

**Exploring Cultural Assimilation and Intercultural Sensitivity: A case study of
Migrant Experiences**



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Bachelor's degree program in modern languages, English and French

Santander de Quilichao

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Research project submitted to the Human and Social Sciences School in partial fulfillment of the requirement for obtaining the degree of “Licenciado (a) en Lenguas Modernas, Inglés y Francés”

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Mejia:

**EXPLORING CULTURAL ASSIMILATION AND INTERCULTURAL
SENSITIVITY: A CASE STUDY OF MIGRANT EXPERIENCES**

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Dedicated to

the migrants, thank you for inspiring us to continue learning with your precious experiences and memories.

Appreciation

Quiero agradecer a todas las personas que han contribuido y brindado un apoyo incondicional en la culminación de esta etapa académica de mi vida. Agradezco infinitamente a mis padres y hermanos por su tiempo y apoyo, a mi tía y mi abuela por su amor y motivación, a todos aquellos que esclarecieron las dudas y me guiaron en un proceso de investigación como mis profesores, tutores, jurados y compañeras de trabajo. Considero este trabajo académico un logro trascendental y su encarecido apoyo y soporte como las bases del éxito de este.

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Natalia García

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Karen Gómez

Abstract

This research explores the migratory experiences and memories of two Colombian women, Diana and Luxcini, as well as their relevance concerning the concepts of cultural identity, culture shock, the acquisition of a second language and the experiences of intercultural sensitivity and cultural assimilation. These two migrants had more than 20 years of experience residing in a foreign country such as Germany and Israel, with Diana being a resident there until now. Methodologically, qualitative paradigms and case study approaches are used, using structured and semi-structured interviews as instruments for collecting information. The data analysis shed light on issues such as the possible and diverse reasons for migrating, the challenges that the process entails, and all of these concepts already mentioned. This analysis allowed the researchers to verify that migration is a very arduous and complex issue, which is experienced differently according to each subject, facing barriers such as discrimination and the difficulty of adapting to a new culture.

Keywords: *cultural assimilation, intercultural sensitivity, migration, second language acquisition, culture, cultural identity, culture shock.*

Resumen

Esta investigación explora las experiencias y memorias migratorias de dos mujeres colombianas, Diana y Luxcini, así mismo como su relevancia con respecto a los conceptos de identidad cultural, choque cultural, la adquisición de una segunda lengua y las experiencias de sensibilidad intercultural y asimilación cultural. Estas dos migrantes contaban con una experiencia de más de 20 años residiendo en un país extranjero como lo son Alemania e Israel, siendo Diana una residente en dicho país hasta el momento. Metodológicamente, se emplean paradigmas cualitativos y enfoques de estudio de caso, utilizando entrevistas estructuradas y

semiestructuradas como instrumentos para la recolección de información. El análisis de datos dio luz a cuestiones como las posibles y diversas razones para migrar, los desafíos que conlleva el proceso de todos estos conceptos ya mencionados. Este análisis permitió a los investigadores constatar que la migración es un tema muy arduo y complejo, que se vive de manera distinta de acuerdo con cada sujeto, enfrentando barreras como la discriminación y la dificultad de adaptación a una nueva cultura.

Palabras clave: *asimilación cultural, sensibilidad intercultural, migración, adquisición de una segunda lengua, cultura, identidad cultural, choque cultural.*

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Introduction

This research delves into the migratory journey of two Colombian migrants, Diana and Luxcini, who have spent over two decades in their adopted countries of Germany and Israel. By exploring their personal narratives, experiences, and memories, we aim to comprehend the complex processes of migration, cultural assimilation, and intercultural sensitivity and their emerging themes such as culture, cultural identity, culture shock and the acquisition of a second language. These processes significantly impact an individual's life when they choose to migrate, leading them through unique challenges and stages of integration into a new culture. At the outset, it presented the problem statement and the research objectives. Then, it delves into the methodological aspects, adopting a qualitative paradigm and a case study approach. The instruments consisted of three formats of structured and semi-structured interviews for data collection. The data analysis chapter is divided into four chapters named as follows: “*Two Facets of One Coin*”, “*Sailing through culture journey*”, “*Unlocking cultures through words*” and “*Intercultural sensitivity from migrant’s experience.*” They address aspects that raise questions based on topics such as the reasons behind the decision to migrate, elements related to cultural identity, acquisition of a second language and experiences regarding cultural assimilation and intercultural sensitivity to get closer to the perspectives of the migrant. The result shed light to established that migration is a very arduous and complex phenomenon, which is experienced differently by each individual in their singularity through varied stages of their lives, facing multiple challenges such as fleeing out from home, falling into the unknown, meeting face-to-face discrimination, struggling adaptation from a different reality, and the difficulty of adapting to a new culture.

Problem statement

“It is possible that our century and the one just past will be remembered in the future as the centuries of migration” (Carrera & Contini, 2022).

From humanity's experience, it can be assumed that early human beings migrated due to many factors, primarily those that allowed them to survive and adapt to a new society. This phenomenon continues to present itself with more fury and without a course to end one day. In postmodern society, the number of people who live in a country other than their country of origin is increasing, being a key matter for investigators to raise and spread awareness.

Migrations are initiated by human decision but also by natural disasters that can force whole communities to move. The motivation of migrants include adventure, escape, expulsion, commerce, war, and a search for resources to bring back to their home community (Manning, 2015, p. 278).

As illustrated above, one of the motives for migrating could be the human decision, the freedom that people have to increase their chances of survival, even if they move all alone, leaving behind their belongings, lives, and people they love. According to López (2016), under the human decision, several factors can be implicated: “Las personas que optan por emigrar lo hacen principalmente porque buscan mejorar sus condiciones de vida, su condición económica, la huida de la precariedad laboral, la huida de conflictos bélicos, etc” (p. 8). One of the main reasons for migration is improving life conditions, such as accessibility to a better salary. Most people who migrate to other advanced countries come from Latin America, where the unemployment rate is higher than previously mentioned, and go to first-world countries looking for better opportunities (CNN Español, 2017). The scope to fulfil their dreams is more remarkable at work, which helps

them to achieve their goals; this is one of the principal reasons why immigrants decide to stay; the journey is set out when immigrants arrive in various countries and to establish themselves in an unfamiliar environment, they can suffer from countless feelings of confusion, anxiety, and uncertainty known as Cultural Shock.

Following this, IOM (2011, as cited in MIGRATION DATA PORTAL, 2020) indicates that: "the process by which migrants become accepted into society, both as individuals and as groups... [Integration] refers to a two-way adaptation process by migrants and host societies". As explained, the process's objective is to achieve the insertion of migrants to transform them into active and appreciated members within the host society. It is indispensable a joint effort of the ones involved, such as the immigrants, the entities that administer the host country, and the other members of society or citizens.

Lutz (2017) explains that: "intercultural sensitivity is where one looks beyond those cultural aspects that are normally very superficial, without delving into the depth of the culture in this case, we delve deeper into language, studied more deeply and its importance in the development of the migrant's life in the society of the host country" (p. 4). It can be taken for granted that the first aspect of intercultural sensitivity is to inquire into participants' life experiences in their position as migrants to compare them and draw unique conclusions. Many of the aspects that an iceberg hides in this matter stem from the culture shock, starting from aspects such as language, going through the deep side of culture like behaviours, values, perceptions, management, adaptation to different types of food, the demands, or accents that the participants could manifest while integrating to the new culture. All these aspects can be collected and highlighted in the Intercultural sensitivity scale.

The phenomenon of a struggling adaptation to a new culture is an essential question to reflect on when discussing migrant cases. The best option to illustrate this concept for this investigation will be referred to cultural assimilation. According to Nur'aini (2001) "assimilation occurs when people adopt local cultural values and identity while maintaining day-to-day interactions with members of the local community while rejecting or having very little interest in their home cultures" (p. 31). It can be understood that a person assimilates a culture when they live with it daily. When a particular time passes, the person starts going through this integration process, interacting with culture and language within the same context. After spending a long time in a foreign country, migrants can forget their cultural features and choose to live with the majority culture. Ultimately, they could absorb the majority culture and will have to deal with it.

The concepts of Intercultural Sensitivity and Cultural Assimilation were broached in this study to recollect information about participants' experiences through the migration process. On the one hand, the Intercultural Sensitivity model proposed by Bennett (1986) was used with the following stages: Denial, Defense, Minimization, Acceptance, Adaptation, and Integration. On the other hand, Cultural Assimilation, defined by Bochner (1999), was employed to analyse the information collected. In exploring Cultural Assimilation, various related concepts will be brought up, including Spencer (2008) and Matsumoto's (1996) perspectives on culture, Oberg's (1960) insights on Cultural Shock, Salgado's 1999 examination of Cultural Identity, Saville's (2012) definition of Second Language Acquisition, and León's (2015) insights on Migration.

Two cases of two Colombian women were followed to work on this investigation. The first participant is Diana, a 55-year-old Colombian woman who migrated to Germany at the age of 28 with the primary objective of achieving better job opportunities and improving the quality of life for herself and those who surrounded her. The second participant is named Luxcini, a 56-

year-old Colombian woman who migrated to Israel to make life progress and find stability outside her native country for her own benefit and her family's future.

To provide insights surrounding the base concepts of migration, cultural assimilation and intercultural sensitivity, it was decided to carry out a total of 3 interview formats: the first one aims to be a structured interview to make a first connection and get to know the participant's basic information, the second one was a semi-structured interview with keys questions related to cultural assimilation, culture, culture shock, culture identity and SLA, and the third one was a semi-structured interview based solely on Intercultural sensitivity concept.

The case study, along with the qualitative paradigm approach, was chosen by its coherence to find and interpret similarities and differences between these 2 cases and demonstrate that there is not a single version and a single truth regarding the migrant processes because all the migrant experiences are diverse, unique, and particular from each other, depending entirely on the perception, feelings and life experience from migrants themselves in a new environment and culture. Considering this detailed information, the following question arose:

What are the insights on cultural assimilation and intercultural sensitivity that the experiences of two Colombian migrant women provide?

Objectives

General

- ✓ To provide insights on cultural assimilation and intercultural sensitivity through the experiences of 2 Colombian migrant women.

Specific objectives

- ✓ To collect information about the migration process, memories, and experiences at the time the participants were in the country.
- ✓ To describe the integration of migrants taking into consideration Bennett's model of intercultural sensitivity.
- ✓ To reflect on the process of cultural assimilation of migrants into a new culture.

Rationale

Based on the source landscape and conducted studies related to the human activity of migration and reasons why people decide or are forced to migrate to other countries, it is urgent to make visible the one reflecting the integration of migrants to an unknown culture through the acquisition of a second language, being an essential pillar to adapt to the new culture. The need arises to study this process of acquiring a second language as a means by which migrants can adapt, participate, engage, live, and be functional in a new society.

The understanding of the process of cultural assimilation encourages highlighting the importance of the acquisition of a second language for the integration of a member into a new culture. These processes can be examined through testimonials based on the experiences of migrants that can shed light on new visions and different ways of understanding the reaction that people have towards cultural differences. On the same way, to contribute to retrieving

information for future generations of researchers regarding the relationship between the acquisition of a second language, cultural assimilation, and finally integration into a community by intercultural sensitivity. In addition, it is intended to leave a precedent of the human activity of migration for people who have initiated or faced similar experiences related to those narrated in this study. Evenly, it is done on purpose to advance the understanding of the development of intercultural sensitivity, that is, the process by which an individual immerses in embracing the characteristics of a new culture, even becoming part of the migrant itself, being the central pillar the language, that can influence or determine the process of its integration in a new culture.

Universidad Del Cauca proposes an understanding of the concept of interculturality, which implies the recognition of socio-humanistic and cultural competencies for integrating the individual in society. According to PEI (1998):

El Proyecto Educativo Institucional es la herramienta que permite a la Universidad del Cauca expresar sus grandes propósitos y finalidades, [entre ellos] el producto de la participación y reflexión de la Comunidad Educativa Universitaria... Su construcción gira alrededor de ejes fundamentales tales como la valoración de la propia identidad, reconociendo al mismo tiempo la interculturalidad, la flexibilidad y apertura en los procesos como metodología de trabajo y aprendizaje (p. 10).

For instance, a definition has been set to describe the subject's components and objectives. According to Microcurriculum de Comunicación Intercultural en Francés 1: "Knowledge of culture is essential for learning a second, since this implies comprehensive knowledge about the culture that is related to the language, as well as allows an encounter with the other and a knowledge of one's own identity". Learning a second language implies going beyond just focusing on the different grammatical elements; it also involves understanding the deep side of

culture, such as values, rituals, social behaviours, and how individuals' function in society through language. According to Acuerdo Superior 033 (2019):

ARTÍCULO TERCERO: Los cambios sustanciales al programa de Licenciatura en Lenguas Modernas con Énfasis en Inglés y Francés, corresponden a la organización del programa por componentes, la inclusión, modificación y eliminación de asignaturas, cambios en la denominación de asignaturas, cambios en la ubicación de asignaturas y cambio del número total de créditos del programa...3. Eliminación de las asignaturas: Comunicación Intercultural en Inglés II, Comunicación Intercultural en Francés II.

Exposing this information, a critical adjustment can be observed in the reduction of Comunicación Intercultural II en inglés and Comunicación intercultural II en francés, eliminating the continuation of these subjects (part 2) for the next semester, unlike the previous curriculum of 2012. As part of the university community, it is essential to highlight the relevance and duration of these subjects as a vital component of developing intercultural communication among students.

As future teachers of the degree program in Modern Languages English and French from Universidad Del Cauca, we will face numerous challenges regarding teaching, such as the influence of the second language on social and communicative relationships in the classroom while learning English or French. As professionals in the educational sector in languages, from the faculty of "Ciencias Humanas Y Sociales" "it is our duty to provide confidence and support to all our students while learning but also integrating the target language culture into their aspirations, so they can become critical and develop a level of reflection and analysis of the second culture o contrast it with its cultural reference.

Moving into a national or international context to teach languages, migrants, as students, can make themselves present in courses in schools or universities. Hence, promoting an intercultural understanding approach to integrate them for learning is essential. Taking the different experiences, visions, and knowledge, as well as cultural assimilation, can support the teaching process with their peers. The significance of this research lies in its focus on the previously mentioned aspects of intercultural sensitivity and cultural assimilation and their connection to distinctive migration experiences that can serve as a guide for learning, particularly those of individuals residing in northern Cauca, including the members of the community of the University of Cauca. Additionally, offering a more comprehensive exploration of this topic within the realm of education from a humanistic perspective sparks a broader discourse on the influence of culture on our identities. Therefore, the aim is to encourage qualitative research considering individuals' diverse life narratives, facilitating reflective analysis from an interpretative standpoint.

Previous studies

This degree work resorted to an exhaustive review of previous research on interculturality, cultural assimilation and migration, addressing various contexts and perspectives. Among the local studies, Velasco and Tique (2022) researched a pedagogical strategy to promote intercultural sensitivity in students in Colombia. At the national level, Pérez and Mellizo (2020) explored communication and intercultural sensitivity in students from Cali, Colombia. At the international level, Moreno and Torres (2021) focused on cultural assimilation from the perspective of migrants, highlighting the individuality of the process and the influence of bilingualism and biculturalism. Additionally, Díaz (2022) conducted a bibliographic review

on migrations in Latin America, highlighting both local and international approaches. Forero (2014) examined French migration policy during Nicolas Sarkozy's term, an approach that transcends national borders. Larrahondo and Álvarez (2023) focused on Latin American Au Pairs and their experiences in cultural exchange programs without specific geographical limits. Arenas and Urzúa (2016) described the relationship between acculturation strategies and ethnic identity among Peruvian and Colombian immigrants in Chile. Finally, Gyan et al. (2023) explored the experiences of young refugees and immigrants in Montreal, Canada, while Migliarini and Cioè (2022) addressed the construction of illiteracy of refugee children in Italy by local professionals.

Velasco and Tique (2022) undertook an undergraduate thesis with a profound dedication to assess the impact of a pedagogical strategy implemented in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction. They aimed to instill intercultural sensitivity among eighth-grade students in a public school in Jamundí, Colombia. Employing a qualitative approach, the researchers meticulously utilised the action research model, which consists of four crucial stages: problem identification, action plan development, plan implementation, and process reflection.

The study demonstrated significant improvements in positive attitudes towards cultural differences, increased recognition of cultural characteristics, heightened awareness and acceptance of otherness, and the progress of emotions and behaviours consistent with intercultural dimensions. Despite some students exhibiting limited intercultural sensitivity, the research suggested the need for further activities promoting the exploration of different cultures and the admiration of one's cultural heritage. The researchers aimed to create intercultural sensitivity among the students. They were focused on helping the students become more aware of and accepting of cultural differences.

A study published by Pérez and Mellizo (2020) explored communication and intercultural sensitivity among fifth-grade students focused on showcasing the cultural characteristics of the student group, emphasising factors like physical appearance and personal backgrounds, all while using a foreign language as a means of exploration and communication. The authors employed a qualitative approach rooted in Burns's Action Research methodology; the research spanned five of its eleven stages. Data collection included observations, interviews with the responsible teacher, and a needs analysis survey administered to the students. The research revealed that many students not only recognised but also appreciated the cultural diversity in their environment.

This study is closely related to the development of intercultural sensitivity because it aimed to assess and promote it; even though it is linked to a pedagogical approach, it can be used as a guide to reflect on cultural awareness and recognition for the showcase of intercultural characteristics by applying questions based on Cultural awareness, which is a fundamental component of intercultural sensitivity.

Moreno and Torres (2021) conducted a study that emphasised on the concept of cultural assimilation, particularly within the context of migrants' experiences. This study employs a qualitative multiple case study approach, which aims to provide a deeper understanding of this phenomenon by exploring the perspectives of individuals who have gone through cultural assimilation.

Referring to the methodology, the researchers conducted semi-structured interviews with five migrants from diverse parts of the world. These interviews allowed the participants to share their personal experiences and life stories related to the process of adapting to a new culture, adapting the different concepts such as culture, cultural identity, migration, cultural assimilation,

being the essential key to collect data for the investigation. The study highlights that the experiences of migrants are a highly individualised and unique processes that cannot be repeated or compared. Other aspects that surrounded the investigation process are Bilingualism and Biculturalism, being integral stages within the cultural assimilation process, where migrants often find themselves navigating between two or more languages and how they can be affected.

This study sheds light on the deeply personal and multifaceted nature of cultural assimilation faced by migrants, emphasising the process of adaptation and cultural identity into a new cultural environment. It underscores the importance of considering the individual experiences and perspectives of migrants to contribute to the understanding of this phenomenon of migration. Also, the study proposes some instruments and questions that can be a sort of tool and guide to learn and dig more about the methodology options.

Díaz (2022) carried out a bibliographic review with the main objective of this text is to make a general assessment of some outstanding contributions on the study of migrations to Latin America, and therefore, to identify the main points of analysis that are developed in the works, which mostly address the period between 1880 and 1930. The study is divided into four parts. In the first stage, a brief analysis of the first contributions to migrations in Latin America was made. The second stage focuses on the line of socioeconomic analysis of migration to Latin America. In the third stage, a general framework of migration studies in Latin America was outlined, and finally, in the fourth stage, a short analysis of the historiography of the subject studied in Colombia was presented. Two general perspectives of analysis were identified. In the first category, he focused on the causes of migration and the labour activities of immigrants. In the second perspective, he focused on the way in which racialized ideals of citizenship and nationhood affected the way in which Latin American nations received and welcomed

immigrants. Regarding Colombia, it was found that there was little literature available on the subject to be placed in the economic category. The analysis showed a fundamental component in relation to the process of social integration of these immigrants in Colombian society and the appreciations made by the literature so far.

In a study conducted by Forero (2014), the role of cultural assimilation in French migration policy during the presidency of Nicolás Sarkozy was examined. The research analysed the relationship between the Maghreb region and France in terms of migratory flows during Sarkozy's government. The methodology used a multidisciplinary approach and was divided into three parts. In the first part, the methodology described the historical relationship between the Maghreb region and France regarding migration patterns. The second part implicated analysing Sarkozy's speeches as President of France concerning North African-origin migration, using Teun van Dijk's parameters, including context, action, power, and ideology. This analysis also explored the concept of cultural assimilation in Sarkozy's speeches. In the third part, the study presented conclusions drawn from the discourse analysis.

