to talk.*

Andrea discursively defies a subordinate position by referring to her manager as "this girl". Andrea's judgment statement "she's very young", suggests age as a position of hierarchy in their interactions. Additionally, the fact that her young manager does not speak any Spanish and is interested in practicing this language works to situate both participants in a more leveled footing within interactions. Not only the perceptions of age as a hierarchy marker are at play, but also the fact that, precisely because of her age, this manager is more likely to engage with Andrea in informal, not only work related conversations restricted by regulatory discourse. Notwithstanding, Andrea and the young manager have marginal opportunities to

coincide at the work place at a time when work pressures could allow the emergence of conversations favorable for Andrea's English proficiency development and the manager's Spanish practice.

Another quality of the linguistic exchanges occurring at the workplace revealed in Alejandrina, Miriam and Andreas' *testimonios* is the limited linguistic genres, registers and functions to which they are exposed. The segments by Alejandrina shared above in the discussion of regulatory discourse also reveal this aspect. Here are two more examples from her work in the cleaning agency and the hotel (respectively):

*Only for the, how do you say customers? The ladies? The ladies house is when we speak English, like when we arrive in the morning – hi, how are you? – Good! – thank you for come – and we understand that she's saying welcome and thanks for coming to her house. And at the end she says, oh thank you for your good job, good job, she says, beautiful the clean. And what else does she say? Have a good day, she says, happy you?... nice day? Good day? – Yes, happy nice day, she says, so they're telling us to have a good day. And I just say, Thank you! I say, bye-bye. But I have to practice it more.*

*And they say, "here for the wash you need the purple liquid; and for the toilet and for da sink the pink pink liquid, and for the mirror, for da glasses, windes [Windex]. Then I understood all that, the bed, da bed, da cheets [sheets], and da pilo [pillow]. Oh! And the kitchen is where I understood everything, for the micro, da refrigerio, the estove, the sink, and what's it called? For coffee, da wada, because everytime needs da wáter for the kitchen, and yeah, I know lots of names. And need da clean da estove inside and outside, and I learned all that bit by bit. I still don't know some words. Others I just know the names and don't know how to write them; but if I see them I know what they are.*

Language is a complex human activity that encompasses both cognitive and social processes.

The situations and social contexts in which language is used are as varied as the functions,

styles, discourse types, genres and registers that correspond to these diverse settings. In order to learn a second language, people need exposure to and involvement in a full range of social and communicative situations (Fillmore, 1991). A limited access to social and communicative situations, will naturally limit the range of linguistic styles, registers and functions to which the learner is exposed. Alejandrina, Miriam and Andrea are exposed to a narrow range of lexical, grammatical, pragmatic, phonological and sociolinguistic repertoires in their work settings. In the segments above for instance, Alejandrina demonstrates that indeed language learning is taking place as she is able to understand some phrases such as greetings and comments on her job in her interactions with the clients of the cleaning agency, and she can also respond appropriately. However, her exposure to language is restricted to a very segmented array of lexical, grammatical, pragmatic, phonological and sociolinguistic knowledge. In the second example, the display of work related vocabulary demonstrates how one component of language, (e.g. lexical) is developed at the expense of the other aspects (phonological, grammatical, functional). Furthermore, Alejandrina is aware of the type of language skills and functions she is developing and the ones she has less opportunity to practice when she reflects on the fact that she knows and understands several words, and she can also recognize them in written form, but she does not know how to write them. Her involvements in the communicative exchanges occurring at the work place situate her in passive roles. That is, all she needs to conduct her work responsibilities properly, as far as linguistic knowledge is concerned, is to recognize key vocabulary (verbs, nouns related to cleaning) and follow commands. In that sense, it can be said that she is successful; nonetheless such involvement does not allow her to practice more agentive roles in

workplace communication, and thus develop linguistic knowledge that would equip her to fulfill more complex communicative needs at the workplace or other social spaces.

As discussed earlier, the over representation of Latin American female workers in certain types of industries is reflected in Alejandrina, Miriam and Andrea's work histories. This situation is not unique to these three women, but a collective experience of non-English speaking immigrant women that are relegated to "ethnically segmented low-paying occupations in which extensive oral interaction is not a requirement of the job" (Norton, 2013, pg. 81). As a result of the ethnically segmented hiring practices in factories, fast food restaurants, home care and domestic service, the pervasiveness of Spanish is illustrative of the ethnic and linguistic isolation that immigrants experience in these work settings, hindering access to English language and dominant American culture. This is problematic considering that leading L2 Acquisition theories have established that a fundamental condition for L2 learning is the exposure to the target language in naturally occurring situations. Given the significant share of time that work takes in adult people's lives and the social organization of the work settings that the three women have access to, their exposure to English is minimal. Spanish is often times the predominant language of communication. This excerpt from Alejandrina's long period of work at the ranch in Socorro exemplifies this situation:

*Then, I worked at the ranch for 10 years, but there was no English there, it was all ranch, going to clean the man's big house. And people who worked there all spoke Spanish. My bosses spoke a little Spanish, but the secretary was the one in charge of the ranch, and she's the one I'd communicate with. When there was something to do, she'd say, "Alejandrina... we need you to clean the little houses because visitors are coming." But she'd always tell me in Spanish. And when the bosses got there, well,*

*sometimes the boss lady would speak to me in English and when I didn't understand, I'd call Bety, "hey, tell her to say it again because I didn't understand her."*

This other example shows Alejandrina's awareness of the fact that a Spanish predominant work environment in the cleaning agency hinders English language practice:

*But, how am I supposed to practice English when my co-workers – you call them **my partner**, right? **My partners speak Spanish everyday?***

Andrea's work at the fast food chain also shows limited exposure to English:

*Sometimes they [the people in charge] have to go to the bathroom or whatever, and suddenly there's a line of people waiting and they're not around, and you can't help them because you don't know how, that's when I tell the clients in English to wait just a minute, that the person in charge went to the bathroom. So, I don't speak much English there.*

Examples like the ones shared above illustrate that people can develop survival strategies to sustain active participation in the labor force and provide for their families, albeit hardly making ends meet, without the need to use English. Another feature of such contexts is that there is always a way to go around communication via an interpreter, thus eliminating the potential need to negotiate meaning between the L2 learner and the native speaker and over time develop linguistic competence. Therefore, workplaces available for marginalized working class Latino/a immigrants become hubs that aid in the maintenance and thriving of Spanish language and Latino culture in the migration context, but seldom aiding in the development of English. A workplace setting that promotes an additive approach to bilingualism (Cummins, 1978a) where the home culture and mother tongue of immigrants are valued and nurtured while simultaneously aids in the development of English acquisition

and new acquired skills that place workers in better paying jobs would be the optimal situation for immigrant integration.

***Barriers to Second Language Learning and Socialization (social determinants)***

In this section I examine the major structural barriers to language and socialization that the three women experienced in their daily interactions outside of the workplace. The multiple forms of discrimination they encounter include those stemming from structural determinants, systemic racism, and nativism, such as the barriers imposed by the legal system to socioeconomically disadvantaged immigrants, who are forced to live and work under the category of unauthorized immigrants and the discursive otherization that communities of color are subjected to under the ideologies of racist nativism (Amin, 2001). Social and linguistic discrimination, as well as day-to-day microaggressions are also present in the *testimonios*. In the following paragraphs I discuss the impact of these multiple forms of discrimination in L2 learning and L2 socialization. As I did in the previous section, I illustrate the discussion with extracts of the *testimonios*.

*My father wasn't with us for long periods of time, he was a bracero. He said that he got paid 9 cents, I think, and he said that he came back to Mexico with only 60 dollars and he had worked like a dog. He said: "I don't want you to go there." And I ended up coming here, and then I came back again, twenty years. But I tell him: "we need to work anyways, and nowadays there are factories." And I left to Chicago and every time I came back my father used to tell me: "What do you go to the United States for? There is a lot of discrimination." And still there is, isn't there?*

Historically, Mexican immigrants have been the targets of discrimination and the current times are not an exception. Alejandrina and her father, a former bracero worker, have experienced this discrimination first hand at different points in history as the exchange above

related by Alejandrina illustrates. This pervasive social prejudice shapes the social spaces occupied by Mexican immigrants such as Alejandrina, Miriam and Andrea in their daily lives. The experiences and social exchanges that they recount in their *testimonios* exhibit the processes of direct and indirect marginalization. The *testimonio* segments I share below illustrate the workings of social practices that subject Alejandrina, Miriam and Andrea to discrimination on the basis of multiple aspects of their identities including age, race, ethnicity, language, legal status and gender. The importance of identifying the social, linguistic and racial marginalization that mark these women's lives resides on the need to understand the combined negative effects that these social practices have on the development of social identities and L2 skills since these multiple sites of marginalization and discrimination are major barriers to L2 learning and L2 socialization. The social organization of the three women lives responds in part to these barriers, which must be understood in relation to the larger historical and socio political context.

The increasing hostility against immigrants of color, particularly Mexican and Central American subjects, create harsh circumstances under which these groups of immigrants live. These hostile sociopolitical environments do not stay in a sort of innocuous discursive cloud; they actually penetrate into the very fiber of social interactions and materialize into tangible social, legal, and economic conditions that impact peoples' lives. At the level of daily interactions, Alejandrina, Miriam and Andrea must contend with everyday indignities, insulting and denigrating messages that have a significantly negative impact on their ability and possibilities to develop healthy identities while engaging in meaningful interactions and establish social relationships that lead to language learning and social participation. Under these circumstances, the routine activities of adult life, e.g. working, grocery shopping, child



rearing, interacting with children's educators, and so forth, become actual everyday struggles and sites of confrontation. In the same vein, learning English turns into an extraordinary act of resistance. English language acquisition could be simply a natural consequence of residing and working in a predominantly English speaking country. However, it becomes a complex and almost unattainable realization for people living in the margins, such as Alejandrina, Miriam and Andrea who are situated within the constriction of subordinate identities as female working class immigrants of color.

Systemic and institutional racism is a major barrier for Latin American origin immigrant. Subject positions should be understood in relation to these historical systems and structural determinants since they do not only shape who people are but also who they can be as their aspirations and imagined identities are also impacted in response to new circumstances. Alejandrina talks about her enhanced aspirations and desires in relation to her new condition as a legal resident.

*I was able to get papers, now I have had my green card for the past two years. That's why now I can learn English and get a job. They say that after five years I can request citizenship, so I need to really study English.*

The regularization of immigration status enhanced Alejandrina's already strong drive to learn English. In the text above she also expresses the aspiration to improve her material conditions, as she seems to equate legal status with better opportunities for social mobility. Unfortunately, after two years (as of the time of data collection) of obtaining her legal residence, Alejandrina's actual employability conditions have only changed in that she can now apply for formal employment (e.g. hotel maid, cleaning agency) as opposed to the more

irregular employment she has had in the past. Research on immigrant communities has found that learning English and obtaining residency or naturalization

“may not necessarily translate into structural mobility in the hierarchies of wealth and power. Thus, despite being thoroughly acculturated, minorities- such as descendants of earlier Mexican, Puerto Rican, Caribbean migrants- are still confined to an inferior socioeconomic position and continue to be racialized by a predominantly white mainstream” (Portes & Rumbaut, 2014, p. 77).

Yet, the power of self-positioning vis-à-vis structural oppression should not be underestimated since this fosters aspirations that allow people to envision and thus, pursue better material conditions of living.

Miriam recounts several instances in which she was aware of the racial, linguistic and ethnic discrimination directed to herself or her family members. In this first example of blunt linguistic discrimination, Miriam recounts with great pain and affliction an event when her artistically inclined daughter, Mabel, was denied the opportunity to participate in an audition for a commercial. The older daughter accompanied Miriam and the young aspiring actress, taking the role of interpreter. Mabel was denied the opportunity simply because the mother was not able to communicate in English with the person in charge of taking the applications. This person would just not address the older daughter even though she explained that she is an adult and she is the mother’s interpreter. She would not talk to the young candidate either, because she was underage. She rudely dismissed their attempts to explain and be heard, Miriam in Spanish and the older daughter in English, and called on the next person in line, completely ignoring Mabel.

*One experience has always hurt me a lot, and I’ll feel it my whole life... That’s why I felt so bad that year, because of that person who discriminated against me for*

*speaking Spanish, who didn't give my daughter an opportunity. I still don't understand that. I don't understand why language makes a difference. My daughters are here for an education, for a better wellbeing, I'm not here to take anything from anybody. We're struggling to get ahead, I mean, I don't understand inequality. For that person to discriminate against me just because I couldn't answer in English...*

Not only was Miriam anguished and frustrated to see her daughter's dreams shattered by a prejudiced gatekeeper, but by the internalization of guilt. Failing to speak English did not only represent a miscommunication. It represented the deprivation of power from the other interlocutor. It signified losing face and being stripped of the authority and position of respect that her family dynamics had vested on her, by a narrow-minded, all-powerful interlocutor.

*Mabel cried, too, and said, "oh well." I told her, "honey, forgive me! Honey, I promise I'll try to learn as best I can," I said. I apologized to my daughter for having lost that opportunity, because it was my fault she didn't move forward, just because of the language. My daughters have always understood me, you know? They know what the situation is, that I have tried to learn English as much as possible, but that it is a struggle for me.*

Miriam's anguish was not only driven by her lack of command of the English language, it was produced by a strong feeling of failing in her roles of adult, caregiver, protector and mother, in the ways she understands and performs these roles.

Discrimination based on race and language often transpires in school settings for Miriam, as well. The following instance displays the hostile environment that Miriam and other Spanish speaking families experienced at her children's school:

*Frequently I'm made to feel that I'm not from here. At my daughter's school, the youngest, you still experience that difference, that racism. The principal doesn't like*

*us, I mean, she would like her school to always be 100% English. We argue with her a lot to continue with the bilingual program, so they wouldn't take away the classes they provided there at the school, the support. But she says no, and no, and no. The parents' room was closed down, they fired the teacher who supported us and no, very little Spanish is spoken at the offices. I mean there... uhm... no, no, it's really bad... if you go in there you don't feel welcome, it's not comfortable, you don't know how the secretary is going to answer you.*

*Some schools don't have a bilingual program, and they can't help you at all, so then you have to find the way to support your kids in their education. It was a really tough change for my kids. My daughter cried a lot, she didn't want to go to school, she said her teacher was a witch, sorry for saying that, but she cried every day. She'd get home and go lock herself in her room and at school she wouldn't talk at all and the teacher sent her to a counselor. It was a big change from education in Mexico, it was really different. However, slowly, we started to study, we bought a translator to start to get to know the language*

Miriam also recounts several instances of encounters with police where abuse of power and an underlying racial prejudice are visible.

*When we got here, we went through things we didn't expect. To start off, when the police stopped me. Oh my God! I'm driving and then, the lights! I stopped right there, I didn't even pull over, but then when someone honked at me, "oh well it's me, it's for me," I said, so I stopped. I stayed quiet, and she was talking and talking to me in English, "**Cumon**"<sup>39</sup> [Come on] and "**cumon!**" I was all frightened and didn't understand at all. I thought, what does she want? She's going to send me back. We hadn't been here very long and I thought she was going to send me back to Mexico. That woman was mad, very aggressive, I don't know if maybe she got upset because I wasn't responding to her, but I... I didn't know what to do. In Mexico I'd never been stopped, never. It's the first time the traffic police have stopped me.*

Miriam's family's interactions with powerful social institutions like the police are framed by powerlessness and a state of disenfranchisement. In the example below Miriam remembers a case when the police detained her teenage son:

*They were stopped and they had him sitting on the curb for like two and a half hours. And my son says, "they wouldn't let me make calls and were calling me insults, but I wouldn't answer anything. You know what he called me, mom? Wet bean!" my son said. But they didn't do a test to show that he wasn't drunk, the police officer just told him why was he bringing that drunk man and the man had open beers in the car, and my son was blamed because he was driving. My son was just 17 years old, he was in high school, he already understood English, but he didn't speak much. "But those words he called me, mom, he kept calling me wet bean," that's what my son told me. Later we couldn't even complain about that, because they wouldn't have done anything.*

In this other case Miriam's son had to interact with the police because his car was vandalized. In both instances legal status was used by police as an excuse to exercise abuse of power, to use racist slurs when addressing the young man and to be negligent in the pursuit of justice for Miriam's son.

*Another time we were at church, my son had prayer group, and someone tried to steal his car. He went to the police and everything and they asked for my son's social security number, and since he didn't have one, he couldn't give it, then the police officer said they'd see if they moved forward with his report, and they never did, they didn't do anything. And they had really damaged his car, they destroyed it, but the case died, there was no investigation, just because he didn't have a social security number. My son would go and talk to them, and he said the police officer gave him his card to call him and follow up on the case, but they never ever did anything, they never proceeded.*

Miriam and her family experience these interactions from a position of fear to authorities fueled by numerous reasons including an unauthorized legal presence in the country, the widespread anti-immigrant rhetoric and the ongoing massive deportations of undocumented immigrants of color. Miriam expresses this constant fear referring to the possibility of a police encounter escalating and turning into an encounter with immigration enforcement:

*I mean, often, even if I'm doing the right thing and I know my rights, it still worries me, makes me nervous, frightened, to leave my family, right? Because it happens you know that they call immigration right away or something and sometimes you don't have the chance, they process you fast and you're out. So that's my fear, to leave my daughters alone, leave them without... oh, no!*

Miriam's fear of authorities and the alienation her family suffers from the justice system is not an isolated event but a collective experience of a larger group of immigrants as the following survey from the Pew Research Center informs:

Half of Latinos say their situation in the U.S. has worsened over the past year, up from 32% in the weeks after Donald Trump won the 2016 presidential election and the highest level since the Great Recession. In addition, more say they have serious concerns about their place in American society now (49%) than in 2017 (41%). And a majority (55%) say they are worried that they, a family member or close friend could be deported (Lopez et. al. 2018, p. 5).

Miriam understands that the repeated micro-aggressions she has suffered and the multiple forms of discrimination have a racist undertone. A cactus full of thorns in her illustration for the river of life activity represents the deep grief caused by forced migration and racism encountered in the new country, in contrast with a rose that symbolizes the solace found in the unity of her family (See figure 2, Miriam's River of Life).

*I put a cactus here<sup>94</sup> because being here in the United States has caused me many thorns. Each thorn is a deep pain<sup>30</sup>, it's a whirlpool, the waters are all stirred up, and sometimes people don't help you, and look down on you. That obstacle, that racism that exists, which is so damaging to us, which has caused me very, very much pain, so much uncertainty. But I've moved forward, in spite of having the spiny cactus, this rose here shows that I have my family together, in spite of the fact that we have suffered so much, that we weren't familiar with this city, we are together, we're not separated, we are living together.*

The exchanges below, shared by Miriam, illustrate that when people make the choice to not speak Spanish, even though they can, their linguistic choices might suggest negative attitudes towards the Spanish language and its speakers.

*There are people who I hear or see can speak both languages, but it's like they don't like Spanish any more. Because there have been situations when we've asked them questions and they say they don't understand or don't speak Spanish, and then we go do something else and suddenly I hear them, I turn around and they are speaking Spanish with someone else. I mean, maybe it's also because of one's profile, I don't know how they see us, but maybe that's also impacting things. It's happened to me several times, at first in Walmart, we'd go there and ask the lady, "**excuse me, do you speak Spanish?**" "No, no." And I'd turn around and then here she's helping someone else in Spanish.*

This type of exchanges and attitudes can gradually have a deleterious effect on peoples' sense of identity especially when they are not isolated events but part of peoples' daily exchanges with the larger society outside of their ethnic, linguistic and/or cultural enclaves.

*"Why is that?" I would think, it made me sad. I mean, it's one's racial profile, as they say, they push you aside. I don't know what she saw different between that lady and me. Because I mean, I look at myself and I see her and she seems like me, it's not like... like she was whiter than me, or that she had, like, blue eyes, I see her and she*

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<sup>94</sup> She cries as she tells her story in the River of Life Activity

*seems the same as me, I don't know what makes me different. That's why I asked her, because I heard her. When I saw someone else, to ask her and have her tell me no? I thought, I guess I won't even ask, it's better just to wander around looking for things on my own.*

Miriam's discussion about social encounters and linguistic exchanges in which people make a choice to not speak Spanish suggests that her understanding and awareness of the underlying discriminatory events is deeper than her ability to name it, yet she is able to see the intersection of language and ethnicity, race and nationality underlying discrimination.

*But I mean, look at the difference, right? I don't know how they see me, or what distinguishes me from an American, a Mexican. Maybe, like they say, their white skin, their eyes, their hair, but look how many Americans have brown skin, dark skin! They are always going to treat us like that, like pointing us out, you're from Mexico, you're from there, and here we're still fighting.*

These type of attitudes stem from prejudiced notions of Spanish-speaking immigrants. People assimilate the larger societal discourse of discrimination against poor Mexican immigrants and the refusal to speak a language once known for them is a way of dissociating themselves from that marginalized group.

Contrastingly, Miriam also meets people who are willing to help facilitate linguistic exchanges in service encounters. Miriam praises the fact that businesses recognize the need to offer Spanish-speaking customer service in Spanish dominant neighborhoods such as the one where she lives. Nonetheless, these experiences guide Miriam's choices for places to do routine activities such as grocery shopping, and in doing so, delimitate her social activities to those spaces where Spanish is spoken, and where the attitude towards Spanish speakers is welcoming. While it is helpful and reassuring to find spaces that are hospitable, and where



people are willing to interact with her in her native tongue, this also counters Miriam's efforts to be exposed to and actively practice English. The instance shared below further illustrates this:

*Then there are others who see me struggling with English and right away they speak to me in Spanish so I don't have trouble. They say, "were you looking for this, did you need this, ma'am?" I say, "Oh, you speak Spanish!" And since that Walmart is small, and most of us over there are Hispanic, the good thing is that they thought it was a Latina community there, right? That most of us speak Spanish.*

There are several factors that favor the use of Spanish in routine activities and that dictate the prevalence of this language in the social contexts of Alejandrina, Miriam and Andrea. For instance, the historical and political background of New Mexico explains the state's majority Hispanic population. The ongoing influx of new immigrants, the majority from Mexico, is a major influence in the maintenance of Spanish in social spaces and households, and entire neighborhoods occupied by Spanish speaking immigrants. Miriam experience is an example of the cultural and linguistic reproduction that takes place in this situations:

*Most people who live over there speak Spanish, most of them are Hispanic. I feel comfortable in that neighborhood, as if I were in Mexico, I mean, because the people, like I said, most of us speak Spanish. We talk about everything, about our homeland, and you feel as if you were in a neighborhood in Mexico.*

Like Miriam, Andrea also lives in a predominantly Spanish Speaking area. It is noticeable that despite the number of years that Alejandrina, Miriam and Andrea have been living in the United States, none of them have established close relationships, either friendships or acquaintances with English speakers, which further marginalizes them from the English language. Andrea talks about the absence of Anglophone social networks in her life:

*Because I don't go to church and I don't have... I don't have friendships, well, I don't have many opportunities. And since it's my daughter and me, we stay busy, we like going to movies, going out to eat, but always the two of us, it's not like we have other friends who I can speak more English to. And when we go to the supermarket, it's usually Smith's or Walmart or to El Súper or Mezquite... so, well, yeah, people all speak Spanish, we haven't really needed to speak much English.*

This situation combined with the marginalization and discrimination that socially disadvantaged immigrants experience in social spaces that cater to the dominant group, push people to favour Spanish-speaking enclaves in order to fulfill their daily needs such as grocery shopping, healthcare services and so forth. Alejandrina recounts an experience that suggests how her efforts to participate in English speaking interactions are curtailed resulting in turning her energy to find services in her own language instead:

*The other day I went and I told them I wanted two tires, but the man didn't speak Spanish, I couldn't explain myself. So there I was looking all over Walmart and I couldn't find anyone to explain in Spanish. And then I take it out on my daughter, "just because you didn't go with me, dummy, and then you don't answer the phone, and that man couldn't tell me anything." I'm better off going where there are Mexicans, in the south. I ask them: "**hey men you speak spanish?**" and they answer "**Yes.**" – "Then why are you answering me in English instead of Spanish?" [Hearty laugh] – "So you can understand me," he says. And I bought the tires over there and they put them on and everything was fine. So that's it.*

There are a number of businesses run by Spanish speakers and also larger companies such as Walmart that respond to the demand of a large population of consumers by hiring bilingual employees. Important service areas such as health, respond to the need to protect peoples' rights to be assisted in their own language, and thus healthcare facilities offer interpretation mandated by law, and many also seek to employ bilingual health care

personnel. Andrea, Miriam and Alejandrina share the perception that English (or lack of English knowledge and proficiency) is a major impediment to their successful integration and participation not only in social interactions, but also in their access and integration to the larger society. At the same time, they are hard-pressed to organize their lives with marginal exposure to the English language. They learn that it is possible and practical to get their chores done and satisfy their immediate needs without the need to use English. The following examples from Andrea illustrate this:

*I didn't need English to get a job. I didn't need English to fill out the application for the apartment either. Well, the buy in charge there spoke English, but I was with my friend and I filled it out and handed it to him, I didn't need much English. In my daily routine I really don't need much English either.*

*Usually, when I start at 3 p.m., I drop my daughter off at the child care center where she works and I go home to clean house and cook. I don't interact with many people, I mean, the people I have relationships with are my friends who work at Burger, and who live there at the same apartments, but all of them also speak Spanish*

*Recently my daughter hurt her foot and we've had to go to several clinics and, you know, it's all in Spanish... all of them. We went to three clinics and they spoke to us in Spanish in all three, even the doctor. I also went with my daughter to get a tooth pulled, and we also spoke to them all in Spanish. Even though my daughter gets along fine, she's bilingual.*

Because Spanish has an important presence in New Mexico it is natural that Spanish-speaking people use their native language whenever it is available in order to accomplish the communicative needs they face. For instance, Alejandrina's incentive to practice English listening to the news on television declines with the availability of news in Spanish.

*I like the news and sometimes I put it on in English. But now I tell Daisy, when I don't understand I switch to Spanish, because in the end, they repeat it, that's what I do.*

How do Alejandrina, Miriam and Andrea go about their daily lives in these circumstances where actual opportunities to develop the English language are minimal? How do these larger socio political discourses trickle down to permeate their everyday lives and how does this affect second language learning and socialization? Given that social norms and behaviors are highly regulated by local cultural systems and at the same time, intrinsically organized through language, access to language is paramount in the processes of language learning, group membership and ultimate social integration. The social organization of life and work of marginalized immigrants creates barriers to English language. Furthermore, the barriers seem to go beyond the access to the language of power. The intricate systems of exclusion ban people from living their lives to their fullest potential, and lock them in cycles of marginalization where life becomes a succession of repeated monotony, as this conversation between Alejandrina and her brother illustrates:

*At that job, we didn't get out until it was dark. It started at 5 a.m. and we walked for an hour to get to that job. And I didn't really even notice what streets or where... I just, we'd get to work, go in and leave, in the dark. Then we'd get back to sleep and eat, and then the next day, the same thing all over again. And I said [to the brother]:*

*-- "oh, you can't see things here"*

*-- "no, we're only going to see the sun on Saturdays and Sundays when we don't work." [the brother replied].*

*And that's the time to wash and clean up the kitchen, the house, go buy food and yeah, that's all we did.*

The lack of opportunities to engage in formal second language education together with the exhausting work schedule that impede adults to engage in learning activities, are other forms of overt discrimination. From the three participants, Alejandrina is the one with the longest experience in several locations in the U.S. It wasn't until she came to Albuquerque that she was able to engage in formal ESL classes, as the following two passages illustrate:

*Look how long I had to wait to go to school! Because, over in Socorro, there was no school for adults. And I had thought, "when I go to the United States I have to go to school." But in Socorro, I was working all the time.*

*Before, I mean in Socorro, I didn't have much chance to study, or to learn, or to practice, or to hear people speak English. It was even worse in Chicago! In Albuquerque is where I've had the chance to learn some English.*

Alejandrina is aware of the fact that her social environment didn't allow her any access to English for many years, not even exposure to the L2.