The study's essential findings suggested that Sarkozy's discourse on French identity and cultural assimilation influenced France's immigration and integration policies between 2007 and 2012. The research indicated that these policies were strongly shaped by the culture and traditional values of the host society, potentially reinforcing barriers, stigmatisation, prejudices, and discriminatory actions against migrants. Additionally, Sarkozy accentuated the importance of civilising transformations to empower immigrants for autonomy and participation in society, rooted in the concept of cultural assimilation. The study analyses the relationship between the Maghreb region (which includes North African countries) and France in terms of migratory

flows during the presidency of Nicolás Sarkozy. This denotes that it is investigating the patterns and dynamics of migration between these regions during that specific time.

Larrahondo and Álvarez (2023) revolves around the profound impact of cultural exchange programs on non-native speakers, focusing on Latin American Au Pairs. These programs are widely recognized for offering individuals a unique opportunity to engage in cross-cultural experiences, including learning a new language, travelling to different parts of the world, exploring and immersing themselves in foreign cultures, and living in environments where the target language is an integral part of daily life.

The research sheds light on the effects of cultural exchange and immersion experiences on non-native speakers, and how the interactions within a natural linguistic context, where they are constantly exposed to and required to communicate in a foreign language, affects and contributes significantly to intercultural sensitivity by immersing themselves in new cultural contexts; these individuals become more attuned to the nuances of intercultural communication and gain a deeper appreciation for the diversity of our globalized world. Briefly, the study argues that Latin American Au Pairs, through their participation in cultural exchange programs, benefit not only from language proficiency but also from enhanced intercultural awareness and sensitivity, being an essential part of intercultural sensitivity development.

Arenas and Urzúa (2016) conducted a study that was based on a quantitative approach and had a non-experimental, analytical, and cross-sectional design. The objective was to describe the relationship between the acculturation strategies introduced by Berry, integration, assimilation, separation and marginalisation, with ethnic identity. The research instrument used was a 4-item questionnaire developed by Basabe, Zlobina, and Páez, (2004) in the Basque Country. In this research, it was decided to survey immigrants of Peruvian and Colombian

nationality, over 18 years of age who resided in the city of Antofagasta for a regular period of 6 months. The decision was based on a police record “Peruvian and Colombian citizens are most immigrants in the city”.

The results showed that biculturalism was the acculturation strategy most used by both groups, however, differences by sex were found. For ethnic identity, the differences were statistically relevant for both groups only between nationalities. This research emphasized the need to continue studying and understanding the migration phenomenon in depth and deepen the understanding of this complex psychosocial phenomenon. In addition, the importance of reviewing and updating public policies regarding immigration, such as immigration laws, education, health, work, among others, is highlighted. Likewise, the importance of having updated and disaggregated information was emphasized to analyse and understand the new trends and problems associated with migration, and thus be able to constantly evaluate what is happening in this matter.

Gyan et al. (2023) conducted a study to understand the experiences of the RIY related to what resilience represents for them and the barriers they face in the integration process. The article has a qualitative approach, the design used manual inductive thematic data analysis. In-depth interviews between 60 and 120 minutes were conducted with the participants, the interviews were done virtually using online/remote platforms, such as MS Teams, Zoom, and WebEx. The tools used to collect information and process it were the transcription of audio recordings, of the interviews, as well as a focused thematic analysis with descriptive categories. This research focused on people who had lived in Montreal for 10 years or less. Priority was given to the perspectives of young refugees and immigrants, people between 16 and 28 years ago. The selection of the research participants was carried out through purposive sampling,

which implies the process of selecting a sample that has the best knowledge or experience in relation to the investigation.

The research article found that social isolation, cultural differences, racism, hostility, aggression, and language are barriers to integration. The participants related resilience as a form of adaptability. The research article contributed to a critical understanding of the field of refugee and migration studies, as well as an analysis of a growing interrelation between the social and economic integration of refugees, and the cultural factors of the host country. The need to recognize racialization and the multiple vulnerabilities of RIYs in their integration process is demonstrated. It will be useful for future research to consider the differences in the experiences and perceptions of the resilience of refugee youth and immigrant youth.

In a study conducted by Migliarini and Cioè (2022), it was aimed to use part of the data collected to show how the construction of illiteracy of refugee children by Italian professionals serves to make their racialization and disability visible. The article was based on a qualitative approach using the constructivist grounded theory. The objective of the research article was to use part of the data collected to show how the construction of illiteracy of refugee children by Italian professionals serves to make their racialization and disability visible. Semi-structured interviews were applied as an instrument for data collection. The participants were 10 young forced immigrants and 17 Italian professionals operating in educational and social services between 2014 and 2017, residents of the city of Rome, emphasis was placed on nine services for refugees in the city. All the young immigrants were identified with a disability during their asylum/refugee process in Italy.

According to the findings, they highlighted how the performance of monolingualism of young, forced migrants indicates their effort to be included in the host society. Another important

finding revealed the distinction between identity persecution and political motives for the persecution made by education professionals as institutional representatives. Likewise, the article highlighted the disconnect between what the State expects of young refugees to be included and what is provided to meet expectations.

Conceptual framework

Intercultural sensitivity

To address the concept of intercultural sensitivity, it was opted to use the model of Bennett (1986) called *the development of intercultural sensitivity*. The concept, in this sense, is beheld as the way in which migrants respond or comprise an intercultural context as they integrate in the new culture such as their behaviour, thought, empathy, interest, acceptance with the other, curiosity, diversity, among others. The model was a tool to follow and comprehend most of the processes and experiences through which they went through as they were living in the host country. The model consists of six stages: Denial, Defense, Minimisation, Acceptance, Adaptation, and Integration.

Figure 1: The developmental model

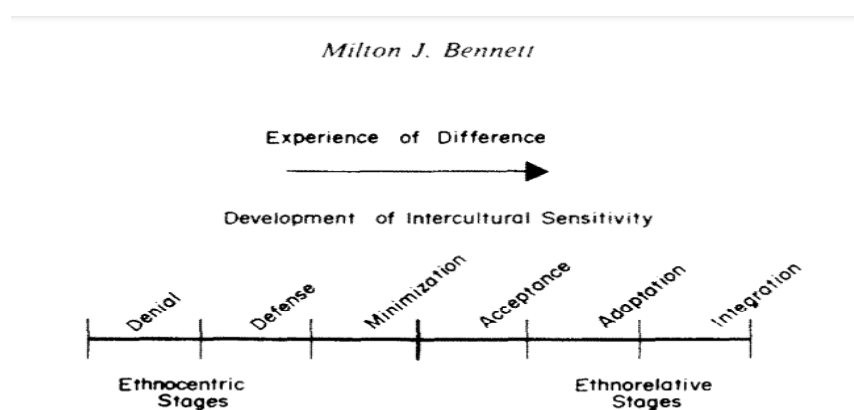


FIGURE 1.

In Figure 1, *The developmental model*, the stages of Intercultural Sensitivity are classified as follows: the midpoint of the continuum represents a division between Ethnocentrism and Ethnorelativism. The first three stages which are Denial, Defense and Minimization are on the side of Ethnocentrism and the last 3 are at the other end of Ethnorelativism. For Bennett (1986) the Denial stage represents the ultimate Ethnocentrism, where one's own worldview is unchallenged as central to all reality. In this way, Ethnocentrism is based on a closed point of view focused on the individual's own reality, in which the culture and the experience are superior in comparison to other possible cultural realities. Then, there is a transition from Ethnocentrism to Ethnorelativism in the stage of Acceptance where cultural difference is both acknowledged and respected and is perceived as fundamental and preferable in human affairs (Kluckhohn et al, 1961; Stewart, 1972 as is cited in Bennett, 1986). Ethnorelativism is comprehended as the identification of cultural difference, as well as respect for such differentiation. The six stages of Bennet are described below:

Stage 1. Denial. occurs when individuals or communities are completely insulated from significant cultural differences. Without exposure to different cultures, people may not recognize or acknowledge the existence of such differences. This lack of encounter leads to a lack of understanding and categorization of these phenomena, resulting in a narrow and ethnocentric worldview. In this position, one's own perspective is seen as central to all of reality, and alternative viewpoints or cultural practices are ignored or denied (Bennett, 1986, p. 182-183).

In this manner, Denial is understood as the position where migrants deny any contact or recognition of a different culture or belonging to their own, limiting themselves to a worldview centred on their own culture. As an instance, the case where they perceive people from different cultures in a matter-of-fact way and are often selfish. People can stereotype others a lot, using

pejorative terms such as "gringos", or affirming speculations such as "there's only black people in Africa", "all Asians look alike", etc. They can suppose that the different cultural dispositions must be considered, highlighting deficiencies such as "character", "intelligence", "physical capacity", "work ethic" or other "innate traits".

Stage 2. Defense. These strategies arise when individuals move beyond denial and begin to acknowledge the existence of the difference, albeit with a defensive mindset. A common defense strategy is denigration of difference, also known as negative stereotyping. This implies attributing undesirable characteristics to each member of a culturally distinct group. It is important to note that denigration is considered a stage of development, rather than an isolated act. People who put down one group often put down other groups as well. Ethnocentrism, rather than ignorance, is the central factor driving defensive denigration. People can simply assume that their own culture is the acme of some evolutionary scheme, rather than denigrating other cultures. For example, migrants feel attacked by the native people of the new culture, since they tend to feel racism. Many times, they can be hurt by comments such as "they are coming to take our jobs" and "in this country of whites there can be no blacks" among many others. This stage of defense may not only come from the natives but also from migrants themselves.

Additionally, they can also begin to develop an acknowledgment of the existence of another culture, including their differences with a degree of defense strategies. These are the application of a negative stereotype, which implies a generalisation of people belonging to the other culture and the feeling of one's own cultural superiority, which proposes a positioning of egocentric expectations rather than denigrating the other culture.

Stage 3. Minimisation. For Bennet (1986) Minimisation is the ultimate attempt to maintain the centrality of one's worldview by trying to minimize or trivialize cultural differences.

“The state of minimization represents a development beyond denial and defense because, at this stage, cultural difference is overly acknowledged and is not negatively evaluated, either explicitly as in denigration or implicitly as in superiority” (p. 183). Instead, these differences are considered relatively unimportant compared to the perceived power of cultural similarities. Human behaviour is enough for successful communication. However, this perspective remains ethnocentric since it assumes that the fundamental categories of behaviour are absolute and like one's own. In both forms of minimization, cultural differences are recognized and tolerated to some degree. However, these differences are seen as superficial or even obstacles to effective communication when is only supposed to be successful if it is based on shared universal rules or principles. Minimisation represents a relatively more sensitive position on interculturality among ethnocentric perspectives, it falls short of the full potential for intercultural understanding that its adherents often claim. (Bennett, 1986).

The third stage of Minimisation represents the recognition of cultural differences without evaluating them negatively. Cultural differences are considered by the migrant as irrelevant and are considered barely tolerable. Therefore, an egocentric view of culture persists.

Stage 4. Acceptance. The acceptance stage implies acknowledgement and respect for cultural differences. Two main levels can be identified, which usually occur sequentially. The first level is acceptance of behavioural differences, including language, communication styles, and nonverbal patterns and the second level is the acceptance of underlying differences in cultural values, which may reflect fundamentally different ways of organising reality. By understanding cultural differences as dynamic, migrants can engage in more empathetic interactions and appreciate the diversity of human experience. (Bennett, 1986, p. 184-185). At this stage, two major changes can be seen from the perspective of the migrant: the first

encompasses the acceptance of differences in behaviour and deeper aspects such as non-verbal communication of people belonging to another culture, and the second includes recognition and respect by the conceptions of the world that can determine the reality of said culture.

Stage 5. Adaptation. Adaptation involves the temporary adjustment of behaviour and thinking to accommodate and engage with cultural differences. Empathy approaches cultural worldview change when another person has a very different worldview. Empathy is usually partial, focusing on areas relevant to the communication event. This may be psychological, such as asking appropriate questions, or it may involve verbal and non-verbal behaviour, culturally perceived as appropriate by members of the target culture. In short, adaptation is based on the acceptance of difference as a relative process and forms the essence of intercultural communication. (Bennett, 1986, p. 185-186). At this stage, the decision on the part of the migrants to begin a commitment to adapt to cultural differences can be evidenced. Empathy refers to a change to understand events and experiences from another's perspective, demonstrating a level of education, respect, and appropriate forms of communication to become more interculturally sensitive.

This stage occurs when people from different cultural backgrounds can talk about their cultural experiences and perspectives in ways that are familiar with and sensitive to the other culture. Importantly, Bennett emphasises that adaptation is not "assimilation," which can be defined as the process of abandoning one's cultural identity to adopt a different cultural identity.

Stage 6. Integration. The final stage corresponds to the concept of Integration, which represents the highest degree of acceptance and evolution of the migrant. Integration of cultural difference occurs when someone's identity or sense of self evolves to incorporate the values, beliefs, perspectives, and behaviours of other cultures in appropriate and authentic ways. In this

way, it can be understood that the migrant begins to incorporate particular and unique features of the new culture to which he has been exposed for a period, managing to obtain new perceptions of the world, of the new culture so as not to perceive it as threatening. but, as part of their own identity. (Bennet, 1986, p. 186).

The final stage is defined as the migrant's ability to incorporate different cultural perspectives such as values, customs, and traditions of the host country into their identity as individuals, to continue expanding their vision of the world. It is not simply a matter of tolerance or acceptance of those perspectives as in past stages, but also implies active and meaningful participation. It is the highest representation of intercultural sensitivity in which the individual is characterized by open acceptance of difference and perceives it as an integral and enriching aspect.

Cultural Shock

The term culture shock refers to when an individual is related to a cultural environment very different from their own, and is it involved in different situations, normally related to the culture of the host country. The culture shock is what leads migrants to have this clash or differences they face within the visited country. Since they arrive accustomed to interacting, living and/or coexisting as well as speaking in a different way than the one they notice from the first moment they arrive in the country to which they migrate. Culture shock occurs starting from things as simple as the schedule, the food, or the language as previously mentioned; even what we call culture, which are things more specific to each country; rituals, customs, sayings, myths, legends, and everything related to the identity of a society and its coexistence.

Culture shock is precipitated by the anxiety that results from losing all our familiar signs and symbols of social inter course. These signs or cues include the thousand and one

ways in which we orient ourselves to the situations of daily life: when to shake hands and what to say when we meet people, when and how to give tips, how to give orders to servants, how to make purchases, when to accept and when to refuse invitations, when to take statements seriously and when not (Oberg, 1960, p. 177).

Culture shock can generate a state of anxiety due to the loss of family references and symbols that we use to interact socially. When we find ourselves in a culturally different environment, our usual ways of behaving, communicating, and understanding the world may not be effective or appropriate. Culture shock involves facing the unknown and new ways of thinking, acting, and relating. It can lead to feelings of confusion, stress, and anxiety, as individuals are out of their comfort zone and must learn to adapt to a new culture and its social norms. However, it is important to keep in mind that culture shock is not simply a negative state of anxiety, but also part of an adjustment process. As people become more familiar with the culture and gain new intercultural skills, they can overcome culture shock and become more comfortable in the culturally different environment.

Second language acquisition

Second Language Acquisition (SLA) refers both to the study of individuals and groups who are learning a language after learning their first one as young child, and to the process of learning that language. The additional language is called a second language (L2), even though it may be the third, fourth, or tenth to be acquired. It is also commonly called a target language (TL), which refers to any language that is the aim or goal of learning. (Saville, 2012, p. 2). It can occur when a child from Japan moves to the US and acquires English through specific play and school interactions with native English-speaking children, without instruction in the English language. It can also happen when an adult Guatemalan immigrant in Canada learns English

through interactions with native English speakers or co-workers who speak English as a second language; as it is in the case of this research, in which the Spanish-speaking participants acquired a German L2, and Hebrew L2 in similar circumstances to those explained by the author. This concept was a fundamental piece for exploring the experience of cultural assimilation that the cases of the two migrants can contribute to the research study.

Culture

Spencer (2008) states that:

“Culture is a fuzzy set of basic assumptions and values, orientations to life, beliefs, policies, procedures, and behavioural conventions that are shared by a group of people, and that influence (but do not determine) each member’s behaviour and his/her interpretations of the ‘meaning’ of other people’s behaviour.” (p. 2).

On the other hand, Matsumoto (1996) declares that: “the set of attitudes, values, beliefs, and behaviours shared by a group of people, but different for everyone, communicated from one generation to the next.” (p. 2). Considering these definitions, culture affects and influences the individual differently and does not determine them, making their case unique and unrepeatable, as in the case of migrants. Likewise, it can be inferred that a person's culture is a mirage of customs, beliefs, values, behaviours, and perceptions of different aspects of life that are learned together with other people who are part of the same society, but these aspects do not permanently determine the individual's life, personality, and actions.

Cultural identity

Cultural identity constitutes unique aspects such as beliefs, behaviours and values for everyone or group and the culture(s) to which they belong. These aspects are shared in society to

later serve as a symbol of belonging and authenticity of each culture compared to other cultures in the world. This cultural identity is built through the passage of time, interactions, learning and, of course, the experiences lived in personal, family, work, social environments, etc. Salgado (1999, as cited in Grimaldo, 2006) states that:

Identidad Cultural está referida al componente cultural que se moldea desde edad temprana a través de nuestras costumbres, hábitos, fiestas, bailes, modos de vida, todo aquello que forma parte de nuestro folklore y que es una expresión misma de nuestro pasado y presente con proyección al futuro (p. 42).

In this way, it can be understood that cultural identity goes beyond a set of aspects developed in adulthood, since, from childhood, values, customs, behaviours, and habits in society are acquired that lead to forming the personality of the individual, creating identity traits and expressions different to other cultures of the world. This is how the individual can feel that they belong to a certain culture since they share traits with other people from the same culture.

Cultural assimilation

The term cultural assimilation will be used in this research to understand the experiences and reactions of migrants in contrast to a different culture from their own. Cultural assimilation can be defined as:

...the term used to describe the 'swallowing up' of one culture by another. It was often the approach of colonial powers, taking the form of imposing their cultural values and etiquette on the countries they had conquered. Technically, assimilation refers to the process whereby a group or a whole society gradually adopts, or are forced into adopting,

the customs, values, lifestyles, and language of a more dominant culture... (Bochner, 1999 as cited in Ward, et al. 2005, p. 28).

Considering Bochner's definition, assimilation can be understood as the absorption of a culture by an individual or group, successively adopting the customs, values and so on of this culture.

Migration

The process of migration by many people can vary and differ from each other depending on their life experiences and the environments they develop their lives.

Se le denomina al cambio de residencia de un lugar llamado “origen” hacia otro llamado “destino”, con un carácter casi permanente, los cuales son motivados por razones económicas, sociales o políticas. También se la define como el cambio de residencia de un lugar hacia otro realizado durante un periodo de tiempo determinado llamado intervalo de migración. Las migraciones son desplazamientos de grupos humanos que los alejan de sus residencias habituales. (León, 2015, p. 116).

The process can be understood as a determining factor in people's lives since it generates a displacement and distance from the habitual residence which can represent their comfort zone and sense of cultural identity. In the same way, migration can cause significant decision-making and opportunities to interact in the new society to which migrants arrive, being a case worthy of study to better understand the phenomenon of migration that migrants can experience around the world.

Contextual framework

The participants agreed to the use of their names and personal data for research purposes in this study. The participants who were part of this research are Diana and Luxcini, identified as women who migrated from their countries of origin in search of a better future for themselves and their families. Diana, the first participant, with Colombian nationality was born in Jamundí, Valle del Cauca. She migrated to Germany at the age of 28, in search of better job opportunities and to improve her quality of life. The decision was encouraged by a relative who already lived in the country. She stayed in Germany for 2 years, returned to her country of origin and stayed for another two years. Later, she migrated back to Germany where she has lived for the last 25 years. The migration process was extremely complex because the participant had expectations that contrasted with the experiences she lived, and the language was a major barrier to adapt to the new environment since Diana did not know German or any other language other than Spanish.