*Over in Socorro, like in other places that I went, there weren't any English classes, either. At the poultry plant there was no English, it was all Spanish, Spanish, Spanish. I would go three days or two days to work at the poultry plant in the afternoon, and the other three days I took care of the elderly man.*

Alejandrina's previous experience in Chicago reveals how her motivation to engage in ESL classes was undermined by the demands of long work hours and blatant discrimination.

*When I was young over in Chicago, working making springs, they said they were going to give English classes and I went to ask and a woman said they were taking the "Aydees"? [IDs] the credentials. She said I couldn't take classes because I didn't have legal papers, I wasn't from there and I was Mexican and so, I couldn't, that's what she told me. So, what could I do? Anyway the school where they were going to give English classes was really far away and I didn't have a car, I didn't have a **ride**,*

*and to go all the way to Chicago was like two hours. That's why I never studied English. Besides having to work for my daughters.*

The passage above shows the ways in which people are marginalized from multiple sites of their identities. There is an actual individual acting as a gatekeeper of the system, bluntly exercising her power through blatant discrimination against Alejandrina denying her the right to participate in the ESL classes, on the basis of nationality, language and legal status. Simultaneously, other systems of exclusion operate from the multiple sites of systemic marginalization manifested as poverty, lack of transportation, secluded housing, and an exploitative and exhausting work routine.

The following passages of Alejandrina and Miriam's *testimonios* were produced in the activity The River of life. In this activity the research participants created graphic representations that they then interpreted orally, of their migration histories using the idea of a river and its features as metaphors to talk about the ups and downs of their trajectories. These passages provide a glimpse into the processes that they engaged with as they make sense of their location with respect to their new contexts and new identities. Interestingly, but not surprisingly, language emerges as a barrier in the three women's *testimonios*. The first example from Alejandrina reveals how she situates herself in this larger context, identifying the main barriers she has encountered along the way:

*In this picture, I have my boat in the middle of the river, because it represents looking for the place to live, to be able to arrive with hope about something I can do...I'm in the boat with my daughters. In front is my younger daughter because she's the one I brought with me, and behind is my daughter who I left in Mexico. I'm the one who's rowing and that means that I'm the only one who has supported the family, I'm the one moving the boat forward, even thru hardship. The difficulties are these rocks, because there are many problems, like money. The size of the rocks represents how*

*big the difficulties are. The rock of language is the biggest one, because language is very difficult for me.*

As Miriam makes sense of her transborder positionality, she also identifies language as a major barrier,

*Coming here to the U.S., the main obstacle was the language. To go to register at a school was very, very hard because you don't know how to communicate, how to speak to the teachers. To get home and try to do the homework, to translate. It was a very difficult situation, because some teachers don't help you out even when you ask them.*

*Currently I'm studying English Two so I can keep improving, right? Because in this country language is the main thing, it is an obstacle that has affected me, that's why here I have an angry face, a sad face, tears...*

L2 learning in itself is not an easy process and it becomes even more difficult for disenfranchised adult immigrants given the challenges presented by the mechanisms that operate within systemic racism and the inherent social, linguistic and ethnic discriminatory practices, as we have observed in Alejandrina, Miriam and Andrea's *testimonios*. In these circumstances, the time and energy that adult learners need to devote to L2 learning (or learning any other intellectually and cognitively demanding skill) is consumed by additional demands that take priority. For instance, learning the skills necessary for a new job, learning how to get around a new city, learning about the new educational system where their children will be immersed, and so forth. L2 learning in these circumstances requires an amount of time and effort that marginalized adult immigrants simply cannot afford.

Despite being distinct bodies of research, second language acquisition research and the field of second language socialization have important points of agreement that are

relevant in this discussion. Both bodies of research point to the social nature of language and the importance of meaningful participation in social interactions in both interconnected and mutually dependent processes of second language acquisition and the learning of social norms and conventions of group membership. The following quote from Auerbach (1992) captures this shared assumption from the field of second language acquisition:

The notion of communicative competence implies that it is not enough to know the grammar of a language; it is necessary also to know appropriate forms to use as the context changes. According to this view, both grammatical and sociolinguistic knowledge are acquired in the process of meaningful interaction in a range of settings, with a range of purposes, and participants. Real communication, accompanied by appropriate feedback that subordinates form to the elaboration of meaning, is key for language learning (p. 23).

L2 socialization research similarly, contends that by engaging in meaningful and appropriate interactions adults will learn to use the language of the majority community (Sarangi & Roberts, 2002). However, it is noticeable that my participants find themselves in the “communication paradox” whereby they have to learn the target language to communicate, at the same time that they need to communicate with the host society to learn the language (Bremer et al, 1993; Norton, 2013; Sarangi & Roberts, 2002). Access to ESL classes is limited as we discussed above, but unfortunately, increasing access to formal language education is not the panacea, as most of these learning settings focus on the grammatical aspect of language. As Auerbach (1992) correctly poses, sociolinguistic knowledge is acquired through meaningful participation in linguistic interactions that reflect the variety of social contexts, communication purposes, and diversity of participant tsp. that occur in real



life. The three *testimonios* depict the complex demands adult immigrants face to learn not only how to navigate and adopt new linguistic systems but also to perform unfamiliar norms and behaviors that are socially and culturally sanctioned, and that are regulated and organized predominantly through language, precisely due to the multiple web of issues that result in their marginalization.

The focus of this dissertation is on language learning and socialization processes as they transpire in the *testimonios* of three immigrant women. We have discussed how marginalization and discrimination based on multiple aspects of the identities and social status of immigrants of color result in a limiting and constraining social organization, which prevents language learning and integration to the dominant society. Experiences of racial microaggressions are unmistakably present in the three *testimonios*. Besides the linguistic and socializing implications, the effects on the overall wellbeing of marginalized peoples have been discussed elsewhere (Sue, 2010). Expanding the notion of microaggressions beyond Chester Pierce's (1970) original coinage of the term focused on race, Sue (2010) defines microaggression as "the brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, and environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial, gender, sexual-orientation, and religious slights and insults to the target person or group (2010, p. 5). The relevance of recognizing microaggressions and their effect is based on extensive research that asserts that

microaggressions are constant and continuing experiences of marginalized groups in our society; they assail the self-esteem of recipients, produce anger and frustration, deplete psychic energy, lower feelings of subjective well-being and worthiness,

produce physical health problems, shorten life expectancy, and deny minority populations equal access and opportunity in education, employment, and health care (Sue, 2010, p. 6).

Theorizing from the lens of racist nativism, Laterite theorists have developed conceptual models to examine the racialization of Latinas/so in relation to historical positions of colonization and current positions of oppression (Pérez Huber & Cueva, 2012; Pérez Huber & Solórzano, 2014). The concept of racist nativism unveils the historical social construction of whiteness in relation to the otherization of Latino/as based on perceived racial differences that makes them “non-native” (Amin, 2001; De Genova, 2005). Utilizing this conceptual frame, LatCrit theorists examine what Pérez Huber & Solórzano (2014) call racial microaggressions defined as the manifestations of “systemic everyday forms of racist nativism that are subtle, layered, and cumulative verbal and non-verbal assaults directed toward people of color that are committed automatically and unconsciously” (Pérez Huber, 2011; p. 379; Pérez Huber & Cueva, 2012 p. 394).

The examples of racial microaggressions in Alejandrina, Miriam and Andrea’s *testimonios* are abundant. Miriam’s encounters with police where abuse of power and the use of direct racial slurs such as “wet bean” are some of these examples. Alejandrina’s contention with school authorities in Socorro, judging her capabilities as a mother based on the school’s personnel’s biased and prejudiced perceptions of education. Because Alejandrina’s daughter did not know English and lacked knowledge of New Mexico History and Civics when she started fourth grade in Socorro, her teachers and school officials jumped to the conclusion that Alejandrina was at fault for not sending the young girl to school.

Without making any proper investigation they accused and humiliated Alejandrina who rightfully explained that they had just arrived to the U.S. and the girl's prior education had taken place in Mexico. The effects of these repeated and constant assaults on Alejandrina, Miriam and Andrea's wellbeing, as well as on the overall wellbeing of the larger marginalized population of immigrants of color is a topic that deserves further inquiry. Alejandrina, Miriam and Andrea's *testimonios* suggest that microaggressions, as the manifestations of repeated discrimination at the level of daily life, can hinder immigrants' L2 learning and socialization.

### **Second Language Learning and Socialization Strategies (Resistance and Agency)**

In this final section, I turn the attention to the three women's efforts and drive to learn English with an emphasis on elucidating the ways in which they perceive and make sense of their own second language learning and second language socialization processes. Examples of the strategies that Alejandrina, Miriam and Andrea utilize to practice English in their daily lives inside and outside of classroom settings illustrate the ways in which they act upon the social interactions and routine transactions that require linguistic exchanges. Of particular interest is to realize how Alejandrina, Miriam and Andrea claim their right to participate in social exchanges in the second language and resist subordinate subject positions within such interactions. Despite multiple forms of marginalization discussed in the previous paragraphs, the three women's *testimonios* also expose many ways in which they exercise agency and devise their own strategies to face and sometimes defy the struggles of their everyday lives. Finally, this last section will also highlight linguistic identities emerging in relation to the demands on the three women as L2 speakers/learners. Emergent identities as L2 learners/speakers are also understood in relation to the macro structural determinants under

which marginalized adult immigrants struggle to define themselves. These processes also shed light on the development of transborder subject identities shaping Alejandrina, Miriam and Andrea's involvement in and attitude towards language learning.

### **The Practice Of English Inside And Outside The Classroom**

Many immigrants strongly value formal education and, given the minimal opportunities to practice English in daily activities, ESL classes can be one of the few spaces where they can have access to second language learning. The *testimonios* of the three women provide strong indicators of their drive and desire to participate in L2 formal instruction, despite the difficulties that most non-English speaking working class people face, such as long and exhausting work routines, limitations with transportation, childcare, and other demands of adult life paired with the limited educational opportunities that exist for unauthorized immigrants. Alejandrina's example is remarkable in that despite facing multiple obstacles over the years, she never gave up her desire to participate in ESL classes. She held expectations to formally study English when she formulated her plans to migrate to the United States, only to find numerous impediments. As we discussed in previous sections of this chapter, in Chicago she faced the limitations of long work hours, and lack of transportation and childcare that prevented her from joining the ESL class offered to the factory workers where she was employed. On top of all that, she was denied access to the classes due to her irregular immigration status. Later in Socorro, she found no educational opportunities for her. Nonetheless, the many barriers she faced and the long years she waited did not deter her from her efforts until she was finally able to join an ESL class in Albuquerque, as she recounts in this passage:

*In Albuquerque is where I've had the chance to learn some English. I went to CNM<sup>4</sup> but they told me they were full. I went to register at Catholic Services<sup>5</sup>, but it was far*

*away and they told me they were going to give math classes at Jackson<sup>6</sup>. So when I got there I asked a man, are you here for math class? And he said, “no, I’m here for English class.” And I said, What? They have English classes here, too? -- Yes. So that’s when I went into your classroom and said, “I’m not leaving here, I want to learn [laughs] I’ve already wasted too much time in my life.” Remember that? And that’s what I wanted, to learn English. And the reason why is because my whole life I’ve been like this, right?*

Alejandrina recalls the first interaction she had with me in my capacity as Director of education of the organization offering the ESL class she wanted to join (and eventually did). I went to the classroom on the first day of class to welcome students and provide an orientation of the organization. Alejandrina and approximately other 20 people heard about the class and showed up after registration was already closed. Combined with the students that did register, there were about 45 people in the classroom that night. I apologized for the inconveniences and explained that we could not have such a large class due to practical and pedagogical reasons. Despite my explanation, Alejandrina, from the back of the room, politely protested and assertively demanded a place in the class. She provides further context to this instance:

*That’s why that day I told you, “no, I’m not going anywhere.” Remember? You told me there wasn’t any room in the English class, that I had signed up too late, and that it had to be a small group to be able to learn, and this and that, but [laughs heartily] look, I really want to learn English! I want to learn English! That’s why I stood there by the wall and told you: “I’m staying here, standing right here, I don’t take up room, and I’m not going to be a bother, or ask anything, but I’m staying here to learn English, I don’t care if you don’t register me, I don’t care if there’s no room left in the class.”*

Alejandrina also reflects on the fact that she didn't have opportunities before and when she saw the chance she took it. Even though she has been functioning without much English for many years, her motivation to learn the language of the country where she expects to continue living in the future remains strong:

*If I had had the opportunity before that, well, I think I would have spoken it earlier, right? But, now I'm elderly and I have the chance, well, I have to make the best of it. And look, I'm already in the second level of English. If I want to keep living here I want to learn English.*

The outcome of Alejandrina's brave determination to advocate for herself resulted not only in a benefit for herself but for all of the others who didn't have a space in the class and were encouraged by Alejandrina to speak up as well. The organization which offered the ESL class saw the need to open an additional class to accommodate the demand. The relevance of this instance is that it shows a clear example of agency and self-advocacy. In addition, it is a reflection of the gap between the demand for adult education opportunities and the capacity to offer such services. With regards to this situation, the New Mexico Higher Education Department website, under the Adult Education Division provides this information:

Of the 1.1 million adults over age 25 in New Mexico, over 240,000 have not finished high school. Another 162,000 do not speak English or do not speak English well. More than 400,000 adults cannot fully participate in family, work, and community opportunities and would benefit from AE [Adult Education] services, yet our programs only serve about 23,000 per year, or 6% of the eligible population.

This statement is an indicator of the low position Adult Education has in the hierarchy of priorities for education in general, an area that already suffers from insufficient funding.

Adult Education is limited for the population at large, but the opportunities are even more reduced for unauthorized immigrants. Institutions that receive state or federal funding to offer Adult Education services (such as community colleges or university-based Adult Education classes) are required to collect students' social security numbers. An unauthorized immigrant seeking educational opportunities at places like these faces the first barrier in the enrollment form which requests this information upfront. This also underscores that the difficulties that Alejandrina has experienced in trying to join an ESL class are part of larger structural and systemic barriers, a result of a social system that does not fully recognize the potential of the growing immigrant population in employment and the economy.

Paying attention to the ways in which adult immigrant second language learners reflect upon and make sense of their own learning processes, and recognizing the linguistic awareness in their discourse is important since this is a powerful way to acknowledge and substantiate the centrality of experiential knowledge. For example, Alejandrina's following reflection illuminates her cognitive processes and the strategies she employs to learn English in class.

*When the teacher talks to us in English, well, I try to record the words in my mind so I can practice them and understand. I tell my daughter, "The thing is I have delayed reaction, right? Maybe I'm so slow because of my age, but I try, and if I hear the word again, I'm like practice practice!" I've been studying English now for two years. I'm concerned with it, I'm in a rush, I want to learn.*

There are two beliefs surfacing in Alejandrina's passage above that are worth a closer examination because I have encountered them often in my years of experience working with immigrant adult learners and even some teachers. First, Alejandrina's statement "*Maybe I'm so slow because of my age,*" concurs with the widespread notion of the critical period

hypothesis, which proposes that “there is a limited period during which language acquisition can occur” (Lightbown & Spada, 2011, p. 198). This hypothesis is grounded in the view of learning as a psycho-cognitive process and the belief in biological mechanisms that are involved in language acquisition and function optimally up to a certain age. This hypothesis has been critically questioned by sociocultural theory, with the counterargument that learning is a social activity before becoming an individual outcome. Sociocultural theorists view learning “as a process that is socially mediated, that is, it is dependent on dialogue in face-to-face interaction” (Lightbown & Spada, 2011, p. 204). Even though there is more consensus in current research with regards to the view of language learning as a social activity as well as advances in neurological science that support the notion of learning as a life-long activity (not tied to a certain period in life), the notion of relating age with the ability to learn in general and acquire a second language in particular, is interestingly deeply seated in people’s minds (including some teachers). Furthermore, research has found that, in comparison with younger children, adult second language learners have the advantage of possessing knowledge of the world and more sophisticated intellectual processing skills, which are useful in language learning (Singleton & Ryan, 2004). Thus, the popular view that older learners are at a disadvantage when learning a second language has little credibility among researchers. My hypothesis is that the myth survives both in marginalized adult learners and their teachers given that the “data” that inform this belief is the slow pace observed in their learning, while their children seem to acquire the second language effortlessly once they enter school. However, what is missing in this picture is critical consideration of the adverse social context that does not offer marginalized adult immigrants with the opportunities to develop social networks with the Anglophone speech community that would provide them



with the frequency and quality of interactions that are needed for second language learning to take place (Fillmore, 1991). The second belief that I identify in Alejandrina's reflection "*I try to record the words in my mind so I can practice them and understand*" seems connected with traditional methods of teaching and learning second languages that emphasize memorization of vocabulary. While this can be a useful strategy, again, there is still the need to have access to social contexts in which such memorized language can be reinforced and practiced in contextualized situations. Memorization alone does not account for the contextual nature of meaning in linguistic interactions. Alejandrina and all adult second language learners would benefit from these realizations to avoid feelings of guilt, shame and inadequacy when they face the difficulties of second language learning. In my experience of working with adult immigrant learners, these feelings are all too common. Additionally, this situation has been identified in research. Norton (2013) reports on a study conducted by Rockhill in 1987 with Hispanic immigrant women in the United States:

Despite the fact that learning English was extremely difficult, given the material and social conditions of the women in the study, the women nevertheless expressed shame and guilt at not being able to communicate in English and blamed themselves for making little progress in learning English (Norton, 2013, pg. 79).

These experiences reflect a collective reality shared among adult immigrant learners. Women in particular tend to hold feelings of guilt and inadequacy produced by a complex combination of circumstances that may include their home language literacy level and educational background, and enhanced by experiences of failure when trying to learn a second language. Most often adult women who engage in ESL classes need some time to get readjusted to the dynamics of formal schooling given that they have been out of these

contexts for a long time, particularly older women with little formal educational backgrounds. For example, Alejandrina started the ESL class approximately 40 years after her last schooling experience in Mexico, which explains her investment in the practice of memorization. Having just examined these two particular beliefs I identified in Alejandrina's *testimonio*, it is important to clarify that the prominence of such analysis resides on the frequency with which I encounter such beliefs in the context of adult education, and not in the premise that such beliefs define in absolute terms Alejandrina's thoughts around second language learning. On the contrary, her accounts provide plenty of examples of her beliefs and practices that reveal a more comprehensive undertaking of her own L2 learning, not only in the context of formal instruction, but in practicing English in her daily life. In the example below for instance, she discusses how she transfers classroom strategies to other sites of learning:

*In class, I understand what the teacher is explaining to us and sometimes when I hear— **she will- The...** how do you say it? **The tomorrow**, so then I know they're talking about tomorrow, right? But when she says, **she was weekend**, they're talking in the past. When I hear them say, **I am hungry, I need eat**, they're speaking in the present. That's what I'm picking up on, also on television when they're speaking in past tense, in present tense and in future tense.*

*And look what I learned watching movies. In the words I was watching **the movies, the alien** but **alien** like **monster**. And whenever I see "**alien**" I think about a monster. Now that I'm in English class and when I did my residency papers, I learned that it's "**foreigner**" and, those are the details about how you start learning.*

Miriam's thoughts about her learning processes and the way she talks about school in general reveal the importance she places on formal instruction.

*I started getting involved and studying English. I know I still have a lot to learn, but I am happy and proud that I have been able to move forward.*

*I studied English in 2008, for about a semester, and then again, in 2016 I enrolled in English One<sup>24</sup>.*

Judging by her actual ability to communicate in English, however, (based on both my observations during the research process and Miriam's performance in class), I believe that Miriam's satisfaction does not necessarily reside on her actual L2 skills and command of the language, but rather on her commitment and her ability to stay connected with formal second language instruction, as well as her active engagement with English practice as much as she can outside of the classroom. As with most immigrant adult learners that I meet, she seems unaware of the impact that frequency and regularity have on language learning. On the one hand, adults' busy schedule and demands such as work, family, and routine activities hinder their ability to dedicate much time to formal instruction; on the other hand, as we have discussed, their social environment does not offer many opportunities to practice English in their daily lives. Responding to adult learners' time constraints, the ESL classes that Miriam, Alejandrina and Andrea are taking meet for about 4 hours a week in a 15-week academic semester which means approximately 60 hours of total classroom work. At the time of data collection, Miriam was in the second level of ESL, which indeed indicates she is advancing, but her communication skills in English are still very limited. Frequent participation in naturally occurring conversations would, ideally, complement the classroom instruction. However, as I have discussed before, the opportunities to engage in linguistic interactions in the target language are contingent upon access to English-speaking social settings and social networks. One thing evident in the *testimonios* is that working class immigrant women have little or no access to such social contexts. Nonetheless, something that Miriam does seem to

be aware of is the importance of practicing English with other English-speaking peers (as opposed to practicing only with the teacher and other second language classmates), as can be observed in the passage below where she highlights the benefits of the conversation practices with English-speaking volunteers that one of her teachers facilitated in the classroom.

*Now, well, in school my English is more fluent, right? Because with Miss Liz<sup>25</sup> and the volunteers<sup>26</sup>, that really helped a lot, we got a lot of corrections and a lot of vocabulary*

*You advance bit by bit. The classes help me know how to ask a question, for example, with a medical appointment, what I want to ask the doctor. If I didn't learn it in class, questions come up in the conversation with volunteers and they tell you. Many times the volunteers say, "you know what? Ask it like this, this is how." Or with the doctor, or for example maybe... I also had questions about cancer and conversations, and I write them here in my notebook, and later I look at them "oh, like this," to remind yourself.*

This comment above speaks to the importance of centering classroom practices on learners' real life contexts and communicative needs. It also reveals that Miriam understands the positive impact that this type of practice has on the development of oral skills, and that she can transfer such skills to real life situations. A relevant aspect of these conversation practices is that they take place in a supportive learning context in which the target language speaker has the main role of assisting the second language learner's efforts. Furthermore, Miriam believes that this type of practice should happen more often, and she misses not having this opportunity in her second level ESL class. Furthermore, she is critical of the passive role that students play in some of the activities in her current class.

*That's why I say, I need more conversation like with Miss Liz [ESL teacher], with the volunteers...*

*We don't practice as much with Jerry [ESL teacher] anymore, just what's in the homework sheets; we read the question and then the answer. Or, in the writing when he dictates sentences to us, so then you go and write them.*

Again, she expresses satisfaction in her outcomes:

*I've learned a lot, I understand more, I might not say a full sentence but I try to answer people, say some words, get my meaning across, and I can also ask some questions*

Practicing communication in English in this non-threatening learning environment with Anglophones who volunteer their time and are willing to help second language learners to develop L2 skills, constitutes an important set of experiences that positively impact language learning in several ways. This type of classroom experiences enhance not only learners' second language skills but also the confidence they need to transfer such skills and self-reliance to ordinary social contexts. This practice is reminiscent of the model for second language learning proposed by Fillmore (1991), consisting of three main components and three major processes. The components are:

(1) *learners* who realize that they need to learn the target language (TL) and are motivated to do so; (2) *speakers of the target language* who know it well enough to provide the learners with access to the language and the help they need for learning it; and (3) a *social setting* which brings learners and TL speakers into frequent enough contact to make language learning possible (p. 279).

Juxtaposed with these three components are the closely interrelated social, linguistic and cognitive processes that come into play in language learning according to Fillmore's model (1992). Although the integration of conversation practice with English-speaking

volunteers in class partially reproduces this model, there are essential aspects that are missing. First, every classroom practice, regardless of how well it is planned, is going to be somewhat contrived in comparison to natural communication. Thus, the three interconnected social, linguistic and cognitive processes that Wong Fillmore talks about do not play out in the same way they do in naturally occurring situations. In such interactions (provided that the three components of the model are present) the social, linguistic and cognitive processes operate as learners and target language speakers engage in frequent contact in which the learner has sufficient examples of how people use the target language in a variety of communicative purposes and in a full range of situations. In this ideal scenario, the adult second language learner gradually discerns how language works and how people use it to achieve communicative needs. Essential to this complex process is the role of context in the construction of meaning. By integrating contextual clues, and being actively involved in the negotiation of meaning, second language learners form the basis of language use in socially accepted ways. The relationship between context and situated interactions in the negotiation of meaning is the element that is more difficult to recreate in classroom-facilitated exchanges. Nonetheless, given the marginality that characterizes the lives of many immigrants of color and the structural barriers that hinder their access to Anglophone social settings and networks, classroom facilitated practice can provide the foundations needed to claim more spaces and opportunities for active participation in real life situations. This in turn, might enable the disruption of the paradox facing adult immigrant language learners where they need to learn the English language and its rules of use in social groups through participation; but at the same time they need to have access to such social groups to learn the language and its appropriate social conventions (Norton, 2013).

A common strategy employed by non-English speaking adult immigrants is to rely on their bilingual children as cultural and linguistic interpreters in social interactions.

Alejandrina, Miriam and Andrea live in bilingual households. The role that English plays in their families, however is not uniform but responds to the different family compositions.

Alejandrina's U.S.-born adult daughter is fully bilingual, but since there are only the two of them in the household, they speak Spanish at home. Andrea's Mexican-born adult daughter speaks English fluently, but they also speak Spanish among themselves at home and their entire social network is Spanish-speaking. Miriam's household is different in that she has young children who speak English among themselves and Spanish to their parents. In any case, as many bilingual families, the three women's children sometimes perform the role of cultural and linguistic interpreters. Both Miriam and Alejandrina talk about their children taking this role of linguistic mediators as well as language learning coaches, as in this example shared by Miriam:

*If my daughters are with me, they help me out, or if I'm embarrassed, "honey you tell him, you ask." That's what my daughters try to do, first they want me to make the effort to pronounce so slowly the words will come out.*

The following example of Alejandrina reveals the creative ways in which people seek to communicate via family members as interpreters with the additional help of technology:

*Now I use the phone a lot with my daughter so she can help me. For example, I went to a mechanic and I said, "**good morning, you espeak espanish?**" He said, "**No, only English.**" – "**Ok, wada mini.**" [wait a minute] And then I called my daughter, "hey, Daisy, I want to tell this guy such and such, tell him in English." Then she says, "the man says he can't do that, that you have to go to, for example, Walmart."*

With Vitanova (2005), I see these everyday actions of creativity as important instances of

agency where adult language learners not only simply surpass communicative barriers but also pave the way for their voices to be included in the dominant society.

### **Claiming The Right To Speak And Participate In Social Contexts**

The social spaces that women occupy, and the social organization of their daily lives constrain their incursion into Anglophone dominant contexts. While claiming spaces to speak English and employing a variety of language learning strategies, Alejandrina, Miriam and Andrea make attempts to disrupt the “communication paradox” whereby immigrant adult second language learners have to learn the target language to communicate, at the same time that they need to communicate with the host society to learn the language (Bremer et al, 1993; Norton, 2013; Sarangi & Roberts, 2002). Yet, the possibilities that Alejandrina, Miriam and Andrea have to act upon their environment are related to their identities and social positions. For example, in the extracts below, Miriam reveals how her family environment and her role as a mother both constitute and demarcate the spaces she can claim to practice the second language:

*Between 2008 and 2016, almost all my practice has been in my daughters’ school, because most of the teachers only speak English. My daughters also, from the little one to the oldest, just speak English. I didn’t understand lots of things they would say but little by little I started hearing them repeat the same things, I mean, they spoke the same, and I would ask my daughter, “what are they saying Mabel?” She would tell me, so I would catch a word, a thing, like that.*

The social spaces Miriam can claim are inextricably tied to her gendered identities. For instance, in the passage below, Miriam reflects on how she has interacted with the English language in her role as mother. Miriam’s access to the English language is largely demarcated by her identity as a mother, and the social spaces that this role ensues.