Luxcini, the second participant, is a Colombian woman who migrated to Israel at the age of 30 in 1996 and lived there for 24 years. Her reasons for migrating reside in the difficult economic and social situation that she lived in her country, during the period of violence. The need to provide economic resources for herself to survive and support her family as well as the lack of job opportunities, were the main factors that prompted her to make the decision to migrate. The migration process was not easy; leaving her children and her parents behind was reason for sadness, but at the same time for strength and support to migrate in search of a better quality of life for her and her family. Many migrants face inconveniences and the challenges they had to face to settle in a new country and with a different culture. From discrimination to communication problems regarding the language, the participants have experienced first-hand

the challenges that migration entails. Therefore, it is essential to consider their testimonies and perspectives to effectively address the problems faced by migrants in recent years.

Methodology

This research was constructed on a qualitative approach. Creswell (2009) claims that:

Qualitative research is a means for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. The process of research involves emerging questions and procedures, data typically collected in the participant's setting, data analysis inductively building from particulars to general themes, and the researcher making interpretations of the meaning of the data. The final written report has a flexible structure (p. 22).

It was determined from a qualitative research approach that led us to address cultural assimilation, giving relevance to the meaning the participants as researchers attribute to this phenomenon. As Creswell (2009) affirms:

In the entire qualitative research process, the researcher focuses on learning the meaning the participants hold about the problem or issue, not the meaning that the researchers bring to the research or that writers express in the literature (p. 164).

Following this, pertinent questions must be asked to understand the narrative of these experiences and address migration from various perspectives, from the material level, such as the economic situation, to the emotional level, such as the migrants' own expectations about cultural assimilation. Likewise, the process of developing intercultural sensitivity must be initiated.

Case Studies

It was decided to opt for the case study design to adequately address the differences between migrants' experiences throughout the Cultural Assimilation process. According to Creswell (2009): "A case study is an in-depth exploration of a bounded system (e.g., activity, event, process, or individuals) based on extensive data collection" (p. 465). On the one hand, the case study can be an appropriate approach since the cases of migrants differ based on different experiences and versions of the phenomenon. On the other hand, extensive data collection is essential not to limit the person's ability to tell their experience from the migrant's perspective.

Multiple case study

Following the coherent relationship with the qualitative paradigm and the type of research proposed, the multiple case study sought to interpret and gain an in-depth understanding of the experiences of two participants during the study process of migration. Based on these experiences, information was collected through interview formats. According to Stake (1995, as cited in Creswell, 2009): "case studies may also include multiple cases, called a collective case study, in which multiple cases are described and compared to provide insight into an issue" (p. 465). Both cases were deeply interpreted and compared in this investigation to enrich the data obtained. To develop the research, the structure proposed by Creswell was adapted into six stages:

1. Selection and definition of the type of case
2. Connection with the participants
3. Interview design
4. Interview application
5. Analysis and interpretation

6. Final report

Connection with participants

The participants' information on the migration process was obtained subtly and freely by approaching the reality of cases through experience reports and life stories. In this research stage, basic and personal questions were asked to get information about the participant's origins, identity, and main reasons why they decided to undertake this migration process.

Interview design

“Qualitative interviews can be based on personal and subjective information such as opinions, perceptions, feelings, as well as values and beliefs” (Hernandez, 2014, p. 407). The interviews were based on the experiences of the participants, as well as their perceptions, feelings, and emotions generated during the migration process. Given the need for qualitative research, three types of interview formats with a series of specific questions were stipulated.

The first structured questionnaire named *Exploratory Interview* was based on specific questions, comprising 12 questions, ranging from the name to the personal relationship with migration. The main objective was to confirm that there was a migration process on the part of the participants and that it represented a case worthy of study.

The second semi-structured interview format named *Migration Interview* was conducted with 20 questions considering their motivation for migrating and the journey. The construction of this instrument is based on the concept of Cultural Assimilation and the aspects that surround it: motivation for migration, culture, culture identity and cultural shock.

The third semi-structured interview format named *Intercultural Sensitivity Interview* was created with the aim of collecting information about the migrant's experiences on intercultural

sensitivity. This instrument with a total of twelve questions, two questions per stage, is based on the stages of Intercultural Sensitivity: Denial, Defense, Minimisation, Acceptance, Adaptation, and Integration proposed by Bennett.

Interview application

Interviews will be carried out with the research participants. A structured interview was conducted with the participants to confirm the existence of a migration process on the part of the participants. Two more interviews will be carried out, an interview related to the concept of cultural assimilation, as well as a questionnaire connected to the concept of intercultural sensitivity.

Analysis and interpretation

For this stage, the interviews carried out with the participants in the investigation will be examined in depth. The information obtained will be discussed giving opinions about it, terms and authors will be used to define and deepen the analysis of the story of each participant.

Final report

A brief account of the information collected during the investigation will be developed, along with a brief overview of that information, as well as the reflection on concepts such as migrant, psychological, sociocultural, and economic adaptation of migrants, in addition to understanding what happens around the linguistic capacities of migrants.

Tools and techniques

According to Creswell (2009): "...Qualitative researchers collect data themselves through examining documents, observing behaviour, or interviewing participants. They may use a protocol—an instrument for collecting data—but the researchers are the ones who actually gather the information. They do not tend to use or rely on questionnaires or instruments

developed by other researchers” (p. 164). Based on the need for qualitative research, the semi-structured interview technique was applied to obtain less limiting and natural information for the participants, and the design of the questions was based on the concepts of cultural assimilation and intercultural sensitivity approached from the perspectives of a migrant. Hernández (2014) affirms that: “...el investigador cualitativo utiliza técnicas para recolectar datos, como la observación no estructurada, entrevistas abiertas, revisión de documentos, discusión en grupo, evaluación de experiencias personales, registro de historias de vida, e interacción e introspección con grupos o comunidades” (p. 9). The tools used to store the information collected in the interviews and the intercultural questionnaire will be voice recording using a cell phone as a device, and the Google Meet application to be later transcribed.

Data analysis

Data analysis from a qualitative perspective can often represent a challenge that is quite difficult to clarify for the research team given the characteristics of its interpretive nature. Likewise, Hernandez (2014) explains that the qualitative process is not sequential or linear compared to the quantitative process, since the stages constitute the steps that are carried out to achieve the research objective and answer the research question. From this paradigm and the multiple case study, we collected, interpreted, described, and reflected on these perspectives experienced by our participants as migrants during their time in the host country. For a contextually nuanced categorization of the case study involving the two participants, it was deemed prudent to classify the information in accordance with the methodology elucidated by Creswell (1998, as cited in Hernandez, 2014). Creswell metaphorically portrays qualitative analysis as a spiral, wherein manifold facets and perspectives of the studied phenomenon are

explored. Accordingly, the collection of information was systematically filtrated, categorized and described following these activities: visualization, reflection, selection, and interpretation of data. To analyse, the decision was made to delineate four overarching categories to encapsulate the information gleaned from the outlined instruments, thus adhering to a structured narrative that delineates the migratory process and intercultural sensitivity. Each category was meticulously described, considering specific facets of participant responses, facilitating the discernment of disparities and commonalities amid the experiences encountered during this migratory phase.

The interviews were divided into 3 sections, taking approximately 30 minutes each one to execute each one of them. The first contains information for the exploratory interview, the second dedicated to the process of cultural assimilation and migration, and the third records experiences regarding intercultural sensitivity. These findings were reviewed and classified according to their content and the processes and activities mentioned before. Important characteristics were found to determine their order and subcategorization, which lead to an organized and narrated understanding. In this way, a large review was consolidated around the following 4 categories: in the first category, named *Two Facets of One Coin*, the concepts of migration and cultural assimilation were considered. In the second category named *Sailing through culture journey*, the results were described based on the concepts of culture, cultural identity, and culture shock. In the third category titled *Unlocking cultures through words*, the results were interpreted from the concept of Acquisition of a second language, and the fourth category named *Intercultural sensitivity from migrant's experience*, the most specific and important responses from each stage of intercultural sensitivity were interpreted. However, the first three will be united: denial, defense and minimization as a narrative of how this experience

is lived for each migrant from an ethnocentric experience, and then from the last three: acceptance, adaptation, and integration as an ethno-relative experience.

The interviews conducted afforded us the opportunity to delve into the diversity of experiences encountered by our participants throughout the process of migration and cultural assimilation. As envisaged, three interviews were conducted, and the questions were satisfactorily addressed. Some of the interviews were conducted virtually due to the impracticality of in-person meetings, as one of the participants resides in a country distinct from that of the researchers. Concerning the participants' identities, permission was granted for the utilization of their real full names for research purposes. This underscores the participants' trust and willingness to engage with the researchers to share and disseminate their cases and experiences for broader awareness.

Two Facets of One Coin

As vast as the phenomenon of migration may be, delving into the experiences, memories, and challenges of our participants Luxcini and Diana, two Colombian women who migrated to other countries in search of a better life and work opportunities, allowed us, as a research team, to investigate and gather unique perspectives to understand these phenomena from the standpoint of cultural assimilation and migration. Clarifying our participants' conditions before moving to the host country is relevant. Luxcini Munera Lugo is a Colombian woman born in the city of Cali. She currently resides in the municipality of Jamundí. At present, she is 57 years old, which led us to discover that she began her migratory process to Israel at the age of 30, staying 24 years in the host country.

Similarly, Diana Aurora Altamirano is a Colombian woman born in Jamundí. She is 55 years old and initiated her migration process to Germany at the age of 28. In stark contrast to

Luxcini, Diana still resides in the country, specifically in the Frankfurt region. According to our findings, these characteristics lead us to believe that our participants undertook a migratory process known as external immigration. León (2015) explains that migration can be external if individuals move between countries. Notably, both relocated to areas and territories outside their native country, Colombia, namely Israel and Germany, respectively. Furthermore, León (2015) adds that migration can consist of immigration, meaning a change of residence by an individual or group of people from a particular region or country to another different country.

Call of duty

Leaving behind one's native country began with a decision, driven by a longing for a better future. León (2015) explains that migration has existed since the early days of the human race, and to continue surviving as a species, humans had to leave their place of origin in search of shelter and food. This reason inherently implies a drive to improve the basis of one's daily life, taking risks into the unknown such as embarking on an impactful migration journey and having zero knowledge of the destiny that awaits. Diana relates:

Bueno mis factores determinantes fueron porque yo ya tenía una niña (...) uno quiere formarle o brindarles un futuro mejor a sus hijos. (...) uno ve que la plata de acá el cambio como que rinde más entonces eso te hace como pensar y tomar la decisión.

It becomes evident that the foundation of these many reasons that Diana had for migrating was to improve her economic situation for the sake, future, and well-being of her daughter. As a single mother without stable financial support, the decision would lead her to seek for opportunities in another country so she could secure a higher salary than what could be expected if she remained employed in her home country. Viewing the other side, Luxcini relates: “*me quedé sin trabajo, sin empleo y como era madre soltera tenía que solucionar ese evento (...).*”

Bueno lo primero la economía del país que fue desastrosa en ese tiempo y la causa fueron mis hijos, para darles un bienestar''. In the same path of Diana, she also had a clear understanding of her primary objective; upon losing employment and being a single mother in a country with a faltering economy, the desire for prosperity and well-being for her whole future was born.

Following these cases, it could be interpreted that one of the primary motivations was to provide better incomes for their children and family members that remain closed and beloved, which actively demonstrates that decisions to migrate due to strong family bonds and their duties within their roles can be enough and worthy. León (2015) explains that:

Causas familiares. Los vínculos familiares también resultan un factor importante en la decisión de emigrar, sobre todo, en los tiempos más recientes, en los que cualquier emigrante de algún país subdesarrollado, necesita de mucha ayuda para establecerse en otro país de mayor desarrollo económico (p. 123).

Family bonds are another factor influencing the decision to migrate, especially when one grows up in an underdeveloped country and requires more support when moving to a country with superior economic development. In one hand, Luxcini comments:

Sí, tenía dos hijos menores, y mi papá y mi mamá que eran personas mayores de edad (...) porque mi familia quedaba dependiendo de mí cuando yo me fuera porque el dinero lo necesitaba yo para viajar. Eso fue una forma muy muy difícil.

As León suggests, this can be observed in Luxcini's case, where she had many people under her responsibility, four individuals in total, two of whom were minors that can be considered as fragile as the older ones when it comes to protection. These pressures would lead our participant to be so dedicated to her own choices and claim to have the objective of fleeing out to her own native country for the sake of them. On the other hand, Diana explains:

Siempre he velado por mi mamá sí. Siempre, o sea, he estado ahí al pendiente de ella, y ayudándola económicamente, era mi mamá y mi hija y una hermanita que tengo que es discapacitada.

It can be comprehended that their family ties and assumed calls of duty were vital incentives to migrate. Pursuing better economic opportunities and living conditions emphasises the importance of decision-making based on the desire to provide a better future for loved ones. The connection between the search for job opportunities and family responsibilities reveals the complexity of motivations behind migration, underscoring the importance of considering various elements in this process. To highlight, León (2015) asserts that contemporary migration extends globally and is characterised by movement from countries with lower development to more advanced ones. These consequences are evident in the case of the participants in this research, Diana and Luxcini, who chose to migrate from a third-world country like Colombia to a more developed country like Germany and Israel.

Try one's luck

León (2015) claims that economic factors are the primary determinants in the decision to migrate, both at the macroeconomic and individual levels. They stand out as one of the main causes for migration for our participants, facing difficulties on a personal level or due to a situation of economic precarity in their native country. To sum up the economic reasons, it can be inferred that a link in Colombia's economy and the decision to migrate was set to be a determining macroeconomic factor, a planned decision. However, these decisions can be unpredictable and even not planned at all, but rather a lucky break. Diana relates: “*a ver, decidí emigrar para probar suerte en otro país (...) yo era una persona de no querer salir de Colombia (...) yo nunca añoraba tampoco estar en otro país (...)*”. In other cases, the decision was

determined by a desire to "try one 's luck" and behold what sort of lucky plans and actions would lead her to achieve her prime objectives. The participant did not wish to migrate from her home country but considering the opportunity and motivated by both economic and family factors, she was impelled to make the determination to do so. As seen earlier, motivations for migration can be fixed and focused on the same goal of achieving a promising economy for the migrant.

However, the decision to pursue this goal can be either carefully planned over a considerable period or entirely impromptu, depending on each case. Like two facets on one coin, these faces may reflect situations and decisions that are entirely different but not mutually exclusive.

Migrants can be aware of the numerous barriers and obstacles they might face, such as the fear of the unknown, the need to communicate in another language, learning and understanding different cultures, adapting to different schedules, styles of dressing, eating habits, and behaviours, among others.

Following this path, we have been exploring so far, it is pertinent to ponder the factors that may transform a decision into a planned action. Luxcini relates: “*(...) otra el sistema económico, o sea, la forma de los recursos (...) planeábamos durante un año porque la situación económica estaba muy difícil en nuestro país*”. The possibilities of evolving in one’s native country can be pressuring; in Luxcini's case, the decision was planned a year in advance to migrate to the country of Israel, demonstrating a strong motivation and commitment to both her own and her family's economic stability. On the other hand, Diana expresses:

La decisión fue muy repentina (...) me llamó mi tía y me dice (...) quiero que vengas a probar a ver qué tal te va y en esas no lo pensé mucho y le dije bueno que sí, que lo aceptaba.

It exhibited an entirely opposite side of the coin, where there was no pre-established planning; the decision to migrate was sudden and prompted by a relative residing in the host country, who would act as a safe zone for our participant to embark on the journey to Germany. Therefore, the decisions occurred in different contexts: one decision was meticulously planned and driven by personal motivation, while the other decision happened suddenly and was largely motivated by the economy and criteria of family members in the host country.

For León (2015), the famine and destitution in various underdeveloped countries determine the fate of migrants, compelling them to risk their lives to escape their circumstances. However, there can be situations where the scarcity of resources to migrate to another country to improve one's economic condition may pose a fierce challenge. On one side, Diana comments: "*No, no, la verdad no, la verdad no contaba con los recursos suficientes para hacerlo*". This condition is reflected in many individuals who migrate without the necessary resources, often expecting to achieve a better quality of life outside their native country. On the other side, Luxcini claims: "*(...) no tenía recursos por eso no lo había realizado, entonces nos valimos de una casa que tenía mi madre, la vendimos y esos fueron los recursos que utilizamos para el viaje*". This decision can be interpreted as a decisive effort to count on one thing that was certain in her life, and her sacrifice to migrate could directly impact not only herself but also the primary form of the economy of her family; she relied on a property that did not belong to her, putting at risk a significant investment, demonstrating a sense of implicit responsibility in her decision.

Crocheted perspectives

In planned and sudden decisions, cultural influences can lead the migrant to undertake the migration process. León (2015) explains that cultural aspects significantly impact deciding where a specific population's migration is headed. Culture, which encompasses economy, language,

traditions, and customs, influences the choice to stay in a country or migrate. Luxcini expresses: "(...) *para otros países veía que había mucha emigración, y pues para este país de Israel, yo veía que la economía estaba más...Había más trabajo, más oportunidades*". It can be interpreted that a preference for Israel was established. With many people migrating to various countries, Israel stood out due to its worker demand and a lower influx of migrants to that destination. This situation could give her a better job offer and less competition for employment opportunities. It could be said that the decision to migrate to certain countries may be influenced by the country's situation, primarily by opportunities to stand out and survive in good conditions. As noted, factors such as language can be decisive when choosing the migration destination. Diana relates:

Porque yo soy una persona que no soy nada buena para el inglés, pero nada. (...) Y de hecho ese fue un poco del temor de los Estados Unidos también, porque yo sabía que con el inglés no había podido en el estudio (...) No, fue algo totalmente con unas ideas muy diferentes (...).

It can be observed that preconceived ideas and expectations significantly influenced the destination to carry out the migration. The previous negative experience with English and the a priori idealised ideas of life in Germany guided her to choose that country as her destination.

The traces of the journey

Having compelled all these findings on motivations for migrating and its challenges, we are interested in reflecting on participants' traces of their long journeys and what they have been going through. On one side, Diana announces:

Mi tía (...) me sacó libros en alemán (...) ella sentada ahí conmigo y que tenía que leer esos libros y yo sin saber ni siquiera como pronunciar una palabra. Mi tía me hablaba

duro, fuerte (...) me ponía a llorar, ya me quería regresar a casa (...) pero hoy en día le agradezco esa dureza porque así es que uno aprende a defenderse en estos países.

The effort to acquire a language, which can give rise to emotional tensions, should be mentioned; experiencing a hostile environment in the German language teaching setting evoked feelings of rejection and regret for the decision to migrate. Likewise, the lack of materials in context or designed for language learning elicited negative feelings over time. However, it is remembered as an experience that could help navigate an unfamiliar environment. On the other side, the journey reveals the difficulties that can occur during the planning process for migrating. Luxcini relates:

(...) no necesitaba nada, ningún papel legal para viajar sino simplemente pasaporte (...). Fue un viaje triste porque dejaba a mi familia, preocupante porque no sabía la lengua ni conocía los sitios (...) En Ámsterdam llegué al hotel y gracias a Dios había un muchacho que había estado (...) tres años en España. Me guio mucho (...) estuve dos días en Holanda (...) viajé por Jordania, un país árabe. Una cultura terriblemente cerrada (...) Llegué a ese aeropuerto a las 3am con un árabe que también hablaba español (...) Me llevó hasta el hotel, se quería quedar conmigo; le dije como pude en inglés, que no (...) Me llevaron a un cuarto; me iban a meter tres hombres a ese cuarto (...) Les dije que iba a llamar la policía. Que mi familia sabía que estaba en ese hotel. Y pegué un grito, y me salí de allí.

From this experience, it can be understood that Luxcini expressed concern about her lack of knowledge of the language, as well as difficulties communicating as Diana has expressed. It can be inferred that her migration process was relatively straightforward from a legal perspective, as she did not require special documents beyond her passport for the journey. This difference

highlights how migration processes can vary significantly in terms of legal requirements depending on the destination and personal circumstances. The journey to Israel involved stops in various countries, as well as exposure to different cultures that can be considered hostile or misogynistic. It can be inferred that ignorance of the culture of a country can expose the migrant to situations that threaten their well-being. In this way, Luxcini expresses: *“eh sí, muy difícil, es muy difícil porque primeramente dejaba una familia. Una familia que dejaba con mis dos hijos pequeños, eh, fue muy difícil partir”*. It can be identified that there was a strong emotional challenge in having to separate herself from her loved ones as she left everything valued to her to just navigate in a unknown world. As research team, these experiences help us understand risky situations and actions that arise in the migration processes from a legal and security point of view, regardless of the conditions that may be adequate or totally against luck and prosperous development of the participants. Viewing the other side, Diana expresses:

Bueno de aquí el esposo de mi tía (...) me mandó la carta de invitación, que quiere decir que él se hacía cargo durante mi estadía aquí en Alemania (...) Y claramente me trajeron con una visa de turista (...) Se supone que yo había entrado aquí a Alemania solo por los 3 meses. Entonces ya pues ya llegado el tiempo de los 3 meses ya la persona se queda ilegal y ya es un riesgo grande.

The coin reflects one of its most significant differences on each face. The latent risk of being deported causes stress for Diana. This additional concern is not experienced by Luxcini, who obtained the required documents to work and reside legally in the country. However, she risked her safety by making stops in other countries without trustworthy guides. These findings can establish that the migration process was a highly significant phase in their lives, filled with challenges, emotions, and adaptations to a new cultural reality. The results included difficulties

with the language, racist, xenophobic, and discriminatory attitudes from some individuals in the host country, the pressure, expectations, economic stability, and the cultural aspects that shape and represent a life formed in another country, distinct from their home, Colombia.

Sailing through culture journey

Once acquainted with the reasons behind our participants' decision to migrate, we sought to delve into those aspects that could give rise to a cultural shock and even the loss of cultural identity when having direct contact with the various elements that encompass the culture.

Spencer (2008, as cited in Spencer, 2012., p. 2) establishes that:

Culture is a fuzzy set of basic assumptions and values, orientations to life, beliefs, policies, procedures, and behavioural conventions that are shared by a group of people, and that influence (but do not determine) each member's behaviour and his/her interpretations of the 'meaning' of other people's behaviour (p. 29).

In this way, it can be understood that culture is a grouping of assumptions, values, social conventions, and beliefs shared by a community that impacts an individual's behaviour and ways of interpreting the environment, life, and others. However, these conceptions do not confine an individual, implying that one can be unique and diverse in their singularity concerning the culture with which they identify, preserving differences in thoughts, ways of thinking and acting, and above all, the perception of the world that they may have, compared to other individuals belonging to the same culture.

A fish adrift from its realm

Venturing into and immersing oneself in a culture entirely different from one's own can be an immeasurable challenge. Migrants can find themselves entangled in myriad sensations and

emotions, ranging from the milder and more common, such as anger and despair, to the stronger, such as melancholy or loneliness. Oberg (1960) suggests that cultural shock is triggered by the anxiety stemming from the fading of all those familiar elements of interpersonal relationships with which a person grows up and is accustomed to interacting. These elements of familiarity encompass all the social norms that guide an individual's life, such as greeting, giving orders, understanding sarcasm, and even irony. Cultural shock manifests various 'symptoms' and attitudes associated with anxiety or unease when surrounded by unfamiliar elements for the migrant. Oberg (1960) states that some of these "symptoms" include feelings of anger, helplessness, and frustration, such as a distracted and distant gaze, dependence on other migrants of the same nationality who have been in the host country for a more extended period, reluctance or complete refusal to learn the language of the host country, excessive fear of being deceived, robbed, or harmed, concern for minor discomforts, excessive worry about essential services and food, fear of contact with others, and last but not least, a longing to return to the home country and interact with people or things that represent that familiarity. These symptoms can be reflected in different areas, such as cultural, work-related, social, and familial aspects during the migrant experience, reinforcing the cultural shock that may be experienced. Symptoms like negative feelings such as helplessness and frustration due to the inability to communicate effectively without knowledge of the language can impact the quality of work in a professional setting by hindering understanding of instructions. Additionally, concerns may arise about needing to know what to expect from the working conditions typical in the host country's culture. Similarly, feelings of uncertainty and worry may surface due to not knowing or being able to adjust to the gastronomy, customs and traditions, value system, and other elements that constitute the society of the host country's culture.

Migrants may experience a sense of being welcomed or well-received by individuals within the host country's culture. Oberg (1960) suggests that when individuals immerse themselves in a neighbouring culture, nearly all familiarity signals dissipate, as the individual is perceived as 'a fish out of water.' This situation implies feeling disoriented, lost, and completely isolated from where one belongs, where similarities are found among people and customs, colours, and flavours, providing a sense of belonging and security as unique and social individuals. On one side, Luxcini comments: “*me sentí super bienvenida. Me acogieron totalmente super bien. Me sentí querida y respetada*”. In the realm of diversities, we can always encounter peculiarities where cultural differences are not an obstacle to experiencing the sense of being welcomed by the host country's inhabitants, so an impression of being cherished and respected can be discerned. Luxcini adds: “*porque igual... Me sentía... nadie me recogía en ese momento. Fui sola, hubieron problemas, me devolvieron, me pasaron a emigración. Pero siempre yo tenía la fe de que yo iba a llegar hasta mi destino (...)*”. Despite not knowing with whom or what challenges she might encounter feelings of hostility or rejection were dismissed from the first encounter. She even arrived at perceiving emotions and feelings of being cherished and respected by the locals as an individual integrated into the culture. On the other side, Diana comments: “*que me llamó mi tía y me dice hombre que vengas quiero que vengas a probar a ver qué tal te va y en esas no lo pensé mucho y le dije bueno que sí, que lo aceptaba*”. In contrast to Luxcini, Diana had a secure place to arrive without having to endure numerous misfortunes and desperate situations that could place her life in a constant state of danger.

Interactions in a new culture cannot be exclusively defined or interpreted as either positive or negative, as, given the circumstances, there may be various nuances in the experiences of migrants. Oberg (1960) expresses that individuals react similarly to frustration,

initially rejecting the environment that represents this discomfort, as "the customs of the host country are bad because they make us feel bad." Diana relates: "*mi mayor desafío ha sido el poder hablar bien este idioma. (...)'*". A significant challenge is achieving proficiency in the language she set out to acquire. Besides, it was not enough to rely on the sympathy and willingness of people to communicate through gestures, which caused a relatively cultural solid shock. Luxcini relates: "*y el idioma, o sea, la comunicación es... te sentís perdido (...). O sea, ese fue uno de mis mayores desafíos, la movilización en ese país sin tener la lengua, ni el conocimiento de la escritura del idioma'*". This process becomes complex due to being surrounded by entirely different elements from that one has grown up with and become accustomed to interacting with. For Luxcini, realising the communication difficulties isolated her from her new environment, inducing her to feel lost in a completely unfamiliar scenario. Consequently, it can be thought that language proficiency is fundamental for a migrant to thrive within any society. Bourhis and Giles (1997, as cited in Ward et al. 2005) posit that language functions as a badge of identity and is a means to achieve higher status within the society in which an individual operates. Therefore, it can be inferred that in both cases, there is a pressing need to express oneself in the host country's language, primarily for the status and benefits that mastering such language may entail.

Through cultural differences

Ignorance of cultural aspects can generate various inconveniences. Oberg (1960) explains that:

There is maid trouble, school trouble, language trouble, house trouble, transportation trouble, shopping trouble, and the fact that people in the host country are largely indifferent to all these troubles. They help, but they just don't understand your great

concern about these difficulties. Therefore, they must be insensible and unsympathetic to you and your worries (p. 178).

The migrants must endure multiple setbacks in almost every aspect of their daily life, ranging from private spaces like home and educational spaces like school to public spaces such as transportation and stores. These setbacks are often not understood by the host country's residents, as being immersed in their own culture may pose a difficulty for the migrant, whereas, for the locals, it is something familiar and easily comprehensible. Thus, this lack of understanding can be perceived as indifference and a complete lack of empathy. Consequently, this lack of awareness can hinder assimilating into the new culture. Ward et al. (2005) claim that: "assimilation refers to the process whereby a group or a whole society gradually adopt, or are forced into adopting, the customs, values, lifestyles and language of a more dominant culture". (p. 28-29). The term assimilation can describe the 'swallowing up' of one culture by another, implying that the migrants are compelled to coexist with these elements foreign to their own culture and deal with them to engage with the environment in which they find themselves.

Luxcini expresses:

Llegué a Jerusalén, para buscar un taxi...En ese tiempo, más de 25 años atrás, 27 años atrás, me cobraban 200 dólares. (...) Hasta que por fin encontré a un hombre que hablaba un poquito español. Me cobró 50 dólares. (...) Los árabes es una cultura muy fuerte, muy ladrones también (...). O sea, es una cultura muy parecida, así como a Colombia; pero en el sentido del machismo, de lo fuerte, de los agresivos, y de lo vivos también.

Immersing oneself and being compelled to coexist with the customs of the host country's culture, such as understanding social norms, the functioning of infrastructure, and the way of interacting

with others, from simple tasks like requesting a service to paying for transportation, can reflect a challenge in the cultural assimilation of the host country. As Oberg expressed earlier, interpersonal relationships one grows up with and becomes accustomed to living with are a significant factor in an individual's life, leading to a sense of loss of familiarity, like the fish that drifted from its realm, attempting to reach the unfamiliar transport. In Luxcini's case, there is a comparison between the host culture and the culture of origin, with similarities in negative values such as dishonesty, violence, and sexism causing great distress to the participant. In addition to this, a lack of language proficiency prevented her from fully understanding the situation. Despite attempting to maintain resilience, it is acknowledged that there was a masking of the true emotional state she was in. It can also be observed that there are distinct stereotypes or prejudices about the values of the local inhabitants. Oberg (1960) explains that: "the use of stereotypes may salve the ego of someone with a severe case of culture shock, but it certainly does not lead to any genuine understanding of the host country and its people" (p. 176). In this case, it becomes apparent that Luxcini justified the resemblance between the two cultures through stereotypes to explain her feelings and understanding of the situation. This analysis leads us to consider that it might have been a coping mechanism to shield herself from cultural shock without fully comprehending the unjust or unequal situation she was going through.

Through culture terrain

Continuing with Oberg's observations, the issue of transportation can be considered a fundamental aspect of coexisting in the host country's culture. Luxcini relates:

(...) Entonces ese fue un desafío muy tremendo para mí. Aprender a movilizarme en esa nación, sabiendo que no conocía el idioma, ni conocía nada de... y total que el transporte era totalmente diferente y distinto (...) Y las estaciones (digamos así) de los

autobuses, que tenía una parada como el metro, sea, no paraban en cualquier parte (...) Entonces si me llegaba a pasar de esa estación era muy difícil, tenía que volverme a regresar.

Transportation, from the mobility perspective, represents a cultural shock because of a need to understand the functioning and management, such as schedules, space allocation, and the overall structure of the transportation service in the host country's culture. This lack of comprehension could lead to a situation where the migrant might find him/herself in a state of vulnerability, particularly the fear or apprehension of being deceived, harmed, or robbed. Diana relates:

Entonces yo llegué allá a la estación (...) una muchacha alemana lógicamente se me acercó y me dijo que, si ella me podía ayudar, pero yo no entendía ni nada entonces yo lo único que le dije a ella, era que “ai tiket” (...) Entonces ella me ayudó... me compró el tiquete y ella misma como podía me indicaba y me decía que ese era el tren que tenía que coger... porque era con señas que ella me hacía y yo le decía que ok. Y sí, me fui en ese tren y llegué a donde tenía que llegar y fui hice la vuelta y me regresé.

Simultaneously, this same concern aligns with what Oberg mentioned as a symptom of cultural shock, involving the fading of familiarity with the functioning of transportation in the host country. Diana needed to gain knowledge of the transportation infrastructure of the country she migrated to, which caused her nervousness and distress. Thus, a common point can be identified in the experiences of the research participants. Additionally, with a limited command of the language of the country they migrated to, it can be acknowledged that there was assistance from locals who guided them through non-verbal communication or communicated with their limited knowledge of the migrant's native language. Another factor determining the likelihood of cultural assimilation is the conditions under which intercultural relationships are governed. Thus,

if interactions are limited, little intercultural exchange could interfere with cultivating the migrant's intercultural assimilation. Luxcini comments:

En cuestión de diversión o social, todo era muy cerrado, porque pues el fin de semana todo está cerrado (...) entonces entre semana trabajaba y había tiempo, pero se hacía por las tardes entre semana se sale, y pues sí. Difícil, pero pues se tiene que adaptar.

A determining factor for our participant's feeling isolated was the significant difference between Colombian culture and the host country's culture, given the circumstances in which social interactions occur. Aspects such as the distribution of commerce and the time available for personal or leisure purposes represent a new order and norms of social behaviour that all those native to Israeli culture follow to enter a socially accepted normalcy. For Luxcini, being isolated from these social interactions in the host country's culture could have contributed to the lack of intercultural contact with people, significantly affecting the process of cultural assimilation.

Through cultural convictions

Considering what Spencer expressed, culture not only involves what we can see at first glance, such as customs or beliefs, but also represents everything that makes up an individual's life: their beliefs, customs, opinions, perceptions of life, and the values with which familiarity is developed and formed, as Oberg reminds us. Luxcini comments:

Los jóvenes no se matan entre ellos como en nuestro país, no hay esa agresividad, se puede gritar, se puede llegar a palabras, pero jamás se llegan a los golpes. (...) leyes de tránsito, la policía es muy respetada, la salud es muy respetada, las normas son muy respetadas. (...) Tienen mucho sentido de pertenencia. (...) valoran mucho a la familia (...) Otra cosa es que hay mucha libertad. (...) allá hay mucho diálogo entre las familias hay mucho diálogo.

The set of values of a country's culture can represent a series of imbalances, changes, and opinions in the migrant's perspective, leading them to observe the marked difference between his culture of origin and the culture in which they are immersing. These differences can generate criticism and comparisons that lead the migrant to realise the reality they must face. However, in certain cases like Luxcini's, these values such as pacifism, patience, patriotism, and respect generate a deep admiration for the culture of the host country and an awareness of their absence in their Colombian roots, where the absence of these values is noted, meaning there are negative values such as aggressiveness, lack of patience, and disrespect.

Through family bonds

As previously suggested by Oberg, the symptoms such as feelings of anger, helplessness, and frustration, dependence, reluctance to learn the language of the host country, excessive fear of being deceived, robbed, or harmed, and fear of contact with others or simple things that represent the native familiarity involve the loss of intimate, personal, and close elements with family members and other individuals from the culture with whom one lives daily. These relationships stem from the foundation of individuals such as mothers, fathers, siblings, or grandparents who share their lives in the upbringing and care of the younger ones. This series of experiences can linger in our participants, causing impressions, surprises, and misfortunes.

On one side, Diana expresses:

Ellos son muy desapegados, muy desarraigados de la familia (...) los padres están solos, o los mandan a un asilo cuando ya envejece o también los padres tienen los niños, y desde pequeños los meten a jardines. O consiguen personas para que los cuiden, y ellos se van a trabajar muy tempranamente.

It can be interpreted that Diana reflects a judgment regarding detachment, when she faces elements foreign to her culture, such as family relationships with little emotional connection and mutual care. The individual is detached from the family nucleus in the new culture, unlike the culture of origin where relationships with family members are a fundamental part of daily life. In German culture, despite the existence of large families, there is no intimate connection among its members because of the values system, which causes in our participant a sense of loss. On the other side, Luxcini relates: *“las costumbres allá son muy independientes, o sea los jóvenes no viven en una misma casa, ósea ya cuando tienen una determinada edad, 18 años, van al cuartel, se separan de sus padres, viven totalmente independientes”*. Similarly, Luxcini felt a significant difference in terms of family relationships, which were very distant from her own roots; the recognition and comparison of the condition of independence among people can be observed between Colombian culture and Israeli culture. This highlights the ability of young individuals to sustain themselves, something that is not commonly seen in her own culture, emphasising values that differ from it, such as being hardworking, studious, and independent. On the other hand, there is evidence of an agreement and appreciation for this custom, as there is no rejection or denial of it. Instead, it is acknowledged as an enriching factor of the culture of the host country.

Through cookery

Another symptom of cultural shock is the concern about food and its preparation in the host country's culture. Diana relates:

Espera uno decir: ¡ah de pronto por allá me puedo comer el sancochito que mi mamá me prepara tan rico! o puedo conseguir a la mano los plátanos, la yuca, las frutas que tu consigues fácilmente en los mercados de Colombia. Y cuando ves aquí, te estrellas mucho porque no se consiguen nada de esas cosas (...) Importan a veces lo que es el

maracuyá, el tomate de árbol, la granadilla. Pero super caras en comparación de nuestros países (...) aquí lo que más inclina son: las pastas y las papas. (...). Cuando estamos en el verano, aquí hace demasiado calor. Aquí no comen caliente, tratan de comer algo frío. Y algo frío es: comerse unos Kellogg's, o comerse una ensalada verde, o una ensalada de tomate y mozzarella; algo rápido.

It becomes evident that the culinary customs of the new culture differ significantly from those of their native culture. Therefore, a loss of familiarity is suffered, as well as a shock by the impossibility of preparing special dishes in the host country due to the lack of native ingredients or the inability to obtain them because of not having sufficient financial resources to acquire them at a supermarket. Consequently, there was a need to adapt to the culinary customs of the country. Additionally, there can be a change in diets according to the seasons, such as prioritising cold preparations during the summer, which could also cause a mismatch in the migrant's way of eating. In some cases, culinary can be interpreted in a positive light. Luxcini comments:

La comida es otra cosa totalmente diferente. (...) me gustó mucho, o sea, sí, cambió mi forma de comer, muchísimo, porque ellos son muy saludables, comen mucha, mucha verdura y no se usa la harina, el arroz por lo menos casi no, se usa solamente para el shabat, la carne tampoco, entonces más que todo la línea de ellos es muy vegetariana.

In contrast to Diana's experience, the culinary customs of the new culture also differed from her culture of origin, but it was not affected on a high level since it did not differ so much from their culinary customs, which reduced the culture shock. Consequently, her eating changed, which was perceived as beneficial for her health. Culinary customs linked to religious practices, such as the Shabbat, did not represent something antagonistic to their own beliefs. It can be discerned that in contrast to Diana, for Luxcini, the change in diet is perceived as more positive. She

associates these dietary customs with healthy habits, creating a sense of comfort to counteract cultural shock. On the other hand, Diana did not perceive the changes in dietary habits as entirely negative. However, her ability to prepare recipes in line with the culinary customs of her culture was limited.

Through work and time perception

Cultural shocks can be reflected in the concern and anxiety about the unfamiliarity with the working conditions of the host country's culture. Luxcini expresses:

Entre Colombia e Israel la cultura es muy muy diferente, o sea, empezando en su forma laboral. En Israel ya el día cambia, se trabaja hasta el viernes mediodía y sábado se descansa y ya todo está cerrado, no había nada abierto. Se respeta el “שבת” (sábado) porque es totalmente la cultura, ósea de ellos. Ellos vienen con una tradición de guardar el sábado.

The major disparity between Israeli and Colombian culture is the organisation of rest times, particularly for religious reasons. The Shabbat or “שבת”, being the seventh day of the week and considered sacred in Judaism, is celebrated with the abstention from all types of work. Therefore, Saturday is the day of rest from work instead of Sunday, as it is in the native culture of our participant. Another element that can cause surprise or dissatisfaction in the migrant is time management. Diana comments:

En el sentido cultural, decir, aquí la gente es muy puntual, aquí, si tu no puedes asistir a una reunión o si haces un compromiso y no puedes asistir, tienes que llamar con tiempo, y cancelar. Y no como esa costumbre que tenemos nosotros los colombianos, que dejamos todo para última hora.

In employment relationships, compliance with the schedule and the acquired commitments are considered as a manner of respect for others by taking into consideration their times and dispositions, which highly differs from the customs of the migrant's culture, who mentions that flexibility in schedules and the postponement of commitments is present. Consequently, there may be pressure on the migrant to meet expectations and fit into their new environment. Time management between one culture and another can be contrasting in many aspects from the perspective of the migrant. Luxcini relates:

En el trabajo no hubo ningún problema con discriminación, ninguna diferencia después de que uno sea responsable, cumplido en su labor, a ellos no les interesa nada más y con el horario, sí, en cuanto al horario pues si te dicen que a las 7, a las 7, si ya llegas a las 7 y media, ya llegaste tarde.