*I also had to read my daughter her schoolbooks, she had daily reading, and since they're in a bilingual program, one week would be in Spanish and one week in English. Well, I can't, I don't know how to pronounce well to read in English, or to translate it. So we used to read along with the images and the words; I would get the gist of it. I would always ask my daughters, "what is this? What does it say here?" And they would tell me. Sometimes Mabel would translate it, so then I would assimilate the word that I was reading, and would understand a few of them, right?*

These instances denote the intricate relationship between identity, gender, social participation and language learning. As is the case with most immigrant homes with school-aged children, Miriam's household is bilingual. For a long time, most of her exposure to the English language has been in her children's school or listening to her children using English at home.

*All that time [between 2008 and 2016] that I wasn't able to go to classes, I would try to be listening, to be looking at words, advertisements, or the streets that say **one way**. Even if I couldn't pronounce it well, my son teases me a lot and says, "**What?**" "**What? Tell me, tell me,**" he says, just to laugh at me. Then he says, "mom, **one way** means in one direction and don't go in that way, don't go that way, look at what it says." "Oh, okay, now I know," I tell him. But, you know, it's with them that I have learned more vocabulary.*

Miriam's experiences are regulated by the gendered systems that restrict women's private and public spaces and reduce the options they have to develop social identities and roles outside of the limiting patriarchal norms and practices. Despite being delimited by these systems, Miriam finds ways to actively engage in English learning. She is amused by her children's humor around her learning efforts and recognizes how this family situation assists in her development of vocabulary in English. Another way in which Miriam claims spaces in society and contest the many forms of social discrimination is by creating her own support

networks. Miriam talks about the support group that was created by parents who met at their children's school's parent room, where the families learned about community resources and had the opportunity to engage with a variety of pro-immigrant grass roots organizations.

*I met many parents there, mothers who I've known for eight or nine years now, and we're still friends. We have a group on **Facebook messenger**; there are about twenty families who are still in touch. If someone needs say, I don't know, vaccinations for their dogs, or who can give me a **ride** to Rio Bravo, there's going to be a food bank, or shots for **flu**... I mean, we're still in communication. I tell you, they're like a second marriage for me because they've been there through thick and thin, like in sickness and in health, I mean, always supporting. For example, when I had surgery for pre-cancer and wasn't able to drive, right away people offered to help. They said, "we'll take you to chemotherapy" so my husband could go to work. Sometimes I think, well that I don't have family here and there are bad people who discriminate against you, but God also gives us good people.*

Creating social networks is an important strategy for low-income people not only to meet social needs and share scarce resources, but also to defy the social marginalization that many working class immigrants experience.

*Over time, I've gotten involved in lots of organizations. I stay busy because I always want to keep learning. My kids already know that. I tell them, "if I'm not here, wait until I get home." And then they say, "Oh no, I know that you are never here at the house." I tell them, "honey, the thing is, I have lots of things to do."*

Other times the disruption of the systems of exclusion targets racist and discriminatory systems by asserting participation in a variety of daily life situations or by attempting to balance the unequal power relationship in social interactions, even in spite of limited English language skills. For example, the repeated experiences of discrimination, and

the discouragement from school authorities that Miriam faced, did not dissuade her from her continued struggle to assert her rightful participation as a parent in her children's schools. She expressed this defiance by co-creating, with other Spanish-speaking parents, opportunities to volunteer and engage in community-led activities. A significant instance is when the group of Spanish-speaking parents stood up to confront racial and linguistic discrimination at their children's school:

*The principal [of her daughter's school] doesn't like us, I mean, she would like her school to always be 100% English. We argue with her a lot to continue with the bilingual program, so they wouldn't take away the classes they provided there at the school, the support. But she says no, and no, and no....*

Miriam's example shows that even without access to the language of power, people confront racial and linguistic discrimination with direct actions, intuitively becoming community organizers. These direct actions can be as powerful as discursive resistance.

*...several of us have had conflicts there, I mean, we have been seeking and fighting at APS<sup>33</sup> and seeking support of other people, but the principal is still there...  
...When I went to the parents' room, and met more parents, the moms and all, and we got involved to be volunteers there at the schools...*

These experiences shared by Miriam expose powerful ways in which she has challenged the gendered, ethnic, and linguistic delimitations that constrain her participation in social spaces. However, her defiance does not necessarily signify the expansion of social contexts, but the adoption of agentive and contesting subject positions. By situating her cultural and gendered subjectivities of motherhood in these contexts, she transforms the social constraints of such social positioning into acts of resistance. Miriam has found that building strong social networks with other parents and participating in community-based

organizations have enhanced her access to symbolic and material resources. These efforts have also helped Miriam incorporate empowering traits into her subordinate yet fluid subjectivities (e.g. mother, unauthorized immigrant, woman, working class, Spanish-speaker). Such empowering traits include assertiveness, advocacy and leadership that are nurtured by the power, solidarity and reciprocity that Miriam finds in building community. She understands that as a marginal subject, the more she engages with a variety of organizations and social groups, even based on ethnic and linguistic affiliations, the more opportunities she will have to be exposed to new cultural and social norms and values, at the same time that she offers her own cultural, social and linguistic repertoire to these groups in a reciprocal manner. These are important cognitive and social assets that marginalized second language learners can transfer to potential situations of second language use since knowledge of these social conventions and the embodiment of assertive subjectivities are useful skills in easing the incursion to social contexts where the second language is used. The focus then is not only in having access to Anglophone social spaces and interactions, but also in developing the identity traits that help people resist subordinate positions in such spaces and interactions.

Some of the strategies employed signify a mere intent to practice English in familiar and safe situations, such as learning from and with their children. Other strategies that are employed to learn English are to use it in social transactions and get things done, such as the example below shared by Miriam:

*What also happens to me in stores is that you go there and say, “**excuse me**”, I want to ask about something, they hear me struggling with my English, and they speak to me in Spanish. Then my daughters say, “oh, mom, you’re trying in English and they speak Spanish.” How am I supposed to know if they speak Spanish? I try to ask*

*because I want to learn and try to speak English, and “is this how you say it?”  
That’s how I can learn.*

As discussed in earlier sections in this chapter, the presence of Spanish in New Mexico is helpful for non-English-speaking immigrants to manage their daily lives even without knowing the language, but it can hinder their attempts to practice and improve their English language skills. Nonetheless, Miriam asserts her desire to learn English and keeps trying.

Miriam realizes that being immersed in the second language also entails engaging with the whole environment around her; thus, she pays attention to her surroundings as a strategy to learn English, as the following two examples reveal:

*...for example, you know when you go to Walmart, they have signs, like, tools in English and in Spanish, gardening in English and in Spanish, or baby things. I’ve always noticed how they translate things so I can start to learn them, because I’m always looking at things.*

*Sometimes at the cash register, the cashier will say, “**don’t forget ice,**” and I would be like, what is that? Until I asked my daughter, “what does that mean?” “Mom, **don’t forget, don’t forget, the ice, the ice.**” Because sometimes you pay for it, you leave without the bag, and that’s why they say **don’t forget** so you don’t forget it. Oh! I won’t forget that. But I always try to ask them something. One day I learn one word, and that’s how it is, bit by bit. I have a way to go before I can say full sentences, but with the few words I’m learning, I’m okay.*

Miriam actively seeks other opportunities to participate in interactions and is alert to absorb the contextual clues that support comprehension in the second language. This is not an easy process, as she faces repeated difficulties with getting the message across, which can cause feelings of insufficiency that can eventually damage second language learners’ confidence.

*But yes, sometimes they laugh when people talk to me in Spanish. “Oh,” I say, “you are bad, you speak Spanish?” “Yes, ma’am, I speak Spanish.” “See?” I say, “and here I am trying in English.” Many times, I’ve had the experience that they don’t understand me. “Oh, sorry, sorry” but I keep trying. When I’m alone, without the girls and when they don’t understand me, they say, **Sorry that they don’t understand.**” They say they don’t know. “**Sorry,**” I say, “**excuse me.**” They say, “**no problem,**” and I say, “**sorry I no speak English.**”*

The positive impact of frequent and meaningful interactions in language learning has been reported in research as well as the difficulties that marginalized immigrants encounter in finding access to such interactions (Menard-Warwick, 2009; Norton, 2013; Fillmore, 1999). Alejandrina, Miriam and Andrea’s *testimonios* expose the difficulties they encounter in gaining access to social networks and social contexts where they can learn English. Among the many difficulties is the fact that people they interact with in service transactions and other daily life settings in general do not have a sound understanding of the complexity of learning a second language. Finding people who are willing to help the process of communication is not easy. Miriam shares one of the very few instances of positive encounters:

*On Sunday I went grocery shopping. I was in the line at Walmart and I had a great big box of 35 waters and I told the cashier, “**wan wata**” [one water] and then he said, “**excuse me?**” Then I said, “**wan wata**”. “**Oh, ok.**” Then he said, “**what?**” and he made me repeat it like they pronounce it. Then he told me that he spoke Spanish and “how long have you been here?” he asked. “No, well I’ve been her for this long and, **sorry I practice my English.**” “No,” he said, “**is good** you are doing it well.” He told me that there is another woman who’s lived here for like 22 years, she goes to him, and they talk. He said, “that lady is already speaking to me in better English.” “Oh, well I’ll come see you every day,” I said, “so you can teach me English.” “No,” he said, “you come by whenever you want.” “Yes,” I said, “so you can help me*

*pronounce because I pronounced pretty badly.” “No,” he said, “but if you learn little by little, you can do it.” That made me go home happy. Look, I said, this guy was so kind and was correcting me and everything, how cool is it to find people like that, right?*

The most important aspect of interactions like this is that they assist in confidence building, which in turn motivates the learner to take risks in communicative encounters in public spaces and be more assertive in claiming the right to use the second language. Unfortunately, instances like this one were not very common in the *testimonios*.

Lack of fluency in English does not mean that silence is imposed on people all the time. Alejandrina shows how she defied an instance of microaggression even with little command of English:

*Another day I went to the store and a man told me it wasn't the line for so many items. He was a white guy and then he says, “**hey lady**, can't you see that it says for just 15 items and you have a cart full?” So then I turned around and saw him and turned to see the cashier and I said, “**hey lady** is it **ok da... da it?**” and I just pointed at the cart and then she said, “**is ok, no problema.**” So then I turned to him and I said, “**she say no problema.**” [laughs heartily] Was I right? He was mad and went somewhere else. The cashier was very nice. It's like I don't get embarrassed when they talk to me like that or say things, I just pretend like I understand them fine. And when I don't understand absolutely anything, I say: “**I'm sorry, I no understand, nothing.**”*

In the example above, Alejandrina is seeking ways to restore the imbalance of power in this interaction. Power disparity between speakers in linguistic exchanges is due to a number of factors including uneven skills and knowledge of the dominant language, combined with the

social positions that speakers undertake in the context of such exchanges in relation to the larger context of social stratification.

Meaning-making in every exchange should be a two-way avenue, and responsibility for successful communication should be equally shared among speakers. However, because of the imbalance of power relationships, the responsibility of meaning-making in linguistic exchanges between “novice” speakers and dominant language speakers normally rests upon the shoulders of the novice. Andrea is aware of this situation as she indicates in the passage below where she challenges this discrepancy in her interaction with an employer by resisting the burden of taking all the responsibility in communication:

*Sometimes I try to communicate in English and I don't succeed. Or the person I'm trying to communicate with does not cooperate. Once I was working at a lady's house and I asked where she had the trash bags, and she told me that she didn't understand me, and that she didn't understand me. I told her ... how did I told her? “Bag, beg?” “Where is the bag, the beg?” ... I could not find a way to tell her but I tried to pronounce in different ways and she told me that she did't understand me. I say, how difficult is it to understand “bag” or “beg”? I mean, I don't think she doesn't understand “the trash”?*

A significant finding in research conducted with adult immigrants (Bremer et al, 1996), discussed by Norton (2013) precisely concluded, “...if both parties actively participate in the negotiation of meaning, language learning is enhanced” (Norton, 2013). Bremer's study (1996) also remarked that “in most inter-ethnic encounters, it is the learner who is expected to work to understand the native speaker, rather than the native speaker ensuring that the learner understand” (Norton, 2013). I would argue that this situation would be reversed if the learner were the speaker of the powerful language, for instance an English speaker, trying to communicate in Spanish with native Spanish speakers. My argument rests in the belief that



the power ascribed to language emanates from the positions of power (either real or ascribed) of the speakers of such language. Spanish-speaking immigrants are devoid of power in linguistic exchanges, not only because the language they speak is that of less powerful nations, but also because of the socioeconomic, ethnic and legal positions they occupy in the context of migration. In the extracts shared below, Andrea shows another example of resisting a subordinate position in her interactions with a co-worker whom Andrea perceives as an equal. This exchange occurred in a larger context in which Andrea struggled to earn respect at the workplace, not only from co-workers but also from managers:

*Finally, one day I told her, “I don’t have to work the way you work. You work your way and I work mine, I’m going to arrange things the way I like them, and the way that works best for me when I’m working.” So, she and I had that sort of confrontation. Because everybody said, “she’s going to get mad, she’s this and she’s that,” like they were afraid of her. And the time comes when they respect you, too, because what’s with just bending over and doing what they want? She’s not even your boss, so, no way.*

The repeated experiences of uneven power relations in social linguistic exchanges have a toll on people’s sense of dignity and their rightful place in society, as we can appreciate in the following excerpt from Alejandrina where her frustration is apparent.

*How do I say I came for my prescription, for the paper they’re going to give me for the medicine? So then I had to wait until my daughter got there to tell the young man, and that’s why I say, Oh! I have to learn English. They didn’t try to help or anything either, he just said, “ok, thanks” in Spanish and then told me who knows what in English. That’s why I say, Oh! How do I say it? Why is he saying “Ok, thanks?” Because he thinks I’m a country bumpkin? Just because he sees that I’m all Mexican and so he says any word he knows? But he didn’t solve my problem! So you never forget that. What’s up with him? And that’s when I say, oh, all of this because I don’t*

*speak English! And that's also what my daughter says: "Mom, you have to learn English so you can defend yourself."*

Alejandrina seems to understand that access to the language of power is key to prevent this type of dignity-sapping encounter. However, she also understands that it is not all about language, but an intersection of other aspects of her identity as well, such as nationality and the adscription of identity markers by association of stereotypes such as socioeconomic status, race and ethnicity. Her way of defying such situations is by investing herself even more intentionally in learning English.