In a culture, schedules can be strict, which would lead the migrant to question their own perception of time and adjust to certain ways of managing their timetable to be capable of staying in par with the host country's society norms, leaving aside the flexible character that they can refer into their native culture. This change in perspective can occur for countless reasons, and some of them resort to avoid being rejected or criticised, but also being perceived out the normality. The challenges can also involve cultural shocks regarding the host country 's technology, seen as another big issue. Luxcini relates:

Mis mayores desafíos fue llegar a un país donde todavía la tecnología no se desarrollado como la tenemos ahora. O sea, no habían teléfonos celulares. Solo habían teléfonos en la calle, y en la casa, y esos teléfonos se manejaban con unas tarjetas, y era muy difícil para mí, porque las direcciones estaban en hebreo. Y en inglés, y no había forma de

comunicarme con la persona de que me guiara o algo. Si no que me tocaba ir preguntándole al autobús en el poco inglés que yo sabía.

Mobility can be affected by communication difficulties, which represents a completely different scenario from what she was used to in her country, being immersed in an environment with street or home telephones with a complex system of use and acquisition. The difficulty is not only because there is a different communication technology, but also a lack of proficiency in the language of the host country. The migrant looks for a way to speed up communication, which usually borders on the use of non-verbal language or a lingua franca, as in the case of the participant.

Oberg (1960) adds that a phase of cultural shock is regression, as the familiar environment of one's home suddenly takes on immense importance given the circumstances and challenges our participant faced. Luxcini adds:

Entonces ese fue un desafío muy tremendo para mí. Aprender a movilizarme en esa nación (...) tienen sus estaciones para uno bajarse (...). Entonces, si me llegaba a pasar de esa estación era muy difícil, tenía que volverme a regresar.

Mobility represented a rather shocking and disheartening factor since she was unfamiliar with the main communication system, and the Hebrew language posed a significant challenge. This limitation prevented her from seeking more information about the transportation system, including stops, available buses, and schedules. The lack of proficiency in both spoken and written language greatly hindered her ability to navigate the transportation system. She couldn't effectively communicate with others or interpret notices providing essential information such as schedules and stops. Oberg (1960) suggests that one way to overcome culture shock is to gain an understanding of the people in the host country. It can be emphasised that this understanding

cannot be successfully achieved without knowing the language, as it represents the primary symbolic system of communication. Diana explains:

Mi tía (...) me dijo que tenía que ir como a unos 5 pueblos más adelante a escribir una encomienda a la casa de una amiga de ella, y me dijo que tenía yo que ir sola a comprar el ticket para viajar en el tren (...) ¿cómo lo iba yo hacer?, que yo vería.

It can be observed a rather challenging situation regarding the learning process and her motivation to acquire the second language. Initially, there was no opportunity to attend a school or institute where she could formally learn the language. Moreover, there were no specialised resources to facilitate the process, and finding an empathetic person with an appropriate disposition to dedicate time and teach her was even more challenging. Returning to what Oberg expressed, the symptom of regression becomes evident, as there was an urgent need to retreat from the culture of the host country and seek refuge in familiar elements that could ensure comfort in the unfamiliar environment. On the other hand, one can understand that Diana's aunt's decision to expose her completely to German culture, without providing any basic knowledge of it, might align with what Oberg proposed. Following this line of thought, Oberg (1960) explains that once a person can engage in friendly conversations with individuals such as servants or neighbours, or simply by interacting in the street and going shopping, not only does one gain confidence and empowerment, but it also allows for an opening to a new environment of cultural meanings. In this way, Diana would be forced to interact, articulate words, and discover a new world by herself, without creating a safe space where she could have initial interactions to gain confidence and motivation. This forced immersion would equip her with the necessary tools to navigate the challenges that social relationships may present.

Through cultural identity

Salgado (1999, as cited in Grimaldo, 2006., p. 42-43) noted that cultural identity directly refers to the cultural component, beginning from an early age through customs, habits, and ways of life. On the other hand, Grimaldo (2006) suggests that identity can be seen as a process through which an individual self-defines and self-values, considering aspects of their experiences such as past, present, and future. In this way, it can reconcile inclinations and talents from the initial roles defined by parents, peers, and society itself; cultural identity is closely related to the culture with which an individual engages in their development, and this is manifested through components such as customs, values, both the superficial and the profound aspects of culture. Furthermore, identity is a process in which a self-definition is related to personal experiences at all stages of life. Thus, cultural identity can be considered an essential part of the migrant individual when interacting with the host country's culture. This identity may be influenced by aspects that constitute the new culture or remain a symbol of the individual's identity over the years. It may involve a conscious effort to adapt and integrate. Luxcini comments:

La iglesia porque soy una mujer cristiana, entonces no había forma tampoco de reunirme, porque no hay iglesia donde podía reunirme, donde podía ir, y tampoco me podía reunir con mis hermanos de la iglesia, es otra cosa diferente, no se encuentra un sitio para uno reunirse.

The expression of Luxcini's identity regarding her religious beliefs was limited by the absence of common meeting places to engage in community with others who shared her beliefs. Similarly, social, and recreational relationships were also restricted due to the different uses of public spaces and schedules. In her country of origin, during weekends, most public and entertainment spaces such as restaurants, shops, and shopping centres are open to the public, whereas in the host country, this did not occur in the same manner. Luxcini adds:

Entonces yo me adapté a la cultura de los judíos, me adapté en ciertas formas, sobre todo la comida, los horarios, respetar sus fiestas, sin abandonar mis creencias, total sin abandonar mis raíces, o sea, yo nunca perdí mi identidad como persona. Me adapté a las circunstancias, y a la forma de vivir en este país.

Therefore, she tried to integrate into her new context without abandoning her beliefs. It is reiterated that there was an interest in assimilating into the new culture by following and understanding the social norms and rituals inherent in that society. Moreover, adapting to the circumstances that arose while living in an unfamiliar context was crucial to maintaining her own identity as a fundamental aspect of preserving her cultural identity. Diana expresses:

No, no en todos los sentidos. No he dejado mi identidad cultural por estar en otro país. He tenido cambios en ciertas cositas sí, me he sometido, a ciertos cambios de mi cultura, a la cultura de aquí, pero no pierdo mi identidad cultural, jamás. Yo la conservo todavía.

A middle ground can be observed between both extremes, considering various aspects of the host country's culture to distinguish her cultural identity. Through these migrant experiences, cultural identity is an aspect that is subject to change according to the migrant's life aspects and based on their advantages to establish themselves in a new culture. In both cases, there is no total abandonment of the native cultural identity to favour adaptation and to be able to settle for an extended time. Once this is understood, it is concluded that the aspects that make up cultural identity are preserved from the roots, some being more forceful than others. However, the need arises to make changes or adjustments in certain customs and behaviours to achieve better integration and approval from the community in which one lives.

New culture, new things to explore

When multiple cultures coexist, individuals can be influenced by the culture foreign to them, resulting in changes in the identity of people from the non-dominant culture. Ward et al. (2005) claim that:

The interplay between home and host culture identities may be affected by several factors, and their development only sometimes follows a linear or unidirectional path.

Various identity changes may be observed as recently arrived immigrant groups evolve into more firmly established minorities in multicultural societies (p. 108).

The interaction process between the culture of origin and the host culture is not linear or with a specific direction, as various factors can influence it. Due to this interaction, there may be a change in identity if migrants become minorities. However, this does not always represent the abandonment of the individual's original identity by the person from the minority culture. Likewise, the clash between the two cultures should not be solely perceived as something inherently negative but as something with various nuances. The migrant may find notable and positive elements in the differences. Luxcini relates:

Lo que más me llamó la atención de la nueva cultura fue la organización en cuanto a lo social. No vi en sus calles, no vi niños (...) Un niño abandonado; nunca jamás vi un niño sin ir a la escuela. Nunca vi un anciano en la calle pidiendo. Nunca vi personas indigentes en los semáforos.

Renewed encouragement is highlighted to continue residing in the country. She assumed she was in an economically prosperous country with better resource management and, therefore, better tools to address social problems and help marginalised people. Additionally, the participant's economic situation would be improved as a resident in the country, providing relief from any concerns, considering that the primary motivation for migration was to seek job opportunities.

Continuing with the noteworthy aspects mentioned by the participants, the order and infrastructure of the host country can also be one of the most impactful factors. Diana explains: *"lo que más me llamó la atención aquí de esta nueva cultura ha sido el orden. El orden que ellos mantienen aquí en las calles... el orden en todo el aspecto. Muy ordenados, muy limpios"*. In the new culture, order and cleanliness were notable factors for the participant, especially as impactful and positive aspects for initial perceptions of the country where she migrated and still resides. In both cases, it can be highlighted that order was a component that significantly influenced their perceptions and opinions about the host country, leading to favourable judgments.

The Essence of Identity

After being in the host country for an extended period, cultural identity can be influenced by various factors across different areas of an individual's life. Ward et al. (2005) suggest that:

Those who view their stay in a new culture as temporary, such as sojourners or short-term migrants, retain a stronger identity with their culture of origin and a weaker identity with the culture of contact, compared with those who plan for their residence to be more permanent (p. 111).

Migrants who have a short stay in the host country have a more robust capacity to retain their cultural identity and a weaker retention of the learned identity when adapting to the new cultural environment. However, for our participants, their identity still endures, regardless of their extensive years spent in their respective countries of Germany and Israel. On one hand, Diana explains: *"No, no han cambiado. Mis costumbres y valores no cambian. Es algo muy arraigado dentro de mí"*. Her cultural identity remains with her as an individual living in Germany, and despite being surrounded by and having experienced, worked, and spent a significant part of her

life with native people, these customs, values, or traditions have not been able to ultimately influence and change those rooted identities that she brings as a Colombian wherever she goes. On the other hand, we can observe that these roots can be strengthened and nurtured despite being in a completely different culture. Luxcini expresses:

Han mejorado. Sí, total. (...) He mejorado en cuestión de valorarme y de quererme como soy, porque realmente esto lo aprendí en Israel. De valorarme muchísimo, de saber que como ser humano valgo, y porque me hicieron sentir así allá.

It becomes evident that arriving in a country with distinctive traits such as values and beliefs can be a positive factor. This factor strengthens one's identity, enabling one to learn to appreciate oneself, understand oneself, and find a sense of belonging in a culture different from the native one. In both cases, it can be concluded that our participants, despite having been in the respective countries of Germany and Israel for more than 20 years, still preserve and represent themselves with the characteristics of their Colombian identity, leaving a marked sense of identity wherever they go.

Unlocking cultures through words

Initial encounters

In the migratory experience, numerous differences and peculiarities can exist, rendering each case unique and unreproducible. This reality holds for migrants who adopted a second language as their primary means of communication to survive and adapt to diverse circumstances and contexts. In the specific migration cases addressed in this research, the term "Second Language Acquisition" (SLA) is preferred over "Learning." Additionally, Saville (2012) elucidates that the second language is generally considered an official language with a dominant

social status in various realms such as education, employment, and everyday purposes. It is often acquired by minority groups, such as migrants who, as native speakers, communicate in another language. Following this line of thought, we would like to commence by exploring the participants' initial encounters with the language of the host country. Luxcini explains:

El país al que yo emigré se habla...la lengua materna de allá es el hebreo la segunda lengua es el inglés y la tercera el árabe (...) no tenía yo conocimiento de estas lenguas, el inglés fue muy básico en mi colegio y unas que otras palabras sabía, entonces era totalmente idiomas diferentes para mí.

It is deduced, then, that Hebrew serves as the primary language of the host country, with English or Arabic being used as a secondary language. The participant did not speak either of these languages; she only had basic English learned in school. Prior knowledge of the culture and all its implications, including language and social dynamics, among others, in the destination country can be a significant factor in the migrant's adaptation to the new culture. The need to adopt a second language to adapt to different contexts becomes evident. For Saville (2012): “Second Language Acquisition (SLA) involves a wide range of language learning settings and learner characteristics and circumstances” (p. 5). The environment in which the individual operates, and their understanding is a decisive element in language acquisition. Luxcini adds:

Como a mí me ha gustado mucho la historia y yo conocía mucho la historia de Israel, de ese pueblo tanto bíblicamente cómo pues por documentales y por muchos medios de información (...) sabía que el idioma sería difícil, pero no imposible para yo aprenderlo.

In this way, it can be interpreted that prior knowledge of a culture and its linguistic component can generate a feeling of security and preparation to face various complex situations in the host country, which would lead to converting the acquisition of a second language as a central means

of communication to survive these new experiences. On the other hand, a community sharing cultural traits within the host country existed, akin to other migrant cases, which may generate a sense of familiarity to counterbalance the cultural shock related to language. Luxcini remarks:

Había más personas, totalmente. Eran emigrantes, y también había una comunidad de judíos, argentinos. Cuando la vía fuera de España, ellos emigraron allá a Suramérica, entonces sí había una buena... eh, no tanta como ahora, pero sí había cierta población de habla hispana.

It is understood that knowing other migrants who spoke Spanish, she could counteract feelings of unease due to unfamiliarity with the language and culture. This context can happen because there were more Spanish-speaking individuals with whom they could identify in some way. Diana relates: ‘*sí. Se habla un idioma diferente. Y sí necesitaba aprenderlo*’. Similarly, in Germany, the language spoken was vastly German, which stood apart from her mother tongue Spanish. Within herself, there arose a compulsory need to learn it, and in contrast to Luxcini, Diana's experience conveys a sense of sadness and loneliness, in addition to attempting to maintain resilience against the discrimination she describes. Diana adds:

Es otra cultura, otro idioma y lógicamente hay alemanes muy racistas, pero muy racistas (...) porque empezando por el idioma aquí te hablan y si no entiendes bueno te miran mal (...) empezando que a mí a veces también me hablaban y me hablaban y como yo no sabía ni entendía nada, lo poco y nada que aprendí a decir al comienzo era ‘ja’ y ‘nein’ que significa ‘sí’ y ‘no’.

In this context, it can be interpreted that the term "racist," as used by participant Diana, refers to the xenophobic discrimination and rejection she experienced in the host country due to her limited proficiency in the German language. The lack of vocabulary constrained successful

interactions, as it is deduced that a comprehensive understanding of a language is fundamental for effective communication and more enjoyable interactions. In this case, using simple words to affirm and negate proved insufficient to convey a complete idea and grasp the thoughts the interlocutor wished to express. Moreover, these simple responses were not deemed acceptable by the country's residents. Saville (2012) explains that for varied reasons, most individuals are knowledgeable in more than one language, and usually, the first language is acquired effortlessly. However, the second language involves many conditions and processes, and success is far from guaranteed. Learning a second language is influenced by prior knowledge of the first and by more individual and contextual factors. Considering this definition, it can be discerned that in an initial encounter with the host country's language, the second language is influenced by the first and purely contextual and individual factors. The lack of knowledge of the language and culture could further hinder Diana's acquisition of a second language; likewise, conflicting feelings may have arisen given the circumstances. Diana clarifies:

Sí, si tenía más personas que hablaban el español a mi alrededor. Y en parte se alegra uno demasiado, lógico. El poder uno interactuar en su propia lengua, pero a la vez también estanca un poco para poder aprender bien este idioma.

Despite the joy brought about by Spanish speakers in her environment, there was concern about interacting with these individuals. These interactions could pose obstacles in her German language acquisition process, as there was no likelihood of focusing on the use of the German language in all social contexts since she would be consistently using her native language, Spanish.

Embracing language barricades

After an initial encounter, it can be acknowledged that language is paramount for those who choose to migrate to a foreign country. Once daily life is immersed in the host culture, language becomes the primary means of communication for the migrant. It facilitates communication for everyday matters and is crucial for social integration, enabling participation in the local culture and establishing emotional connections with others. In the professional realm, language proficiency is often a fundamental requirement for accessing employment and advancing professionally, thereby contributing to successful cultural assimilation and the construction of a fulfilling life in the new environment; language proved to be one of the significant barriers for the participants in this research. Therefore, it was a decisive motivation to initiate the migration process towards a specific destination, as was the case for Diana, who previously described having relatives residing in the United States and Germany waiting for her arrival. Diana clarifies:

Porque yo soy una persona que no soy nada buena para el inglés, pero nada (...) me daba temor, también en el idioma ¿no? (...) si no puedo con el inglés mucho menos voy a poder con el alemán.

Following her experience, it can be understood that from the outset, there was the possibility of choosing between the United States and Germany. However, after having a negative experience with English, she dismissed the possibility of migrating to the United States. Instead, she opted for Germany, having no prior experience with the language and, therefore, no negative perceptions. In certain situations, language does not pose a challenge that limits its acquisition, acknowledging the diversity of languages that may exist in the host country. Luxcini notes:

Todo el mundo habla su idioma, el idioma de allá, o el hindú, o el tagalo, o el árabe, o el japonés, o el chino, o el griego, porque todos los idiomas los escuchas en Israel; todas

las lenguas. Entonces, sí, se siente perdido, se siente uno atemorizado (...) muy difícil para mí, porque las direcciones estaban en hebreo. Y en inglés, y no había forma de comunicarme con la persona de que me guiara o algo. Si no que me tocaba ir preguntándole al autobús en el poco inglés que yo sabía.

Acknowledging the language diversity within Israeli society elicited feelings of fear and loss in a culture entirely different from hers. However, this was not a determining factor in choosing another country to migrate to instead of Israel. The lack of knowledge of Hebrew and the other languages spoken there posed a significant challenge when trying to navigate and communicate with people in the new environment and created a linguistic barrier, leading to reliance, as a first measure, on limited proficiency in English. Consequently, the lack of proficiency in the local language is a prominent obstacle to adaptation in a country with a different culture from one's own.

Native tongue's dialogue

As mentioned in the migration category, both participants arrived in the host countries around their thirties. Luxcini initiated the migration process to Israel at the age of 30 and remained there for 24 years. Similarly, Diana began the process at the age of 28, currently having spent 25 years in the country. However, this does not imply that they acquired Hebrew and German as second languages from a young age, undergoing a later language acquisition process. Saville (2012) explains that L1 refers to languages acquired during childhood, starting before the age of three, and learned as part of natural growth among children. In this context, it can be understood that both participants have Spanish as their mother tongue and grew up in a Spanish-speaking country like Colombia. Given this, the investigation sought to determine whether they

had the opportunity to interact in their mother tongue once established in the host country.

Luxcini explains:

Muy pocas veces porque no me relacionaba con gente, ni trabajé con gente de habla hispana. Todo el tiempo llegué a casas donde se hablaba el hebreo. Entonces solo con los latinos donde llegué y viví, eh, solamente era pues un día a la semana que yo podía hablar mi lengua. El resto de los días estaba en mi trabajo, y era solo con gente que hablaba su lengua, el hebreo.

Despite having proximity to a community that spoke her mother tongue, there were few occasions when there was an opportunity to interact in Spanish. This situation occurred because they were not part of the work environment where most of her time was spent. A contrasting situation can be inferred. Diana comments: "(..) *sí claro, tenía que hablar alemán*". Recognising the necessity of speaking exclusively in this language, the experiences in this aspect contrast between the migrants, as one had, albeit limited, the opportunity to speak in her mother tongue, while the other expressed herself solely in the second language. To remark, Luxcini relates:

Allá un niño que sale de primaria ya habla el inglés perfectamente. Y como mínimo habla francés, o habla árabe, o habla ruso. O sea, por lo mínimo son dos idiomas que salen hablando. Entonces me pareció súper bien.

It can be considered one specific and exciting aspect about the language acquisition of Israeli children, where, culturally, there is a significant difference in education concerning languages and their diversity. By the end of primary school, English plays a significant role as a second language and knowledge of other languages such as French, Arabic, or Russian is presented too. As researchers, this line of thought leads us to interpret the vast array of languages that can be

spoken, taught, or even acquired in a country different from the participant's country of origin, Colombia.

Unraveling Strategies in Language Acquisition

An important aspect that can hinder the participants' interactions in the host country's culture is communication in the second language. Diana narrates:

Entonces yo a mí me hablaban a veces y me preguntaban cosas entonces yo como no entendía qué era lo que me estaban hablando yo siempre respondía 'ja', 'ja', 'si', 'si', decía yo, entonces la persona me decía 'ja?' entonces hacían gestos como desagradables y me decían 'ja?' entonces yo decía 'jumm' esto no es una pregunta buena, entonces la cambiaba y decía 'ah nien nein'. (...) pero entonces decía dentro mí Dios mío no he entendido nada.

Saville (2012) explains that the circumstances under which the process of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) occurs are essential to understanding what is learned, and typically depend on informal or formal exposure to speakers of other languages in an environment where a second language is needed to meet basic needs. A problematic communication situation in the second language can be interpreted, as she struggled to comprehend what the interlocutor was expressing in German. As Saville mentions, being exposed to an informal situation can test her ability to communicate and understand basic needs in the second language. Lacking resources such as vocabulary and information retention capacity, the use of the German language posed a challenge and a significant concern due to limited vocabulary use, which she was aware of. Her responses were driven by a need for approval and were compelled by the circumstances to respond out of obligation. In the same manner, Luxcini expresses:

En cuanto al idioma y la comunicación, nos da pena pronunciar mal y el hebreo es muy difícil la pronunciación. Entonces muchas personas por miedo a equivocarse, por pronunciar mal una palabra no se abren, no sueltan la palabra. Para mí no fue problema ¿Por qué? Porque siempre he tratado de lo que no sé preguntarlo.

A significant difference can be found in this regard; it could be interpreted that in one case, the communication in the second language was approached more engagingly, demonstrating an active effort to understand what the interlocutor was expressing, so there was no need for approval from native speakers, thus allowing for freedom to make errors. The limited use of the language was a concern, indicating an interest in learning and acquiring unfamiliar vocabulary; hence, it was essential to inquire about anything unknown. The ability to communicate and comprehend was more resourceful, employing tools such as vocabulary and information retention capacity. The use of the German language presented a challenge and a significant concern due to the limited vocabulary use, which was acknowledged. Responses were driven by a need for approval and compelled by circumstances to respond out of obligation. In the case of the Hebrew language, despite initially acknowledging its difficulty, it did not pose a challenge that hindered the language acquisition process. There was a conscious use of vocabulary, as Saville reminds us that being exposed to an informal situation signifies a challenge for speakers to consciously use the second language.

Considering these findings, there was a desire to understand and gather more information about the process of acquiring the second language in the host country. In exploring the question that relates to tools, techniques, and strategies for memorising vocabulary, such as phrases and verbs, two quite distinct positions were elucidated from each other. Luxcini narrates:

Una de las mejores técnicas que yo tomé fue el día a día. Preguntar mucho repetir y repetir y en la televisión y siempre estaba repitiendo, y entonces estaba escribiendo. Una palabra la escribía, una palabra la escribía... Era muy repetitiva, y veía los letreros de las calles, leía y los preguntaba a un judío, algo así. Lo que estaba en hebreo, yo le decía... lo que fuera yo señalaba ¿Qué dice aquí? Entonces me respondía en el hebreo. Entonces yo lo repetía, lo repetía ¡mucha repetición! También tomaba los libros de los niños, en los dibujos que estaban ahí marcados. Entonces yo empezaba a mirar los dibujos y empecé a aprenderme la letra del abecedario para ver la fonética, entonces así fui juntando palabras, y la televisión; la forma de aprendizaje, osea, muchos apuntes, y mucha práctica.

As can be observed, it is appropriate to say that Luxcini employed a Cognitive Style to acquire Hebrew as a second language. Saville (2012) states that: “Cognitive style refers to individuals’ preferred way of processing: i.e., of perceiving, conceptualising, organising, and recalling information” (p. 92). As described, numerous memorization and vocabulary organisation techniques were employed, such as asking native speakers about the content of advertising signs or directions found on the streets. Regarding information recall, the continuous repetition of what was read and heard when pronouncing Hebrew with native speakers can be interpreted. Active listening through television reinforced this knowledge and note-taking enhanced vocabulary through writing. When it comes to perception, the resource used was children's books to learn written phonetics and the alphabet. On the other hand, Diana explains: “*Sí. Primeramente, lo hice a través de libros. Luego escuchando la radio, y luego también viendo mucho la televisión. Son medios que ayudan muchísimo. Y cada palabra que escuchaba, entonces yo le buscaba la traducción en un diccionario*”. Unlike Luxcini, Diana did not engage in direct contact with

natives. To perceive and recall information, she consistently relied on the resource of reading, specifically books. Regarding listening, she used mass media sources such as radio and television. In terms of vocabulary, it can be inferred that for each word she heard, there was a search for the equivalent in her mother tongue in a dictionary. Additionally, the personality factor is decisive in the choice of strategies for acquiring a second language. Saville (2012) claims that: “Cognitive style is also closely related to and interacts with personality factors and learning strategies” (p. 93). Each participant has a unique personality that influences their decisions when acquiring a language. Luxcini describes: “(...) *Nunca quise trabajar con un latino porque siempre quise trabajar con un extranjero, con un nativo de allá para poder aprender la lengua y entonces el oído. Estar muy atenta a todo lo que me decían (...)*”. Choosing to work with native speakers to perfect the language represents a personality factor to make her acquisition process more comforting and reliable. On the other hand, Diana 's personality led her to be reserved in social interactions with the language. These reasons can be understood from a social/affective perspective, where people are seeking opportunities to interact with native speakers, working cooperatively with peers to obtain feedback, asking questions to obtain clarification, requesting repetition, explanation, or examples (O’Malley and Chamot 1987, p. 97, as cited in Saville, 2012). Unlike Luxcini, Diana did not actively seek interactions with natives and feedback was more a consequence of living in a country with a language different from her mother tongue. She chose to consume products in the new language, such as television and radio programs, as well as books. Instead of directly asking residents for information, she preferred to look in dictionaries. Considering these findings, we can infer that language acquisition also has a significant social component. Saville (2012) explains that:

Each language reflects the social requirements of the society that uses it, and there is no standard for judging whether one language is more effective for communication than another (...). We use language to communicate, to categorize and catalogue the objects, events, and processes of human experience (p. 34).

Language is primarily used for communication, categorising objects, and describing the human experience. It is not considered that one language is more effective for communication than another because it reflects the expectations society places on individuals. As investigators, there was a curiosity to see if there were any use of strategies to cope with communication limitations by a participant. Luxcini manifests:

Siempre estaba preguntando ¿Qué significa? Y me guie mucho por el inglés, aunque no sabía inglés, como siempre se habla inglés allá entonces me mostraban en inglés, me repetían en hebreo y ya empezaba yo a repetir. Pero era más cuestión de oído, más cuestión de prestar mucha atención. (...) Entonces para mí no me daba pena si lo hablaba mal me decía, me repite, repítemelo por favor, repítemelo por favor. Entonces siempre estaba preguntando lo dije bien, lo dije bien, no me daba vergüenza y eso es más que todo la forma de aprender, la repetición constante.

A crucial aspect to highlight is the use of another language, different from her native language and the host country 's native language: English, as a bridge to acquire Hebrew. As Saville suggests, it is relevant to consider that there is no standard for judging the effectiveness of one language compared to another, as Luxcini did not speak English as a native or second language. Despite this, she preferred to pay attention to the meaning in English and listen to natives for their Hebrew equivalents, making this case an interesting one. Returning to Diana 's case, one can reflect on the lack of communication and how it limits social interactions. She perceives

residents of the host country with little openness, which is reinforced when there are no communication issues, even leading to the exclusion or ignorance of individuals who do not conform.

A conscious communicative adaptation

Saville (2012) suggests that: "Humans are born with a natural ability or innate capacity to learn language" (p. 13). As understood earlier, the participants have demonstrated the ability and strategies to acquire the host country's language based on their needs to navigate the culture and everyday life. Effectiveness can vary depending on different factors, such as acquisition strategies or each person's personality. Communication in a second language is essential to interact appropriately with a culture entirely different from one's own, and there may be occasions where individuals must consciously adapt to be part of social exchanges, maintaining their similarities and differences within a framework of mutual respect for both cultures. Diana articulates:

(...) si yo no me sé defender bien con el idioma y estoy con un grupo de alemanes y no se desenvolverme bien y hablar bien el idioma, entonces no me van a tener en cuenta para contarme, si no que ellos van a hablar entre ellos y me van a ignorar a mí (...) uno tiene que aprender a hablar muy bien aquí este idioma para poder integrarse con esta cultura, porque si no de resto te ignoran todo el tiempo y te hacen a un lado (...) porque no les interesa.

The difficulty of integrating into German culture was more complex concerning the language, as it restricted her social interactions. This action highlights the significance of appropriately using the second language for interaction with native speakers. A factor that may have led to a closer and less challenging experience when integrating and socialising with natives of the host

country's culture was her motivation to learn more about the culture. Luxcini comments: " (...) *El idioma sí es difícil, pero no me fue tan difícil porque me gusta mucho aprender y me gusta mucho poner cuidado, preguntar*". The desire to learn could have been a fundamental factor driving interactions with the residents of the new culture. Saville (2012) suggests that a factor often cited to explain why some L2 students are more successful than others is personal motivation, as it largely determines the level of effort exerted in the stages of second language development, which is typically crucial for achieving the final level of proficiency. Motivation would be a determining factor in a successful process, as there would be a correlation between motivation and the effort to achieve proficiency in a second language.

A change in the migrant's perspective

Direct contact with a new language can bring various perspectives on a culture different from one's own. Luxcini articulates:

Al vivir en un país ya se cambia la percepción de lo que es una cultura total porque una cosa es superficial, otra cosa es vivir en ese mundo (...) con respecto al lenguaje, me enriqueció mi conocimiento, porque aprendí otro idioma, pero no para cambiar mi forma de hablar. Cada país y cada cultura tiene su idioma y de eso no puedo cambiar nada, Entonces no puedo yo, o sea, cambiar mi lenguaje porque es mi lengua castellana y es muy diferente una gramática de un idioma a otro. Si estoy allá y hablo hebreo lo hablo como con la gramática de ellos y si estoy en mi país con la gramática del castellano, no lo puedo cambiar porque es así es el idioma.

Acquiring a second language enriched her cultural knowledge; however, this has not changed her relationship with her native language and the way she uses each of the two languages. It is

essential to have knowledge and proper use of the language, respecting the spaces in which one operates. It should be emphasised that the need to use a second language may arise from a necessity for effective communication. This is how Saville (2012) explains: “learning a second language for communicative purposes requires knowledge and skills for using it appropriately, as well as knowing aspects of linguistic forms and how they are organised” (p. 137). In this sense, it can be understood that knowledge, skills, and strategies for appropriately using the second language can change the perspective of the migrant, as in the case of Luxcini, who emphasises the importance of distinguishing contexts to use one language or another according to communicative and social needs. Like Luxcini, Diana has also been able to observe significant changes in her relationship with the second language since she began her migration process. Diana relates: “*Sí. Si he sentido cambios en la percepción de la cultura (...) con el idioma si demasiado y con el problema del racismo también. Pero ya he sentido muchos cambios con respecto a eso; hay más aceptación de momento*”. In this sense, the racism Diana refers to again corresponds to the term xenophobia, and a possible interpretation of this improvement in the situation could be connected to a better use of the language, which has developed during her stay in the host country. Therefore, there is effective communication that has had repercussions on her perspective regarding interpersonal relationships with the locals.

Intercultural sensitivity from migrant’s experience

The migratory experiences of our participants have allowed us to navigate through the process of migration and cultural assimilation, exploring all aspects that constitute cultural shock, identity, and the acquisition of a second language. Equally, we wanted to explore, with intercultural sensitivity, how the process has been from the stage of Denial to Integration into the

new culture, considering both an ethnocentric and an ethno-relative perspective. Following this, Bennett (1986) establishes that the denial stage is the beginning and foundation of Ethnocentrism, where an individual's viewpoint is unquestionable and is the centre of their entire reality. Ethnocentrism is the position and experience of the individual in which their perspective on ideals, thoughts, opinions, realities, or truths is closed and unquestionable concerning other options that differ from their own. This stance does not allow for any viewpoint that might challenge reality compared to other cultures, as their own culture is considered superior. In this way, Bennet (1986) explains that Ethnocentrism is composed of the first three stages of the model of intercultural sensitivity: Denial, Defense, and Minimization, where there is a reluctance to understand other perspectives from different cultural realities, focusing exclusively on the worldview provided by individual's native culture. On the other hand, Bennet (1986) suggests that Ethnorelativism is conformed by the last three stages of the same model: Acceptance, Adaptation, and Integration, where cultural difference is recognised and respected, perceiving diversity as usual and healthy among various cultures. Therefore, both perspectives, Ethnocentrism and Ethnorelativism, converge with each other, positioning the vision of their own culture as legitimate or recognising and accepting different worldviews, respectively. The migrant can oscillate between extremes according to their exceptional cases and experiences.

An ethnocentric experience

As seen earlier, the first stage that initiates this ethnocentric experience is the Denial stage. Bennet (1986) explains that Denial occurs when individuals are inhibited from physical or social contact, implying the isolation of significant cultural differences. This isolation leads us to think that the migrant could adopt an ethnocentric stance from the initial encounter with multiple cultural aspects of the host country, where their worldview becomes unquestionable in

understanding other possible cultural realities. Diana comments: “*Sí, si me afectó en cuanto a la cultura, me afectó el aislamiento de las personas. El ser cada uno concreto en su hogar, en su casa, y no ser como la cultura nuestra que es más sociable, me afectó bastante sí*”. Aspects visible to the naked eye, such as the way of socialising, sharing or expressing oneself, are factors that can cause the state of Denial in this new cultural environment; the change in social dynamics, limited physical contact with others, and the inability to integrate or feel identified most likely reinforce an ethnocentric vision because of lacking understanding a unique reality, where the comparison begins with the personal traits of the native culture versus the culture of the host country, allowing them to be seen as more negative than positive aspects. In the veld of the diversity, contrary situations can be observed. Luxcini expresses:

Bueno, no me sentí aislada en la cultura de ellos porque, pues, la verdad que son personas muy fáciles, por decir que ya lo vi en el país, o sea, no interfieren en tu cultura; pienso que son personas muy independientes y no están fijándose en cómo vives, cómo no vives, no. Ellos están en su mundo y son personas muy sencillas de entender en su forma de vivir.

The same feeling regarding the cultural difference that exists in the case of Diana is not observed since the interactions with members of the host country provided valuable information and characteristics about the reactions and possible encounters that our participant could witness, also as part of the social and collective thought that facilitates communication and approach to the new cultural reality. Among these traits, we find acceptance, empathy, and respect for the members of a different society. Following this path, Bennett (1986) adds that without exposure to different cultures, individuals cannot recognise the existence of cultural differences. This lack of recognition results in poor understanding and categorisation, leading to an ethnocentric

viewpoint. This position includes individuals perceiving the host culture's members through stereotyped feelings and actions that arise in response to protecting their cultural identity, which feels attacked. The individuals may criticise inherent traits or deficiencies such as character, intelligence, physical ability, and work ethic. In this way, one can question the presence of prejudices or beliefs in stereotypes about the local population of the new culture by the participants. Diana clarifies: “(...) *yo nunca había mostrado interés de salir de mi país. Por lo tanto, no tenía un conocimiento*”. The lack of knowledge about what is unknown can influence in a certain extent the way of experiencing the reality of a new, totally different culture since, lacking knowledge, there would be a lack of reason to formulate a criticism or have specific behaviours and stereotypical thoughts. Despite not having prior information and contact with other cultures, she chose not to form hasty opinions about German culture. In some instances, prejudices may be less evident or non-existent given the circumstances of proximity or knowledge of the host country's culture. Luxcini explains: “*no prejuicios no tuve contra ellos nunca, jamás. Ya tenía conocimiento más o menos de la cultura donde yo iba a emigrar, entonces no tuve ningún prejuicio. No, no, no, para nada*”. Despite the different conditions, since one of the participants had some knowledge about the new culture, while the other participant lacked prior information about the culture, there was a greater propensity to develop prejudices. Both cases gave equal reactions as there were no prejudices. Thus, the lack of information can lead to prejudiced opinions. However, it is not certain that such prejudices will occur.

Moving beyond the isolation of cultural differences, we encounter the next stage of Defense. Bennet (1986) suggests that:

The Defense against difference involves attempts to counter perceived threats to the centrality of one's worldview. Because difference must be recognised (and thus given meaning) before it is seen as threatening, this stage represents a development in intercultural sensitivity beyond Denial (p. 183).

It is necessary that the difference is acknowledged, or else it will be seen as a potential threat. Therefore, Defense would be a manner to counteract cultural shock and the threat of an egocentric worldview. Diana elucidates:

Sí sentí rechazo en cuanto al idioma y a la falta de comprensión. Ejemplos que puedo dar también es que nos catalogan un poco mal en estos países europeos. Yo cuando entré a hacer un curso que quería, me catalogaban como guerrillera o narcotraficante y eso es muy triste.

Language could be recognised as a sign of segregation, given the abysmal difference in skills for communication with it. Likewise, in Diana's case, the generalised negative stereotype associated with crime, such as illegal armed groups and drug traffickers that exist in Colombian culture, limits her insertion in the areas of education and her image of a person with values. The related comments could be perceived as a threat to her ego since they were seen as derogatory, hindering her assimilation process. Residents also exhibited a defensive stance, being a way of coping with differences perceived as a threat to an ethnocentric worldview, separating themselves from the one that comes from another origin. Bennett (1986) suggests that the most common defense strategy is the denigration of difference, where undesirable characteristics are attributed to every member of a culturally different group. It can be linked to race, religion, age, gender, or any other presumed difference indicator. Such denigration is considered a developmental stage, not an isolated act. Additionally, there may be situations where there is no urgent need to defend and

prioritise the native culture over coexisting with another possible cultural reality. Luxcini comments:

No rechacé ningún comportamiento o creencia porque la verdad que como ellos son un pueblo judío, son practicantes del Antiguo Testamento, y como yo soy una persona cristiana evangélica, y soy practicante también de la religión, entonces conozco bien de la creencia de ellos, entonces no, no podía rechazar nada de ellos.

The greater the identification of similar traits in terms of beliefs, the lower the level of hostility and Defense against difference. This factor favours the assimilation of cultural practices as the migrant learns about them, providing them with a greater understanding and a broader overall perception. It should be considered that while living with these new cultural realities, there may be discriminatory or derogatory comments regarding beliefs or behaviours perceived by native individuals of the host country's culture. Such comments can trigger our participants' defensive stance to protect their cultural identity. Diana relates: "*(...) por ejemplo a nosotros nos inculcan, de que cuando tenga gripa no se bañe, o cuando usted termine de aplanchar no se moje. Aquí dicen que eso es mentira (...) Entonces nuestras culturas chocan un poco sí. (...)*". The cultural shock between the beliefs and customs, when aspects rooted in the migrant's identity, such as daily tasks or even health care, are invalidated, would cause a solid defensive posture. Similarly, the host country's residents showed Defense by nullifying the participant's customs, categorising them as statements that do not make any logical sense. As Bennet indicated, Defense involves attempts to oppose opinions contrary to the individual's worldview, such as locals making comments that categorised the participant's customs as deceitful. Certain specific conditions can significantly reduce Defense in these situations. Luxcini narrates:

Ellos son indiferentes a tu creencia (...) entonces simplemente te dicen, Luxcini, no comparto tu creencia y no más (...) en lo judío (...) siempre hay dos lavaplatos, uno para la leche y uno para la carne, es lo primero que te aclara, entonces si usted va a trabajar allí, sabe que tiene que respetar eso (...) así que no tuve ningún choque, ningún problema.

Indifference is taken as something positive, as there is no contempt for beliefs related to the migrant's religion. It also opens spaces for dialogue and recognition of disagreements, in this case, related to the separation of food that is connected to religious beliefs. Thus, it facilitates labour relations by promoting a pleasant environment for both sides.

Among the six stages of intercultural sensitivity, there is a transitional stage between an ethno-relative and ethnocentric perspective, namely, minimisation. Bennett (1986) explains that minimisation is the ultimate attempt to maintain the centrality of one's worldview supremacy by trying to trivialise cultural differences of the host culture. This stage represents a clear step for development beyond Denial and Defense, where cultural differences are overly acknowledged and are not negatively evaluated as much, being the midway point in the process of intercultural sensitivity for a migrant to position themselves in a more ethno-relative perspective. It allows us to see how attempts to maintain this position centred on supremacy can either persist or, on the contrary, evolve from a biased opinion influenced by stereotypes and fear of the unknown to a more flexible stance regarding the recognition of diversity among cultures, it also involves leaving cultural differences as a negative trait in conflict with the migrant's own cultural identity.

Luxcini explains:

O sea, lo que me impactó de su cultura, de su comportamiento, es la crianza de los niños. (...) hay mucha autoridad, (...) entonces desde pequeños son educados con disciplina, con

reglas, y son muy competitivos, entonces todos quieren estudiar, quieren salir adelante, quieren ser los mejores.