*And that's the problem, and that's why when I went to see you I insisted, "I have to learn English, no, I have to learn English! I don't like for them to treat me like that in the hospital! No, forget about it! In Spanish I can defend myself fine, I just need to learn to do that in English."*

Alejandrina recounts a situation at the ranch in Socorro that provides another example of the great energy that marginal subjects need to devote in the negotiation and often times dispute of disadvantaged social locations and asymmetrical power relations in their social interactions:

*One day the boss lady asked me, "Where's my shirt?" – "You put it over there and I put it in the washing machine" – "No! It's to iron," she says. And then she tells me, "You fried?... You hired?" How do you say it? "You're fired!" And since I watched the Donald Trump show which was The Apprentice, and when he fired someone he said You fired, so I said, "Oh, I understand fired, I'm leaving, bye." And then she said, "No, no! Come here!" And she took me to the secretary who translated for us and in a rush she said, "no, no, no! Don't leave." – "No, you said, you fired." And she wasn't joking, because she said it mad, right? And the thing is, she didn't explain anything about her shirt to me, and she has to put the ironing over where there's a basket, hanging up and then I know I have to iron it. Okay, after that she never left anything there again.*

These examples illustrate how Alejandrina claims her rightful participation in linguistic interactions and attempts to restore the imbalance of power between the native speaker and the second language learner. Alejandrina is aware of the feelings of inadequacy that such encounters produce in her. She also expresses resistance to the situations that trigger such frustrating encounters where communication fails not only due to linguistic issues but also due to lack of cultural sensitivity. A major part of Alejandrina's resistance consists in her ability to embody the assertive persona that she knows she can be when she interacts in her native language.

For Andrea, claiming a space for participation and contesting subordinate subject positions involve proactively seeking a promotion in her current job. Even though she explains that her motivation is to have more access to interact with clients and learn English, a promotion can also mean advancement with regards to her status in her job and potentially her financial situation.

*Yesterday I told my boss, "put me in front." Even though I'm terrified because I had to speak English. "Are you up for it?" she asked. "Put me there! And teach me the cash register." I like that because I want to learn and I want to be there, and I want to interact with people and all that, and that would force me to practice English.*

But she also has to compromise as she is confronted with the conflicts between what is feasible as a shorter-term goal and her longer-term aspirations for better employment.

*But I don't want to stay there because it means working on December 25<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> and all those days, I mean, you don't rest, much less on those days. If I can get a job at a child care center where I can work Monday to Friday and get Saturday and Sunday off... well I'd like to do that.*

Claiming spaces for social participation is understood in relation to the subject positions individuals have in different social context, their aspirations, desires and possibilities within the constrain of powerful societal constraints, as we appreciate in Andrea's case above. She aspires to be placed in a position where she can interact with Anglophone customers at her workplace, but understands that in the long run, that would create more commitment with an employment that does not fulfill all her aspirations.

### **The Ongoing Emergence Of Linguistic Identities**

Norton (2013) theorizes the production and negotiation of identities through the examination of the routine practices found in institutions (homes, workplaces, schools and the like) and material and symbolic resources in relation to the differential access second language learners have to such practices and resources in given settings. The author suggests that the interconnectedness between identity, practices and resources suggests the influence on the production and negotiation of second language learners' identities. Alejandrina, Miriam and Andrea's *testimonios* reveal instances of the women's linguistic identities emerging in relation to the demands they face as L2 speakers/learners, along with the development of transborder subjects' identities shaping their involvement in and attitude towards language learning. For example, Andrea's negotiation of her shifting subject positions in relation to English language learning presents an interesting case. Before migrating to the United States, Andrea studied English as a foreign language in Mexico. In the passage below she recognizes the different incentives driving her efforts to learn English back home and in her new context and reflects on her attitude towards second language learning before and after migration:

I had learned English [in Mexico], but I didn't speak it and I didn't understand when I heard it. Because at the Language Center we didn't speak it... I thought, we should study more phonetics, because I also took a phonetics class at the language school,

but I don't know, it's like I didn't get anything out of those years I was there. But maybe I wasn't open to wanting to really learn it. Now I am interested in speaking it, in understanding it. I did know the meaning of lots of things, and actually I brought some of my English books from Cañas, and when I got home after work with that woman,<sup>12</sup> I'd get busy with the books.

Not only the source of her motivation is different, but also the nature and focus of the instruction has changed. In Mexico, her motivation derived from her relatively advantaged position as a middle class woman with time to spare. But at the same time, it was a way to include an activity for her own development in the midst of a gendered routine devoted to the care of others. The focus on learning English as a foreign language had an emphasis on grammar and vocabulary. Living in the United States, she finds that speaking and pronunciation are more important and she develops strategies to improve these skills. There is also an element in Andrea's narration that reveals her understanding of the new place the English language has in her life after migration: she traveled with her English language textbooks and she dedicated time to study on her own even after the exhausting work of cleaning houses, the first job she got in Albuquerque.

In contrast with Alejandrina and Miriam's perception of the English language as a major difficulty, a "barrier" as they phrased it in their *testimonios*, Andrea's perspective toward language seems contradictory. After deeper analysis, more than a simple contradiction, these seemingly contrasting attitudes are a reflection of Andrea's L2 learner identity development and an example of the fluid nature of identity. While she recounted feeling afraid of speaking English when she first arrived, she also speaks from the position of a confident L2 learner/speaker showing a self-assurance not expressed by Alejandrina or Miriam, as the following two examples show:

*When I first got here, I was really afraid, even though I had some ideas of English, I used to be afraid to speak it because I didn't know if I was pronouncing it right or not, so, I didn't dare to speak. I had learned English, but I didn't speak it and I didn't understand when I heard it.*

Andrea's sentiment around language learning seems to evolve in relation to her own self-esteem and confidence as she experiences a sense of accomplishment in other areas of her life, as its apparent in the following paragraph:

*In the river of my life, these flowers that are here at the end<sup>15</sup> mean that I am flowering... I mean, it's the tree, it has fruit, I feel strengthened and I'm flowering in my work, I mean I'm going out, I'm happy, I'm flourishing, and I like to be flowering. Flowering is to be happy in my work, to like my work, it's to be with my life, to learn the language, and somehow, I'm getting the English.*

Andrea enjoyed a relatively more privileged socioeconomic position, in relation to Alejandrina and Miriam, before migration. First of all, Andrea's first contact with the United States was as a middle class Mexican tourist who visited for shopping and family vacation purposes. Second, she had access to ESL classes in her hometown's university. Third, her migration was not driven by economic displacement but rather an emotional soul-searching experience seeking to heal the emotional wounds caused by the breakdown of her marriage. As an upshot of this event, she developed a strong need and aspiration to become financially independent for the first time in her life. Her pre-migration socioeconomic positioning influences her new relationship with the English language and the identities she forges for herself as a transborder individual. This is reflected in the confidence she displays regarding L2 language learning in comparison to Alejandrina and Miriam. However, her actual access to English and her opportunities to participate in meaningful English language exchanges, are not more frequent or better than those of Alejandrina and Miriam so far

(taking into account that Andrea's presence in the United States is much shorter). Her post-migration social class positioning is equivalent to that of Miriam and Alejandrina.

Furthermore, her advantage in English language proficiency as compared to the other two research participants is not significant in terms of the linguistic competence necessary for meaningful participation in English-speaking environments and for access to better employment or any other social advantages. Andrea's confident attitude towards English language is better explained in relation to her pre-migration experiences, including her privileged social positioning (in comparison with the other two research participants) and the elements of that identity that she transposes to her new context. The process of identity development in the context of migration in Andrea's case is a clear example of the correspondence between identity, social positioning and L2 learning.

*But I do consider that English is important. Yes, it's important, because English is spoken everywhere, more than Spanish, wherever you go it's English.*

*And in Mexico, well, it's also important and that would help me if, for example, like I told you, I want to set up a little school or some business, it's also helpful. Or to give classes in a school.*

*I do see English as a future plan. I really do want to speak and understand English very, very well.*

Andrea's worries when practicing English also reveal her emerging identities as a second language learner in the context of migration.

*I worry about pronunciation, to know if I'm pronouncing things right and if people will understand. But it's a matter of losing the fear of English. For example, when I'm with this girl, I feel like she doesn't judge my pronunciation, how I speak, how I talk. And if she doesn't understand me, she goes to her phone and looks it up and then she tells me how to say it. So, I feel comfortable with her and I like to speak to her. It's not like I feel that other people judge me when I speak, I don't think that, it's more*

*about me judging, not other people. I judge myself. It's like I don't feel confident pronouncing things maybe and then, I don't pronounce them right because of my own insecurity.*

I infer two reasons for Andrea's apprehension with pronunciation. One, I believe, is the negotiation of new identities as an immigrant and the ensuing subject positions that this entails in relation to second language learning. Her pre-migration subject position with regards to learning English was that of an English as a foreign language student at the University's language center in her hometown. This position indexed her privileged social status as a middle class woman who had the time and the resources to engage in an intellectual activity. In contrast, her social repositioning in the context of unauthorized immigration has compelled the surfacing of a second language learner/user identity with reference to her new subordinate social status. Additionally, Miriam and most adult immigrant second language learners experience feelings of infantilization and losing face that are produced in their attempts to perform a task that presents enormous difficulties. If this task is language and communication in social settings, the difficulties are enhanced by the close relationship between language and identity: in great part, we present ourselves to others through language; our ability to communicate with the outside world represents who we are. Thus, adults' competent, capable, mature selves are challenged by the difficulties of performing their best 'selves' in a second language.

The *testimonio* passages discussed in this last section provide examples of how Alejandrina, Miriam and Andrea exercise agency within the domains of power in their sociohistorical context (Pennycook, 2001). By undertaking an active role in their own learning processes they construct their own theories around language learning and employ



creative strategies to practice English in their daily lives. With regards to the opposing forces between human agency and structural determinants Norton (2013) states:

structural conditions and social contexts do not entirely determine language learning or use. Through human agency, language learners who struggle to speak from one identity position may be able to reframe their relationship with others and claim alternative, more powerful identities from which to speak, read or write, thereby enhancing language acquisition” (pg. 3).

In the analysis of agency and resistance, I subscribe to Pennycook’s (2001) contention that agency is exercised within domains of power, but it does not simply work as a dualistic confrontation between macro and micro structures. Rather, agency is about an ongoing recreation of “different forms of power through our everyday words and actions” (p. 120).

As dynamic agents in their own second language learning and socialization processes Alejandrina, Miriam and Andrea claim spaces for participation and social interactions and negotiate linguistic identities while they confront the structures of power that shape such identities and constrain their possibilities for action.

### **Conclusions**

In this chapter I have discussed how Alejandrina, Miriam and Andrea navigate L2 learning and L2 socialization processes and make sense of their emerging transborder identities. The methodology of *testimonio* allowed for a holistic analysis of their trajectories offering an intimate portrayal of the complex ways individual testimonios potentially reflect collective experiences of marginalization while they also voice alternative counter narratives of resistance and agency. The organization of the findings in three sections, namely, *testimonios* of transborder identities, *testimonios* of migration and testimonios of L2 learning

and L2 socialization attempted to provide in-depth analysis of these aspects that are constitutive of Alejandrina, Miriam and Andrea's transborder experiences, not as distinct or separate but as interrelated and interdependent. The findings in the three sections answered the research question: *How do Spanish-speaking adult immigrants discursively negotiate language learning, identity construction and socialization processes in their journey to adapt to a new country?* In the examination of transborder identities the frameworks of transborder feminism, subjective transnationalism, and the concepts of borderlands and hybridity brought to the discussion the recognition of gender as an axis from which to examine experiences, in this case female migration. These frameworks also helped us to analyze Alejandrina, Miriam and Andrea's movements across borders from the perspective of transmigration and transborder experiences understanding that the three women's trajectories do not trace a linear path from one point to another. Rather they encompass multiple directions as transborder subjects maintain material, symbolic and familiar relationships with both places of origin and destination, creating this hybrid space of borderlands which is not to be understood by geopolitical borders, but by cultural activity. Alejandrina, Miriam and Andrea are a statement of this growing population of transborder subjects that is actively engaged in creating their syncretic version of these borderlands.

The analysis of individual *testimonios* of migration within the contexts of economic global forces, demographic trends and south-north migration patterns unveiled interesting phenomena that speaks to the complexity of female migration such as transborder motherhood and the reproduction of domestic labor.

The last part of this chapter examined Alejandrina, Miriam and Andrea's *testimonios* in reference to their L2 learning and socialization experiences in the workplace in both sides

of the border. Gender and age discrimination, difficulties to secure employment and financial stability highlight the intersections of gender, socio economic status, educational background, legal status and pervasive patriarchal norms which confine poor women of color to low wage and low skill employment that locks them in a cycle of poverty. The *testimonios* also revealed structural and systemic barriers that hinder Alejandrina, Miriam and Andrea's access to Anglophone social networks. The three *testimonios* illuminate the ways in which social interactions with the majority community are framed by mechanisms of marginalization that operate at the macro social level of powerful institutions, such as the legal system, employment opportunities, housing and transportation. Such mechanisms of marginalization filtrate down to daily social interactions at the workplace and the children's schools, where adults need to interact to go about their lives. All these circumstances make it very difficult for the three women to participate in the *meaningful and appropriate interactions* that are needed to successfully acquire a second language. Nonetheless, even within the constraints of powerful social determinants, the three women's *testimonios* illuminate the ways in which people resist subordinate positions and devise creative ways to exercise agency. Some of the ways in which Alejandrina, Miriam and Andrea disrupt their oppressive contexts is by showing relentless efforts and motivation to learn English and by claiming spaces for social participation. They reflect on their own L2 learning process and develop theories from which they devise language learning strategies and make pedagogical recommendations. By actively seeking opportunities to immerse in L2 learning as they go about their daily lives, they also defy subordinate positions within linguistic interactions and also in reference to the larger social context and constantly express optimistic and hopeful aspirations for the future.

## Chapter Eight

### Conclusions & Recommendations

When adults from the global south relocate to wealthier areas in order to improve their life chances, a great deal of their energy is focused on securing employment. Furthermore, they do not come to their new residence as blank slates, but bring with them already-formed identities, a sense of social locus and an understanding of their place in the greater social world. The transborder experiences that we discussed in the first part of chapter eight have impacted the sense of being in the world of Alejandrina, Miriam and Andrea. Experiences of marginalization based on gender, class and formal education attainment are heightened in the new country by virtue of added socially-ascribed categories that are made apparent in the context of international migration such as ethnicity, race, and the perceived inferiority of their places of origin and their native language. There is also the additional complication of legality, which in the increasingly hostile anti-immigrant political environment and the direct targeting of Mexicans in political hate speech and actual immigration policies, mostly affect underrepresented immigrants of color. These interlocking systems of oppression have an impact on the likelihood of learning English. The intricate web of systems that exclude global south immigrants from social spaces where they could create healthy identities and have access to the language of power are revealed in the way work and social life are organized in Alejandrina. Andrea and Miriam's *testimonios*. The employment and social spaces that the host society awards to immigrants in general, and working class immigrant women in particular, have a direct impact in the opportunities (or lack thereof) to learn the language of power and to gain membership in dominant social groups. Alejandrina, Miriam and Andrea's stories reflect the physical, linguistic and social

isolation that many marginalized immigrants experience and the real consequences in language learning and social integration. Alejandrina, Miriam and Andrea's *testimonios* are very unique in their own right, but at the same time are reflective of the collective experiences of many marginalized immigrants attempting to learn the language of the host society and become active and productive members of society. They also illustrate the mechanisms of interlocking systems of exclusion that limit the possibilities that immigrants have to develop social identities sanctioned by the aspired-to social group. The synthesis of the research findings offers conclusions and implications regarding theory and methodology as well as pedagogical recommendations.

### **Theoretical implications**

The critical examination of the social context surrounding language learning and socialization brings about important considerations for the fields and for further research with underrepresented adult second language learners. These considerations imply a close and critical scrutiny of major assumptions on both fields of L2 learning and L2 socialization set against the backdrop of the intersecting issues that frame the learners' lives. Understanding L2 socialization as "the process by which non-native speakers of a language ... seek competence in the language and, typically, membership and the ability to participate in the practices of communities in which that language is spoken" (Duff, 2012, p. 564), I posed the following questions: How have Alejandrina, Miriam and Andrea sought to develop linguistic competence, implicitly and explicitly in their daily lives? To what extent have they developed the ability to participate in the practices of communities in which English is spoken? What are the circumstances surrounding their daily interactions and to what extent are these conducive to L2 learning? How do they exercise agency as they organize their

social lives under the constrictions of the social determinants framing their experiences, and what are the conditions under which L2 learning can take place under these circumstances? While exploring answers to these questions in Alejandrina, Miriam and Andrea's *testimonios*, I took into consideration the difficulties of navigating new social worlds, adopting new linguistic systems and performing unfamiliar behaviors. In order to incorporate the socially and culturally sanctioned norms and behaviors that regulate language use in social contexts, adult immigrants must participate actively in social groups. In addition to the limited access to Anglophone social networks and English dominant social spaces, adult immigrants need to contend with all the other complex demands of adult life, such as work, finances, motherhood, education, healthcare, housing, transportation and so forth. These multiple challenges are exacerbated by the locations of disadvantage that demarcate marginalized adult immigrants' lives (namely, low socioeconomic status, unauthorized immigration status, subordinate gender, limited English proficiency). Thus, Alejandrina, Miriam and Andrea must learn a second language while also facing issues concerning their immigration status and disadvantaged subjectivities. These challenges include (but are not limited to) fear of deportation, institutional violence, linguistic and racial discrimination, disenfranchisement and prejudiced and bigoted treatment by authorities such as the police. All of these are symptoms of an entrenched systemic racism that permeates deep into the fabric of society and transpires in a multitude of ways affecting peoples' lives. Alejandrina, Miriam and Andrea contend with tangible racist, classist, patriarchal, xenophobic oppressive contexts, while they relentlessly, and I must add, optimistically enact oppositional practices as a commonplace routine.

Second language socialization research highlights the twofold function of language socialization, i.e. “to understand language through social experience and learning to understand social experiences through language”, (Sarangi & Roberts, 2002, p. 198) almost in a circular fashion. Given that language is at the heart of cultural production, socialization practices of adult immigrant learners need to be understood in tandem with L2 learning processes. In the examination of Alejandrina, Miriam and Andrea’s language learning and socialization experiences, I contemplated three assumptions of this body of research. First, the premise that L2 learning goes beyond the acquisition of its components, namely grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary and syntax. Second, the belief that meaningful interactions need to take place in order for a ‘novice’ to be able to incorporate the understandings and knowledge shared by the host speech communities. This also holds true for the ability to integrate the appropriate social behaviors and linguistic repertoire in ways that make sense for the dominant group, in order for the novice to participate and gain membership. Finally, another important guiding assumption of researchers that adopt the approach of L2 socialization in multilingual and multicultural contexts, is that L2 socialization is not a linear or finite process where the ‘novice’ is a passive receptor of language and culture, but rather a multidirectional and ongoing process that acknowledges the agentive nature of the learner and her ability to also impact and transform the cultural and linguistic spaces and practices with which she interacts (Baquedano-López & Mangual Figueroa, 2012; Bayley and Schechter, 2003; Duff, 2012; Garcia-Sanchez, 2012; Sarangi & Roberts, 2002).

As I listened to Alejandrina, Miriam and Andrea’s stories and read their *testimonios* multiple times, I had this question in mind: what opportunities did they have to establish

significant social and linguistic interactions conducive to the learning of the new language and the new culture? As we can see in their narratives, the opportunities were minimal. Daily experiences of the three women were framed by long and monotonous work hours, long commutes and household chores. Sadly, their experiences are not unique. The ways in which immigrants' work and social life are organized are reflective of the marginal spaces that the host society awards to immigrants. This in turn, has a direct impact on the opportunities, and lack thereof, to learn English and to gain membership in social groups. Alejandrina, Miriam and Andrea's individual *testimonios* tell of the physical, linguistic and social isolation experienced by many marginalized immigrants reflecting direct consequences in language learning and group membership. This explains the fact that Alejandrina, for example, has not been able to develop the level of competence in English needed for work or social interactions over the long years that she has lived in the United States. Similarly, regardless of the active involvement of Miriam in a diversity of social groups, such as community-based organizations, parent groups at her children's schools, and so forth, her access to English-speaking circles is peripheral. Likewise, Andrea's trajectory as a transborder individual is still short, but her chances do not look more promising than those of Alejandrina and Miriam, should she decide to stay longer in the United States. Alternatively, the three women co-construct spaces where they can achieve the goals they set in coming to this country. Learning English in reality is not a goal by itself, but a necessity to accomplish the overall goal of improving life chances for themselves and their families. However, even if access to English is not possible they still take important steps towards achieving their larger goals, even if that means that they become peripheral actors in this journey, centering their children as the focal receptors of life improvements.



Second language socialization research in bilingual and multicultural contexts asserts that adults who have moved to a new country will learn to use the language of the majority community by engaging in meaningful and appropriate interactions. (Sarangi & Roberts, 2002). I examined Alejandrina, Miriam and Andrea's *testimonios*, alongside this assertion and realize that two phrases of the premise above are key. The first one is *meaningful and appropriate interactions*. The three women's experiences are in fact a living testimony that such *meaningful and appropriate interactions* are restricted by the hierarchical social structures and power relations where social mechanism of inclusion and exclusion afford status and privilege to some groups and deny it to others. This brings us to another challenge to the before-mentioned L2 socialization premise. The phrase: *adults who have moved to a new country* is a very general descriptor of "immigrant" and it is void of the social constructions of the different categories of immigrants. My participants cannot be defined simply as "adults who have moved to a new country." Their socially-constructed subordinate identities are demarcated by the disadvantaged social positions that they occupy in the host society in combination with the already disadvantaged social positions they experienced in their country of origin. The socially-ascribed and racialized ethnicities are the product of the sociopolitical context that affords liminal social spaces to transborder subjects from the global south, in this case from Mexico. These intersecting sites of marginalization must be accounted for in the examination of L2 socialization and L2 learning processes. The three *testimonios* illuminate the ways in which social interactions with the majority community are framed by mechanisms of marginalization that operate at the macro social level of powerful institutions, such as the legal system, employment opportunities, housing and transportation. Such mechanisms of marginalization filtrate down to daily social interactions at the

workplace and the children's schools, where adults need to interact to go about their lives. All these circumstances make it very difficult for the three women to participate in the *meaningful and appropriate interactions* that are needed to successfully acquire a second language.

### **Methodological Implications**

*Testimonio* is concerned with research and praxis that bring about an interpretation of social and political realities that is both personal and collective and that is conducive to social change. *Testimonio* as a research tool and method provides a window into the intimate lives of my participants, into their world views described in their own words and perceptions validating their experiences as epistemological contributions in the understanding of language acquisition and socialization processes. Simultaneously, *testimonio* as an approach, a research methodology, employed with a decolonial feminist lens allows for a holistic analysis of these lived experiences, contesting subordinate social positions and re-centering liminal epistemologies. Because of its holistic nature, the analysis entails the interconnected issues surrounding such experiences, which support a more humane and dignified portrayal of immigrant experiences. *Testimonio* is in itself an empowering and powerful form of resistance as it re-centers marginal epistemologies and re-inscribes otherwise ignored stories of migration.

The findings of this research suggest important implications for research utilizing *testimonio* as a methodological approach employing a feminist decolonial lens. An implication I sought from the moment of designing this research project was to establish conceptual bridges between the distinct but related fields of Second Language Acquisition and Second Language Socialization in Multilingual and bilingual contexts. In both fields

there is a growing body of research that incorporates critical perspectives on language from multidisciplinary approaches such as critical discourse analysis (Garcia-Sanchez, 2012), critical race theory (Amin, 1997, 2001), feminist and gender perspectives (Norton, Menard-Warwick). However, more work needs to be done with a focus on marginalized transborder individuals of color and more efforts are needed to validate their experiences as knowledge which can and should inform both fields. I believe that centering research on disenfranchised voices brings a much needed perspective on the processes of L2 learning and L2 socialization, in particular with a focus on social groups and social settings that been the 'object' of study in research but not the agents informing and guiding inquiry. A feminist decolonial approach contributes in the examination of the intersecting systems of oppression that frame the experiences of underrepresented populations but most importantly in validating "theory emerging from women's everyday embodiments and interventions" (Villenas, 2006 p. 660).

### **Pedagogical implications**

Chicana/Latina feminists have a robust tradition of pedagogies that implicate and center the voices of marginal actors such as women, minority groups and other underrepresented populations. These scholars promote the recognition of cultural knowledge in female dominant spaces that have historically been disregarded as educational sites, but that are reclaimed as the foundation of epistemologies and cultural activity, such as the home and other everyday spaces (Delgado Bernal, Elenes, Godinez & Villenas, 2006), which Trinidad Galvan calls "the pedagogies of the everyday, the mundane and the ordinary" (2001, p. 605). Following this tradition, my research has important implications for the recognition of women's knowledge and recommendations regarding the creation of pedagogical models and

the recognition of pedagogical sites that center their experiences. Listening attentively to Alejandrina, Miriam and Andrea's *testimonios* their recommendations for pedagogical practices within classroom settings and the creation of alternative pedagogical spaces become apparent. The constraints that marginalized immigrants find in their daily interactions which inhibit second language learning, seem to reinforce the argument in favor of the creation of safe second language learning spaces. The implications of my research however, elucidate the need to reformulate such spaces so that they re-create the non-existent but ideal conditions of linguistic interactions inside the classroom while working towards the larger goal of developing linguistic and sociolinguistic skills and self-esteem that would allow learners to gain access and immersion to real world interactions and social participation in the second language.

For instance, Miriam makes recommendations for pedagogical practices within ESL classrooms that pay closer attention to adult learners' communicative needs. She reflects on the ways she benefited from participating in conversations with Anglophone volunteers in her ESL class while she criticizes the passive role that some classroom activities imply for learners, such as dictation or grammar exercises. This directly speak to the importance of creating pedagogical spaces that satisfy this need in adult learners, particularly because ESL classrooms sometimes are one of the few spaces where marginalized adult learners have access to the language of power. In these efforts a strong recommendation is to re-create Fillmore's (1991) model for second language learning in social contexts described in detail in chapter seven (see pages 308 – 309). Fillmore's model (1991) is comprised of three elements:

(1) *learners* who realize that they need to learn the target language (TL) and are motivated to do so; (2) *speakers of the target language* who know it well enough to provide the learners with access to the language and the help they need for learning it; and (3) a *social setting* which brings learners and TL speakers into frequent enough contact to make language learning possible (p. 279).

Adult learning institutions already have the first element, namely motivated and linguistically aware learners. By expanding and strategically devising efforts of English speaking volunteers recruitment, these individuals can fulfill the need for the second element.

Fillmore's use of language in describing this second element is significant in that she proposes Anglophones who know the language "well enough to provide the learners with access to the language and the help they need for learning it" (p. 279), disrupting the myth of the native speaker as the only model for language learning. Finally, even when is not reflective of the diversity of situational contexts that comprise communication in real life, the adult education centers, the ESL classroom, can function as the social setting that brings the learner and the English speakers together to facilitate the learning of the second language.

The re-creation of this model in adult education sites, requires intentionality and strategic inclusion of several important elements. First, teachers, volunteers and learners need to engage in discussions to raise awareness and consciousness surrounding the realities of marginalization and difficulties to access Anglophone social networks that underrepresented non-English speakers face, as we learned in the *testimonios* of Alejandrina, Miriam and Andrea. This will necessitate the use of the home language, as the validation of cultural and linguistic wealth in educational sites is important for the development of healthier identities, but also for centering people's epistemologies. Also, programmatic decisions need to be

made to ensure that the frequency and quality of such interactions is ensured to actually facilitate language learning. Considering the social, physical and linguistic isolation that pervades the lives of many immigrants of color and the structural and systemic barriers that hinder their access to Anglophone social settings and networks, classroom facilitated practice can provide the foundations they need to build linguistic skills, develop stronger identities and claim more spaces and opportunities for active participation in real life situations. This in turn, might enable the disruption of the adult second language learner paradox (Norton, 2013), where English language learners face the need of social participation to learn English at the same time that they need English for social participation.