The acknowledgement of certain aspects may lead the migrant to adopt an attitude of coping with beliefs or behaviours that are completely different from their own, and the feeling of stress from fitting into the culture varies from perspective. In this case, our participant's way of coping refers to personal preferences and, of course, a sense of curiosity, respect, and admiration from their counterparts. This preference actively demonstrates that the more migrants can engage and be self-compared in an enriching manner, the less they would be affected by solid differences. Therefore, her experience leads us to infer that being impacted by the unknown is not necessarily a negative aspect of our participant's way of coping with difference. Instead, it is an opportunity to observe and evaluate cultural differences from a standpoint of admiration and respect. Bennet (1986) adds that: "cultural difference is recognised and tolerated to some degree" (p. 184). In the middle point of the intercultural sensitivity process, it is worth noting that cultural difference is not always entirely accepted as an identifying feature of the host country's culture, being untouchable or unquestionable in the eyes of migrants. Despite not being negatively evaluated, it is acknowledged and tolerated to some extent. On the one hand, Luxcini mentions:

Una que a mí personalmente no me pareció es que niñas de 16 años, 14 años, 15 años, ya tengan su novio y pueden dormir en su casa con su novio (...) porque eso lo hace la gente del común, no los judíos religiosos (...). Entonces, para ellos es normal (...) que una niña a los 12 años ya planifique y que una niña tenga relaciones sexuales a los 13, 14 años.

Tolerance demonstrates boundaries that cannot be crossed, closely examining our participant's values regarding sexual relationships. The individuals involved are young people, essentially

girls, who are not considered adults in their home country, Colombia. In this sense, a stage of isolation from cultural differences can be discerned, as there is a religious justification to differentiate themselves from those who are native and considered secular Jews, unlike others who consider themselves Orthodox Jews. The participant is close to the latter's beliefs, indicating a preference for groups that share similarities with her cultural identity. The distinctive cultural norms of the host country create a sense of detachment from the cultural identity of the Jewish culture. This experience leads us to think that Luxcini has had close contact with these situations during her tenure as a domestic worker. They have helped distinguish herself from specific social groups that classify certain customs and behaviours as natural and everyday but are perceived differently within the Jewish culture. On the other side, Diana expresses:

Ellos aquí consideran (...) que somos un país de tercer mundo y por lo tanto no tenemos conocimiento de muchas cosas. Me estuvieron explicando también al comienzo que era un león, los animales (...) a mí me molestó muchísimo. Y les hice ver a la gente que realmente nosotros venimos de un país, de una cultura demasiado rica. (...) Y entonces eso sí me molestó mucho y lo defiende y lo sigo defendiendo.

Like Luxcini, some aspects do not align with Diana's cultural identity, making her unable to tolerate or accept fully. Elements in perspectives between individuals from German culture and Colombian culture have drastically affected her ability to minimise them. Stereotypes have marked the intercultural sensitivity experience, forming the basis for discriminatory comments she has received from locals since her initial contact with German culture. It clarifies that the inability to digest the difference is rooted in a Defense strategy that still prevails in her ethno-relative process in the Minimization stage. Bennet (1986) suggests that:

Another Defense strategy is the assumption of cultural superiority rather than denigrating other cultures. One assumes that one's culture is the acme of some evolutionary scheme (...). The superiority strategy allows more experience of difference than does denigration. However, Ethnocentrism is still supported by the belief that most cultural differences must be overcome for genuine development to occur (p. 183).

All these comments have been symptoms of previously analysed cultural shocks. Therefore, it can be understood that our participant was not prepared to deal with such responses and comments regarding her culture, once again positioning herself in the distinctive features of the Defense stage; the response to differences in resources, perspectives, or opportunities can involve attempts to counteract the perceived threat to the centrality of one's worldview. This suggests that the reaction expressing that her culture is not ready for certain situations is indicative of a defensive stance '*demasiado rica*' and emphasising comments such as Diana expresses: '*ellos aquí se creen que son superdotados, a un nivel muy alto, y que nosotros somos la más mínima persona del mundo*'. There are desperate attempts to counteract those stereotype-based comparisons, which are viewed as a biased fact from our participant's perspective and within her cultural identity. Also, this attempt at comparison somehow demonstrates the assumption of cultural superiority characteristic of Ethnocentrism, which can serve as a shield against such comments. On the part of people belonging to German culture, there is again an ethnocentric view, conjecturing cultural superiority and trivialising cultural differences by pretending that the migrant lacked specific universal knowledge, such as different types of animals, being from another culture. Therefore, they considered it relevant to provide instruction on these matters. Bennett (1986) suggests that: "such difference is seen as either superficial or even obstructive to the pursuit of communication. It is because communication is assumed to rest

necessarily on the common ground of universal rules or principles" (p. 184). Cultural differences hinder communication since it is believed that communication should be based on standard and universal principles. Therefore, it can be verified that universal and straightforward knowledge about the beliefs or behaviour of the host country's culture can profoundly influence communication with individuals. Luxcini narrates:

Soy creyente hace mucho tiempo (...) conozco la Biblia, entonces no hubo ningún choque referente a la creencia. (...) no hay forma de debatir, ellos te dicen de plano; Luxcini, tú crees en tu Mesías, te acepto y te respeto, tú no me digas nada y yo creo en Moisés y ahí paramos (...) solo piden respeto, yo respeto tu creencia, tú respetas la mía y ya.

Recognising, respecting, and assessing these features in a less biased and negative manner can nourish a potential improvement in communication between the migrants and residents of the host countries. From a religious perspective, assertive communication to contrast and set boundaries regarding beliefs is essential to emphasise. In this case, language use is characterised by the need to communicate and be understood within a framework of respect between cultural realities. This use was smooth for our participant in comprehending and accepting these disparities. Similarly, one's knowledge and customs that are part of cultural identity can be contrasted and evaluated without falling into a constantly negative perspective regarding the host country's cultural differences. Diana relates: "*(...) en esta cultura hay muchas cosas también positivas, como lo es el ser uno cumplido en los horarios de cita. El ser limpio, porque aquí las calles son limpias*". The coexistence and direct contact with social norms related to cleanliness and time management reinforced the migrant with a more positive view of the German culture in which she is immersed. These are part of a deeper side, which would contribute to the overall process of cultural assimilation, comprehending the organisation, the meaning of time and its

importance in a work environment, and how far migrants are in terms of awareness of the difference and how to behave in order not to break or disrespect others by their careless actions. In brief, the acknowledgement, acceptance, and respect for the distinctiveness of their counterparts in both cases provided a broader understanding of the expected behaviour of the country's inhabitants and a way to set their minds to a new cultural reality.

An ethnorelative experience

Bennett (1986) claims that: "The acceptance of cultural difference represents a move from Ethnocentrism to Ethnorelativism. At this stage, cultural difference is both acknowledged and respected. Difference is perceived as fundamental, necessary, and preferable in human affairs" (p. 184). The acknowledgement and respect for cultural distinctiveness represent a noticeable step from an ethnocentric perspective to an ethno-relative one. These differences are accepted, paving the way for understanding and coexistence. Therefore, acceptance is an openness to an ethno-relative view. Additionally, acceptance within itself is marked by two levels. Kluckhohn et al. (1972) explain that:

Within this stage are two major levels of acceptance that occur in sequence. First is accepting behavioural differences, including language, communication style, and nonverbal patterns. Second is acceptance of the underlying cultural value differences, which may represent profoundly different organisations of reality.

There are two crucial levels; the first is based on accepting behavioural differences such as language and non-verbal communication patterns, and the second is accepting differences in cultural values, representing the reality of the host country's culture in profoundly different organisations. In this sense, we wanted to see if, since arriving in the host country and living with these cultural differences such as behaviour, social norms, culture, food, customs, values, and

beliefs, any change in the migrant's perspective can be evident to consider themselves in the stage of acceptance, considering these two levels. Diana mentions:

La falta de comunicación (...) la gente se encierra a ser muy sola y aislada. (...) uno tiene que aprender a hablar muy bien aquí este idioma para poder integrarse con esta cultura, porque si no de resto te ignoran todo el tiempo y te hacen a un lado.

A fundamental aspect of the first level, which involves accepting differences, whether forced or willingly, regarding the behaviours, language, and communication style of native individuals in German culture, can be observed; there is a recognition on the part of our participants regarding the importance of acquiring the language and being an active part to feel included by individuals in the local community. It is pertinent to evaluate the consequences of not participating in conversations or gatherings, as there is a bias, a reaction of indifference, and disdain for non-natives who cannot integrate into the culture and, consequently, into everyday social interactions. Among those aspects of the second level mentioned earlier, the organisation and distribution of Jewish society is profound. Luxcini relates:

Sí, claro, al vivir en un país ya se cambia la percepción de lo que es una cultura, total, porque una cosa es superficial, otra cosa es vivir en ese mundo qué me cambió para bien, porque es un pueblo muy organizado.

The prior information acquired before direct interaction may be purely about the superficial culture compared to direct interaction within the same culture, which can provide a strong base of the deep culture. Additionally, the structure of Jewish culture differs significantly from Colombia's, as the organisation of this society reflects the order that individuals follow and project in their daily lives. On the other hand, cultural morality also constitutes another part of the deep culture. Luxcini explains:

Los ortodoxos son practicantes de la Biblia, entonces en la Torá se les dice que la mujer tiene que ser sumisa (...) no lo veo como machismo sino como obediencia a la misma palabra (...) los que no son ortodoxos ni son religiosos (...) la mujer es muy liberal, el hombre en la casa y la mujer en la calle (...) tampoco estoy de acuerdo. (...) por mi creencia religiosa.

A considerable level of acceptance can be found in understanding and respecting conditions based on Orthodox Jewish religious beliefs. Aspects that might be considered sexist and oppressive towards women in Colombian culture can be viewed from another perspective as expressions of respect and responsible conduct that align with religious beliefs. Another interesting point to analyse is the disparities regarding women's and men's roles in Jewish society. As indicated in Luxcini's testimony, women may have a submissive role as a matter of obedience and self-respect. However, in the same society, women take a different role of dominance compared to men, who assume a submissive role, obeying women and taking care of domestic tasks such as childcare. Consequently, gender roles in Jewish culture are directly related to the religious beliefs of specific groups or individuals, differing from those of our participants and opening the gate to making comparisons and understanding a new possible way of living and behaving as a woman in another culture.

Following this line of thought, Bennett (1986) explains that by understanding cultural differences as dynamic, migrants can engage in more empathetic interactions and appreciate the diversity of human experience. At this specific stage of intercultural sensitivity, understanding takes a more serious step toward empathetic engagement with cultural value diversities. Luxcini elucidates:

No interactúan mucho contigo, pero te respetan mucho, eso sí. Valoran mucho tu trabajo, y los niños los enseñan a que la persona que trabaja en su casa la tienen que respetar (...) Con mis patronas, la relación era excelente. (...) O sea, lo que me impactó también es que allá no hay una clasificación social, allá no hay estrato (...) lo que me pareció súper, súper lindísimo.

Luxcini's feelings and perceptions towards the value system that shapes Jewish culture, where respect for others prevails, now become a more enriching reason to appreciate and point out the beauty behind the norm and differentiation. From an early age, she is instilled in the appropriate way to interact with domestic workers; there would be a low or non-existent classism, at least when our participant was in the country. People from different social classes are not considered inferior or treated disrespectfully, which generates a non-existent defensive position, where the difference will not be minimised but instead accepted as an aspect that gradually favours integration into the new cultural reality, in contrast to Latin American culture, particularly Colombian culture, where there are socioeconomic strata, the show of appreciation for domestic workers, appears as a comforting factor for our participant. It is worth noting that social classification is one of the aspects that can be highlighted in the second level of acceptance as aspects deeply rooted in the host country's culture, along with education.

Moving to the penultimate stage, Bennet (1986) expresses that adaptation involves temporarily adjusting behaviour and thinking to accommodate and engage with cultural differences. Empathy approaches cultural worldviews change when another person has a very different worldview. It is usually partial, focusing on areas relevant to the communication event. The adaptation is related to empathy because it tends to manifest partially, which is sufficient for communication to be enhanced, prioritising areas associated with it. Adaptation, therefore,

entails a change in behaviour to fit into a different environment and the ability to act beyond one's native cultural perspective, considering it the key point in intercultural communication. On the one hand, Diana expresses:

Si me he adaptado, como se puede decir sometido un poco a aceptar de que realmente es otra cultura, y es el país en el que he elegido venir a vivir y por eso lo he hecho. (...) Y entonces soy tolerante (...) adaptarse un poquito para coger un poco de la cultura de ellos y poder vivir tranquilamente.

A conscious adaptation regarding behaviour, thinking, and communication style to connect with individual's native to the host culture is unveiled. Over time, and by establishing a stable life in the host country with her children and her husband, she may have reached the adaptation stage; an awareness of the reality in which she lives allowed for a transition to conformity and a willingness to tolerate German culture. In the same vein, she may have adjusted to find a balance between her cultural identity and the host culture of the country. Understanding this, migrants, at some point in their journey, can achieve a situation where they could feel content and at ease because of the capacity to be established. On the other hand, Luxcini states:

Lo primero es el respeto (...) entonces, nunca tuve un problema porque siempre supe comportarme donde quiera que yo iba (...) siempre estaba observando cómo se comportan ellos para así yo misma interactuar con ellos, entonces siempre estaba esperando que ellos actuaran primero y después yo seguía.

Acting beyond one's native cultural perspective, based on accepting differences, can also become a crucial aspect of intercultural sensitivity for adaptation. The active and conscious understanding of distinctiveness in the realm of traditions can be observed, giving rise to an ethnorelative perspective. In these everyday situations, which may be considered primary or

common sense for inhabitants of Jewish culture, acting deliberately and out of sheer ignorance can lead to reactions contrary to a calm and understanding social environment based on respect. Our participant knew and understood that everything revolved around respect for these traditions; to maintain a peaceful atmosphere, there was no room for interrupting discourteously, with reckless disregard for the information learned in the actual cultural context of Jewish culture. A practical tool to avoid such disagreements and inappropriate behaviours was to observe and emulate the residents, thereby preventing mistakes that could lead to an uncomfortable situation for all involved. Diana relates:

Como es el país de frío, así se sienten las personas, frías, distantes. (...) yo soy una mujer muy sociable (...) Aquí es totalmente diferente (...) Eso me afectó y me sigue afectando, porque había momentos en que la verdad me quería regresar a mi país debido a esto.

Unlike Luxcini, Diana underwent a different reaction concerning a conscious adjustment of behaviour to adapt herself to her new reality: it is essential to emphasise that feelings associated with the denial stage, such as isolation, persist. Despite having reached a stage of adaptation and being formally established in the country, along with a family, there has yet to be assimilation with German culture. Compared to her customs related to Colombian culture, the act of sharing with friends or engaging in conversations with nearby neighbours is no longer present. This absence rekindles the cultural shock symptom of regression mentioned earlier.

Finalising the stages of intercultural sensitivity, Bennet (1986) claims that the final stage corresponds to the concept of Integration, which represents the highest degree of acceptance and evolution of the migrant. Integration of cultural differences occurs when someone's identity or sense of self evolves to incorporate other cultures' values, beliefs, perspectives, and behaviours in appropriate and authentic ways. In this manner, it can be understood that the migrant starts to

assimilate specific and unique traits of the new culture to which they have been exposed for an extended period during their stay in the host country. This assimilation allows them to gain new perceptions of the world that are not seen as threatening but as part of their identity. On the other hand, Bennet (1986) proposes that: "at the stage of Integration, the lack of any absolute cultural identification can be used for constructive purposes" (p. 186). Considering this contribution, a lack of understanding of cultural identity can serve as a constructive factor in explaining the reactions and experiences of our participants. Diana adds:

Yo tenía una costumbre (...) me invitaban a algún sitio y yo invitaba a gente demás (...) aquí no es admitido algo así, si te invitan a ti esa es la invitación para ti, no para que lleves a más personas.

An adaptation can be consciously chosen to comply with social expectations since non-compliance is directly related to a lack of respect and commitment, thus creating difficulties in relating to society and its residents. This effort is related to the migrant's ability to recognize the importance of meeting social and cultural expectations to avoid situations that cause arguments, and possible confrontations. Bennet (1986) establishes that: "as the culmination of intercultural sensitivity, the stage of Integration suggests a person who experiences difference as an essential and joyful aspect of all life" (p. 186). In this sense, the Integration stage enables the individual to experience the joy of the cheerful aspects that make up life, particularly those who are part of the family. Luxcini comments:

Para mí, la familia (...) me marcó mucho la unión, el diálogo, la interacción entre todos, la ayuda mutua (...) me identifiqué mucho con ellos en esa cuestión porque también yo he sido así (...) muy parecida la forma de ser de nosotros, de mi casa con la cultura judía (...) el respeto, la unión los valores, la disciplina, entonces eso estaba en mi casa.

There is an interest and connection with the meaning of family and the values surrounding this concept. The value system of the new culture and one's own culture have similarities; therefore, identifying with aspects such as values, beliefs, and traditions can serve as an incentive to navigate through an adaptation stage without experiencing significant conflict with one's identity. Bennett (1986) states that it is not merely a matter of tolerance or acceptance of those perspectives, as in past stages, but also involves active and meaningful engagement with cultural differences. This stage represents the highest level of intercultural sensitivity, wherein an open acceptance of differences characterizes the individual and perceives them as an integral and enriching aspect of their identity. Luxcini explains: "*ya como algo cotidiano mío, o sea, puedo decir que El Shabat; fueron 24 años que yo no trabajé los sábados. Allá bíblicamente, ese día está como descanso, no el domingo. Entonces ya lo tomé para personal en mi vida*". By being exposed for a long time, some customs can become a habit and are integrated despite no longer residing in the host country as it is considered beneficial. Luxcini adds:

La alimentación también. (...) antes comía mucha carne (...) Como mucha verdura, pasta, pollo, o sea, son cosas que son muy cotidianas de allá. (...) En cuestión de comida, en nuestra creencia religiosa de la palabra de Dios, tampoco comemos carne con leche, o sea, esas cosas, la sangre. También, esto ya lo tenía yo. Entonces para mí tampoco fue difícil. Es más, lo afirmé.

The Integration of food-related customs into habits of daily life can be strongly influenced and determined by the similarity of various cultural aspects such as religious beliefs, and values shared between the host country and native culture because of its emotional connection; as the migrant sets a special boundary and affinity, as well as getting used to put it on practice in contexts and situations with other individuals, it becomes a part of their the culture reality, being

relatively easy to integrate them for an extended period of time, even if they move to their native country.

This category encapsulates the profound journey of the participants' migratory experience, tracing their path from the outset to the culmination, all within the context of intercultural sensitivity. The interplay between the ethnocentric and ethnorelative experiences is particularly intriguing, underscoring the complexity and demands of each perspective.

Case 1

In the case of Diana, a more common and expected situation of a migrant person is observed, having gone through all the stages of Intercultural Sensitivity proposed by Bennett and, therefore, having experienced the ethnocentric perspective at the beginning of her migratory process by showing hermetic to difference or visions that may disagree with theirs. Regarding the ethnorelative perspective, in her latest experiences in the host country, she demonstrated greater understanding and openness to difference. However, it should be noted that, although each stage is different and having gone through all of them, it does not mean that it has left characteristics of a stage, such as a step from Minimization to Acceptance, reflecting the difficulty in overcoming them and continue the process for complete and proper Integration.

Case 2

Luxcini's experience represents an unusual case, which actively demonstrates the side of the exception. The first three stages Denial, Defense and Minimization were practically non-existing or simply just accepted and passing through them with less issue. Then, moved directly to the stages connected with Ethnorelativism. By showing complete openness to difference and

not being reticent to views contrary to one's own, it is thought that prior knowledge and self-identification with culture realities is related to having a more enjoyable migratory experience.

Conclusions

This qualitative case study facilitated an exploration into the perspectives of migratory experiences, cultural assimilation processes, and intercultural sensitivity among two migrant women from Colombia. Within the realm of qualitative paradigms, this study provided an opportunity to uncover significant and valuable insights, contributing to both macro and micro-level understandings. These findings align closely with the objectives outlined in this study.

Regarding **the general objective**, pertaining to the perspectives on cultural assimilation and intercultural sensitivity through the experiences of two Colombian migrant women, it was found that:

- The primary motivations for migration were predominantly economic and familial in nature. The country's precarious economy prompted the participants to seek better familial opportunities in countries with more developed economies, such as Germany and Israel, which offered enhanced prospects of adequately remunerated employment and, consequently, economic prosperity. Additionally, familial ties played a significant role in the migratory process, as the responsibilities assumed towards family members to ensure their well-being and sustenance encouraged the pursuit of better economic growth opportunities.
- The shared experiences provide a broad and profound perspective on the migration process, as each participant has resided in the host country for an extended period,

ranging from 20 to 30 years, thereby immersing deeply in the new culture. The customs of another culture may or may not be adopted into the migrant's daily life depending on the decisions made and whether these customs are perceived as beneficial or positive for the individual.

- The process of cultural assimilation is influenced by the individual circumstances of each migrant. The country they choose to migrate to, prior knowledge about that culture, language proficiency, cultural differences between the home country and the host country, as well as intercultural interactions, are factors that impact the complexity and duration of an individual's assimilation of the new culture. The process of intercultural sensitivity is affected by the interactions and social connections that the migrant manages to establish or already possesses in the host country, which can provide them with cultural information, contribute to acceptance in some cases, and foster a sense of belonging and support.

In accordance with the **first specific objective**, which pertains to gathering information about the migration process, memories, and experiences during the participants' time in the country, it can be observed that:

- Migrations are either planned or occur suddenly, depending on the emergence of opportunities and whether the individual aspires to undergo a migration process at some point in their life.
- The migration process entails various challenges, which vary depending on whether the process occurs within legal frameworks or not, and whether there is support or guidance in the destination country. Additionally, migration evokes a range of emotions and

feelings in the migrant, which may lead them to persist in this process, whether short-term or long-term.

- Living amidst new cultural realities, there may be discriminatory or derogatory comments regarding the beliefs or behaviors of the migrant by native individuals of the host country's culture or vice versa, creating a defensive stance and hindering interactions and integration between both parties. These cultural realities also generate cultural clashes between beliefs and customs by invalidating or criticizing differences.
- Thus, it can be interpreted that recognizing significant cultural differences in the host country can foster a disposition, both from the migrant and from native individuals of the host country, to navigate cultural clashes and integration, ultimately fostering harmonious coexistence.
- In brief, Migration is a very arduous and complex phenomenon, which is experienced differently by everyone in their singularity through varied stages of their lives, facing multiple challenges such as fleeing out from home, falling into the unknown, meeting face-to-face discrimination, struggling adaptation from a different reality, and the difficulty of adapting to a new culture.

In alignment with the **second specific objective**, which refers to describing the integration of migrants considering Bennett's model of intercultural sensitivity, the following points can be highlighted:

- Both participants provided specific experiences related to the first three stages of intercultural sensitivity, which served to understand and explore an ethnocentric perspective. It is evident that the participants were biased by their own culture, displaying a reluctance or refusal to comprehend different cultures and focusing solely on the

worldview provided by their own culture. In some cases, limited socialization and lack of prior information affect the acceptance of the new culture due to a lack of understanding of the environment. Similarly, drastic changes in social dynamics can cause discomfort, and if individuals receive constant criticism of their beliefs, it can trigger a state of alertness or defensiveness. Conversely, in other cases, if there is prior information and consistent interaction with members of society, sufficient information about the other culture is provided for understanding and, consequently, acceptance of the new culture.

- In specific cases, there is a clear inclination to think that the process and its characteristics vary depending on the experience, with some being more pleasant than others, even demonstrating that certain stages may be nonexistent.
- Despite each stage being different, in some cases, individuals may have gone through each stage, but that does not mean they have left behind the characteristics of the past, reflecting a difficulty in overcoming them and continuing with the process.
- Additionally, an ethno-relative experience was revealed, in which both participants shared specific experiences related to the last three stages of intercultural sensitivity. This served to understand and explore this stage in terms of opening-up to the perspectives offered by other cultures and consciously accepting differences, achieving a balance between maintaining their cultural identity and integrating the new culture. In some cases, some customs or values of the new culture align with the individual's personal beliefs and values, making it easier to integrate into the host culture. Conversely, in other cases, constant interaction with the culture gradually integrates aspects of the new culture.

Finally, the **third specific objective**, which pertains to reflecting on the process of cultural assimilation of migrants in a new culture, allows us to infer that:

- Cultural shock is triggered by the loss of familiar traits from one's own culture. The intensity of this shock is influenced by the type of interactions in the new culture. These interactions are imbued with various nuances according to the migrant's individual experiences and perceptions.
- Lack of knowledge and proficiency in the language predominantly used in the host country limits the migrant's integration into society. Ineffectively communicating with others and misinterpreting provided information make their interactions less smooth.
- Arriving in a country where distinctive and traits such as values and beliefs are upheld can be a positive factor, strengthening cultural identity to learn to appreciate oneself, to understand oneself, and to find a sense of belonging in a culture foreign to one's native one, particularly to navigate through various situations that may cause regression, as a symptom of cultural shock, and to abandon the migratory process and cultural assimilation. In both cases, it can be concluded that, despite spending over 20 years in their respective countries of Germany and Israel, cultural identity is still preserved and represented as a symbol of identity within the host country's culture, leading the participants to reaffirm themselves with the characteristics of their Colombian cultural identity.

Recommendations

- It is of vital importance to understand the type of migration, the process of cultural assimilation, and intercultural sensitivity that individuals may undergo in a particular experience, as each case is unique in its entirety. Identifying the origin, the determinative decisions to navigate these phenomena, the time and their respective characteristics, exceptions, and surprises are part of a dedicated and successful study to continue contributing to future research. Furthermore, it is worth highlighting that intercultural sensitivity can be applied to populations, not only student populations for educational purposes but also to other highly studied populations, such as migrant populations, from an innovative perspective like intercultural sensitivity.
- Within the university, research groups and seedbeds can benefit from addressing migratory processes, as well as teaching, learning, and language acquisition from a cultural perspective since these phenomena are experienced within the university community, with members being able to provide valuable information and allowing for a better understanding of these processes.
- It is pertinent to give space to research work within the qualitative paradigm and the case study approach to address topics from the singularity of each experience, both within the areas of pedagogy and language teaching as well as migratory processes. This type of research allows for a profound analysis of the experiences of the participants, analyzing different phenomena within and outside the humanities area in a profound manner, without treating them as mere objects of study but as individuals with all their contradictions and singularities that the human condition implies.

- It is essential to address topics, testimonies, interviews, or works related to migration processes in Intercultural Communication subjects to provide broader perspectives on cultural assimilation, cultural clash, and the transition from an ethnocentric view to an ethno-relative view. Addressing these topics allows for self-criticism, encouraging a deep evaluation of one's own perspective.

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Appendixes

Appendix a: Consent format 1



CONSENTIMIENTO INFORMADO

Día: 05/05/2023

Estimado/a Sr/a:

Diana Aurora Altamirano Bonilla.

Con el debido respeto me presento a usted, nuestros nombres son Tali Dayana Munera Álvarez, Karen Tatiana Gómez Mejía y Natalia García Sánchez. Estudiantes de Licenciatura en Lenguas Modernas Énfasis Inglés-Francés de la Universidad del Cauca (Santander de Quilichao). En la actualidad, nos encontramos realizando nuestro trabajo de grado para la culminación de nuestra carrera universitaria, y para ello quisiéramos contar con su valiosa colaboración. El proceso consiste en la realización de entrevistas para aportar datos confiables a la investigación, que requieren de información básica y personal. Los datos se guardarán, se respetará su confidencialidad y se evitará el uso para terceros.

Por ende, solicitamos su colaboración para poder utilizar sus datos, bajo el consentimiento y legalidad de su uso autorizado por usted.

Gracias por su colaboración.

Tali Dayana Múnera Álvarez

CC: 1193391887

Karen Tatiana Gómez Mejía

CC: 1007671731

Natalia García Sánchez

CC: 1112496889

Participante: de aceptar participar en la investigación, afirmo haber sido informado/a de todos los procedimientos de la investigación. En caso tenga alguna duda con respecto a algunas preguntas se me explicará cada una de ellas.

Yo Diana Aurora Altamirano Bonilla con número de CC: 31.526.335 siendo el/la persona quien acepte la participación en la investigación del trabajo de grado de las estudiantes Tali Dayana Munera Alvarez, Karen Tatiana Gómez Mejía y Natalia García Sánchez.

Diana A. Altamirano Bonilla
C.C. 31.526.335

Firma del/la participante
Licenciatura en Lenguas Modernas con énfasis en Inglés y Francés - Universidad del Cauca
(Santander de Quilichao)

Appendix b: Consent format 2



CONSENTIMIENTO INFORMADO

Día: 05/05/2023

Estimado/a Sr/a:

Luxcini Munera Lugo.

Con el debido respeto me presento a usted, nuestros nombres son Tali Dayana Munera Álvarez, Karen Tatiana Gómez Mejía y Natalia García Sánchez. Estudiantes de Licenciatura en Lenguas Modernas Énfasis Inglés-Francés de la Universidad del Cauca (Santander de Quilichao). En la actualidad nos encontramos realizando nuestro trabajo de grado para la culminación de nuestra carrera universitaria, y para ello quisiéramos contar con su valiosa colaboración. El proceso consiste en la realización de entrevistas para aportar datos confiables a la investigación, que requieren de información básica y personal. Los datos se guardarán, se respetará su confidencialidad y se evitará el uso para terceros.

Por ende, solicitamos su colaboración para poder utilizar sus datos, bajo el consentimiento y legalidad de su uso autorizado por usted.

Gracias por su colaboración.

Tali Dayana Múnera Álvarez

CC: 1193391887

Karen Tatiana Gómez Mejía

CC: 1007671731

Natalia García Sánchez

CC: 1112496889

Participante: de aceptar participar en la investigación, afirmo haber sido informado/a de todos los procedimientos de la investigación. En caso tenga alguna duda con respecto a algunas preguntas se me explicará cada una de ellas.

Yo Luxcini Munera Lugo con número de CC: 31958220 siendo el/la persona quien acepte la participación en la investigación del trabajo de grado para las estudiantes Tali Dayana Munera Alvarez, Karen Tatiana Gómez Mejía y Natalia García Sánchez

Firma del/la participante:

*Licenciatura en Lenguas Modernas con énfasis en Inglés y Francés - Universidad del Cauca
(Santander de Quilichao)*

Appendix c: Exploratory Interview format

Preguntas [questions]	Objetivos específicos [Specific objectives]
Nombre completo [full name]	<p>Establish a first general contact with the participants to know their identity and general information</p> <p>To confirm there was a migrant process from participants</p>
Edad [age]	
Sexo [sex]	
Género [gender]	
Lugar de nacimiento [place of birth]	
Lugar actual de residencia [Current place of residence]	
Lengua materna [mother tongue]	
¿Cuántos idiomas hablas? [How many languages do you speak?]	
¿Dónde se dio el proceso de migración? [Where did the migration process take place?]	
¿A qué edad se dio el proceso de migración? [From what age did the migration process take place?]	
¿Por cuánto tiempo estuviste o has estado en el país anfitrión? [How long were/have you been in the host country?]	

Appendix d: Migration Interview format

Preguntas [Questions]	Objetivos específicos [specific objectives]
<p>¿Por qué decidiste migrar? ¿Qué influyó esa decisión?</p> <p>[Why did you decide to migrate? What influenced that decision?]</p>	<p>Motivation for migrating</p> <p>To understand the reasons why participants decided to migrate and the factors that influenced their decision and their connection with cultural assimilation</p>
<p>¿Cómo fue el proceso personal y legal para migrar?</p> <p>[How was the personal and legal process to migrate?]</p>	
<p>¿Cuánto tiempo te tomó tomar esta decisión?</p> <p>[How long did it take you to make the decision to migrate?]</p>	
<p>¿Cuáles fueron los factores determinantes para decidir migrar a otro país?</p> <p>[What were the determining factors in deciding to migrate to another country?]</p>	
<p>¿Por qué decidiste migrar a ese país en lugar de otro?</p> <p>[Why did you decide to migrate to that country instead of another?]</p>	
<p>¿Estabas casada o en una relación con alguien antes de decidir migrar a otro país?</p> <p>[Were you married or in a relationship with someone before you decided to migrate to another country?]</p>	
<p>¿Tenías niños o alguien menor o mayor a tu cuidado?</p> <p>[Did you have children or someone younger or older in your care?]</p>	
<p>¿La decisión fue repentina o planeada? ¿Tenías suficientes recursos financieros para hacer el proceso migratorio?</p> <p>[Was the decision sudden or planned? Did you have enough financial resources to make the migration process?]</p>	

<p>¿Viajaste sola o acompañada?</p> <p>[Did you travel alone or accompanied?]</p>	
<p>¿Crees que este proceso de migración fue difícil?</p> <p>[Do you think this migration process was difficult?]</p>	
<p>¿Tuviste que dejar tu propia identidad cultural para adaptarte adecuadamente al país anfitrión?</p> <p>[Did you have to leave your own cultural identity to adapt properly to the host country?]</p>	<p>Cultural identity</p> <p>To understand and contextualise the perspective of the participant regarding the migration process regarding cultural identity as this has affected the worldview of the migrants</p>
<p>¿Qué tan diferente son las costumbres y valores de tu cultura de la cultura del país anfitrión?</p> <p>[How different are the customs and values of your culture from those of the culture of the host country?]</p>	
<p>¿Podrías describir si tus expectativas de vida cambiaron a la llegada al país anfitrión?</p> <p>[Could you describe if your expectations of life changed upon arrival in the host country?]</p>	
<p>¿Hubo más personas que hablaban tu lengua materna a tu alrededor en el país anfitrión?</p> <p>[Were there more people who spoke your mother tongue around you in the host country?]</p>	
<p>¿Tuviste la oportunidad de usar tu lengua materna en el país anfitrión?</p> <p>[Did you have the opportunity to use your mother tongue in the host country?]</p>	
<p>¿Han cambiado tus costumbres o valores viviendo en este país?</p> <p>[Have your customs or values changed by living in this country?]</p>	

<p>¿En el país al que emigró se hablaba una lengua distinta a la materna? Si el idioma era diferente a su lengua materna, ¿conocías el idioma o necesitabas aprenderlo?</p> <p>[In the country you migrated to, a language other than your mother tongue was spoken. If the language was different from your mother tongue, did you know the language or did you need to learn it?]</p>	<p>Cultural shock</p> <p>To find out how the process has been since they came face to face with the culture shock and to support the arguments that are already held by them.</p>
<p>¿Te sentiste bienvenida o rechazada en el nuevo ambiente cultural?</p> <p>[Did you feel welcomed or rejected in the new cultural environment?]</p>	<p>To know what it is for them and what they have</p>
<p>¿Cuáles han sido tus mayores desafíos desde que llegaste y empezaste a vivir en el país anfitrión?</p> <p>[What have been your biggest challenges since you started living in the host country?]</p>	<p>experienced about it. Establish a connection of how culture shock influenced the</p>
<p>¿Qué es lo que más te llamó la atención de la nueva cultura?</p> <p>[What struck you the most about the new culture?]</p>	<p>adaptation of migrants to the new culture.</p>
<p>¿Cómo fue el proceso de aprendizaje del idioma del país anfitrión? ¿Puedes describir las técnicas, herramientas o estrategias para memorizar vocabulario como frases y verbos?</p> <p>[How was the process of learning the language of the host country? Can you describe the techniques, tools, or strategies to memorise vocabulary such as phrases and verbs?]</p>	

Appendix e: Intercultural Sensitivity Interview Format

<p>Preguntas [questions]</p>	<p>Etapas de sensibilidad intercultural [stages of Intercultural sensitivity]</p>
<p>1. ¿Puedes contarnos algún momento de tu vida en el que te hayas sentido aislado de diferencias culturales en el país anfitrión? ¿Cómo afectó esto a tus interacciones con personas de la cultura del país al cual migraste? ¿Podrías describir tu actitud y pensamientos durante ese período?</p> <p>[Can you tell us about a time in your life when you felt isolated due to cultural differences in the host country? How did this affect your interactions with people from the culture of the country you migrated to? Could you describe your attitude and thoughts during that period?]</p> <p>2. ¿Tuviste algún estereotipo o prejuicio hacia personas de la cultura del país donde migraste? ¿Impactaron de alguna forma esas percepciones en tu experiencia en el país?</p> <p>[Did you have any stereotypes or prejudices towards people from the culture of the country where you migrated? Did those perceptions impact your experience in the country in any way?]</p>	<p>First stage of Denial:</p> <p>Isolation of significant cultural differences</p>
<p>1. ¿Qué comportamientos o creencias de la cultura del país donde migraste rechazaste? De ser así, ¿Podrías darnos ejemplos?</p> <p>[What behaviours or beliefs from the culture of the country where you migrated did you reject? If so, could you give us examples?]</p>	<p>Second stage of Defense: Go beyond Denial and begin to recognize the existence of cultural differences with a defensive mindset.</p>

<p>2. ¿Qué tipo de comentarios discriminatorios o denigrantes percibiste hacia tus creencias o comportamientos? ¿Te pusiste a la defensiva? ¿Podrías darnos ejemplos de estas reacciones?</p> <p>[What type of discriminatory or denigrating comments did you perceive towards your beliefs or behaviours? Did you get defensive? Could you give us examples of these reactions?]</p>	
<p>1. ¿Qué diferencias significativas reconociste de la cultura del país anfitrión? ¿Le diste importancia o la ignoraste? ¿Te sentiste en la capacidad de tolerar alguna de estas creencias o comportamientos?</p> <p>[What significant differences did you recognize from the culture of the host country? Did you give it importance, or did you ignore it? Did you feel able to tolerate any of these beliefs or behaviours?]</p> <p>2. ¿Cómo tu conocimiento previo sobre las creencias o comportamientos de la cultura del país anfitrión influyó en tu comunicación con las personas de esa cultura?</p> <p>[How did your prior knowledge about the beliefs or behaviours of the host country's culture influence your communication with people from that culture?]</p>	<p>Third stage of</p> <p>Minimisation: The recognition of cultural differences without evaluating them negatively.</p>
<p>1. Desde tu llegada al país anfitrión y al convivir con aspectos de la cultura como el lenguaje, la comida, las tradiciones, los valores y las creencias, ¿Has experimentado un cambio en tu percepción sobre esta cultura?</p> <p>[Since arriving in the host country and living with aspects of the culture such as language, food, traditions, values and beliefs, have you experienced a change in your perception of this culture?]</p>	<p>Fourth stage of</p> <p>Acceptance:</p> <p>Acknowledgement and respect for cultural differences.</p>

<p>2. ¿Cuáles son los aspectos culturales más diferentes que observaste en el país anfitrión con relación a tu cultura de origen? ¿Aceptaste estos aspectos? ¿Podrías darnos ejemplos?</p> <p>[What are the most different cultural aspects that you observed in relation to your culture of origin? Did you accept these aspects? Could you give us examples?]</p>	
<p>1. ¿Puedes describir una situación en la que te adaptaste conscientemente con respecto a tu comportamiento, pensamiento o estilo de comunicación para relacionarte con personas de ese entorno cultural? ¿Qué te motivó a hacer estos ajustes?</p> <p>[Can you describe a situation in which you consciously adapted your behaviour, thinking, or communication style to interact with people from that cultural background? What motivated you to make these adjustments?]</p> <p>2. ¿De qué manera la comprensión jugó un rol importante en tu capacidad para adaptarte a las diferencias culturales del país anfitrión?</p> <p>[How did understanding play an important role in your ability to adapt to the cultural differences of the host country?]</p>	<p>Fifth stage of</p> <p>Adaptation: Temporary adjustments in behavior and thinking to relate to cultural differences.</p>
<p>1. ¿Qué aspectos específicos de la cultura extranjera consideras como propios, ¿Cómo afectó esta integración en tu propia identidad?</p> <p>[What specific aspects of the foreign culture do you consider your own? How did this integration affect your own identity?]</p> <p>2. ¿Qué costumbres incorporaste de esta cultura a tu vida diaria? ¿Podrías darnos algunos ejemplos?</p> <p>[What customs did you incorporate from this culture into your daily life? Could you give us some examples?]</p>	<p>Sixth stage of</p> <p>Integration: The highest degree of acceptance and evolution with respect to cultural differences.</p>