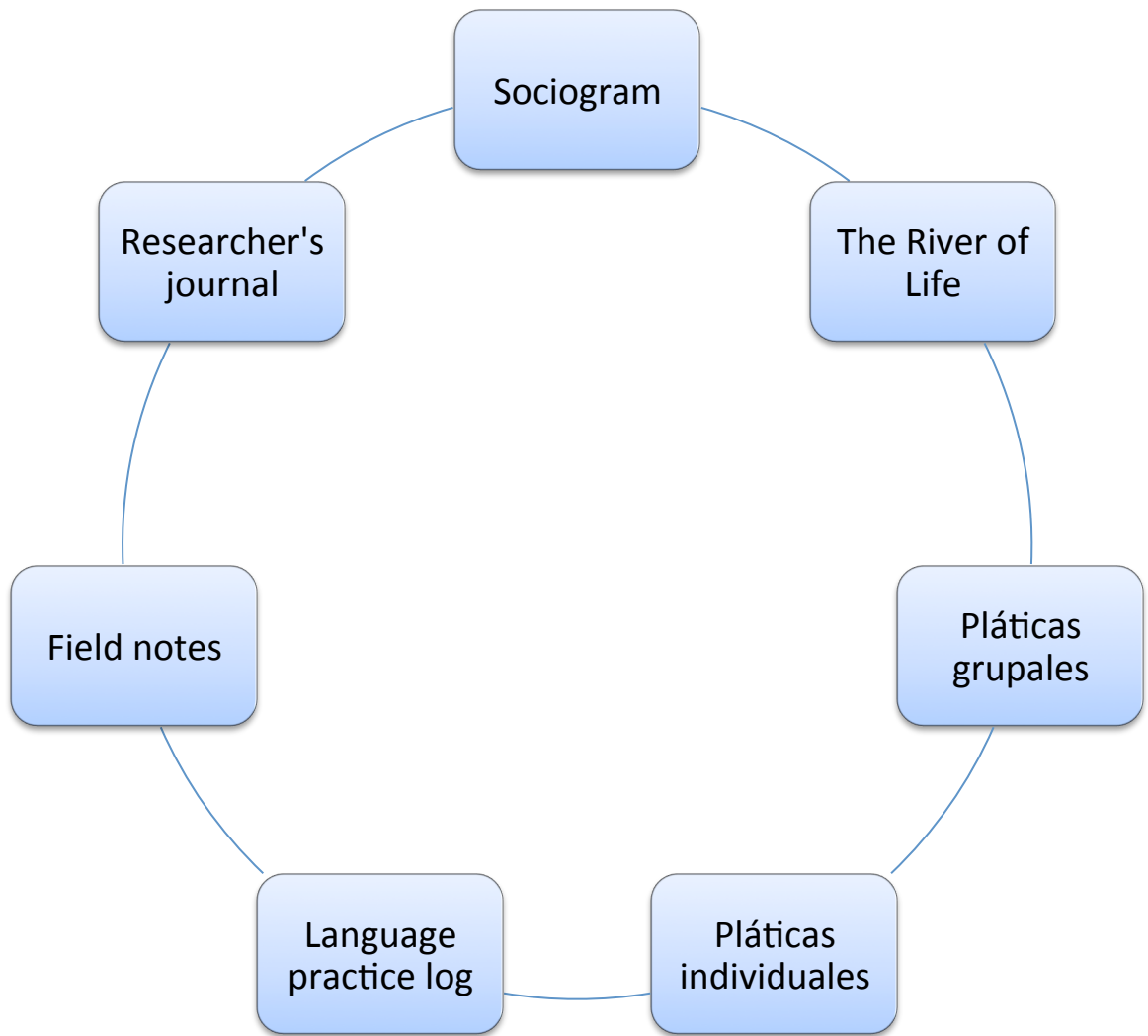
### **Final Thoughts**

The *testimonios* presented in this dissertation convey the voice of many women migrating across the globe, whose social standings do not award them the privilege to center their voices, their message and their experiences. Certainly, it is not a matter of just taking up the message and carrying it over to other spheres, in this case, into an academic audience. The core of this matter is to get to a point in human history where everyone has equal right to speak and be heard at the same time that opportunities to thrive in life are more equitable. My hope and motivation for writing this dissertation, is the same that motivates my work in education, and it was beautifully expressed by Miriam when she said: “*in these peaceful waters may we all navigate calmly, that there be love, peace, I would like a balance with equity for all, respect.*”

May Andrea accomplish her wishes of traveling around the world and become financially independent establishing her own business in Mexico, and furthermore, deepen her intuitive feminism and continue to defy patriarchy. May Alejandrina find a job that is not

so physically heavy, and have a house where she feels safe and that has that big tree of hope that she dreams of while she sees her daughters advance in life. May Miriam accomplish her dream of working with children of different abilities, and may she finally cross that bridge that she envisions in her aspirations for a better future, signifying that people can move freely across spaces, and may she live long enough to witness the world that she dreams about and works so hard to construct, one with love, peace, respect and the balance of equality for all.

### Appendix 1. Interrelation of Data Collection Methods





## Appendix 2. Language Sociogram

### Individual work:

Choose the social spaces you occupy (add more if needed,) and mark the language that you use predominantly in each one (E for English, S for Spanish, ES for both).

### Group reflection:

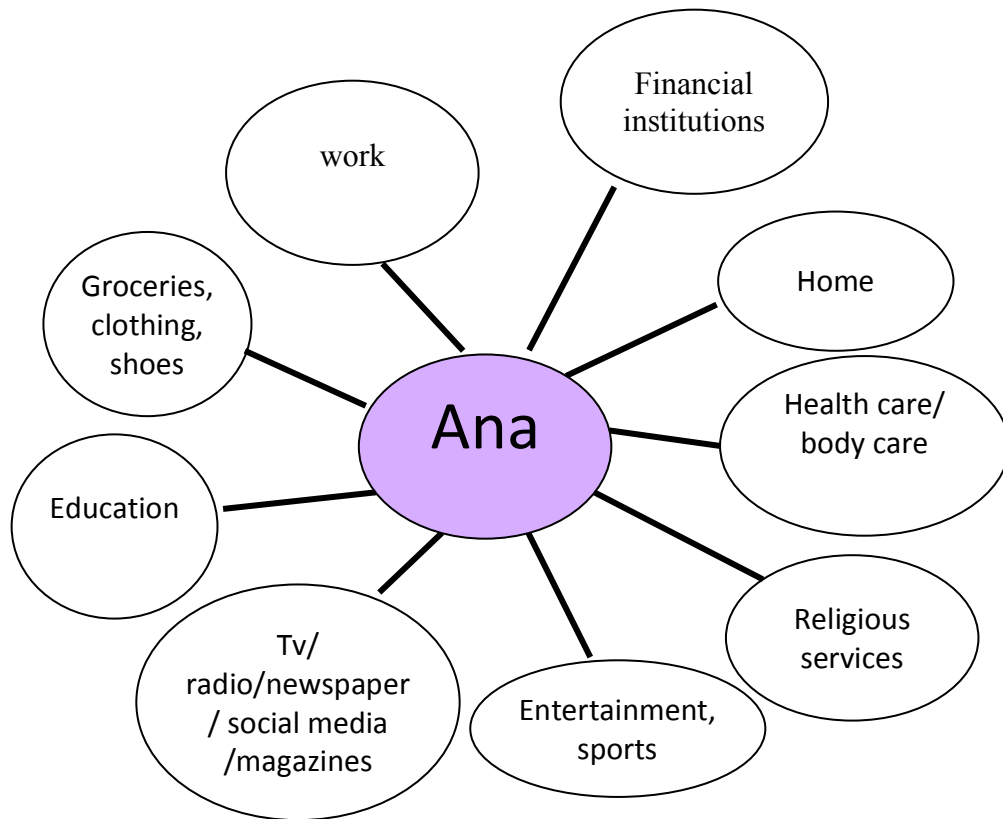
How many spaces offer you the opportunity to use English? (Listen to it, read it, talk in English).

Why do you think one language predominates? Why don't you use more English?

### Goals:

What can you do to create more opportunities to practice English?

What places or situations can you add to your daily routine in order to have more access to English?



### Appendix 3. Interview protocol

The following questions are thought of as guidance for the conduction of unstructured, open-ended personal interviews (*pláticas personales*).

A) Initial interview: the main purpose of this initial one on one conversation (*plática*) is to get to know each other, obtain demographic information and learn about language use. Given that the organization where the research took place collects demographic, family and financial information on the intake form, I asked permission to use that information as well. These conversations were conducted in Spanish. Not all the initial questions included here are open ended, and thus not conducive to producing rich narratives. However, they are important in establishing a relationship of trust and respect and in setting the participants' involvement in the research project and their sharing of information in a gradually increasing way. More open-ended questions were introduced in subsequent *pláticas*, and some English gradually emerged from the participants.

- Where are you from? When were you born?
- How do you identify yourself? (Elicit identity without offering any labels, accept any answer, other identity markers will come up later in the research; identity markers might be nationality or typically assigned ethnicities, such as Hispanic)
- How many people are there in your family? In your household? How are you related? (Assuming that there might be extended families living together)
- Are you married, live with someone, in a relationship?
- Do you have children? What are their names and ages? Where do they go to school?
- Where is your spouse (other family members in the household) from?
- Where do you live (part of the city, zip code)
- Do you work? What do you do? (Elicit specific tasks in the workplace to understand how much language use is needed in a regular work routine. E.g. waiters use language a lot more than food preparation or construction workers)
- How long have you had this work? Have you had other roles in your workplace?
- What other jobs have you had in the past (either in home country or the US)
- What language do you use at work? What languages do your work colleagues, supervisors use at work?
- What language(s) is (are) spoken at home?

B) Second *plática*: The second interview aimed at gaining more knowledge on the participants' personal stories and reasons for migrating. Notice the introduction of more open ended questions and the potential of generating rich narrative.

- Tell me your migration story:
- Why did you move from (country or city of origin)?
- How long have you lived in Albuquerque?

- How did you make the decision of migrating? Why here? Who did you talk to, who else was involved in this plan?
- Tell me about your move here. Who did you travel with? How did you travel? How long did it take you? How did you finance the trip? What was the experience like?
- Describe to me your first few days/weeks upon arriving to the US. What was it like?
- Did you have family/friends here?
- How did you feel when you first arrived?
- How did you learn your way around the city? Who helped you? How did you choose what supermarket to go to? What doctor? What pharmacy? (etc.)
- How did you choose your children's school? How did you feel when you first went to register your children? Tell me about that experience.
- What was your first job in the US? How did you get it? Tell me about that experience.

C) The third interview focused on the process of adaptation to life in the US and experiences of language learning and socialization.

- Why are you studying English? How long have you studied English?
- What do you need English for? Where do you use it?
- Tell me about a situation where you needed to use English? Where was it? Who did you need to communicate with? What was the purpose? Who initiated the communication? How successful were you in communicating? How did you interlocutor(s) react? How did you feel? Etc.
- Do you think you have learned English outside of the classroom? Give me examples.
- What do you do to practice English?
- How do you feel about practicing English with native speakers or with people who speak only English?
- What language do you use in your daily activities? Give me some examples.
- Tell me more about the instance "X" in your language practice log.
- Tell me more about the experience "X" in your journal.
- Tell me about the situations in which you use English (refer to language sociogram)

### Appendix 4: Language practice log

PRACTICE LOG- Enter at least one example per week.

DATE	PLACE	SITUATION, PURPOSE OF COMMUNICATION	LANGUAGE SKILL	PARTICIPANTS	EXAMPLE OF LANGUAGE USED	NOTES (OPTIONAL)
8/23/16	My house	Greet my neighbor	Speaking + listening	My neighbor and I	"Good morning"	Mi vecina siempre me Saluda y yo sólo sonrío, ahora le contesté "good morning".
9/08/16	The car	Listening to radio	Listening	I	Weather cloudy	Me gustó mucho entender aunque sea unas pocas palabras
10/11/16	My apartment bldg.	Report a problem, leak in my faucet	Writing	My landlord and I	Problem, leak, fix, apartment number	The landlord has complaint forms I filled one
11/21/16	On the street	Walking home, my son said look	Reading	Me, my son	September, State Fair	I read an announce with the date of the State Fair, my son want to go
11/21/16	Grocery store	Paying	Speaking + listening	My husband and I	Debit or credit?	The cashier asked my husband and I answered "debit"

Note: The log entries are taken from language practice logs of different students I have had in the past, dates are made up.

### Appendix 5. Data Analysis techniques

Technique	Procedure/ purpose	Stage in analysis	Type of theme produced	Researcher (cited in Bernard and Ryan, 2010)
Repetitions	Easy to recognize in texts. Look for re-occurrence of ideas or concepts.	Early	Theme	Andrade, 1991; Claudia Strauss, 1992.
Metaphor	Search for metaphors in text, deduce schemas and underlying themes.	Early	Theme	Lakoff and Johnson, 2003, 1980; D'andrade, 1995; Strauss and Quinn, 1997.
Indigenous Typologies	Look for local words, familiar words that are used in unfamiliar ways.	Early	Theme, subtheme	Patton, 2002; Linnekin, 1987; Strauss, 1978; Strauss and Corbin, 1990; Bogdan and Taylor, 1975; Spradley, 1979.
Linguistic Connectors	Look carefully for words and phrases that indicate attributes and various kinds of causal or conditional relations (look for connectors e.g. "if", "because", etc.)	Late	Theme	Casagrande and Hale, 1967; Spradley, 1979; Werner, 1972.
Cutting and Sorting	A manipulative technique that consists on identifying quotes or expressions that seem somehow important (exemplars) to then arrange them into categories.	Late	Theme, subtheme, metatheme	Lincoln and Guba, 1985.

(Adapted from Bernard and Ryan, 2015, p. 68)

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